

Great Limber Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2036

**A report to West Lindsey District Council on the
Great Limber Neighbourhood Development Plan**

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by West Lindsey District Council in February 2018 to carry out the independent examination of the Great Limber Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood plan area on 22 March 2018.
- 3 The Plan proposes a series of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the plan area. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding its distinctive estate character. It includes policies for infill housing development, to secure high-quality design and to safeguard community facilities and open green spaces.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. The community has been engaged in its preparation in a proportionate way.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Great Limber Neighbourhood Development 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
23 March 2018

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Great Limber Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2036 ('the Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) by Great Limber Parish Council in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood development 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 Plan 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 Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the plan area and will 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 development plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by WLDC, with the consent of the Parish Council, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both 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 a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have over 30 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service.

Examination Outcomes

- 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 Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

The Basic Conditions

- 2.5 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan 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 Plan 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 2.10 of this report.

- 2.6 In order to comply with the Basic Condition relating to European obligations the District Council carried out a screening assessment. This is a comprehensive document which provides appropriate reassurance that these important matters have been properly

considered. The conclusion of the screening report was that there were no significant environmental effects as a result of the production of the Plan. The screening report is usefully included as part of the submission documents.

- 2.7 The required consultation was carried out with the three prescribed bodies. Responses were received from the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.
- 2.8 WLDC also undertook a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening exercise on the Plan as part of the wider screening process. It concluded that the Plan was not likely to have any significant effect on a European site.
- 2.9 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various Regulations. 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 Plan is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.
- 2.10 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan 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 take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Other examination matters

- 2.11 In examining the Plan 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.
- 2.12 Having addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.11 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 Plan.
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement
- the WLDC Screening report
- the representations made to the Plan.
- the Parish Council's responses to my Clarification Note
- the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012 to 2036
- the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).
- Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 and subsequent updates).
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Plan area on 22 March 2018. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. My site inspection is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood development plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I was satisfied that the Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing. I advised WLDC of this decision early in the examination process.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development management decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood 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. The Statement reflects the Plan area and its policies. It also provides specific details on the consultation process that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan from September to October 2017. The design and content of the Statement reflect that of the Plan itself.
- 4.3 The Statement sets out details of the consultation events that were carried out in relation to the initial stages of the Plan. Details are provided about the engagement with the statutory bodies and the public consultation events in the area. Specific events highlighted include:
- the use of questionnaires;
 - the October 2016 public event; and
 - the consultation event on draft policies
- 4.4 The Statement also sets out the ways in which the local community was engaged as part of the Plan's preparation. They have included the distribution of questionnaires and leaflets to every household and the display of posters in prominent locations.
- 4.5 The Statement also sets out details of the responses received to the consultation process on the pre-submission version of the Plan. It also sets out how the Plan responded to those representations. The exercise has been undertaken in a very thorough fashion.
- 4.6 The Plan has attracted a limited number of representations at its submission phase (see 4.8 below). In doing so has received general support from the various statutory bodies. This process reflects the way in which the Plan was produced and how it has responded in a positive fashion to earlier comments.
- 4.7 From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I conclude that the Plan has sought to develop an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. I am satisfied that it meets the tests for a consultation process for a neighbourhood plan as set out in paragraphs 183 and 184 of the NPPF. WLDC has carried out its own assessment of this matter and has concluded the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Representations Received

4.8 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by the District Council for a six-week period that ended on 15 February 2018. This exercise generated comments from a range of statutory and local organisations. They are listed below.

- Anglian Water
- The Brocklesby Estate
- Community Lincs
- CPRE
- Environment Agency
- Highways England
- Humberside Airport
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- National Grid
- NFU
- Sport England
- Witham Internal Drainage Board (various)
- West Lindsey District Council

4.9 I have taken account of all these representations as part of the examination of the Plan. Where it is appropriate and relevant to do so I refer specifically to the representation concerned in this report.

5 The Plan Area and the Development Plan Context

The Plan Area

- 5.1 The Plan area covers the parish of Great Limber. In 2011, it had a population of 271 persons living in 110 dwellings. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 8 March 2016.
- 5.2 The village of Great Limber sits in open countryside to the north of the A1173 and to the south of the A180. Humberside Airport is located approximately 3 km to the north-west. The wider neighbourhood area extends mainly to the south of the village. It is primarily in agricultural use. The Brocklesby Park Registered Park and Gardens is located to the immediate north of the village.
- 5.3 Great Limber is predominantly residential in character. It sits astride the A18 and has a focus around the junction of High Street, Grasby Road and Brickyard. It includes a wide range of vernacular buildings that reflect its estate heritage and culture. The design and layout of the village has been heavily and positively influenced through its longstanding association with the Brocklesby Estate.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) was adopted in April 2017. It sets out the basis for future development in the central Lincolnshire area up to 2036.
- 5.5 The CLLP provides a very clear spatial context for development in the Plan area. Its Policy LP2 provides a focus for development by way of a settlement hierarchy as follows: the Lincoln urban area, the main towns, the market towns, larger villages, medium villages, smaller villages, hamlets and the countryside. Within this hierarchical approach Great Limber is identified as a Small Village’.
- 5.6 Policy LP2 also provides a clear context for the development of neighbourhood plan policies. In the context of the settlement hierarchy it identifies that small scale developments should be supported in appropriate locations. Policy LP4 identifies that Great Limber should accommodate new growth in the Plan period of 15% of the existing number of dwellings. This is higher than the usual 10% growth target due to the key facilities already available in the parish.
- 5.7 The CLLP includes a wide range of other policies. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully captures these against the various policies in the submitted Plan. In summary, the following CLLP policies have been particularly important in underpinning neighbourhood plan policies:

- LP4 Growth in Villages
- LP5 Delivering Jobs and Prosperity
- LP15 Community Facilities
- LP23 Local Green Spaces and other Important Open Space

- LP24 Creation of New Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities
- LP25 The Historic Environment
- LP26 Design and Amenity
- LP55 Development in the Countryside

5.8 It is clear that the submitted Plan has been prepared within the context provided by the Local Plan. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned the Local Plan. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

Site Visit

- 5.9 I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Plan area on 22 March 2018.
- 5.10 I drove into the Plan area from the M180 and Humberside Airport on the A18. This highlighted the significance both of the strategic location of the neighbourhood area and the significance of the A18 as a through route within the village.
- 5.11 I looked initially at the overall character and appearance of the village. I saw its various traditional estate buildings. They are impressive both in their own right and also in the way in which they occupy very large and spacious plots. Whilst built to a very similar standard they each demonstrated their own distinctive building types. Within this context I was immediately able to understand the importance of a robust application of Policies 5 and 6 throughout the Plan period.
- 5.12 I then looked at the various proposed Public Open Green Spaces. They are clearly serving the purpose anticipated by the policy. The village pond (POS1) is particularly important in visual terms in the heart of the village. The recreation area (POS3) was being very used to good effect for dog training on the day of my visit.
- 5.13 I then looked at the various identified community facilities in Policy 4. I saw that the Village Shop and the New Inn P.H. were at the heart of the community. This was reinforced with the imaginative use of the former phone box as a 'Little Free Library'. I enjoyed a very pleasant lunch in the New Inn. Thereafter I walked to St Peter's Church.
- 5.14 I then walked up to the Mausoleum to view the wider Brocklesby Park. I was rewarded with excellent views of the wider protected landscape to the north.
- 5.15 I then walked along Grasby Road. I saw further traditional estate cottages and the two former chapels that are now in residential use. It was clear that the Road properly justified its location in the designated conservation area.
- 5.16 I finished my visit by driving around the wider neighbourhood area to understand its character and agricultural origins. In particular I drove to Caistor to the south so that I could understand its geographic relationship with the neighbourhood area.

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 very professional 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 2.10 of this report have already addressed the issue of conformity 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 Great Limber Neighbourhood Plan:

- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan;
- proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development to deliver new homes;
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities; and
- always seeking to secure high quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings.

6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development, 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 development plan.

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

6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations available 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. At its heart are a suite of policies that aim to safeguard its character and appearance and to promote sensitive development appropriate to its position in the settlement hierarchy in the CLLP. It has a particularly effective policy (and supporting

text) on its design requirements for new development. It also includes a policy to safeguard community facilities and it designates a series of open green spaces. Table 2 of the Basic Conditions Statement is particularly effective in terms of mapping the Plan policies with the appropriate paragraphs in the NPPF.

- 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 that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes policies for the development of infill housing (Policy 2) and for employment development (Policy 3). In the social role, it includes policies on house sizes (Policy 1), community facilities (Policy 4) and for open green spaces (Policy 8). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect the design and character of the neighbourhood area (Policy 5) and sets out guidance on its heritage assets (Policy 6).

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in the wider CLLP/West Lindsey District area in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.
- 6.12 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the recently-adopted Local Plan. Table 3 of the Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relates the Plan's policies to policies in the Local Plan. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan. Nevertheless, I recommend that the Plan closely monitors the delivery of new housing within the context of the adopted Local Plan. Its context of including a general infill policy makes this approach all the more appropriate.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the 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 also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area. This is particularly the case in respect of Policies 1 to 5. The wider community and the Parish Council have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (41-004-20170728) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. It carefully includes a series of community aspirations in a separate part of the Plan as advised in Planning Practice Guidance.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted plan.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies whether or not I have recommended modifications in order to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 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.

The initial sections of the Plan (Sections 1-7)

- 7.8 These introductory elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are commendable to the extent that they are proportionate to the Plan area and its subsequent policies. The Plan is exceptionally well-presented. The distinction between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. It is helpfully supported by well-chosen photographs and maps. The Plan is very informative in the way in which it presents background information in charts and tables.
- 7.9 The design of the Plan also ensures that the vision and the objectives for the Plan set the scene for the various policies. This approach will ensure that it will comfortably be able to take its place as part of the development plan in the event that it is eventually 'made'. As with other recent plans that have come forward for examination in the District, the Plan would be an excellent template for any group about to embark on its own plan-making process.
- 7.9 Sections 3 and 4 respectively provide information about the background to the preparation of the Plan and a statement of support from the Brocklesby Estate. This

statement of support is particularly important given the context and heritage of the neighbourhood area.

- 7.10 Section 5 provides helpful information about the concept of neighbourhood planning and how the Plan has been developed. Some parts overlap with the Consultation Statement. It sets out a Vision which is underpinned by community objectives. Both the vision and the objectives are clearly described and are distinctive to the Plan area.
- 7.11 Section 6 sets out a proportionate history of the neighbourhood area. Section 7 identifies a range of demographic, social and economic information about the parish area.
- 7.12 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 above.

Policy 1: Housing Mix and Type

- 7.13 This policy sets out a two-pronged approach towards ensuring that new residential development addresses the identified housing needs in the Plan area. These needs are comprehensively addressed in the supporting text. The first part of the policy requires that developments of two or more houses provide a mix of housing to address the identified needs. The second part of the policy provides active support for starter units and for 2/3-bedroom dwellings.
- 7.14 The policy approach adopted is underpinned by evidence and is distinctive to the neighbourhood area. I recommend two modifications to the policy so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF. The first modifies the language used in the first part of the policy. The second replaces 'welcomed' with 'supported' in the second part of the policy. This will provide a more policy-based focus.

In the first part of the policy replace 'that consist of....one dwelling' with 'of two or more dwellings'

In the second part of the policy replace 'welcomed' with 'supported'.

Policy 2: Infill and Small-Scale Housing Developments

- 7.15 This policy provides a local context to infill and small-scale housing developments in the neighbourhood area. It has been carefully-designed to be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan. It has two related components. The first addresses general housing. In doing so it identifies three criteria against which any such proposals would be assessed. The second addresses affordable housing.
- 7.16 Both components of the policy meet the basic conditions in general terms. I recommend two modifications so that the policy has the clarity required by the NPPF and to ensure general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan. The first tightens up the language in the first part of the policy. As submitted it only requires

infill proposals to ‘consider’ the three environmental criteria. The second recommends a modification to the second part of the policy so that it also offers support to affordable housing proposals within the village.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘where they consider the following’ with ‘subject to the following criteria’.

**In the second part of the policy insert the following additional wording after ‘where they’:
‘either are located within the built form of the settlement or’**

Policy 3: Local Economy

- 7.17 This policy provides a context for the determination of planning applications for proposals that would assist the protection of existing employment uses or the development of new uses. The first part of the policy offers support to new business development. The second part of the policy refers more specifically to proposals for the re-use/conversion of existing buildings. Its approach in general terms has regard to national policy and is in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan. The wider effect of the policy is to signal strong and positive support for the promotion of a robust and balanced local economy. The delivery of the policy will do much to assist the delivery of the economic dimension of sustainable development in the neighbourhood area.
- 7.18 The Parish Council has helpfully responded to my request for clarification on its intentions with this policy. In this regard I recommend that the reference to agricultural uses is deleted from the first part of the policy. Plainly many aspects of agricultural development will be permitted development. I also recommend that the fifth criterion of the second part of the policy becomes a free-standing element of the policy. This reflects that it does not have the same effect and composition as the previous four criteria. I also recommend modifications to its details to take account of the Parish Council’s response to my Clarification Note. To reinforce its proposed free-standing nature, I recommend associated deletions from the second part of the policy.

In the first part of the policy delete ‘other than agricultural uses’

In the second part of the policy:

Replace ‘Development proposals’ with ‘Business development proposals’

In criterion (a) delete ‘or incorporates.... the parish’

Remove criterion (e) and reposition it to sit as a third part of the policy.

Remove ‘and’ from the end of criterion (d) and insert ‘and’ at the end of criterion (c).

In the new third part of the policy replace:

‘encouraged.... artisan type uses’ with ‘particularly supported where they would provide accommodation for small-scale professional uses appropriate to the

scale of the building concerned and/or for other rural, craft type employment uses.'
and 'used' with 'developed'.

Include the following additional text at the end of paragraph 10.7:

'The third component of the policy sets out the Plan's ambitions for the sensitive use of existing buildings within the parish. The development of rural, bespoke, craft style industries will be particularly welcomed and supported. They have the ability to sustain the buildings concerned, to provide local employment and to assist in the promotion of sustainable development.'

Policy 4: The Provision of Community Facilities

- 7.19 This policy adopts a very robust approach towards community facilities in the neighbourhood area. It has two related parts. The first safeguards existing identified facilities subject to a series of replacement and viability criteria. The second element of the policy offers support for new community facilities.
- 7.20 The generality of the approach adopted meets the basic conditions. I recommend two modifications to the policy to ensure that it can be consistently applied by WLDC during the Plan period. In the first part of the policy I recommend that 'permitted' is replaced with 'supported'. Plainly WLDC will need to balance all material considerations in determining any planning applications and the language used in the submitted policy is too prescriptive. The second inserts a set of criteria within the second part of the policy. Whilst the support that it offers for new and extended facilities is entirely appropriate both the local community and WLDC will need the Plan to include appropriate locational and environmental safeguards. This approach was accepted by the Parish Council in its response to my Clarification Note.

In the first part of the policy replace 'permitted' with 'supported'

In the second part of the policy add the following at the end:

'All such proposals should comply with the following criteria insofar as they are relevant to the development concerned:

- **they provide appropriate access and car parking facilities;**
- **they are well-designed and are in keeping with their local surroundings;**
- **they would not harmfully reduce the privacy or amenity of nearby properties; and**
- **they are located within or adjacent to the built form of the settlement.**

Policy 5: Design Principles and New Development

- 7.21 This policy sets out a robust and distinctive approach to design in the neighbourhood area. The supporting text carefully explains the associations between the village itself and the Brocklesby Estate. This is reflected in the design and materials of the buildings, the boundary treatments and the local trees. The estate nature of the village and the wider parish is self-evident.

- 7.22 Having reviewed all the submission documents I am satisfied that the general approach adopted is entirely appropriate. The neighbourhood area has the characteristics and appearances that warrant such an approach. One of the 12 core planning principles in the NPPF (paragraph 17) is ‘(always seek) to secure high-quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings’. Furthermore, the approach adopted in the policy has regard to the more detailed design elements of the NPPF. In particular, it plans positively for high quality and inclusive design (paragraph 57), it has developed a robust and comprehensive policy (paragraph 58), it proposes outlines of design principles (paragraph 59) and does so in a locally distinctive yet non-prescriptive way (paragraph 60).
- 7.23 Within this overall context I recommend three technical modifications to the policy. The first would ensure that the criteria are applied as relevant to an individual project. Plainly some schemes may not directly relate to the principles set out in the various criteria. The second clarifies that the need for arboricultural surveys only applies to larger schemes and/or where the future of existing trees would be compromised. The third deletes the second part of the policy. It adds no value to the first (and substantive) part of the policy.

In the opening section of the first part of the policy insert the following wording after ‘following’:

‘insofar as they apply to the proposal concerned’

At the start of criterion (d) add:

‘for proposals for one or more houses, for commercial development, for new or extended community facilities and where existing trees would be compromised by the proposed works’

Delete the second part of the policy

Policy 6: Heritage

- 7.24 This policy sets out the Plan’s approach to its built heritage. It does so very effectively. The supporting text at paragraphs 13.1 to 13.9 is exemplary. Proposals Maps 3 and 4 are very clear and well-prepared.
- 7.25 I sought clarification from the Parish Council on its intentions in including the second part of the policy. In effect it largely repeats the approach adopted in the NPPF. The Parish Council advised that it wished to retain this part of the policy to reinforce the requirements of national policy in the neighbourhood area. I have some sympathy for its approach both in general terms and given the very high quality of the local built environment. Nevertheless, there is no need for neighbourhood plans to repeat national or local policies. In coming to decisions on planning applications WLDC will apply national, local and neighbourhood plan policies in the round. On this basis I recommend the deletion of the second part of the policy. However, I also recommend that the wording is transposed into the supporting text (with a degree of modification) to reflect the Parish Council’s thought process.

- 7.26 I also recommend a technical modification to the first part of the policy.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘Planning applications’ with ‘Proposals’

Delete the second part of the policy

Relocate the deleted second part of the policy to the end of paragraph 13.3 and insert the following additional text between the existing text in 13.3 and that relocated from the submitted policy:

‘The Plan sets out to translate this important national principle into local effect. This is particularly important given the high-quality nature of the built environment in the settlement in general, and its estate nature in particular’

Policy 7: Environment

- 7.27 This policy has a more general effect than other policies in the Plan. As paragraph 14.5 of the Plan identifies its intention is to ensure the protection of the surrounding countryside and the wider landscape.
- 7.28 I am satisfied that the generality of the policy approach adopted meets the basic conditions. In particular it meets its statutory requirements in relation to the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south. In this regard Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act requires that a relevant authority should have regards to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an area of outstanding natural beauty when exercising planning functions in relation to, or so as to affect land in an area of outstanding natural beauty. It also addresses other environmental assets (and as helpfully shown on Proposals Map 7).
- 7.29 I recommend a series of modifications so that the policy can be applied by WLDC with the appropriate clarity and rigour throughout the Plan period. In particular the first part of the policy as submitted is more narrative than policy based in its language. In this context I also recommend a similar modification to the first recommend modification for Policy 2. I also recommend changes to the language used in the second part of the policy. These modifications will ensure that the policy has the clarity required by the NPPF and to have regard to national policy. Their combined effect will be to make the policies robust and effective.

In the first part of the policy replace the opening section with:

‘Subject to meeting the requirements of other policies in this Plan proposals for new development will be supported where they demonstrate that they will not impact unacceptably on the landscape character and setting of the neighbourhood area and where they comply with the following criteria:’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘The proposal’ with ‘All such proposals’ and ‘it will have minimal impact on’ with ‘they have taken account of the specific importance of’.

**At the end of the second part of the policy add:
‘insofar as these designations are relevant to the proposal concerned’**

Policy 8: Protection of Public Open Green Spaces

- 7.30 The policy identifies three public open spaces in the Plan area. They are shown clearly on Proposals Map 6. The effect of the policy is to safeguard the open spaces unless two circumstances arise. The first is that alternative open spaces would be provided. The second is that the community achieves significant benefits from the development proposed on the open space concerned.
- 7.31 I looked at the three proposed public open green spaces when I visited the neighbourhood area. They are entirely appropriate to be included in this policy approach and are well-chosen.
- 7.32 I recommend modifications to the policy so that it would have the clarity required by the NPPF. In particular I recommend that the two exceptional factors identified are addressed as free-standing criteria.

**Replace ‘permitted’ with ‘supported’
Replace ‘would’ with ‘will’**

**Replace ‘in exceptional circumstances alternative facility’ with:
‘where either of the two following criteria apply:**

- **the local community would gain equivalent benefit from an alternative open green space provided as part of the proposed development; or**
- **the economic, social or environmental benefits of the proposal outweighed the loss of the open green space concerned’**

Community Aspirations

- 7.33 The Plan identifies six community aspirations. In accordance with national policy these aspirations are addressed in a separate part of the Plan. They will not in themselves form part of the development plan in the event that this Plan is ‘made’. Nevertheless, I am satisfied that they are appropriate to the neighbourhood area. They are distinctive in their design and character.
- 7.34 Paragraph 15.2 of the Plan comments that a variety of funding mechanisms, including CIL and Section 106 agreements will be used to fund the various initiatives. Given the generality of the undertakings in the Plan I am satisfied that modifications are not required. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that community actions 3-6 would be unlikely to qualify direct for CIL funding as they do not in themselves improve or create new physical infrastructure.

Monitoring and Review

- 7.35 Section 15 of the Plan correctly addresses its monitoring and review. It does so to good effect. I recommend that additional text is included at the end of paragraph 15.3 to emphasise the importance of monitoring housing delivery against adopted development plan targets and requirements. In this context the Plan relies on the delivery of infill and windfall developments (through its Policy 2) to deliver strategic growth requirements

At the end of paragraph 15.3 add:

'The District Council and the Parish Council will actively monitor the delivery of new housing in the neighbourhood area to ensure that the ambitions of policies LP2 and LP4 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan are achieved'

Factual matters

- 7.36 In paragraphs 2.1 and 5.1 there are inaccurate references to the date of the Localism Act.

In paragraphs 2.1 and 5.1 replace 'Localism Act 2012' with 'Localism Act 2011'

- 7.37 In paragraph 5.8 the supporting text does not correctly comment about the strategic requirements of the CLLP.

Replace the elements of the paragraph as recommended by WLDC in its representation to the submitted Plan

- 7.38 Paragraph 5.10 of the Plan is now out of date with regard to the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy. I recommend accordingly.

Replace the first two sentences of paragraph 5.10 with the following:

'West Lindsey District Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy in January 2018. This Plan sets out local community projects in Appendix A.'

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2036. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan I have concluded that the Great Limber Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.
- 8.3 This report has recommended some modifications to the policies in the Plan. Nevertheless, it remains fundamentally unchanged in its role and purpose.

Conclusion

- 8.4 On the basis of the findings in this report I recommend to West Lindsey District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Great Limber Neighbourhood Development 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 entirely appropriate for this purpose 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 March 2016.
- 8.6 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth and efficient manner.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
23 March 2018