

# Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Management Plan 2018 - 2023



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# Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan --- 2018 - 2023

Produced on behalf of  
Lincolnshire County Council, East Lindsey District Council,  
West Lindsey District Council, North East Lincolnshire Council  
and partners

by

The Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service and  
Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee (AONB Partnership)

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# Chairman's Introduction

Welcome to the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan which sets out the updated Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2018-2023. The Lincolnshire Wolds was designated as an AONB in 1973, recognising it as one of the country's finest landscapes, a designation on a par with our National Parks.

The Lincolnshire Wolds is a hidden jewel of the English countryside and one of only two nationally protected landscapes in the East Midlands region, the other being the Peak District National Park. During the 45 years since its designation as an AONB, the continued modernisation of farming, demands of modern living and development of new technologies have imposed continued pressures on the landscape. However these are both threats and opportunities. Our overarching goal is to ensure that the Wolds retains its unique landscape and undeniable special character, whilst maintaining and supporting its communities.

We are keen to thank the many organisations, local groups, farmers, landowners, businesses and individuals that have been involved in the development of this document. A public consultation questionnaire took place during the summer of 2016 with extensive coverage in the local press and social media. We received responses from a wide range of interested individuals, organisations, local businesses and parish councils. A detailed peer review was subsequently undertaken to update the Strategy (aims, objectives and policies) and make recommendations for the Action Plan (which proposes a range of specific actions from April 2018). A formal six week consultation of the revised Management Plan took place during the winter of 2017-18 with further coverage in the local media. Detailed responses and constructive suggestions were received from a wide range of parties including local landowners, community groups, parish councils, and representatives from many organisations including our local authorities.

The published Plan seeks to continue to build on our original shared vision for the future of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB with a continuing emphasis on balancing environmental, social and economic interests. Change is an intrinsic characteristic of the Wolds, but the type, scale and pace of change does need to be carefully managed. The challenge has never been greater, with pressures from the global economy, food production, energy use and climate change becoming increasingly evident. On account of Brexit, there is clearly considerable uncertainty for the UK's rural economy and more specifically the food, farming and environmental sectors. This Plan will remain flexible to respond to these ongoing challenges.

The Plan is not just a document for use by the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service (LWCS), or the Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), but rather a Plan for everyone. It is a place-based Plan derived through consensus and built on partnerships - local and national - and this is vital if we are to continue to move towards our shared vision for the AONB. We will endeavour to ensure that the new Plan provides an ongoing catalyst for protecting and enhancing our unique asset – the Lincolnshire Wolds. The Partnership looks forward to working with you to this end.

**Stuart Parker**

**Chairman,**

Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee

(AONB Partnership; working collaboratively with the National Association for AONBs).

## National Association for AONBs Foreword

On behalf of the AONB Family, the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) welcomes the new Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan (2018-23) and congratulates the Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) on its production. Clearly the Plan has undergone extensive peer review and local consultation to help review the issues facing the area and develop the forthcoming collaborative policies and actions to help safeguard and enhance the Wolds special qualities.

The Lincolnshire Wolds is one of 38 AONBs nationally protected in England and Wales - and as evidenced within this Plan, AONB Partnerships continue to provide very important and democratic mechanisms for developing and encouraging collaborative action that can both protect and enhance the area's natural beauty. We recognise that maintaining vibrant, healthy and diverse local communities is essential to the future of all AONBs and we will continue to work with the Lincolnshire Wolds Partnership and the wider family of protected landscapes to improve the connection between people, nature and place.

As highlighted within this Plan, part of the NAAONB's work is recognising that as dynamic, living landscapes, AONBs form an important component of the UK's economy – especially in the context of farming, forestry, tourism and recreation. We will work collectively to help strengthen relationships with landowners, farmers and other businesses to help ensure a robust and sustainable economy post-Brexit.

We are confident that the revised Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan and other forthcoming AONB Management Plans, will provide the necessary tools and opportunities to help aid the future delivery of relevant Government Plans; including not least, Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan which recognises and pledges its commitment to nationally protected landscapes and the opportunities they provide for securing environmental gains (natural capital) whilst supporting and advancing sustainable farming appropriate to the local and often unique natural beauty.

**Phillip Hygate**  
**Chairman,**

National Association for AONBs



*Phillip Hygate, NAAONB Chairman*



*Stuart Parker, JAC Chairman*

# How to read and use the Management Plan

**Section 1 (pages 9 - 12)** sets the scene for the Plan, providing an overview of the statutory background to AONB designation and summary of the legal requirements to produce and review Management Plans through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) and more recent relevant legislation.

**Section 2 (pages 13 - 34)** describes the Lincolnshire Wolds and highlights the reasons for its designation as an AONB. Tables 1 - 2 and Appendix 3 complement this section, identifying the special qualities of the area, and the resulting threats/pressures and opportunities. The LWCS has completed a State of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Report for 2017 (see Appendix 4) to establish a new baseline across a wide range of environmental, social and economic parameters. The report is not exhaustive, but commonly focuses on the more robust and readily available sources of data. It seeks to provide context, collate evidence and summarise findings across a number of proposed State of the AONB indicators.

**Section 3 (pages 35 - 37)** sets out the vision, aims and guiding influences for the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB and identifies five overarching themes: Protecting the Wolds; Living and Working in the Wolds; Discovering the Wolds; Developing the Wolds and Partnerships in the Wolds. These themes provide the overarching structure for the Plan.

**Sections 4 - 8 (pages 38 - 79)** provide the Strategy for the future management of the AONB detailing a series of objectives, policies and management statements across the five themes: Protecting the Wolds; Living and Working in the Wolds; Discovering the Wolds; Developing the Wolds; and Partnerships in the Wolds. These themes have been utilised to help group individual topics. Each topic is tackled succinctly with an introduction and overview of the current management issues. Each of these sections and individual topics are not mutually exclusive and in many cases there is both overlap and interdependence between them. This reflects the complex nature of AONB management in respect of the need to balance environmental, social and economic factors – the major drivers of landscape change in the AONB.

The objectives set out the overarching goals of the Plan, with policies providing clear, specific and measurable areas of management for delivering the Strategy. Management statements have been endorsed for both the Wolds' landscape and partnerships as these are seen as integral to the overall delivery of the vision.

**Section 9 (pages 80 - 110)** contains the AONB Action Plan (Table 3) identifying and suggesting what needs to be done, by whom and when, to help implement the overarching objectives and policies. It is clearly an ambitious and challenging programme, even more so in the current financial climate and the many uncertainties emanating from Brexit.

The Plan's successful implementation will depend on everyone's continued hard work. Monitoring progress on the Action Plan and the condition of the AONB is included in Section 9, with Table 4 setting out a range of monitoring indicators.

**Appendices and maps (pages 111 - 122)** are included at the end of the document or are available on the website [www.lincswolds.org.uk/looking-after/lincolnshire-wolds-aonb-management-plan](http://www.lincswolds.org.uk/looking-after/lincolnshire-wolds-aonb-management-plan) and provide a wide range of supporting information including additional baseline data, an index of key related plans and strategies, summaries of the questionnaire survey, peer review and public consultation, and a bibliography including useful website addresses. There is also a detailed glossary of technical terms and acronyms to aid the reader.

## How was the Plan produced

This revised statutory Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan (2018-23) has been produced by the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service (LWCS), in partnership and close consultation with the relevant local authorities, Natural England, other members of the Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), and many other organisations and interest groups.

The JAC, on behalf of the relevant local authorities, advised the LWCS of the need to conduct a light review to minimise public cost and avoid undermining the extensive work undertaken to help inform the previous 2013-18 Management Plan and its twenty-five year vision for the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB. This approach concurs with the recommendation in the recently published AONB Management Plans - Support for their revision in England (Steve Preston Associates with the NAAONB, June 2017) that recommends that the current round of Plan Reviews should be concentrating on both continuity and consistency of management objectives.

Key elements in the production of this Plan have included:

- An initial public questionnaire survey undertaken during the summer of 2016 (Appendix 5).
- A Management Plan Review Workshop for the Joint Advisory Committee (AONB Partnership) facilitated in October 2016.
- A subsequent detailed Peer Review from key partners and organisations with an active interest in the AONB (Appendix 6).
- Attendance from the LWCS staff and display at a range of local shows and events during the summer of 2017 - inviting informal discussions and comments on the current issues facing the area.
- Ongoing evidence gathering to aid compilation of the Lincolnshire Wolds State of the AONB Report - 2017 (Appendix 4).
- Production and circulation of the Draft Management Plan and formal six week public consultation (Dec 2017 – Jan 2018).
- An endorsement of the pre-publication of the Plan from the Lincolnshire Wolds JAC and key statutory consultees including Natural England and Historic England.
- Local authority adoption and publication of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan (2018-23) setting out the Strategy and Action Plan for the five year period from April 2018.

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For appendices see:-

[www.lincswolds.org.uk/looking-after/lincolnshire-wolds-aonb-management-plan](http://www.lincswolds.org.uk/looking-after/lincolnshire-wolds-aonb-management-plan)

# 1. Setting the Scene

## 1.1 What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

The Lincolnshire Wolds is a nationally important and cherished landscape most of which was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1973 on account of its high scenic beauty. AONBs, together with National Parks, make up the finest landscapes in England and Wales. The AONBs are a national asset containing a wide variety of attractive landscapes including wolds, downlands, woodlands, moorlands and heaths, rivers and streams, estuaries and marshes, and coast (Map 1). Like National Parks, our AONBs are very much living and working landscapes that have been, and continue to be, shaped by nature and human activity.

## 1.2 Why have AONBs?

### International context:

AONBs are one of a group of globally protected landscapes. They fall within a worldwide category of Protected Landscapes, established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) where they are classed as 'Category V – Protected Landscapes'.

The European Landscape Convention, the ELC (2000), has been ratified by the United Kingdom and came into effect in March 2007. It sets out a comprehensive strategic agreement for the consideration of landscape matters within all relevant decision making across the European Community. The UK government's position on the Landscape Convention in the light of Brexit is currently unclear, although likely to be retained as saved legislation.

### National context:

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPAC Act) established powers to create AONBs, with the overriding objective of conserving and enhancing their natural beauty. 'Natural beauty' is not just the visual element of the landscape, but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries (Countryside Agency – now Natural England, CA24, 2001). Whilst the original reasons for protection still hold true today, with the landscape quality of overriding importance, there has been increasing recognition of the multiple benefits that these dynamic areas bring. Our national AONB resource provides vibrant places that help to underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of UK society, offering a wealth of opportunities for everyone to enjoy and also to help in looking after them.

The Lincolnshire Wolds is one of a family of 46 designated AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that work closely through the shared aims, objectives and work programme of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB). The NAAONB was formed in 1998 and now operates as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee with its membership comprising AONB partnerships, some local authorities and other voluntary bodies, businesses and individuals with an interest in the future of these nationally important and iconic landscapes. Through the guidance of its Trustees, Management Board and wider membership, the NAAONB aims to sustain and enhance the funding arrangements, management and public awareness for all AONBs. In addition to the clear links with other AONBs the Lincolnshire Wolds is part of a wider national protected landscape family that includes the UK's National Parks and Heritage Coasts.

The close working relationship with our family of AONBs and sister group of protected landscapes remains vital to help share expertise, good practice and encourage innovation. The NAAONB revised its Strategic Plan in 2016, reaffirming the shared objectives and aims for AONBs under the branding of Landscapes for Life seeking to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, ensuring they can meet the challenges of the future.

- Support the economic and social wellbeing of local communities in ways which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.
- Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the nature and culture of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and encourage people to take action for their conservation.
- Value, sustain and promote the benefits that the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty provide for society, including clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and wellbeing.

Over the past 20 years, the NAAONB has established itself as the collective voice of AONB partnerships in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and in so doing, represents those involved in the planning and management of over 8,000 square miles of the UK's finest landscapes. Its "modus operandi" is "Leading, Sharing, Learning and Inspiring" to enable everyone who can help care for our AONBs to do so, now and for future generations (NAAONB Communication Strategy 2017-20).

(visit [www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk) - for further details on the Strategy, Business Plan and wider work of the NAAONB – see also cross cutting influences, Section 3.3).

### 1.3 What are the statutory obligations for managing AONBs?

In 1991 the Countryside Commission (now Natural England) published a policy statement about AONBs (CCP 356) which clarified the following obligations for their management:

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing this aim account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be made to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves help to conserve and enhance the environment.

Unlike our National Parks, recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) introduced significant measures to improve the protection and management of AONBs. As summarised by the Countryside Agency (CA23, 2001), the CRoW Act:

- Consolidates the provisions regarding the designation and purposes of AONBs previously contained in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPAC Act) as modified by subsequent legislation. (Section 82, CRoW Act)
- Confirms the powers of local authorities to take appropriate action to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of AONBs. (Section 84, CRoW Act)
- Places a duty on 'relevant authorities' when exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. (Section 85, CRoW Act)
- Provides for the creation of conservation boards for selected individual AONBs by means of an establishment order made by the Secretary of State. (Section 86, CRoW Act)
- Requires the preparation and publication of a Management Plan and its periodic review by the appropriate local authorities, or by an AONB conservation board where one is established. (Section 89, CRoW Act)



## 1.4 What is an AONB Management Plan and why is it needed?

The objective of AONB Management Plans is to ensure both consistency and continuity of management over time, conserving and enhancing these nationally important landscapes for their use and enjoyment over future generations. The production of five yearly management plans is a statutory duty for all local authorities that have AONBs, or part of an AONB, within their administrative boundaries and one plan must be produced in partnership with other local authorities and relevant statutory bodies.

The review of the previous Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan (2013-18) has provided a fresh opportunity for everyone with an interest in the area to help reassess the issues, revise objectives and set fresh priorities for protecting and enhancing the Wolds AONB. Additional to safeguarding our nationally protected scenic landscape the Plan can help to integrate strategic objectives and partnership actions to help secure a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits for those living, working and visiting the area.

## 1.5 The Management Plan in context

The total area of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB is 558 km<sup>2</sup> (55,800 hectares): Map 2 shows the administrative areas which includes East Lindsey District Council (397 km<sup>2</sup>); West Lindsey District Council (119.5 km<sup>2</sup>); and North East Lincolnshire Council (41.5 km<sup>2</sup>) with 516.5 km<sup>2</sup> within Lincolnshire County Council.

The Management Plan cannot be viewed in isolation and its strategic objectives, policies and resulting actions represent the collaborative local authority, AONB Partnership and wider public aspirations for the area. This publication seeks to complement the planning and development management framework provided under the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and the accompanying suite of local plans. The NPPF recognises the importance of AONBs as national assets and makes it clear that relevant planning decisions must give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in these areas.

The local plans of relevance to the Lincolnshire Wolds are: the East Lindsey Local Plan (Emerging Local Plan 2016-2031); the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Adopted Local Plan, 2012-2036) which includes the joint policies for West Lindsey District Council (WLDC); Planning for Growth – North East Lincolnshire Local Plan (Pre-Submission Draft, 2016); together with the additional Lincolnshire County Council and North East Lincolnshire Council plans for highways, minerals and waste matters. There is currently one neighbourhood plan which extends into the AONB and was produced by the market town of Caistor and subsequently adopted by WLDC. The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership, and their accompanying strategies, are further important drivers for change.

## 1.6 Status of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan

In accordance with Section 89 of the CRow Act and the various "how to write and review plans" AONB guidance (CA23, CA221, the 2012 Defra/Natural England/NAAONB advice note and the most recent AONB Management Plans – Support for their revision in England 2017 publication) the revised Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2018-23) has been forwarded to Natural England for final observations prior to its formal adoption by Lincolnshire County Council, East Lindsey District Council, West Lindsey District Council and North East Lincolnshire Council.

## 1.7 Who looks after the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB and how is the partnership funded?

The care of the AONB has been entrusted to the local authorities, organisations, community groups and those who live and work in the area. Much of the Wolds are in private ownership, with few publicly owned and managed sites. Private landowners, particularly farmers and land managers, have a crucial role to play in continuing to safeguard this unique landscape.

The Lincolnshire Wolds AONB has an established Joint Advisory Committee (Appendix 1): a partnership of public, private and voluntary organisations and representatives who have a special interest or working knowledge of the area. The JAC acts as a forum to advise and guide activity on a wide range of issues across the Wolds and will be instrumental in developing, implementing and monitoring the revised AONB Management Plan.

The LWCS currently implements a varied work programme on behalf of the JAC and its core funders, who meet quarterly as part of the Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Management Group (Appendix 2). The LWCS works alongside a wide range of organisations, local landowners, community groups and volunteers advising on policy and undertaking activity that furthers the interests of the AONB and wider Wolds Character Area. The LWCS will help to coordinate both the delivery and future statutory review of the Plan and will play a key role in identifying and pursuing funding opportunities that can aid its implementation. The success of the Plan will ultimately depend on integrated stakeholder action involving all organisations, landowners and communities with an influence and/or interest in the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB.

The LWCS provides the dedicated staff unit for the AONB and is hosted by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) on behalf of the JAC. The current national government has pledged its continuing financial commitment to AONBs; with a 75% core grant supplied direct from Defra and a local Memorandum of Agreement in place with all relevant local authorities including LCC, East Lindsey District Council, West Lindsey District Council and North East Lincolnshire Council – whom together help to cover the additional 25% core and selected project funding. The national funding arrangements for AONBs are likely to be under further review in 2020.

There is a wide range of available grant programmes for assisting landowners, local communities and businesses to protect and enhance the Lincolnshire Wolds. Natural England's Mid Tier Stewardship (MT) and High Tier Stewardship (HT) schemes, together with the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), provide continuing support to the area's landowners and rural businesses. The RDPE also supports the Lindsey Action Zone (LEADER) programme which operates across and beyond the AONB boundaries and provides an added source of funding for local landowners, businesses, community groups and organisations.

Ongoing pressures on public finances and the need to reduce both central and local authority budgets will continue to have a direct impact upon future partnership work activity and grant programmes, creating challenging but fresh opportunities over the lifetime of the Plan. The JAC wishes to build on the many successes enjoyed by those living, working and visiting the Wolds: continuing to liaise with all to help towards the prudent management of resources, and the exploration and implementation of innovative ideas for future sustainable development.

## 2. The Lincolnshire Wolds - A Special Landscape

### 2.1 The Lincolnshire Wolds - Introduction

The Lincolnshire Wolds lie in the north-eastern quarter of the county of Lincolnshire (Map 3), midway between Lincoln and the coast, surrounded by the relatively flat fens, coastal marsh and the Central Lincolnshire Vale. As detailed, the AONB comprises an area of 558 km<sup>2</sup> (216 miles<sup>2</sup>), while the wider Lincolnshire Wolds Character/Natural Area incorporates the two neighbouring areas of the 'Spilsby Crescent' to the south and the remaining chalk uplands to the north (Map 4).

### 2.2 The Wolds' General Character

The Wolds has a strong unity of visual character, characterised by open plateau hilltops, sweeping views, strong escarpments, wide grass verges and ridge-top routeways, dramatic wooded slopes and valleys, beech clumps, attractive villages often nestled in hill folds, and natural and historic features of great interest including visual remnants of ancient tumuli and deserted/shrunken medieval villages.

The Landscape Character Assessment for the Wolds undertaken by the Countryside Commission (CCP414, 1993), recognises the landscape as strikingly different from most other chalk and limestone landscapes in the extent of arable cultivation, made possible by the area's fertile chalk and glacial tills. The 'typical' chalk downland features of calcareous grassland and sheep walk were probably never widespread in the Wolds due to the thinness of the chalk and the fact that much of the area is covered by glacial till. The area subsequently has a long association with cultivated farming practices. The surviving areas of semi-natural habitats, including grassland and ancient woodland, are very limited in extent, but are nonetheless of particular importance, and are supported by more recent introductions of hunting and shooting plantations and hedgerows indicative of an enclosure landscape.

In addition to the distinctive and widely nucleated villages and hamlets within the Wolds, the surrounding market towns of Alford, Caistor, Horncastle, Louth, Market Rasen and Spilsby have integral connections with the area. The Wolds remain relatively sparsely populated and the roles of the market towns are very important in providing a wide range of social and economic services for the wider community, whilst also operating as important gateways to the surrounding countryside. The AONB remains a relatively tranquil place for residents and visitors alike and the aim of the Management Plan is to promote and enhance the area's special qualities, whilst also supporting and managing future recreational and tourism demands across a living and working landscape.

### 2.3 Why is the Lincolnshire Wolds an AONB?

#### 2.3.1 Outstanding Qualities

The Lincolnshire Wolds was designated an AONB in 1973 following a period of considerable local campaigning. This recognised the area's unique landscape and distinctive 'sense of place'. The Landscape Character Assessment (CCP414, 1993), acknowledged the following outstanding qualities as detailed in support of our current vision statement (see Section 3):

- **A unique physiography (geology and topography)** – The physical geography of the Lincolnshire Wolds is unusual and distinctive. The Wolds is the highest upland landscape in eastern England between Yorkshire and Kent and has a complex geology; nowhere else in Britain has a chalk landscape been so extensively modified by glaciations. These have given rise to some of its most striking features including numerous steep-sided and open-ended combs (valley systems).

- **A scenic, working landscape** – The high scenic quality of the Wolds depends almost entirely upon the area's use for agriculture. Much of its charm is derived from the seasonally changing field and cropping patterns; the rural scenes of farming activity; and the traditional villages and farmsteads in brick and pantile. Overall approximately 76% of the AONB is in arable cultivation, with 14.5% as pasture or rough grazing and 5.4% woodland cover (Defra Agricultural Census 2013 & Forestry Commission stats, 2015). It is widely recognised that much of the attractiveness of the Wolds today is a result of the activities of generations of landowners and farmers.
- **A major archaeological resource** – The Wolds has a rich legacy of prehistoric sites and a wealth of historic landscape features. Most of Lincolnshire's long barrows are in the Wolds, with a high concentration of round barrows, together with many important ancient trackways including the ridge-top routes of the Bluestone Heath Road and the Caistor High Street. The Wolds also has one of the largest densities of deserted and shrunken medieval villages (DMVs & SMVs) in the country.
- **A valued cultural landscape** – The Wolds' landscape has been a source of cultural inspiration. The Tennyson family has a strong association with the area. Alfred, Lord Tennyson - the Poet Laureate - spent much of his formative years in the Wolds and it is featured in many of his works including 'The Brook'. The landscape has offered inspiration to many artists and writers over the years including the mid-19th century landscape painter Peter de Wint and more recently the author A. S. Byatt in the Booker Prize-winning novel 'Possession'.

### 2.3.2 National Landscape Character Assessments

The Lincolnshire Wolds AONB is part of the more extensive Lincolnshire Wolds National Character Area (NCA Number 43) as mapped originally by the Countryside Agency, now Natural England. The national Countryside Quality Counts project has helped to collate landscape trends for all of the NCAs and provides useful historic data for the wider Wolds area. This project has been updated by the Character and Quality of England's Landscapes initiative, also known as CQuEL. This programme aims to provide a series of integrated datasets focusing on place-based evidence for the character and function of landscapes, and the provision of relevant ecosystem services.

Natural England (NE) has led on a national programme to update, expand and strengthen the suite of England's 159 NCA profiles. This work has sought to encompass the recommendations of the Government's White Paper on the Natural Environment including the development of a Strategic set of Statements of Environmental Opportunities (SEOs) for each area.

### 2.3.3 District Landscape Character Assessments

Finer-grained landscape character studies have been undertaken via the West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment (1999) and East Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment (2009). The West Lindsey study recognised two distinct sub-areas the 'North West Wolds Escarpment' and 'Lincolnshire Wolds' within the AONB. The East Lindsey study highlighted three sub-areas, two directly in the AONB: 'G1-Binbrook to Tetford Wolds Farmland' and 'G2-Little Cawthorpe to Skendleby' and a third 'G3 Hainton to Toynton All Saints Wolds Farmland' extending south-eastwards beyond the AONB boundary. A further landscape character assessment was completed in 2015 and included the north-east corner of the Wolds as part of the wider North East Lincolnshire Council landscape character study. Alongside the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) study for Greater Lincolnshire these studies help to illustrate the highly regarded and distinctive qualities of the Wolds' landscape



### 2.3.4 The Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment

The Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape Character Assessment (CCP414, 1993) identified and described the key features that make the area special and contribute to its overall 'sense of place'. These features are:

- A rolling upland landscape of strongly cohesive identity.
- A pronounced scarp edge to the west comprising rough pasture and scrub, affording fine panoramic views to the Central Lincolnshire Vale.
- A combination of elevated plateau and deep-sided valleys.
- Large rectilinear fields with wide hedgerows from the late enclosure.
- Archaeologically rich, with ancient trackways, deserted villages and burial mounds.
- Sparse settlements of small-nucleated villages, often in sheltered valleys and associated with modest country houses and small parklands. The diverse geology gives rise to a variety of building materials.
- Broad verges to some roads and tracks providing valuable flower-rich habitats.
- Occasional shelterbelts concentrated on steeper-sided valley and scarp slopes emphasising landform.
- Broader south-west valleys of the Rivers Lymn and Bain. Associated alder carr woodland and tree-lined watercourses.

### 2.3.5 Local Landscape Character Areas

There are clear variations in scenic character across the Wolds with topography and geology appearing to be the most dominant factors. The Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape Character Assessment (CCP414, 1993) recognised four Landscape Character Areas within the AONB (Map 5) identified by their distinct group of special features (Appendix 3):

- The north-west scarp
- The chalk wolds
- The ridges and valleys of the south-west
- The south-eastern claylands.

The Management Plan uses the local landscape classification as the most practical tool within the AONB, with the other district and national classifications providing useful information at the relevant mapping layer.

## 2.4 The Lincolnshire Wolds State of the AONB Report: 2017

The Lincolnshire Wolds State of the AONB Report: 2017 (Appendix 4) has been compiled by the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service (LWCS) and identifies and reviews a number of indices to help update and extend the baseline data for the protected landscape. There has been a notable increase in available data since the preparation of the previous AONB Plan in 2012-13, including provision of a wider range of national datasets made available via the Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL) framework.

A number of indicators are proposed and these have been grouped in-line with the overarching themes of the Management Plan. The Report includes the context, findings and a concise analysis of the results, either for an individual indicator, or a cluster of closely linked indicators. As evidenced in the report, both quantitative and qualitative information has been utilised. Wherever possible AONB specific data has been gathered, however in some cases estimates from wider data coverage have been necessary to generate a proxy measure. This report is ongoing, with some limited data searches still being pursued, for example in respect of health measures, and broadband/mobile phone coverage specific to the AONB.

The report provides a snapshot of the Wolds to help assess the overall condition of the protected landscape, both its special qualities and also the area's important wider environmental, social and economic attributes. As mentioned, it establishes a detailed baseline of evidence to help evaluate both the current and the future success of the AONB Management Plan. The AONB Partnership (JAC) has always stressed that the objective of the Plan should be to provide a working document to help inspire and steer future positive partnership action.

## 2.5 The Special Qualities of the AONB

Table 1 summarises the special landscape features that typify the Lincolnshire Wolds 'natural beauty' and 'sense of place'. These include features relating to landscape, farmland, geology, topography, biodiversity, archaeology, built heritage and culture. Appendix 3 provides an additional summary of the special qualities of each of the four Landscape Character Areas.

The table includes estimates of the extent or coverage of any feature and where possible an indication of its condition. This information is by no means comprehensive and has identified areas for further survey work (e.g. habitats in the wider countryside including woodland and grassland sites). The table provides a useful overview to accompany the more detailed State of the AONB report (Appendix 4). The source organisation is abbreviated in the left hand column. Table 2 (Forces for Change) complements Table 1 in highlighting specific threats and management options that relate to the individual qualities of the AONB.

**Table 1: The Special Qualities of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB**

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent				Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands			
Landscape Character							
Scenic beauty & rural charm	General component - a rolling upland landscape of strongly cohesive identity with farming as an underlying component.				Good, but needs quantitative survey (see monitoring section)	Changes in land management and the future use of farm buildings; decoupling from CAP; quarrying; telecommunication masts; wind farm developments including periphery of AONB; oil exploration; light pollution; solar, anaerobic and other alternative energy schemes.	Planning and development management; interpretation & education; liaison with community & visitors; national and local funding opportunities through agri-environment schemes, Lottery funding etc.
Expansive, sweeping views	General component - views from scarp edge, High Street and Bluestone Heath Road are particularly dramatic.				Good, as above	As above, but particularly potential for intrusion from hilltop or skyline developments including overhead powerlines.	Planning and development management; high quality design and build; landscaping. Undergrounding overhead wires initiative.
Peace & Tranquillity	General component - once away from the main roads there is a wide sense of remoteness and rural isolation accentuated by the combination of elevated plateau and sheltered coombes.				Good, away from main roads such as A16, A18 and High Street.	Continued increase in road freight & possible increase in air traffic (via Humberside Airport and armed services); light pollution; unmanaged visitor pressure.	Integrated public transport initiatives.

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent				Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands			
Farmed Land (scenic quality, biodiversity, socio-economic)  (NE)	<p>Primary land-use component of the AONB landscape.</p> <p>76% of the AONB is in regular cultivation, including over 45% for cereals.</p> <p>A further 11% of the AONB is in permanent grassland – a figure which has increased in recent years through agri-environment targeting of Countryside, Entry and Higher Level, and Mid and High Tier Stewardship Schemes.</p>				Varied, but essential element of the AONB character (see component features below).	New cropping regimes; changes to national/EU farm policy via Brexit reforms; demands for ever larger farm sheds, outside stores, grain silos; climate change.	<p>Re-directing new funding streams for landscape, biodiversity, access and recreation including fresh incentives via the Agriculture Bill (2018).</p> <p>Opportunities via game conservation. High quality design for farmed buildings via land agents, design guides and LPAs good practice.</p>



Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent					Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB			
Earth Heritage								
Chalk upland – plateau & valley landscape (Geodiversity Group)	General component - series of sandstones, ironstones and clay underlie the chalk capping and form the essential character of the Wolds. The area has been shaped by at least two periods of glaciation.				Most of AONB	Varied	Modern development (visual intrusion e.g. telecom masts and wind turbines both within and adjacent to the AONB); farm infrastructure developments (as above); chalk quarrying.	Planning and development management; interpretation & education.
Glacial/periglacial features including remnant lakes/spillways (Geodiversity Group)	Key feature 1 SSSI 4 LGS 1 RIGS 1 LWT Reserve	Key feature 1 SSSI 1 LGS	Key feature 1 LGS 1 RIGS		2 SSSI 6 LGS 2 RIGS	Varied  2 SSSIs all in favourable condition	Change in land use e.g. tree planting.	Improved access, interpretation & education; landowner liaison; restoration schemes.
Geological qualities (Geodiversity Group)	1 SSSI 1 LGS	Key feature 3 SSSI 2 LGS 1 RIGS	1 RIGS		4 SSSI 7 LGS 4 RIGS	Varied, some small pits overgrown or infilled. 4 SSSIs all in favourable condition	Change in land use; lack of awareness; erosion; secondary activity including landfill; illegal activities.	Improved access, interpretation & education; landowner liaison; restoration schemes.

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent						Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North- west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South- eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB				
Biodiversity									
Calcareous, meadow, pasture & wet grasslands  (NE, LWT & LWCS)	Key feature Nettleton Valley and western scarp face.	Local feature within the chalk valleys.  1 SSSI (bats in disused railway tunnels)	Key feature  4 SSSI 2 LWT Reserves	Local feature  5 SSSI 3 LWT Reserves	Estimated 13% of AONB  Over 55 sites with primary grassland interest have been selected as Local Wildlife Sites. 10 SSSI	54% decline in grasslands between 1975 and 1994 (EN stats. from MAFF agriculture annual census). Situation now improving with agri- environment support.  2 SSSIs in declining condition.	Threat to livestock farming; intensive agricultural practices including land drainage; potential conflict with woodland planting; loss via woodland/scrub encroachment.	Grazing support schemes; shifts in national/EU policy favouring environmental farming schemes; landowner liaison.	
Beech clumps (BeC)  (LWCS)		Key feature  28 BeC	Local feature  12 BeC	Local feature  8 BeC	Important landscape feature.	Many of similar age & structure. The LWCS Beech Clump project has helped to create/restore 38 clumps since 2004, with the planting of over 6,630 trees & shrubs.	Wide neglect & lack of management, climate change.	AONB specific grants & advice. Landowner liaison. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).	
Woodlands (largely 18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century plantings)  (FC)	Local feature	Key feature	Key feature	Key feature	2454 ha, <4.4% of AONB  Approx. 80% b'leaved, 10% coniferous, 10% mixed w'land/ young trees	At least 56% of woodland is now deemed to be in positive management from 27% in 2001/02.  Remaining 44% unknown.	Further decline in management; lack of potential markets although improving with increasing demand for local wood fuels; conifer planting; fragility owing to small size; climate change; fly tipping.	Further surveys; targeted planting & woodland restoration schemes; development of woodland markets; TPOs.	

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent					Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB			
Ancient woodlands (NE, LWT, CA & LWCS)	Oak & ash	Hazel, ash & wych elm 1 SSSI	Alder carr 1 SSSI	Oak & ash 2 SSSI 1 LWT Reserve	604 ha, <1.08% of AONB Localised, but highly visible feature. 4 SSSI	2 SSSI in favourable condition.	As above; with isolation of the woodland of particular concern. Impacts from disease (Chalara and Acute Oak Decline).	As above.
River, streams and ponds (EA & LWCS)	Key feature	Local feature	Key feature	1 LWT Reserve	9 principal river systems many are SSSI and LWS. Total estimated length = 258 km. Ponds unknown	Poor – good 89 km classed as moderate to good condition. 7 km in poor condition (Laceby Beck catchment) Approximately 26 km of chalk stream restoration achieved since 2004. Over 45 km of adjacent habitat placed into positive management since 2004.	Low flow issues; poor water quality including sedimentation; restricted or inappropriate riverside habitats; invasive alien species – signal crayfish, Himalayan Balsam etc.	Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project; Catchment Restoration Fund; Catchment Characterisation Studies; River Basin Management Plans under WFD. Anglian Water's Resources Management Plan. Future Facilitation Fund.

Special Quality (importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent						Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB				
Biodiversity (continued)									
Hedgerows (LCC; State of the Environment Report)	Local feature	Key feature	Key feature	Local feature	Unknown. Mainly enclosure hedges, small areas of pre-enclosure (species rich) hedgerows survive in pockets.	Unknown. Between 1970s and 1990s over 1000m per km square believed to have been lost in the Wolds. Situation improving especially with grant support for new/restored hedges.	Decline in grant support for hedgerow restoration. Loss of traditional practices; poor management; spray drift. Ash Dieback.	Further surveys; landowner liaison, advice and specific grant aid; links to other habitats; development control (planning conditions) and Hedgerow Regulations.	
Roadside verges and green lanes (LWCS & LWT) Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	Local feature	Local feature 7 RNRs	Key feature 3 RNRs	Key feature 7 RNRs	Overall key component of area. 17 RNRs within the AONB	Variable. 17 verges subsequently reclassified as Local Wildlife Sites	Loss of traditional management, e.g. grazing & hay making; inappropriate use; road run off & vehicle encroachment; fly tipping.	Increased volunteer engagement via Life on the Verge project; suitable future management; interconnected network of sites.	

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent					Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB			
Archaeology	Key feature Caistor High Street	Key feature Barton Street	Key feature Bluestone Heath Road	Key feature Barton Street	Roman roads and salter routes, many as byways etc.	Generally degraded, esp. on byways.	Loss of character through road widening; modern signage; increased traffic flows; lack of appropriate management (e.g. byways); increased traffic flows.	Sympathetic/traditional signage; education & awareness.
Ancient route-ways  (LWCS)								
Scheduled Monuments (SMs)  (LCC - MapInfo) (HE)	Local feature 13 barrow sites	Key feature 48 sites: 17 DMVs; 3 moated sites; 1 hillfort; 25 barrows 3 structures;	Key feature 26 sites: 2 DMVs; 2 moated sites; 16 barrows; 6 structures	Local feature 10 sites: 1 DMV; 9 barrows	98 SMs within AONB  One new listing in 2016 – DMV.	30 SMs at high risk from cultivation (HE, 2017) - a downward trend from 37 in 2013 and 47 in 2004.	Change of land use or management; farming operations.	Development control; landowner liaison & advice; increased access interpretation & education; agri-environment schemes.



Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent						Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB				
Archaeology (continued)									
Burial mounds & monuments	Local feature Long barrows and round barrows.	Key feature Long barrows and round barrows.	Key feature Long barrows and round barrows.	Local feature Long barrows and round barrows.	Visible on chalk tops & adjoining routeways 56 long barrow & up to 350 round barrow sites recorded for the Wolds. 13 Anglo-Saxon cemeteries	Vulnerable feature. Many now only visible as crop & soil marks. Several important key sites remain e.g. Giant's Hill long barrow.	Farming operations; development pressures.	Planning and development management; landowner liaison; agri-environment schemes. HE & HL ongoing Long Barrow survey – results pending.	
(LCC - MapInfo)	2 Anglo-Saxon cemeteries	3 Anglo-Saxon cemeteries	7 Anglo-Saxon cemeteries	1 Anglo-Saxon cemetery					
Deserted medieval villages (DMVs) & shrunken medieval villages (SMVs)	Local feature Nettleton Parish - Hardwick, West Wykeham & Draycot	Key feature North Ormsby, Calcethorpe, Withcall & Maltby	Key feature Wykeham, Biscathorpe and Calceby		High density of DMVs on plateau & spring line locations (Approx 80 DMVs /SMVs.)	Vulnerable feature.	Farming operations; development pressures.	Planning and development management; landowner liaison & advice; increased access interpretation & education.	
Roman villas and settlements									
(LCC - MapInfo)	5 sites	12 sites	3 sites	1 site	21 known	Variable condition, (but no data for all). Vulnerable features. Many are only visible as crop marks.	Change of land use; farming operations; development pressures.	Planning and development management; landowner liaison & advice; increased access, education & interpretation; agri-environment schemes.	

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent				Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands			
<p>Cultural associations (community value)</p> <p>Literary/artistic</p> <p>(CCP414 pg 24-26)</p>	<p>General component, especially Chalk Wolds &amp; Ridges and Valleys of the South-West.</p> <p>Local and AONB-wide cultural associations.</p> <p>Vernacular idiom/dialect.</p>	<p>Most of AONB</p>	<p>Strong.</p> <p>Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate;</p> <p>Peter de Wint, landscape painter;</p> <p>A.S. Byatt, Booker Prize - winner novelist.</p>	<p>Change in ownership; loss of records or information;</p> <p>lack of interest or awareness.</p>	<p>Interpretation &amp; education;</p> <p>improved access to cultural sites;</p> <p>landowner liaison; support specialist interest groups.</p>		

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent					Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB			
Historic Landscapes & Buildings Village character, including churches (LWCS)	Key feature Local ironstone & limestone buildings.	Key feature Villages hidden from view.	Key feature Local sandstone buildings, with rectangular plan villages.	Key feature Linear villages	72 villages with distinctive churches.  16 villages without a church.	Variable Total of 343 building & heritage features listed at grade I, II* & II.  3 Listed buildings deemed to be at risk in the AONB.	Insensitive development including infill; change of use; visitor pressure.	Planning and development management, e.g. Design Guides as SPG; interpretation & education.
Conservation areas (LCC - MapInfo)	2 Historic conservation areas (Tealby and Tealby-Thorpe).	2 Historic conservation areas (Binbrook & Irby upon Humber).	1 Historic conservation area (South Willingham).	Many houses of brick and pantile.	2 Historic conservation areas deemed to be at risk (Binbrook & South Willingham).			
Traditional farm buildings  (HE & LWCS)	Local feature Built of local stone, many still house livestock.	Key feature Victorian planned farmsteads mainly built of brick.	Key feature Victorian planned farmsteads, mainly built of brick and housing livestock.	Farmsteads 48 Outfarms 3	A feature, esp. the planned Victorian farmstead e.g. Turnor buildings at Kirmond le Mire.  Farmsteads 549 Outfarms 37	Variable Traditional Farmsteads Study completed in 2017 by Locus Consulting supported by LWCS and HE. Results included: Extant - 13% Partial loss - 36% Significant loss - 23% Farm house only - 6% Total loss - 22% Heritage potential - 48%	Change of agricultural practices and legislation demand larger buildings for livestock and machinery; insensitive developments.	Planning and development management e.g. Design Guides as SPG; landowner liaison & advice; increased access; interpretation & education.

Special Quality (Importance to natural beauty)	Local Landscape Character Area – Quality & Extent					Condition	Pressures and trends	Management options
	North-west scarp	Chalk Wolds	Ridges and valleys of the south-west	South-eastern claylands	Total extent within AONB			
Historic Landscapes & Buildings (continued) Industrial heritage, airfields, railways mine workings	Local feature Ironstone mining.	Local feature. 3 former RAF airfields, old railway line and buildings.	Local feature Old railway line. Key feature - Stenigot Mast.		Small pockets of interest throughout inc. 9 historic military sites; 10 cuttings & embankments.	Airfield heritage in declining condition, although memorials well maintained.	General neglect; previous lack of awareness has been improving e.g. Down Your Wold community heritage project.	Landowner liaison; improved access, interpretation & education.  Growing interest in ironstone mining heritage.
Moated sites (LWCS)	1	4	Key feature		5 known	Vulnerable feature	Farming operations; development pressures.	Development control; landowner liaison; improved access, education & interpretation
Watermills & Windmills (LWCS)	Local feature Paper making industry at Tealby utilised watermills 7	Local feature Thoresway and Binbrook watermills remain 11	Local feature Stockwith Mill is best remaining in Wolds. Ketsby Mill has potential 6	Local feature Windmills at Hagworth-ingham and Grebby.	A localised feature within the Wolds, many have no surviving remains (all records have been counted). 24 known	Only half (12) have bricks/evidence on the ground of the site.	Many now lost through changes into private residence with watercourses often diverted; neglected feature under threat.	Development control; landowner liaison & advice; improved access, interpretation & education.
Dry stone walls (LWCS)	Key feature				Limited to the north-west scarp.	Variable condition but improving in places e.g. Tealby church wall.	Neglected feature; lack of building material.	Further surveys; landowner liaison AONB specific grants/advice including agri-environment schemes.

## 2.6 Threats/Issues/Pressures on the Wolds' Natural Beauty

Table 2 complements Table 1 in providing an overview of the threats and pressures on the Wolds and future opportunities that may exist for minimising any potential impact on the natural beauty of the AONB. The management options provide a basis for developing much needed positive action to improve the Wolds' landscape quality and biodiversity. Appendix 3 provides an additional summary of the threats/pressures for each of the four AONB specific Landscape Character Areas.

There is much action by landowners, local authorities and others to help influence and encourage positive landscape management. A wide range of partnership achievements are documented in the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Annual Reviews which have been published since 2004-05. These reports show the success of the Partnership in encouraging and supporting a wide range of projects, very often inspired by local communities, and delivering environmental and socio-economic benefits for the area.

Whilst there may be a number of continuing threats to the landscape, there are also many opportunities for conservation and enhancement of the AONB. The task for everyone is to ensure that efforts can be coordinated in the best interest of the Wolds' landscape whilst meeting the needs of those living, working or visiting the AONB. The Management Plan seeks to provide a framework and stimulus for such integrated action.



*Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Annual Reviews*



**Table 2: Forces for Change on the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB (summary)**

Land Management	Pressures/Threats:	Opportunities:
<p><b>Agriculture</b> (see also economic section)</p>	<p>Uncertainties within agriculture linked to Brexit and de-coupling from CAP.</p> <p>Financial viability of future farming with increasing pressures from open market forces.</p> <p>Reducing and aging work force and possible restrictions on the mobility of seasonal labour from overseas.</p> <p>Extreme weather events, locally &amp; globally, increasing volatility in market prices.</p> <p>Intensification in farm practices, coupled with emerging pests and diseases and future threats to biosecurity.</p> <p>Demand for ever larger working/storage facilities to maintain profitability &amp; meet bio-control standards.</p> <p>Continued pressure on livestock farming &amp; implications to the Wolds' landscape &amp; biodiversity.</p> <p>Increasing financial costs of arable and livestock production and consistency in energy supply.</p> <p>Loss of cross compliance funding to help aid corridor management e.g. ditch and hedgerow boundary maintenance etc.</p>	<p>Ongoing Brexit and UK farming policy reform is a significant factor, including the new Agriculture Bill (2018).</p> <p>Rationalisation of future government support mechanisms (Stewardship) providing a smart system of support with increasing emphasis on wider public goods and services – commonly expressed as "natural capital".</p> <p>Utilise links with the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, quality assurance schemes &amp; other Lincolnshire branding initiatives including local rare breed groups.</p> <p>Catchment sensitive farming and integrated pest management systems.</p> <p>Increased collaborative working via Lincs Agri-Horticulture Forum, Natural England's facilitation fund and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership &amp; Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.</p> <p>A greater role for research and innovation and sharing good practice within and between sectors to enhance the knowledge bank and ensure food security.</p> <p>A shift towards sustainable farming that can work in harmony with landscape/natural forces as well as offering resilience to market pressures.</p>
<p><b>Forestry</b> (also economic section)</p>	<p>Continued decline in management &amp; isolation of woodland.</p> <p>Inappropriate location/species mix.</p> <p>Traditionally a lack of markets for local timber, although trends reversing.</p> <p>Climate change impacts, including emergence of new pests &amp; diseases including Ash Die-Back (<i>Chalara</i>) and Acute Oak Decline.</p> <p>Future impacts from an increasing deer population.</p> <p>Resilience tree felling by power companies.</p>	<p>Woodland surveys &amp; audits. Farm woodland plans.</p> <p>Woodland support schemes.</p> <p>Woodland fuel products.</p> <p>Promoting/supporting appropriate management practices and raising awareness of licencing obligations.</p> <p>Tailored advice and guidance to landowners and managers including timber markets.</p>

Land Management (continued)	Pressures/Threats:	Opportunities:
<p><b>Recreation</b> (see also economic section)</p>	<p>Private ownership often restricts public access.</p> <p>Need to manage any potential increase in recreation pressures and visitor numbers, especially to avoid harm to the AONB, including tranquillity.</p> <p>Need to balance the various user group requirements to minimise conflict, including safeguarding farmer, landowner and local community interests.</p> <p>Declining access payments available through agri-environment schemes will continue to impact upon and restrict the future levels of permissive access.</p>	<p>Love Lincolnshire Wolds tourism network and the emerging Destination Management Plan for wider Lincolnshire Wolds and its market towns.</p> <p>Viking Way regional footpath and connections with the wider Walkers are Welcome market towns network.</p> <p>Increased number of promoted circular walks.</p> <p>Continued potential for cycling &amp; promoted cycle routes.</p> <p>Access for all &amp; multi-access opportunities e.g. the Lindsey Trail, all-terrain mobility scooters etc.</p> <p>Promotion of the wider benefits of recreation &amp; countryside tourism; including to the local economy, environment, public health &amp; well-being.</p>
<p><b>Climate Change</b></p>	<p>Increasing demands for rural products to be produced from sustainable sources &amp; demonstrate 'green credentials'.</p> <p>Implications for species and habitats e.g. woodland species mix may change.</p> <p>Increased fluctuations in water flows &amp; possible increase in flooding, drought &amp; soil erosion.</p> <p>Temperature changes for ground &amp; surface water &amp; impact upon chalk stream species.</p> <p>More extreme weather events likely to place increased stresses on nature conservation, farming and heritage resources including archaeology.</p>	<p>Potential for new crops - new species &amp; habitats may equally become viable.</p> <p>Increasing emphasis on multi-functional land management to help aid protection and enhancement of natural resources, including flood mitigation and the locking up of greenhouse gasses.</p> <p>Greater drive for energy efficiencies, including the opportunities to shift towards a more local "circular economy".</p>
<p><b>Pollution</b></p>	<p>Air quality – elevated levels of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollutants from surrounding power stations along the Trent.</p> <p>Agro-chemical pollution exacerbated by low flows – water abstractions. Risk of diffuse runoff or point source discharges of pollutants, including potential risks from ammonia, pesticides (including neonicotinoids) and high sediment loads.</p> <p>Increasing light &amp; noise pollution impacts upon dark night skies &amp; tranquillity respectively.</p>	<p>Legislation, technical advances and alternative sustainable energies should improve air quality.</p> <p>Water quality protection via Water Framework Directive &amp; Anglian Water's AMP6 targets.</p> <p>Technological improvements in farm spraying applications &amp; LERAP regulations.</p> <p>Agri-environment &amp; catchment sensitive farming schemes including buffering of water courses.</p> <p>Energy efficient lighting design.</p>

Economic (continued)	Pressures/Threats:	Opportunities:
<p><b>Agriculture/Forestry Industries</b></p>	<p>Wolds' economy historically heavily reliant upon farming.</p> <p>Pronounced period of uncertainty.</p> <p>Fewer people employed directly in farming than at any other period.</p> <p>Livestock farming particularly vulnerable along with infrastructure &amp; skills to support a local livestock industry.</p> <p>Concerns that many of the younger generation are not attracted to a career in farming/forestry.</p>	<p>Lincolnshire Forum for Agriculture &amp; Horticulture.</p> <p>Local branding schemes – Tastes of Lincolnshire &amp; Select Lincolnshire. Niche selling and promotions via farmers/rural markets.</p> <p>Farm diversification initiatives including links with tourism &amp; conservation.</p> <p>Opportunities via the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership &amp; Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.</p> <p>Utilising the shooting/field sports sector and its links to the wider local economy.</p> <p>Cluster farming approaches to aid collaboration and promote and share good practice.</p>
<p><b>Tourism Industry</b></p>	<p>Developing tourism is currently restricted by a weak infrastructure (e.g. limited accommodation and attractions; restricted highways and public transport).</p> <p>Threat to peace &amp; solitude of the Wolds caused by additional visitors to various attractions, especially to honey-pot villages and nature reserves.</p> <p>Limited resources for collaborative countywide tourism promotions.</p> <p>Greater investment required to support sympathetic innovative developments to help enhance the visitor experience.</p>	<p>Partnership promotion under the Love Lincolnshire Wolds banner and enhanced development of the Destination Management services to help grow and enhance the visitor economy.</p> <p>Need for improved and well managed range of accommodation &amp; visitor attractions appropriate to the Wolds AONB.</p> <p>Scope to further develop the green tourism product.</p> <p>Ongoing innovation of the Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival and promotion of other local cultural events.</p> <p>Utilise countywide tourism initiatives, including links to visitors to Lincoln and the east coast.</p> <p>Explore further links to the Wolds unique sense of place and its range of local shops, pubs and tearooms.</p> <p>Segmentation of the market promotions to reflect varying demographics and interests – opportunities to expand the year-round and weekend offers.</p> <p>Utilise links to Cadwell Motor Park to secure fresh interest in the AONB from wider audience groups.</p>

Economic (continued)	Pressures/Threats:	Opportunities:
<b>Mineral Extraction</b>	<p>A number of chalk quarries and sand/gravel pits are actively worked within or adjacent to the Wolds.</p> <p>Secondary uses e.g. land fill, recycling facilities, tarmacadam works.</p> <p>Hydrocarbon (oil and gas) exploration is ongoing. There is a perceived threat from "unconventional" drilling operations (i.e. fracking) but the UK Infrastructure Act 2015 does not permit hydraulic fracturing at a depth of less than 1,200 metres beneath nationally protected areas, including AONBs.</p>	<p>Reclamation schemes for landscape, wildlife, access, interpretation &amp; education.</p> <p>Ongoing active management of key sites to maintain geodiversity features of interest.</p>
<b>Radio, Telecommunication Masts &amp; Powerlines</b>	<p>Incomplete broadband coverage.</p> <p>Proliferation of skyline masts including the latest generation of masts for non-spots.</p> <p>Visual impact of medium and low voltage powerlines including potentially over-aggressive tree thinning operations.</p>	<p>Improved technology/design</p> <p>Increased sharing of masts &amp; sites by operators. Removal of redundant masts.</p> <p>Increased use of underground powerlines especially with OFGEM financial incentives.</p>
<b>Alternative Energies</b>	<p>Wind energy seen as both a threat and an opportunity.</p> <p>Several wind farm scheme applications have been permitted both within and adjacent to the AONB; other proposals have been rejected largely on landscape intrusion grounds.</p> <p>Potential solar farms and anaerobic digestion plants within and close to the AONB need careful planning &amp; design.</p>	<p>Anaerobic digestion generation and bio-fuels, including miscanthus, maize &amp; willow coppice, could aid farm diversification &amp; woodland management.</p> <p>Potential for appropriate small scale wind turbines, appropriate on-farm composting schemes &amp; increased use of photovoltaics &amp; other emerging renewable energy technologies.</p>
<b>New Business</b>	<p>Expansion of IT resources is increasing business mobility – impacting upon social fabric of Wolds.</p> <p>Landscape threats due to new IT installations.</p>	<p>Secondary income to farm businesses through diversification &amp; increased opportunities for local employment.</p> <p>Re-use of redundant/derelict buildings including farm buildings &amp; former military installations.</p>
<b>Transport</b>	<p>Visual impact of road signage.</p> <p>Heavy goods vehicles impact on road verges and impacts from winter salting on verge habitats.</p> <p>Out of character road developments in village settlements following urban planning guidelines.</p> <p>Some village traffic calming measures potentially out of character with settlement entranceways.</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans and integrated initiatives.</p> <p>Every Street Matters initiative supporting public realm enhancements and aiding Village Design Statements.</p> <p>Promote opportunities for community and public transport provision such as Call Connect/Wheels to Work.</p>

Social	Pressures/Threats:	Opportunities:
<p><b>Local Services</b></p>	<p>Local services are under threat owing to the general rural isolation of many of the communities within the Wolds and the limited social infrastructure.</p> <p>Public transport service variable, often poor with weekend services particularly limited.</p> <p>Minimal services/facilities for the younger generation aiding outward migration of workforce.</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans.</p> <p>Community strategies including neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>Community-run facilities such as village shops and multi-use centres.</p> <p>Furthering connections with the market towns for wider service provision – a two-way pathway for wider links with parishes across the Wolds.</p>
<p><b>Local Housing</b></p>	<p>General lack of affordable housing, with the Wolds invariably enabling a premium market price for high quality larger homes.</p> <p>National building corporations using standard building designs with formulaic architecture.</p>	<p>Village Design Statements.</p> <p>Local Development Frameworks and accompanying Housing Strategies to help aid social housing.</p> <p>Sympathetic re-development opportunities for farmsteads.</p>
<p><b>Social Fabric</b></p>	<p>The rural communities have suffered from economic deprivation aggravated by an ongoing decline in agriculture and the defence industry.</p> <p>Continued rural isolation, loss of local services, small size of many settlements &amp; influx of both commuters and retired people is impacting upon traditional communities.</p> <p>Some parts of the AONB currently have very limited mobile phone and/or broadband coverage.</p> <p>Concerns with the potential decline in police protection and increase in rural crime.</p>	<p>Community Strategies &amp; resulting community development schemes, rural support networks etc.</p> <p>Enhance opportunities for public engagement and social cohesion via volunteering.</p> <p>Support sustainable communities through fostering environmental/place shaping activity.</p> <p>Market town initiatives &amp; links with the AONB as physical and information gateways to the Wolds.</p> <p>New enterprise possibilities via recreation, tourism, educational &amp; other specialist industry sectors.</p> <p>Broadband &amp; other IT improvements, especially with opportunities via the OnLincolnshire Broadband Project, UK wide Rural Broadband Partnership and future development of Wi-Fi technologies.</p>



## 2.7 Public Survey – Have Your Say

During March to September 2016, residents and visitors to the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB were invited to complete the Lincolnshire Wolds "Have Your Say" survey. The questionnaire was promoted via the LWCS and AONB Partnership's e-newsletter Higher Ground, through direct mail and via social media. The survey provided a very useful snapshot of views in respect of the importance of the Lincolnshire Wolds and in particular perspectives on its recognition as a nationally protected AONB.

The results are detailed in Appendix 5 and provide interesting comparisons with the public questionnaire survey coordinated by the Partnership in 2003. In terms of providing a barometer of local views and opinions the results complement the generally very positive findings from Google and Trip Advisor (500+ responses) as evidenced within the State of the AONB Report. The results were reported to the AONB Partnership and have helped to inform and shape the review of the Plan.

Going forward, the AONB Partnership will continue to place a high value on listening and seeking to understand and appreciate the views and aspirations of local residents, landowners, communities and visitors to the area. This helps us to identify the relevance of the AONB and the natural environment to peoples' day to day lives and the choices they make, and to help inspire imaginative and ambitious local engagement. We envisage conducting a similar Have Your Say survey during the summer of 2021 to inform the ongoing Action Plan and kick-start the next formal Management Plan review.



*Engaging the public during events*

## 3. The Vision and Guiding Influences

### 3.1 The Vision

The Lincolnshire Wolds should not be preserved in aspic and is continually evolving in response to the many human and natural forces that are placed upon it and it is evident that the pressures on the AONB are set to continue to increase further. However, these pressures can be offset by new opportunities to manage the process, and the production of this Plan serves to highlight that there is a continuing pressing need for everyone to work in partnership - to positively influence the Wolds through appropriate future development and land management - recognising the vital contributions from local landowners, and everyone living, working and visiting the area.

The area's vision for the twenty-five year period from 2018 is as follows:-

*The Lincolnshire Wolds will continue to be a vibrant living and working landscape through the primary influence of sustainable agriculture, forestry and land management. It will retain its unique and nationally important sense of place: an area of open rolling hills, dramatic views, farmed fields changing with the seasons, tranquil valleys, woodland, pasture, streams and attractive villages.*

*The Wolds natural and cultural heritage will be well known, enjoyed and widely respected by both residents and visitors. It will continue to provide a place of tranquillity and inspiration for those fortunate enough to visit the area, whilst meeting the economic, social and environmental needs of those who live and work there.*

*A sustainable approach to management activity will be normal practice with an emphasis on integrated farming and land management providing a wide range of innovative solutions to tackling the issues of climate change (through mitigation and adaptation), food production, water quality and supply, recreation provision, and energy demands. Enhanced connectivity between healthy, resilient landscapes and green infrastructure will help to provide and cater for an increasingly dynamic environment and help to contribute to a good quality of life for all.*

The vision acknowledges the challenge of securing social, economic and environmental progress that can protect and enhance the special and intrinsic qualities that define the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB (as introduced in Section 2). The Plan sets out a framework of objectives, policies and actions that collectively strive towards achieving this vision through local partnership action.

### 3.2 The Aims

The five key aims of the Management Plan are to sustain and enhance:

- the Lincolnshire Wolds' natural beauty and its landscape character
- farming and land management in the Wolds as the primary activities in maintaining its character, landscape and biodiversity
- recreational, tourism and interpretive activities and opportunities appropriate to the area
- the economic and social base of the Wolds including the development and diversification of enterprises appropriate to the area
- partnerships between organisations, the local community, landowners and others with an interest in the Wolds.

### 3.3 Cross-cutting influences – national drivers

The recent publication, AONB Management Plans – Support for their revision in England (June 2017) has served to highlight the following national context to the fresh round of reviews:

**Partnership working:** *The AONB Management Plan is a place-based plan derived through local consensus. It seeks to define the approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB through the application of local solutions to local challenges that also respect the national and international importance of the AONB. It is a plan for the AONB, not just the Partnership or (where relevant) Conservation Board.*

**Local participation:** *AONB staff actively listens to their local communities. Using their skills, knowledge and empathy they are able to plan and support the delivery of practical solutions to local land management and planning issues that reflect local interests and concerns. These solutions often help support a sustainable rural economy and improve the health and well-being of those that live in, work in, and visit the AONB.*

**Economic value of AONBs:** *The AONB designation has helped to conserve and enhance some of England's finest landscapes. These landscapes are highly valued by business as economic assets in their own right and as settings which add value to business. Well managed landscapes offer a wealth of natural resources that serve as the foundations of rural business, including farming and forestry. Their beauty and international appeal also offers opportunities for tourism related businesses. AONBs are living, working landscapes that contribute some £16 billion GVA (Gross Value Added) to the national economy.*

**Planning and the wider goods and services:** *The natural environment underpins the economy through the provision of goods and services, more specifically its use in farming, forestry, housing, business, transport, energy, tourism and recreation. However, space and natural resources are limited and increasingly contested. The land use planning system is designed to help achieve optimal outcomes for society when decisions on land use priorities must be made.*

*AONB teams can provide specialist advice to help public bodies and statutory undertakers make decisions on planning matters. In doing so, they can help these bodies meet their legal duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs, and ultimately help ensure that planning decisions result in sustainable outcomes.*

**Agri-Environment Support:** *Farming requires a profitable future to sustain farming families, safeguard the environment, mitigate climate change and maintain vitality and employment in rural communities. Land managers play a crucial role in helping to look after the environment including its soil and water quality and the provision for open air recreation.*

*The AONB designation provides a platform for integrating the support provided to the sector with wider environmental, social and economic opportunities. In doing so, AONB teams are vital in helping develop a more sustainable approach to agriculture in the UK.*

**State of the Environment:** *Monitoring and review is an essential part of management planning, with each review of the plan building on the results of the monitoring of the previous plan. In this way, successive plans can be modified to achieve better results, and the performance of those tasked with delivery can be measured. Robust state of the environment reporting is the foundation for all AONB management plans and is both qualitative and quantitative.*

**Health and Well-being:** *AONBs are vitally important for the health and well-being of the nation. 156 million people visit AONBs in England annually, many to make the most of the free opportunities on offer for outdoor recreation, exercise, rest and relaxation. Likewise, many of the one million people who live in AONBs express an appreciation for living in an area with a clear sense of place and local identity. As the link between greenspace and reduced depression, anxiety, anger and sadness becomes better understood, AONBs have become increasingly important for providing outdoor opportunities for improving the health of the nation.*

### 3.4 Delivery Themes

Considering both the aims and cross-cutting influences, five themes have been identified to help deliver the vision for the Wolds. These are:

- Theme 1. Protecting the Wolds
- Theme 2. Living and Working in the Wolds
- Theme 3. Discovering the Wolds
- Theme 4. Developing the Wolds
- Theme 5. Partnerships in the Wolds

These themes provide the overall Strategy for the document. The sections are not mutually exclusive and in many cases there is both overlap and interdependence between themes. This reflects the complex nature of AONB management in respect of the need to harmonise environmental, social and economic forces, which are the major drivers for landscape change in the AONB. A set of objectives, policies and actions have been developed on a topic by topic basis within these themes, acknowledging both threats and opportunities.

Section 1.7 (p12) explains in more detail the resourcing of the wider AONB partnership. There is general recognition of the challenging financial climate which is continually likely to impact upon all sectors of the national and local economy, especially public and third sector organisations. This places an ever greater need for prudent and effective partnership working, increasingly utilising the services of willing landowners, volunteers, and local communities to help aid project delivery. The Strategy and Action Plan is ambitious, but the relevant local authorities and wider AONB partnership strongly believe that the document will serve as a catalyst for further innovative delivery.



*The Wolds in winter (N. Gurnhill)*