

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Economic Development Portfolio Holder

REPORT NO: PLA 893

DATE: 4th July 2011

TITLE:	Grantham Area Action Plan: Response to Public Consultation and Proposed Changes to Policies	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Key Decision	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Cllr Frances Cartwright Economic Development Portfolio Holder.	
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INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below	Full impact assessment Required:
Equality and Diversity	N/A	
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	PLA830 Adoption of Core Strategy PLA866 Grantham Area Action Plan: Preferred Approach DPD	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the issues raised in the representations set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and
- b) Approves the proposed changes to the draft policies as set out in Appendix 2 of the report and for these to be included in the Submission version of the Grantham Area Action Plan Development Plan Document.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 To enable the Cabinet to consider the issues raised in the representations made during the six weeks consultation on the Grantham Area Action Plan (GAAP): Preferred Approach DPD and to consider proposed changes to the policies for inclusion in the Submission version of the DPD, which will be the final version of the Plan.
- 2.2 The preparation of the GAAP DPD supports the Good for Business Priority Theme.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Besides site specific development allocations, the GAAP DPD provides more detailed policy guidance to support the broad framework of the Core Strategy. The policies cover the following areas:

- Movement and Accessibility
- Green Infrastructure Provision
- Town Centre Uses and Retailing
- Regeneration Sites
- Open Space Provision/Protecting Existing Open Space
- Allotment Provision
- New Housing Development/Housing Allocated Sites
- Sustainable Urban Extensions
- Existing Employment Areas/New Employment Allocations
- Historic Environment and Townscape

- 3.2 The GAAP DPD was approved for the purposes of public consultation by the Cabinet on the 7th February, 2011 (Report PLA 866) and was subject to six weeks consultation between the 4th March and 15th April 2011. Consultation was carried out with Parish Councils adjoining the GAAP area and a wide range of national, regional and local groups and organisations including those with a particular interest in Grantham. The consultation period was advertised in the local press and a drop in session was held in Grantham library over two days which was attended by approximately 240 people. The response at this session was generally supportive of the Plan's approach with particular comments regarding the town centre and regeneration sites and traffic issues.

- 3.3 At the end of the consultation period, a total of 61 representations had been received from organisations and individuals. A total of 371 comments were made. Appendix 1 attached to this report summarises all the representations received to the draft policies together with an officer response and, where appropriate, recommended changes to the policies (see also Appendix 2).

- 3.4 Representations relating to the housing policies are excluded from this report. Work is currently being undertaken on updating the housing land supply position across the District. There would be considerable benefits to be derived if the GAAP and its housing policies were based on the most up to date housing figures. This would also ensure consistency with the Site Allocation and Policies DPD where housing issues, including the allocation of sites, are due to be considered by Members in August. Representations relating to housing issues in the GAAP will, therefore, be considered in a separate report to be considered by Members in August.

4. POLICY ISSUES

Vision and Objectives

- 4.1. Overall the responses indicate general support for the vision. Minor amendments are proposed to the wording of the vision to provide clarification (see Appendix 2).
- 4.2 Generally, the GAAP Objectives received positive feedback. There were no objections raised. The Objective of providing for employment and attracting high quality investment and skilled jobs received the most support from the representations.

Plan Boundary

- 4.3 The GAAP boundary was drawn tightly to the extent of the built up area of the town except those sites proposed for housing or employment allocations. Several representations were received seeking amendments to the GAAP boundary primarily related to the promotion of additional housing or employment sites on the edge of the town including land east of Harlaxton Road and off Somerby Hill. These are sites that have been previously assessed but found not suitable for allocation. The representations contain no additional information which would justify a different view being taken or the boundary amended to incorporate them.
- 4.4 The exception to this is land off Sheepwash lane adjoining the proposed allocated employment site south of Barrowby (see paragraph 4.28 and appendix 2). Minor amendments to the boundary are proposed to ensure consistency with other plan policies.

Policy MOV1: Movement and Accessibility

- 4.5 The majority of the representations support the Movement and Accessibility Policy and the provision of the East-West Relief Road as part of Southern Quadrant development. Amendments have been suggested to the supporting text for clarification. These are included in Appendix 2.

Policy RT1: Improving Town Centre Retail Offer

- 4.6 A number of representations made support the retail policy of improving the town centre retail offer and promoting the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 4.7 A representation was made on behalf of B&Q objecting to the wording of Policy RT1 in respect of assessing new retail development at the edge of centre or out of centre locations as being inconsistent with national policy prescribed by Planning Policy Statement 4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth). The policy will be amended to provide this clarification (see Appendix 2).

Policy TOC1: Town Centre Uses

- 4.8 The majority of the representations made support the current town centre boundary and the Shopping Frontages approach.
- 4.9 Sainsbury's Supermarket Limited has requested the inclusion of their store within the defined Primary Shopping Area on the grounds that the store is on the main arterial routes into the town centre and will function as part of the town centre's main convenience retail offer, serving both the town centre and its wider catchment area.
- 4.10 The statement that the store is a major part of the convenience provision of the town is not disputed, especially given its edge of centre location and ease of access to the town centre.
- 4.11 The Town Centres and Retail study completed in 2010 by NLP identified the uses of buildings in each suggested street in Grantham. These were mapped and clearly show that the town centre boundary as shown in the GAAP Preferred Approach is the most appropriate for the purposes of the policy.
- 4.12 The purpose of defining the town centre is to concentrate development within it to ensure its vitality and viability. Extending the boundary would dilute this and may have a negative impact as well as limiting investment opportunities and sustainability. Sainsbury's store is located beyond the edge of the town centre and is, therefore, not appropriate to include it as part of the Primary Shopping Area as requested.

Regeneration Site Policies

- 4.13 Overall, there was support for the four policies covering each of the regeneration sites. It is proposed to amend the wording of Policy SA1 (Station Approach) to respond to a comment from English Heritage regarding the need to make reference to the adjoining conservation area and undesignated heritage assets within and surrounding the site.

- 4.14 A representation from British Waterways proposed that Policy CB1 (Canal Basin) should incorporate a more flexible approach in the delivery of the regeneration of the Canal area. It stated that allowing for incremental delivery of appropriate developments within the Policy area would be a sustainable approach for the realisation of the vision of the canal area. British Waterways were of the view that Policy CB1 limited the opportunity for appropriate small-scale developments within the area.
- 4.15 Policy CB1 stated that “a comprehensive redevelopment of the Canal Basin will be permitted for mixed use development and that the Council will not permit development that will have a negative impact on the aspirations of the site”.
- 4.16 This approach was intended to guide against developments which might prejudice the vision for the Canal Basin not to rule out smaller developments that might contribute to achieving that vision coming forward. The policy text will be amended to clarify this (see Appendix 2).

Policy OSS1: Open Space Provision and OSS2: Protecting Existing Open Space

- 4.17 The majority of the representations support protecting existing open spaces in Grantham. Key stakeholders such as DEFRA, Sport England, the National Trust, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board all supported the need to protect all existing open spaces in Grantham.
- 4.18 A representation was made that the provision in Policy OSS1 which required open space in new development to be ‘centrally’ located within the development is not ‘justified’, as no evidence was presented to say that this is most appropriate in all instances. A similar comment was made regarding the Open Space policy in the Site Allocation and Policies DPD and it has previously been agreed to amend the policy to clarify this issue (report PLA 867). It would be appropriate, therefore, to make the same amendment to the policy in the GAAP.

Policy AT1: Allotment Provision

- 4.19 Representations were received relating to the California Gardens, Huntington Tower Road (south) and Harrowby Road Allotment sites stated that most or part of these allotments are inactive and that the need to protect them to meet future demand for allotment provision in the town as set out in Policy AT1 is not justified.
- 4.20 Redevelopment of allotments simply because they have been allowed to fall out of use and become derelict or that poor use or quality of a facility should not be taken as necessarily indicating an absence of

need in the area. The position of the Council is to protect all allotment sites from loss to alternative development, both active and inactive sites, in order to meet the demand for allotments both now and that which may arise in the future due to the town's planned population growth. This is in conformity with both local and national policies (Policy EN1 of the Core Strategy and Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 respectively).

- 4.21 Other than minor amendments to provide clarification no changes to the policy approach are proposed (see Appendix 2).
- 4.22 A representation was made by Buckminster Trust Estate that the northern two-thirds of the Barrowby Road allotments as shown in the Plan should not be identified as their future use is covered by the Poplar Farm planning application and associated masterplan. An amendment to the Plan is proposed to reflect this position (Appendix 2).

Policy EM1: Existing Employment Areas and Policy EM2: New Employment Allocations

- 4.23 The majority of the representations support the protection of existing employment sites and the provision of new employment opportunities. Representations that object to the protection of existing employment sites are those that have an interest to develop their site for alternative use more specifically for residential.
- 4.24 A representation was made that land North of Harlaxton Road and West of A1 should be allocated for employment development and for a new marina or canal basin on Grantham canal.
- 4.25 The site has been previously assessed but found to be unsuitable for an employment allocation and the representation made contained no additional information which would justify its allocation. The proposal for canal related development does not overcome the identified constraints.
- 4.26 A representation regarding the employment allocation of land south of Barrowby Road and east of the A1 suggested the need for flexibility in the delivery of the site. This site (allocated as EM2 (a)), is allocated in the GAAP for employment-B1 use. However, the landowner suggests that due to viability issues the site will best deliver a mixed use development including residential. Also, the representation suggested that a 9 acre area of land between Sheep Wash Lane and the A1 be included in the employment allocation.
- 4.27 There is no substantive evidence provided in the representation to suggest that the current employment allocation is undeliverable. However, the request to incorporate the land by Sheep Wash Lane up to the A1 to the Barrowby Road employment site is considered

appropriate. This is a logical extension to the A1 and it may help to integrate the landscape into the development as well as acting as a buffer from the A1 (see appendix 2).

- 4.28 Representations made by Autumn Park Ltd and B&Q suggested boundary changes to the identified existing employment sites to reflect their existing boundary layout and usages. Also, as the Bairds Malt site off Springfield Road has been granted an outline planning permission (GAAP site reference EEP10/EEP11) for residential, business and industrial development it would be inappropriate for this site to be covered by Policy EM1. Amendments are proposed to reflect these changes (appendix 2).
- 4.29 A representation suggested that the Former AAH Distribution Centre at Trent Road should be considered for residential or mixed use development. However, though the site is currently vacant, the continued use of the site for employment purposes will help provide employment opportunities for residents of Earlsfield which is a deprived neighbourhood and no change is proposed.

Policies HE1 to HE5 Historic Environment and Townscape

- 4.30 English Heritage made a number of comments regarding the historic environment policies and minor amendments are suggested to the supporting and policy text for clarification. These are included in Appendix 2.

5. THE NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The proposed changes to the draft policies will, subject to Cabinet approval, be included in the draft Submission version of the DPD: this will be the final version of the Plan that will be made available for formal consultation prior to submission for examination.

6. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The Adopted Core Strategy provides the overarching policy framework which requires these additional policies. If they are not included within the Grantham Area Action Plan DPD, the plan will not be in conformity with the Core Strategy and could fail to be found sound at examination.
- 6.2 Each of the suggested policies is based upon a Core Strategy policy: this provides little scope to consider alternative policy options. In respect of the representations received, Appendix 1 sets out the consideration of the issues raised and whether the changes as requested to the policies are appropriate.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising out of this report. There will be some costs associated with the subsequent consultation and examination process of the Submission Grantham Area Action Plan DPD, the costs of which have been included in the proposed Planning Policy and Partnerships Service Budget for 2011/2012.

8. RISK AND MITIGATION

- 8.1 None Identified

9. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The Core Strategy establishes the policy framework and the policies has been the subject of an equality impact assessment. It is understood that an equality impact assessment will be required for this DPD and this will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the final draft plan for pre-submission consultation.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None arising from this report.

11. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 11.1 I have no specific financial comments to make in respect of this report. All costs associated with the development of the Local Development Framework can be met from within existing budgets supported by the monies received from the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant award.

12. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 12.1 The purpose of the report is to enable Cabinet to consider the results of the consultation, take into account any relevant comments on the revision to the draft policies and approve any changes to the policies. A final plan including policies and sites allocated (when determined) will be considered by Cabinet before publication later this year.

13. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Schedule of Officers' Response to Representations Received about the Grantham Area Action Plan: Preferred Approach (March, 2011)

Appendix 2: Schedule of Proposed Changes arising from consultation on the Grantham Area Action Plan: Preferred Approach (March, 2011)