

# Central Lincolnshire Policy S62: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value Evidence Report

Formerly Policy S61

March 2022



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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 S62, 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 most recently been updated in July 2021.
- 2.2 Section 15 of the NPPF concerns ‘conserving and enhancing the natural environment’;
- Paragraph 174 – *‘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 175 – *‘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 Framework; 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 176 – *‘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... The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.’*
- 2.3 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first introduced in 2014 which offers ‘live’ government guidance and is regularly updated. The PPG provides guidance to assist in the implementation of policy in the NPPF.
- 2.4 The PPG includes advice on how the character of landscapes can be assessed to inform plan making, where it states:

*“The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that 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.*

*Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Local Policy

- 2.5 Adopted Local Plan Policy LP17: Landscape, Townscape and Views included protection of the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and designated Areas of Great Landscape Value. The Areas of Great Landscape Value were carried forward from the previous Local Plans prepared by North Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council. The inclusion of the AGLV have previously undergone scrutiny through the Local Plan examination process and accordingly the appropriate evidence documents for the AGLV are included in the previous examination library for the adopted Local Plan.

## 3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1 Central Lincolnshire includes part of 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, as well as being included in the NPPF can be determined more locally in Local Plans.
- 3.2 Areas of Great Landscape Value are locally important, and the boundaries of the Areas of Great Landscape Value have remained unchanged since they were established in individual district's Local Plans.
- 3.3 In an effort to check that the designations remain of importance and fit for purpose an assessment of the boundaries, which included site visits, was undertaken in 2020. Details of the process 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

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<sup>1</sup> PPG Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721

Plan Policy LP17: Landscape, Townscape and Views was not listed amongst the policies not 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. Regulation 18 Consultation

- 5.1. A Consultation Draft of the Local Plan was published for consultation between 30 June and 24 August 2021. During this eight week consultation period comments were received on the plan, the policies within the plan, supporting information and evidence. The table below summarises the comments received in relation to Policy S62:

Comments received	Action	Comments
Agree with strengthening of the policy in relation to AGLV and AONB	None required	
Sleaford and the Fenland landscapes should be considered/included	None	The policy only relates to those landscapes that are already designated as Areas of Great Landscape Value
Interpretation and implementation can be challenging and create barriers	None	Interpretation and implementation of the policy is for the decision maker to take, taking into account all merits and material planning considerations.
Policy is designation driven and not evidence based with no justification for the designation of AGLV's	None	The designation of Areas of Great Landscape Value is long standing and has been found sound in numerous examinations. The designations remain valuable to the area to protect locally important views and this basis has been tested and approved. A review of the extent of these areas has been undertaken to ensure that nothing materially has altered their value with changes proposed detailed in the appendices to the evidence report.
No reference made to character, setting, views and cumulative impacts in areas that are outside designated areas	None	This element is covered in Policy S53 Design and Amenity: part c) which states ' <i>protect any important local views into, out of or through the site</i> '
Should include reference to heritage/cultural attributes that contribute to sense of place in point d & h)	Amend point d) and h)	Wording updated to include heritage and cultural contributions to sense of place within these designated landscapes

Adverse impact wording to be amended to allow for some mitigation	Amend	Wording updated to include scope for appropriate mitigation.
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## 6. Proposed Approach in Draft Local Plan

- 6.1 The proposed approach for this Policy is to draw it out of a general landscape policy contained within the previous Local Plan and create a policy relating solely to the protected landscapes – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value. This allows for a greater degree of protection and specific policy considerations appropriate for each designation.
- 6.2 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.

## 7. Reasonable Alternative Options

- 7.1 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).
- 7.2 **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 that contribute to a unique sense of place.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the Proposed Submission Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. 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			



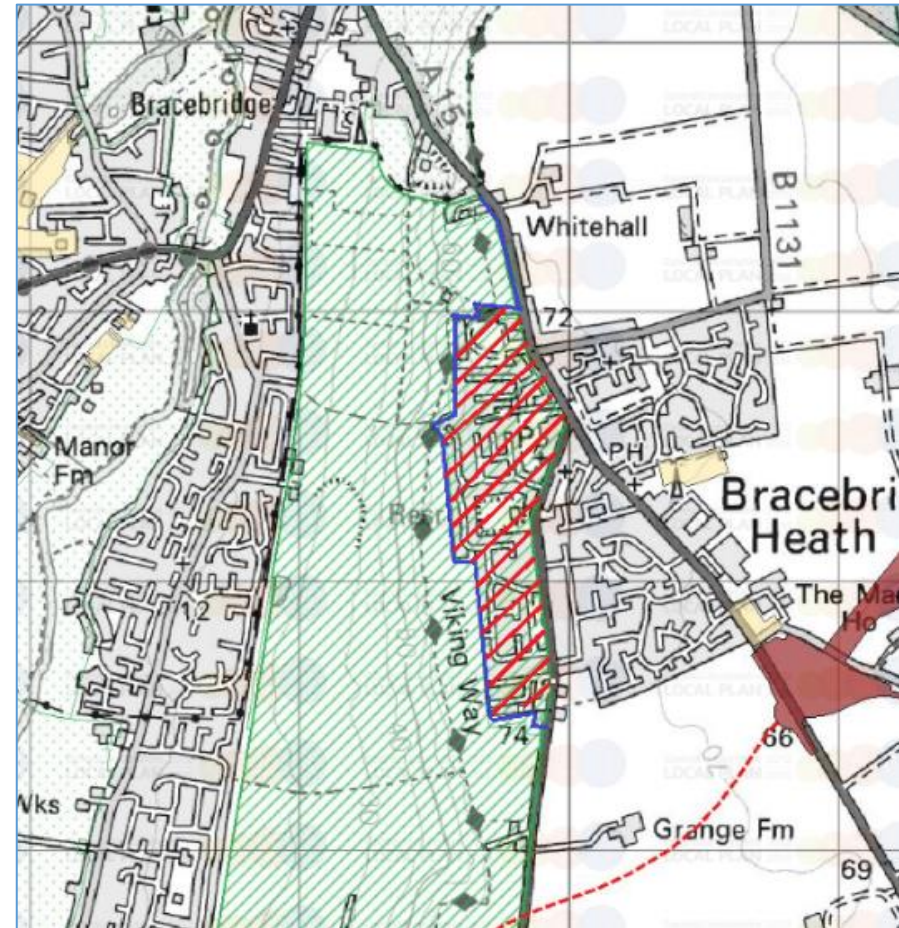
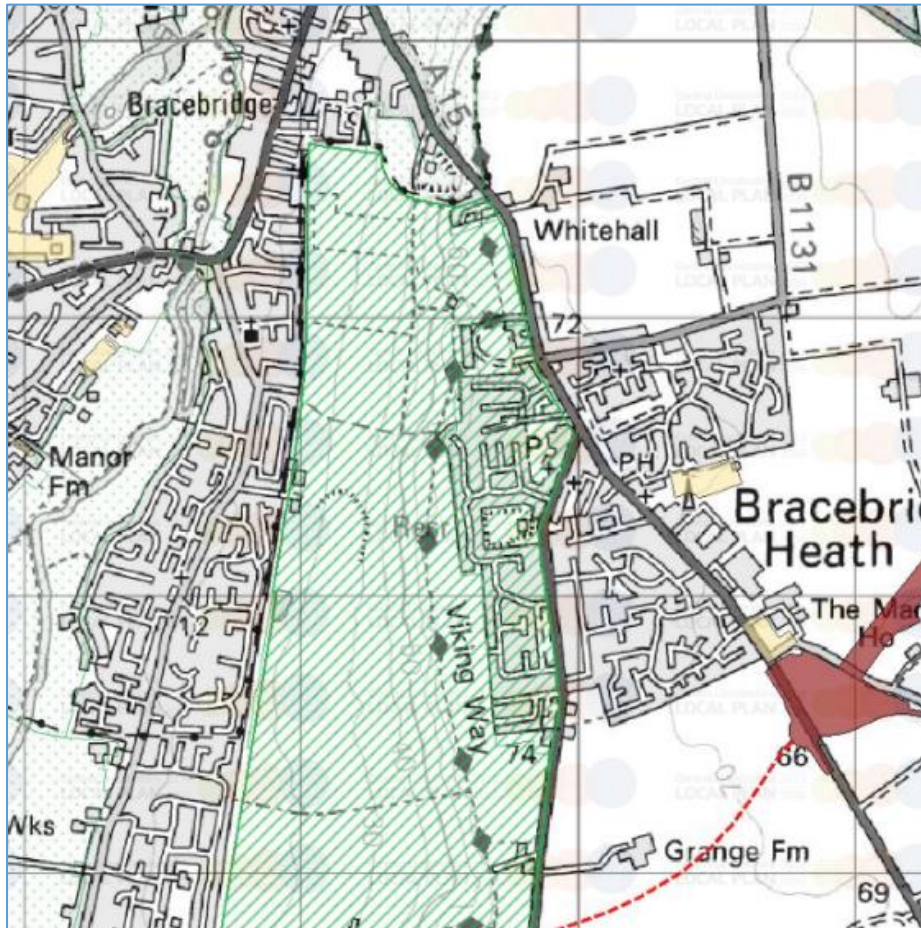
## Appendix 3 – Proposed Amendments to Areas of Great Landscape boundaries

### 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

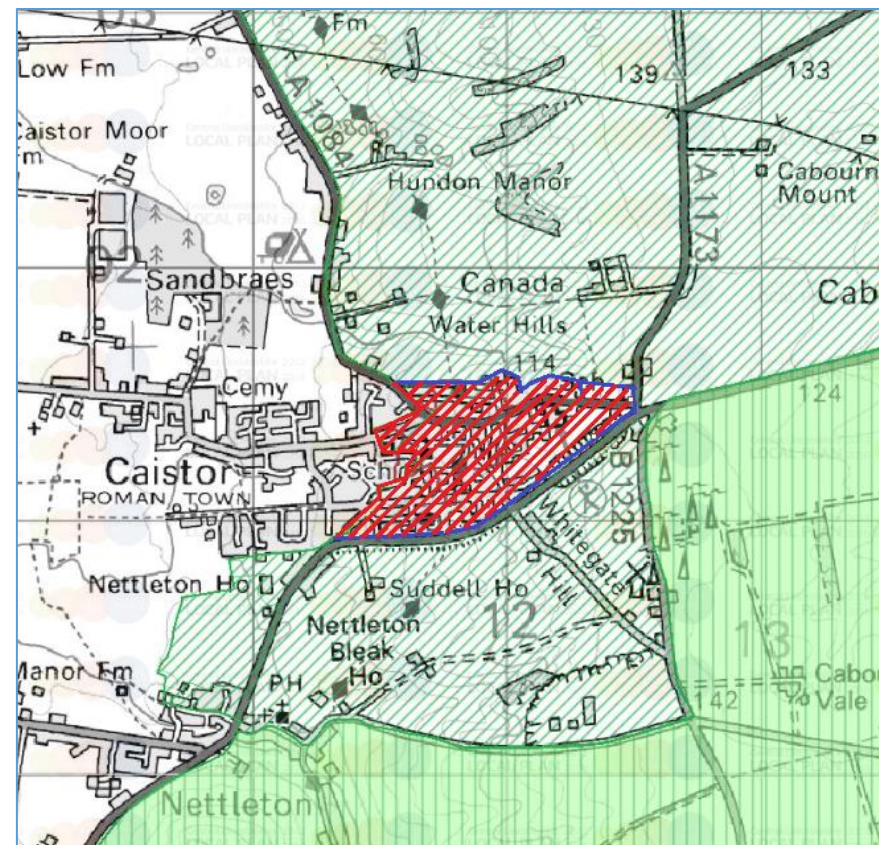
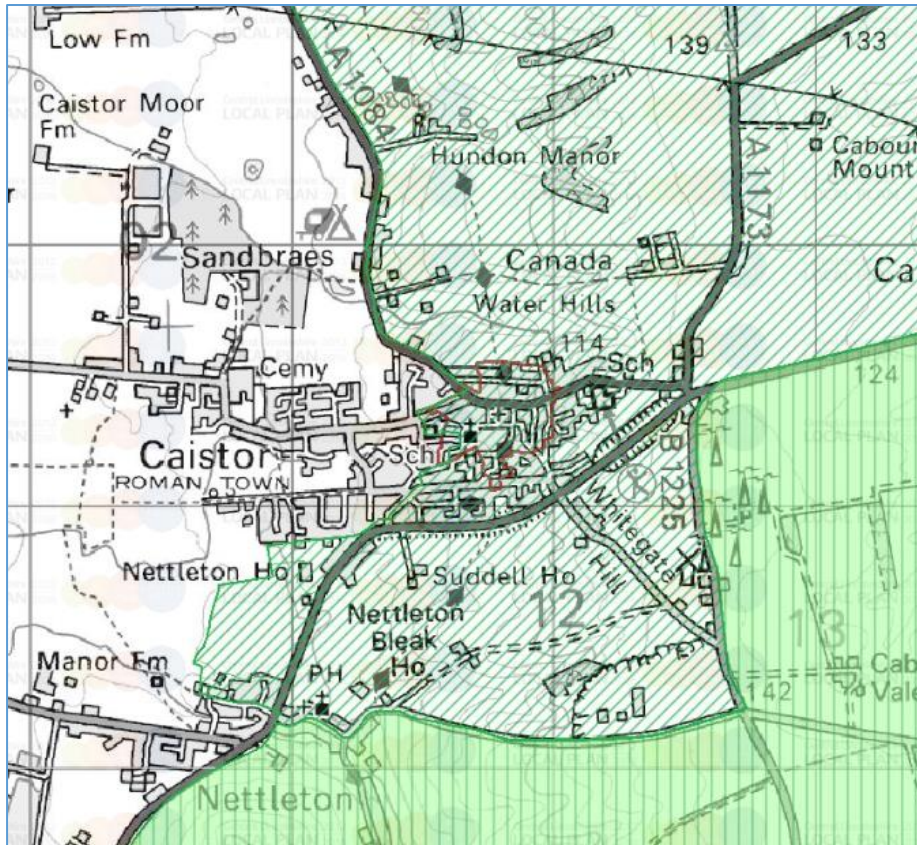
**Proposed:** Alter the boundary to reflect the edge of the settlement, excluding the built footprint. Continues to protect the wedge and the Viking Way public footpath. (Area hatched red to be removed from AGLV designation, boundary to follow blue line).





## 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 be 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.

