



Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

North East Lincolnshire Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Contents

Executive summary	6
What is green and blue infrastructure?	6
Chapter 1	12
Introduction to the strategy	
What is green and blue infrastructure?	12
How does GBI add value?	13
Why does North East Lincolnshire need a GBI strategy?	14
How was the strategy developed?	15
What happens next?	16
Chapter 2	18
North East Lincolnshire's current GBI network	
A summary portrait of North East Lincolnshire's GBI network today	18
Theme 1: Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire	19
Theme 2: Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire	33
Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire	44
Theme 4: Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment	51
Theme 5: Resilient and climate positive North East Lincolnshire	62
Chapter 3	70
A vision for the future GBI network	
Chapter 4	72
GBI assets and needs	
Chapter 5	76
Key growth areas	

Key growth area 1: West of Immingham	78
Key growth area 2: Grimsby West	85
Key growth area 3: Humberston Road	94

Chapter 6 **103**

Delivering GBI in North East Lincolnshire

Embedding GBI in North East Lincolnshire's Local Plan	103
Delivering off-site GBI in North East Lincolnshire	105

Appendix B **107**

Summary of stakeholder engagement

Appendix C **112**

List of datasets used

References **117**

Table of Tables

Table 2.1: Statutory designated sites in North East Lincolnshire	24
Table 6.1: Summary of off-site delivery options for GBI in North East Lincolnshire	106
Table B.1: Protected habitats	112
Table B.2: Access to nature and open space	112
Table B.3: Placemaking, heritage, landscape and green infrastructure	113
Table B.4: Blue corridors	113
Table B.5: Floodplain woodland potential	113
Table B.6: Climate vulnerability	114
Table B.7: Valued GBI assets	114
Table B.8: GBI needs	115

Table of Figures

Figure 1.1: Key benefits of GBI	13
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Figure 2.1: Protected habitats within and close to North East Lincolnshire	30
Figure 2.2: Access to open space in North East Lincolnshire	42
Figure 2.3: Green infrastructure, character and placemaking in North East Lincolnshire	49
Figure 2.4: North East Lincolnshire's Blue corridors	58
Figure 2.5: Floodplain woodland potential in North East Lincolnshire	59
Figure 2.6: Climate vulnerability in North East Lincolnshire	67
Figure 4.1: Valued GBI assets	74
Figure 4.2: GBI needs	75
Figure 5.1: Key growth areas	77
Figure 5.2: GBI assets in and around West of Immingham	84
Figure 5.3: GBI assets in and around Grimsby West	93
Figure 5.4: GBI assets in and around Humberston Road	101

Executive summary

North East Lincolnshire Council's 'Our Green Future' [See reference 1] and 'Our Plan' ('Greener Future') (2025 to 2028) [See reference 2] set out a clear commitment to the green agenda. These documents set out aspirations for the borough to be a nature-rich place, with clean air, inspiring green open spaces (to protect health and enhance lives), amongst other ambitions to be a thriving low carbon and circular economy and a place where residents live in energy efficient sustainable communities. Achieving this means not just conserving the green and blue infrastructure network that exists but planning and investing in a joined-up network that supports nature recovery, climate resilience, health and wellbeing, and local character.

This Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy provides the evidence and framework to deliver that vision – mapping North East Lincolnshire's natural assets, identifying key opportunities and needs and showing how new development can help create a stronger, more connected network. It also highlights the partnerships, policies and funding needed to turn ambition into action.

What is green and blue infrastructure?

Green and blue infrastructure (GBI) is the network of natural and semi-natural spaces – from parks, woodlands, meadows and street trees to rivers, canals, wetlands and sustainable drainage features – that connect landscapes, people and places. Planned as a network, these elements deliver multiple benefits at once. They support wildlife, make walking and cycling easier and more pleasant, help manage water and urban heat and enhance the distinctiveness and vitality of towns and villages.

This strategy sets out the importance of viewing GBI as essential infrastructure – just as essential as education, health, and transport infrastructure. By investing in it strategically, North East Lincolnshire can recover nature, strengthen communities, grow its visitor economy and achieve climate resilience.

Why does North East Lincolnshire need a GBI strategy?

North East Lincolnshire Council's adopted Local Plan (2018) [\[See reference 3\]](#) will guide development and growth in the borough until 2032. The Council is currently undertaking a Local Plan Review to replace this Plan and has commissioned a GBI Strategy to support the process.

Once adopted, North East Lincolnshire's new Local Plan will guide development and shape the borough from 2025 until 2043. The new Local Plan will need to respond to and accommodate future growth. This growth represents an opportunity to channel investment into North East Lincolnshire's GBI network. However, it is important that robust policies ensure that new development enhances rather than harms the natural environment.

The Local Plan is being prepared against the backdrop of a rapidly changing national context – including a response to the climate emergency and a renewed focus on biodiversity and nature networks, in part as a result of the Environment Act 2021 and in the light of Natural England's GI Framework [\[See reference 4\]](#). It is important that the new Local Plan reflects this new reality. It is equally important that it reflects the latest available data on GBI networks and associated needs and challenges.

Against this background, the overarching goal of this GBI Strategy is to provide a robust evidence base for the Local Plan Review and support the need to accommodate significant growth in the borough while protecting the natural environment. Considering this, it seeks to:

- Identify deficiencies and opportunities for creating and enhancing GBI across the borough.
- Review current GBI policies with the existing Local Plan and make recommendations for robust new policy.
- Ensure that enhancements to the GBI network are aligned with overall growth plans, with a focus on those areas which will accommodate that growth.

A vision for the future of North East Lincolnshire's GBI network

Chapter 3 of this strategy sets out a vision for the future of the GBI network in North East Lincolnshire. Supported by a set of six objectives, this vision should act like a 'golden thread' for decision-making on GBI and guide the opportunities identified later in the report.

Through the planning process and in collaboration with partners, North East Lincolnshire Council will shape a connected, resilient, and inclusive green and blue infrastructure network. The network will protect and enhance North East Lincolnshire's rich natural heritage and protected sites, support healthy and thriving communities, strengthen climate resilience and celebrate the Borough's unique landscape identity – ensuring benefits for people of all ages and background, local economies and nature for generations to come.

How is North East Lincolnshire's GBI Network performing today?

The GBI 'themes' used for this strategy draw on the Benefit Principles set out in the Natural England GI Framework – which outlines best practice for green and blue infrastructure planning across England. They help to draw out the multiple 'functions' which GBI assets play in the borough. Full analysis (including maps) is set out in **Chapter 2**.

Theme 1: Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire: the borough has internationally important habitats (e.g. the Humber Estuary) and local ecological networks, but faces significant pressures from development, recreation, poor water quality and climate change. Opportunities exist for habitat restoration, nature recovery and strengthening green and blue infrastructure connectivity.

Theme 2: Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire: the borough faces poorer health outcomes, high obesity levels, an ageing population and low active travel, alongside limited and unequal access to green space. Despite valuable parks and assets, opportunities exist to improve health and reduce inequalities through enhanced green infrastructure provision and connectivity.

Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire: The borough has strong assets in its town centres, visitor economy and historic environment, but faces challenges from declining retail vitality and changing consumer behaviour. Opportunities exist to support regeneration, enhance visitor appeal and strengthen local identity through green infrastructure and heritage-led place-making.

Theme 4: Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment: the borough has significant water assets, including the Humber Estuary and chalk streams, but faces challenges from poor water quality, flood risk and water stress. Opportunities exist to enhance resilience through green and blue infrastructure, including natural flood management, SuDS and catchment restoration.

Theme 5: Resilient and climate positive North East Lincolnshire: the borough faces challenges from high transport emissions, low active travel, limited tree canopy cover and increasing climate risks such as heatwaves and flooding. Opportunities exist to enhance resilience through green infrastructure, including active travel networks, urban tree planting and nature-based flood management solutions.

Priorities for GBI enhancements in North East Lincolnshire's key growth areas

Significant new development is being planned through the Local Plan Review, offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity to use growth to deliver a greener, healthier North East Lincolnshire. To ensure this happens, the strategy includes three key growth area profiles (see **Chapter 5** for full profiles):

1. West of Immingham
2. Grimsby West
3. Humberston Road

Each profile summarises the local landscape and GBI context, the main environmental and placemaking challenges, and the most important opportunities for multifunctional GBI – such as habitat corridors, active travel links, blue-green flood resilience and high-quality public open space.

These profiles demonstrate how GBI can be embedded from the outset of masterplanning and broader multi-stakeholder initiatives to improve the GBI

network locally, helping to create distinctive, sustainable places that reflect local character and landscape identity.

Delivering GBI in North East Lincolnshire

Turning the vision into reality will depend on coordinated delivery and sustained investment. North East Lincolnshire Council cannot deliver this alone – success will require strong collaboration between all stakeholders including developers, neighbouring authorities, Natural England, the Environment Agency, Forestry England, Rivers Trusts, landowners and community groups.

Key tools for delivery include:

- Embedding strong, evidence-based GBI policies in the new Local Plan.
- Securing multifunctional GBI through new development.
- Aligning GBI investment with tools such as the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and catchment-based water management.
- Using the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan to direct developer contributions towards strategic GBI projects.
- Exploring innovative finance opportunities such as habitat banks, carbon and nutrient credit schemes and agri-environment funding.

See **Chapter 6** for further detail on delivery, and **Appendix A** for further detail on the stakeholders involved in the development of this strategy.

Next steps

This strategy provides a robust foundation for the Local Plan Review (2025-2043) and for the next review of North East Lincolnshire's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It should also inform parallel strategies – including health and wellbeing, open space and climate action – ensuring GBI is embedded across all areas of policy and delivery.

Next steps include:

- Translating strategic opportunities into deliverable projects through detailed feasibility and design work.

- Prioritising "early-win" projects that demonstrate tangible benefits for communities and wildlife.
- Establishing clear governance and partnership arrangements to coordinate funding and delivery.
- Monitoring progress to ensure continuous improvement.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the strategy

What is green and blue infrastructure?

1.1 Green and blue infrastructure (in this report simply referred to as GBI) refers to the network of green and blue spaces that surround and run through our villages, towns and cities. GBI helps connect people, wildlife and nature. It includes large green spaces like National Parks, Country Parks, farmed landscapes or river corridors. It also includes green areas in private gardens, allotments, hedges, street trees, roadside green verges, and footpaths. However, GBI is not about individual assets - more important are the connections between those assets and the functions they provide.

1.2 Crucially, GBI should form a strategic network of high-quality green spaces and other natural features, which offers quality of life benefits for communities. It should thread through and around the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland.

1.3 Unlike grey infrastructure, such as drainage pipes which have a single function, GBI can provide many functions. These include recreation, removing water pollution, reducing flood risk, providing homes for wildlife, providing flowers for bees and other pollinators and helping to keep urban areas cool.

1.4 However, it should be noted that different functions can sometimes compete. As such, it is important to carefully define and manage these uses to ensure they complement rather than conflict with each other.

1.5 Considering this, GBI is a core planning consideration in North East Lincolnshire, given the borough's ecological richness, rural character and environmental challenges shared with the rest of the UK. It will also help deliver against North East Lincolnshire's 'Our Green Future', outlined in the Council's Environmental Vision Statement **[See reference 5]** and 'Our Plan' ('Greener Future') (2025 to 2028) **[See reference 6]**.

Figure 1.1: Key benefits of GBI

How does GBI add value?

1.6 Historically, GBI has been treated within the planning system as a cost. However new approaches – such as the 'natural capital' approach – have helped to better understand the tangible value delivered by investment in GBI.

1.7 A natural capital approach considers the value of the natural environment for people and the economy. It is an important part of a wider move to better understand 'inclusive wealth' – as set out in the Dasgupta Review commissioned by the Government in 2019 [\[See reference 7\]](#).

1.8 National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) [\[See reference 8\]](#) states:

Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services.

1.9 This value is largely made up of:

- **Provisioning services:** products from nature such as food, water, energy and materials. This includes agriculture, water extraction, renewable energy and mineral extraction.
- **Regulating services:** services helping to maintain the quality of our environment, such as carbon sequestration to remove greenhouse gases, parks and blue spaces to cool, and vegetation to remove air pollutants.
- **Cultural services:** these are non-material benefits people obtain from natural capital, such as tourism, recreation and aesthetic experience.

1.10 In fact, the Office for National Statistics now produces a set of Natural Capital accounts. These estimate the financial and societal value of natural resources in the UK. In 2022, they estimated that the stock of the UK's natural capital is worth £1.8 trillion. Natural England's Natural Capital Atlas (Atlas 23 – the Lincolnshire Edition) [\[See reference 9\]](#) highlights the distribution, quality and function of natural assets across the county, demonstrating a landscape dominated by intensive arable agriculture alongside important freshwater and coastal systems. These assets deliver a wide range of ecosystem services, including water supply, flood regulation and water quality management, as well as recreational benefits. Woodland and other semi-natural habitats play a key role in carbon sequestration, air quality regulation and supporting wider ecosystem resilience.

Why does North East Lincolnshire need a GBI strategy?

1.11 North East Lincolnshire's adopted Local Plan (2018), which currently guides development and growth in the borough to 2032, is not supported by a borough-wide GBI Strategy.

1.12 The adopted 'Developing a green infrastructure network' policy (Policy 40) recognises the multifunctional nature of GBI but was drafted prior to the publication of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (GIF). It includes reference to strategic gaps that protect the setting and separate identity of settlements. However, the primary purpose of the broad strategic gaps is to prevent coalescence of the Grimsby/Cleethorpes urban area with the settlements of Humberston, New Waltham and Waltham to the south and Laceby, Healing and Bradley to the west. The policy has a distinct spatial and landscape focus.

1.13 Once adopted, North East Lincolnshire's new Local Plan will guide development and shape the borough from 2025 to 2043. The emerging Local Plan will need to

respond to, and accommodate, significant future growth. This growth represents an opportunity to channel investment into North East Lincolnshire's GBI network. However, it is important that robust policies ensure that new development enhances rather than harms the natural environment.

1.14 The new Local Plan is being prepared against the backdrop of a rapidly changing national context – including a response to the climate emergency and a renewed focus on biodiversity and nature networks, in part as a result of the Environment Act 2021 and in the light of Natural England's GBI Framework (2023) [See reference 10]. It is important that the new Local Plan reflects this new reality. It is equally important that it reflects the latest available data on GBI networks and associated needs and challenges.

1.15 This strategy must draw on evidence to set out priorities which support the Local Plan's ambitions to:

- Reduce the borough's carbon footprint.
- Protect and enhance the outstanding local environment.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of North East Lincolnshire's residents.
- Ensure towns and villages are truly sustainable, meeting changing needs of local populations and catering to a new model for leisure and retail.
- Secure and attract investment and make the borough an attractive place for new and growing businesses.

1.16 Against this background, the overarching goal of this GBI strategy is to provide a robust evidence base for the Local Plan Review and support the need to accommodate significant growth in the borough while protecting the natural environment. With this in mind, it seeks to:

- Identify deficiencies and opportunities for creating and enhancing GBI across the borough.
- Review the current GBI policy and GBI-related policies within the existing Local Plan and make recommendations for robust new policy.
- Ensure that enhancements to the GBI network are aligned with overall growth plans, with a focus on those areas which will accommodate that growth.

How was the strategy developed?

1.17 The process for developing the strategy comprised the following key tasks:

1. A **desktop baseline review and mapping of key datasets** was undertaken, considering existing policy and emerging information on potential growth locations.
2. **Relevant GBI 'themes'** were identified, based on North East Lincolnshire's characteristics and the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework.
3. **GIS data was analysed** to understand how different GBI assets interact with a range of factors and needs across the borough to identify gaps in current provision.
4. **A vision and set of objectives** were established to guide the remainder of the strategy.
5. The **emerging growth strategy** of the Plan was considered and the implications for the GBI network.
6. **Key stakeholders** were engaged with to 'sense check' the baseline and co-create opportunities.
7. The **final report** was drafted.

1.18 Because GBI does not respect administrative boundaries, it was important that this strategy took account of GBI corridors which extend beyond the local authority boundary of North East Lincolnshire to take a wider, more strategic view.

What happens next?

1.19 This strategy will form part of the evidence base underpinning North East Lincolnshire's Local Plan Review. It will be used by both the policy and development management teams to inform the development of GBI policies in the new Local Plan, as well as in decision-making on planning applications. The priorities outlined in this strategy should also guide the next update of North East Lincolnshire's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, making it a key element of infrastructure planning.

1.20 However, the Council's Local Plan alone will not be sufficient to secure all the investment needed for North East Lincolnshire's GBI network. The delivery of this network will involve multiple partners, both within and outside the Council. Therefore, it is essential that the multiple benefits of GBI are recognised and integrated across all local authority departments. Additionally, a strong delivery partnership with external organisations and community groups (see **Appendix A**) will be crucial.

1.21 This strategy includes an assessment of GBI needs and opportunities at a strategic level across the borough and identifies clear priorities. However, it does not provide the detailed design or implementation plans for each project. Further feasibility and design work will be required to bring those projects to fruition.

Chapter 2

North East Lincolnshire's current GBI network

A summary portrait of North East Lincolnshire's GBI network today

2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the condition, performance and strategic importance of North East Lincolnshire's GBI network. It is structured around five themes from Natural England's GI Framework, highlighting how GBI supports nature recovery, health and wellbeing, economic prosperity, water management and climate resilience.

2.2 The borough contains a rich mosaic of natural assets, from the internationally significant Humber Estuary to the chalk streams of the Lincolnshire Wolds. The Lincolnshire Wolds are primarily spring-fed, clear water streams, and include the River Freshney, Laceby Beck and Waithe Beck. However, these ecosystems face mounting pressures from habitat loss, agricultural intensification, climate change and recreational disturbance. GBI plays a vital role in reconnecting fragmented habitats, supporting biodiversity beyond designated sites, and delivering national policy requirements such as biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery strategies.

2.3 Strategic initiatives (including the South Humber Gateway mitigation sites, the Natural Assets Plan and the Chalk Streams Project) demonstrate a proactive, landscape-scale approach to nature restoration:

- The South Humber Gateway mitigation sites form a network of sites for birds that help offset any loss of habitat used by birds as a result of development in the South Humber Gateway **[See reference 11]**.
- The Natural Assets Plan **[See reference 12]** sets out how North East Lincolnshire Council will protect and enhance the environment, including through habitat restoration and creation.
- The Chalk Streams project **[See reference 13]** works to protect and restore the chalk streams by working in partnership with landowners, communities, volunteers and conservation organisations to achieve this.

2.4 In terms of people and place, the borough's GBI network underpins public health by providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and contact with nature at the numerous parks and open spaces present within the borough, including People's Park, Cleethorpes Country Park and Weelsby Woods. Parts of the Port of

Grimsby can also be used for recreational purposes, particularly the Kasbah dock area. Yet significant inequalities remain. Some urban and rural communities have limited access to high-quality green space, and wider health outcomes in the borough lag behind regional and national averages.

2.5 Economically, GBI has a role to play in enhancing the town centres of Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham, in addition to supporting tourism and strengthening the character of historic places. It also plays a central role in managing water quality, flood risk and coastal resilience, providing nature-based solutions that complement hard infrastructure.

2.6 Finally, GBI is critical for climate change mitigation and adaptation, offering carbon sequestration, urban cooling, sustainable drainage and opportunities to expand tree cover. Together, these functions position GBI as a cornerstone of North East Lincolnshire's long-term environmental and socio-economic resilience.

The remainder of **Chapter 2** summarises the condition and performance of North East Lincolnshire's GBI network today. It does this by breaking the functions of the network into five 'themes', based on the five Benefit Principles set out in Natural England's National Green Infrastructure Framework. These focus on "why" GBI should be provided:

- Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire
- Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire
- Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire
- Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment
- Resilient and climate positive North East Lincolnshire

Theme 1: Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire

Why is GBI important for a nature-rich North East Lincolnshire?

2.7 GBI is essential for a nature-rich North East Lincolnshire. GBI plays a crucial role by connecting, buffering and diluting pressure on the designated sites network to provide a wider well-connected and multi-functional network of habitats for wildlife.

2.8 GBI focuses on improving biodiversity within and beyond the boundaries of formally protected sites by creating habitat-rich places. The borough has a rich

natural environment, ranging from the rolling chalk hills and chalk streams of the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape to the internationally significant Humber Estuary [See reference 14]. As an important part of the 'East Atlantic Flyway' (a bird migration superhighway) [See reference 15], the estuary's intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes support internationally important waterfowl populations [See reference 16]. However, the Humber Estuary and other habitats present in the borough face compounding pressures from agricultural intensification, commercial development and climate change, leading to significant habitat loss and ecological fragmentation across the wider landscape [See reference 17].

2.9 Well-designed and managed GBI interventions, create vital ecological “stepping stones” [See reference 18], enabling wildlife to shelter, forage and move through otherwise intensive agricultural landscapes or more heavily developed areas. Given the rich array of ecological assets in North East Lincolnshire, GBI is integral to maintaining and enhancing the connectivity between designated nature conservation sites. This benefits the qualifying species within and moving between these areas, as well as the assemblages that inter-exist.

2.10 GBI is also a key mechanism for delivering local and national environmental policies. Ecological networks can be strengthened and incorporated into spatial planning [See reference 19]. The Environment Act 2021 mandates a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) for new developments in order to leave the biodiversity of sites in a better state than how they were found. BNG investments can be directed towards opportunity areas where habitat creation and restoration will achieve the most benefits [See reference 20]. GBI can shift the planning focus from preserving isolated pockets of nature to regenerating a connected, resilient ecosystem [See reference 21].

2.11 It is widely evidenced – and as set out in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework – that biodiversity loss in England continues to accelerate, with the fragmentation of habitats resulting in species decline. Soil degradation, damage to geodiversity through agriculture are all contributing factors. Without undermining the importance of areas specifically designated for their biodiversity value (as set out below), today there is a focus on improving biodiversity and geodiversity beyond these protected areas.

How does international legislation affect biodiversity in North East Lincolnshire?

2.12 International legislation shapes biodiversity protection in North East Lincolnshire through the European Habitats and Birds Directives [See reference 22]. These

directives, transposed into domestic law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, afford the highest levels of legal protection to the Humber Estuary [See reference 23], which forms part of the UK's National Site Network. The estuary is safeguarded as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA), alongside global recognition under the Ramsar Convention [See reference 24]. Any development potentially affecting the estuary's fragile ecology must undergo a rigorous assessment to understand the implications [See reference 25]. If a proposal risks an adverse impact, it cannot proceed unless appropriate mitigation is provided to offset the loss of habitat [See reference 26].

What does national legislation and policy say?

2.13 The UK's **Environment Act 2021** sets out the Government's environmental agenda for the next 25 years, putting key elements of its 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) into law [See reference 27] [See reference 28]. It requires the creation of local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) to build a national nature recovery network and supports the delivery of a minimum 10% BNG through new development.

2.14 The **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023** places a duty on all local planning authorities to "take account of" their relevant LNRS [See reference 29]. The Greater Lincolnshire LNRS is currently emerging and will provide a spatial map and prioritised action plan for restoring habitats. Policy makers and stakeholders will need to take account of defined Areas of Particular Importance (APIBs) and Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance (ACBs) within this framework.

2.15 England's **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** requires planning decisions to protect and enhance the natural environment, including boosting biodiversity, improving air and water quality and addressing climate change - all while delivering housing and growth. Crucially, plans should also explicitly secure net gains for biodiversity.

2.16 The **EU Habitats Directive** established the Natura 2000 network, a system of protected sites across Europe aimed at conserving Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. The Directive forms the cornerstone of nature conservation policy in the EU, was transposed into UK law and continues to apply through domestic legislation.

2.17 The **Planning and Infrastructure Act** aims to introduce a more strategic approach to nature recovery, through:

- Introducing a new Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) that will unlock and accelerate development; and

- Allowing Natural England (or other designated delivery body) to bring forward Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) to address the impact that development has on a protected site or species. These can be utilised by a developer who would then no longer be required to undertake their own assessments or project-specific interventions for issues addressed by the EDP.

What does local policy say?

2.18 At a corporate level, North East Lincolnshire's **Council Plan 2025-2028** [See reference 30] embeds a 'Greener Future' within its core ambitions, recognising the need to balance regional economic growth with the protection and enhancement of the borough's unique natural environment. At a strategic level, it reaffirms the Council's commitment to safeguarding the internationally important Cleethorpes coastline and Humber Estuary wetland bird habitats amidst ongoing industrial expansion. The plan champions the inclusive management of public green space and supports major local biodiversity initiatives, such as the newly designated King's National Nature Reserve and the Dynamic Understanding of the Natural Environment (DUNE) coastal protection project.

2.19 Local policy in North East Lincolnshire provides a robust framework for protecting ecological assets and integrating nature recovery into spatial planning.

2.20 The **North East Lincolnshire Local Plan** (adopted 2018) [See reference 31]:

- **Policy 41 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)** states the expectation for development to protect, manage and enhance international, national and local conservation sites while minimising biodiversity loss.
- **Policy 40 (Developing a Green Infrastructure Network)** explicitly requires developments to maintain and improve the network of green infrastructure, as well as specifically designing spaces to offset the effects of recreational pressure on the sensitive habitats of the Humber Estuary.

2.21 South Humber Gateway Ecological Mitigation Delivery Plan: This plan is an award-winning strategic framework that uses an innovative model of delivering mitigation in advance of development [See reference 32]. By establishing a strategic network of safeguarded wetland habitats before industrial construction occurs, the Council ensures the mitigation balance sheet always remains "in credit" [See reference 33]. This proactive approach successfully guarantees that the internationally important bird populations of the Humber Estuary are protected.

2.22 Greater Lincolnshire Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): This emerging strategy provides a spatial map and prioritised action plan for restoring the county's

diverse habitats [See reference 34]. It aims to expand and connect existing habitats across the county so that wildlife populations can move across the landscape and adapt to future pressures.

2.23 Natural Assets Plan: This plan sets out the direction for nature conservation, aiming to ensure habitat restoration is actively “invested in to strengthen nature networks that deliver for biodiversity and climate change” [See reference 35]. It also prioritises preparing local sites to receive BNG investment, ensuring environmental enhancements and financial benefits remain within the community.

2.24 North East Lincolnshire Tree Strategy: The strategy’s guidelines require that new planning applications demonstrate how green infrastructure will be used to “maintain, protect, enhance and extend the GI network” across the borough [See reference 36]. The strategy ensures that trees and hedgerows are integrated into early development designs to support wildlife corridors and habitat linkages.

2.25 The Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project recently published a Strategic Plan 2025-2035 setting out a collaborative, long-term vision to discover, restore, and enhance the region’s globally rare chalk streams and unique blow wells [See reference 37]. Driven by a broad partnership of environmental organisations, local businesses and community groups, the plan provides an actionable framework to mitigate severe ongoing threats such as over-abstraction, agricultural pollution and climate change. To ensure the long-term ecological health of these priority habitats, the plan actively promotes the uptake of sustainable farming practices, targeted species recovery programmes, and the implementation of nature-based flood management solutions across the Greater Lincolnshire landscape.

What are the assets, challenges and pressures for nature-rich North East Lincolnshire?

Designated nature conservation sites in North East Lincolnshire

2.26 North East Lincolnshire’s protected habitats are illustrated in **Figure 2.1**. Detailed mapping of the habitat network for North East Lincolnshire – which these designated sites form the foundation for – can be found in the emerging Greater Lincolnshire LNRS [See reference 38]. Below is a summary of some of the key sites.

Statutory designated sites in North East Lincolnshire

Table 2.1: Statutory designated sites in North East Lincolnshire

Statutory designated site	Area (ha)
SAC	1,009.18
SPA	1,009.18
Ramsar site	1,009.18
SSSI	1,009.86
National Nature Reserve	292.12
Local Nature Reserve	441.97
Local Wildlife Site	354.12
Site of Nature Conservation Interest	240.54

2.27 North East Lincolnshire has a variety of formally protected sites, ranging from internationally important coastlines to cherished local woodlands [\[See reference 39\]](#). The most significant of these is the Humber Estuary, which is protected as a SAC, SPA and Ramsar site, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) [\[See reference 40\]](#). These designations recognise the importance of the estuary's vast saltmarshes and intertidal mudflats, which provide vital feeding and roosting grounds for migrating birds [\[See reference 41\]](#).

2.28 Furthermore, the borough now hosts the first of the King's series of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in Lincolnshire. Created in collaboration with Natural England and other partners, the Lincolnshire Coronation Coast is a newly designated King's NNR and offers more opportunities for local communities to access and experience the coast [\[See reference 42\]](#). This Lincolnshire Coronation Coast NNR combined two existing reserves: Donna Nook and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes.

2.29 Closer to the urban centres, the borough contains five statutory Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) which provide communities with opportunities to experience and learn about wildlife [\[See reference 43\]](#): Cleethorpes Sand Dunes, the historic Bradley and Dixon Woods, Weelsby Woods, Cleethorpes Country Park and Freshney Parkway. Given the sensitivity of these environments, it is important that increasing visitor numbers and development pressures are managed to ensure the integrity of these sites is safeguarded for the future [\[See reference 44\]](#).

Non-statutory designated sites

2.30 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) form the final piece of North East Lincolnshire's network of protected habitats, providing valuable "stepping stones" for local wildlife to move across the borough [See reference 45]. In the borough, the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership has identified 39 of these local sites for their wildlife and sometimes geological value [See reference 46]. The health of these habitats is measured by tracking the proportion of sites that are achieving positive conservation management [See reference 47]. As of 2024, only 23% of the borough's 39 local sites (31 Local Wildlife Sites and 8 Local Geological Sites) were recorded as being in positive management [See reference 48]. While this is a slight improvement from the previous year, it still falls short of the wider Greater Lincolnshire average of 50% [See reference 49]. Because many of these sites are located on privately owned land, they are not always open to the public and the Council has no direct duty to maintain them [See reference 50]. However, the Council continues to collaborate with local landowners to try and secure good, ongoing management for these important areas.

2.31 There are also numerous Sites of Nature Conservation Interest located across the borough, although data is not available on their quality. According to the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership, these will be superseded by Local Wildlife Sites in the future, as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest were identified on the basis of local knowledge and were selected without consideration of any formal criteria (as is the case with Local Wildlife Sites) [See reference 51].

Extent and condition of designated sites

2.32 The condition of the Humber Estuary SSSI units within the borough varies. According to Natural England's Designated Sites View, approximately 57% of the area is classified as "unfavourable – recovering" [See reference 52]. This indicates that while the habitat is not yet at its target state, the necessary management is in place to reach it. Conversely, about 43% of the estuarine area is currently "unfavourable – declining," suggesting that pressures such as coastal squeeze or recreational disturbance are actively degrading the habitat [See reference 53]. Stakeholder consultation suggested that there may be some uncertainty regarding the current condition of the SSSI, particularly at a site-wide scale, as not all components have been subject to recent comprehensive survey. However, the units at Cleethorpes Beach and the foreshore toward Grimsby Dock are currently assessed as being in "favourable" condition. This high performance is attributed to the dedicated local care and strategic interventions implemented through the Cleethorpes Habitat Management Plan [See reference 54].

The role of strategic gaps

2.33 In North East Lincolnshire, strategic gaps between settlements are explicitly safeguarded under policy 40 to prevent the merging of the urban fabric and to form multi-functional GBI corridors [\[See reference 55\]](#). As such, they comprise landscape/spatial designations. These defined areas do, however, provide some opportunities to conserve local wildlife by protecting the ecological links between otherwise isolated habitat sites [\[See reference 56\]](#). For example, the Freshney Corridor spans over 250 hectares and threads an extensive network of woodlands, hedgerows and watercourses through the urban area of Grimsby [\[See reference 57\]](#). By incorporating several Local Wildlife Sites along the River Freshney, this corridor acts as a highly effective green lung that brings essential habitat connectivity into the heart of Grimsby [\[See reference 58\]](#).

Chalk streams and blow wells

2.34 Globally rare chalk streams and blow wells are found in North East Lincolnshire. Chalk streams support a remarkable diversity of wildlife, including vulnerable species such as water voles and brown trout, and form a vital part of Lincolnshire's natural heritage. A blow well is a globally rare artesian spring where groundwater from a confined chalk aquifer is forced upward under natural pressure through a breach in the overlying glacial clay, creating a unique, constant-temperature wetland habitat [\[See reference 59\]](#). Blow wells are virtually exclusive to the lowlands fringing the Lincolnshire Wolds, with local examples like Freshney Bog serving as vital strongholds for protected species, including water voles. Over the last century, Greater Lincolnshire's natural areas have suffered significant decline and depletion, driven in large part by the impacts of large-scale industrial agriculture on water quality and habitat fragmentation [\[See reference 60\]](#). The chalk streams and blow wells are among the habitats most severely degraded by these pressures and now require targeted restoration and protective buffer zones to prevent further contamination from agricultural surface run-off.

Pressures on Functionally Linked Land (FLL)

2.35 The Humber Estuary supports thousands of migrating waterbirds that heavily depend on nearby "functionally linked land" (FLL) to survive [\[See reference 61\]](#). These important areas are typically open agricultural fields located just outside the estuary's designation boundaries and that provide safe spaces for birds to feed, rest and shelter when the tide is high [\[See reference 62\]](#).

2.36 However, this supporting land faces immense pressure from the borough's economic growth as much of the farmland used by these birds overlaps with the South Humber Gateway industrial development zone [\[See reference 63\]](#). Furthermore, alongside the physical loss of habitat to construction, these sensitive bird populations are increasingly threatened by everyday "urban effects" and recreational disturbance from activities like dog walking, paddleboarding, and drone flying along the coast [\[See reference 64\]](#). Because the loss or disturbance of this FLL could harm the estuary's wildlife, any new development in these areas must undergo environmental assessments to ensure that suitable replacement habitats are provided before any buildings can be constructed [\[See reference 65\]](#).

Recreational pressure

2.37 There are over eight million visitors to North East Lincolnshire each year [\[See reference 66\]](#), with a major attraction being the Cleethorpes coastline. However, the internationally protected mudflats, saltmarshes and sand dunes of the Humber Estuary are sensitive to this recreational pressure [\[See reference 67\]](#). Activities like off-lead dog walking and paddleboarding regularly scare and disturb the estuary's wintering birds [\[See reference 68\]](#). These fragile habitats face associated physical threats from daily trampling, soil erosion and nutrient enrichment from dog waste [\[See reference 69\]](#). This daily disturbance extends to nearby wildlife hotspots like the Humberston Fitties and Tetney, where walkers and drones threaten rare breeding birds [\[See reference 70\]](#). Proactive mitigation is required to successfully balance tourism and visitor numbers with nature conservation [\[See reference 71\]](#). The Cleethorpes Habitat Management Plan outlines practical measures, such as seasonal dog bans and educational signs, to ensure the estuary's wildlife remains protected [\[See reference 72\]](#).

2.38 To protect all of these sites, the Council actively promotes alternative everyday spaces, like Cleethorpes Country Park, to draw visitors away from these vulnerable sites [\[See reference 73\]](#). Furthermore, there is now a Cleethorpes Coastal Ranger, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, whose role is to engage with the community to celebrate and protect the unique beauty of the coastline [\[See reference 74\]](#).

Water quality

2.39 Surface water quality across North East Lincolnshire is under significant pressure, with the latest assessments classifying the River Freshney / Laceby Beck as having 'Poor' ecological status [\[See reference 75\]](#). Furthermore, the Humber Lower water body has failed its chemical quality assessment [\[See reference 76\]](#),

while the borough's vital underground chalk aquifers require strict safeguarding through defined Groundwater Source Protection Zones [\[See reference 77\]](#). The impacts on water quality are explored in detail under Theme 4.

Irreplaceable habitats

2.40 Irreplaceable habitats are those habitats which take significant time to restore, recreate or replace once they are destroyed, often as a result of their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity [\[See reference 78\]](#). In North East Lincolnshire, irreplaceable habitats primarily take the form of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees [\[See reference 79\]](#).

2.41 The most significant local example is Bradley and Dixon Woods, an ancient woodland over 1,000 years old that was originally recorded in the Domesday Book [\[See reference 80\]](#). This historic site, which is also an LNR, supports a community of rare plants and animals that rely entirely on the stable ecological conditions that only ancient woodlands can provide [\[See reference 81\]](#). Furthermore, individual ancient and veteran trees scattered across the wider landscape provide cultural, historic and nature conservation value [\[See reference 82\]](#).

2.42 These irreplaceable habitats face significant threats from habitat fragmentation, agricultural intensification and the escalating impacts of climate change [\[See reference 83\]](#). Across the borough, ancient and long-established semi-natural woodland now has a limited and fragile distribution [\[See reference 84\]](#). If these sensitive woodlands are subjected to environmental stress or changes in tree species composition, their dependent and vulnerable wildlife populations may be severely threatened [\[See reference 85\]](#).

Climate change

2.43 Climate change is a severe threat to local biodiversity, driving habitat fragmentation and reducing native species populations [\[See reference 86\]](#). Along the coast, rising sea levels threaten to inundate the Humber Estuary's vital mudflats and saltmarshes before sufficient silt can be deposited [\[See reference 87\]](#). Inland, extreme weather patterns will severely stress existing woodlands, increasing their vulnerability to an expanding range of pests and diseases [\[See reference 88\]](#). Planning measures must prioritise robust ecological networks to help these species and habitats successfully adapt [\[See reference 89\]](#). The wider impacts of climate change and opportunities for mitigation and adaptation are explored in Theme 5.

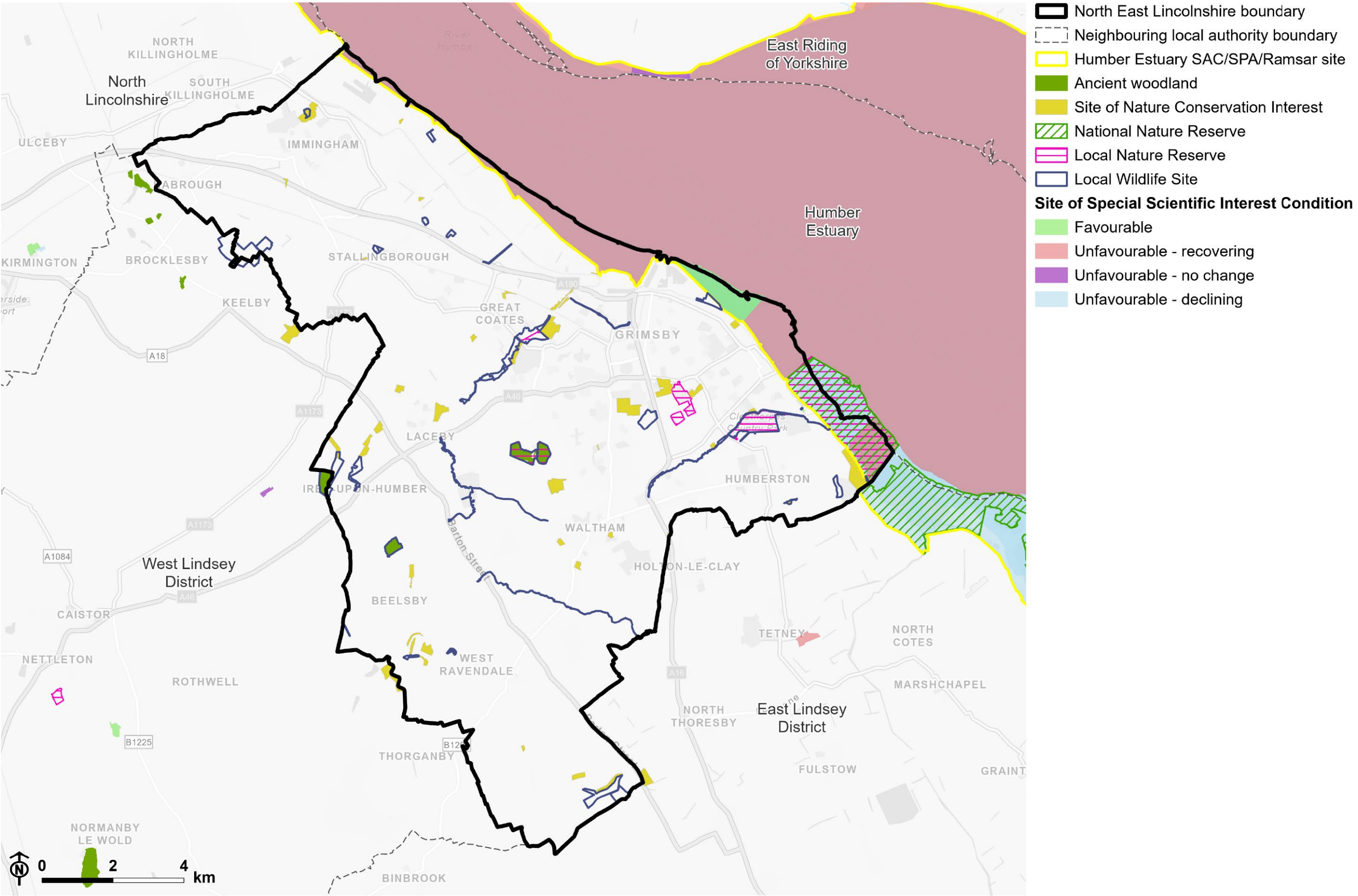
Habitat restoration and growth in ecosystem services

2.44 In North East Lincolnshire, habitat restoration and the growth of ecosystem services are increasingly driven by strategic, landscape-scale mitigation and emerging nature recovery networks [\[See reference 90\]](#). A leading example is the South Humber Gateway strategic mitigation project, which is safeguarding around 120 hectares of managed wet grassland to provide roosting and feeding habitats for internationally important bird populations whilst enabling industrial growth [\[See reference 91\]](#). Two ecological mitigation sites facilitating this strategic approach, Cress Marsh and Novartis Ings, are now complete, which not only protects the natural environment and mitigates climate change but also provides a major incentive for new businesses to locate in the area [\[See reference 92\]](#).

2.45 The ecological network is further strengthened by the RSPB Tetney Marshes nature reserve, located adjacent to the borough boundary. This reserve provides over 1,500 hectares of coastal grazing marsh and intertidal habitat that is critical for breeding and wintering birds [\[See reference 93\]](#). Although the reserve sits just beyond the local authority boundary of North East Lincolnshire, its management is coordinated with the Cleethorpes coastline through the Cleethorpes and Tetney Local Recreational Disturbance Group [\[See reference 94\]](#). This collaborative approach is necessary because recreational pressures create cross-boundary disturbances that threaten the shared, internationally important populations of breeding and roosting birds at the Tetney Marshes RSPB reserve and surrounding saltmarshes [\[See reference 95\]](#). To effectively manage these interconnected habitats, the Council works directly with the RSPB to ensure mitigation efforts are aligned through joint initiatives like the Cleethorpes to Tetney Local Recreation Disturbance Management Plan.

2.46 Regional collaborations like the Humber Nature Partnership coordinate projects to sustainably manage estuarine conservation objectives and mitigate recreational disturbances along the coast [\[See reference 96\]](#). Future developments are expected to further boost natural capital through BNG and the integration of green infrastructure into strategic site options [\[See reference 97\]](#). Collaborative initiatives, such as the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project, are actively restoring local watercourses like Laceby Beck to mitigate agricultural degradation [\[See reference 98\]](#). Furthermore, Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) – specifically the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) – empower local farmers to deliver “public goods” [\[See reference 99\]](#). By funding nature-friendly practices like wildflower margins and reduced nutrient input, these schemes establish vital wildlife corridors linking the Wolds to the Humber coast [\[See reference 100\]](#).

Figure 2.1: Protected habitats within and close to North East Lincolnshire



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Summary of key challenges

- **Condition of designated sites:** the Humber Estuary SSSI, while internationally important, has areas within the borough that remain predominantly in an 'unfavourable recovering' condition.
- **Local Wildlife Site management:** there is a significant shortfall in local habitat maintenance, with only 23% of North East Lincolnshire's Local Wildlife Sites achieving positive conservation management during 2023-24.
- **Functionally linked land:** huge industrial expansion along the South Humber Bank threatens the loss of functionally linked agricultural land relied upon by overwintering SPA and Ramsar bird populations.
- **Recreational pressure:** growing visitor numbers and recreational activities, such as dog walking, cause severe disturbance to sensitive bird species along the estuarine coast.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** inland, historic agricultural intensification and modern development pressures have eroded rural landscape features and caused severe habitat fragmentation.

Summary of key opportunities

- **South Humber Gateway mitigation:** the delivery of circa 120 hectares of managed wet grassland offers a landmark opportunity to secure vital roosting habitats for internationally important estuarine birds while enabling industrial development.
- **Biodiversity net gain:** mandatory net gain requirements provide a powerful funding mechanism to reverse habitat fragmentation across the borough. This new investment can be spatially targeted to help achieve the ambitious priority habitat targets emerging through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- **Enhancing green wedges:** existing strategic gaps, such as the Freshney Corridor, can be explicitly managed as multi-functional ecological corridors connecting people living in urban areas to the wider countryside.
- **Wolds fringe restoration:** collaborative initiatives, such as the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project, offer targeted means to make sustainable improvements to rare chalk streams and unique blow wells for the benefit of

both wildlife and the community. Also, the use of ELMS (including landscape recovery projects and the Sustainable Farming Incentive) to fund large-scale positive changes for priority habitats across agricultural landscapes.

Theme 2: Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire

Why is GBI important for active and healthy places in the borough?

2.47 Health is not merely the absence of disease but a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing. GBI plays a vital role in supporting this by creating safe, nature-rich spaces for exercise, social interaction, play and rest – while also helping to mitigate environmental health risks such as flooding, air pollution and extreme heat **[See reference 101]**.

2.48 Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework identifies 'active and healthy places' as a core benefit of GBI. Well-designed GBI encourages physical activity, fosters connections with nature and supports stronger and more cohesive communities – all of which contribute to improved physical and mental health, reduced health inequalities and better quality of life.

2.49 Public Health England categorises the health benefits of green space into four key areas:

- Promoting healthy behaviours;
- Strengthening social ties and belonging;
- Supporting learning and skills – particularly for young people; and
- Reducing exposure to environmental harms such as poor air quality and flooding **[See reference 102]**.

2.50 There is extensive evidence that regular activity in natural spaces helps prevent long-term health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers. Increasing access to GBI is recognised across the health sector to support long-term independence and wellbeing, with outdoor activity increasingly used as a positive complement or alternative to medical interventions through 'green social prescribing'. This links people with local 'green' activities, such as walking groups, community gardens and food-growing projects.

2.51 According to Natural England's People and Nature Survey (2025) **[See reference 103]**, in July-September 2025, 78% of adults agreed that being outdoors is good for physical health and 85% for mental health. However, nearly one in three adults do not live within a 15-minute walk of a green space **[See reference 104]**. These findings highlight the urgent need for equitable access to high-quality GBI across all communities.

2.52 GBI also plays a crucial role in mitigating environmental challenges, such as reducing pollution and heat exposure. Strategies like green streets, urban planting and the prioritisation of active travel routes (for walking, cycling and wheeling) are key components of planning for health.

What does national legislation and policy say?

2.53 In recent years, the value of GBI for people has risen to the forefront of the UK's political agenda. The Government's **25-year Environment Plan** looks to connect people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing. This includes opportunities to improve health and wellbeing by using green spaces, encouraging children to be close to nature and greening towns and cities.

2.54 England's **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve "healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles", especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs.

2.55 Natural England's **Green Infrastructure Framework** (launched in early 2023) further highlights the importance of GBI and natural spaces for health and wellbeing, local communities and inclusive spaces. The Framework provides guidance to help local planning authorities and developers to meet GBI requirements through the planning system and outside it - including on setting 'Headline GI standards'. The Accessible Greenspace Standard includes a recommendation for "everyone to have access to and benefit from good quality green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home".

2.56 The **National Design Guide** [\[See reference 105\]](#) highlights the relationship between high-quality design and positive health and wellbeing outcomes. It emphasises that nature is a critical component of well-designed places, contributing both to place quality and to people's quality of life. The guidance advocates for accessible, well-located open spaces that support a range of activities including play, recreation and sport to encourage physical activity and promote health, wellbeing and social inclusion. It also underlines the importance of integrating GBI within movement networks, noting that well-designed routes can promote activity and social interaction while incorporating features such as street trees to improve air quality and support biodiversity.

2.57 The **10 Year Health Plan for England: fit for the future** [\[See reference 106\]](#) aims to modernise the NHS through three key shifts: moving care from hospitals to communities, shifting from analogue to digital and focusing on prevention rather than sickness. It seeks to seize the opportunities provided by new technologies, medicines

and innovations to deliver better care for all patients. The strategy outlines measures to encourage individuals to make healthier choices, including a new health reward scheme to incentivise positive behaviours and a partnership with the Great Run Company to launch campaigns motivating millions of people to engage in regular physical activity.

What does local policy say?

2.58 At a corporate level, North East Lincolnshire's **Council Plan 2025-2028** [See reference 107] sets out the Council's strategic priorities and ambitions to be delivered by 2028. The plan sets out the aims of the authority as it supports the continued regeneration of the borough and the growth of its people. At its core is an ambition to deliver a stronger economy and stronger communities.

2.59 North East Lincolnshire's **Local Plan** (adopted 2018) [See reference 108] includes the following policies which relate to healthy and active places:

- **Policy 43 (Green space and recreation)** safeguards public and private green spaces, sports and recreation facilities and equipped play areas in recognition of their importance to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. It also requires new development to provide appropriate green space, sport and recreation infrastructure to meet the additional needs generated.
- **Policy 36 (Promoting sustainable transport)** supports measures that encourage more sustainable travel choices, with the aim of promoting active travel and healthier lifestyles.

2.60 The North East Lincolnshire's **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy** [See reference 109] sets out a bold, place-based vision to improve health and wellbeing for everyone in North East Lincolnshire. It is grounded in the belief that health is shaped not just by access to healthcare, but by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. The strategy sets out six strategic aims, including to increase healthy life expectancy, reduce health inequalities, improve mental wellbeing, make public health everyone's business, embed prevention and early intervention and create a fairer, greener, and more inclusive borough.

2.61 North East Lincolnshire's **Sport & Physical Activity Strategy** [See reference 110] provides a vision for delivering and facilitating community sport, physical activity and leisure provision in the borough to support a more active population for the future. This includes a number of long-term objectives to ensure that sport and physical activity can exist to improve the physical and mental health of people in North East Lincolnshire, supporting the economy, connecting communities and building a stronger society.

2.62 North East Lincolnshire's **Natural Assets Plan** [\[See reference 111\]](#) recognises the multifaceted benefits of the borough's natural environment and sets out eight areas that North East Lincolnshire Council aims to focus on making improvements to. It explains why they are important, what the Council's current situation is and what actions they plan to take in the short, medium and long-term. One of these areas includes 'Protecting health and wellbeing' and states that the Council seeks to provide equal access for all abilities and demographics to open space, promote active travel and improve the nature walk network amongst other ambitions.

2.63 North East Lincolnshire's **Playing Pitch Strategy 2020 – 2032** [\[See reference 112\]](#) sets out to assess existing sports pitches, the future need for sports pitches and opportunities for new provision. It helps to protect playing fields from loss and make sure the right type, and quantity, of new pitches are provided as part of existing and new developments and future growth sites.

2.64 North East Lincolnshire's **Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2021- 2031** [\[See reference 113\]](#) considers the status of the rights of way network in North East Lincolnshire, including the needs of its users, how the network could be improved to reflect changing patterns of use and the changing requirements being placed upon it. It also seeks to encourage more use of the Public Rights of Way Network.

2.65 The North East Lincolnshire **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan** [\[See reference 114\]](#) covers the entire local authority area, with a particular focus on the key urban areas with the greatest potential for modal shift to walking and cycling in Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham. It provides a series of recommendations for the integration of active travel and identifies key route funding opportunities to deliver schemes in future.

2.66 North East Lincolnshire's **Green Spaces Strategy 2016- 2021** [\[See reference 115\]](#), whilst now out of date, established the role the Council and its partners play in directing the management of green spaces in North East Lincolnshire and guided the development of its parks and open spaces until 2021, making sure they evolved to meet the changing needs of the community. The overarching Green Space Vision is "to ensure that every area of North East Lincolnshire has green and open spaces of a high quality for all current and future generations to use and enjoy".

2.67 North East Lincolnshire's **Air Quality Strategy** [\[See reference 116\]](#) runs from 2021 to 2026 and focuses on achieving clean air in North East Lincolnshire. The strategy focuses on seven broad topics which set out the areas where the council can influence a reduction in air pollution within the borough, including transport, public health, planning and infrastructure, strategies and policy guidance, air quality monitoring, raise public awareness, funding air quality improvements. North East Lincolnshire previously had two AQMAs at Immingham and Grimsby. The former was

revoked in 2016 and the latter in 2024. The **2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report** [See reference 117] states that during 2024, no exceedances of the NO² annual mean objective were identified within the then existing AQMA at Grimsby, continuing the trend observed since 2018 which supported the move to revoke the AQMA in 2024.

What are the assets, challenges and pressures for an active and healthy North East Lincolnshire?

Physical and mental health

Physical health

2.68 A recent Health Report for North East Lincolnshire Council states that being physically inactive, smoking, misusing alcohol or poor eating habits can damage our health. These risk behaviours can be the leading cause of major non-communicable diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, etc.) and are associated with substantially increased mortality and ill health [See reference 118].

2.69 Overall, health outcomes in North East Lincolnshire are poorer than regional and national averages, with residents experiencing lower life expectancy than across the Humber region and England as a whole. In 2023, average life expectancy at birth for females in North East Lincolnshire was 80.9 years. This is below both the regional average for the Humber (82.1 years) and the national average for England (83.1 years). For males, average life expectancy was 77.5 years, which is likewise lower than the regional (78.1 years) and national averages (79.1 years) [See reference 119].

2.70 In North East Lincolnshire, 71.6% of adults were classified as overweight or obese in 2023/24. This is higher than the regional average for the Humber (67.2%) and the national average for England (64.5%) [See reference 120].

2.71 Data from Sport England indicates that 63% of adults in North East Lincolnshire were classified as physically active in 2023/24, defined as undertaking at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week [See reference 121]. While this is only marginally below the national average of 63.7% [See reference 122] this headline figure masks important trends in how physical activity is being achieved.

2.72 In particular, active travel plays a relatively limited and declining role in residents' overall activity levels. In 2021, 17% of residents reported walking regularly (7 or more sessions per week, or 28 sessions per month), while 40% reported not

walking at all (no sessions of 10 minutes or more per month) [\[See reference 123\]](#). Although time spent walking for leisure has increased since the pandemic, walking for travel purposes has continued to decline. A similar pattern is evident for cycling. Participation in leisure cycling at least once a month increased from 8.0% in 2022 to 13.2% in 2023 but remains below the pre-pandemic peak of 19.2% recorded in 2017. By contrast, cycling for travel has fallen from 10.1% in 2022 to 9.4% in 2023 [\[See reference 124\]](#).

2.73 Travel to work data further highlights the limited role of active modes. In 2021, 3,423 residents aged 16-74 travelled to work by bicycle, representing approximately 5% of the working population. By comparison, 60% of journeys to work were undertaken by driving a car or van, demonstrating a continued reliance on private vehicles [\[See reference 125\]](#).

2.74 According to the latest Department for Transport National Travel Survey [\[See reference 126\]](#), the main barrier to cycling in England, aside from a lack of interest, relates to concerns around road safety (12%). In parallel, the most reported measures that would encourage more cycling include safer roads (22%), alongside the provision of off-road or segregated cycle routes (10%) and dedicated safe cycle lanes (7%).

2.75 These findings indicate that infrastructure quality and perceived safety are critical determinants of cycling uptake. This presents a clear opportunity for the strategic enhancement of GBI networks. By integrating high quality and traffic free walking and cycling routes into green corridors and public open spaces, GBI can provide attractive, safe and direct alternatives to road based travel. Greenways and segregated routes not only address safety concerns but also improve user experience through landscaping and connections to key destinations.

Mental health

2.76 Overall, measures of personal wellbeing in North East Lincolnshire present a mixed picture. While levels of reported high anxiety are lower than regional and national averages, there are more varied results across other indicators of wellbeing, including happiness, life satisfaction and perceptions of life being worthwhile.

2.77 According to a recent Health Report by North East Lincolnshire Council, 20.1% of respondents scored between 6 and 10 in response to the question “Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?” This is lower than both the regional average (24.2%) and the national average (23.3%), indicating comparatively lower levels of reported high anxiety [\[See reference 127\]](#).

2.78 The proportion of respondents scoring between 0 and 4 in response to “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?” was also lower in North East Lincolnshire than at the regional (6.2%) and national (8.9%) levels, suggesting fewer residents reported low levels of happiness.

2.79 Similarly, 5.9% of respondents scored between 0 and 4 for “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?” This is slightly below the regional figure (6.4%) but marginally above the national figure (5.6%).

2.80 Finally, the percentage of respondents scoring between 0 and 4 for “Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?” was lower than both the regional (5.3%) and national (4.4%) averages.

Ageing population

2.81 With a similar story to many other areas of the U.K, North East Lincolnshire has an ageing population. Between the last two censuses, the average (median) age of North East Lincolnshire increased by two years, from 41 to 43 years of age [\[See reference 128\]](#).

2.82 The number of people aged 65 to 74 years rose by around 2,900 (an increase of 19.5%), while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by just under 5,700 (17.2% decrease).

Access to green space

2.83 North East Lincolnshire has over 50 parks and green spaces. Some of these include:

- Cleethorpes Country Park is a 64-acre park was once open farmland and is now a Local Nature Reserve [\[See reference 129\]](#).
- Cleethorpes Boating Lake is a recreational area at the southern end of Cleethorpes featuring two lakes with accessible paths, seasonal boating, fishing and an open air paddling pool [\[See reference 130\]](#).
- Weelsby Woods Park is a large urban public park and woodland, offering open parkland, play facilities, woodland areas and a café. Weelsby Woods is designated as a Local Nature Reserve [\[See reference 131\]](#).
- People’s Park is a 23-acre Victorian park with a central lake and fountain, bandstand, bowling greens and café, which also hosts community events during the summer months [\[See reference 132\]](#).

- Bradley Woods is an area of ancient woodland over 1,000 years old, mentioned in the Domesday Book, which supports a range of wildlife and characteristic ancient woodland flora [\[See reference 133\]](#).

2.84 Despite these assets, North East Lincolnshire has poor access to green space compared with neighbouring local authorities. According to Natural England's GI Framework mapping, North East Lincolnshire has 4.61km² of accessible green infrastructure, which equates to roughly **29m² of accessible green space per person**, which is lower than surrounding local authorities such as West Lindsey (205.5m² of accessible green space per person), North Lincolnshire (72.4m²) and East Lindsey (103.0m²) [\[See reference 134\]](#).

2.85 The 'Access to Green space Standards (AGSt) profile' for North East Lincolnshire highlights which areas have least access to certain types of open space at different scales [\[See reference 135\]](#). The access standards are based on walkable distances to certain sizes of open space, with the assumption that people will walk further to a larger open space that offers more opportunities for different types of recreation and experiences, than to a smaller park. The AGSt buffers on the map show the walkable access distances.

2.86 The AGSt mapping clearly shows poor access to green space of all scales in higher density areas of the borough, in areas such as north of Grimsby and Immingham and more rural areas of the borough. The Green Spaces Strategy 2016-2021 [\[See reference 136\]](#) states that North East Lincolnshire Council aspires to ensure that everyone has access to an informal amenity space within 200m of their home, a local recreational area within 400m, a borough park within 1,000m and a major park within 3,000m.

2.87 There are no registered Common Land and Village Greens in North East Lincolnshire [\[See reference 137\]](#).

Inequalities in access to open space

2.88 Across the country, research has shown that people living in the most deprived areas are ten times less likely to live near high-quality green space [\[See reference 138\]](#).

2.89 England's 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) indicates that North East Lincolnshire is more deprived overall than 73% of local authority boroughs in England. The most deprived parts of the borough are concentrated in Grimsby, Immingham and Cleethorpes. Mapping undertaken by Natural England, which overlays socio-economic deprivation data with access to green space, identifies

these same locations as areas of particular challenge [\[See reference 139\]](#). This mapping can help to prioritise GBI interventions and investment into areas where these deficiencies overlap.

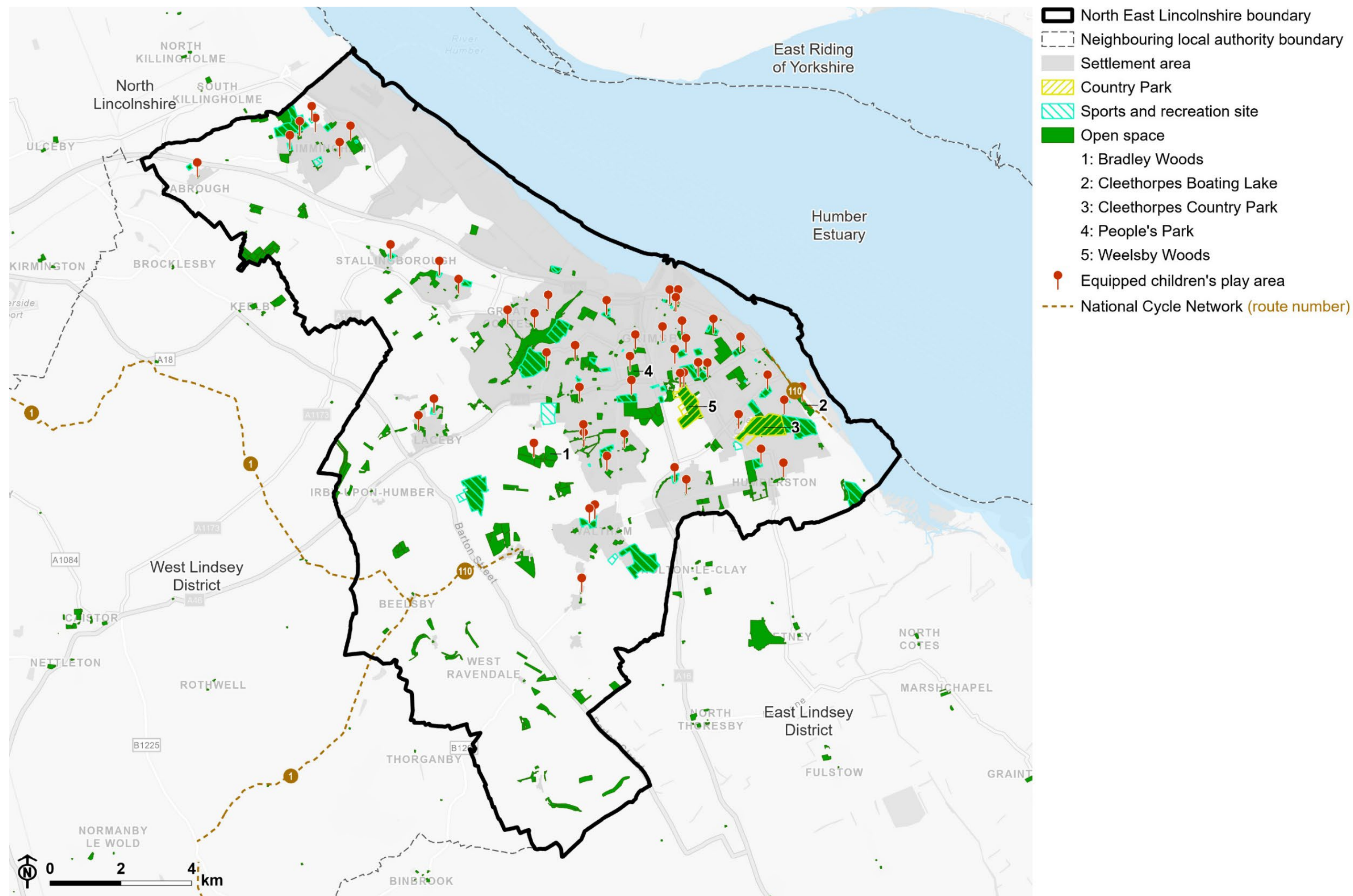
2.90 There are a number of public footpaths and cycle routes across North East Lincolnshire. However, these are often fragmented and do not function as a continuous network. Many routes lack connectivity between key destinations such as residential areas, town centres, schools and employment locations, limiting their practicality for everyday journeys. This fragmented network particularly affects more deprived communities in Grimsby and Immingham.

Air quality

2.91 In North East Lincolnshire, all measured concentrations of air pollution are below the annual air quality objectives. However, 11% of the population suffers from the respiratory diseases: asthma and/or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which are made worse by air pollution [\[See reference 140\]](#).

2.92 More cycling and walking can also reduce air pollution. An analysis has shown that 38% of commuter journeys in North East Lincolnshire could be made by bike, as long as there is adequate cycling infrastructure and increased use of e-bikes. Currently, only 6% of commuters in North East Lincolnshire cycle to work [\[See reference 141\]](#).

Figure 2.2: Access to open space in North East Lincolnshire



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Summary of key challenges

- **Uneven access to green space:** with the poorest provision concentrated in higher density areas of Grimsby and Immingham, as well as some rural communities falling outside walkable access standards.
- **Health and wellbeing disparities:** including high levels of overweight and obesity (over 70%) and relatively low levels of everyday physical activity, particularly linked to declining active travel.
- **Ageing population:** leading to changing demands for accessible, inclusive green spaces suited to older residents.
- **Transport-related air pollution:** with all neighbourhoods exceeding WHO guidelines and around 11% of residents affected by respiratory conditions. A reliance on private vehicles reinforces the challenge, with limited but important opportunities for GBI to support modal shift.

Summary of key opportunities

- **GBI as part of a 'natural health service':** making the GBI network as attractive and accessible as possible to make active and healthy lives the easy choice for all residents. Including exploring opportunities for green prescribing.
- **Plugging new development into the wider GBI network:** ensure new residential developments include well-connected active travel links.

Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire

Why is GBI important for a thriving and prosperous borough?

2.93 As highlighted in Natural England's GI Framework, our communities have become increasingly disconnected from nature, even though our economies, livelihoods and well-being depend on it. A recent House of Commons Committee report has set out that nature and ecosystem services underpin both the domestic and the international economy, yet the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world [\[See reference 142\]](#).

2.94 GBI is key to building thriving, prosperous communities in the borough. It acts as a vital 'placemaking' tool by creating attractive, high-quality places that draw businesses, investors and visitors, while also enhancing the setting and character of historic sites. By supporting vibrant retail areas and regeneration efforts, GBI helps encourage people to spend more time and money in local centres.

2.95 GBI also drives green job opportunities – from ecology experts and green roof installers to those working in food production and forestry. These roles are essential for maintaining and managing the green spaces that enrich everyday life, from local parks to river corridors.

2.96 As competition for skilled workers grows, access to well-connected, nature-rich environments becomes a powerful asset. A strong GBI network boosts quality of life, making the borough a place where people want to live, work and invest, supporting longer term economic success.

2.97 Research conducted by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and Bournemouth University sets out the clear benefits of nature restoration for economic growth and job creation [\[See reference 143\]](#). It highlights how many local businesses rely on having a healthy and attractive local environment. This includes not only tourism, recreation and agriculture, but other businesses such as manufacturing and construction, which require clean water, natural materials and a hazard-free environment.

What does national legislation and policy say?

2.98 The national policy agenda is increasingly recognising the role of GBI and the natural environment in high quality design and as part of wider economic

regeneration agendas. This is led by the UK's **Environment Act 2021**, which highlights how environmental sustainability is inherently tied to economic prosperity.

2.99 England's **National Planning Policy Framework** [See reference 144] sets out that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt (paragraph 85). In rural areas in particular, decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside (paragraph 88). The NPPF also sets out the important role of trees for the quality of urban environments (paragraph 136) and supports measures to ensure the vitality of town centres (Chapter 7).

2.100 Finally, England's **National Design Guide** [See reference 145] outlines ten characteristics that create a well-designed place. One of these emphasises the importance of the provision of a network of high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities, including play.

What does local policy say?

2.101 At a corporate level, North East Lincolnshire's **Council Plan 2025-2028** [See reference 146] sets out the Council's strategic priorities and ambitions to be delivered by 2028. The Plan identifies 'Stronger Communities' (including 'Living a healthy life') and a 'Greener Future' as two of its core ambitions, which will have positive effects in terms of a green economy and a high-quality environment.

2.102 North East Lincolnshire's **Local Plan (adopted 2018)** [See reference 147] includes the following policies which relate to creating thriving and prosperous places:

- **Policy 12 (Tourism and visitor economy)** seeks to support the growth of a strong and resilient tourism and visitor economy, including by protecting sites of biodiversity importance and maintaining the integrity of the Humber Estuary by managing recreational pressures. It promotes rural 'green tourism' facilities and rural diversification, while also maintaining high water quality and overall attraction of Cleethorpes beach.
- **Policy 23 (Retail hierarchy and town centre developments)** supports development within defined town, district and local centres (as identified on the Policies Map) where proposals reinforce the role and function of the centre, although there are no references to GBI or nature-based solutions.
- **Policy 39 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)** seeks to sustain the cultural distinctiveness and significance of the area's historic urban, rural and coastal environments. Development proposals must protect, preserve

and, where appropriate, enhance the character, appearance and significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings.

2.103 North East Lincolnshire's **Economic Strategy** [See reference 148] seeks to coordinate action and investment across partners to secure its objectives, while establishing strong foundations for growth and future investment over the next 3-5 years. The strategy is structured around four key cornerstones of North East Lincolnshire's economy, including ensuring North East Lincolnshire's towns are great places to live, work, visit and stay. This will help attract and retain skilled people while also providing a high quality of life with opportunities for connections with nature.

2.104 North East Lincolnshire's **Tourism Action Plan** [See reference 149] sets out targeted priorities and activities designed to strengthen the visitor economy of North East Lincolnshire. It supports broader economic and place-making objectives by increasing visitor numbers, promoting longer stays and enhancing the quality and sustainability of the tourism offer.

2.105 North East Lincolnshire's **Creativity Strategy** [See reference 150] sets a five-year framework to embed creativity at the heart of life, work and place-making across Grimsby, Immingham, Cleethorpes and the Wolds. At its core is the idea that stories about people, places, heritage and identity can be a powerful vehicle for community pride, economic growth and positive perceptions of the area. Central to the Creativity Strategy is a sustainable focus on landscape and connection to nature.

What are the assets, challenges and pressures for a thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire?

Settlement centres and retail offer

2.106 The main retail offer in North East Lincolnshire is focused in Grimsby Town Centre, where Freshney Place Shopping Centre accommodates a range of national high street retailers. However, work has commenced to re-develop Freshney Place Shopping Centre into a mixed-use destination. The proposals include a new market and food hall, a cinema and new leisure, food and beverage, or retail opportunities. The scheme is intended to support the wider regeneration of Grimsby town centre by increasing leisure and visitor activity, including through new features like planting, trees and seating, and is due to be completed in 2027 [See reference 151]. The Victoria Street area recorded 3.4 million visitors in 2023, an increase from 3.3 million in 2022 [See reference 152].

2.107 Secondary retail centres are located along St Peter's Avenue in Cleethorpes and at the Civic Centre in Immingham. St Peter's Avenue experienced a 3% increase in footfall in 2023 compared to 2022. This suggests that, despite poor summer weather affecting the seafront and promenade, core retail areas remained relatively resilient [\[See reference 153\]](#). In contrast, Cleethorpes promenade footfall declined by 8% year-on-year in 2023, reflecting particularly poor weather during June, July and August. This was 24% lower than August 2022 (306,862 visitors) [\[See reference 154\]](#).

2.108 Despite modest increases in footfall in certain locations, overall visitor numbers have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. This reflects wider national trends, with town centres across the UK experiencing reduced footfall, increased vacancy rates and the loss of anchor retailers, including the closure of House of Fraser locally. These structural changes, driven by changing consumer behaviour and the continued growth of online retail, have affected the vitality and quality of the shopping environment across North East Lincolnshire [\[See reference 155\]](#). However, these challenges also highlight the potential for GBI to play a role in supporting a renewed town centre offer, with investment in green public spaces helping to improve the visitor experience and support a GBI-led approach to town centre regeneration.

2.109 Natural England's 'Greenness Grid' [\[See reference 156\]](#), which measures the percentage of manmade area, reveals that much of the North East Lincolnshire borough is sparsely developed and benefits from expansive green areas. The main exceptions are around the main settlements, especially Grimsby and Immingham.

Visitor economy

2.110 The GBI network in North East Lincolnshire is a key component of the area's appeal to visitors and tourists, with its coast, landscapes and natural spaces forming an important part of the local visitor offer. In 2023, approximately 8.7 million people visited North East Lincolnshire, generating an estimated £697 million for the local economy [\[See reference 157\]](#). Key assets such as Cleethorpes and the Lincolnshire Wolds underpin the area's tourism offer, with the sector representing a significant source of employment and inward investment. Overall, the visitor economy supports around 7.6% of local jobs and contributes approximately £0.5 billion in income annually [\[See reference 158\]](#).

2.111 Survey evidence indicates that a notable proportion of visitors to North East Lincolnshire travel from outside the local area, including from elsewhere in the region and from further afield across the UK. When asked about their main reasons for visiting Cleethorpes, 51% cited walking in the area and 30% referenced the beach. North East Lincolnshire Council has been balancing this high tourism demand in

Cleethorpes with environmental protection through a collaborative approach with Natural England that focuses on education, sustainable management of the beach (which forms part of the Humber Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site and SSSI), promoting eco-tourism and using inland sites like Cleethorpes Country Park to absorb pressure.

Historic environment

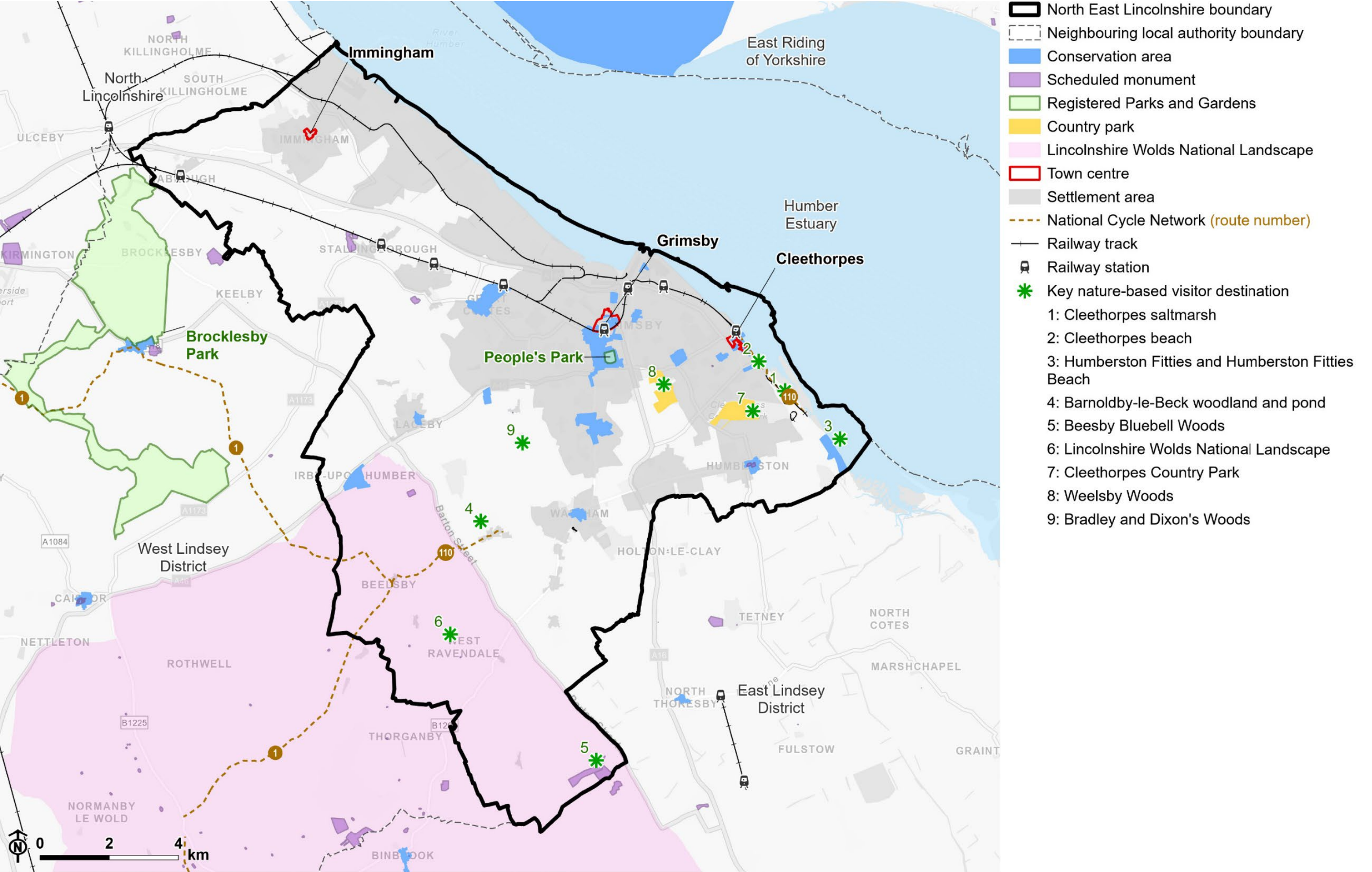
2.112 North East Lincolnshire has a wealth of significant heritage buildings, public space and landscapes, some of them listed, others not. They illustrate the times of growth and change in the area, whether this is the docks, the tourist related buildings or the housing to accommodate the growing communities. North East Lincolnshire Council's Creativity Strategy [\[See reference 159\]](#) notes that there are opportunities to conserve, adapt, regenerate and celebrate this range of heritage assets.

2.113 In North East Lincolnshire, there is one registered park and garden at People's Park, Grimsby. In addition, the area has 11 nationally designated scheduled monuments that include medieval settlements, barrows, churchyard crosses and Humberston Abbey [\[See reference 160\]](#).

2.114 Conservation areas are declared by the local authority for those areas which possess 'special interest', the 'character and appearance' of which is desirable to 'preserve and enhance'. They represent a familiar and often cherished local scene thus having greater protection against undesirable changes. In North East Lincolnshire there are 17 conservation areas [\[See reference 161\]](#).

2.115 Thirteen assets in North East Lincolnshire are on the Heritage at Risk Register, [\[See reference 162\]](#) including two scheduled monuments (a civil war earthwork fort and a Premonstratensian priory chapel). As well as these designated assets there are a wide range of non-designated cultural heritage features in North East Lincolnshire.

Figure 2.3: Green infrastructure, character and placemaking in North East Lincolnshire



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Summary of key challenges

- **Balancing visitor demands:** a lot of people visit North East Lincolnshire due to its tourism offer, but the pressure from visitors needs to be balanced with environmental protection objectives.
- **Large new developments planned:** a lot of development is planned, including the regeneration of Freshney Place Shopping Centre and Grimsby more generally and the Council will need to ensure GBI is not lost or deteriorates as a result of this development.
- **Regeneration pressures:** balancing economic renewal with conservation of historic character and GBI remains an ongoing challenge.

Summary of key opportunities

- **Coastal and beach assets:** Cleethorpes' beach and promenade provide a significant blue infrastructure asset that attracts significant visitor numbers by supporting walking and recreation. There is some potential for biodiversity integration and enhanced climate resilience.
- **Public realm and green corridors:** town centre regeneration presents opportunities to embed urban greening and tree planting to enhance local biodiversity and access to GBI.
- **Active travel potential:** high levels of walking associated with coastal visits highlight opportunities to strengthen walking and cycling links between town centres, the seafront and surrounding green spaces.
- **Heritage-led green regeneration:** historic parks and conservation areas provide a framework for investment in multifunctional green spaces that support health, tourism and heritage conservation.

Theme 4: Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment

Why is GBI important for an improved water environment in North East Lincolnshire?

2.116 GBI plays a critical role in sustainably managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment. When thoughtfully designed, it can:

- Reduce the risk of flooding by slowing down and holding back heavy rainfall.
- Improve water quality by naturally filtering out pollutants before they reach rivers and streams.
- Maintain the natural water cycle and promote sustainable drainage at both local and catchment levels.
- Provide beautiful, nature-rich spaces that deliver a range of amenity, biodiversity, economic and other benefits to local communities and wildlife.

2.117 GBI serves both strategic and local roles in positive water management. When carefully planned and implemented, it functions as a nature-based solution, significantly reducing the speed and volume of water flowing into drains, sewers and watercourses. Features such as rain gardens, tree-lined streets and open green spaces can capture and store excess water during severe storms, recharging underground aquifers and easing the borough's water stress.

2.118 This approach also prevents existing drainage networks from becoming overwhelmed, significantly reducing the chance of sudden flash flooding in urban areas [\[See reference 163\]](#). This ensures that water is treated as a valuable resource that supports environmental and community well-being, rather than simply a hazard to be managed [\[See reference 164\]](#). It also puts excess water to beneficial use.

2.119 GBI also enhances natural water filtration processes, helping to recharge groundwater and prevent unnecessary runoff into drainage systems. Vegetation can capture, filter and reduce contaminants, ultimately improving overall water quality. This aligns with the principle of multifunctionality – where GBI not only addresses environmental challenges but also delivers health, social and economic benefits through its integration into urban and rural landscapes.

What does national legislation and policy say?

2.120 Water management is tightly integrated into the planning policy landscape. Concerns over future climate resilience and the deteriorating quality of England's rivers are leading to an increasingly prominent policy position.

2.121 The core aim of the EU's **Water Framework Directive (WFD)**, which was retained in UK law post-Brexit, is to protect the UK's water environments by preventing their deterioration and improving their quality. The planning system is required to consider this, guided by a series of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). The three relevant plans for North East Lincolnshire are the **Humber River Basin District RBMP** [See reference 165], the Louth Grimsby and Ancholme management catchment and the Humber Transitional and Coastal catchment (see **Figure 2.4** for a map of the catchment areas).

2.122 The UK's **Environment Act 2021** also sets out ambitious targets for improving water quality in England's watercourses, including reducing pollutants like phosphorus, nitrates and microplastics.

2.123 In general, national policy adheres to a **catchment-based approach (CaBA)**, led by the Environment Agency, which aims to improve water quality and watercourse health by considering the whole area that feeds into the river, not just the river itself.

2.124 In this light, the **NPPF** requires that new developments should manage surface water effectively on site and protect watercourses from contamination. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features should be multifunctional wherever possible, in part to improve water quality. Additionally, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) [See reference 166] states that GI can contribute to the protection of water quality and other natural resources.

2.125 National policy in England is evolving to promote the wider adoption of SuDS. The establishment of a SuDS Approval Body (SAB) was planned through **Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act in 2024**. However, at the time of writing, the policy has not yet been fully implemented.

2.126 The UK's **National Design Guide** [See reference 167] includes a policy to improve and enhance water management, noting the importance of effective SuDS. In well-designed places, it notes, water features form part of an integrated system of landscape, biodiversity and drainage.

2.127 Finally, Defra has also recently published national standards for SuDS to guide design of surface water drainage systems for new developments. It promotes a

'natural' approach to water management, which promotes water quality, biodiversity and amenity benefits as well as water management [\[See reference 168\]](#).

What does local policy say?

2.128 At a corporate level, North East Lincolnshire's **Council Plan 2025-2028** [\[See reference 169\]](#) establishes a 'Greener Future' as a core aim. Through the plan, the Council is implementing flood mitigating rain gardens as an innovative method to manage heavy rainfall and allow water to safely drain back into sewers. Additionally, the Dynamic Understanding of the Natural Environment (DUNE) project is exploring "options to save and better protect the fragile coastline."

2.129 In **North East Lincolnshire's Local Plan** (adopted 2018) [\[See reference 170\]](#), the following policies are of relevance to the water environment:

- **Policy 33 (Flood risk)** directs new buildings away from high-risk flood areas and requires proposals to mitigate the likely effects of climate change. Essentially, anyone applying to build new developments must prove their design can safely manage future extreme weather without making flooding worse for their neighbours.
- **Policy 34 (Water management)** mandates that development must use water efficiently and protect important underground drinking water sources from pollution.

2.130 North East Lincolnshire's **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy** (2024) outlines the Council's approach to managing local flooding from rainfall, groundwater, and small streams [\[See reference 171\]](#). It focuses on collaborating with partners to improve community resilience and adapt to more extreme weather over the next ten to thirty years.

2.131 For coastal areas, the Council is partnering with the Environment Agency to develop the **Humber 2100+ Strategy**, which will identify the most sustainable approach to managing tidal flooding over the next century while accounting for sea-level rise [\[See reference 172\]](#).

What are the assets, challenges and pressures for North East Lincolnshire's water environment?

Water quality and links to biodiversity

2.132 North East Lincolnshire falls primarily within the Louth, Grimsby and Ancholme management catchment of the Humber River Basin District. The borough's blue infrastructure network is defined by the internationally significant Humber Estuary, alongside a complex network of coastal waters, rivers, streams and groundwater aquifers [\[See reference 173\]](#). As explored in Theme 1: Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire, the Humber Estuary is designated as a SAC, SPA, SSSI, and Ramsar site, supporting vast populations of migratory birds and invaluable habitats such as saltmarshes and mudflats. Inland, the landscape features globally rare chalk streams, such as Waithe Beck and Laceby Beck, which flow from the Lincolnshire Wolds and provide highly specialised ecological niches [\[See reference 174\]](#).

2.133 Despite these valuable assets, the ecological health of many watercourses in the borough remains compromised, with the River Freshney / Laceby Beck continuing to fall short of 'good' targets, achieving only a 'poor' ecological classification in 2022 [\[See reference 175\]](#) (see **Figure 2.4** for a map illustrating water quality). According to the Humber River Basin Management Plan (2022), the primary challenges limiting the health of these local catchments are diffuse pollution from agricultural runoff and point-source wastewater pollution [\[See reference 176\]](#) (point-source wastewater pollution is contamination that enters a water body from a single, easily identifiable location (such as a specific pipe or drainage tunnel) as opposed to "diffuse" pollution that runs off from widespread, undefined areas like agricultural fields [\[See reference 177\]](#)). Furthermore, historic river modifications (such as the installation of weirs and hard flood defence structures) have severely altered natural flows and reduced vital in-channel habitat diversity [\[See reference 178\]](#).

2.134 The porous chalk geology underlying much of the borough means that a large proportion of the area is designated as a Groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ), making the public drinking water supply highly vulnerable to surface contamination [\[See reference 179\]](#). Particularly sensitive areas (zone 1) can be seen within some parts of the settlements of Grimsby, Immingham, New Waltham and Healing (see **Figure 2.4**).

2.135 When water quality degrades and natural flows are altered, the complex habitats required by aquatic plants, invertebrates and fish are severely compromised [\[See reference 180\]](#). Implementing GBI interventions, such as creating wetland buffer strips or restoring natural river meanders provides a mechanism to filter out

pollutants before they reach sensitive water bodies [\[See reference 181\]](#). For example, targeted restoration work along the River Freshney in Grimsby has removed thousands of tonnes of silt to allow water to flow more freely, improving both the aquatic habitat and the visual amenity of the town centre [\[See reference 182\]](#). Upstream, partnership projects have successfully restored sections of Laceby Beck, demonstrating how rehabilitating degraded chalk streams can regenerate local biodiversity while supporting sustainable water management [\[See reference 183\]](#). The Freshney Valley functions as a strategic washland where designated flood storage areas safely attenuate excess water during high-flow events, protecting Grimsby downstream [\[See reference 184\]](#).

2.136 Planting trees next to rivers and streams supports climate change resilience by reducing water temperatures and decreasing sedimentation, which enables the waterways to store more floodwater [\[See reference 185\]](#). As these newly created woodland areas establish themselves, they offer a natural flood management mechanism that has the potential to significantly reduce rapid surface water run-off during heavy rainfall events [\[See reference 186\]](#). See **Figure 2.5** for a map of floodplain woodland potential in North East Lincolnshire.

Water supply

2.137 North East Lincolnshire falls within the Anglian Water supply region which is classified by the Environment Agency as an area of serious water stress [\[See reference 187\]](#). However, it is important to note that this designation is applied at the water company level rather than to individual local authorities like North East Lincolnshire. Water Resources East was established as an independent organisation tasked by the Government with creating a long-term regional water resources plan for Eastern England to 2050 and beyond [\[See reference 188\]](#). In the Regional Water Resources Plan for Eastern England, Water Resources East states that the entire Eastern England region is officially designated as being seriously water-stressed [\[See reference 189\]](#).

2.138 This vulnerability is forecast to worsen as climate change brings hotter, drier summers and as regional industrial demand expands [\[See reference 190\]](#). The expansion of regional industrial demand worsens water vulnerability because commercial and manufacturing operations require vast volumes of water, placing significant strain on an already stressed supply network [\[See reference 191\]](#). The borough relies heavily on underground chalk aquifers, which require protection from over-abstraction to avoid damaging sensitive local ecosystems [\[See reference 192\]](#). Over-abstraction poses a direct and critical threat to the public drinking water supply; alongside the severe ecological damage it causes [\[See reference 193\]](#).

2.139 Half of the East of England's water supply relies on groundwater sources. Therefore, protecting these aquifers from depletion is essential to maintaining the domestic and industrial water network [\[See reference 194\]](#). GBI can help alleviate this pressure by capturing rainwater for local reuse and allowing natural infiltration that can safely recharge these vital groundwater reserves [\[See reference 195\]](#).

Flood risk

2.140 Much of the urban areas of North East Lincolnshire, including the densely populated centres of Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham, lie within high flood risk zones and rely heavily on hard-engineered sea walls and embankments for protection [\[See reference 196\]](#). Because of its low-lying coastal location along the Humber Estuary, tidal flooding presents a significant threat, particularly during extreme storm surges and high spring tides [\[See reference 197\]](#). Beyond their ecological value, natural coastal habitats such as saltmarshes and mudflats function as primary blue infrastructure assets by dissipating wave energy and reducing the physical pressure on hard-engineered sea defences [\[See reference 198\]](#).

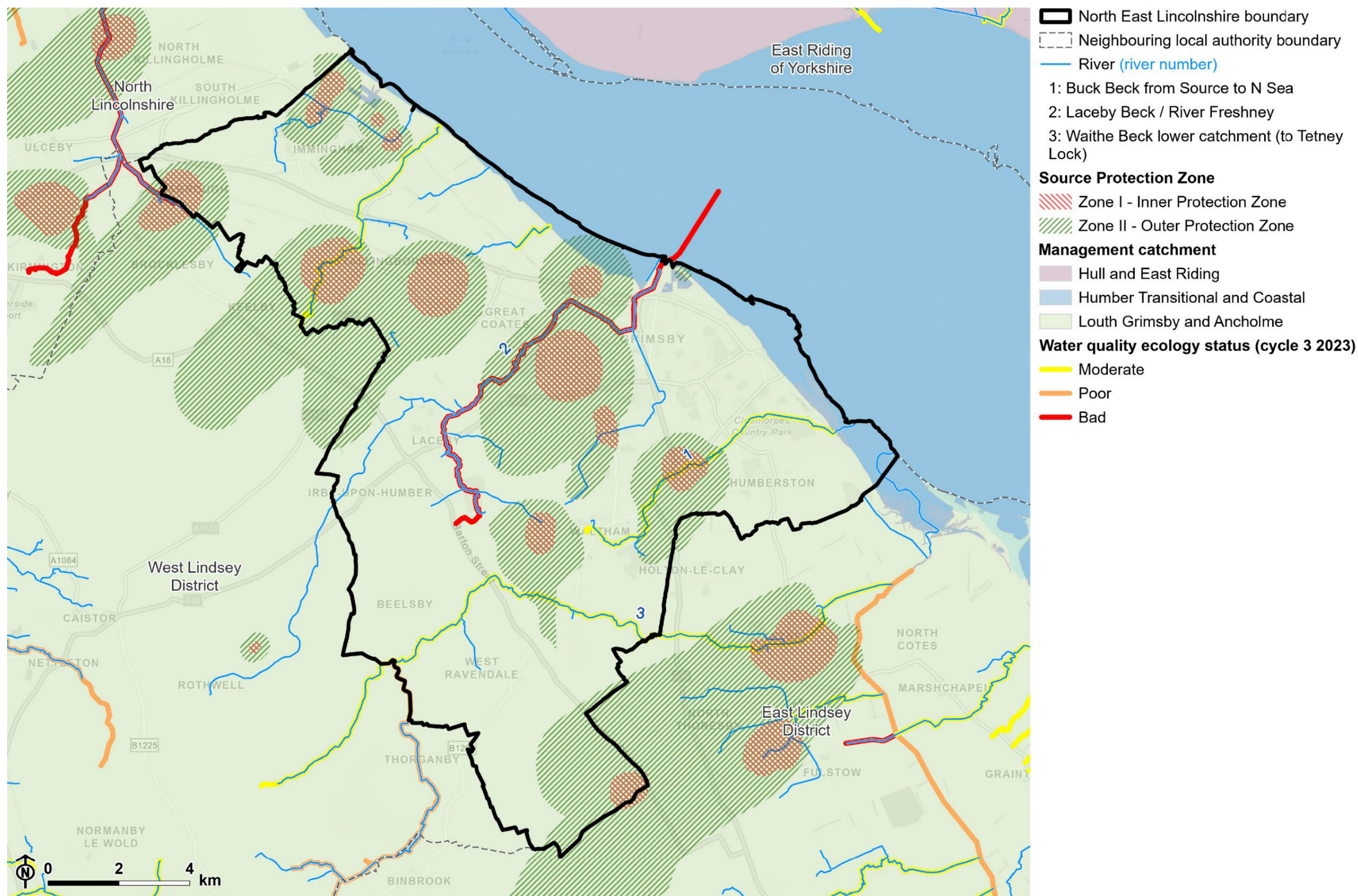
2.141 In addition to coastal threats, the borough faces a high risk of surface water and sewer flooding, primarily due to aging combined sewer networks in urban areas [\[See reference 199\]](#). During intense summer storms, these drainage systems can quickly become overwhelmed, leading to rapid surface water runoff that ponds in roads and properties before it can discharge into local watercourses or the sea [\[See reference 200\]](#). This risk is particularly concentrated in Grimsby and Immingham, where the ongoing expansion of impermeable surfaces puts immense pressure on the limited capacity of the existing drainage systems [\[See reference 201\]](#).

2.142 Groundwater flooding is also an emerging concern, specifically in Grimsby, where medieval riverbeds intersect with the underlying Flamborough Chalk aquifer [\[See reference 202\]](#). As the localised private extraction of water for industrial processes has declined in recent years, the natural water table has begun to rise, allowing groundwater to occasionally emerge at the surface through underground springs known locally as "blow wells" (discussed under Theme 1: Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire) [\[See reference 203\]](#).

2.143 Climate change predictions indicate that these combined flood risks will worsen, bringing more frequent intense rainfall events and accelerating sea-level rise along the coastline [\[See reference 204\]](#). Integrating nature-based solutions, such as retrofitting SuDS and creating new wetland habitats, provides a critical means to safely store excess water, relieve pressure on traditional sewers and adapt the built environment to future climate extremes [\[See reference 205\]](#).

2.144 The borough is already testing innovative delivery models through the Doncaster, Immingham and Grimsby (DIG) SuDS Retrofit Innovation Funding project, which seeks to integrate sustainable drainage measures directly into existing urban townscapes to relieve pressure on combined sewers [\[See reference 206\]](#). North East Lincolnshire Council has already begun implementing these adaptations, having recently introduced flood mitigating rain gardens as means to allow water from heavy downpours to drain back into the sewers [\[See reference 207\]](#).

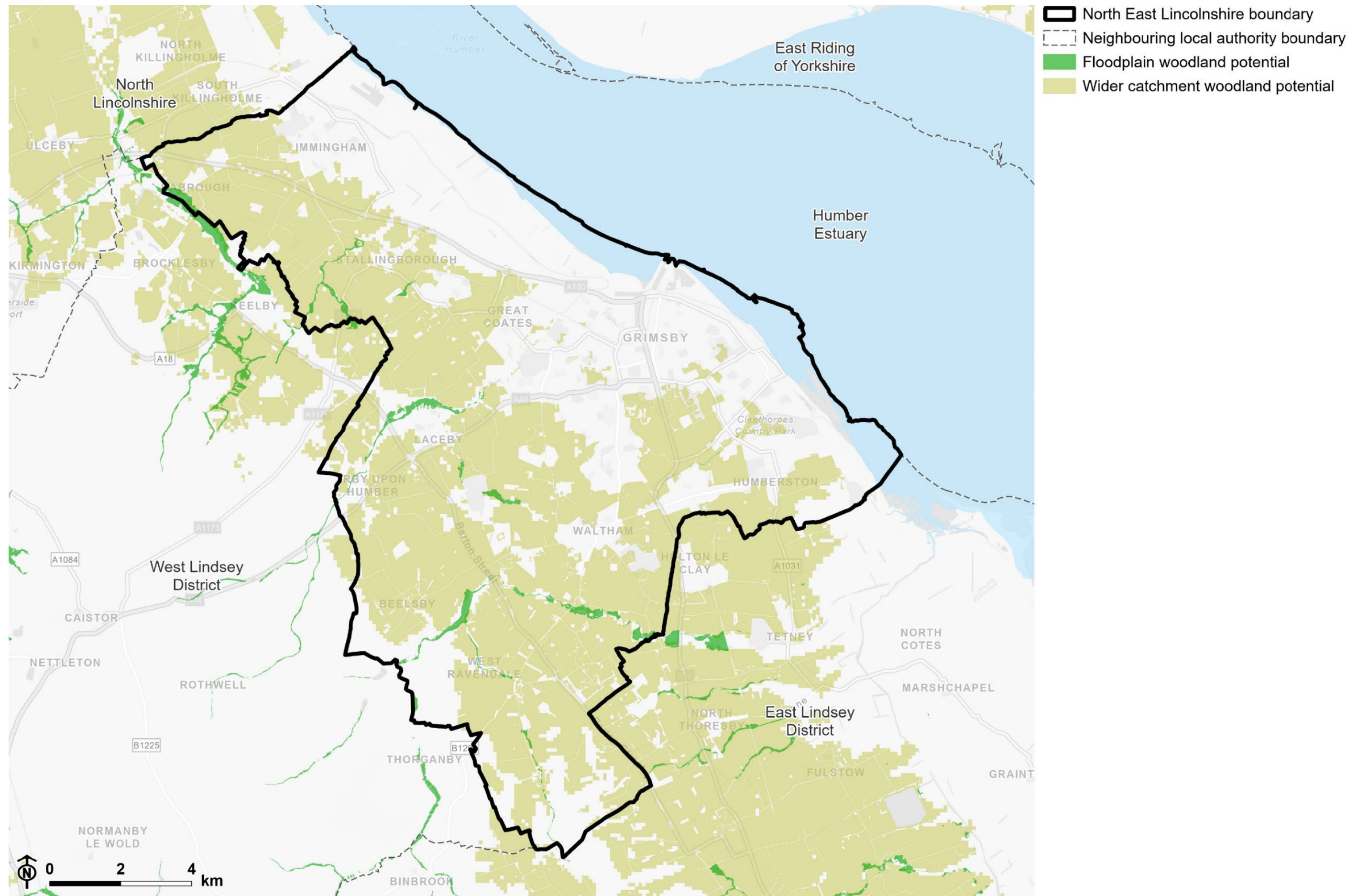
Figure 2.4: North East Lincolnshire's Blue corridors



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Figure 2.5: Floodplain woodland potential in North East Lincolnshire



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Summary of key challenges

- **Surface water and sewer flooding:** the continued expansion of impermeable urban surfaces places immense pressure on aging combined sewer networks, leading to rapid runoff and localised flooding in Grimsby and Immingham.
- **Tidal flood risk:** low-lying coastal settlements rely heavily on hard-engineered defences that face increasing pressure from extreme storm surges and accelerating sea-level rise along the Humber Estuary.
- **Watercourse degradation and pollution:** many local rivers, such as the Laceby Beck / River Freshney, fail to achieve 'good' ecological status due to historic channel modifications, agricultural runoff, and wastewater pollution. No rivers achieve above 'moderate' for ecological status.
- **Serious water stress and aquifer vulnerability:** expanding regional industrial demand and hotter, drier summers threaten underground chalk aquifers, risking both the public drinking water supply and sensitive ecosystems like chalk streams.
- **Emerging groundwater flooding:** a rising natural water table, caused by a long-term decline in localised industrial water extraction, is creating new groundwater flood risks along former medieval riverbeds in Grimsby.

Summary of key opportunities

- **Urban Grimsby and Cleethorpes:** opportunities for retrofitting SuDS – the densely paved areas of the borough's main urban centres require targeted interventions to relieve pressure on aging combined sewer networks and reduce surface water flood risk. Initiatives such as the Doncaster, Immingham and Grimsby SuDS Retrofit Innovation Funding project, alongside the successful local implementation of flood mitigating rain gardens, provide a framework for retrofitting SuDS into the existing townscape.
- **The Freshney Corridor:** a strategic washland and 'blue' lung. The River Freshney and its adjoining green spaces form a vital corridor of GBI stretching from Laceby directly into the centre of Grimsby. By protecting and expanding the washlands and designated flood storage areas along this valley, the network can safely attenuate excess floodwaters while functioning as a continuous ecological and recreational asset.

- **Chalk springs and aquifers:** protecting rare chalk stream catchments. Globally rare chalk streams flowing from the Lincolnshire Wolds, such as Laceby Beck and Waithe Beck, require targeted riparian planting and sensitive rural land management to restore their natural function and protect them from agricultural run-off. Furthermore, establishing robust green buffers around these catchments and their unique active blow wells will help to safeguard the underlying chalk aquifers and the public drinking water supply from contamination.
- **The Humber Foreshore:** managing tidal risk through natural buffers. As sea levels rise, there is a strategic opportunity to integrate GBI into the long-term Humber 2100+ coastal strategy. Softening estuary edges with natural coastal habitats, such as saltmarshes, and delivering unique mitigation sites like Cress Marsh and Novartis Ings (delivered through the South Humber Industrial Investment Programme [[See reference 208](#)]) can dissipate wave energy while offering major incentives for new businesses to move to the area. Additionally, the DUNE project offers an opportunity to explore options to better protect the coastline.

Theme 5: Resilient and climate positive North East Lincolnshire

Why is GBI important for resilient and climate positive places in the borough?

2.145 In the face of intensifying environmental pressures driven by climate change, resilient landscapes are those that are able to withstand and maintain their basic functions and processes. GBI plays a vital dual role in responding to climate change – both by mitigating its causes and by helping us adapt to its unavoidable impacts.

2.146 To support climate mitigation, a well-designed GBI network can reduce emissions through carbon sequestration in habitats such as woodlands, wetlands and grasslands, while also supporting low-carbon travel via active travel routes and green corridors (alongside strong sustainable transport policies).

2.147 At the same time, GBI is key to climate adaptation – enhancing flood resilience and water retention, providing cooling, shading in urban areas, and improving habitat connectivity to allow wildlife to move and adapt as conditions change. Theme 4 goes into further detail about the borough's blue corridors and their role in flood mitigation.

What does national legislation and policy say?

2.148 The **UK's Climate Change Act 2008** (as amended in 2019) sets a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 [\[See reference 209\]](#). England's 25 Year Environment Plan also includes a strong focus on protecting and improving the environment to tackle climate change.

2.149 The UK's independent Climate Change Committee recommends increasing woodland cover in the UK from 13% to a minimum of 17% by 2050 (and ideally to 19%) to help the country achieve net zero carbon emissions as a support to full decarbonisation efforts [\[See reference 210\]](#). The Government launched a Tree Planting Task Force in November 2024, to strengthen collaborative working and oversee the planting of millions of trees, noting that the UK has less tree cover than almost anywhere in Europe and recognising the need to close the gap [\[See reference 211\]](#).

2.150 Similarly, the Government's **Nature Positive 2030 report** [\[See reference 212\]](#) aims to combat climate change and biodiversity loss through the deployment of

nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation - notably by restoring peatlands and planting native trees.

2.151 The **Environmental Improvement Plan** [See reference 213] is a strategic framework for improving England's natural environment up to 2043. It contains ten goals and provides a clear plan for how the Government will deliver them, including addressing climate change and mitigation and providing cleaner air, water and improved soil. The plan seeks to achieve 'environmental security' through goals on climate, hazards and biosecurity and recognises the need to protect and restore nature to better manage the impact of the changing climate on our natural environment.

2.152 England's **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** [See reference 214] includes a requirement to mitigate and adapt to climate change (as a key environmental objective under paragraph 8). The planning system is explicitly required to support the transition to net zero by 2050.

2.153 Finally, the UK's **10 year Infrastructure Strategy** released in June 2025 [See reference 215] highlights a significant role for nature-based solutions and GBI in climate mitigation and adaptation. The strategy establishes a hierarchy for infrastructure design, which instructs that "first, maintain and optimise existing assets. Then, consider green and nature-based solutions where they are effective. New 'grey' solutions should only be deployed if other solutions are not viable."

What does local policy say?

While an important element of climate resilience, flood risk policies are dealt with separately under Theme 4 on water management.

2.154 At a corporate level, North East Lincolnshire's **Council Plan 2025-2028** [See reference 216] sets out the Council's strategic priorities and ambitions to be delivered by 2028. The plan recognises a 'Greener Future' as a key ambition and commits to cutting the organisation's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 and supporting North East Lincolnshire Borough to hit the target of carbon net zero by 2050.

2.155 North East Lincolnshire Council declared a **Climate Emergency** in October 2019. The declaration commits the Council to cutting its carbon emissions to net zero by 2040 and to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 [See reference 217].

2.156 North East Lincolnshire's Local Plan (adopted 2018) [See reference 218] includes the following policies which relate to creating resilience and climate positive places:

- **Policy 36 (Promoting sustainable transport)** supports measures that encourage more sustainable travel choices, with the aim of reducing dependence on the private car.

2.157 North East Lincolnshire's Net Zero Carbon Roadmap [See reference 219] sets out a structured programme to reduce carbon emissions across the Council's own operations and to support wider decarbonisation across the borough. This includes achieving carbon storage by planting more trees.

What are the assets, challenges and pressures for a resilient and climate positive North East Lincolnshire?

Supporting low-carbon travel

2.158 In North East Lincolnshire, transport accounts for 25% of climate emissions. Transport also causes air pollution, which is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, contributing to up to 30,000 deaths every year [See reference 220].

2.159 As of 2023, carbon emissions per km² in the borough were 4.8kt, higher than the regional Yorkshire and the Humber total of 1.8km². Across the Yorkshire and the Humber region, transport accounts for approximately 35% of total emissions [See reference 221].

2.160 As set out under Theme 2, levels of walking and cycling today in the borough are low given poor provision of options for these modes of transport. A well-planned GBI network can work alongside sustainable transport policies to provide high quality options that reduce car dependency and as a result carbon emissions.

Canopy cover and heat mitigation

2.161 In North East Lincolnshire, the temperature reached 37.5°C during the record-breaking heatwave in 2022. Those most susceptible to extreme heat include babies, pregnant women, people in poor health and the elderly. Nature provides cooling during heatwaves, for example shade from tree cover [See reference 222]. **Figure 2.6** highlights those areas of the borough where communities are most vulnerable to

urban heating, with key areas of vulnerability within built-up areas of the borough in particular.

2.162 Expanding canopy cover is an effective way to manage urban heat. The Tree Equity Score Map (developed by American Forests) is a tool that identifies where tree cover is needed most by combining data on canopy cover with social and environmental factors – helping target urban tree planting to improve health, climate resilience and equity in underserved communities. The tool highlights a number of gaps where urban tree planting should be prioritised around the borough, notably around Immingham and Grimsby [\[See reference 223\]](#).

2.163 North East Lincolnshire has an estimated tree canopy cover of 10.5%, with some wards within North East Lincolnshire with as little as 2% tree coverage, including East Marsh, West Marsh, Sidney Sussex, Immingham, and Croft Baker [\[See reference 224\]](#). Ninety-seven percent of neighbourhoods in North East Lincolnshire have less than 20% tree cover [\[See reference 225\]](#).

2.164 Stakeholder engagement identified that opportunities for tree planting are strongly influenced by housing density. In lower-density wards, retrofitting street trees is often not feasible without the support of highway authorities and strong political commitment. As a result, prioritising well-designed, effective tree planting within new large-scale developments represents a strong opportunity to significantly enhance overall canopy cover.

2.165 North East Lincolnshire Council launched the ‘Greening Up Our Place’ tree planting programme in late 2023, aiming to increase tree canopy coverage across the borough in the streets, parks and open spaces. Recent community projects in 2024/25 include [\[See reference 226\]](#):

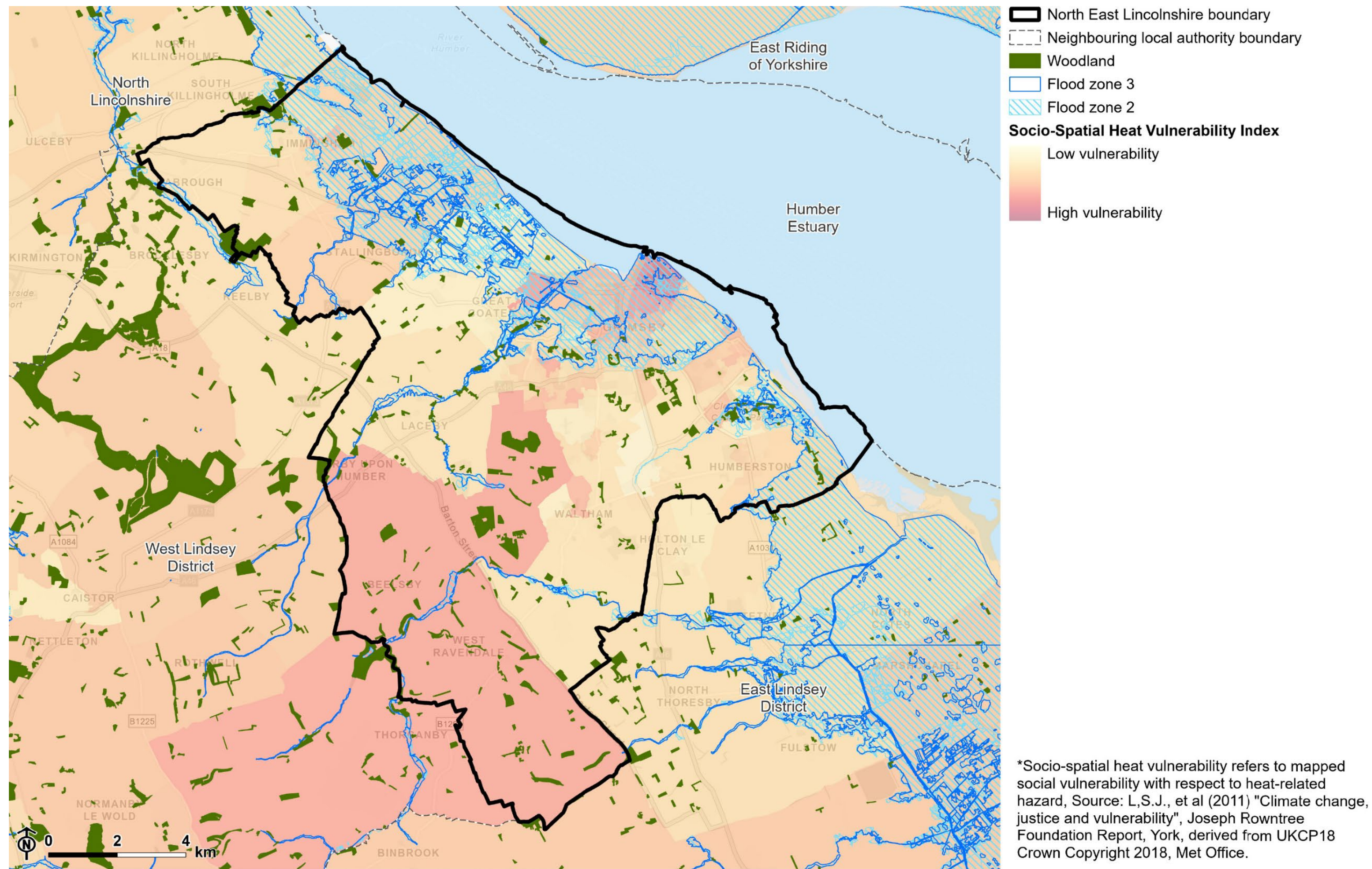
- **St John and St Stephen’s Church:** In the heart of the East Marsh, outside St John and St Stephens Church and the Shalom Centre, two trees were planted with the help of children attending activities there.
- **Cambridge Road, Grimsby:** Both Grange Primary School’s Eco Group & Cambridge Park Schools Eco Group assisted the Council in helping to plant by their schools. In total 11 trees were planted at Cambridge Road.
- **Nunthorpe:** Community volunteers came together from Lincolnshire Housing Partnership, Oasis Family Hub South, Flourish and Woodlands school to plant trees across Nunthorpe. Planting 29 trees in total on two locations on Sutcliffe Avenue and at Nunnys Farm.
- **Frederick Ward Way:** Staff from North East Lincolnshire Council and Equans planted seven trees at Frederick Ward Way.

Flood risk

2.166 Both urban and rural parts of North East Lincolnshire will become more vulnerable to fluvial and coastal flooding, water supply deficiencies, subsidence and sea level rises, as the local climate continues to change as a result of climate change. Increasing risks of flooding could lead to negative impacts on local habitats or species and pose a threat to an increasing number of properties. The Humber Estuary poses a significant flood risk, with surge events predicted to become more frequent due to rising sea levels [\[See reference 227\]](#).

2.167 Nature-based solutions to flood risk are a central plank of how GBI can contribute to greater climate resilience across the borough. As noted at the start of this chapter there are some overlaps between the themes, therefore for the purposes of this report, the use of nature-based GBI solutions to address flood risk is dealt with under Theme 4 (Understanding and Managing North East Lincolnshire's Water Environment). However, **Figure 2.6** also highlights key areas of fluvial flood risk in the borough.

Figure 2.6: Climate vulnerability in North East Lincolnshire



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Summary of key challenges

- **High transport-related carbon emissions:** carbon emissions per km² in North East Lincolnshire are higher than the regional average for Yorkshire and the Humber. Transport accounts for approximately 35% of total emissions across the region. Car dependency remains high, with limited walking and cycling infrastructure constraining modal shift.
- **Low levels of active travel:** despite the health, climate and cost-of-living benefits of active travel, current levels of walking and cycling remain relatively low, reflecting gaps in adequate alternative infrastructure.
- **Low tree canopy cover and urban heat vulnerability:** the borough has a low tree canopy cover, with some wards (including East Marsh, West Marsh, Sidney Sussex, Immingham and Croft Baker) having as little as 2% coverage. Opportunities to increase canopy cover are strongly constrained by housing density, particularly in lower-density wards where retrofitting street trees is often unfeasible.
- **Increasing flood and coastal risk:** both urban and rural areas face rising risks from fluvial and coastal flooding subsidence and sea level rise. Climate change will intensify these pressures, potentially affecting habitats, infrastructure and residential areas.

Summary of key opportunities

- **Delivering an integrated green active travel network:** a strategically planned GBI network can support low-carbon travel by providing safe, attractive walking and cycling corridors that connect various areas of the borough.
- **Targeted urban tree planting for climate resilience and equity:** tools such as the Tree Equity Score highlight priority areas for canopy expansion, particularly around Grimsby and Immingham. Expanding urban tree cover through street trees, pocket parks and community greening projects (building on the Council's 'Greening Up Our Place' programme) can reduce urban heating effects, improve air quality and address environmental inequalities. Prioritising effective tree planting as part of new large-scale development provides a strong opportunity to improve canopy coverage.

- **Nature-based flood management:** GBI offers cost-effective and multifunctional solutions to flood risk. Opportunities include sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), restored watercourses and coastal habitat enhancement. These measures can manage flooding whilst providing biodiversity and recreational benefits.

Chapter 3

A vision for the future GBI network

Through the planning process and in collaboration with partners, North East Lincolnshire Council will shape a connected, resilient, and inclusive green and blue infrastructure network. The network will protect and enhance North East Lincolnshire's rich natural heritage and protected sites, support healthy and thriving communities, strengthen climate resilience and celebrate the Borough's unique landscape identity – ensuring benefits for people of all ages and background, local economies and nature for generations to come.

Strategic objectives

3.1 The following six strategic objectives will help to deliver on this vision. They are driven by the findings of the baseline research in **Chapter 2** and each one relates to one of the GBI themes used for the study. Together with the vision, they should act like a 'golden thread' for decision making on GBI and guide the opportunities identified later in this report:

1. To **deliver a coherent and inclusive network of parks, open spaces, green corridors and active travel routes** within and between settlements in North East Lincolnshire, improving access to nature for all communities. Emphasis should be placed on addressing inequalities in provision, improving connectivity in underserved areas and enabling walking and cycling as everyday active choices.
2. To use **GBI as a key driver for improving physical and mental health outcomes** by increasing access to high-quality green space and creating environments that support recreation, social interaction and connection with nature.
3. To fully **integrate quality, multifunctional GBI** into **new development and regeneration** projects in Grimsby, Cleethorpes, Immingham and growing settlements, ensuring GBI shapes place from the earliest stages, strengthens local character and supports vibrant town centres and communities.
4. To **restore and reconnect irreplaceable habitats**, reduce growing pressures on **sensitive ecosystems**, and **champion distinctive landscape**

features – ensuring biodiversity recovery and ecological resilience across North East Lincolnshire, guided by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

5. To **support North East Lincolnshire's key blue corridors**, including rivers, becks, chalk streams and drainage corridors, in playing a full and integrated role within the wider GBI network by improving water quality, enhancing biodiversity and delivering nature-based solutions to flood management to create a healthy and resilient water environment.

6. To **expand tree and hedgerow cover** to meet national targets with a focus on less wooded areas, to support carbon storage and heat mitigation and to integrate nature-based solutions to climate resilience into both new development and land management across the Borough.

Chapter 4

GBI assets and needs

4.1 To maximise the benefits of GBI it is essential to understand the network, and to understand where the greatest need for GBI benefits arises. This chapter seeks to highlight the areas of the borough that are of significant value in GBI terms and also identify where the greatest need for GBI functions arises.

4.2 GIS data layers used for this strategy were combined to produce two combined datasets:

Valued GBI assets

Features and areas of green and blue infrastructure currently present within North East Lincolnshire that provide key ecosystem services, biodiversity value, recreational opportunities or placemaking/economic value and as such are prioritised for conservation and enhancement (shown in **Figure 4.1**).

GBI needs

Identified areas within North East Lincolnshire showing deficits in green infrastructure provision or function, representing priority locations for investment, restoration, or new GI interventions to improve ecological connectivity, climate resilience and community wellbeing, in line with this strategy's five GI themes (shown in **Figure 4.2**).

4.3 The mapping of valued GBI assets (Figure 4.1) highlights a clear spatial structure to most important aspects of North East Lincolnshire's GBI network. The most extensive areas of high-value assets are concentrated along the Humber Estuary to the north and east. In addition, a substantial area of high functioning GBI is evident in the south-west of the borough, associated with the Lincolnshire Wolds and their adjoining landscapes around Beelsby, Irby-upon-Humber and West Ravendale. Smaller, more fragmented patches are distributed across the main urban areas, including Grimsby and Cleethorpes, typically associated with parks, playing fields and more urban green spaces.

4.4 In contrast, the GBI needs mapping (Figure 4.2) demonstrates that the highest concentrations of need are focused within the main urban areas, particularly across Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham. These areas display extensive areas of moderate to significant need, reflecting a number of overlapping pressures such as

limited access to green space, lower canopy cover, higher levels of deprivation and increased exposure to climate risks such as surface water flooding and urban heat. Corridors of need are also visible along key transport routes, indicating opportunities to improve connectivity and enhance the multifunctionality of already existing infrastructure. The south west of the borough generally exhibits lower levels of need, corresponding with the presence of natural assets and lower development pressures. However, pockets of need are still present within rural areas and along transport corridors, suggesting some opportunities for enhancements.

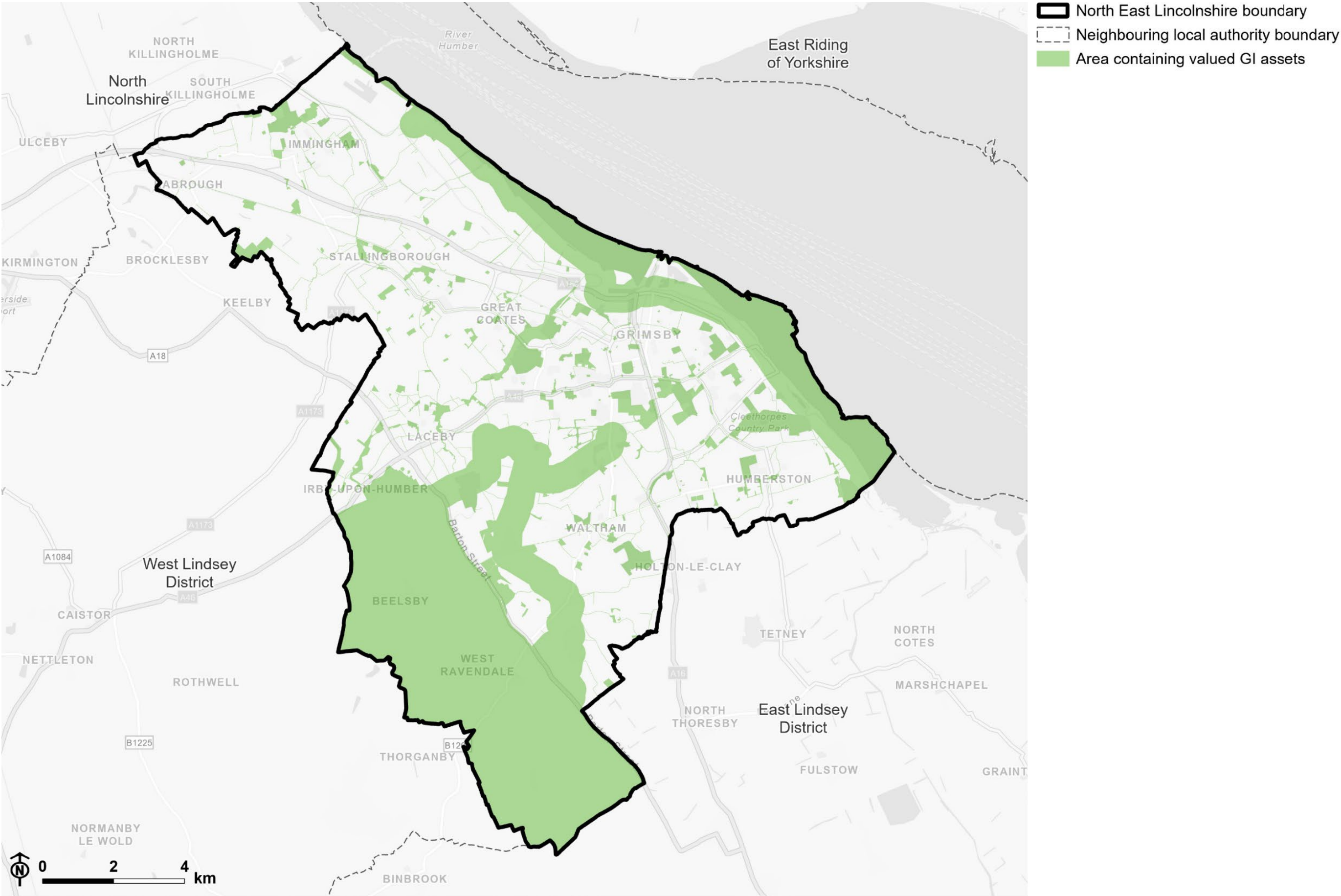
4.5 When considered together, the two mapping layers highlight a number of spatial relationships that can inform priorities for intervention. In some locations, particularly along the urban fringe and around the edges of Grimsby and Cleethorpes, areas of valued GBI assets coincide with moderate to high levels of need. These represent key opportunity areas where relatively modest interventions such as improving access, strengthening connections, or enhancing the quality and functionality of existing assets could deliver significant benefits to local communities.

4.6 Conversely, there are areas within more urban areas where need is high but existing GBI assets are limited and fragmented. These locations, including parts of central and eastern Grimsby and inland areas of Cleethorpes, are likely to require greater intervention, such as the creation of new GBI, greening of streets and public realm and integration of blue-green features into regeneration schemes.

4.7 The Humber Estuary corridor presents a strategic opportunity where high-value assets are already present but where there are also identified needs relating to flood resilience, access, and socioeconomic factors. Careful enhancement of this corridor through improved public access (without harming sensitive designations) and integration with urban areas could deliver borough-wide benefits.

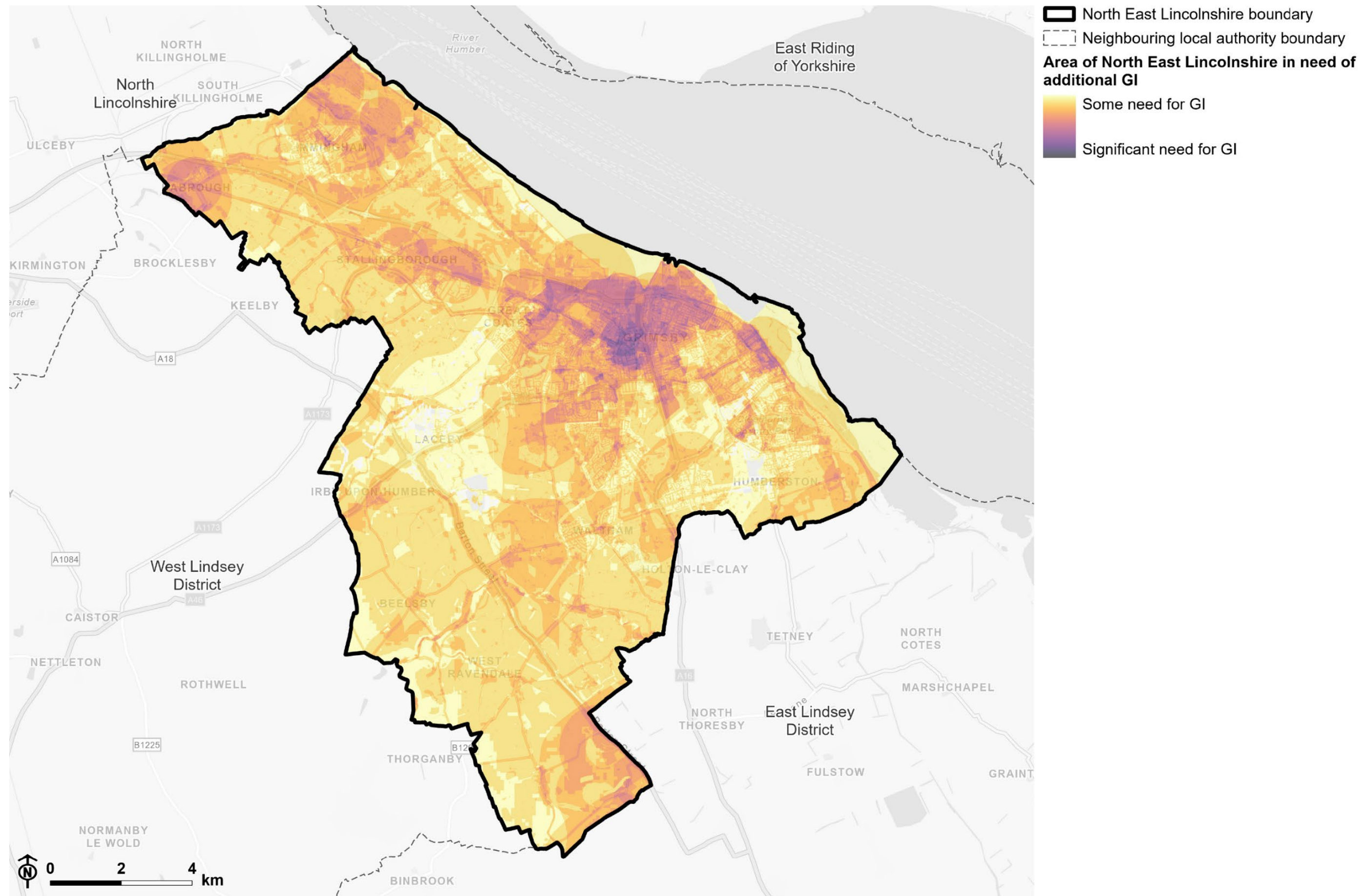
4.8 The greatest opportunities for delivering multifunctional GBI benefits lie in areas where multiple needs overlap, particularly within and around the main urban settlements and along key green-blue corridors. Investment focused in these areas will help to maximise the benefits of intervention through delivering the greatest opportunities for multifunctional GBI, by simultaneously addressing biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience and community wellbeing.

Figure 4.1: Valued GBI assets



Created by LUC - 17068_001_r0_GrowthAreas/001_r2_NeedsAssets_A3L 29/04/2026
Overlap_Assets_Merge_20260330 Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS © OpenStreetMap contributors, and GIS User Community. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026 Ordnance Survey Licence 100020759. Please refer to the data table in the appendix for data included in these results

Figure 4.2: GBI needs



Created by LUC - 17068_001_r0_GrowthAreas/001_r1_NeedsAssets_A3L 30/03/2026

Overlap_Needs_20260326 Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS © OpenStreetMap contributors, and GIS User Community. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026 Ordnance Survey Licence 100020759. Please refer to the data table in the appendix for data included in these results

Chapter 5

Key growth areas

5.1 The Replacement Local Plan is seeking to deliver a significant amount of new development – 10,586 new homes and 300 hectares of employment land.

5.2 This growth is not distributed evenly across the Borough, but will occur at key growth areas, this section of the strategy provides greater detail on the existing GBI network in and around these areas and seeks to align GBI interventions with planned growth.

5.3 These locations offer the most immediate and tangible opportunities to deliver new GBI on the ground. Integrating GBI into areas of development ensures that new communities benefit from access to nature, climate resilience and healthy environments from the outset, rather than retrofitting these assets later at greater cost.

5.4 The key growth areas are:

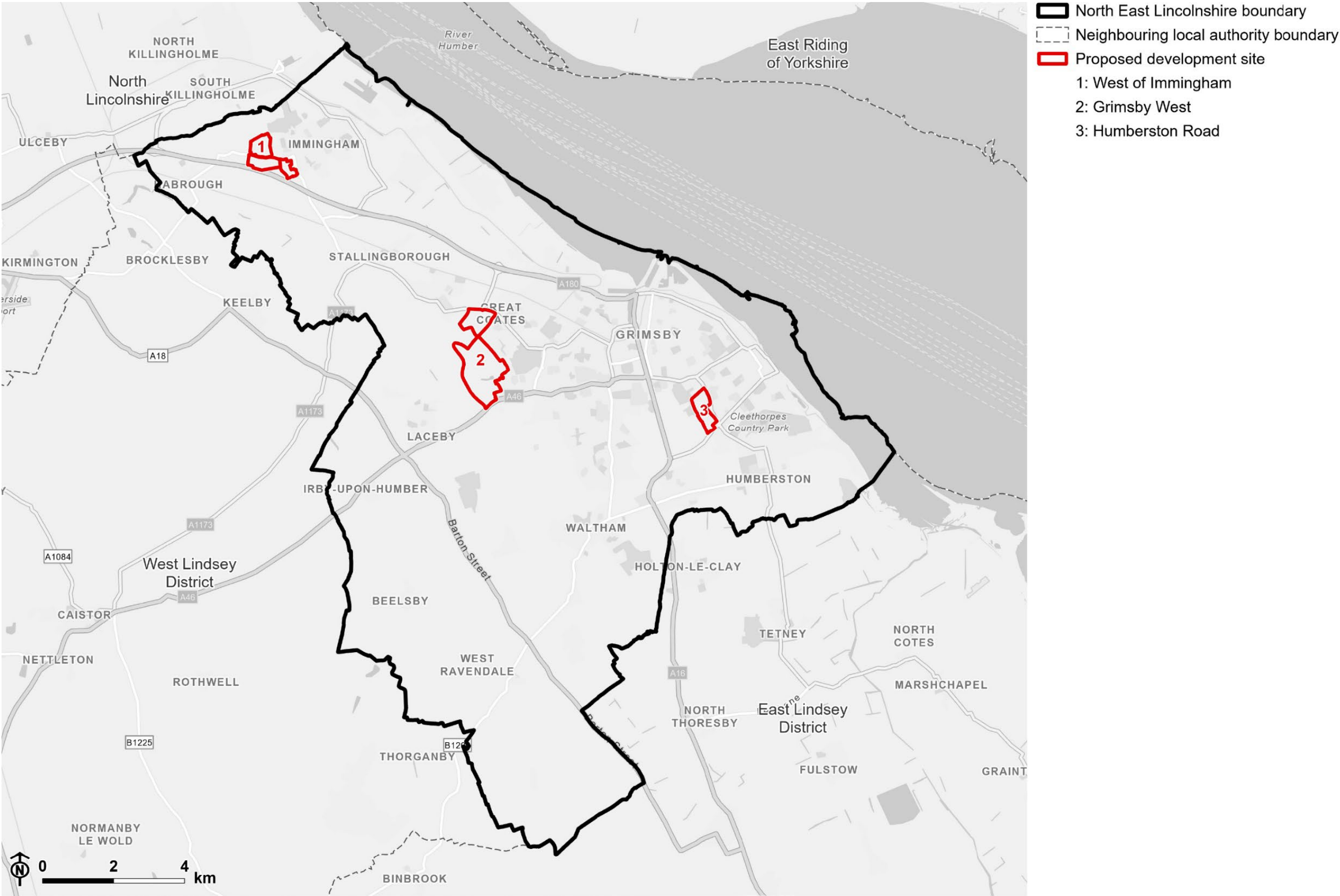
- West of Immingham (1,000 dwellings)
- Grimsby West (3,500 dwellings)
- Humberston Road (1,500 dwellings)

5.5 It is important that high-quality GBI is delivered within and alongside all new development across the borough, wherever growth takes place (see **Chapter 6** for further detail on delivery). However, the aforementioned key growth areas provide a valuable opportunity to consider the GBI network at a more local scale in parts of the borough that are set to absorb the most growth.

5.6 Understanding how the GBI network in these areas currently functions, where there are gaps or pressures, and where there is potential for enhancement will enable developers and the Council to use development as a force for good to enhance the GBI network.

5.7 The following three key growth area profiles set out the key characteristics, challenges and opportunities for GBI within each location. They are intended to inform the planning and design of future development, ensuring that proposals respond positively to the local GBI context and help to deliver on the priorities identified in this strategy. Each profile includes a GBI summary map of the area, a short description of the GBI context, a summary of key challenges and a summary of key opportunities.

Figure 5.1: Key growth areas



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Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS © OpenStreetMap contributors, and GIS User Community. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026 Ordnance Survey Licence 100020759.

Key growth area 1: West of Immingham

5.8 The strategic site will result in an extension to the west of the settlement of Immingham. This site is anticipated to deliver approximately 1,000 new homes in the new plan period (2025-2043)

Overview of the GBI context

Landscape setting

5.9 The town of Immingham lies on the southern bank of the Humber Estuary, within a National Character Area (NCA) defined by broad, low-lying estuarine landscapes, open views, and extensive areas of intertidal habitat. Although the growth area sits inland, the wider landscape character is influenced by the estuary's flat topography, open fields and long drainage corridors. The strategic site occupies a transitional zone between the urban edge of Immingham and the more rural landscape extending towards Habrough. The area is dominated by farmland, crossed by ditches, hedgerows and occasional tree belts, which together create a semi-rural setting. Despite this, the presence of nearby port-related infrastructure (including the Port of Immingham, one of the largest ports in the UK) introduces an element of industrial influence to the landscape. Field patterns are typically rectilinear and defined by a network of drainage channels, reflecting a history of agricultural land management in the Humber floodplain.

Ecological assets

5.10 The Humber Estuary, approximately 3km to the north east of the growth area, is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), due to its extensive intertidal habitats (including mudflats, saltmarsh, reedbeds and grazing marsh) and its internationally important migratory and breeding birds. The SAC additionally recognises the estuary's geomorphological interest and populations of lamprey species. While the growth area itself does not lie within these statutory designations, its proximity to the Humber means that ecological sensitivity underpins the wider context. A Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) abuts the southern tip of the site. Additionally, an SNCI and Local Wildlife Site at Homestead Park Pond is located just over 1km to the north east. Whilst these sites are some distance from the growth area and are unlikely to be directly affected, they contribute to the wider

ecological network of the area. There are also areas of priority habitat surrounding the site including pockets of woodland and floodplain grazing marsh, providing habitat connectivity for a range of species.

Green open spaces

5.11 Formal open space provision within and adjacent to the growth area is limited. The site itself is predominantly agricultural land, with no designated parks or play spaces. Within the wider area of Immingham, green spaces are generally small and dispersed, consisting primarily of local parks, playing fields, sports clubs and amenity green spaces associated with residential areas, including areas such as Homestead Park, Boat Park, Pilgrim Father's Monument and Blossom Way Bowling Club. Beyond Immingham, access to open space is largely confined to the surrounding countryside which is not readily accessible.

Access and connectivity

5.12 The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network within and around the growth area is relatively sparse and fragmented. There are limited east to west connections linking Immingham with the surrounding countryside and a number of routes terminate at field boundaries, reducing permeability through the site. A small number of footpaths provide westward connections towards Habrough, though these are not continuous and do not form a coherent network. As a result, movement options into the rural landscape are currently constrained. The National Cycle Network (NCN) does not currently extend into Immingham or the growth area. In addition, there are no signed Local Cycle Routes outside the settlement boundary, meaning that opportunities for cycling are limited.

Key challenges in and around West of Immingham by GI theme

GBI Theme 1: Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- Although the site does not lie within the Humber Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, its proximity to the protected site introduces some sensitivity to pressures such as disturbance and increased activity.
- Development would potentially act as a barrier between the area of woodland to the east of the site and the open countryside to the west and south of the site.

- Development would take place on open agricultural fields, which will reduce the quantity of green infrastructure. It is important that the quality of the remaining GBI is high to compensate for this loss.

GBI Theme 2: Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- The growth area is served by only a small number of footpaths, with limited east to west and north to south connectivity. Routes often end abruptly and do not form a functional network.
- The National Cycle Network does not extend into Immingham or the growth area. There are no Local Cycle Routes outside the settlement boundary, limiting opportunities for active travel.
- Immingham is identified by the AGSt mapping as having some of the weakest access to publicly accessible green space in the borough. The area west of Immingham currently provides no formal public greenspace.
- Immingham is identified as one of the borough's most deprived areas, where limited access to GBI intersects with poorer health outcomes and lower levels of physical activity.

GBI Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- Limited east to west connectivity weakens links between Immingham and nearby settlements, reducing opportunities for integration with the broader area.
- The growth area has limited access to formal, multifunctional green spaces, reducing the attractiveness of the area as a place to live.

GBI Theme 4: Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment

Key challenges

- Parts of Immingham fall within groundwater Source Protection Zones, indicating sensitivity to contamination and the need to ensure development does not compromise aquifer quality.
- There are two attenuation ponds to the north east of the site and a watercourse that runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. Development will therefore need to be carefully designed to avoid adverse effects on these features.
- Due to the proximity of the watercourse, parts of the site fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3, indicating an increased susceptibility to flooding.

GBI Theme 5: Resilient and climate-positive North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- Immingham contains some of the lowest canopy cover in the borough, with the growth area having minimal woodland cover or mature trees.
- The development of open agricultural land to development will increase impermeable surfaces and exacerbate surface water flooding.
- Limited active travel infrastructure means most journeys currently rely on private vehicles, contributing to transport-related emissions.

Key multifunctional GBI opportunities

5.13 It is recommended that the following enhancement opportunities are implemented as part of development in this area.

- **A new green heart for the western settlement edge:** create a high-quality, multifunctional green space at the core of the growth area. This should act as a community focal point, provide accessible recreation and help reduce recreational pressure on designated sites. This space should be designed to deliver benefits by combining accessible green space with biodiversity led design, incorporating areas for community food growing, climate resilient planting with increased tree canopy cover, natural play features and quieter

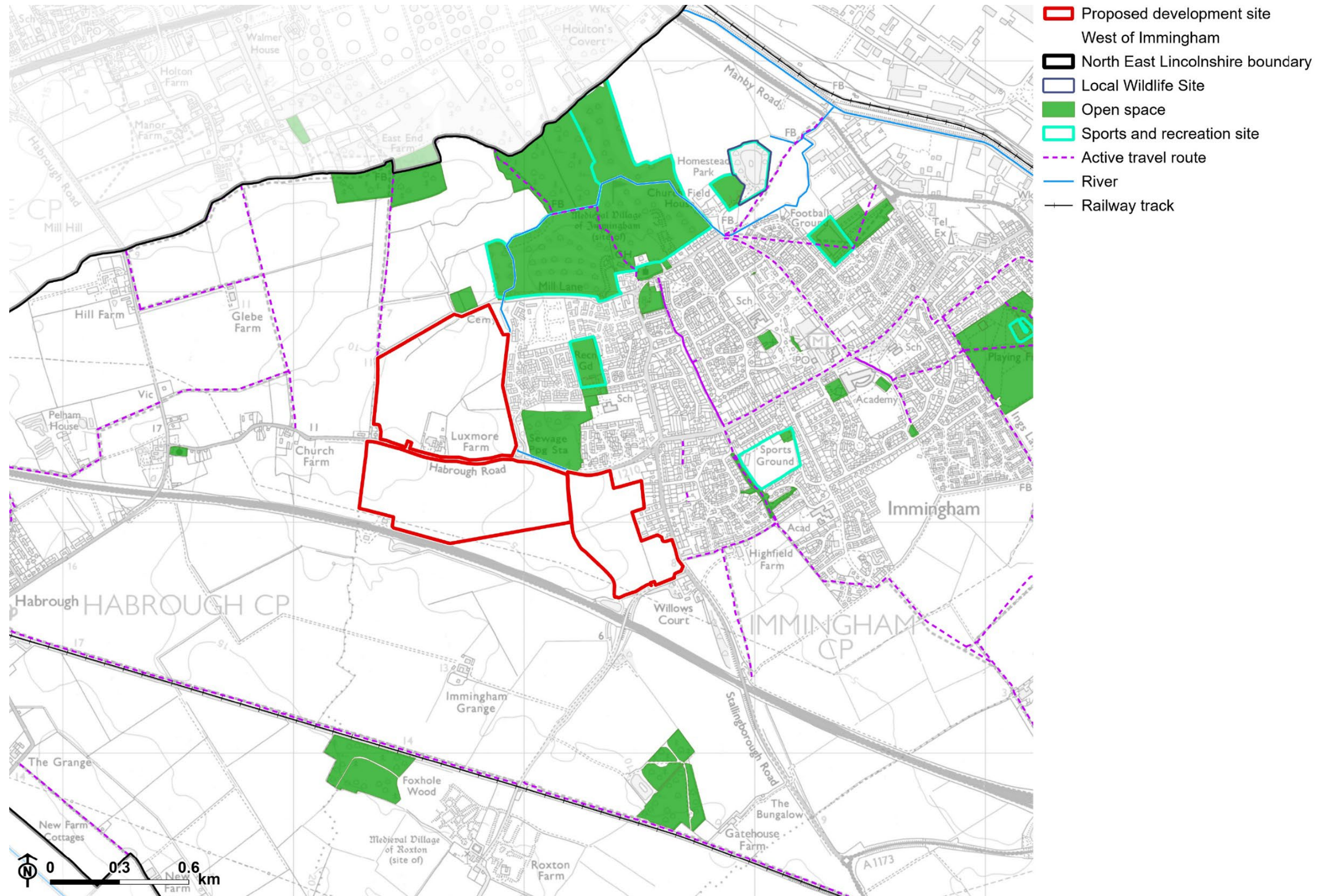
wildlife focused areas, creating a balanced space that supports recreation, nature recovery and resilience.

- **Immingham – West of Immingham – Habrough green active travel corridor:** deliver a strategic east to west green active travel route through the growth area, using Habrough Road as the primary alignment to create a coherent walking and cycling connection between Immingham and Habrough. This corridor would address existing gaps in active travel provision and help overcome severance created by the A180 through an improved active travel crossing at Station Road linking to Habrough village and railway station. The route can be integrated with wider active travel proposals and LCWIP priorities, strengthening access to employment, schools and public transport while incorporating enhanced GBI, including tree planting, hedgerows and SuDS so that it functions as both a key movement route and an important green link.
- **Northern woodland access:** formalise and enhance an existing informal path along Mill Lane to the north of the growth area to provide a clear, safe and attractive walking and cycling route to the woodland located approximately 500m to the north of the site. This route would be upgraded to a defined, all-ability path suitable for year-round use, creating a direct link from new residential areas to accessible natural greenspace and supporting everyday recreation, health and wellbeing. The corridor should be integrated with planting such as hedgerows and trees to strengthen its role within the wider GBI network, supported by clear entrance features and wayfinding to improve visibility, safety and awareness of the woodland as a public asset. The woodland itself could be managed as a local open space, with access improvements and wayfinding routes that encourage responsible use while safeguarding its ecological value.
- **Blue-green wildlife and local nature site:** formalise and enhance the existing network of attenuation basins and associated grassland to the north east of the growth area to create a blue-green corridor and wetland wildlife site. The area already functions as part of the local drainage network and provides incidental biodiversity value and could be managed as a multifunctional GBI asset through the enhancement of the north to south drainage ditch as a defined corridor with riparian planting and softened banks, alongside the management of attenuation features as a connected mosaic of wetland habitats. Carefully designed informal access, such as paths or viewing points, would allow engagement with nature while maintaining the primary function of the area as a wildlife-focused space.

Key stakeholders/delivery partners

- Developers and masterplanners of the strategic housing allocation
- North East Lincolnshire Council
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Parish and Village Councils to represent local community interests
- Anglian Water
- Local farmers and landowners
- Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Partnership
- Forestry Commission
- The Woodlands Trust
- RSPB
- Sport England

Figure 5.2: GBI assets in and around West of Immingham



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© Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly sustrans) © Natural England copyright 2026. © Historic England 2026. Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS © OpenStreetMap contributors, and GIS User Community. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026 Ordnance Survey Licence 100020759.

Key growth area 2: Grimsby West

5.14 The strategic site of Grimsby West comprises an urban extension to Grimsby, which is anticipated to deliver approximately 2,500 new homes during the existing plan period (2013 to 2032) but has capacity to deliver around 3,500 new homes in total. The area in which the strategic site is located already contains an important network of blue and green infrastructure assets and the scale of the proposed development presents a major opportunity to protect, connect, and expand the GBI network, cultivating a green-blue jewel for Grimsby.

Overview of the GBI context

Distinctive landscape setting

5.15 The area of Grimsby West contains a relatively large extent of the Freshney Valley, featuring chalk streams and wetlands between Great Coates and Laceby. The area is located on the western edge of Grimsby and encompasses open agricultural land that borders the residential neighbourhoods of Wybers Wood and Laceby Acres. The village of Great Coates is located to the north-east, Healing to the north-west, and Laceby to the south-west. Much of the existing landscape character is defined by gently undulating arable farmland interspersed with occasional woodland blocks and hedgerows. However, the southern extents are distinct as here the site is bisected by Laceby Beck/River Freshney. The area falls within the 'Laceby and Grimsby' strategic gap referred to in the adopted Local Plan, the purpose of which is to protect the setting and separate identity of settlements.

Blue infrastructure and ecological assets

5.16 The site's ecology (and topography) is influenced by its blue infrastructure, made up of Laceby Beck/River Freshney, which flows through the southern extents of the site. The valley in which Laceby Beck/River Freshney sits supports a range of habitats, including woodlands, farmland, hedgerows, and the chalk stream itself. It also contains several designated ecological sites. The site itself contains the majority of Laceby Beck North LWS and the entirety of Laceby Carr Plantation & Pond LWS. Immediately adjacent to the site to the north-east is Freshney Parkway LWS with Freshney Parkway LNR upstream. Adjacent to the north-western site boundary is Wybers Wood SNCI. The strategic site has a medium to high SPA bird potential to

support qualifying bird species from the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar site. Around the site there are areas of deciduous woodland classed as Priority Habitat.

Green open spaces

5.17 Beyond the site to the north and west are arable fields but within the site and to the west are publicly accessible open spaces. Within the site is the open space around Laceby Beck/River Freshney and the Laceby Carr Plantation & Pond. Adjacent to the site to the west is Freshney Parkway, which extends north-eastwards to Cromwell Road. To the south-east of Freshney Parkway is a golf course, Grimsby Golf Club, and further downstream is another, Grimsby Golf Centre and FootGolf.

Access and connectivity

5.18 Bridleways traverse the southern extents of the site, following Laceby Beck/River Freshney as well as providing north-south connections along historic field boundaries. Footpath PROWs traverse the entire southern half of the site, following Laceby Beck/River Freshney before crossing fields and connecting to Wybers Wood. There are off road cycle routes to the north and south of the site, the latter connecting to central Grimsby. There is also another off road cycle path in proximity to the site and it runs through Freshney Parkway. The current network of bridleways, footpaths, and cycle routes provides good coverage of human movement across the site, particularly in its southern half, and allows residents of existing neighbourhoods access to the open countryside.

Historic landscape character

5.19 The landscape character of the strategic site is influenced by historic features. The north-eastern corner of the site contains part of the Great Coates Conservation Area, which contains the Grade I listed Church of St Nicolas – the tower of which is visible from the site. Located in close proximity to the southern perimeter of the site (less than 100m) is the Cottagers Plot Conservation Area. There are two moated sites at Healing Hall (a scheduled monument) 1km north-west of the site.

Key challenges in and around Grimsby West by GI theme

GBI theme 1: Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- The large-scale development on greenfield land proposed at Grimsby West has the potential to result in adverse impacts on habitats and their connectivity through habitat fragmentation and the loss of trees and hedgerows.
- Development pressures could negatively impact ecologically sensitive assets, including Laceby Beck North LWS, Laceby Carr Plantation & Pond LWS, and Freshney Parkway LWS.
- Because the site has medium to high potential to support SPA/Ramsar birds, comprehensive ecological assessments and bespoke mitigation measures will be required before development can proceed.
- Development would take place on open agricultural fields, which will reduce the quantity of green infrastructure. It is important that the quality of the remaining GBI is high to compensate for this loss.

GBI theme 2: Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- Introducing a new community of this scale will place significant recreational demands on existing open spaces.
- The potential delivery of the new Grimsby West Link Road connecting the A1136 in the north to the A46 in the south risks posing a major barrier to movement and could divide the new community in two, severing ecological and active travel movement.
- Childhood obesity in the borough is a significant threat to health and due to the scale of the site, it must be designed in a way that makes walking and cycling between homes and amenities the easiest choice.

GBI theme 3 : Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- Future designs must rigorously assess and mitigate potential harm to the historic setting of the Great Coates Conservation Area and its key heritage assets, including the Grade I listed Church of St Nicolas, as well as the heritage settings of Cottagers Plot Conservation Area and the two moated sites at Healing Hall.

GBI theme 3: Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment

Key challenges

- A large area of the southern extent is in Flood Zone 3. This presents a significant challenge for managing flood risk associated with Laceby Beck/River Freshney, particularly as the frequency of flooding events will increase as a result of climate change.
- Laceby Beck/River Freshney suffers from severe water quality issues and is currently classified as having a “Poor” ecological status and a failing chemical status. These water quality issues are largely attributed to diffuse pollution from agricultural runoff and contamination from wastewater. The new development must have a comprehensive GBI network that collects, stores, and filters surface water across the site.
- Development on such a large area of greenfield land could reduce rates of infiltration and increase flood risk, as there will be a significant loss of permeable land.
- The area falls within groundwater Source Protection Zones, indicating sensitivity to contamination and the need to ensure development does not compromise aquifer quality.

GBI theme 3: Resilient and climate-positive North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- Transforming a vast area of agricultural land into an urban extension will significantly increase impermeable surfaces, which will exacerbate surface water flooding if nature-based drainage solutions are not extensively integrated.
- North East Lincolnshire is located in an area of water stress; the new development faces the challenge of integrating robust water efficiency measures and demand management technologies into designs.
- The loss of open agricultural land to development will require mitigation through extensive new tree planting to provide essential shading and support carbon sequestration.

Key multifunctional GBI opportunities

Existing policy requirements (opportunities)

5.20 North East Lincolnshire Council's adopted Local Plan (2018) allocates Grimsby West in Policy 14 Development of strategic housing sites. According to the policy, green infrastructure should be provided as outlined below.

- Open space, play and recreation provision – specifically three equipped play areas, no less than two hectares of allotments and provision of three adult sports fields including changing and parking facilities.
- Freshney Parkway should be expanded to the west to create Freshney Valley Country Park, in addition to a network of green infrastructure that will link to the country park and wider countryside.
- The softening of the western and northern boundaries to avoid urbanising impacts on the wider countryside.
- Protection of Laceby Beck North LWS and Laceby Carr Plantation and Pond LWS.
- Avoid coalescence with surrounding settlements and mark a transition between the village of Healing and the development site.
- Provision of legible and permeable public transport, cycle and pedestrian connections throughout the development and connections to Wybers Wood, Grimsby town centre and the South Humber Bank employment area.

Enhancement opportunities

5.21 In addition to the existing policy requirements, it is recommended that the following enhancement opportunities are implemented as part of development in this area.

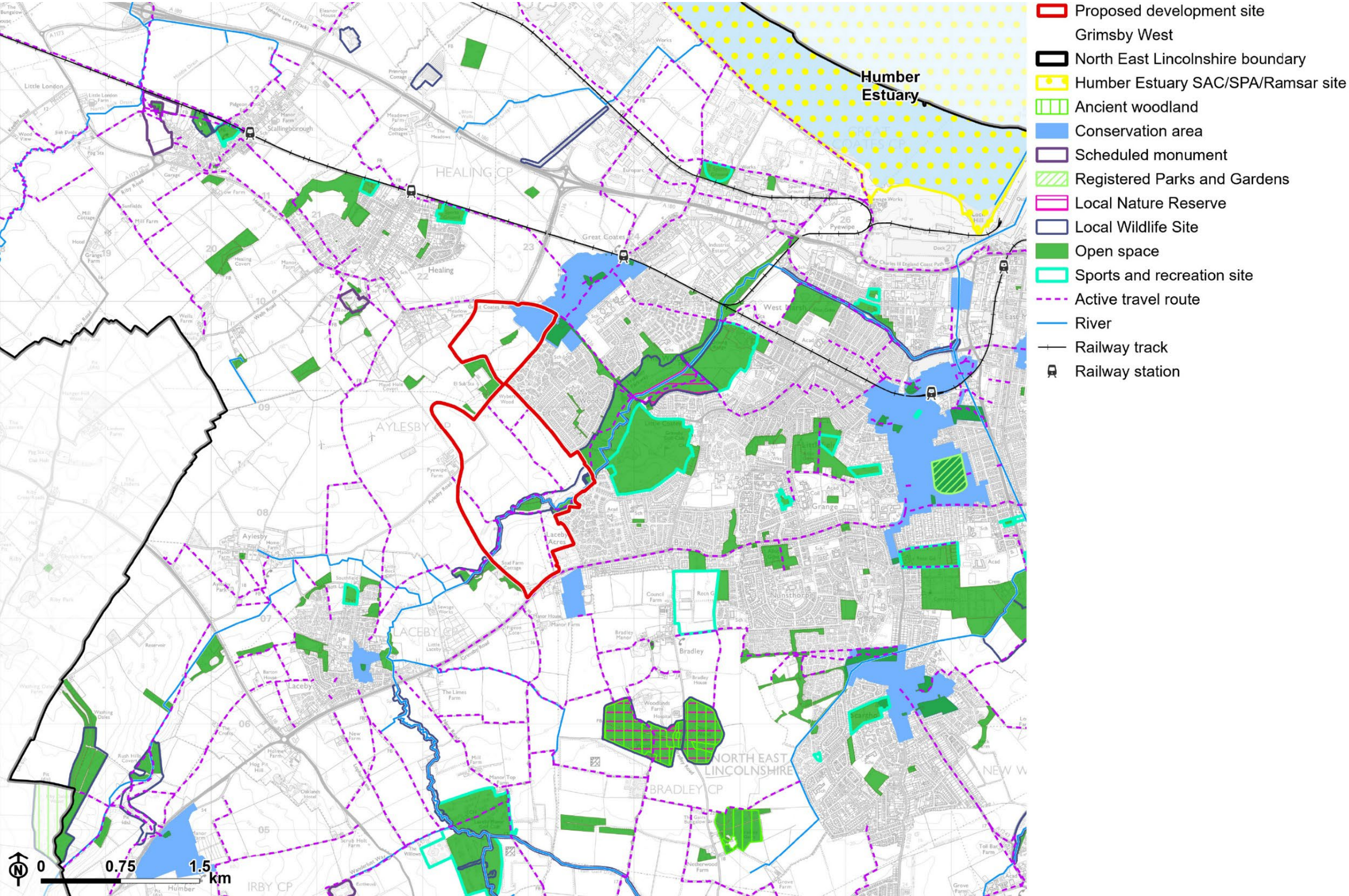
- **Reconnecting Laceby Beck/River Freshney with its floodplain:** an important opportunity that the creation of the Freshney Valley Country Park will bring is the chance to reconnect Laceby Beck/River Freshney with its floodplain. This would involve the removal of embankments and/or re-naturalising the river's shape so that in times of flood, water can flow into the floodplain, which will hold and absorb the water. This has the benefit of slowing water flow and alleviating the impacts of flooding downstream in central Grimsby. The Environment Agency's Working with Natural Processes (WWNP) mapping illustrates this floodplain reconnection potential.
- **Maximising the area of the Freshney Valley Country Park by using the footprint of the Laceby and Grimsby strategic gap:** using the area demarcated as the Laceby and Grimsby strategic gap to inform the area and size of the new country park will ensure that the strategic gap is protected from urbanisation and that the LWSs are appropriately protected.
- **A "sponge" park:** the proposed country park can be an innovative "sponge" park that can be designed to accommodate differing levels of water, from times of drought to times of flood. Such a "sponge" park would enable the restoration and expansion of important habitats as well as offer a novel outdoor learning environment for children and school groups. The new country park should be designed as a regionally important destination that can strategically draw visitor pressure away from more highly sensitive estuarine habitats.
- **Multifunctional green corridors:** WWNP mapping illustrates riparian woodland potential, where planting trees in thick bands can slow the flow of water, stabilise banks, filter pollution, and provide shading for waterways. These suggested thick bands of trees could serve as the basis for multifunctional green corridors that could include SuDS, such as swales, active travel routes (including nature trails), and incidental play. These green corridors would enable carbon sequestration and the movement of species. Smart street lighting could allow for "dark corridors" at night to support wildlife. Green corridors with comprehensive SuDS would capture, store, and filter surface water runoff, which would help restore the condition of Laceby Beck/River Freshney and protect the underlying aquifer from urban run-off.

- **Greywater recycling via reed beds:** a possible opportunity for the new development to manage water sustainably could be greywater recycling via reed beds.
- **Soft buffering:** the new development must prevent the coalescing of Grimsby with surrounding, rural villages. The western and northern boundaries of this growth area require careful green buffering to allow for a gradual transition from the surrounding rural countryside to the new development. Such buffering must still meaningfully contribute to the GBI network; it should not be “lazy” in its application, such as through the simple delivery of only parkland trees and wildflower meadows. It should be multi-functional – providing new habitats, cycling and walking routes, and play opportunities. Furthermore, appropriate buffering must protect the LWSs of Freshney Parkway, Laceby Beck North, and Laceby Carr Plantation & Pond.
- **A permeable place:** the new development must create a place that is highly permeable to human movement, integrating cycle and pedestrian connections throughout the new development to bring the new and existing communities together, including Grimsby town centre and the wider landscape. Key north-south connections must be established that connect the existing off-road cycle routes to the north and south of the site. The proposed development must extend the off road cycle route in Freshney Parkway into the site and aim to align it along Laceby Beck/River Freshney. This would further strengthen the waterside route that connects the rural countryside with the centre of Grimsby.
- **Integration of the potential Grimsby West Link Road:** it is imperative that the proposed road is integrated into the GBI network to allow for a porous road link that does not divide the new community in two and sever ecological movement. It will demand exceptionally sensitive design to successfully limit its ecological footprint, visual intrusion and pollution. It is recommended that the link road does not cut through the Laceby and Grimsby strategic gap as it would have a very negative impact on the Freshney Valley and new Country Park, undermining its integrity, while also introducing noise and air pollution, in addition to runoff. Emphasis should be on strengthening the multifunctional blue-green corridor of Laceby Beck/River Freshney.
- **Great Coates heritage setting:** new development will need to safeguard historic landscape features, such as the character and setting of Great Coates Conservation Area (including the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Nicolas), Cottagers Plot Conservation Area, and the two moated sites at Healing Hall.

Key stakeholders/delivery partners

- Developers and masterplanners of the strategic housing allocation
- North East Lincolnshire Council
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Historic England
- Parish and Village Councils to represent local community interests
- Anglian Water
- Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project
- Local farmers and landowners
- Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Partnership
- Forestry Commission
- The Woodlands Trust
- RSPB
- Sport England

Figure 5.3: GBI assets in and around Grimsby West



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Key growth area 3: Humberston Road

5.22 Growth and land use: the strategic site will result in the extension of the settlement of Cleethorpes to the west. The site is anticipated to deliver approximately 750 new homes during the existing plan period (2013 to 2032) but has capacity to deliver around 1,750 new homes in total.

Overview of the GBI context

5.23 Landscape setting: the area of Humberston Road marks the transition from the suburban area of Cleethorpes to open fields. The area is characterised by agricultural fields to the west and suburbs to the north and east, and fields for agriculture to the south, with some green open spaces like parks and pockets of woodland in surrounding areas. The strategic site is located between Woods Country Park and Cleethorpes Country Park which is a which is classed as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Large open views are typically contained by housing and hedgerows, and woodlands to the west (Weelsby Woods) and south (Peak's Covert). The area falls adjacent to the 'New Waltham and Grimsby and Humberston' strategic gap referred to in the adopted Local Plan, the purpose of which is to protect the setting and separate identity of settlements.

Ecological assets

5.24 The wider and local area are home to a number of ecologically valuable sites: Humber Estuary and Cleethorpes Country Park, respectfully. The Humber Estuary is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site (wetlands of international importance), in addition to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its importance for migratory birds. Some examples of these migratory birds are Black-tailed Godwits, Redknots and Eurasian Golden Plovers. Additionally, there are two more LWSs: Gooseman's Field and Big Humphry. Cleethorpes Country Park, Weelsby Woods, Gooseman's Field and Big Humphrey all play an important role in providing habitat to amphibians, birds and invertebrates. The strategic site has a medium to high SPA bird potential to support qualifying bird species from the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar site. Around the site there is deciduous woodland that is classed as Priority Habitat.

Role of woodlands:

5.25 Woodlands in this area, whilst scattered, play an important role in the green-blue infrastructure of the area, especially Weelsby Woods and the tree belts nearby. These wooded areas provide local residents with a connection to nature, shade and contribute overall to the local character. The woodland is also important to local flora and fauna – providing connectivity of habitats for safe movement and shelter from potential prey.

Green open spaces

5.26 There are a selection of open spaces for residents to use within the Humberston Road area, including Weelsby Woods Country Park and Cleethorpes Country Park. There are two smaller open spaces named Haverstoe Park and King George V Playing Fields. These green spaces provide opportunities for local residents to enjoy recreation and nature. However, access to these can be difficult depending on where residents live due to the distance they would need to travel, as cycling routes do not connect to all residences and access by foot would require people to travel along busy roads. There are also some allotments located nearby: Peaksfield Allotments, Weelsby Allotments, Carr Lane Allotments and Beacon Hill Allotments.

Access and connectivity

5.27 Access via footpaths and cycle routes that link residential areas to the main open spaces is limited. Some cycle routes link with the main open spaces; however, public footpaths are disjointed resulting in people needing to navigate busy roads and use indirect paths to reach those spaces.

Water environment

5.28 There are no major watercourses within the immediate area. However, there is a small stream called Buck Beck to the south east that runs past nearby residential areas, as well as Cleethorpes Country Park and Cleethorpes Golf Club, eventually leading to the Humber Estuary protected site. There are trails running parallel to Buck Beck allowing people to walk along its length. Additionally, Cleethorpes Boating Lake by the coast is also an attractive option for local residents, albeit a little farther away.

Key challenges in and around Humberston Road by GI theme

GBI theme 1 Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- There may be increased recreational pressure on Weelsby Woods Country Park and Cleethorpes Country Park, particularly as Weelsby Woods adjoins the strategic site. Other ecological designations and Buck Beck which forms a walking route, are also likely to be subject to further recreational pressure.
- Increased recreational pressure on Weelsby Woods Country Park and Cleethorpes Country Park, due to the increase in the number of residents in the area. This will result in more people visiting the country parks which could in turn have adverse affects, for example on the Humber Estuary: as Buck Beck which drains into Humber Estuary runs adjacent to Cleethorpes Country Park, and with additional visitors may also come more littering and dog fouling which could end up in Buck Beck. Development would take place on open agricultural fields, which will reduce the quantity of green infrastructure. It is important that the quality of the remaining GBI is high to compensate for this loss.
- Because the site has medium to high potential to support SPA/Ramsar birds, comprehensive ecological assessments and bespoke mitigation measures will be required before development can proceed.

GBI theme 2: Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- Whilst residents close to green areas like Cleethorpes Country Park and Weelsby Woods Country Park have good access via walking and cycling, this is less appealing for those further away due to disconnected walking and cycling paths.
- For those living further away from the main green spaces mentioned above, they do have other open space options. However, these are typically dedicated football fields such as King George V Playing Field and Haverstoe Park, which are only attractive to certain people and not necessarily appropriate for enjoying nature and walking.
- There are options for cycle routes and public footpaths. However, these are often not connected with each other, resulting in less safe travel, as they will

force travellers to navigate busy roads to get to their desired destination or to get to the next cycle route or public footpath they wish to use. .

GBI theme 3: Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- As housing density in the area increases there is a need to ensure GBI is used to enhance place.
- The existing country parks act as key focal points of the GBI network in this area. Ensuring adequate maintenance and visitor management of these assets is important. .

GBI theme 4: Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment

Key challenges

- Parts of the Humberston Road area fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and are also at risk of surface water flooding, particularly to the north and south east – the latter of which is along Buck Beck, Cleethorpes Country Park and towards the coast. Flooding is projected to get significantly worse in this area as a result of climate change.
- Development will increase impermeable surfaces resulting in increased surface water runoff, which increases the chances of flooding.
- The watercourse of Buck Beck is classed as being of moderate condition. This indicates that the Buck Beck is experiencing some level of impact, but is not severely damaged. The watercourse is likely supporting healthy populations of plants and wildlife, but attention is required for some areas to ensure ecological health is maintained.
- The area falls within groundwater Source Protection Zones, indicating sensitivity to contamination and the need to ensure development does not compromise aquifer quality.

GBI theme 5: Resilient and climate positive North East Lincolnshire

Key challenges

- While there are certain streets that have an adequate number of trees and vegetation, other streets and particularly cul-de-sacs in this area have limited tree canopy cover, which will contribute to localised heat island effects, especially during summer.
- Main roads (particularly the A1031) create barriers, limiting additional green-blue connectivity across Cleethorpes to encourage low-carbon forms of transport.

Key multifunctional GBI opportunities

Existing policy requirements (opportunities)

5.29 North East Lincolnshire Council's adopted Local Plan (2018) allocated Humberston Road in Policy 14 Development of strategic housing sites. According to the policy, green infrastructure should be provided as outlined below.

- Open space, play and recreation provision – specifically two equipped play areas, no less than 0.3 hectares of allotments and provision of two adult sports fields including changing and parking facilities as part of some adjacent green infrastructure.
- The expansion of Weelsby Woods to the south, between Weelsby Woods and Hewitts Avenue, in addition to green links that will connect to the wider countryside.
- Protection of Weelsby Woods SNCI.
- The softening of the western boundary to avoid urbanising impacts on the wider countryside.
- Provision of legible and permeable public transport, cycle and pedestrian connections throughout the development and connections to Weelsby Woods.

Enhancement opportunities

5.30 In addition to the existing policy requirements, it is recommended that the following enhancement opportunities are implemented as part of development in this area.

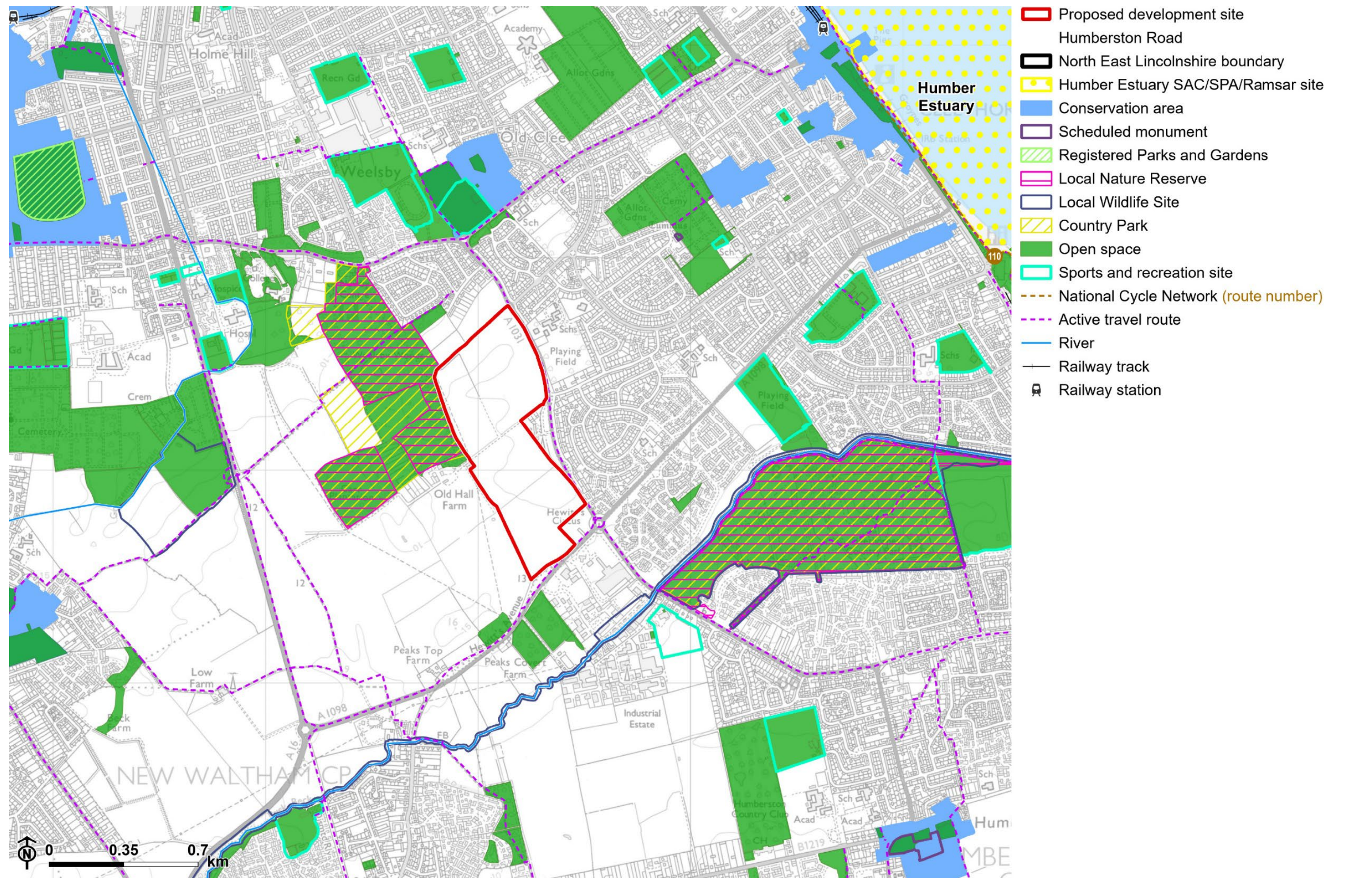
- **Green corridor connecting Weelsby Woods to Cleethorpes Country Park (and Golf Course):** create a green corridor through the strategic site that connects Weelsby Woods to Cleethorpes County Park, in addition to 'greening' (i.e. planting native hedgerows, trees and introducing wildflowers on verges) the section of the A1031 between the strategic site and Cleethorpes Country Park, which also forms part of a local cycle route. The green corridor that would connect Weelsby Woods to Cleethorpes Country Park can also be utilised as a walking and cycling route. This would provide locals with shade when travelling along its length, and offers a nature filled journey between these two green open spaces. This green corridor would have more trees, green verges, wildflowers etc. than surrounding areas, to have nature guide people towards more nature. These routes will also provide shade in summer for people walking or cycling along them. Improving the connection between the strategic site and Weelsby Woods Country Park would provide a more direct route through to People's Park, providing residents with greater opportunities to enjoy recreational activities and improve their physical and mental health.
- **Create high quality multifunctional green space:** create a new, large open space that forms part of the aforementioned green corridor to serve existing and new residents – supporting local recreation while helping to relieve visitor pressure on surrounding ecological assets.
- **Enhancing biodiversity within existing green open spaces and natural sites:** enhancing biodiversity within existing green open spaces such as Weelsby Woods Country Park and Cleethorpes Country Park (as well as the King George V Playing Field and Haverstoe Park where possible), by planting wildflower meadows with native plants and belts of native trees. Another method to enhance biodiversity is to allow for some long grass areas that will encourage invertebrates, and through using a rotational management practice, allowing there to be areas that are always fully grown. Re-naturalising vegetation along waterways such as Buck Beck will provide , safer travel across areas and protection for riparian species. This can be done whilst still accommodating the existing footpath that runs along its length.
- **Enhance flood storage and riparian habitats along Buck Beck:** increase floodwater holding capacity by creating additional habitats and expanding floodplains, integrating public access and recreation where appropriate.

Key stakeholders/delivery partners

- Developers and masterplanners of the strategic housing allocation
- North East Lincolnshire Council

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Parish and Village Councils to represent local community interests
- Anglian Water
- Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project
- Local farmers and landowners
- Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Partnership
- Forestry Commission
- The Woodlands Trust
- RSPB

Figure 5.4: GBI assets in and around Humberston Road



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Future considerations

5.31 These key growth areas were identified prior to the publication of the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS. Once the LNRS has been fully adopted, it will be important that this is taken into account when considering habitat and species measures set out within the LNRS Habitat Map within areas such as these key growth areas defined for GBI. This will contribute to the Council's statutory duty to take account of the LNRS in their planning.

Chapter 6

Delivering GBI in North East Lincolnshire

Embedding GBI in North East Lincolnshire's Local Plan

6.1 Natural England's Green Infrastructure Process Journey for Local Planning Authorities [See reference 228] sets out a six-stage approach to help councils strategically plan, embed, and deliver high-quality GBI. It supports integration into Local Plans and wider strategies by guiding authorities through:

- Stage 1: Strategic Context and Vision – aligning GBI with national and local priorities.
- Stage 2: Evidence and Mapping – using Natural England's tools to assess provision and need.
- Stage 3: Policy Development – creating strong, standards-based policies.
- Stage 4: Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships – working with partners and communities.
- Stage 5: Implementation and Delivery Planning – identifying funding and stewardship models.
- Stage 6: Monitoring and Stewardship – setting measurable targets and ensuring long-term care.

6.2 North East Lincolnshire's new Local Plan will include an updated strategic GBI policy, based on the findings of this study – recommended policy wording has been provided to the Council on the basis of this work. However, beyond the strategic policy itself, the following should also be key considerations:

1. GBI-linked vision and objectives

6.3 GBI should be integrated into the Local Plan's vision and strategic objectives, making it a core part of sustainable place-making rather than an environmental afterthought. This aligns with national policy priorities, signals to developers that GBI is a strategic concern, and encourages early consideration in design. It also strengthens policy coherence and helps unlock investment.

2. 'Mainstreaming' GBI through the plan

6.4 GBI must be embedded across the Local Plan, not confined to a single strategic policy. Natural England advises LPAs to integrate GBI in all relevant policies and site allocations. This avoids sidelining GBI and ensures it links to other agendas such as health and the economy. References to GBI should be woven throughout the Plan to ensure it informs decisions consistently.

3. Site-specific policies

6.5 All site-specific allocation policies should require GBI to be integral from the earliest design stages. Proposals must protect and enhance existing GBI while creating multifunctional spaces that address the GBI study's themes. Allocation policies should draw on the growth location "fast-fact" profiles provided within this study to respond to local challenges and opportunities, using these to guide site design and support positive placemaking.

4. Alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

6.6 The Greater Lincolnshire LNRS (in draft at time of publishing) will map priorities for nature recovery and environmental enhancement. Once finalised, developers will need to consult it alongside this GBI Study to ensure spatial priorities are addressed. Local Plan policy should clearly set out how the LNRS and GBI Study work together to guide development, support nature recovery, and deliver environmental benefits through planning.

5. Exploring GBI standards

6.7 Natural England's Headline GBI standards provide benchmarks for delivering multifunctional GBI. Including them in the Local Plan (or future Plan) would offer clarity, support early integration, and enable monitoring. Risks include reduced design flexibility, increased costs, and challenges around evidence and enforcement. Standards could be applied District-wide or to major developments to strengthen delivery.

6. Upskilling

6.8 Awareness of GBI planning can be low among Development Management planners. Once the new Local Plan and GBI Strategy are in place, targeted training

will be essential. This should build understanding of GBI's benefits, Natural England's Framework, and how to apply local policy in practice. Training will support early engagement with developers and help secure high-quality GBI outcomes.

Delivering off-site GBI in North East Lincolnshire

6.9 Beyond securing high quality GBI within new development sites, delivery of off-site GBI will be essential in order to build a robust strategic GBI network in North East Lincolnshire that responds to all the challenges and opportunities set out in this study. Broadly, the following mechanisms are available for securing off-site GBI through the planning system:

Table 6.1: Summary of off-site delivery options for GBI in North East Lincolnshire

Mechanism	Overview	Opportunities	Challenges
Section 106 agreements	Legal agreements attached to planning permissions securing developer contributions or works	Can secure direct delivery of GBI projects tailored to local priorities (aligned with the evidence and opportunities set out in the GBI study) and enforceable through legal agreement.	Harder to pool funds from multiple developments for large projects (unlike CIL, not currently charged by NELC).
Planning conditions	Conditions attached to planning permissions requiring specific actions or works.	Straightforward to secure delivery of specific off-site works e.g. habitat enhancements. No legal agreement required.	Cannot require financial contributions and must meet specific tests of necessity, relevance to planning and the development, enforceability, precision and reasonableness.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Statutory requirement to deliver measurable biodiversity improvements, often off-site via habitat creation or enhancement.	Clearly delivery route for off-site habitat creation/restoration and can align with LNRS priorities.	Primarily biodiversity-focused and may not deliver wider recreational or access benefits. Market availability of suitable off-site units may be limited.
Section 278 (S278) Agreements	Agreements for developers to fund or carry out works on the public highway linked to their development	Allows GBI (e.g. street trees, swales) integrated into highway works. Can help connect GBI networks.	Only applies where development affects public highways. Focus tends to be on transport safety/function rather than GBI quality
Partnership & External Funding Blends	Pooling developer contributions with external grants and funding to deliver larger GBI projects.	Enables larger or more ambitious projects by combining multiple funding streams. Supports strategic GBI delivery.	Dependent on external funding availability and timing. Requires strong coordination among partners, which is often absent without resourcing.

Appendix B

Summary of stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement strategy

B.1 The following organisations took part in the stakeholder engagement process:

- Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency
- Woodland Trust
- Forestry Commission

B.2 The following local organisations took part in the stakeholder engagement process:

- Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership

B.3 The following North East Lincolnshire Council officers took part:

- Team manager – Drainage and Coastal Defence (Lead Local Flood Authority)
- Drainage Engineer – Drainage and Coastal Defence
- Policy Planner
- Environment Strategy and Sustainability Manager
- Trees and Woodlands Officer
- Ecology Officer

Key stakeholder virtual 'round table'

B.4 On Monday 27 April, the team convened a two hour virtual 'round table', inviting key selected stakeholders. Other than the core project team, there were 13 participants on the day representing a range of viewpoints.

B.5 The key purpose of the round table was to:

- Firstly, gather feedback on the proposed 'themes', including the baseline study for each, covering strengths, weaknesses, challenges and the initial mapping of network assets.

- Secondly, explore ongoing GBI initiatives and opportunities in greater depth.
- The round table resulted in a rich and useful discussion which gave further direction to how best to map GBI corridors and deficits in North East Lincolnshire as part of the final methodology.

B.6 A MIRO virtual whiteboard was used to capture conversation and results were shared with participants.

Summary of issues raised by stakeholders

Discussion 1: Sense check of baseline findings

Nature-rich North East Lincolnshire

- Low canopy cover is a concern, particularly in low-density wards.
- Retrofitting existing streets for GBI is difficult.
- Not all Local Wildlife Sites are mapped and some are encompassed by or threatened by development.
- New developments are seen as the main opportunity to significantly improve tree canopy cover. However, they are not consistent (tick box exercise with lack of commitment to deliver what was promised). Strong enforcement is essential and enforcement teams require confidence and authority to challenge poor compliance.
- Policy is the foundation on which justification for pursuing Enforcement action it to be built on. Planning Conditions are the link between Policy and Enforcement.
- GBI should be embedded at the earliest planning stages.
- The evaluation of the Humber Estuary SSSI is behind schedule, so the true condition remains uncertain.
- The Humber Estuary SSSI is subject to recreational pressure.

Active and healthy North East Lincolnshire

- Designing places that genuinely support walking and physical activity remains a challenge.

- Recreational pressure on sensitive sites (SSSI and others) needs active management.
- Theme 2 identifies air pollution as a health issue that should be more strongly reflected.
- Adoption and long-term maintenance of GBI is a persistent barrier.

Thriving and prosperous North East Lincolnshire

- No additional comments.

Understanding and managing North East Lincolnshire's water environment

- Integrating sustainability into flood risk management is widely supported.
- SuDS are effective but often not implemented at sufficient scale. Retrofitting remains difficult.
- Grimsby highlighted as a high flood risk area.
- There is poor public understanding of SuDS, despite them being generally well received once delivered.
- There is a disconnect between planning and the Water Framework Directive (WFD).
- Issues around water quality (including CSO spills) remain.
- Stronger partnership working is required (e.g. with Anglian Water).
- More consistent, area-wide approaches rather than piecemeal delivery.

Resilient and climate positive North East Lincolnshire

- Nature-based flood management is strongly supported.
- Climate, nature, and water objectives should be treated as integrated rather than separate.
- Nature-based solutions provide multiple benefits and provide cost-effective resilience to climate change.

Discussion 2: Ongoing GBI initiatives/partnerships + opportunities in North East Lincolnshire

Ongoing GBI initiatives

- Humber Nature Partnership and Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.
- Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).
- Green Investment in Greater Lincolnshire.
- Integrated Care Partnership – Environment Group.
- Social services and the NHS.
- Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project / Chalk Streams Trust.
- Northern Becks Catchment Plan.
- Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Partnership.
- Humber 2100+ (Environment Agency).
- South Humber Gateway Mitigation Strategy.
- DUNE project.
- Work with Ørsted on oysters / oyster nursery development.

Emerging opportunities

- The development of a design code for North East Lincolnshire.
- Chalk streams are identified as a major opportunity to deliver nature recovery networks.
- Opportunity through the DUNE project to build an interconnected multifunctional nature corridor.
- Exploring social and green prescribing, with neighbouring authority North Lincolnshire acting as a pilot area.
- Greater opportunities for Saltmarsh and sand dune restoration.
- Update the South Humber Gateway Mitigation Strategy with new strategic sites as these have been lost as a result of mitigation strategies.
- The Humber Estuary is a case study for a Natural England led project assessing how protected sites can be managed in a more holistic manner.

- The East coast wetlands have been added to UK's list of potential World Heritage sites.

Appendix C

List of datasets used

Table B.1: Protected habitats

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	© Natural England
Special Protection Area (SPA)	© Natural England
Ramsar site	© Natural England
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	© Natural England
SSSI condition/units	© Natural England
Ancient woodland	© Natural England
Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Local Wildlife Site	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Local Nature Reserve	© Natural England
National Nature Reserve	© Natural England

Table B.2: Access to nature and open space

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Settlement area	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Country park	© Natural England
Sports and recreation site	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Open space	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council and © Ordnance Survey
Equipped children's play area	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
National Cycle Network	Sustrans (now known as Walk Wheels Cycle Trust)

Table B.3: Placemaking, heritage, landscape and green infrastructure

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Conservation area	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Scheduled monument	© Historic England
Registered parks and gardens	© Historic England
Country park	© Natural England
Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape	© Natural England
Town centre	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Settlement area	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
National Cycle Network	Sustrans (now known as Walk Wheels Cycle Trust)
Railway track	OS Open Map Local © Ordnance Survey
Railway station	OS Open Map Local © Ordnance Survey
Key nature-based visitor destination	Digitised by LUC

Table B.4: Blue corridors

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
River	OS Open Rivers © Ordnance Survey
Source Protection Zone	© Environment Agency
Management catchment	© Environment Agency
Water quality ecology status (cycle 3 2023)	© Environment Agency

Table B.5: Floodplain woodland potential

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Floodplain woodland potential	© Environment Agency
Wider catchment woodland potential	© Environment Agency

Table B.6: Climate vulnerability

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Woodland	© Forestry Commission
Flood zone 3	© Environment Agency
Flood zone 2	© Environment Agency
Socio-spatial Heat Vulnerability Index	ClimateJust: Lindley, S. J., O'Neill, J., Kandeh, J., Lawson, N., Christian, R. & O'Neill M. (2011) "Climate change, justice and vulnerability", Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report, York derived from UKCP18 Crown Copyright 2018, Met Office

Table B.7: Valued GBI assets

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	© Natural England
Special Protection Area (SPA)	© Natural England
Ramsar site	© Natural England
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	© Natural England
Ancient woodland	© Natural England
Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Local Wildlife Site	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Local Nature Reserve	© Natural England
National Nature Reserve	© Natural England
Wood pasture and parkland	© Natural England
Open space	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council and © Ordnance Survey
Open greenspace	© Ordnance Survey
Country park	© Natural England
Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape	© Natural England
Public Right of Way	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Local cycle routes	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
National Cycle Network	Sustrans (now known as Walk Wheels Cycle Trust)
King Charles II England Coast Path	© Natural England
Scheduled monument	© Historic England
Registered parks and gardens	© Historic England
River	OS Open Rivers © Ordnance Survey
National Forest Inventory	© Forestry Commission

Table B.8: GBI needs

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Rivers with poor/bad water quality as per Water Framework Directive	© Environment Agency
Habitat network (combined habitats): Network expansion zone	© Natural England
SSSI condition/units – unfavourable	© Natural England
Index of Multiple Deprivation (deciles 1-3)	© Office for National Statistics and © Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
Road and rail noise (Lden)	© Defra
Town centres	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Local centres	Provided by North East Lincolnshire Council
Heritage conservation	© Historic England
Railway station 800m buffer	OS Vector Map Local © Ordnance Survey
WWNP Wider catchment woodland potential	© Defra
WWNP Floodplain reconnection potential	© Defra
WWNP Riparian woodland potential	© Defra
WWNP Floodplain woodland potential	© Defra

Dataset	Conditions to data/copyrights
Source Protection Zone 2	© Environment Agency
Natural England Greenness Grid	© Natural England
Flood zone 2	© Environment Agency
High and medium risk of surface water flooding	© Environment Agency
Urban Tree Equity Score	© Woodland Trust
Socio-spatial Heat Vulnerability Index	ClimateJust: Lindley, S. J., O'Neill, J., Kandeh, J., Lawson, N., Christian, R. & O'Neill M. (2011) "Climate change, justice and vulnerability", Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report, York derived from UKCP18 Crown Copyright 2018, Met Office

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Bristol

12th Floor, Beacon Tower, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 4XE
0117 389 0700

Cardiff

Room 1.12, 1st Floor, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Rd, Cardiff CF24 0EB
0292 254 0920

Edinburgh

Atholl Exchange, 6 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG
0131 326 0900

Glasgow

5th Floor, The Garment Factory, 10 Montrose Street, Glasgow G1 1RE
0141 403 0900

London

250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD
020 7199 5801

Manchester

4th Floor, 57 Hilton Street, Manchester M1 2EJ
0161 802 2800

Sheffield

32 Eyre Street, Sheffield, S1 4QZ
0114 392 2366

Email address for general enquiries: hello@landuse.co.uk

landuse.co.uk

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