

## **Examination of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan**

### **North Lincolnshire Council Examination Statement**

#### **Matter 1 - Legal Compliance**

##### **Issue 1 – Duty to Cooperate**

#### **Question 3. How did the Committee consider potential strategic cross-boundary issues with North Lincolnshire Council, having particular regard to the impacts of growth along the A15?**

As noted in its response to the Proposed Submission version of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, North Lincolnshire Council is generally supportive of the Plan and its approach. However, one area where greater recognition of cross boundary links and capacity is required is transport.

The Proposed Submission North Lincolnshire Local Plan (due to be submitted imminently) recognises that the A15 between Junction 4 of the M180 and the A46 at Lincoln is a key north-south strategic transport corridor. It connects the Humber ports into the wider network to Newark and the A1, and to the A17 with access to the food production areas of southern Lincolnshire and Norfolk beyond.

There has been continued decline in the performance of the A15, with slow journey times impacting upon journey reliability, safety and the resilience of the network. This holds back productivity and is also a barrier to future growth. As a result, North Lincolnshire Council and partner authorities have prioritised investigating improvements to the road. Further work is required for upgrading the route, and North Lincolnshire Council will work with partner authorities to improve the A15. A feasibility study is ongoing and due to conclude in early February 2023. It is supported by a working group with representatives of North Lincolnshire Council, West Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP.

Policy T7 of the Publication Draft Addendum North Lincolnshire Local Plan safeguards the route of, and supports measures which deliver, maintain and improve, key transport infrastructure that are considered to be crucial in assisting the delivery of the Plan's economic and housing growth. Specific reference is made under part g. of Policy T7 to improvements to the A15 (South) – between Junction 4 of the M180 and A46. The approach of the existing 2011 North Lincolnshire Core Strategy also specifically supports improvements to the same stretch of road.

The direct impact of major developments and initiatives in the South Humber Gateway on the operation of the A15 cannot be underestimated. The Gateway is a major strategic national, local, and regional employment site and together with existing port operations is one the UK's major trade gateways to the north of England, the Midlands and beyond. The South Humber Gateway consists of facilities that are located both within and beyond the North Lincolnshire boundary, and functions collaboratively between the local authorities and marine operators. It offers the largest undeveloped area of land next to a deep-water estuary in the UK and is at the centre of the developing offshore renewables industry. Much of this area includes the Able Marine Energy Park and Able Logistics Park and is part of the Humber Enterprise Zone (EZ), which is the country's largest, and is also designated as part of the Humber Freeport. The EZ supports the growth of the ports, logistics and renewables sector and it is the region's ambition to become a leading national and international centre for the renewables sector.

Unlike the draft New North Lincolnshire Local Plan, the Proposed Submission version of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan does not appear to recognise or support the need for improvements to the A15,

which is of great concern given the largest part of the stretch of A15 concerned sits within the Central Lincolnshire Plan area.

There is a mounting weight of evidence supporting improvements to the A15, including:

- The gradual rise in traffic along the route as demonstrated by annual average daily traffic flows north of Caenby Corner Roundabout increasing from 7,177 in 1996 to 10,906 in 2018. At over 20%, the proportion of these vehicles that are over 3.5 tonnes in weight is high.
- An A46 Corridor Study<sup>1</sup> was completed by Midlands Connect in November 2020 to establish the strategic case for investment in the A46 corridor. It found that intervention is needed in the Lincoln area across a sustained period between 2025-2035. The North Hykeham Relief Road (Lincoln southern bypass) is scheduled for delivery in 2026, however, the impact of this as well as potential and planned improvements at the A1 will need to be established to make the case for further investment on the Lincoln Northern Bypass. Consideration will also need to be given to safety concerns. There is an appetite to focus further growth in the A15 corridor but transport investment is needed at a higher level to achieve this. The A15 would form the 'final piece of the jigsaw' should the vision for the A46 corridor be achieved. Given this, it is recommended that significant upgrades to the A15 corridor should be in the 2035-2040 period following upgrades to the south. Options are being developed further with Lincolnshire County Council with a study underway. Ultimately, there is the desire to achieve upgrades delivering a consistent corridor standard with the A46.
- Inconsistent journey times and safety issues caused by variations in width, horizontal and vertical alignment of the road. This is combined with a diverse mix of strategic and local traffic, HGVs and farm vehicles resulting in issues with cars attempting overtakes at inappropriate points on the network. For example, the speed limit on a stretch of road from the County boundary with North Lincolnshire around Kirton in Lindsey was reduced to 40mph after a number of lorries overturned off the carriageway. The road is particularly narrow at this point. In summary, the injury related collisions along the A15 (in North Lincolnshire) over the last 5 years (10/10/2017 to the 09/10/2022) starting from M180 junction and finishing at the county boundary (approx. 6 miles) shows there were 17 injury related collisions with 13 of these being slight and 4 serious.
- Significant development is anticipated on and around the road, which will rely on the A15 for both local and strategic road movements. In addition to Scunthorpe and Lincoln at either end, there is the potential redevelopment of RAF Scampton- Policy 75 of the Plan- 480ha (see also our statement to Matter 6/Issue 8/Question 2), and Lincolnshire Showground- Policy 44 of the plan. This is in addition to the major growth of the South Humber Gateway discussed above.

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<sup>1</sup> Available here: [mc-a46-corridor-study-phase-2-final-report-march-2021-with-appendix.pdf \(midlandsconnect.uk\)](https://midlandsconnect.uk/mc-a46-corridor-study-phase-2-final-report-march-2021-with-appendix.pdf)