



# **Policy LP27 Main Town Centre Uses – Frontages and Advertisements Evidence Report**

**Proposed Submission  
April 2016**

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# 1 Introduction and Policy Context

## Introduction

- 1.1 A joint Local Plan for the Central Lincolnshire area is being produced which will set the framework for how development will be considered across the districts of the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey to 2036.
- 1.2 This Evidence Report (which is one of a collection) provides background information and justification for policy LP27, which relates to frontages and advertisements of main town centre uses.

## National policy

- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was introduced in 2014 which offers 'live' government guidance.
- 1.4 Section 7 of the NPPF concerns "Requiring good design" and the following points are particularly relevant:
  - Paragraph 56- The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
  - Paragraph 58- ... Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments: ...establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; ... respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
  - Paragraph 64- Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
  - Paragraph 67- Poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.
- 1.5 Paragraph 079 (reference ID: 18b-079-20140306) of the NPPG concerns considerations affecting amenity in relation to advertisements, and specifies that "*in assessing amenity, the local planning authority would always consider the local characteristics of the neighbourhood: for example, if the locality where the advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, the local planning authority would consider whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.*"

- 1.6 The above policy and guidance has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP27 in particular.

## 2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP27

- 2.1 The Central Lincolnshire authorities recognise the need to enhance and maintain the built environment to a high standard in order to improve the quality of life for residents, improve the legibility of retail centres, and attract visitors and investors.
- 2.2 Some areas of Central Lincolnshire have rich street scenes due to high quality, considerate shop front design and the rich historic fabric of the locality. In contrast, some areas are in need of regeneration and better quality, more sympathetic frontages and advertisements could significantly contribute to the revitalisation of these areas.

## 3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2014) included a policy on shop fronts and advertisements.
- 3.2 Nine comments were made on the shop fronts and advertisements policy during the consultation on the Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan. Of these comments, 5 were in support, 2 expressed objections, and 2 were neutral. The key issues raised were:
- Criteria 'a' should require shop front designs to be sympathetic rather than high quality, as high quality design may still be inappropriate.
  - Criteria 'b' should encourage the enhancement of traditional or original shop fronts, rather than simply their protection.
  - CCTV cameras need to blend into surroundings.
  - The policy should address the problems posed by mobile snack bars (litter, noise, smells, etc).
  - Need to include specific consideration of development in conservation areas.

## 4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 The policy in the Further Draft version of the Local Plan was amended from the original Preliminary Draft in response to comments received during the Preliminary Draft consultation.
- 4.2 Criteria 'a' of the policy was amended to require the design of shop fronts to be both of a high quality *and* sympathetic. It was considered important to retain the need for development to be of high quality design in order to encourage development of the highest standard that will improve the built environment, and also to reflect section 7 of the NPPF.
- 4.3 Criteria 'b' was amended to seek enhancements to traditional/ original fronts and features wherever possible.
- 4.4 In relation to mobile snack bars and the issues associated with these, amenity considerations such as noise and smells were addressed in the Design and Amenity policy of the Further Draft Local Plan, therefore these principles were not duplicated within this policy.
- 4.5 Reference to listed buildings and conservation areas was added to criteria 'b' and a new criterion, 'e' in the Further Draft version, was also introduced in relation to security shutters.

- 4.6 Planning permission is not normally required for CCTV therefore the policy did not introduce a criteria relating to this.
- 4.7 In addition to the changes outlined above, the policy title was amended to refer to 'town centre frontages' (as oppose to 'shop frontages') to clarify that the policy requirements do not apply solely to retail units.
- 4.8 Furthermore, the criteria relating to security shutters were separated from the general frontage criteria in order to improve the flow and usability of the policy. An additional criterion- d - was introduced in order to prevent the introduction of unnecessary and excessive shutters to the street scene, which would likely have a negative impact upon the attractiveness and quality of the built environment.

#### **Further Draft Consultation**

- 4.9 Only six comments were registered in relation to policy LP27 during the Further Draft consultation. All comments were in support of the policy wording, and included support for the reference to heritage assets. One observation stated that the policy would be better located with the retail policies, after LP6 Retail and Town Centres in Central Lincolnshire.

## **5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission**

- 5.1 Policy LP27 has been amended in the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan to provide further clarity and avoid misinterpretation.
- 5.2 Specifically, the policy title has been amended from 'Town Centre Frontages and Advertisements' to 'Main Town Centre Uses – Frontages and Advertisements'; the opening sentence of the policy now refers to 'uses defined as a main town centre use' rather than simply to 'town centres'; and the policy's introductory paragraphs now clarify that the policy applies to 'main town centre uses' as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.3 These changes have been made to avoid potential misinterpretation that the policy only applies to frontages and advertisements within town centres: changing the emphasis to main town centre *uses* clarifies that the policy applies to all frontages and advertisements which fall under the NPPF definition, regardless of location.
- 5.4 In addition, a sentence referring to the possibility of Supplementary Planning Documents being prepared by the individual local planning authorities in relation to frontages and advertisements has also been added at paragraph 5.12.5.

## **6 Alternative Reasonable Options**

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been considered for this policy. (Option 1 is the preferred policy approach which has been included in the Proposed Submission Local Plan.)
- 6.2 **Option 2:** No policy on frontages and advertisements and rely on national policy and other Local Plan policies. This option has been discounted in light of the significant positive impact high quality frontages and advertisements can have on the vitality, attractiveness and appeal of shopping areas, and in light of national policy on design. It is therefore deemed important to have a specific policy on frontages and advertisements in order to avoid development that would have a detrimental impact on the street scene and on the area's appeal as a visitor / tourist destination.

- 6.3 **Option 3:** Have separate policies on frontages and advertisements. The approach of a combined policy is preferred in light of the obvious interrelationship between these topics, and also in light of the desire to produce a concise, user friendly Local Plan.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the April 2016 Proposed Submission Local Plan. We hope this helps demonstrate how we have responded to comments received during both the Preliminary and Further Draft consultations, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.