

# Central Lincolnshire Policy S47: Accessibility and Transport Evidence Report

Formerly Policy S46

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 S47, which relates to accessibility of development and transport related infrastructure.

# 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 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; and...*

- 2.4. Chapter 9 relates to promoting sustainable transport, Paragraph 104 states that:

*“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

- a) *the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) *opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) *opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*

*d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and  
e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.”*

2.5. Paragraph 105 states:

*“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”*

2.6. Paragraph 106 goes on to state:

*“Planning policies should:*

- a) support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities;*
- b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;*
- c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;*
- d) provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans);...*

2.7. Paragraph 113 refers to transport assessments and travel plans:

*“All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.”*

2.8. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first introduced in 2014 which offers ‘live’ government guidance. The PPG provides guidance to help in the implementation of policy in the NPPF.

2.9. The PPG includes two separate sections relevant to Policy S47: Accessibility and Transport. These sections are ‘Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking’ and ‘Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements’ and they provide details of the expectations for local plans in relation to transport.

### **Local Policy**

2.10. The adopted Local Plan includes Policy LP13: Accessibility and Transport which seeks to ensure that accessibility and transport issues are taken into account in new development.

The policy has also been informed by the 4<sup>th</sup> Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and its objectives for transport in Lincolnshire for the period 2013/14 to 2022-23.

- 2.11. The Local Transport Plan sets out the following objectives for transport in Lincolnshire:
- assist the sustainable economic growth of Lincolnshire, and the wider region, through improvements to the transport network;
  - improve access to employment and key services by widening travel choices, especially for those without access to a car;
  - make travel for all modes safer and, in particular, reduce the number and severity of road casualties;
  - maintain the transport system to standards which allow safe and efficient movement of people and goods;
  - protect and enhance the built and natural environment of the county by reducing the adverse impacts of traffic, including HGVs;
  - improve the quality of public spaces for residents, workers and visitors by creating a safe, attractive and accessible environment;
  - improve the quality of life and health of residents and visitors by encouraging active travel and tackling air quality and noise problems; and
  - minimise carbon emissions from transport across the county.
- 2.12. In addition to these objectives, LTP4 also sets out the overall strategy and delivery arrangements for transport, including supporting growth, improving accessibility and creating safer roads for Central Lincolnshire. LTP4 is supported by Transport Strategies for Lincoln (TRA002), Gainsborough (TRA003) and Sleaford (TRA004). The Lincoln Transport Strategy has been updated to support and inform this Local Plan. Both the LTP and Transport Strategies prepared by Lincolnshire County Council seek to build on innovative approaches to sustainable transport such as the 'Access Lincoln' and 'Interconnect' services which, along with others seek to improve bus travel, rail services and facilities and walking and cycling infrastructure.
- 2.13. In 2015 the Lincolnshire County Council Highways Alliance produced a strategic level Lincolnshire Local Planning Tool (LLPT) which seeks to identify the potential impact of growth on the County's highway infrastructure. The LLPT seeks to assess the current and future capacity of the county's highway infrastructure and identify the need for any targeted improvements should this be required to accommodate planned growth and as a basis for setting developer contributions to highway infrastructure through planning conditions and planning obligations. A subsequent Lower Tier assessment for the Lincoln Area was also produced in 2016. These reports were produced to inform the adopted Local Plan, however, with a projection date of 2036 they provide useful information and evidence in respect of the capacity of the highways network in Central Lincolnshire.
- 2.14. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared alongside this Local Plan, which sets out what, where and how infrastructure will be needed and delivered. The IDP identifies the type, scale and distribution of infrastructure required to support the level, location and phasing of development identified in the Local Plan. The IDP identifies the cost of infrastructure required to support the growth, proposed sources of infrastructure funding, known funding gaps, proposed delivery mechanisms and proposed delivery partners.

- 2.15. Lincolnshire County Council have also published 'Guidance notes for the preparation and implementation of Development Travel Plans'. This document sets out when travel plans are required, including local thresholds for development size.

### 3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. Like Lincolnshire as a whole, the Central Lincolnshire area is predominantly rural. As a result of this rurality there is a heavy reliance on car use across large parts of the area for access to jobs, health, social and educational facilities, whilst urban areas have issues with congestion at peak time, access and parking.
- 3.2. This reliance on car use raises a range of issues, especially in terms of isolation in rural areas, and the inability to access services for those without access to a private car such as the elderly, children and young people. Within the urban areas, the issues that arise as a result of high car dependence relate primarily to congestion.
- 3.3. Public transport provision varies across the area, with Lincoln having a good bus network with most services running commercially. Lincoln also benefits from good rail links with services to London, the wider East Midlands, Cleethorpes, Sheffield, Doncaster and Peterborough and beyond. Like Lincoln, Gainsborough is also relatively well connected with the Interconnect 100 (Lincoln – Gainsborough – Scunthorpe) bus service and its location on the Lincoln – Doncaster rail line both providing regular inter urban connectivity, supported by the "Into Town" bus service that operates. Sleaford benefits from good rail connections in four directions, but especially to Lincoln and to Grantham and Nottingham. The town also has an "Into Town" bus service linking residential areas with the town centre.
- 3.4. Lincoln has seen some significant improvements to its highway network over recent years, with a number of LTP4 schemes being completed. These completed schemes include the East-West Link between Canwick Road/Pelham Bridge and High Street and a new Public Transport Interchange in the city centre. These projects have been complimented by additional bus priority measures to improve bus access to the new Public Transport Interchange. The completion of the Lincoln Eastern Bypass in December 2020 has removed further traffic from the city centre, in particular through-traffic has been removed from the Cross O'Cliff Hill/ South Park Avenue/ Broadgate/Wragby Road route. The LTP4 anticipates that this removal of traffic will enable the delivery of other sustainable travel projects within the city. The completion of the Whisby Road Improvement Scheme has seen improved facilities for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians and included improvements to lighting, and the installation of shared footways/cycleways and signalised crossings as well as the construction of a new roundabout at the Station Road/Whisby Road junction.
- 3.5. Gainsborough and Sleaford have both also seen the recent completion of major highways projects at the Corringham Road/Thornkdike Way junction in Gainsborough and the A153/A17 Rugby Club junction in Sleaford. Further improvement work at the Holdingham Roundabout started in early 2021.
- 3.6. This Local Plan seeks to build upon the improvements to transport infrastructure that have already been seen. Infrastructure policies seek to ensure that appropriate and necessary transport infrastructure is provided either directly by the developer to support developments, or to ensure that the appropriate contributions to larger or strategic projects are secured through the planning obligations process.

- 3.7. The existing LLPT has been updated and used to support bids for funding on the North Hykeham Relief Road. In 2021 and 2022 discussions were held with National Highways to seek agreement that the LLPT adequately tested the development proposed in the Local Plan. Through these discussions some additional forecasting years and scenarios were assessed. This resulted in National Highways confirming that the LLPT was adequate transport evidence for testing the Local Plan. A Transport Modelling Note (ref TRA006) has been produced to detail these discussions and the outcomes.
- 3.8. On sites proposed for allocation in this Local Plan, transport impacts have been taken into account where known and issues that may require further investigation identified in the relevant site allocation policies and supporting evidence. Additionally, Policy S45 of the draft Local Plan safeguards the preferred route of the North Hykeham Relief Road.

## 4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. The Issues and Options consultation identified the existing policy, LP13: Accessibility and Transport as a policy not intended to be changed. A very small number of comments were received on this proposal not to change the policy, which are summarised below.
- Issues with this policy, but these issues are in relation to Government policy.
  - The transport plan is not fit for purpose given how little has been done to ensure walking, cycling and public transport.
  - As a minimum this policy will need to be reviewed in light of parking standards being introduced.
  - Part d of the policy should be strengthened for electric charging facilities.
  - More should be done in this policy to address walking and cycling provision in new development.

## 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 number of comments were made on this policy. These comments have been summarised as follows:
- Various comments broadly supporting elements of the policy.
  - Various comments suggesting the policy needs some rewording, especially in relation to disabled access to public transport and HCV routing restrictions
  - The evidence behind the policy is lacking / weak.
  - Various detailed suggestions, to improve clarity of policy wording, including in relation to highway infrastructure and biodiversity net gain, and road/rail interaction.
  - Concern that the policy is not in conformity with the NPPF.
- 5.3. Following the comments received during the consultation, a number of amendments have been made to the policy. Under the 'For Strategic Transport Infrastructure' new criterion f) reads "deliver opportunities for improved road and rail interaction, and avoiding impacts upon level crossings;" and new criterion i) reads "Improve and manage the strategic highway infrastructure, wider road infrastructure and public rights of way network to

deliver biodiversity net gain, including improved connectivity and extent of green infrastructure guided by local nature recovery strategy; and”

- 5.4. The first paragraph after the final criterion, criterion n) has been expanded to take account of specific comments and provide clarity, it now reads “...highway authority and external bodies where relevant.”
- 5.5. The supporting text at paragraph 8.2.8 has been updated to reflect the fact that the plan period for LTP4 is coming to an end, and the progress made in the preparation of LTP 5. The paragraph also now sets out the key themes of LTP5 and the objectives that sit under each theme.

## 6. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 6.1. The Draft Local Plan includes a policy relating to Accessibility and Transport. This policy has been carried forward from the Adopted Local Plan, and also brought up to date where specific elements of the policy have been superseded and are no longer relevant or correct.
- 6.2. The car parking element of the adopted policy has been removed from this policy, to be included as a new separate policy within the Draft Local Plan.
- 6.3. The Walking and Cycling element of the adopted policy has also been removed and included as a new separate policy within the Draft Local Plan.

## 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 policy and rely on national policy. This option was discounted as it was considered to have minimal impact as it does not provide for locally specific solutions to come forward.
- 7.3. Option 3: To have no policy, but rely on transport requirements for each site through allocation policies. This option was also discounted, as, while resulting in some benefits, it would have a specific focus on the allocated sites, and thus would miss opportunities offered by other sites coming forward.

## 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.