

Policy LP40 Gainsborough Riverside 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 LP40, which relates to Gainsborough Riverside.

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 2 of the NPPF concerns "Ensuring the vitality of town centres", section 4 concerns "Promoting sustainable transport", section 8 concerns "Promoting healthy communities", section 11 concerns "Conserving and enhancing the natural environment", and there is a separate section on "Plan-making". The following points are particularly relevant:
 - Paragraph 23 – *"Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres of the plan period. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should: recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability"*.
 - Paragraph 30 – *"In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should...support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport."*
 - Paragraph 69 – *"Planning policies...should aim to achieve places which promote...safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas"*.
 - Paragraph 111- *"Local policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value"*.
- 1.5 The NPPG recognises the importance of delivering high quality open spaces and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes. It states

"Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure, as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development, and an important component in the achievement of

sustainable development."
[Reference ID: 37-001-20140306]

- 1.6 The NPPG also states that "*Public rights of way form an important component of sustainable transport links and should be protected or enhanced.*" [Reference ID: 37-004-20140306].
- 1.7 The above NPPF policy and NPPG guidance has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP40 in particular.

2 Central Lincolnshire Context in Relation to Policy LP40

- 2.1 The regeneration of Gainsborough town centre is a key priority for West Lindsey District Council. In 2007, a Masterplan for Gainsborough was published to cover the period to 2026. This Masterplan identified that:
'opening up of the River is critical to encouraging a walking and cycling culture, and encompasses access not just in a north-south direction along its banks, but also through the Town Centre from the direction of Marshall's Yard. Riverside developments will facilitate opportunities to create a comprehensive corridor for walkers and cyclists'.
- 2.2 The Riverside sites collectively present a major opportunity for supporting the regeneration of Gainsborough. The importance of regenerating the town was recognised in the Growth Point status awarded to Gainsborough in 2008, which provided access to Government funding to help with the planning and delivery of new housing and infrastructure in the town.

3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan (published for consultation in October – November 2014) did not include a policy on regeneration of the riverside in Gainsborough. However, it did include the policies LP34 'Building a Better Gainsborough' and LP35 'Supporting the Natural Evolution of Gainsborough', which contained elements relevant to the riverside.

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 Policy LP40 was introduced into the Further Draft version of the Local Plan in response to comments received during the consultation on the Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan and to help deliver the regeneration of this key area in Gainsborough.

Further Draft consultation

- 4.2 Consultation on the Further Draft Local Plan between October and November 2015 revealed mixed support and objection to the policy.
- 4.3 Various detailed objections were received, including that the policy is very prescriptive and inflexible and that it is unclear what is meant by "all relevant development proposals". It was also felt that the last paragraph in relation to public open space is inflexible and disproportionate and that the policy fails to demonstrate ambition for the regeneration of the riverside area.
- 4.4 Additional wording was suggested relating to the Water Framework Directive and meeting the Exception Test where this applies.

5 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 5.1 The Proposed Submission version of the policy has been amended in response to the various issues raised, to improve the policy wording, and to clarify the requirements of the policy.
- 5.2 Additional text has been added to policy introduction regarding the flood defence upgrade scheme to better set the policy context.
- 5.3 The policy wording has been revised to clarify what is being required by the policy. Considerations in respect of access to maintain flood defences, consideration of the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and deterioration of the river have been added to the policy.
- 5.4 The policy does not include reference to the flood risk exception test, as flooding is addressed by policy LP14, Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk and will be considered in detail as part of planning applications.

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:** To have no local policy that actively promotes the enhancement of the riverside area. This option has not been taken forward, as it would provide a lot of uncertainty for the delivery of this key regeneration ambition.

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.