



Policy LP54 Remaining Capacity on SUEs and Broad Locations for Future Growth 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 LP54, which is a policy relating to urban extensions and locations for future growth.

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 Of particular relevance to this policy is para 14 of the NPPF, which sets the fundamental framework for plan-making, and includes the statement that "*Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change...*"
- 1.5 Paragraph 21 is also relevant, which relates to economic growth, whereby it states (third bullet point) that "*Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.*"
- 1.6 Paragraph 52 of the NPPF is particularly relevant to urban extensions, 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.*"
- 1.7 The above NPPF policy has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP54 in particular.
- 1.8 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 Policy LP54

- 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 identifying 8 urban extensions (see policies LP30 (Lincoln SUEs); LP39 (Gainsborough SUEs); LP44 (Sleaford SUEs); and LP48 which summarises the allocations).
- 2.2 However, it is important that policies in the Local Plan are both realistic and flexible to deal with changing circumstances, and for SUEs and growth in general, it is important that:
 - a realistic assumption is made about the extent to which the SUEs will be developed ('built out') during the plan period, and only counting the element that is expected to be completed in the plan period towards the overall 36,960 target;

- flexibility is built into the plan should sustainable growth to be of an extent in the earlier part of the plan period to warrant additional growth over the 36,960 target.

2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, this Evidence Report makes no detailed comment or appraisal on the rationale for Sustainable Urban Extensions in principle, or on the merits of individual sites. Such evidence is presented in other documents available in the Planning Policy Library on our website. The purpose of this Evidence Report is to set out the reasoning behind having such a policy as a matter of principle.

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 which dealt with remaining capacity at SUEs or broad locations for further growth. This was because at that preliminary stage, the site allocation process was not complete and a ‘call for sites’ process was issued.

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

4.1 The Further Draft version of the Local Plan included, for the first time, Policy LP54, entitled at that stage as ‘Broad Locations for Future Growth’.

Further Draft consultation

4.2 Consultation on the Further Draft Local Plan between October and November 2015 revealed the following issues:

- Status of these sites were unclear.
- Objections received stating that work undertaken on them, as SUE-size sites, is insufficient to date.
- Objections and/or general comments received about the Broad Location for Future Growth at Land at Quarrington, Sleaford
- Support was received for the allocation of Land East of White’s Wood Farm, Gainsborough (Gainsborough Eastern SUE) as a Broad Location for Future Growth:
- Comments received suggesting that the Broad Location for Future Growth at Land at Quarrington, Sleaford should be allocated fully in the Local Plan:
- Comments received suggesting that a change to the boundary should be considered for the Broad Location for Future Growth at Land South of Waddington Low Fields.
- Suggestions for additional and/or alternative Broad Locations for Future Growth were received for the following sites:
CL1021 – Land off Mareham Lane, Sleaford
CL4391 – Land off Boston Road, Sleaford

4.3 As can be seen above, most comments therefore were of a site specific nature, rather than the principle of the policy. Such site specific issues are dealt with in other Evidence Reports.

5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

5.1 The Proposed Submission version of the policy has been amended in response to the various issues raised and where opportunities to improve the policy wording have been identified.

- 5.2 Of particular substance is the redrafting of the policy into two parts (and the subsequent retitling of the Policy, for clarity). The first part, Part A, relates to the SUEs which are allocated in the Local Plan (Policy LP48) and on the Policies Map, but which are not expected to be fully built out by the end of the plan period. This applies to four of the SUEs.
- 5.3 Thus, Part A of the policy is not allocating these SUEs, it is merely confirming that they will remain 'live' development sites beyond the plan period, with an estimated 5,750 homes still to be complete. This 5,750 remaining to be complete have NOT been included in the calculations to deliver the 36,960 homes.
- 5.4 The second part of the Policy, Part B, are locations which are not allocated in the Local Plan or on the Policies Map, but are indicated more broadly on the Key Diagrams within the Local Plan.
- 5.5 As discussed in other evidence reports (primarily an appendix to the IIA), these locations appear likely suitable for growth at some point, but not likely needed in the plan period. Again, these dwellings, which are very broadly estimated to deliver a further 5,750 homes, are NOT included in the calculations to deliver the 36,960 homes identified.
- 5.6 This policy is a very important policy in the Local Plan, and entirely in line with NPPF, which seeks flexibility and, more generally, to support growth. It is a clear commitment by the Local Plan to deliver growth beyond its identified need, should circumstances in the future warrant it. Indeed, it identifies 11,500 homes for beyond the plan period, which is around a 30% boost on top of its identified and allocated need of 36,960 dwellings.
- 5.7 The policy is also invaluable to infrastructure providers, as it sets the likely direction of growth beyond the next 20 years, which will enable such infrastructure providers to plan with confidence what level of infrastructure is needed, and where.
- 5.8 To ensure the policy is not abused (eg by an early application for development for one of the broad locations identified in Part B), the policy makes it clear that only at the mid-point of the Local Plan period will development in such locations be considered. This allows a proper level of monitoring to take place, to determine whether the release of such sites is warranted.
- 5.9 The comments made in relation to the principle of the policy have all been carefully considered, and amendments made to ensure the policy is clear.

6 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 6.1 The following alternative option has 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 No policy on additional / future growth sites:** Instead rely on other Local Plan policies and national policy. This option has been rejected. The NPPF makes it clear that the Local Plan should be flexible to deal with rapidly changing circumstances, and the lack of a policy would be contrary to that approach. No policy would also be unhelpful to the long term planning of infrastructure.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy LP54 as contained in the April 2016 Proposed Submission Local Plan. We hope this helps demonstrate how we have responded to comments received during the Further Draft consultations, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.