

Report to the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee

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Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State

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Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review, Inspectors Report March 2023

Report on the Examination of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review

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Abbreviations used in this report

Committee	Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee
ENA	Economic Needs Assessment Update
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLTM	Greater Lincoln Transport Model
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HNA	Housing Need Assessment
IEEA	Important Established Employment Area
LEA	Local Employment Area
LGS	Local Green Space
MM	Main Modifications
MoD	Ministry of Defence
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PPTS	Planning Policy for Traveller Sites
PSA	Primary Shopping Area
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SES	Strategic Employment Sites
SPA	Special Protection Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SUE	Sustainable Urban Extension
WMS	Written Ministerial Statement

Non-Technical Summary

This report concludes that the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the City of Lincoln and the districts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey, provided that a number of main modifications are made to it. The Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee has specifically requested that we recommend any main modifications necessary to enable the Plan to be adopted.

Following the hearings, the Committee prepared a schedule of the proposed main modifications and carried out a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of them where necessary. The main modifications were subject to public consultation over a six-week period from 13 January to 24 February 2023. We have recommended their inclusion in the Plan after considering all the representations made. In summary, they:

- Modify Policy S2 to state that the housing requirement is 1,102 dwellings per year.
- Modify Policy S3 to include requirements for development proposals adjacent to the Lincoln Urban Area, the Main Towns and the Market Towns.
- Modify Policy S7 to clarify that meeting all of the sustainable design and construction standards is unlikely to be viable in Sleaford, Gainsborough and on brownfield sites.
- Make it clear that proposals for renewable energy generation will still need to consider potential impacts on heritage assets and the landscape through modifications to Policy S14.
- Delete Policy S19 and make consequential changes to the supporting text.
- Modify Policy S22 to make it clear how First Homes will be considered.
- Clarify the scale, type and mix of uses permitted at the Lincolnshire Showground in Policy S44.
- Include a requirement to consider reviewing the Plan should one or more of the Sustainable Urban Extensions fail to deliver as expected.
- Clarify the position regarding land at the Western Growth Corridor not covered by the extant planning permission in Policy S69.
- Provide flexibility for land at the South West Quadrant to come forward in advance of the North Hykeham Relief Road, where justified.
- Modify Policy S75 to require the redevelopment of RAF Scampton to come forward in accordance with a development plan document, such as through an Area Action Plan or a partial review of the Local Plan.
- Delete housing sites at Carholme Road, Lincoln (COL/CAR/005), land rear of Grantham Road Car Park, Sleaford (NK/SLEA/018), Linwood Road, Market Rasen (WL/MARK/007) and Green Man Road, Navenby (NK/NAV/007).
- Clarify the need for gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation and set out how these needs will be met.
- Update the housing trajectories within the Plan.

A number of other main modifications are also recommended to ensure that the Plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Introduction

1. This report contains our assessment of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review in terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It considers first whether the Plan's preparation has complied with the duty to co-operate. It then considers whether the Plan is compliant with the legal requirements and whether it is sound. Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') states that in order to be sound, a Local Plan should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
2. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee ('the Committee') has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review, submitted in July 2022, is the basis for our examination. It is the same document as was published for consultation between 16 March and 9 May 2022.
3. The submitted Plan is a joint Local Plan which covers the local planning authority areas of the City of Lincoln Council, North Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council. It has been prepared by the Committee in a formal partnership between the three authorities and Lincolnshire County Council.

Main Modifications

4. In accordance with section 20(7C) of the 2004 Act the Committee requested that we should recommend any main modifications ('MMs') necessary to rectify matters that make the Plan unsound (and /or not legally compliant) and thus incapable of being adopted. Our Report explains why the recommended MMs are necessary. The MMs are referenced in bold in the report in the form **MM1**, **MM2** etc, and are set out in full in the Appendix to this Report.
5. Following the examination hearings, the Committee prepared a schedule of proposed MMs and, where necessary, carried out Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of them. The MM schedule was subject to public consultation for six weeks. We have taken account of the consultation responses in coming to our conclusions in this Report and have made some amendments to the detailed wording of the MMs where necessary for clarity. None of the amendments significantly alters the content of the modifications as published for consultation or undermines the participatory processes and Sustainability Appraisal or Habitats Regulations Assessment that has been undertaken. Where necessary we have highlighted these amendments in the Report.

Policies Map

6. Each local planning authority must maintain an adopted policies map which illustrates geographically the application of the policies in the development plan. When submitting a local plan for examination, the Committee is required to provide a submission policies map showing the changes to the adopted policies map that would result from the proposals in the submitted plan. In this case, the submission policies map comprises the set of plans identified as "Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Policies Map".
7. The policies map is not defined in statute as a development plan document and so we do not have the power to recommend MMs to it. However, a number of the published MMs to the Plan's policies require corresponding changes to be made to the policies map. For example, the deletion of sites COL/CAR/005, NK/SLEA/018, WL/MARK/007 and NK/NAV/007. There are also instances where the geographic illustration of policies is not justified and changes need to be made to ensure that the Plan is justified and effective. Examples include the boundaries to the LN6 Industrial Area, the Lincolnshire Showground and the South East Quadrant Sustainable Urban Extension (site NK/CAN/003).
8. These further changes to the policies map were published for consultation alongside the MMs. When the Plan is adopted, in order to comply with the legislation and give effect to the Plan's policies, the Committee will need to update the adopted policies map to include all the proposed changes.

Context of the Plan

9. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was adopted in 2017 and provides the basis for the planning of the City of Lincoln and the districts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey. The joint Local Plan focussed growth towards the main urban areas of Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford with an appropriate level of growth also directed to the towns and villages in the surrounding rural areas.
10. The Local Plan Review continues with the same overarching spatial strategy. Sustainable Urban Extensions ('SUE's') are allocated once more at the main settlements of Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford and all the sites have made progress since 2017. Beyond the main urban areas Central Lincolnshire is predominantly rural and is characterised by a dispersed pattern of villages, with smaller market towns at Caistor and Market Rasen. Development is supported throughout the towns and villages by a combination of new and existing housing sites. A similar strategy to the 2017 Local Plan is proposed and none of the settlements have boundaries defined on a plan. However, one of the main differences in the Local Plan Review is the removal of the village growth levels, which previously allowed either a 10 or 15% increase in dwelling numbers.

11. The three local planning authorities have also recognised an urgent need for action in response to climate change. The Local Plan Review therefore includes five 'themes' to reduce energy consumption, increase renewable energy generation, prevent the loss of carbon sinks, facilitate the transition to a net-zero carbon lifestyle and adapt to climate change.
12. Finally, one of the main reasons for the Local Plan Review has been the impending closure and sale of land at RAF Scampton, a locally significant site previously home to the Royal Airforce Aerobatic Team. The Plan therefore includes a policy aimed at managing its future reuse and redevelopment.

Public Sector Equality Duty

13. In examining the Plan, we have had due regard to the aims expressed in S149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This has included our consideration of several matters including the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople, the needs of older people and those with disabilities. These matters are discussed in more detail under our assessment of soundness that follows.

Assessment of Duty to Co-operate

14. Section 20(5)(c) of the 2004 Act requires that we consider whether the Committee has complied with any duty imposed on it by section 33A in respect of the Plan's preparation.
15. Cooperation has taken place between the three local planning authorities and the County Council in the preparation of the Plan. This includes strategic cross boundary matters such as the scale and distribution of development and the identification of regeneration and opportunity sites, such as RAF Scampton. The latest Statement of Common Ground¹ also includes details of the engagement that took place between the Committee, neighbouring planning authorities and other prescribed bodies on strategic matters during the preparation of the Plan. Amongst other things, this includes the agreement that Central Lincolnshire will meet all of its housing and employment needs and is not tasked with meeting unmet needs from elsewhere.
16. To the north of Lincoln, the A15 is a key transport corridor and provides connectivity to the M180. Situated alongside the A15 is RAF Scampton, a site allocated in the Plan as a regeneration opportunity. Prior to submission, North Lincolnshire Council raised concerns that redevelopment of RAF Scampton could have implications for the capacity of the A15 and that the necessary detail should not be deferred to a masterplan. It was also suggested that work to

¹ Examination Documents EX008 and EX008A

produce a feasibility study into potential upgrades should be referenced in the Plan. However, both these issues are soundness matters and relate to the effectiveness of the Plan in dealing with the issue of the site's potential redevelopment. As far as the Duty is concerned, the Statement of Common Ground adequately sets out the engagement that has taken place and includes a commitment for ongoing dialogue as details for the site emerge.

17. To the west of Central Lincolnshire, a strategic logistics site of over 118 hectares is proposed in the Bassetlaw Local Plan at Apleyhead. A standalone Statement of Common Ground has been prepared with Bassetlaw District Council and is presented in Examination Document EX023. In summary, this sets out the agreement between both plan-making authorities that any additional housing need generated by the development will, in principle and subject to its own examination, be met in Bassetlaw. The approach taken and engagement carried out is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Duty.
18. We therefore conclude that where necessary the Committee has engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of the Plan and that the duty to co-operate has been met.

Assessment of Other Aspects of Legal Compliance

Sustainability Appraisal

19. The Committee produced a Sustainability Appraisal ('SA') of the Plan at each stage of its preparation, prepared a report of the findings and published each document for consultation.
20. The Interim SA Report² assessed different options for the scale of new housing, ranging from 1,086 dwellings per year (based on the local housing need calculation) to 1,325 dwellings per year (based on a jobs-led growth scenario). A further, higher figure of 2,960 dwellings per year was tested which reflects the amount of market housing required to meet affordable housing needs in full. The likely significant environmental effects were taken into account by the Committee, amongst other things (such as deliverability), in determining the scale of development proposed in the Plan.
21. Another option *could* have been tested which sought to maximise affordable housing provision but without going as high as 2,960 dwellings per year. However, there was no evidential basis to suggest what that figure should be, or anything to suggest that the likely significant environmental effects would be materially different. The range of reasonable alternatives was fit for purpose.

² Core Documents STA004b and STA004d

22. As part of the Local Plan Review, the Committee re-assessed the spatial strategy to determine whether or not it was still appropriate for the area. Alternative options included new settlements and a more even distribution of growth across smaller towns and villages. For the purposes of the SA, the Committee adequately considered a range of reasonable alternatives and provided reasons for the chosen strategy.
23. Where sites are concerned, the SA is part of the Committee's decision-making process. It does not identify which sites should be allocated or which sites are the "most sustainable". The start of the process involved a review of information held on existing known sites, in addition to those put forward as part of the 2019 call for sites and initial stages of consultation. Stage 2 then filtered sites by discounting those which conflicted with national planning policy (such as land in Flood Zone 3) and land divorced from settlements. Sites passing through this stage were taken forward as reasonable alternatives for the purposes of the SA. This is a reasonable and appropriate approach to take.
24. In some cases, detailed evidence had been provided by site promoters which was not used in the SA. This was to ensure that all options were tested on an equal and consistent basis. It was appropriate for the purposes of the SA. Evidence relating to mitigation was taken into account in the wider site selection process.
25. Following submission of the Plan it became apparent to the Committee that some sites were omitted from the SA in error. This was rectified by the SA Addendum Report which was published for consultation for 6 weeks between August and October 2022.³ The additional work did not identify any significant likely effects that would require any modifications to the submitted Plan.
26. In some limited cases, it has been suggested that the results of the SA (and the site selection methodology) include incorrect factual information. In response, the Committee has carried out a 'fact check' of relevant sites⁴ and confirms that the outcomes of the SA process remain the same. The other main concerns with the SA are the consistency and level of detail provided in the summaries. Whilst it is accepted by the Committee that summaries *could* have been more thorough, in our view the various iterations are adequate and proportionate to the task in hand, which started at Stage 1 with over 800 potential housing sites.
27. In conclusion therefore, the various iterations of the SA demonstrate that the Committee has identified, described and evaluated the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan, and considered reasonable alternatives taking into account its objectives and geographical scope. The

³ Examination Document EX005 and EX018

⁴ Examination Documents EX022 and EX025

Committee has carried out an adequate SA of the Plan and reasonable alternatives have been considered to a sufficient degree.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

28. The Habitats Regulations Assessment ('HRA') Main Report and Technical Appendices⁵ confirms that there are no Special Protection Areas ('SPA's) or Special Areas of Conservation ('SAC's) within Central Lincolnshire. The nearest is the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar site which is approximately 5km away from Central Lincolnshire to the north. It is designated for its ability to support mobile bird species including waterfowl, waders and birds of prey. Impacts on the Humber Estuary SAC, The Wash SPA and The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC are also considered.
29. A distance of 8km has been used in the HRA to consider likely impacts on the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar site from increased recreational disturbance arising from allocations in the Plan. This has been agreed with Natural England. In summary, the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment concludes that no significant adverse effects will arise due to the distance between proposed allocations and the designated sites, combined with other factors such as the availability of alternative recreational routes. Similar conclusions are reached in respect of possible impacts on functionally linked land and in respect of atmospheric changes affecting the integrity of sites. In the event that windfall proposals come forward, including proposals for wind turbines, the Plan provides sufficient safeguards through Policies such as S60 and S14.
30. We therefore conclude that the policies and allocations in the Plan will not have a significant adverse impact on the integrity of the Humber Estuary SPA and SAC, The Wash SPA or The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC.

Climate Change

31. Part of the Vision for the Local Plan Review is to ensure that new homes are efficient and are located in the right places to minimise the need to travel by car. Renewable energy development is also supported as Central Lincolnshire moves towards becoming a carbon net-zero region. This will be achieved by a combination of the spatial strategy, which seeks to direct the majority of new growth to the Lincoln Strategy Area, and through policies concerning the design of new buildings, reducing energy consumption, water efficiency, adaptable design and renewable energy.
32. The soundness of these policies is considered below. However, for the purposes of this assessment, we are satisfied that, taken as a whole, the Plan

⁵ Core Documents STA005.1a and STA005.1b

includes policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the area contributes towards the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Other Matters

33. Consultation on the Plan and the MMs was carried out in compliance with the Committee's Statement of Community Involvement.⁶ Electronic copies of the Plan and all supporting documents were provided online, with paper copies of the Plan and the SA available for inspection at Council offices and libraries in Lincoln, Market Rasen, Gainsborough and Sleaford. Press notices were also used to inform people of the consultation and those people who had previously been involved were contacted directly from the Committee's database.
34. Furthermore, at the Regulation 18 and 19 stages, Parish Councils were contacted 2 weeks prior to consultation starting. This allowed Parish Councils to both consider the Plan and make representations on time, but also to distribute information locally. Whilst there was a difference in the methods used by Parish Councils to raise awareness, this was outside the Committee's control. Nevertheless, it serves to highlight the proactive ways in which the Committee sought to consult with local communities in rural areas. We are satisfied that adequate public consultation was carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and that people were made aware of the Plan and had sufficient opportunities to submit comments. This is further evidenced by the representations received and participation in the examination.
35. The Development Plan, taken as a whole, includes policies to address the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in each of the three local planning authority areas. The Plan was submitted for examination after the indicative dates given in the Local Development Scheme, but this was largely due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Plan area is logical given the administrative boundaries of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey.
36. Paragraph 1.1.7 states that the Local Plan Review replaces the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, which was adopted in April 2017. It has been clear to participants throughout the examination that the Local Plan Review is a full replacement of the existing development plan for the area. For the avoidance of doubt, the word "all" could be added to the text at paragraph 1.1.7, but this would be a matter for the Committee. In our view it was not a matter that required amending by way of a MM.
37. The Plan complies with all other relevant legal requirements, including in the 2004 Act (as amended) and the 2012 Regulations.

⁶ Core Document STA003

Assessment of Soundness

Main Issues

38. Taking account of all the representations, the written evidence and the discussions that took place at the examination hearings, we have identified 11 main issues upon which the soundness of the Plan depends. This Report deals with these main issues. It does not respond to every point or issue raised by representors. Nor does it refer to every policy, policy criterion or allocation in the Plan.

Issue 1 – Whether the Plan is informed by a robust, objective assessment of housing need and whether the housing requirement is justified and positively prepared to meet that need

Local Housing Need Assessment

39. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, paragraph 61 of the Framework states that 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.
40. At the time of the Plan's preparation, the local housing need assessment identified a need for **1,060** net new dwellings per year (or 23,320 over the plan period). Using the latest affordability ratio results in a slightly higher figure of **1,102** dwellings per year (or 24,244 over the plan period). To ensure that the Plan is positively prepared, justified and up to date upon adoption, **MM1** is required to update Policy S2 to incorporate the latest figures.

Balancing Homes and Jobs

41. The PPG advises that the standard method for assessing local housing need provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of new homes needed in an area. It does not attempt to predict other factors which might have an impact on demographic change, such as growth strategies or infrastructure improvements.
42. As submitted, Policy S2 identifies the housing requirement for Central Lincolnshire as a range between 1,060 and 1,325 dwellings. The lower end of the range was derived from the local housing need assessment. The higher figure represents a projected scale of housing needed to support the creation of 24,000 new jobs over the plan period.

43. The use of a range is not precluded by the Framework. It is also referred to in the PPG.⁷ However, the Committee accepts that it has caused confusion and we agree that, as submitted, it is not sufficiently clear what the housing requirement is. Paragraph 16 of the Framework requires Local Plans to contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous. A MM is therefore needed in the interests of effectiveness.
44. Having established that a MM is necessary, the next question is whether the housing requirement should be 1,102 (the updated local housing need assessment figure) or 1,325 (the 'jobs growth' figure). The majority of participants at the hearing sessions favoured the higher figure, citing the need to plan positively and avoid situations where housing availability would constrain economic growth.
45. The justification for the 'jobs growth' figure is found in the Central Lincolnshire Housing Needs Assessment⁸ and the Economic Needs Assessment Update⁹ ('ENA'). In summary, 1,083 dwellings (the original local housing need assessment figure) are expected to provide enough population to support 677 jobs per year. In contrast, the ENA predicts that 992 jobs will be created on average over the plan period when taking into account past trends. Supporting this level of job growth would require around 1,325 dwellings per year.
46. However, the assessment of past trends is based on a period between 2012 and 2018. As the Committee points out, this reflected a period of economic growth following the last major global recession. Although the projection of 992 jobs per year has been downgraded slightly, it must nonetheless be considered in that context. There is nothing to suggest that such a high level of jobs growth would prevail over the plan period. In contrast, Oxford Econometrics and Experian project growth levels of between 420 and 714 jobs per year.
47. Furthermore, the ENA was published in March 2020. The authors therefore recognise that it has been produced during a period of "exceptional economic volatility", coming only weeks after the UK formally leaving the EU in January 2020 and at the outset of the Coronavirus pandemic. More recent global economic pressures are also now relevant, such as rising inflation driven by higher food and fuel costs. Clearly, these factors were not known at the time of publication but serve to demonstrate the cyclical nature of housing and employment markets.
48. For these reasons, we find that the use of the higher figure of 1,325 dwellings is not justified as the housing requirement. Instead, **MM1** is necessary to make it clear that the requirement is **1,102** dwellings per year, or 24,244 dwellings over

⁷ Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 68-027-20190722

⁸ Core Document HOU001

⁹ Core Document ECO001

the plan period. This is the minimum number of new homes needed. It has been calculated using the standard methodology as advocated by national planning policy. It is therefore justified, robust and sound.

49. Concerns have been expressed that this is a negative approach and will constrain business growth by limiting housebuilding in Central Lincolnshire. However, in preparing the Plan, and allocating sites for housing, the Committee has not been bound by the minimum housing requirement. This is evidenced by the total identified supply. Based on completions since 2018, sites with planning permission and/or under construction, and sites allocated in the Plan, roughly 34,700 dwellings are projected to be built over the plan period.¹⁰ No persuasive evidence has been provided to demonstrate that basing the housing requirement on the local housing need figure would harmfully constrain growth, especially when also considering the permissive approach to windfall sites around the main settlements in Policy S3.

Conclusion

50. We therefore conclude that, subject to the recommend MMs, the Plan is informed by a robust, objective assessment of housing need and that the housing requirement is justified and positively prepared to meet that need.

Issue 2 – Whether the settlement hierarchy and distribution of development is justified, positively prepared and consistent with national planning policy

Settlement Hierarchy – Policy S1

51. The hierarchy in Policy S1 is based primarily on the size of each settlement, by total dwelling number, using a base-date of April 2018. In considering the settlement hierarchy, no detailed assessment of services was carried out. The level of service provision was used to determine the site allocations.
52. For the purposes of ranking settlements, making a distinction based on size can be appropriate for plan-making. This is because, typically, larger settlements such as Lincoln, the Market Towns and the Main Towns have a greater ability to accommodate additional growth, from absorbing impacts on the character and appearance of the area to benefitting from services, facilities and public transport provision, thus limiting the need to travel. It is the same approach that was used in the existing Local Plan and is justified and sound.
53. Dwelling numbers were not used for Lincoln, but the city is by far the largest settlement in the plan area and is the county town of Lincolnshire. Its position at the top of the hierarchy is therefore justified. Below Lincoln, Sleaford and

¹⁰ CLJSPC Matter 9 Hearing Statement

Gainsborough are the main settlements in West Lindsey and North Kesteven and are also noticeably larger than the Market Towns. It is therefore appropriate to make a distinction from Caistor and Market Rasen below them.

54. Based on dwelling numbers alone, some Large Villages are actually bigger than the Market Towns. But Caistor and Market Rasen are historic towns which serve and support their wider rural hinterland. They are materially different to even some of the largest villages such as Cherry Willingham, Branston and Skellingthorpe. Their position in the hierarchy is therefore justified. It also reflects the approach taken in the existing Local Plan.
55. The threshold for a Large Village is anything above 750 dwellings. Medium Villages range from 250-749 dwellings, with Small Villages between 50 and 249 dwellings. By using this approach there will inevitably be settlements on the cusp of each tier. There will also be circumstances where planning permissions and/or developments built since the base date of the survey mean that settlements are now larger. But similar issues would arise with whatever the threshold used. There also needs to be a cut-off point in the evidence base when assessing dwelling numbers in a village, which naturally change over time. As a result, these factors do not undermine the approach taken and the distinction between villages is justified and sound.
56. Settlements with between 15 and 49 dwellings are classed as Hamlets, provided that houses are clustered together to form a single developed footprint. This will require an element of professional judgement because Hamlets are not listed in the Plan by name. However, this is a reasonable approach given the size and rural context of Lincolnshire and the sheer number of possible Hamlets. In our view, the Plan is sufficiently clear enough to be effective. It also reflects the approach in the existing Local Plan and we have not been made aware of any instances which demonstrate that use of the hierarchy has been ineffective.

Distribution of Housing Development – Policy S2

57. Policy S2 aims to direct around 64% of development towards the Lincoln Strategy Area through a combination of existing commitments and allocations in the Plan. The Lincoln Strategy Area is different to the Lincoln Urban Area and includes surrounding villages such as Bassingham, Saxilby, Waddington, Welton and Dunholme. The area is based on travel to work patterns and recognises the close physical and functional relationship between Lincoln and the surrounding rural villages.
58. Directing the majority of growth to the Lincoln Strategy Area continues to be an appropriate and positively prepared strategy. It reflects the primary role and function of Lincoln and seeks to direct significant new development to places which are, or can be made, sustainable in accordance with paragraph 105 of

the Framework. However, for effectiveness, **MM1** is needed to clarify that the totals include planned and committed developments.

59. Below the Lincoln Strategy Area, Policy S2 directs 12% of growth to Gainsborough, Sleaford and 'Elsewhere'. This also reflects the existing Local Plan but was reconsidered by the Committee during the Plan's preparation. Other options that were considered included directing greater development to the rural areas, as evidenced by the SA and the Committee's Matter 3 Hearing Statement. In summary, a continuation of the 64/12/12/12 split was considered to represent an appropriate strategy for Central Lincolnshire. Based on the evidence provided, judgements around the percentage of growth directed to each location are reasonable and sound.
60. In terms of housing numbers, the latest information¹¹ shows a general alignment between planned housing growth and the percentages in Policy S2 since the start of the plan period. In Gainsborough and Sleaford, the numbers are slightly below that anticipated by the Plan (9.5% and 10.5% respectively). However, the differences are not significant. In both locations the SUEs are also still at a relatively early stage. This will be a matter for the Committee to monitor.
61. In the 'Elsewhere' category (which includes several rural villages) the latest information shows an anticipated supply of over 5,400 dwellings over the plan period, or nearly 17%. This remains very broadly consistent with the 12% in Policy S2 and we are satisfied that the Plan will be effective in meeting the intended strategy. It also demonstrates that rural communities beyond the Lincoln Strategy Area will continue to see a proportionate, and meaningful, amount of housing growth.
62. The Plan does not apportion a percentage or amount of growth between individual settlements. However, Central Lincolnshire is a large, predominantly rural area covering three districts with a significant number of rural villages. Moreover, at a village-level, the amount of growth planned for is based on factors such as the availability of sites put forward, their suitability and a consideration of existing commitments. The approach taken to the distribution of housing is therefore proportionate and sound. It also ensures that the Plan is focused on growth towards the most sustainable locations within and around Lincoln, and at Gainsborough and Sleaford.

Distribution of Employment – Policies S2 and S28

63. The distribution of employment development reflects the same principles around focussing significant new development in the most accessible locations which are, or can be made, sustainable. For effectiveness, this is made clear by **MM1**.

¹¹ CLJSPC Matter 3 Hearing Statement

64. The employment allocations all reflect the spatial strategy and are located in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford. The exceptions are Witham St Hughs and the extension to the Hemswell Cliff Business Park. However, development is underway at Witham St Hughs and forms part of a new mixed-use community. Hemswell Cliff is also identified as an Enterprise Zone and has been identified for new employment growth throughout the existing Local Plan. Its inclusion remains justified.

Conclusion

65. Subject to the recommended MMs, we therefore conclude that the settlement hierarchy and distribution of development is justified, positively prepared and consistent with national planning policy.

Issue 3 – Whether the Plan will be effective in achieving the proposed spatial strategy and whether its policies will be effective for decision-making purposes

Introduction

66. As with the existing Local Plan, no settlement boundaries are proposed in the Local Plan Review. Instead, new development proposals are assessed against Policies S3, S4 or S5 depending on their location.
67. The starting point is whether a proposal is within, adjacent to, or outside the 'developed footprint' of a settlement. A definition of 'developed footprint' is provided in the Plan and excludes locations such as gardens, paddocks and other undeveloped land where it relates more to the surrounding countryside than the built-up area of the settlement. As with the application of the policy in the existing Local Plan, an element of professional judgement will be necessary to determine whether a proposal falls within the developed footprint. Circumstances between sites in the same settlement may also vary. Nevertheless, we are satisfied that the Plan is clear enough to be effective.

Housing in the Lincoln Urban Area, Main Towns and Market Towns – Policy S3

68. Development is supported in principle within the developed footprint of Lincoln, Gainsborough, Sleaford, Market Rasen and Caistor. The Plan is also intended to allow development in appropriate locations *adjacent* to the developed footprint of the main urban areas. In doing so, it is positively prepared in seeking to increase the supply of housing in locations which are, or can be made, sustainable. In principle, this is justified and consistent with paragraphs 73 and 105 of the Framework.
69. However, as submitted, these intentions are unclear. For effectiveness, **MM3** is therefore needed to confirm that proposals will be supported on sites

immediately adjacent to the developed footprint where they meet certain criteria. For the same reasons the criteria also need to be specified in the policy. This includes requiring schemes to provide the requisite amount of affordable housing, avoiding harmful landscape and townscape impacts, being adequately served by infrastructure, integrating successfully with the community they adjoin and being accessible by sustainable modes of transport. The criteria ensure that windfall housing sites on the edges of settlements will be considered on a transparent and consistent basis and lead to high quality developments.

70. In order to be justified and effective, it is also necessary to include a restriction on the size and scale of developments permitted by Policy S3. Allowing windfall sites to come forward on the edges of settlements without any consideration of size could start to undermine the purpose of the plan-led system. Requiring proposals to be subordinate in size to the community they adjoin will therefore strike an appropriate balance between providing a flexible, positively prepared strategy for windfall sites without undermining the role and function of the Plan. Alternative wording was discussed during the hearing sessions, but we are satisfied that the text proposed by **MM3** will be effective in allowing proportionate new development around the edges of the main urban areas.
71. For the same reasons, it is necessary to make it clear that windfall proposals under Policy S3 must not compromise the delivery of other site allocations in the same settlement. The changes in **MM3** make this requirement clearer and are needed for effectiveness. Consequential changes to the supporting text are required by **MM2**, which also removes the erroneous reference to market saturation which would be difficult to prove and is neither justified nor effective.

Housing Development in or Adjacent to Villages – Policy S4

72. The principle of new residential development is also supported within the developed footprint of Large, Medium and Small Villages. However, unlike Lincoln, Gainsborough, Sleaford, Market Rasen and Caistor, a size restriction of up to 10 dwellings is applied to Large and Medium Villages, with up to 5 dwellings permitted in Small Villages.
73. The primary reason for limiting the scale of development in villages is to provide certainty to local communities. As part of the Local Plan Review process, the Committee has considered all sites put forward for 10 or more dwellings and allocated land where it was considered suitable to do so. The purpose of Policy S4 is to support smaller, windfall sites, with the intention for larger sites to be considered as part of the plan-led system, either through the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans or Local Plan Reviews (such as this one). When also taking into account the typical size of villages, and the fact that land availability will be far less than in places such as Lincoln, the policy is justified and sound. Moreover, in the event that a larger site was identified in a village (such as a

large brownfield site for example), then Policy S4 includes an appropriately worded caveat to account for site specific circumstances.

74. One of the main differences between the existing Local Plan and the Local Plan Review is the restriction on development *adjacent* to villages. In the existing Local Plan, Policy LP4 allows new housing on the edges of villages where the scheme has local support and does not result in growth of more than 10 or 15% depending on location. In the submitted Plan, Policy S4 only allows new residential development *within* villages, unless it is a First Homes exception site or a rural exception site.
75. For the reasons set out above, seeking to focus development towards the larger settlements of Lincoln, Gainsborough, Sleaford, Market Rasen and Caistor is entirely appropriate and sound. Although the existing Local Plan allowed some development on the edges of villages, the Committee is not duty bound to stick with this strategy indefinitely. In fact, one of the reasons for the Local Plan Review is to address issues whereby perfectly acceptable schemes were prevented by the 10 or 15% limits. The approach is therefore consistent with paragraph 33 of the Framework, which requires policies to be reviewed at least once every five years and updated as necessary.
76. Evidence in the Committee's Matter 3 Hearing Statement shows that over 25% of housing expected to come forward in the plan period (from commitments and allocations) will take place in Large Villages. This accounts for over 6,800 new homes. Nearly 1,750 dwellings (or approximately 6.4%) of housing growth will take place in Medium Villages, with around 785 dwellings in Small Villages (or 2.9%). Whilst taking a slightly more restrictive approach to windfall housing sites, the Plan therefore still includes a substantial amount of growth in villages. Neighbourhood Plans also provide an appropriate mechanism to identify and allocate sites for housing until the next Local Plan Review.

Development in the Countryside – Policy S5

77. Where a proposal is outside the developed footprint of a Hamlet or Village¹², it falls within the 'countryside'. This is sufficiently clear to users of the Plan. Within the countryside, Policy S5 applies and lists the various types of development which are permitted.
78. Explicit support is given for rural enterprises, agricultural diversification schemes and the modernisation and adaptation of rural land-based developments (such as proposals to help mitigate the impacts of climate change). The policy is therefore positively prepared and consistent with paragraph 84 of the

¹² *and is not adjacent to the Lincoln Urban Area, a Main Town or a Market Town under Policy S3

Framework which states that planning policies should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in the rural area.

79. Where new residential development is concerned, the policy also reflects current national planning policy by restricting proposals to the re-use of existing buildings, replacement dwellings and accommodation for rural workers. Requiring residential conversion schemes to demonstrate that buildings are no longer suitable or required for commercial uses is a justified and proportionate way of promoting sustainable patterns of development in a predominantly rural area. It ensures that opportunities are provided for rural businesses to grow, expand and diversify and seeks to limit the need for additional new development in the countryside to situations where it is required. The policy is not restrictive, and ultimately allows for the appropriate reuse of buildings. In this regard it is consistent with the Framework. Furthermore, it would only apply to applications requiring planning permission, with conversions also permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.
80. The Plan does not explicitly refer to brownfield sites which may become redundant in the countryside, and which cannot be reused for the purposes of Policy S5. But this does not make the Plan unsound. Given the context and history of Lincolnshire, the majority of brownfield sites in the countryside are Ministry of Defence ('MoD') sites which are covered by Policy S84. Neighbourhood Plans, future updates of the Local Plan and exceptions such as enabling development would also provide other opportunities to promote the suitable reuse and redevelopment of brownfield sites. Moreover, just because a site is previously developed does not justify wholesale policy support for what could be a significantly more intensive use in typically less accessible locations. The scope of Policy S5 as submitted is appropriate and justified.

Conclusion

81. We therefore conclude that, subject to the recommended main modifications, the Plan will be effective in achieving the proposed spatial strategy and the relevant policies will be effective for decision-making purposes.

Issue 4 – Whether the process for selecting residential site allocations was robust and whether they are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy

Methodology

82. The Local Plan Review re-allocates sites which are included in the existing Local Plan (and have not yet come forward) and allocates new sites. A useful breakdown of the sites is provided in Core Document HOU007. Where sites are currently allocated, they have previously been examined, found to be sound and adopted as part of the development plan.

83. The starting point for the Local Plan Review was to assess information on existing allocations and sites submitted as part of the 'call for sites' process. This resulted in over 800 potential housing sites being identified. The next stage was to sift out sites based on their capacity (a minimum of 10 dwellings was required), whether land was within or adjacent to a named settlement, sites in Flood Zone 3 and land containing Scheduled Monuments.
84. Requiring land to be within, or adjacent to, named settlements in the hierarchy is a reasonable and justified way of filtering out sites to determine suitable allocations in the Plan. It ensures that the process is consistent, transparent and seeks to direct growth to existing towns and villages in accordance with the spatial strategy. Sites that were not well connected when considered in isolation, but which could be connected via another allocation were not discounted at this stage.
85. The level of services and facilities in each settlement was then assessed. This process identified core facilities such as schools, healthcare, retail, employment, post offices, pharmacies and the frequency of bus and rail connections. It also informed the 'Village Profiles', which included an overall summary, a key constraints map, details of recent developments and commentary on the relationship with any nearby settlements. The Village Profiles were also sent to Parish Councils. Any comments received were considered and the Village Profiles then informed the Site Settlement Analysis Report¹³. In turn this informed the selection process.
86. All identified sites were then subject to further assessment and visits were undertaken by Officers. A Geographic Information System ('GIS') based desktop constraint assessment was also carried out with the results being categorised in a red/amber/green ('RAG') scoring matrix. External organisations were consulted on the sieved sites to further inform the assessment of their potential suitability for housing. This included the NHS.
87. The likely capacity of each potential housing site was calculated by using density zones. Lincoln sites within 1km of the railway station were defined as higher density, with sites beyond the zone classified as being in the 'wider urban area'. This approach was taken in order to promote sustainable development by having higher density development in the city centre and around the transport hub of the station. It is reasonable and justified in seeking to promote more sustainable patterns of development.
88. In order to further inform site capacity, a range of schemes with extant planning permission were used as comparisons. For the likely developable areas some

¹³ Core Document STA008

assumptions were required. However, these are reasonable, such as the need for larger sites to require space for supporting infrastructure and open space.

89. It has been pointed out that some factual errors were made in the evidence-base documents used to determine the site allocations. However, the Committee has clarified these errors through Examination Document EX025 and confirms that they are minor in nature and do not materially affect the assessment process or suitability of the sites. Based on the information provided we have no reasons to find that the process was fundamentally flawed.
90. In summary, the Committee's site selection methodology ensured that sites were considered on a consistent and transparent basis and followed a wide-ranging and detailed assessment process. Inevitably, there will be disagreements with the outcomes for some sites, but on the whole, we consider that the process and any judgements made by Officers on which sites to allocate, were robust and justified.

General Policy Requirements

91. Policies S77-S82 set out residential site allocations by tier of the settlement hierarchy. In general, the approach taken was to list the allocations and provide an indicative dwelling capacity. Only where it was considered necessary were site-specific requirements included. Because the Plan is read as a whole, and therefore other policies would apply to development proposals regardless, this approach is justified and sound. However, to ensure that the Plan is effective and clear to decision-makers, the position is clarified by **MM41**.
92. As submitted, allocations on the edges of villages have a generic requirement that the final design must be 'low density' and in keeping with local vernacular. Although the rationale for the policy is sensible, it does not automatically follow that sites must be 'low density' to reflect their rural context and surroundings. Additional flexibility is therefore needed for effectiveness and is achieved by **MM55, MM56, MM57, MM58, MM60, MM61, MM64, MM65, MM67, MM70, MM71, MM73, MM74, MM75, MM76, MM77, MM78, MM79, MM80, MM81, MM82, MM83, MM84, MM85, MM88, MM89** and **MM91**.

Sustainable Urban Extensions ('SUE's') – Policies S68, S69 and S76

93. Policy S76 lists the SUEs and provides an indicative dwelling capacity for each one. This is based on detailed plans for each site and/or assumptions on density and dwelling capacity as set out in the Sustainable Urban Extensions Evidence Reports¹⁴.

¹⁴ Core Documents EVR068-EVR071

94. All the SUEs were assessed to consider whether it remained appropriate to allocate the sites in the Local Plan Review. They were not 'automatically' carried forward without prior consideration by Officers. This consideration included factors such as progress made and whether any material changes in circumstances were relevant. The principle of the SUEs and their part in the growth strategy for Central Lincolnshire has been established by the existing Local Plan and remains an appropriate strategy for meeting housing needs. Several of the sites have made good progress and they are an integral part of the plan-led system in Central Lincolnshire. Paragraph 73 of the Framework recognises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale developments, such as new settlements or significant extensions to towns and villages.
95. The overarching requirements for all the SUEs are provided in Policy S68. It sets out a need to approve matters such as phasing, the timely delivery of infrastructure and to consider an appropriate mix of uses. The requirements are all justified in the interests of securing comprehensive and high-quality development. They also recognise that due to their size, some of the SUEs will deliver beyond the plan period and therefore appropriate details around phasing and delivery need to be agreed.
96. One of the main changes from the existing Local Plan is the omission of a requirement to provide gypsy and traveller pitches on the SUEs. As discussed below and evidenced by documents EX031 and HOU005, the identified needs for gypsy and traveller accommodation is likely to be met through other means. Therefore, it is not necessary to include specific pitch targets on the SUEs in the Local Plan Review at this moment in time.

Lincoln SUEs

97. In January 2022, a hybrid planning application was approved for a residential-led mixed-use development comprising up to 3,200 new homes at the Lincoln Western Growth Corridor (COL/BOU/001)¹⁵. The scale, amount and mix of uses on the site have therefore been established.
98. Not all of the allocated site is covered by the approved scheme. Because this land could still come forward, in the interests of effectiveness it is necessary for the Plan to specify that any additional development proposals must address relevant site constraints, namely, flood risk, heritage and access. It is also necessary to require future proposals to integrate with the wider site to ensure that a coherent and comprehensive development is achieved. Both soundness issues are resolved by **MM36**.

¹⁵ Ref 2019/0294/RG3

99. In December 2022, outline planning permission was granted for part of the first phase of the Lincoln South East Quadrant (NK/CAN/003)¹⁶. A resolution to grant permission for another application across the remainder of the first phase was passed in February 2022¹⁷. These approvals provide confidence that the site is developable and both schemes are coming forward in accordance with the Lincoln South East Quadrant Broad Concept Plan and Design Code¹⁸. However, for effectiveness it is necessary to correct a cartographical error and amend the site area in Policy S76 (**MM45**). A corresponding change to the policies maps will also be required by the Committee upon adoption of the Plan.
100. Development is now underway on the first phase of the Lincoln North East Quadrant (COL/ABB/001). Although planning permission has been granted, it is still necessary to include a policy in the Plan to guide future proposals and later phases should details change.
101. Development of the South West Quadrant (NK/NHYK/001) was intended to take place alongside the first phase of the Lincoln Southern Bypass (also referred to as the North Hykeham Relief Road). However, in securing funding from the Department for Transport, Lincolnshire County Council presented a case for delivering the road in a single phase. This was approved and funding secured.
102. The delivery of the allocation linked to the construction of the relief road is therefore still justified, but there may be scope to provide some housing as part of earlier phases without prejudicing highway safety or the project as a whole. This is reflected in the supporting text to the Plan, but not in Policy S69. For effectiveness, and to provide additional flexibility, **MM36** therefore states that any proposals to deliver early phases in advance of the road completion will be supported, but only where it can be demonstrated that such proposals will not undermine the delivery of the relief road and are informed by the necessary transport evidence. The necessary amount of transport evidence needed to support a proposal would be determined as part of the planning application process.
103. As consulted upon, in error **MM36** did not delete the words “in line with the agreed Broad Concept Plan” from Policy S69(d), as shown in earlier drafts and discussed at the hearing sessions. However, upon reflection, this text does not need to be deleted to make the Plan sound. This is because even in the event that an early phase was proposed, in the interests of the comprehensive planning of the site and good design, it would still be necessary to show how the development (any necessary highways mitigation) tied in with the Broad Concept Plan. It is therefore shown as retained text in the schedule of MMs in the Appendix to this Report. We have also added the words “any associated”

¹⁶ Ref 16/1564/OUT

¹⁷ Ref 20/0057/OUT

¹⁸ Core Document HOU012

and “mitigation”. These are minor changes and simply reflect the fact that the mitigation will be associated with the scheme and the evidence supporting it.

104. The southern site boundary of the Lincoln South West Quadrant SUE is intended to follow the line of the bypass. However, because the precise route of the bypass is currently unknown here, there is a small discrepancy on the submission version policies maps. For effectiveness, it is therefore necessary to state in the Plan where the boundary of the site will be formed (**MM35**).

Gainsborough SUEs

105. Progress has also been made with the SUEs at Gainsborough. Development is underway on a first phase at the Gainsborough Southern Neighbourhood¹⁹ (WL/GAIN/015) and the second phase has a national housebuilder lined up to take the site forward. A planning application is also before West Lindsey District Council for the remainder of the site.²⁰ At the Northern Neighbourhood (WL/GAIN/001), detailed planning permission is in place for the first phase and development is expected to commence soon. We are therefore satisfied that the allocations are developable and the policy requirements are justified.

Sleaford SUEs

106. Land at Handley Chase (NK/SLEA/014) benefits from various planning permissions granted since adoption of the existing Local Plan and development is underway. The Sleaford West Quadrant has lagged behind and despite a resolution to grant outline planning permission in 2017, no formal decision has been issued owing to an outstanding legal agreement. There is no dispute regarding the suitability of the site for the uses proposed (it is also in the existing Plan) but questions have been raised about the realistic prospect of its delivery.
107. However, there is nothing to suggest that the SUE is not developable (at least in part) over the plan period, which runs until 2040. As an allocation in the Local Plan Review, it therefore remains justified. Furthermore, in the event that the situation changes, and the Sleaford West Quadrant (or any other SUE for that matter) is no longer viable, then the option is available to the Committee to carry out a review and update of the Plan as required. This has always been the Committee's intention. For effectiveness (and recognising that the situation on sites may change in the first five years from adoption) **MM34** is therefore necessary to include this commitment in the Plan.

¹⁹ Ref 140081

²⁰ Ref 145239

Regeneration and Opportunity Areas – Policies NS72, NS73 and NS74

108. Policies NS72-NS74 identify Regeneration and Opportunity Areas throughout Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford. The purpose of the policies is to provide in principle support for the redevelopment and regeneration of these areas. The requirement to provide masterplans also seeks to ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken to development proposals. Because of the uncertainty surrounding possible future uses, and the timescales for their delivery, they are not allocated in the same way as housing or employment sites. This is a proportionate, reasonable and justified approach.
109. At Gainsborough, no indication is given to the type of uses that will be permitted. For effectiveness, this is rectified by **MM37**. The MM also states that proposals should not undermine the ambitions of the regeneration area which are set out in criterion a) to g). As consulted upon, the MM does not include any reference to existing uses, the improvement and expansion of which may contribute to wider regeneration aims and objectives. We have therefore added the words “existing uses” to the schedule of MMs in the Appendix to this Report. Other policies in the Plan would ensure that appropriate separation and mitigation was provided between new residential uses and existing commercial operators (such as S53).
110. A MM is also required for effectiveness to Policy NS74, stating that any redevelopment plans at the former hospital in Greylees must be part of a heritage-led landscape scheme, thus ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to the Registered Park and Garden (**MM38**).

Housing Sites in the Lincoln Urban Area – Policy S77

111. Policy S77 allocates 19 sites for residential development in the Lincoln Urban Area that will provide around 1,500 dwellings. It is necessary to delete one allocation (COL/CAR/005) as the site is now coming forward for alternative uses and the policy as submitted is therefore no longer effective (**MM46**). A corresponding change to the policies maps will be required by the Committee upon adoption of the Plan.
112. Land at Cathedral Quarry, Riseholme Road (COL/MIN/005) includes requirements to retain the bunds around the site and the enhancement of biodiversity. However, keeping the bunds is not the only way of achieving the necessary separation between existing and proposed new housing or of enhancing biodiversity on the site. The bunds could also be reused to help fill the former quarry and a new landscaping scheme could help ensure an overall net gain in biodiversity, potentially including any existing wildlife corridors and protected trees. To ensure that the allocation is effective and justified, both requirements are therefore modified by **MM47**. For the same reasons, and to

reflect more detailed design work in the submitted planning application, the capacity also needs to be modified to 70 dwellings. (**MM47**)

113. Land south of Station Road, Waddington Low Fields (NK/WAD/004A) includes requirements to contribute towards the Lincoln Southern Bypass and towards primary school education and health. But no justification has been provided to determine what these contributions are or demonstrate why they are necessary. When also taking into account that other policies in the Plan will apply to future planning applications (and require the provision of infrastructure) the criteria are not justified and deleted by **MM48**. The remainder of the allocation is justified and will provide a proportionate extension to the Lincoln Urban Area with shops, services and public transport provision all within walking distance.

Housing Sites in the Main Towns – Policy S78

114. The majority of allocations in the Main Towns either have planning permission or are under construction. The principle of development has therefore already been established and the sites are justified. At Grantham Road, Sleaford (NK/SLEA/018) development is now complete. The allocation is no longer required and for effectiveness is deleted by **MM49**. A corresponding change to the policies maps will be required by the Committee upon adoption of the Plan.

Housing Sites in the Market Towns – Policy S79

115. Around 1,000 dwellings are allocated across 13 sites in the Market Towns. Again, several sites either benefit from planning permission or are under construction. At Market Rasen, the allocated site on Linwood Road (WL/MARK/007) is coming forward for less than 10 dwellings. To reflect the site selection methodology, maintain a consistent approach to allocations and ensure that the Plan is justified, the allocation is therefore deleted by **MM50**. A corresponding change to the policies maps will be required by the Committee upon adoption of the Plan.

116. At Legsby Road, Market Rasen (WL/MARK/001), around 1.84 hectares of land is identified for 55 new homes. Whether or not additional land could have been included in the boundary, there is nothing to suggest that the submitted site is unsound or requires additional land to facilitate the delivery of housing.

Housing Sites in Large Villages – Policy S80

117. A significant amount of time has been spent during the examination carefully considering allocations at Welton. Five sites are allocated, totalling around 750 new dwellings. We have therefore had due regard to the cumulative impact of development, especially on services such as health and education.

118. It is accepted by the Committee that Welton has 'more' development than some other villages of a similar size. However, Welton is a Large Village within the Lincoln Strategy Area, which for the reasons set out above, is the focus for new development. It also benefits from public transport connections into Lincoln and has a good range of services. Moreover, the village has a close functional and physical relationship with neighbouring Dunholme, which contains additional services such as the local convenience store. The good range of services and facilities in the two villages are set out in the Site Allocations Settlement Analysis Report (STA008).
119. For these reasons, and when taking into account the size of the villages and the absence of any objections or compelling evidence from relevant consultees (such as the County Council or the NHS), we consider that the scale of development is proportionate and justified. In the event that additional infrastructure was required, then other policies in the Plan (namely Policy S45) would apply. When read as a whole the Plan includes sufficient policies to ensure that the provision of new, or contribution towards, existing infrastructure is secured where necessary.
120. Site WL/WELT/001A is to the west of the village. As submitted, Policy S80 states that access will be taken from Heath Lane. This is an error and should refer to Cliff Road (which is the name of the main road adjacent to the site). For effectiveness the error is corrected by **MM66**. No access is proposed from Prebend Lane, and as part of any future development pedestrian connectivity will be necessary. The development requirements also introduce the need for a scheme to mitigate against on-site surface water drainage issues.
121. To the north of the village are two allocations adjacent to one another. Sites WL/WELT/011 and WL/WELT/007. The larger of the two sites (WL/WELT/011) is allocated in the existing Local Plan for around 350 dwellings (site CL1491). That allocation reflected an outline planning permission for 278 dwellings and 72 retirement units (350 in total). Following adoption of the existing Local Plan, reserved matters approval was granted for the houses, which are now under construction. Approval for the retirement units has lapsed.
122. The approved layout does not use the full extent of the allocated site. An area of unused land remains within the site and is shown on the approved layout plan as 'safeguarded for additional development'. It is argued that a further 100 houses could come forward and that the Plan should be modified accordingly.
123. We agree that, as submitted, the Plan is unsound because the development coming forward does not reflect the allocation and will leave an undeveloped parcel of land which has, through both the existing Local Plan and the approved scheme, always been included in the site and identified for housing. However, the amount of additional housing has not been properly tested having regard to

material planning considerations such as highways capacity, possible impacts on local services or impacts on the character and appearance of the area. Simply increasing the capacity of the site at this stage would not be justified.

124. In order to rectify the soundness issue, **MM69** therefore introduces text into Policy S80 which states that proposals for additional residential development on the area of land safeguarded for housing under the approved scheme will be supported in principle. In doing so, it is therefore clear to decision-makers, developers and the local community that the parcel remains identified for new housing, but ensures that the type and amount of development will have to be justified at the planning application stage to address these issues accordingly. Because the amount of development will therefore be design and capacity led, there is no need to amend the dwelling capacity figure, which is only indicative.
125. WL/WELT/007 is bounded to the north, east and south by a combination of existing development and the golf course. Combined with its boundary landscaping, allocation of the site would provide additional housing whilst retaining the form and shape of the village. Subject to the preferred access being taken through the adjoining site, the allocation is justified.
126. Site WL/WELT/003 is part of an existing allocation in the current Local Plan (CL1490). That allocation has been partially built-out, leaving the area of land identified as WL/WELT/003. The remaining parcel will not extend residential development any further north or east than the existing developed footprint of the village and its inclusion in the Local Plan Review is justified.
127. Adjacent to the eastern boundary of the allocation is site WL/WELT/008A. As submitted, Policy S80 states that access is preferred from site WL/WELT/003. If access from Eastfield Lane is taken, then the Plan states that road widening and a new footway may be required.
128. Following submission of the Plan, the Committee put forward some “suggested modifications” in Examination Document EX011. This included a suggestion to delete WL/WELT/008A because of concerns over access. In summary, it was considered that the necessary widening of Eastfield Lane could not be achieved and that access from WL/WELT/003 is undeliverable due to ownership issues.
129. However, following discussions at the hearing sessions, and after receiving clarification from highways officers, the Committee changed their position on the Welton sites as set out in Examination Documents EX027 and EX028. Document EX027 states that following further consideration of the issues it is not necessary to delete the site on highways grounds. For the reasons set out in our letter dated 11 January 2023²¹, we agree. The previous planning

²¹ Examination Document EX034

application process did not raise insurmountable highways objections, only that road widening and a new footway would be necessary in the event that access was taken from Eastfield Lane. Based on the evidence provided and observations at our site visits, we find nothing to suggest that these works cannot be carried out, or that allocation of the site would lead to severe residual impacts on the highway network. The allocation is therefore justified, but for effectiveness, it is necessary to make it clear that the highway works will be required as part of the scheme. (**MM68**)

130. As submitted, Policy S80 also requires site WL/WELT/008A to be “phased back” after other allocations in the village without planning permission. However, no persuasive reasons have been given by the Committee to justify why this is necessary. It is also unclear when and how the site will be “phased back”. For example, the policy does not stipulate whether this should be until other developments have started, or have to wait until they are fully occupied. Even if there was a justified reason why an allocation should be delayed, such as to await the provision of new infrastructure, then this could be adequately dealt with as part of the planning application process. For these reasons, whilst noting the comments provided by West Lindsey District Council, the requirement is neither justified nor effective and is deleted by **MM68**.
131. At Billingham, sites NK/BIL/002, NK/BIL/003, NK/BIL/004, NK/BIL/005 and NK/BIL/006a are adjacent to one another. Policy S80 contains requirements to provide connectivity across the sites, but this should also include vehicular access to ensure a comprehensive and well-planned extension to the village. The necessary changes are made by **MM51**, **MM52**, **MM53** and **MM54** and are needed for effectiveness. With the exception of NK/BIL/006a, all the sites are already allocated in the existing Local Plan. The additional land is justified and will effectively fill a gap between existing housing to the east and the development underway to the west off Mill Lane.
132. Land at Top Farm, Green Road, Navenby has now been completed (NK/NAV/007). As with other similar sites, for effectiveness it is therefore deleted by **MM59**. A corresponding change to the policies maps will be required by the Committee upon adoption of the Plan. At Keelby, both allocations are justified but it would not be appropriate to access WL/KEE/003 from Church Lane due to the width and layout of the road. For effectiveness this is made clear by **MM62**.
133. At Nettleham, land east of Brookfield Avenue (WL/NHAM/018) is allocated by the existing Local Plan and the made Neighbourhood Plan. Although the allocation is justified in principle, the site does have some surface water flooding issues which need to be resolved as part of any development proposal. This is made clear by **MM63**, which is needed for effectiveness.

134. Land to the west of Station Road and north of Nettleton Close, Branston is allocated for 35 dwellings (NK/BRAN/007). The site is a logical extension to the village and adjoins a new housing development allocated in the existing Local Plan which is already under construction. It is justified and sound.
135. Two allocations are proposed at Heckington. Land off Kyme Road is under construction (NK/HEC/007). Land at Sleaford Road (NK/HEC/004) is bounded by existing housing to the north and east and by the railway line to the south. Aside from some surface water issues to be resolved, the site is relatively unconstrained and would retain the shape and form of the village. It is justified as an allocation.
136. At Waddington, site NK/WAD/015 is bounded on two sides by development under construction. The allocation would extend the village to a point parallel with the site opposite (NK/WAD/014) and follow the line of built development to the north (NK/WAD/024). It would therefore represent a logical and sound extension to the village and is the reason why it has been chosen over other reasonable alternatives. The policy requirements will also ensure that any future development adequately assesses the proximity of RAF Waddington.

Housing Sites in Medium Villages – Policy S81

137. At Bassingham, two sites are allocated for housing (NK/BAS/007 and NK/BAS/010). Land at Torgate Road (NK/BAS/007) relates well to the built footprint of the village and is very close to the doctor's surgery and the school. It is justified as an allocation and is proportionate to the size and scale of the village. To ensure consistency across the development plan, it is required to come forward after 2026, thus reflecting the aims and objectives of the made Neighbourhood Plan. No convincing evidence has been provided to suggest that the site cannot deliver over the plan period. Similarly, land at Whites Lane (NK/BAS/010) is justified as an allocation and in doing so, reflects the made Neighbourhood Plan. Although housing has yet to come forward, there is nothing to suggest that the site is undevelopable over the plan period.
138. The Plan includes text which states that the allocations are subject to their retention in the made Neighbourhood Plan. We are not aware of any changes being sought to delete the sites that would prejudice their allocation in the Local Plan. In the event that circumstances changed, this would be a matter for the Committee to address through updates to the Local Plan, if required.
139. Site NK/DIG/001 (land north of Station Road, Digby) is currently under construction with a remaining capacity of approximately 44 units. As part of this phase the site-specific requirements in Policy S81 have all been provided. As such, they are not necessary and for effectiveness are deleted by **MM72**.

140. Land at Meadow Lane, Leasingham (NK/LEAS/001) falls partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There is also an existing sewage works to the north east of the site. However, Core Document HOU002c explains how the amount of development has been reduced to 25 dwellings to avoid the areas at risk of flooding and provide an appropriate buffer to the sewage works. The Committee's Matter 7 Hearing Statement also explains how the allocation could be developed in a way that would not cause any material harm to the character and appearance of the area, principally by reason of its boundary landscaping. Other policies in the Plan would ensure that future proposals provide the necessary contributions towards infrastructure as required.
141. Access to the site is intended from Deepdale Drive, rather than Meadow Lane. If the latter is to be used, then the policy is justified in requiring a scheme of highway improvements and widening. However, in the interests of promoting more sustainable modes of transport, it is also necessary to require pedestrian and cycle connections as part of the development proposals. This is achieved by **MM76** and is needed to ensure that the policy is justified.
142. Land south of Meadow Lane is allocated for housing under NK/LEAS/006 and shares similar characteristics and constraints, including a requirement to avoid areas at risk of flooding. Part of the site already benefits from planning permission for new residential development, and combined with the allocation to the north, would create a new, clearly defined settlement edge to the village. Other policies in the Plan would prevent any harmful impacts on infrastructure such as the neighbouring wastewater treatment site.
143. At Blyton, land to the south of Rowan Drive is allocated for around 62 dwellings along with the retention of the existing allotments (WL/BLYT/006). Access would be taken from the site frontage onto Gainsborough Road. Although no technical drawings have been provided in support of the allocation, all sites have been assessed by the County Council and no in principle objections have been raised. Given the land available and the forward visibility in both directions, we find no reasons to disagree. The final access arrangements would be for the planning application process to determine.
144. Site WL/FISK/001A is located on the edge of Fiskerton. Although relatively long, the linear allocation would not project beyond the existing built form of the village north of Chapel Road. Furthermore, the topography is not so pronounced that dwellings would obscure views from the footpath to the north any more than the existing properties on Ferry Road. Indeed, residential development of the site would provide a similar backdrop to that which currently exists. No substantive evidence has been provided to suggest that the allocation would have any harmful impacts on services, facilities, traffic generation or flooding in the village. Such matters would also be covered by other policies in the Plan.

145. In terms of the scale of growth proposed, Fiskerton is within the Lincoln Strategy Area. It is located close to Lincoln where the majority of new growth is directed, consistent with Policy S2. Evidence provided in the Committee's Matter 3 Hearing Statement also identifies that Fiskerton will see an increase of around 29% in total dwelling numbers. This does not represent a disproportionate amount of growth for a village with existing services and facilities.
146. Similarly, new development is proposed at Scothern by site allocations WL/SC/003 and WL/SC/004A. Cumulatively, the sites would provide around 97 dwellings which represents a growth of around 26% in total dwelling numbers. This exceeds the 10% which is currently applied in the existing Local Plan. However, for the reasons set out above, the Local Plan Review takes a different approach which we have found is appropriate and sound. The scale of growth proposed in Scothern, whilst notable, is not disproportionate for a Medium Village. Similar conclusions are reached in respect of other villages where the scale of growth proposed in this Plan, is higher than the existing one. Whilst the strategy is different, it is not inherently unsound.
147. At Sturton by Stow, two additional sites are allocated in addition to those which have planning permission. Land off the High Street (WL/STUR/003) is currently in use for commercial operations but represents a previously developed, brownfield site in the centre of the village surrounded by housing. Its reuse for residential development (upon cessation of the existing use) is therefore appropriate and justified.
148. Land south of Gilberts Farm (WL/STUR/006A) was reduced in size from a larger parcel (WL/STUR/006). Although scoring similarly in the SA, the differences are explained in Core Document HOU002f. In summary, the allocated site was found to retain the shape and character of the settlement, thus reducing encroachment into the countryside. This is a subjective judgment, but in our view, a reasonable one. Combined with the site's good accessibility to some of the services on offer in the village, the allocation is justified.

Housing Sites in Small Villages – Policy S82

149. Outline planning permission has been granted for a mixed-use development of 120 houses and 20 retirement units at Swinderby (site NK/SWI/006). Any future reserved matters applications would have to be pursuant to the outline. In the event that any substantive changes are required, Policy S82 requires evidence of community support. This is justified due to the size of the proposed scheme and its location in a Small Village, where Policy S4 limits new residential development to sites of up to 5 dwellings.
150. As consulted upon, **MM90** reduced the capacity of the site from 140 to 120 dwellings. However, the retirement units as part of the approved scheme are not restricted and may fall within Use Class C3. The MM is therefore not

required to address a soundness issue and is not included in the accompanying schedule.

151. Due to an error, two allocations (WL/BUR/005 & WL/BUR/005A) need to be deleted from Policy S82 and moved to Policy S81 as they should be in the Medium Villages category and not the Small Villages category. This is achieved by **MM86**, **MM87**, **MM92** and **MM93** so that the policy is effective and justified.

Conclusion

152. We therefore conclude that the process of selecting residential site allocations was robust, and subject to the recommended main modifications, they are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Issue 5 – Whether the policies and allocations in the Plan will be effective in ensuring that the housing requirement will be met, and whether there is a reasonable prospect of a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites on adoption

153. As modified by **MM1**, the housing requirement over the plan period (2018 to 2040) is **24,244** dwellings. Based on information from the latest Housing Land Supply Assumptions Report²², and discussions at the hearings, it is estimated that around **34,600** dwellings will be delivered in total over the same period.
154. The total supply figure includes dwellings from completions, commitments, sites under construction and allocations in the Plan. Whilst some of the assumptions regarding completion rates on the larger sites may be overly optimistic, the Committee can nevertheless demonstrate a strong forward supply well in excess of the housing requirement. We are therefore satisfied that the housing requirement will be met in full.
155. Some representors have queried why the Plan allocates more sites given the healthy forward supply of housing, especially in villages and the rural areas. This is because a key component of the Plan remains the delivery of the SUEs. By their nature these are large sites with significant infrastructure demands and typically come forward more slowly than smaller ones. In the event that one or more of the SUEs stall, or do not deliver at all, the Plan seeks to provide sufficient flexibility to allow for any shortfall. This is an appropriate and justified strategy. It also ensures that the Plan provides a wider range of smaller sites in locations across Central Lincolnshire.

²² Core Document HOU010a

156. For effectiveness, and to ensure that the Plan is up to date on adoption, **MM42**, **MM43** and **MM44** are necessary to update the latest housing trajectories, which are required by paragraph 74 of the Framework.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

157. Paragraph 74 of the Framework states that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement. The supply of specific deliverable sites should include a buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land, or 20% where there has been significant under delivery over the previous three years.

158. Based on the latest Housing Delivery Test results, a 5% buffer is currently applicable in Central Lincolnshire. Taking this into account the five-year housing requirement is **5,786** dwellings (1,102 x 5 + 5%).

159. The Committee's Matter 9 Hearing Statement demonstrates that 1,318 homes are expected to be built between 2022/23 and 2026/27 on small sites with planning permission (sites under 10 dwellings). For larger sites, a forward supply of 6,262 dwellings already benefits from detailed planning permission. These sites were 'sense checked' by Officers and are defined as 'deliverable' in accordance with Annex 2 of the Framework. Sites with full planning permission therefore exceed the five-year housing land requirement.

160. A further contribution of 1,101 dwellings is expected to come forward from sites with outline planning permission and allocations in the Plan. The amount has been derived from discussions with site promoters and developers, with input from Officers to ensure that delivery rates are realistic. As part of this figure, some delivery is expected from sites such as the Western Growth Corridor and South East Quadrant, sites which despite allocation in the existing Local Plan, have yet to come forward. However, progress has been made on both, with the approval of outline planning permissions and the resolution of complex legal matters and land ownership issues. When taking into account landowner interest and likely phasing, it is reasonable to assume that some housing will come forward on the larger sites within the five-year period following adoption.

161. A small windfall allowance of 150 dwellings per year is included from 2025/26 onwards. This compares to an average of around 288 dwellings per year from small windfall sites since 2017. The allowance included in the trajectory is therefore justified and based on compelling evidence as required by paragraph 71 of the Framework.

162. In summary therefore, the Plan identifies a supply of housing sites sufficient to provide around 9,300 dwellings over the first five years following adoption.

Even in the event that some larger sites do not deliver as expected, the Committee can identify a supply well in excess of the requisite five-year requirement. We are therefore satisfied that there is a strong likelihood of a five-year supply of housing upon adoption of the Plan in 2023.

Flexibility

163. The existing Local Plan includes a policy (LP54), which states that if job growth exceeds 496 full time equivalent roles per year, and housing delivery has been near to, or exceeds, 1,540 dpa, then Broad Locations of Future Growth could be considered for new development. No such policy is included in the Local Plan Review. However, due to the amount of flexibility in the supply of housing as referred to above, one is not necessary. In the event that one or more of the SUEs failed to come forward in the manner proposed, or there was a significant change in circumstances, then the Committee would be able to review parts of the Plan accordingly. For effectiveness, this is made clear by **MM34**.

Conclusion

164. We therefore conclude that the policies and allocations in the Plan will be effective in ensuring that the housing requirement will be met and that there is a reasonable prospect of five-year supply of deliverable housing sites on adoption.

Issue 6 – Whether the policies relating to climate change are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy

165. One of the primary reasons for carrying out a full review of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was to introduce a suite of policies that require new development to contribute towards the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, as required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Paragraph 152 of the Framework states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. Amongst other things, this includes shaping places in ways that contribute to “...*radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions...*”.

166. Chapter 3 of the Plan sets out 5 main themes. They are the need to reduce energy consumption in new build, the need to generate energy from renewable sources, the need to protect or enhance carbon sinks, the need to facilitate net-zero carbon lifestyles and the need to adapt to a changing climate.

Reducing Energy Consumption in New Build

Design Principles for Efficient Buildings – Policy S6

167. Policy S6 is an over-arching design policy and relates to some of the principles which are expanded upon in the policies that follow, such as reducing energy needs and generating energy from renewable sources. Because the policies that follow include caveats and flexibility, **MM4** is needed to ensure internal consistency. It is also required for effectiveness and states that the design expectations should be considered (rather than used) in new development.

Reducing Energy Consumption – Residential Development - Policy S7

168. The Plan is supported by a suite of comprehensive evidence which set the context and background of climate change, identify the need to reduce energy consumption and generate more renewable energy and test ways in which the aims and objectives can be met by development plan policies.²³ In summary, the evidence shows that existing buildings in Central Lincolnshire account for around 43% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Because a Local Plan has a limited influence on retrofitting existing buildings, in order to reach both national and local targets for carbon reductions²⁴, significant reductions in the energy requirements of new buildings are needed now.

169. For new residential development, Policy S7 therefore includes two primary requirements. The first is that schemes must generate at least the same amount of renewable electricity on site as the electricity they need to operate. To help achieve this, the second requirement aims to reduce demand in the first place and targets a space heating demand of around 15-20 kWh/m²/year, with a total energy demand of 35 kWh/m²/year achieved through a 'fabric first' approach to construction. In doing so, Policy S7 seeks to deliver new homes to net zero carbon standards.

170. The requirements in Policy S7 exceed those in the current Building Regulations. However, the Planning and Energy Act 2008 s1(1)(c) states that a local planning authority may, in their development plan documents, include policies imposing reasonable requirements for development to comply with energy efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of the Building Regulations. The Act, at s1(5) also states that policies included in development plan documents by virtue of s1(1)(c) must not be inconsistent with relevant national policies.

171. Paragraph 154b of the Framework states that any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national

²³ Core Documents CLC001-CLC013

²⁴ Inspectors' Note – Climate Change Act 2008 and City of Lincoln Climate Change Emergency 2019

technical standards. The PPG provides further information on the use of national technical standards²⁵. It advises that the Government has created a new approach to rationalise existing standards into a simpler, streamlined system. It also clarifies that the Government has set out its policy on such matters in the Written Ministerial Statement – Planning Update March 2015 ('WMS'). The WMS is a statement of national planning policy.

172. For the specific issue of energy performance, the WMS reiterates that local planning authorities will continue to be able to set Local Plan policies that exceed the requirements of the Building Regulations until commencement of amendments to the Planning and Energy Act 2008 in the Deregulation Bill 2015. It goes on to state that:

“This is expected to happen alongside the introduction of zero carbon homes policy in late 2016. The government has stated that, from then, the energy performance requirements in Building Regulations will be set at a level equivalent to the (outgoing) Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. Until the amendment is commenced, we would expect local planning authorities to take this statement of the government’s intention into account in applying existing policies and not set conditions with requirements above a Code level 4 equivalent...”

173. The amendments to the Planning and Energy Act 2008 have not been implemented and the Government has confirmed that there is no intention to do so either²⁶. It therefore remains the case that a local planning authority can impose energy efficiency standards that exceed Building Regulations. In principle, Policy S7 is not inconsistent with national planning policy for England.

174. Until the amendment is commenced, the WMS expects local planning authorities to take the statement into account in applying existing policies and not set conditions with requirements above a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 equivalent. We share the Committee’s interpretation of this to mean during the consideration of planning applications (where existing policies apply), with the imposition of conditions used as the mechanism by which a local planning authority would enforce compliance with Code Level 4 standards.

175. Additional guidance is provided in the PPG²⁷. It more clearly advises that development plan policies can set standards higher than Building Regulations, but only up to the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. Code Level 4 provided a 19% reduction in CO₂ from Part L of the 2013 Building

²⁵ Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 56-001-20150327

²⁶ Response to Future Homes Standard Consultation, contained within Examination Document EX004

²⁷ Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 6-012-20190315

Regulations. The approach to net zero carbon in Policy S7 therefore exceeds the now revoked Code Level 4 equivalent.

176. However, notwithstanding the different views presented on the interpretation of the WMS and the PPG, critically, in June 2022 changes to the Building Regulations were introduced that require a 31% reduction from Part L 2013. This is a material change in circumstances and means that all new residential development already has to exceed the previous Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 equivalent (a 19% reduction over Part L 2013). The changes brought into effect in 2022 are intended to be an interim measure before the introduction of the Future Homes Standard, which will see all new homes 'zero carbon ready' from 2025 onwards.
177. In summary therefore, we conclude that the approach of Policy S7, which seeks to go above and beyond the requirements of the Building Regulations, is not inconsistent with national planning policy for the purposes of the Planning and Energy Act 2008. When read as a whole, it is also consistent with the Framework which states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and help shape places in ways that contribute to radical changes in greenhouse gas emissions. Whilst we find conflict with national planning practice guidance, both the PPG and the 2015 WMS have clearly been overtaken by existing and proposed changes to the Building Regulations brought into force in 2022. MMs are therefore not necessary to require the Plan to adhere to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 equivalent standards, which are now exceeded by the Building Regulations.
178. Turning to whether Policy S7 is justified, in support of the Plan is a comprehensive assessment of issues from the need for carbon reductions to their feasibility and cost implications²⁸. Included in the supporting evidence is a technical feasibility study which assesses different policy options, compares alternatives and makes recommendations which have been included in the Plan. Where space heating demand, energy use and renewable energy generation is concerned, the evidence shows that the Local Plan option (Option 1) is the most ambitious. Nevertheless, the technical analysis indicates that the targets are feasible, and because the efficiencies are concerned with the core of a building's operation, potential future occupants will be less exposed to volatile energy price changes.
179. The cost implications in Core Document CLC007 are supplemented by the Viability Assessment Addendum²⁹. In summary, it shows that in the majority of cases, development will still be viable. As explored at the hearings, there are different ways in which the calculations can be carried out, and there will always be individual cases which fall outside the scope of the typologies used.

²⁸ Core Documents CLC001-CLC013

²⁹ Core Document INF003

However, on the whole, the evidence demonstrates that cumulative costs associated with the Plan will not adversely affect the majority of development types to such a degree that they become unviable.

180. The exception to this is for schemes located in the lower value areas around Sleaford and Gainsborough. Here, it is acknowledged by Policy S7 that meeting the requirements for energy efficiency may not be possible. Proposals are still required to demonstrate what they can achieve, but the policy includes the necessary flexibility to allow for a lower level of provision. This is a justified and proportionate approach to managing development in areas where viability is already challenging.
181. As submitted, Policy S7 did not make an allowance for brownfield sites in the same way. Although the Viability Assessment suggests that brownfield sites in high value areas could still achieve the policy requirements, most development in even the mid value zones was found to be unviable. To ensure that the Plan reflects the evidence base and is justified, **MM5** is therefore necessary and introduces a further caveat for brownfield sites.
182. It has been suggested that the development industry in Central Lincolnshire is not ready to accommodate the measures that will be needed to meet Policy S7 – such as the extensive use of heat pumps and solar panels. Compared to changes to the Building Regulations, there is also no gradual implementation or phasing of the standards. However, no convincing evidence has been provided to substantiate these concerns in response to the information on feasibility and viability supporting the Plan. Moreover, adoption of the Plan would not introduce an instant requirement for all development built in Central Lincolnshire to meet the higher standards. Existing sites with planning permission would continue to be built out over a number of years. We are also mindful that the Plan has been in preparation since 2019, the same point that the City of Lincoln and North Kesteven District Council declared their climate emergency.
183. In this particular case, the Plan is therefore justified in requiring new development to meet the standards from the point of adoption. In the event that housing delivery *is* impacted, either in terms of completions and/or the granting of planning permissions, then this is something that the Committee could monitor and address as necessary. This may include, for example, the need for targeted updates to the Plan.
184. In summary therefore, we are satisfied that the Plan's approach to the use of technical standards for energy efficiency is justified in Central Lincolnshire.
185. Turning to effectiveness, as submitted, Policy S7 sets specific targets for all residential dwellings. However, there may be instances where some dwellings on a site cannot meet the requirements due to operational reasons, but others

can. Further flexibility is therefore necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the Plan. It is achieved by **MM5** which deletes the requirement for each unit in favour of a site-wide approach.

186. Recognising that in some cases, developments will not be able to meet the requirements, Policy S7 also includes an exception clause. For example, a site may be overshadowed or there may be competing policy requirements, such as the need to maintain the significance of a heritage asset. Including this clause is therefore justified and appropriate. Although there may be other technical reasons aside from overshadowing and heritage, there is no need for a MM to try and include every eventuality. This would be considered on a case-by-case basis. For the majority of developments, the evidence shows that the requirements are feasible and viable.
187. Where technical reasons have been shown to demonstrate that a scheme cannot meet part 1 and 2 of the policy, then for major development proposals an off-site payment in kind is permitted. This can either be in the form of a financial contribution or a legal agreement to secure renewable energy elsewhere to offset the energy generated by the scheme. Alternatively, the Plan allows for schemes to be connected to a decentralised energy network or a combined heat and power unit. In our view the policy therefore strikes an appropriate balance between requiring new development to meet the prescribed targets but offering adequate flexibility in circumstances where technical reasons prevent this. The values cited in the policy reflect the average costs in the supporting evidence and have been viability tested. Smaller proposals under 10 dwellings would not be subject to the same off-site offsetting or financial contributions.
188. Finally, as submitted, Policy S7 states that if developers use a recognised accreditation scheme, such as Passivhaus Classic, then the requirements would be met. However, the 'Classic' accreditation does not include a requirement for renewables, which was an oversight in drafting the policy. For effectiveness, this is corrected by **MM5**.

Reducing Energy Consumption – Non Residential Buildings – Policy S8

189. A similar approach to Policy S7 is proposed for non-residential development in Policy S8. Again, the justification, including feasibility and viability have been tested and set out in the same evidence supporting the Plan. A summary and further justification is provided in Core Document EVR008. This makes the distinction between residential and non-residential development. The PPG clarifies that local planning authorities are not restricted or limited in setting

energy performance standards above Building Regulations for non-housing developments.³⁰

190. As with residential development, the similar modifications are needed to Policy S8 in order to assess schemes across an entire site, and not just by individual units. This is required for effectiveness and is achieved by **MM6**.
191. Flexibility is provided by Policy S8 which allows exceptions where there are site specific or other policy reasons for not meeting the requirements, or, where there are technical reasons linked to the nature of the building proposed. An example is a commercial building which, by the very nature of its use, has a high demand for energy. We appreciate that there will inevitably be other commercial buildings where it is not feasible to meet the requirements for technical reasons. But it is not necessary to try and list every possible scenario. The Plan includes a caveat which refers to the “unique purpose of the building”. In our view that would allow for a proportionate response to be taken in circumstances where buildings are proposed and there are valid (and substantiated) reasons where the nature of the scheme precludes meeting the full policy requirement.

Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings – Policy S13

192. A policy seeking to reduce energy consumption in existing buildings is justified and consistent with the aims and objectives of the Plan to reduce carbon emissions. The necessary flexibility is provided by encouraging applicants to improve efficiency, rather than mandating improvements in the same way as new buildings. This reflects the fact that it in many cases, options for significantly changing the fabric of an existing building will be outside the scope of the development proposed.
193. For effectiveness, **MM10** clarifies that where heritage assets are concerned, improvements in efficiency should be consistent with the asset's significance and consistent with relevant national planning policy on heritage matters.

Decentralised Energy Networks, Combined Heat and Power and Embodied Carbon – Policies S9, S10 and S11

194. Policy S9 states that any new or extended combined heat and power network will only be supported if the source of that network is non-fossil fuel based. The reason for this is that whilst a combined heat and power network can be more efficient than a standard system, some still require fossil fuels such as coal and gas. We agree that this would be counterintuitive when considering the aims

³⁰ Reference ID: 6-012-20190315

and objectives of the Plan and the evidence provided on the need for significant carbon reductions in new developments. In principle, the approach is justified.

195. However, paragraph 155 of the Framework states that Plans should identify opportunities for development to draw its energy from decentralised, renewable or low carbon systems. Low carbon systems are defined in the Framework as technologies that can help reduce emissions compared to the conventional use of fossil fuels.
196. To ensure that the Plan is consistent with national planning policy, a MM is therefore needed to widen the scope of Policy S9. **MM8** amends the wording to state that the relevant power source should be either renewable or very low carbon based. For effectiveness, a consequential change is also required to the supporting text by **MM7**. It clarifies that very low carbon is defined as a power source which has very low or nil carbon emissions compared to the conventional use of fossil fuels in both its operation and/or manufacture. This could, for example, encompass the use of fuel cells which convert hydrogen into electricity. As modified, the policy therefore seeks to achieve the radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions as required by the Framework, and meet the aims and objectives of the Plan, whilst recognising that some fossil fuels may still be used in combined heat and power technology. As with other policies, whether a proposal accords with Policy S9 will largely depend on the nature of the scheme and the detail provided. There is no need (for effectiveness) to list all the permitted technology types which could change as technologies progress during the plan period. The MM also clarifies the latest position regarding consultation on proposals for heat network zoning to ensure that the Plan is up to date upon adoption.
197. Policy S10 supports proposals which demonstrate their compatibility with the principles of a 'circular economy'. This includes reducing the demand for raw materials and making provision for the storage and management of waste for recycling and/or re-use. The principle of minimising waste is entirely appropriate and justified. It is also consistent with the environmental objective of sustainable development in the Framework.
198. Policy S11 seeks to support the repair, re-use and refurbishment of existing buildings and contains a 'presumption against demolition'. We note that the Framework does not contain a similar policy, but through paragraphs 119 and 120 does seek to make the effective use of land and support the development of underutilised land and buildings. Furthermore, the policy does not prohibit demolition. Instead, it only requires applicants to demonstrate that either a building is in a state of disrepair and is unfeasible and unviable to reuse, that a new building would offer an overall lower net-carbon solution or that there would be other public benefits that outweigh any carbon savings. We see no reasons why this could not be done on a proportionate basis so to avoid unnecessary

additional burdens on small scale developers. Some forms of demolition could also take place outside of the planning application process.

199. For major development proposals from 2025 onwards, Policy S11 requires applicants to demonstrate how embodied carbon has been taken into account and minimised where possible. Prior to 2025 there will be no requirement to use materials with a lower embodied carbon, but the policy requires developers to demonstrate that they have considered the options available.
200. The justification for Policy S11 is provided in Core Document CLC010. By distinguishing between major and non-major developments the policy reflects the evidence base which suggests that savings are challenging for smaller projects. Having a phased approach also allows time for developers of larger sites to consider how the requirements can be met. No evidence has been provided to suggest that showing how embodied carbon has been considered in the design of major housing schemes would be unduly onerous. Policy S11 has also been considered as part of the Whole Plan Viability Assessment.

Water Efficiency – Policy S12

201. Central Lincolnshire is identified as being within an area of water stress. The requirement for developments to achieve the Optional Technical Standard of 110 litres per person per day is therefore justified.
202. In the interests of good design and sustainable water management the requirements for permeable surfaces and water butts in new housing are also justified. However, requiring all flat roofs to be 'green roofs' is not justified or effective as there may be instances where it is impracticable to do so (for example a situation where the roof is permanently in shadow). **MM9** is therefore necessary and introduces greater flexibility. It also cross-refers to Policy S20 where further information is provided (as modified by **MM18**).

Renewable Energy Generation

Renewable Energy – Policies S14, S15 and S16

203. Policy S14 supports the principle of renewable energy schemes across Central Lincolnshire. Through the supporting text, the submitted Plan also provides an indicative capacity for both wind energy generation (150MW) and solar (230MW).
204. Although the figures are not meant to represent a cap or a ceiling, the text has led to some confusion and uncertainty with the way that it is presented, especially when comparisons are drawn with the amount of land needed. For effectiveness, **MM11** therefore amends the supporting text at paragraphs 3.3.4

and 3.3.5 to confirm that there is no upper limit on the amount of electricity that could be generated, subject to meeting the relevant policy requirements.

205. Current national planning policy on wind energy is set out in paragraph 158 and footnote 54 of the Framework. It states that except for the repowering of existing turbines, a proposed wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy in the development plan, and following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.
206. The Plan differentiates between small-medium sized wind turbines (up to 40m from the ground to the blade tip) and large-scale wind turbines (anything over 40m). Where small turbines are concerned, Policy S14 states that the whole of Central Lincolnshire is identified as a broad area potentially suitable for a wind turbine and requires proposals to meet three criteria. However, the Framework does not differentiate between turbine size. A MM is therefore needed to require proposals to accord with the tests in national policy (relating to the impacts on local communities and securing their backing). To ensure internal consistency, and for effectiveness, the same MM also updates the text for large scale wind turbines (**MM13**).
207. As submitted (and re-ordered by **MM13**), the Plan states that whether or not a proposal has met the footnote 54 test will be a matter of judgement for the local planning authority. We agree with this statement. It is highly unlikely that any development proposal will be supported by 100% of respondents. Judgements will have to be made by the decision maker, as will judgements around other impacts such as landscape or noise. As such, no modification is needed to correct an issue of soundness, other than re-ordering the wording so that it appears in the supporting text rather than the policy itself. This is needed for internal consistency and because the text refers to how the policy will be applied, rather than setting a policy requirement. It is achieved by **MM13** and recommended for effectiveness.
208. For turbines over 40m in height, broad areas suitable for wind energy are shown on the policies maps and the extract in the Plan at Map 2. Core Document EVR014 explains how the areas were defined and what factors were taken into account, from proximity to settlements, national landscape designations and buffers to airports and airfields. The assessment of relevant issues is robust and the decisions on which areas to include are adequately justified and transparent. To rectify an error, the map in the Plan needs correcting to include RAF Barkston Heath (**MM12**). Upon adoption the Committee should also ensure that the relevant policies maps are correct. For the same reasons, and for effectiveness, the list of airfields also needs to include Temple Bruer, the supporting text should clarify that not all settlements were sieved out (only those

over 50 dwellings) and that rail safety is a relevant consideration (**MM11** and **MM13**).

209. Historic England and the National Trust raised concerns about the designation of land which forms part of a historic landscape around the Witham Fen. Concerns were also raised about the importance of this area to the setting and key views of significant heritage assets such as Lincoln Castle/Cathedral and Tattershall Castle.

210. However, the evidence in Core Document EVR014 explains that the potential impact of a development on the setting of a heritage asset is not typically something that can be shown on a map by applying a standard buffer in the same way as an airfield. Instead, a more bespoke assessment is required having regard to issues such as the significance of the asset, the precise location of the turbine, its size and the surrounding landscape. For effectiveness, and the avoidance of doubt, **MM11** makes this clear by confirming that site specific constraints such as heritage and landscape were not sieved out and will need to be assessed. It also specifically refers to the Witham Fen as one such example where the historic landscape may be sensitive to the introduction of wind turbines and therefore proposals would have to carefully consider their impact. For the same reasons, **MM13** includes the historic landscape in the list of considerations in Policy S14. As modified, the Plan therefore provides appropriate safeguards against harmful heritage impacts.

211. Finally, the submission version Plan included a presumption against any ground mounted solar PV panels on best and most versatile agricultural land. However, national planning policy in footnote 58 of the Framework refers to the significant development of agricultural land. A MM is therefore required to ensure consistency with the Framework, which to avoid duplication cross refers to Policy S67 (**MM13**).

Transition to Net Zero Carbon Lifestyles

Electric Vehicle Charging – Policy NS18

212. In the interests of promoting sustainable design and transport, the requirement for electric vehicle charging points as part of new developments is justified. There is, however, no justification for stating that new developments must meet Building Regulations, which is dealt with outside of the planning application process. **MM15** makes the necessary modification.

Fossil Fuel Exploration, Extraction, Production or Energy Generation – Policy S19

213. Policy S19 states that proposals for fossil fuel extraction will be refused across Central Lincolnshire. The policy is unsound for two reasons. Firstly, it is not justified or effective as the County Council would be the decision-making authority for applications concerning mineral extraction. Secondly, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations (2012) require local plans to be consistent with the development plan, unless those policies are intended to be superseded. In this case, the development plan for the area contains the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2016) which permits fossil fuel extraction. Policy S19 therefore needs to be deleted by **MM17**. Consequential changes are required to the supporting text by **MM16**, which is also needed for effectiveness to elaborate on the reasons why this is not a matter for the Local Plan.
214. Not all of the supporting text is recommended for deletion. This is because paragraph 3.5.7 (and the latter part of paragraph 3.5.8) set out the Committee's view that the extraction and burning of fossil fuels is not commensurate with delivering a net zero carbon Central Lincolnshire. In our opinion, this provides additional background and context to the wider aims and objectives of the Plan. Provided that the text is modified to make it clear that this is the Committee's in-principle view on the topic only, and does not include any reference to the determination of planning applications or setting of policy requirements, the text remains justified and sound (**MM16**). It also helpfully clarifies in paragraph 3.5.8 that the County Council is responsible for making decisions on applications for mineral extraction and allocating land for such uses.
215. As consulted upon in Document EX035, not all of the text at paragraph 3.5.9 was deleted. Unlike the preceding paragraphs, this does refer to the determination of planning applications and refers to the decisions of the districts in their role as consultees on planning applications. Following the deletion of Policy S19, this text is superfluous. It is also unjustified in the Local Plan where the districts will form their own views on individual applications having regard to the merits of each case and relevant policies. The proposed introduction of text which states that the Committee looks forward to working with the County Council in reviewing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan is also unnecessary for soundness. Paragraph 3.5.9 is therefore deleted in the accompanying schedule of MMs.

Adapting to a Changing Climate

Resilient and Adaptable Design and Flood Risk – Policies S20 and S21

216. The PPG advises that when preparing Local Plans, authorities should pay particular attention to mitigation and adaptation. Examples include maximising summer cooling and avoiding solar gain³¹. Requiring applicants to consider how buildings can minimise overheating is therefore justified in seeking to secure high quality design and higher levels of efficiency in new construction. Green roofs can assist in this process but may not always be feasible or appropriate. For effectiveness, further flexibility is therefore provided by **MM18**. It also clarifies that green roofs are not just suitable for adding insulation.
217. The second part of Policy S20 requires new development to be more adaptable in the future. The justification for the policy is to make buildings fit for purpose over the longer term and avoid the resource implications of redevelopment. As submitted, the policy refers to examples such as the use of stud walls. However, at the hearings the Committee accepted that a scheme meeting the Building Regulation M4(2) standards would adhere to the aims and objectives of the policy and would also offer a standardised approach to determining planning applications. For effectiveness, this is made clear by **MM18**, but in the absence of any wider justification is not mandatory. In the event that Building Regulations are not updated as expected to include M4(2) standards, then this is something that the Committee could consider as part of any future review.
218. For the same reason of effectiveness, **MM18** is also needed to clarify that schemes should identify the *potential* for home working, which could simply include bedrooms where more than 1 bedroom is proposed per dwelling. This recognises the fact that not everyone will need a separate dedicated home working space in every house type and provides greater flexibility.
219. Finally, Policy S21 largely reflects national planning policy on flood risk as set out in the Framework. Additional requirements such as the use of higher water efficiency standards, rainwater harvesting and sustainable drainage are all justified in the interests of promoting higher and more sustainable design practices, and because Central Lincolnshire is an area of water stress.

Conclusion

220. We therefore conclude that subject to the recommended main modifications the policies relating to climate change are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

³¹ Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 6-004-20140612

Issue 7 – Whether the policies relating to the type and mix of housing are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy

Affordable Housing – Policy S22

221. The Housing Needs Assessment³² (HNA) identifies an overall need for approximately 592 affordable homes each year across Central Lincolnshire, with the greatest need for 2-bedroomed properties. It also estimates that there is a shortfall of around 575 affordable homes to meet current needs, primarily in the City of Lincoln and West Lindsey District.
222. Policy S22 aims to deliver approximately 12,000 affordable dwellings over the plan period with affordable housing sought on all qualifying developments of 10 or more dwellings or with a site area of 0.5 hectares or more. Where a site qualifies for affordable housing provision, the amount required is based on location. The four zones require between 10 and 25% and are informed by the Whole Plan Viability Assessment³³. This approach is clear, effective and is based on the evidence which shows different levels of viability across the plan area.
223. The Whole Plan Viability Assessment identifies that achieving the full policy costs and affordable housing would be challenging on brownfield sites away from the higher value zones. However, the evidence demonstrates that the number of brownfield sites likely to come forward, based on the allocations in the Plan, would be low. It also identifies that brownfield sites have previously managed to deliver affordable housing, and subject to the recommended MMs above, these sites would not be subject to the full costs associated with the suite of climate change policies. The recommended policy approach is therefore to include affordable housing requirements for all sites, including previously developed ones, subject to a caveat allowing alternative provision where justified by site specific evidence. This is included in Policy S22, and based on the information provided, is appropriate and justified.
224. The tenure mix for affordable housing will be derived from discussions with the relevant local authority and informed by the latest HNA. This provides sufficient clarity but recognises that circumstances may change during the plan period and therefore allows for flexibility. Policy S22 also states that the starting point for these discussions will be the delivery of 25% of all affordable housing being First Homes, with priority then given to affordable rent. First Homes are defined in Policy S22 as homes priced at least 30% below full market value up to a maximum of £140,000 after the discount is applied.

³² Core Document HOU001

³³ Core Documents INF002a-d and INF003

225. Concerns have been raised that the application of a £140,000 cap would be unduly restrictive and limit the provision and choice of new homes. It is argued that the cap should reflect the £250,000 price quoted in the PPG³⁴. However, whilst some people may be able to afford up to £250,000 for a discounted First Home, it does not mean that everyone can. Core Document EVR022 provides the reason for needing a lower cap in Central Lincolnshire due to the below average incomes in the area. The principle of a lower cap is therefore justified and is consistent with national guidance in the PPG³⁵.
226. That being the case, the Committee recognises that house prices have already risen since preparation of the Plan and could continue to do so going forward. This is evidenced by the ONS East Midlands House Price Index which shows an 11.3% rise in house prices over the year to September 2022. To ensure that the Plan is justified and effective upon adoption, **MM20** is therefore necessary to increase the cap to £160,000 and clarify that this will be reviewed annually to reflect house price inflation. Recognising that the sale of a First Home could come several years after planning permission has been granted, it is also necessary for effectiveness to clarify that mechanisms may be used in planning obligations to adjust the price cap accordingly with reference to model agreements. This is achieved by **MM19**, which also makes the necessary consequential changes to the supporting text.
227. Policy S22 also requires affordable housing to be provided on qualifying developments for specialist housing for older people. This reflects the need for affordable properties across different types of housing and is justified. It is also consistent with paragraph 62 of the Framework, which states that the size, type and tenure of housing for different groups should be assessed and reflected in planning policies, including housing for older people. However, recognising that the costs for specialist housing may vary, Policy S22 allows the amount of affordable housing to be negotiated where viability constraints are proven.
228. Part 3 of the policy permits rural exception sites where local needs are demonstrated. It also allows for a limited amount of market housing where this would help facilitate such schemes, consistent with paragraph 78 of the Framework. The exclusion of affordable housing from MoD schemes is justified where properties are for military personnel and where restrictions are put in place on their possible future resale on the open market.

Meeting Accommodation Needs – Policy S23

229. The HNA projects the likely need for housing over the plan period for different groups in the community. This includes families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, private rented households

³⁴ Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 70-002-20210524

³⁵ Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 70-005-20210524

and people occupying houseboats. It is therefore consistent with the requirements in paragraph 62 of the Framework.

230. The population of people aged over 65 in Central Lincolnshire is expected to increase by approximately 45% by 2040, with the working age population only increasing by around 2% over the same period. Concerns have been raised that it would be challenging for the Plan to deliver enough specialist accommodation to meet the needs of the increasingly elderly population. The HNA also identifies that around 20% of all Central Lincolnshire residents were limited to some extent in their daily activities at the 2011 Census.
231. However, Policy S23 includes a clear expectation that developers will provide housing that contributes towards meeting the needs of the area as set out in the HNA or other appropriate local evidence. It also requires new residential development to maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced communities. Support is also given to development proposals for residential care in Tiers 1-4 of the settlement hierarchy, or other locations where schemes are accessible to local services. Moreover, proposals achieving the higher Building Regulation M4(3) standards are encouraged, with the expectation that making M4(2) standards compulsory will be introduced via changes to the Building Regulations³⁶. Other policies, such as S20 and S53 would also apply, and seek to ensure that new dwellings are adaptable (to M4(2) standards). When read as a whole, the Plan is therefore positively prepared in seeking to ensure that the needs of older people and people with disabilities can be met.

Custom and Self Build Housing – Policy NS24

232. The HNA states that as of late 2019, there was a total of 136 entries on the self-build registers across Central Lincolnshire. As of March 2022, there was a combined total of 71 people³⁷, with an average of around 50 people being on the registers per year between 2016 and 2021. Based on the evidence available, the Committee predicts that the requirement for this type of housing will be between 30 and 35 plots per year, or 660-770 plots over the plan period.
233. In response, Policy NS24 requires proposals for 100 or more dwellings to include 5% of the total number of units as self-build or custom plots. This is expected to yield around 265 plots. The remaining need will be met on individual plots or by developers on sites of less than 100 units. When taking into account that planning permissions for around 244 plots have been granted in the past 5 years, we are satisfied that the Plan will ensure that needs are met.

³⁶ Inspectors' Note – In the event that this does not happen, then the Committee should consider whether it would be appropriate and justified to introduce the standards as part of any future review.

³⁷ Core Document EVR024

234. As submitted, Policy NS24 requires plots to be marketed for 3 years before they can be built and sold as conventional housing. However, this is a significant period of time and risks plots remaining vacant when they could be used to help meet wider housing needs. To ensure that the policy is justified and positively prepared, **MM21** therefore reduces the period of marketing time to 18 months. In the interests of effectiveness, it also clarifies that the period of marketing starts when basic requirements have been met, such as the plot having access to a public highway, sufficient space to build the house and connections to relevant services.

Sub-division and Multi-occupation of Dwellings in Lincoln – Policy S25

235. Policy S25 includes criteria for the conversion or change of use of buildings in Lincoln to self-contained flats or shared accommodation, such as houses in multiple occupation. The criteria are justified in that they seek to address issues such as the living conditions of existing and future residents and the standard of accommodation. Requiring applicants to demonstrate a lack of demand for single family homes is also necessary in order to help maintain a supply of accommodation suitable for families in the city. The policy is consistent with paragraph 130 of the Framework, which requires planning policies to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Houseboat Moorings and Caravans – Policy S26

236. The HNA highlights that there is a need for approximately 30-40 additional residential moorings in the centre of Lincoln and that there is a demand for caravan and park homes as part of the Central Lincolnshire housing market. Proposals for new residential houseboat moorings, or extensions to existing moorings that are within or immediately adjacent to a named settlement as set out in Policy S1 are supported by Policy S26 subject to several criteria.

237. Likewise, Policy S26 supports proposals for new caravan pitches or park homes or extensions to existing park home sites where they are in a location which would be suitable for residential development and satisfy the requirements of other policies in the Plan. These pitches and park homes differ from those used by the Traveller community. The Plan is therefore positively prepared in seeking to meet the identified needs.

Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation – Policy S83

238. As submitted, the Plan identified a need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches based on the definition in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites ('PPTS')

(32 additional pitches between 2019 and 2040). However, following submission of the Plan, the Court of Appeal³⁸ held that the definition was discriminatory. To ensure that the Plan is justified and positively prepared, it is therefore necessary to update the text by reference to the higher figure in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment ('GTAA'), which does not exclude people who have ceased to travel permanently. This is achieved by **MM94** and refers to a need for **41** pitches between 2019 and 2040.

239. In meeting the identified need, Examination Document EX037 identifies a supply of between 27 and 30 pitches from planning permissions and sites allocated in Policy S83. This comfortably exceeds the need identified up to 2029 (15 pitches). Although it falls short of the 41-pitch total, Core Document HOU004 shows how existing sites could be expanded or reconfigured on Council owned land to provide additional space. When taking this into account, the positively worded policy for windfall sites, and the ability for the Committee to monitor progress and update the Plan as necessary, we are satisfied that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be met over the plan period.

Conclusion

240. We therefore conclude that subject to the recommended main modifications, the policies relating to the type and mix of housing are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Issue 8 – Whether the strategy for job growth, employment, Ministry of Defence sites and tourism is justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy

Spatial Strategy for Employment, Strategic Employment Sites and Employment Land on SUEs – Policies S28, S29 and S30

241. The ENA³⁹ predicts that certain sectors such as agri-food, health and social work are likely to see significant growth in the plan period but will not require the same amount of land as 'typical' employment uses. As a result, the ENA forecasts that around 6.5 hectares of land will be needed for offices, 4.3 hectares for warehousing and only around 1 hectare of new industrial land.

242. In contrast, the Plan allocates Strategic Employment Sites ('SES') with sufficient capacity to provide nearly 100 hectares of additional land over the plan period. An additional 51 hectares of employment land is allocated as part of the SUEs.

³⁸ Court of Appeal *Smith v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities & Anor* [2022] EWCA Civ 1391

³⁹ Core Document EC001

243. The justification for this is because the SES are intended to meet large scale investment needs on sites that require a significant land take. Moreover, all of the sites either have planning permission, or, in the case of Hemswell Cliff, benefit from a Local Development Order as part of the Food Enterprise Zone. The largest site, Teal Park, is actively coming forward in phases for a range of uses and is already occupied by companies such as Siemens and Jaguar Land Rover. Other allocations are also progressing and will deliver phased employment provision. Continued allocation of the SES is therefore justified.
244. Similarly, there have been no material changes in circumstances insofar as the SUEs are concerned. Here, the allocation of employment land is justified in the interests of providing sustainable, mixed-use communities. The spatial distribution of sites also reflects the strategy in Policies S1 and S2 which seek to direct the majority of growth to locations that are, or can be made, sustainable.
245. Although the allocated amount of employment land far exceeds that envisaged by the ENA, the Plan will not lead to a harmful imbalance between jobs and homes. This is because the nature of the sites are large, strategic opportunities which are likely to take several years to implement in full. An example of this is Teal Park at North Hykeham which is coming forward in phases (around 29 out of the 36 hectares remains available). Likewise, employment land provision on the SUEs will happen alongside the phased delivery of housing. Even if significant amounts of employment land did come forward, for the reasons given above the Plan is positively prepared in allocating new housing over and above the minimum demographic housing need.
246. Where new development is concerned, Policy S29 supports employment generating uses on the SESs and seeks to avoid piecemeal development by requiring the approval of masterplans. This is justified in ensuring the comprehensive and coherent development of the largest flagship sites. For the same reasons, so is the intention to limit changes of use away from industrial and commercial uses.
247. The spatial strategy for employment, the allocation of SES and the inclusion of more employment land on the SUEs is therefore appropriate, positively prepared and justified. For effectiveness, **MM22** corrects an error in Policy S29 relating to the amount of undeveloped land available.

Important Established Employment Areas and Local Employment Areas – Policies S31 and S32

248. Important Established Employment Areas ('IEEAs') are existing, well-established sites which include some land available for development. Local Employment Areas ('LEAs') are smaller sites providing a role for local communities. Core Document EVR028-034 includes details of the criteria used to assess the differences.

249. For IEEAs, sites must be in the top 4 tiers of the hierarchy, have 5 or more separate units occupied by separate businesses, provide over 8,000 square metres of floorspace and occupy a site of 2 hectares or more. Other factors could have been used to determine whether sites are 'important', but in our view the methodology used is appropriate. It ensures that sites are assessed on a consistent, objective and transparent basis. To reflect the evidence base and correct an error in the Plan, **MM23** is needed to update Policy S31 by referring to the correct tests for designation.
250. By taking this approach there will inevitably be circumstances where sites fall short of designation because they fail to meet one of the requirements. In some cases, they might also be large sites which clearly play an important role in the local economy. However, this does not make Policy S31 as a whole unsound. Moreover, if the Committee was to allow 'exceptions' to the criteria, then there would be little merit in using this methodology at all if alternative sites could be added to the list. We are also mindful that the Plan does not preclude such sites from continued business expansion. Policies S33 and S34 support the principle of new business development in both the urban area and countryside.
251. Following submission of the Plan, part of the IEEA at North Hykeham (E18) has secured planning permission across a different area to the one designated (land west of Station Road). To ensure that the geographic illustration of site E18 is correct, the Committee should therefore ensure that the necessary correction is made to the policies map upon adoption.
252. The IEEA also encompasses land on the opposite side of Station Road. Adjacent to Hykeham station is a small parcel of cleared land which connects the much larger industrial areas to the north and south. Due to its size (relative to the rest of the IEEA) it has been suggested that the parcel should be excluded from the wider designation. However, no evidence has been provided to substantiate claims that the parcel of land would be unattractive to commercial operators. The site is surrounded by industrial and commercial uses of varying sizes. It also has a physical, visual and practical association with the rest of the IEEA and its inclusion in the Plan is justified.
253. Similar conclusions are reached in respect of sites E9 and E14. Both are situated close to the City Centre but there is nothing to suggest that either site is likely to become vacant anytime soon. In the event that circumstances change after leases expire in 2027, then the Committee would be able to take any necessary action by updating the Plan as required.
254. Policy S32 defines LEAs as sites over 0.5 hectares in size, provide at least 2,500 square metres of floor space, have 3 or more units occupied by separate businesses and are within Tiers 1-6 of the settlement hierarchy. As with IEEAs, using thresholds to identify and designate sites is appropriate and justified for

the purposes of a local plan policy. The policy is also positively prepared in supporting new and expanded business uses provided that conflicts with neighbouring land uses and the highway network (amongst others) are avoided.

255. By only including locations within Tiers 1-6 of the settlement hierarchy (and not those in the countryside), some significant employment sites are omitted from designation by Policy S32. However, including this requirement reflects the spatial strategy for employment (as set out in Policy S28) which states that LEAs are intended to ensure that there are jobs and services available to meet local needs. It also reflects the overall spatial strategy in Policy S1 which focuses on delivering sustainable growth. Supporting job growth within existing settlements is justified.

Non-Designated Sites, Proposals within Settlements and Proposals Outside Settlements – Policies S33 and S34

256. Development proposals for employment generating uses on non-designated sites within settlements are supported by Policy S33. Criterion a) is justified in requiring applicants to demonstrate that there are no other available sites on IEEAs and LEAs within 5km before permission is granted. The purpose of this requirement is to encourage the reuse of vacant land and buildings on designated employment sites, thereby strengthening their role and function and recognising their importance to the local economy. For proposals in the countryside, Policy S34 supports new and existing land-based rural businesses consistent with paragraph 84 of the Framework.

Re-Use of Employment Land and Buildings

257. On SES and IEEAs, proposals resulting in the loss of business uses are only permitted where the new development would, amongst other things, generate employment and where the existing units have been marketed for 12 months. In our view the protection afforded by the Plan is commensurate with their status as employment sites of strategic importance in the main urban areas. It is also sufficiently clear enough to be effective. For example, where planning permission is required, other Class E uses would only be permitted where criterion a) to d) are met and where the sequential test was passed, or, where the use proposed was clearly ancillary to the function of the employment area.

258. The approach is different for LEAs. Here, non-employment generating uses will be considered on their merits, having regard to criterion a) to e) and having considered the impact of any loss on the local community and site suitability. Even greater flexibility is afforded for non-designated sites by Policy S33 where no marketing is required. In taking a proportionate approach to the protection of employment land and buildings the different requirements are justified.

Retail and Town Centres – Policies S35, S36, S37, S38, S39 and S40

259. Policy S35 sets out a hierarchy of centres consistent with paragraph 86 of the Framework. The tiers are justified and reflect the role, form and function of settlements, with Lincoln City Centre above the town centres at Gainsborough, Sleaford, Caistor and Market Rasen. Town centre boundaries are defined on the policies maps in tiers 1-4 of the settlement hierarchy, in addition to Primary Shopping Areas ('PSAs') at Lincoln, Gainsborough, Sleaford and Market Rasen.
260. Policy S35 also sets out thresholds for requiring impact assessments which vary by the size of each centre. This is justified and reflects the fact that, depending on their size, proposals are likely to have a greater impact on smaller centres than the likes of Lincoln, Gainsborough or Sleaford.
261. Policies S36-S40 guide development across the hierarchy of centres. Non retail uses are permitted in the Primary Shopping Areas in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford provided that, amongst other things, they are main town centre uses and do not result in an over-concentration of similar uses or create 'dead' frontages. Although this requires an element of professional judgement, it is sufficiently clear to be effective. It is also proportionate in seeking to retain the commercial focus in the centre of the largest towns. Additional flexibility is provided in District, Local and Village centres.
262. As submitted, Policies S36 and S40 refer to a range of uses that would be supported in principle within town centres. However, in error, the list omits reference to health services and facilities. For effectiveness this is rectified by **MM24** and **MM25**.

RAF Scampton and MoD Sites – Policies S75 and S84

263. RAF Scampton has a significant history and is considered to be of national importance. As a Bomber Command airfield, it was the base for 617 Squadron in World War II – 'The Dambusters'. During the Cold War it was only one of two RAF Vulcan bases to pioneer rocket technologies, and from 1983 to 2022 was home to The Red Arrows.
264. The Red Arrows have since moved to RAF Waddington and the intention of the MoD is to sell the site on. The purpose of Policy S75 is therefore to guide future proposals for its reuse. However, at present the mix of uses, scale and possible amount of development is unknown.
265. As submitted Policy S75 defers these decisions to a masterplan. The Statement of Common Ground between the Committee, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and West Lindsey District Council agrees that this

could take the form of a Supplementary Planning Document⁴⁰. However, that would not be subject to any independent examination and would only be a material consideration for decision-making purposes. Depending on the type of development and its scale there may also be wider, strategic cross boundary matters to consider. Combined with the national importance and significance of the site, it is therefore necessary to stipulate that the masterplan must form part of a development plan document, either through a targeted review of the Plan or an Area Action Plan. The changes are achieved by **MM40** and are necessary to ensure that the policy is justified and effective. A consequential change to the supporting text is required by **MM39**.

266. In the submitted Plan, Policy S75 also states that before any masterplan is developed, the “value of the airspace above RAF Scampton and within 5 nautical miles of its centre must be fully understood...” and that any “value” should be incorporated into the masterplan. This relates to the fact that the airspace above the site is protected by a statutory instrument and allows for low-level flying by The Red Arrows.
267. The policy requirement is ineffective because the “value” attributed to the airspace will vary between stakeholders. It is also subjective and currently unclear precisely how it would affect uses on the ground. Moreover, as the airspace is controlled by a statutory instrument, its operational use is controlled by a separate process outside of the land use planning system. This is a further reason why redevelopment of the site should be subject to a development plan document with independent examination in public. For effectiveness, **MM40** therefore deletes the text referring to the value of the airspace in favour of a requirement which demands an assessment of how uses on the ground are compatible with the airspace and requires consultation with the MoD. This also includes a consideration of general amenity, as any future residential use of the site would also need to demonstrate how it could provide a good standard of living conditions if the airspace was continued to operate for low flying.
268. One of the policy requirements stipulates that the development as a whole must be net zero carbon. However, the site includes existing buildings, several of which are designated heritage assets, and existing dwellings. A bespoke strategy is therefore going to be needed to reflect the site constraints and it should form part of the masterplan (**MM40**).
269. Other MoD sites are covered by Policy S84. The policy is consistent with paragraph 97 of the Framework which requires planning policies to recognise and support development required for operational defence and security purposes and ensure that operational sites are not affected by development in the area.

⁴⁰ Dated September 2022, Committee Matter 6 Hearing Statement

270. Where reuse of land is concerned, the policy supports the principle of redevelopment where, amongst other things, the majority of proposals are on brownfield land. This is justified and seeks to ensure the efficient use of land whilst reflecting the spatial strategy. Because access to health services would be an equally important consideration it should also be included in point f. The requisite change is made by **MM95** to ensure the policy is justified and effective.

The Lincolnshire Showground, Tourism and Education – Policies S42, S43, S44 and S52

271. The Lincolnshire Showground is one of the key agricultural show venues in the UK, but is also used year-round for conferences, networking and events. It is of significant importance to the area and contributes to economic growth, education and the visitor economy.

272. Supporting the range of uses in Policy S44 is therefore appropriate and justified. However, this should also include uses within Class F1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and Class F2 (community uses). **MM26** makes the necessary change and is needed to ensure that the policy is effective by more accurately reflecting the activities which take place at the Showground. For the same reasons the Committee should also ensure that the policies map is up to date on adoption by reflecting the boundary of the approved site. Any possible future alternative uses would be considered on their merits and have to demonstrate their compatibility with the main showground use of the site.

273. The Statement of Common Ground between the Committee, West Lindsey District Council and the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society (who own the site) also agrees that because the agricultural college is nearing the 8,000 square metre limit, some flexibility is needed for possible future expansion. We agree that to provide flexibility, and to ensure that the policy is effective in supporting the Showground, additional development should be allowed in principle up to 10,000 square metres, a figure agreed between the three main parties (**MM26**).

274. Policies S42 and S43 support tourism in both urban and rural areas. In this regard the Plan is consistent with paragraph 84 of the Framework which supports sustainable rural tourism and is justified. The supporting text also recognises that locations such as Market Rasen Racecourse are outside the built-up area, but are still recognised as a visitor attraction for the town.

275. The support for the growth and expansion of universities and colleges in Policy S52 is also appropriate and justified, provided that impacts are adequately considered. In error, the Committee omitted the boundary of the Riseholme Campus from the submission policies map and this should be corrected upon adoption of the Plan.

Conclusion

276. We therefore conclude that subject to the recommended main modifications the strategy for job growth, employment, MoD sites and tourism is justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Issue 9 – Whether the policies and designations concerning Green Wedges, Local Green Spaces and Important Open Spaces are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy

Green Wedges – Policy S63

277. Green Wedge designations are included in the existing Local Plan under Policy LP22. The Local Plan Review continues the same approach under Policy S63. In summary, the Green Wedges are intended to prevent the physical merging of settlements, create multi-functional 'green lungs', provide an accessible recreational resource and conserve and enhance local wildlife. Within the Green Wedges, planning permission will only be granted where it would not be contrary to these aims and functions, or, where development is essential and the benefits outweigh any impact.

278. Justification for the Green Wedges is provided in Core Document ENV003, which was used to inform the existing Local Plan. Although the Review was produced in 2016, the criteria for designation remain relevant and justified. Moreover, the Committee has assessed the policies map to determine whether there have been any material changes in circumstances which require boundary alterations. Where necessary, these are presented in Core Document EVR063. We are therefore satisfied that reliance on the 2016 Review, with targeted boundary alterations, is a proportionate and adequate approach to take. The Green Wedge designations are based on a thorough and robust assessment.

279. Adjacent to Hykeham station is a small parcel of cleared land which is part of the E18 designated IEEA. Beyond this land to the rear (east) is a larger area of open space which is part of the Hykeham Pits Green Wedge.⁴¹ The Green Wedge has already been examined, found to be sound and formally adopted as part of the development plan for the area. Based on the evidence provided there have been no material changes since adoption of the Plan in 2017 that would warrant an alternative approach for the Plan before us. For the reasons set out in ENV003, Parcel E1 meets the criteria for designation. The reasoning remains relevant and the designation is justified.

⁴¹ Referred to as Parcel E1 in Document ENV003

Local Green Spaces – Policy S64

280. Paragraphs 101-102 of the Framework state that Local Green Spaces ('LGS') are not appropriate for most open areas and should only be used where the area is reasonably close to the community it serves, is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance and is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
281. Existing Local Green Spaces were designated in the 2017 Local Plan. These sites were reviewed for any significant changes in circumstances and continue to be shown on the policies maps. New sites were subject to the same appraisal process, as explained in Core Document SOS002, thus ensuring that sites were considered in the same way. The selection criteria are consistent with paragraph 102 of the Framework and the Local Green Spaces are justified.
282. Following submission of the Plan it became apparent that the South Hykeham LGS, as designated by the Hykeham Neighbourhood Plan, was omitted from the submission policies maps in error. The Committee proposes to rectify this upon adoption of the Plan as illustrated on the proposed schedule of policies maps changes.
283. Where new development is concerned, Policy S64 refers to the tests in paragraph 103 of the Framework. This approach is justified and avoids the unnecessary repetition of national planning policy.

Important Open Spaces – Policy S65

284. Important Open Spaces ('IOS') from the existing Local Plan have formed the baseline of the areas to assess for the Local Plan Review. Core Document SOS001 sets out the methodology and criteria used to assess both existing sites and proposed new ones. It presents, in a clear and transparent way, why certain areas should be included as IOS, and why others should not. The IOS have been consulted on as part of the Plan's preparation.
285. At Swaton, the existing Local Plan designates an area of IOS to the rear of St Michael's Church running adjacent to Parson's Drove. The boundary in the submitted Plan has been amended following a review by Officers and following the approval of planning permission on part of the site. As submitted it now excludes a parcel of land to the rear of Orchard House and follows a slightly different boundary to Swaton Court.
286. The site is designated because of the important contribution that it makes to the character and appearance of the area, with views afforded through the site to the church and Swaton Court. Based on the evidence provided and observations from our site inspections, we agree, and the designation is

justified. In objection to the Plan a comparison has been made to another area of land in Brant Broughton, which was discounted as an IOS. However, the Committee confirms that the site in Brant Broughton was discounted as an IOS because it was not visually open. Indeed, having viewed both sites, the circumstances are materially different.

287. Land at Lee Road, Lincoln is illustrated as an IOS on the submission version policies maps. However, it does not meet the criteria for designation as set out in Core Document SOS001 and was included in error. The geographic illustration of the policy is therefore not justified and it will be necessary for the Committee to update the policies maps upon adoption of the Plan.

288. Policy S65 states that some areas of IOS are not shown on the policies maps but are still safeguarded from development and will be considered against national planning policy. The list in the Plan includes 'school playing fields' whereas paragraph 99 of the Framework includes all playing fields. Although there is a discrepancy between the two documents, the Plan clearly defers decisions for consideration against the Framework. We are therefore satisfied that sufficient clarity exists without the need for main modifications.

Conclusion

289. We therefore conclude that subject to the recommended main modifications the policies and designations concerning Green Wedges, Local Green Spaces and Important Open Spaces are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Issue 10 – Whether the policies relating to the built and natural environment are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy

Built Environment – Policies S53 and S57

290. Policy S53 aims to ensure that good design will be at the centre of every development proposal and provides a clear set of standards and considerations under ten themes that are closely aligned with those set by the National Design Guide. The criteria are all clear enough to be effective and are justified in seeking to promote high quality design, consistent with national planning policy. The exception is criterion 7b), where it is necessary for soundness to make it clear that new and existing uses should be compatible with each other in all circumstances. **(MM28)**

291. Policy S57 aims to protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment. **MM29** is necessary for the effectiveness of the policy by clarifying that the fourth paragraph relates to proposals for changes of use. The

same MM is also needed to correct an error in the policy, as conservation area boundaries are set by the individual districts and not the Local Plan process.

Natural Environment – Policies S60, S61 and S67

292. Policy S60 sets out a hierarchy of designated sites within Central Lincolnshire. However, because some sites could be added and/or amended outside of the Local Plan process (such as a Local Nature Reserve), it is necessary to delete the words 'as shown on the policies map'. This is in the interests of effectiveness and to remove any possible conflicts where sites are protected by policies in the plan but not always shown on the maps (**MM30**).
293. **MM31** is required to ensure that the supporting text to policy S61 is consistent with the mitigation hierarchy set out in paragraph 180 a) of the Framework. It is also necessary for effectiveness to provide additional clarity in relation to potential delivery mechanisms for biodiversity net gain. **MM32** is needed for the same reasons, by clarifying the relationship between Policy S61 and national planning policy, recognising that some small-scale proposals may be exempt, recognising that conditions may be used to secure measures and that national policy may change during the course of the plan period.
294. Policy S67 aims to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land thereby protecting opportunities for food production and the continuance of the agricultural economy. However, Footnote 58 of the Framework refers to the 'significant' development of agricultural land. For consistency with national planning policy, the relevant change is made by **MM33**.

Conclusion

295. We therefore conclude that subject to the recommended main modifications the policies relating to the built and natural environment are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Issue 11: Whether the policies relating to infrastructure and transport are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy

Strategic Infrastructure Requirements – Policy S45

296. Throughout the examination concerns have been raised that the Plan would lead to new housing without the necessary supporting infrastructure. Policy S45 applies to new development and clearly states that planning permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the necessary requirements from the proposed development. Proposals must also consider all the infrastructure

implications of a scheme, not just those on site or in the immediate vicinity. The Plan therefore provides a robust policy framework to ensure that all relevant infrastructure, including healthcare and education, will be provided.

Accessibility and Transport – Policies S46, S47, S48 and S49

297. The Greater Lincoln Transport Model ('GLTM') has been used to assess the traffic impacts of the Plan with a horizon year of 2040. In summary, National Highways concludes that the evidence underpinning the Local Plan Review is suitable for considering growth around the A46, and that the amount of growth has not changed significantly from the existing Plan. The GLTM was not considered sufficiently extensive for testing impacts on the A46 between the A1 and the A46 Hykeham roundabout, but National Highways confirms that this can be dealt with through appropriate testing and mitigation as required to support individual development proposals. In summary therefore, we are satisfied that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network have been adequately tested and will not be severe.
298. One of the key transport provisions in the Plan remains the North Hykeham relief road. It will link the Eastern Bypass (at the A15 Sleaford Road) with the existing A46 Western Bypass (at its junction with Newark Road), creating a complete Lincoln ring road. It forms part of the Lincoln Integrated Transport Strategy⁴², and in 2020 the County Council secured £110m towards its construction. Identification of the project and the safeguarding of the route by Policy S46 is therefore appropriate and justified.
299. North Lincolnshire Council and its partners have prioritised investigating improvements to the A15. Although this work is not explicitly referred to in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, it is still at a relatively early stage. The Plan is not unsound by failing to reference to this emerging project. As and when proposals for RAF Scampton come forward, then clearly any impacts on the A15 would have to be considered as part of that process.
300. Policy S47 provides an overarching framework for accessibility and transport and supports development proposals which contribute towards an efficient and safe transport network that offers a range of transport choices. It also sets out how transport related infrastructure will be delivered. Any development that has severe transport implications will not be permitted unless deliverable mitigation measures have been identified and their implementation has been secured. The requirements are sufficiently clear, effective and consistent with the aims and objectives of national planning policy in seeking to promote more sustainable modes of transport.

⁴² Core Document TRA003

301. Policy S48 outlines how new walking and cycling infrastructure will be provided as well as how existing infrastructure will be protected, maintained and improved. For effectiveness, **MM27** is required to make sure that the aim of connecting communities and facilities is explicitly referenced in criterion a).
302. Where parking spaces are concerned, paragraph 107 of the Framework states that policies should take into account accessibility, the type, mix and use of development proposed, the availability of public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to provide facilities for ultra-low-emission vehicles. The requisite evidence is provided in Core Document TRA005. In summary, it assesses car ownership across Central Lincolnshire by location, then looks at other areas and observations from completed local developments before testing different options.
303. The outcome in Policy S49 seeks to prioritise walking, cycling and the use of public transport and existing car parks in and around Lincoln City Centre. Within 300m of the City Centre, applications for residential development will be considered on their merits, having regard to the location of the scheme, its connectivity and available parking nearby. Although this will require a degree of professional judgement as to what level of parking is acceptable, it is sufficiently clear and reflects the fact that within and around the city centre the connectivity and need for parking spaces could vary significantly. It therefore provides an appropriate level of flexibility.
304. Elsewhere, development proposals are expected to meet the *minimum* requirements in Appendix 2. The standards are justified by the evidence in Core Document TRA005 and seek to ensure that enough on-site parking is provided, especially in rural areas where car ownership levels are higher. For housing developments, the preference for parking on-site is also justified in the interests of good quality design and the usability of housing, especially where charging points are required. Sufficient flexibility is included in the policy wording to allow for other arrangements where they can be justified.

Community Facilities and Open Space, Sports and Leisure Facilities – Policies S50 and S51

305. Policy S50 introduces clear requirements to prevent the unjustified loss of community facilities. It is consistent with paragraph 93 of the Framework which states that planning policies should, amongst other things, guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services. The policy is also justified in requiring the provision of new community facilities, preferably on-site where they have been demonstrated to be necessary. We note Sport England's comments regarding the Facilities Planning Model, but also their generally supportive position on the soundness of the policy.

306. All new residential developments of 10 dwellings or more are expected to provide new or enhanced open space, sport and leisure facilities to meet the standards in Appendix 3 of the Plan. Those standards are evidenced by, amongst other things, Core Documents SOS003a-b and SOS006. Although the various studies do not constitute a formal Playing Pitch Strategy, Sport England confirms that it has no objections to Policy S50 and that it will work with the Committee to produce the necessary strategy as part of a review of the Plan. In the absence of any other contradictory and/or compelling studies, we are satisfied that the requirements of Policy S51 are appropriate and justified.

Conclusion

307. We therefore conclude that subject to the recommended main modifications the policies relating to infrastructure and transport are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Overall Conclusion and Recommendation

308. The Plan has a number of deficiencies in respect of soundness for the reasons set out above, which mean that we recommend non-adoption of it as submitted, in accordance with Section 20(7A) of the 2004 Act. These deficiencies have been explained in the main issues set out above.

309. The Committee has requested that we recommend MMs to make the Plan sound and capable of adoption. We conclude that the duty to cooperate has been met and that with the recommended MMs set out in the Appendix to this Report the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review satisfies the requirements referred to in Section 20(5)(a) of the 2004 Act and is sound.

Matthew Birkinshaw and Clive Coyne

INSPECTORS

This report is accompanied by an Appendix containing the Main Modifications.