Landscape and Conservation

Introduction

12.1 North Lincolnshire has a high quality natural environment and the protection and enhancement of these assets is fundamental to sustainable development and to improving the quality of life for both residents and visitors to the area. The Local Plan is a major component in achieving this together with other Council initiatives including the Local Agenda 21 strategy, the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and an appraisal of landscape character and the preparation of a Countryside Design Summary. Also of importance is the Humber Estuary Management Strategy which provides an overview of a wide range of planning issues, including nature conservation, which affect the estuary as a whole.

12.2 With regard to nature conservation the scene was set by the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit which agreed an action plan for the environment including provision for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. This was complemented by the UK Conservation Strategy and UK Biodiversity Action Plan which aim to ensure policies contribute to the conservation of abundant and diverse British wildlife. Policies are aimed at the protection and enhancement of all natural assets as well as areas identified as having special quality.

12.3 North Lincolnshire has an abundance of wildlife habitats which range from the internationally important areas of the Humber estuary and Crowle Moors, through nationally and regionally important wildlife and geological sites to sites of particular local importance.

12.4 North Lincolnshire is also characterised by a variety of landscapes. A recent Landscape Assessment identified six basic landscape types ranging from the flat, low lying warpland of the Trent Floodplain, through the escarpment of the Lincoln Edge, the Ancholme Valley, the undulating Lincolnshire Wolds and the gently undulating Lincolnshire Drift to the estuarial lowlands of the Humber. These areas comprise predominantly arable land interspersed with a number of woodland and wetland areas and scattered hedgerows. Significant changes to the landscape have resulted following the extraction of minerals where semi-natural landscapes, such as Barton Clay Pits and the Ironstone Gulletts, have been created and also from the development of large scale industry such as at Killingholme at the mouth of the Humber estuary.

12.5 There are continued pressures on the landscape brought about by a number of factors including changes in agricultural practices; urban and village growth; new housing; large industrial or agricultural buildings in or on the edge of the countryside; the growth in leisure and tourism; communications infrastructure; power generation and transmission; mineral extraction; and the significant lack of trees and woodland in comparison with other parts of England. These are all issues which are addressed elsewhere within the Local Plan.

12.6 Government priority as outlined in PPG7 is to find ways of enriching the quality of the whole countryside to complement the protection which specific designations offer. The approach is to examine the overall character of the countryside which is derived from the interaction of physical and ecological features (including geology, landform, soil, wildlife and modern and historic man-made features) with land use.
and other activities including farming, settlement form and building design. The overall aim is to accommodate change without sacrificing local character.

Nature Conservation

Sites of International Importance, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar Sites

12.7 Sites of International Importance include Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), designated under the European Community Habitats Directive, and Ramsar sites notified in line with the Government’s obligations as a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance. These sites support communities and populations of plants and animals which are particularly special, making them internationally important. These areas currently comprise the Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast SPA and Crowle Moors (part of Thorne Moors candidate SAC).

LC1 - Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar Sites

Proposals for development which may affect an SPA, a proposed SPA, a SAC or candidate SAC will be assessed according to their implications for the site’s conservation objectives. Proposals not directly connected with, or necessary for, the site, and which are likely to have a significant effect on the site (either individually or in combination with other proposals), will not be permitted unless it can be conclusively demonstrated that:

i) there is no alternative solution; and

ii) there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development.

Where the site hosts a priority natural habitat type or a priority species, proposals will not be permitted unless it can be conclusively demonstrated that it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety, or for consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.

Where such a development does proceed, the use of conditions or planning obligations to secure all compensatory measures necessary to comply with Article 3 of the EEC Habitats and Species Directive will be considered.

12.8 Ramsar sites, SACs and SPAs are covered under the provisions of EU Directives. The provisions of the Ramsar Convention include requirements for contracting parties to promote wetlands generally and to:

i) formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the list, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory;

ii) designate alternative sites of the original habitat type should the development of any of the presently designated sites become necessary in the national interest.

12.9 Annex C of PPG9 sets out the procedures to be followed in
Considering development proposals. The Habitats Directive provides the main mechanism for protecting these areas by restricting the grant of planning permission for development which is likely to significantly affect such areas and which is not directly connected with or necessary to their management. The local authority shall, after consulting with English Nature, consider the effect of any proposal, either individually or in combination with other proposals on the site and will require the developer to undertake an assessment of the impact of the proposal. The scope and content of the assessment will depend on the location, size and significance of the proposal.

**Sites of National and Regional Nature Conservation Interest**

12.10 It is essential to ensure that the abundance and diversity of wildlife and its habitats in North Lincolnshire is conserved and enhanced. The area already contains some 20 or so Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are sites of national and regional interest. Policies should be aimed at the continued protection of such areas and the designation of additional areas where special consideration needs to be given.

**LC2 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves**

Proposals for development in, or likely to affect, Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be subject to special scrutiny. Where such development may have an adverse effect, directly or indirectly on the SSSI, it will not be permitted unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the national network of such sites.

Where a site is a National Nature Reserve (NNR) or a site identified under the Nature Conservation Review (NCR) or Geological Conservation Review (GCR) particular regard will be paid to the individual site’s national importance.

In all cases where development is permitted which would damage the nature conservation value of the site, such damage should be kept to a minimum. Where development is permitted the use of conditions or planning obligations to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site’s nature conservation value and other appropriate compensatory measures will be considered.

12.11 Some of these sites are particularly important because what they exemplify is rare and irreplaceable, and others are important as representative examples of their type on a local, national or international scale. Government guidance indicates that development proposals in or adjacent to SSISs must be subject to special scrutiny. Where a development is permitted and there is no damage to a designated site, planning conditions or obligations will be sought to safeguard the nature conservation interest.

**Other Sites of Nature Conservation Interest**

12.12 There are over 130 sites which are of significant local nature conservation interest. A number of these sites are worthy of designation as Local Nature Reserves (LNR), though to date there is only one designated Local Nature Reserve at Frodingham Railway Cutting in Scunthorpe. In addition to these sites, however, there are a multitude of other Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The
area also contains Regionally Important Geological Sites / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS).

**LC3 - Local Nature Reserves**

It is proposed that the following areas are designated as Local Nature Reserves.

1) **Brumby Wood,** Scunthorpe
2) **Atkinsons Warren/Skippingdale Plantation,** Scunthorpe
3) **Sawcliffe,** Scunthorpe
4) **Dragonby Ponds,** Scunthorpe
5) **Silkstone Pond,** Scunthorpe
6) **Ashby Ville Ballast Pits,** Scunthorpe
7) **Axholme Lane,** Haxey
8) **Butterwick Hale and Common,** East Butterwick
9) **River Eau and Messingham Ings**
10) **Elsham Marsh**
11) **Waters Edge, Barton upon Humber**
12) **Chase Hill Wood**
13) **Burton Woodland**
14) **Sheffields Hill**
15) **Thealby Gullet**

16) **Yorkshire East Gullet (north)**
17) **Brumby Common,** Scunthorpe
18) **Owston Ferry Castle**

**LC4 - Development Affecting Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance**

Any development or land use change which is likely to have an adverse impact on a Local Nature Reserve, a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation or a Regionally Important Geological Site will not be approved unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site or feature.

In all cases where development is permitted which may damage the nature conservation value of the site, such damage shall be kept to a minimum. Where development is permitted the use of conditions or planning obligations to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site’s nature conservation value and other appropriate compensatory measures will be considered.

12.13 Sites of nature conservation and geological interest are important not only for the protection of natural assets and the promotion of bird nesting but also as a valuable local education resource. Sites of this nature should, therefore, be protected from the encroachment of development which may either destroy or adversely affect them.
Planning permission will not be granted for development or land use changes which would have an adverse impact on badgers or species protected by Schedules 1, 5 or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Where development is permitted that may have an effect on those species, conditions or the use of planning agreements will be considered to:

i) facilitate the survival of individual members of the species; and

ii) reduce disturbance to a minimum; and

iii) provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of population.

12.14 The EC Habitats and Species Directive 92/43, requires the UK Government to protect certain species in accordance with Articles 12-16. Furthermore PPG9 specifies that the presence of a protected species is a material planning consideration when considering development proposals which would be likely to result in harm to a species or its habitat. Where development is permitted the Council will impose conditions or enter into planning agreements to minimise any adverse impact on such species.

Habitat Creation

12.15 The area contains a variety of sites of established nature conservation interest which are to be conserved and enhanced to assist in increasing biodiversity. There are however opportunities to create new habitats to complement existing areas and to contribute to biodiversity.

Provision will be made for the creation of nature reserves and new wildlife habitats both in rural and urban areas. Where appropriate, in granting planning permission, the creation of such areas will be required for the following types of development:

i) in association with the reclamation of former mineral workings and waste disposal sites;

ii) in association with schemes for derelict land clearance;

iii) on land which is no longer required for long term agricultural use. Particular emphasis will be placed on the creation of habitats such as wet and dry heathland, wet woodland and reedbed in keeping with local and national biodiversity targets and provision of habitat for protected species.

12.16 National Biodiversity Action Plan targets have been identified for habitat creation to increase biodiversity, and these include targets for heathland and habitats for protected species. Specific sites have already been identified as priority areas for the creation of caversands heath, which forms part of the distinctive local character of parts of North Lincolnshire. Opportunities exist for this and other habitat creation particularly in relation to despoiled land, waste disposal sites and redundant agricultural land.
Countryside Conservation and Enhancement

12.17 The landscape is an intrinsic part of the structure of North Lincolnshire and a major influence on development patterns. It is also a dynamic commodity which has been, and will continue to be, subject to change and it is the purpose of the Local Plan to control future changes to maintain and enhance the value of this important asset. An assessment of the landscape character of North Lincolnshire and the preparation of Guidelines and a Countryside Design Summary has been undertaken by landscape consultants.

LC7 - Landscape Protection

Where development is permitted within rural settlements or within the open countryside, special attention will be given to the protection of the scenic quality and distinctive local character of the landscape. Development which does not respect the character of the local landscape will not be permitted.

12.18 Local landscape character areas and local landscape types have been defined for the whole of North Lincolnshire. All proposals for development will have regard to the conservation and enhancement of the district’s landscape and its features, and will seek to maintain local variations in the landscape. Wherever possible, woodlands, grasslands, heathlands and other habitats of landscape importance together with valuable existing landscape features, such as hedgerows, trees, copses, ponds, watercourses, dykes, historical sites, estate features, enclosure landscapes, and other built heritage features will be protected and enhanced.

12.19 All proposals for development will have regard to the landscape assessment and guidelines and the Countryside Design Summary, which are to be used as supplementary planning guidance.

Areas of High Landscape Value

12.20 A review of Areas of High Landscape Value has been undertaken following the recent appraisal of the district’s landscape character and in the light of guidance set out by the Countryside Commission in CCP 423 Landscape Assessment Guidance. In the light of this review it is proposed that a number of Areas of High Landscape Value should be retained. The Lincoln Edge Cliff, The Lincoln Edge Woodland and Heathland to the east of Scunthorpe and the Wold Villages Scarp Slope are already identified as being of special value. There are additional areas which should be designated for their special characteristics.

LC8 - Areas of High Landscape Value

The following Areas of High Landscape Value will be retained:

1) Lincoln Edge Cliff, between Whitton and Flixborough

2) Lincoln Edge Woodland and Heathland areas, east of Scunthorpe and extending south to Kirton in Lindsey

3) Wold Villages Scarp Slope
LC9 - Proposed Areas of High Landscape Value

The following areas are proposed as Areas of High Landscape Value:

1) Deepdale
2) Barton Claypits
3) Areas of woodland at Kirmington

LC10 - Development in Areas of High Landscape Value

Proposals for development in Areas of High Landscape Value, existing or proposed, will be subject to special scrutiny. Development will only be permitted where it is sensitively related to the distinctive local character of the landscape and where:

i) there is no adverse impact on the special scenic quality of the landscape;

ii) the development is required to meet the social and economic needs of rural communities or is for appropriate small scale tourist and recreational facilities;

iii) the development is appropriately sited and is of a high standard of design and uses materials reflecting the traditional character of buildings in the area and the surrounding landscape;

iv) there is no loss of features important to the local landscape including trees, copses, woodlands, hedges and ponds.

12.21 These areas are regarded as an important resource for the district, by reason of their scenic quality, their distinctive landscape character or sense of place, their lack of larger scale or visually intrusive development, and often through features of particular wildlife, historic, geological interest or cultural associations. As such they should be protected from insensitive development.

Areas of Amenity Importance

12.22 In addition to Areas of High Landscape Value, there are numerous important amenity areas within North Lincolnshire. Such areas include not only public open space and recreational land, but also a multitude of areas in private ownership. Many areas are accessible for enjoyment by the public but others are identified purely for landscape or nature conservation reasons. These areas help to improve the image of North Lincolnshire, and contribute to local distinctiveness. They also assist greatly in promoting the health and welfare of the community.

LC11 - Areas of Amenity Importance

Within important amenity areas, development will only be permitted where it would not adversely affect their open character, visual amenity or wildlife value or compromise the gap between conflicting land uses. Where development is permitted, measures shall be taken to minimise their impact.
or, where necessary, make a positive contribution to such areas.

12.23 There are many areas of landscape which make a significant contribution to the character and amenity of settlements. In larger settlements they provide breaks between built up areas and often serve as important buffers between conflicting land uses such as housing and industry. Within settlements they also provide valuable havens and corridors for the establishment and movement of a variety of wildlife. Within smaller settlements they provide open areas important to the character and setting of villages, and may also contain interesting plants and animals. These important amenity areas are defined on the proposals map. These areas should be protected from development which would adversely affect them. It is, therefore, essential that such areas are retained and enhanced wherever possible. This could be promoted in the rural areas, through future parish appraisals and the preparation of Village Design Statements.

**LC12 - Protection of Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows**

Proposals for all new development will, wherever possible ensure the retention of trees, woodland and hedgerows. Particular regard will be given to the protection of these features within the setting of settlements, the protection of ancient woodlands and historic hedgerows and the amenity value of trees within built up areas. Tree preservation orders will be made where trees which contribute to local amenity or local landscape character are at risk. Landscaping and tree and hedgerow planting schemes will be required to accompany applications for new development where it is appropriate to the development and its setting.

12.24 Trees and woodland are relatively scarce in North Lincolnshire and are of particular importance in contributing to the character of the countryside. Similarly, hedgerows which are important to the character of the area particularly in relation to the scale and pattern of the landscape, and as a wildlife resource are markedly absent or in a state of decline through lack of proper management. There is a pressing need to protect and enhance these features not only through the control of development but also through encouraging farmers and landowners generally to increase tree and hedgerow planting and improve the management of such valuable features, including the retention of older trees where these are not prejudicial to public safety.

**LC13 - Parks, Gardens and Landscapes of Special Historic Interest**

The character and features of parks and gardens of historic or landscape interest will be preserved and enhanced. Development within or adjacent to those listed in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, which is maintained by English Heritage, will not be permitted if this would adversely affect their special historic character and appearance or their setting.

Where development is permitted the use of conditions or planning obligations to ensure the protection and enhancement of special features will be sought.

12.25 Historic parks, gardens and landscapes are an important part of the heritage and environment of North Lincolnshire. Nationally, English Heritage is currently updating the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and PPG15 indicates the desirability of protecting such sites. In addition to
these nationally important sites, there are other significant sites of regional or local importance which should be protected from harm and enhanced where possible. Work is underway to compile a list of the regionally and locally important sites, and this policy seeks to ensure their protection and where possible their enhancement. The conservation and restoration of their layout, landscape and architectural features will be encouraged and where appropriate will be secured through planning conditions or obligations.

**LC14 - Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest**

The Isle of Axholme is designated as an area of Special Historic Landscape Interest.

Within this area, development will not be permitted which would destroy, damage or adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the historic landscape, or any of its features.

Development required to meet the social and economic needs of rural communities and small scale tourist and outdoor sport and recreational development will be permitted provided such development is related to the historic landscape and its features.

A high standard of design and siting in new development will be required reflecting the traditional character of buildings in the area and the character of the historic landscape, and using materials sympathetic to the locality.

Schemes to improve, restore or manage the historic landscape will be sought in connection with, and commensurate with the scale of, any new development affecting the area of Special Historic Landscape Interest.

12.26 The Isle of Axholme has been the subject of an intensive study of landscape character commissioned by the Countryside Commission. The study has identified significant areas of medieval open strip fields and Turbaries, both of which are of considerable national importance. These attributes together with enclosed land and the overall settlement pattern of the area make it unique in the country. It is essential therefore that future development is not allowed to adversely impact on this valuable historic resource. This is particularly so in relation to the character of settlements and to individual buildings or overall groups of buildings in the open countryside.

**Countryside Enhancement**

12.27 The Local Plan contains policies for the protection of the vulnerable countryside and landscape resources, but there is also a need to ensure that where possible the landscape is enhanced.

**LC15 - Landscape Enhancement**

The following landscape enhancement schemes are proposed:

Scunthorpe and Bottesford Urban Area

1) North West Escarpment
2) Conesby Quarry / Sawcliffe
3) Bottesford Beck
4) Railway Sidings, Station Road
5) Land North of Rowland Road
Barton upon Humber

6) Barton East
7) Barton West
8) Waters Edge

Brigg

9) Power Station
10) River Ancholme
11) Wrawby Road Approach
12) Brigg North

Medium Growth Settlements

13) Winterton - North West Boundary
14) Winterton - North East Boundary
15) Messingham - South West Boundary
16) Broughton - Northern Boundary
17) Epworth - Eastern Boundary

Minimum Growth Settlements

18) Hibaldstow - Station Road
19) New Holland - Industrial Estate
20) New Holland - Mere

12.28 Proposals for enhancement can result in the creation of new and informal landscape areas, wildlife habitats and improved surroundings for historic buildings and features. They are also important in screening visually intrusive developments, particularly in the open countryside. The landscape enhancement schemes under policy LC15 are shown on the proposals map in an indicative manner. The actual scheme will be defined by a process of negotiation. Where the provision of an allocated landscaping scheme is a prerequisite for achieving development of a site, the implementation and maintenance of allocated landscaping schemes will be achieved through the use of planning conditions and agreements. In other cases the Council will undertake, or secure funding for, the implementation and maintenance of the allocated landscaping proposals. Such improvements will, in the majority of cases, need to be secured through management agreements. It will be important to discuss proposals affecting coastal defences or river corridors with the Environment Agency.

LC16 - Lincoln Edge Scarp Slope Landscape Enhancement Area

Special emphasis will be placed on the protection and enhancement of the landscape and the creation of new landscapes within the Lincoln Edge Scarp Slope Landscape Enhancement Area.

Development will only be permitted where it provides opportunities for landscape enhancement or creation.

12.29 The Ironstone Gullets are distinctive and valuable features of the landscape to the north east of Scunthorpe. Whilst parts of the area require protection as features of the landscape and for their nature conservation value, there remain significant opportunities for landscape enhancement throughout the area. A variety of measures should be encouraged and where appropriate, secured as part of any development proposals, including, the creation of
new landscapes and habitats, the restoration of former habitats including heathland and woodland, the removal of eyesores and redundant structures and the conservation and management of existing features important to the landscape.

**LC17 - Barton and Barrow Clay Pits**

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of, or do demonstrable harm to, existing nature conservation and recreational land uses in the Barton and Barrow Clay Pits areas and immediate surroundings.

12.30 The area of Barton and Barrow Clay Pits, to which this policy relates, is co-incident with that of the Area of High Landscape Value LC9-2. The Barton and Barrow Clay Pits form a valuable wetland natural resource, the majority of which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It was identified, in two separate stages as a Special Protection Area/Ramsar site. The first stage covers the Humber foreshore, excluding the area adjacent the Waters Edge site, and was formally designated in July 1994. The proposed second stage covers the inland area of the SSSI. In recent years there has been demand for water-based recreational uses and nature reserves, and consequently a balance between the needs of nature conservation and recreation throughout the Clay Pits area has developed. A major attraction has been created which generates 250,000 visitors per year, for a wide variety of purposes including sightseeing, water sports, educational visits, bird watching, rambling, industrial archaeology at the tile works, and nature conservation. Planning permission for development will therefore only be given if such development retains the important balance of nature conservation and recreation, and appropriate management agreements are secured.

**LC18 - Humber Bridge to Chowder Ness**

Planning permission for development related to nature conservation and, where appropriate, for quiet, informal recreation such as fishing and nature study, will be allowed to the west of the Humber Bridge, between the A15 and Chowder Ness, within the Barton and Barrow Clay Pits.

In these areas, proposals for development will not be permitted if they would generate noise of a level and nature sufficient to be perceived as unacceptably intrusive beyond the site boundary.

12.31 The balance between nature conservation and recreation throughout the Clay Pits is essential. The area of greatest nature conservation value is to the west of the Humber Bridge where precedence is given to protecting this asset. Therefore, quiet, relatively informal recreation such as fishing and nature study are appropriate uses. Noisy sports as defined in the policy, will prejudice nature conservation, particularly causing disturbance to wildfowl, and will not be permitted.

**LC19 - Humber Bridge to New Holland Mere**

Planning permission for development related to nature conservation and general water-based recreation will be allowed to the east of the Humber Bridge between the A15(T) and New Holland Mere within the Barton and Barrow Clay Pits.

12.32 The area of greatest organised water-based recreation has historically been located in the Clay Pits to the east of the Humber Bridge i.e. water skiing,
sailing and wind-surfing. Since the needs of nature conservation have been successfully integrated with these recreational land uses, a continuation of this policy is appropriate.

South Humber Bank Landscape Initiative

12.33 One of the key issues raised in this part of North Lincolnshire is the relationship between industry and nearby settlements. The environment of local communities is heavily dependent not only on the quality of the immediate setting within which the industry lies but also on the general character of the countryside which surrounds it. Buffer areas will be retained between settlements and industry. To protect important sites of nature conservation or amenity value it is proposed to set up a partnership involving the industrial and agricultural communities to co-ordinate and progress schemes of environmental enhancement.

LC20 - South Humber Bank Landscape Initiative

It is proposed that the following measures will be undertaken throughout the South Humber Bank Landscape Initiative area:

i) **softening** - provision of stepped-back security fences, fringed with shrubs and trees;

ii) **screening** - establishment of mixed broad-leaf and conifer belts;

iii) **habitat conservation** - maintenance of wet areas and other existing features, such as woods and hedges, to provide a good framework for future improvements;

iv) **habitat creation** - introduction of lakes, ponds and marshes;

v) **field boundary management** - careful management of existing hedges to increase height;

vi) **tree and hedge planting** - new planting, carefully positioned for maximum effect, with minimum impact on farm management industry’s operational needs and sites of archaeological importance.

12.34 The South Humber Bank Landscape Initiative offers good opportunities for industry and agriculture to help create a showcase where both are placed in greater harmony with their surroundings. In the case of industry, there is a growing public interest in the environment and an increasing concern about the effects large-scale industrial development can bring.

12.35 Individual improvements can be planned to dovetail with present and future operational needs. In this way a network of grassland, hedgerows, woodland and open water between and around industry could be developed. By planning ahead, landscape improvements could reach maturity in readiness for new developments to have considerable combined effect on the appearance of the whole industrial zone. A better environment for industry means a better image, a better workplace and better relations with the whole community. In addition, substantial scope exists to increase the recreational use of the area. Footpath links through to the Humber Bank can
be enhanced and provision for many informal pursuits (walking, fishing etc.) can be improved for residents, workers and visitors.