

CHAPTER 2 – RURAL ECONOMY (ECON)

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INTRODUCTION

2.1 There are many demands on the use of land in the countryside and the settlements within it. The broad range of policies contained in this chapter will seek to reconcile these demands to ensure the rural economy functions efficiently as the countryside is a living and working place. However, the Council also recognises that there is a need to restrict and control certain types of development in order to protect and enhance the attractive nature of the West Lindsey countryside. The role of the District's three market towns is emphasised as a key component of the Local Plan First Review strategy.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.2 The Local Plan First Review is influenced by the policy guidance emerging from Central, Regional and County levels together with this Council's overall corporate strategy. The policies contained in this chapter have been formulated with a number of objectives in mind:

- To achieve an acceptable balance between the needs of the environment, local communities and the demands of development and land uses.
- To encourage rural diversification to create local job opportunities and improve the skills of the local people.
- To strive to assist the economic development and regeneration process and its progression through the planning system with the minimum of delay and inconvenience.
- To improve the social environment and reduce the levels of crime and disorder.
- To try and improve the physical environment and ensure that no development causes permanent damage to the countryside, thus protecting the countryside for its own sake.

NATIONAL, REGIONAL & STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

2.3 Government Guidance for the rural economy set out in PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) provides broad objectives to:

- Meet social and economic needs of people who live and work in rural areas.
- Maintain or enhance the character of the countryside and conserve its natural resources.

· Improve the viability of market towns and smaller settlements in order to promote a sustainable community in terms of a reasonably mixed demography, variety of employment and housing, and prevent the decline of community services and facilities.

2.4 The Rural White Paper vision seeks a living, working, protected and vibrant countryside.

2.5 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands recognises the diverse nature of the rural economy in that its aim is a living and working countryside in which enterprise is promoted and the environment is respected.

2.6 The East Midlands Regional Economic Strategy and the Lincolnshire Economic Strategy seeks to strengthen the rural enterprise links between settlements and their hinterlands. A holistic approach is required in order to integrate the transport and access networks, provide a range of housing, offer a wide variety of employment opportunities; and offer people the opportunities to enhance their skills to fulfil their potential. A combined approach will help to sustain existing communities, their services, facilities and to help to reduce rural deprivation, unemployment resulting from agricultural restructuring and the social exclusion that is experienced and compounded by the remote nature of the rural communities.

2.7 The East Midlands Rural Action Plan focuses upon learning and skills, enterprise and innovation, agriculture, rural transport, rural tourism, market towns and promoting rural issues and initiatives.

2.8 The strategic guidance for Lincolnshire set out in the Lincolnshire Structure Plan Review focuses on the need to sustain and improve the quality of life for present and future generations to facilitate more sustainable development.

2.9 The Economic Development Strategy for West Lindsey sets out the vision for sustaining and developing the rural economy.

2.10 The Local Plan First Review seeks to set out a range of policies which support the aspirations of the Lincolnshire Economic Strategy. It also links to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Lincolnshire 2006 – 2009 which has a priority focussed on economic development. This same priority is also contained in the West Lindsey Sustainable Community Strategy 2006 – 2016.

2.11 This chapter aims to guide development into suitable areas within settlements, particularly the three towns. This will help to improve the local economy and to help stimulate new job opportunities by providing choice through flexibility and competition.

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

2.12 Of the rural districts within Lincolnshire, West Lindsey has the second lowest number of VAT-registered businesses and accounts for only 2% of the region's business registrations (ONS - UK Business Activity, Size and Location 2005).

2.13 The Council is committed to supporting the local economy, and local businesses, and to improving the employment opportunities of West Lindsey residents. One of the ways of achieving this is by ensuring that there is an adequate supply of land available for either the expansion or relocation of existing businesses and the establishment of new businesses within West Lindsey.

2.14 The business structure of the District is based upon approximately 2,940 business units of which 94% employ fewer than 25 people. The business unit is defined as being a

firm which is not the company headquarters but may be an additional site of a company (ONS - UK Business Activity, Size and Location 2005).

2.15 The Council wishes to encourage employment generating development, which is of a nature and scale appropriate to the area, and by optimising (where acceptable) the expansion of existing firms.

2.16 This will ultimately increase job choice for local residents, reduce unemployment in the area, benefit local communities, and aim to reduce the existing trend of economically active residents of West Lindsey commuting outside of the District, principally to Lincoln City.

POLICY ECON 1 - EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT PROVISION

Employment-generating development or the construction of buildings for businesses, general industry, storage or distribution, port and wharfage development will be permitted on sites not allocated for any of these uses provided that the proposal meets all the following criteria:

- i. There is no available allocated site within the nearby settlements or an established employment area in existence within the locality;*
- ii. It would not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the character of access roads or require improvements which would damage the character of those roads;*
- iii. It would not harm the character or appearance of the countryside;*
- iv. It would not harm the character, appearance or setting of the local settlement or the amenity of nearby or adjoining residents or other land uses;*
- v. It would not harm any site of nature conservation value or archaeological importance or any building of architectural or historic interest, conservation area or historic landscape or their setting;*
- vi. It would blend into the landscape in design, siting and choice of materials;*
- vii. It is not sited in a Green Wedge, AONB, protected settlement break or other protected landscape area or feature;*
- viii. The site can adequately accommodate the proposal in terms of size and shape for the layout incorporating suitable access, parking, landscaping or any other requirements of the proposed development;*
- ix. The proposed development should be in scale with the size of the settlement within which it is proposed.*

Priority will be given to previously developed sites over the release of greenfield sites.

JUSTIFICATION

2.17 It is important to ensure that sufficient opportunities are available within the District to help fulfil the Council's economic development objectives in relation to planning and sustainable growth, with the development of sites which will generate employment, or be used for industry, business etc. In accordance with national policy the Council aims to ensure that there is sufficient land available which is readily capable of development and is well served by infrastructure, and that there are a variety of sites available to meet differing needs.

2.18 Sites that have been allocated for employment use will usually be considered to be preferable for development. However, in order to achieve the Council's goals in terms of economic growth, this may sometimes involve the development of land which has not specifically been allocated for such uses. This policy will broadly support such windfall proposals.

2.19 Employment-generating development can sometimes result in intensive use of a site, with the potential to create a significant impact upon the surrounding area. It is important to create a balance between the economic and environmental considerations to ensure that, even though development can go ahead, the character of the surrounding area is protected and the amenity of nearby residents is not adversely affected. This is especially important for sites near to or within the countryside, and protected areas such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, sites of nature conservation etc.

2.20 More intensive uses can also have a detrimental impact upon the existing road system, unless carefully controlled. It is essential that developers ensure that the roads leading to a site are capable of accommodating an increase in traffic or a change in the type of traffic. Any alterations or improvements made to the main routes leading to the site must not alter the character of those roads.

AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

2.21 Despite the changes in the agricultural sector it remains a significant part of the economy. The physical landscape has been determined by the changes in agricultural practices and the resulting farm diversification schemes, which often remove land from agricultural use.

2.22 The following policies seek to encourage appropriate agricultural development, including farm diversification and the intensive livestock units proliferating throughout the District, whilst protecting agricultural land.

POLICY ECON 2 - AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural development will be permitted provided that:

- i. It does not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the environment or residential amenity;*
- ii Wherever possible and reasonable, the development is sited in close proximity to existing buildings;*
- iii The development would not significantly detract from views across the open countryside or from the setting of a settlement;*
- iv. The impact of the development is minimised by careful attention to its layout and design, including the massing of buildings and structures, type and colour of materials used and the landscaping scheme proposed;*
- v. The scheme makes provision for the prevention of pollution of ground and surface water;*
- vi. The development is of a size and scale commensurate with the proposed use.*

JUSTIFICATION

2.23 Agricultural development is an important aspect of the rural economy however agricultural buildings can have a significant impact upon the landscape of the District.

2.24 The Council expects farmers or developers to pay close attention to matters of design, materials and landscaping when submitting Planning Applications, and would encourage the same principles to be applied to 'Agricultural Development Notifications' under the General Permitted Development Order.

2.25 Modern agricultural practice often requires large buildings to house livestock, or to store machinery or produce, such that they can have a significant visual impact on the landscape. The Council recognises that larger structures are more cost-effective and practical. However, careful attention to materials, siting and design of buildings and their effect on the surrounding environs is crucial to prevent any adverse impact on the wider landscape character.

2.26 Should it be desirable to remove an existing building which is not in use, conditions will be imposed on the planning permission to achieve their removal when no longer required for agricultural purposes. This will ensure that the countryside does not contain a proliferation of vacant and redundant modern agricultural buildings.

PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

2.27 Central Government policy seeks to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land as a national resource for future generations, which echoes the fundamental principle of sustainable development. The best and most versatile land is classified as Grades 1, 2 and 3A. Development proposals must ensure they seek a lower, rather than higher, grade of agricultural land to ensure the ability of the best land to be retained for food production in the future.

2.28 Local Planning Authorities are therefore required to consult the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on any proposal that does not accord with the Development Plan, and which leads to, or may lead to, the loss of more than 20 hectares of land in Grades 1, 2 and 3A.

POLICY ECON 3 - PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Development will not be permitted if it would result in theirreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land unless all the following criteria are met:

- i. There is a lack of development opportunities on previously developed land or on land in existing urban areas, towns or settlements;*
- ii. There is little land in grades below 3A or little lower grade land which does not have a recognised environmental, nature conservation, landscape, historic or archaeological value;*
- iii. The development is proposed on land of the lowest practicable grade.*

Unless there is an overriding need for the development.

JUSTIFICATION

2.29 The Council recognises the importance of safeguarding the best and most versatile land in order to meet the objectives of sustainable development.

2.30 It is no longer necessary to protect land for agricultural use, although it remains important that an efficient and flexible agricultural industry remains. Many 'soft' uses of agricultural land, e.g. golf courses often render the return of land to agricultural use impracticable.

2.31 In some instances, such as habitat creation, it is recognised that policies to protect high quality agricultural land from development need to be sufficiently flexible so as to not constrain environmentally beneficial projects that would not cause irreversible loss of such land and would contribute to national, regional and county level sustainability and biodiversity objectives. In such cases relatively small areas of high grade land may be required for habitat restoration projects which substantially improve the local environment and contribute to the achievement of the Government biodiversity or other targets. A particular case is for flood defence schemes where the creation of washlands may provide the most cost-effective and sustainable means of defence. Development proposals should be directed towards lower grade land, but that is not to say that all lower grade land is appropriate for development. The overall approach with this policy and others is still to protect the countryside from inappropriate development.

FARM DIVERSIFICATION

2.32 The changes in the agricultural industry over the past decade have led to many farmers being encouraged to 'diversify' into new enterprises. It may be necessary for the rural economy to diversify away from its traditional agricultural roots.

2.33 Central Government policy advocates principles for farm diversification in order to support the vitality of the rural economy. Local Planning Authorities are expected to be supportive of well conceived farm diversification schemes because of their potential for providing a wide and varied employment opportunity for local people.

2.34 Application of the policy criteria will ensure that the proposals are appropriate to their proposed location and remain protective towards and respectful to the surrounding environment.

POLICY ECON 4 – FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Proposals to diversify the range of economic activities on a farm will be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

- i. The proposal is complementary to the agricultural operations on the farm and is operated as part of the farm holding;*
- ii. The character, scale and location of the proposal is compatible with its landscape setting and any area of nature conservation or archaeological importance;*
- iii. The proposal would not use the best and most versatile agricultural land;*
- iv. The likely amount of traffic generated by the proposal could be accommodated on the local highway network without reducing road safety;*

v. *The proposal should re-use or adapt any suitable farm building paying particular regard to the need to protect the character of traditional buildings and the retention of the local vernacular distinctiveness;*

vi. *If a new building is justified, it should be sited in or adjacent to an existing group of buildings where possible, be of compatible design and scale, and blend satisfactorily into the landscape in design, siting and materials;*

vii. *The proposal would not cause noise, light, air or water pollution;*

viii. *The proposal would not harm the amenity of the local residents;*

ix. *The proposal contributes to the local rural economy.*

Proposals to replace the entire farm operation by a new non-agricultural operation will not be supported by this policy.

JUSTIFICATION

2.35 The Council recognises the need for farm diversification in order to sustain and enhance a healthy rural economy. Any proposal submitted should be complimentary to the agricultural operations on the farm and be operated as part of the farm holding. Any proposal to completely replace a farm operation with a new use will be considered in accordance with the policies relevant for that use as they are not considered to be farm diversification proposals.

2.36 Proposals that meet the wider objectives of the Local Plan First Review, such as informal countryside recreation, or make good use of existing buildings, or realise the opportunities for enhancing habitats and environmental improvement works without harming the character of the area are likely to be considered favourably.

INTENSIVE LIVESTOCK UNITS

2.37 Although intensive livestock units (ILUs) can be an appropriate land use in rural areas, they can on occasions create serious problems of dust, smell, noise, soil and water pollution. As a consequence, great care needs to be exercised in choosing their location so as to minimise their impact on the countryside and the amenities of nearby residential properties and as a broader threat to the growing significance of the countryside as a tourism asset.

2.38 For the purposes of Policy ECON 5, an intensive livestock use can be taken to be the use of a purpose-designed or specially modified building for the concentrated breeding or keeping of animals for intensive food production purposes.

POLICY ECON 5 - INTENSIVE LIVESTOCK UNITS

Generally, development proposals for new or expanded livestock units in the countryside will be permitted provided that:

i. *They or any slurry or sewage sludge storage facility are located not less than 400 metres from a building occupied by people, which is not directly and functionally related to*

the enterprise. The final distance will be determined by other factors which will be taken into account such as prevailing winds, lack of bunding, screening and topography;

ii. As a result there would not be an over-intensification of livestock units in a locality;

iii. The development complies with all other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

JUSTIFICATION

2.39 ILUs present particular planning problems, because of the scale of development that is required, and because of their associated characteristics and requirements. The Council recognises however, that such units allow cheap and efficient food production, together with local employment opportunities and also the necessity of their location in the countryside.

2.40 Whilst ILUs are an important part of the farming process, the Council will aim to ensure that their impact upon the countryside and local communities is limited to acceptable levels.

2.41 Such development may require an Environmental Assessment for proposals; such an assessment should discuss in detail the likely impacts of the proposal on the local environment and should be prepared by suitably qualified persons.

2.42 With proposals for all ILUs, the Council will assess all aspects and implications arising from the use, including traffic generation and waste disposal. Applicants will be expected to provide details of the likely traffic movements and how wastes are to be taken, dealt with, and how and where disposal can take place. The Council will not support storage of slurry or sewerage waste within the given separation distance and, to ensure that this is the case, appropriate planning conditions will be imposed upon any planning permission granted. Any disposal of slurry or sewerage waste by means of spreading will be expected to be carried out with adherence to the relevant guidelines.

2.43 A distance of at least 400 metres between ILUs and the majority of other buildings has been retained, as a standard suggested by Central Government. This cordon will minimise the level of contact that the public, and particularly local residents, will have with agricultural operation, reducing unpleasant odours and other forms of pollution that emanate from such ILUs.

2.44 The Council is aware that, by applying good management practices to ILUs, the risk of various forms of pollution can be kept to a minimum. Therefore, development which is expected to result in nuisance and an adverse impact upon the public should be refused.

2.45 The number of ILUs in an area will be monitored, so that they do not dominate areas close to settlements and the cumulative impact is not too great on the character of the landscape and countryside.

POLICY ECON 6 – NOW DELETED

CONVERSIONS OF BUILDINGS WITHIN TOWNS AND PRIMARY RURAL SETTLEMENTS

2.55 Conversions of existing buildings within settlement boundaries to employment uses or other alternative uses are often acceptable in principle.

POLICY ECON 7 - CONVERSIONS TO EMPLOYMENT OR OTHER USES WITHIN TOWNS AND PRIMARY RURAL SETTLEMENTS

Within settlement boundaries the conversion of buildings to employment or other appropriate uses will be permitted provided that the building is capable of conversion to the proposed use without the need for significant external alterations or extensions which would adversely affect its character or its surroundings.

JUSTIFICATION

2.56 The re-use of existing buildings is often preferable to the provision of a new building and can often be part of a wider regeneration scheme. An assessment will be required to ensure that the building is capable of conversion and accommodating the proposed use. The associated land should also be capable of accommodating any additional development requirements, such as ancillary buildings, structures, and vehicle parking, without adversely affecting the character of the building and its setting.

CONVERSIONS OF BUILDINGS IN OTHER SETTLEMENTS OR THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

2.57 There are many traditional Lincolnshire farm buildings to be found throughout the District. Because of their form and materials, many make a positive contribution to their local environment.

2.58 Conversions of these buildings for employment or community use can make a positive contribution to sustaining and enhancing the rural economy by offering employment opportunities whilst helping to reduce the need for new buildings and therefore preserving the character of the countryside.

POLICY ECON 8 – CONVERSIONS TO EMPLOYMENT USES OR OTHER USES IN OTHER SETTLEMENTS OR THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

Outside of settlement boundaries, the conversion of buildings to business or community related uses will be permitted provided that:

- i. The proposed development is appropriate in scale in that location and provides for a use which will benefit the rural economy or support the local community;*
- ii. The building is capable of conversion to the proposed use without the need for significant alterations or extensions which adversely affect the character of the building, its setting or the countryside;*
- iii. There is sufficient land attached to the building to provide for the functional needs of the proposed development;*
- iv. The proposed development will not result in an unacceptable impact upon traffic movements, the local highway network, or the local environment;*

v. Parking can be accommodated within the site without a negative impact on the setting of the building or wider landscape.

JUSTIFICATION

2.59 The Council recognises that the conversion of redundant rural buildings to other appropriate uses is important to the rural economy. This policy is not, however, intended as a way of allowing or encouraging development which would have unacceptable or adverse effects on the character of the building and its locality, traffic movements and the local road network, or the environment generally.

2.60 Certain types of development will, because of their scale or nature, be unacceptable in the countryside and such proposals are likely to be more suited to land allocated for employment purposes. Development proposals that were originally acceptable can become unacceptable over time if the use intensifies or expands significantly.

2.61 The countryside and the settlements within it are very sensitive to change and they should be protected for their own sake. Therefore conversion schemes must aim to harmonise with the local environment. This will mean that conversions, which keep alterations to a minimum and which reflect the traditional character of Lincolnshire buildings, will be generally acceptable.

2.62 There should be sufficient land attached to a building to allow for the provision of functional requirements to be both adequate and well designed. Car parking and storage can be particularly intrusive in the landscape and should be minimised and/or screened.

RETENTION AND PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

POLICY ECON 9 – RETENTION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

Planning permission will not be granted to develop or use vacant business, general industrial, storage or distribution sites or premises for non-employment purposes unless:

- i. The present use harms the character or amenities of the adjacent area, the site is not capable of satisfactory use for employment and overriding local benefits would come from the proposed development; or*
- ii. The proposed use would not preclude subsequent change of use back to the employment use without significant building or alteration works; or*
- iii. The retention of premises or sites for employment use has been explored fully without success and it is demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the land for employment purposes due to the amount of land allocated or committed for employment use in the locality; or*
- iv. The site can be demonstrated not to suit the needs of modern business operations.*

JUSTIFICATION

2.63 It is important for the Council to encourage development that makes the best use of appropriate brownfield sites and this includes the re-use of vacant buildings. Existing employment sites that have become vacant provide an ideal opportunity to introduce new business to an area without the need for additional use of land. It is therefore important to avoid the loss of the employment use.

2.64 There may be occasions where a former employment site is no longer suitable for employment use, maybe as a result of recent development within the area, or another use may create more benefits for the local community. In such cases, the Council will consider proposals for non-employment uses for the site. The policy gives criteria which must be met before the Council will support non-employment uses for land currently in employment use. Some existing employment sites are identified with the Council's Urban Capacity Study as offering potential for new use for residential purposes.

THE SERVICE SECTOR

2.65 In recent years there has been a growth in the service sector of the economy with a decline in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Council aims to promote economic growth in the service sector, to increase local employment opportunities and expand the services available to local residents.

2.66 Strategic policy recognises the importance of office development as a component of the Lincolnshire Economic Strategy, alongside industrial and warehousing activities.

POLICY ECON 10 – OFFICE SPACE DEVELOPMENT

Permission for new office space development or change of use to provide office accommodation will be granted provided that:

i. Within the defined town centres:

a. It accords with Policy RTC 1; or

b. It is the only means of preserving or enhancing a building of historic or architectural merit; or

c. It would contribute to the vitality of the town centre and would not have a detrimental impact on the retail environment.

ii. Outside the defined town centres but within settlement boundaries, it complies with Policy ECON 1 and does not harm the character and amenity of the area or detract from neighbouring land uses;

iii. Outside of settlement boundaries it relates to the expansion of an existing business or complies with Policy ECON 8 and does not harm an existing building or the character, amenity of the area or detract from neighbouring and uses.

JUSTIFICATION

2.67 The development of small offices has become an expanding source of employment, and demand has mostly been catered for within urban areas. Urban areas do have greater

accessibility and the range of business services and shops that are usually present. Encouragement into these locations will cluster established retail and commercial businesses together and recognise the potential of local service centres.

2.68 The Council wishes to maintain the role of the town centres by encouraging investment and by utilising the re-use of historic buildings which are often the cornerstone of such centres. Vacant upper floors can often be a problem in town centres and this policy will help to facilitate the use of these spaces.

2.69 Outside of the town centres, within the settlement boundaries and the countryside, appropriate office development can often be a good neighbour and can provide employment opportunities for local people and thereby reduce commuting to larger urban areas.

HOME WORKING

2.70 Technological developments have produced a change in the working patterns and office arrangements to change. Increasingly the idea of the remote office or operation away from the main headquarters of a business has opened up the choice for employees to work from home.

2.71 Many businesses use the opportunity for home working for their employees as a way of creating satellite offices or allowing staff to achieve a better home and work life balance.

2.72 Within West Lindsey, 12% of the economically active population employed within the District work from home according to the 2001 Census.

POLICY ECON 11 – HOME WORKING

Small-scale, home-based businesses will be permitted provided that it can be demonstrated that:

- i. Residential amenity and character of the neighbourhood, or rural character, will not be materially or unacceptably harmed by virtue of noise, smell, traffic generation, health and safety impacts, scale, design, appearance or nature of operations;*
- ii. The operation of the business activity can be contained within the existing curtilage of the premises;*
- iii. The operation of the business activity does not require external modification of the premises.*

JUSTIFICATION

2.73 Small businesses often find it difficult to start up or continue because of a lack of acceptable premises within their means. Some businesses become established at home and have the potential to make a valuable contribution to local employment provision and the local community.

2.74 Small-scale home-based operations do not always require planning permission. This policy applies to proposals where consent is required, for example due to a change of use of part of the property occurring.

2.75 The use of a property for home working must not adversely affect the amenity or character of the surrounding area.

IMPROVING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE DISTRICT

2.76 In rural areas the quality of highway links is often crucial for the accessibility of the settlements and in particular the three towns of the District.

POLICY ECON 12 – IMPROVING HIGHWAY NETWORK LINKS FOR GAINSBOROUGH AND CAISTOR

The Council will work closely with the Highway Authority and other bodies to look at options for improved access between Gainsborough and the strategic motorway network.

The Council will look at improving access to Caistor by considering a Caistor Relief Road, utilising the A46 and North Kelsey Road.

JUSTIFICATION

2.77 Certain road schemes, although not actually proposed in the Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan (2006-2011), would be desirable within the District to improve its overall accessibility. In this case, access from Gainsborough to the motorway network, and improved access to the industrial areas of Caistor would be desirable. Should solutions be found through funding to assist with these issues or through a future Local Transport Plan, this policy would support those solutions in land use terms.

2.78 No route has yet been identified on the proposals map for links between Gainsborough and the strategic motorway network. As a result, it is not possible to suggest the protection of any areas of land from development within this policy. However, should routes be proposed in the future for improved access from Gainsborough or Caistor, as defined in this policy, the Council would wish any land surrounding the proposals to be protected in order to avoid jeopardising the development of the road schemes.

THE LINCOLN EASTERN BY - PASS

2.79 The Lincoln Eastern By-Pass is part of a long-term development option in order to accommodate growth in the main urban centre for Lincolnshire and this policy should be read in conjunction with Policy STRAT 10 – Long Term Development Options.

POLICY ECON 13 – LINCOLN EASTERN BY - PASS

Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals which will prejudice the implementation of the road scheme for the Lincoln Eastern By-Pass, identified on the Proposals Map.

JUSTIFICATION

2.80 Lincolnshire County Council has planning permission for the Lincoln Eastern By-Pass and will continue to pursue this scheme through the relevant statutory bodies. Most road

schemes are required to either reduce the present unacceptable effects of traffic in an area, or will be required to ensure that there is an adequate capacity for additional traffic produced by new developments. The Council will refuse any development that may jeopardise the implementation of this scheme, in the interests of protecting the City of Lincoln's sub-regional role. The Lincoln Eastern By-Pass is part of the overall range of projects set out in the Lincoln Transport Study.

2.81 The land surrounding the Lincoln Eastern By-Pass should be protected and therefore development on any sites which may hinder the progress of the by-pass should not be permitted. The construction of the Lincoln Eastern By-Pass is a fundamental measure required to help achieve the increased regional importance of the Lincolnshire economy as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

PROPOSALS INVOLVING OPEN STORAGE

POLICY ECON 14 – PROPOSALS INVOLVING OPEN STORAGE

Permission for the open storage of materials will not be granted unless the proposal meets all of the following criteria:

- i. It is situated alongside and is functionally related to an industrial or warehouse building;*
- ii. It incorporates landscaping and boundary treatments for screening;*
- iii. Materials are stacked or set out to minimise visual intrusion into the surrounding area;*
- iv. No operations are conducted which will harm the landscape character, amenities of nearby residents or other land users or cause the loss of wildlife habitats, or cause pollution, contamination of soil and/or surface and ground water, in terms of noise, smell, atmospheric or light pollution, health and safety impacts;*
- v. It does not reduce operational servicing and vehicle parking space;*
- vi. In the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty development proposals will only be permitted if it would not harm the natural beauty of the landscape or impose itself upon the skyline.*

JUSTIFICATION

2.82 Industrial processes and activities usually require areas for the storage of raw materials, finished products or waste materials. If located in the open, such areas can be visually obtrusive and, depending upon the nature of the stored materials, can also be a nuisance. Open storage can cause problems within the locality, often causing considerable noise and odour nuisance at unsociable hours. It can also take up valuable space, which may be required towards operational servicing requirements or vehicle parking, causing problems with these activities having to take place elsewhere.

2.83 Operations involving manufacturing or warehousing should be carried out within purpose-built buildings, especially if in close proximity to residential areas.

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INTRODUCTION

3.1 The overall purpose of this Local Plan First Review is to provide guidance on the appropriateness of various forms of development throughout the district. In determining proposals, consideration must be given to the siting, design and appearance of a development as well as its impact on adjoining land uses or on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Regard must also be taken of design and development standards contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance in assessing proposals.

3.2 Whilst some policies fall easily into defined categories relating to their specific function, a number of policies are either relevant to more than one type of development or are very specific to a particular form of development and as such do not sit easily in any specific category. Therefore, to prevent repetition of the same advice in the various chapters these matters have been included under the heading of Core Policies.

3.3 The Core Policies chapter will focus on a diverse range of topics ranging from highway infrastructure provision, advertisements, commercial pet establishments through to open space provisions within developments and telecommunications equipment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.4 The aims and objectives of the policies in this chapter are:

- To improve accessibility to a wide range of functions throughout the District.
- To ensure that all advertisement proposals do not detract from the safety and the amenity of the locality.
- To ensure that the impact of the siting of telecommunications equipment, and other utilities apparatus on the natural and built environment is minimised.

NATIONAL, REGIONAL & STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

3.5 Because of the diversity of the policies included under the heading of Core Policies, a wide range of National, Regional and Strategic policy applies. The common factor is the requirement to enhance accessibility, reduce social exclusion and to improve and encourage the use of public transport in the District.

3.6 Specific advice on telecommunications development is contained in both the Lincolnshire Structure Plan Review and in PPG8 whilst PPG19 provides guidance on advertisement control.

VEHICLE AND CYCLE PARKING STANDARDS

3.7 Car ownership levels in the United Kingdom are continuously growing. In both urban and rural areas the requirement to provide adequate parking provision for vehicles has to be balanced with the likely impact that the proposal has on the character and appearance of the locality, especially on defined Conservation Areas.

POLICY CORE 1 – VEHICLE AND CYCLE PARKING STANDARDS

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which are in accordance with the locational policies set out in this Local Plan First Review; and which indicate that the appropriate vehicle and cycleparking spaces will be provided in accordance with the standards outlined in Appendix 9 to this plan for operational and non-operational use unless:

- i. Such provision would be detrimental to the character or amenity of the location; or*
- ii. A suitable alternative site/provision is available or will become within an agreed time period.*

JUSTIFICATION

3.8 Parking standards are used by the Council to determine the requirements for residential and operational vehicle parking spaces with a view on road safety and functional needs. However, in certain parts of the District where adherence to standards would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area, lower standards may be more appropriate. Appendix 9 outlines the maximum parking standards for all types of vehicles except cycles. The cycle parking standards in Appendix 9 are expressed as the minimum requirement in order to encourage more cycling. The Council will apply these parking standards and not those of any other body, these differ to the national standards set out in PPG13 (Transport) and the standards used by Lincolnshire County Council as the Highway Authority. The standards set out in Appendix 9 are those which have been determined to meet the needs of West Lindsey.

3.9 The Council will take into account the fact that the operational parking spaces are provided to allow vehicles which must call at particular premises to park alongside, or close to them. Such vehicles include those which deliver goods to shops and offices. If they do not have a dedicated parking space/unloading bay, then they may often hold up other traffic by parking on public roads, or create an unpleasant and hazardous environment for those on foot by parking and manoeuvring in pedestrian areas.

3.10 The benefits of operational parking will be weighed against the impact that it will have on the character and visual appearance of the area when new developments are proposed. If it appears that appropriate provision can be made with no detrimental effect, then the standards outlined in the parking provision will be maintained. It may be that, through sufficient attention to the location, layout and design of operational parking areas, these can be satisfactorily accommodated.

3.11 In some cases it may be possible to accommodate the level of provision required without significant detriment to the character and appearance of the locality. In such cases the Council will need to be convinced that parking for operations that require the provision of parking spaces can be satisfactorily achieved without creating a dangerous or

unpleasant environment for other users of the area. In this respect, alternative parking areas nearby, or the restriction of delivery times to certain hours, may resolve any problems.

HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

3.12 The provision of highway infrastructure is a fundamental part of any proposal. Poorly designed roads and pavements can detract from the character and appearance of an area as well as potentially having a negative impact on the safety of vehicle users and pedestrians. Therefore it is imperative that development standards are in place to ensure that all new road schemes are acceptable in terms of design, appearance and safety.

POLICY CORE 2 – HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals unless any associated roads:

- i. Meet acceptable standards of design, access and layout;*
- ii. Meet safety and functional requirements;*
- iii. Reflect the character of existing developments in the locality, and are designed so as to respect environmentally sensitive areas;*
- iv. Cater fully for the needs of people with impaired mobility;*

Where it is considered that development proposals require traffic calming measures on existing or new roads these should be agreed and provided.

JUSTIFICATION

3.13 New roads should be able to cater for the amount of traffic that is expected to use them safely and without generating traffic hazards. Functional and safety standards must be met in order for the specifications of the highway and planning authorities to be met. The Lincolnshire Design Guide, which was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by all the authorities in Lincolnshire, sets out the full highway standards that the Council will expect all developments to follow.

3.14 In certain areas, it is important that the Council only allows new development to proceed if it reflects the character of the existing development, or the undeveloped character of the locality. Such areas include Conservation Areas and the Lincolnshire Wolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Within such areas, the development of a new road, no matter how minor, may have a significant impact on the character of the area.

3.15 The potential for a detrimental impact on the surrounding area may be avoided or minimised by designing roads in such a way so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. This may at times involve the relaxation of the functional standards, or involve new and radical design solutions. These measures will be considered positively if the overall aim is to reduce the visual intrusion of the new road. Otherwise, the relaxation of standards will not be permitted for cost-cutting reasons or for convenience.

3.16 Traffic calming measures are often installed to bring significant improvements for the safety and living conditions of the local residents.

POLICY CORE 3 – NOW DELETED

PUBLIC CAR PARKING

3.19 The provision of a public car park facility can improve the economic viability of an area as well as contribute to reducing traffic congestion by decreasing the number of vehicles parked on the highway. However, improved parking facilities can promote car usage and reduce public transport viability. A balance must be struck between economic improvements and ensuring that accessibility for all types of transport users is maintained and promoted.

POLICY CORE 4 – PUBLIC CAR PARKING

Planning permission for the use of land for general public car parking will be granted providing the following criteria can be met:

- i. The land is located in an area where there is a demonstrable need for off-street car parking;*
- ii. The economic viability of the locality is likely to suffer without additional car parking;*
- iii. The use of the land would not be detrimental to the character of the surrounding area;*
- iv. The use would not detract from the amenity of existing neighbourhood uses;*
- v. The use of the land would not generate or aggravate highway or traffic problems;*
- vi. The proposal incorporates adequate provision for cycle parking or storage in the form of stands and/or lockers.*

JUSTIFICATION

3.20 The provision of car parking usually causes improvements to highway safety by allowing traffic to park clear of roads. Provision also allows surrounding uses to function properly and may maintain or improve the economic viability of an area, because visitors can easily park their cars.

3.21 However, the creation of parking areas can discourage the use of other forms of transport to reach an area, such as public transport, walking and cycling. Parking areas can detract from the character of an area by affecting the street scene with their open and (where the sites of demolished buildings have been used) semi-derelict nature.

3.22 The amenity of an area can also be affected by the continuous flow of vehicles into and out of car parks, creating noise, air pollution and general levels of activity. Highway safety must be carefully considered with the location of entrances and exits to car parks, therefore avoiding any additional hazards.

3.23 Because of the potential harm to an area in terms of safety, amenity and economic viability, a balance must be struck with parking provision. However, as a result of the potential harm to amenity, general public car parking will not normally be permitted in areas where the criteria outlined in the policy cannot be fulfilled.

RETENTION OF EXISTING CAR PARKS

3.24 The loss of an existing car park can have a negative effect on the accessibility of an area, in particular the smaller market towns. Therefore it is important when development proposals are submitted to have regard to the existing provision in the locality.

POLICY CORE 5 – RETENTION OF EXISTING CAR PARKS

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of an existing car park unless:

- i. There is a lack of demand for car parking and the parking area is under-used; or*
- ii. The parking area is no longer required as equivalent or better provision has been made in the locality; or*
- iii. An alternative nearby site can be provided to cater for the demand for car parking before the development commences.*

JUSTIFICATION

3.25 Although the provision of new car parks may be discouraged in order to attract the use of alternative forms of transport, existing off-street areas for car parking can be essential to the economic well being of the area. The removal of a car park may render an area less attractive to visitors, thereby creating an adverse effect on the economic viability of a town or a village.

3.26 Whilst the use of public transport is encouraged, an adequate level of car parking is also maintained. This is especially the case in the smaller rural market towns where there may be reliance upon car parking to attract visitors. The Council acknowledges that, as levels of car ownership continue to rise, the demand for car parking spaces will increase, therefore necessitating the need to protect existing car parks for public use.

3.27 However, where there is a lack of demand for car parking, the areas of land currently used as a car park may prove to be more beneficial if used for development. Certain factors in a locality, such as an increase in the use of public transport, walking or cycling, may result in a reduction in the use of the private car, and consequently a reduction in the need for car parking. The most beneficial use for an area for car parking needs to be assessed.

ROADSIDE SIGNAGE AND ADVERTISEMENTS

3.28 Advertisements affect the appearance of the place where they are displayed and sometimes a wider area. There needs to be a balance between the commercial need for the advertisement and its visual impact on the surrounding environment.

POLICY CORE 6 – ROADSIDE SIGNAGE

Permission for directional signs located beyond highway boundaries and alongside other transport corridors will not be granted unless the signage:

- i. Is reasonably required in connection with, and to enable the public to locate, a business or activity which is not situated in a named place or readily identifiable location;*

- ii. Is sited to avoid creating any transport, highways or traffic hazard and must be near to, in case of highways, but not on highway land, not within 50 metres of an official traffic sign facing the same direction, and not more than 2 miles from the business it relates to;*
- iii. Does not exceed 0.15 square metres in area and the top of it is no higher than 3m above ground level;*
- iv. Identifies the premises only, does not include any motif or advertise a product and does not look like an official traffic sign;*
- v. Is not illuminated and is not finished in reflective material;*
- vi. Wherever possible makes use of an already existing means of support;*
- vii. Will not result in an adverse impact on either the residential amenity or the amenity of the wider landscape.*

JUSTIFICATION

3.29 Outdoor signage is an important aspect of commercial activity and the Council is keen to support expansion in the local economy, including new businesses. Directional signs are helpful to businesses operating in more remote places, but there could be serious amenity and safety implications if numbers, location and design considerations were not carefully controlled.

POLICY CORE 7 – ADVERTISEMENTS

Consent will only be given for the display of an advertisement which does not detract from interests of public safety and amenity assessed in the context of the general characteristics of the locality, threat to highway safety, and any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or other special interest, including:

- i. The design, historic character, structures and the setting of Listed Buildings or scheduled ancient monuments;*
- ii. The character and appearance of Conservation Areas, or other areas of architectural, historical or townscape merit;*
- iii. The scenic beauty and landscape character of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, other areas of landscape value and the countryside in general;*
- iv. The special qualities and integrity of SSSIs and SNCIs.*

In Conservation Areas, the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, and on Listed Buildings of special architectural or historic importance, consent will not be granted for advertisements unless appropriate natural materials (usually either wood or metal) are used and any illumination is external to the advertisement.

JUSTIFICATION

3.30 The purpose of Council policy is to protect and improve the pleasant environment of West Lindsey. In sensitive locations or settings in the District, poorly designed or positioned advertisements will be especially harmful. It is also the intention to avoid the adverse effect

on road safety that certain types of advertisements have, either by intrusiveness, the diversion of the attention of road users or the interference with traffic information signs.

COMMERCIAL PET AND ANIMAL ESTABLISHMENTS

3.31 Commercial pet and animal establishments can have a negative impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of potential noise nuisance, odour and general disturbance.

POLICY CORE 8 – COMMERCIAL PET AND ANIMAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Development of commercial pet and animal breeding, boarding or handling premises will be permitted provided that:

- i. It is not located adjoining a residential or other noise-sensitive use which is unconnected with the business;*
- ii. It would not adversely affect the amenity of nearby residents due to noise, smell, scale, layout, appearance, traffic generation and parking;*
- iii. There is sufficient land in the control of the applicant to house and meet the exercise needs of the animals;*
- iv. It is accompanied by a scheme of noise attenuation measures to minimise the potential for disturbance to surrounding households/land owners;*
- v. It is accompanied by a landscaping scheme to effectively screen the use made of the site from the surrounding area.*

JUSTIFICATION

3.32 Pet boarding or breeding establishments which are operated commercially can create a significant effect upon the amenity of the surrounding area.

3.33 Commercial boarding and breeding operations often involve relatively large areas of land in order to provide for kennels and activity/exercise areas for the animals. The potential impact of the buildings, combined with the noise, odours, and traffic generation can result in a detrimental impact upon the surrounding area. It is therefore important that such factors are taken into consideration.

RETENTION OF IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES AND FRONTAGES WITHIN OR ADJOINING SETTLEMENTS

3.34 Open spaces within a settlement are as important as the buildings in giving a settlement its unique character and form. They provide welcome breaks in the street scene and many allow views of the surrounding open countryside to be enjoyed from within the settlement. Some open spaces and/or frontages are also highly important to the setting of the settlement.

3.35 Many of the small spaces and gaps in towns and villages have disappeared due to development. In many cases this has affected the character and appearance of the settlements. It is the Council's aim to ensure that in the future important open spaces or

frontages in or adjoining settlements will be retained. There has been a rise in levels of infill housing development as a result of policy and economic changes. This often results in many open gaps or visual breaks in towns and villages coming under pressure for development. This policy seeks to protect the most important spaces and undeveloped road frontages in settlements from such development pressure.

POLICY CORE 9 – RETENTION OF IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES/FRONTAGES

Development will not be permitted:

- i. On the areas of open character to remain undeveloped as shown on the proposals map;*
- ii. Where it will adversely affect the open character or important feature of a protected frontage as shown on the proposals map;*
- iii. On other areas of open space/character within settlements not identified on the proposals map, where this would adversely affect the character of the street-scene or settlement or lead to a cramming effect within a settlement.*

JUSTIFICATION

3.36 The Council recognises that infill development is important to sustain housing and other developments within the towns and villages of the District. However, as open spaces can in some circumstances make an important contribution to the character and appearance of a settlement, the Council will seek to protect them from development.

3.37 Within towns and villages, informal open spaces, such as allotments and private gardens can often be of great importance to the character of a neighbourhood and policies have been devised with the aim of retaining these valuable spaces with amenity value.

3.38 The character of settlements is strongly influenced by what can be seen from the roads and the footpaths. It is often an open frontage or a feature, such as a brick wall or hedge, which contributes to the pleasant visual impact of a street scene. Redevelopment further back may be seen as acceptable, providing the essential character of the frontage is retained.

3.39 The main areas of open character to remain undeveloped and important open frontages are identified on the proposals map. However, there are other areas of open character or open frontages within settlements which should be equally protected under this policy but are not specifically highlighted on the proposals map.

OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING WITHIN DEVELOPMENTS

3.40 The value of successful landscaping should not be underestimated, since it makes a very public contribution to the local environment. Commercial and industrial premises can often be intrusive forms of development. Good landscaping can help offset these effects and provide a good impression to visitors.



POLICY CORE 10 – OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING WITHIN DEVELOPMENTS

New development proposals will be expected to include proposals for landscaping and open space which:

- i. Help integrate the development into the surrounding environment;*
- ii. Are planned as an integral part of the development;*
- iii. Ensure important natural landscape and nature conservation features are retained and where possible the opportunity to seek to enhance the site's wildlife value is undertaken;*
- iv. Ensure trees that are subject to a tree preservation order (TPO) are kept clear of proposed buildings and structures and are enclosed by fencing so they are not detrimentally affected by works connected with the development;*
- v. Seek to retain and protect existing trees and hedgerows on site;*
- vi. Take account of neighbouring uses in terms of amenity and safety considerations.*

JUSTIFICATION

3.41 This policy is intended to apply to all types of open space of public or private value, but particularly land which is not designated for the purpose of formal recreational use or play.

3.42 It is vital that development leads to the creation of new areas of open space. This will be especially important where it is considered that the existing amount of open space is either inadequate to serve the settlement's needs or where areas which were previously open spaces have been built on. Each small area of open land helps to contribute to the diversity and the character of a settlement and can help to maintain attractive built environments.

3.43 There are many instances, such as new housing developments, where there will be a specific requirement for sports land, play spaces and land for informal recreation. In addition to this, however, in numerous types of development, the provision of general open space will improve the quality of the development, provide new amenity space for residents and contribute to the attractive character of our towns and villages. Such spaces for example may take the form of courtyards, communal gardens for residential homes, water features on housing estates, parkland on business parks.

3.44 The Council considers that the provision of sufficient and suitable landscaping is a priority in all forms of development. The benefit to the community of the provision of a well designed landscaping scheme is significant in comparison to the relatively small cost incurred by the developer as part of the scheme in totality.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT, OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LINES AND OTHER UTILITIES APPARATUS

3.45 Telecommunications are an essential ingredient in modern living as they benefit the community and represent an important and growing element in the national economy. Technology in the communications field is advancing rapidly and new improvements spread quickly to meet demands from all sectors of the community.

3.46 Central Government advice is set out in PPG8 (Telecommunications). The objective is to facilitate the growth of new technology to ensure that the needs of the users are met whilst also ensuring that the equipment required facilitating this growth does not have a negative impact on either the built or natural environment.

POLICY CORE 11 – TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

Telecommunications development will be permitted unless:

i. The equipment would be out of scale with the building on which it would be erected and would detrimentally affect the appearance of the building; or

ii. It would harm the character and appearance of or would be visually intrusive in a street scene or a sensitive landscape or environment which has been recognised as being important such as the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, other Areas of Landscape Value, SSSIs, Historic Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments; or

iii. The siting or appearance of the equipment would harm the amenities of local residents;

Any objection identified on the above grounds is not outweighed by the need for the development, bearing in mind the feasibility of meeting such need in any more acceptable way including sharing other facilities or the use of an alternative site.

JUSTIFICATION

3.47 In considering proposals for telecommunications developments the effect of the appearance of the equipment on both the natural and built environment will be an important consideration. The combined intrusive effect of a number of masts in particular areas will also be taken into account. To combat the appearance of a number of individual masts in the countryside or in urban areas it is expected that operators will look at mast-sharing opportunities as advised in PPG8 (Telecommunications).

3.48 It will be appropriate for applicants to demonstrate on submitting applications that the erection of telecommunications equipment would not cause harm to the environmentally or visually sensitive areas where the physical or visual impact would be particularly intrusive or damaging. The Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, Areas of Great Landscape Value, SSSIs and National Nature Reserves, should be avoided as locations for equipment installations.

CONSULTATIONS ON OTHER UTILITY APPARATUS

3.49 New overhead transmission lines and other utilities apparatus can often have a detrimental impact on the landscape. However, as many works are permitted development they fall outside of the scope of planning control this means that the powers of the Council are limited in directly controlling proposals to site potentially intrusive equipment.

3.50 The Council does have the right under Section 37 of the Electricity Act to be consulted on transmission lines proposals even though they are permitted development. When consulted the Council would normally oppose any proposals which are felt to be visually intrusive into the built or natural environment. Where this proposal will have a significant negative impact on residential or landscape amenities the Council will press for lines to be

located underground to minimise any such impact. Alternatively, route options should be explored to reduce any adverse impacts.

3.51 The Council will press for lines to be underground in the following sensitive locations:

- Conservation Areas;
- Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Area of Great Landscape Value;
- Nature Conservation Sites;
- Within the setting of Listed Buildings

POLICY CORE 12 – NOW DELETED

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CHAPTER 4 – COMMUNITY, RECREATION AND TOURIST FACILITIES (CRT)

Other links in the Interactive Local Plan:

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INTRODUCTION

4.1 A basic social requirement for residents of the District is the provision of recreation and community facilities. Through Local Plans adequate land and water resources should be allocated for both organised sport and for informal recreation. There are growing links between sport, recreation and tourism, and the economy of the District can be affected by the success of these types of facilities. Non-residents and visitors to the District may be attracted by the availability of plentiful indoor and outdoor recreational and sports facilities.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.2 The rôle of the planning system is in assessing opportunities and needs for sport, recreation and community use provision and safeguarding open space with recreational value. Policies in the Local Plan First Review in relation to recreation and community facilities should follow these objectives:

- Facilitate the provision of indoor and outdoor facilities to meet the needs of local communities.
- Protect public and private open space and other land of recreational, conservation, wildlife, historical or amenity value.
- Encourage the provision of playing fields where local communities have identified suitable projects.
- Support the Lincoln Greenways Strategy.

4.3 Although there is a strong relationship between the provision of recreation and community facilities and tourism facilities, the Council has specific objectives relating to the provision of tourism facilities. These are to:

- Encourage a range of appropriate tourism opportunities.
- Increase enjoyment and enhance the visitor experience.
- Encourage tourism proposals which will enhance, protect and work in harmony with the environment and heritage of the District.
- Protect the existing amenities of residents.
- Maintain, improve and increase the range and quality of visitor and holiday accommodation.

NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

4.4 Tourism is an important part of the British economy; it provides a significant number of jobs and boosts the economy. In West Lindsey there is a need to develop both new tourism facilities to attract visitors and to maintain and enhance the District's existing recreation and community facilities. Such development will have a potential impact upon existing communities in terms of traffic and commercial competition etc. It is essential that the benefits of any new schemes outweigh any possible negative impacts.

4.5 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) generally supports tourism. National policy is currently set out in PPG21 (Tourism) however this is due to be replaced in September 2006 by a Good Practice Guide. National policy for sport and recreation is set out in PPG17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation).

4.6 Thus, any new development must meet the aims and objectives of the Plan as a whole including the desire for sustainable development. The Lincoln Area is the national pilot for the Greenways Strategy. The Council will support the development of this national example as it will create safe routes for walking, cycling and horse riding on suitable paths or quiet roads.

LOCAL NEEDS RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

POLICY CRT 1 - LOCAL NEEDS RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposals for the development of recreation and community facilities serving local needs will be permitted provided that:

- i. The development is of appropriate scale with regard to its settings and would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the open countryside or settlement;*
- ii. The development would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety.*

In the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, development proposals for recreation and community facilities will only be permitted if it would not harm the natural beauty of the landscape or impose itself upon the skyline.

JUSTIFICATION

4.7 The Council will in principle support any proposal to provide recreational or community facilities provided that they are genuinely to serve the local community. Other planning issues will be given consideration against the criteria in Policy STRAT 1, against which all developments are judged.

4.8 The Council will emphasise the need to ensure that new facilities enable the widest use by local people, including the particular needs of the elderly and disabled.

4.9 Development can only be justified where it will not have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area.

STANDARDS FOR OPEN SPACE AND TOURISM FACILITIES

POLICY CRT 2 – STANDARDS FOR OPEN SPACE SPORTS PROVISION

Within settlements of greater than 2,500 population the Council will apply the standards contained within Appendix 10 for open spaces, play and sports provision.

Within settlements of population of less than 2,500 the provision of open spaces, play and sports provision will be based upon the findings of local surveys identifying deficiencies of provision.

JUSTIFICATION

4.10 The provision of open space, which has a recreational value, is essential to the social well-being of residents of the District. The 2001 Census will be used as the basis for population figures when applying this policy.

Settlements over 2,500 population are:

Caistor 2,601

Cherry Willingham 2,947

Gainsborough 16,869

Market Rasen 3,230

Nettleham 3,514

Saxilby 3,679

Scotter 2,591

Welton 3,821

4.11 Open space with a recreational value includes sports pitches, greens and courts, training areas in the ownership of public and private bodies and playgrounds equipped for children of all ages. Also included is more informal play space within housing areas.

4.12 Sport and recreation facilities and open space can form an important component of housing, major office or retail developments as well as new initiatives.

LOSS OF RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

POLICY CRT 3 - LOSS OF RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Development proposals which would lead to the loss of or reduce the suitability or adequacy of recreation and community facilities, to the detriment of the local community, will only be permitted provided that:

i. The development proposal is of proven public interest that outweighs the recreation, leisure, nature conservation and amenity interest of the existing facility; or

ii. If the existing sport, recreational or community facilities can best be retained and enhanced through redevelopment of part of the site.

Where such a proposal is considered acceptable, the Council will seek to secure, by negotiations, suitable replacement of lost recreational and leisure-related use elsewhere within the Plan Area where the need is greatest.

JUSTIFICATION

4.13 These facilities are being increasingly regarded as not just desirable, but essential requirements of the local community. They are important because they provide an opportunity to protect, conserve and enhance wildlife habitats and ecosystems and help contribute to community identity and the health and well being of residents. Finding available, suitable and well-located sites can be difficult. Relocation of such facilities will not always be possible and will often necessitate accepting a less conveniently located site.

4.14 Public playing fields and play areas, as “under-developed” green areas, can often come under threat and therefore need special protection. This policy is consistent with and will be applied in conjunction with strategic policy in which it is concluded that recreational open space should be protected from development in Local Plans except where specific criteria can be met.

4.15 This policy approach is consistent with national policy, which advises that planning authorities should have regard to resisting pressures for the development of open space which conflict with the wider public interest. The Council through its Community Services Directorate will be identifying areas within the District where deficiency of existing recreation and sports provision exists.

PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY POST OFFICES, CONVENIENCE STORES AND PUBLIC HOUSES

4.16 Settlements containing a range of services and facilities are arguably more sustainable than those settlements without. The Rural White Paper highlighted the importance of retaining local services and facilities within villages.

POLICY CRT 4 - PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY POST OFFICES, CONVENIENCE STORES AND PUBLIC HOUSES

Planning permission will not be granted for new development or a change of use which results in the loss of a community post office, essential community convenience store or public house unless:

i. A suitable and convenient alternative facility is available nearby either within the same settlement or a neighbouring settlement;

ii. It can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the facility is no longer economically viable in the long term for retail or public house purposes and that reasonable efforts have been made to market the property for a class A1 or public house use;

iii. The proposed use would have significant alternative benefits for the local community.

JUSTIFICATION

4.17 In recent years some areas have suffered from a decline in services and facilities. This can be blamed on a number of reasons including the increased numbers of large supermarkets offering competitive prices, easily accessed by the increased usage of the private car and second home owners using services and facilities outside the settlement.

4.18 Retaining life services and facilities in smaller communities is essential for those residents who are unable to access services and facilities elsewhere. A pub, a local shop or post office for example can also be a focal point in the community.

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION FACILITIES

POLICY CRT 5 - COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION FACILITIES

Proposals for countryside recreational facilities will be permitted provided that:

- i. Development is of appropriate scale with regard to its setting and would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the open countryside or settlement;*
- ii. The development would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety.*

In the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, development proposals for recreation and community facilities will only be permitted if it would not harm the natural beauty of the landscape or impose itself upon the skyline.

JUSTIFICATION

4.19 The development of countryside recreational facilities is desirable to cater for existing and future demand and to help realise the tourism potential of the area. Conservation of the countryside will, however, remain of paramount importance. Development should not be visually intrusive or compromise the quality of life of local communities or the interests of agriculture, nature conservation or archaeology.

4.20 The capacity of local roads must also be sufficient to accommodate the traffic generated by the development. An example of a suitable facility could be a picnic area or the creation of a path as part of the Greenways network.

MAJOR FACILITIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT - RISEHOLME PARK UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

4.21 Riseholme Park is the University of Lincoln's rural campus where it provides amongst others the agricultural, horticultural and equestrian related courses. The University has developed it into an important educational facility for the County.

POLICY CRT 6 - RISEHOLME PARK CAMPUS (UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN)

Within the Riseholme Park Campus as defined on the Proposals Map development proposals involving the expansion/alteration of existing educational related uses will be permitted provided that:

- i. The development is of appropriate scale with regard to its settings and would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the open countryside, the setting of Listed Buildings or the setting of the Historic Park and Garden and Scheduled Ancient Monuments;*
- ii. The development would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety;*
- iii. The development would not have a detrimental effect on residential amenity by reason of noise and traffic.*

JUSTIFICATION

4.22 Riseholme Park campus has become an important educational facility in the District. The expansion or improvement of this educational facility would be a benefit to the District and the County as a whole.

4.23 This campus-style site is located in the open countryside; this policy is required to set a context for development proposals for the site. The site is also identified as a historic park and garden by English Heritage and therefore requires more careful consideration when development is proposed in order to ensure the character and setting of all of the historical and cultural assets of the site are not harmed.

MAJOR FACILITIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT - LINCOLNSHIRE SHOWGROUND AND MARKET RASEN RACECOURSE

4.24 Both the Lincolnshire Showground and the Market Rasen Racecourse are important assets to the County as a whole and to West Lindsey in particular. At the Lincolnshire Showground there are a range of uses which can be complementary to the principal use of the site for shows. Diversification into other uses on site can help to sustain the showground as one of the key agricultural show venues in the UK. The Market Rasen Racecourse is a well known and supported recreational and sporting venue for West Lindsey and beyond.

POLICY CRT 7 - LINCOLNSHIRE SHOWGROUND AND MARKET RASEN RACECOURSE

Within the Lincolnshire Showground Area as defined on the Proposals Map, development proposals for conference facilities, leisure and recreational uses will be permitted provided that:

- i. The development is compatible with and ancillary to the main showground use;*
- ii. The development is of appropriate scale with regard to its landscape setting and would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the open countryside;*
- iii. The development would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety.*

Within the Market Rasen Racecourse Area as defined on the Proposals Map, development proposals for leisure, recreation, education and rural business opportunities