CORE STRATEGY

TOPIC PAPER

Sustainable Communities

November 2016

East Lindsey
DISTRICT COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES TOPIC PAPER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes sustainable development as the "golden thread" running through both plan-making and decision-taking. It requires that all plans should reflect this and provide clear policies that guide how this should be applied locally.

1.2 The NPPF requires that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, and that planning policies should take a positive approach to sustainable economic growth in rural areas. It also states that, Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and should seek the achievement of each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; and net gains across all three

1.3 The plan therefore needs to sets out the East Lindsey context for sustainable locations by which to direct growth and enable decisions to be taken that reflect the particular circumstances of the District. This paper sets out the background to the development of a settlement patter for East Lindsey; it examines the effects of the previous growth strategy in relation to its impact on sustainable communities; it sets out the background to the selected option; and finally, it provides the context for the spatial allocations and notations in the Plan.

2.0 SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Why have a settlement pattern?

2.1 East Lindsey's settlements do not exist in isolation. They form part of a wider pattern that stretches across its borders to include the higher order settlements of Boston, Grimsby and Lincoln. Our settlements are not self-contained units. They have different roles and complement each other in providing a range of services and facilities. However, they are affected by economies of scale, which means that few of our 200+ settlements can provide all the services that their residents need or want and larger settlements frequently provide for smaller settlements.

2.2 Identifying a settlement pattern helps in understanding the roles different towns and villages perform and how they relate to each other. Only then can we confidently direct new growth to those settlements that can provide the greatest benefits to the greatest number of East Lindsey residents.

2.3 The Council has used the principle of a settlement pattern for many decades. The pattern has changed with changing circumstances in the District and has been reviewed every time planning policy is changed. The changes that have taken place in national planning policy have continued to emphasise the need for development proposals to be informed by a thorough understanding of the ability of that settlement to meets its needs and its relationship to other neighbouring settlements.

Background to the Approach

2.4   The concept of using the services and facilities of a community as a means of comparing and grouping settlements has been used by the Council for many years. This approach is widely used across the country and recognised nationally as providing a sound basis for identifying the relative roles of settlements which may have a diverse range of facility types; and from there to distribute development in Local Plans.

2.5   The Core Strategy identifies the roles of the different settlements in the pattern as:

Towns - They provide a range of higher order district-wide services and facilities that because of economies of scale cannot, reasonably be expected in other settlements. These should mainly include –

- a range of convenience shopping;

- further education and vocational training facilities;

- secondary education facilities;

- a choice of managed recreational and sporting facilities;

- access to public transport;

- a defined retail catchment area;

- a defined employment zone with opportunities for inward investment;

- a range of health and community facilities;

- a fire station and permanent police station;

- a permanent library;

- accessibility to green infrastructure.

Large Villages - These provide a range of facilities for their own needs and provide for some of the needs of smaller villages within their immediate sphere of influence. Typically, the facilities available include at least one convenience store, a primary school, rural workshops and/or a range of premises for business use, a doctor and/or dentist, mains drainage, on the strategic road network, commuter bus service available and a range of community facilities.

Medium Villages - These provide some essential services such as shop, post office or primary school, and some job opportunities for their residents, and may provide basic services for neighbouring hamlets and smaller villages, but look to towns and larger service villages to provide a greater range of community facilities. They can also provide suitable locations for affordable housing to meet local needs close to essential services such as schools; they mainly are on mains drainage and have a shopper bus service, etc.

Small villages - There is a large number of smaller villages of differing sizes, which have a limited range of services or facilities. Very few have schools, food shops, or employment opportunities although most have places of worship,

village halls and a public house and look to higher order settlements to meet the vast majority of their needs. The majority do not have access to public transport in the form of scheduled bus services or the main road network and consequently are not considered suitable for major housing or employment growth.

Open Countryside - This includes hamlets and isolated groups of houses. These may have very limited facilities such as a church or a public house; some of these hamlets have no facilities. There are also single dwellings and small isolated groups of houses in the District with no facilities.

2.6   The assessment considers the presence of key attributes within each settlement, such as the number of shops and other services, employment, education, health etc. The Council updates the data it holds on community facilities whenever alerted to a change. It also now completes an annual refresh of the survey so there is a continuum of information at fixed points to enable trends to be observed and the affect on the role and status of a village assessed. The Council took the opportunity, with the preparation of the new plan, to look again at the way the assessment is carried out, reviewing the types of facilities included; looking at the weighting given to each facility; and threshold of points should be between the different settlement types. Elected members were involved directly in creating the methodology.

How was the Settlement Pattern created?

2.7   Although the overall approach has been used a number of times, the fine detail of the assessment has been reviewed with every new Plan. For the preparation of the 2012 Core Strategy, the Planning Policy Committee of the Council decided to look afresh at the methodology. A workshop was held on 20th February 2012, to which all elected members were invited. The workshop began with a blank sheet of paper so that all approaches could be considered. Members discussed the previous methodology and considered that the overall approach was sound but wished to look again at the different types of community facilities included in the methodology.

2.8   The Council uses a weighting system, whereby the facilities deemed most essential to community life are given the highest points. Members agreed that this approach still offered the preferred way of establishing the pattern, but felt that the range of facilities scoring points, the points allotted and the thresholds between each part of the pattern should be looked at anew.

2.9   Members had an open discussion during which they put forward the facilities that were felt important to community life. Once a list was determined, discussion was held on the weighting and the points to be awarded to each. The points represent their relative importance across the community and reflect the likelihood of being used regularly by the community. For example, although public houses have a primary function that would not necessarily be used by the whole community, they are frequently used in rural communities as meeting places for clubs, societies and sports teams; offer somewhere for families to eat out; and some have taken on wider community roles offering services that are not available elsewhere in the village – e.g. the Pub is the Hub Scheme. Conversely, although Doctors and Dentists are (in theory) used by the whole community, some people can be many years without needing to use them and do not necessarily chose to use their local surgery, preferring to be registered elsewhere.

2.10 As the number of facilities in the list was increased, Members agreed to expand the points range to 4, 3, 2 and 1 (from the previous 3, 2 and 1). Below is a list of the community facilities used in the methodology. Those listed in bold italics were added to the previous list of facilities by members at the workshop in February 2012. The points awarded were completely refreshed from previous versions.

Food shop	4 points
Primary school	4 points
Employment	4 points
Large Employer (over 10 employees)	4 points
Public House	4 points
Commuter Bus Service	4 points
Pre School Facility	4 points
Strategic Road network	4 points
Post Office	3 points
Community Hall	3 points
Public Playing field	3 points
Children's play area	3 points
Other shop	3 points
Bank/building society cash machine	3 points
Place of Worship	3 points
Mains Drainage	3 points
Doctors	2 points
Dentists	2 points
Sports Facilities	2 points
Shoppers bus service	2 points
Petrol filling station	2 points
Vets	1 point
In use cemeteries	1 point

Data behind the Criteria

Facilities

2.11 The numbers of services and facilities present in each village were initially established from questionnaires sent out to Parish Council's. Only 31% of Parish Council's responded to the questionnaire, so these were backed up by surveys carried out by the elected members for the ward and/or Council Officers. Given the intervening period since data was collected, there has been an audit of the data to establish any changes in the intervening years. The Council tries to keep the data as a living document, making amendments as it becomes aware of changes to facilities. However, each was looked at again as part of drawing up the Core Strategy. In most cases, awarding the points is a simple matter of fact, either a village has the facility/ies or it doesn't. However, some of the criteria are a little more complex and need further explanation.

Employment

2.12 When the methodology was established, Members wanted the employment points to reflect a level and range of employment opportunities that can potentially serve the wider community, allowing people with different skills the opportunity to work close to home. The most readily accessible and comparable data on employment premises is the record of properties registered for non-

domestic rates. There are some acknowledged difficulties with this data. There are no details of numbers of people employed, indeed some of those premises charged non-domestic rates may be purely for personal use; there can be many changes over the plan period as businesses come and go; it does not reflect all businesses e.g. farms; and it does not necessarily reflect the general level of business activity within a parish which may include people working from home or those who live in a community but offer services over a wide area (such as plumbers or builders). However, it represents the most objective dataset available as it enables properties to be identified that could otherwise missed by an on-site settlement survey. The records were analysed and all the lower value properties (below £1,000) were discounted, as these are of a domestic scale and/or unlikely to generate wider employment (such as a single stable or small storage building). To assess what represents a high or low level of businesses in an East Lindsey context, the mean (average) number of business premises was calculated for properties over £1,000; which is 14.22. As points in this category are intended to identify settlements that have a number of employment opportunities, so a community needs to have 14 premises, or more, paying business rate to qualify for the points. To reflect the requirement for a range of types of business activity, premises were divided into types: Service Industry; Workshop and Premises; Shops/Sales; Stores and Warehouses; Tourism and Recreation; Industry and Manufacturing; Game/Farms/Kennels; and Offices. Communities should have premises in more than half of these categories to qualify for the points; so five out of the eight categories. To qualify for the employment points, a settlement needs to pass both these thresholds.

Large Employer

2.13 When Members added the criteria for a large employer, they agreed set the threshold as a business employing ten or more people. The only data available on the number of employees is a Business Directory compiled by an external source, which the Council's Economic Development Team uses for its data. Businesses only score for these points if the business employs people on site. This would therefore not include examples where the business is registered at an address but employs people off site at a variety of (or non-specified) locations, such as building contractors, cleaning contractors and those employing people who carry out the majority of work remotely from another location. The data has been interrogated to address these issues and, as far as is possible to determine from the data available, those scoring the points employ ten or more people on the site as set out in the list of data. Points are only awarded once, so if there are several businesses there would not be multiple award of points.

Bus Services

2.14 The Commuter Bus Service points are awarded where a daily service exists that allows arrival in the nearest town to start work at 9am and where a return journey can be made after 5pm. Shoppers bus service points are awarded where, at least once a day, the bus service allows residents to go into the nearest town and allows them enough time to do a weekly shop or equivalent visit before they have to get a return bus. Points are awarded for the best level of service, not for both. Points are not awarded for demand responsive services, as these operate throughout the district and therefore do not allow differentiation between settlements.

The Pattern

2.15 To establish the pattern, thresholds have to be objectively set between the different types of settlement that reflect the points needed to fulfil the different roles outlined in the Core Strategy. There are no set requirements as to the specific services a settlement needs to meet these thresholds, as different communities will have a different range of services. Paragraph 2.5 of this paper sets out the settlement characteristics for each settlement type, as contained in the Core Strategy. In order to determine which category a settlement fits within, given the different types of services and facilities that may be present, it is necessary to set a threshold between each category.

Thresholds

2.20 Planning Policy Committee agreed, on 3rd May 2012, to increase thresholds between the different categories of settlement as follows. The need to increase the thresholds from those used previously reflects the increased points and additional facilities considered.

Large Village   46 points or more
Medium Village   23 points or more
Small Village   12 points or more

2.21 In selecting the new threshold, the range of facilities that had been used as the benchmark in setting thresholds previously was used as the starting point. Then new criteria, added at the workshop, were included to reflect the extended range of facilities, increasing the range for each settlement type. The points for this selection were then totalled, which then provided the threshold between levels. This approach, and the outcome, was adopted by the Council. The facilities in each category can only be representative, some village will have a different combination but it is the overall level the Council is seeking to establish.

2.22 **Large Villages**: reflecting that a large village should have a wide range of facilities to support a larger population and neighbouring smaller communities, the representative level of services used previously was the equivalent in points of a food shop; a primary school; a post office; employment; a village hall; a public house; a playing field; a commuter bus service; 2 non-food shops; and a place of worship. Mains drainage and being on the Strategic Road Network were then added to reflect the wider range. This made a total of 46 points as the threshold for large villages.

2.23 **Medium Village**: there should be the equivalent of a food shop; a public house; a post office; a village hall; a recreation facility (playing field or children's play area); and a shopper bus service. Mains drainage was then also added to accommodate the increase in number of facilities and points. This brought a threshold of 23 points.

2.24 **Small Village**: the range of facilities would expect to be much smaller, such as a place of worship, village hall, pub and sports club; this gives a total of 12 points.

2.25 Hamlets and isolated groups of houses in the countryside are likely to have a very limited number of facilities and would encompass any group of houses falling below the 12 point threshold.

2.26 **N.B.** Initially, points were allocated to both the settlement which hosted the facility and also to any other settlements which supported the facility through financial contributions; to address those neighbouring communities which share a village hall or play area. However, consultation responses queried this, as many facilities are used by people from a wide area outside the host community, for example a shop on the strategic road network may be supported by passing trade or a highly rated pre-school facility may be supported by parents from a wide catchment. The purpose of the assessment is to look the level of facilities within a community and see which settlements provide the services and which need to look elsewhere for them. Therefore, it was decided to only award the points where the facility lay within the village. The application of the thresholds resulted in 5 towns; 23 large villages; and 39 Medium Villages. The remainder of the District's settlements are Hamlets or clusters of houses in the open countryside.

3.0 LINK BETWEEN GROWTH AND LEVEL OF FACILITIES

3.1 Various consultations have raised concerns about the loss of facilities if growth was not forthcoming in communities. Clearly, the choice of option for growth is also a factor in this, but the settlement pattern is the starting point. Sufficient economies of scale through development are needed to prompt the provision of new services and facilities where they do not already exist, so creating a situation in a small village where half a dozen of so houses are allowed over the plan period is unlikely to facilitate the opening of a new shop of primary school; or even keep an existing facility open. However, this is a genuine concern of people. A piece of work was carried out in 2013, looking at the potential correlation between levels of growth and changes to community facilities within large and medium villages. Below is a short summary of changes that have occurred in the Large and Medium villages since 2001.

	No change to number of facilities	Lost 1 Facility	Lost 2 Facilities	Lost 3 Facilities	Lost 4 Facilities	Total
Growth of 0 - 4.9%	14	4	6	1	2	27
Growth of 5 – 9.9%	9	2	3	0	0	14
Growth of 10% and above	4	7	3	2	0	16
Total	27	13	12	3	2	57

3.2 Of the facilities lost:

- 17 were food shops; 16 were Post Offices; 7 were non-food shops; 7 were Petrol Filling Stations; 3 were Doctors Surgeries (out reach for main

surgeries); 2 were Public Houses; 1 was a Community Hall; and 1 was a School.

- Of these, 9 communities lost both a food shop and a Post Office. In these case, the two business shared premises.

- Of the two settlements that lost 4 facilities, 1 lost three facilities in one go when the shop, post office and petrol filling station in the same premises closed. The other lost the post office and shop in the same premises but the other two facilities were separate premises. These are both medium villages.

- In the case of the communities losing three facilities, the village in the 0 - 4.9% growth band was a Medium Village which lost its Post Office and associated shop along with one other facility. The two villages in the 10% plus growth band were large villages, at the higher end of this banding, which had lost 3 shops of varying types.

- For Medium villages, 0 – 4.9% growth equated to between 0 dwellings (although only a few village had no development) and 14 dwellings; 5 – 9.9% growth represented a range of 10 – 44 dwellings; and 10% plus growth was from 17 – 60 dwellings.

- For Large villages these figures were 0 – 4.9% growth 18 – 58 dwellings; 5 – 9.9% growth 21 – 96; dwellings and 10% plus growth 38 – 325 dwellings.

3.3   There are no clear patterns emerging in relation to the amount of growth in a settlement and the changes to village facilities. Villages with low growth have retained services and those with high growth have lost facilities. Although less villages have received the higher two bands of growth, these are not restricted to large villages; medium villages have also seen development of this level. 47.4% of settlements have seen no change in the level of facilities over that period. This may suggest that any previous losses in facilities have now stabilised and that schemes operated within communities, such as "The Pub is the Hub" have born fruit.

3.4   There are clearly, other factors involved which have influenced the changes to facilities in villages, not just the building of houses. The closure of post offices, which is out of the control of the Council, has had an impact in terms of both the services it provides and associated food shops. Changes to people's shopping patterns, including the rise of internet shopping over this time period may also have had an effect on the viability of local shops. It has been well documented nationally that independent petrol filling stations in rural communities have struggled to compete with the national chains and the rise in supermarkets selling petrol. Other factors that may have impacted on local services are the freedom of choice that people now have in services that were once locationally driven. For example, greater choice in which school children can attend or which doctor's surgery people register with, mean that the link between home and services may not be as strong as it once was. The number of transactions that can now be carried out on line and the access to information on line that once may have been gained face to face in a local business or service providers premises have also played a part.

4.0 OPTION SELECTION (OPTION 2)

4.1 Once the settlement pattern has been established, a choice has to be made about what growth strategy to pursue. The Council identified four potential Options for growth which were considered to be viable and deliverable. Option 1 – Concentrate Growth into the Five Towns; Option 2 – Moderately Dispersed Growth in the Towns and Large Villages; Option 3 – More Dispersed Pattern of Growth across the Towns, Large and Medium Villages; and Option 4 Dispersed Growth including Small Rural Villages. Through consultation on the issues and options, there was least support for Options 1 and 4, with more support for options 2 and 3, albeit slightly more support for Options 3. Even though it was close with the other options, Option 3 was the option favoured by the consultees, however those that supported wider dispersal did so because of a fear of losing services and facilities and as set out above, there is no evidence to support this fear and a long historic policy of dispersal has not stemmed the tide of community loss. However, it is not as straightforward as choosing the most popular option from the consultation. There are three main factors which need to be considered in choosing a suitable Option for the distribution of housing growth across the District.

The National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 The plan, and the choices upon which it is based, must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). With the NPPF clearly stating that sustainable development should be the "golden thread" running through plan making, this would inevitably move the Council toward a more sustainable solution to its housing distribution which enables a larger percentage of the population to access community facilities, employment and other services. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF does state that "housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in villages nearby." However, there needs to be a mutually supportive element to the relationship rather than putting additional growth in locations where residents will have to look elsewhere for the majority of their services. The Core Strategy does contain policies that allow a small amount of development in the medium and small villages, in particular circumstances. However, these are not locations that it feels the Council should be directing strategic growth.

4.3 The NPPF also advocates the promotion of healthy communities in that there should be an integrated approach when considering the location of housing, economic uses and community services and facilities. In the District younger residents are moving out either to go to higher education or to work and those moving in are of the older larger birth cohorts 50+. There is also evidence that residents who are 75+ are moving out of the District. One conclusion for the young and over 75s moving out is that in the smaller villages there is not the service provision to support their needs.

Support for Services and Facilities

4.4 A number of consultees that supported Options 3 and 4 were concerned that settlements needed housing growth to continue to be sustainable. There is no evidence to show that the level of growth experienced in these villages has had a significant bearing on the provision or retention of services and facilities; this is

explored in section 3 of this paper. This analysis highlights that the fact that it is important to ensure that the Core Strategy is strong in its support for the protection of rural services and facilities and its support for new opportunities for employment and diversification; housing on its own is not enough to support and strengthen these smaller communities.

Constraints on Development

4.5 The capacity of settlements to accommodate additional development is a key issue that needs to be addressed on an individual settlement by settlement basis; reflecting their form, character, and the constraint of flood risk. Some of the District's settlements have issues which will be almost impossible to overcome. A few have extensive flood risk which leaves little or no land available in suitable locations for housing allocations. The longer term capacity of some of these villages will also become more of an issue as land outside the flood risk area in these villages is used up.

4.6 The problem of capacity is exacerbated if Option 3 is pursued. In addition to flood risk, many of the medium villages have had no, or very little, land promoted through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) so there is a shortfall. Environmental constraints, in terms of landscape, settlement form, biodiversity and the historic environment, means finding additional sites will be vey difficult. The medium villages where there are issues are as follows;

Medium Village with Site Difficulties

*Mumby (Settlement Form)
*Covenhams (Settlement Form)
*Donington on Bain (Settlement Form and Limited Site Availability)
** Wainfleet St Mary (Flood Risk)
*Bucknall (Limited Site Availability)
**West Ashby (Settlement Form and No Sites Promoted)
**Toynton All Saints (Settlement Form and Limited Site Capacity)
*East Keal (Settlement Form)
**East Kirkby (Settlement Form and No Sites Promoted)
*Halton Holegate (Settlement Form)
**New York (Settlement Form and Limited Site Availability)
*Maltby le Marsh (Settlement Form)
** Anton's Gowt (Settlement Form and No Sites Promoted)
** Eastville/ New Leake (Settlement Form and No Sites Promoted)
** Gipsey Bridge (Settlement Form, Flood Risk and No Site Promoted)
*New Bolingbroke (Settlement Form and Flood Risk)
* Stickford (Limited Site Availability)

Large Village with Site Difficulties

**Grainthorpe (Flood Risk)
**Wainfleet All Saints (Flood Risk)
**Marshchapel (Flood Risk)

* Will be difficult to accommodate growth
** Will be very difficult if not impossible to accommodate growth because of flood risk or accepting that their core character will be altered irretrievably. Protection of character is a key issue raised during consultations.

4.7 Many of the medium villages are small in size. Some are linear in form and some of a nuclear form with few opportunities to development without projecting into the countryside. The more medium villages there are that cannot accept growth because of capacity issues and constraints, the more growth will have to spread over the remaining medium villages, some of which then will not have the capacity to accept that growth without their own core character being altered; and may also not have the availability of land to take additional development.

4.8 Given all of the above; the need to be in conformity with the NPPF; the issues around locating growth in the medium villages including the lack of available land in some settlements, the capacity of settlement character and flood risk issues; the Council selected Option 2 - focusing development on the District's Towns and Large Villages - as its option for growth.

5.0 SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS AND SITE SELECTION

5.1 There is more to a sustainable community than just housing growth. The different aspects to a sustainable community cut across the policies of the plan, covering a range of different land uses. The strategic policies set out the approach taken to determine planning applications across the District. Then the settlement proposals, which are predominantly map based, show the spatial expression of these policies in settlements identified for growth. This includes the areas where development is allocated and the locations of other policy based notations, such as protected open space and sport and recreation facilities etc. The Council allocates sites and selects notated areas to implement some of its policies, based on the approaches set out below.

Housing

5.2 As required by Government, the Council prepared a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which looks at all the housing sites that have been put forward in the District and assesses if they are available, broadly suitable and deliverable within the timeframe of the Plan. The suitability of all the housing sites identified to the Council has also been assessed as part of the site selection and allocation process. Each one has been tested against the same criteria. The test is comprised of two stages, firstly through the Sustainability Appraisal (based on the Council's Sustainability Objectives) and secondly against any other relevant material planning considerations.

5.3 The key stages in the site identification and selection process have been;

- Site identification through the call for land and review of undeveloped existing allocations. This has established their availability, suitability and deliverability;
- Analysis of site constraints e.g. flood risk, ancient monuments, tree preservation orders etc.;
- Access constraints assessment by Lincolnshire County Council Highways Engineer;
- Site survey;
- Sustainability Appraisal.

5.4 Housing sites have not been identified in the coastal zone. This reflects the policy of placing a cap on further development, above the levels needed to

maintain current population levels, in order to prevent an increase in the number of properties and lives at risk from flooding.

5.5 Housing growth inland will be distributed across the 5 inland towns and 20 large villages (mean option 2). Growth is calculated pro-rata on the population in each settlement. The minimum amount of housing for each relevant settlement is set out in the Housing Topic Paper.

5.6 In some villages there are factors which affect the amount of housing that can be accommodated. Some of the towns and large villages are affected by flood risk and in others, despite the Council's best efforts (including calls for land and contact with Parish Council's) insufficient land has come forward for development.

5.7 Where this has occurred, housing growth has been redistributed up to the 5 inland towns. This is considered the most sustainable way of distributing growth to ensure that new housing development is sited near to services and facilities.

Employment

5.8 The employment elements of the plan cover a number of employment types and each will require different considerations in terms of their spatial expression on a plan. The Core Strategy sets out the amount of employment land the District needs to provide for the 15 year Plan period. It reflects the trends in take-up over recent years and the possible requirement associated with projected population growth. As the demography of the District and the economy changes, this will require constant review to ensure adequate sites are available. Sites are identified in the Settlement Proposals that will, where possible, enable the benefits accrued by the existing industrial development to be continued and allow the expansion of existing industrial sites.

5.9 In the towns, the settlement proposals also identify town centre areas and where appropriate, the extent of the primary shopping frontage to promote the viability and vitality of the historic and coastal towns. The previous town centre boundaries and the protected shopping frontages have been reviewed. That review has re-assessed the extent of the core town centre activities within previously defined limits and made amendments based on the density of retail, commercial and leisure uses on a street by street basis.

5.10 In overall terms the review has found that the extent of the protected shopping frontages as currently defined remain valid and require limited if any change. Whilst this may reflect the impact of current policies, it may suggest that their capacity to grow may be constrained by their role within the wider shopping hierarchy. In addition, because of changes in retailing and the increasing use of technology such as, bulk shopping trips and internet shopping the face of town centres is likely to change markedly. As a result it is conceivable that the area used for town centre retailing may well diminish and space be given over to complementary activities. This will require ongoing monitoring and policy review.

5.11 In Skegness and Mablethorpe as, well as the town centre and prime retail frontages, the Inset Maps also define:-

• Serviced Holiday Accommodation identifying the core areas for this type of holiday accommodation;
• Foreshore areas which provide a range of holiday attractions and;

- Holiday amusement areas , the key areas of amusement arcades between the main retail and foreshore areas.

5.12   Areas to be protected for serviced holiday accommodation were identified in the previous Local Plan and protected through a policy. These have been reviewed to assess the degree of subsequent change. Where premises are no longer in holiday use, and the cohesiveness of areas has been lost, the protected areas have been amended to better reflect the current situation.

5.13   Foreshores have been identified in Mablethorpe and Skegness. The foreshores represent the area between the towns and the sea and contain a range of tourism uses from amusement parks and refreshment outlets, to natural areas which provide space for wildlife. The boundaries are largely self selecting, although minor amendments have been made to previous notations, and they reflect the variety of activities in these areas.

5.14   The holiday amusement area notations set out those areas of Mablethorpe and Skegness where amusement arcades will be supported. Areas are specifically defined to enable these uses to be directed to specific parts of the town and to protect areas elsewhere from encroachment. Amusement Arcades are an important part of the tourism offer in coastal resorts, offering more than just video games and gaming machines, they frequently contain other ancillary activities; such as bowling alleys and refreshment outlets. They bring colour and vibrancy to the resorts. However, two issues have led to a policy need to identify specific areas for them. One is to protect the integrity of the retail offer in coastal resorts, so the holiday uses are not competing with the secondary retail areas (primary shopping frontages having greater protection through policy). Secondly, is the juxtaposition of holiday activities with serviced holiday accommodation, as well as some residential areas. Amusement arcades often have music playing and the sound of machines which can be heard outside the premises, are highly illuminated and operate late into the evening. This attracts visitors and adds to the holiday atmosphere but may create conflict with other non entertainment uses. Giving these uses their own identified areas enables them scope to carry on their activities while also providing additional protection to other proximate areas of the resorts.

Open Space

5.15   The Plan seeks to safeguard and deliver an identified network of accessible greenspace as part of the wider approach to environmental enhancement, biodiversity and health and well being. Despite being a large agricultural area, East Lindsey does not contain large swathes of public open space and, particularly in some of the villages, there are limited opportunities for accessing open space and takin part in informal recreation. By identifying locally important greenspaces on the inset maps, the baseline for establishing these networks will be protected and it provides the information for developers and others to identify opportunities to expand this network. Open space can provide opportunities to address a number of aspects of policy, such as climate regulation and change, biodiversity, and healthy lifestyles.

5.16   Sites identified in the settlement proposals come under two broad headings. The first is amenity space within communities that are considered valuable to its residents. These cover a range of types of spaces, such as parks and gardens; amenity areas within development (including those on a housing development negotiated as part of the planning permission); and cemeteries, church yards

and other green space round heritage assets. There are many different types of green space; however, it is publically accessible greenspace that provides the widest scope to meet quality of life indicators.

5.17 The second are areas used for sport and recreation, which may be playing fields, sports pitches or hardened surfaces for sport. As with amenity open space, this form of open space is not as prevalent as it may be in larger communities. While there are pockets that are quite well served, the there are areas where provision limited. It is therefore important that the current level of provision is protected and opportunities taken to address the need for additional provision with new growth. Current areas have been identified through the Sport and Recreation Audit and are protected through the Plan.

Biodiversity

5.18 The role of biodiversity in the life of sustainable communities is recognised by the plan, which protects sites identified for their biodiversity importance; whether these are designated internationally, nationally or locally. Where these coincide with settlement proposals maps, they will be identified. However, the majority of sites are in the more rural pars of the District and therefore will not appear on the settlement plans.

Historic Environment

5.19 The District contains 17 Conservation Areas, designated by the Council or its predecessor. There are also over 1400 listed buildings across the District, designated at a national level by Historic England and its predecessors. There are also over 150 Scheduled Ancient Monuments protected for their archaeological importance. The rich architectural heritage of East Lindsey is an important part of its diversity and character. Where any of these designations coincide with a map in the settlement proposals, they will be shown on the plan. Subsequently designated building or areas, or those which lie outside the Inset Maps, will still receive the same protection, although it will not be possible for the plans to depict them.

Conclusion

5.20 Bringing all these aspects of the Plan together sets the foundation for creating and maintaining sustainable communities within the context of East Lindsey. The Plan has identified the aspects of community life that make up the District, such its rurality; its market and seaside towns; the quality of the environment and the need to protect the resources that shape it. This topic paper sets out the wider policy choices that have been made in defining the areas for growth and the other policy approaches that will shape the areas that the growth will take place. All the policies that related to the towns and large villages are subject to the same policies, and others that reflect the smaller settlements. However, it is the where growth will be directed where these policies are given a map based approach.