

## **CHAPTER 12 - PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### ***Landscape, Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geodiversity***

#### **Where we want to be**

The rich and varied landscape of East Lindsey continues to be valued by local residents and visitors.

The Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty continues to be protected for its special landscape quality.

The highly sensitive landscape areas of the District have retained their character and special qualities.

The amount of greenspace in the District will have increased and be well connected.

Biodiversity is thriving and new areas have been created and maintained while existing areas are maintained and enhanced.

#### **What it will look like**

Change to the landscape will have been managed sensitively to retain local diversity and distinctiveness. New development will be integrated within its local landscape.

East Lindsey will contain a network of high quality, well-connected greenspaces that support flourishing wildlife habitats and species and help promote active and healthy lifestyles.

New green spaces will have been created within and around communities, linked to existing green infrastructure, to help meet the needs of the growing population. Habitats for wildlife will have been protected, enhanced and expanded to enable species to adapt to the changes brought about by climate change.

#### **Delivery Objectives** (how we are going to get there)

This strategy will be delivered through the following

Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan 2013 - 2018

Coastal Country Park

Heritage/Wild Coast Partnership Lincolnshire Limewoods,

Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project

Settlement Proposals and Neighbourhood Development Plans

Partnership Plans including Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan and Geodiversity Action Plan

## **Evidence**

East Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment 2011  
East Lindsey Green Infrastructure Audit  
Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan  
Lincolnshire Geodiversity Action Plan  
Lincolnshire Wolds Management Plan  
Data held in Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre including Local Wildlife Site data

## **Why we have taken this approach**

### ***Landscape***

12.1. East Lindsey displays a rich and varied landscape, much of which has been recognised through national and international designations for its special quality and character, or for the habitat it provides. This includes the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the only such designation in the East Midlands, which covers about one third of the District.

12.2. The landscape also contains a variety of important and designated historic areas that have shaped, and in turn been shaped by, the history of East Lindsey. These include the English Civil War Battlefield at Winceby and the formal landscapes of the District's Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. The District's Conservation Areas and listed buildings also form an integral part of the landscape character of East Lindsey. Each has their own character and it is important that any new development or alterations within these areas, or that affect a listed building, or which affects their setting, preserves or enhances their distinctive qualities.

12.3. The European Landscape Convention highlights the need to develop policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of the landscape. Part of this approach includes the National Landscape Character Areas (as defined by Natural England). The District comprises four distinct National Character Areas: the Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes, Lincolnshire Wolds, Central Lincolnshire Clay Vale and the Fens.

12.4. The Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2009 further defines thirteen landscape character areas, each with their own distinctive characteristics and sensitivity to change. The character areas within the assessment fall within four levels; these vary from moderate to low to highly sensitive. The highly sensitive landscapes should be given the highest protection. This will be used to help assess and influence the design and layout of new development. The District's landscapes will be conserved or where appropriate enhanced and restored in line with the recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape character does not follow administrative boundaries and collaboration with neighbouring authorities is important to ensure a coherent strategy for the landscape.

12.5. There is much in the landscape to be protected for its special qualities and natural history value, and in some cases its tranquillity, but it also provides opportunities to enrich the quality of life for our communities and to add to the rural economy, especially by appealing to tourists and visitors. Our strategy here is to ensure that we balance the need to protect the most valuable resource whilst also releasing its community and economic potential.

12.6. All proposed development, in its location and design, will be required to adhere to these principles and shall be guided by the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, the emerging Lincolnshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Assessment and the East Midlands Landscape Character Assessment.

12.7. The Council will welcome development that adds to the distinctive character of the landscape and will encourage development that uses its landscape setting to grow the local economy for the benefit of local communities, provided it does not harm the landscape's character in the process.

12.8. The Lincolnshire Wolds, which were designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1973 for their distinctive and high quality landscapes, are particularly sensitive to change. Whilst we expect them to expand their role as a visitor destination, this should not be at the expense of the distinctive landscape or of the quality of life of the communities within them. The close spatial and functional relationship between the small settlements and the landscape should be retained, as should the more significant views within, out of and into, the Wolds. The Council will give careful consideration to any applications in the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB in respect of its ability to protect and enhance the setting of this distinctive landscape. The highest level of design should be expected in these nationally designated landscapes and, in the case of major development, consideration will be given to the need for the development to be in that location. New initiatives and countryside management will be directed and co-ordinated through the statutory Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan, drawn up in partnership with the Council. The Council endorses all of the objectives and policies in the Management Plan and shall make sure that all new development in, or affecting the setting of, the Wolds aligns with them and vice versa.

12.9. The Lincolnshire coast is a unique and highly distinctive landscape feature in the East Midlands Region. As such, it is a valuable resource. Whilst we will encourage further high quality development and changes to the built up coast to reinforce and improve the tourism offer, we will permit only those uses, including non-invasive green tourism, along the naturalistic coast, which do not impose themselves upon, or harm the distinctive character of, the landscape. A Heritage/Wild Coast Partnership is being developed extending along the entire undeveloped, natural East Lindsey coastline. Once established, this will be, along with the Coastal Country Park initiative, one of the key mechanisms to addressing this challenge.

## **Strategic Policy 23 (SP23) – Landscape**

- 1. The District's landscapes will be protected, enhanced, used and managed to provide an attractive and healthy working and living environment. Development will be guided by the District's Landscape Character Assessment and landscapes defined as highly sensitive will be afforded the greatest protection.***
- 2. Development will be supported where it allows for greater public access to the countryside and naturalistic coast, supports visitors to the District and helps provide additional employment opportunities, provided this does not compromise landscape quality or the biodiversity objectives of the plan.***
- 3. The Council will ensure that the distinctive character of the District's landscapes whether they are of cultural, natural or historic significance, will not be compromised. In particular, the highest level of protection will be given to the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which is designated at a national level because of its landscape quality.***
- 4. The Council will support development that conserves and enhances designated and historic landscapes (Winceby Battlefield, Lincolnshire Wolds, Coastal Country Park, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, setting of listed buildings within the landscape) as focal points for widening and improving the visitor experience.***

## **Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

12.10. Biodiversity is a term commonly used to describe the variety of life on Earth. This encompasses the whole of the natural world and all living things with which we share the planet. It includes plants, animals, and even invisible micro-organisms and bacteria that, together, interact in complex ways with the inanimate environment to create living ecosystems. Geodiversity is the term used to refer to physiographical and geomorphological features, such as rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

12.11. Biodiversity is a key indicator of the health of our environment and contributes greatly to our quality of life. Enhancing biodiversity is one of the key principles of sustainable development. It also has considerable economic and social benefits. Biodiversity is dynamic; however, some species and habitats can be highly susceptible to the harmful effects of change. Changes in climate, agriculture, settlement patterns and other human activities have led to a decline in biodiversity in the District over the last 50 years. The District Council, along with other public bodies, has a duty under The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out its functions. This is referred to as the "Biodiversity Duty". The aim of the biodiversity duty is to raise the profile of biodiversity, so that the conservation of biodiversity becomes properly embedded in all relevant policies