

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review

Growth Options Paper

June 2021



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1. Introduction and Context

Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. This report provides the evidence behind the proposed strategic distribution of growth across Central Lincolnshire in the new Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. It supports the plan as a whole but is of particular relevance to the policies in chapter 2 of the Local Plan and the site allocations made in chapter 13 which deal directly with distribution of growth.
- 1.2. The report sets out the thought process behind the proposed distribution of growth in the draft Local Plan, details the methodology behind the strategy and the reasonable alternative distribution options considered throughout the process.
- 1.3. The overall aim of this report is to reach conclusions as to what is the most sustainable and deliverable approach to meeting Central Lincolnshire's housing needs, which in turn has then influenced the drafting of policies.
- 1.4. This report should be read in conjunction with the draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and the associated Sustainability Appraisal.

National Policy Context

- 1.5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in March 2012. This was updated in July 2018 with subsequent changes made in February 2019. The NPPF forms the main piece of national policy for planning purposes.
- 1.6. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development, stating that for "*plan-making this means that:*
 1. *plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;*
 2. *strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*
 - i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or*
 - ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*
- 1.7. Paragraph 20 goes on to state that "*Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for... housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development*".
- 1.8. Paragraph 23 states that "*...Strategic policies should provide a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This should include planning for and allocating sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of the area (except insofar as these needs can be demonstrated to be met more appropriately through other mechanisms, such as brownfield registers or nonstrategic policies).*"
- 1.9. In paragraph 60, the NPPF specifically stipulates that "*To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need*

assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.”

- 1.10. Furthermore, in paragraph 65 it states that *“Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period.”*
- 1.11. This all makes it clear that the plan must identify what the housing needs are, as well as any unmet need from neighbouring areas, and aim to meet these needs. The plan must also seek to meet the employment, retail, leisure and other commercial needs arising from the population growth.
- 1.12. The NPPF also goes onto how the Local Plan should consider land availability to help meet the need. Paragraph 67 states that *“Strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability.”*
- 1.13. Paragraph 68 of the NPPF identifies how *“Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:*
 - a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;”*
- 1.14. Conversely, paragraph 72 also gives support to delivering a large number of homes through *“...planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.”*
- 1.15. Paragraph 78 sets out how Local Plan should promote sustainable development in rural areas, *“housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby”* and paragraph 79 states that planning policies should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside.
- 1.16. The NPPF sets out a clear set of criteria that should be considered and addressed through the plan-making to deliver sustainable outcomes for the area when considering growth and distribution.
- 1.17. Further to the NPPF, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides additional ‘live’ government guidance for how the policy in the NPPF should be implemented in relation to a large number of topics including plan-making and growth and distribution.

- 1.18. Paragraph 034 (Ref ID: 61-034-20190315) of the PPG states that “*authorities preparing local plans should assess future needs and opportunities for their area, explore and identify options for addressing these, and then set out a preferred approach...*”
- 1.19. Paragraph 059 (Ref ID: 61-059-20190315) sets out the importance of ensuring that your plan is deliverable, it says “*authorities preparing local plans should assess future needs and opportunities for their area, explore and identify options for addressing these, and then set out a preferred approach.*”
- 1.20. In relation to identifying the housing requirement for a plan, the PPG is quite clear that the nationally derived Local Housing Need (LHN) should be considered a minimum annual housing need figure, not a housing requirement (Ref ID: 2a-002-20190220). In paragraph 003 (Ref ID:) it goes onto state that the use of the LHN is not mandatory for strategic plans “*if it is felt that circumstances warrant an alternative approach but authorities can expect this to be scrutinised more closely at examination.*”
- 1.21. In paragraph 010 (Ref ID: 2a-010-20190220) it sets out the scenarios where it might be appropriate to use a figure higher than the LHN where it says:

“The government is committed to ensuring that more homes are built and supports ambitious authorities who want to plan for growth. The standard method for assessing local housing need provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area. It does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. Therefore, there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates.

This will need to be assessed prior to, and separate from, considering how much of the overall need can be accommodated (and then translated into a housing requirement figure for the strategic policies in the plan). Circumstances where this may be appropriate include, but are not limited to situations where increases in housing need are likely to exceed past trends because of:

- *growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth (e.g. Housing Deals);*
- *strategic infrastructure improvements that are likely to drive an increase in the homes needed locally; or*
- *an authority agreeing to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground;*

There may, occasionally, also be situations where previous levels of housing delivery in an area, or previous assessments of need (such as a recently-produced Strategic Housing Market Assessment) are significantly greater than the outcome from the standard method. Authorities will need to take this into account when considering whether it is appropriate to plan for a higher level of need than the standard model suggests.”

This provides a clear steer for when the LHN should not be used to determine what the housing requirement for the plan should be.

- 1.22. National policy and guidance provides a clear steer for what is expected in relation to growth and distribution, and in the evidence needed to support decisions, but it also provides flexibility for the plan-making authority to address needs in the way that is most suitable and sustainable for the area being planned for.

Local Policy Context Adopted Local Plan 2017

- 1.23. The Development Plan consists of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted 2017), the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (which consists of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, adopted in 2016 and the Site Locations Document, adopted in 2017), and a series of 'made' neighbourhood plans covering a number of communities across the area.
- 1.24. The adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Local Plan 2017) forms the key basis for this plan review and much of its evidence is still relevant to this plan review.
- 1.25. Policy LP2 of the Local Plan set out the settlement hierarchy for Central Lincolnshire. In the hierarchy there are 8 tiers:
1. Lincoln Urban Area – including parts of the continuous built up area not within North Kesteven and West Lindsey Districts
 2. Main Towns – Gainsborough and Sleaford
 3. Market Towns – Caistor and Market Rasen
 4. Large Villages – villages with 750 or more dwellings at 1 April 2012
 5. Medium Villages – villages with between 250 and 750 dwellings at 1 April 2012
 6. Small Villages – villages with between 50 and 250 dwellings at 1 April 2012
 7. Hamlets – settlements with between 15 and 50 dwellings clustered together
 8. Countryside – all other areas
- 1.26. Growth was focused higher up the hierarchy, in particular at the Lincoln Urban Area and the Main Towns, but the top 4 tiers received housing allocations in the Local Plan. At Medium and Small Villages growth is being managed through a percentage growth approach set out in Policy LP4 of the Local Plan, and development is restricted at hamlets and within the countryside.
- 1.27. Policy LP3 of the Local Plan 2017 set out overall housing requirement and employment for Central Lincolnshire for the period 2012-2036 as follows:

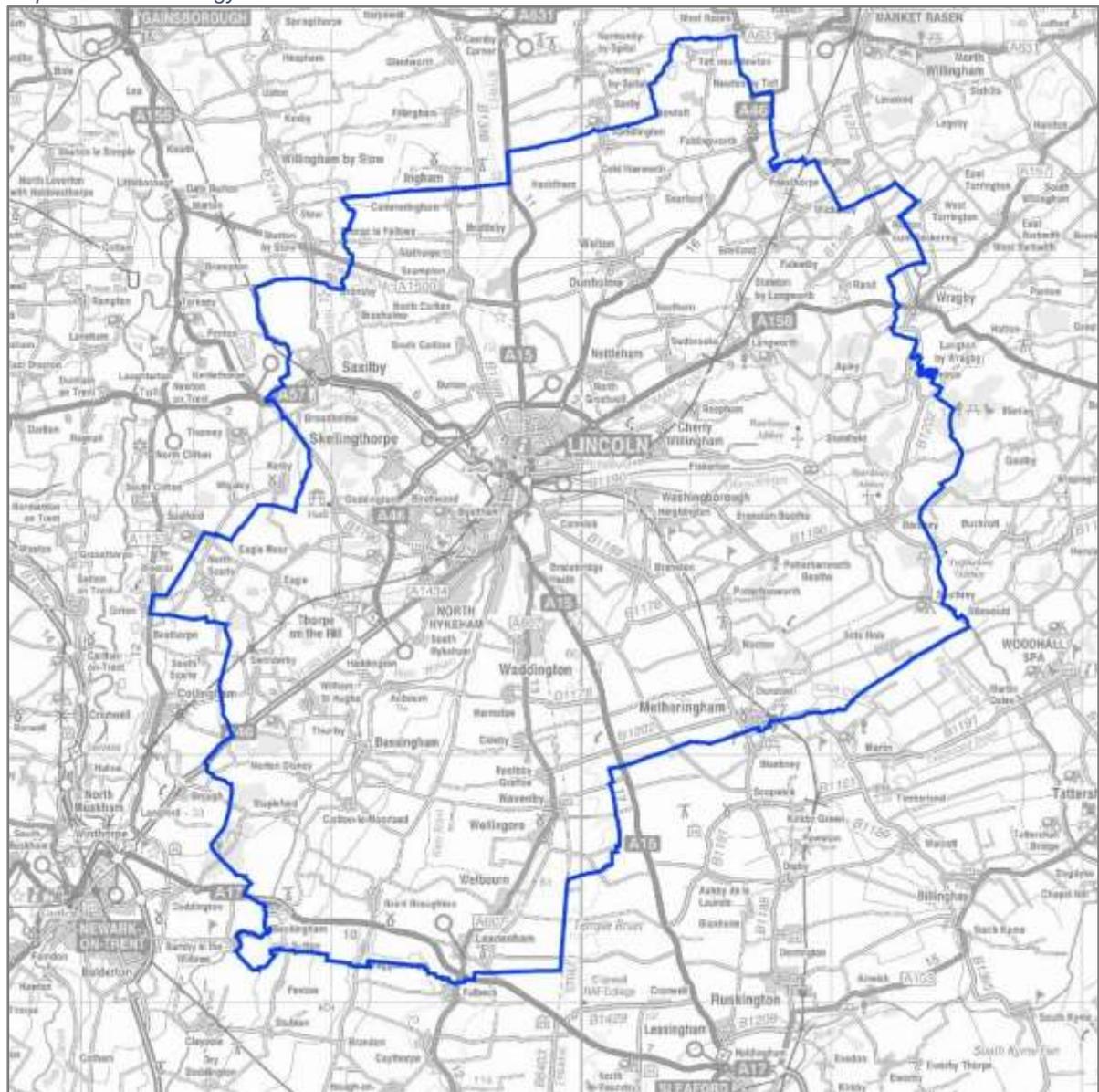
Objectively Assessed Need for Dwellings	Objectively Assessed Need for Jobs
36,960 dwellings (average of 1,540 dwellings per annum) (net)	11,984 FTE net new jobs 2012-36

- 1.28. Policy LP3 also set out the broad distribution of growth in the plan area. In this a Lincoln Strategy Area was identified, based on travel to work patterns that would be the focus for much of the growth.
- 1.29. Policy LP3 assigned a broad distribution of dwellings across Central Lincolnshire as follows:
- Lincoln Strategy Area – around 64% (23,654 dwellings across the plan period)

- Gainsborough – around 12% (4,435 dwellings)
- Sleaford – around 12% (4,435 dwellings)
- Elsewhere – around 12% (4,435 dwellings)

This was based on the population residing in each of these geographies as a percentage of the population of Central Lincolnshire, but the figures for the Main Towns of Sleaford and Gainsborough were slightly inflated to help deliver regeneration aims and to locate development near to existing infrastructure. The extent of the Lincoln Strategy Area can be seen on map 1 below:

Map 1: Lincoln Strategy Area



- 1.30. More than 130 sites capable of delivering 25 or more dwellings were allocated in the Local Plan. Approximately 40% of the total growth from the 2017 Local Plan is located on eight Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) located at, or near to, Lincoln Urban Area (four SUEs) and at the Main Towns of Gainsborough and Sleaford (2 Sues at each). Not all SUEs were expected to be delivered in their entirety within the plan period of 2012-2036.

- 1.31. The SUEs were key to the Local Plan strategy not only for their housing provision, but for the facilities they were uniquely able to deliver by virtue of the scale of development on each.
- 1.32. Policy LP5 designated employment sites across Central Lincolnshire. This included seven sites with permissions for over 100 hectares of employment land (Strategic Employment Sites). These sites were in the Lincoln Urban Area, the Main Towns, Witham St Hughs (a former RAF base which has been developed as a new community including allocations in the plan for more than 1,200 dwellings) and related to the Food Enterprise Zone along the A15 corridor at Hemswell Cliff and Lincolnshire Showground. The plan also identified an additional 50 hectares of land set aside in the SUEs.
- 1.33. Policy LP5 also designated existing employment areas at a number of locations across Central Lincolnshire.

Reflection on the effects of the Adopted Local Plan 2017

- 1.34. Whilst the Local Plan has only been adopted for a short period of time, the review of the Local Plan offers an opportunity to reflect on the effects of the approach to growth and distribution in the plan.
- 1.35. Since adoption in April 2017 there have been two monitoring years of housing delivery data collected. The delivery data is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Delivery and permissions since the Local Plan adoption and anticipated delivery from sites in plan period

Area	% in plan	A		B		C		D		E	
		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		Outstanding with PP		Outstanding with and without PP	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lincoln Strategy Area	64%	727	70.8	1,050	72.4	1,029	66.9	15,480	61	18,072	58.8
Gainsborough	12%	36	3.5	80	5.5	106	6.9	4,658	18.4	4,884	15.9
Sleaford	12%	117	11.4	149	10.3	127	8.3	2,435	9.6	3,853	12.5
Elsewhere	12%	147	14.3	172	11.9	276	17.9	2,797	11	3,920	12.8
Total	100%	1,027	100	1,451	100	1,538	100	25,370	100	30,729	100

- 1.36. This provides an indication that, in terms of delivery (Columns A, B and C in Table 1), the Lincoln Strategy Area (69.9% of dwellings built in 2017/18 and 2018/19) and the 'Elsewhere' category (14.8% of dwellings built) have performed well against the percentage of growth applied in the Local Plan. Conversely the Main Towns have performed less well with Sleaford delivering 9.8% of housing development over the three year period and Gainsborough delivering 5.5%.
- 1.37. When also looking at projected development in columns D and E of Table 1 in broad terms the sites with and without permission provide a proportion of growth across Central Lincolnshire which broadly reflects the strategic distribution.
- 1.38. All of this indicates that the sites within the Lincoln Strategy Area and 'Elsewhere' are delivering well and possibly indicates that whilst the market may be somewhat slow to deliver in the Main Towns, this is largely down to the large proportion of dwellings on the SUEs at each town.

- 1.39. Further to the overall distribution, whilst there is no percentage applied to the split of growth in the settlement hierarchy, it is also important to look at the delivery in the different levels of the hierarchy. This will help to understand the performance of the urban focus in the plan. This is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Development in tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy since Local Plan adopted

Area	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		Outstanding with PP		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lincoln Urban Area	457	44.5%	553	38.1%	374	24.3%	2,462	15.3%	3,846	15.3%
Main Towns	153	14.9%	228	15.7%	233	15.1%	5,562	34.6%	6,176	34.6%
Market Towns	32	3.1%	33	2.3%	32	2.1%	822	5.1%	919	5.1%
Large Villages	248	24.1%	500	34.5%	644	41.9%	5,109	31.8%	6,501	31.8%
Medium Villages	59	5.7%	71	4.9%	144	9.4%	1,279	7.9%	1,553	8%
Small Villages	48	4.7%	49	3.4%	70	4.6%	668	4.2%	835	4.1%
Hamlets	4	0.39%	2	1.4%	7	0.5%	24	0.1%	37	0.2%
Countryside	26	2.5%	15	0.1%	34	2.2%	163	1.0%	238	1%
Total	1,027	100%	1,451	100%	1,538	100	16,089	100%	20,105	100%

- 1.40. Table 2 shows that approximately 55% of all growth with permission is in the Lincoln Urban Area and the four Main and Market Towns and with another 32% spread across the 21 Large Villages. This shows that there has been a general urban focus for permissions since the plan was adopted.
- 1.41. The amount delivered has been increasing in each of the years since the plan was adopted and this trend is expected to continue once more SUEs come on stream and with construction commencing on many more sites and other permissions being secured.
- 1.42. The data in the above tables show that the plan is, so far, delivering growth with an urban focus and broadly in line with the distribution identified for the plan. A significant number of allocated sites are making very good progress and developers are utilising the percentage growth approach in Medium and Small Villages. However, the SUEs have been slower to start delivering than originally anticipated. These delays have occurred for a variety of reasons, but progress is now being made on most of the SUEs.

2. Spatial Issues

Spatial Issue 1: Housing Need and Ambition for Growth

- 2.1. In accordance with the NPPF the starting point for identifying housing need for an area is the Local Housing Need (LHN) which is established through the standard method. For Central Lincolnshire in 2019 this requirement figure was 1,083 dwellings with a slight increase to 1,086 dwellings in 2020, and then reduced to 1,060 in 2021. The method for calculating this figure is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance.¹

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments#housing-need>

- 2.2. In the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation in June and July 2019, the consultation document set out a proposal to include a housing requirement range in the Local Plan with the bottom end of the range being the LHN and with the upper end being 1,300 dwellings per year. This 1,300 dwellings figure was proposed as it is a significant uplift on the LHN, representing a 20% increase on the 2019 LHN, providing choice in the market for homes and to build in additional robustness to the preparation of the Local Plan in the event of the LHN figure rising in subsequent years.
- 2.3. Since the 2019 Issues and Options Consultation, the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and the Economic Needs Assessment (ENA) update have been published. These documents reviewed the need for housing and the impact of housing delivery on the labour available in relation to projected job growth. This evidence identified that 1,325 dwellings per year would support the expected job growth in Central Lincolnshire.
- 2.4. The HNA also looked at affordable housing need identifying that 12,439 affordable homes to 2040, equating to 592 per year. This need equates to approximately 56% of the LHN figure and nearly 44% of the 1,325 dwellings identified as being needed to support expected job growth. Delivering this level of affordable housing would clearly be challenging under any likely scenarios, but it is not only delivered through planning obligations. Direct development by districts, or housing associations also occurs which help to deliver homes to meet the needs of those whose needs are not met by the market.
- 2.5. Given the requirements of national policy and guidance and the conclusions of the evidence work in the HNA and ENA, the housing requirement is still proposed to be presented as a range, with the LHN forming the bottom of the range and the evidence-based need for housing delivery to match job growth forming the top end. This means that in 2021 (at the time of the Regulation 18 Consultation) the housing requirement of the Local Plan is proposed to be 1,060-1,325 dwellings per year. This will require the Local Plan delivering enough homes to meet the top end of the range which equates to 29,150 from 2018-2040.

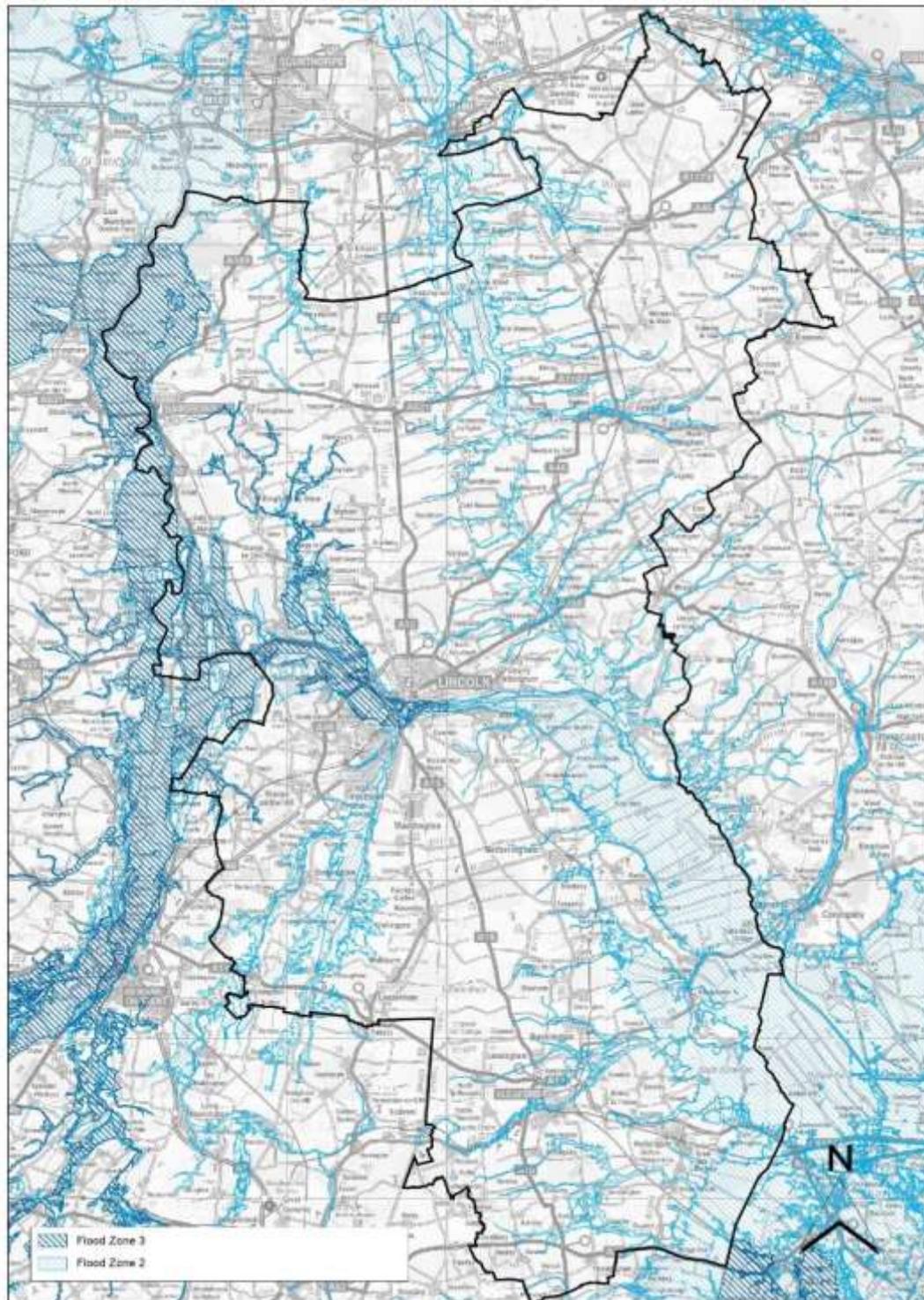
Spatial Issue 2: Climate Change

- 2.6. In 2019 City of Lincoln and North Kesteven districts both declared a climate emergency and West Lindsey and Lincolnshire County Council both passed motions recognising the urgent need to address climate change. The need to address climate change has rapidly become a central requirement in national policy and local policy and this is no different for the Local Plan.
- 2.7. The need to both address the carbon resulting from the Local Plan and making sure that development will be safe from and adaptable to the results of climate change is central to the work on the Local Plan.
- 2.8. In relation to growth distribution, climate change can be considered in two ways, locating growth where:
 - a) it will not be impacted from the results of climate change, in particular areas at risk of flooding; and
 - b) it will reduce the need to travel and even where the need to own a private vehicle will be minimised.
- 2.9. Information in relation to flood risk is available from the Environment Agency. This data does not currently include an allowance for climate change. Through the development of

the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment discussions were ongoing with the Environment Agency who concluded that “the impact of climate change on the extent of the Flood Zones in this area is likely to be negligible and should not significantly impact on the strategic allocation of land.”²

2.10. Flood zones 2 and 3 are shown on Map 2 below:

Map 2: Flood zones 2 and 3 in Central Lincolnshire



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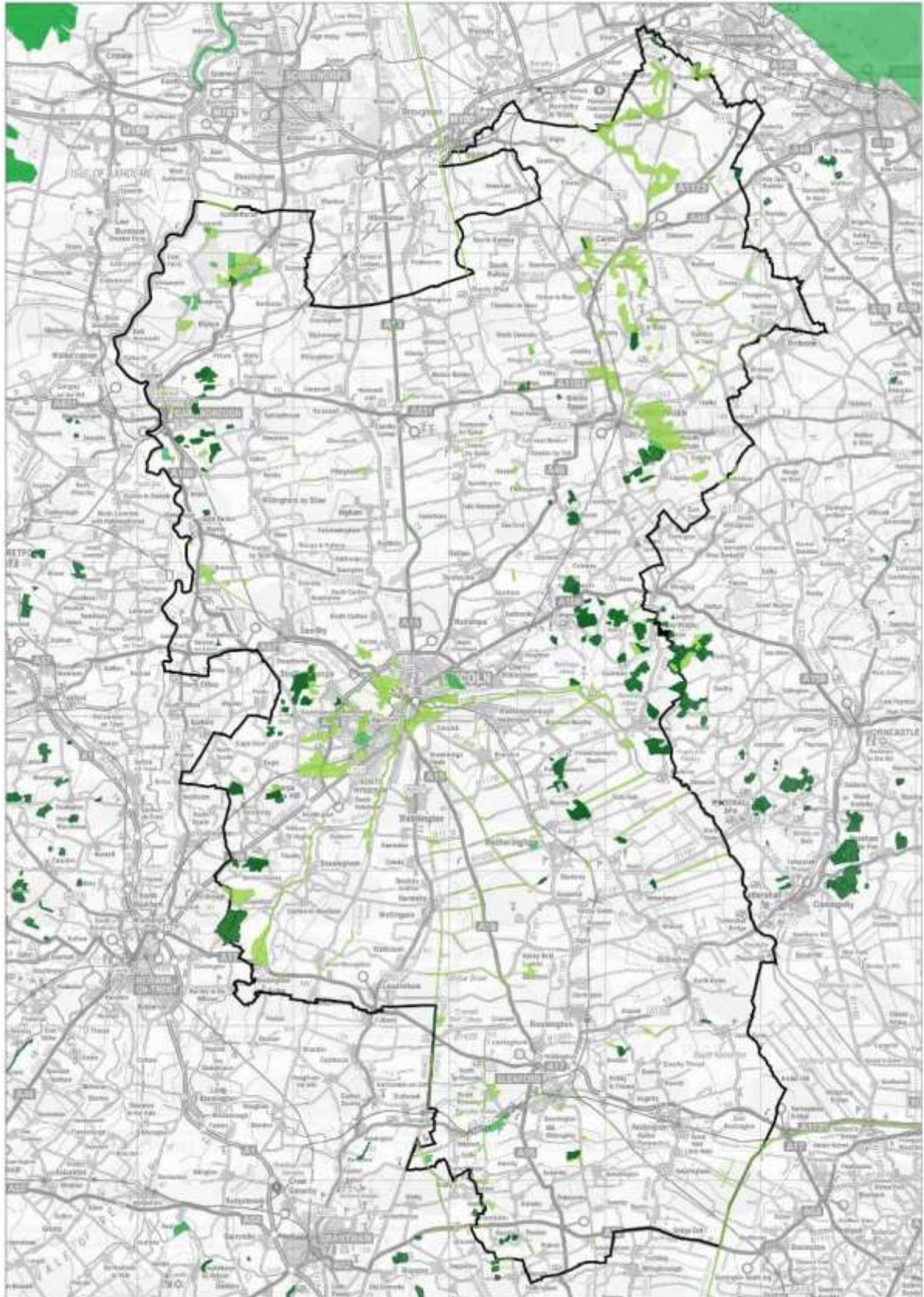
² Paragraph 3.3 of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1, June 2021.

- 2.11. As is highlighted above, the distribution of development can also have an impact on the carbon emitted from transport. By locating development close to facilities and services or at locations where modes of transport other than private car are easily accessible this can reduce the carbon (and other greenhouse gases) being omitted from vehicle movements.
- 2.12. These climate change constraints and opportunities are clearly important to be considered in selecting where growth will be located to fit in with the objective of delivering a net zero carbon Central Lincolnshire and ensuring that housing is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Spatial Issue 3: Geographic Opportunities and Constraints

- 2.13. Looking beyond flooding there are also other constraints which, because of the strict protection offered by national policy, will impact the distribution of growth in Central Lincolnshire.
- 2.14. The first of these are nationally and internationally protected wildlife sites. These include Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves. Not all of these are present in Central Lincolnshire, but a full list has been included for completeness.
- 2.15. However, it is not just nationally and internationally important wildlife sites that act as a constraint to development. Local or regional sites are also of such value for ecology that they also need protection from development. These include Local Wildlife Sites, Regional Geological sites and other local designations.
- 2.16. Beyond these designated sites there are also additional irreplaceable assets that require protection including ancient woodland. All of these nature conservation constraints can be seen on Map 3 below with dark green showing nationally and internationally protected sites and the lighter green denoting the local designations.

Map 3: Nature constraints in Central Lincolnshire



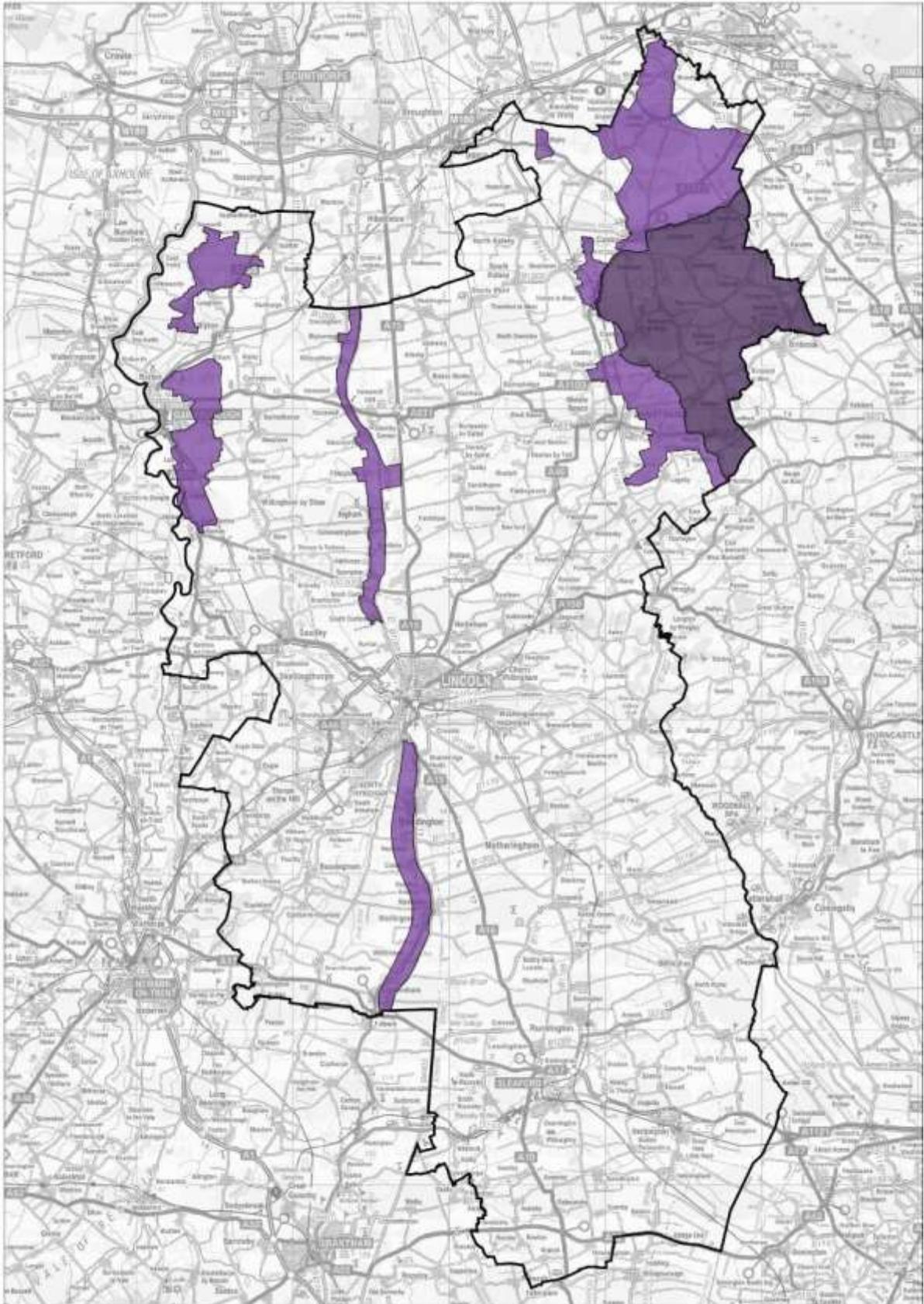
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- 2.17. Other constraints also exist that impact on decisions on where to locate growth such as landscape designations. In Central Lincolnshire there is a large area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is protected by national policy. The

Lincolnshire Wolds AONB cover a large area to the north east of Central Lincolnshire and is both an asset to the area and also an area where large scale development would be wholly inappropriate due to the impact it would have on this nationally important landscape.

- 2.18. There are additional areas protected for their landscape at a local level. These areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) are protected in the 2017 Local Plan and this protection is expected to continue due to the important role these areas play in Central Lincolnshire's landscape character.
- 2.19. These landscape designations can be seen on Map 4 below, with the darker areas being AONB and lighter shades being AGLV.

Map 4: AONB and AGLV landscape designations



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2.20. But it is not just constraints that might influence where development should be located – there are also opportunities that exist to deliver development in sustainable locations. The

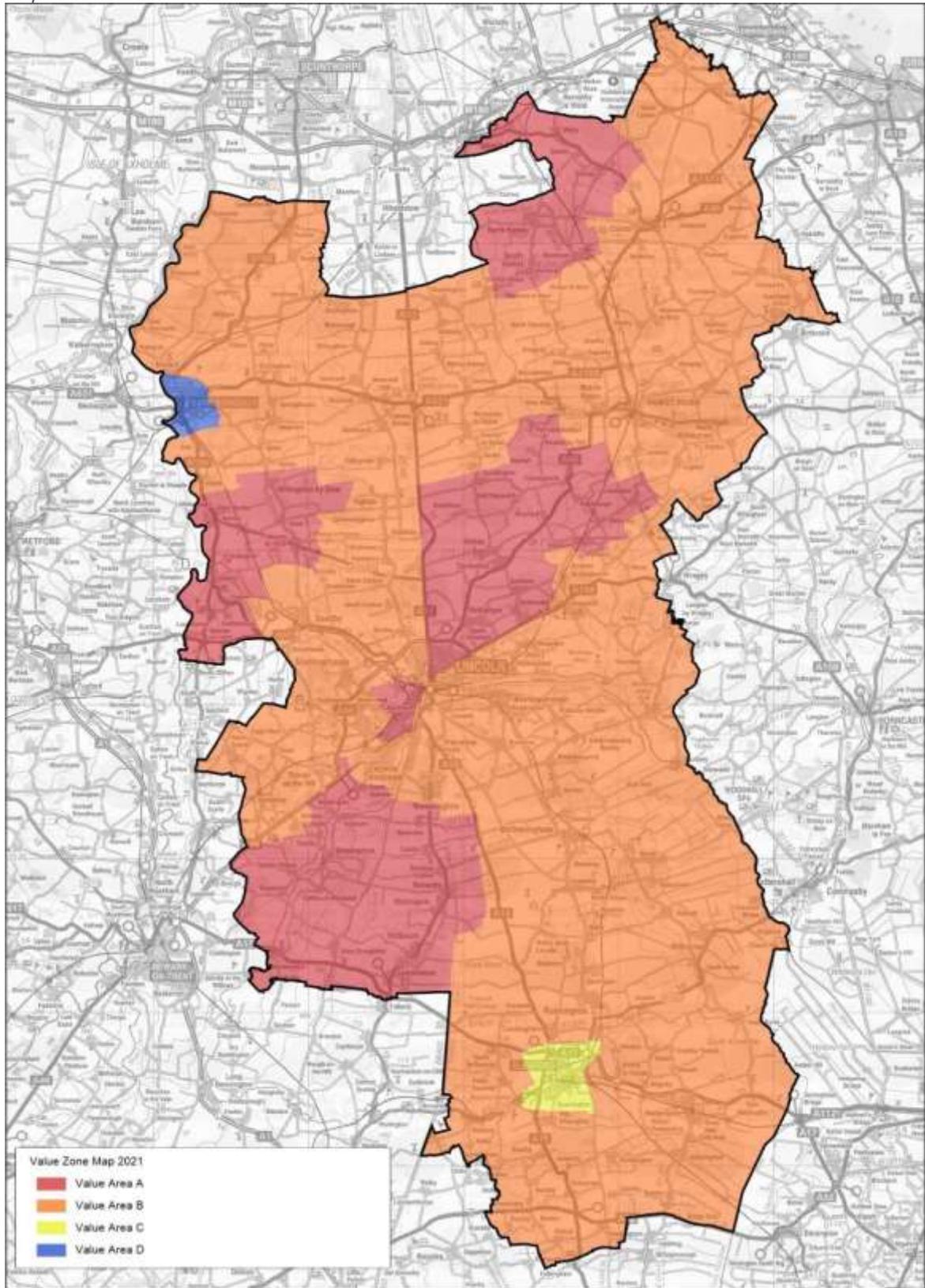
presence of existing accessible services and facilities can both be supported by additional development and reduce the need to build new infrastructure, servicing a larger population.

- 2.21. Closely linked to this is the presence of transport corridors – routes which provide good connectivity with main centres to allow for travel by non-private car or which can substantially reduce travel distance and time to main centres and the jobs, services and facilities that are present there.
- 2.22. Locating growth near to or in locations that are well-connected to main centres or other services and facilities provides benefits both socially (by ensuring accessibility to more services and helping to ensure that these services remain available), but also environmentally as it reduces the need to and distance of travel and reduces the carbon footprint by reducing the number of new facilities being built.

Spatial Issue 4: Market Forces & Viability

- 2.23. Central Lincolnshire has a varied market with some distinct value zones as is set out in the Central Lincolnshire Whole Plan Viability assessment (WPV). This highlights that there is challenging viability in some locations in Central Lincolnshire. The WPV separates out Central Lincolnshire into 4 separate value zones where different sales values have been observed through market research. These zones are shown on Map 5 below:

Map 5: Central Lincolnshire Value Zones



2.24. Value Zones C (yellow) and D (blue) are the areas of lower sales values where the WPV identifies viability is more challenging. The WPV concludes that where sales values are lower, the ability to deliver, or otherwise fund, affordable housing, infrastructure or other policy requirements becomes diminished as typically build costs and land values are consistent across the areas.

- 2.25. This then identifies areas where the market is likely to be more eager to deliver, however, it does not necessarily mean that developers will not build in the lower value zones as can be witnessed by the development taking place in these areas. It also identifies the areas where more can reasonably be sought from development without rendering schemes unviable.
- 2.26. However, it is also important to note the impact of market saturation and sub markets created by the varied needs and wants of house buyers or renters. Developers typically have a set margin to work to, once all costs are factored in and factoring in the expected sales values on a scheme. However, if too many homes become available at a single time in a local market, this has the potential to lower the sales values because of the competition from other sites. If pushed too far this could reduce build rates, or otherwise hinder the delivery on sites. Whilst there is no set identification of these local sub markets, care is needed to ensure that there are a range of housing products, in a variety of settings across Central Lincolnshire to avoid market saturation.

3. Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

3.1. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan shares its objectives with the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Objectives. These Objectives are as follows:

1. **Housing** – To ensure that the housing stock meets the housing needs of the Central Lincolnshire area and appropriate infrastructure is provided to support sustainable communities.
2. **Health and Wellbeing** – To reduce health inequalities, promote healthy lifestyles and maximise health and wellbeing.
3. **Social Equality and Community** – To stimulate regeneration that maximises benefits for the most deprived areas and communities in Central Lincolnshire. To ensure equitable outcomes for all, particularly those most at risk of experiencing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.
4. **Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure** – To conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity across Central Lincolnshire by delivering measurable net gain in biodiversity through development and establishing nature recovery networks through planning.

To provide enhanced opportunities for people to access and appreciate wildlife and the natural environment whilst safeguarding protected sites.

To protect, enhance and create and improve high quality green and blue spaces that are multifunctional; for sport, recreation, play and ecosystem services, and which form part of and are connected to the green infrastructure network, improving landscape connectivity for people and wildlife.

5. **Landscape and Townscape** – To protect and enhance the rich diversity of the character and appearance of Central Lincolnshire's landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.
6. **Built and Historic Environment** – To conserve and enhance the significance of buildings, sites and features of archaeological, historic or architectural and artistic

interest and their settings, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets, and ensure new buildings, spaces and places are designed to a high quality.

7. **Natural Resources – Water** – To protect and enhance water resources and their quality in Central Lincolnshire.
8. **Pollution** – To minimise pollution (air, noise and light) and improve air quality.
9. **Natural Resources – Land Use and Soils** – To protect and enhance soil and land resources and quality in Central Lincolnshire.
10. **Waste** – To minimise the amount of waste generated across all sectors and increase the re-use, recycling and recovery rates of waste materials.
11. **Climate Change Effects and Energy** – To minimise the effects of climate change by developing the area's renewable and low carbon energy and heat, reducing dependency on fossil fuels, minimise energy usage, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the area contributing to the achievement of a carbon net-zero Central Lincolnshire.
12. **Climate Change Adaptation and Flood Risk** – To minimise vulnerability, improve community resilience and ensure Central Lincolnshire adapts to the effects of climate change, both now and in the future through careful planning and design of the built and natural environment.
To reduce and manage the risk of flooding from all sources.
13. **Transport and Accessibility** – To make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure and seek to extend and enhance infrastructure to match local needs.

To reduce the need to travel by car, improve accessibility to jobs and services for all and to ensure that all journeys are undertaken by the most sustainable travel modes (particularly public transport, walking and cycling).
14. **Employment** – To create and improve access to high quality employment, training and learning opportunities for everyone within the Central Lincolnshire area.
15. **Local Economy** – To encourage and support a competitive, diverse and stable economy and to protect and enhance Central Lincolnshire's hierarchy of centres to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

3.2. The SA Objectives are accompanied by decision making criteria in the SA Report to allow the effects of draft policies and reasonable alternative options to be tested.

3.3. The SA assesses the sustainability of separate decisions made in the plan for example in relation to the amount and distribution of growth (Policy S2), the Settlement Hierarchy (Policy S2), and more against the SA Objectives and considers reasonable alternative options. These assessments have helped inform the content and approach of these policies and have fed into the main options for how to distribute growth in section 4 below.

4. Options for Distributing Growth

4.1. There could be any number of detailed options for how to distribute growth in the new Local Plan down to individual settlement level. However, this growth options papers looks at high level options and principles for how growth can be distributed sustainably and in a manner that will be delivered. This section focuses on five realistic options for how growth might be

distributed within Central Lincolnshire. These options are all based on using the housing requirement range identified in Spatial Issue 1, above, of 1,060 to 1,325 dwellings per year.

Option 1: Urban focus

- 4.2. Option 1 looks to focus development in the main urban areas. This is similar to maintaining the approach in the 2017 Local Plan which distributed growth broadly in line with the population in the 2011 Census of four areas, but adjusted the percentages for Gainsborough and Sleaford to allow for greater urban focus and regeneration in both towns.
- 4.3. This urban focus approach would see growth aligned to the settlement hierarchy – the larger the settlement, the more growth it would receive (subject to other constraints). This would have the effect of creating additional critical mass at the main urban centres, maximising the use of existing facilities, and minimising the need to travel for more purposes. The percentages and share of amount of growth assigned to each area in the 2017 Local Plan can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Broad distribution under the 2017 Local Plan

Geography	Proportion of population in 2011 Census	Proportion of total growth in Local Plan	Number of dwellings from Local Plan (overall need 36,960 dwellings, 2012-2036)
Lincoln Strategy Area	64%	64%	23,654
Gainsborough	6%	12%	4,435
Sleaford	6%	12%	4,435
Elsewhere	24%	12%	4,435
Total	100%	100%	36,959

- 4.4. However, it is important to note that the Lincoln Strategy Area, which received the majority of growth in the 2017 Local Plan, is not solely focused on the Lincoln urban area but it also includes a number of villages within a large rural area surrounding Lincoln. The 'Elsewhere' category also covers a vast rural area with many villages of varying sizes and the two market towns of Market Rasen and Caistor.
- 4.5. If this option were to be applied in the new plan it would look to broadly retain the percentages above prioritising growth around the main centre of Lincoln and in the Main Towns. However, it would go one step further and within the Lincoln Strategy Area there would be significant focus on the Lincoln urban area, and to a lesser extent the larger villages within the Lincoln Strategy Area. Within the Elsewhere category it would see the clear prioritisation of the Market Towns and to a lesser extent the larger villages in the area.
- 4.6. Whilst this approach would help deliver a number of sustainability goals by creating and adding to critical mass at fewer locations, it would also result in large areas of Central Lincolnshire getting very few dwellings delivered and effectively being starved of growth. There are also limited development opportunities within the urban areas and so this option would require developments at the edge of the large settlements. This continuous building outwards of the large settlements might also not be the most sustainable approach as it would exacerbate traffic issues in locations and potentially result in facilities being overwhelmed by the growth, making it increasingly difficult for people to access the centres and its services. It would also have implications for landscape and townscape.

4.7. Also of importance are the question marks about the deliverability of such an approach and whether the market would deliver so many homes in limited geographies. In order to maximise delivery and help meet the needs a variety of housing products are required at a number of locations. The market will only have a finite capacity for delivery in any given year in a geographical area and across similar sites in similar settings. These market limitations have perhaps been witnessed by the slow take up on some of the sites allocated in the 2017 Local Plan.

4.8. Under this option the growth distribution would be as follows:

Table 4: Option 1 broad distribution

Geography	Proportion of total growth in new Local Plan	Number of dwellings from the new Local Plan (1,325 dwellings per year)
Lincoln Strategy Area (with a clear focus in the Lincoln Urban Area)	64%	18,656
Gainsborough	12%	3,498
Sleaford	12%	3,498
Elsewhere (with a focus in the market towns and the larger villages)	12%	3,498
Total	100%	29,150

Option 2: Small site focus

- 4.9. Option 2 would look to reduce the focus on a limited number of locations of growth by spreading development across a greater number of smaller sites across a larger number and range of locations. It does not necessarily mean that there would be no large sites as many that are currently allocated are making good progress, but it would shift the focus of additional allocations to more, smaller sites in more settlements including smaller villages.
- 4.10. This would provide far greater variety of sites to ensure market delivery and to give more smaller and medium developers opportunities to secure sites to build. Spreading the growth would also see impacts of growth on infrastructure spread out and potentially made less intense at some locations. The delivery of growth in rural locations has been strong with the majority of such sites allocated in the 2017 Local Plan making good progress.
- 4.11. Furthermore, national policy is very firm in respect of the need for Local Plans not to just meet its need over the plan period, but meet its need in the first five years on a rolling basis. And, on that basis, it is undoubtedly true that, small sites tend to deliver completed homes quicker than large scale sites (though, conversely, large scale sites can deliver much quicker than a collection of small sites, once the large scale sites have got up and running with strategic infrastructure in place, delivering units quickly through the economies and efficiencies of delivering at scale).
- 4.12. However, this approach would also make it more difficult to focus infrastructure to support the growth in Central Lincolnshire. Whilst it is likely that existing infrastructure could support many 'pockets' of growth, there would be areas where people would need to travel further for amenities and services.
- 4.13. Under option 2, the same approach as was taken in the 2017 Local Plan – using the population figures from the 2011 Census – could be carried forward but without the added emphasis for urban growth and regeneration in the main towns. Under this option the growth distribution would be as follows:

Table 5: Option 2 broad distribution

Geography	Proportion of total growth in new Local Plan	Number of dwellings from the new Local Plan (1,325 dwellings per year)
Lincoln Strategy Area (with a focus for new growth on small sites in general spread throughout the area and more in rural areas)	64%	18,656
Gainsborough	6%	1,749
Sleaford	6%	1,749
Elsewhere (with sites being spread across more villages)	24%	6,996
Total	100%	29,150

- 4.14. Clearly the main change here is with the much reduced figures for each of the main urban areas with this development being displaced to the Elsewhere category and spread around more settlements.

Option 3: Transport / infrastructure corridor focus

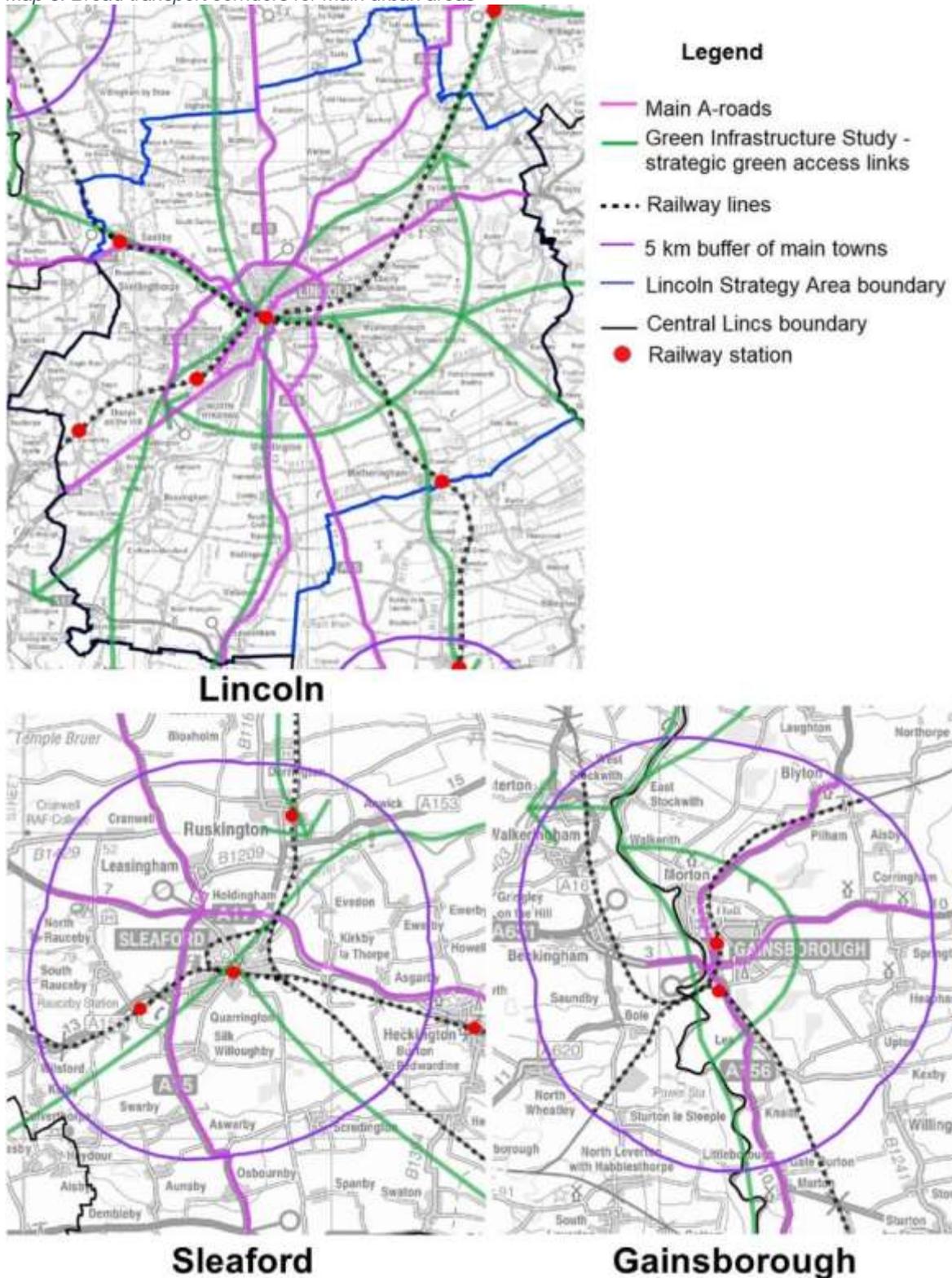
- 4.15. Option 3 would utilise transport corridors linking settlements with main centres for focusing development. The aim of this approach is to create a network of settlements that are well connected along main transport corridors. Not only would it help connect nearby settlements but it could help to focus transport infrastructure investment on these corridors to enhance the accessibility to the main urban settlements.
- 4.16. This option would see the identification of a number of key transport corridors around Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford. These corridors would be the main arterial roads, the railway network where there are stations within proximity, locations well-served by bus routes and locations with active transport opportunities to access main centres.
- 4.17. Focusing too much growth in these corridors could result in other areas being starved of development. Whilst growth would not be confined to these corridors, more development would be located within them taking into account their accessibility, constraints and other attributes. The principle of this approach also does not necessarily focus on urban or rural sites or large or small sites, but instead focuses on the corridors themselves and would maximise potential within them.
- 4.18. This approach is directly supported by paragraph 102 of the NPPF which says “*Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that...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...*”
- 4.19. To establish where these transport corridors exist a mapping exercise has been carried out. This mapping focused on the main A-Roads and around the stations within a reasonable proximity of the main settlement. It identified the following corridors:
- Lincoln – the corridors around Lincoln were limited to the Lincoln Strategy Area. The main A-Roads have been used to form the corridors, specifically the A15, A46, A57,

A158, and the A607. Rail corridors have also been considered as a key component of such an approach. Aside from Lincoln Station there are stations in North Hykeham, Saxilby, Metheringham and Swinderby within the Lincoln Strategy Area. The Central Lincolnshire Green Infrastructure Study also identified a number of strategic green access links in the area offering opportunities for active travel.

- Gainsborough – There are three main road corridors for Gainsborough within Central Lincolnshire, the A159 to the north, the A631 to the east and the A156 to the south. Other than Gainsborough Central and Gainsborough Lea Road, there are no railway stations in proximity to Gainsborough to be factored in. The Central Lincolnshire Green Infrastructure Study also identified a number of strategic green access links in the area offering opportunities for active travel.
- Sleaford – There are a number of main road corridors for Sleaford with the A15 running to the south and north, the A17 running to the west and east, and the A153 running from the south west to the north east. Other than Sleaford Station, there are railway stations at Greylees (Rauceby), Ruskington and Heckington which are within proximity of Sleaford. The Central Lincolnshire Green Infrastructure Study also identified a number of strategic green access links in the area offering opportunities for active travel.

These corridors can be seen indicatively on Map 6 below with 5km buffers being applied to the diagrams for Gainsborough and Sleaford to represent a broad distance likely to be cyclable for most or at very least allow for a very short journey time:

Map 6: Broad transport corridors for main urban areas



4.20. Map 6 does not show bus routes and clearly this is another important factor that may influence where to locate growth under this option. By having a regular bus route people will have the option to travel further afield without need for private car. Many of these bus routes will use the main transport corridors shown on the maps but they also offer greater connectivity for villages farther afield from these main urban centres.

4.21. Under this option it is considered that the population-based percentages but with additional steering towards the main towns used in the 2017 Local Plan being applied. But rather than

just focusing this additional growth within the main towns, the extra dwellings would also be located within settlements in the transport corridors. Under this option the growth distribution would be as set out in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Option 3 broad distribution

Geography	Proportion of total growth in new Local Plan	Number of dwellings from the new Local Plan (1,325 dwellings per year)
Lincoln Strategy Area (with a focus for new growth within the urban areas and at settlements within the transport corridors)	64%	18,656
Gainsborough and in settlements within transport corridors	12%	3,498
Sleaford and in settlements within transport corridors	12%	3,498
Elsewhere	12%	3,498
Total	100%	29,150

- 4.22. The main benefit of this option is that it will assist delivery by spreading the growth assigned to the main towns to locations that are very well-connected to the main towns. This is beneficial as the main towns are identified as being more challenging to deliver in from a viability perspective because of lower sales values compared to elsewhere in Central Lincolnshire.

Option 4: Creation of new settlements

- 4.23. Option 4 would see the creation of one or more new settlements either within the countryside or potentially at a specific (currently small) settlement/s where significant growth would be focused. This option does not assume all growth would be accommodated in this way – that would not be a reasonable option to test, because existing settlements will need to accommodate at least some of the growth. However, freestanding new settlement(s) could make a significant contribution to meeting the growth, and, as a matter of principle, is an option which the NPPF suggests should be explored, at para 52: “*The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements...*”.
- 4.24. As an assumption, a minimum of 500 dwellings would be needed for the creation of a new settlement as this is aligned to the minimum size considered for Sustainable Urban Extensions where a different CIL level is set and where it is recognised that significant levels of infrastructure is needed to support the growth.
- 4.25. Clearly there could feasibly be any number of locations where new freestanding settlements could be located, dependent on the constraints, opportunities, market appetite and land availability. At this stage we are not considering the precise location, but the principle of meeting growth needs through such a new settlement.
- 4.26. The allocations in the 2017 Local Plan already include nine SUE-sized sites which made up approximately 40% of all growth in the plan. Most of these SUEs are making good progress but a number have yet to start delivering on the ground. Large sites such as these require

significant work to plan and open up which requires a lengthy lead in time but, when they start building, they have a tendency to deliver at a significant rate.

- 4.27. Having growth on fewer, very large sites can also result in a narrow range of sites available to home builders of different sizes. They also reduce the variety of products and locations where homes are being built. These limitations all have potential to contribute to a narrow housing supply that does not satisfy the varied demand in the market and could have implications for delivery as a result of market saturation of similar housing types in similar settings.
- 4.28. As was mentioned under *Option 2: Small site focus* the government requires local planning authorities to maintain a rolling supply of deliverable sites for housing. The addition of further largescale sites in the form of new settlements would not help the supply in the short term and so is likely to be of limited value for the new Local Plan given the SUEs which are already progressing and will supply a significant amount of homes over the next 25 years.
- 4.29. Whilst the location of a new settlement could be in any location, for the purposes of considering and assessing the principles of these options, it is being considered in isolation from the distribution areas generally being considered in the options. Under this option the growth distribution would be as follows:

Table 7: Option 4 broad distribution

Geography	Proportion of total growth in new Local Plan	Number of dwellings from the new Local Plan (1,325 dwellings per year)
Lincoln Strategy Area	60%	17,490
Gainsborough	10%	2,915
Sleaford	10%	2,915
Elsewhere	10%	2,915
New settlement/s (assuming 3,000 dwellings for either one or two new settlements)	≈10%	2,915
Total	100%	29,150

- 4.30. Given the amount of development already committed through allocations and permissions on large sites, it is not considered to be a realistic option to allocate further sites of this scale in this plan given the requirements to maintain an ongoing housing land supply. Whilst it could be an option to pursue towards the end of this plan period when the SUEs are substantially completed, at the present time it is not considered to be deliverable when taking into account the wider requirements of plan-making.

Option 5: Balanced combination of options 1-3

- 4.31. Each of the options presented provides substantial benefits but also have drawbacks and limitations. As such it is considered appropriate to also consider an option which incorporates elements of the others to find a balanced approach for distributing growth.
- 4.32. One difficulty of this approach is deciding what to include from which option in order to maximise sustainability in a strategy that is deliverable.

- 4.33. For this option, it is assumed that the percentage for the Lincolns Strategy Area, each of the main towns and elsewhere are broadly correct. However, it is the approach within each area that would differ slightly.
- 4.34. Overall the Lincoln Strategy Area remains the focus for development, receiving approximately 64% of the overall growth as in the 2017 Local Plan. Within the Lincoln Strategy Area there would be a focus on the Lincoln urban area and the retention of the Sustainable Urban Extensions. Beyond this there would also be growth focussed around the area in smaller settlements, particularly focused in settlements along the transport corridors and in settlements with a good range of facilities and services available either within the village or nearby. This would see all settlements in the hierarchy down to Small Villages being considered for some allocations where land has been put forward based on their merits.
- 4.35. For the Main Towns of Gainsborough and Sleaford, they would retain the percentage of overall growth of approximately 12% that is in the 2017 Local Plan. This figure would be met primarily by focusing on the Sustainable Urban Extensions and other sites within the urban areas. Beyond this, additional growth would be focused in some nearby villages that are well-connected to the towns, subject to their suitability, sustainability and any constraints present. Whilst no specific distance is chosen for what is considered nearby a qualitative assessment of connectivity and relationship to nearby settlements in the Site Allocations Settlement Analysis takes this into account.
- 4.36. The elsewhere category will then also remain at approximately 12% of the overall growth but will be covering fewer villages than previously as it no longer includes the settlements near to the main towns. In these areas development will be focused at the market towns in West Lindsey and larger villages, with development also occurring on smaller sites in villages where their development would be sustainable taking into account proximity to services and facilities and connectivity to main urban areas. The general breakdown of the distribution for option 5 is provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Option 5 broad distribution

Geography	Proportion of total growth in new Local Plan	Number of dwellings from the new Local Plan (1,325 dwellings per year)
Lincoln Strategy Area (with a focus for new growth within the urban areas and at settlements within with good connectivity to the main urban area or with good facilities nearby)	64%	18,656
Gainsborough and in settlements in proximity and well-connected to Gainsborough	12%	3,498
Sleaford and in settlements in proximity and well-connected to Sleaford	12%	3,498
Elsewhere	12%	3,498
Total	100%	29,150

5. Preferred Option for Distributing Growth

- 5.1. From weighing up the 5 options it is clear that all have their benefits and drawbacks.
- 5.2. When factoring in both the sustainability appraisals relating to the individual elements of the policy direction and what is known about the housing market in Central Lincolnshire, *Option 5: Balanced combination of options 1-3* is arguably the best performing and is amongst the most deliverable options. It is therefore proposed that option 5 form the basis for distributing growth in Central Lincolnshire with the exact amount and locations of development to occur within these sub areas to be considered through the detailed site assessment process.
- 5.3. To summarise, this preferred option will see the Local Plan:
 - Identify enough housing to deliver approximately 18,656 dwellings from 2018 to 2040 in the Lincoln Strategy Area – these will be delivered on sites primarily in and around the Lincoln Urban Area, on the existing Sustainable Urban Extensions, with additional growth taking place in villages that are well-connected and/or have a good range of facilities present locally;
 - Identify enough housing to deliver approximately 3,498 dwellings in each of the Main Towns primarily focusing on the existing Sustainable Urban Extensions, with other smaller sites in the towns and in well-connected nearby villages also contributing to development needs in these areas; and
 - Deliver approximately 3,498 dwellings elsewhere with a particular focus in the two Market Towns with additional growth taking place in villages that are well-connected to main urban areas and/or have a good range of facilities present locally.
- 5.4. This option will provide a sustainable and deliverable strategy that largely maintains the strategy of the existing plan which has, so far, proven largely successful.

6. Potential for Meeting Need

- 6.1. As this proposed strategy builds on the existing strategy of the 2017 Local Plan many sites are already allocated and are progressing towards delivery in these locations. As the proposed housing requirement is reduced from that in the existing Local Plan, this means that the deliverable allocations in the 2017 Local Plan make up a large proportion of the overall requirement. In fact, given the sites with planning permission and that are already allocated in the 2017 Local Plan (and have confirmed to still be available and deliverable within the plan period) this means that the shortfall is likely to be in the region of 2,000-3,000 homes.
- 6.2. From looking at the sites put forward in the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment there is sufficient land in all of the geographies to achieve the development needed to deliver 29,150 homes to 2040, subject to detailed analysis of constraints.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. This growth options report has considered the benefits and issues of a number of options for how growth can be delivered and distributed in Central Lincolnshire.
- 7.2. It also considered the level of overall growth, but with the limitations placed on Local Plans by national policy, options are limited in this matter. The evidence base also clearly indicated a number of homes required to support the job growth expected in Central Lincolnshire and it is clearly important that adequate housing is provided to support economic growth to avoid unsustainable travel to work patterns arising. As such the range between the nationally derived Local Housing Need and the evidence based requirement to support job growth is proposed to be used – currently **1,060-1,325 dwellings per year**.
- 7.3. In terms of distribution, this report considered a number of high level options that have been informed by Sustainability Appraisals on specific policy decisions, constraints and opportunities present, the Central Lincolnshire housing market and the importance of aligning to the plan and SA Objectives.
- 7.4. The option selected looks to continue the strategy largely used in the existing 2017 Local Plan, focusing growth in urban areas and at strategic sites, with some limited development taking place in more rural settlements. The one area of change is considering villages near to the Main Towns as having an important role in supporting these centres and recognising the ability of residents here to access the facilities and services of the Main Towns. As for other villages the proposal is to take account of the sustainability credentials of a settlement in making decisions on whether or not to allocate there. This includes taking account of connectivity with larger centres and presence of services and facilities locally.
- 7.5. This strategy provides a sustainable and deliverable framework for Central Lincolnshire to grow