

CHAPTER 4 - RAISING THE QUALITY OF OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Where we want to be

The rich and diverse historic and cultural heritage of East Lindsey is at the heart of local distinctiveness and the reinvigoration of our communities. Development is well designed and sustainable, enhancing local distinctiveness and quality of life.

What it will look like

Places are positively shaped by the history and heritage of the local area and respond to the challenges of climate change through sustainable development and construction.

New development has taken the opportunity to improve the character and quality of its surroundings.

The area has become better known for the quality of its built environment.

Delivery Objectives (how we are going to get there)

This strategy will be delivered through the following

The use of a place-making checklist

Evidence

Conservation Area Appraisals for Alford, Horncastle, Louth, Spilsby, Wainfleet and Woodhall Spa 2012

East Lindsey Landscape Character Appraisal 2011

Lincolnshire Design Guide for Residential Areas

Louth Urban Design Study

Lincolnshire Historic Landscape Characterisation

Neighbourhood Plans

East Lindsey District Council Water Cycle Study 2016

Design

Why we have taken this approach

4.1. East Lindsey has a rich and diverse historic and cultural environment. The District does not have a single built character but is made up of over 200 settlements many with their own distinct identity. The introduction to this document draws out some of the characteristics that influence East Lindsey's shape and character.

4.2. The environment should be valued for its own sake and there is a widespread acceptance of the importance of the familiar and cherished local scene. The distinctive character of each town and village is a source of local

identity and pride, reinforces community confidence, and enhances quality of life for the residents of the District. High quality environments also play a significant role in attracting visitors and investment. Where prepared, Town or Village Design Statements will be a material consideration in the planning process.

4.3. Good design is important in shaping the places where we live, work and undertake leisure activities. It is not just about buildings. Development should respond to the established pattern and form of development, have a sense of character and include the spaces between buildings, how they relate to each other and the street, the different uses of buildings and how they operate, and access around and between towns and villages. Good design is also an important factor in protecting and managing change within the wider landscape. Development proposals must show how they have taken into account and respected the distinctive character of their setting. Where appropriate the Council will encourage developers of major development to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement and agree a set of principles around good design.

4.4. The quality of the environment also plays an important role in the health and well-being of the population. There are many facets of public health that benefit from carefully designed buildings and spaces. Specialist guidance is available on how the general design criteria in the place making checklist can be utilised to help health conditions, such as dementia and obesity, as well as more general health and well-being. These should be considered when putting development proposals together. Developers are encouraged to carry out a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) commensurate with the size and nature of the development to show how they have factored this into their proposal. This can be incorporated into the design and access statement (where required) to show how the health needs of the community have been taken into account in drawing up the proposal.

4.5. Dark night skies are distinctive and valued characteristics of East Lindsey and should be protected. Light pollution can have negative impact on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Set against this is the need to ensure safety and security through the use of appropriate lighting.

4.6. Landscaping is an essential part of the overall design of development. It should be fully integrated into any development proposals from the outset. The nature of landscaping needed will vary depending on the type of development and the environment within which it sits. Landscaping not only helps to bed development into its setting, it can also create green infrastructure for the wider community, providing habitats for wildlife, opportunities to adapt to climate change and, on larger sites, recreational opportunities and health promotion.

4.7. It is particularly important that housing developments create a positive living environment by integrating landscaping and open space with the built development. The use and retention of existing landscape and natural features such as trees, hedges and the natural formation of the ground is supported and positively encouraged in development. Due to the diverse nature of East Lindsey, the size, location and type of residential development across the district will vary

considerably. It is important that the approach to landscaping and open space reflects this, incorporating space for amenity landscaping, recreation, circulation and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) appropriate to the site. From this requirement, it may be difficult to isolate and measure areas of open space, but as a guideline, on housing sites over 1 hectare, the Council will require multi-functional green space, for example, recreation areas, landscaped cycle ways and footpaths, wildlife areas. Where possible, it should show how it links to the wider community and other areas of green space to create an innovative and integrated development. The Council will be guided by the Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst) in assessing the level of open space within a community and how that provided through the development contributes to this.

4.8. Accompanying the need for good design is the need to ensure our built environment plans for the effects of climate change in terms of both sustainability and the way it is constructed. There are many simple design approaches, such as passive solar gain, grey water recycling and choice of materials that can be incorporated into the design of proposals. Flood risk mitigation may affect the design of development, i.e. the need to raise floor levels or have non habitable ground floor rooms. This however should not compromise design nor should it affect the character of an area or impact on surrounding residential amenities. Flood risk is covered in more detail in Strategic Policies (SP16) Inland Flood Risk and Chapter 10 - Coastal East Lindsey.

4.9. Where there is a choice, development sites should be selected where they would generate fewest car movements and be within comfortable walking distance of essential facilities. New development should ensure that it creates strong walking and/or cycling routes to key services linking in to existing routes where available. The use of suitable brownfield sites within existing settlements should always be given priority over more distant greenfield sites. Agriculture continues to play a significant role in the economy of the District. Protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land (that of grade 1, 2 and 3a) is an important part of supporting this industry. In selecting sites for development, the preference should be to seek to utilise lower grade land to that of a higher grade.

4.10. The Council will encourage communities to join in clusters to develop and share key services and facilities, both to take advantage of the potential economies of scale, to cut down on the need for longer distance travel to higher order settlements and to improve health outcomes. However, brownfield sites, if left undisturbed for some time, can develop biodiversity interest and an assessment will be needed to show that the biodiversity interest of the site is not so significant that it would prevent or restrict its future redevelopment. Development of Brownfield Land should ensure that any risk posed to human health, groundwater, and surface water from pollution is appropriately assessed and mitigated where necessary. Assessment of Brownfield Land should be done in accordance with the Environment Agency's guidance document CLR11 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination'.

4.11. East Lindsey lies in an area under serious water stress and this can cause deterioration for the water environment in both the quality and quantity of water.

Given this development that will unacceptably deplete water resources or pose a risk to the quality of the water table and aquifers will not be supported. Neither will development located around water sources be supported unless it includes adequate measures for their protection from pollution. Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are areas of groundwater where there is a particular sensitivity to pollution risks due to the closeness of a drinking water source and how the groundwater flows. They are used to protect abstractions used for public water supply and other forms of distribution to the public such as mineral and bottled water plants, breweries and food production plants. Development in these sensitive areas to groundwater pollution will be expected to comply with the Environment Agency's guidance document 'Groundwater Protection: Principles and Practice (GP3)'. This is to prevent any contamination of the public water supply and to avoid having to deal with the consequences of water pollution. Development that includes measures to regenerate, recycle, re-use or reduce the demand for, finite resources will be preferred. It is considered appropriate to implement the need for new development to be designed to Building Regulations water consumption standard for water scarce areas which is 110 litres per person per day.

4.12. The Council will segregate new development from hazardous uses. Development will not be permitted if it will pose a threat to the hazardous use or, conversely, if it could be harmed by its materials or operation. This will be a special consideration for proposals in the hazard protection areas of Covenham Reservoir and Theddlethorpe Gas Installation and in the safeguarding zones around North Cotes, Binbrook and Coningsby airfields, the high-pressure gas pipeline network, the bombing range at Donna Nook, Conoco Oil Terminal at Tetney Lock, Hatton Compressor Station, Skegness Airfield and Anglian Water Services at Covenham.

4.13. Whilst crime is relatively low in the District, good design can assist in reducing the opportunity for crime. The Council will seek to ensure that all new development aims to address this issue, without creating a fortress environment, quality building promotes health outcomes.

4.14. To help promote good quality design that is accessible for everyone in the District, all dwelling houses and any major development that does not lie within an existing industrial estate in the District will be encouraged to satisfy the Councils place-making checklist. This traffic-light tool kit will help achieve consistent high quality outcomes for housing and major development across the District irrespective of architectural styles or tastes. It will also help the public and others commenting on planning application to understand the principles behind the proposal. There is a guide to using the tool kit available on the Councils website.

PLACE MAKING CHECK LIST	Achieves A good standard of design	Partially achieves with alterations could achieve a high standard	Does not achieve Needs to reconsider (How? what?)
A sense of character – Does the development have a sense of character or could it be anywhere?			
Streets and spaces shaped by development – Does the development help to create well-defined streets with active edges, or does it turn its back on streets and spaces and sit in isolation?			
Architectural quality – Is the building fit for purpose? Does the building, irrespective of style, relate to its surroundings? What about detailing? How does the building look at night?			
Easy for everyone to get around – Are the routes into and through the development direct, safe, attractive and easy for every one of all abilities to use? Does the development design out crime? What is it like after dark?			
Interesting places – If possible, does the development include a variety of uses? Has the opportunity been taken to create interesting spaces?			
Landscaping – Does the development include appropriate landscaping and green space for habitats and wildlife? Have existing landscape and natural features been retained and/or enhanced? Do the spaces link to the wider community and other green spaces?			

<p>Built to last for generations – How could the building be used if the current (or proposed) occupier leaves? Does the building incorporate sustainable features and/or renewables?</p>			
<p>Strategically Important Sites - This section only refers to those sites that are considered so important in terms of their location within a settlement and their potential impact and influence on the wider visual or historic environment within that settlement.</p> <p>These sites will be expected to also conform to a design brief agreed at pre application.</p> <p>Does the site conform to the design brief?</p>			
<p>Consultation – has there been public consultation on the development? If so, what form did that consultation take and how has it influenced the design?</p>			

4.15. There will be occasions when the Council consider a site so important in terms of its location within a town or village, that it will warrant special attention with regards to design. These sites will have a wide reaching impact and influence on the wider visual or historic environment of a town or village. The Council will wish to ensure that any development on such a site conforms to an agreed set of principles, unique to that site.

4.16. On those occasions, and in order to speed up the planning application process, developers will be encouraged to agree, at pre application stage in the planning process, a short simple site-specific design brief. This will form part of the normal collaborative process between the applicant and the Local Planning Authority. Applicants are advised to contact the Council early in the application process to enter into discussions regarding these sites. If there has been no pre application discussions, then at the earliest opportunity during the application determination process, the relevant officer will set out the design parameters the Council expects for the site. This should be agreed with the developer. The Council will support on design grounds, development that complies with that brief.

4.17. The sites this section refers to are as follows;

- Gateway sites into a settlement (a site which lies at the entrance to a settlement and is therefore the first one that is seen on entering the built up area along the principal routes into the settlement).
- All retail applications over 0.25ha
- Applications over 0.5ha within a designated town centre
- Applications on sites over 4ha

4.18. There are a number of publications from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), which provide good guidance to applicants. In addition, the good practise set out in By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System Toward Better Practice; Planning and Access for Disabled People, A Good Practice Guide; Safer Places, the Planning System and Crime prevention; Building for Life; By Design, Better Places to Live; the Lincolnshire Residential Design Guide (published 1996) still contains good design principles to guide applicants. With regard to the design of streets and highways, the Council will look to Manual for Streets, its supporting and accompanying documents and any documents that supersede it, as its guide.

Strategic Policy 10 (SP10) – Design

The Council will support well-designed sustainable development, which maintains and enhances the character of the District's towns, villages and countryside by:-

- 1. Where possible supporting the use of brownfield land for development, unless it is of high environmental value, seeking to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality.***
- 2. The use of high quality materials and where the layout, scale, massing, height and density reflect the character of the surrounding area.***
- 3. Ensuring it is easy for everyone to get around by incorporating safe and attractive roads, cycleways and footways that enable people of all abilities to access shops, jobs, schools and other community facilities.***
- 4. Providing on-site landscaping to integrate the development into its wider surroundings and make provision for open space.***
- 5. Development will be supported if it is designed to minimise glare and light spillage, it does not unacceptably harm the rural or dark-sky character of a settlement or landscape or any nearby residential amenity; it respects the local historic environment; and it does not unacceptably harm or reduce the safety of highways, cycleways and footways.***

6. The design of new and altered buildings or areas will be supported where they adequately take into account the safety and security of the users of the facilities both during the day and at night and that of neighbouring residents.

7. Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that its design incorporates sustainable features and/or renewables and that the development could be adapted in the future for other uses in that it is development that will become a high quality integrated part of the built environment over many generations.

8. Supporting development that includes measures to recycle, re-use or reduce the demand for finite resources. New development should be designed to Building Regulation water consumption standard for water scarce areas, to not exceed 110 litres per day per person.

9. Development around water sources will only be supported if it contains adequate protection preventing pollution from entering into the water source.

10. Development will only be supported around hazardous uses if it contains adequate provision to mitigate against threat from the hazardous use and does not conflict with that use.

11. The following developments will be supported on design grounds if they satisfy a site-specific design brief.

- **Gateway sites into a settlement**
- **All retail applications over 0.25ha**
- **Applications over 0.5ha within a designated town centre**
- **Applications on sites over 4ha**