

# Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036 Examination

## **MATTER 11: Sleaford (LP43, LP45, LP46 and LP47)**

Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee  
Hearing Statement

October 2016



## **MATTER 11: Sleaford (LP43, LP45, LP46 and LP47)**

### **Issue 11a - Sleaford**

#### **Q 1. What is the justification for Policy LP43 criterion a. which seeks to preserve and enhance the special character, setting and appearance of conservation areas?**

The wording of criterion a. was taken from section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which states “*It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas*”.

However, in the exercise of its planning functions section 72 (1) states “*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*”.

In relation to Conservation Areas, Policy LP25 in the Plan states that: “*Development within, affecting the setting or, or affecting views into or out of, a Conservation Area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area’s character, appearance and setting*”.

To ensure consistency with national policy, legislation and other policies in the Plan, the Committee acknowledges that criterion a. of LP43 should be amended and proposes the following amendment (suggested modification Main/SC/14):

“Preserve and, **where possible**, enhance the special character, setting and appearance of the Sleaford Conservation Area, respecting its special historic and architectural context.”

#### **Q2. Are the ‘important local views’ in Policy LP43 set out anywhere? To be effective should they be set out in the Plan?**

The recently adopted Sleaford Conservation Area Appraisal, April 2016<sup>1</sup> identifies key views and vistas into, within and from the Sleaford Conservation Area, including views of landmarks, listed buildings and groups of buildings, linear views and views across open spaces. The Sleaford Masterplan (E020, p27) also identifies key views and key landmarks which can be seen within Sleaford and beyond, and which are important features of Sleaford. Both of these documents were subject to public consultation and are referenced in the supporting text to Policy LP43 at paragraph 9.2.3.

Paragraph 9.2.3 specifically mentions views of the Bass Maltings complex, a grade II\* heritage asset, as this is Sleaford’s most iconic landmark. However, the Committee is of the view that it would not be appropriate to list all important local views in the Plan, as it is not possible to produce an exhaustive list of every view and the omission of a view may imply it is not important or significant.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building/planning/conservation-and-heritage/conservation-areas/conservation-area-reviews/>

**Q3. Is the requirement for proposals to ‘protect and enhance’ the landscape character and setting of Sleaford and the surrounding villages justified? Is it consistent with paragraph 109 of the Framework which refers to protecting and enhancing valued landscapes? Does the Local Plan need to distinguish between any areas of valued landscapes in and around Sleaford and the surrounding villages?**

Valued landscapes in Central Lincolnshire are identified and protected through Policy LP17 Landscape, Townscape and Views. However, in addition to paragraph 109, one of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (paragraph 17). The NPPG states that: “*Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside*”, (Reference ID: 8-001-20140306).

Therefore the Committee is of the view that it is appropriate and justified for policies in the Local Plan to seek to protect and enhance the landscape character and setting of Sleaford and the surrounding villages outside of the designated valued landscapes identified under policy LP17. The North Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (**E036**) provides evidence of the key features, elements and characteristics of the landscape around Sleaford and the surrounding villages, sensitivity of the landscape to change, and opportunities for enhancement. It is not necessary to replicate this Assessment in the Local Plan itself.

**Q4. To be effective should Sleaford’s Regeneration and Opportunity Area’s under Policy LP45 be identified on the policies map?**

No. The Committee’s approach is the identification of the Opportunity Areas as set out in LP45 on the Key Diagram for Sleaford rather than on the Policies Map. As stated in paragraph 9.4.1 of the Plan, these areas are not considered to be sufficiently advanced to allocate them for specific land uses in the Plan. Some of the Opportunity Areas are identified as key projects or potential development sites in the Sleaford Masterplan (**E020**), but not all. With the exception of the former Advanta Seeds site (see Q5 below), the supporting text to Policy LP45 is considered to provide sufficient detail, alongside the Key Diagram, as to the broad location and coverage of each Opportunity Area. This approach is consistent with NPPF para 157, 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point.

**Q5. Should the ‘former Advanta Seeds site’ be allocated and illustrated on the Policies Map given its inclusion within Policy LP45?**

The Committee’s approach as set out in LP45 is considered to provide the necessary promotion of the site as an area in need of regeneration without being overly prescriptive.

The former Advanta Seeds site was not submitted for consideration as an allocation in the Plan (**PS.EVR 48-54**) and therefore has not been considered as a reasonable alternative in the IIA (**E001A to E001C**). Recent pre-application discussions, post submission of the Plan, have taken place regarding the redevelopment of the site. However, proposals are not considered to be sufficiently advanced to provide the necessary detail as required by the NPPG<sup>2</sup> to justify a specific allocation in the Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> The NPPG (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 12-010-20140306) states that: “Where sites are proposed for allocation, sufficient detail should be given to provide clarity to developers, local communities and other interests about the nature and scale of development (addressing the ‘what, where, when and how’ questions)”.

The Committee considers the guidance contained within Policy LP45 and LP46 and other policies within the Plan, together with the Sleaford Masterplan (**E020**), is suitably framed and sufficiently flexible to guide development proposals, such as mixed use schemes, without allocating the site for a specific use or uses.

However, to further help the reader as to the location of the site, it is suggested that para 9.4.9 could helpfully be expanded as follows (suggested modification Main/SC/15):

“The former Advanta Seed site is a key redevelopment area towards the southern end of Sleaford Town Centre. **Whilst not precisely defined on the Policies Map, it is the area which was previously occupied by the Advanta Seeds premises, with the maximum extend of the regeneration and opportunity area bounded by the railway line to the south, residential to the east and the recreation ground to the north.** This large scale site offers significant...”