

Central Lincolnshire Policy S44 Lincolnshire Showground Evidence Report

Formerly Policy S43

March 2022



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan is being updated since the first Local Plan for Central Lincolnshire, an area covering the districts of City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey, was adopted in April 2017.
- 1.2. This Evidence Report (which is one of a collection) provides background information and justification for Policy S44, which relates to developments at the Lincolnshire Showground.

2. Policy Context

National Policy and Guidance

- 2.1. Since the Central Lincolnshire Plan was adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2018 with subsequent additional changes being published in February 2019 and a further update in July 2021.

- 2.2. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF explains that:

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

- 2.3. Paragraph 8 goes on to state that:

“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) **an economic objective** – *to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) **a social objective** – *to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;...*

- 2.4. Paragraph 93 relates to social, recreational and cultural facilities, which encompass tourism facilities, and states:

“To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- a) *plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings,*

public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;
c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services."

Local Policy

- 2.5. The Lincolnshire Showground is considered to be of a strategic importance to Central Lincolnshire. Therefore, the adopted Local Plan includes a policy that specifically addresses the Lincolnshire Showground and the range of uses and developments, which will be supported in principle to take place on the site. The site was also identified on the Policies Map.

3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. The Lincolnshire Showground is an established agricultural show venue for Lincolnshire and as such provides a unique facility serving Central Lincolnshire and beyond, particularly when major events are being held. Bishop Burton College have moved their agriculture, animal management, equine studies and horticulture and arboriculture courses to a new campus on the showground site, along with a hall of residence, and the Epic Centre on the site provides exhibition, conference and events facilities and a number of 'eco-friendly' homes have also been built.
- 3.2. The Showground site is a strategically important agricultural show venue located in the open countryside. The importance of the Showground to Lincolnshire is acknowledged and there is widespread support to ensure its continued success. Facilitating this success will be the need to diversify and provide wider services and facilities on the site. There is therefore a need to make sure that a balance is reached between ensuring that the Showground's continued use for agricultural shows and other events is not compromised, and its rural setting and open nature is protected, whilst at the same time managing development pressures (such as the impact on infrastructure) created by the need to diversify and strengthen its operations.
- 3.3. Overall, it is this unique set of issues, which in combination with the strategic importance of the Showground, justifies it having its own policy in the Local Plan.

4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. The Issues and Options consultation identified the existing policy, LP8: Lincolnshire Showground as a policy not intended to be changed. A very small number of comments were received on this proposal to not change the policy. These comments did not object to the proposal, but rather highlighted that some minor re-wording would be required in order to bring the policy up to date.

5. Regulation 18 Consultation

- 5.1. A Consultation Draft of the Local Plan was published for consultation between 30 June and 24 August 2021. During this eight week consultation comments were received on the plan, the policies within the plan, and supporting information and evidence.
- 5.2. A small number of comments were received on this policy. The comments received have been summarised as follows:
 - Comments in support of the policy;
 - Comment suggesting the policy needs substantial or significant rewording, especially in relation to size and range of permitted uses.
- 5.3. Having reviewed the comments submitted it is not considered necessary to make any changes to this policy. It is considered that the policy makes provision for an appropriate level of growth onsite, which is in a rural location. The suggested increase in permitted uses and size thresholds are at odds with the vision for the site, and could be considered over development given the rural location.

6. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 6.1. The Draft Local Plan includes a policy in relation to the Lincolnshire Showground. This policy has largely been carried forward from the adopted Local Plan with some minor amendments to bring it up to date.

7. Reasonable Alternative Options

- 7.1. The following alternative options have been considered for this policy (option 1 being the preferred option).
- 7.2. Option 2: To have no Local Plan policy and rely on other general policies in the Local plan, and national policy. This option was discounted as it would not provide the level of detail required to ensure that only appropriate and necessary development for the operation of Lincolnshire Showground takes place.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the Proposed Submission Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. This helps bring together relevant evidence that has informed this policy and how we have responded to comments received during the plan making process, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.