

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Head of Land Use Planning

REPORT NO. PLA441

DATE: 10th May 2004

TITLE:	LINCOLNSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN – DEPOSIT DRAFT
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	FUTURE ISSUE
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	KEY DECISION

COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	The Structure Plan will set the framework for future Council land use planning policy. Cllr J Smith.
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	Planning & Conservation, Affordable housing, Town Centre development
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	Minor
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	Outside scheme
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Lincolnshire Structure Plan. First Deposit Draft April 2004 Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands

LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN – Deposit Draft

Lincolnshire County Council is required under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 199, to prepare and keep up to date a Structure Plan for the area. The County Council never formally adopted the most recent Plan (due to Directions served by the Secretary of State on housing and transport policies), although it underwent an Examination in Public (EIP) in 1999.

Although the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill will formally abolish Structure Plans, they will continue to have an important statutory transitional role in providing sub-regional policy guidance until the relevant Regional Spatial Strategies are reviewed, published and adopted. It is intended that the Structure Plans currently under review and deposited before enactment of the Bill will be valid for a minimum of 3 years from the date of adoption.

In response to the Secretary of State's Direction, and the need to reflect recent Government Guidance, the County Council on 5th April placed a new Draft Structure Plan on deposit. This Plan, when adopted, will set the broad framework for the development and other use of land in Lincolnshire up to the year 2021, and provide the strategic context for more detailed Local Plans/Local Development Documents prepared by the District Councils and which will act as the basis for day-to-day development control decisions.

The County Council has invited objections to, and representations of support for the Draft Plan to be submitted by the 17th May 2004.

The purpose of this report is to make recommendations on those parts of the Plan which are of significance to South Kesteven.

THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

POLICY S3: DEVELOPMENT IN MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

The Plan sets out a proposed hierarchy of Major Settlements intended to reflect regional planning priorities and selected on the basis of their current service and employment role and their potential for accommodating new development.

The proposed settlement hierarchy will be used to direct the largest proportion of new development towards these locations according to the function and potential of each settlement.

The **Lincoln Policy Area** (Lincoln City and parts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey) is designated the county's only "**Principal Urban Area**" where, in accordance with the key regional planning objective to promote a significant strengthening of the area, it is proposed that a greater proportion of housing, employment and retail development will be provided than previously experienced.

Grantham (together with Boston) is to be promoted as a "**Sub-Regional Centre**" where investment in the town centre together with measures to reduce traffic problems and identification of key employment and housing sites are to be pursued, but not on a scale that prejudices the urban renaissance of the **Principal Urban Area**.

Stamford is included within the list of seven "**Main Towns**" which "provide a range of sub-regional and local services and facilities which provide vital support to their respective hinterlands" and where "The Districts, consequently, should allocate appropriate development land to maintain viability in the light of local circumstances."

It is considered that the term "sub-regional" used here requires clarification, if only to distinguish the difference between the serve function of "**Main Towns**" and those intended as "**Sub-Regional Centres**" within the proposed hierarchy.

Bourne and **The Deepings** are included in the fourth and final tier of major settlements which are described as "**Small Towns**". These also "provide a range of convenience shopping, education, community and health facilities". However it seems that the only differences between settlements in this group and those described in the tier above as "**Main Towns**" is that the service functions of the latter are both "sub-regional and local" and "provide vital support to their respective hinterlands".

Members may feel that Bourne, in particular, has a legitimate claim to be included as a "**Main Town**".

Recommendations:

1. That the District Council requests that the term "sub-regional" at paragraph 4.20 of the Plan be clarified if only to distinguish the difference between the service function of "**Main Towns**" and those intended as "**Sub-Regional Centres**".
2. That greater clarification be given of the differences in the service functions of "**Main Towns**" and "**Small Towns**" within the proposed settlement hierarchy.

3. That **Bourne** be removed from the list of “**Small Towns**” and included in the list of “**Main Towns**”.

POLICY S4: RURAL COMMUNITIES

Comment:

Outside the defined major settlements listed at Proposed Policy S3, the Plan proposes that development be located in settlements with existing service and community facilities. It will be the role of Local Plans/Local Development Documents to determine the amount and nature of development appropriate for each settlements, taking into account the size and character of the place, its relation to employment opportunities and access to the highway network and public transport links.

The final paragraph of the Policy requires provision for new residential development in the county to be accommodated at existing settlements and dismisses any proposals for new settlements. As such it does not seem to belong to the main thrust of the policy which is concerned with development in villages.

Recommendation:

That the District Council requests that the final paragraph of Policy S4 be couched as a separate policy.

HOUSING

POLICY H1: HOUSING PROVISION

Comment:

Local Development Plans are required to conform generally with national and regional planning policy guidance.

Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands (RPG8), published in January 2002, requires provision to be made for the development of 55,000 new homes throughout Lincolnshire over the period 2001 to 2021.

However the County Council's new Draft Deposit Plan proposes that provision be made for 9,200 dwellings in South Kesteven; some 4,800 (34%) less than that in the Plan previously proposed for adoption, and 2,310 (20%) less than our expectations.

No other County District is to experience this level of reduction which is largely the result of the County Council's proposed strategy to:

- i) Maintain the amount of new housing development to be provided in the Lincoln Policy Area (i.e. Lincoln City and parts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey) at 16,300 dwellings in order to secure "the significant strengthening of the area's regional role" as advocated by Regional Planning Guidance and which, because of the reduced scale of provision countywide, results in other County Districts' share goes down to a greater or lesser extent;

and,

- ii) Prevent unsustainable patterns of development emerging in those parts of Lincolnshire bordering major urban centres in adjoining counties i.e. Peterborough.

Over the past 10 years housebuilding in South Kesteven has fallen by 21% from an average 771 dwellings per annum over the period 1991-1995 to 611 in 1996-2000. Since the start of the proposed new Structure Plan period in April 2001, output has again fallen by a further 10% to 552 dwellings per annum.

Since there is no evidence of a decline in consumer demand, this fall in output appears to be more a consequence of the District Council's existing policy of housing development restraint at the towns of Stamford and the Deepings taking effect, together with the delay in a limited number of large high volume sites allocated for housing at Grantham (Poplar Farm) and Bourne (Elsa Park) coming forward for development. This may be responsible for a higher than anticipated increase in local house prices.

However, in proposing an average 460 dwellings per annum over the next 20 years or so, the Draft Structure Plan intends that housebuilding in South Kesteven be reduced by a further 25% to a level lower than at any one time over the past 10 years and 14% below that currently being achieved.

At the present time (December 2003) planning permission exists for the development of 4,310 dwellings within the District. Assuming that all of these will be implemented, additional land will need to be found for another 3,372 in order to meet the proposed Structure Plan target.

Within the strategic planning policy vacuum brought about by the lack of an adopted County Structure plan that conformed with the latest Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands, the District Council has, with the general agreement of the Government's regional office, assumed that South Kesteven's share of the RPG8 county figure would be in the same ratio (20.9%) as that in the Structure Plan proposed for adoption in December 2000.

On that basis, we calculated that provision would need to be made for the development of 11,440 new dwellings in the District between 2001 and 2021. This is 2,240 or 24.3% more than that proposed by the County Council's Draft Plan. However, at 575 dwellings, the average annual rate of house building required to meet this target is still 17% less than that achieved in the 10 years to 2001 (at a time in which both the County and District Council exercised policies of housing development restraint at Stamford and the Deepings), and is only 4% above that achieved since the start of the new Structure Plan period in April 2001.

It is not, therefore, unreasonable to conclude that the provision of 11,440 dwellings at South Kesteven represents a more realistic reflection of the need for new homes in South Kesteven and, if accepted, would still represent an 18% reduction on the scale of provision set out in the Structure Plan proposed for adoption in December 2000.

However, taking into account those built since April 2001, and allowing for those remaining to be built on sites with planning permission, then additional land would need to be found for the development of 5,612 dwellings; some 2,240 (66%) more than that required to meet the proposed Draft Structure Plan target.

If the 11,440 was shared between the urban and rural parts of the District in the same ratio as that proposed by the Draft Structure Plan, then 9,072 new homes (454 per annum) would be required to be provided at the four towns and 2,368 (118 per annum) in the rural area.

At an average 454 dwellings, the average annual rate of house building necessary to meet the urban requirement would be 89 or 24% more than that proposed by the Draft Structure Plan and 162 or 55% above that achieved since the start of the Plan period in April 2001.

Taking into account those built since April 2001, and allowing for all those remaining to be built on sites with planning permission, then additional land would need to be found for the development of 4,787 dwellings which is 1,772 (or 59%) more than that required to meet the proposed Draft Structure Plan target.

On the same basis we would need to find land for an additional 925 dwellings in the rural area which is over twice that required by the proposed Draft Structure Plan.

If it is considered that the Draft Structure Plan proposal for 1,900 dwellings (95 per annum) in the rural area represents an acceptable scale of development, and should not be exceeded, then the amount of new housing development in the four towns would need to be set at 9,540 (480 per annum) in order to meet a District total of 11,440.

At an annual average of 477 dwellings, the rate of development at the towns would be 112 p.a. or 31% more than that proposed by the Draft Structure Plan, and 185 or 63% above that achieved since 2001.

Taking into account those built since April 2001, and allowing for all those remaining to be built on sites with planning permission, then additional land would need to be found for the development of 5,255 dwellings; some 2,240 (74%) more than that required to meet the proposed Draft Structure Plan target.

Is the proposed amount and distribution of new housing development between the District's towns appropriate?

The existing Structure Plan Alteration No. 1 (Housing) approved by the Secretary of State in August 1991, allocated about 68% of the Districts housing provision to the four towns.

In December 2000, the replacement Structure Plan proposed for adoption increased the towns' share to 71%.

Now, in pursuit of the Government's aim for a more sustainable pattern of development and in order to strengthen the role of the county's urban areas, the new Draft Plan proposes to raise the towns share to 79% with 7,300 of the 9,200 dwellings going to the District's urban areas. However this is still some 27% less than the Structure Plan proposed for adoption in December 2000.

Grantham

For the first time ever the Draft Structure Plan proposes a specific housing figure for Grantham. Some 3,800 new homes, which is just over half the District's urban allocation, is to be provided there in support of the Regional Planning Guidance's intention to "enhance the town's status as a Sub-Regional Centre".

Since the start of the Structure Plan period in April 2001, 415 dwellings have been built in the town. At an average 151 dwellings per annum, the rate of housebuilding is 20.5% short of that (190 per annum) required by the Draft Plan. Thus, in order to meet the proposed target to the year 2021 annual output will need to be raised by 30% to 196 dwellings per annum which is higher than that achieved in any one of the past 10 years.

Currently (December 2003) planning permission exists for the development of an additional 782 new homes in the town of which 502 (64%) are on sites currently under construction and 280 (36%) on sites where development has yet to begin. Almost 45% of this commitment involves previously-used land and buildings.

Taking this “commitment” into account, land needs to be found for the development of a further 2,603 dwellings in the town if the proposed Draft Structure Plan requirement to 2021 is to be met.

Surveys have identified an additional 62 hectares of previously used land without planning permission at Grantham, that could accommodate 1,640 new homes. This would leave 963 dwellings to be found elsewhere in the town, largely by way of sustainable “greenfield” extensions.

The existing adopted Local Plan allocates land for new housing development at Poplar Farm on the north-western edge of the town. Under the Government’s greenfield directive, a planning application for about 1,400 dwellings on the site has been ‘called-in’ for determination by the Minister. Our analysis thus suggests that about two thirds of this site will be required even if the Draft Structure Plan housing target for Grantham is to be met.

However, it is considered that the scale of new housing development proposed for the town is excessive and unlikely to be achieved. Rather that the District Council be allowed to determine the amount of new housing development appropriate to the town which reflects the strategic intention to enhance Grantham’s status as a Sub-Regional Centre and which would still allow some peripheral expansion in the preferred Poplar Farm area, whilst giving the District Council greater flexibility to pursue necessary development in the form of affordable housing provision and other community benefits at one or more of the other three towns.

Stamford, Bourne and the Deepings

Slightly less than half (3,500 dwellings) of the District’s proposed urban housing allocation is to be shared between the towns of Stamford, Bourne and the Deepings. The Plan considers that this is sufficient to allow “balanced housing and employment growth”.

Since 2001 (to December 2003) 389 new homes have been built in these three towns. At an average 141 per annum, the rate of development has fallen short of Draft Structure Plan expectations (175) by 34 or 19%.

Despite this, planning permission exists for the construction of 2,699 there. This represents 62.6% of the District's urban 'commitment'. However 2,176 or 81% of these are at Bourne, with 1,939 on a single site in the south-west quadrant of the town. This large development, the first phase of which is currently under construction, was granted planning permission in July 2001 following a decision by the Secretary of State not to intervene as a result of a consultation under PPG3.

Taking into account those built and those remaining to be built on sites with planning permission, new land would need to be found for only 412 additional dwellings in the towns although the District Councils review of urban capacity for Stamford, Bourne and the Deepings has yet to be completed, initial surveys suggest that up to 1,300 homes could be provided on previously used sites. This is more than three times that necessary to meet the proposed Structure Plan requirement.

Stamford

Existing development plan policies, at both county and district level, seek to restrain population and housing growth at Stamford in order to protect the unique environment of this historic town.

Compared to the District's other three towns, housebuilding at Stamford over the past 10 years has remained buoyant with only a 3% fall in output over the periods 1991-1995 (87 dwellings per annum) and 1996 to 2000 (84 dwellings per annum).

Since 2001, 202 new homes have been built in the town. This represents 25% of the total number of dwellings completed in all our towns. However, at an average 73 per annum, output has fallen slightly over previous years.

Nevertheless, planning permission exists for the development of a further 477 homes there, of which over 90% are on previously-used land. At current building rates these represent about 6½ years supply. At present, agreement has been reached with developers for the provision of about 44 affordable homes on approved sites and negotiations are taking place for a further 15.

Initial surveys have identified about 34 hectares of previously-used land in the town which, at a minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare, may have the potential to accommodate an additional 814 new homes.

Less than half of all such sites are above the lower threshold of 0.5 of a hectare at which the Government considers it appropriate to seek the provision of affordable housing and, at 30% of the assumed yield, could deliver 209 units.

Bourne

Over the past 10 years or so, housebuilding at Bourne has fallen by 32% from an average 116 dwellings per annum in 1991-1995 to 79 in 1996-2000. Since April 2001, which is the start date of the new Structure Plan period, 84 new homes have been built in the town. At an average 30 per annum, output has been disappointingly low and appears to be mainly due to the long lead time and consequent delay in the delivery of housing on the large Elsea Park site which accounts for 71% of all land with planning permission for residential development in the three towns.

Completion of this commitment by 2021 would necessitate an annual average building rate of 112 dwellings. Whilst not impossible (completion rates of 204, 117 and 111 occurred in 1992, 1994 and 1998), current performance suggest this may be optimistic.

Deepings

As a consequence of the District Council's policy of development restraint, housebuilding in the Deepings has fallen dramatically over the past 10 years or so from an average 124 dwellings per annum in 1991-1995 to 37 in 1996-2000.

Since the start of the proposed new Structure Plan period in April 2001 (to December 2003), 103 new homes (37 per annum) have been built in the town, and planning permission exists for the development of only 46 additional dwellings on 21 sites. All but one of these sites are for less than 10 dwellings.

The District Council's "Housing Needs Survey – 2002" identifies the Deepings as having one of the highest shortfalls of affordable homes. However, there is no requirement for any of the sites with planning permission to include an element of affordable housing, or to make a financial contribution to such provision elsewhere.

Initial surveys have identified a little over 7 hectares of previously-used land in the town which may have the potential to accommodate up to 176 new homes. However, only two sites are above the lower threshold of 0.5 of a hectare at which the Government considers it appropriate to seek the provision of affordable housing. Assuming an overall minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare on these sites the, at a ratio of 30% of the total, they would deliver only 24 affordable dwellings. This is 40% short of the annual requirement identified by the Housing Needs Survey.

POLICY H1: Rural

Is the proposed amount of new housing development in the rural area appropriate?

The existing Structure Plan Alteration No. 1 (Housing), approved by the Secretary of State in August 1991, allocated about 32% of the District's housing provision outside the four towns.

In December 2000, the replacement Structure Plan proposed for adoption reduced the rural areas share to 29%.

Now, in pursuit of the Government's aim for a more sustainable pattern of development, and in order to strengthen the role of the county's urban areas, Policy S4 of the new Draft Plan proposes to reduce the rural area's share to 21% with 1,900 of the District's 9,200 dwellings to be provided there.

Unlike the towns there has been very little change in house building within the rural area over the past 10 years with only a small (7%) fall in output between 1991 – 1995 (295 dwellings per annum) and 1996 – 2000 (275 dwellings per annum).

This rate of development is largely a legacy of planning decisions taken during the late 1980's and early 1990's which allowed significant new housing estate development in a number of villages within commuting distance of towns and other urban areas both within and outside the District.

Since 2001 (to December 2003), 714 new homes have been built in the rural area. At an average 260 dwellings per annum, house building has equalled that of the towns, and is almost three times that required to meet the proposed Structure Plan target of 95 dwellings per annum.

In order to meet the proposed Structure Plan target between now (December 2003) and 2021, provision needs to be made for the development of 1,186 dwellings. Since planning permission

already exists for 829, then land would need to be found for the construction of only 357 additional homes.

With over 100 rural villages, it seems that this requirement could be met by small 'windfall' developments of a non-estate nature (i.e. less than 10 dwellings) on suitable unallocated sites.

Recommendation:

1. That the District Council objects to the proposed amount of new housing development to be provided in South Kesteven under Policy H1, and requests that the figure be increased from 9,200 to 11,440 dwellings together with an increase in the amount of housing to be provided in the Districts' Major Settlements from 7,300 to 9,540 dwellings but the rural allocation to remain as proposed at 1,900.

And,

2. That the District Council objects to the inclusion of a specific housing allocation at the Sub-Regional Centre of Grantham and requests a combined allocation of 9,450 dwellings in the District's four Major Settlements.

POLICY H3: DENSITY OF NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Comment:

Whereas the explanation to the Policy acknowledges that central government policy seeks to avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (defined as those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing) it recognises that in a rural context there is a need for local flexibility and that District Councils will need to use their own local judgement set within the context of government policy.

In these circumstances it seems somewhat unnecessary for Policy H3 which recommends that new housing development in the County should achieve an average of 30 dwellings per hectare, seems unnecessary especially since this would be very difficult to monitor effectively.

Recommendation:

That Policy H3 be deleted.

POLICY H7: PROVISION FOR GYPSIES

Comment:

Policy H7 sets out the general criteria to be used for identifying sites for gypsies. Although the policy admits to being no more than a general framework, it is considered that the wording is too prescriptive in requiring site provision to be made by District Councils in Local Plans/Local Development Documents, especially since the explanation to the policy admits that “at the local level, assessments of need can be usefully undertaken by District Councils to indicate the scale of provision required.”

Recommendation:

That ‘**WHERE NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE**’ be inserted between “**IN**” and “**LOCAL PLANS/LPDs**” in the first line of Policy H7.

ECONOMY

Background – paragraph 6.3

Comment:

The penultimate sentence of paragraph 6.3 omits Market Harborough from the list of local authorities comprising the Welland Partnership.

Recommendation:

That the District Council requests the inclusion of Market Harborough in the penultimate sentence of paragraph 6.3.

POLICY E2: EMPLOYMENT LAND AND BUILDINGS

Comment:

Unlike the Structure Plan Proposed for Adoption (December 2002), draft Policy E2 does not quantify the amount and distribution of employment land to be provided in the County. Instead it sets out a ‘checklist’ of qualitative and sustainability criteria to be used by local planning

authorities in assessing the suitability of existing Local Plan allocations for business and industrial uses.

The thrust of this policy seems to stem from the Quality of Employment Land Study (QUELS – July 2002) undertaken on behalf of the EMLGA, and the Regional Employment Land Priorities Study (RELPS – June 2003) carried out on behalf of EMDA, which identifies an apparent over-provision of employment land in parts of Lincolnshire but a need, among other things, for high quality employment sites.

Whilst the policy may be reflective of central and regional government guidance, the supporting text rightly points to the need to ensure an adequate supply of land for a variety of business uses by considering how future allocations can be made which stand a high chance of matching market demand and which can ameliorate some of the deficiencies in the Lincolnshire economy by creating high quality jobs. Accordingly the supporting text claims that the Policy also provides a useful checklist which can be used as a framework for allocating any new employment sites in Local Plans. However, the wording of the Policy omits this intention.

Paragraph 6.22, 6.23 and 6.24 provide a brief overview of economic issues at Lincoln, Boston and Grantham. Although the text acknowledges the need to maintain a portfolio of employment sites at Grantham it is considered that, compared to the other two, the town's needs and potential are somewhat understated with much being made of opportunities for small-scale office space and business parks, and redevelopment of existing industrial areas for mixed use schemes.

Recommendation:

1. That the first two sentences of Policy E2 Employment Land and Buildings be replaced by:
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES WILL REVIEW EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATIONS AND COMMITMENTS AND JUDGE NEW ALLOCATIONS AGAINST THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:
2. That paragraph 6.24 (Grantham) be reworded to give greater emphasis to the economic potential offered by Grantham's strategic location on the national transport system for major employment development.

POLICY E3: TOWN CENTRES, RETAIL AND LEISURE

Comment:

In accordance with central government advice, Policy E3 endorses a sequential approach to the consideration of proposals for retail and leisure development. However, the policy also requires that “Development must not significantly affect, alone or in combination with other proposed developments, the vitality or viability of any other town centres ...” and “... any priority area for regeneration or town centre strategy within Lincolnshire”.

The Policy thus appears to dictate that a proposal for retail or leisure development, irrespective of its size and nature, in Grantham should be assessed against its affect on, say, Gainsborough (or for that matter any other town in the County). However, the supporting text refers to a presumption against out-of-town retail and leisure development where it would adversely affect the vitality and viability of nearby town centres. This is confusing.

Recommendation:

That the District Council requests clarification of Policy E3, and the explanation thereof, regarding the interpretation of “any other town centres” and “nearby town centres”, and to the nature and scale of retail and leisure developments to which the Policy is intended to apply.

POLICY E4: OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Comment:

Policy E4 recommends a sequential approach to proposals for developments that generate a significant number of trips, with preference being given to locations within or adjoining town centres, than at locations well served by public transport hubs, followed by other locations, but only where a need can be demonstrated. There is no supporting text to this policy and so it is not clear what is meant by a “significant number of trips” and what represents a “transport hub”.

Recommendation:

That the District Council requests clarification of Policy E4 as to what constitutes a “significant number of trips” and a “transport hub”.

POLICY E5: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Comment:

The explanation of the policy recognises the contribution of tourism to the coastal, urban and rural economy of the County. However, the wording of the policy is confusing. Whilst the first part recommends that tourism development should be located in “existing settlements”, the second part goes on to address proposals “outside these urban areas”. This implies that all existing settlements are urban which contradicts the Plan’s Spatial Strategy.

Recommendation:

That “**OUTSIDE THESE URBAN AREAS**” be replaced by “**OUTSIDE THESE SETTLEMENTS**” in paragraph 2 of Policy E5.

POLICY M5: MOVEMENT IN, TO AND FROM THE DEFINED MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

Comment:

This policy seeks to increase accessibility and transport choice throughout the County. In doing so it recognises that the diverse nature of Lincolnshire’s settlements necessitates a variety of solutions. The policy advocates an integrated approach involving improved transport infrastructure, traffic management and improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

The policy also calls for “a better balance of long stay/short stay parking permission”. The word “better” is considered subjective and somewhat vague, lacking in guidance.

Recommendation:

That “BETTER” be deleted from the second bullet point in Policy M5.

POLICY M7: PARKING

Comment:

In line with PPG13 Transport and RPG8 Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands, Policy M7 requires car parking provision at new developments to be kept within maximum standards, and for minimum standards to be applied for cycles, motorcycles and disabled people. These are contained within the County Council’s document “a guide for Parking Provision in Lincolnshire – August 2002”.

The explanation of the policy sets out a number of considerations that will need to be given in determining the level of parking to be provided at a new development, with priority being given to short-stay parking in town centres and a presumption against parking dedicated to specific new retail and service developments with the aim of maintaining the vitality and viability of these centres.

Members are reminded that this Council has not adopted the County Council's "Guide to parking provision in Lincolnshire", and that the government office objected to the inclusion of maximum car parking standards from the First Stage Deposit South Kesteven Local Plan.

Recommendation:

That members consider whether they wish to endorse Policy M7 and, in doing so, accept the County Council's Parking Standards.

POLICY NE8: RENEWABLE ENERGY

Comment:

This policy relates to the potential to exploit a variety of sources of energy. The explanation refers to RPG requirements that "policies to **facilitate** the delivery of " renewable energy targets are made. It further states that Local Plans "**can** use this strategic framework to formulate more detailed policies **as appropriate**". However, the phrase "provision will be made.." would seem to indicate that specific sites will be identified by Local Planning Authorities.

Recommendation:

That "**PROVISION WILL BE MADE.....**" be replaced by "**IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR.....**" in the first line of Policy NE8.

POLICY BE6: PROTECTING HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

Comment:

This policy recognises that the historic landscape is both a physical and a cultural resource, and seeks to protect it by not allowing development which would have a detrimental effect.

However, the term “historic landscape” is not defined, nor are criteria given for the designation of “historic landscapes”. The explanation of this policy at paragraph 9.27 admits that “Virtually all landscape, however unassuming, means something to someone”. The policy therefore fails to distinguish the differences, if any, between Historic Landscapes and Landscape Character Areas in policy NE6.

Recommendation:

That the District Council requests that Policy BE6 be deleted.

POLICY T7: INFORMAL RECREATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Comment:

This policy recognises the importance and popularity of recreational activities in the countryside. It seeks to permit such activities where the Local Authority is satisfied that they will not be detrimental to the environment. The final sentence of this policy states “opportunities for developing informal recreational areas within the country in partnership with other agencies; authorities and through restoration plans for worked out mineral sites will actively be investigated”. This would appear to be an executive statement of intent and, as such, is not appropriate for a policy.

Recommendation:

That the District Council requests that the final sentence of policy T7 be deleted.

POLICY T8: NOISY SPORTS

Comment:

This policy sets out the criteria against which proposals for activities which are, or involve “noisy sports” are to be assessed. The policy states that “provision will be made....”. This phrase indicates that Local Planning Authorities be providing sites for development. However, the explanation of the policy at paragraph 10.31 states that, “in line with PPG, the District Councils should make specific provision in Local Plans for noisy sports where a clear demand exists subject to appropriate residential and environmental safeguards”.

Recommendation:

That **“PROVISION WILL BE MADE....”** be replaced by **“IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR....”** in the first line of Policy T8.

POLICY T9: WATER BASED RECREATION

Comment:

This policy recognises the importance of water-based recreational activities in the county. However it is considered too prescriptive in requiring provision to be made by Local Planning Authorities for such facilities.

Recommendation:

That **“PROVISION WILL BE MADE....”** be replaced by **“In considering proposals for....”**.

POLICY WM2: WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS/RECYCLING PLANTS/COMPOSTING FACILITIES/HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING FACILITIES

Comment:

This policy provides a framework for the assessment a range of facilities able to deal with a diversity of waste streams. As the policy states that “provision **will** be made for the establishment of waste” facilities, it could be inferred that additional facilities will be provided, although there is no further mention made of what sort of provision and where. The final sentence “the aftercare and restoration measures proposed “ would appear to be one of the criteria to be used when proposals are being assessed, if this is the case it should be bullet-pointed.

Recommendation:

That **“provision will be made....”** be replaced by **“in considering proposals for”** and the final sentence of the policy should be bullet-pointed.

POLICY WM3: FINAL TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL

Comment:

This policy provides the criteria to be used when assessing proposals for the final treatment of waste. Once again the Policy states that “Provision will be made”. It is also considered that the criteria used to assess proposals should include some consideration of the aftercare and restoration measures to be employed at any site. A statement to this effect, as in policy WM2, could be included to rectify this.

Recommendation:

That “**PROVISION WILL BE MADE....**” be replaced by “**IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR....**” in the first line of Policy WM3 and that “**AFTERCARE AND RESTORATION MEASURES**” be added to the list of matters by which proposals will be assessed.

MONITORING, REVIEW & IMPLEMENTATION

POLICY MRI 2: LOCAL PLANS SHOULD IDENTIFY SITES FOR SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY NEED AT LOCATIONS EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO THE COMMUNITY BEING SERVED.

Comment:

The foreword to, and explanation of, this policy recognises that proposals for new development often generate additional infrastructure and service requirements for which Local Authorities will look to developers to provide by way of planning obligations, and that the retention of certain facilities is important to small rural communities.

Whilst these statements hold true, Policy MRI 2 advises sites for social and community needs to be identified in Local Plans. However, it is often the case that the need for such facilities and their specific site requirements, in terms of size and location, cannot be identified until such time as the need has been determined. Development Briefs and Master planning can assist with the process of achieving a considered evaluation of community infrastructure needs.

Recommendation:

That “**NEEDS**” be deleted and replaced by “**FACILITIES, WHERE NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE.**”

POLICY MR15: LOCAL PLANS/DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS SHOULD IDENTIFY SITES FOR NEW SCHOOLS WITHIN SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WITHIN SITE BRIEFS OR SIMILAR.

Comment:

This policy instructs LAs to identify where schools should be located, but the explanation advises developers to contact the LEA as they will be in a position to know where there is actual need. As provision of education facilities is sometimes sought by means of a S106 agreement from developers, it is felt that policy MR14 (dealing with planning obligations) adequately covers this subject.

Recommendation:

That policy MR15 be deleted.