

**Briefing Note: Alignment of Coastal Study Principles with Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan**

DATE: 26/05/2016

<b>SUBJECT:</b> <b>Alignment of Coastal Study Principles with Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan</b>
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## **1. Introduction**

The Lincolnshire Coastal Study was published in 2010. It is a study of the socio-economic and geographical context for spatial planning within the coastal zone of Lincolnshire. Its original purpose was to provide the basis for a coastal strategy within the East Midlands Regional Spatial Plan.

The Coastal Study concludes with a number of principles, intended to form a framework for regional planning policy as applied in the coastal zone. With the abolition of regional planning from 2010, the intended strategy was not progressed. Instead, Local Planning Authorities have used the Coastal Study as an evidence base to inform the ongoing development of their Local Plans. This has involved variations in the way that the Study's principles have been applied from area to area.

Since 2010 there has been significant change in funding for flood risk management, with a long term requirement for local contributions as well as a general policy change across government departments prioritising the importance of economic growth. On the Lincolnshire coast existing agri-food and visitor economies depend heavily on effective water management, while the capacity to sustain water management can only be secured by encouraging inward investment and growth in those sectors.

This new focus is crystallised in the Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), developed by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership, which was published in 2014 and agreed by all partner organisations within Greater Lincolnshire.

Lincolnshire County Council strongly supports the growth objectives in the SEP, and wishes to support its partner Local Planning Authorities in developing spatial planning policy to facilitate the SEP. As a result, the Council wishes to establish a clear position regarding the relationship between the Coastal Study principles and the objectives of the SEP to inform its support to Local Planning Authorities in the coastal area and to provide clarity for its partners when consulting on draft Local Plan documentation.

## 2. Coastal Study Principles

**Principle 1: the primary principle is to increase the safety of people by reducing the number of people at risk of flood hazard in the Study Area.**

Development will be guided by the level of flood hazard (red being the highest)

With respect to the red, orange and yellow zones major development will be employment or business related only;

- Exceptionally, development to meet local housing needs may continue subject to the mitigation of flood risk through flood resilient design and emergency planning
- It will not be appropriate for housing development in the red, orange and yellow zones to contribute to meeting the Region's strategic housing requirements. Rather, any new housing development should be of a level and type designed to keep the population in these zones broadly stable

With respect to the green zone:

- Exceptionally, major development may be possible so long as flood risk is mitigated through flood resilient design and emergency planning.

With respect to all flood hazard zones:

- New and replacement community buildings may be permitted subject to flood risk being mitigated through flood resilient design and emergency planning
- New caravan sites or extensions to existing sites may be allowed for short-let tourist use between the months of April and September subject to the mitigation of flood risk through flood resilient design and emergency planning
- Development of buildings and infrastructure explicitly for use in emergencies may be permitted subject to flood risk being mitigated through flood resilient design

**Principle 2: The consequence of flooding for people in all flood hazard zones will, over time, be reduced by:**

- The installation of flood resilience measures in domestic and public buildings, caravan sites and for essential infrastructure
- Improving emergency planning and emergency response and evacuation arrangements
- Improving public awareness and understanding of flood risk and responses

**Principle 3: Development decisions will aim to improve social, economic and environmental conditions in existing and new communities by:**

- Minimising the loss of high quality agricultural land
- Diversifying the tourism industry
- Improving green infrastructure
- Protecting and enhancing water infrastructure
- Protecting natural, cultural and historic assets
- Improving transport infrastructure and services
- Improving the quality of existing housing stock and access to jobs, training and services for local people
- There will be a particular focus on more deprived areas

### **3. Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan**

The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) covers economic growth ambitions for the whole of Greater Lincolnshire (North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and the administrative County of Lincolnshire), including the coastal areas.

The SEP defines Greater Lincolnshire's priorities and drivers as

- 1 To drive the growth of the area's three defining and strongest sectors that offer the most competitive advantage: agri-food; manufacturing; the visitor economy
- 2 To grow specific opportunities identified as future defining features of the area: health and care; low carbon; ports and logistics
- 3 To drive this growth by putting expansion into new markets, modern telecommunications, infrastructure improvements and the skills of individuals and business owners at the forefront of what we do
- 4 To promote Greater Lincolnshire as a place for sustainable growth through improved transport infrastructure to connect us with national and international markets, enabling wider enjoyment of our world-class heritage sites, culture and strong communities
- 5 To recognise the need for new housing for the existing local population and those moving to the area, and to support balanced housing and economic development through promoting the area's capacity to deliver high-quality growth.

More specifically, it identifies water management, including coastal management, as a key means of achieving these goals, particularly in facilitating the infrastructure provision required to allow for housing growth of 100,000 by 2031. In this regard, the SEP identifies the following four key elements of water management in its programme.

- To encourage development through protecting land from development
- To undertake a detailed feasibility study into protection for the whole coastline of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) area
- To promote the schemes that have arisen from our private sector-led review into water management
- To use water to support economic growth through irrigation, cooling, and other production processes

The GLLEP is supporting the development of a high-level Coastal Vision, the purpose of which is to draw together the main objectives of a range of long term, forward-looking plans and strategies for Coastal Greater Lincolnshire, providing a framework for a strategic approach to managing the coastal zone.

#### **4. Alignment between the SEP and the Coastal Study**

Lincolnshire County Council considers the principles of the Coastal Study to be broadly compatible with the objectives set out in the SEP. However, the Council is also mindful that the national policy context in which the Coastal Study was first produced has changed markedly since 2010, most obviously with all Local Authorities in Greater Lincolnshire having agreed the objectives in the SEP.

The opportunities to attract inward investment through promoting growth are exemplified in the annual provision of £15m through implementation of the devolution deal. At the same time, the ability to demonstrate the economic value of promoting growth through effective coastal management is beginning to allow access to external funding previously inaccessible for this purpose.

While the SEP takes a high level approach to the target of 100,000 new homes in Greater Lincolnshire over the Plan period, supplementary research demonstrates the key role of the LEP in securing added value through housing growth, an important element of which is exploring and implementing flood resilient design.

The SEP identifies agri-food and the visitor economy as fundamental building blocks to growing the Greater Lincolnshire economy. The core of these industries are located along the coast, with the visitor economy a key factor on the east coast and agri-food predominant in Boston and South Holland. Growth in these industries will require housing growth, either directly located close to the economic activity itself, or within travel distance of employment opportunities. There is therefore a need to consider carefully future housing requirements in East Lindsey's coastal zone in the light of growth in both these sectors.

At present 10% (around 4,300) of East Lindsey's workforce works in the agri-food sector (as defined by the LEP). There are concentrations around Wrangle, Old Leake and Wainfleet, in the north east of the district, and also in Louth and, to an extent, Mablethorpe (see map at Annex 1). Commuter flow data shows limited flow from East Lindsey into North East Lincolnshire and Boston for work in areas where there are high levels of agri-food employment. Based on the concentrations shown in Annex 1, just over 3,700 commuters from East Lindsey travel to the green areas on the map to work on a daily basis – though over one third of this is to work in Louth.

A further consideration is strategic infrastructure. This is key in enabling employment and housing growth, and is important in the SEP's aspirations for Greater Lincolnshire future growth. Developer contributions are essential in delivering such improvements, particularly in coastal areas with their potential for both agri-food and visitor economy development. This includes infrastructure to facilitate access within the coastal area as well as to and from it.

The County Council, therefore, considers it appropriate to define its own position in balancing the highly precautionary approach set out in the Coastal Study principles with the current policy emphasis on sustaining current economic activity and promoting future economic growth. This will inform the Council's position in supporting partner authorities to develop and implement spatial planning policy, particularly with regard to growth in coastal locations.

The Council considers that the following specific aspects of the Coastal Study principles require emphasis in the changed economic circumstances that have emerged since 2010, and in light of recent developments outlined above.

**Principle 1:** The primary principle of reducing the number of people at risk of flood hazard remains essential, as does the need to avoid strategic housing growth in these areas while continuing to promote commercial and employment development.

The potential to employ improved flood mitigation and resilience measures, coupled with emergency preparedness means that the flexibility within the principles to consider appropriate provision to meet local housing need can provide wider scope for exploration of this issue in the development of local planning policy. It is noted that the original coastal study considered this issue in respect of levels of housing growth that were strategic in a regional, rather than a local context.

With regard to employment and housing growth, the County Council is sceptical of the capacity of affordable housing alone meeting these needs. The Council considers the current draft Local Plan does not sufficiently address the balance between providing for housing growth appropriate to economic and employment growth as envisaged by the SEP, and managing housing supply in a manner consistent with reducing overall flood risk.

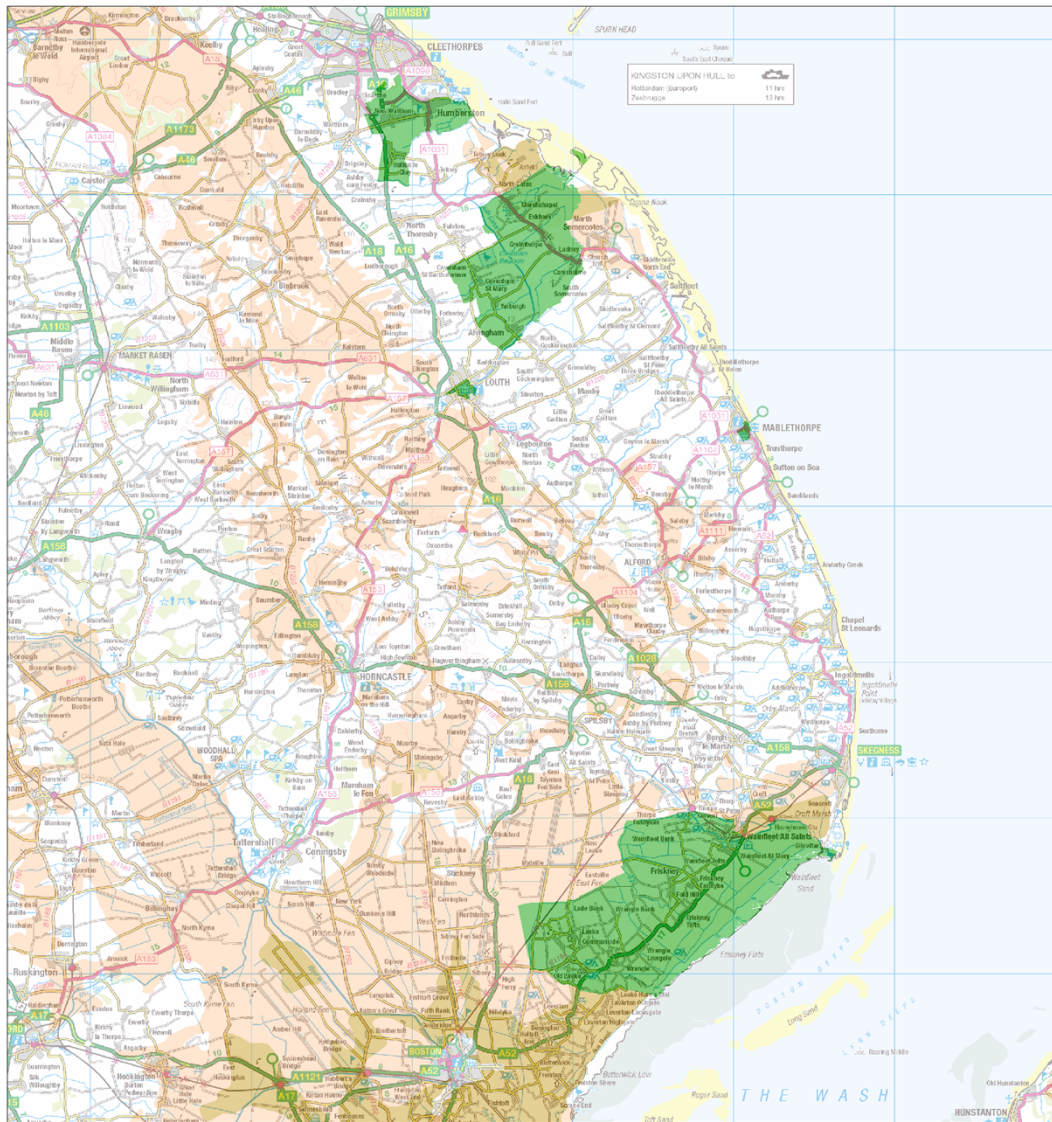
In particular, the current focus in the draft Local Plan on providing for local housing needs primarily through existing consents and affordable housing will encourage a greater concentration of vulnerable people into areas at high risk from coastal flooding, while discouraging provision of resilient housing that will support infrastructure investment and growth in the SEP's target economic sectors.

**Principle 2:** overall improvements in resilience, emergency preparedness and public understanding of flood risk are key elements within the existing Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Drainage Management Strategy, and are considered to be good practice in respect of all developments, coastal and inland.

This is an area where the LEP's capacity to add value through promotion of resilient housing design could be substantially enlarged upon in relation to both housing and commercial development. The County Council would wish to explore these aspects more fully with the Local Planning Authority in the course of public consultation on the draft Local Plan.

**Principle 3:** supports delivery across a number of important aspects of the SEP, and in general terms is applicable in both coastal and non-coastal contexts. In this regard, the County Council considers the Coastal Study and the SEP to be entirely consistent. However, in order to achieve this principle in the coastal area, the way in which the draft Local Plan applies Principle 1, particularly with regard to housing provision and promotion of infrastructure improvement, requires further exploration.

# Annex 1



Levels of Agri-food Employment in East Lindsey

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- High Levels of Agri-food employment
- Grade 1 Land
- Grade 2 Land

It is proposed that the above brief analysis inform the position the County Council takes with regard to its engagement with its partners during public consultation on the draft East Lindsey Local Plan.

The County Council wishes to support the ambitions for economic growth set out in the Strategic Economic Plan for Greater Lincolnshire, and considers local planning policy to be a critical enabling factor in achieving these ambitions. The Council is therefore keen to work closely with its partners in supporting the development of Local Plans that are robust and effective in facilitating growth in all parts of the area. The Council, therefore, wishes to be clear and open with its partners in setting out its position with regard to the current draft Local Plan for East Lindsey, and to engage in detailed discussions with a view to resolving any outstanding issues prior to submission of the draft Local Plan to the planning inspectorate.

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