

**North Lincolnshire Local Plan (2020 To 2038)**  
**Submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State**  
**(Regulation 22)**

SAFE WELL PROSPEROUS CONNECTED

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN**  
**IMPORTANT OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT**

**OCTOBER 2022**

## IMPORTANT OPEN SPACE

### Assessment Methodology

#### 1. Introduction and Policy Context

- 1.1 North Lincolnshire Council is producing a new area-wide Local Plan which will set out policies for how development will be considered across North Lincolnshire to 2038.
- 1.2 This evidence report provides background information and justification for Policy DQE10: Important Open Space and the subsequent designation of sites on the Policies Map and Inset Maps.
- 1.3 The North Lincolnshire Local Plan 2003 designated areas of open amenity and green space in settlements as 'LC11 Areas of Amenity Importance'. The main reason for this was to protect these areas for their open space character and amenity value, retain them as important spaces for each individual settlement, and to stop them from being developed in the future. The LC11s ranged from agricultural paddocks and woodlands to highway verges and urban public realm (for example, Church Square in Scunthorpe).
- 1.4 As part of the new emerging North Lincolnshire Local Plan a review was required of these existing LC11 designations to check whether their status should remain protected through designation. It was decided to amend the designation terminology from the LC11 Area of Amenity Importance to an alternative designation. Areas that are designated through the review are now designated 'Important Open Space' (IOS).
- 1.5 Important Open Space has been identified by North Lincolnshire Council as a space that is important to the settlement in which it is located, whereas a Local Green Space has been identified by the local community. North Lincolnshire has a wide variety of IOS which performs a range of functions and delivers a wealth of benefits to local people and wildlife. Parks and gardens, amenity space, play space for children/teenagers, outdoor sports facilities, and allotments are all examples of publicly accessible IOS. Valued for their recreational and social functions, IOS also contribute to the visual amenity and character of a settlement, providing relief from the built-up area.

#### National Policy Context

- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides government guidance on plan making.
- 1.7 Section 8 of the NPPF concerns 'promoting healthy communities', and there is a separate section on 'Plan-making'. The following paragraphs are particularly relevant:
  - Paragraph 92 "Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
    - a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts

that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion - for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments, and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”
- Paragraph 93 “To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:
  - a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship), and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
  - b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social, and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;
  - c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
  - d) ensure that established shops, facilities, and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
  - e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses, and community facilities and services.”

1.8 Planning Practice Guidance states:

“Green infrastructure can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees, and ‘blue infrastructure’ such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies. References to green infrastructure in this guidance also apply to different types of blue infrastructure, where appropriate.”

1.9 “Why is green infrastructure important? 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.”

1.10 “How should open space be taken into account in planning? Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 98). Open

space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors, and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby, have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 174), as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development (see NPPF Section 2 Achieving sustainable development).”

- 1.11 The above NPPF and PPG policies have been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and Policy DQE10 in particular.

## **2 North Lincolnshire Context for Policy DQE10: Important Open Space**

- 2.1 Open spaces make a significant contribution to local communities and the environment within North Lincolnshire. Accessible, good quality open spaces provide opportunities for physical exercise and places to meet, impacting positively on health and wellbeing and social cohesion. These spaces can also have environmental benefits, including supporting biodiversity, flood risk management, and contributing to landscape and townscape character and the setting of the built environment.
- 2.2 Within the 2003 adopted Local Plan there are spaces within settlements identified as “Areas of Amenity Importance” which are important to the character and amenity of North Lincolnshire’s settlements.
- 2.3 A key issue facing North Lincolnshire is balancing the need to retain access to and protect high quality open spaces whilst delivering significant growth in new homes and jobs with improved infrastructure.

## **3 Local Plan Policy**

- 3.1 Through the early periods of public consultation on the Local Plan the question was asked whether the existing Areas of Amenity Importance (LC11) designation should be retained. There was general support for the retention of such a designation in the new North Lincolnshire Local Plan, so North Lincolnshire Council started to review all existing LC11 designations against a new robust criteria for designation. Potential new sites and new sites suggested in the Call for Sites 2017 (Initial Consultation), 2018 (Issues & Options) and 2020 (Preferred Options) were also considered to see whether they should be retained and/or designated in the new Local Plan as ‘Important Open Space’.
- 3.2 A desk-based review was undertaken of the existing LC11 designations and any new site suggestion submitted during the ‘Call for Sites’ stages to check:
1. Whether the status of each site had changed since the adoption of the Local Plan in which they are designated;
  2. Whether the site is being considered for an alternative allocation in the emerging North Lincolnshire Local Plan (2020-2038) and should be deleted as it does not meet the criteria for designation;

3. Whether the site meets the following other factors:
  - does it contribute to the open character or appearance of a settlement;
  - is it open to public view;
  - does it have ecological or landscape value;
  - does it have a recreational or social function.

3.3 Only sites which have remained as open space and should not be considered for alternative allocation in the new North Lincolnshire Local Plan will be designated as Important Open Space. As such, the designations will be considered to be justified.

#### 4. Next Steps

4.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the September 2022 Submission North Lincolnshire Local Plan. It demonstrates how the council has considered the retention of existing Areas of Amenity Importance within the new IOS designation, the addition of new designations, how we have responded to comments and nominations received during both the Issues & Options and Preferred Options consultations, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.

4.2 Sites recommended for designation as IOS listed in Appendix One: Important Open Space Assessment are shown on the policies map that accompanies the Submission Local Plan. Those sites not considered to meet the IOS criteria may still be protected under other policies in the Local Plan and/or via national or European legislation. Members of the public, landowners, and organisations have had the opportunity to comment on the proposed IOS designations as part of the Local Plan consultations.

4.3 The comments received as part of the Addendum consultation, in addition to the comments received to the North Lincolnshire Local Plan (2020-2038) Publication Draft consultation, will be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration at examination along with the Plan and supporting documents.

4.4 The examination will consider whether the proposals in the Local Plan are sound; this might include examination of the IOS designations. Further information on the different stages of Local Plan preparation, including examination and adoption, can be found in the Local Development Scheme under the Evidence Base link, here:

[A New Local Plan | North Lincolnshire Council \(northlincs.gov.uk\)](https://www.northlincs.gov.uk)