

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

**CONSULTATION ON PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 4: PLANNING FOR
PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members about a Government consultation paper, which seeks views on combining national planning policy for economic development in urban and rural areas and town centres into one consolidated and streamlined Planning Policy Statement (PPS).
- 1.2 Emphasises the need for regional planning bodies and local planning authorities to plan proactively for economic development in their areas.
- 1.3 Although PPS4 seeks to protect town centres and promotes environmental goals, the emphasis throughout is on giving appropriate weight to economic development impacts at all stages of the planning process.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The new Planning Policy Statement Planning for Prosperous Economies (PPS4) has been published in draft form for consultation. The consultation ends on July 28 2009.
- 2.2 It sets out the Government's comprehensive policy framework for planning for sustainable economic development in urban and rural areas, including town centres. In its final form, PPS4 will consolidate national planning policy on economic development into a single streamlined planning policy statement. It will replace: - Planning Policy Guidance Note 4; Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms, Planning Policy Guidance Note 5: Simplified Planning Zone and Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres. It will also replace parts of Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport.

- 2.3 The draft PPS draws on recommendations made in the Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing and on the Planning White Paper, Planning for a Sustainable Future. It should also be understood in the context of the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, which is creating a closer alignment, at regional level, of economic and spatial planning.
- 2.4 Specific views are sought on the consolidation and streamlining of national planning policy in economic development into a single policy statement and on whether more should be done to give priority in forward planning and development management to strategically important sectors such as those that support a move to a low carbon economy. Views are also sought on a new impact test for town centres.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Draft PPS4 sets out a number of proposed plan-making and decision-making policies, grouped under 24 main headings with the most relevant summarised below.

Plan-Making

The draft PPS proposes that: -

- regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should work together to prepare and maintain a robust evidence base on existing business needs and likely changes in the market;
- regional planning bodies should positively and proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, in line with the principles of sustainable development based on a clear and proactive economic vision for the regions;
- regional planning bodies should set out a spatial vision and strategy for the management and growth of town centres in their region;
- local planning authorities should positively and proactively encourage sustainable economic growth in both urban and rural areas, in line with the principles of sustainable development;
- local planning authorities, through their local development frameworks, should in their core strategy, set out a spatial vision and strategy for the management and growth of the centres in their area over the plan period;
- local planning authorities should proactively plan for consumer choice and promote competitive town centre environments;

- in selecting sites for development for town centre uses, local planning authorities should base their approach on the identified need for development, identify the appropriate scale of development, and apply the sequential approach to site selection;
- local planning authorities should prepare planning policies to help manage the evening and night-time economy in appropriate centres;
- economic development in open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled. Most new development should continue to be located in or on the edge of existing settlements as this facilitates best use of existing infrastructure and delivers sustainable development;
- local planning authorities should set out the criteria to be applied to planning applications for farm diversification and support diversification for business purposes that are consistent in their scale and environmental impact with their rural location;
- local planning authorities should set maximum parking standards for non-residential development in their area; there should be no minimum standards for development, other than for parking for disabled people;
- regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should use their annual monitoring reports to keep under review the network and hierarchy of centres (at both the regional and local levels), the need for further development, and the vitality and viability of centres (at the local level);

Decision-Making

Local Planning Authorities should: -

- adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development;
- seek to protect and strengthen village and local centre shops, services and other important small scale economic uses;
- support the conversion and re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside, particularly those adjacent or closely related to towns or villages, for economic development;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and which utilise and enrich, rather than harm, the character of the countryside, its towns, villages, buildings and other features;

- ensure that local parking standards apply to individual development proposals;
- ensure that all in-centre options have been thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered;

Additionally, the draft PPS advises that: -

- sequential and impact assessments should accompany a planning application for a main town centre use which is not in an existing centre nor allocated in an up-to-date development plan;
- local planning authorities should consider whether town centre assessment sets out clear conclusions on all town centre and wider impacts, in particular on the first 5 years after the implementation of a proposal;
- local planning authorities should refuse planning permission where the applicant has not demonstrated compliance with the sequential approach, where there is clear evidence that the proposal could lead to significant adverse climate change impacts;
- local authorities should give the impact on existing town centres particular weight, especially if new and additional classes of goods or services for sale are proposed, and should only apply the sequential approach where the gross floor space of the proposed extension exceeds 200 square metres;
- where shops are proposed as an ancillary element to other forms of development (for example, petrol filling stations), local planning authorities should ensure that the retail element is limited in scale and genuinely ancillary to the main development;
- local planning authorities should use planning conditions to secure the provision of units suitable for smaller business.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Draft PPS4 seeks to ensure that planning becomes demand led, anticipating and responding to the requirements of the economy. Its publication is timely with regards to the preparation of the Council's own LDF Core Strategy, which recognise the importance of providing employment land to meet North Lincolnshire's needs
- 4.2 The draft PPS4 is broadly supported with its emphasis on the economic aspects of development. This emphasis however, needs to be balanced with social and environmental considerations and it is hoped that the final version will give clearer guidance on how to balance the tensions which often

exist between social, economic and environmental considerations. Given the broad level of support for the Draft PPS it is considered that no action is required.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Financial – there are no financial implications
- 5.2 Staffing – will be from existing staffing resources with various teams across the council
- 5.3 Property – there are no property implications
- 5.4 IT – there are no IT implications

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

- 6.1 Statutory – will provide national policy guidance, which should be reflected through the policies of the emerging LDF and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 6.2 Environmental – will support the delivery of sustainable development.
- 6.3 Diversity – there are no diversity implications.
- 6.4 Sections 17 Crime & Disorder – there are no s.17 implications.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 All comments from relevant officers have been included in this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the information be noted.

HEAD OF STRATEGIC REGENERATION, HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) – Consultation on Planning Policy
Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Communities

Communities and Local Government – Consultation on Planning Policy
Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Communities