

North East Lincolnshire

Natural Environment Topic Paper

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Section 1 About this topic paper

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1** This topic paper provides background, evidence and justification for the proposed revision to the Open Space and Recreation policy as part of the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan (NELLP) review. The current plan was adopted in 2018 with the review aiming to ensure policies are reflective of updated evidence, national guidance changes and consultation responses.
- 1.1.2** The purpose of this topic paper is to clarify the position taken with various elements of the natural environment policies, specifically with regard to the requirements around open space, the considerations around Local Green Space (LGS) allocations and the justification around the name change of the Strategic Wedges policy.
- 1.1.3** For the context of this paper, the definition of LGS reflects that outlined in the Planning Practice Guidance (as dated 06/03/2014). "Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas for particular importance to local communities."

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2.1 Policy context

2.1.1 National context

- 2.1.1.1** Great emphasis is placed on the importance of open space in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024). Both through its preservation and through the creation of new open spaces. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, March 2014) direct Local Authorities to ensure Local Plans are supported by a robust and up-to-date evidence base to understand the local position on open space, sports and recreation requirements including surpluses and deficiencies. This should then translate into a clear requirement for developments to help meet the borough's needs.
- 2.1.1.2** Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework provides a best practice approach when considering how easily both existing and new residential developments can gain access to natural spaces using distance ranges.
- 2.1.1.3** More specifically, the Fields in Trust Standards, Creating great spaces for all (FiTS, 2024) sets both quantity and accessibility standards for open spaces. It adopts six themes (shown below) in which green space should achieve to ensure spaces are of a high standard. Additionally, it breaks spaces into five typologies including parks and gardens, amenity green space, natural/semi-natural space, outdoor sport and play spaces. The document provides best practice on walking distances from each and how much of each should be provided based on a calculation per 1,000 people.



Figure 2.1 (FiTS, 2024)

2.1.2 Local context

North East Lincolnshire Council's Plan

- 2.1.2.1** North East Lincolnshire Council set out four areas within the Council's Plan: Stronger Economy, Stronger Communities, Greener Future and Engaging and Effective Council. The natural environment policies within the Local Plan will play key roles to contribute towards these aims, particularly Stronger Communities and Greener Futures.



Figure 2.2 North East Lincolnshire Council Plan Aims

2.1.2.2 Green spaces contribute significantly to the Council's ambition to create stronger communities by providing opportunities for recreation, physical activity, social interaction and improved health and wellbeing. This is particularly important in North East Lincolnshire where obesity levels are above the national average and they also support the Greener Future agenda by enhancing biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience and protecting and improving the Borough's natural environment. Through the protection of existing free spaces and the delivery of new provision, the Local Plan helps create a connected and accessible network of green and blue infrastructure that delivers benefits for residents, communities and the environment.

Supporting the Wider Natural Network

2.1.2.3 The Local Plan will also look to apply "bigger picture thinking" when it comes to its green and blue spaces. Creating continuous networks of natural spaces can improve their value in many factors including usability, biodiversity value and visual appeal. Open space will play a key role in adding to this valuable network.

2.1.2.4 Additionally, a well-connected network of accessible open spaces can help manage recreational pressure on sensitive habitats by providing opportunities for day-to-day recreation closer to where people live. This is particularly important in North East Lincolnshire where coastal habitats around Cleethorpes are vulnerable to disturbance from activities such as dog walking. By ensuring residents have access to attractive and accessible greenspaces, open space provision can help reduce pressure on these nationally important habitats whilst supporting wider biodiversity objective.

Local Policy Context

2.1.2.5 The current adopted 2018 Local Plan addresses open space requirements under Policy 43. The supporting text sets out the various typologies, their local national standards and evidence base and the contribution trigger point with regards to development size.

- 2.1.2.6** The Policy is supported by the 2011 (reviewed 2015) Green Space Strategy, 2008 (reviewed 2015) Play Strategy, 2020 Playing Pitch Strategy and the 2011 Allotment Strategy.
- 2.1.2.7** For the review of the Local Plan, new evidence documents are currently in production. This includes an Open Space Assessment and an updated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). For plan preparation, an interim Open Space Assessment (IOSA) which has carried out a desktop study of the Borough's open spaces is being used as a basis. As the PPS is still being completed, the policy still uses the 2011 strategy which will be superseded once the document is complete.
- 2.1.2.8** The IOSA provides a desktop assessment of open space across North East Lincolnshire. The study categorises open spaces into a range of typologies and examines the quantity, accessibility and distribution across the Borough. This identifies where existing provision meets or falls below the recognised standards. The IOSA therefore provides an important evidence base for understanding current provision and informing future open space requirements arising from development. The IOSA identifies that North East Lincolnshire currently provides approximately 3.35ha of accessible greenspace per 1,000 people, although the assessment identifies variations in provision and accessibility between typologies and locations across the Borough.
- 2.1.2.9** The changes in December 2024 to the NPPF saw the housing requirement for almost all local authorities rise. North East Lincolnshire was no different. Using the standard methodology, the annual housing target went from 512 per annum in the adopted Local Plan to 621 per annum. It is important therefore that the open space requirements for the Borough responds accordingly.

2.2 Policy justification

Securing New Spaces

- 2.2.1** Through the consultations for the Local Plan review, development management officers raised that applying the calculation for open space and equipped play spaces could yield different results when interpreted by different people which meant the requirements for developers was unclear. This highlighted the need to change the approach to open space calculations to ensure the approach to calculating requirements was simple and consistent.
- 2.2.2** The interim Open Space Assessment has carried out a desktop study of the open space in the borough and sorted spaces into different typologies. It identified three accessible greenspace typologies. These typologies are synonymous with the FiT guidance. This guidance provides definitions for these:
- **Amenity green space** - Informal areas of open space providing for casual recreation and visual amenity close to where people live. For example (but not limited to) communal green space, village greens and urban commons. These spaces should be multifunctional and meaningful avoiding a piecemeal approach.

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- **Natural and semi-natural green space** - Areas of open space with natural features providing opportunities for informal recreation and biodiversity. For example (but not limited to) woodland, scrub or grassland.
- **Parks and gardens** - Formal areas of open space designed for recreation and leisure serving a wider catchment.
- **Outdoor Sports Facilities** - Areas used for formal sport and recreation including pitches and courts.

2.2.3 It also denotes the location of the Borough's equipped play spaces separating them into the following hierarchy again in line with FiT guidance;

- **LAP (Local Areas for Play)** - Small, local play space within approximately 100m of homes. Usually designed for young children.
- **LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play)** - Equipped play space within approximately 400m of homes. Usually designed for children of all ages offering varied, stimulating and challenging play experiences.
- **NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play)** - Larger community play facility. Usually designed for older, more independent children with opportunities for younger children too. Generally, NEAPs will contain a range of experiences through a variety of equipment, sufficient space for larger group games and seating and shelter.

2.2.4 The proposed policy uses these typologies as the framework for open space requirements arising from residential development. This reflects the fact that new housing generates additional demand for open space. Not only for recreation and play, but also for visual amenity, and health and wellbeing of residents. To ensure the requirements remain proportionate, the Policy applies to major residential developments, defined nationally as developments comprising of 10 or more dwellings. At this scale, development is considered capable of generating a meaningful increase in demand for open space and recreation provision.

2.2.5 The Policy applies a series of dwelling thresholds to identify when particular forms of open space, sports provision and allotments are required. These thresholds reflect the scale of development necessary to generate a meaningful need for different types of open space and recreation provision, ensuring that requirements remain proportionate to the development proposed. In developing the policy, the Council has had regard to the approach established through the adopted Local Plan, local evidence and development viability considerations. As this Local Plan review is not seeking to fundamentally alter the Council's approach to open space delivery, existing thresholds have generally been retained where they continue to provide an effective and deliverable mechanism for securing open space. The Council considers that this approach provides clarity and consistency for applicants whilst ensuring that developments make an appropriate contribution towards meeting the needs generated by future residents.

2.2.6 The approach to children's play provision has been updated to reflect the latest FiT guidance. Unlike the adopted Local Plan, which applied a single threshold for children's play provision, the proposed policy introduces the FiT hierarchy of

LAPs, LEAPs, and NEAPs. The threshold for requiring play provision has also been reduced from 50 dwellings to 20 dwellings in accordance with FiT guidance, recognising that smaller residential developments can also generate demand for local play opportunities. The Council considers that this strengthened approach is justified by the evidence base. The IOSA identifies that provision for children and young people quates to only 0.04ha per 1,000 people compared to the FiT recommended standard of 0.55ha per 1,000 people. The introduction of a clear hierarchy and associated thresholds provides greater certainty for applicants and decision-makers by identifying the type and scale of play provision expected from different forms of development whilst also helping to address an identified deficiency in provision and secure age-appropriate play opportunities in accordance with recognised good practice.

Typology	IOSA Accessibility standards informing the proposed policy	FiT Accessibility Standards	FiT Size Requirements (per 1000 people)	Proposed Local Plan Requirements (per dwelling)
Amenity Green Space	Within 200m (Noted as doorstep accessible greenspace)	N/A	0.60 ha	13.20m ²
Parks and Gardens	Within 300m (Noted as local accessible greenspace)	N/A	0.80 ha	17.60m ²
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	Within 1000m (Noted as neighbourhood accessible greenspace)	N/A	1.8 ha	39.60m ²
Strategic Open Space Requirement	N/A	No specific strategic distances however, FiT sets out all homes should be within 200m-300m walking distance of open space with	FiT does not give a strategic open space standard but does give an overall open space standard of 3.2 ha	70.4m ²

Typology	IOSA Accessibility standards informing the proposed policy	FIT Accessibility Standards	FIT Size Requirements (per 1000 people)	Proposed Local Plan Requirements (per dwelling)
		everyone having access to the full range of open space types within 1000m		
LAP	Within 100m	Within 100m walking distance	Minimum size of 100m ²	The required number of areas meeting this definition will be specified with the need for developments to meet at least the minimum size threshold
LEAP	Within 400m	Within 400m walking distance	Minimum size of 400m ²	The required number of areas meeting this definition will be specified with the need for developments to meet at least the minimum size threshold
NEAP	Within 1000m	Within 1000m walking distance	Minimum size of 1000m ²	The required number of areas meeting this definition will be specified with the need for developments to meet at least the minimum size threshold

Typology	IOSA Accessibility standards informing the proposed policy	FiT Accessibility Standards	FiT Size Requirements (per 1000 people)	Proposed Local Plan Requirements (per dwelling)
Strategic Play Space Requirements	N/A	No FiT standard aligning to this	FiT does not give a strategic play space standard but does give an overall play space standard of 0.55 ha	12.1m ²

Table 2.1 Relationship between IOSA evidence, FiT guidance and proposed policy standards

- 2.2.7** The accessibility standards contained within the policy are informed by a combination of FiT guidance and the IOSA. These standards seek to ensure that residents have appropriate access to a range of open space typologies and reflect both recognised good practice and local evidence regarding accessibility across North East Lincolnshire. The standards therefore support the delivery of a more consistent and equitable distribution of open space provision across the borough.
- 2.2.8** National open space standards are typically expressed as a 'per 1,000 people' basis. Whilst this approach provides a robust means of assessing need, it can introduce additional complexity when applied through the development management process, requiring assumptions regarding occupancy levels and resulting in varying interpretations of open space requirements. To improve transparency, consistency and ease of application, the Policy converts these requirements into a simple "per dwelling" standard. The conversion has been undertaken using an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling. This is consistent with Census 2021 data for North East Lincolnshire (156,966 residents and 69,826 equating to approximately 2.2 persons per household) and with the Council's Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HEDNA, 2025 as amended 2026) which notes in 2025, the average household size is approximately 2.2 with likelihood for decline in the future. This figure can be revisited in future Local Plans to ensure it is still suitable. It is therefore considered that this figure is a reasonable and proportionate assumption for the purposes of calculating open space requirements arising from residential development. This approach does not alter the underlying level of provision sought. Rather it translates population-based standards into a format that can be more readily applied by applicants, decision-makers and the local community while maintaining consistency with the evidence base. The following calculation and the table below shows how this was carried out.

$$\text{ha per dwelling} = \frac{\text{ha per 1,000 people}}{1000} \times 2.2$$

Figure 2.3 Calculation

Calculation Stage	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace
FiT Standard	0.60ha per 1,000 people	0.80ha per 1,000 people	1.80ha per 1,000 people
Divide standard by 1000	0.0006ha per person	0.0008ha per person	0.0018ha per person
Multiply by average household size of 2.2	0.00132ha per dwelling	0.00176ha per dwelling	0.00396ha per dwelling
Convert to square metres to improve useability	13.2m ²	17.6m ²	39.6m ²

Table 2.2 Table showing the calculations for open space from per 1000 people to per dwelling

- 2.2.9** The Policy adopts an "on-site first" approach to the provision of open space. This reflects the principle that open space should, wherever possible, be provided in locations where new development generates additional demand ensuring that future residents have access to appropriate recreational opportunities within their local area. However, the Policy also provides flexibility by allowing the Council to consider existing levels of provision and accessibility on a site-by-site basis. Where evidence demonstrated that sufficient provision already exists locally, or where off-site improvements would better address identified needs, the Council may accept a commuted sum or off-site contribution. This approach enables decisions to be informed by local circumstances, drawing on the findings of the IOSA and any subsequent relevant evidence base documents.
- 2.2.10** To ensure open space provision is planned comprehensively rather than as a series of standalone spaces, the Policy requires developers to submit an open space strategy. This document will set out how the development will meet the recreational needs generated by future residents and demonstrate how proposed open spaces relate to existing facilities, accessibility standards and local deficiencies. The strategy will also ensure new provision contributes positively towards the wider green and blue infrastructure network, helping to create a connected, multifunctional (providing benefits such as biodiversity enhancements, climate resilience and sustainable drainage solutions) and accessible network of open spaces across the Borough. It is expected that the strategy would be proportionate to the size of the development.

- 2.2.11** For outdoor sports facilities, requirements will be informed by the PPS and any subsequent updates. This reflects the fact that the need for sports provision is influenced by a range of factors including capacity, quality, geographic distribution and specific sports requirements, which are more appropriately assessed through the evidence base rather than through a fixed policy standard.
- 2.2.12** The Council has chosen to assess allotments through local evidence rather than applying a nationally prescribed standard because FiT does not provide a specific benchmark for allotment provision. Instead, allotments are recognised within the broader amenity greenspace typology and their provision is therefore informed by local circumstances, existing supply and identified need using evidence derived from the IOSA.
- 2.2.13** For strategic residential developments of 500 dwellings or more, a different approach is applied to ensure open space provision responds appropriately to the scale and complexity of the development. Rather than requiring provision against each individual typology, the policy establishes an overall open space and play space requirement. This allows the detailed mix, distribution and design of provision to be determined through a site-specific strategy, ensuring open spaces and play facilities are located where they will be most effective and accessible. The approach provides greater flexibility for large-scale developments while ensuring that the overall level of provision remains sufficient to meet the needs generated by future residents. Outdoor sports facilities and allotment provision are not included within the strategic open space calculation and will instead be assessed on a site-by-site basis in accordance with the relevant evidence based documents, reflecting the above established approach to these forms of provisions.
- 2.2.14** Finally, to ensure newly created open spaces continue to provide lasting benefits, the policy requires a management plan to be secured for the lifetime of the development. As the Council will no longer adopt new areas of open space, it is important that clear arrangements are put in place for their future maintenance and management. This helps ensure that newly secured spaces remain accessible, attractive and fit for purpose, allowing them to continue meeting the needs of the community throughout the lifetime of the development.

Protecting Existing Spaces

- 2.2.15** Existing open spaces make an important contribution to the health, wellbeing, recreation, biodiversity and visual amenity of the Borough. The loss of open space can therefore have consequences beyond the site itself affecting accessibility, the wider green and blue infrastructure network and the ability of existing communities to access open space.
- 2.2.16** The Policy adopts a balanced approach by resisting the unnecessary loss of open space whilst recognising that there may be circumstances where redevelopment is appropriate. In such cases, applicants will be required to demonstrate through robust evidence that the site is surplus to requirements or that suitable replacement

Section 2 Open Space and Recreation

provision can be secured. The Open Space Strategy will provide the evidence necessary for the Council to assess the proposal against the most up-to-date open space evidence base and accessibility standards.

- 2.2.17** Where a site is claimed to be surplus to requirements, the Open Space Strategy should demonstrate the quantity, quality, accessibility and function of existing provision within the surrounding area, together with any identified deficiencies and future needs. Where replacement provision is proposed, the strategy should demonstrate how the replacement open space will achieve at least equivalent standards of size, quality, usefulness, attractiveness and accessibility whilst contributing positively to the wider green and blue infrastructure network.
- 2.2.18** Requiring an Open Space Strategy ensures that decisions relating to the loss of open space are informed by robust evidence and local circumstances, helping to maintain and enhance the Borough's network of open spaces over the lifetime of the Local Plan.

Ensuring Effectiveness

- 2.2.19** The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through the development management process and future updates to the Council's evidence base. Open Space Strategies submitted in support of development proposals will provide a mechanism for assessing compliance with quantity, accessibility and quality standards whilst monitoring of open space delivery through planning permissions will help inform future reviews of open space provision. The Council will continue to review its evidence base, including the Open Space Assessment and related strategies to ensure the Policy remains responsive to local needs and changing circumstances.

2.3 Conclusion

- 2.3.1** The Open Space and Recreation Policy provides a comprehensive framework for the protection, enhancement and delivery of open space across North East Lincolnshire. The policy is informed by a range of evidence base documents including the IOSA, FiT guidance, the PPS and the wider green and blue infrastructure evidence. It seeks to safeguard existing open spaces, secure new provision to meet the needs generated by development and ensure that open spaces contribute positively to health and wellbeing, biodiversity, climate resilience and the wider green and blue infrastructure network in line with the wider Council Plan. In doing so, the policy translates the findings of the IOSA and the wider evidence base into a clear and proportionate framework for the protection, delivery and long-term management of open space across the Borough.
- 2.3.2** The policy has been developed to provide a clear and proportionate framework for developers and decision-makers whilst reflecting local circumstances and maintaining consistency with the Council's established approach to open space provision. Through the use of quantity standards, accessibility standards, dwelling

thresholds and open space strategies, the policy will help ensure that new and existing communities have access to a high quality network of open spaces which need both current and future needs.

Assessment Against the Test of Soundness

Positively Prepared

- 2.3.3** The policy responds to the open space and recreation needs arising from existing and future development within North East Lincolnshire. It seeks to address identified accessibility issues, support healthier communities and ensure that growth contributes towards the delivery of an enhanced and better-connected network of open space.

Justified

- 2.3.4** The policy is based on an appropriate and proportionate evidence base including the IOSA, FiT guidance, the PPS and the wider green and blue infrastructure evidence. The standards and requirements included within the policy have been developed having regard to local circumstances whilst drawing upon recognised national guidance and best practice.

Effective

- 2.3.5** The policy provides a clear framework for implementation through the development management process. Quantity standards, accessibility standards, dwelling thresholds, Open Space Strategies and management plans provide certainty for applicants whilst ensuring that open space provision is delivered in a coordinated and sustainable manner. The policy also contains a clear mechanism for assessing proposals involving the loss of open space and securing appropriate replacement provision where necessary.

Consistent with National Policy

- 2.3.6** The policy is consistent with the NPPF's objective of promoting healthy and safe communities, protecting and enhancing open space and supporting access to high-quality green infrastructure. It has also had regard to recognised national guidance, including FiT standards and Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards whilst adapting those principles to local circumstances.
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3.1 Policy context

3.1.1 National context

3.1.1.1 The NPPF provides the Government's approach to LGS. LGSs can be designated through local and neighbourhood plans. Local communities can put forward green areas which are of particular importance to them and these sites can be considered and designated only when a plan is being prepared or updated. These sites need to be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

3.1.1.2 The NPPF provides criteria that sites must meet in order to be considered for this type of designation. Including that the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

3.1.1.3 In addition, the PPG (PPG, March 2014) also sets out that LGS designations should not be used in a way that undermines the identification of sufficient land supply in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. Finally, the PPG sets out that LGS designations will rarely be appropriate where land has planning permission for development with the only exception being where the permission is compatible with the designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented.

3.1.2 Local context

3.1.2.1 The current adopted Local Plan adopted in 2018 makes no reference to LGS either in policy or through mapping and there are no LGS currently allocated in North East Lincolnshire. There is no specific supporting evidence commissioned for this.

3.1.2.2 The following table provides an overview of the sites put forward for consideration for LGS status through the Sites considered for Local Green Spaces Local Plan Review consultation process.

LGS Reference	Site Address	Location
LGS1	Freshney Valley	Grimsby
LGS2	Mount Pleasant Playing Fields, Fairway	Waltham
LGS3	Waltham Allotments, Ings Lane	Waltham
LGS4	Grove Park, Ings Lane	Waltham
LGS5	Land West of Cheapside	Waltham

Section 3 Local Green Space

LGS Reference	Site Address	Location
LGS6	South View HOU082	Humberston
LGS7	Land South of Humberston HOU084	Humberston
LGS8	084a Land South of Humberston	Humberston
LGS9	Cleethorpes Country Park, North Sea Lane	Cleethorpes
LGS10	King George V Playing Fields, Taylors Avenue	Cleethorpes
LGS11	King George V Stadium, Weelsby Road	Grimsby
LGS12	Cleethorpes Town Football Grounds, Clee Road	Cleethorpes
LGS13	People's Park, Park Drive	Grimsby
LGS14	St Christopher's Road Play Park, St Christophers Road	Humberston
LGS15	Wendover Play Area, Church Lane	Humberston
LGS16	Haverstoe Park, Hardys Road	Cleethorpes
LGS17	Barrett's Recreation Ground, Park Avenue	Grimsby
LGS18	Grimsby Rugby Club, Springfield Road	Grimsby
LGS19	Rose and Crown Playing Field, Louth Road	Grimsby
LGS20	Bradley Football Development Centre, Bradley Road	Grimsby
LGS21	Freshney Parkway, Great Coates Road	Grimsby
LGS22	Carr Lane Allotments, Beeley Road	Grimsby
LGS23	Humberston Allotments, Humberston Avenue	Humberston
LGS24	Sussex Recreation Ground, Brereton Avenue	Cleethorpes
LGS25	Sydney Park, Brereton Avenue	Cleethorpes
LGS26	Grant Thorald Park, Durban Road	Grimsby
LGS27	Fairfield Recreation Ground, Quantock Road	Grimsby
LGS28	Community Recreation Ground, St Clements Way	New Waltham
LGS29	Cherry Garth Scout Camp, Scouts Lane	Humberston
LGS30	Peaks Top Farm, Hewitts Avenue	New Waltham
LGS31	Stallingborough Recreation Ground, Station Road	Stallingborough
LGS32	Homestead Park, Church Lane	Immingham
LGS33	Pilgrim Park	Immingham

LGS Reference	Site Address	Location
LGS34	Royal British Legion Sports Ground, Oak Road	Healing

Table 3.1 Sites put forward through consultations for consideration for LGS designations

3.2 Policy justification

- 3.2.1** Following consultation, the nominated sites were reviewed having regard to national policy relating to LGS designation. The Council concluded that it was not necessary or appropriate to designate any LGSs through the Local Plan review.
- 3.2.2** Whilst LGS designations can be used to provide special protection for areas of particular importance to local communities, many of the nominated sites already benefit from protection through existing planning policies. The Local Plan review contains a comprehensive policy framework relating to open space and green and blue infrastructure which the Council considers provides an appropriate level of protection for valued green spaces across the borough.
- 3.2.3** The Council also had regard to national guidance, in particular the PPG which is clear that LGS should not be used simply as a means to prevent development and should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. Some of the sites put forward included land identified for housing development. When considered alongside national policy guidance, The Council concluded that LGS would not be appropriate.
- 3.2.4** It is for these reasons set out that the Council has decided not to take any sites forward as formal LGS designations.

3.3 Conclusion

- 3.3.1** The Council considers that the approach on LGS designations is:
- **Justified** as it is informed by consultation responses, national policy and the existing evidence base.
 - **Effective** as the wider policy framework provides protection for valued open spaces across the Borough.
 - **Consistent** with national policy having regard to the criteria set out in both the NPPF and PPG.

Section 4 Other Changes of Note

4.1	Changes to the Name of the Draft Green Wedges Policy and Omission of BNG Policy	23
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4.1 Changes to the Name of the Draft Green Wedges Policy and Omission of BNG Policy

Strategic Wedges

- 4.1.1** The concept of strategic gaps previously sat within Policy 40, citation 4 of the 2013-2032 (adopted 2018) Local Plan. It sought to maintain the separate identities of settlements, provide buffers between conflicting uses, prevent coalescence of settlements, retain openness of land and control the nature and scale of urban and rural development. For the Local Plan review, this position remains unchanged, with the concept being carried forward through the Green Wedges designation, albeit with the policy separated from the Developing a green infrastructure policy. This amendment has been made to provide greater clarity regarding the purpose and function of the designation. Whilst the designations encapsulate areas of open countryside which are green in nature, the primary purpose of the designations is to prevent the coalescence of settlements and preserve their distinct identities. The policy is retained as a strategic policy because it is not intended to prevent development, but to ensure development is directed to appropriate locations whilst maintaining the separate identity of settlements.
- 4.1.2** For the regulation 19 version of the plan, it is proposed that the Green Wedges Policy changes its name to Strategic Wedges (SW). The term "strategic wedge" more accurately reflects the role of the policy and more clearly distinguishes it from the suite of policies which specifically relate to the natural environment. The name change does not change the purpose and operation of the proposed policy. It is solely intended to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the Plan by ensuring that the terminology used properly reflects the strategic function of the Policy.
- 4.1.3** The North East Lincolnshire Green Wedges Methodology and Evaluation (October, 2023) sets out the evaluation process which was used to create the boundaries of the SW. Since then, these boundaries have been refined to account for proposed housing allocations and any under construction sites. None of these changes materially change the considerations around SW. The North East Lincolnshire Landscape Character Assessment (2026) provides an up to date evidence base which remains in keeping with the methodology used.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.1.4** Previous consultation drafts of the Local Plan Review indicated that a dedicated Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy would be included. Following further consideration, it was concluded that such a policy would largely duplicate existing national legislation and policy. The NPPF is clear that Local Plans should not unnecessarily repeat national policy. As the Council is seeking the statutory minimum requirement of 10% net gain rather than introducing additional local requirements, a standalone policy was not considered necessary. BNG will instead continue to be secured through the national legislative and policy framework.

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