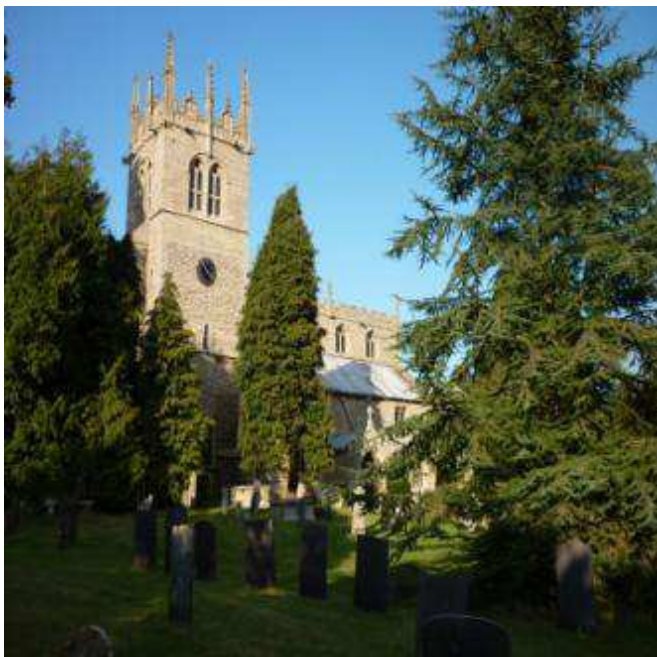




## **HOUGH ON THE HILL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**2014 - 2026**





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### **Appendix 1:**

Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013)

### **Appendix 2:**

Proposal for Local Green Space Designation of Loveden Hill – Justification Statement

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new right for Parish Councils to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan to influence future development in their local areas. An adopted Neighbourhood Plan sits within the statutory planning framework for England and has full weight in the determination of planning applications. Therefore Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with both the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Local Plan policies of the relevant local authority, which for Hough on the Hill Parish is South Kesteven District Council (SKDC).

## Why is a Neighbourhood Plan Needed?

- 2 Hough on the Hill Parish Council believes that whilst the rural character of the area and its three settlements of Gelston, Brandon and Hough on the Hill is unlikely to substantially change over the next ten to fifteen years, development and land use challenges are still evident in many planning applications coming through.
- 3 Clear, locally formulated policies about the type, scale and design of any development will help everyone to have greater certainty about what is acceptable and appropriate here. There are also particular features of the Parish's distinctive landscape, historic fabric and rural character setting which require attention to ensure that what we value is protected into the future.
- 4 Preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan helps to ensure that local people have a stronger influence over the way change and development takes place in coming years, and greater certainty that the features they value will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

## How was this Plan Prepared?

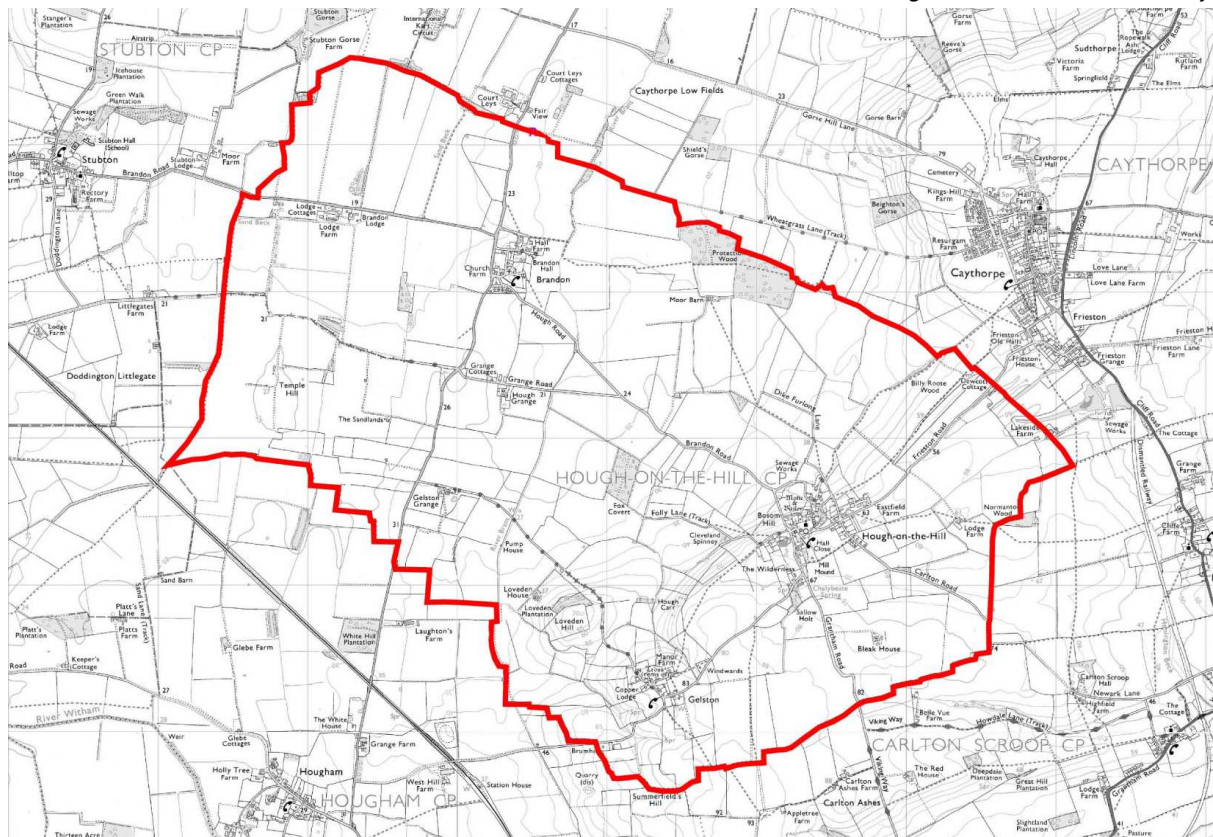
- 5 The work of developing the Plan was undertaken by the Neighbourhood Planning Project Team (NPPT) established by the Parish Council. This group comprises
  - 2 Parish Councillors
  - up to 6 local residents
- 6 Further details about the membership of the NPPT, including its Terms of Reference, are provided with the 'Statement of Consultation' separately submitted alongside this Plan.
- 7 A grant of £6,510 was obtained from the Government's scheme of assistance to communities preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. This money was used to obtain professional advice, undertake consultation, prepare publicity and produce the final Plan documents (in some cases expenditure was shared with Stubton Parish who are also preparing a Neighbourhood Plan). However, most of the work involved was undertaken by a small group of volunteers who have contributed a great deal of their own time, thought and effort. Free professional advice was also provided through the Government's scheme of assistance to communities preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, and this has been invaluable in ensuring compliance with the statutory processes involved.

## 2 ABOUT THE AREA AND ITS PEOPLE

### The Plan Area

- 8 Hough on the Hill Parish is located within Lincolnshire approximately 7 miles north of Grantham, 12 miles east of Newark on Trent, and 18 miles south of Lincoln. It was formally designated as a 'Neighbourhood Area' by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) in February 2013. The map below indicates the boundary:

**FIGURE 1 Hough on the Hill Parish Boundary**



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- 9 Hough on the Hill Parish is rural in character and contains three main settlements - Gelston, Brandon and Hough on Hill itself – as well as scattered farms. The population at the 2011 Census was approximately 400 persons, with a broadly similar age profile to that of the wider District and the East Midlands as a whole. The area's primary economic function is agricultural with some associated recreation and tourism. The sections below briefly outline relevant information about the area.

### History and Heritage

- 10 The earliest sign of habitation in the Parish is extensive crop marks around Temple Hill, dating from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British periods. Evidence of a Roman villa was also

found near Hough. During the Anglo Saxon period Loveden Hill was an important burial site, and probably the meeting place for the Loveden Wapentake (Hundred).

- 11 Hough, Gelston and Brandon were all established villages by the Anglo Saxon era and are listed (*Hache, Cheuelestune and Brandune*) in the 1086 Domesday Book.
- 12 Little documentary evidence then exists until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By this time nearly all the fields had already been enclosed and much of the land was farmed by tenants of a few large landowners, principally Lord Brownlow (of Belton House). The farms were a mixture of arable and pastoral, with the latter being mainly sheep. The population was similar to that recorded in the Domesday Book (and similar to today). In 1850 there were several farms in the villages (also a similar size to today), plus a number of outlying farms.
- 13 The population seemed to peak in the 1860s, before continuing industrialisation and an agricultural slump drew people towards towns and cities. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population had shrunk by nearly a quarter and many of the men were employed in the ironstone quarries to the east and south of Hough.
- 14 By the 1950s there were more cattle than sheep and a dairy was built on Stubton Road. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century dairy farming became uneconomic and the land is now mainly arable. Some of the smaller, isolated farm buildings have been demolished. Although some fields have been merged to aid mechanisation, most of the post-enclosure hedgerows remain.
- 15 Property in the village of Hough on the Hill itself was predominantly owned by the Brownlow family (Belton House) during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with many of the houses built in a typical 'Brownlow' estate style creating a unified appearance across the village. The Brownlow estate was sold in the 1970s. Most of the village is now a Conservation Area in recognition of its picturesque quality, distinctive architectural style, archaeological significance, topography and striking, far-reaching views out over the Trent and Belvoir Vales. The Conservation Area contains 8 listed buildings and is currently the subject of a review being undertaken by South Kesteven District Council (available within the 'Evidence Base' for this Plan). It is proposed to expand the boundary to encompass more of the former estate cottages and three fields which show evidence of ridge and furrow.
- 16 The Parish Church of All Saints at Hough on the Hill (Grade I listed) dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century and has a distinctive Saxon circular tower. A nearby Augustinian priory was founded in 1164 but only earthworks remain. Brandon has an Early English 'Chapel of Ease' and a Wesleyan Chapel in Gelston was in use from 1839 to 1958. Some of the main farming families around Brandon were Quakers and held meetings at Brandon Lodge, as well as supporting the Meeting House at Brant Broughton.



- 17 As well as a large number of listed buildings – such as Brandon Old Hall c1500 – the Parish has a motte and bailey at Hough on the Hill (known as Castle Hill) and a 15<sup>th</sup> century cross on Gelston green (both of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments).

## Local Character, Landscape and Environment

- 18 Each of the three separate and distinct settlements within the Parish enjoys a unique sense of place derived from the landscape and built environment. Hough on the Hill and Gelston are perched on the ridge overlooking the vale to the west and uplands to the east and each benefits from extensive panoramic views across the Trent Valley. In addition to the numerous church towers and spires visible in the landscape a number of historic buildings can be seen including Lincoln Cathedral, Belvoir Castle, Newark Castle and Southwell Minster. There are very few modern man-made structures visible; these include Staythorpe Power station near Newark, Cottam Power Station (some 25 miles away) along the River Trent, the Recycling Station at Lincoln and the sugar factory in Newark.
- 19 By contrast Brandon is located in a pivotal position in the vale itself. These lower contours enable uninterrupted views of the full curvature of the escarpment and flatlands. This allows sight lines to historic churches both inside and outside the Parish, noticeable through their towers and spires which pierce the skyline.
- 20 In sporadic locations there are well preserved ridge and furrow earthworks, providing a link with the past. The many walkways which criss-cross the contours of the varied landscape provide their own special experience enhanced by dramatic sunsets. Changing seasons and colours add to the attraction of the views.
- 21 The road networks and pathways are quintessentially rural in character, particularly the elevated routes which meander between the villages. All thoroughfares are narrow and only suitable for light traffic. These quiet country lanes allow for unencumbered enjoyment of the countryside where tranquillity and nature can be appreciated.
- 22 The built environments of the villages have a nucleated pattern. The architectural style is fairly consistent, employing a traditional palette of materials across most buildings. Stone and red brick walling is common along with slate and pantiled roofs. The more historic buildings feature dressed stone detailing. Brandon in particular is small in scale and many of the buildings are dormer style including single storey barn conversions in places. Conversely, Hough on the Hill has more structures with a three storey configuration. Gelston creates its own distinctiveness by virtue of predominantly 1½ and 2 storey buildings nestled around the village green. The building materials are more varied in this settlement with the introduction of rendered walls in places.
- 23 Taking the Parish as a whole it has the advantage of a varied topographical landscape which has remained relatively unchanged over time. The built environment works in harmony with the terrain and boasts a long history dating back to the Saxon period and beyond.
- 24 In response to residents' views regarding the importance of the landscape to their enjoyment of life in the Parish, in 2013 the Parish Council commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment study. The resulting report forms a key part of the evidence underpinning this Plan (and is presented in full at Appendix 1). The study identifies **four key character areas** across the Parish:



**FIGURE 2: Landscape Character Areas**

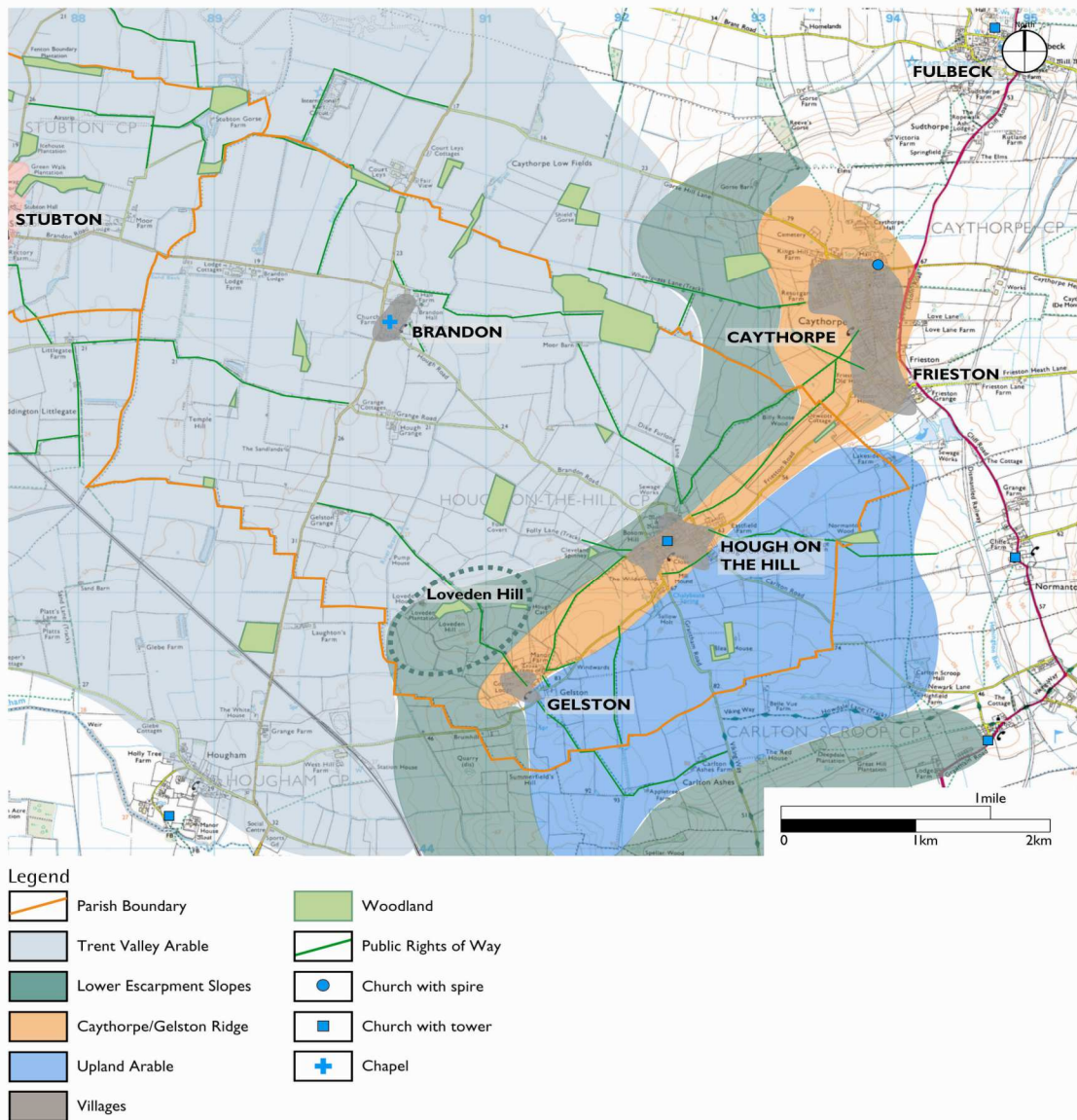


Fig 8 - Map of Parish Landscape Character Areas

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**Trent Valley Arable** - This is the dominant landscape character within the wider area and its boundaries extend well beyond the Parish. The characteristics are in keeping with the broader landscape character area of the Trent and Belvoir Vales. It includes the village of Brandon as well as a number of farms.

**Lower Escarpment Slopes** - This area comprises the undulating slopes of the limestone escarpment which runs through the Parish. With the highest area to the east, the slopes within the study area are generally north-west facing. The land use is generally pasture with some arable fields on the more gently sloping areas. The northern part of Hough on the Hill sits within the character area and includes the pasture to the south of Lower Road and some houses and farm buildings on the edge of the village. Loveden Hill also sits within this character area and comprises a distinct hill with an area of woodland to the north.

**Caythorpe Gelston Ridge** - This area forms a narrow strip between the two adjacent character areas but is distinct in that it forms a ridge, affording 360 degree views from many locations. The area includes the village of Hough on the Hill, Gelston and Frieston/Caythorpe (outside the Parish).

**Upland Arable** - This area lies to the south and east of Parish and comprises arable fields on a plateau between the two faces of the escarpment. Views to the east are towards the upper escarpment slope.

## **Farming & Wildlife Conservation**

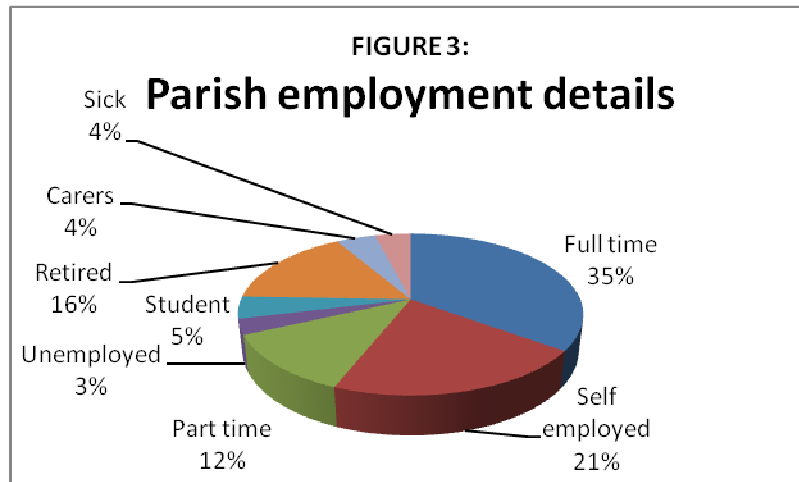
- 25 Farming, as the predominant economic activity, plays a significant role in both shaping and preserving our landscape. The Parish is perhaps fortunate that one resident family of farmers owns and manages some 70% of the land (including over 30 miles of hedges and 8 miles of dykes), which they have done for generations. The considerable care they, and other farmers, take in their stewardship role is of great value locally. During the last four decades at least 10 copses and spinneys have been planted, the Protection and Foxcovert woods have been partially felled and extensive replanting schemes implemented. On an annual basis between 1000 and 1500 hedging plants of varying species are planted to maintain and improve the existing hedges.
- 26 There has also been success in efforts to increase the number and diversity of birds and mammals that are resident or visitors to the Parish, by encouraging lapwings for example. Over the last five years all of the Barn Owls that have been reared in the owl boxes have been tagged, with a total of 48 Barn Owl chicks tagged to date.

## **Housing**

- 27 The 2011 Census data records a total of 167 dwellings in the Parish, all of which are detached, semi-detached or terraced houses or bungalows. The SKDC Housing Register records a total of 20 affordable housing units (10 in Hough on the Hill, 2 in Gelston and 8 in Brandon). A detailed housing needs assessment is not currently available for the Parish, but the Housing Register records 5 persons with a local connection seeking 2-bedroom accommodation.

## **Economy**

- 28 The predominant economic activity within the Parish is agriculture. There are several working farms, mainly arable crop production, and with sheep and a few cattle. There are also areas used for raising, and shooting, pheasants. Other local businesses include the Brownlow Arms, the Paddocks Riding Centre and Johnson Packaging (manufacture and supply).
- 29 Of the 293 persons aged between 16-74 years in the 2011 Census, 35.5% are classified as working fulltime, 12.6% part-time, and 21.5% as self-employed. 3.1% are classified as unemployed and retired persons comprise 16.7%.



- 30 It is assumed that the majority of the working population travel outside of the Parish to their place of work, although commuting patterns are not known. The number of persons working from home is also not known.

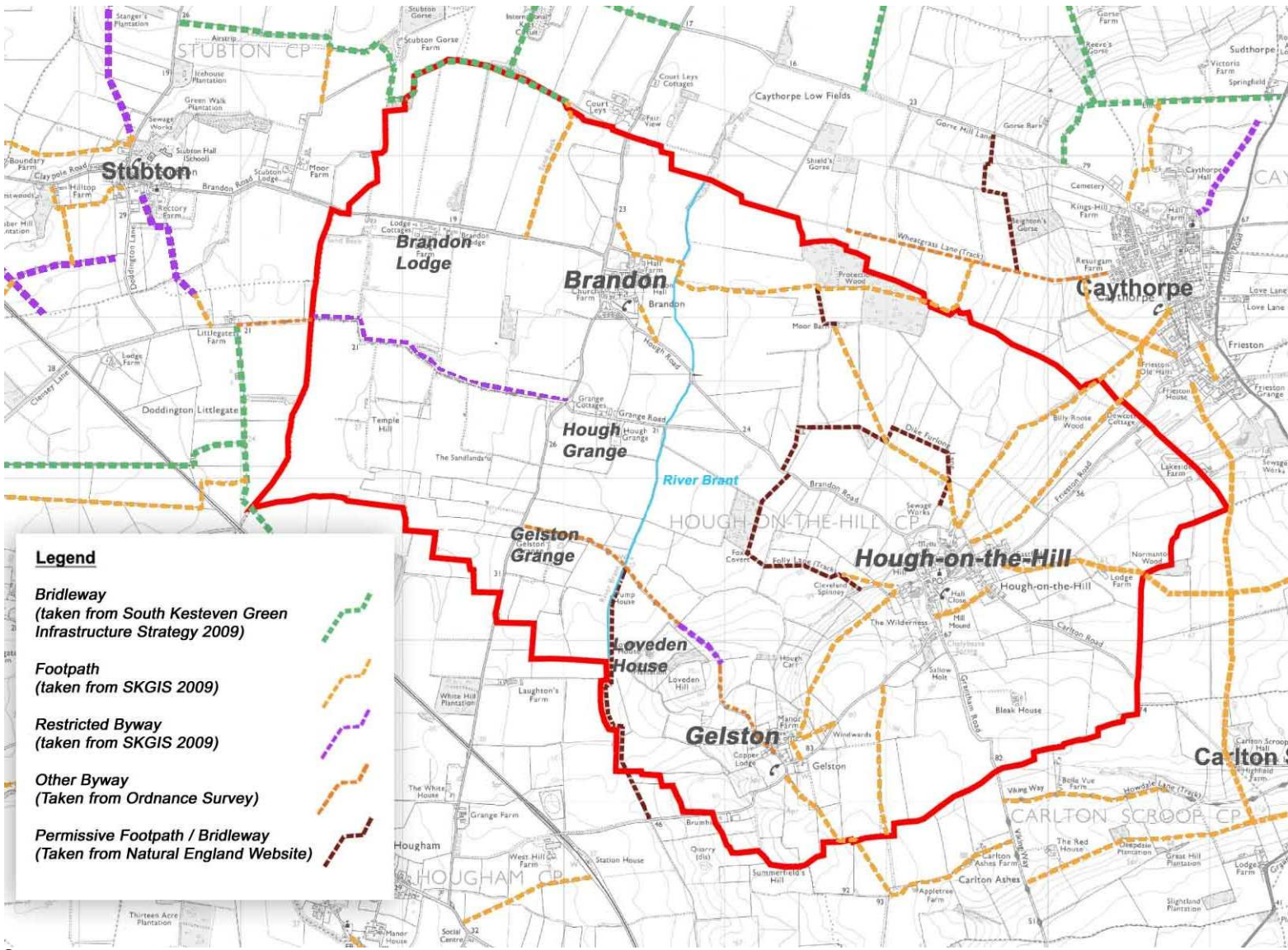
### Transport and Movement

- 31 The road network in the neighbourhood is rural in character. The lanes are narrow and many have a sinuous pattern. They are all Minor “C” road classification. The main vehicular routes are beyond the neighbourhood and consist of the A1, A17 and A607.
- 32 Data obtained from the Department of Transport (2010 traffic flow data) confirms that the usage is low, fairly typical of most villages sited in the countryside. Perhaps the greatest traffic movements are present on the C001 Stragglethorpe Road which cuts through the Parish linking the A17 to the A1. However, the traffic recordings are only 7.5% of a typical A road in the region. The accident rates for Stragglethorpe Road (the C001) in comparison to the A17 are considerably higher (some 4-6 times more likely). This is possibly due to the sinuous road configuration and the 60mph speed limit.
- 33 There are a large number of public rights of way in the form of footpaths, country lanes, bridleways and byways. Many lead to and from Hough on the Hill. When considered with the archaeology and place names it is clear that Hough on the Hill historically was a significant location. The roundtop Loveden Hill which is associated with the ancient Loveden Wapentake also forms a prominent feature in the landscape.
- 34 There is no regular public transport in the neighbourhood. However, bus stops are located in the nearby villages of Caythorpe, Stubton, Marston and Hougham. This means that the majority of the community are reliant on motor vehicles or the Call Connect mini bus service. Some residents commute via the East Coast Mainline with stations at Grantham and Newark Northgate as well as using cross country trains to Nottingham and Leicester from Grantham.
- 35 A portion of the population own cycles for either recreation purposes or as a means of transport. The National Byway for cyclists runs through the villages of Hough on the Hill and

Brandon. Gelston and Hough on the Hill are also located along the Hougham Village Cycle Route, a circular leisure cycling route.

- 36 Horse riding is also popular. There are three riding businesses with 105 associated riders operating within the Parish.
- 37 A plan showing the extent of the designated footpaths and roads in the neighbourhood is illustrated in the figure overleaf. (NB It should be noted that there are also a number of 'Permissive Paths' operational within the Parish where local farmers and landowners currently allow public access and for which they have been receiving government funding. This funding arrangement is now ending, and future funding arrangements are unclear. It is therefore possible that a number of these paths and bridleways, which are popular and well-used, may cease to allow public access.)





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**FIGURE 4: Roads, Footpaths and Byways**

NB The designation of the 'Restricted Byway' shown above is taken from a SKDC source; however we understand this track to be a 'Byway Open To All Traffic'

## **Flood Risk, Water Quality and Geology**

- 38 There are areas of flood risk within the Parish, and also areas identified as being at risk of surface water flooding, most particularly around the Brandon area. Dykes and watercourses are under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency and Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board. These authorities control bylaws which need to be respected when considering any form of development.<sup>1</sup>
- 39 Hough on the Hill drains into the River Brant catchment, with the village being served by a small Anglian Water Sewage Treatment Works. The Upper Brant is failing good status due to elevated levels of phosphate. The lower River Brant is also at poor ecological status.
- 40 The Parish is predominantly underlain by the geology of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation, which is of low environmental sensitivity with regard to groundwater. However, the western part of the Parish is underlain by the Highfield Farm Limestone bed, which is classified as a secondary A aquifer, whilst the Charmouth Mudstone is interbedded with some more permeable layers of Brandon Sandstone and Marstone Rock, which are also secondary A aquifers. There are no Source Protection Zones within the Parish. There are also no current or historic landfill sites within the Parish.

## **Facilities, Services and Community Organisations**

- 41 There are very few facilities and limited services available within the Parish. The majority of properties (and all properties within Brandon and Gelston) are not on mains drainage and none has mains gas. Water supply at Gelston relies on a pump (run by Anglian Water) to maintain supply. The main electricity supply to the villages is through low-level, medium-voltage cables and transformers. There are frequent interruptions of supply in strong winds and high consumption periods, suggesting that provision is operating at or near to capacity.
- 42 Broadband speeds are currently poor and are a concern locally. Hough on the Hill and Gelston are in phase 5 of the Lincolnshire 'Superfast Broadband' project with 78% of properties due to receive superfast (above 24Mb/s) by June 2015. Brandon however is in phase 8 which won't be implemented until March 2016. The remaining properties will be below the superfast level, but improved from the current situation. There are of course other solutions that are available now (e.g. fibre to wireless in Brandon and Gelston) but these can be more expensive than existing connections.
- 43 The only licensed premise in the Parish, the Brownlow Arms in Hough on the Hill, is the last remaining service since the adjacent shop and post office closed and the closure of the village school. Brandon and Gelston were once served by cottage 'stores' and mobile suppliers, but these are long gone. The nearest shops are available at Caythorpe and Claypole, outside the Parish, as are several primary schools in larger villages (eg at Caythorpe, Marston, Barkston) and

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<sup>1</sup> All development is subject to SKDC Local Development Plan policies relating to flooding and treatment of surface water (Policy EN2).

a GP Surgery, with Pharmacy, also at Caythorpe. Hospital services, including Accident and Emergency, are available at Grantham. The nearest Public Library is at Grantham (and the Mobile Library service currently visits Gelston once a month).

- 44 The Parish Council owns the Playing Field in Hough on the Hill, and manages a small, enclosed playground there with swings and other play equipment. The Parish Council also owns a small area of land in Brandon where there used to be a village hall (destroyed by fire).
- 45 The Church of All Saints in Hough on the Hill offers regular worship, and some services are also held at the Chapel in Brandon.
- 46 There is a local Parish charity, the Hough on the Hill Relief in Need Charity, which derives rental income from its ownership of two local fields. Monies are distributed annually to assist the elderly and people with disabilities.
- 47 The community organisation of longest standing in the Parish is the Hough History Society. Formed in 1984 to preserve, promote and record the local history of the Parish, the Society has accumulated an extensive archive of photographs, news cuttings, old maps, census records and other material providing a rich picture of local historical life.
- 48 Of more recent establishment is the Hough Community Project. In 2000, the Parochial Church Council began to explore ideas for converting parts of All Saints Church in Hough on the Hill to create more accessible and useable space for community access. The Parish has no community centre and the closure of facilities such as the village school meant there were few opportunities for residents to get together socially or hold community activities and events. Successful fundraising provided resources for the completion of Phase One works in 2012, opening up the rear of the nave to create a 75sq metres clear space and constructing an accessible toilet and new servery facilities. The new community space is now used by the Parish Council for its meetings, for the weekly Pilates group, for talks, concerts and regular Coffee Mornings. Fundraising continues for Phase Two works which propose the creation of a new meeting room on the ground floor of the church tower.
- 49 A 'Riding for the Disabled' charity is based at the Paddocks Riding Centre.



### **3 LOCAL CONSULTATION TO FORMULATE THE PLAN**

#### **How Have Local People been Involved in Preparing the Plan?**

50 Local residents, landowners and businesses within the Parish have been consulted on their views throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Full details of all the activities undertaken are contained within the separate 'Statement of Consultation' submitted alongside this Plan. The main findings, and the key issues identified, are summarised as follows.

#### **Initial Consultation (June 2013)**

51 At the start of the process for compiling a Neighbourhood Plan every household and business premises in the Parish was sent a questionnaire (in June 2013) asking for initial views. A total of 28 questionnaires was returned which, whilst a small percentage of the population, provided a helpful steer on some of the main issues, as summarised below:

##### **a) Landscape and Local Character**

It was clear that people's main focus was on the importance of the landscape, its tranquillity and unspoilt character.

##### **b) Housing and New Development**

It was clear that those who responded did not want any change to the size of the villages, or to their look or feel. There was support for heritage and conservation measures, and for tighter controls of new build and conversion designs. Concern about wind farm development featured highly, and also dislike of motorsport noise, and generally people indicated that they did not want any large, industrial or noisy developments.

##### **c) Road Safety**

There were quite a few comments relating to roads and transport. The physical condition of the roads and road safety issues in particular figure quite highly, along with concerns about through traffic and speeds.

##### **d) Facilities**

There were several responses relating to community facilities, especially sports provision.

##### **e) Other Issues**

The most consistently raised issue was the need for improved Broadband provision.

#### **Issues Consultation (January 2014)**

52 In January 2014 a four-sided leaflet was delivered to every business and household in the Parish providing an overview of the emerging issues and identifying areas of concern about which further opinions and views were sought. The leaflet contained a Questionnaire, and also advertised a Consultation Workshop open to all to attend. The Workshop took place on 25<sup>th</sup> January in All Saints Church, Hough on the Hill and was attended by 33 residents (including some of the local landowning farmers).

53 The table below summarises both the Questionnaire and Workshop outcomes and shows an emerging consensus on most issues apart from **new housing development** where opinion was almost equally divided. There was also less consensus on two other issues: whether the Parish should create a '**local list**' of positive buildings and structures in the villages; and whether the Parish should be doing more to promote small-scale **renewable energy**. Both of these issues achieved approximately two-thirds support in the Questionnaire responses, with one third opposing.

Issue	Commentary
<b>1 Design Guidance</b>	Almost universal support for this from the Questionnaire responses (33 in favour and only 2 against). From the Workshop discussions, people would seem to favour a positive approach rather than just listing what's not permitted, and an approach that does not rule out modern design. Hedgerows were also raised as important at the Workshop.
<b>2 Valued unlisted structures</b>	Majority support for this proposal in the Questionnaire responses, although quite a few against it (20 in favour and 10 against). Much of what people have suggested is in fact already listed, or identified within the SKDC Conservation Area 2014 Draft Review.
<b>3 Recreational hard-surface facilities on the Playing Field</b>	Majority support for this proposal in the Questionnaire responses (23 in favour and 6 against) However, one of the discussion groups at the Workshop were not supportive of the proposal. Some people didn't support it because they felt it wouldn't be used, or they wouldn't themselves use it. Suggestions for other areas for recreational facilities not put forward.
<b>4 Improved Access to the Countryside</b>	Very strongly supported by the majority of respondents to the Questionnaire (30 in favour and 3 against) and the issue featured strongly in the Workshop discussions with widespread support. However, the challenges currently faced by our local farmers because of walkers and others not adhering to footpaths was also raised. Improved signage was suggested as a helpful approach for walkers and farmers alike. Several people have also strongly objected to the current status of the Loveden Hill track (which is a Byway Open to All Traffic), asking if this could be changed so that it is open to walkers and horse riders only.
<b>5 Local Green Space</b>	Almost universal support for the designation of Loveden Hill as a Local Green Space in the Questionnaire responses (32 in favour and 2 against). Several other areas also suggested, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the old Priory field in Hough on the Hill</li> <li>- the Wilderness in Hough on the Hill</li> <li>- Bosom Hill</li> <li>- Fox Wood</li> <li>- old quarry workings to the east of Hough</li> <li>- Brandon village green adjacent to the church</li> <li>- Protection Wood</li> </ul>
<b>6 Affordable Housing Development</b>	Views on this issue are almost evenly divided (16 in favour and 17 against). Most of the people who support the provision of more affordable housing do so because they want a balanced community. Those against do not believe the villages are appropriate locations because of lack of public transport and other facilities. (NB it is apparent that the term 'affordable' was not fully explained, and some people think it means lowcost homes for sale.) One of the discussion groups did favour allowing one or two owner occupier starter houses to be built, affordable to young couples, in each of the villages. Inevitably some people also raised previous planning applications they have made for development that have been refused.
<b>7 Renewable Energy Provision</b>	There is majority support in the Questionnaire returns for small-scale renewables, but only if they are not visually intrusive (21 in favour and 12 against). Some people also remain opposed to energy schemes that are unviable without subsidy. Community-energy schemes were seen as favourable at the Workshop and at the Workshop it was commented that the need for farmers to be 'carbon neutral suppliers' means they are finding it necessary to install renewable energy in the form of solar panels and turbines to meet this demand.
<b>8 Roads &amp; Transport</b>	Quite a lot of support at the Workshop for trying to get speed limits (and weight limits) down on the COO1, or some more electronic warning signs. Also support for continuing to do press for action on potholes and verges – but absolutely no support for road widening. There is some support for the creation of passing lanes on verges.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY**

54 The aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan have been formulated in response to the consultation findings as summarised above, flowing directly from the key issues and concerns identified:

### **The Aim of the Plan:**

55 The primary purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan will be to set out a vision for the evolution and longterm sustainability of the Parish's historic and built environment, protecting its rural landscape character and guiding appropriate and sensitive future development.

### **Objectives:**

- Promoting sensitive development which protects and enriches the landscape and built setting of the Parish
- Prioritising local distinctiveness in every element of change and growth
- Protecting jobs, supporting sustainable economic development and local businesses
- Protecting greenspace, and supporting nature conservation and biodiversity
- Encouraging energy efficiency and, where appropriate, energy production from renewable and low carbon sources
- Improving recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages to enjoy
- Seeking improvements to transport, utility infrastructure and digital connectivity
- Involving local people in an ongoing process of plan-making, monitoring and delivery

The Plan will cover the time period **2014 to 2026**.

56 Taking the core issues arising from consultation, and including the findings and recommendations of the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment, the Neighbourhood Plan will focus on the following approaches:

- The rural setting and landscape character of the Parish will be sustained and enhanced through policies designed to protect views and key features, promoting economic and recreational value and protecting heritage and conservation.
- Design guidance will promote sensitive change and enhancement to existing buildings and inform appropriate small scale development on brownfield sites.
- The importance of Loveden Hill, both historically and as a key feature in the landscape, will be highlighted and protected through its designation as a Local Green Space.
- New leisure and recreational facilities will be supported for appropriate locations.
- Local renewable/low carbon energy schemes and community-led initiatives to generate energy, save energy and/or reduce energy costs will be encouraged, providing there is no visual intrusion into the area's historic or landscape character.

## 4 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

### Hough on the Hill Village

57 Hough on the Hill is the largest of the three villages within the Parish and is located on the top of the escarpment and in part on its north west facing slopes. A number of lanes radiate out connecting it to the surrounding villages. The village area is characterised by an irregular plan form and a low density of development. The buildings are located principally along Lower Road, High Road, Carlton Road and the east side of Grantham Road; their informal layout interspersed with areas of open space and grassed verges are significant features which contribute to the picturesque quality of the village. As previously noted most of the village area is included within a Conservation Area (originally designated in 1980) which contains 8 listed buildings, and 29 records in the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record. The Conservation Area is currently the subject of a review by SKDC, and parts of the following narrative are taken from the draft of this 2014 review.



*Church of All Saints (Grade I) together with the Motte and Bailey (Castle Hill, a Scheduled Ancient Monument) form areas of visual dominance and high heritage significance. The Church is located within a spacious graveyard with yews and other mature trees framing views.*

58 Trees and hedgerows frame key views or form the backdrop to views within and beyond the Conservation Area. The trees lie mainly within private land and gardens but also include the tree belts on the valley slopes and ridge tops which form the backdrop to views

beyond the Conservation Area. Boundary walls and hedges are important features which link buildings and maintain the continuity of the building line along the streets.

59 **Lower Road** has a gently curving alignment and a dramatic change in topography as it descends into the valley. It has a low density of development of mainly detached buildings. It has a fragmented character at its southern end as the west side consists of both traditional and modern buildings with mixed or no boundary treatments; as the road descends into the valley the character becomes more cohesive due to the presence of boundary walls. The traditional buildings on the east side are elevated above and separated from the highway by a steep grassed verge. The western end has a more rural character with an attractive group of buildings around Wayside Farm and open fields enclosed by hedgerows and trees which allow glimpses of the vale to the north and the church and vicarage to the south.

60 **Thompson's Lane** is a narrow lane extending northwards from Lower Road. It contains traditional and modern farm buildings and dwellings. There are glimpsed views southwards to Lower Road and the church tower.

- 61 **New Hill** is a pleasant rural lane enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees which give way to stone boundary walls as the centre of the village is approached. The buildings on the east side can be glimpsed between the trees and, as the crest of the hill is approached, the Brownlow Arms, Hough House and buildings along Grantham Road and High Road emerge into view. There is an extensive sloping field to the West side, containing Ridge and Furrow, and known locally as 'Bosom Hill', an area popular for sledging in the winter.

*Hough Manor (Grade II), together with its grounds at front and rear, and enclosing walls make a significant contribution to the Conservation Area.*



- 62 **Folly Lane** extends westwards from the junction with New Hill, High Road and Grantham Road. It has a low density of development on its south side and is enclosed by the stone boundary wall to Hough Manor which partially obscures the buildings from view whilst the low hedgerows on the north side allow extensive views across the vale. The church tower framed by the mature trees is visible in the eastern view.

- 63 **Grantham Road** has a low density of development located mainly on its eastern side, comprising detached buildings which are either set back or aligned to the rear of the narrow footway. The west is enclosed by a stone boundary wall with open fields and mature trees beyond with views of Hough Manor to the north. The small terrace of houses on the west side, to the north of the junction with Gelston Road, are set back from the highway with large front gardens enclosed by a stone boundary wall.

- 64 The western end of **High Street** comprises a large attractive square enclosed to the south by the Brownlow Arms and former Post Office, and to the north by Hough House and the former vicarage. The road narrows and descends sharply to the east and has an open character with the churchyard and castle mound on the north side (although the steep topography largely obscures them from view) and the generous grounds of Ashlea. The south side is an informal grouping of dwellings and fields (enhanced by recently completed laid-hedging).



- 65 **Carlton Road**, in contrast with the rest of the conservation area, has a regular plan form of pairs of semi-detached former estate cottages which stand within small gardens enclosed by boundary hedgerows.

*Properties along Carlton Road, employ architectural detailing such as twisted chimneys and 'gothic' style window openings adding to the picturesque character of the Conservation Area.*

- 66 The Conservation Area has a harmonious character derived from a common material palette and vernacular architectural style. The traditional buildings are constructed predominantly of red brick, coursed squared or rubble limestone or ironstone; some of the frontages have been rendered and colour washed. The predominant roof covering is clay pantiles or natural slate, although some have unfortunately been replaced with concrete interlocking tiles. Red brick chimneys are a prominent feature, some of which are decorative in style, particularly the twisted brick chimney stack to No. 20 Carlton Road.
- 67 There are some unusual architectural details which add to the picturesque quality of the Conservation Area. Some of the former estate cottages on Carlton Road have triangular dormer or circular windows; Wayside Farm, the Vicarage and Old School House have attractive fish scale slate roofs and the Old School also has Dutch gables. There are also examples of elegant 18th and 19th century door cases, including the former post office on High Road and Eastern House on Lower Road.
- 68 The post war buildings do not reflect the vernacular style of the traditional buildings, however the use of red brick or stone partially integrates them into the street scene and they do not detract from the overall character of the Conservation Area. Some traditional timber windows and doors have been replaced with upvc to standard designs, which may be considered to detract from the appearance of individual buildings and from the overall character of the Conservation Area.
- 69 Whilst the Conservation Area affords a substantial level of protection to the built heritage of the village, this Plan considers that additional policies regarding design, use of materials and the protection of key views are warranted, and are supported by public opinion. There are also a number of key features, structures and buildings which, whilst not listed, are considered of particular note for their heritage or visual amenity (and some are also mentioned in the SKDC 2014 Conservation Area Draft Review):

*Cast iron fingerpost and cobbled surfacing are features of historic quality that should be retained*

- Finger Post at top of New Hill
- Church Farm (and the Crew Yard at rear)
- The Old Vicarage
- The footpath cobbles on the path known locally as India Rubber Hill
- Bosom Hill
- Red telephone box
- North House (on Grantham Road)
- The Wilderness
- The Old Smithy (on Grantham Road)
- Red Barn (on New Hill)
- Millmound Cottage and Stableyard
- Village Pump
- Water Lane footpath



- Two wells on the High Road
- Church Lychgate and Noticeboard
- The Cottage (Lower Road)
- Beechers Farm
- Eastern House
- Thompson’s Lane (general setting)
- Old Dairy (brick buildings), Thompson’s Lane
- Wayside Farm

70 Listed Buildings in Hough on the Hill:

- Manor Farm House, Folly Lane..... Grade II
- Manor House, Folly Lane..... Grade II
- The Red House, Grantham Road..... Grade II
- Brownlow Arms, High Road..... Grade II
- The Post Office and attached house, High Road..... Grade II
- Hough House, High Road..... Grade II
- The Church of All Saints..... Grade I
- The School and attached School House, High Road..... Grade II

71 The map on the next page (taken from the 2014 SKDC Conservation Area Draft Review) shows the proposed expanded boundary of the Conservation Area, the position of listed buildings and other important features, along with the key views both into and out from the village.

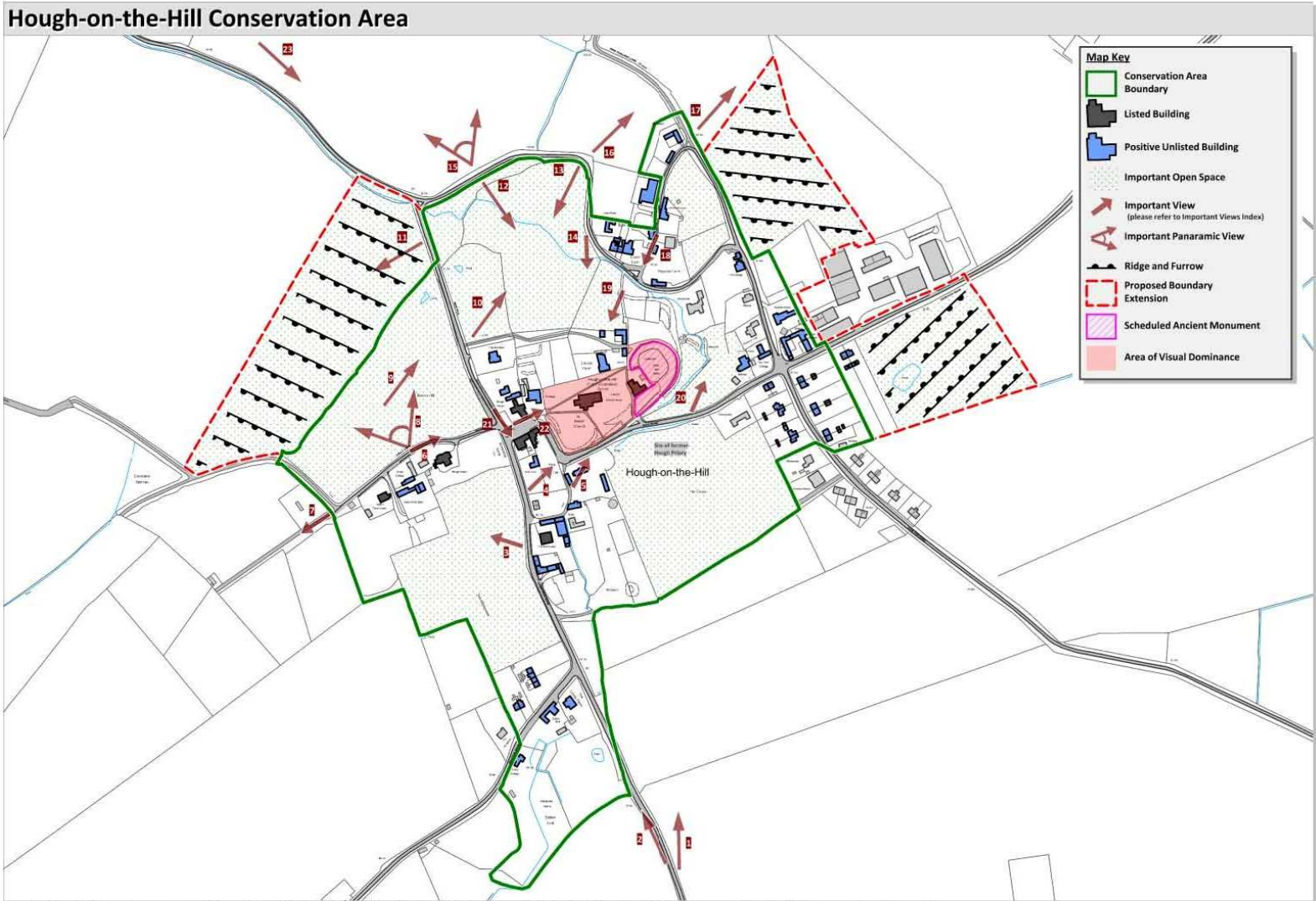
**Augustinian Priory Site**

72 The site of the old Augustinian Priory is another important open space within the village. It is a large field (used for grazing) showing extensive earthwork evidence of the original Priory, enhanced by informative Interpretation boards explaining the layout of the buildings on the site, and offering important views across to the Church and village centre.

**Parish Playing Field**

73 Hough on the Hill also contains the Parish’s Playing Field. Apart from the small, fenced playground area operated by the Parish Council, there are no other specific facilities on this large grassed site at the present time which is therefore not extensively used. Consideration will be given to the suggestion that part of this area could usefully contain a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) or some marked hard-surface courts for tennis or other ball games thus improving sports and leisure facilities within the Parish.





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FIGURE 5: Conservation Area (2014)

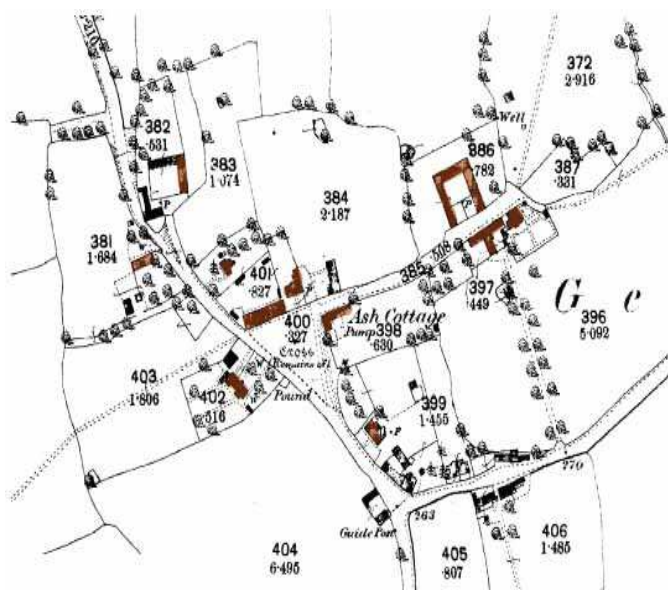
### Important Views Index

1. View towards All Saints Church and Tower.
2. View into conservation area along Grantham Road.
3. View across 'The Wilderness' towards Hough Manor.
4. View towards All Saints Church Tower between buildings on Grantham Road.
5. View towards All Saints Church and Tower between buildings on Water Lane.
6. View towards All Saints Church and Tower Folly Lane.
7. Views out of the conservation area towards Gelston and surrounding Countryside.
8. Panoramic views of Belvoir Vale including Lincoln Cathedral to the north.
9. View towards surrounding Countryside and St Vincent's Church.
10. View from Lower Road through and in between hedgerows across fields of the Belvoir Vale and surrounding Countryside.
11. Views towards ridge and furrow at Bosom Hill.
12. View of All Saints Church, Castle Hill and Church Farm from Lower Road.
13. View of All Saints Church, Castle Hill and Church Farm from Lower Road.
14. Glimpsed views through the trees and hedgerows towards All Saints Church, Castle Hill and Church Farm from Lower Road.
15. Panoramic views across Belvoir Vale.
16. Views across surrounding Countryside towards Caythorpe.
17. Views across surrounding Countryside towards Caythorpe.
18. Views towards All Saints Church, castle Hill and Church Farm from Lower Road.
19. Views towards Church Farm and outbuildings from public footpath.
20. Views from High Road across areas of open space and stream in a north easterly direction.
21. View towards The Brownlow Arms, High Road.
22. View towards All Saints Church and its Norman tower.

*NB: The SKDC document above refers (point 22) to a 'Norman' tower at All Saints Church; however we understand that the tower is 11<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon, with a 15<sup>th</sup> century addition of the belfry.*

## Gelston Village

74 Gelston village enjoys an elevated position overlooking the historic Loveden Hill. The large protected Village Green and historic 15<sup>th</sup> century limestone Cross at its centre provide a distinctive landscape feature. The dwellings in this location take advantage of this prime rural setting and the surrounding panoramic view. 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show the footprints of buildings that still remain in some form today. This settlement also has examples of the authentic courtyard farmstead arrangement that is evident elsewhere in the Parish.



*Note: Images above show Gelston in 1889 (left) and post 2000 (right). Colours on 1889 map denote the following: brown: built prior to 1889 with evidence of remains today.*

75 Loveden House situated to the north west of Loveden Hill (beyond the extent of the map) was in existence in 1850 and is still evident today. The landscape surrounding Gelston has proved to be rich in archaeological remains. There are also remnants of the traditional ridge and furrow earthworks.

76 Views of Interest from/to Gelston:

- The view from Hough Road, before entering the village, through a field opening towards Loveden Hill and beyond
- Entering Gelston on Hough Road there are far reaching views across the Trent valley with the finger post, red telephone box and an open field used for grazing in the foreground
- This view opens out along the road into Gelston Green with a stone wall along the edge of the field.
- A far reaching view from the stone Cross on Gelston Green and from the refurbished pinfold incorporates Belvoir Castle, Newark and Southwell
- The view back from Gelston Green to the Old Chapel set in fields used for grazing edged with stone walls and hedgerows creates a rural scene with Belvoir ridge in the background.

- The Byway to Loveden Hill, edged with hedgerows and wide verges, affords continuously changing views to Marston, Hough on the Hill and Caythorpe. This opens out at the top of Loveden Hill to magnificent views across as far as Derbyshire and around to Lincoln Cathedral.
- The footpath along the ridge to Hough on the Hill across a mixture of grazing and arable fields has wide views of Loveden Hill, Hough Church and Caythorpe as well as vistas to Lincoln Cathedral.
- The plateau footpaths benefit from 360 degree views, because of the height and open nature of this arable area, from Carlton Ashes to Belvoir Castle, Newark, Brant Broughton Church and Lincoln Cathedral.

77 Listed Buildings in Gelston:

- Gelston Green, Grade II; 15<sup>th</sup> century Limestone Cross, Scheduled Ancient Monument.

78 List of buildings and features of interest in the landscape (Gelston):

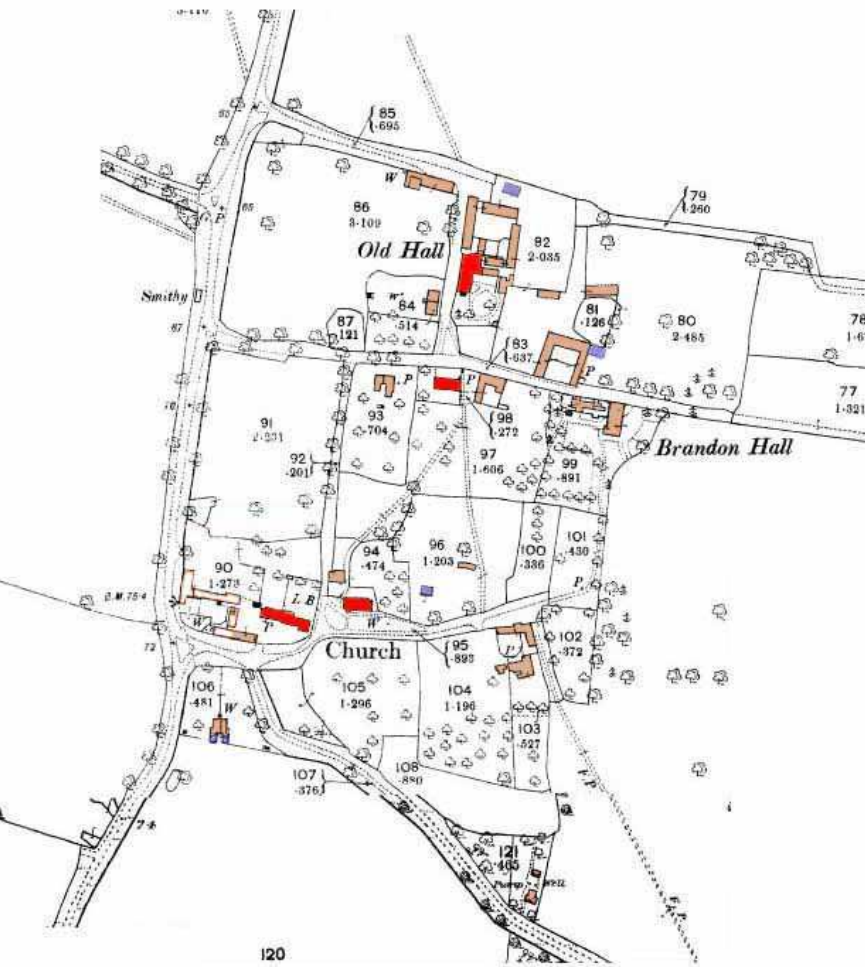
- The Old Chapel 1839
- Copper Lodge and Belvoir Cottage – (circa 18<sup>th</sup> century)
- The Long House
- The Row 1849 (included the old bakery)
- Fox's Farm
- Manor Farm
- Manor Barns
- White cottage
- Gelston House
- The Corner House
- 20 Gelston, ironstone cottage wall
- Pinfold – restored for the Millennium
- Finger Post
- Red Telephone Box
- Old ironstone walls adjacent Manor Farm and white cottage
- Walled garden at Birdsong bungalow
- Ridge and Furrow between 18 Gelston and Windwards
- Dew Pond and wild area adjacent footpath - Manor Farm

### **Loveden Hill**

79 The historic Loveden Hill, which rises just to the north west of Gelston, featured strongly in consultation responses to the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment. Local residents said that the hill plays a special role in our local landscape character, dominating views and providing significant heritage value. Enquiries have been made to English Heritage regarding its potential inclusion as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, seeking both recognition and protection of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery it contains, and for the burial mound itself. However, previous excavations and ploughing activity within the area have damaged the archaeology, and it is not considered appropriate for listing in this way, although it is mentioned in the Historic Environment Record. (See Appendix 2 for fuller information in support of this Plan's proposal to seek designation of Loveden Hill as a 'Local Green Space'.)



## Brandon Village



*Note: Images above show Brandon in 1889 (left) and post 2000 (right). Colours on 1889 map denote the following: brown: built prior to 1889 with evidence of remains today; blue: built before 1905 red: denotes Listed Buildings built before 1889.*

- 80 Many of the buildings that remain have been modified in some way to facilitate residential use. Brandon historically accommodates a number of wells which have been exposed in various locations. The 1889 map indicates a pump-house to the south east corner of the village (Nightingale Cottage). This Victorian building is elaborately detailed and suggests that this location was once an important place for this natural resource.
- 81 The village of Brandon is close to the River Brant and consists of largely small scale traditional historic buildings located around the Church to the south and Old Hall to the north. The village has a quintessential rural character with interesting lanes and grass verges. Often the orientation of buildings form strong edges and in many cases boundary treatments consist of masonry walls, trees and hedges with Lincolnshire post and rail fences. The spaces in between the buildings encompass large gardens and paddocks.
- 82 Sections of the adjoining landscape towards Hough on the Hill contain fields of surviving ridge and furrow landform.

83 Brandon village and the surrounding former farmsteads at Gelston Grange, Hough Grange and Brandon Lodge conform to traditional 1850 courtyard plan arrangements as illustrated on the historic maps.

84 Interesting Features in the village (Brandon):



*View of street adjacent The Old Hall Brandon, showing an example of stone walling, grass verges and soft edging to the street. The nearby land is also separated into small gardens or paddocks by fencing.*

*Photo shows arrangement of new buildings forming a natural vista into the landscape beyond.*



*Photo shows the close relationship between St John's Chapel and Church Farmhouse enabling a green space within the village.*

*Photo shows Nightingale Cottage with elaborate Victorian detailing to window heads, stone mullions and banded brickwork.*







*View of original structures from 19<sup>th</sup> century either converted or extended and used as dwellings. Building on left has been extended to include a new first floor.*



*Photo of Brandon Hall, the only three storey building in Brandon indicating its historic importance and prominence within the village.*

*Former cottages converted into one single dwelling with evidence of extensions both to the rear and upwards to create a first floor. The side walls incorporate the original stone gable.*



85 Like Hough on the Hill, Brandon contains a number of listed buildings:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Church Farm House, Church Lane.....                                    | Grade II  |
| 2. St John's Chapel, Church Lane.....                                     | Grade II* |
| 3. Greystones, Hall Lane.....   | Grade II  |
| 4. Brandon Old Hall, Hall Road.....                                       | Grade II* |
| 5. Wall around Brandon Old Hall,<br>garden and attached outbuildings..... | Grade II  |

86 In addition the following buildings and features of interest in the landscape are of particular note:

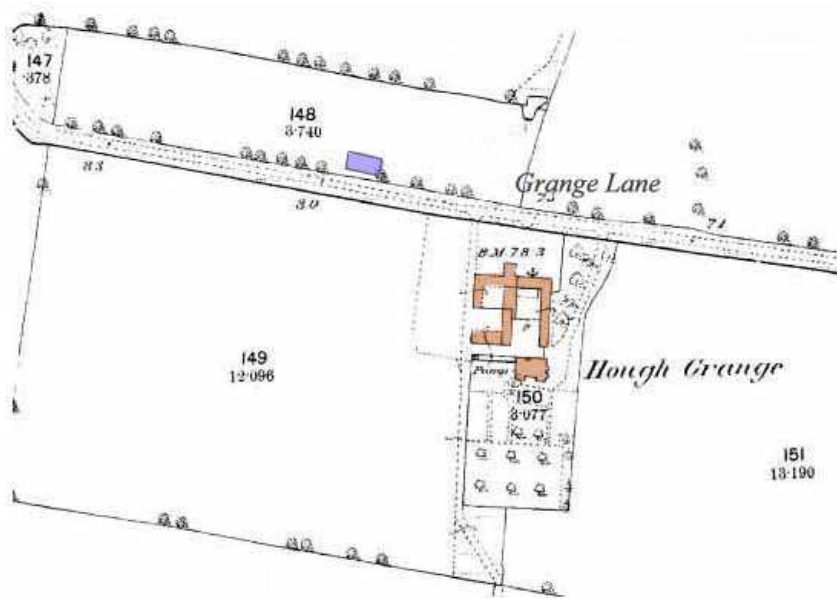
- Red telephone box and surrounding landscape on Church Lane.
- Brandon Hall, Hall Lane



- The Courtyard and Granary on Hall Lane
- Rowan Cottage, Hall Road
- Old Hall Barn, Hall Road (and detached dilapidated outbuilding to the north)
- Old Hall Cottage, Hall Road.
- Church Farm Cottage, Church Lane
- The Stables, Church Lane
- Church Lane Farmhouse, Church Lane
- Nightingale Cottage on Hough Road
- Twisted Chimneys (1844), Stragglethorpe Road
- Small narrow unstructured and varied country lanes within and beyond the village

### **Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest** (not Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings)

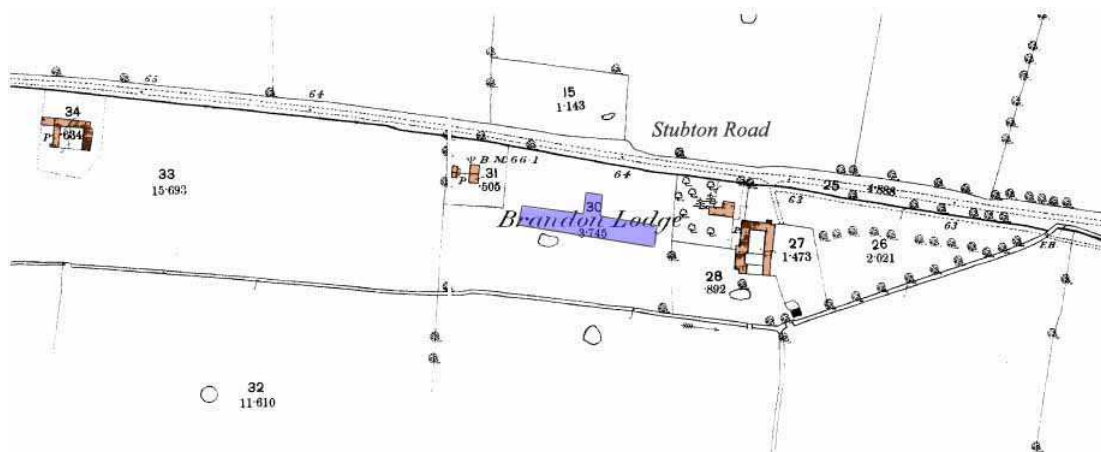
#### Hough Grange



*Note: Images above show Hough Grange in 1889 (left) and post 2000 (right). Colours on 1889 map denote the following: brown: built prior to 1889, blue: built prior to 1950.*

- 87 It is clear that the smallholding and farmhouse at Hough Grange is original and has historic and architectural interest; many of the barns have survived and are apparent today. During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century two cottages were constructed on the north side of Grange Lane, shown in blue. The style, brick detailing and sash windows confirm that these dwellings are of late Victorian/Edwardian origin.
- 88 Hough Grange was originally an historic farmstead located in the open countryside. The distinctive hamlet is now primarily a residential settlement.
- 89 Buildings of interest on Grange Lane:
- Barakiel Barn, Grange Cottage, Lower Barn, Grange Barn, and Hough Grange

## Brandon Lodge



*Note: Images above show Brandon Lodge in 1887 (top) and post 2000 (bottom). Colours on 1887 map denote the following: brown: built prior to 1887, blue: built circa 1950- 1956.*

- 90 The above plans demonstrate that most of the original fabric and grouping of the buildings remain the same as shown on the 1887 plan.
- 91 Brandon Lodge is positioned on Stubton Road to the west of Brandon village. The former agricultural buildings and farmhouse are now in residential use. A dairy was constructed in the 1950s adjacent to Brandon Lodge. The building is still in existence today although no longer in use as a dairy.
- 92 List of buildings and features of interest:
- The Old Dairy and associated barns, Stubton Road
  - Chestnut Court, Stubton Road
  - Brownlaws Cottage and attached barns, Stubton Road

## Gelston Grange



*Note: Images above show Gelston Grange in 1889 (left) and post 2000 (right). Colours on 1889 map denote the following:  
brown: built prior to 1887 with evidence of remains today.*

- 93 Gelston Grange is another example of an independent smallholding with footprints that reflect the 19<sup>th</sup> century working farm. Rural diversification has successfully integrated a new use, as the grange serves as a guest house. This small crop of buildings is discreetly located off Stragglethorpe Road at the bottom of Loveden Hill.
- 94 The gardens have been elaborately cultivated to provide a highly attractive environment where guests can enjoy the rural setting and views across the landscape.
- 95 List of buildings and features of interest:
- The Grange dwelling and associated outbuildings.

## **Settings and Key Views Across the Parish**

- 96 The individual village profiles above set out many of the key views this Plan will seek to protect and enhance. However, as indicated previously, the unique setting of much of the Parish on the limestone escarpment produces spectacular views both from, and to, many key areas (particularly around Gelston and Hough on the Hill villages). A plan setting out these important wider views across the Parish is shown on the next page.





**A** - Views to the escarpment including:  
 i) Belmont Tower, ii) Hilltop villages & Loveden Hill, iii) All Saints Church, Hough on the Hill, iv) St Vincents Church, Caythorpe, v) St Martins Church, Stubton, vi) St James Church, Dry Doddington, v) Church of St. Mary, Marston

**B** - Views to the escarpment including:  
 i) Hilltop villages & Loveden Hill, ii) All Saints Church, Hough on the Hill, iii) St Vincents Church, Caythorpe, iv) Church of St Nicholas, Fulbeck

**C** - View from Loveden Hill overlooking the Trent & Belvoir Vale. Villages depicted by Church Steeples. Power Station on the horizon on clear days.

**D** - Extensive panoramic view of the valley and church spires.

**E** - Millennium Beacon site with extensive panoramic view of the valley and historic features, including: i) Caythorpe Village, ii) Brandon Village, iii) Stubton Village, iv) Church of St Helen, Brant Broughton, v) Hough Grange, vi) All Saints Church, Fenton, vii) Church of St. Peter, Claypole, viii) All Saints Church, Hough on the Hill

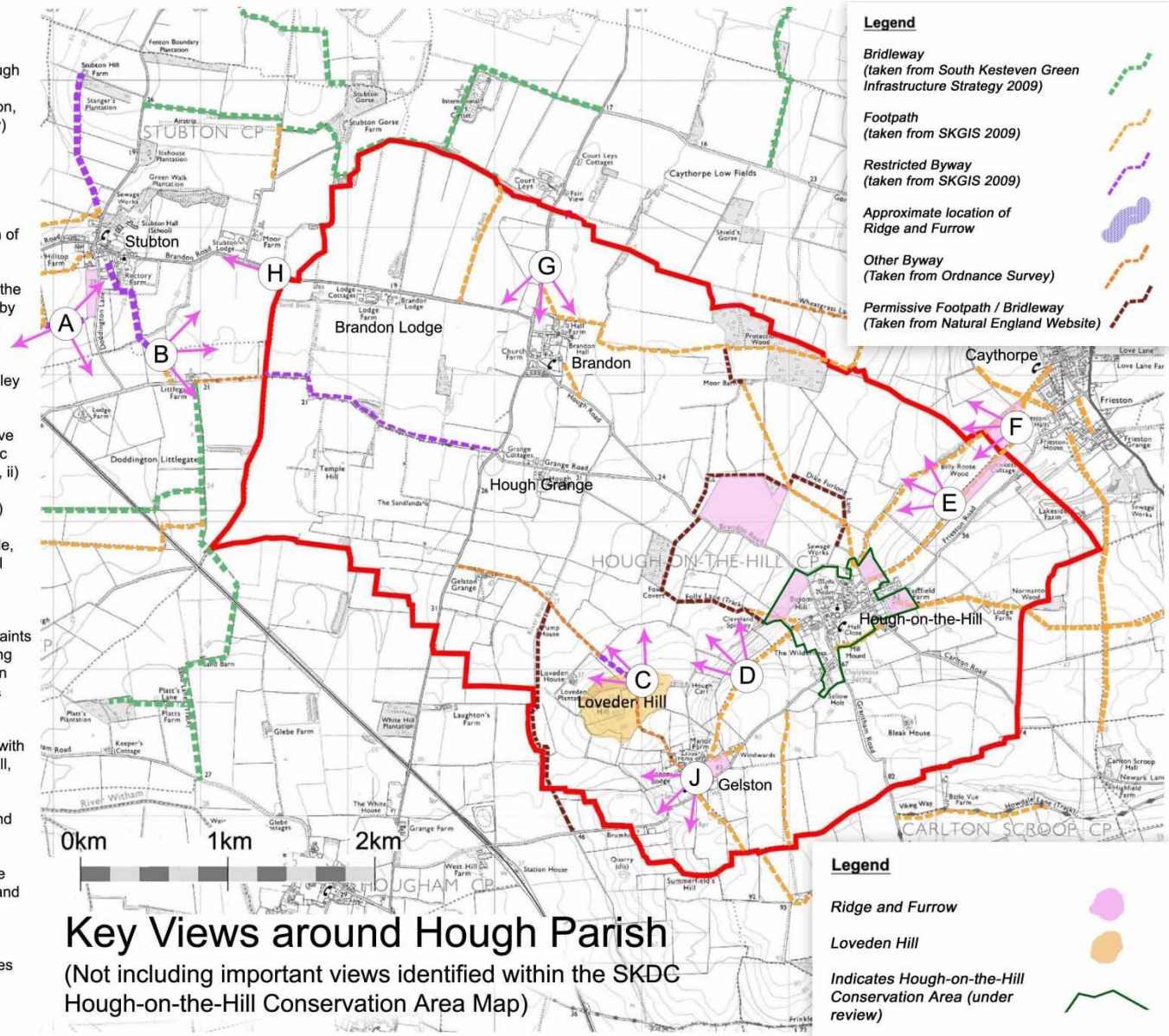
**F** - Picturesque setting illustrating the contours of the land including ridge & furrow. Strong picture card view of All Saints Church, Hough on the Hill nestled among the trees. Contours of the land frame an extensive 90 degree view of the Trent & Belvoir Vale.

**G** - Key approach into Brandon Village with view of Brandon roovescape, The Old Hall, Loveden Hill and the Escarpment.

**H** - Strong view towards Stubton Hall and approach to Stubton

**J** - Extensive panoramic view of the vale looking west towards Nottinghamshire and south towards Leicestershire including Belvoir Castle.

\* All views taken from public thoroughfares  
 \*\* Position of ridge and furrow is approximate



**FIGURE 6: Key Views in the Parish**

## 5 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

### Introduction

97 The policies of the Hough on the Hill Parish Neighbourhood Plan are set within the context of the national plan-making framework. The scope and content of the Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan has been shaped by the priorities and aspirations of the Hough on the Hill community, led by the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Planning Project Team.

### Planning Context

98 The procedure for the making of a Neighbourhood Plan is prescribed within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

99 The Regulations have informed the preparation of policies for the Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan, in particular:

- Ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development (which is defined below).
- Ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of SKDC.<sup>2</sup>

### Sustainable Development

100 A definition of sustainable development is provided within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). It notes that there are three dimensions to sustainable development and that these dimensions give rise to the need for planning to perform a number of roles:

***an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*

***a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and*

***an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.*

### Neighbourhood Plans

101 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the broad parameters within which a Neighbourhood Plan should be prepared. It notes that there are a number of key elements that should be at the heart of Neighbourhood Plan making:

---

<sup>2</sup> The Evidence Base used in the preparation of the Plan contains a detailed Policy Compliance Analysis (April 2014) tracing the linkages between the (then draft) Neighbourhood Plan policies, the NPPF and the SKDC Local Development Plan

- Neighbourhood Plans give communities direct power to develop a shared vision of the neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need.
- Neighbourhood Plans can shape and direct sustainable development within their area.
- The ambition of the Neighbourhood Plan should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider area.
- Neighbourhood Plans should be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and plan positively to support them. They should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan and should not undermine its strategic policies.

## Policy Objectives

102 The policies of the Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan seek to deliver the Aims and Objectives of the community, which are set out earlier in the Consultation Findings section of this document and are summarised again below:

*The primary purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan will be to set out a vision for the evolution and long term sustainability of the Parish's historic and built environment, protecting its rural landscape character and guiding appropriate and sensitive future development.*

*The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:*

- *Promoting sensitive development which protects and enriches the landscape and built setting of the Parish*
- *Prioritising local distinctiveness in every element of change and growth*
- *Protecting jobs, supporting sustainable economic development and local businesses*
- *Protecting greenspace, and supporting nature conservation and biodiversity*
- *Encouraging energy efficiency and, where appropriate, energy production from renewable and low carbon sources*
- *Improving recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages to enjoy*
- *Seeking improvements to transport, utility infrastructure and digital connectivity*
- *Involving local people in an ongoing process of plan-making, monitoring and delivery*

*The Plan will cover the time period 2014 to 2026.*

## Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan Policies

103 The rural setting and landscape character of the Parish will be sustained and enhanced through Policies designed to protect views and key features, promoting economic and recreational value and protecting heritage and conservation. With the exception of Policy HOH9 concerning Loveden Hill, the Policies detailed below are generic to all sites and developments taking place within the Parish. Design guidance is shown separately following the Policies, which are grouped into five sections (showing the relevant Plan objectives at the start of each section):

- Character and Built Environment
- Employment
- Green Spaces
- Renewable Energy
- Leisure and Recreation



104 The Policies are to be read in conjunction with the Design Guidance, the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) provided in Appendix 1, and the 'Key Views in the Parish' shown in Figure 6 (page 31).

## **CHARACTER AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**-PROMOTING SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT WHICH PROTECTS AND ENRICHES THE LANDSCAPE AND BUILT SETTING OF THE PARISH**

**-PRIORITISING LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS IN EVERY ELEMENT OF CHANGE AND GROWTH**

105 New development within areas such as Hough on the Hill Parish is restricted by SKDC's spatial strategy which states that only development for the following uses would be considered acceptable:

*A. affordable housing (rural exception or allocated sites)*

*B. agriculture, forestry or equine development*

*C. rural diversification projects*

*D. local services & facilities*

*E. replacement buildings (on a like for like basis); or*

*F. conversions of buildings provided that the existing building(s):*

- *contribute to the character & appearance of the local area by virtue of their historic, traditional or vernacular form;*
- *are in sound structural condition; and*
- *are suitable for conversion without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding, and that the works to be undertaken do not detract from the character of the building(s) or their setting.*

106 The Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan supports developments which accord with the SKDC spatial strategy, as outlined above, where it maximises opportunities to protect and enrich the landscape and built setting of the villages and their environs as defined within the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013). The uses set out within the SKDC spatial strategy (see above para 105) are considered to be 'appropriate uses' for the purposes of the Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Policy HoHI:**

*New development for 'appropriate uses' (see paras 105 and 106 above), which are in accordance with the other policies of this plan, will be supported where it can be demonstrated that opportunities to enrich the landscape and built setting of the Parish have been incorporated.*

*Locally important features and characteristics against which any development will be assessed are clearly defined in this Neighbourhood Plan and its evidence base and development which appropriately responds to these will be supported.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District and SP1 – Spatial Strategy

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 12; Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17)

107 Policy EN1 of the SKDC Core Strategy sets a number of criteria against which new development will be assessed and states that it must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape within which it is situated, and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration. Specific criteria within policy EN1 concern the built environment and aim to ensure development is appropriate to its character and context, including:

2. local distinctiveness and sense of place
3. historic character, patterns and attributes of the landscape
4. the layout and scale of buildings and designed spaces
5. the quality and character of the built fabric and their settings

108 The defining characteristics of the Parish and its settlements are set out in Sections 2 and 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan and presented within the SKDC Conservation Area Appraisal 2014 Draft Review (and subsequent versions of this document). The Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) also considers the historic development and character of the Parish in relation to both the built and natural environment.

**Policy HoH2:**

*New development should be sympathetic to the existing form, scale and character of its location and be appropriate to its rural context. Development should respond to the character of both the built and natural environment.*

*Materials and boundary treatments should be sympathetic to the character and landscape of the part of the Parish area in which they are proposed.*

*Development which has been designed in accordance with the Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance will be supported.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District and SP1 – Spatial Strategy

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 12; Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17)

109 The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as follows:

***Heritage asset:*** *A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).*

110 Therefore, heritage assets within the Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan include:

- Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments - as defined in the individual village descriptions contained in Section 4 of this Plan (and included within the Hough on the Hill Conservation Area 2014 Draft Review and subsequent versions of this document).

- Hough on the Hill Conservation Area – as defined within the appropriate adopted Conservation Area Appraisal.
- Locally listed buildings, ‘Positive Unlisted Buildings’ or other non-designated heritage assets identified and supported by an evidenced justification within the Hough on the Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2014 Draft Review and subsequent versions of this document), within any detailed list of Positive Unlisted Buildings prepared on behalf of SKDC or any superceding document.

**Policy HoH3: Hough on the Hill Conservation Area**

*New development will be supported within the Conservation Area where:*

- *It preserves and enhances the character and local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area.*
- *It is sympathetic to the site’s context and to the characteristics which are unique to the Hough on the Hill Conservation Area.*
- *It uses materials which are appropriate to the Conservation Area.*
- *It’s use, scale and form are appropriate to the Conservation Area and its setting.*

Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy: EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

Conformity with NPPF: Section 12; Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17)

**Policy HoH4:**

*Development which would result in the loss of all or part of a heritage asset will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the public benefits would outweigh the harm caused.*

Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy: EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

Conformity with NPPF: Section 12; Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17)

111 The following listed buildings are located within the Parish boundary:

**Hough on the Hill**

The Church of All Saints	Grade I
Manor Farm House, Folly Lane	Grade II
Manor House, Folly Lane	Grade II
The Red House, Grantham Road	Grade II
Brownlow Arms, High Road	Grade II
The Post Office and attached house, High Road	Grade II
Hough House, High Road	Grade II
The School and attached School House, High Road	Grade II

**Gelston**

C15 Limestone Cross, Gelston Green, Scheduled Ancient Monument	Grade II
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**Brandon**

St John’s Chapel, Church Lane	Grade II*
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Church Farm House, Church Lane	Grade II
Greystones, Hall Lane	Grade II
Brandon Old Hall, Hall Road (and attached outbuildings)	Grade II*
Wall around Brandon Old Hall and garden	Grade II

***HoH5: Listed Buildings***

*New development will be supported where it would improve, restore or maintain the fabric of a listed building.*

*Development which would have a negative or harmful impact on a listed building or its setting will not be supported unless a clear justification is presented that there would be substantial public benefits which would outweigh the loss or harm to the building.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 12; Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17)

- 112 The Conservation Area Appraisal for the Hough on the Hill Conservation Area (Draft Review 2014 and subsequent versions of this document) contains references to a number of ‘positive unlisted buildings’. These buildings are defined as those which make “*a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*”
- 113 These buildings include some of the former Brownlow estate properties or traditional farm buildings and outbuildings, and 19th to early 20th century detached and semi-detached properties or terraces which are fairly commonplace within the district, but by virtue of their age, design and use of local materials contribute towards the special quality of the Conservation Area. Examples include Church Farm, a two and a half storey detached, Georgian Farmhouse that has a pleasing aspect facing the church and churchyard; The Old Vicarage, with highly decorative features and prominent Gables; and North House, Grantham Road, likely to have been built by the Brownlow family but without the decorative features. In addition to dwelling houses there are many other ancillary buildings, such as outbuildings, stables and former privies that add to the interest of the Conservation Area and should be retained.
- 114 Currently there are no ‘locally listed buildings’ in the Hough on the Hill Conservation Area (2014 Draft Review and subsequent versions of this document). Buildings identified on the Conservation Area map (2014 Draft Review or subsequent future versions) as ‘positive unlisted buildings’ (and other key features identified in Section 4 of this Plan) will be taken forward for consideration for inclusion on any future Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest.

**Policy HoH6: Positive Unlisted Buildings or Buildings on the Local List**

*New development will be supported where it would improve, restore or maintain a positive unlisted building/locally listed building or any other structure of local significance as identified within any other appropriately evidenced list.*

*Development which would have a harmful impact on a building or structure of this type or its setting will not be supported unless a clear justification is presented which explains how the benefits would outweigh the loss or harm.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 12; Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17)

115 Affordable housing is identified as an appropriate use within the Parish, where this conforms with the planning policies of SKDC. Affordable housing in Parishes such as Hough on the Hill may be brought forward through a 'rural exception scheme' and these schemes must be supported by clear up-to-date evidence that:

- There is a need within that village for the affordable housing being proposed.
- That no other more suitable site is available within that village

116 Consideration of the sustainability of a site to meet a local housing need will be based upon it satisfying all of the following criteria:

- That the site is located within the built up part of the village. If no such sites are available consideration may be given to a site adjoining the village, provided that it is demonstrated that all other options have been considered.
- That the site is small-scale, capable of accommodating only the amount of housing needed.
- Avoids areas which are protected because they are important for wildlife, biodiversity, natural, cultural or historic assets.
- Avoids sites which are at risk of flooding or which could increase the impact of flooding elsewhere.

117 Sites may be considered appropriate for affordable housing if they can be positively assessed against the three roles of sustainable development set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (economic, social and environmental).



### Policy HoH7:

*Affordable housing will be supported within the villages where:*

- *It meets a defined local need;*
- *It is within the existing built-up or developed parts of the existing villages and settlements of the Parish;*
- *It is on a suitable, previously-developed site or, if no previously developed sites are available, it can be clearly demonstrated that there are no other suitable sites available;*
- *It has been designed in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance; and*
- *It is in accordance with the Character and Built Environment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District; SP1 – Spatial Strategy; and H3 – Affordable Housing. Policy SAP2: Rural Exception Affordable Housing

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 12; Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17)

## **EMPLOYMENT**

### **PROTECTING JOBS, SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL BUSINESSES**

118 There are a number of businesses in the Parish (see para 28) and these are important to the local economy. National and local planning policy recognise the need to support appropriate economic growth in rural areas and this is also a key aspiration of the community in Hough on the Hill Parish.

119 Appropriate economic growth through rural diversification is an important part of the Neighbourhood Plan, and may include:

- Diversification of agricultural, farming and other land based rural businesses;
- Sustainable rural tourism or leisure uses and visitor facilities appropriate to the character of a countryside location
- Retention and development of existing local businesses.

120 In addition, as identified within the South Kesteven Site Allocations, proposals for business development within the countryside must demonstrate that they meet all the following criteria:

- be of a scale appropriate to the rural location.
- be for a use(s) which is(are) appropriate or necessary in a rural location.
- provide local employment opportunities which make a positive contribution to supporting the rural economy.
- the use / development respects the character and appearance of the local landscape, having particular regard to the Landscape Character Assessment.
- will not negatively impact on existing neighbouring uses through noise, traffic, light and pollution impacts.

- avoids harm to areas, features or species which are protected because they are important for wildlife, biodiversity, natural, cultural or historic assets, including their wider settings.

121 In all cases, there is a need to demonstrate that the proposals would help to support or regenerate a sustainable rural community.

**Policy HoH8:**

*Development proposals for appropriate rural diversification within the Parish will be supported where;*

- *It is in accordance with the Character and Built Environment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan; and*
- *It is located on previously developed land or sites containing existing agricultural buildings, or a clear justification is provided as to why the proposed site is more appropriate.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** E1 –Employment Development. Policy SAP4 - Business Development in the Countryside (including Rural Diversification Schemes)

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 1 (paragraphs 20 and 28)

## **GREEN SPACES**

### **PROTECTING GREENSPACE, AND SUPPORTING NATURE CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY**

122 The National Planning Policy Framework enables local communities to identify green areas which are of particular importance to them for special protection. The significance of Loveden Hill is outlined within the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) and has been identified by the community as a place of local importance to be recognised through the Neighbourhood Plan. A detailed justification statement for this designation is provided within Appendix 2.

**Policy HoH9:**

*The Neighbourhood Plan designates the area at and above the 50M contour line of Loveden Hill as a Local Green Space as shown on the map in Appendix 2.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 8 Paragraphs 76-78

123 The Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan supports developments which accord with the SKDC spatial strategy, in particular the following elements of EN1 which seeks to protect the natural environment and permits new development where it is appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape within which it is situated, and contributes to its conservation, enhancement or restoration. In particular, it includes the following criteria to ensure that landscape, open space, biodiversity and ecology are protected:

1. statutory, national and local designations of landscape features, including natural and historic assets
6. the condition of the landscape
7. biodiversity and ecological networks within the landscape
14. protection of existing open space (including allotments and public open space, and open spaces important to the character, setting and separation of built-up areas)

124 In addition to this, the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) considers the landscape and environmental context of the Parish in detail, identifying important characteristics, features and views unique to the area. Key local views are identified in Figure 6 within this Neighbourhood Plan, and Section 4 details the key views within the individual settlements and hamlets.

**Policy HoH10:**

*New development must be appropriate to the character, natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the Parish's landscape. Developments must respect the landscape character of the Parish and its settlements, as defined within the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) and incorporate features which contribute to the conservation, enhancement or restoration of these features.*

*In particular, new development should, wherever possible:*

- *Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows. Where new trees are proposed, these should, wherever possible, be appropriate disease resistant native species.*

Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy: EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

Conformity with NPPF: Sections 7 and 11 (paragraphs 58, 109, 113)

**Policy HoH11:**

*Development will be supported where it would maintain the features which define the character and setting of the Parish which are set out within the Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013). In particular, development which would impact on views into and out of the villages and hamlets as indicated on the Key Views Map (Figure 6, page 31) should demonstrate that these features have been sensitively and appropriately considered and incorporated and/or mitigated as necessary.*

Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy: EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

Conformity with NPPF: Sections 7 and 11 (paragraphs 58, 109, 113)

**RENEWABLE ENERGY**

**ENCOURAGING ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENERGY PRODUCTION FROM RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON SOURCES**

125 Renewable energy and the transition to a low carbon economy are supported through the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance for Renewable and Low Carbon

Energy and policy EN3 of the SKDC Core Strategy. The latter defines renewable energy as energy that comes from:

- Solar thermal (solar hot water systems);
- Active photovoltaic energy (PV);
- Geo-thermal water heating;
- Wind turbines;
- Energy crops and biomass;
- Energy from human sewage and agricultural plant and animal waste but not energy from domestic or industrial waste, except methane from existing landfill sites;
- Ground source heat pumps; or
- Combined heat and power plants.

126 The Neighbourhood Plan supports energy efficiency and renewable/low carbon energy generation projects which are local in nature and help existing residents and businesses make a transition to alternative technologies, where these are also in accordance with the wider design aspirations of the Plan.

***Policy HoH12:***

***New development for domestic-scale energy efficiency and/or energy production from renewable and low carbon sources will be supported where:***

- ***They relate to an existing or proposed property in the Parish;***
- ***They are subordinate in scale to the existing building; and***
- ***They are in accordance with the Character and Built Environment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance.***

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy: EN3 – Renewable Energy Generation**

**Conformity with NPPF: Core Principles (Paragraph 17)**

127 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (para 17) support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy where they provide positive local benefit. The Community Energy Strategy (para 2) discusses how communities could develop solutions to meet local needs by:

- Generating electricity
- Generating heat
- Reducing energy use
- Managing energy demand
- Purchasing energy

128 The Neighbourhood Plan supports community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy where they meet local needs and provide a positive local benefit.

**Policy HoH13:**

*Community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where:*

- *They meet local needs and provide a positive local benefit, and*
- *They are in accordance with the Character and Built Environment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance.*

Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy: EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

Conformity with NPPF: Section 10 (paragraph 97)

129 Local businesses may be required, by regulation or commercial pressures, to derive an increasing proportion of their energy use from renewable sources. As discussed above (para 125) this requirement can be satisfied by a number of technologies, depending on the nature and situation of the business.

130 The Neighbourhood Plan supports efforts by local businesses to develop low carbon and renewable energy, where these are subordinate to the primary business and are also in accordance with the wider design aspirations of the Plan.

**Policy HoH14:**

*Initiatives which would enable local businesses to develop renewable and low carbon energy will be accepted where:*

- *The primary function is to support their operations;*
- *They are subordinate to the primary business, and*
- *They are in accordance with the Character and Built Environment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance.*

Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy: EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

Conformity with NPPF: Section 10 (paragraph 97)

## **LEISURE AND RECREATION**

### **IMPROVING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF ALL AGES TO ENJOY**

131 Hough on the Hill Parish includes a network of footpaths, tracks and bridleways which are well used by the local community and visitors. These routes and ways in which they could be improved are identified within the Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) and their popularity was confirmed through the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process. The Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of opportunities to maintain and improve access to the countryside.



**Policy HoH15:**

*New development for 'appropriate uses' (see paras 105 and 106 above) will be permitted where it seeks to maintain or improve access to the countryside, and where it is in accordance with the other policies of the plan. In particular, the following improvements will be sought through the use of planning condition, s.106 agreement where appropriate and feasible, or through the neighbourhood element of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) if/when this is adopted by South Kesteven District Council:*

- *Improvements to footpaths and signage to ensure they are easily identified and accessible all year round.*
- *Wherever possible, new development should ensure that access to existing permissive rights of way is maintained.*
- *Wherever viable, provide linkages to existing footpaths and rights of way or create new routes.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District

**Conformity with NPPF:** Section 8 (para 75); paragraphs 203-206

132 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a Delivery Strategy which establishes the evidenced need for infrastructure within the Parish, prepared on behalf of the Parish Council in response to local consultation. If a CIL is adopted by SKDC, the Parish Council may draw on the 'neighbourhood element' of CIL to provide funds towards those items identified in the Delivery Strategy, and it is hoped SKDC will also consider the items in the Delivery Strategy when identifying any planning conditions or s.106 agreements where appropriate and feasible.

**Policy HoH16:**

*All new development must provide necessary and appropriate new facilities on site or contribute to off-site facilities as required either by means of planning condition, s.106 or use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as appropriate.*

*If a CIL approach is not adopted by South Kesteven District Council, necessary facilities and infrastructure will be secured by negotiation on a case by case basis.*

**Conformity with SKDC Planning Policy:** SP3 - Sustainable Integrated Transport and SP4 - Developer Contributions

**Conformity with NPPF:** paragraphs 203-206

## Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance

- a) The design of extensions should be sympathetic, set back and subordinate in size to the original building and in keeping with the general character of the village or hamlet. Similarly roof pitches, windows and colour schemes should be in harmony with the original palette. Garages and extensions should have pitched roofs in accordance with the existing building and/or style of the neighbourhood.  
Exemptions will be given for innovative contemporary creative solutions that successfully integrate modern architectural design into the local vernacular.
- b) A variety of natural roof materials is encouraged eg slates, pantiles and plain tiles.
- c) Dormers should be small and unobtrusive, appropriate in scale and number to the main roof of the building. The size of these windows needs to be in proportion with the existing fenestrations and in accordance with the rhythm of the building. Lead cheeks are considered appropriate with pitched, catslide or flat roofs to be determined by the locality.
- d) TV and satellite dish aerials should be installed in the roofspace where possible, or on the ground in a garden. Aerials at high level and fixed to the main structure of the building should not be visible from the road, if possible.
- e) Particular attention needs to be given to boundary treatments and landscaping. The preservation of existing trees, hedgerows and stone/brick walls should be encouraged. Where removal of hedgerows is unavoidable, new planting should incorporate native species rather than exotic conifers. Timber close boarded fence should not be erected where visible from the road.
- f) Opportunities to incorporate features into new build or retro-fitted buildings which are beneficial to wildlife are encouraged, eg the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes. Similarly, the incorporation of features which contribute to the efficient use of water (eg water butts) is encouraged.
- g) Vehicular access arrangement must not be detrimental to the character of the village lanes. Access to houses may include a variety of surface finishes for example, block pavements, gravel, tarmacadam or concrete with traditional brick edging detail.
- h) Key views into and from villages will need to be respected, particularly principal vistas to heritage assets and villages on the escarpment.

- i) Victorian red brick or stone walling is considered the most appropriate building material for the villages and hamlets. Also, the type, colour and finish of components should be in keeping with the local vernacular. Elements such as windows and doors are particularly important as these can help emphasise the local distinctiveness. A consistent choice of materials should be adopted.
- j) Solar panels to roofs can dominate a setting. Their installation is encouraged in appropriate locations that are not prominent.
- k) A large proportion of the neighbourhood is low-lying and surrounded by higher ground. This means that new structures are likely to have a substantial impact across a broad extent of the landscape. The breadth of the landscape and the modest scale of the settlements require new development to be grounded within the broadly horizontal topography. This will mean that the form of new development needs to adopt a horizontal emphasis, with larger structures/buildings (including agricultural storage units) carefully sited with sensitive consideration of their roofscape, colours and textures and with extensive use of new planting to visually break up the mass.
- l) The wide verges along country lanes will need to be maintained where possible to preserve nature and for conservation purposes. The existing bio-diversity, habitats, ecology and wildlife of the area should be protected. All existing public footpaths and byways need to fully protected.

## 6 DELIVERY STRATEGY

### Development Management

- 133 The Neighbourhood Plan NP will be implemented through a combination of SKDC’s consideration and determination of planning applications and through steering any additional funds into a series of infrastructure projects contained in the plan.
- 134 Whilst SKDC will be responsible for development management, the Parish Council will use the NP to frame their representations on submitted planning applications.
- 135 The majority of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered by land and property owners and developers responding to its planning policies. Care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that these policies are achievable.

### Infrastructure Requirements

- 136 Policy HOH16 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to the requirement for all new development to provide necessary and appropriate new facilities on site or contribute to off-site facilities to be secured by means of planning condition, s.106 where appropriate and feasible, or through the ‘neighbourhood element’ of any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) adopted by SKDC.
- 137 Although the Parish Council will consider any new plan or project put before them which would enhance the infrastructure or facilities of the Parish, the consultation process for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan identified a number of requirements. These are set out in the following table (noting that improvements to footpaths and bridleways are separately covered in Policy HOH15):

IDENTIFIED NEED	PRIORITY
Hard Surface Games Area on the Hough on the Hill Playing Field	High
Installation of flashing signs indicating driving hazards or speeds in the following locations in order of priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on the COO1 as it passes Brandon, in both directions</li> <li>- on the Frieston Road and Barkston Road entries into Hough on the Hill</li> <li>- on both approaches through Gelston</li> </ul>	High
The Parish Council will continue to work with Lincolnshire County Council Highways Department to maintain and improve the safety of the roads within the Parish. However, should additional funding become available to the Parish, further safety improvements will be sought, eg by the creation of passing places on the roads connecting the three villages.	High
Community Renewable Energy Schemes (Reference Policy HOH13)	Medium
Interpretation Boards for local heritage sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at All Saints Churchyard (village features and history)</li> <li>- at Beacon Site (landscape, ecology and history of the ironstone workings)</li> <li>- on the Loveden Hill Byway (history and archaeology)</li> </ul>	Low

## Non-Planning Issues

138 The Parish Council has responded to the views and wishes of residents in compiling the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan, but a number of the concerns and ideas raised lie outside the scope of planning and require other actions to take them forward. The table below sets out suggestions for taking forward these wider issues, for further consideration:

Issue	Proposed Action
<p><b><u>1 Loveden Hill 'Byway Open to All Traffic'</u></b>            Raised as a concern during consultation. Parish Council requested to seek a change to the current status of the track, returning it to Footpath and Byway status.</p>	<p>Parish Council could enquire about the necessary legal process through the Lincolnshire County Council's Footpaths Team. (An initial enquiry has already been raised, Reference 1253648.)</p>
<p><b><u>2 Multi-Use Games Area on the Playing Field</u></b>            There was support from the consultation for improving the utilisation of the current Playing Field in Hough on the Hill, potentially by installing a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) or similar improved ball games facility.</p>	<p>The Parish Council will consider any new plan or project put before them to enhance the leisure facilities of the Parish.            (NB: It is possible that installation of a MUGA, or similar facility, by the Parish Council on land owned by them could be pursued as a permitted development - ie, not require planning permission. However it is recommended that the views and advice of SKDC be obtained before any such initiative is taken forward.)</p>
<p><b><u>3 Permissive Paths and Byways</u></b>            Government funding to support landowners and farmers to operate Permissive Paths is ending. These paths and byways, which are popular and well-used within the Parish, may be closed.</p>	<p>The Parish Council will liaise with local farmers and landowners about the future of the Permissive Paths within the Parish, supporting them wherever possible to keep Paths open to the public, and/or promoting new paths and access arrangements.</p>
<p><b><u>4 Condition of Local Roads and Speed Limits</u></b>            Concerns about speeding vehicles on local roads, the lack of passing places and the poor condition of both roads and verges was consistently raised during consultations.</p>	<p>The Parish Council will continue to work with Lincolnshire County Council Highways Department to improve the safety and condition of the roads within the Parish.</p>
<p><b><u>5 Preparation of a Local List</u></b>            There is currently no Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest for Hough on the Hill Parish. The SKDC Conservation Officer has indicated that there would be support for such a list to be compiled through an evidenced process.</p>	<p>The Parish Council will explore, in partnership with the SKDC Conservation Officer, an appropriately evidenced process for compiling a Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest, including within such consideration those 'positive unlisted buildings' identified within the Hough on the Hill Conservation Area (Draft Review 2014 or any subsequently approved document) and the features of interest</p>



	identified by local people as listed in Section 4 of this Plan.
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### **Regular Review**

139 The Parish Council will seek to develop its process of consultation with its parishioners.

140 The Parish Council will undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Plan every 5 years to ensure it remains compliant with both national and local planning policy, and that it is up to date and relevant to changing circumstances. The review process will include liaison with the owner of Loveden Hill Local Green Space if any aspects of this legislation or its impact have substantially altered in the intervening period such that they impact on the operation of his business. The review process will also ensure that the required infrastructure improvements (as listed above) remain relevant and appropriate.

Allen Pyke Associates

HOUGH ON THE HILL  
PARISH LANDSCAPE  
CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



Landscape architecture



Urban design



Environmental planning

Prepared on behalf of

**HOUGH ON THE HILL PARISH  
COUNCIL**

Ref: 2448-H-RE-01D – FINAL

Date: October 2013

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Image on front cover – view from footpath between Gelston and Hough on the Hill

## I. Introduction

- I.1 In June 2013 the Parish of Hough on the Hill in Lincolnshire commissioned landscape architects Allen Pyke Associates Ltd. to undertake a locally based landscape character assessment of the parish. This study was commissioned alongside one for the neighbouring parish of Stubton. The purpose of this study is to provide supporting information for a potential Neighbourhood Plan.
- I.2 The assessment draws on the existing published landscape character assessment for South Kesteven and on the Lincolnshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (see sections below for further detail). Both documents are essential parts of the existing, adopted local planning policy and have therefore been important in the development of this parish based study which seeks, where relevant, to further sub-divide the area into a finer grain of characterisation.
- I.3 This study has been undertaken in line with the Natural England's best practice guidelines along with a focus on the experiences and perception of the local residents of their landscape and surroundings. As well as reviewing the elements that make up the character ie the physical nature of the landscape and its land use, the experience of living or working within the area or engaging in recreational activities have been considered. Important views, valued walks, local landmarks etc have all been discussed with the residents of the parish and the findings have been used to develop the landscape character areas set out below.

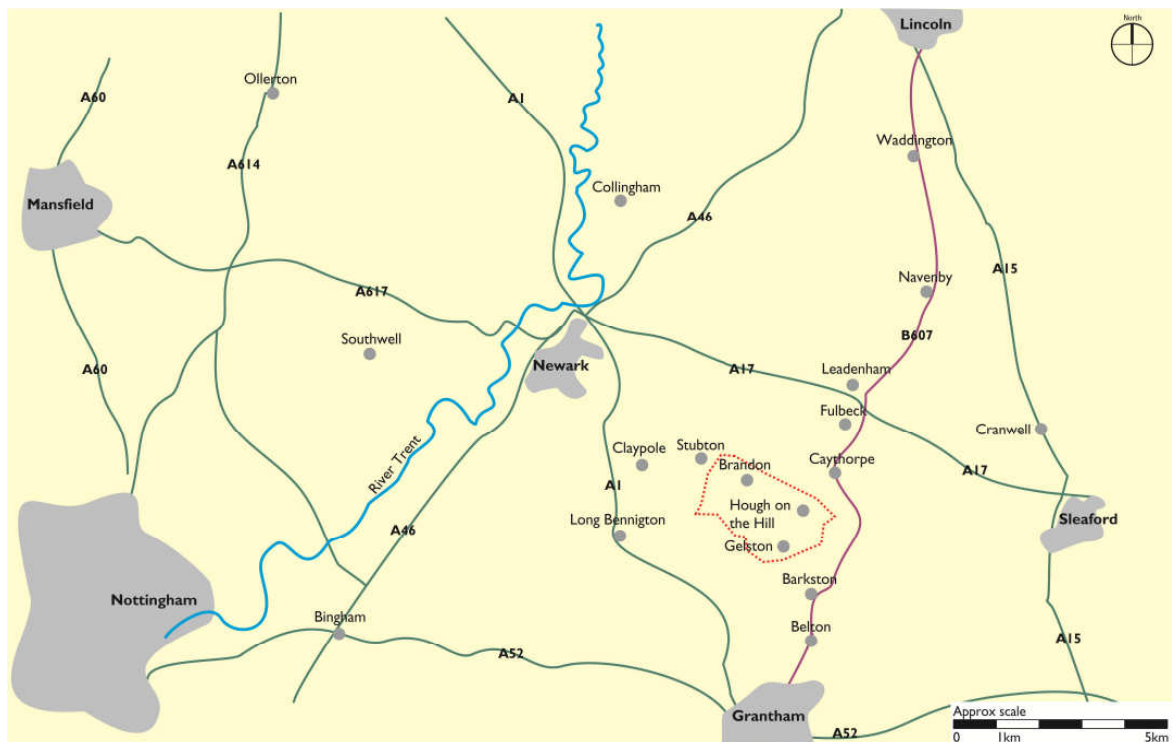


Fig 1 – Location of Hough on the Hill Parish (note – not all villages/roads are illustrated)

## **Methodology**

- I.4 Landscape Character Assessment, as noted above, is the recognised methodology for describing the landscape and its defining characteristics at a variety of scales from national through to regional, district and parish. Guidelines for undertaking such assessments were published by Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) in 2002 and 'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland' remains the recognised standard for such studies. Landscape character assessment is also recognised by national government within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- I.5 This parish based assessment has been undertaken in a number of stages. Following the development of the brief and scope of this study with members of the Parish Council, the first stage was to undertake a 'desk based' assessment which included a review of current and historical mapping, planning policy and existing, published, character assessments. The second stage involved a series of site visits and walking of most of the footpaths and lanes within the parish. These were recorded with photographs and written notes describing the features within the landscape, views, landmarks etc. The third stage involved drawing up an initial character area map and describing the key characteristics of each area. Stage four involved input from the community which sought to gain an understanding of how local people use, experience and feel about the landscape. This occurred through the use of a simple questionnaire and a workshop with local residents who reviewed the initial findings and the initial character area locations and descriptions. The final stage was the collation of information into a map and series of descriptions for each parish level character area. The findings were then used to consider the threats or implications of change on the landscape. This has been developed into a series of objectives and recommendations that may be used to inform future parish based policy.
- I.6 Whilst the assessment followed the above stages, this has not been a linear process and that each stage has overlapped and informed the work of the other stages.
- I.7 The site work was undertaken during the summer months when trees and hedges were in leaf and visibility in places restricted. It is also noted that whilst the majority of photographs were taken in July and August in good weather conditions, seasonal change will affect the appearance of much of the landscape, especially that which is in arable production. The different annual and seasonal growing regimes result in an ever changing landscape ranging from deep ploughed fields, to the floral yellow cover of oilseed rape, to the bright green of young crops and the golden fields just prior to harvest.



## 2. Policy Context

### National Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 At a national level the landscape is recognised as an important asset and this is set out in planning policy as well as being promoted by public bodies such as Natural England and English Heritage. In 2006 the government signed up to the European Landscape Convention which became binding in 2007. Part of delivering the objectives of the convention has been through the preparation and application of landscape character assessments. Such assessments have become important and recognised tools in helping decision making bodies, developers and the general public understand distinctions between landscapes at all scales as well as helping set policy relating to the conservation or enhancement of the landscape. The convention defines landscape as *“An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”* (Council of Europe 2000)
- 2.2 Under the Localism Act 2011, the government sets out that local communities, through a Parish Council or through the formation of a local forum, can produce Neighbourhood Plans with a view to setting locally based guidance on where new development can go and what any such development should look like. This landscape character assessment will be used to inform the policies set out in the potential Neighbourhood Plan and will form part of the ‘evidence base’ for the Plan.
- 2.3 The NPPF forms the primary national planning policy in respect of new development and seeks to promote sustainable development across the country. Local Plans (those prepared by the District Councils) are also required to be in line with the NPPF. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in line with both the NPPF and Local Plan policy.
- 2.4 The NPPF sets out 12 ‘core principles’ the first of which states that decision making should *“be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area.”*
- 2.5 The fourth principle states that decision making should *“always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”* and the fifth principle states that it should *“take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it”*.
- 2.6 Section 8 of the NPPF, Promoting Healthy Communities, sets out the national policy relating to access to open space and its importance to health and well-being, whilst much of this policy is concerned with formal open space and sports provision, paragraph 75 states that *“Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.”*

- 2.7 Section 11, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment sets out how policy and decision making should protect and enhance the natural environment including minimising impact on bio-diversity and ‘protecting and enhancing valued landscapes’ with an emphasis on existing ‘protected landscapes’. Section 12 goes on to set out policy relating to Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment noting that policy and planning decisions should take account of “opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”
- 2.8 Paragraph 170, which sets out requirements for local authorities in respect of preparing an ‘evidence base’ to support their local plans, states that “Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and for areas where there are major expansion options assessments of landscape sensitivity.”

### **Local Planning Policy Context**

- 2.9 The Parish of Hough on the Hill is located within the administrative boundary of South Kesteven District Council. The Core Strategy adopted in 2010 contains the current planning policy. Section 4, Environmental Policies, sets out the Council’s policy relating to environmental issues including landscape character which is set out in Policy EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District. The preamble to the policy states that

*“Landscapes are an important part of Lincolnshire’s physical and cultural resource. They contain innumerable visible traces of human interaction with nature over many millennia. They contribute to the identity of the County, provide settings for everyday life, attract tourism and business, and are a source of enjoyment and inspiration. Virtually all landscape, however unassuming, means something to someone.”*

It goes on to state that

*“The District’s landscape character is not only its topography but is a blend of natural features, biodiversity and man-made structures. This policy aims to ensure that these resources are conserved and that the environment is protected and enhanced. It aims to make sure that development within the District does not compromise the variety and distinctiveness of the existing biodiversity and wider environment. It is intended to sustain an attractive, diverse, high-quality, accessible, thriving and environmentally healthy countryside in South Kesteven.”*

- 2.10 Policy EN1 States

*“South Kesteven’s Landscape Character Areas are identified on the map [paragraph 4.1.10]. Development must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape within which it is situated, and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration. All development proposals and site allocations will be assessed in relation to:*

- 1. statutory, national and local designations of landscape features, including natural and historic assets*
- 2. local distinctiveness and sense of place*
- 3. historic character, patterns and attributes of the landscape*
- 4. the layout and scale of buildings and designed spaces*
- 5. the quality and character of the built fabric and their settings*

6. *the condition of the landscape*
7. *biodiversity and ecological networks within the landscape*
8. *public access to and community value of the landscape*
9. *remoteness and tranquillity*
10. *visual intrusion*
11. *noise and light pollution*
12. *Conservation Area Appraisals and Village Design Statements, where these have been adopted by the Council*
13. *impact on controlled waters*
14. *protection of existing open space (including allotments and public open space, and open spaces important to the character, setting and separation of built-up areas)”*

### 3. Existing Published Character Assessments

- 3.1 There are already studies which exist at a national, regional and district scale and this section will summarise the findings of these assessments as they form an important basis for the more detailed parish level assessment below.

#### National Landscape Character Area

- 3.2 Natural England is currently in the process of reviewing and re-publishing all national level character assessments. The parish of Hough on the Hill falls within national character area 48 Trent and Belvoir Vales (which was recently re-published in April 2013). The area (see map below) covers a large geographical area and is described as being:

*“characterised by undulating, strongly rural and predominantly arable farmland, centred on the River Trent. A low-lying rural landscape with relatively little woodland cover, the NCA offers long, open views. Newark-on-Trent (generally referred to as Newark) lies at the centre with Grantham, Nottingham, Lincoln and Gainsborough on the peripheries. The southern and eastern edges of the Vales are defined by the adjoining escarpments of the Lincolnshire Edge and the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds NCA. To the west, the escarpment of a broad ridge of rolling landscape defines the boundary with the neighbouring Sherwood and Humberhead Levels NCAs. The area’s generally fertile soils and good quality agricultural land have supported a diversity of farming over a long period but, because of this, little semi-natural habitat remains. The powerful River Trent and its flood plain provide a strong feature running through the landscape. It is the greatest biodiversity resource, being a major corridor for wildlife moving through the area and supporting a variety of wetland habitats. It also provides flood storage as well as large amounts of cooling water for local power stations.”*

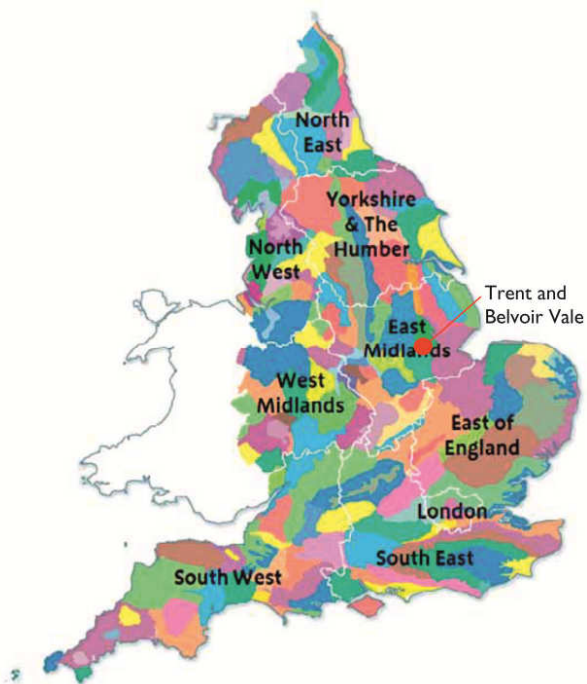


Fig 2 – National Landscape Character Area 48 – Trent and Belvoir Vale

- 3.3 It is of note that several photographs used to illustrate the character area within this publication are taken from within the parish of Hough on the Hill. These are of views looking down across the Trent Valley from the elevated slopes of the escarpment. The full character assessment and the broader scale policies within it can be viewed on the Natural England website.

### **Regional Scale Character Area**

- 3.4 The East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2010 on behalf of the East Midlands Landscape Partnership. At this regional scale the parish falls across two Character Groups/Areas Character Group 4 - 'Lowland Vales' - Character Area 4a 'Unwooded Vales' and Character Group 6 - 'Limestone Farmland' - Character Area 6a 'Limestone Scarps and Dipslopes'. The key characteristics are described as follows -

#### **Character Area 4a 'Unwooded Vales'**

- Extensive, low lying rural landscape underlain by Triassic and Jurassic mudstones and clays and widespread superficial deposits;
- Expansive long distance and panoramic views from higher ground at the margin of the vales gives a sense of visual containment;
- Low hills and ridges gain visual prominence in an otherwise gently undulating landscape;
- Complex drainage patterns of watercourses that flow within shallow undulations often flanked by pasture and riparian habitats;
- Limited woodland cover; shelter belts and hedgerow trees gain greater visual significance and habitat value as a result;
- Productive arable and pastoral farmland, with evidence of increasing reversion to arable cropping in recent times;
- Regular pattern of medium sized fields enclosed by low and generally well maintained hedgerows and ditches in low lying areas; large modern fieldscapes evident in areas of arable reversion; and
- Sparsely settled with small villages and dispersed farms linked by quiet rural lanes.

#### **Character Area 6a 'Limestone Scarps and Dipslopes'**

- Limestone escarpment and dip-slope with strong north south alignment;
- Diverse patterns of land use and regular spring line settlements along scarp in contrast to the more open and exposed dip slope;
- Limestone villages retain strong historic character, and provide strong link to the nature of the underlying geology;
- Ermine Street forms a significant feature of the landscape, and continues to dictate landscape patterns and boundaries;
- Place names and some indicator species are reminders of once widespread heathland; and
- Evidence of declining landscape condition across intensively farmed areas.

### **District Landscape Character Assessment**

- 3.5 The South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment was prepared by FPRC on behalf of the District Council in 2007. It forms part of current planning policy and is specifically referred to within the Core Strategy environment policies. The assessment, building on the national character assessment, divides the district into six character areas (see map below). The parish of Hough on the Hill falls within the character area also called the 'Trent and Belvoir Vales'. The key characteristics for this area are described as follows

- A relatively simple, medium to large-scale, open arable or mixed farming landscape.
- Flat or very gently undulating topography.
- Simple regular fields enclosed by hawthorn hedges.



- Relatively few hedgerow trees and virtually no woodland.
- Small villages typically located on slightly rising land.
- Church towers and spires visible across the landscape.
- Buildings styles vary, but a high proportion of brick with dark red pantiles

3.6 The landscape objectives for this character area are as follows -

- Maintain and improve field boundary condition.
- Retain ditch patterns.
- Maintain wet grassland areas.
- Protect any woodland cover.
- Maintain existing hedgerow trees and plant new hedgerow trees.
- Provide new woodland planting with any new large scale agricultural buildings.
- Maintain views to elevated villages and churches.

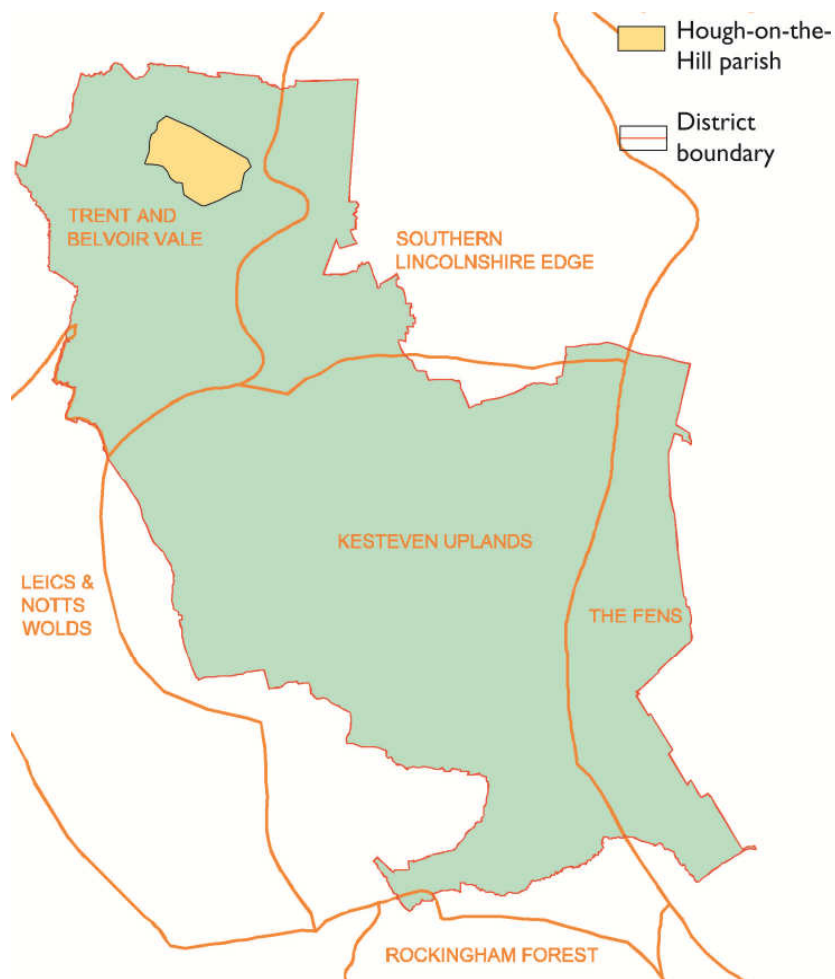


Fig 3 – SKDC Landscape Character Areas

### Historic Landscape Characterisation

- 3.7 Lincolnshire County Council published the 'Lincolnshire Historic Landscape Project' in 2010. The study, based on best practice methodology provided by English Heritage, seeks to define the existing landscape in terms of its historic development and influences. Hough on the Hill falls within the wider Regional Character Area 7 known as The Southern Cliff and within the historic Character Area Zone TVL4 The West Grantham Farmlands within The Trent Valley Character Area. Whilst covering a much larger area, of relevance to this assessment, The Southern Cliff character area refers to the '*distinctive line of settlements traceable along the cliff from Lincoln southwards to Grantham. This line appears to follow the curvilinear course of the Cliff, but is not limited to the top of it. It may be that the settlements were established along a spring-line*'. Reference is made to the agricultural land having a high proportion of surviving parliamentary and planned enclosures and the hills and valleys which are more suited to pastoral farming.
- 3.8 The description of the character area goes on to state '*The area is well wooded, with a mixture of ancient woodland and more recent plantations. The large country estates in the area have also enhanced the woodland cover of the area through the planting of shelter belts, screens and game coverts. There is a greater occurrence of woodland in the rolling hills of the south than on the heath. There is less woodland cover on the eastern slopes at the fen edge, perhaps indicating the greater arable productivity of the soil in this part of the area.*'
- 3.9 Sheep farming and the wool trade is referred to as one of the contributing factors to the historic wealth of the area, which is evident in the surviving stone built farm houses dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is noted that the area retains strong elements of its historic character but with area of ancient enclosure on the uplands having been lost to the pressures of modern day farming practices.
- 3.10 The historic character zone, The West Grantham Farmlands (TVL4) notes that the zone is '*divided between the flat low lying areas of farmland and several small hills, on which the historic nucleated settlements are found*'. The landscape of the wider character zone is described as rural, displaying a 'strongly planned character', though it notes that around Caythorpe and Hough on the Hill, the fields are '*larger and more irregular, although the character of straight, hedged boundaries is still prevalent. A less dominated pattern of small irregularly-shaped fields with sinuous boundaries can be seen on the higher ground in the immediate vicinity of some settlement such as Gelston*'. And with further reference to Gelston it is noted that during the later medieval periods '*parts of former open fields were gradually enclosed in a piecemeal fashion*', perhaps for grazing sheep, and that these ancient enclosures are well preserved around Gelston. Reference is also made to the well preserved ridge and furrow in some fields, particularly on higher ground.
- 3.11 During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, any remaining open fields or commons were enclosed either by private owners or under the parliamentary enclosures acts, which also resulted in the addition of dispersed farmsteads, beyond the existing settlements. Further modification to field patterns have taken place in the twentieth

century resulting in some areas having larger fields to accommodate modern mechanised farming techniques.

- 3.12 Settlement is described as dating from the early medieval period, with all villages mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086.



*15<sup>th</sup> Century Cross at Gelston and ridge and furrow pasture near Hough on the Hill*

## 4. Hough on the Hill Parish Assessment

### Introduction

- 4.1 As described in the introduction, the methodology for assessing the parish landscape character areas has been applied using a combination of published information and maps, site visits and consultation with local residents. This section provides a brief description of the main attributes contributing to the landscape of the parish of Hough on the Hill. This is followed by a description of the parish level character areas.
- 4.2 The parish of Hough on the Hill comprises a predominantly agricultural landscape with a number of small villages and scattered farms. The main villages, described in further detail below, are Hough on the Hill, the largest of the villages and located to the east of the parish; Gelston to the south of the parish and Brandon located centrally in the heart of the parish.



*View from Loveden Hill looking towards Gelston Grange over the surrounding agricultural landscape*

- 4.3 The Lincolnshire Dictionary of Place Names (Cameron, 1998) notes the meanings of the villages as follows: Hough, deriving from the Old English word, Haga meaning enclosure; Gelston, probably referring to 'Giofull's village and ton, a hybrid of the word tun, usually referring to an Anglo Saxon settlement taken over by the Danes. Brandon is believed to derive from the old English word dun or hill, looking over the River Brant.



*View from Gelston looking north east across the surrounding agricultural landscape*

4.4 The parish lies within Lincolnshire approximately 10 miles east of Newark on Trent, approximately 15 miles south of Lincoln and approximately 10 miles north of Grantham. The road network through the parish comprises rural lanes which in places are single track. The area is popular with cyclists, with Gelston and Hough on the Hill located along the Hougham Village Cycle Route, a circular leisure route. The main East Coast railway line runs parallel with the south of the parish but does not pass within it.

**Settlement**

4.5 Hough on the Hill is the largest of the three villages within the parish and is located on the top of the escarpment and in part on its north west facing slopes. A number of lanes radiate out connecting it to the surrounding villages.

4.6 The village itself comprises a nucleated village of predominantly limestone houses with pantile roofs. There has been some modern infill and conversion of farm buildings into residential properties. The Brownlow Arms and the adjoining former post office, Grade II listed buildings, are located in the centre of the village. The Church of All Saints is a Grade I listed building, dating back to Saxon times. It is constructed of local limestone and ironstone and has a tower with a circular stair turret attached. It was built on a hill within the village, known as Castle Hill, alongside the motte and bailey and also a Scheduled Ancient Monument. To the south of High Road further archaeological earthworks are evident which relate to Hough Priory, an Augustinian priory founded about 1164 and dissolved in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Much of the village is designated as a Conservation Area and there are several other Grade II listed buildings, including Manor Farmhouse, Hough House, The Red House, Manor House and the former village school and Schoolhouse. As a former estate village to the Brownlow family, the Tudor-gothic style is distinctive in many parts including the former estate cottages. Further details relating to the development of the village, the Conservation Area and the buildings within it can be found in the Conservation Area Appraisal (produced by SKDC, the appraisal was still in draft format whilst at the time of completing this assessment).



*The Church of All Saints, Hough on the Hill and a view towards from the church yard towards of the former post office and the Brownlow Arms*

4.7 Gelston, which lies to the south of Hough on the Hill, is a small village, again on the elevated slopes of the escarpment. Here the houses are predominantly of red brick, with some render and limestone with some properties dating from the 1700s and others from the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The village is located alongside



Loveden Hill (an archaeological monument), which includes the site of an Anglo-Saxon burial ground, the largest in the county and including over 1700 cremations and 45 inhumations. A locally significant track runs around the hill and down to Gelston Grange towards Brandon and several footpaths converge in and around the village. Gelston does not have a church but there is a converted former chapel building. The remains of a stone cross are prominent on the Village Green thought to date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and itself a Scheduled Ancient Monument. There is also a preserved Pinfold adjacent to the green and areas of open land within the village envelope allowing views out towards the surrounding countryside and contributing to the rural character of the village.



*The Village Green at Gelston*

4.8 The small village of Brandon is located centrally to the west of the parish on the lower levels. The houses are built from both red brick and local limestone. The Old Hall, a Grade II\* listed building, dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is built from distinctive bands of ironstone, blue lias and limestone. Whilst many properties date from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, a number of houses were built in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century.

4.9 The chapel, dedicated to St John the Evangelist, is constructed from limestone and ironstone, though has a modern slate roof. The layout and size of the village has remained largely unchanged, with the exception of the council built houses to the south, and the village still retains areas of undeveloped land within its boundaries.



*The chapel of John the Evangelist, Brandon and view looking down Hall Road with The Old Hall to the right*



**Geology and hydrology**

- 4.10 The underlying geology of the parish is varied, particularly to the east where the ground rises up the escarpment.
- 4.11 The River Brant runs north-south through the parish and alongside the village of Brandon. Elsewhere water courses within the parish are limited to a small stream to the west and field drains. There are some areas of standing water associated with field irrigation. Within Hough on the Hill and Gelston, as found elsewhere along the escarpment, a number of springs rise from the limestone and feed down into the rivers system and some properties have wells.

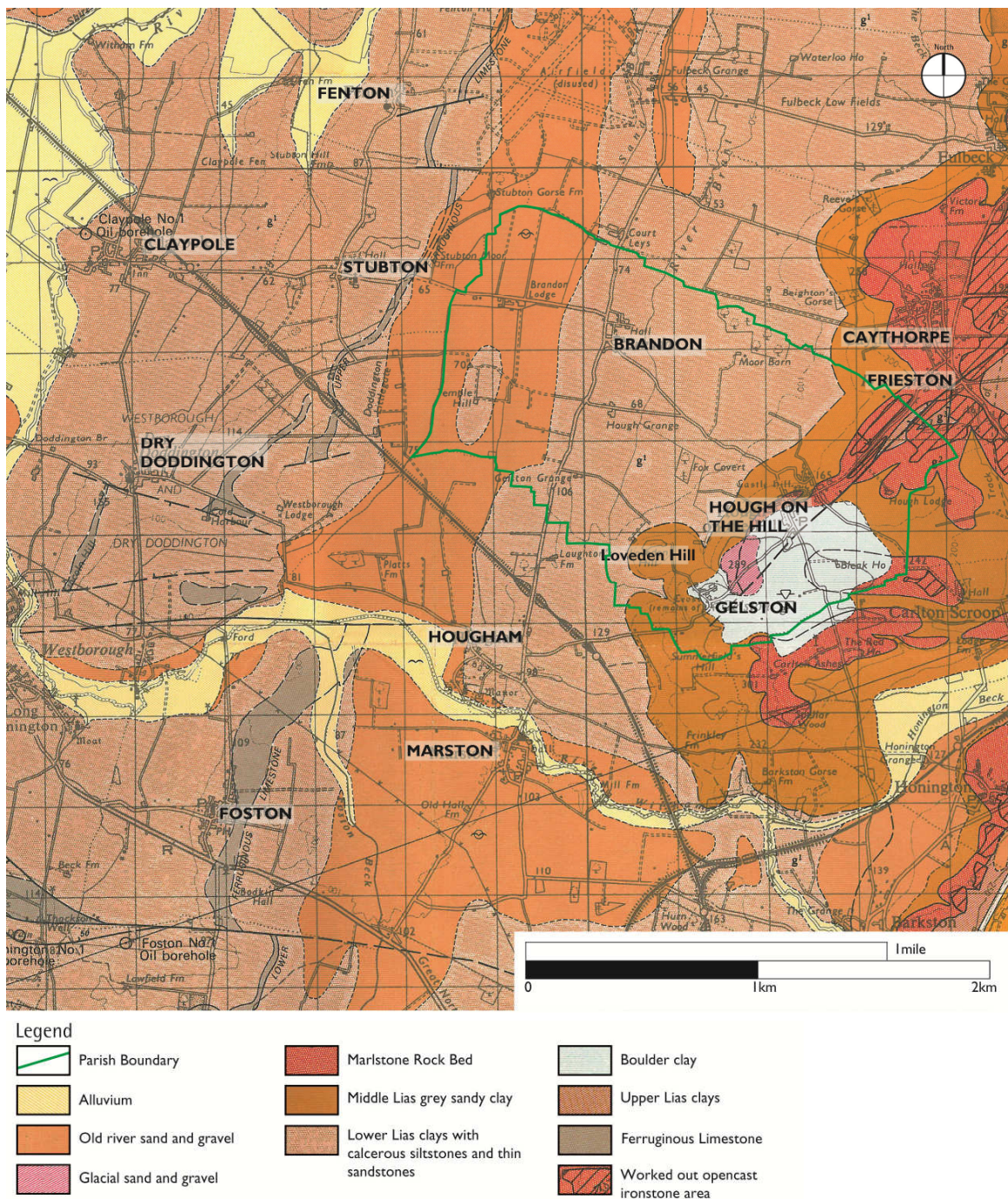


Fig 4– Geology Map

**Topography, Views and Visibility**

4.12 The topography is varied within the parish with a predominantly a flat area at approximately 20m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and covering much of the parish but rising towards the escarpment (also known locally as the Cliff or the Lincoln Edge), which at its highest point is at approximately 85m AOD. Loveden Hill, a local landmark is located to the north west of Gelston and rises to approximately 70m AOD. Land beyond the parish in the upper escarpment rises to approximately 110m AOD.

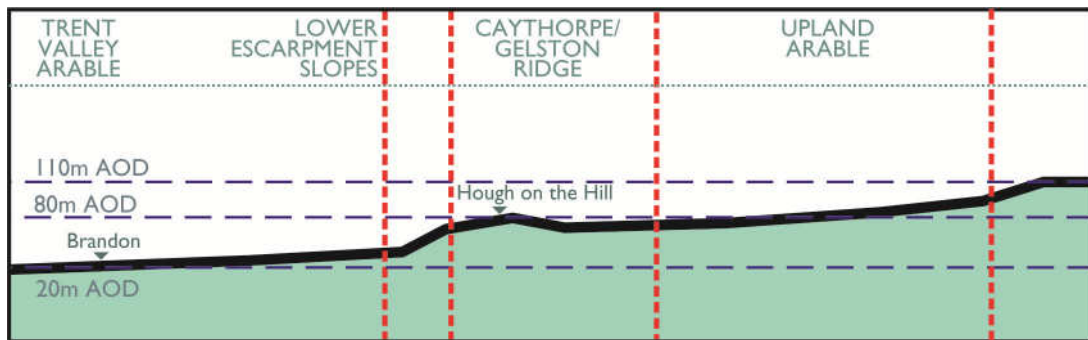


Fig 5 – Illustrative section through the parish – not to scale

4.13 The time of year affects the nature of views, for example the loss of leaf cover on trees and hedgerows in winter opens up some otherwise contained views. At other times of year, the angle of the lower setting sun highlights particular features such as the limestone church spires and towers in nearby villages. The varied topography and extensive views out contribute to the character and enjoyment of residents and visitors to the area.

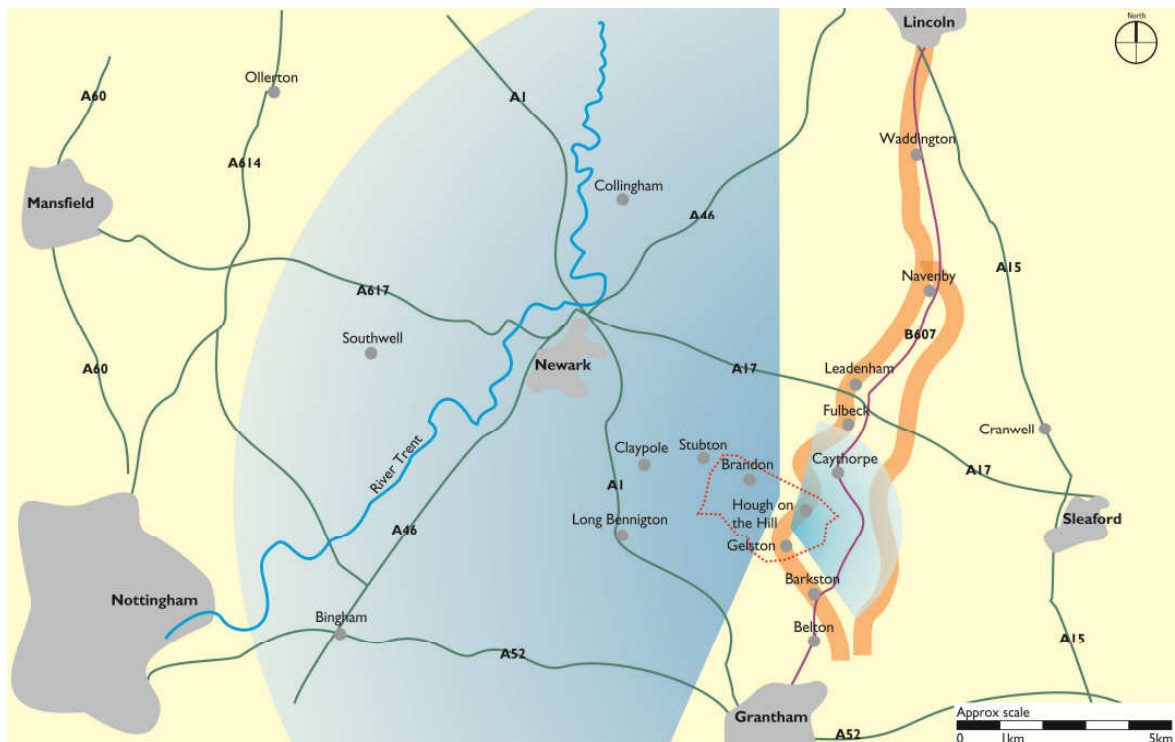


Fig 6 – Illustrative map of key views from the escarpment slopes (shown in orange) near Hough on the Hill



- 4.14 Whilst many of the field boundaries comprise hedgerows and mature trees there is a predominance of long distance views, often many miles beyond the parish boundaries and the variation in topography results in the views being a significant feature of the landscape. The escarpment itself, including Loveden Hill is prominent in views from the west when looking towards the parish, and from many locations from some distance away, it forms the horizon. From the lower levels, for example in and around Brandon, the escarpment forms a significant feature in the views with the wooded areas, villages and church towers and spires forming local landmarks.



*Panoramic view from Hough on the Hill looking down the escarpment towards the Trent Valley*

- 4.15 From the higher ground along the escarpment ridge or from its slopes, the views west are across many miles of the Trent valley, into Nottinghamshire and beyond. From some vantage points, views across this landscape cover 180 degree views of fields, hedgerows and plantation woodland. In addition to the numerous church towers and spires visible in the landscape a number of historic buildings can be seen including Lincoln Cathedral, Belvoir Castle, Newark Castle and Southall Minster. There are very few modern man-made structures visible; however these include Staythorpe Power station near Newark, and Cottam Power Station (some 25miles away) along the River Trent and the sugar factory in Newark. Whilst distant in the view these can change in prominence depending on the weather for example influencing the view of steam clouds from the cooling towers. A tall mast, located near Brandon, is visible in many of the views, but this is a temporary structure due to be removed within 6 months to a year.
- 4.16 From other locations along the higher ridge of the escarpment, the views eastwards are across fields towards the upper slopes of the escarpment, beyond the parish boundary. Here again only a few man made structures are visible. These include a telecommunications tower beyond Carlton Scroop and single wind turbine near Carlton Ashes which is especially visible from Gelston.



*View looking south east towards Brandon with the escarpment on the horizon*

- 4.17 A number of high status houses such as Fulbeck Hall (Grade II\* Listed) and Leadenham House (Grade II\* Listed), are located along the length of the escarpment, south of Lincoln and were clearly deliberately located to benefit from the views out across the Trent Valley and along the curve of the escarpment itself. This is also the case for Stubton Hall (Grade II) which lies to the west in adjacent parish of Stubton and Belton House (Grade I Listed and with a Registered Park and Garden), north of Grantham and some 5 miles from the parish. Bellmount Tower (Grade II\* Listed) within the grounds of Belton House is located on elevated slopes to benefit from the view. The Tower, built in 1751 as a focal point and viewing tower, has been the subject of a separate study The Belton House and Park – Setting Study and Policy Statement 2010 (prepared by Atkins for South Kesteven District Council and The National Trust) and whilst the parish lies several miles away from the Park, it is clear that the countryside within the parish forms part of the wider view and landscape setting of Belton House and Park and in particular Bellmount Tower.

### Land Use and Vegetation

- 4.18 The land use is predominantly agricultural fields with the majority of land being used for arable production growing wheat, sugar-beet, field beans, oilseeds, potatoes etc. There are a few fields used for grazing sheep, particularly along the slopes of the escarpment and in smaller fields closer to the villages as well as some horse paddocks and grazing for cattle. In places near Hough on the Hill and Gelston there are fields where ridge and furrow has been preserved.
- 4.19 There are a number of small areas of deciduous woodlands (Fig 7), generally in planned, linear formations along field boundaries. There is a larger mixed deciduous wood near Brandon called Protection Wood. Land within the parish including some areas of woodland is used for shoots and raising game birds. Numerous badger setts and fox coverts are found across the parish.



*Views of road side hedges with woodland and mature trees on the horizon*

- 4.20 Hedgerows grow along many field boundaries, and comprise native species with a predominance of hawthorn and blackthorn. Groups of trees occur at some junctions with other field boundaries and occasional larger mature trees such as oaks, ash and horse chestnut occur within the hedgerows and along some roads. Along some older boundaries, particularly on the escarpment slopes, there are numerous instances of remnant hawthorn hedges where the hawthorns have been allowed to grow into small trees. There are a large number of trees around and within the village of Hough on the Hill and within all three villages a variety of tree species are found including ornamental species, conifers and fruit trees that are more typically found within residential areas.
- 4.21 Some shelter belt planting occurs around the edges of farms and includes species such as the distinctly fastigate Lombardy Poplars or conifers as well as other larger growing species including oak, ash, chestnut willow and poplar.

**Footpaths**

4.22 There is a network of footpaths, tracks and bridleways throughout the parish (Fig.7). Feedback via the public consultation (see below for further detail) confirmed that these are well used by local people and visitors and as reflected throughout this study, the wide panoramic views and seasonal change experienced along these routes are essential elements to the enjoyment of the area. The Viking Way is located to the south of the parish and is connected by footpaths leading from the village of Gelston. It is a long distance, national route of some 147 miles which runs from the Humber Bridge, in North Lincolnshire to Oakham in Rutland to the south.



Fig 7 – Map of Parish with public rights of way, churches and woodlands



### **Public Consultation**

4.23 The following summarises findings of the initial public consultation exercise which included the receipt of over 30 questionnaires and an evening workshop event attended by over 30 residents.

4.24 Residents were asked the following questions

- 1 - Which 5 words would you use to best describe the character of the countryside within the parish?
- 2 - What are the 5 key elements, landmarks or features that you associate with the surrounding countryside?
- 3 - What do you value most about your local countryside?
- 4 - What, if any, are the negative aspects of the surrounding countryside?
- 5 - Thinking about how you experience the local countryside, what, if any improvements could be made to enhancing this experience?
- 6 - How often do you use the local footpaths/bridleways etc?
- 7 - Which is your favourite footpath/walk/local area and why?

### **Question 1**

4.25 The foremost characteristic of the area as viewed by local people is its overwhelmingly undeveloped and tranquil nature. Though featuring a number of working farms, the lack of industrial sites is seen as a key positive attribute by residents. This underlines the local view of the area as 'historic' and 'natural'. Local sites of interest such as 'The Cliff' and Loveden Hill derive much of their value from this setting.

### **Question 2**

4.26 Key landmarks such as Loveden Hill and Bellmount Tower and locations such as Caythorpe and the other 'Cliff' villages share many characteristics and associations that were highlighted by locals as important, such as the local architecture used throughout the small, traditional villages. Local churches formed another significant set of features highlighted as important for reinforcing the character of the area. The core underlying theme of both the man-made and natural features of the area is the 'harmoniousness' of their layout, raising the lack of support of any development other than improvement of existing infrastructure.

### **Question 3**

4.27 A vast majority emphasised the area's 'feeling of space and peace' as the feature they valued most, in conjunction with limited traffic and 'unspoilt' rural views.

### **Question 4**

4.28 Residents did however identify that whilst infrequent, heavy goods vehicles damage the tranquillity and character of the area as well as creating noise, pollution and causing physical damage to local roads and impacting road safety. The lack of affordable housing, a cycle lane, basic amenities and postal services were seen as drawbacks of the area, however as with other questions, residents' responses highlighted that they would view increased development negatively. Other issues included a lack of local schools available in the

area itself; the poor state of many footpaths and the lack of protection for specific species (Barn owls in particular).

**Question 5**

- 4.29 Residents were particularly concerned for the conservation of local farm buildings and the general architecture of the churches and villages. The prevention of lorries travelling through villages was an issue of near unanimity. To a lesser extent the lack of disabled access and seating on footpaths illustrates the concern of specific community groups. Greater awareness of the parish history and natural/wildlife attributes was also seen as an area for future improvement as was the condition of country paths and public rights of way.

**Question 6**

- 4.30 Though not all residents commented on their use of local footpaths and bridleways, those who did, use them on a daily or weekly basis.

**Question 7**

- 4.31 Footpaths/bridleways between Gelston, Caythorpe and Brandon appear to be the most heavily used while others such as those in and around Temple Hill, Carlton Scoop and Little Gates Nursery were cited as being locally popular.

**Workshop**

- 4.32 The workshop held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at All Saints Church in Hough on the Hill was attended by over 30 local residents. Following a brief presentation about the parish character assessment three groups were formed to discuss the draft character areas as identified on maps. The discussions, in most parts confirmed the overall findings of the questionnaire, in that the rural and unchanged character were of most importance and that people highly valued aspects such as tranquillity with bird sound and lack of traffic noise being noted as important characteristics of this area. In addition the importance of local landmarks such as the church spires and towers as well as access to footpaths and bridleways were raised.
- 4.33 All three groups agreed with the four main character areas and the descriptions below reflect the discussions on each area. Loveden Hill was specifically highlighted as a special area and it was felt that it should be given prominence within the character assessment. The historic connections dating back to the Anglo-Saxon times were seen as very significant to many local people and it was recognised that its prominent location alongside but separate to the escarpment and the wide and long distance 360 degree views out over the adjacent vale and surrounding areas emphasised its significance over many centuries.



*Photographs from Loveden Hill and looking towards Loveden Hill from the footpath between Gelston and Hough*

- 4.34 All groups agreed that one of the most valued aspects of living in the parish are the views both to and from the escarpment – the sense of openness, large open skies and the experience of the changing seasons were seen as intrinsic to and improving the quality of their daily life. Low levels of night time light pollution was also mentioned as a benefit allowing for the enjoyment of night skies.

**5. Parish Character Areas**

- 5.1 The following section describes the local landscape character areas. The characteristics are drawn from information collected in the desk based assessment but more importantly from visiting the area, walking around the landscape and consulting with local residents to gain an understanding of their views on the landscape and what they feel are the main characteristics.
- 5.2 The assessment concluded that the land within the parish can be subdivided into to four character areas. Each is described below with a general description and a summary of key characteristics. There are a number of these key characteristics that are found across all three areas.

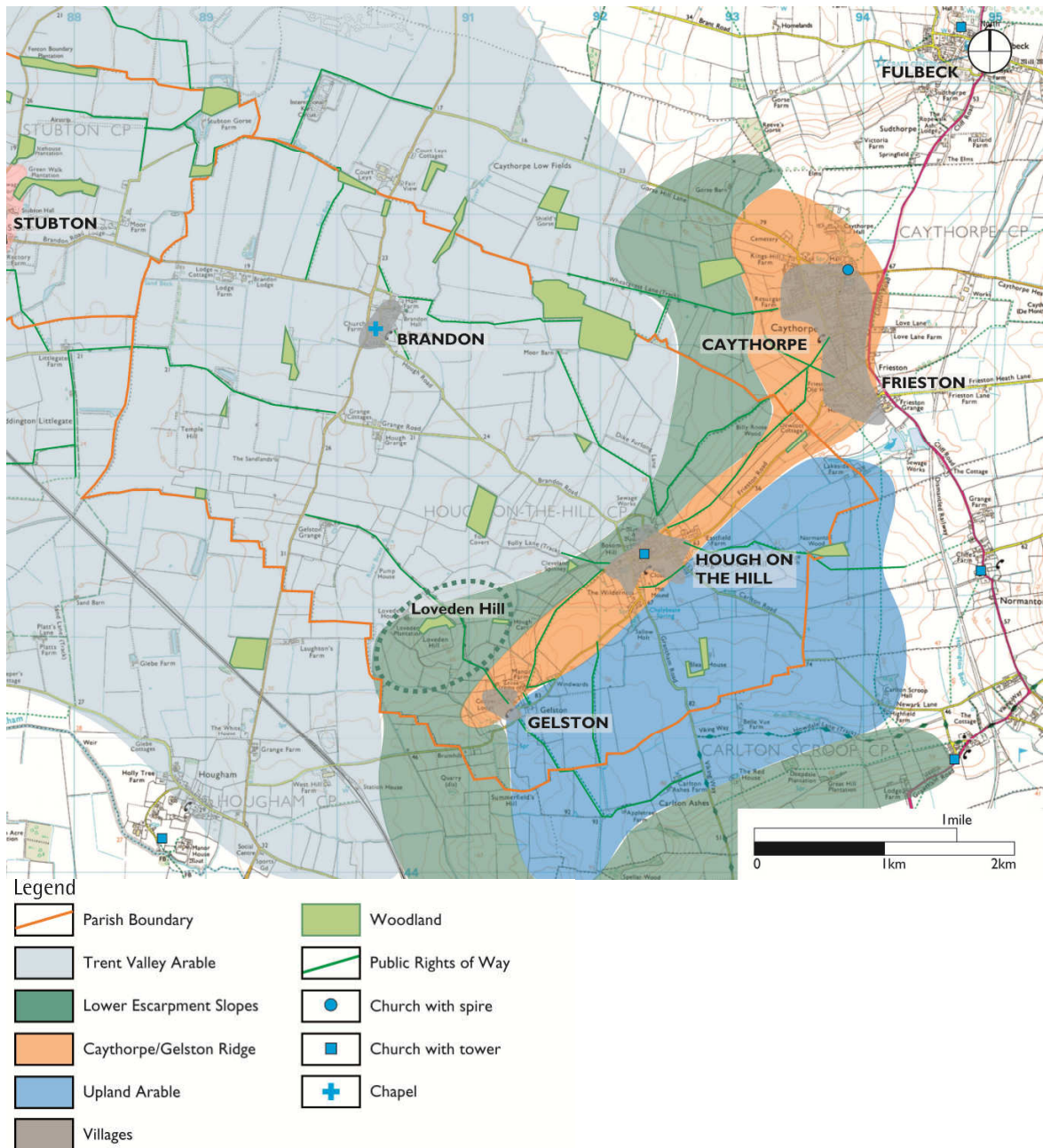


Fig 8 – Map of Parish Landscape Character Areas

5.3 PCA 1 - Trent Valley Arable - This is the dominant landscape character within the wider area and its boundaries extend well beyond the Parish. The characteristics are in keeping with the broader landscape character area of the Trent and Belvoir Vales described in the South Kesteven Assessment. Whilst generally within arable use, it was noted at the consultation event that much of the land had been used by dairy herds until the 1950s and that the choice of crop is now determined by the soil which tends to be sandy in the west with more clay in the east.

5.4 The Character Area includes the village of Brandon as well as a number of farms. The majority of buildings are of lower scale, considered harmonious with the landscape though there are a few larger scale agricultural buildings of which a small number are in some disrepair and detract from the quality of the landscape from some local views. Key characteristics for the PCA are

- A tranquil area with, large open views and only a very few minor roads.
- A relatively simple, medium to large-scale landscape with open arable fields.
- Flat or very gently undulating topography but with views east towards the escarpment beyond.
- Simple regular fields enclosed by predominately hawthorn / blackthorn hedges, with some wider field margins.
- Some hedgerow trees and areas of plantation woodland.
- Occasional farms (or former farms) with a range of residential buildings generally of lower scale two storey, but with some larger scale agricultural buildings (barns etc)
- Church towers and spires visible landmarks across the landscape particularly along the elevated land of the escarpment villages to the east.
- Building materials include a high proportion of brick with dark red pantiles with some localised use of Lincolnshire limestone.



*View across arable fields and hedgerow with trees*

5.5 PCA 2 – Lower Escarpment Slopes – This area comprises the undulating slopes of the limestone escarpment which runs through the parish. With the highest area to the east, the slopes within the study area are generally north-west facing. The land use is generally pasture with some arable fields on the more gently sloping areas. The northern part of Hough on the Hill sits within the character area and includes the pasture to the south of Lower Road and some houses and farm buildings on the edge of the village. Loveden Hill also sits within this character area and comprises a distinct hill with an area of woodland to the north. The village of Hough on the Hill and Loveden Hill are of historic/archaeological importance.

- A tranquil area with extensive 180 degree views to south, west and north with views stretching many miles across predominantly agricultural landscape.
- Smaller to medium pasture with some ridge and furrow evident. Some arable fields on shallow slopes.
- Gently undulating topography along the north-west facing slope with Loveden Hill being a prominent feature of historic note.



- Fields enclosed by predominantly hawthorn / blackthorn hedges – including some remnant hedges along older field boundaries.
- Some hedgerow trees and pockets of woodland and trees around the perimeters of the villages.
- Includes the northern area of the village of Hough on the Hill.
- Church towers and spires visible across the landscape both along the escarpment and out over the vale.
- Some pylons, and other infrastructure visible on the distant horizon.
- Building styles vary, but a high proportion of Lincolnshire Limestone with some ironstone and brick with dark red pantiles with some slate.



*View towards the escarpment edge near Hough on the Hill*

5.6 PCA 3 – Caythorpe Gelston Ridge - this area forms a narrow strip between the two adjacent character areas but is distinct in that it forms a ridge, affording 360 degree views from many locations. The area includes the village of Hough on the Hill, Gelston and Frieston/Caythorpe (outside the parish).

- A tranquil area with extensive 360 degree views from countryside and edge of village with views stretching many miles across predominantly agricultural landscape to the west and towards the higher escarpment slopes to the east.
- Mixture of small to medium pasture with some arable fields.
- A distinct ridge along the top of the escarpment between gently undulating topography along the north-west facing slope and containing former ironstone workings.
- Fields enclosed by predominately hawthorn hedges – including some remnant hedges.
- Some hedgerow trees and trees around the villages.
- Includes the villages of Gelston and Hough on the Hill.
- Church towers and spires visible across the landscape.
- Some pylons, and other infrastructure visible on the distant horizon.
- Building styles vary, but a high proportion of Lincolnshire Limestone with some ironstone and brick with dark red pantiles with some slate.



*View along the escarpment edge*



5.7 PCA 4 – Upland Arable - this area lies to the south and east of parish and comprises arable fields on a plateau between the two faces of the escarpment. Views to the east are towards the upper escarpment slope. A single wind turbine near Carlton Ashes is visible from much of this area.

- A tranquil area of open landscape with views across to the upper escarpment.
- Medium arable fields with some pasture.
- Generally flat topography.
- Simple regular fields enclosed by a mix of hedges and fences with drainage ditches.
- Some hedgerow trees and small woodland plantation.
- Church towers and spires visible across the landscape.
- Some pylons and other infrastructure visible across the landscape to the east.
- Scattered buildings with a mix of brick and limestone; dark red pantiles.



*View across arable fields towards the upper escarpment*

## 6. Parish Level Landscape Recommendations

- 6.1 This section draws on the findings of the character assessment and the comments and discussions held with local residents. Following the consultation draft of the initial character area plan and accompanying descriptions, the conclusion was that that the landscape, as it is, is a highly valued local resource and that the character of the parish and its setting should be retained. Key aspects of the character across all areas relate to the open, unspoilt and rural nature of the parish and wider area and that the views to and from the parish are of importance with the most significant features being the church towers and spires, Loveden Hill and the absence of larger scale built form.
- 6.2 Through consultation with residents there were a number of issues identified that are seen as threats to maintaining the landscape character, which are summarised as follows.
- Change of landowners – as much of the land is in arable agricultural use there is a concern that if the nature of farming changed then this could affect the character of the area – for example through the construction of large scale agricultural buildings.
  - An increase in the provision of alternative energy – whilst there currently are very distant glimpses of wind-turbines on the horizon, there is a threat as a result of current or future planning applications which would affect the open and uninterrupted views across the countryside, particularly in the case of turbines which would break the horizon.
  - Loss of trees and hedgerows – there is a potential threat of loss of hedgerows through either lack of management or pressure to remove for agricultural reasons. There is also a significant threat to trees, specifically those susceptible to disease such as Ash, Oak and Horse Chestnut, all of which are present within the parish.
- 6.3 A series of recommendations are made below which could be considered for adoption by the Parish Council. The aim is to assist the Parish in their promotion of the area for the enjoyment of residents and visitors specifically through the retention and enhancement of their highly valued landscapes and the distinct characteristics found within the Parish.



*Community event in Brandon*

**A - Access to the Landscape**

- 6.4 A1 - Maintain footpaths by ensuring they are easily identified and accessible year round. Efforts should be made to ensure signs are located at specific junctions or changes in direction and that, particularly where footpaths cross fields in production, a clear and accessible route is maintained. It is noted that the responsibility for implementing this may fall to individual landowners and efforts should be made to maintain dialogue with the relevant parties.
- 6.5 A2 - Review the permissive rights of way. To encourage access to the countryside efforts should be made to retain access to existing permissive rights of way and review, where appropriate, the option to have these formally designated as public rights of way. Where possible circular off road routes should be encouraged for the safety and enjoyment of all users.
- 6.6 A3 - Consider an increased number of bridleways. This would assist in avoiding unsafe use of roads (for riders and drivers). Where possible liaise with landowners to review the use of existing tracks and field margins to create new, safe, off-road bridleway routes.

**B - Residential and Village Environment**

- 6.7 B1 - Any new development should respect the style and scale of the existing properties and villages. Through reviews of planning applications, all development including conversions, extensions and any new development should ensure that the scale of buildings do not change the existing characteristics of the villages and that building materials, including boundary treatments (front / side walls, fences etc) are in keeping with the prevailing materials within each village. The impact of any other developments such as solar or wind generation should be considered with specific reference to the amenity and setting of residential properties.
- 6.8 B2 - New development should not significantly affect the existing village envelopes. To avoid change in the character and scale of the villages any new development should be carefully located on previously developed (brownfield) land.
- 6.9 B3 - Maintain the distinctive pattern of open spaces within the villages. Efforts should be made to ensure that the undeveloped land within the villages including the greens and other open spaces remain intact to retain the existing character and structure of the villages. (See also C4 below).

**C - The Landscape and Natural Environment**

- 6.10 C1 - Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and where possible encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows. Where appropriate, the Parish Council should encourage enhancements to the biodiversity of the area through the retention of existing vegetation and promotion of new planting, where possible using seeds / cuttings established from local sources. The responsibility for implementing this will be largely with private landowners.

- 6.11 C2 - Monitor trees for signs of disease. As trees are such a highly valued resource, efforts should be taken by the landowners and those using footpaths etc. to assist in the monitoring and identification of diseased trees. Information on identifying such diseases could be made available to residents (possibly through links to existing on-line resources). In order to maintain the level of tree cover in the longer term, the planting of disease resistant species to replace those under threat should be positively encouraged.
- 6.12 C3 - Maintain the character, setting and views of the parish. The views to and from the rural, undeveloped landscape have been identified as intrinsic and special aspects of the area. The character of the landscape and setting of villages and natural features, in particular Loveden Hill, are all highly valued. Care should be taken to maintain the character of the landscape, the setting of the villages and the quality and nature of the views. When reviewing planning applications the Parish Council should consider the appropriateness or otherwise of any development with a view to avoiding change to the unspoilt and open nature of the area and views to and from it. To avoid harm, larger scale buildings and structures which will be out of keeping with the openness and unencumbered views should be avoided.
- 6.13 C4 - Local Green Space Review – Through public consultation, a number of open spaces have been identified as being distinct and significant in the local area. Loveden Hill has been highlighted as an important local feature within the landscape and the historic significance as well as physical attributes are both highly valued by local residents. The Parish Council might usefully consider whether or not the hill could be designated as a scheduled ancient monument and also, due to its local value, consider applying for the hill to be designated as a Local Green Space under the provisions set out in the NPPF. Other areas such as the open spaces within Brandon could also be reviewed to assess appropriate designations.

### **Policy Compliance**

- 6.14 The following section demonstrates how the above recommendations relate to existing national and local policy including the objectives of the District level Landscape Character Assessment.

### **A - Access to the Landscape**

#### **A1 - Maintain footpaths by ensuring they are easily identified and accessible year round.**

#### **A2 - Review the permissive rights of way**

#### **A3 - Consider an increase number of bridleways.**

- 6.15 NPPF - paragraph 75 of Section 8 states that “*Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.*”
- 6.16 SKDC Core Strategy – There are no specific local policies relating to public rights of way as these are covered by national policy (NPPF) and fall under the provisions set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, however reference is made to ‘*public access to and community value of the landscape*’ in Policy EN1 in respect of new development proposals.

**B - Residential and Village Environment**

**B1 - Any new development should respect the style and scale of the existing villages.**

**B2 - New development should significantly affect the existing village envelopes.**

**B3 - Maintain the 'green spaces' within the villages.**

6.17 NPPF – The NPPF requires that development “*always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings*”.

6.18 SKDC Core Strategy – Policy EN1 requires that development proposals should be assessed in respect of the following (items relevant to the above are listed)

*2. local distinctiveness and sense of place*

*3. historic character, patterns and attributes of the landscape*

*4. the layout and scale of buildings and designed spaces*

*5. the quality and character of the built fabric and their settings*

*12. Conservation Area Appraisals and Village Design Statements, where these have been adopted by the Council*

*14. protection of existing open space (including allotments and public open space, and open spaces important to the character, setting and separation of built-up areas)*

6.19 SKDC Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document (adopted June 2013) Section 3.2 makes specific reference to Landscape and Visual Amenity and Box 2 states that site selection for turbines “shall have regard to the local landscape character”.

**C - The Landscape and Natural Environment**

**C1 - Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and where possible encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows.**

**C2 - Monitor trees for signs of disease.**

**C3 - Maintain the character, setting and views of the parish.**

**C4 - Local Green Space Review.**

6.20 NPPF – Paragraph 109 of Section 11 in the NPPF requires that the planning system should ‘*contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by*’ - ‘*minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*

6.21 Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF set out the provisions for designating areas as Local Green Space it states that the designation should only be used –

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is 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
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

6.22 SKDC Core Strategy – Policy EN1 notes that “development must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape within which it is situated, and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration” and notes that development proposals and site allocations will be assessed in relation to the following (items relevant to the above are listed).

1. statutory, national and local designations of landscape features, including natural and historic assets
2. local distinctiveness and sense of place
3. historic character, patterns and attributes of the landscape
6. the condition of the landscape
7. biodiversity and ecological networks within the landscape
9. remoteness and tranquillity
10. visual intrusion

6.23 SKDC Landscape Character Assessment – The recommendations above reflect the objectives for the district level character area – The Trent and Belvoir Vales which are as follows –

- Maintain and improve field boundary condition.
- Retain ditch patterns.
- Maintain wet grassland areas.
- Protect any woodland cover.
- Maintain existing hedgerow trees and plant new hedgerow trees.
- Provide new woodland planting with any new large scale agricultural buildings.
- Maintain views to and from the elevated villages and churches.



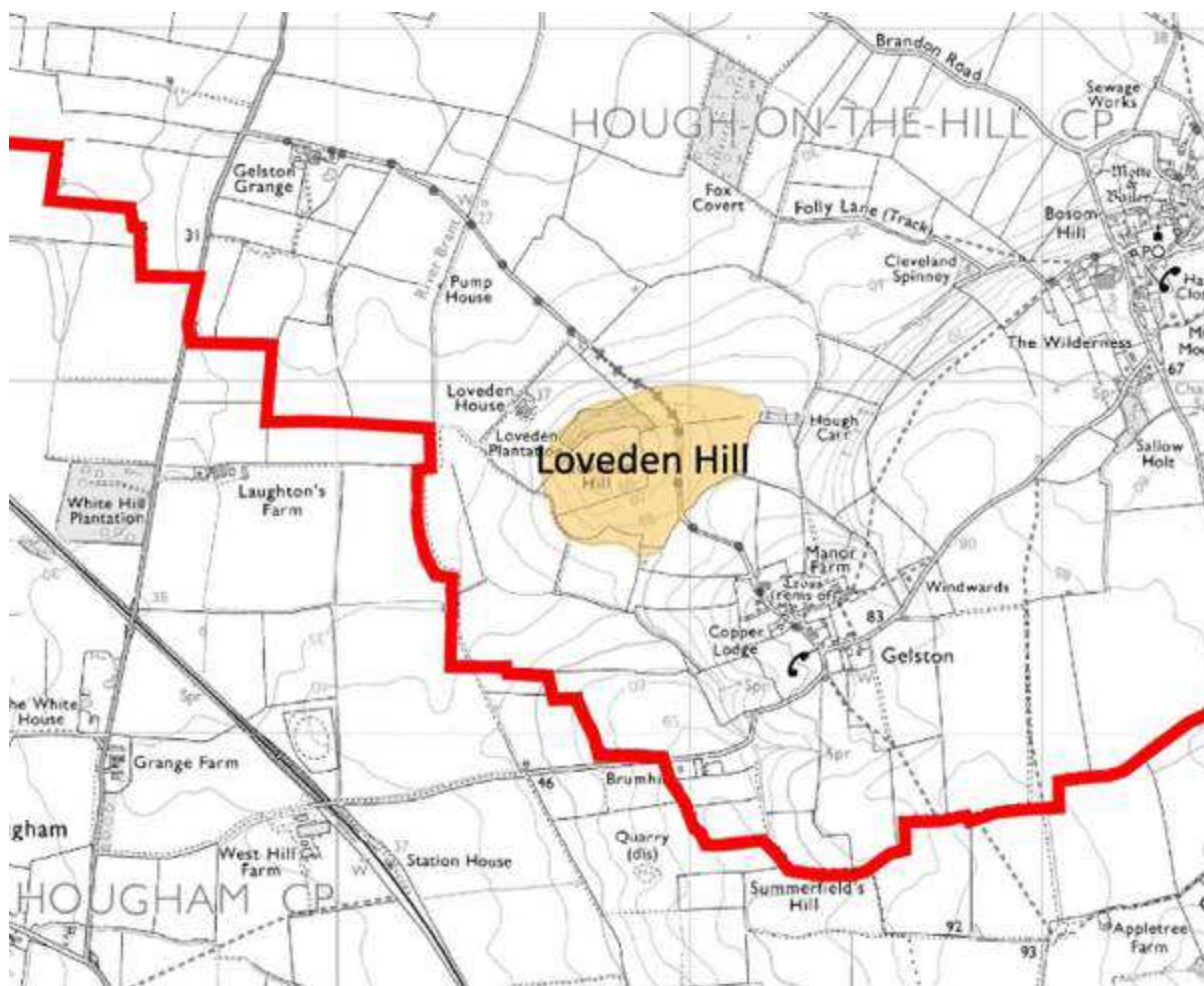
## PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION OF LOVEDEN HILL

### Justification Statement

#### Loveden Hill: A Local Heritage Asset

The elevated, wooded slopes known as Loveden Hill rise just to the north west of Gelston, as indicated on the following map:

*Loveden Hill Local Green Space Proposal (the area shown from the 50m contour line)*



Loveden Hill is the site of an extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery, featuring both inhumations and cremations. It is one of the largest such sites in England, suggesting that the site was important to the Anglo Saxons. It covers about 1.2 acres and has a date range from the fifth to the seventh century with over 1700 cremations and 45 inhumations. Many of the finds from site excavations are in The Collection at Lincoln and others are in the British Museum, as well as museums at Grantham, Newark, Nottingham and Scunthorpe.

Loveden Hill was at the centre of Loveden Wapentake (the Danelaw equivalent to the "Hundred" in Anglo-Saxon England). The court is likely to have met monthly at Loveden Hill. The word Wapentake means "show your weapon". The idea was that all in favour of a resolution would raise their sword etc. to show agreement.

### **Loveden Hill: An Important Feature in the Local Landscape**

During consultation with residents in the Parish one of the main issues to emerge was the significance and importance of Loveden Hill as a loved and valued feature in the local landscape. The hill dominates the topology of the area, and a walk round the hill affords a breathtaking panorama across the Trent Valley and beyond. This ancient hill has always been a significant place, and many people have commented that they feel the power of it even today.

The Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) carried out as part of the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan (see Appendix 1) concluded that Loveden Hill plays a special role in the local landscape character, dominating views and providing significant heritage value.



*Photo shows Loveden Hill in the Background (January 2014)*

### **Loveden Hill: Current Stewardship**

The current owner of the land that includes the summit of Loveden Hill is a local farmer who provides excellent stewardship and who has taken several initiatives over recent years to both protect and enhance its important heritage and landscape significance, several utilising funding available under current Agri-Environment schemes. For example, hedgerows have been improved

and the large field on the western slope of the hill has been sown with wild bird seed to encourage lapwings (with significant success).

The landowner also currently operates a Permissive Bridleway which connects from the Gelston Road round to the Byway, allowing improved access to the countryside around the hill. (NB The funding the farmer receives to support the operation of this Permissive Bridleway will cease in 2017; funding replacement arrangements are not yet clear and so the longterm status of this valued access arrangement is insecure.)

### **Local Green Space Designation**

When local people made clear how much this local heritage asset and landscape feature was valued, they asked why the hill was not a Scheduled Ancient Monument, or designated in some way to give it the status many believe it deserves. The Neighbourhood Planning Project Team therefore made enquiries (through the Conservation Team at SKDC) to English Heritage regarding its potential inclusion as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, seeking both recognition and protection of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery it contains, and for the burial mound itself. However, English Heritage advised that previous excavations and ploughing activity within the area have damaged the site, and it is not considered appropriate for listing in this way, although it is mentioned in the Historic Environment Record.

The Neighbourhood Planning Team therefore explored other possibilities. ‘Local Green Space’ is a new designation introduced in The Localism Act 2011 for use in Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans as a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

The designation should only be used in particular circumstances, and the following table lists those circumstances and indicates why Loveden Hill is felt to meet these requirements:

<b>Designation Requirements</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<b>The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.</b>	Loveden Hill is sited very close to Gelston, is in easy walking distance from everywhere within the Parish, and visually dominant to everyone as a substantial landscape feature. The top of the hill itself is not accessible to the public, but there is a ‘Byway Open to All Traffic that winds around the slopes to the east and cuts across part of the area proposed for Local Green Space designation. The current landowner also provides a permissive bridleway which opens up access around the hill, connecting through from Gelston Road to the Byway.
<b>The green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty,</b>	The importance of Loveden Hill as both a heritage asset (being one of the largest Anglo-Saxon cemetery sites in England) and as a loved, prominent

<p><b>historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.</b></p>	<p>feature within the local landscape was raised by many people during consultation (see the October 2013 Landscape Character Assessment at Appendix 1). A specific request was made that the Neighbourhood Planning Team should explore the possibility of securing a special status or designation in order to give expression to its importance, and to protect it into the future.</p>
<p><b>The green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</b></p>	<p>Loveden Hill is a valued feature within the local landscape. The area proposed for Local Green Space designation is that which lies above the 50M contour line, as shown on the map at Figure 7 above.</p>

### **Publicity and Consultation**

The proposal for designation of the Local Green Space has been notified to SKDC who have raised no objection. The proposal has been included in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations (and was publicised in the Grantham Journal local newspaper) and has received widespread support.

All known landowners in and around Loveden Hill (six in total) who may be affected by the designation were sent letters notifying them of the proposal and seeking views. Support was received from one of these landowners, and an enquiry from the agent for another. The landowner responsible for most of the site proposed for designation was initially concerned about the proposal's impact on his working farm operation. Following liaison and a site meeting, he has agreed that the proposal should proceed on the understanding that the Parish Council will keep the legislation and its impact on his business under review, with his involvement. Arrangements for carrying out such reviews are proposed at 5-yearly intervals within the Delivery Strategy contained in Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan.