

Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan

2014-2031

A report to West Lindsey District Council on the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by West Lindsey District Council in July 2015 to carry out the independent examination of the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood plan area on 25 August 2015.
- 3 The Plan proposes a wide range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the plan area. There is a clear focus on safeguarding the very distinctive character of the village and its open spaces. It promotes new residential growth in a positive and sensitive way.
- 4 The Plan has been significantly underpinned by community support and engagement. It seeks to achieve sustainable development in the plan area and which reflects the range of social, environmental and economic issues that it has identified.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood plan area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
30 September 2015

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 (NNP).
- 1.2 The plan has been submitted to West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) by Nettleham Parish Council in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012 and which continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 This report assesses whether the NNP is legally compliant and meets the Basic Conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.5 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the NNP should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the NNP would then be used to determine planning applications within the plan boundary and would sit as part of the wider development plan.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by WLDC, with the consent of the Nettleham Parish Council, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both the WLDC and the Parish Council. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am Assistant Director – Economic, Environment and Cultural Services at Herefordshire Council and I have over 30 years' experience in various local authorities. I am a chartered town planner and have experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the NNP is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the NNP should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the NNP does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted NNP meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area; and
 - be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.

I have examined the submitted NNP against each of these basic conditions, and my conclusions are set out in Sections 6 and 7 of this report. I have made specific comments on the fourth bullet point above in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.9 of this report.

- 2.6 In order to comply with the Basic Condition relating to European obligations the District Council has undertaken a screening opinion. This process concluded that the NNP would require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) due to the scale of the residential development proposed in the Plan area. I am satisfied that WLDC followed the required process in consulting with English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England. During the course of my examination of the Plan I was

given access to these and other documents and which set out the process that was followed.

- 2.7 As a result of this screening opinion an environmental statement was prepared by the Parish Council. It addresses the necessary issues in a comprehensive fashion. In particular it sets out a thorough assessment of each policy in the Plan in general, and of the greenfield site allocations in particular. It is also clear that the work on the preparation of the environmental statement played a key part in bringing about elements of the changes between the draft and submission versions of the Plan. This is neatly summarised in Table 5 of that Statement.
- 2.8 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination I am satisfied that a thorough, comprehensive and proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. The environmental report gets to the heart of the matter in both identifying and proposing mitigation for a range of environmental matters. It also assesses alternative scenarios. None of the statutory consultees have raised any concerns with regard to either neighbourhood plan or to European obligations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted NNP is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.
- 2.9 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted NNP has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to be involved in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis I conclude that the submitted NNP does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.
- 2.10 In examining the NNP I am also required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.11 Having addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.10 of this report I am satisfied that all of the points have been met subject to the contents of this report.

3 Procedural Matters

- 3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:
- the submitted NNP.
 - the NNP Basic Conditions Statement.
 - the NNP Consultation Statement
 - the detailed appendices to the NNP (A – K)
 - the screening opinion
 - the representations made to the NNP.
 - the adopted West Lindsey Local Plan (First Review) 2006.
 - the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012 to 2036 - Further Draft for Consultation.
 - the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).
 - Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 and subsequent updates).
 - Ministerial Statements.
- 3.2 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Plan area on 25 August 2015. I looked at the plan area in its wider context, the character of Nettleham village itself and the identified local green spaces. I paid particular attention to the housing policies in general and to the associated four housing allocations. I looked at the proposed green wedge in the southern part of the Plan in relation to its proximity both to Nettleham and Lincoln. My site inspection is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.7 to 5.10 of this report.
- 3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Three representations made during the consultation exercise on the submitted Plan asked to participate at a hearing. However each of the representations was submitted in a very comprehensive fashion and I had access to the relevant information to assess the Plan against the basic conditions. Having considered all the information before me, including all the representations made to the submitted plan, I was satisfied that the NNP could be examined without the need for a public hearing. I advised WLDC of this decision after making my visit to the Plan area.
- 3.4 As part of this examination I looked at all the information submitted with the Plan itself. In particular I have examined Appendix A (which provides detail on the character of the Plan area) and Appendix C (which provides detail on the Plan's designation of local green spaces). Both these documents are informative in their own right, and the details in these and other appendices make the neighbourhood plan more succinct and readable than would otherwise have been the case.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require these plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 the Parish Council has prepared a Consultation Statement. This statement is very thorough and comprehensive. It is supported by an appendix which summarises the comments received at earlier stages of the Plan. The wider Statement provides a very significant level of detail and in a proportionate and well-presented way.
- 4.3 Consultation has fundamentally underpinned the Plan's production. A committee of parish councillors and other interested residents was formed in April 2012. Following the designation of the Plan area in January 2013 a range of focus groups and workshops were held with key bodies and individuals between February and August 2013. Other meetings also took place with developers, land owners and agents from early 2013 to late 2014. A preliminary draft Plan was published in May 2014. The draft Plan itself was approved by the Parish Council in October 2014. Paragraph 4.6 of the Consultation sets out the range of publicity and community engagement that has been undertaken as the Plan has been developed. It has included leaflet drops, feedback in Nettleham News and displays at the village carnival. It is clear that this process has been comprehensive and exhaustive.
- 4.4 There has been considerable liaison between the Parish Council and officers of the relevant local councils. This collaborative approach is good practice. It has also ensured that the NNP has been produced within the context of the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.
- 4.5 Appendix A of the Consultation Statement has been particularly useful to my examination of the Plan. It sets out how the Plan evolved between the pre-submission and submission phases. The positive approach that was taken in responding to the earlier comments is reflected in the representations received to the submitted plan (see 4.7 below) and their generally positive nature.
- 4.6 From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I can see that the NNP has promoted an inclusive and comprehensive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. On this basis I am fully satisfied that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Representations Received

4.7 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by the District Council for a six week period and which ended on 17 July 2015. This exercise generated comments from the following persons or organisations:

- Malcom Leaning
- The Highways Agency
- Mrs J Clayton
- Lincolnshire Police
- Clark, Mann and Weldon
- Lorna Patten
- Chris Williams
- Maureen Rees
- Peter Rees
- Joseph Siddall
- Louise Siddall
- Chris Siddall
- Andrew and Dominique Blow
- North East Lincolnshire Council
- Dr and Jane Marshall
- John Downs
- The National Grid
- Richard Porter
- June Gauke
- Adrienne Wright
- Beal Developments Limited
- Dixon Homes
- Anglian Water
- Long Leys Gospel Trust
- Natural England
- Mr R Cole
- Emma Kent
- Mr C and Mrs F Stuffins
- Robert Doughty Consultancy
- Lincolnshire County Council
- West Lindsey District Council

5 The Plan Area and the Development Plan Context

The Plan Area

- 5.1 The Plan area covers the whole of Nettleham parish. Nettleham is an attractive village located in the southern part of the West Lindsey District and on the northern edge of the City of Lincoln. The village is well defined and sits within open countryside.
- 5.2 The built up part of the village has a pleasant and attractive character. It sits on the banks of a rivulet (known as The Beck) which runs from west to east towards Scothern. It lies within a shallow valley. The village has a strong and clear historic core based around High Street, Church Street, Chapel Lane and The Green. This historic core was designated as a conservation area in 1969. The predominant traditional vernacular materials in this historic core are limestone rubble and pantile roof tiles. This gives this part of the village a warm and attractive character. There is a very pleasant and attractive group of shops and other local services around The Green. The history of the Plan area is also clearly visible in the remaining earthworks on the site of the former Bishop's Palace and Meadow to the south of High Street. The more modern parts of the village are characterised by a variety of residential properties of differing sizes and designs. Most are of brick construction. However they sit comfortably within the historic context of the village. There are a variety of local green spaces and which add to the pleasant and open aspect of the village. The Lincolnshire Police HQ and its associated grounds sit to the immediate north west of the village itself.

Development Plan Context

- 5.3 The development plan context is emerging. Nonetheless it is clear that this context has provided a solid framework for the preparation of the neighbourhood plan.
- 5.4 The West Lindsey District Local Plan (First Review) was adopted in June 2006. It sets out the basis for development in the District between 2006 and 2016. A significant part of its policies remain saved until the adoption of the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. All the policies in the Strategic section of the saved local plan are strategic policies of the development plan (see paragraph 2.5 of this report). Within this saved plan the following policies are particularly relevant to the NNP:

Policy Strat 3 in which Nettleham is identified as a Primary Rural Settlement.

Policy Strat 6 which sets out a series of criteria against which applications for windfall or infill residential developments will be assessed in primary rural settlements.

Policy Strat 13 which identifies a series of green wedges around Lincoln. One of these is located to the south of Nettleham.

- 5.5 These saved policies will apply in the NNP area until the adopted Local Plan is replaced by the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.
- 5.6 During the course of my examination of the NNP the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) 2012 to 2036 was reported to the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Plan Committee (on 7 September) and was approved for consultation purposes. That report indicated that consultation would commence on 1 October 2015. Plainly at this stage its policies are in an emerging state and have not been examined. Nevertheless its policies will have an important and longer term implication on the NNP area. Within this emerging Plan the following policies have particular relevance to the NNP:

Policy LP2	Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.
Policy LP3	Level and Distribution of Growth.
Policy LP21	Green Wedges.
Policy LP22	Local Green Spaces
Policy LP24	The historic environment.
Policy LP52	Residential allocations – Large Villages
Policy LP55	Development in Rural areas and the countryside.

This emerging Plan helpfully identifies those policies that would be regarded as strategic policies once it has been adopted. With the exception of Policy LP22 all the policies listed above will be strategic policies.

Site Visit

- 5.7 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Plan area on 25 August 2015. I walked along the length of Main Street and saw how the Beck adds character and interest to the village. I took the opportunity to spend time in the site of the Bishop's Palace and the adjoining meadow. The sites were beautifully maintained and have been recently enhanced by the planting of memorial trees, the completion of the Prince's Gate and the construction of a traditional dry stone wall. I walked along FP145 through the Police HQ to Welton Road. Thereafter I walked along Scothern Road to the northern edge of the village. I then walked to The Green and saw the range of retail and other service industries in this attractive and vibrant part of the village. In making this tour of the village I looked in detail at the four proposed housing allocations in the NNP. To complete my visit I walked along Sudbrooke Lane and looked at Mulsanne Park. I drove back towards Lincoln along Greetwell Lane so that I could see the characteristics and definition of the green wedge.
- 5.8 It was very clear from the visit that there is a strong sense of community in the Plan area. The quality of the public realm is very high in general, and the Bishop's Meadow and the grounds of the church are beautifully maintained. The Bill Bailey's Memorial Playing Field was also very well maintained and has a wide range of facilities on offer. At the time of my visit it was clearly being appreciated by the younger residents of the village. There were also strong signs of environmental

sustainability and local pride. The recent works to the Bishop's Palace and Meadow have been sensitively implemented, and all the footpaths provide full and safe access and are very well-signed.

- 5.9 This sense of local pride and maintenance is also reflected in the building stock in the Plan area. Properties and gardens are very well-maintained. The heart of the village around The Green has a very pleasing effect of active business and commercial uses set within sensitively-adapted buildings. The recent development of Ambrose Court sits very comfortably in this context both in terms of its design and its use of vernacular materials.
- 5.10 I also saw the geographic and topographic relationship between the Plan area and the City of Lincoln to its south. I was able to understand better how these relationships have informed key elements of the Plan.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan as a whole

6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented, informative and concise document.

6.2 The Plan needs to meet all the basic conditions to proceed to referendum. This section provides an overview of the extent to which the Plan meets three of the four basic conditions. Paragraphs 2.6 to 2.9 of this report have already addressed the issue of compatibility with European Union legislation.

National Planning Policies and Guidance

6.3 The key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in March 2012.

6.4 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are of particular relevance to the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan:

- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan, the adopted West Lindsey District Local Plan Strategy (First Review) 2006 and the emerging CLLP.
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities – in this case both generally and in relation to the strategic gap between the plan area and Lincoln in particular.
- conserving heritage assets.
- actively managing patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being.

6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development and which is identified as a golden thread running through the planning system. Paragraph 16 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the local plan.

6.6 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning guidance including the Planning Practice Guidance and the recent ministerial statements.

6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations submitted as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national

planning policies and guidance in general terms. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the plan area and promotes sustainable growth. At its heart are a suite of policies to safeguard its distinctiveness and character. In doing so it actively and positively promotes new residential development. The constructive conservation of historic assets is also positively promoted.

- 6.8 At a more practical level the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraphs 17 and 154). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014. Its paragraph 41 (41-041-20140306) indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.9 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. The majority of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.10 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social and environmental. It is clear to me that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in Nettleham. In the economic dimension the Plan sets out a very sharp focus on identifying new residential development and safeguarding identified employment sites. In the social role it includes policies to allow appropriate affordable housing. In the environmental dimension the Plan positively seeks to protect the natural, built and historic environment of the parish. It identifies a suite of local green spaces and sets out a range of policies that seek to ensure sustainable drainage. It seeks in particular to safeguard the character, appearance and function of the Beck which is a key feature of the local environment.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in West Lindsey and the wider Central Lincolnshire area in paragraphs 5.3 to 5.6 of this report.
- 6.12 It is clear that the submitted NNP has been prepared to be in general conformity to the adopted West Lindsey Local Plan 2006 whilst at the same time to have a weather eye to the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Plainly circumstances have moved on significantly from 2006 when the Local Plan was adopted. Nevertheless the NNP continues the approach set out in that Plan. It proposes proportionate housing growth on three sites on the edge of the village and on one site within the

existing built up area. It safeguards identified employment sites for longer term use. It seeks to retain the distinctive character and appearance of the Plan area.

- 6.13 It is also evident that there has been overlapping work on the production of the NNP and the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. The latter identifies the same four housing sites and indeed identifies them as the neighbourhood plan sites. There is a different approach taken between the two plans on the geographic extent of the green wedge between Nettleham and Lincoln. I comment on this matter in more detail in Policy E1 in Section 7 of this report. Nevertheless in general terms I conclude that the NNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the range of policies in the Plan. In particular it makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases I have recommended changes to the text to reflect proposed modifications to policies.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is concise and distinctive to the Plan area. Other than to ensure compliance with national guidance I do not propose that major elements of the Plan are removed or that new sections are included. In some cases however I have recommended that certain policies are combined for both consistency and clarity. The community and the Parish Council have spent considerable time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This gets to the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 In other cases I have recommended modifications to policies that reflect my own observations on my visit to the plan area or that reflect comments from those making representations in terms of the extent to which the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted plan. In some cases there are overlaps between the different policies.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies whether or not I have recommended specific modifications to individual policies.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

Sections 1 to 4

- 7.8 These introductory elements of the Plan set the scene for the range of policies. They do so in a concise and proportionate way. The Plan is well-presented and arranged and it is supported by well-chosen photographs, maps and contextual information.
- 7.9 The Introduction to the Plan provides a very clear context to the role and purpose of neighbourhood planning and the designation of the neighbourhood planning area. Paragraph 1.5 properly sets out the Plan's time period. Section 2 sets out an interesting range of information about the Plan area. It provides a useful background and context to the range of policies in the Plan. It helpfully provides information to someone without any previous knowledge of the Plan area. Section 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the development of the Plan since 2011. It overlaps with the Consultation Statement. Section 4 sets out the vision for the future of Nettleham. The various key issues that stem from this overall analysis are then addressed in

more detail in Section 5 of the Plan which addresses various topics and sets out a range of policies.

Policies in General

- 7.10 The presentation of the Plan makes a clear contrast between the policies themselves and the supporting text. This will ensure that decision-makers have clarity on the policies in the NNP. The identification of key issues in each of the topic sections is also very helpful. The Proposals Map is identified as a separate appendix to the Plan. Whilst this does not affect the integrity of the map itself it results in an important element of the plan being separate from the main document. This is easily remedied by the following modification:

Include the Proposals Map within the Plan itself rather than as a separate appendix.

Policy E1 The Green Wedge

- 7.11 This policy sets out to identify and safeguard a green wedge to the south of the village and with a view to prevent its coalescence with Lincoln to its south. This approach reflects the identification of a green wedge in this area in both the saved 2006 Local Plan and the emerging CLLP. In the case of the NNP the identified green wedge is larger than in both the saved and the emerging local plan. In detail the NNP proposed green wedge extends to the east of Greetwell Lane. I can see that the Plan sets out its justification for an extended green wedge. However my role is to examine the NNP against the basic conditions rather than to develop policy. Given the scale of the proposed extension to the green wedge and the proposed retention of the extent of the green wedge from the saved local plan in the emerging CLLP I am not satisfied that the NNP proposal is in general conformity with strategic local plan policies. This situation can be remedied by the identification of the saved local plan green wedge in the NNP. This is reflected in my proposed modification below

Revise the boundary of the green wedge to that included in the saved Local Plan

Remove associated elements of supporting text that refer to the proposed spatial extension of the green wedge in the submitted plan.

Policy E2 Local Green Spaces

- 7.12 This policy identifies and safeguards green spaces within the Plan area. Supporting text indicates that these areas make a vital contribution to the character and appearance of the village and are valued by the community. I saw both of these factors during my visit to the Plan area. I can also see that there is a very significant overlap between the local green spaces as identified in the NNP and on the Nettleham inset map within the emerging CLLP. I recommend below a modification to

refine the wording of this policy and which will separate supporting text from the policy itself.

- 7.13 I have looked in detail at the representation made by the Lincolnshire Police. I can understand its security concerns over the designation of part of its premises (space 8) as a local green space. I took the opportunity to walk through the area on my visit. At that time I saw several other groups of people taking advantage of the pleasant walk. I saw that there was appropriate signage in the area. I am satisfied that this area is appropriate to be designated as local green space, and that the designation of the wider suite of fourteen areas meets the basic conditions. The designation of Local Green Spaces neither suggests nor creates any additional access rights over and above those which currently exist. I did however identify that it was difficult to relate the geographical area for local green space 8 (within the Police HQ site) as identified in the NNP to specific features on site. As identified in the emerging CLLP the identified local green space in this location better relates to natural features on the ground. On this basis I recommend that the NNP designation is amended to reflect that in the emerging CLLP. In summary I recommend the following modifications:

Modify opening sentence to read:

The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following locations as Local Green Spaces and as shown on the proposals map.

Modify final sentence to read:

Applications for development on the identified local green spaces which would adversely affect their function as open green spaces will not be permitted.

Modify geographic extent of local green space 8 to reflect that shown on Inset Map 21 of the emerging CLLP

*Amend second paragraph of the green spaces supporting text on p.20 to read:
A detailed assessment and justification for the designation of the fourteen local green spaces against the principles set out in the NPPF can be found in Appendix C.*

Policy E3 Heritage Sites

Policy E4 Buildings of Local Character

- 7.13 These policies set out to safeguard local heritage sites and listed buildings and non-listed buildings within and adjacent to the conservation area. These objectives are appropriate and clearly relate to the character and appearance of the Plan area. However as drafted in the submitted plan they include elements of policy and supporting text, they refer to features not currently shown on the proposals map and they overlap with each other. Whilst their spirit and purpose will remain unchanged I have set out below a series of proposed modifications to these policies and which address the issues identified above.

Replace Policy E3 with the following:

Development proposals will be expected to protect and safeguard the local heritage sites identified in Appendix C. Where appropriate these local heritage sites should be enhanced as part of any adjacent or associated development.

Reposition the wording in the policy in the submitted version of the Plan to the end of the supporting text under the Heritage Sites heading on page 21.

Replace Policy E4 with the following:

Policy E4- Historic Buildings and the Conservation Area

Development proposals will be expected to safeguard listed buildings in the Plan area and unlisted buildings within the conservation area as shown on the proposals map. Where appropriate these various buildings should be incorporated into or enhanced as part of any adjacent development.

Within the conservation area development proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the character of the area as set out in Appendix H of this Plan.

Amend the heading on page 22 from Buildings of Local Character to Historic Buildings and the Conservation Area.

Identify the boundary of the conservation area on the Proposals Map.

Reposition the wording of Policy E4 in the submitted Plan to the end of the supporting text immediately above this policy (now to be titled Historic Buildings and the Conservation Area).

Policy E5 Nettleham Beck Green Corridor

- 7.14 This policy sets out to safeguard the Beck from inappropriate development. It also provides guidance on how any adjacent development proposals should respect and enhance the Beck and its setting. This policy is appropriate and relevant to the Plan area. I have already commented on the significance and importance of this natural feature in the Plan area.
- 7.15 As set out in the submitted Plan the policy has elements of both policy and supporting text. It also proposes that unspecified development proposals should deliver a series of improvements to the functions of the Beck. I have addressed the former point in recommended modifications to the wording of the policy itself below. On the latter point there is no clear or obvious mechanism for the delivery of the improvements, nor is there any guidance for developers on the types of projects that would be expected to address the issues as specified. On this basis I have also recommended that a revised form of wording (to that set out in the latter part of the policy) is repositioned into supporting text. In summary I recommend the following modifications:

Replace the policy with the following wording:

Development proposals which enhance the setting of the Beck and its associated amenity value will be supported. Where appropriate development proposals adjacent to the Beck should:

- **seek to retain public access and extend access through the formation of waterside walkways; and**
- **preserve and enhance its amenity, biodiversity and recreational value.**

Development proposals which encroach upon or materially harm the function, character or appearance of the Beck will not be supported.

Replace first sentence of supporting text on this matter on p.22 with the following:

The Nettleham Beck is a greatly valued local feature for amenity, recreation and wildlife. It is indicated on the Proposals Map.

Inset the following new paragraph of supporting text at the end of the text in the submitted Plan:

There will be significant opportunities within the Plan period for development proposals to improve the function and appearance of the Beck. The Parish Council encourages developers and landowners to explore opportunities for improved walking access, improved footpath connectivity and the formation of new footbridges. The potential exists for a footbridge connecting to Kerrison Way and linking the development of housing sites B and C as identified elsewhere in this Plan.

Policy D1 Access

- 7.16 This policy addresses the issue of the potential impact of new residential development on the flow of traffic in the NNP area in general, and to and from the A158 and A46 in particular. It is appropriate to the Plan area and serves a practical purpose. For clarity the key policy issue is that any new residential development should be able to demonstrate that there is capacity within the network for it to proceed safely and efficiently. It is on this basis that I recommend the following modification

Replace ‘be locateddevelopment’ with ‘demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity within the local highway network to ensure the free and safe flow of traffic from the sites concerned both to the village centre and’

The County Council has raised observations and concerns about the wording in the associated text on p.24. I agree with its comments as a matter of a factual nature. As such I recommend the following changes to the text in the bottom right text box on that page:

Replace text in bottom right text box on p.24 with the following:

Limited maintenance due to restrictions available to the highways authority

*Replace text in bottom left text box on p.24 with the following:
Reduced level of maintenance of roads and footpaths*

Policy D2 - Pedestrian and Cycling Distances

- 7.17 This policy sets out the NNP's expectations for the incorporation of pedestrian and cycling access into the design of new residential and commercial developments. This approach is both sound and good practice. It will encourage more sustainable travel arrangements in the Plan area. I recommend a range of modifications to this policy so that it meets the basic conditions. In particular I recommend that the focus of the policy is modified slightly so that it refers to the development proposal itself rather than the village centre as a destination. Plainly once cycling and walking facilities are established the users of those developments will make their own choices about how and when they cycle and to which destinations.

Replace policy with the following:

New title – Pedestrian and cycle access

Proposals for residential and commercial development will be expected to incorporate both pedestrian and cycling access into their design. Where relevant and appropriate development proposals should:

- **incorporate routes and access arrangements that minimise distance travel to the village centre; and**
- **connect with existing cycle routes and rights of way; and**
- **address existing physical impediments to safe and easy pedestrian and cycle access; and**
- **safeguard any wider strategic opportunities for cycling and walking facilities in the immediate locality.**

Policy D3 – Parking Provision

- 7.18 This policy identifies specific parking standards for new residential development. The policy sets out minimum parking standards for different sizes of dwellings. This contrasts with the saved policy in the WLDLP which sets out maximum standards.
- 7.19 The Plan provides appropriate evidence to justify such a changed approach. In particular there is a need for new residential development to be self-contained in terms of its provision of off road parking. This will particularly be the case where new developments are proposed in close proximity to the village centre. However as drafted the policy is too detailed and is potentially confusing. I have addressed these issues in the recommended modification below

Replace policy with the following:

New residential developments must provide the following minimum number of off street car parking spaces per dwelling:

1 or 2 bedrooms	2 spaces
3 or 4 bedrooms	3 spaces
5 or more bedrooms	4 spaces

Accessible communal car parking areas of an equivalent provision will be considered as an acceptable alternative in appropriate locations.

Policy D4 - Drainage Strategy

- 7.20 This policy sets out to establish an overall drainage strategy for the Plan area. However its comments are primarily in relation to validation requirements for planning applications. Plainly this is a matter for the District Council to apply. In any event it is a process matter rather than a policy approach. As such I recommend the deletion of this policy.

Delete Policy D4

Policy D5- Sustainable Urban Drainage

Policy D6- Nettleham Beck

- 7.21 These policies set out the Plan's expectations for drainage and surface water run-off both generally and in relation to the Beck in particular. The two policies overlap and include a combination of policy and supporting text. There is also a reference to a flood plain map which appears earlier in the Plan but without sufficient detail or a key to explain its purpose or content.
- 7.22 It is clear to me that these policies serve a local and a distinctive purpose. The village lies in a shallow valley and there is the obvious potential for the frequency and impact of flooding to increase as new development proceeds within the Plan period. However there would be real benefit in the combination of these two policies in order to provide the necessary clarity to comply with national policy. Whilst there is an understandable focus on the Beck in the policies in the submitted Plan a more general approach would serve the Plan area better throughout its life. I have taken account of helpful representations made by both WLDC and Lincolnshire County Council in my recommended modification below. I have also set out to ensure a direct relationship between the proposed modified policy and policy LP14 in the emerging CLLP.

Replace policies D5 and D6 with the following policy

Water Resources and Flood Risk

Applications for planning permission will be required to demonstrate that they have satisfactorily addressed the water resources available in the plan area and the associated flood risks

Flood Risk:

Proposals for development in flood zone 2 as identified on the plan at Appendix (insert new appendix) will be required to demonstrate through reference to the West Lindsey Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and to a site specific flood risk assessment that the proposed development will not increase the flood risk to the site and to other parts of the Plan area in general, and to the Nettleham Beck in particular

Sewage and Drainage:

Applications for new development (other than for minor extensions) will be required to demonstrate that:

- **the development contributes positively to the water environment and to its ecology where possible and does not adversely affect surface and ground water quality; and**
- **any development that has the potential to pose a risk to ground water resources is not located in a sensitive location; and**
- **appropriate sustainable drainage systems have been incorporated into the proposals unless they can be shown to be impractical; and**
- **the design of the scheme incorporates appropriate measures that contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and green corridors in the Plan area in general, and to the Nettleham Beck in particular.**

Amend supporting text to reflect the combination of the two policies

Insert additional text at the end of the amended existing text to read:

Policy (insert new number) sets out an approach to address a wide range of drainage and water management issues in the plan area. The issues take account of the emerging policies in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and which will provide the other component part of the development plan for the plan area.

Remove plan at top of page 29 and replace with a plan in a separate appendix showing accurate and up-to-date information on flood zones in the Plan area.

Policy D7 – Residential Developments in the Open Countryside

- 7.23 This policy sets out the Plan's approach to proposed residential development in the open countryside. At its heart is an approach that seeks both to protect the

countryside and to concentrate new development within or adjacent to the existing village. This approach gets to the heart of several of the basic conditions. I have recommended a series of modifications to the policy to ensure that it more closely relates to wording in the NPPF, to incorporate the content of Policy D8 and to make a sharper distinction between policy and supporting text. Within the proposed revised supporting text I have also ensured that this policy is consistent with the housing allocations set out elsewhere in the NNP. In summary I recommend the following modifications:

Replace policy with the following:

New residential developments will be resisted unless they are adjacent to the existing continuous built form of Nettleham.

Isolated dwellings in the countryside will not be supported.

Proposed new residential development along the principal access roads into the village will only be permitted where those proposals would not extend the linear format of the settlement.

Reposition the description of the continuous built form of the village in the policy to a new second paragraph of supporting text under this heading on p32.

Reposition existing supporting text from p.33 so that it follows on from this new paragraph.

Insert an additional paragraph of text to read:

Policy D7 should be read in association with the wider Plan and the Proposals Maps. The Housing section of the Plan proposes four housing sites, three of which are located immediately adjacent to the existing continuous built form of the village. Policy H1 also indicates that these four sites will represent the vast majority of new residential development in the Plan area.

Policy D8 – Residential Developments on Approach Roads

- 7.24 This policy set out to provide policy guidance for residential developments on approach roads. I have recommended in paragraph 7.23 above that it is incorporated into Policy D7 for clarity and simplicity.

Delete Policy D8

Policy D9 – Design of New Development

- 7.25 This policy provides guidance on the standards expected for new development. Given the nature of the Plan area and the guidance in the NPPF this policy is entirely appropriate and meets the basic conditions. It also usefully ties into existing Nettleham Design Statement. I have proposed a series of modifications to give this policy and its supporting text complete clarity.

Modify the following elements of the policy:

Criterion a) to read:

Recognising and reinforcing the distinct local character (as set out in the character assessment and the Village Design Statement 2008) in relation to height, scale, density, spacing, layout orientation, features and materials of buildings.

Criterion b) to read:

Designing housing proposals to reflect existing residential densities in the locality of the scheme

Criterion d) – delete second sentence

Criterion e) – delete final sentence

Criterion h) - delete ‘consideration of’ at the start and insert ‘where appropriate’ at the end

Policy H1 – Managed Housing Growth

- 7.26 This policy sets the scene for future residential development in the Plan area. It identifies the broad distribution of new housing growth; it seeks to establish a cap on the size of any new residential scheme, and proposes mechanisms to ensure that new residential development is phased. The integration of new development into the community is the underlying theme of the policy.
- 7.27 It is clear from the supporting text that significant work has been carried out on this matter. Four housing sites have been identified which will both contribute to local and strategic growth and will assist in meeting the need for affordable housing in the Plan area. As mentioned earlier these sites have been included in the emerging CLLP. I have considered carefully the need to have a cap on the size of new residential areas and its relationship to the basic conditions. Overall I am satisfied that in principle this matter meets the basic conditions. However as drafted the approach is prescriptive and may prevent innovative and attractive proposals from coming forward. The successful incorporation of these sites into the wider geography of the Plan area will be as much about the way they are arranged and designed in relation to the wider landscape and existing dwellings as the mathematical yield of the site itself. On this basis I have recommended a modification that provides a degree of flexibility on this matter. In coming to this view I am aware that there has been considerable developer interest in the Plan area in recent months. There is a current planning application for 68 dwellings on the Scothern Road site. The potential yield on this site is reflected in the emerging CLLP. There is also a current application in the area to the north of the Hawthorns. In addition development proposals are well-advanced on the Deepdale

Road site and which demonstrate a potentially higher yield. In doing so the site would provide specialist housing for the elderly.

- 7.28 The policy also identifies a mechanism to address the issue of the phasing of new residential development throughout the Plan period. As drafted its intentions are not fully clear. In addition the mechanism of linking subsequent planning permissions to a five year period from the start of construction on the first of the four sites may be difficult to apply. I have recommended modifications to make this element of the policy simpler for the local planning authority to apply. Its purpose however remains unchanged. In summary I recommend the following modifications:

The primary focus of new residential development in the Plan area will be within the four allocated housing sites identified on the Proposals Map. These housing sites will each be restricted to a yield of 50 homes unless it can be demonstrated that their proposed design, layout and dwelling numbers can be satisfactorily incorporated into their topography and landscape settings. Planning applications for the four allocated housing sites in this Plan will be supported where they demonstrate through the submission and approval of a construction management plan that their development can be satisfactorily incorporated into the community.

Policy H2 - Housing Mix

- 7.29 This policy sets out the Plan's intentions to ensure that new housing is of an appropriate type and size. It is underpinned with detailed information and is entirely appropriate. As drafted it includes elements of supporting text. I have also proposed some modifications to the wording of the policy itself so that its requirements are clear. In summary I recommend the following modification.

Modify policy to read:

Applications for 11 or more dwellings will be required to produce a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the identified needs of current and future households in Nettleham.

Applications proposing uniform types and sizes of dwellings will not be supported.

Include the following additional text at the end of the final paragraph on page 41:

Policy H2 sets out an approach to address these issues. The mix of dwellings required by the first part of the policy should reflect the emerging Central Lincolnshire Local Plan requirements. In particular there should be an emphasis on smaller homes (both low cost and also to a higher build standard) rather than larger family homes.

Policy H3- Housing for Older People

- 7.30 This policy sets out the community's approach to the delivery of older persons' housing. The evidence base overlaps with Policy H2. I am satisfied that the principle of a policy of this nature meets the basic conditions. It gets to the very heart of the social dimension of sustainable development in the Plan area. However most of the policy as drafted is supporting text. This is reflected in my proposed modifications as follows:

Modify policy to read:

All housing developments will be required to incorporate appropriate provision for older persons' housing.

Insert additional text at the end of the supporting text on this matter on page 43:

Policy H3 requires all housing developments to make provision for older persons' housing as appropriate. This provision could be achieved through bungalows and homes which are flexible to cope with changing needs of their occupants.

Whilst Site D in this Plan has been identified as the most suitable in the Plan area for the provision of older persons' homes it will not alone meet the identified need. Schemes to address the wider need will be actively encouraged in appropriate sustainable locations.

Policy H4 - Affordable Housing Element

Policy H5- Affordable Housing Criteria

- 7.31 These policies require the provision and retention of an appropriate level of affordable housing on new residential developments. The policies reflect the sensitive balance between wage levels and house prices in the Plan area. The Plan also usefully sets out its ambition to support a diverse and vibrant community with a balance of age groups. Policy H4 reflects the emerging nature of the CLLP and sets out a policy that would require development plan targets to be applied in the NNP area. This is a sensible and practical approach both in its own right and given several recent national policy and legal changes affecting the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system. In order to give both policies greater clarity and to ensure a degree of future-proofing I recommend that the policies are combined to form a single policy. I also propose other modifications to ensure a stronger degree of overlap with Policy LP11 in the emerging Local Plan. On this basis I recommend the following modifications

Replace Policy H4 and H5 with:

The provision of Affordable Housing

New residential developments will be required to include an element of affordable/low cost housing in accordance with policies contained in the development plan.

The affordable housing element will be expected to provide an appropriate balance of house size, type and tenure to meet the housing needs of the local community.

Affordable housing units should be delivered on the application site concerned unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist to necessitate equivalent provision on another site and/or the making of a payment for other off-site provision.

In all circumstances affordable housing units should be seamlessly integrated into the wider layout of the housing sites concerned.

Policy H6 Housing Site A (Deepdale Lane).

- 7.32 This policy sets out detailed criteria for the development of Site A (Deepdale Lane) and as identified in Policy H1. It is supported in the plan itself by a detailed map.
- 7.33 I am satisfied that the site is appropriate and that its allocation meets the basic conditions. It actively promotes growth and does so in a fashion that will result in the creation of sustainable development. A representation made on behalf of the landowner and potential developer indicates that there is active interest in bringing it forward.
- 7.34 The criteria associated with the site allocation are appropriate in terms of the issues they address. I recommend a series of modifications to ensure that the criteria are clear and precise in their intent. For clarity I also recommend that the various matters are annotated on the more detailed map that accompanies this policy.

Add the following sentence to opening part of policy to read:

Land is allocated for residential development to the north of Deepdale Lane and as shown as Site A on the Proposals Map.

For all criteria (except e) – start criteria with ‘The provision of...’

Criterion a) – delete (as it duplicates the policy itself).

Criterion e) - replace with ‘the formation of safe and convenient cycle access to the site from Deepdale Lane and National Cycle Route 1.

Annotate all the criteria as set out in the policy on the associated detailed map of the site.

Modify the associated text to read:

The land to the north of Deepdale Lane is one of the four allocated housing sites as set out in Policy H1. Its proposed development is set out below in Policy H6. The various detailed elements are indicated on the more detailed plan at the end of the policy. Insert existing sentence in text ‘Access to....road.’ The site is adjacent to Deepdale Lane and the National Cycling Route 1 which runs through the village. This

matter is addressed in criterion e) in the policy. Subject to negotiation it may be appropriate for the developer to contribute to improvements of this cycling route as part of the development of the site.

Policy H7 Housing Site B (Scothern Road).

- 7.35 The format of this policy is identical to that of Policy H6 and as I have set out in paragraph 7.32 above.
- 7.36 I am satisfied that the site is appropriate and that its allocation meets the basic conditions. It actively promotes growth and does so in a fashion that will result in the creation of sustainable development. The site sits comfortably to the immediate east of existing residential properties on Scothern Road and High Leas. It is less self-contained by natural or physical features than Site A. This matter is reflected in the range of criteria associated with the development of the site. In some cases the criteria include both policy elements and supporting text.
- 7.37 The criteria associated with the site allocation are appropriate in terms of the issues they address. As with site A I recommend a series of modifications to ensure that the criteria are clear and precise in their intent. For clarity I also recommend that the various matters are annotated on the more detailed map that accompanies this policy. I have recommended the deletion of criterion c) as set out in the submitted plan. Whilst I have sympathy for its ambitions its delivery and extent is unclear. In any event as drafted it merely asks that consideration should be given to the matter. In summary I recommend the following modifications:

Add the following sentence to opening part of policy to read:

Land is allocated for residential development to the east of Scothern Road and as shown as Site B on the Proposals Map.

Modify the criteria to read:

- a) the existing footpath (FP149) is retained and strengthened as part of the development of the site; and**
- b) the creation of a 15 metre planting buffer along the south eastern and eastern boundary of the site; and**
- c) delete**
- d) the retention of a minimum of 50% of the mature trees and hedgerow that runs in a south-easterly direction from the eastern end of High Leas (and as shown on the detailed map with this policy); and**
- e) the appropriate safeguarding of the archaeological feature to the south of High Leas (and as shown on the detailed map with this policy); and**
- f) the formation of safe and convenient cycle access to the site and National Cycle Route 1; and**
- g) the creation of a satisfactory vehicular access into the site; and**
- h) the incorporation of allotments on the site.**

Annotate all the criteria as set out in the policy on the associated detailed map of the site.

Modify supporting text as follows:

The land to the east of Scothern Road is one of the four allocated housing sites as set out in Policy H1. Its proposed development is set out below in Policy H7. The various design elements are indicated on the more detailed plan at the end of the policy.

The development of the site will need to address a range of environmental and access issues. There are a range of existing hedgerows and trees which will provide considerable opportunity for the new dwellings to be sensitively incorporated into the landscape. There will however be a need to introduce a substantial landscape buffer to the south eastern and immediate eastern boundaries of the site. The field archaeological feature to the south of High Leas is a potentially important component of the site. The Plan anticipates that the feature will be investigated for its archaeological value and that an appropriate watching brief is put in place as development proceeds. The site has significant potential to incorporate allotments into its design and layout. This matter should be addressed in the submission of the initial planning application for the development of the site.

There are several potential ways by which vehicular access can be achieved into the site. One such option involves the demolition of No.72 Scothern Road. Full details of the proposed access will be required to be submitted as part of the initial application for the development of the site. The routeing and operation of construction traffic to the site will also need careful consideration. Again this matter will need to be addressed early within the planning process

The site is adjacent to Scothern Road and the Sustrans National Cycling Route 1 which runs through the village. This matter is addressed in criterion f) in the policy. Subject to negotiation it may be appropriate for the developer to contribute to improvements to this cycle route as part of the development of the site.

Policy H8 Housing Site C (The Hawthorns)

- 7.38 The format of this policy is identical to that of Policy H6 and H7 and as I have set out in paragraphs 7.32 and 7.35 above.
- 7.39 Local residents and developers have raised a series of representations about this site at the submission stage. Those local residents who have commented suggest that other sites in the village would be better placed to accommodate housing growth. However the selection of Site C and the other housing sites has followed an exhaustive process, and I am satisfied that the amenities of adjoining residents can be properly safeguarded. I address this matter in my recommended modifications.

- 7.40 Developers have suggested that a more extensive site in this part of the village should be identified for new residential development. Whilst my examination of the Plan was taking place I was made aware of the submission of a planning application for residential development in this part of the village. It incorporates the land within Site C together with other land to the east of Larch Avenue and to the north running up to the Beck. The application proposes up to 200 dwellings with associated public open space, woodland planting and a potential sports pitch facility.
- 7.41 Plainly a decision on this application will be made by WLDC as the local planning authority. My role is to assess the submitted plan against the basic conditions associated with the preparation of neighbourhood plans. In this regard I have commented earlier that I am satisfied that the NNP meets the basic conditions in general terms. I have made individual comments on each proposed housing site and the four sites are also identified in the emerging CLLP. That plan will be tested for soundness in due course including its ability to meet the objectively assessed housing need of the Central Lincolnshire plan area.
- 7.42 Representations made by both Beal Developments and John Dixon Homes rehearse the issues that are contained in the current planning application. They contend that a larger site (currently being promoted through the planning application) is better placed to meeting the aspirations of the community and to preserve the natural wetland environment of the Beck. The representations acknowledge that policy H8 includes a schedule of specific requirements including the provision of footpath links and a bridge across the Beck. They then go on to raise fundamental concerns about the deliverability of these requirements given the number of houses identified for delivery on site C alongside the affordable housing requirements and any other likely planning requirements.
- 7.43 Having considered all the information I am satisfied that the inclusion of the site in the NNP meets the basic conditions. It actively promotes growth and does so in a fashion that will result in the creation of sustainable development. Whilst I can see that there is an ongoing debate on the scale and content of future residential development in this part of the village there is no direct evidence before me to the effect that the site as identified in the NNP is incapable of development for residential purposes. The District Council and the Central Lincolnshire planning authorities have chosen to include the site in the emerging local plan and there is active developer interest in the site and its surrounding areas.
- 7.44 My recommended modifications to this policy follow a similar format to those for Policies H6 and H7. For this particular site I have proposed three specific modifications which impact on both the policy itself and the supporting text. The first relates to the residential amenities of existing adjacent houses. This is particularly important given the position of certain houses in the northern part of The Hawthorns and in Ridgeway and Brookfield Avenue. The second relates to the provision of clarity on the vehicular access into the site. The third relates to the series of criteria associated with the policy. As currently drafted they require works to be undertaken

of an uncertain specification outside the allocated site. This point overlaps with elements of the representations made by Beal Developments and John Dixon Homes.

7.45 On this basis I recommend the following linked series of modifications:

Add the following sentence to the opening part of policy to read:

Land is allocated for residential development to the north of The Hawthorns and as shown as Site C on the Proposals Map

Modify the criteria to read:

- a) the provision of a satisfactory vehicular access; and**
- b) the design, layout and vehicular access into the site shall respect and safeguard the residential amenities of the existing residential properties in The Hawthorns, Ridgeway and Brookfield Avenue; and**
- c) the provision of a footpath within the site and alongside the existing hedge running north-south (and as shown on the detailed map with this policy).**

Annotate criteria a) and c) as set out in the policy on the associated detailed map of the site. In the case of the access issue identify the position of both identified options.

Modify supporting text to read as follows:

The land to the north of The Hawthorns is one of the four allocated housing sites as set out in Policy H1. Its proposed development is set out below in Policy H8. The various elements are indicated on the more detailed plan at the end of the policy.

The detailed map shows the two possible points by which vehicular access could be achieved into the site. This matter will need to be resolved as part of the submission of the first planning application for the development of this site. The positioning and design of the vehicular access will be required to respect and safeguard the amenities of the surrounding residential properties.

The development of the site offers significant potential to provide access to the countryside to the north in general, and to the Beck in particular. The policy requires the creation of a new footpath through the site. Subject to land ownership issues and wider discussions associated with planning applications there is the potential for this footpath to extend outside the allocated site.

Policy B1 – Business Sites

7.46 This policy seeks to safeguard two parcels of land for employment purposes. Whilst Nettleham is primarily a residential area it has some existing local businesses. Their retention and possible diversification and expansion will contribute significantly to the promotion of sustainable development in the Plan area. I saw from my visit to the Plan area that the two sites were similar in terms of their locations on the edge of the

village but very different in terms of their delivery of employment opportunities. On the one hand the site off Deepdale Lane is largely developed out as an employment site. On the other hand the site off Lodge Lane is undeveloped and remains in agricultural use.

- 7.47 A representation has been made on behalf of the owners of the site off Lodge Lane that the site has been marketed for employment purposes without success. That representation also indicates that a planning application is being developed for a mixed use of the site incorporating both residential and employment development. Plainly any planning application of this type would be a matter for the WLDC to determine.
- 7.48 The wider issue of the long term protection of employment land is addressed in national policy. Paragraph 22 of the NPPF is very clear in indicating that planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. It goes on to indicate that in those circumstances applications for alternative uses should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities. Given that business development has not proceeded on this site since its allocation in the saved local plan there will be merit in introducing a degree of flexibility in the longer term uses of this site. This would accord with national planning policy and therefore meet the basic conditions. This approach will also relate to the emerging CLLP Policy LP5 which establishes a similar approach in its section on the Loss of Employment sites or buildings. This is reflected in my recommended modifications to the policy and associated text below:

Modify the policy to read:

Land identified on the proposals map at Deepdale Lane (NE/1) and at Lodge Lane (NE/2) will be safeguarded for employment purposes.

Planning applications for mixed employment and residential development on the Lodge Lane site will be considered on their merits and based on an assessment of the following factors:

- a) the relative scale and size of the different land uses proposed and their physical relationships; and**
- b) information submitted identifying the commercial and viability relationship between the mix of uses proposed; and**
- c) the phasing and delivery of the differing components.**

Add new supporting text to the end of the second paragraph of on page 50 as follows:

Policy B1 provides a degree of commercial flexibility in order to bring forward the early delivery of the Lodge Lane site. This approach accords with national policy as set out in paragraph 22 of the NPPF. However the underlying ethos of the policy is to

safeguard and bring forward the development of the Lodge Lane site for employment use.

Policy S1 – Services and Facilities

- 7.49 This policy seeks to protect a series of community services and facilities from proposals that would bring about their loss or significant harm. This policy strikes at the heart of the social dimension of sustainable development and it is clear from the consultation exercises that the various facilities are valued and well used by the community. The policy meets the basic conditions.

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a wide range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2031. It is concise and distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community. It positively promotes sustainable growth in general and housing development in particular.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan I have concluded that the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.
- 8.3 Whilst I have proposed modifications to several policies and elements of supporting text the Plan itself remains fundamentally unchanged in its role and purpose.

Conclusion

- 8.4 On the basis of the findings in this report I recommend to the West Lindsey District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

- 8.5 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. In my view the neighbourhood area is appropriate and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by the District Council on 8 January 2013.
- 8.6 It is very clear to me that a huge amount of hard work and dedication has been injected into the preparation of this Plan. I would like to record my thanks to all those who have assisted me in a variety of ways in the examination of the Plan. I am particularly grateful to those who have patiently and kindly responded to my requests for information and clarification throughout this time.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
30 September 2015