

# South East Lincolnshire Local Plan Background Paper – March 2017

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

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out how the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (the Local Plan) seeks to support 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 can be derived. Furthermore, it helps to explain how the relevant policies in the Local Plan 'Preferred Options document'<sup>1</sup> have evolved into the proposals featured in the 'Publication Version' of the emerging Local Plan, and specifically Policy 12: Vernatts Sustainable Urban Extension and Policy 30: Delivering the Spalding Transport Strategy.
- 1.2 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.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

#### A) The Spalding Western Relief Road (SWRR)

- 2.1 The SWRR is featured in the **Spalding Transport Strategy 2014-2036**<sup>2</sup> (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 sites 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.'

---

<sup>1</sup> 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)'.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

2.2 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 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’.

2.3 The Preferred Options document identified a ‘Corridor of Search for the Spalding Western Relief Road’<sup>3</sup> within which the SWRR route would be identified; and a policy titled ‘Spalding Western Relief Road (SWRR)’<sup>4</sup>, which stated:

*‘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.’*

2.4 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.

2.5 The planned delivery of the first section of the SWRR (originally described as ‘Phase 1’) has been secured through a section 106 legal agreement relating to the outline planning permission for the Holland Park urban extension, which was granted in May 2012. Phase 1 will commence with a new roundabout junction on the B1172 (Spalding Common) and run northwards via a bridge crossing of the Joint Line railway<sup>5</sup> up towards - but not adjoining - the north-west corner of the Holland Park site at the intersection of South Drove Drain with Hill’s Drain.

2.6 Prior to South Holland District Council securing the delivery of Phase 1 through the Holland Park scheme, LCC had, in July 2011, undertaken a

---

<sup>3</sup> See Figure 6.2 on p.150

<sup>4</sup> See p.242

<sup>5</sup> The Joint Line refers to the GN/GE railway line linking Peterborough, Spalding and Lincoln.

public consultation exercise on two route options relating to what was then being contemplated as 'Phase 2' of the SWRR. Phase 2 involved a proposed 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 did not result in any firm decision as to the future route of Phase 2. However, it did lead to a review of the proposed siting of the roundabout junction at the northern end of Phase 1, with the conclusion that it should be sited in the far north-west corner of the site to enable any extension of the SWRR northwards to undertake as broad a sweep as possible round undeveloped land lying to the south of the A151 (Bourne Road).

2.7 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 were identified where further work was required, specifically those relating to how the SWRR would be delivered. Accordingly, the Joint Committee<sup>6</sup>, 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 prove challenging for the funding of further phases of 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**

2.8 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'<sup>7</sup> (referred hereafter as the 'Vernatts broad location') as the preferred means of realising major residential growth in Spalding in the Local Plan period. The reason for this was to secure greater transport-management benefits pending the completion of the SWRR in its entirety<sup>8</sup>. This broad location was identified following consideration of sites submitted through the Strategic Housing Land

---

<sup>6</sup> The Joint Committee refers to the 'South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee' which is responsible for preparing the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

<sup>7</sup> See para 6.57.4

<sup>8</sup> 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 Local Plan period as well as providing a further source of funding for the SWRR.

Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>9</sup> process, particularly SHLAA Site 'Pin024'.

- 2.9 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. Accordingly, 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 Local Plan examination, there would be a need to prove that the strategy for accommodating housing growth in Spalding was deliverable.

### **C) Other sites promoted through the SHLAA**

- 2.10 The Preferred Options document proposed that the housing development forming the Vernatts broad location be situated some 500 metres west of the Joint Line railway and accessed off another phase of the SWRR (which would run west 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. However, in view of the SWRR funding concerns, it became increasingly clear that to maintain such a gap through which a significant stretch of SWRR (including a bridge crossing of the railway and a roundabout junction with the B1356) would run would not 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.
- 2.11 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 a possible planning application for SHLAA site 'Pin045'. This site measures some 26.15 hectares and relates to land situated on both sides of the Joint Line. It includes most of that part of the 'Broad route alignment for a SWRR' featured in the Preferred Options document<sup>10</sup> which lies between a point approximating to Two Plank Bridge on the Vernatt's Drain and the B1356 (Spalding Road). The

---

<sup>9</sup> 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 Local Plan period.

<sup>10</sup> See page 302.

developer interest 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 (Spalding Road) south- westwards to a point close to Two Plank Bridge, including a bridge crossing of the Joint Line.

2.12 Such a proposal could make a significant contribution to the delivery of the SWRR. However, at the time, it was viewed that any serious consideration of it would have had 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 firmly held by Pinchbeck Parish Council.

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

2.13 An 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.<sup>11</sup> This range of housing served to support the scale of housing provision for Spalding set out in the Preferred Options document. (**NB:** Further updates have since been undertaken<sup>12</sup>.)

---

<sup>11</sup> See para 10.26 on page 194 using link below:

<http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Peterborough-Sub-Regional-Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-Final-Report-July-2014.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> 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 resulted in a new single housing need figure for South Holland District of 430 dwellings per annum - which was somewhat below the previously-identified target range.

See: <http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Peterborough-SHMA-Update-October-2015.pdf>

A further update - following the release of 2014-based household projections in the summer of 2016 - was commenced in November of that year and finalised in March 2017. This exercise revised the single housing need figure for South Holland District upwards to 445 dwellings per annum.

### 3.0 FURTHER WORK ON THE LOCAL PLAN

3.1 Having regard to the contents of section 2.0 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 outlined in points 1) to 3) below should guide further work on Local Plan preparation relating to such aims:

- 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 would 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 would be given to delivering the completed SWRR as soon as possible. Initially, this would focus on the Steering Group’s completion of the design of what was then 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 (Spalding Road), 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 (see **Appendix A**).
- 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 for Spalding 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 of the A151 broad location<sup>13</sup> for delivery

---

See: <http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Peterborough-Housing-Market-Area-Boston-Borough-Council-Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-Update-Final-Report-March-2017.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> 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’).

commencing towards the end of, or beyond, the Local Plan period dependent on demand. This would:

- assist in ensuring continuity in meeting housing need arising in Spalding towards the end of, and beyond, the Local Plan period and provide certainty in this regard;
  - offer a clear alternative site for housing development following substantial completion of the Holland Park scheme; and
  - 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 (Spalding Road). The south-western end of the North Phase would provide the starting point for the final stage of the SWRR, which would involve a bridge crossing of the Vernatt's Drain and proceed round to the Holland Park scheme via an intersection with the A151 (Bourne Road).

#### **4.0 INVOLVEMENT OF DEVELOPER INTERESTS**

- 4.1 Given the interrelationship of the emerging officer proposals for a Vernatt's broad location and the North Phase of the SWRR, as set out in section 3.0 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 in late 2014. 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.
- 4.2 There was general agreement that the emerging strategy set out in section 3.0 above was worthy of further consideration and should provide the basis for progressing relevant proposals in the emerging Local Plan. In addition, it was suggested that some form of 'common understanding' on how a single proposal to deliver housing and the next stage of the SWRR should be agreed between the developer interests, South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council, as Highway Authority. However, no significant progress had been made in this regard as of March 2017.

#### **5.0 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY**

- 5.1 Following the meetings with developer interests, the emerging strategy was reviewed by officers in 2015 in order to inform the preparation of the 'South East Lincolnshire Local Plan: Draft for Public Consultation

(including site options for development) – January 2016’ (the Draft Local Plan). 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 points 1), 2) and 3) in section 3.0 above] by adding points 4), 5) and 6) below:

- 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 (Spalding Road) to a point equating to Two Plank Bridge. (**NB:** this development would require acquisition of a small amount of adjoining land fronting the B1356 (Spalding Road) currently not forming part of SHLAA site Pin045, including two semi-detached dwellings: 167 and 169 Spalding Road.) This part of the North Phase would 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 would 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 would be in association with the development of SHLAA site Pin024, the precise nature of which would be subject to further discussions; the results of which would inform an update of the strategy.



- 6) Early implementation of development on SHLAA site Pin045 would be encouraged.

## **6.0 PROGRESSING THE LOCAL PLAN**

6.1 The Draft Local Plan was the subject of a six-week public consultation exercise between 8 January and 19 February 2016 inclusive. It included 'Policy 13: A Sustainable Urban Extension for housing in Spalding' (Policy13), based on the strategy for the delivery of the SWRR and proposed housing growth to the north of the Vernatt's Drain outlined in sections **3.0** and **5.0** above. In support of Policy 13, it was made clear on the Policies Map Inset for Spalding and Pinchbeck that Sites Pin024 and 045 were viewed as 'Preferred Housing Sites', and not 'Potential Housing Sites', which was the designation applied to all the other site options identified in the document.

6.2 Following the consideration of a number of representations expressing concern about Policy 13, particularly in respect of the proposed loss of countryside between Spalding and Pinchbeck, it was resolved by the Joint Committee, at its meeting on 22 April, 2016, that:

*'the principle of an urban extension to the north of the Vernatt's Drain be retained, but that further consideration be given to the site-specific details relating to this proposal, in particular the number of dwellings involved, the nature of the countryside gap between Pinchbeck and Spalding in the vicinity of the railway and the Spalding Road, and the phased delivery of the development'.*

6.3 Following the consideration of representations on individual site options lying to the north of the Vernatt's Drain, and in the light of the Joint Committee's decision recorded in para 6.2 above, it was agreed that the importance of securing as much developer funding as possible to secure the delivery of the North Phase of the SWRR would have to take priority over the desire, expressed by a number of Pinchbeck residents, to retain a clear countryside gap between Pinchbeck and Spalding. Accordingly, it was decided to enlarge the area of Site Pin024 by adding Site Pin059 to it and to enlarge Site Pin045 by adding Sites Pin001, Pin016, Pin020, Pin031 and Pin040, in order to create more development potential in both cases. In respect of expanding the area of Site Pin045, it was also considered that this would create a better opportunity for achieving a well-designed planning outcome. Further consideration of Sites Pin024 and Pin045 concluded that:

- 1) given the time it could take to deliver the first part of the North Phase of the SWRR that would enable it to access Site Pin024, most of this site should be safeguarded for development beyond the Local Plan period and, instead, a range of smaller sites in the Spalding area be identified for meeting housing need within the Local Plan period; and

- 2) further residential development opportunities on that part of Site Pin045 lying to the west of the Joint Line be created instead of designating it as 'Proposed Green Infrastructure'.
- 6.4 All the above-mentioned changes to Sites Pin 024 and Pin045 were contained in the 'South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2026: Public Consultation on Preferred Sites for Development – July 2016' (the Preferred Sites for Development), which was the subject of public consultation between Friday, 15 July and Friday, 12 August 2016 inclusive.
- 6.5 However, following the consideration of representations on the Preferred Sites for Development and other matters (which included a full review of the distribution of housing across South Holland District resulting in a reduction in Spalding's housing requirement, an update of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for South Holland District, and a review of the proposed funding arrangements for the SWRR), it was decided that the approach towards Site Pin024 set out in the Preferred Sites for Development should be reversed and that the full extent of both Sites Pin024 and Pin045 should be allocated for residential development in the emerging Publication Version of the Local Plan. It was also decided to identify these two sites collectively as the 'Vernatts Sustainable Urban Extension', and to promote them accordingly. As a consequence of this action, a number of Preferred Sites for housing development lying to the west of Spalding were either removed or reduced in capacity for the purpose of preparing the Publication version. Nevertheless, a variety of alternative sites for housing development remain as alternative locations to the Holland Park and Vernatts Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- 6.6 A fuller explanation on how sites for residential development in Spalding have been identified for inclusion in the Publication Version of the Local Plan is set out in the 'Housing Paper' for Spalding<sup>14</sup>.
- 6.7 Having had regard to the representations received following both the **Draft Local Plan** and the **Preferred Sites for Development** public consultation exercises, Draft Local Plan Policy 13: A Sustainable Urban Extension for housing in Spalding has been revised and re-presented as the emerging Policy 12: Vernatts Sustainable Urban Extension (Policy 12). This policy is to be complemented by the emerging Policy 30: Delivering the Spalding Transport Strategy (Policy 30). (**NB:** In respect of both of these policies, the term 'North Phase' of the SWRR has been replaced by 'Northern Section'. Descriptions of the Northern, Central and Southern sections of the SWRR, which will cover the entire length of the road, are set out in the South East Lincolnshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016<sup>15</sup>.)

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Final-Spalding-HP-3.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/FINAL-South-East-Lincs-IDP-17th-November-2016.pdf> See paras 4.6.3 – 4.6.5.

- 6.8 Emerging Policy 12 now makes clear that development of the full capacity of the Vernatts Sustainable Extension will not be realised unless the SWRR is extended round to a junction with the A151(Bourne Road). As currently proposed, this means that no more than 1,026 dwellings could be accessed solely off the Northern section of the SWRR. Emerging Policy 30 makes clear that Sites Pin024 and Pin045 'will be required to contribute to, and subject to viability, deliver the Northern section of the SWRR'; and, in addition, requires other proposed Spalding sites to make financial contributions towards the funding of projects in the Spalding Transport Strategy with a view to, inter alia, helping to mitigate the future impact of some 1,000 dwellings accessing the B1356 (Spalding Road) off the Northern Section of the SWRR.
- 6.9 Inset Map No. 2 proposes areas of 'Recreational Open Space' to the west, south and north of Site Pin045 with a view to not only providing such space for local enjoyment, but also serving to create some form of visual separation of the existing built-up areas of Pinchbeck and Spalding. However, it is recognised that such an approach will not be sufficient to address the previously-expressed concerns of those residents of Pinchbeck who wish to retain the existing countryside gap between the two settlements.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 As mentioned in its introduction, this document seeks to explain how the relevant policies in the Local Plan Preferred Options document have evolved into the proposals featured in the Publication Version of the emerging Local Plan. It is intended that it will both inform and, in turn, be informed by subsequent stages of plan preparation. Accordingly, it will next be reviewed in the light of the outcomes of the six-week public consultation exercise on the Publication Version (which runs from 10 April to 22 May 2017 inclusive).

## Appendix A: The North Phase of the SWRR

