

AUGUST 2024



# RETFORD TOWN CENTRE

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP



## RETFORD TOWN CENTRE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FINALISED, REFERENDUMS CONFIRMED

**THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024**

- Final version of the Neighbourhood Plan now complete, and available to view.
- Adoption by Bassetlaw District Council depends on the outcome of residential and business referendums, to be held in the area on 14 November 2024.
- See inside for further details, and online at: [www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/retfordtcmp](http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/retfordtcmp)



Scan to view the  
Plan and supporting  
documents

# OVERVIEW

The Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan is designed to provide a framework of planning policies for managing and enhancing the Town Centre over the coming 15 years.

The Plan addresses a broad range of themes, informing policies that seek to protect, enhance, and regenerate the Town Centre. The boundary of the area addressed by the Plan is detailed on the map below.

This guide provides a concise summary of each of the sections of the Plan, alongside an overview of the vital role of the upcoming residential and business referendums.

## Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Area



- Why** The decision as to whether Bassetlaw District Council should formally adopt the Retford Town Centre and use it to determine planning applications lies with the local community. This will take the form of concurrent residential and business referendums in the local area.
- When** Both referendums will be held on **Thursday 14 November 2024, between 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM** (polling station details TBC).
- Who** Registered electors who reside within the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan will be eligible to vote, as will a nominated representative of each non-domestic rate paying business within the area (one vote per business, irrespective of the number of their properties within the area). All eligible electors will be contacted by the District Council in advance of the referendum. Eligible businesses will need to complete a registration form.
- How** The referendums will be administered by Bassetlaw District Council, and will function in the same way as ordinary elections, with voting possible in person, via postal vote, or by proxy. The two Referendums will ask the same question:
- *Do you want Bassetlaw District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Retford Town Centre to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?*

The Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted subject to a positive result in both referendums. The District Council will determine how to proceed if the results differ.

## Further information

For any queries about the Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan, please contact:

### **Neighbourhood Planning Team, Bassetlaw District Council**

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### **Rick Brand, Chair of Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Planning Group**

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### Sections 1 to 10: Context, Vision, and Objectives (Pages 6 to 14)

- Outlines the context for the Neighbourhood Plan, and 8 objectives that underpin an overarching vision for the Town Centre, summarised as: *Retford Town Centre will provide a rich mix of shopping, leisure, sports, health, cultural and social facilities within a heritage setting, making it appealing to all as a place to live, learn, develop, work, and spend quality leisure time.*



### Section 11: Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets (Pages 15 to 17)

- Whilst protecting and enhancing the historic character of the Town Centre, the Plan will promote the development of key spaces and vacant or underutilised properties to a high standard to the benefit of business and residents.

### Section 12: Achieving Well Designed Places (Pages 18 to 27)

- Development should respond to the historic context of the Town Centre and contribute positively to the experience of visitors, local businesses, and residents. Design should reflect the guidance included in the accompanying Design Codes and be sustainable, providing measures to mitigate climate change (where possible), achieve visual coherence, and deliver opportunities for improvements.

## Section 13: Significant Views (Pages 27 – 29)

- Views across public spaces, courtyards and alleyways, impressive historic buildings and structures, green areas and the Canal and River provide a range of key views which provide a dramatic backdrop for the day-to-day activity of the Town. Proposals are required to demonstrate how they will respond to, conserve, and enhance these significant views and protect the historic character of the Town Centre.

## Section 14: Improving the Public Realm (Pages 29 to 33)

- The public realm is the space around buildings that is publicly accessible, with significant areas including the Market Square, Carolgate and Cannon Square. Evidence from the public consultation, Design Code and Ecology Study suggested improving these areas by adaptation measures (e.g. planting), providing amenity space, creating spaces for social activities to enhance the attractiveness of the Town Centre as a destination.



## Section 15: Maintaining the Vitality and Vibrancy of the Town Centre (Pages 34 to 40)

- The Plan aims to support businesses to locate and grow in the Town Centre and to ensure that the fabric of the Town is both visually attractive and works for its businesses.
- The conversion of ground floor retail units to non-retail uses is supported only where the proposal increases the provision of services and facilities for the wider community. The execution of further public murals using a similar style will be welcomed and supported.

## Section 16: Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity (Pages 41 to 48)

- An important focus of the Plan is to encourage a more coherent landscape planting and management regime. This 'Greening of the Town' will increase the number of trees, planting, and green spaces. Development proposals which would have significant negative ecological impacts will not generally be supported and should achieve a net biodiversity gain that is measurable. Development proposals should also incorporate appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems.



## Section 17: Improving the Canal and River Corridors (Page 49)

- There are sites within the Plan area along the River and Canal which may, over time, be redeveloped. This development provides the opportunity to deliver an uninterrupted and attractive pedestrian and cycle corridor through the Town Centre. This has a range of benefits including enhancing the Town as a place to spend leisure time as well as to shop.

## Section 18: Significant Green Areas (Pages 50 to 52)

- Significant Green Areas are not intended to be a bar to development but to help identify and reinforce the value of pockets of green space across the Town Centre. Development may take place within them, but this should minimise its impact on these green areas and demonstrate an understanding of the value of these Significant Green Areas to the wider setting of the Conservation Area.

## Section 19: Getting Around the Town Centre (Pages 53 to 58)

- Improving active travel reduces car usage, improves health and well-being, and enhances sustainability. The topography of the Town Centre is relatively flat and compact making it an ideal place to encourage more cycling and walking. The absence of a north-south link away from Carolgate is the single most significant obstacle to increasing cycling usage in the area.

## Section 20: Housing in the Town Centre (Pages 59 to 65)

- Flats of 1 or 2 bed dominate the Town Centre and this need not necessarily be an issue as it complements the wider Retford built up area with more 3 bed plus houses. Recent applications in the Town Centre have included very small flats with limited natural light. This will not create healthy living spaces, and dwellings should conform to the minimum national space standards. Proposals for accommodation for older people, particularly sheltered accommodation with limited support, would meet a local housing need and is supported.



## Section 21: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies (Pages 65 to 67)

- The government identifies the planning system as having a significant role to play in tackling climate change. Energy used to heat and cool homes needs to be reduced as well as shifting to net zero carbon sources. The design and layout of new development can significantly affect the energy efficiency of buildings. The Plan supports low carbon motorised transport, including increased provision of charging points, and appropriate solar powered methods of street lighting and signage illumination.



## **Section 22: Reducing the Risk of Flooding (Pages 68 to 70)**

- Over 50% of the Plan area is currently identified in Flood Zone 2 or 3. BDC will require applicants to undertake site specific flood risk assessments for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Sustainable drainage systems are supported, including increasing the amount of permeable surface. These can be specifically designed (e.g., rain gardens and geopaving), or increased shrubs, trees, and grassed areas to provide ways to capture water and manage run-off.

## **Section 23: Regeneration and Site Allocations (Pages 71 to 81)**

- The Plan addresses three potential development sites, considering their context and constraints, in order to define policies to guide their future regeneration. The sites are: Ebsworth Hall (Policy 13a), Land between Amcott Way, Bridgegate and River Lane (Policy 13b), and Goodwin Hall and the former Registry Office Buildings (Policy 13c).

## **Supporting Documents**

The Neighbourhood Plan is also supported by the following evidence-based documents, all available from [www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/retfordcnp](http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/retfordcnp) :

- Design Guide (AECOM, 2022)
- Ecology Assessment (EMEC Ecology, 2022)
- Ecology Study Report (N. Wraith, 2022)
- Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, 2022)
- Masterplan (AECOM, 2022)
- Site Assessment (AECOM, 2022)
- Vision for Retford (RTCNPG, 2023)