

Appendix B

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan Background Paper

A strategy for the delivery of a further phase of the Spalding Western Relief Road and major housing growth in Spalding

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out how the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (the Local Plan) should help address the joint aims of promoting the delivery of, firstly, the Spalding Western Relief Road (SWRR) and, secondly, significant housing growth in Spalding from which funding of the SWRR could be derived. It explains how the relevant policies in the Local Plan 'Preferred Options document'¹ have evolved into the proposals set out in Draft Local Plan Policy 13.

This document will also be used to inform further discussions and work on promoting the development of the SWRR in conjunction with enabling housing development.

BACKGROUND

A) The Spalding Western Relief Road (SWRR)

The SWRR is featured in the **Spalding Transport Strategy 2014-2036**² (the STS), published in September 2014. The STS states:

'Proposals for the SWRR link the B1172 (Spalding Common), in the south-west of the town, to the B1356 (Spalding Road) in the north. The scheme is an integral part of both the 4th Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan and the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan. The scheme has been identified as one of four major schemes within Lincolnshire in the short to medium term. The scheme is important locally because it will play a major role in opening up development site including Holland Park and other sites in this locale; it also provides an alternative route to the congested A151 route which passes through the centre of Spalding.'

Work on the development of the SWRR is being overseen by the **Spalding Western Relief Road Steering Group** (the Steering Group), which is led by

¹ The Preferred Options document is an abbreviation of the 'Strategy and Policies DPD - Combined Preferred Options and Sustainability Appraisal Report - Full Consultation Document (May 2013)'.

² The Spalding Transport Strategy 2014-2036 was jointly prepared by Lincolnshire County Council Highways Alliance and South Holland District Council. It was formally endorsed by Lincolnshire County Council's Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee on 27 October 2014.

Lincolnshire County Council Highways Department. The Steering Group has stated that the basic purpose of the SWRR is to:

- 'support and facilitate sustainable population and commercial growth in and around Spalding;
- mitigate the impact of the expected increase in level-crossing barrier downtime in Spalding resulting from increased rail-freight traffic passing through the town;
- reduce traffic congestion in Spalding town centre; and
- enhance connectivity by improving west to south links around Spalding'.

The Preferred Options document identified a 'Corridor of Search for the Spalding Western Relief Road' in Figure 6.2 (ref. p.150), within which the remainder of the SWRR route would be identified; and a policy titled 'Spalding Western Relief Road (SWRR)', which included the statement:

“The implementation of a SWRR is critical to minimising the traffic impact of the upgrade to the ‘Joint Line’ and supporting the delivery of growth at Spalding. It will provide a link between the B1172 (Spalding Common and the B1356 (Spalding Road). Its delivery will be linked to the phased development of housing growth to the north and west of Spalding.”

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) had previously made clear that the SWRR must be funded through a developer-led approach, given limits on public sector funding.

The delivery of Phase 1 of the SWRR has been secured through a section 106 agreement relating to the outline planning permission for the Holland Park urban extension, which was granted in May 2012. Prior to South Holland District Council securing the delivery of Phase 1 through the Holland Park scheme, LCC had, in July 2011, undertaken a public consultation exercise on two route options relating to what was then being contemplated as Phase 2 of the SWRR. Phase 2 involved a link between Phase 1 and the A151 (Bourne Road), just to the west of the Broadway/Monks House Lane traffic lights. (The outcome from this consultation exercise later resulted in amendments to the siting of the roundabout junction at the northern end of Phase 1.)

The public consultation on the Preferred Options document revealed that there was some support for the SWRR. However, questions were also raised on the need for it and its influence over decisions regarding the location of development. A couple of areas had been identified where further work was required, specifically those relating to how it would be delivered. The Joint Committee³, at its meeting on 27 September, 2013, agreed that further work on this proposal was required which could result in a change to the approach. At this point in time, consideration of previous estimates of the cost of the scheme were suggesting that it would be challenging for the funding of further phases of

³ The Joint Committee refers to the 'South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee' which is responsible for preparing the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

the SWRR (i.e. the rest of the SWRR excluding Phase 1) to come solely from the private sector. Therefore, it has for some time been recognised that other potential sources of funding for at least part of the SWRR, including various public-sector grants, need to be explored in order to increase the chances of delivering the SWRR in its entirety sooner rather than later.

B) The proposed 'Land to the north of the Vernatt's Drain' broad location

The Preferred Options document identified the development of a broad location for housing (accommodating some 3,750 dwellings) 'to the north of the Vernatt's Drain and the line of the proposed SWRR with vehicular access onto the SWRR' (referred hereafter as the 'Vernatts broad location') as the preferred means of realising major residential growth in Spalding in the plan period, for reason of securing greater transport-management benefits pending the completion of the SWRR in its entirety⁴. This broad location was identified following consideration of sites submitted through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)⁵ process, particularly SHLAA Site 'Pin024'.

The public consultation on the Preferred Options document revealed that there was some support for the Vernatt's broad location. However, questions had been raised, firstly, on the need for so much housing in Spalding and, therefore, the need for such a large residential development to the north of the Vernatt's Drain which would lead to the coalescence of Pinchbeck with Spalding; and, secondly, on the nature of the relationship of the Vernatt's broad location with the SWRR given the need to fund the new road through developer contributions. The Joint Committee, at its meeting on 25 November 2013, agreed that further work on this proposal was required which could result in a change to the approach, mindful, inter alia, that at examination, there was a need to prove that the strategy for accommodating housing growth was deliverable.

C) Other sites promoted through the SHLAA

The Preferred Options document had proposed housing growth situated some 500 metres west of the Joint Line⁶ railway and accessed off another phase of the SWRR (which would run east from its junction with the B1356 Spalding Road) in order to maintain a significant 'gap' of open countryside between the built-up areas of Pinchbeck and Spalding. In view of the SWRR funding concerns, it became clear that to maintain such a gap through which a significant stretch of SWRR (including a bridge crossing of the railway and a

⁴ Notwithstanding the preference for the Vernatt's broad location, the Preferred Options document also recognised the need to promote the 'A151 broad location' for the purpose of meeting housing requirements in Spalding towards the end of, and beyond, the plan period as well as providing a further source of funding for the SWRR.

⁵ The emerging South East Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) contains information about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.

⁶ The Joint Line refers to the GN/GE railway line linking Peterborough, Spalding and Lincoln.

roundabout junction with the B1356) would run would not appear to be the most cost-effective means of delivering the SWRR in its entirety. Consequently, it was decided to consider the possibility of allowing a moderate level of housing development to the east of the Joint Line whilst at the same time retaining some form of separation between Pinchbeck and Spalding.

Before a reassessment of other sites promoted through the SHLAA process could be undertaken, in early 2014, a developer interest, prompted by the fact that South Holland District Council had for some time been unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, canvassed officer opinion on SHLAA site 'Pin045'. This site measures some 26.15 hectares and relates to land situated on both sides of the Joint Line. It includes the full width of that part of the 'Broad route alignment for a SWRR' featured in the Preferred Options document⁷ which lies between a point approximating to Two Plank Bridge on the Vernatt's Drain and the B1356 Spalding Road (the B1356). The developer interest, which had an option on the site, sought opinion on the site's full potential to accommodate:

- a proposed mixed residential and commercial development; and
- the provision of that part of the SWRR from the B1356 south- westwards to a point close to Two Plank Bridge, including a bridge crossing of the Joint Line.

Such a proposal could make a significant contribution to the delivery of the SWRR. However, any serious consideration of it would have to be mindful of the previously-stated desire, set out in the Preferred Options document, to retain a gap in development between the village of Pinchbeck and the town of Spalding as it was understood that the desire to retain such a gap was still held by Pinchbeck Parish Council.

D) Update of Peterborough Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The update of the Peterborough Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published in July 2014. It covers the period 2011-2036 and has identified a housing need in the range of 560-600 dwellings per annum. The lower end of this range is based on the demographic projections; and the higher end recognises the potential for stronger household formation, and would contribute to higher affordable housing delivery.⁸ This range of housing served to support the scale of housing provision for Spalding set out in the Preferred Options document

E) Further work on the Local Plan

⁷ See page 302.

⁸ Peterborough Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Final Report. See para 10.26 on page 194.

Having regard to the contents of **A), B) C) and D)** above, officers, during 2014, gave further consideration to the best way of realising the aims of delivering the SWRR and significant housing growth in Spalding through the preparation of the Local Plan. As a result of that exercise officers concluded, in September 2014, that the following emerging strategy should guide further work on Local Plan preparation relating to such matters:

- 1 In view of the significant cost attached to the delivery of the rest of the SWRR (i.e. from Phase 1 round to the B1356) intimated by Lincolnshire County Council, a more manageable approach to the delivery of the SWRR was required. Therefore, for the purposes of Local Plan preparation, the focus will be on the delivery of another section of the SWRR – and **not** the full outstanding length of the new road. Notwithstanding this approach, every encouragement will be given to delivering the completed SWRR as soon as possible. Initially, this will focus on the Spalding Western Relief Road Steering Group's completion of the design of what is described as the North Phase of the SWRR; i.e. the route of the SWRR running south-westwards from and including a new roundabout junction with the B1356, over the Joint Line railway and then running parallel with the north side of the Vernatt's Drain up to a point just to the west of the urban edge of Spalding as defined by Monks House Lane.
- 2 In terms of housing delivery:
 - a) continue to promote the Vernatts broad location as the preferred principal means of meeting Spalding's housing provision target for the period of the Local Plan **but** in conjunction with SHLAA site Pin045;
 - b) seek to meet the outstanding housing requirement through smaller, more readily deliverable sites to aid housing land supply, especially in respect of maintaining delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet the housing target; and
 - c) in accordance with the Preferred Options document, recognise the future role the A151 broad location⁹ for delivery commencing towards the end of, or beyond, the plan period dependent on demand. This will:
 - assist in ensuring continuity in meeting housing need arising in Spalding towards the end of, and beyond, the plan period and provide certainty in this regard;
 - offer an alternative site for housing development following substantial completion of the Holland Park scheme; and

⁹ The Preferred Options document identifies a second suitable broad location for housing, made up of land 'lying to the north and south of the A151 with vehicular access onto the SWRR' (to be described as the 'A151 broad location').

- require vehicular access via the SWRR and, thereby, create a significant source of funding for the SWRR.
- 3 In view of 2a) above, promote the provision of the North Phase as the next stage in the delivery of the SWRR in order to provide initial access to the Vernatts broad location from the B1356, and also as the means for connecting with the final stage of the SWRR, which involves the crossing of the Vernatt's Drain.

F) Involvement of developer interests

Given the interrelationship of the emerging officer proposals for a Vernatt's broad location and the Northern Phase of the SWRR, as set out in **E)** above, it was deemed essential that officers made early contact with relevant developer/landowner interests in order to test the deliverability of such a course of action. To this end, officers held a series of discussions with representatives in respect of SHLAA sites Pin024 and Pin045. The intention was to gauge support for these proposals and to determine whether a joint approach to their delivery could be agreed and promoted through the Local Plan.

To date, there has been agreement that the emerging strategy set out in **E)** above was worthy of further consideration. In addition, it has been suggested that some form of 'common understanding' involving the developer interests, South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council, as Highway Authority, regarding the promotion of a single proposal to deliver housing and the next stage of the SWRR, should be agreed.

G) Further development of the strategy

Following the meetings with developer interests the emerging strategy was reviewed by officers. This review was informed by the intention to retain a clear separation/green space between the village of Pinchbeck and the town of Spalding, and the completion of detailed preliminary design work on the North Phase of the SWRR by Lincolnshire County Council. The review concluded in a revision to the emerging strategy, set out in section **E)** above, by adding the following points:

- 4 In view of 3 above, promote SHLAA site Pin045 for the purpose of accommodating development on the following basis:
- a) the northern part of the site lying to the east of the Joint Line railway (approximately 15 hectares) to be allocated for meeting part of Spalding's Local Plan housing target;
 - b) the provision of that part of the North Phase of the SWRR from the B1356 to a point equating to Two Plank Bridge. **(NB: this development will require acquisition of adjoining land fronting the B1356 currently not forming part of SHLAA site Pin045, including two semi-detached dwellings: 167 and 169 Spalding Road.)** This part of the North Phase will include:

- a new five-exit roundabout junction on the B1356 serving, clockwise:
 - the B1356 to the north;
 - Enterprise Way to the east;
 - the B1356 to the south;
 - the SWRR to the west; and
 - the development specified in 4.a) above; and
 - a bridge crossing of the Joint Line; and
- c) the remaining western and southern parts of the site to remain 'open' in character.
- 5 In terms of SWRR delivery, the provision of:
- a) the five-exit roundabout will be in association with the development specified in 4.a) above (**NB:** this roundabout could also facilitate access to other SHLAA sites (Pin016, Pin020 and Pin040) lying between Pin045 and the Spalding Road were they to be allocated for development); and
 - b) the remainder of the North Phase will be in association with the development of SHLAA site Pin024, the precise nature of which will be subject to further discussions; the results of which will inform an update of this document.
- 6 Early implementation of development on SHLAA site 045 will be encouraged.

Recent evidence

Following the release of the Government's 2012-based household projections in February 2015, it was agreed that it would be prudent to request a further partial update of the Peterborough Sub-Regional SHMA to provide new objectively-assessed housing need figures for the partner authorities based on these revised projections. This exercise was completed in September 2015 and has resulted in a new single housing need figure for South Holland District of 430 dwellings per annum - which is somewhat below the previously-identified target range.

This means that the proposed Vernatt's broad location should serve to meet the housing needs of the area for a longer period of time.