

Central Lincolnshire
Policy S61:
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
and Areas of Great Landscape Value
Evidence Report

June 2021



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A review of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan is being undertaken which will set out an updated framework for how development will be considered across the districts of City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey to 2040.
- 1.2 This evidence report provides background information and justification for Policy S61, which relates to the protection and enhancement of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

2. Policy Context

National Policy and Guidance

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and has been updated in 2019. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was introduced in 2014 and provides 'live' government guidance.
- 2.2 Section 15 of the NPPF concerns 'conserving and enhancing the natural environment' and Section
 - Paragraph 170 – *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;
 - b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*
 - Paragraph 171 – *'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework⁵³; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.*
 - Paragraph 172 – *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas...'*
- 2.3 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first introduced in 2014 which offers 'live' government guidance. The PPG provides guidance to help in the implementation of policy in the NPPF.

- 2.4 The PPG also includes advice on how the character of landscapes can be assessed to inform plan making, specifically it advises that Local Plans should 'recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside. The PPG also sets out that Plans can include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscape and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening.

Local Policy

- 2.5 Adopted Local Plan Policy LP17: Landscape, Townscape and Views of the 2017 Local Plan included protection of the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and designated Areas of Great Landscape Value. These Areas of Great Landscape Value were carried forward from the previous Local Plans prepared by North Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council.

3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1 Central Lincolnshire includes the nationally designated Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and eight locally designated Areas of Great Landscape Value. The boundaries and general policy approach for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are set nationally, but the controls applied to and the extents of the Areas of Great Landscape Value are determined more locally.
- 3.2 The boundaries of the Areas of Great Landscape Value have remained unchanged since they were established in individual district's Local Plans. In an effort to check that the designations remained of importance and fit for purpose an assessment was undertaken in 2020. This process, which including site visits, and its findings are detailed in the Appendices of this report.

4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1 The first, formal stage of the Local Plan review was the Issues and Options consultation that took place in June and July 2019. During this consultation Local Plan Policy LP17: Landscape, Townscape and Views was not listed amongst the policies not intended to be changed but there was also no specific information or question as to how it was intended to be changed.
- 4.2 Some comments were received during the consultation seeking to ensure that the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty continued to be protected in the plan.

5. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 5.1 The proposed approach for Policy S61 is to draw it out of a general landscape policy and have relating solely to the protected landscapes – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value. This allows for a greater degree of specific requirements which are appropriate for each designation to be laid out.

- 5.2 The boundaries of the Areas of Great Landscape Value have also been reviewed with changes being proposed in three locations as is set out in the Appendices to this report.

6. Reasonable Alternative Options

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been considered for this policy. (Option 1 is the preferred policy approach which has been included in the Proposed Local Plan.
- 6.2 **Option 2:** have no local policy on Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value and instead rely on national level policy. This policy approach has been discounted given the importance of protecting and enhancing the Central Lincolnshire landscape in terms of significant features.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan January 2021. This report will be updated following responses received during the Regulation 18 consultation prior to finalising the Local Plan for submission. This helps bring together relevant evidence that has informed this policy and how we have responded to comments received during the plan making process, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.

Appendix 1 – Review of Area of Great Landscape Value Methodology

Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Local Plan Review an assessment of the current Area of Great Landscape Value areas is proposed to be undertaken to ensure that the boundaries are accurate and reflect any changes that may have occurred since the last Local Plan. The plan area covers three districts of North Kesteven, City of Lincoln and West Lindsey with a total of 8 areas currently classed as Areas of Great Landscape Value. It is proposed to assess these existing areas using the methodology below:

Proposed Methodology

- 1.2 **Scope**

The scope of the review is to assess the current boundaries of the Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) within the Central Lincolnshire area. There are currently 8 areas across North Kesteven and West Lindsey District areas that are classified as Areas of Great Landscape Value.
- 1.3 **Desk Study**

The initial phase will be to undertake a desktop study of the AGLV boundaries, including topography, roads and settlements, rivers, land uses, vegetation and any development proposals that may have impacted upon the current boundaries since the last plan.
- 1.4 **Field Survey**

Next, site visits will be undertaken to each AGLV to assess the boundaries on the ground and to assess any physical changes to them/within them that are not otherwise identified via the desk top survey. Appendix 1 contains the site visit spreadsheet to be completed when visiting the sites.
- 1.5 **Findings/judgements**

Finally, using the findings collected via the desk top survey and site visits an assessment will be undertaken of whether any amendments to the boundaries of AGLV are required. Recommendations for alterations to the boundaries of the AGLV will be discussed with the relevant District officers. Following this amendments will be made to the boundaries of the AGLV on the GIS maps.

Appendix 2 – Site visit form

Site Allocation Survey Form			
Site Ref:		Date:	Officer:
Site Address:			
Is boundary accurate?	Yes:	No (record on location plan the correct boundary and identify reason in notes section)	
Land type:	Brownfield	Greenfield	Mixed (Identify different types on location plan and annotate)
Current Land Use			
Primary use:			
Secondary use/s:			
Other:			
Adjacent Land uses (N, S, E, W):			
Topography (Flat/gentle slope/steep slope/undulations)			
Site Constraints			
Overhead lines <input type="checkbox"/>	Possible contamination <input type="checkbox"/>	Trees worthy of protection <input type="checkbox"/>	
Access <input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbouring uses <input type="checkbox"/>	biodiversity value <input type="checkbox"/>	
PROW <input type="checkbox"/>	Proximity to mineral site <input type="checkbox"/>	proximity to waste site <input type="checkbox"/>	
Setting of CA/ LB/ SAM <input type="checkbox"/>	Watercourses/ditches <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (notes) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Local Open Space/Green Wedge <input type="checkbox"/>			
Notes			

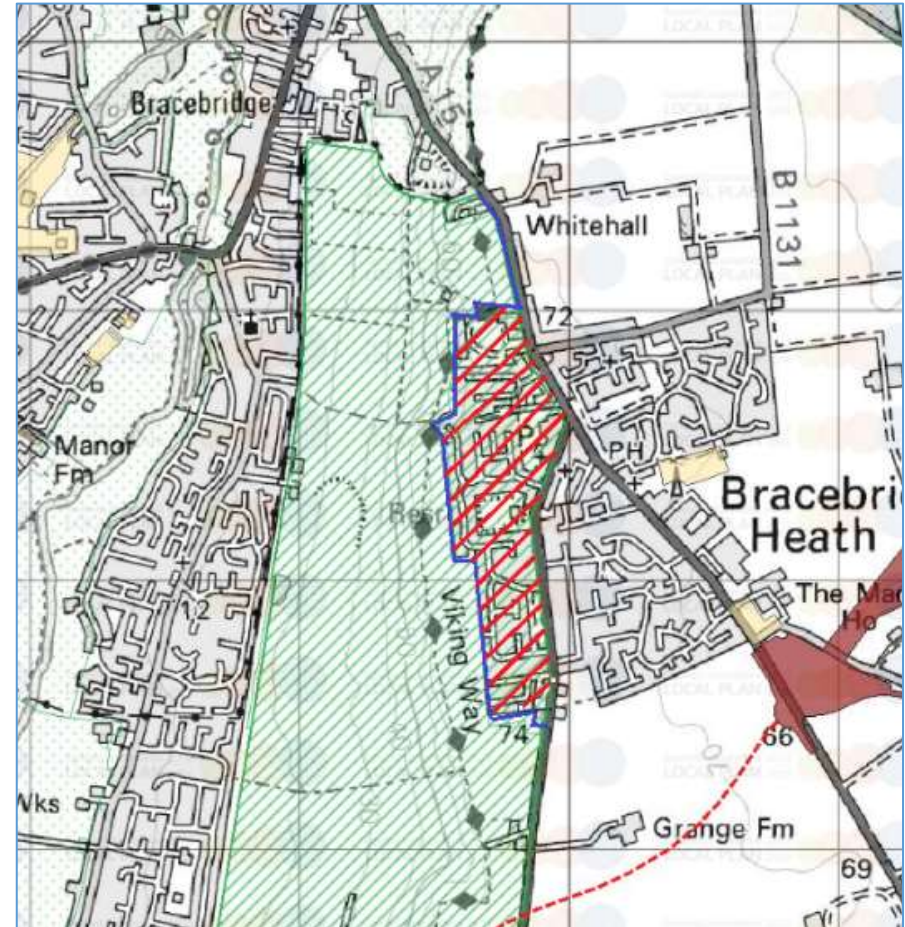
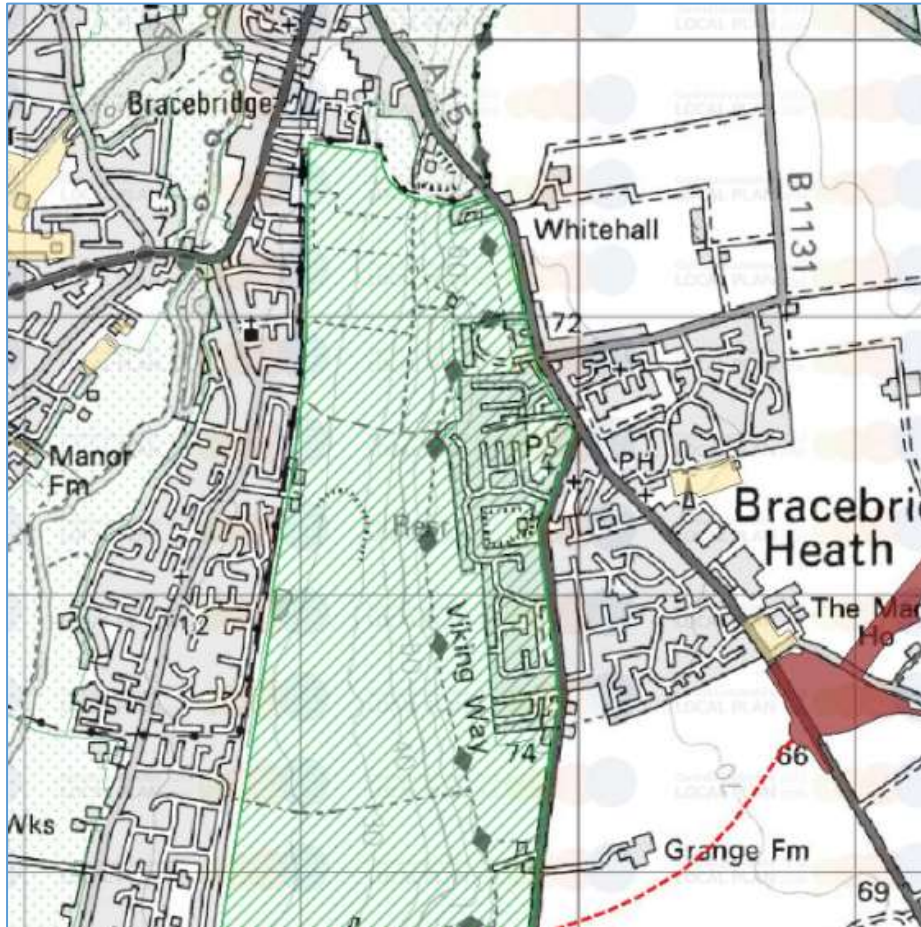
Appendix 3 – Proposed Amendments to Areas of Great Landscape boundaries

Introduction

A review of the current Areas of Great Landscape Value has been undertaken to assess whether the boundaries are still accurate and appropriate going forwards into the new Local Plan. This report sets out the proposals for amendments to the Areas of Great Landscape Value following a desk top assessment and site visits. Areas that are not listed in this document remain unaltered.

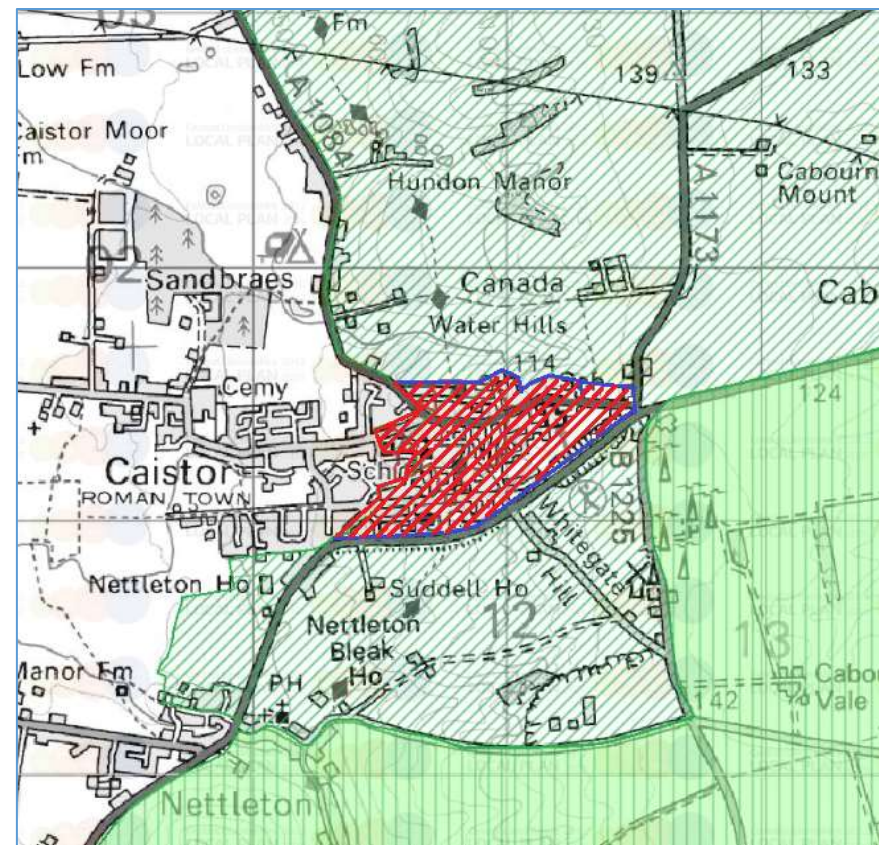
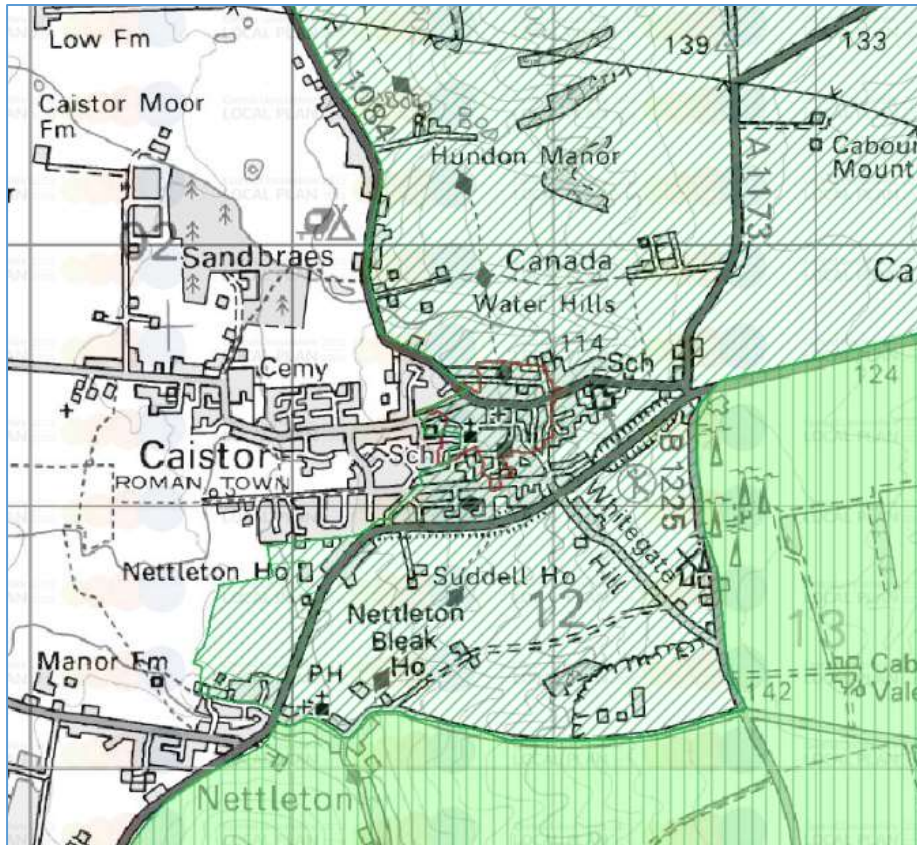
Bracebridge Heath

Proposed: Alter the boundary to reflect the edge of the settlement, excluding the built footprint. Continues to protect the wedge and the Viking Way public footpath. (Area hatched red to be removed from AGLV designation, boundary to follow blue line).



Caistor

Proposed: To alter the boundary of the AGLV to reflect the boundary of the village whilst retaining protection over the surrounding landscape. Caistor centre to protected via existing Article 4 Direction. (Area hatched red to be removed from AGLV designation, boundary to follow blue line)



Gainsborough

Proposed: To alter the boundary of the AGLV up to Belt Road to exclude recent development in this area, including The Gainsborough Academy school. To alter the boundary of the AGLV to exclude the Southern SUE which is currently under construction.

