

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date:	25 September 2014
Subject:	Central Lincolnshire Preliminary Draft Local Plan

Summary:

This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee with the opportunity to review a first draft of the Central Lincolnshire Preliminary Draft Local Plan and to receive information about a six week consultation process which is due to be launched on 1 October 2014.

Actions Required:

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the Plan and the upcoming consultation process.

1. Background

Lincolnshire County Council is a partner in the statutory partnership established through the Central Lincolnshire Strategic Joint Planning Unit with West Lindsey District Council, City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council. The partnership is moving towards the production of a single Local Plan for the Central Lincolnshire area. The project plan for delivery of the Plan is for it to be adopted by the end of 2016.

A first draft of the Central Lincolnshire Preliminary Draft Local Plan is attached to this report at Appendix A. This Plan was considered by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJSPC) at its meeting on 1 September 2014 and approved for consultation from 1 October 2014 for 6 weeks.

The detail of the implications of the Local Plan will be reported to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 31 October 2014. However, the Plan is also being reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee today as the content of the Local Plan extends beyond the remit of the Environment Scrutiny Committee given the spatial implications on economic, transportation, infrastructure, environmental and social considerations. The Plan will also have direct implications for councillors in respect of detailed matters within their own divisions.

The formal consultation process will commence on 1 October on which councillors may wish to make individual representations or alternatively feed views and comments through the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 31 October.

There will be further consultation on the detail of the Plan ahead of the formal adoption and given the cross cutting issues it may be appropriate for future consultation to be reported directly to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Central Lincolnshire Preliminary Draft Local Plan

About the Plan

It should be made clear that this is not a 'full' draft Local Plan. For example, it does not yet include specific allocations for new development. There are also other key policy areas which are yet to be firmed up (such as the precise housing growth target or the proportion of homes which should be 'affordable').

Instead, the Local Plan as presented is one which captures the key issues that we know of already and sets a steer as to how we will tackle the gaps. The intention is then to produce a 'full' draft plan (incorporating suggested sites for development, for example) for July 2015. The plan (and programme) has been consciously prepared in this way as we are specifically seeking comments from the public at this early stage so that we can prepare the next (and 'full') draft plan with confidence and greater certainty.

In line with CLJSPC aspirations, the Local Plan presented today is broadly a pro-growth plan, yet one which seeks not growth for growths sake, but quality growth, with the right infrastructure, quality design and conservation of what is special about Central Lincolnshire.

The policies as drafted are limited to what is necessary, drafted to meet Central Lincolnshire needs and written in a way which, hopefully, is easy to read and understand (without compromising the need for the plan to be written in a way which is suitable for the formal dealing of planning applications, appeals and the like).

The attached Preliminary Draft Local Plan has been prepared taking account primarily of the following:

- CLJSPC steer on what is desired for the new Local Plan
- National Legislation (Acts and Regulations) and Policy (e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework)
- Recent Inspector decisions on Local Plans nationally
- Evidence gathered as part of the previous preparation of a draft Core Strategy for Central Lincolnshire

- Views made by the public and other stakeholders as part of the preparation of the draft Core Strategy
- New or updated evidence

Headline points

Some headline points to note in the plan are (in order of document):

- A clarification note on the status of this draft plan (which is an important note for decision makers, such as planning committees and planning officers).
- A Vision and set of Objectives that we are trying to achieve.
- Chapter 4, which has a number of key policies, including a Settlement Hierarchy policy (LP2), which categorises all of Central Lincolnshire's settlements above a population of about 50 into a category in the hierarchy, which in turn influences what sort of development will be expected in that settlement. Note, the hierarchy is currently predominantly drafted as a 'policy-off' version, which means it is based on facts and figures for each settlement, rather than any policy decision to promote or restrict development in any settlement. The next version of the draft plan in 2015 will be a 'policy-on' version, which means, for policy reasons, some settlements will be promoted up or down the hierarchy, and subsequently be expected to deliver more or less development than would be anticipated via a 'policy-off' hierarchy.
- A Distribution of Growth policy (LP3) which indicates at this stage where growth will be directed, but does not yet establish firm figures as to how much growth.
- Various policies to support the economy (LP4-6 and in Chapter 7 for individual settlements).
- A set of policies around Health and Wellbeing (LP7), Community Facilities (LP8) and meeting housing needs (LP9-10).
- A set of policies relating to infrastructure (LP11-13), which will ensure high quality and necessary infrastructure is provided alongside development.
- Chapter 5, which contains policies on delivering quality development, including protecting what's special (landscape, heritage, natural environment, etc.), achieving high quality design and delivering our contribution, where our landscape and other assets permit, to combatting climate change.
- Chapter 6, which helps to give local communities greater ownership of how their community develops (complimenting their separate Neighbourhood Planning powers).
- Chapter 7, which forms the framework for allocating sites in the future draft of the Local Plan. This chapter explains to the reader some principles in terms of what sites we will/will not allocate, and a method for appraising

possible sites. In effect, this chapter is also a 'call for sites' from interested parties i.e. if someone thinks a site is suitable for allocation then now is the time to let us know.

- Chapter 7 also has a specific section (and associated policies) on Lincoln, Gainsborough, Sleaford and 'Rural Areas'.

The Consultation

The CLJSPC are statutorily obliged to consult certain stakeholders. However, in addition to those, they will notify all those persons on the Local Plan consultation database, via email (if available) or by letter.

They will make all the relevant material available on the Central Lincolnshire website and in hard copies at over 30 community sites across the Central Lincolnshire area. The website will contain both a pdf version of material, plus a 'consultation portal'. This portal is more interactive, and allows comments to be made on the plan at specific sections of the plan. Users of this system (which will be promoted as our preferred choice, as it speeds up collation and analysis of comments) will need to register their details, and will then receive automatic notification that their comments have been received and (subject to checking contents) accepted.

They will make available on-line and at consultation points representation forms for people to complete if they decide not to use the consultation portal. There will be two forms – one for make comments on the plan as consulted upon, and a second form for those who wish to promote a site for development.

Any person is entitled to simply write in or email the Local Plans team with their views, without using the portal or standard form.

Drop-in sessions will be organised in a number of venues across Central Lincolnshire. Dates, times and venues to be confirmed. They are very likely to be held during October, during the first half of the consultation period.

Publicity material, briefing notes and press releases will be provided in the weeks leading up to the consultation period. Other fora such as the Developer and Agents Forum, and member and parish council training events will be used to promote the consultation. Each individual authority is encouraged to assist in promoting the consultation through any other of their own local based networks and information posting.

At the end of the consultation period, all comments will be uploaded on to the consultation portal and made 'live' so that anyone can see all comments made. It is important to note, therefore, that all comments received will not be treated as confidential. Anyone who insists that their comments are confidential will have their comments returned as not being duly made.

Thereafter, all comments will be carefully considered and a report will be prepared entitled 'Key Issues Raised at the Preliminary Draft Stage'. This report will group together key points raised for each policy or issue, together with a proposed way forward on that issue. Individual responses to each person (and their representations) will not be undertaken.

The comments, of course, will be extremely useful as they move towards preparing the second consultation draft over Winter/Spring 2015.

Timetable of events

October 2014 – 1st draft Local Plan for consultation (the ‘Preliminary Draft Local Plan’)

July 2015 – 2nd draft Local Plan for consultation (the ‘Further Draft Local Plan’)

January 2016 - Final draft Local Plan for consultation (the ‘Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan’)

April-September 2016 – Examination of Local Plan

November 2016 - Adoption of Local Plan

2. Conclusion

This report and accompanying appendix provide the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee with the opportunity to consider the Central Lincolnshire Preliminary Draft Local Plan. The report also provides details of the consultation process which will commence on 1 October 2014.

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Central Lincolnshire Preliminary Draft Local Plan
Appendix B	Preliminary Central Lincolnshire Settlement Hierarchy Study

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andy Gutherson, who can be contacted on 01522 554827 or andy.gutherson@lincolnshire.gov.uk