

**Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review Examination, Vistry
Group Ltd, 4th November 2022**

**Hearing Statement – Matter 3 – Spatial Strategy and
Distribution of Development**

Issue 1 – Settlement Hierarchy – Policy S1

Q1. The Settlement Hierarchy Methodology Report states that the categorisation of settlements is a continuation of the hierarchy in the existing Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2017). Is this appropriate and justified? If not, what changes are necessary to rectify any issues of soundness?

Q2. Is the continued use of settlement size (by dwelling numbers) a reasonable and appropriate way of categorising settlements? How were other factors such as services, facilities and public transport provision considered?

1. No, the Settlement Hierarchy is not appropriate or justified. The Methodology Report (May 2020) states that the use of dwelling numbers as a means of categorising settlement tiers was established in drafting the current adopted Local Plan. It has been carried forward from the current Local Plan, which was adopted in 2017 and preparation of which began in 2014.
2. The use of dwelling figures alone is not considered to be a sound means of categorising settlements as a basis for apportioning growth. The Plan must demonstrate compliance with NPPF Paragraph 105 which requires that plans should actively manage patterns of growth in support of objectives that include pursuing opportunities to promote cycling, walking and use of public transport. Consideration must therefore be given to other factors, such as nearby services, facilities, public transport within the settlement, and proximity to the main urban area of Lincoln by public transport (thus reducing the need to travel).
3. In the Main Issues Raised at Regulation 19 Consultation document, the Council states that proximity to services informed decisions on individual site allocations. However, this is after the settlements have been categorised and the level of growth assigned in the hierarchy and strategy. This approach is not therefore consistent with the NPPF.

4. The analysis of services has been undertaken within the villages (see Site Allocations Settlement Analysis STA008) and therefore the evidence is available to inform the hierarchy and strategy.
5. Having regard to the evidence, it is evident the hierarchy is not justified in that within the 'Large Villages' category there are settlements such as Branston which have over 2,000 dwellings and a level of facilities (schools, shops, jobs) and public transport comparable to the Market Towns in the tier above. Further, villages such as Branston fall within the Lincoln Strategy Area which Policy S2 directs is the focus for meeting the majority of development needs over the Plan period.
6. As a consequence of the hierarchy's approach, opportunities are being missed to meet housing needs within settlements which are suitable and where the majority of development should be directed.
7. The hierarchy should therefore be amended to extend the Market Towns to include those larger villages (such as Branston) that have comparable levels of dwellings/population and services/facilities, and proximity to the main urban area that fall within the Lincoln Strategy Area.

Issue 2 – Levels of Growth – Policy S2

Q1. What is the Lincoln 'Strategy Area' based on and does it remain an appropriate geographical area for future growth?

8. Yes, the city of Lincoln is by far the most sustainable settlement in Central Lincolnshire being the principal built up area. It plays a significant role in providing services and facilities for settlements within its hinterland within the Lincoln Strategy Area. Conversely, those villages play a role in supporting the social and economic vitality and viability of the built up area by providing choice within the housing market within a sustainable commuting distance. The LSA is therefore an appropriate basis on which to plan the growth of Central Lincolnshire, given the significant role played by Lincoln in the plan area.

Issue 3 – Distribution of Development – Policies S2 and S8

Q6. Are there are instances where the distribution of growth is significantly out of proportion with the size of a settlement or its role and function in the hierarchy?

9. Yes, the level of growth proposed at Branston (Large Village within the Lincoln Strategy Area) is significantly out of proportion to the size of settlement and its role and function in the hierarchy.
10. The distribution of growth to Branston represents 144 dwellings over the Plan period (a commitment of 109 dwellings and an allocation of 35 dwellings). If fully delivered, this would yield 115 market dwellings and 29 affordable homes to 2040 (or just over 1 affordable home per year over the Plan period). The settlement is just over 2,000 dwellings with a population of over 4,000. The planned growth represents an increase of less than 1% in the size of the village to 2040.
11. The existing population will inevitably generate a need for market and affordable homes over the Plan period which will not be satisfied by the Plan. This will have consequences for the social and economic vitality of the local community. Residents may be forced to move away from family or friends to find market or affordable accommodation. Village services (including the primary and secondary school) may also be affected through no new homes within the village.
12. Branston is a large village, with a full range of local services, within a short distance of Lincoln, and within the Lincoln Strategy Area. The level of growth proposed does not reflect its status, and additional allocations should be made to ensure it meets its own needs, as well as contributing to the needs of the Lincoln Strategy Area.

Marrons Planning

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Appendix A – Extracts referred to in this Hearing Statement

Extracts from SA (PUB-024)

Climate change and air quality impacts arising from a development distribution to the rural areas:

7.27 However, some policies are also expected to have minor negative effects on transport by potentially increasing private car usage, including Policy ST2: Rural Bassetlaw, Policy ST5: Worksop Central Area and Policy ST54: Transport Infrastructure, as well as most of the site allocation policies and Policy ST56: Safeguarded Land.

7.40 Several Local Plan policies are expected to have minor negative effects on air quality by potentially increasing car usage and the associated air pollution, including Policy ST2: Rural Bassetlaw, Policy ST5: Worksop Central Area and Policy ST54: Transport Infrastructure, as well as most of the site allocation policies and Policy ST56: Safeguarded land.

7.46 Furthermore, several Local Plan policies are expected to have minor negative effects on climate change by potentially increasing car usage, and thereby associated greenhouse gas emissions, including Policy ST2: Rural Bassetlaw, Policy ST5: Worksop Central Area and Policy ST54: Transport Infrastructure, as well as some of the site allocation policies and Policy ST56: Safeguarded land. However, these site allocation policies encourage low carbon design and so would have mixed effects overall. The scale of development proposed by the Local Plan will result in a net increase in District-wide emissions, although the Local Plan will help to minimise these by enabling forward planning for sustainable transport.

The sustainability of larger settlements in limiting private car use, reducing emissions and maximising sustainable transport (including Retford):

6.37 Mixed minor positive and minor negative effects are likely overall in relation to **SA objectives 6: transport, 10: air quality and 11: climate change**. The spatial strategy focuses most development at the larger settlements which have strong sustainable transport links (including rail services at Worksop and Retford). Focusing most housing growth at these locations is likely to limit the need to travel by private car and the associated emissions. Locating most employment development in the main towns will also mean that most

6.100 Focussing most housing development at Worksop, Retford and Tuxford will capitalise on the access to employment opportunities due to their good transport links. Therefore, a minor positive effect is therefore expected in relation to **SA objective 3: economy and skills**.

6.101 Focussing most new development at the larger settlements of Worksop and Retford and the smaller settlement of Tuxford, where there is the widest range of services and facilities in the District, will help ensure that most new residents have generally good access to services. Therefore, the policy is likely to result in a minor positive effect in relation to **SA objective 4: regeneration and social inclusion**.

6.102 Focussing most housing development within and near to Worksop and Retford will provide more residents with opportunities to walk and cycle day-to-day, as they are likely to be travelling shorter distances for work and to access services and facilities. Likewise, the site allocation at Tuxford is within walking distance of various open spaces, and a GP. As such, a minor positive effect is therefore expected in relation to **SA objective 5: health and wellbeing**.

6.103 Minor positive effects are likely in relation to **SA objectives 6: transport, 10: air quality and 11: climate change** as the policy focuses most development at the larger settlements which have strong sustainable transport links (including rail services at Worksop and Retford). Although the allocated site at Tuxford is located within close proximity to bus services, it is not served by a railway station or dedicated cycle routes. Focusing housing growth at locations with access to public and active modes of transport is likely to reduce the need to travel by private car and the associated emissions. While the existing traffic congestion issues at Worksop and Tuxford may be exacerbated by a high level of new development, population growth and increased demand may improve the provision of sustainable transport links.

Extracts from Publication Version (SUB-010)

Retford

- 5.1.49 Retford is the second town in the District and has 22,013 residents¹⁵. It has a wide range of services, shops, and employment opportunities with good public transport links. It is a sustainable location for growth: the town is expected to deliver local employment growth (see Policy ST7) appropriate to meet general needs, and to maximise opportunities to sustainable transport choices, including to the East Coast Mainline Retford Railway Station. Enhancements to the town centre are expected to be underway by 2038 (see Policy ST14) facilitated by a neighbourhood plan.
- 5.1.50 Over the past three years, Retford has seen strong housing growth with about 325 dwellings completed (2019-2022). As at 31 March 2022, 940 of the expected housing growth in Retford has already been delivered or is on committed sites with extant planning permission. The remainder of the growth will be delivered from new allocations in the Plan providing for about 1,332 additional dwellings.