

Policy LP45 Sleaford's Regeneration and Opportunity Areas 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 LP45, which relates to areas of opportunity for regeneration within Sleaford.

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 8 concerns "Promoting healthy communities", 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:
 - 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 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 LP45 in particular.

2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP45

- 2.1 The regeneration of Sleaford town centre is a key priority for North Kesteven District Council. In 2011, a 25 year Masterplan for Sleaford was published, which concluded that Sleaford wasn't currently fulfilling its potential as a market town destination and that the quality of the environment in the town centre needed to improve. The masterplan proposed a comprehensive strategy, including a number of projects to deliver a series of destinations, to unlock the town's potential and to create a pedestrian focused environment.
- 2.2 The Central Lincolnshire Authorities respond to these issues in a variety of ways. For example, a private, public and third sector partnership has been formed between North Kesteven district Council, Lincolnshire Community Foundation, Sleaford Corn Exchange Ltd and Bristol Arcades Ltd to regenerate the Grade II listed Corn Exchange building and new and improved pedestrian access from Money's Yard to the Market Place via a footbridge over the River Slea. Supplementary Planning Guidance has been prepared to guide the regeneration of the Southern Southgate area of Sleaford. A Sleaford Regeneration Group has been formed made up of representatives from North Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Sleaford Town Council and local businesses. The group meet 4 times a year and discuss projects in the town and are used for consultation on regeneration projects.

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 regeneration and opportunity areas in Sleaford. However, it did include LP37 Building a Better Sleaford, which contained elements relevant to LP45.
- 3.2 Responses to the Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan were mixed in relation to the Sleaford Masterplan and Sleaford Town Centre SPD. Some commented that these were not widely supported, whilst others supported their aims and objectives. One respondent suggested the Sleaford Masterplan would need to be revisited in light of the longer plan period.
- 3.3 There were a number of comments in relation to the Sleaford Link Road (also known as the Sleaford South East Regeneration Route).

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 Policy LP45 was introduced into the Further Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October-November 2015) in response to comments received during the consultation on the Preliminary Draft and to provide guidance for development proposals that may come forward in opportunity areas identified in the Sleaford Masterplan.
- 4.2 Having carefully considered the Preliminary Draft representations, it was considered that the Sleaford Masterplan remains relevant and up to date as evidence to support the Further Draft version of the Local Plan.

- 4.3 Comments on the Link Road have been considered in relation to LP47 Access and Movement.
- 4.4 Responses to the Further Draft version of the Local Plan were generally supportive of the policy as drafted. Comments made included:
- An additional opportunity area was suggested for Carre's Grammar School and Kesteven and Sleaford High School, as they are looking to relocate from their current premises due to expansion.
 - Concern was raised that whilst regeneration was supported, it could not be achieved until traffic congestion was tackled in the town centre.

5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 5.1 Comments received during the Further Draft consultation have been duly considered, but no amendments to the policy have been made for the Proposed Submission Local Plan.
- 5.2 The relocation of the school sites are not considered to be advanced enough to be included as regeneration and opportunity areas in this Local Plan. This issue of traffic congestion has been considered under LP47 Access and Movement within Sleaford.
- 5.3 The policy is supported by the Sleaford Masterplan (2011), Sleaford Town Centre Regeneration SPD (2010), and other policies in the Local Plan, including: LP17 Landscape, Townscape and Views; LP25 The Historic Environment; LP26 Design and Amenity; LP43 Protecting Sleaford's Setting and Character; 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).
- 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 the Preliminary and Further Draft consultations, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.