

## Planning Aid in Action: Caistor Neighbourhood Plan Support

### Background

The project is located in the parish of Caistor – a rural Market Town within the West Lindsey District Council area of Lincolnshire. It was developed as a result of an approach to the Steering Group (part of an approach to all 6 Lincolnshire Frontrunners), offering a range of potential support services in connection with the preparation of the Caistor Neighbourhood Plan. Planning Aid England offered support and a support package template/model, illustrating the type of support that was potentially available and the basis on which it could be provided.

Planning Aid attended a meeting of the Steering Group in order to expand on the support package offer, following which the steering group responded outlining the support it was looking for. This was enshrined in an agreed support package document. Specific elements of the agreed support package were then embodied within the Neighbourhood Plan Project Plan.

Although there has been no external partner involvement up to this point, West Lindsey Council's Conservation & Design Officer attended a session. Planning Aid has had some discussion with Design Council CABE (an additional support to the Steering Group on design issues) in order to coordinate support activities and consider how the two organisations might work together in respect of the scheduled future session on 'visioning'. A link is also possible with Community Lincs in respect of future planned prioritisation and action planning activity, following on from an earlier Planning for Real exercise led by Community Lincs.

**“Well experienced planning officers present – absolute necessity.”** *Participant*

**“Easy, understandable learning – good presentation, excellent research by presenters – all good.”** *Participant*

### Planning Aid's support included:-

- Developing session content with the Steering Group Chair, and tailoring it in order to reflect the specific requirements/needs of Steering Group members. Full notes were taken of the sessions and made available to attendees post-event.
- Delivering a planning training session attended by 13 steering group members and delivered by two PAE volunteers. Materials (including powerpoint) were developed for the session and made available to attendees.
- Delivering a plan preparation support workshop, attended by 11 steering group members (plus a member of the Tetney Village NP Frontrunner Steering Group), led by the Outreach Coordinator and supported by five PAE volunteers.

The session was run as a mix of presentations and small working groups. A 'master powerpoint' was developed to bind the session, together with specific materials to facilitate individual sessions (e.g. example policies for the policy writing topic).

**“Being able to talk to people with know how, i.e. Planning Aid staff & volunteers – gave us professional insight and help.”**  
*Participant*

### What was the outcome of the project?

An initial two elements of the support package have so far been delivered. Volunteers have so far contributed 50-60 hours to this project. These volunteers have been drawn from a pool of nine assembled as a team in order to deliver the project, with six so far being utilised. It is envisaged that all nine will ultimately be involved as the support package continues to unfold in future months.