

Policy LP41 Regeneration of Gainsborough 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 LP41, which relates to areas of opportunity for regeneration within 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 2 of the NPPF concerns "Ensuring the vitality of town centres"; section 4 concerns "Promoting sustainable transport"; section 8 concerns "Promoting healthy communities"; section 12 concerns "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment"; and there is a separate section on "Plan-making". The following points are particularly relevant:
 - Paragraph 23 - Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres of the plan period. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should: recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability.
 - Paragraph 30 – In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should...support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.
 - Paragraph 69 – Planning policies...should aim to achieve places which promote...safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
 - Paragraph 111- Local policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.
 - Paragraph 126 – Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.
- 1.5 The NPPG recognises the importance of planning for town centres: "local planning authorities should plan positively, to support town centres to generate local employment, promote beneficial competition within and between town centres, and create attractive, diverse places where people want to live, visit and work" (para 001, Reference ID: 2b-001-20140306). The NPPG provides further guidance on what is a positive strategy for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment: paragraph 004 (Reference ID:

18a-004-20140306) advises, “in developing their strategy, local planning authorities should identify specific opportunities within their area for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets”.

- 1.6 The above NPPF policy and NPPG guidance has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP41 in particular.

2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP41

- 2.1 The regeneration of Gainsborough town centre is a key priority for West Lindsey District Council. In 2007, a Masterplan for Gainsborough was published covering the period to 2026. This Masterplan identified a number of key sites which closely relate to the areas listed in policy LP41 that would help rejuvenate Gainsborough town centre.
- 2.2 The importance of regenerating the town was recognised in the Growth Point status awarded to Gainsborough in 2008, which provides access to Government funding to help with the planning and delivery of new housing and infrastructure in the town.

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 regeneration of Gainsborough. However, it did include policies LP34 Building a Better Gainsborough and LP35 Supporting the Natural Evolution of Gainsborough, which contained elements relevant to LP41.
- 3.2 Responses to the Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan were mixed in relation to policy LP34. One comment suggested that the Gainsborough Masterplan was inadequate to guide the development of Gainsborough and that the ‘Gainsborough Town Plan’ should be used instead. Other comments included that the policy was too broad, that maps were needed to illustrate, that sites for economic development were needed as well as for housing, that greater use of rail links should be encouraged, as well as support for green space and growth elements of the draft policy.
- 3.3 Responses to draft policy LP35 included that the Gainsborough Town Plan will revise the definition of the town centre and will identify district centres, that it should include reference to a second road bridge across the river, and that there is too much focus on growth in Gainsborough.
- 3.4 Further to the above, comments received against policy LP33 A Growing Gainsborough included views that supported the inclusion of a ‘Regeneration of Gainsborough’ policy in the Further Draft. Comments included that brownfield sites should be developed before greenfield sites and that development should be restricted to within Gainsborough’s existing footprint utilising infill plots.

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 Policy LP41 was introduced into the Further Draft version of the Local Plan in response to comments received during the consultation on the Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan and to help deliver the regeneration of Gainsborough.

- 4.2 Elements of policies LP34 Building a Better Gainsborough and LP35 Supporting the Natural Evolution of Gainsborough of the Preliminary Draft Local Plan which were relevant to the regeneration of Gainsborough were carried forward to the Further Draft version.
- 4.3 The scope of policy LP41 in the Further Draft Local Plan therefore included:
- A requirement that development proposals should assist in meeting the objectives of the Gainsborough regeneration and investment plans and Town Centre Masterplan.
 - Support for development which: enhances linkages to named locations and other unnamed key heritage assets; strengthens the retail area; regenerates the Riverside area; and improves public transport facilities and connections.

Further Draft Consultation

- 4.4 There was general support for the Regeneration of Gainsborough policy during the Further Draft consultation, though very few detailed supportive comments.

5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 5.1 Very minor amendments have been made to policy LP41 in the Proposed Submission Local Plan.
- 5.2 The list of development proposals which would be supported remains the same as the Further Draft version of the policy, with the exception of the modification of 'and' to be 'and / or' at the end of the penultimate bullet point. This modification reflects the fact that not all development proposals will necessarily deliver on all four of the points, but that proposals which deliver on at least one of the points will deliver on regeneration or investment objectives for Gainsborough.
- 5.3 The first sentence of the policy has also been revised to refer to '*meeting wider regeneration and investment objectives for Gainsborough*' rather than the Further Draft wording of '*meeting wider objectives of the Gainsborough regeneration and investment plans*'. This revision adds flexibility, should objectives not be presented in specific 'regeneration' or 'investment' plans.
- 5.4 The Proposed Submission policy is supported by the Gainsborough Masterplan (2007) and other policies in the Local Plan, including: LP17 Landscape, Townscape and Views; LP25 The Historic Environment; LP26 Design and Amenity; LP40 Gainsborough Riverside; LP42 Gainsborough Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area; and LP47 Access and Movement within Sleaford.

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 Local Plan).
- 6.2 **Option 2:** To have no local policy and rely on national policy in the NPPF. This option has not been taken forward, as the NPPF requires Local Plans to develop robust and comprehensive policies that identify specific opportunities within their area for the conservation and enhancement of the built and natural environment and historic environment. Relying on national policy would not allow local circumstances to be taken into account.

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.