

# **Policy LP44 Sleaford Sustainable Urban Extensions Evidence Report**

(Policy criteria for the Sleaford Sustainable Urban Extensions,  
formerly LP43 in 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 LP44, which relates to Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) in Sleaford. Please note the policy numbering for this policy has changed in the Proposed Submission Local Plan from LP43 to LP44.

### **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 sustainable urban extensions (SUEs), stating "*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 LP44 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 LP44

- 2.1 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment ('SHMA', 2015) identified a need 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 identifying 2 urban extensions to Sleaford.
- 2.2 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
- 2.3 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.

## 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 (LP43) which identified two candidate urban extension sites to Sleaford.

- 3.2 The two sites were:
- Sleaford South (land at Stump Cross Hill and land to the south east of London Road): This site has outline permission for 1,450 dwellings and associated infrastructure, including a primary school and local centre;
  - Sleaford West Quadrant (land to the west of Drove Lane and to the east of the A15).
- 3.3 Consultation on the Preliminary Draft Local Plan revealed support in general for the growth of Sleaford and overall support for the principle and locations of the candidate SUEs. General comments on this policy included reserving comment until site detail and specific policy requirements were known, objection to proposed level of growth, support for a higher level of growth, and objection to a focus on Sleaford as it would be detrimental to the regeneration and sustainability of the rest of Central Lincolnshire. Specific comments and key issues raised included:
- the need to provide details on how any affected heritage assets should be addressed, as well as recognising historic environment opportunities;
  - SUEs should not only protect and enhance nature conservation sites but it should also provide a network of green infrastructure. New developments should seek to significantly enhance the biodiversity of the area and provide a network of natural greenspace within the green infrastructure of the site;
  - in relation to Sleaford West Quadrant SUE, concern was raised in relation to road access and surface water issues.

## 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 a policy which proposed the designation of two Sustainable Urban Extensions to Sleaford. In addition, Policy LP54 proposed various 'broad locations for future growth', including a site south of Sleaford: Land at Quarrington.
- 4.2 Policy LP43 proposed the designation of the Sleaford South Quadrant SUE to deliver 1,450 dwellings in the plan period to 2036. 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:
- A new Local Centre (to include a health centre, community centre, retail and small start-up offices);
  - An onsite primary school.
- 4.3 Policy LP43 also proposed the designation of Sleaford West Quadrant SUE to deliver 1,600 dwellings in the plan period to 2036. The criteria specific to the development of this SUE included:
- A new Local Centre;
  - A new healthcare facility;
  - 3 ha of employment land (mainly B1 uses);
  - An onsite primary school and an onsite secondary school.

- 4.4 There was mixed support and objection to policy LP43 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. An alternative SUE was proposed at land at Quarrington, identified as a broad location for growth in the Further Draft Local Plan under policy LP54.
- 4.5 No specific comments were made in relation to Sleaford South Quadrant SUE.
- 4.6 In relation to Sleaford West Quadrant SUE, the following comments were made:
- The SUE is within 400m of Sleaford Water Recycling Centre. Policy LP43 should include an additional requirement for applicant(s) to undertake a detailed odour assessment to demonstrate that these sites can be developed without having an adverse impact on future residents;
  - Site has poor connectivity to Sleaford Town Centre;
  - Concern in relation to increased risk of flooding;
  - Question logic to requiring provision for gypsies and travellers in this site;
  - Concern regarding loss of agricultural land;
  - Object to criterion F, as presumes against the use of The Drove to access any new dwellings;
  - Request that: -criteria F is amended to allow a limited amount of development to be served from The Drove subject to technical investigation and the approval of the Council.
  - Criteria G is amended so that the streets where secondary accesses will be provided will also include The Drove.

## 5 Proposed Submission Local Plan

- 5.1 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 the representations received, 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.
- 5.2 The key requirements for the Sleaford SUEs are:
- Sleaford South Quadrant SUE
- 1,450 dwellings expected in the plan period;
  - New local centre to include a health centre, community centre, retail units, nursery school, public house, care home and start-up offices;
  - Onsite primary school and contribution towards secondary and sixth form education in Sleaford.
- Sleaford West Quadrant SUE
- 1,400 dwellings expected in the plan period (as opposed to the 1,600 dwellings anticipated in the Further Draft Local Plan);
  - New healthcare facility centre;

- 3 ha of employment land (mainly B1 uses);
- An onsite primary school and an onsite secondary school.

## 6 Alternative Reasonable Options

6.1 The reasonable alternative options for SUEs at Sleaford 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 Sleaford 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.