

Policy LP47 Access and Movement within Sleaford Evidence Report

**Proposed Submission
April 2016**

Contents

1.	Introduction and Policy Context.....	1
2	Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP47	1
3	Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft	2
4	Local Plan Policy: Further Draft.....	2
5	Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission	3
6	Alternative Reasonable Options.....	3
7	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 LP47, which relates to access and movement in the Sleaford area.

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 Sustainable transport is referenced throughout the NPPF and the whole of section 4 is concerned with "Promoting sustainable transport". Reference is also made to transport in the section on "Plan-making". Section 8 "Promoting healthy communities" is also relevant. The following points are particularly relevant:
 - Para 40 – Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure...
 - Para 41 – Local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice".
 - Para 75 – Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access...
 - Para 157 - ...Local Plans should: plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this framework...
- 1.5 The above NPPF policy has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP47 in particular.

2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP47

- 2.1 Sleaford has good connections, benefitting from the A15 and A17 as part of the strategic road network, and a railway station with direct services to Peterborough, Nottingham, Lincoln and Boston. However, a key issue facing the town is the extent of vehicle movement through the town centre and the impact this is having on the ability of the town to regenerate.
- 2.2 A Transport Strategy for Sleaford was completed in June 2014 (library reference E043). The Strategy will help to address existing transport and travel issues within Sleaford town centre and the surrounding area. It will also help support proposals for significant growth in the short, medium and long term whilst helping mitigate any impacts associated with that growth. The Strategy is closely aligned with Lincolnshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP4,

library reference E040)) and the Sleaford Masterplan (April 2011, library reference E020), and identifies the following key issues:

- Town centre congestion during peak hours exacerbated by level crossings which impacts on movement. Limited route choice and spare capacity on the network;
- Good bus network but with low frequency and poor Sunday service;
- Some car parks are over capacity whilst some have significant spare capacity;
- Fragmented cycle network and a lack of provision for cyclists and pedestrians at junctions;
- Town centre traffic impacts on the quality of the environment;
- Barriers to pedestrian movement and accessibility;
- Improve the appearance and function of the transport hub and integrate it more effectively within the wider town.

2.3 The Sleaford Masterplan sets out a framework and strategy for the change and growth of the town over the next 20 to 25 years. It includes a movement and carpark strategy for the town, which aims to reposition and rationalise car parking to strategically located car parks on the radial routes into the town so that they are in walking distance of the town centre. This will reduce vehicle movement through the town centre and lead to an improved environment which is more welcoming and pedestrian friendly.

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 specific transport policy in the Sleaford chapter, however, it did include LP37 Building a Better Sleaford, which contained elements relevant to LP47 (particularly bullet points a, b and i), which were carried over to the Further Draft Local Plan.
- 3.2 Most comments received on the Preliminary Draft were generally supportive of LP37, Sleaford Masterplan and Sleaford Transport Strategy. General comments included concern that congestion will be difficult to minimise, that the town can't absorb anymore cross town journeys, that the link road is not essential and will increase traffic in the one way system and, requiring improvements in public transport.
- 3.3 Some concern was expressed around the viability implications of developments supporting projects associated with the Sleaford Transport Strategy and the Sleaford Masterplan.

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 The policy in the Further Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2015) was created partially in response to comments received in relation to policy LP37 Building a Better Sleaford.
- 4.2 Concerns raised at the Preliminary Draft stage have been recognised and have led to the insertion of a specific policy on transport issues in the Sleaford chapter of the Further Draft Local Plan. However, some of the concerns are largely addressed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, Community Infrastructure Levy and Whole Plan Viability supporting documents.

- 4.3 In general, responses to the Further Draft Stage were supportive of the policy as drafted. Comments made included:
- Objection to the inclusion of the Sleaford Link Road (or South East Sleaford Regeneration Route) in the policy and on the Policies Map, due to concern that it will not alleviate traffic congestion in the town and will lead to increased emissions;
 - Public transport will need to be improved to support the levels of new housing proposed;
 - A pedestrianisation scheme for the town centre should be investigated.

5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 5.1 Comments received during the Further Draft consultation have been duly considered, but have not resulted in any amendments to the policy in the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The Link Road has planning consent, and therefore should be identified in the Plan and on the Policies Map.
- 5.2 The policy is supported by LP12 Infrastructure to Support Growth and LP13 Transport in the Proposed Submission Local Plan, which also include criteria relevant to transport and accessibility, as well as the Sleaford Masterplan and Sleaford Transport Strategy.

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 Sleaford specific transport policy and rely on a generic Central Lincolnshire transport policy and national policy. This option was discounted given that vehicle movement in the town centre, and the need to promote a shift to more sustainable transport modes, is a key issue facing Sleaford and has been identified as a barrier to further regeneration.

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.