

Gainsborough Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Screening Opinion

June 2019

Gainsborough Neighbourhood Plan
Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion

Actions	Name	Position	Role	Date
Preparation of draft Screening Report	Ian McCluskey	Principal Consultant	Project manager	April 2019
Review of Screening Report	Frank Hayes	Associate Director	Technical review	April 2019
Locality Review of Screening Report	Fancis Shaw	Locality	Review	June 2019
Final Report	Frank Hayes	Associate Director	Technical Review	June 2019

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1. Introduction

1.1 This screening report has been prepared to assist in the determination as to whether or not the content of the draft Gainsborough Neighbourhood Plan (GNP) requires a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. It also considers whether the GNP complies with the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/ECC) and Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC), as required as a basic condition by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The designated neighbourhood plan area can be seen in Appendix 1. It includes the wards of Gainsborough North, Gainsborough East and Gainsborough South-West. The GNP is being prepared by Gainsborough Town Council (GTC).

1.2 A consultation draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP) (pre Regulation 14) has been prepared (February 2019). The draft Neighbourhood Plan sets out a community vision for Gainsborough which states that:

“The Gainsborough Neighbourhood Development Plan will take a positive approach to development so long as it brings forward a balance of housing, employment, retail, community and leisure development on sites within (as well as on the edge of) the town. This will ensure Gainsborough becomes a more attractive, vibrant place, providing all the amenities you would expect in a desirable town.

All development within the Plan period will maximise the environmental assets in and around Gainsborough, particularly the river, access to the countryside and the parks and green spaces so that people can cycle or walk around the town, making the most of the town’s natural features and enabling a healthier lifestyle for all.

The riverside and the significant historic buildings and spaces will be a focus for regeneration within the town and the market place will be a focal point for retail, commercial and social uses.

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Gainsborough will be a growing visitor destination - the improved fabric of the town (historic, retail and social) will see an increase in tourism spending in the town.

Businesses of all sizes in Gainsborough will grow as the town thrives, benefiting from the improvements made to the quality of the town, road and rail network and the access to a growing workforce of local people happy to live, work and play in the town."

1.3 A number of community objectives have been identified to help deliver the vision and include the following.

- **Community Objective 1:** The regeneration of the riverside is a priority to provide leisure and recreation for local people and to make the town more attractive.
- **Community Objective 2:** To ensure that all new development is designed to a high standard and that it respects the materials, style, and layout of the town (where applicable), and enhances, rather than diminishes, the existing character of Gainsborough.
- **Community Objective 3:** To promote the redevelopment of brownfield sites for housing and employment as the principle focus for the successful regeneration of Gainsborough.
- **Community Objective 4:** To implement a range of improvements to the historic buildings and spaces in the town as part of a wider improvement programme for the town centre with the market place as the focal point.
- **Community Objective 5:** To ensure that future housing growth provides a mix of house types to meet local as well as district need.
- **Community Objective 6:** To ensure that new housing developments to the north and south of the town connect easily with the existing settlement pattern of the town so the appearance integrates with it.
- **Community Objective 7:** To bring the centre of the town back to life creating an attractive shopping area around the market place and supporting the growth of a vibrant evening economy (cafes, pubs, restaurants and other leisure facilities.)
- **Community Objective 8:** To improve walking and cycling access to the countryside, the riverside and routes within the Town to the local

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green spaces by improving and extending routes that create green connections, whilst supporting nature conservation.

- **Community Objective 9:** To create an environment that makes it attractive for micro, small and medium sized businesses and shops to locate and flourish in the town.
- **Community Objective 10:** To seek improvements to rail, bus and road infrastructure that will unlock the movement of people, goods and services into, out of and around the town.
- **Community Objective 11:** To encourage developers to work with the local community before planning applications are submitted so the community and developers can produce schemes that ensure the most positive benefit for the town.

1.4 In light of these objectives, the NP proposed 18 policies which address the key themes of the Plan including the spatial strategy, engagement, green networks, local green spaces, protecting landscape character, design principles, a mix of house types, allocated development sites, riverside regeneration, town centre riverside sites, protecting heritage assets and improving the vitality of the town centre.

1.5 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan allocates sites within Gainsborough which are considered suitable for residential development. NP policies 8 – 16 provide a policy framework for the development of these sites. Many of these specific policies encourage a mixed use approach to the development of these sites. It is understood that the GTC are not allocating sites for housing and employment development through the GNP.

1.6 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012), the GNP will need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies which are adopted by the local authority (West Lindsey District Council) in which the NP lies. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was adopted in April 2017. The Council are currently in the early stages of reviewing the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan which they are seeking to adopt in September 2021.

1.7 It is understood that GTC are not seeking to redefine the Town Centre boundary which is outlined in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

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- 1.8 The rest of this report is set out as follows:
- Section 2 – sets out the legislative requirements and explains why this screening exercise is being undertaken;
 - Section 3 – sets out each of the steps of the screening process, as set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance;
 - Section 4 – provides the screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the GNP;
 - Section 5 – considers the ‘basic condition’ requirements of the Habitats Directive and whether a Habitats Regulations Screening Report for the NP would be required;
 - Section 6 – sets out the conclusions of the assessments and the next steps to be taken.

2. Legislative Background

- 2.1 In order to be ‘made’, Neighbourhood Plans are required to be tested against and meet a number of ‘basic conditions’. One of the basic conditions is whether the making of the NP is compatible with European Union obligations, including obligations under the SEA Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC) and the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC).
- 2.2 The Habitats Directive has been transposed into English Law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. The Habitats Directive ensures the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species and habitat types. The Directive establishes an ecological network of protected areas across the European Union called Natura 2000 sites.
- 2.3 The SEA Directive has been transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or the ‘SEA Regulations’. Detailed guidance of these regulations can be found in the government publication ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ (ODPM 2005). More recent guidance with regard Neighbourhood Plans is provided in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) at paragraph: Paragraph: 026 Reference

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ID: 11-026-20140306 and 045 Reference ID: 11-045-20140306. The NPPG indicates that a strategic environmental assessment may be required for example where;

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development;
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan;
- the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

2.4 To decide whether a proposed Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and hence requires SEA, it should be screened at as early as stage as possible.

2.5 Screening is 'Stage A' in the government's recommended six stage approach to SEA for Neighbourhood Plans outlined in the NPPG. If it is determined that significant environmental effects are unlikely then further SEA is not required.¹

2.6 Screening involves considering the anticipated scope of the plan and the scope of environmental issues (to include opportunities) locally, before concluding whether there are any significant effects on the environment.

2.7 Annex 2 of the SEA Directive lists a series of criteria that should be taken into account when establishing the potential for the plan to result in significant effects. Annex 1 of the Directive lists a series of broad environmental issues that should be considered². The criteria/issues listed in the Directive are helpful in that they provide a methodological basis for screening.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#strategic-environmental-assessment-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans>

² Also, when identifying 'issues' as part of screening, it is appropriate to give consideration to the presence and condition of 'sensitive areas' as defined by national guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment#Sensitive-areas>. These sensitive areas are defined for the purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening, as opposed to SEA screening, but are nonetheless relevant.

3. The SEA Screening Process

Who is responsible for screening?

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require the 'responsible authority' to 'determine' whether or not a plan is likely to have significant effects, which in this case is West Lindsey District Council. The Council will reach a determination in light of this screening opinion, and also in consultation with the statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England). AECOM has prepared this screening opinion on behalf of GTC through the Locality Neighborhood Plan Technical Support Programme.

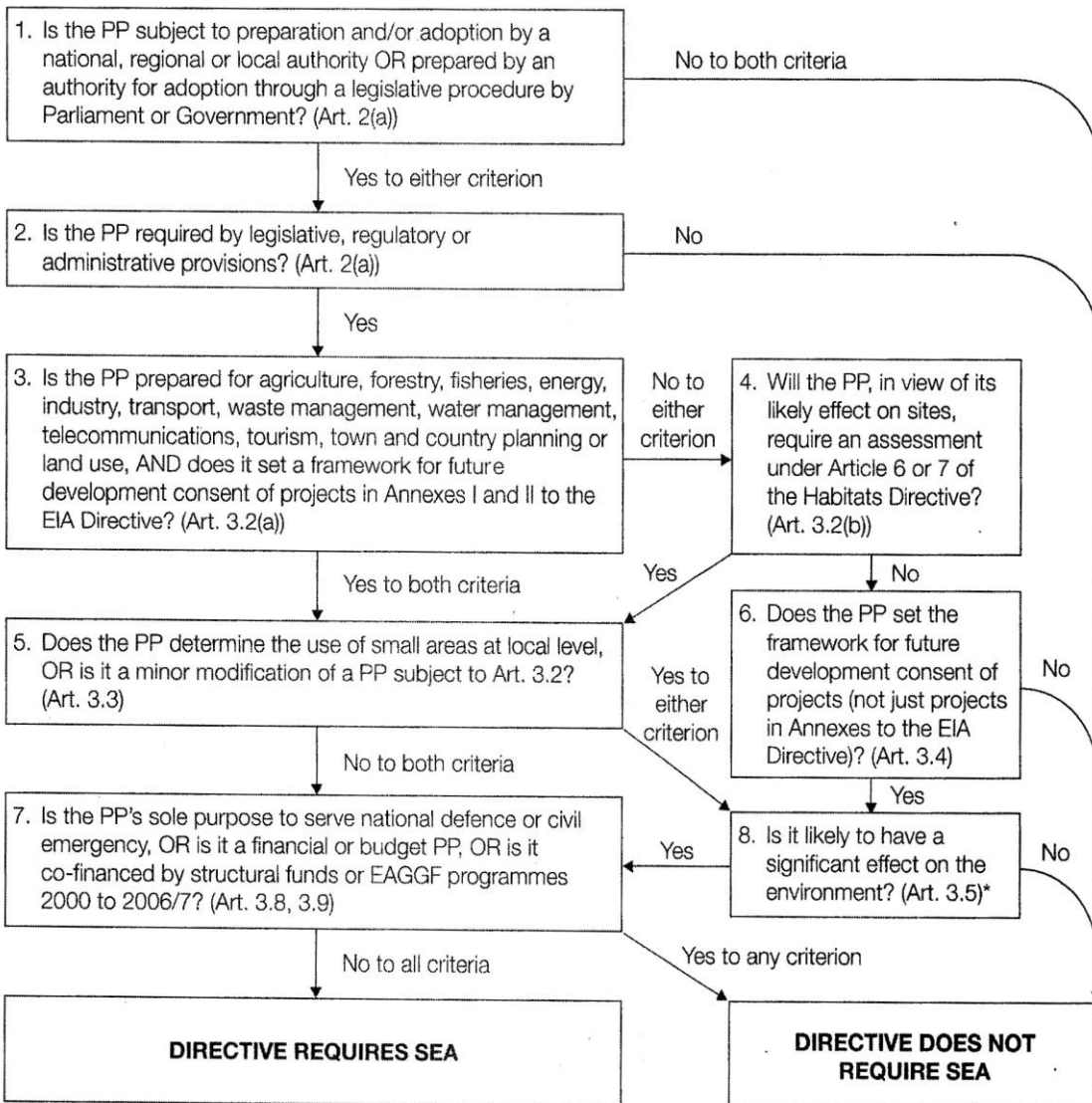
Screening methodology

- 3.2 The ODPM (now Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)) Practical Guide to the SEA Directive provides a checklist approach based on the SEA Regulations to help determine whether SEA is required. This checklist, alongside consideration of the criteria in Annex 2 and the list of 'issues' in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive have been used to assess the need for SEA in respect of the GNP as set out in section 3.
- 3.3 The diagram below is taken from the MHCLG Practical Guide. It illustrates the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required.

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Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

4. Assessment

4.1 Table 1 below sets out the assessment of the GNP. The questions in the table are drawn from the diagram in Section 3 which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Table 1: Establishing the Need for SEA		
Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the GNP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	It will be prepared by the Gainsborough Town Council and will be adopted by West Lindsey District Council under the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
2. Is the GNP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	Although there is no requirement to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, they are subject to formal procedures and regulations laid down by national government. In light of the European Court of Justice ruling in the Case C-567/10 it is considered that this means the NP is 'required'.
3. Is the GNP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Y	The NP is prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development including mixed use development and housing development, which may fall under 10(b) of Annex II of the EIA Directive. ³

³ Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive) – European Commission 2008

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Table 1: Establishing the Need for SEA		
Stage	Y/N	Reason
4. Will the GNP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N	The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Local Plan) was screened and it was concluded that appropriate assessment was not required and this was confirmed by Natural England (in May 2016). The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the Local Plan and, although the GNP can propose more development it is not considered that GNP proposals are significant enough to require further assessment under the Habitats Directive.
5. Does the GNP determine the use of small areas at the local level, OR is it a minor modification of another Plan or Programme (PP) subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The Plan puts forward policies which seek to determine suitable land uses on Local Plan allocated sites within the Plan Boundary.
6. Does the GNP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y	The Neighbourhood Plan will be used to determine future planning applications.
7. Is the GNP sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	N/A	N/A
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	See analysis below from para 4.4 – 4.45.

- 4.2 Having established that the 'plan scope' does not enable the plan to be screened-out (i.e. it is not the case that the plan is set to be very limited in its scope), the next question relates to the nature of the issues (constraints and opportunities) that exist.

Consideration of significant effects on the environment

- 4.3 Annex 1 of the SEA Directive identifies a number of potential aspects of the environment which may require consideration in relation to significant effects. These aspects or "issues" include (but are not limited to): "biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors". The following discussion considers any relevant issues in relation to each of these aspects of the GNP environment and how they might be affected as a result of the proposed policies of the GNP.

Biodiversity, fauna and flora

- 4.4 There are pockets of deciduous woodland in the Plan area, which is a priority habitat. There are two areas of Ancient Woodland (Warren Wood/Bass Wood) within the NP boundary. As identified in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, there is one Local Nature Reserve (Site close to Theaker Avenue) within the NP boundary. There are no sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves or Nature Improvement Areas within the NP boundary.
- 4.5 The closest SSSI is at Lea Marsh and is directly adjacent to the NP boundary to the south. There are also two SSSI's, Mother Drain Misterton and Chesterfield Canal, to the north west of the NP boundary, approximately 4.3 km away. The northern and southern part of the plan area falls within a SSSI risk zone. There is also an area of ancient woodland (White's Wood) adjacent to the NP boundary to the east.
- 4.6 None of the sites allocated for development in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan directly relate to the nature sites identified above and

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consequently the GNP development policies which relate to these Local Plan allocation do not directly impact on these nature sites⁴.

- 4.7 The GNP does not allocate any sites for development. There is one site (Site CL4689) which includes priority habitats (deciduous woodland) and is allocated for residential development in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. However, the GNP refers to this area of priority habitat as Mercer's Wood. GNP policy NPP14 Riverside North (CL 6689) which seeks to designate Mercer's Wood as a Local Green Space which should be enhanced through adjacent additional planting.
- 4.8 Overall therefore, it is considered that it is unlikely that there would be any significant negative effects on biodiversity, fauna or flora through the proposals and policies in the GNP. There may be some potential for enhancement of biodiversity through the identification of Mercer's Wood, but the effects would be localised, not strategic and unlikely to have a significant effect on biodiversity.
- 4.9 Please note that potential significant effects on sites designated for international conservation purposes (sites listed as Natura 2000 sites or RAMSAR sites) are considered separately under the Habitats Regulations obligations in section 5.

Population

- 4.10 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan identified Gainsborough as an area of growth and Policy LP2 identifies that during the plan period Gainsborough will seek to deliver 4,435 new homes to 2036. However, most of this growth is accommodated in two areas: the Northern Neighbourhood Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), and the Southern Neighbourhood SUE. Only a small part of the Northern Neighbourhood SUE (land to the east of Trent Valley Academy) is located within the NP boundary. However, the total indicative number of dwellings proposed, excluding SUEs, within the GNP boundary is 1,739.

⁴ <https://aurora.central-lincs.org.uk/map/Aurora.svc/run?script=%5cShared+Services%5cJPU%5cJPUJS.AuroraScript%24&nocache=1206308816&resize=always>

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4.11 The GNP does not include future population projections. However, as the GNP is not allocating sites for additional residential development over and above those allocated in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan the GNP is not planning for additional population growth. The GNP seeks to ensure that future housing growth provides a mix of house types to meet local as well as district need.

4.12 Overall in light of the above significant effects are unlikely.

Human health

4.13 It is noted from the GNP that certain communities within the NP suffer from having high levels of deprivation in terms of health, employment and living environment. The South West Ward of Gainsborough is one of the 5% most deprived areas of the country. The plan proposes to attempt to address some of these issues through promoting more active and healthy lifestyles by providing access to the countryside and parks and green spaces so that people can cycle or walk around the town, making the most of the town's natural features and enabling a healthier lifestyle for all. Such measures should have benefits for health and wellbeing, but the effects would not be anticipated to be significant.

Soil

4.14 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the need for Local Planning Authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (land classified as grade 1, 2 or 3a). The GNP area relates to the town of Gainsborough rather than a rural agricultural area. As the GNP is not seeking to allocate sites for development, no best and most versatile agricultural land can be lost as a result of the GNP. Significant effects are therefore not anticipated.

Water

4.15 The River Trent runs adjacent to the town of Gainsborough. There is a policy within the adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Policy LP14) seeking to protect the water environment. The policy seeks to ensure

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that development contributes positively to the water environment and its ecology where possible and does not adversely affect water quality.

4.16 The GNP does not include any locally specific policies relating to water quality. However, the GNP promotes the regeneration of the riverside through the redevelopment of a series of sites (Policy NPP8: Gateway Riverside CL4686, NPP 10 Elswitha Hall/ Guildhall Site (CL 4688), NPP 11 Baltic Mill Site (Western Part of CL 4687) and NPP14 Riverside North (CL 4689)). In addition, the GNP also supports the principle of a second River Trent crossing from the south of the Town (Aspirational Policy 2).

4.17 While GNP policies do not consider water quality, Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Policy LP14 would apply to these future development proposals including the potential need for measures to ensure that sensitive development comes forward in relation to the River Trent.

4.18 Significant effects are not likely.

Air

4.19 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Post Adoption Statement (April 2017) indicates that Air Quality across Central Lincolnshire is generally good, however vehicle emissions are a primary source of air pollution at some locations. While there are two designated Air Quality Management Areas in Central Lincolnshire there are none within the NP boundary.

4.20 There is a specific policy in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (LP26) which requires proposals to consider the impact on air, noise and light pollution.

4.21 As the GNP is not seeking to increase the amount of homes and jobs through the Neighbourhood Plan, but rather guide the development proposals within the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, the GNP there would not inevitably be a significant additional increase in the use of the private car. In addition, GNP policy Aspiration Policy 1 seeks to encourage cycling opportunities around the town.

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4.22 In light of the above, it is considered that significant effects are not anticipated with regard Air Quality.

Flood Risk

4.23 Within the GNP area the western part of Gainsborough is shown within Flood Zone 3 associated with the River Trent. The area is show benefiting from flood risk defences. The primary flood risk to the area is from the River Trent with potential risk from a breach of the existing defences.

4.24 There is a specific policy in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (LP14: Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk) which recognises the importance of reducing and managing the risk of flooding. The policy seeks to ensure that new development does not increase the risk of flooding to the development or to existing properties. The GNP is not seeking to increase the amount of homes and jobs through the Neighbourhood Plan, but rather guide the development proposals within the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

4.25 It is not considered that the proposals in the GNP would lead to a significant increase in flood risk within the plan area or downstream. Significant effects on flood risk matters are not anticipated.

Sustainable transport

4.26 Within the GNP area there are two railway stations, Gainsborough Central and Gainsborough Lea Road. Gainsborough Central railway station is managed by Northern Rail, and is on the Cleethorpes – Sheffield line. Sources indicate that the only passenger services are on a Saturday when there are 3 trains in each direction calling at the station. Gainsborough Lea Road Station is on the Lincoln – Sheffield line where there is an hourly service in each direction Monday – Saturday and an every two hour service on Sundays. The station is also on the Doncaster – Lincoln line where there are 5 trains per day in each direction Monday – Friday.

4.27 There are a number of off-road cycle routes, mainly in the residential areas in the south-east of the town and along the River Trent. The National Byway cycling route also passes through Gainsborough along

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The Flood Road, Bridge Street and Ropery Road. The only other designated cycle route provided within the town centre is the signed route from Lea Road along Sandsfield Lane and Heaton Street to the bus station.

4.28 The GNP (Policy NP3: Creating a Green Network around Gainsborough) seeks to add to the connectivity between existing footpaths, roadways and cycle ways in and around the town and to the town centre.

4.29 This is a positive opportunity provided by the NP which would assist to encourage more sustainable modes of transport. Significant effects on transport matters are not anticipated.

Material assets

4.30 There are a number of buildings, facilities and Green Infrastructure assets in the NP area which have been registered with the local authority as Assets of Community Value by Gainsborough Town Council. Significant effects are unlikely.

Housing

4.31 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan identified Gainsborough as an area of growth and Policy LP2 identifies that during the plan period Gainsborough will seek to deliver 4,435 new homes to 2036. However, most of this growth is accommodated in two areas: the Northern Neighbourhood SUE and the Southern Neighbourhood SUE. Only a small part of the Northern Neighbourhood SUE (land to the east of Trent Valley Academy) is located within the NP boundary. However, the total indicative number of dwellings proposed as identified in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan excluding SUEs within the GNP boundary is 1,739.

4.32 For Central Lincolnshire the level of need for affordable housing is evidenced in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)(2015). The findings suggest that across Central Lincolnshire, there is a need for 17,400 affordable homes between 2012-2036. The total net annual affordable housing need for Central Lincolnshire is 911 dwellings of which 25% should be provided within West Lindsey. This suggests that relative to other boroughs in the sub region such as Lincoln and North Kesteven,

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the need in West Lindsey for affordable housing is not as high as in other areas.

- 4.33 Approximately 8,215 dwellings lie within the NP area (Census 2011). It is understood that the GNP does not set out an indicative housing target (either market or affordable) for the NP area nor does it seek to allocate housing sites.
- 4.34 The expected contribution from the particular 'township' covered by the NP area is unknown at the time of writing (as is an objective assessment of local housing needs). However, it is apparent that the NP is not seeking to allocate any site for housing. Significant positive effects upon housing provision are therefore not anticipated.
- 4.35 As indicated above the total indicative number of dwellings proposed as identified in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan excluding SUEs within the GNP boundary is 1,739. The GNP indicates in policy that they support mixed use development on Local Plan residential locations. Consequently, there may be the potential for negative effects as local housing needs may not be met in full if these sites are developed for uses other than housing, but these are not considered to be significant either.

Cultural heritage

- 4.36 The NP area includes a large number of statutorily listed buildings (107) and a three Conservation Areas. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the NP area; the closest is Dog Island moat and Castle Hills Wood ringwork and baileys adjacent to the NP area. There are also no Registered Parks or Gardens within the NP area. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan allocates sites within the NP area, some of which are adjacent to listed buildings. However, the GNP does not allocate any sites for development.
- 4.37 Potential adverse impacts on listed buildings and their setting could be addressed at a detailed level through the development management process and policies in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Specific GNP policy (NPP 17 Protecting Heritage Assets) seeks to protect heritage assets. Significant effects are unlikely.

Landscape

- 4.38 There are no nationally or locally designated landscapes within the NP area. The closest Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) (Lincolnshire) is located over 30km from the NP boundary. Changes to the urban form of Gainsborough will not be visually intrusive to the AONB.
- 4.39 GNP policy NPP5 Protecting the Landscape Character seeks to ensure that development does not undermine local landscape character areas.
- 4.40 It is therefore not considered that the NP proposals are likely to have a significant adverse effect on landscape.

Screening analysis

- 4.41 In light of the discussion of relevant environmental issues above, it is apparent that there are limited environmental sensitivities in the NP area and the nature of the policy within the GNP is not considered likely to generate significant effects.

5. Consideration of obligations of the NP under the Habitats Directive

Legislative Background

- 5.1 Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations makes provision in relation to the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). The Habitats Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European Designated Site for Nature Conservation must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment.
- 5.2 To achieve this, paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations prescribes a basic condition that the making of a Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site. Paragraphs 2 to 5 of the Schedule amend the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 so as to apply its provisions to neighbourhood development orders and Neighbourhood Plans.

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Consideration of Significant Effects

- 5.3 There is no Natura 2000 or RAMSAR sites (European sites) located within or in close proximity to the NP area or within Central Lincolnshire area. The closest European site is the Humber Estuary, Flats, Marshes and Coast which is over 20km away.
- 5.4 Potential adverse cause-effect pathways for sites allocated in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan were ruled out through the HRA Screening Report for the Local Plan (HRA Methodology and Screening Report November 2015).
- 5.5 The HRA Screening Report for the Local Plan found that the Local Plan would not have any significant effects, either alone or in combination, on the function or viability of any Natura 2000 sites. As the GNP does not seek to promote levels of growth and development above and beyond those provided for in the Local Plan it is considered that the GNP would not have any significant effects on a European Site either. It is thus considered that the GNP would meet its obligations under the Habitats Directive.

6. Screening outcome and next steps

Conclusion (Screening opinion)

- 6.1 After having given consideration to the anticipated scope of the GNP, and the relevant environmental issues locally, it is concluded that the potential for significant effects to arise as a result of the GNP is likely to be limited and as such a SEA or HRA is not required. However the plan should still be prepared with due care and attention to avoiding/mitigating any potential adverse effects that could arise (and realising opportunities).
- 6.2 The GNP sets out policies designed to encourage certain uses to be located on certain sites, which may generate both positive and adverse effects locally.
- 6.3 However, it is considered that these effects can be addressed through the development management process and are not likely to be of a strategic nature such that an SEA or HRA is required.

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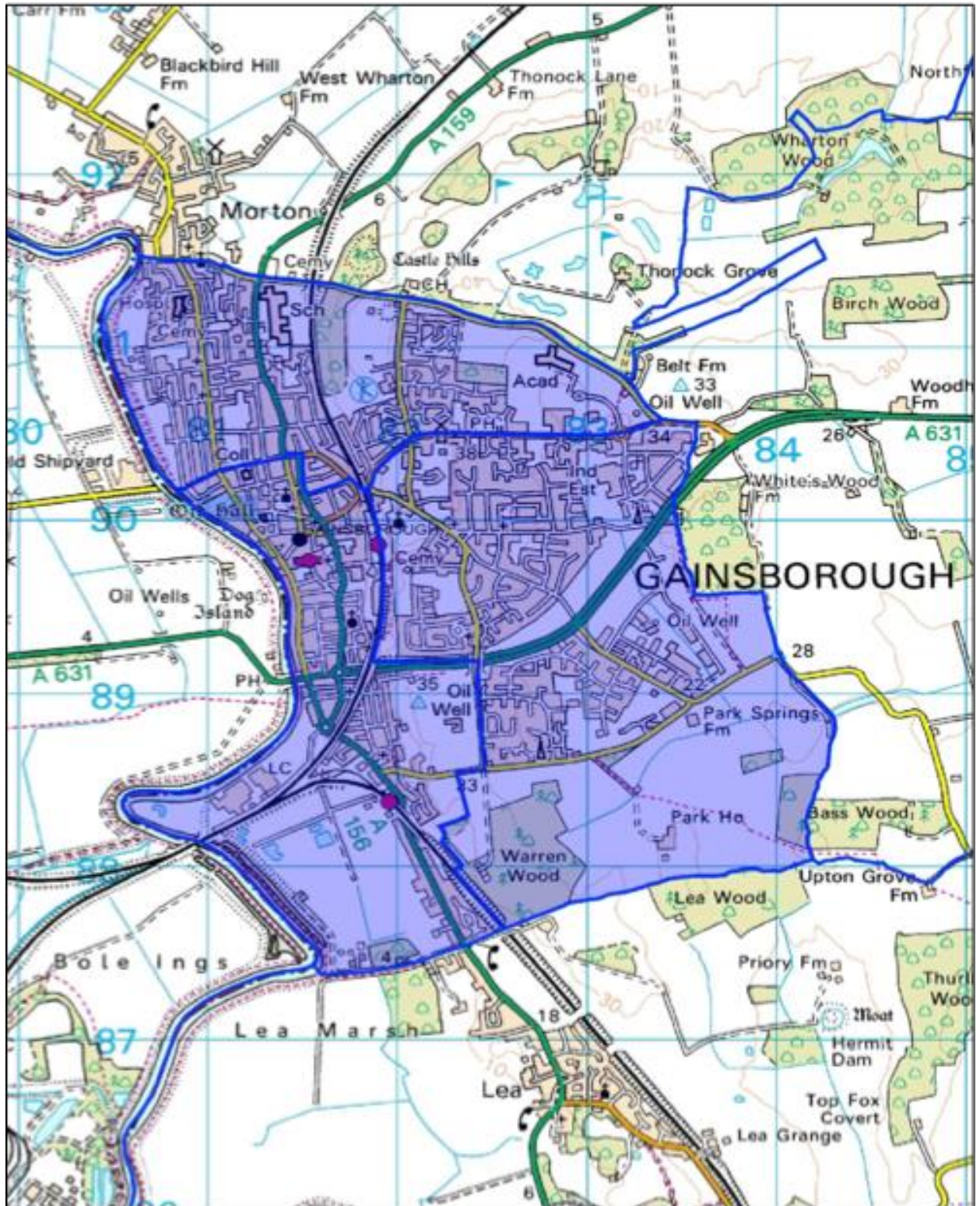
- 6.4 Should the scope or nature of the GNP change substantially through further revisions of the draft plan then this opinion should be revisited, but at present it is considered (to our best available knowledge, and on the basis of the evidence and draft document provided to us) that SEA and HRA is not necessary.

Next Steps

- 6.5 West Lindsey Council, as the responsible authority, should give consideration to this screening opinion ahead of reaching a screening determination. The Council, should they agree with the findings, consult with the consultation bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency in the case of SEA and Natural England in the case of HRA).
- 6.6 If the Council and/or Statutory Bodies disagree with this opinion, and the plan is ultimately 'screened-in', then the Town Council should commence SEA/HRA (as appropriate) at the earliest opportunity. AECOM can provide support with this process through the Locality technical support programme.

Appendix 1

The Neighbourhood Plan Area



Source: Gainsborough Neighbourhood Plan



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Address: Bridgewater Street,
Whitworth Street,
Manchester, M1 6LT

Design, Planning and
Economics
(0161) 907 3500