

Statement of Common Ground between the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee, West Lindsey District Council and the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society

Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is between the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJSPC), West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) and the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society (LAS). It has been prepared to confirm and clarify the level of agreement on the local plan, and particularly Policy S44 of the submitted plan which relates to the Lincolnshire Showground – which is owned and operated by LAS.

Background and Governance

The CLJSPC is the Local Planning Authority for plan making purposes for Central Lincolnshire and WLDC is the Local Planning Authority for development management for the area which includes the Lincolnshire Showground. The LAS who own the Lincolnshire Showground is a charitable organisation whose objectives include the advancement of the agricultural and horticultural industries and the encouragement of environmental protection and sustainable land management.

It has long been recognised by WLDC and CLJSPC that the Showground is an important destination, contributing to the areas of economic growth, education and visitor economy. This is reflected in the current Local Plan Policy LP8 and, as such, Policy S44 in the Submission Draft Local Plan, has remained fundamentally unchanged.

This Statement of Common Ground reflects the current position between CLJSPC, WLDC and the LAS. It is proposed following the adoption of the Local Plan that work will continue between WLDC, CLJSPC & LAS which will support the growth and future sustainability of the Showground.

Policy S44

Areas of Common Ground

Inclusion of a specific Lincolnshire Showground Policy

All parties support the inclusion of a site-specific planning policy which provides a framework for the on-going development of the Lincolnshire Showground.

It is agreed that the policy continues to support and promote the Showground as an important asset, not only to Central Lincolnshire but the County as a whole, in its delivery of its charitable work and by attracting large numbers of visitors throughout the year. It is also considered by the WLDC, CLJSPC & LAS that the CLLP is correct to continue to support and promote the Showground's uses in order to sustain it as one of a declining number of major agricultural show venues in the UK. The area of land and quality of facilities required for the agricultural show, are a major factor in attracting other large outdoor charity and business events to Lincolnshire.

The development types listed in policy S44 which all parties agree with, are as follows:

- Facilities directly related to the functioning of shows on the showground itself;
- Conference facilities (E Use Class) (up to 4,000 sqm);
- Expansion of Agricultural College functions (C2 Use Class) (up to 8,000 sqm);
- Employment related development (E Use Class) (up to 3,500 sqm);
- A hotel (C1 Use Class) (up to 100 beds);
- Other minor ancillary development linked to the above uses.

Areas of Outstanding Disagreement at Regulation 19 stage

Floor space of Agricultural College Functions

Summary of LAS position at Reg. 19: LAS considers the wording in relation to expanding the Agricultural College's functions at the Showground is too restrictive. The Agricultural College has developed the northern half of the Showground over recent years and has utilised nearly all the land they have purchased from LAS and over the 8,000 sqm floor area allocated under the adopted policy LP8 of the 2017 CLLP. Therefore, LAS is proposing an increase in the floor area of the agricultural college functions from "up to 8,000sqm" to "up to 10,000sqm." The LAS suggest the revised wording of the third bullet point should read as follows:- *"Expansion of Agricultural College functions (C2 Use Classes) (up to 10,000 sqm)"*

Summary of WLDC/CLJSPC position: The Lincolnshire Showground (together with the Hemswell Cliff Business Park) was identified in 2015 as a strategic site to support the development of a food and farming Enterprise Zone. As such there is in-principle support for future expansion of the Agricultural College. However, it is important for this growth to be well planned and proportionate, taking account of the current uses and location of the site.

Summary of agreement reached: In discussion following the submission of the Local Plan it has become clear that the agricultural college has expanded and is nearing the limit of 8,000sq.m provided in policy S44. This then justifies provision of flexibility for some small-scale extension during the plan period, it is therefore agreed by CLJSPC, WLDC and LAS that the allowed floorspace for Agricultural College functions should be increased by 2,000sq.m, from the previous 8,000sq.m to 10,000sq.m in total. Allowing adequate flexibility to expand the college and facilitate the continued provision of higher education supporting the agri-food sector would ensure the policy is both effective and sound.

To clarify, all parties agree that the wording of the policy should be amended to *"Expansion of Agricultural College functions (C2 Use Class) (up to 10,000 sqm in total including existing agricultural college floorspace)"*.

Inclusion of Education and Training Facilities

Summary of LAS position at Reg. 19: It is considered that the policy is too restrictive for the types of development which could be supported in principle in the future. One such development type is the inclusion of Education and Training Facilities.

Summary of WLDC/CLJSPC position: The Lincolnshire Showground provides a number of key functions, including that as a destination, a tourism function in the form of the Showground as well as the location for an important educational facility in the form of the Agricultural College and the LAS' own educational programmes. The policy is clear that support will be given to the main showground use to ensure the offering remains balanced. However, it is acknowledged that following changes to the Use Class Order as part of the Business and Planning Act 2020, the reference to new Use Class E as detailed within the second bullet point of Policy S44 does not include the relevant uses referenced in Policy LP8 of the adopted Local Plan and which was intended to be carried forward in this plan. Policy LP8 included Use Class D1 and D2 which is now translated into new Use Classes E, F1 and F2. As such it is accepted that in order to ensure the policy is effective, Use Class F1 and F2 should be included within the second bullet point of Policy S44.

Summary of agreement reached: CLJSPC, WLDC and LAS agree it is justified to include uses F1 and F2 in the second bullet point of Policy S44 to make the policy effective and clear for decision makers and applicants, maintaining consistency with the previous policy LP8. The amended bullet points for policy S44 would read:

- Facilities directly linked to the functioning of show and the showground itself;
- Conference facilities (E, F1 and F2 Use Class) (up to 4,000 sqm);
- Expansion of Agricultural College functions (C2 Use Class) (up to 10,000 sqm, in total including existing agricultural college floorspace);
- Employment related development (E Use Class) (up to 3,500 sqm);
- A hotel (C1 Use Class) (up to 100 beds);

Other minor ancillary development linked to the above uses.

Inclusion of a Roadside Services Facility

Summary of LAS position at Reg. 19: The policy should include the provision of a roadside services facility in the development types listed within the wording of the policy as a facility to support the wider use of the Showground. It is also considered that the provision of these services would address a deficit of facilities along the A15 as well as improve the overall offering to visitors to the Showground. The inclusion of EV fast charging points as part of the roadside services is considered to meet the requirements of policy S16 Wider Energy Infrastructure and NS18 Electric Vehicle Charging.

Summary of WLDC/CLJSPC position: CLJSPC and WLDC considers that Policy S44, as drafted is sound, providing suitable flexibility and details in-principle support for facilities directly related to the functioning of shows on the showground. As such CLJSPC considers that the policy as drafted is justified and effective, providing adequate flexibility for the showground to deliver complimentary facilities. It is not necessary to include road side service facilities specifically within the policy.

Summary of agreement reached: Through further discussions it has been agreed by CLJSPC, WLDC and LAS that the first bullet of the policy provides adequate flexibility to enable the LAS to provide services which meet the needs of their customers and as such changing Policy S44 to include road side services is not required. It is however agreed, due to the importance and strategic nature of the site, that where future significant development proposals are planned that WLDC and LAS will work together to develop a Master Plan.

Increasing the Showground Area in Policies Map 47

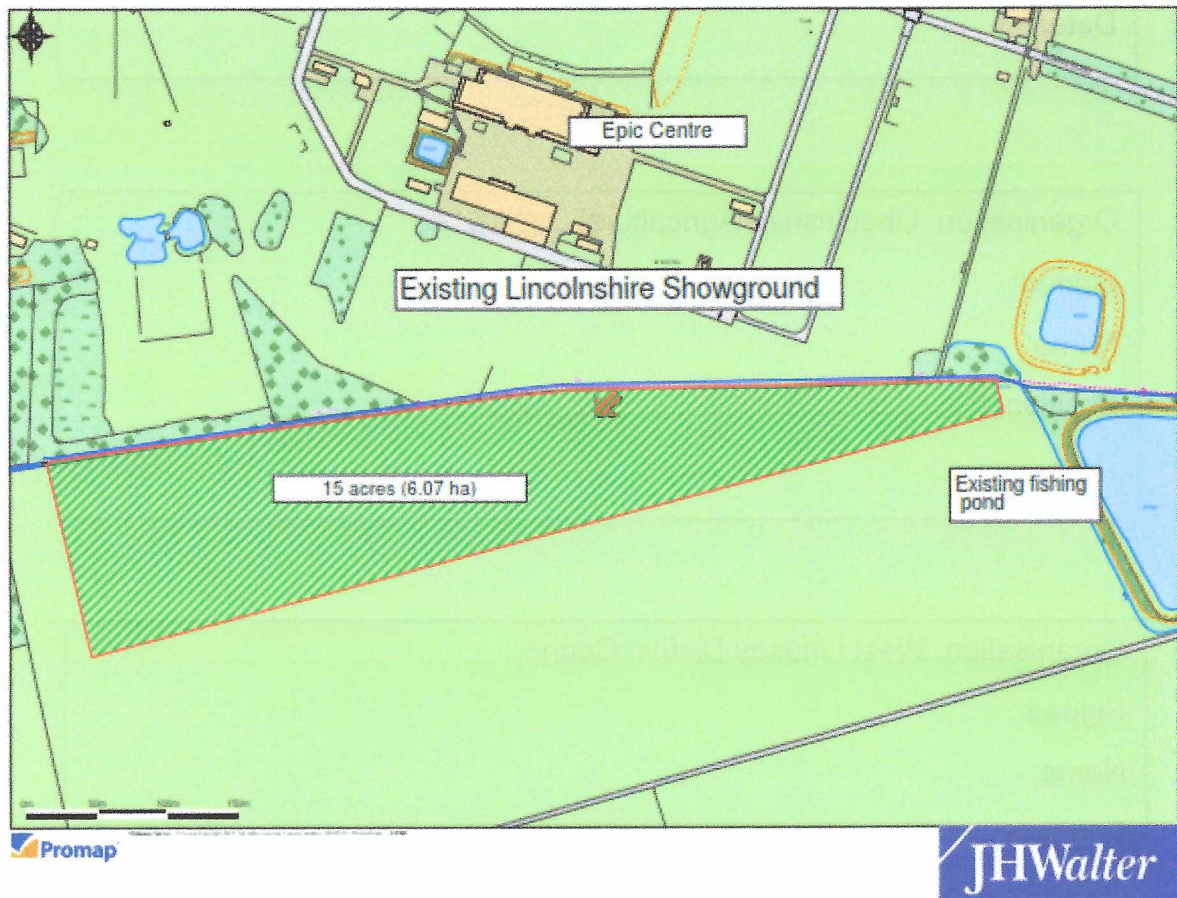
Summary of LAS position at Reg. 19: That the area of the showground allocated in Policy Map 47 be expanded to include two additional parcels of land. One to the Southern boundary of the Showground, Area 1 (6.07ha) and Area 2 to the Western boundary (38ha). This would allow greater flexibility in the way the Showground could operate including additional parking provision. There is a reference to lack of a mains drainage being a barrier to expansion and development and LAS wish it to be noted that they have plans at the final stage of agreement with Anglian Water to address this.

Summary of WLDC/CLJSPC position: The expansion of the Showground policy boundaries should only take place where evidence to support the expansion has been provided and opportunity for public consultation has been given to fully assess the impact of the proposal. CLJSPC has recently been made aware of an additional planning application which covers Area 1 of the showground which changed the use of the land from agricultural land to form an extension to Lincolnshire Showground, (fig. 1 below shows the Site Local Plan used in planning application 133238 for the change of use for Area 1). As such it is considered justified to make this area of the showground part of the policy map. Not changing the policy would leave the area of land with permission in the countryside, which would be inconsistent with the permission.

Summary of agreement reached: It is agreed by CLJSPC, WLDC and LAS that the Policy Map for policy S44 should be updated to include Area 1. It is also agreed that Area 2 should not be included as it is agreed that this change has not been subject to consultation and that any future changes to the policy map boundary for the Showground will be considered as part of a Master Planning exercise of future planning application. This change is needed to ensure that the boundary reflects the land with permission for use associated with the Showground as opposed to the surrounding farmland. It has been justified through the permission as being appropriate for the context and is needed to ensure the effectiveness of implementing this policy.

Fig. 1 – Site Location Plan for planning application 133238

Location Plan - Change of use of land to extension to Showground



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Formal sign off date: