

Appendix 2: Detailed Analysis of Desirability Responses

This Appendix contains three tables. The first table (Table A) includes desirability responses which support the designation of the proposed qualifying land. The second table (Table B) includes desirability responses which object to the designation of the proposed qualifying land. The third table (Table C) sets out the desirability responses which argue for the designation of additional land, beyond that which is considered to qualify.

Table A: Desirability Responses in Support of Designation of Qualifying Land

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
		<u>Commentary</u>
Benefits arising from additional resources (funding, expertise and volunteers)	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSW-5 (North Yorkshire Council)</p> <p><i>'Across North Yorkshire the agriculture and associated food and drink production sector employs more than 5 times the number of people than the national average, and agriculture, agric-tech and agri-food are considered to be North Yorkshire local strengths and specialisms, with clear reference to this starting to emerge in the Y&NY Combined Authority's Growth Plan. Given the strength and importance of this sector in this area, the creation of an AONB / National Landscape area in the Yorkshire Wolds would potentially offer businesses in this area to access future national funding schemes such as Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), and provide a framework around which clusters of similar or related businesses could grow, develop local supply chains, seek new and innovative practices etc.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PZ2-7</p> <p><i>'it will hopefully make it easier for funding to be found for environmental improvements, for example via the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme or similar.'</i></p>	<p>Natural England agrees that designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) enables access to additional resources and funding not typically available in the wider countryside. These resources can make a material difference to the conservation and enhancement of a landscape's natural beauty and special qualities.</p> <p>Funding for an AONB's core functions, including for its staff unit, the production of a Management Plan and the implementation of its policies, is generally provided by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the constituent local authorities. A number of additional sources of funding can also be accessed, to fund non-core activities such as community projects, farming initiatives and species recovery schemes. Many of these are only available within Protected Landscapes (such as National Parks and AONBs) and can be used to support a wide range of stakeholders and projects.</p> <p>A current example is the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme, which provides funding for nature recovery, climate action, landscape enhancement, and sustainable farm businesses. This scheme is only</p>

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	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PCF-4 <i>'If it unlocks resources for sustainability initiatives this would be a really positive development.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PCQ-F <i>'The area would benefit from being an AONB from the perspective of legal protection and additional funding. The presence of a management team would help to continue to enhance the area.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2E-J <i>[ANON] members in an existing local AONB were also surveyed and the clear benefit that the designation brought, was access to funding. Whilst the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme has been a welcome funding opportunity for those in existing AONBs, the programme is currently only confirmed until March 2025, meaning that the proposed Yorkshire Wolds area would not benefit from the obvious funding opportunities that being in an AONB has historically brought.</i></p> <p>[ANON] also recognises that an AONB designation may also present advantages, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to support. Designated landscapes have specific boards and partnerships that can provide help and support on a range of issues. Farm businesses can receive help and support from AONB staff. 	<p>available in Protected Landscapes, such as AONBs and National Parks, and has recently been extended until March 2029.</p> <p>For other funders, the significance afforded by AONB status may support the prioritisation of funding, or specific priorities may be in place to direct funding, such as the Landscape Connections programme run by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England remains of the opinion that designating the proposed area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB would unlock additional resources and bring long-term benefits for the management and enhancement of its natural beauty.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to funding. Farms in designated landscapes may have access to additional funding (such as the Farming in Protected Landscapes Scheme if it is extended). <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P27-4 <i>'Finances of local authorities are extremely limited therefore natural landscapes could easily be a low priority however as part of an AONB team this would raise the status and therefore protect and perhaps improve the overall landscape.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PCF-4 – coastal <i>'If it would unlock resources for maintenance and refresh of existing projects and lead to new initiatives, the designation would be very helpful.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PNF-F– coastal <i>'I hope that this makes funds available to tackle the waste (fish crates, old clothing, oil barrels, nylon ropes and fish netting, household rubbish) on the beach, as this is hazardous and unsightly.'</i></p>	
Benefits of integrated management to achieve conservation	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PZE-T <i>'Preserve and conserve! Better landscape management.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P7Y-B <i>'I feel having the area designated for what it is "an outstanding area of natural beauty" would help maintain a better</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England agrees that designating land within the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB would formally recognise its natural beauty and ensure its protection through statutory duties on public bodies to conserve and enhance the landscape.</p>

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and enhancement	<p><i>sustainable balance between the local people who are lucky enough to live here, visitors and landowners/farmers... Agriculture needs to work together in partnership with nature with a key and important priority being the long term aim of protecting our landscapes and wildlife/insects/fauna.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PNW-Z (North York Moors National Park)</p> <p><i>'The designation supports the Government's target to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 and thus reflects the spirit of the Kunming/ Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the biodiversity duty emanating from the 2021 Environment Act. The designation of the area as an AONB/NL would extend an already significant contiguous tract of protected landscape taking in the North York Moors National Park, the Howardian Hills National Landscape, the King Charles III England Coast Path, the Cleveland Way National Trail, the Yorkshire Wolds Way National Trail and soon the Coast to Coast National Trail. Taken together, the opportunities to build and extend existing nature corridors, to improve connectivity for nature and biodiversity and increase connection between people and nature across a large section of North and East Yorkshire are significant.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVS-4</p> <p><i>'There is a powerful land owning minority of influential people in this area who will undoubtedly lobby against the AONB for their own benefit. They have their own agendas and the needs of food production are acknowledged as being very important, but extending the already industrial level farming by taking up</i></p>	<p>Designation enables integrated management through the implementation of an AONB Management Plan prepared within three years of designation, setting out the vision and strategy for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. This plan would provide continuity of focus for the long term, include policies that incorporate specific objectives to help achieve the vision, and may include cross-cutting policies covering aspects such as biodiversity, climate resilience, water and air quality, public engagement, heritage and culture, and the area's special qualities.</p> <p>While designation does not change land ownership or management responsibilities, it does unlock access to additional skills, advice, and funding. For example, this includes support through the Environmental Land Management Scheme and the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, which are often targeted at National Landscapes where they can have the greatest impact.</p> <p>Natural England notes that some respondents raise concerns regarding intensive farming of the Wolds landscape. These specific issues are considered further under the theme <i>Importance of area for food production and security</i>, below.</p> <p>Whilst the purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of an area, designation can also support the creation of ecological networks and contribute to national goals such as the 30x30 target for nature recovery. Where the proposed designation connects with existing protected landscapes — such as the Howardian Hills National Landscape, the North York Moors National Park, and the Yorkshire Wolds Way — designation could strengthen opportunities for joined-up action on biodiversity, habitat restoration, and public access.</p>

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	<p><i>more of the natural landscape is detrimental to the finely balanced ecosystems now existing here.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYW-B</p> <p><i>'Intensive rearing and commercial shooting of Pheasants and Red Legged Partridges for sport, takes place throughout much of the proposed AONB area. These non-native species are released in large numbers and evidence indicates that this has a negative net impact on biodiversity. We consider that large scale commercial game bird shooting is incompatible with an AONB on the grounds of the imbalance it causes to the biodiversity and restrictions to public access (regardless of rights of way) put in place to protect rearing areas and avoid active shooting. At the very least we would expect there to be detailed independent research into the impact of commercial shooting on the biodiversity of the Yorkshire Wolds AONB leading to recommendations on measures to ensure commercial shooting is limited to a level that has no significant impact on the biodiversity.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYN-2</p> <p><i>'To prevent deterioration of its natural beauty from development and land management pressures. Improved co-ordination in the management of the designated area and potential funding.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PS3-1 (Forestry Commission)</p> <p><i>'The Forestry Commission understand the distinctive and unique landscape of the Wolds.'</i></p>	<p>AONB partnerships work collaboratively with landowners, including those involved in agriculture, woodland management, and recreation. Designation can help promote nature-friendly land use, support climate adaptation, and encourage sensitive practices, including woodland creation and active woodland management. Natural England also recognises the importance of community identity and cultural heritage and values the strong local attachment to the Yorkshire Wolds landscape.</p> <p>While AONB designation does not alter existing land use or access rights, it provides a valuable framework for addressing pressures such as coastal erosion, intensive land management, and habitat loss through partnership working.</p> <p>Recent legislation, including the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023), strengthens the role of Protected Landscapes in delivering national environmental goals. The Protected Landscapes and Outcomes Framework (2024) sets targets aligned with the Environmental Improvement Plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thriving plants and wildlife • Mitigating and adapting to climate change • Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England remains of the opinion that designating the proposed area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB will provide a positive impetus for sustainable land management, nature recovery, and community engagement. The statutory duty placed upon public bodies to seek to further the purpose of</p>

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	<p><i>We see the potential to use the designation as a catalyst to work with farmers and landowners. Specifically, this could assist in bringing more woodland into management and, where appropriate, support woodland creation and an increase in tree cover, with the resulting benefits for biodiversity and landscape.</i></p> <p><i>We are aware of the targets that Government has placed on National Landscapes nationally in terms of habitat restoration, habitat creation and specifically woodland creation and woodland management.</i></p> <p><i>We collectively need to address the challenges presented by climate change and increasing risk from pest and diseases on existing tree cover in the Wolds – alongside the need to consider the 'right tree in the right place'.</i></p> <p><i>There is an opportunity in the Wolds to work with landowners several of which own extensive Estates. We would wish to promote Woodland Management Plans to take forward active woodland management and develop strategies to increase tree and woodland cover.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of delivery, it is worth mentioning the role of Humber Forest in supporting woodland creation. The Forest is currently updating its Forest Plan. Their work in the Wolds has been mostly in creating hedgerows but a new partnership could help engage farmers and landowners in the area.</i></p> <p><i>There can be a misconception that designation will somehow 'preserve' what is already there without fully understanding or recognising the challenges of a changing agricultural sector, climate change and tree health. There is a potential oversimplification of the 'native' 'non-native' species-choice rather than 'the right tree in the right place' in the context of the challenges of climate change, pests and diseases. For</i></p>	<p>designation will help ensure that future decision-making supports the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in this landscape, including its biodiversity and cultural value.</p>

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	<p><i>example in the Wolds it will be important to respond to these challenges such as the threats to Beech (drought) and Larch and Ash (disease).</i></p> <p><i>The introduction of productive woodland in all its forms could be an exciting offer to landowners and if done sensitively complying with the UK Forestry Standard can both enhance landscapes, support net zero and assist nature recovery.</i></p> <p><i>In conclusion, the Forestry Commission is aware of the benefits that AONB designation can bring in terms of statutory recognition through a Management Plan and with a Team and wider partnership to deliver on an action plan. The plan should include woodland management, creation and trees outside woodland. If such a decision was made we would look forward to working with such a partnership.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PV7-8 - coastal</p> <p><i>'The coastline needs protection from the impact of erosion and perhaps this designation may help with this.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSA-F</p> <p><i>'There remain a unique set of emerging issues which mean that AONB designation would future proof development of agriculture, landscapes and ensure preservation of specific habitats and ecosystems is put in place particularly around the northern and western escarpments. This is particularly important to us on the western slopes around the Parish of Leavening where our small community has long tradition of connection to the landscape, its industries and communities. We classify ourselves as a Wolds Village, just below the chalk hills and our heritage and cultural identity is clearly linked to</i></p>	

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	<p><i>the future prosperity and conservation of this area – which our community is broadly supportive of and has identified this as a lead factor in their love for the ‘place’.</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P9E-S</p> <p><i>‘The future of humanity requires caring for Nature better. The creation of the Wolds AONB will help many people to connect with this very beautiful landscape; this could help us to reduce our impact on natural processes in our daily lives. Further, the new Authority should be able to improve care to the landscape, for instance preventing the dumping of rubbish.’</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK2-R</p> <p><i>‘Designation would give the Yorkshire Wolds the recognition it deserves and help to preserve its essential qualities and sense of place, while (with careful management) encouraging regeneration of some of the biodiversity which has been lost through over-intensive use, preserving the area from future developments which could damage its essential qualities, and providing good-quality job opportunities in a diversified rural economy.’</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVN-Y</p> <p><i>‘I feel what remains of the open natural landscape needs to be protected from over farming and development.’</i></p>	

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	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PVP-1</p> <p><i>'The designation needs to allow for change that is within the defined character – e.g. farmland back to chalk grassland or woodland – especially through natural regeneration. There are nuances within this though. Deciduous native woodland and scrub such as seen in Millington and Bugthorpe should be able to expand, but not other woodland e.g. conifer plantations.</i></p> <p><i>It is important the Lawton Principles – bigger, better, more, joined-up – are applied to underpin both the designation and the future management of the area. Climate change adaptation – future proofing for a changing landscape – must be considered.</i></p> <p><i>Future development needs to preclude industrialisation, recognise nutrient neutrality, including watercourses and air, and understand that development controls are not just about aesthetics - a low barn for 50k chickens isn't acceptable just because the immediate visual impact is mitigated. Screening needs to fit in landscape character too.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYX-C</p> <p><i>'Enhancing the natural heritage of this landscape and building the resilience of its habitats to support priority species and adapt to climate change, will clearly have wider sustainable management, economic, and wellbeing benefits. For example, nature friendly and regenerative farming practices can improve soil health, sequester carbon, and create and maintain vital habitats for farmland birds, while also fundamentally improving the resilience and economic sustainability of farm businesses and flood resilience for local communities. Failure to prioritise the nature and climate emergency in this region, particularly in</i></p>	

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	<p><i>a new Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, would be a missed opportunity that nature and the communities that live and work in this landscape can ill-afford.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSC-H</p> <p><i>'I am in favour of designation because i know of no other protection for landscapes against the depredations of landowners oblivious to or reckless about the vital importance of safeguarding our national precious heritage here in the countryside of North and East Yorkshire and its declining wildlife and vanishing flora.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PS6-4</p> <p><i>'To protect and preserve an unspoilt landscape with incredible beauty and solitude and remoteness.'</i></p>	
Statutory protection in planning	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PZ2-7</p> <p><i>'It will hopefully strengthen the arguments against any proposals for inappropriate development which might be forthcoming in the future.... it could also lead to a wave of applications for large-scale developments such as holiday parks (ie caravans and lodges with leisure facilities). I think it should be built into the framework of the AONB proposal that such developments will not be considered suitable within the designated area, though they could of course be considered in appropriate locations outside it.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P5E-N</p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England acknowledges the strength of public concern about the potential impact of inappropriate development on the natural beauty, tranquillity, and cultural heritage of the Yorkshire Wolds. Respondents frequently cited threats from large-scale housing, caravan parks, onshore wind and solar farms, and energy infrastructure — as well as broader pressure on the landscape from poorly designed or uncoordinated development.</p> <p>Natural England emphasises that significant weight should be attached to the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The scale and extent of any</p>

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	<p><i>'I think it is important to protect this landscape from development and to preserve its heritage for future generations.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P5S-3</p> <p><i>'We need formal recognition of the area to give it legal protection from undesirable change or development. It is not sufficient to say that landowners have always looked after the land, and can be relied upon to continue to do so.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PCQ-F</p> <p><i>'The area would benefit from being an AONB from the perspective of legal protection'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P67-8</p> <p><i>'Given the (inter)national imperative of moving energy production towards 'renewables' and the significance of wind farm development in the North Sea off the East Yorkshire coast and involving on-shore cable corridors, as well as the current government's declaration that on-shore wind farms will now be permitted, it will be important to safeguard the Yorkshire Wolds landscape against further such development. This is in the context that the adjacent lowlands of Holderness, the southern Vale of York, Goole and Thorne Moors, and Isle of Axholme are sites of many large wind farms as well as solar farm development proposals; and, currently, energy transmission across Holderness and The Wolds from both on- and off-shore is by buried cable corridors. AONB status will help preserve a precious landscape haven in a broader area'</i></p>	<p>development within AONBs should be limited and any development within the setting must be carefully located and designed to avoid harmful impacts. Development should be well-designed and of high quality, and should be in accordance with the local authority's duty to seek to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty.</p> <p>AONB Designation and the Planning System</p> <p>Designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) does not prohibit all development, but it provides the highest level of protection for landscape in national planning policy. This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planning decisions must give great weight to conserving and enhancing natural beauty (NPPF 2024, paragraph 189). • The scale and extent of development within AONBs should be limited and development within the setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise impacts (NPPF 2024, paragraph 189). • Major development in National Landscapes (AONBs) is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and where clearly justified in the public interest (NPPF 2024, paragraph 190). • Local planning authorities must meet a statutory duty to seek to further AONB purposes in all relevant decisions (Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, s.245). <p>Legal Duties on Public Bodies: Levelling Up & Regeneration Act (2023)</p> <p>Under Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, all relevant authorities (including local planning authorities) must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB when exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land within an AONB.</p>

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	<p><i>that is contributing much to the national need for energy generation from 'renewables'.</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKC-9</p> <p><i>'Development threats to the scenic, scientific, and archaeological quality of the High Wolds have included proposals for a motorway, a car rally, golf courses, war games, wind turbine farms, solar farms, mineral extraction and rambling development. We think that the High Wolds should be given such protection from these threats as designation as an AONB would provide. Changing farming practices may well affect the quality of the landscape and should be carefully monitored. By bringing grazing land under the plough archaeological sites are increasingly eroded. Uncontrolled and unrecorded metal detecting removes for ever any knowledge we might have about finds from these sites.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKW-W</p> <p><i>'The pressure for increased housing activity and on-land wind/solar energy farms is increasing in this part of Yorkshire. All the more reason why such a distinctive natural landscape as the Wolds should be protected.... This is a brilliant proposal and one that should be fully implemented as soon as possible in view of the increasing development pressures on this area..'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKH-E</p> <p><i>'Pressure on the areas mainly minor road network. Most roads are either B roads or unclassified roads but increasingly are having to deal with disproportionate levels of HGV traffic. This</i></p>	<p>This duty also applies to decisions made outside the AONB boundary where those decisions may affect the designated landscape — for example, developments within the AONB setting or views into and out of the area.</p> <p>Renewable Energy & Infrastructure (e.g. wind, solar, cable corridors) AONB designation brings increased scrutiny to all nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs), such as wind farms and energy transmission schemes. The National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1, 2024) confirms that AONBs are landscapes of the highest status of protection, and proposals must be sensitively designed with appropriate mitigation. AONB designation is a material consideration in infrastructure planning at all scales, including for NSIPs.</p> <p>Holiday Parks and Tourism Development While tourism is an important part of the rural economy, AONBs are not suitable locations for large-scale visitor infrastructure that would harm natural beauty or landscape character. Designation strengthens the policy basis for resisting inappropriate development such as new caravan parks, lodges, or leisure complexes in sensitive locations.</p> <p>Housing and Roads AONB designation does not prevent housing where it meets local needs and is well-designed, but it does ensure that developments respect the area's character, scale, and visual impact. Designation also encourages more joined-up planning to manage infrastructure pressure — including road traffic and village expansion.</p> <p>Local Plan Integration and Current Practice The planning system in England is 'plan-led', and decisions are made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate</p>

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	<p><i>is damaging the roads verges and leading to uncharacteristic infrastructure changes, such as traffic calming and junction and carriageway realignments... Control of industrial businesses and associated traffic that may effect it, such as quarries.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVS-4</p> <p><i>'The area is at serious risk of being over developed by wind turbines and solar farms unless AONB status is achieved.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYD-R</p> <p><i>'There has been a massive amount of new housing built all around our town [Pocklington] in the last few years. I used to be able to see the Wolds from my house, but the view is now blocked by housing. So many people enjoy walking and cycling in the area and farming is still important here. I am therefore writing in support of the Wolds being designated as an AONB, so that the natural beauty and wildlife of the area can be preserved.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2N-U</p> <p><i>'Vital the wolds are not exposed to infrastructure energy schemes, such as solar farms, turbines and electrical masts..... The wolds contain an abundance of wildlife. Its protection would help to maintain these for future generations. Reducing the demand for intensive housing should be a key consideration.'</i></p>	<p>otherwise. Limited development within AONBs may be acceptable provided it aligns with national and local planning policy. Major development is more likely to be refused unless exception circumstances exist.</p> <p>The landscapes within the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB have long been recognised for their quality in local planning policies. Both East Riding of Yorkshire Council and North Yorkshire Council (formerly Ryedale) have applied local landscape designations and policies that protect these areas from inappropriate development, recognising the areas as a 'valued landscape' under 187(a) of the NPPF (2024). In addition, the East Riding Local Plan Update (2020–2039) acknowledges the potential AONB designation within the Yorkshire Wolds and notes that, if confirmed, planning policy will need to align with relevant NPPF paragraphs to avoid undermining the area's special qualities.</p> <p>Natural England's proposal to designate part of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB is not based on any criticism of current local planning authorities or their decisions. On the contrary, the high quality of these landscapes is, in part, a result of effective planning and land management over many years.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England remains of the view that AONB designation would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce existing good planning practice • Add statutory weight to the protection of natural beauty • Provide a clear framework for future decisions that reflect national importance • Support communities and councils to respond to development pressure in a coordinated, consistent, and locally accountable way

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	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2J-Q</p> <p><i>'Just get on with it before it is too late especially in view of the modern response to global warming i.e. solar farms and wind turbines... The urgency of designation, in the present circumstances, is a matter of national importance.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P21-X</p> <p><i>'Agricultural / rural policy is fragmented and lacks direction. The exception is the roll out of 'Green Energy'. The rural economy is under pressure and may sellout to the highest bidder i.e. energy companies. The countryside should not be the default cheapest option for wind and solar farms.</i></p> <p><i>Affording rural landscapes as much protection as possible is vital in decision making on energy policy, and larg scale and inappropriate development generally..... Rural landscapes are vital resources. They have no 'voice'. AONB designation will give them collective representation when their integrity is under pressure.... AONB designation might be too late to save some of the areas from inappropriate exploitation.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSA-F</p> <p><i>'From the perspective of [ANON] Parish Council we are confident that the inclusion of our parish in the boundary would give use greater scrutiny, particularly around future development of our village from housing developments and planning pressures. This would, we feel, give North Yorkshire Council a clearer framework for planning applications related to the area which would ensure a sharp focus on future development, guidance for future planning and development which is sensitive to both heritage and landscape. We are</i></p>	

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	<p><i>aware of the importance of making robust decisions about future plans to develop the area in line with community needs. Unlike other parishes who have identified this as high risk, we welcome the opportunity of a robust framework across parishes in the AONB which would bring consistency and clearer guidance. Wolds Villages are unique but have been impacted historically by multi authority planning decisions and local level development led by local landowners. We welcome the opportunity to explore a local level plan which would enable us to join up at parish level. This has not been strong historically and is a significant area of risk at Parish Level.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PZE-T - coastal <i>'Preserve and conserve, stop the ingress of poor quality development.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PZT-9 - coastal <i>'To protect from overdevelopment and retain its beauty and individuality'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PDQ-G - coastal <i>'encourage both councils to bring the local landscape back to a more natural and wilder look. The area does not include any large settlements so using the land for housing shouldn't be a reason to take land out of the designation, and having a more natural Yorkshire Wolds would allow East Yorkshire specifically to be more greener, as much of the rural landscape is unnaturally agricultural.'</i></p>	

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	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PNG-G - coastal <i>'needs protection from more caravan and holidays parks'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK4-T - coastal <i>'Yes, to protect it from unsuitable development'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKC-9 - coastal <i>'The coastal margin along the cliff top is relatively unspoiled and currently the only significant development is at Flamborough Head and North Landing. Adjacent to the proposed area are two holiday parks: The Lighthouse Holiday Park and Thornwick Bay Holiday Park, and two villages: Flamborough and Bempton. Any development of, or around, these centres, or along the B 1255 and B1259, could pose a very real threat to the quality of the landscape. We think that the area should be given such protection from these threats as designation as an AONB would provide.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2Y-6 - coastal <i>'As set out in our response to question C3, [ANON] consider that it is highly desirable to designate the coastal area as an AONB in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Yorkshire Wolds and in doing so receive the highest level of landscape protection in planning policy and would enable authorities to access additional resources for positive enhancement and management of the proposed area. [ANON] consider that the Yorkshire Wolds landscape is nationally</i></p>	

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	<p><i>significant and the designation of the Yorkshire Wolds would provide a more robust level of protection than can currently be offered through the designation of locally valued landscape policies and would offer a further degree of control to the authorities in relation to existing developments as occurs in other AONBs.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PS6-4 - coastal</p> <p><i>'It needs protecting from encroaching caravan parks.... No more caravan parks to blight the landscape.'</i></p>	
Benefits from Improved Access and Visitor Management	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSW-5 (North Yorkshire Council)</p> <p><i>'The DMP [Destination Management Plan] recognises the importance of ensuring sustainable growth within the visitor economy in these areas, as well as throughout wider North Yorkshire to mitigate the impact of increased numbers of visitors on the infrastructure and environment, aiming to balance the needs of each individual area, its people, landscape, wildlife and culture, with the needs of visitors who come to enjoy the area. NYC via the DMP is committed to a strong working partnership with partner organisations to achieve this.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PZE-T</p> <p><i>'Access to land, right to roam.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PQW-3</p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>While Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) do not share the statutory access duty of National Parks, AONB designation plays an important role in helping people understand and appreciate an area's natural beauty. Many AONBs take a proactive role in managing and supporting access, recreation, and visitor infrastructure in ways that protect landscape character and benefit local communities.</p> <p>AONB designation would not change existing rights of access or landowner responsibilities. However, through a coordinated Management Plan and partnership approach, it can help address access-related issues and support other potential Local Authority wide strategies. An example of this approach is the Destination Management Plan for the Lincolnshire Wolds prepared by West and East Lindsey District Councils. Evidence from existing AONBs demonstrates that initiatives may include:</p>

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	<p><i>'The landscape is not fully appreciated outside the area at present. It is also potentially fragile and AONB would give it status and protection.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PQF-J <i>'Will significantly improve tourism to East Yorkshire. Most tourists choose to visit the seaside and are totally unaware of what the Wolds has to offer. The same can be said of many locals!'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PQH-M <i>'Beautiful area, would provide East Yorkshire and Hull [Hull] with an easily accessible AONB... Accessibility from local towns/cities'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PN9-2 <i>'We believe that the additional resources and benefits associated with the designation of the Inland Area as an AONB will lead to more opportunities to develop access, recreation and enjoyment of this area.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKF-C <i>'Maintain and keep bridleways, better signage required, keep dogs on leads for everyone's safety and protect stock and wildlife'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVS-4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting improvements to signage, surfacing, and route connectivity • Encouraging the development of circular walking routes and connections to areas of open access where appropriate • Exploring opportunities for inclusive access and sustainable transport links • Supporting access infrastructure (e.g., car parking, public transport hubs, safer links to trails) • Promoting responsible countryside access and education, including in sensitive coastal or wildlife areas <p>The designation may also strengthen links to the Yorkshire Wolds Way National Trail, and the development of a recreation strategy that seeks to avoid the creation of "honeypot" areas and protects areas of highest tranquillity.</p> <p>An AONB Management Plan, developed within three years of designation, will set out a shared vision and priorities for the AONB, providing the basis for a co-ordinated management approach within the area. These may include initiatives that seek to support public understanding, improve the visitor offer, and ensure access is well-managed, safe, and sustainable. Natural England recognises that improvements in access often require collaboration with landowners, parish councils, and local authorities – AONB Partnerships are adept at working in this way.</p>

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	<p><i>'The slight conflict is that the increased tourism and visitor footfall that might arise might detract from the unspoilt nature of the areaThe protections offered by the designation outweigh the disadvantages of additional tourism to the area.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PY7-B</p> <p><i>'[ANON] broadly welcomes the creation of a Yorkshire Wolds AONB on the grounds that it is likely to lead to improvements in open-air recreation.</i></p> <p><i>It is vital that therefore that [ANON] is included from the outset in the development of the proposed AONB Management Plan, particularly at the informal stages.</i></p> <p><i>The Management Plan, in due course, should specifically review how access can be improved to, and within, the AONB in order that the public can appreciate its beauty and enjoy outdoor recreation. It is important that in reviewing improved access to the Wolds that consideration should be given to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• New access routes where it may be possible to create these. It is suggested that some parts of the Wolds have a relatively low density of public rights of way when compared to neighbouring areas (and very little "access land"), and that the creation of circular "walks" in particular could be a specific objective of the AONB and Management Plan.</i> <i>• An improved quality of access, for example removing conflicts between users of rights of way and public highways. Currently many public rights of way in the Wolds end abruptly on public highways.</i> 	<p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>Natural England considers that AONB designation for the Yorkshire Wolds will provide a positive framework for improving opportunities to appreciate its natural beauty, while protecting its tranquillity and special qualities. Improved coordination, access to funding, and long-term planning should help ensure that access and recreation are managed in ways that benefit both people and place.</p>

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Improvements in access that allow people with impaired or restricted mobility to better access the countryside (where realistically achievable).</i> <i>Improvements in how people from neighbouring areas, towns and cities, can get to the Wolds countryside. This might including development of public transport options, sustainable access into the Wolds, or the development of sites to which people can drive and park in order to "go for a walk". Again we would expect that a Management Plan for the AONB will consider these issues, in order that the beauty of the area can be appreciated by a wide range of the public.</i> <i>We recognise that achieving improvements such as those listed above, will in many cases, require the co-operation of local landowners and others.'</i> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYW-B</p> <p><i>'Under provisions in the CRoW Act 2000 many of the dales in the proposed AONB are already designated for public access (access land), but a significant amount of access land cannot in be accessed by the public without trespassing and some landowners explicitly bar access e.g. Scarn Dale, Minning Dale, Thorn Dale and Blakes Dale just North of Warter. It should also be noted that whilst there is an extensive network of public footpaths, bridleways and green lanes throughout the proposed AONB, many are poorly maintained, poorly signed and in some instances blocked. Although statutory provisions for AONBs do not enable changes to access rights, as a minimum we would expect arrangements to be made with landowners to enable public access to all access land where existing rights of way do not exist. Also, adequate provisions</i></p>	

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	<p><i>should be made to ensure existing public footpaths, bridleways and green lanes are adequately maintained and signed.</i></p> <p><i>Public transport throughout the proposed AONB is poor or non-existent. Public access is therefore primarily by private motor vehicles and the existing infrastructure is inadequate to support current volumes of use. To minimise the impact of increased traffic expected as a result of AONB status, we would expect to see much better provision of public transport, some of the more minor routes restricted to access only and cycling (possibly by means of temporary orders by LAs until legislation changes). Whilst we would like to see people encouraged to use public transport, cycling and walking, we think road traffic routes and car parking provisions should be improved in such a way to remove congestion from villages, farm access and narrow lanes.</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYX-C</p> <p><i>'access needs to be well managed and regulated, and with sites such as Bempton hosting the largest and most accessible seabird colony in the UK, it is paramount that access and education are at the forefront of conservation planning and thinking.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P2S-Z</p> <p><i>'I know AONBs are not primarily about public access. None the less, thought needs to be given about the management of visitors to the area. Work could be done to encourage land owners to support local walkers / runners (eg footpath on Fishpond Hill (Map 11) to allow a circular walk from</i></p>	

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>Pocklington where there is parking. This would reduce car traffic.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSC-H <i>'Any help negating summer traffic would be a huge incentive to gain villages support and would indicate a clear example of the advantages to being designated.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PS8-6 <i>'There could be greater recognition of the relationship and opportunities presented for the AONB with the Yorkshire Wolds Way National Trail.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P2B-F -coastal <i>'Safety - some coastal sites are very hazardous'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PS4-2 -coastal <i>'Needs a little more help with cliff top path maintenance, which designation may well help with.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PS5-3 – coastal <i>'It can then receive more detailed attention in order to protect its scenic beauty, including expert advice on successfully managing visitor pressure.'</i></p>	

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
Connection to other Protected Landscapes	<p>ANON-3WEG-5P9E-S <i>'It has the advantage of creating a good connection with The Howardian Hills Natural Landscape.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PNW-Z (North York Moors National Park) <i>'The northern fringe and escarpment of the inland area of the Yorkshire Wolds forms a significant visual backdrop to the landscape of the North York Moors National Park, particularly the southern aspect from the Tabular Hills and wider southern half of the National Park.</i></p> <p><i>The safeguarding the natural beauty of the Yorkshire Wolds through designation as an AONB/ National Landscape will thus contribute positively the Special Qualities of the North York Moors (notably SQ1 in the North York Moors Management Plan - A surprising range of contrasting landscapes with extensive views). We would also wish to draw attention to the Protected Landscape duty which requires relevant authorities to seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes. This duty relates to the setting of these landscapes as well as functions delivered within them. Designation of the Yorkshire Wolds would reflect the Duty in relation to both the North York Moors and the Howardian Hills National Landscape.'</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England agrees that the northern escarpment of the Yorkshire Wolds forms a significant part of the wider setting to both the Howardian Hills National Landscape and the North York Moors National Park. The visual connection between these landscapes is particularly striking from the Tabular Hills and other southern parts of the National Park, as well as from the designed landscape of Castle Howard in the Howardian Hills and from the River Derwent. These views contribute to the sense of place and scenic quality valued in both designated areas. Designation of an area of the Yorkshire Wolds would help to secure the long-term protection and enhancement of these important views and their contributing landscape features.</p> <p>Natural England also acknowledges the statutory 'Protected Landscapes Duty' under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 (now reinforced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023). This duty requires all relevant authorities (including public bodies) to seek to further the statutory purpose of AONBs in both their decision-making and operational functions, not only within their boundaries, but also in considering their settings. The designation of the Yorkshire Wolds would strengthen and give further effect to this duty by bringing more of the landscape into the national framework of protection and guardianship.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Natural England fully recognises that the Yorkshire Wolds are distinct from the Howardian Hills and North York Moors in terms of landform, geology, and land use. The Wolds' expansive chalk plateau, open arable character, and deeply incised dry valleys offer a unique and complementary landscape. Designation as an AONB would not seek to homogenise these differences, but rather to celebrate and conserve the diversity.</p>

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
		<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Becoming part of the National Landscapes family would offer the Yorkshire Wolds access to a strong network of shared knowledge, policy support, and partnership opportunities. It would also support more integrated approaches to nature recovery, sustainable tourism, climate adaptation, and community engagement across adjacent protected landscapes. Natural England remains of the opinion that it is desirable to designate the proposed area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB in order to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.</p>
Improved rural economy through tourism	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSW-5 (North Yorkshire Council)</p> <p><i>'The rural nature of the Yorkshire Wolds area means many of the businesses in this area sit within the tourism and hospitality sector; the designation as an AONB / National Landscape would bring added value and benefits to these businesses. Being part of the wider National Landscapes family will strength the local sense of identity and aide wider national and international promotion of the area as a visitor destination, either within its own right, or by capitalising on the strength of brand within nearby protected landscapes such as the North York Moors National Park and the Howardian Hills National Landscape, to draw additional visitors and spend to the area.</i></p> <p><i>...from a tourism perspective designation would provide recognition of the importance of the natural beauty of the area, and therefore help towards forming a coordinated approach to management, including creation of a management plan, specialist skills, a statutory duty to protect, conserve and</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England agrees that designation of the Yorkshire Wolds as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) could bring a range of economic benefits, particularly to the local tourism and hospitality sector.</p> <p>As respondents have highlighted, the area already attracts visitors for its tranquillity, walking and cycling opportunities, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. AONB designation would formalise this identity, increasing recognition at both national and international levels. By being part of the wider National Landscapes family, the area could benefit from association with a recognised and respected 'brand'; opening up valuable opportunities for marketing and collaborative tourism initiatives with nearby designated landscapes such as the Howardian Hills National Landscape and the North York Moors National Park.</p>

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>enhance the AONB area, and a level of funding to help support the process, which could potentially be used to support wider tourism initiatives – marketing and promotional activity, active travel and sustainable tourism development opportunities and collaboration with the adjoining Howardian Hills NL.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PZ2-7 <i>'It should help small businesses such as pubs, shops, B&Bs and restaurants to survive and flourish.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P7C-N <i>'It would protect the area and presumably attract more visitors to support the businesses we have in the area.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PDR-H <i>'Designated all areas will also help in the recognition of these areas as a desirable visitor and tourist destination, adding to a positive economic to the area, and in turn helping to secure and preserve the natural beauty of the area.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PCR-G <i>'The area will benefit from an increase in tourism, giving a financial boost to a rural economy. Horse riding is a popular activity in this part of Yorkshire. By offering B & B for horse & rider farmers will benefit directly.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PNM-P</p>	<p>Natural England recognises the following potential benefits for tourism and the rural economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stronger identity and destination branding that supports local marketing, place-making, and heritage-led tourism; increased visitor awareness of the area's natural and cultural qualities, potentially supporting higher footfall in local businesses such as B&Bs, pubs, shops, cafés, farm stays, and visitor attractions; access to targeted funding for rural businesses and visitor infrastructure within Protected Landscapes through programmes such as the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme; support for sustainable and responsible tourism through coordinated planning and management, avoiding the risks of overdevelopment or landscape degradation; and, increased opportunities for diversification for landowners and farmers, including equestrian tourism, nature-based experiences, or accommodation ventures that align with the landscape's special qualities. <p>AONB designation and tourism management</p> <p>Designation does not encourage large-scale visitor infrastructure that would harm the area's natural beauty or tranquillity. Rather, it provides a framework to support well-managed, low-impact tourism that respects the landscape and supports the statutory purpose to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.</p> <p>Through the development of a statutory AONB Management Plan, the new designation could enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> integrated planning for visitor access, signage, and sustainable transport;

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>'it will bring further people to explore and observe it. This will help small business within the area so everyone wins.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVH-S <i>'Designation as an AONB would significantly enhance the recognition of the Yorkshire Wolds as a leisure destination and support the local economy through increased tourism and footfall.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2E-J <i>'[ANON] also recognises that an AONB designation may also present advantages, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Increased tourism and income. AONBs are designated for their natural beauty and can increase visitor numbers. This provides opportunities for farm diversification such as accommodation and hospitality to boost the rural economy.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for circular walks, trails, and active travel routes; coordination with local authorities and tourism bodies on infrastructure improvements and visitor services; and, clear guidance on maintaining the landscape's natural beauty while supporting rural businesses. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England agrees with respondents that designation would strengthen the Yorkshire Wolds' identity as a high-quality visitor destination and unlock new opportunities for sustainable economic growth. Tourism plays a vital role in rural communities, and AONB status could provide the tools, funding, and partnerships needed to support this sector so that it is better able to manage existing and emerging tourism impacts on local communities while protecting the very qualities that make the area special.</p>
Equivalent to other chalk landscapes already designated as AONB or National Park	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PZ3-8 <i>'Easily the equivalent of similar geologically-related areas already designated, like The Lincolnshire Wolds.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P7C-N <i>'It seems a complete anomaly that the Lincolnshire wolds are protected under this scheme but the Yorkshire wolds are not.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P7T-6</p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England agrees that the Yorkshire Wolds shares key landscape characteristics with other chalk areas that are already designated as protected landscapes, including the Lincolnshire Wolds, Chilterns, North Wessex Downs, and Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire National Landscapes, and the South Downs National Park. These landscapes are part of the same underlying geological chalk formation that shapes much of southern and eastern England.</p>

Desirability Theme in Support of Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>'I believe that all of the other chalklands are already AONB and saw no reason that the E. Yorks wolds are not equally as beautiful.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P7G-S</p> <p><i>'It's such a beautiful area and as someone who used to live near the Chiltern Hills I believe this application is long overdue as it's a much more beautiful area than the Chilterns.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKU-U</p> <p><i>'If the Lincolnshire Wolds deserves designation, then clearly the Yorkshire Wolds does.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVH-S</p> <p><i>'The Yorkshire Wolds is a landscape whose natural beauty easily meets the standards of AONB/NL designation, particularly given the designation of similar landscapes such as the Lincolnshire Wolds, which forms part of the same chalk outcrop.'</i></p>	<p>Despite this commonality, the Yorkshire Wolds retains a distinct and locally characteristic expression of the chalk landscape. Its open rolling plateau, steep dry valleys, and dramatic escarpments are unique.</p> <p>The Technical Assessment has confirmed that the Yorkshire Wolds meets the statutory natural beauty criterion for designation under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England is of the view that the designation of an area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB is justified, bringing it into parity with other chalk landscapes and recognising its place within the family of England's finest protected landscapes. Natural England remains of the opinion that it is desirable to designate the proposed area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB in order to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.</p>

Table B: Desirability Responses Against Designation of Qualifying Land

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
Inadequate Resourcing and Funding for Protected Landscapes	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PV1-2 <i>'Who is going to pay for it - all the extra bureaucracy'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2X-5 <i>'I however dispute that further management and another tier of bureaucracy and spending is required to maintain it..... Funding will be required to employ people to administer the area which I believe could be better spent elsewhere. If funding in the future is withdrawn the bureaucracy will still exist without any of the promised assistance to deal with it.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P6W-8 <i>'In light of current protected landscape funding challenges any promises of "new" money coming to the area would have to be clearly laid out in specific terms and guaranteed for the long term to be of value when considering the yes/no of an AONB. New people to oversee an AONB plus new signage and improved area plans etc. are not really things that those living and working in the proposed area would consider as advantages.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKB-8 <i>'Much was made of potential funding for diversification projects for farmers, not only is that not particularly appropriate</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England recognises that a number of respondents have concerns about the funding of a Yorkshire Wolds AONB should it be designated.</p> <p>Funding for the management of an AONB comes from a number of sources. Core funding, including for the establishment of a staff unit and the production and implementation of a management plan, is currently provided by Defra and the AONB's constituent local authorities. Notably none of the relevant Local Authorities affected by the proposed designation have objected to the proposals on the basis of funding.</p> <p>Funding may also come from a number of other sources, including government grants and private investment, that can be used to fund specific initiatives and projects, many of which are only available within Protected Landscapes such as National Parks and AONBs. Examples include Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI).</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Funding for a new AONB in the Yorkshire Wolds will need to be considered by Defra.</p>

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	<p><i>for the farms of the area but is one of the few areas in which the current government are willing to support the industry. So it would be easy to envisage one or the other potential sources of funding being withheld.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PN9-2</p> <p><i>[ANON] would be concerned if the creation of new duties for NYC to support the new AONB might lead to resources being diverted from existing activities. We ask the Natural England and Defra give consideration to their funding of any new pressures on the Local Authorities. One specific concern would be around additional pressures on the North Yorkshire Council Countryside Access Service (CAS).'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYX-C</p> <p><i>'Given the chronic underfunding and resource constraints already experienced by existing Protected Landscapes, we consider creation of a new AONB to be a lesser priority than making those we have already work more effectively. However, if it is to be created, it is critical that the Yorkshire Wolds AONB be provided with the necessary funding and resources to deliver its objectives effectively and that this funding is new and additional to that already allocated to existing Protected Landscapes across England.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK6-V, ANON-3WEG-5PKG-D, ANON-3WEG-5PV9-A, ANON-3WEG-5PV8-9, ANON-3WEG-5PVA-J, ANON-3WEG-5PVZ-B, ANON-3WEG-5PVB-K</p>	<p>Natural England believes that designation as an AONB is a proactive investment to conserve and enhance an area's special qualities; and that designation as an AONB enables opportunities for funding and resources that may not be available otherwise.</p>

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>'The technical assessment on desirability is also clear that any designation will rely predominantly on new funding from DERFA [Defra]. Again, it is undesirable and arguably reckless to designate in absence of sufficient secured funding.'</i></p>	
Issues associated with managing two separate areas	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSK-S (East Riding of Yorkshire Council)</p> <p><i>'There is also concern about how the coastal part of the proposed designation will be managed given the substantial distance between it and the main area to the west. This will need to be given careful consideration in the management proposals.'</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>While the inland and coastal parts of the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB are physically separate, it is not unusual for AONBs to include non-contiguous areas where both are clearly of outstanding natural beauty and merit designation, as discussed in the Desirability Assessment (paras. 8.2.18 – 8.2.21). Examples include the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the North Devon National Landscape, and the Norfolk Coast National Landscape. The proposed coastal area, like the inland Wolds, contains high-quality landscape that meets the statutory natural beauty criterion and contributes to the overall character, diversity, and distinctiveness of the wider Wolds landscape.</p> <p>Should the area be designated, the AONB Management Plan and Partnership would be designed specifically to reflect the geographical structure of the designation, ensuring that the needs, challenges, and opportunities of both the inland and coastal components are properly addressed. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing area-specific policies or objectives within the management plan; • ensuring balanced representation of both areas on the AONB Partnership;

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing localised working groups or delivery mechanisms to ensure appropriate attention is given to both parts of the designation; and/or, • tailoring engagement and funding activity to respond to the distinct characteristics and pressures facing inland and coastal landscapes. <p>Natural England also notes that similar situations have been successfully managed elsewhere. For example, the Cornwall and Norfolk Coast National Landscapes (AONBs) both contain separate areas of designated land yet continue to be managed effectively through robust and inclusive partnership models.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>In summary, Natural England agree that careful planning will be essential to ensure that the coastal part of the proposed AONB receives appropriate focus and resources. Should designation proceed, Natural England would support the development of governance and management arrangements that reflect the distinctiveness of both inland and coastal areas, while maintaining a coherent vision for the new Yorkshire Wolds AONB as a whole.</p>
Future of Existing Local Landscape Designation and Heritage Coast	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSW-5 (North Yorkshire Council)</p> <p><i>'Fragmentation of the Ryedale AHLV may be an important issue and might risk future designation and protection at a local level within the new NY Council Plan if there are important small areas but not considered large enough or viable to remain.</i></p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>Existing Local Landscape Designations</p> <p>The designation of an AONB does not automatically remove or replace existing local landscape designations. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) allows local planning authorities to identify and protect locally valued landscapes where they are supported by robust evidence. As noted in the Desirability Assessment, areas outside the</p>

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>The above also applies to the Heritage Coast management area where there may be small fragmented areas which lie outside the AONB designation.'</i></p> <p><i>Fragmentation and exclusion of parts of the Ryedale Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) may be an important local planning issue. This could risk future viability as a local landscape designation, particularly if there are important small areas not considered large enough to be viable following designation of the AONB.</i></p> <p><i>The 'Desirability Assessment' recognises the discrepancy between the proposed AONB and the wider landscape recognised as a valued landscape by Ryedale District, suggesting that the AONB would not preclude the remaining local landscape designation remaining in place, so long as there is sufficient robust evidence to support this.</i></p> <p><i>The issue of fragmentation also applies to the Heritage Coast where a discrete area to the south side of Speeton currently defined as Heritage Coast which will be excluded from the AONB designation.'</i></p> <p><i>The proposed coastal AONB area is a smaller area than the existing Heritage Coast which does contain significant areas of development which preclude it from meeting the criteria for designation of AONB. Vertical masts / wind turbines and holiday parks are notable detracting elements.</i></p> <p><i>In the Desirability Assessment it is stated that the designation of part of the area as AONB would not have implications for</i></p>	<p>proposed AONB boundary - particularly those recognised as important in the former Ryedale AHLV - can continue to be protected, provided the local authority considers the evidence sufficient to justify their continued status in the Local Plan.</p> <p>Natural England would encourage local authorities to review these areas carefully in accordance with the Landscape Institute's guidance, <i>Assessing landscape value outside national designations</i> (TGN 02-21), to ensure consistent and robust evaluation and justification.</p> <p>Heritage Coast</p> <p>The proposed AONB boundary has been drawn to include the undeveloped coastal sections that meet the statutory criteria for designation. In contrast, certain areas within the current Heritage Coast, including those with substantial built infrastructure such as vertical masts or extensive holiday accommodation, were not considered to meet the Natural Beauty criterion for AONB designation.</p> <p>Importantly, Heritage Coast designation will remain in place regardless of the outcome of the AONB designation process. Heritage Coasts are non-statutory designations, managed through local authority policies and partnership working. While the NPPF (2024) requires that planning policies and decisions within areas defined as Heritage Coast should be consistent with their special character and the importance of their conservation (para. 191), and that major development is unlikely to be appropriate, Natural England acknowledge that the level of protection is not equivalent to that of AONBs.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the Heritage Coast designation will continue to play an important role in landscape conservation, public enjoyment, and coastal</p>

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>the current Heritage Coast designation which would remain in place, and we would support this principle.</i></p> <p><i>The conservation of the Heritage Coast is currently led by the local authorities through their planning policies, as directed by NPPF, and the NPPF provides a degree of planning protection for Heritage Coasts in recognition of their scenic quality.</i></p> <p><i>It is recognised that the wording in NPPF for Heritage Coasts is not as strong as that for AONBs and Permitted Development Rights are not withdrawn as for other national-level protected landscapes. Heritage Coasts are not a statutory designation, they are a defined area.'</i></p>	<p>planning. Natural England will continue to support local partners in maintaining and enhancing the Heritage Coast, whether or not a new AONB is designated.</p> <p>Natural England also notes that the work and influence of an AONB can extend beyond its boundaries. An example of this is the Dedham Vale National Landscape; a small National Landscape (AONB) on the Suffolk/Essex border whose Management Plan encompasses the much larger Stour Valley project area outside the boundaries of the actual designation.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>The introduction of a new AONB should not be seen as displacing or downgrading existing landscape designations. Natural England support continued local planning recognition of valued landscapes in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (<i>TGN 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations</i> (2021)). Natural England also reaffirm support for the ongoing role of the Heritage Coast.</p>
New statutory AONB regulations/ new legislation	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PK6-V, ANON-3WEG-5PKG-D, ANON-3WEG-5PV9-A, ANON-3WEG-5PV8-9, ANON-3WEG-5PVA-J, ANON-3WEG-5PVZ-B, ANON-3WEG-5PVB-K</p> <p><i>'The technical assessment in relation to desirability is unable to confirm the likely impact of new DEFRA AONB regulations on the area designated as the regulations are currently being drafted. It is therefore, undesirable and arguable reckless to designate in absence of impactful regulation detail.'</i></p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>Natural England acknowledges that in December 2024, the Government announced an intent to grant new powers to Protected Landscapes (including AONBs) to boost nature's recovery and access to the outdoors; and that the proposed new legislation and guidance would give Protected Landscapes a clear mandate to widen the public's access to nature through strengthened purposes and making changes to improve their governance. Natural England also acknowledges that the details of these proposed</p>

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	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYX-C</p> <p><i>'We understand why some areas (such as EA7) have been excluded under the current criteria for an AONB ("conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an area"); however, in light of the recent government proposal to develop and enact new legislation which strengthens the protected landscapes mandate to recover nature, we feel that the boundary may need further review. We therefore revert to our point below regarding a pause of the designation process and recommend that the boundary of this AONB is reviewed with nature as the primary driver.</i></p> <p><i>Whether or not the designation occurs before or after the proposed new legislation, it is essential that decisions about the boundary adequately consider ecological processes and what is required to effectively conserve and enhance nature and wildlife as important components of natural beauty in the landscape..'</i></p>	<p>amendments, and the resultant implication(s) for AONBs, have not been confirmed; and the required legislative changes and their implementation may take some time to enact.</p> <p>It is a long-standing and accepted principle of public administration that policy and regulation evolve over time, and designation decisions must necessarily be made within the framework in force at the time. In considering the proposed designation of an area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB, Natural England must comply with current legislation. Legislation covering the designation of protected landscapes has not been amended as a result of the Government's announcement and, therefore, Natural England must consider whether an area is of such outstanding natural beauty that it is desirable that it is designated for the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty, as set out in the current version of The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act, 2000.</p> <p>The assessment methodology described in Natural England's <i>Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England</i> (updated June 2021) reflects current legislation and has been used as the basis for the technical assessments for the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB designation. Natural England's technical assessment and recommendation are firmly grounded in the existing statutory framework. The desirability test, as defined in law, does not require certainty over the content of future regulations, but rather an assessment of whether designation would be an appropriate and effective means of securing the area's natural beauty for the future.</p> <p>It should be noted that there is a clear distinction between the statutory technical criterion for designation as an AONB (outstanding natural beauty), and the purpose of designation (to conserve and enhance an area's natural beauty), as set out in Section 82(1) of the CRoW Act. Whilst under the</p>

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		<p>purpose of designation, AONBs can identify priorities and develop initiatives to support the enhancement of nature, the potential to enhance nature is not currently a reason for designation, in and of itself (as noted in the Natural Beauty Assessment report, para. 1.4.3).</p> <p>It should also be noted that the assessment of natural beauty is based on the current condition of the landscape, not some future potential. The legislation in relation to the natural beauty criterion is expressed in the current tense, i.e. current natural beauty, and there is no provision in the legislation for consideration of 'future opportunities' in relation to natural beauty. This does not prevent AONBs from pursuing nature recovery initiatives once designated.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>Natural England does not agree that the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB designation process should be paused whilst possible new legislation strengthening the purpose(s) of AONB designation is developed and enacted. Natural England does not agree that the need to meet Government policy on nature recovery and climate change should determine the extent of land being included in the proposed designation where it does not meet the natural beauty criterion. The case for designation must be made based on an area's eligibility for designation as an AONB in accordance with current relevant legislation, including the statutory technical criterion and purpose.</p>
Increased public access	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PQC-F</p> <p><i>'The area is poorly served by public transport, and the roads are not adequate for the expected rise in vehicle numbers...'</i></p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p>

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and visitor numbers	<p><i>I feel the wolds in general are a "hidden gem" where we can cycle on quiet roads relatively unhindered by traffic.</i></p> <p><i>If this proposal goes ahead, I fear it would increase the volume of traffic in the area, on roads which are not suitable.</i></p> <p><i>Having the wolds designated an AONB would encourage investors to build facilities to cater for the potential increase in visitors, thus creating a snowball effect, with tourists competing with locals and farm traffic for what little road space there is, to the detriment of cyclists and walkers.</i></p> <p><i>The environmental cost of this project is potentially huge, as the wolds are almost completely without any form of public transport, coming at a time when we are trying to cut back on fossil fuel use.</i></p> <p><i>I would prefer the wolds to be left just as they are. As a quiet area to cycle without the gift shops and theme parks found in other areas.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVY-A</p> <p><i>'It is vital not to over promote the area and make [make] it another tourism honey pot which will damage the quiet character of much of this area. The quietness is a defining characteristic.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P6C-M</p> <p><i>'Bridlepaths are non existant is this going to make the area more dangerous for us riders? I'm unsure as will it bring more traffic and less place to ride horses?</i></p>	<p>Several responses raised concerns about the potential for increased tourism to bring pressure on local infrastructure, road networks, farming operations, and the quiet enjoyment of the countryside.</p> <p>Natural England understand and respect these concerns, especially where they reflect local experience of visitor impacts in certain locations, such as Thixendale. However, Natural England does not agree that AONB designation in itself will necessarily lead to harmful or unmanaged tourism. On the contrary, designation provides a framework to plan, manage, and influence visitor activity in a more strategic and sustainable way, with the active involvement of local communities and land managers.</p> <p>The designation of land as an AONB would not in itself bring about any change in existing public access arrangements. AONB designation does not create new rights of access. Within an AONB, the management of Public Rights of Way remains the responsibility of the local authority, and designation would not alter this statutory responsibility. Similarly, landowners' legal rights and responsibilities in relation to access, trespass, and land management remain unchanged.</p> <p>Natural England recognises the contribution that farmers make towards making the countryside accessible. It is very supportive of the need for access to the countryside to be responsible and safe, and recently promoted the Countryside Code through a campaign using Shaun the Sheep to bring the message to a wider audience. Natural England has a statutory duty to promote the Countryside Code and to ensure that people know how to keep the outdoors in the best possible shape.</p> <p>Designation provides the opportunity to form a dedicated AONB Partnership and staff team, which can work proactively with landowners, farmers, and</p>

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	<p><i>We have no bridlepaths. We have no bridlepaths anywhere, will some be created? or will we be pushed onto roads still which will then have more traffic from more visitors</i></p> <p><i>The rspb does not even have accessible routes for horse riders, We have nowhere to go off road and all the extra visitors will make the roads more dangerous.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PNF-F</p> <p><i>'those of us who live here and cherish it, don't want it to become a theme park, in the way that some locations with high visitor numbers have become (EG: some parts of Peak District, Lake District).</i></p> <p><i>We would like visitors to enjoy it for the reasons we do; for its beauty and sense of isolation and openness, rather than for 'facilities' which in the long term tend to detract from the beauty of the place.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK8-X</p> <p><i>Liability Concerns: Designation may encourage greater public access to the land, potentially leading to issues such as trespassing, damage to crops, or littering. We already suffer enough with these aspects and get little or no support especially when it comes to trespass and poaching.</i></p> <p><i>Disruption to Farming Activities: More visitors might interfere with day-to-day farming operations, particularly during sensitive times like planting or harvest'.</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2E-J</p>	<p>local authorities to support the responsible management of access and mitigate conflicts between recreation and land use. This includes helping to develop local access strategies, promote the Countryside Code, improve signage and infrastructure, and lead awareness campaigns – such as around dog control and livestock safety.</p> <p>Natural England also acknowledges the concerns about narrow rural roads, parking, and potential safety risks to farming operations. These issues already exist and are not the result of designation. However, the absence of a strategic management body makes it more difficult to tackle them effectively. AONB designation creates a stronger platform to secure funding, develop visitor management plans, and coordinate action to address these pressures – based on local knowledge and in consultation with affected communities.</p> <p>Natural England agree that tourism must be well-managed, appropriate to place, and compatible with farming and community life. Designation allows for this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted funding opportunities to support rural infrastructure and visitor education. • Collaborative access planning and problem-solving with local authorities and stakeholders. • Support for farm-based tourism that complements land management. • Focused messaging around responsible access and visitor behaviour. <p>Conclusion</p>

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	<p><i>'The [ANON] conducted a survey of members within the proposed area.... Key themes highlighted in the responses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Issues relating to public access and the number of people in the area, concerns that the Wolds may be unable to support increasing footfall.</i> <p><i>The overall opinions of members within the proposal area are generally negative. All but one category (receiving support from AONB staff) was considered disadvantageous to farming businesses. The overwhelming negatives were perceived as access and planning. 51% of members are not in support of the proposals.</i></p> <p><i>Due to close proximity to heavily populated urban areas (York, Hull, Bridlington, Beverley) nearby we have concerns that visitor numbers could lead to an increase in livestock worrying and crop damage. Data from the NFU Mutual indicates that the average insurance claim for a livestock worrying attack is over £1,300 with the total cost of the sector £1.3m in 2021 – a rise of over 10% on 2019. Research suggests that 64% of dog owners let their dog off the lead in the countryside while half admit their pet doesn't always come back when called.</i></p> <p><i>British farmers recognise, and continue to actively promote, the enormous benefits to people's wellbeing of getting out and enjoying the farmed countryside. Connecting people with rural areas can have a long-term legacy of greater appreciation, valuing and understanding of the countryside and where people's food comes from. But public access to the countryside must always be responsible, managed and safe, so livestock and the environment are protected. If these expansions are approved, it is vital that there is a public messaging campaign</i></p>	<p>The Yorkshire Wolds already attracts visitors, with some respondents highlighting existing issues with visitor management. It is likely that this trend will continue with or without designation.</p> <p>Natural England believes that AONB designation would enable a more coordinated and locally tailored approach to managing visitor activity and its impacts. Designation could provide the tools, partnerships, and resources to support both people and place — ensuring that the special qualities of the Yorkshire Wolds are protected and enjoyed responsibly, now and for future generations. This adds weight to the desirability of designating qualifying areas.</p>

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	<p><i>to allow the public to visit the countryside safely, and in harmony with the farmed environment.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, the agricultural industry is a working environment involving large machinery and balancing the rights of the public to access the networks of footpaths, bridleways and byways across farms. The safety of both the public and those working in the agricultural industry continues to be a high priority and we are concerned that a potential increase in visitor numbers will add an unnecessary risk to the working environment.</i></p> <p><i>Rural areas are characterised by roads that are often narrow, single track and difficult to pass. Issues include roads being blocked to emergency vehicles, gateways and lane entrances being barricaded, blocked farm vehicles in fields or prohibiting field access. We therefore have concerns over a potential increase in visitor numbers leading to a number of risks for the already stretched rural network of roads.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to this, a particular worry to [ANON] members relates to transportation of livestock to and from farms, markets, and abattoirs. When animal hauliers experience undue delays, this has important welfare implications and therefore increased traffic on rural roads is of concern.</i></p> <p><i>Looking forward National Parks and AONBs should ensure their tourism strategies recognise the potential of farm-based tourist activity, accommodation and catering provision.</i></p>	

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	<p><i>Resources should be directed toward better maintenance and visitor management of existing access rather than the creation of new routes. This needs to be supported with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaigns aimed at dog walkers • Promotion of the Countryside Code • A robust local strategy for managing tourist honeypot sites and other problem areas. <p><i>The impact of poor visitor management in itself creates a negative feeling for visitors and local businesses. For example, in the Peak District National Park roads are blocked by cars parking along roadsides, preventing visitor movement around the area an impacting on businesses. Local discussions could resolve this issue. In visitor hotspot areas walkers often leave gates open allowing livestock to leave the safety of their enclosure. This puts road users at risk as well as the animals themselves.</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2V-3</p> <p><i>'Thixendale is already a very popular tourist destination sitting as it does in the centre of the Wolds Way footpath . This has , particularly since the pandemic, created issues especially at weekends, of overcrowding in the village centre with large numbers of parked cars causing obstructions . This has impeded access for residents and created particular difficulties for farms in the parish who are at times unable to undertake key operations involving large vehicle and livestock movements. We have considered what steps we can take ourselves to alleviate this but unfortunately the unique topography of Thixendale sitting at the centre of a steep</i></p>	

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	<p><i>narrow valley with only single track roads surrounding the village means finding alternative parking provision for visitors is simply impractical. Consequently the likely increased visitor numbers likely to come with AONB status is causing grave concern, particularly for our residents living on the main street in the village notwithstanding the benefits extra visitors would bring for our hospitality businesses. It was of concern when I raised this issue with your officers at the Thixendale consultation event they suggested that AONB status may afford funding to address this is yet when I sought evidence of other AONB areas being given assistance to address parking issues , not one example could be given. The reality is that peppercorn funding would simply not address the deleterious impact of additional tourism.'</i></p>	
Impacts on coastal habitats	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PSK-S (East Riding of Yorkshire Council)</p> <p><i>'The Council does, however, have some concerns about the proposed designation around the Flamborough Headland. The "Proposed Yorkshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Consultation Document" fails to recognise the role of the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership (YMNP) in supporting the management of the coastal elements of the proposed designation and its role in managing other existing designations in place. The YMNP is hosted by the Council, chaired by Natural England and supported by North Yorkshire Council. There is no consideration for the need to carry out a Habitats Risk Assessment in consideration of the Flamborough Head Special Area of Conservation or Flamborough and Filey Coast Special Protection Area.'</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England appreciate the important role of the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership (YMNP) in supporting the management of coastal habitats within and adjacent to the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB, including its work on existing designations such as the Flamborough Head Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Flamborough and Filey Coast Special Protection Area (SPA). The YMNP were contacted as part of early engagement activities, and paragraph 5.2.4 of the Desirability Assessment recognises the YMNP initiative and their important role in the management of the Flamborough Headland, and in protecting the species and habitats of the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Special Protection Area (SPA).</p> <p>The proposed AONB designation process recognises the need for effective coordination with relevant bodies like the YMNP to ensure complementary</p>

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		<p>management of coastal and marine environments. A key aspect of AONB management is the establishment of strong partnerships with local stakeholders in order to better understand and tailor the vision, initiatives and policies set out in the statutory AONB Management Plan to meet the particular requirements and characteristics of the AONB. Natural England acknowledges that YMNP should be a key member of this partnership between the local authorities and stakeholders in the future management of a Yorkshire Wolds AONB (should it be designated).</p> <p>Natural England has assessed that a Habitats Risk Assessment is not required as part of the AONB designation process.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England remains of the opinion that it is desirable to designate the proposed area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB in order to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.</p>
Removal of Permitted Development Rights	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PCJ-8</p> <p><i>'When an[d] AoNB is designated farmers lose the permitted development rights and anyone who is in needs of these rights to develop their business should be able to retain them...'</i></p> <p><i>The land owner should still be allowed to put up a grain storage shed under a 28 day notice an these right SHOULD NOT be remove as it will conclude in economic stagnation and environmental decline....</i></p> <p><i>these are working landscape not just presently but also in the future and those owning and working in these designated areas need the flexibility to transition and develop along with</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England recognises that the potential removal of permitted development rights (PDRs) due to AONB designation is perceived by some as a barrier to development. However, although some classes of PDR are withdrawn or restricted within an AONB, this does not prevent development taking place; instead endeavouring to ensure that development takes into account the special qualities and statutory purpose of the AONB, in line with planning policy.</p>

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	<p><i>the governmental policies for example and they should also be given the freedom to maximise potentials from renewable energies and green environmental projects with out the loss of their development rights....</i></p> <p><i>the loss of development rights is of huge concern and must be adjusted to allow for agricultural development allowing rural areas and economies to thrive rather than stagnate. we should be encouraging these to be living and evolving landscapes as there have been for centuries under the watchful eyes of our wonderful arable farmers and livestock farmers rather than giving full management and development control over to our short sighted power hungry local authorities who do not appreciate how agricultural environments and businesses have to develop and embrace opportunities to ensure economic and environmental, sustainability, resilient and viability- farming environments are our industrial landscape and we should allow these to change to ensure British food security which is under unprecedeted pressure. the best this those who like farming landscape can do is protect a farm and farming development rights'.</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYZ-E</p> <p><i>'No renewable power opportunities for farmers, no sheds, no driers , no pig sheds for slurry, no slurry stores... We are farmers not a tourist operators, I don't want camp sites and Holiday cottages, I want to produce food and to achieve this is do require my development rights.</i></p> <p><i>PLEASE raise awareness of the real term impact this will have on farming businesses and I think it is a grave mistake to put such a vast area in- at least let agri businesses retain their full development rights including the right to a 28day planning</i></p>	<p>The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (No. 596) (the GPDO) (as amended) sets out thresholds below which permitted development can occur subject to various limitations and conditions. These are referred to as Permitted Development Rights (PDRs).</p> <p>Certain Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) are withdrawn, or restricted, when an AONB designation Order comes into being. The Local Planning Authority can also remove additions PDRs via an Article 4 direction if they feel it is necessary to protect the area's character. However, the withdrawal of a PDR does not mean that that type of development can no longer occur instead the development will need to be accessed via the standard planning approval process. For other classes of PDR, additional limitations and conditions can apply as a result of AONB designation. Again, this does not mean that that type of development can no longer occur; but it means that there may additional requirements for carrying out the development under permitted development rights.</p> <p>As set out in Appendix 2 of the Desirability Assessment Report (correct at date of publication, September 2024), there is generally little substantive difference in Permitted Development Rights inside AONBs and, in practice, the system places no impediments. As noted in the <i>Inspector's Report on the inquiry into the Lake District National Park (Designation) (Variation) Order 2012 and the Yorkshire Dales National Park (Designation) (Variation) Order 2012</i> (para. 3.87): "Of 68 prior approval applications for agricultural development in the YDNP over a period of 5 years, 63 received no objection, 3 more were approved after details were requested and 2 did not proceed."</p> <p>AONBs, along with Conservation Areas, National Parks, the Broads and World Heritage Sites, are referred to as 'Article 2(3) land' within the GDPO. Schedule 2 of the GDPO outlines permitted development rights for various</p>

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	<p><i>notice. This is quietly being pushed in with the masses unaware of the economical impact for the resilience of farming businesses in particular, essentially to stop rural businesses in particular farms developing growing and thriving to produce great British food- even farmers are unaware , until it is too late.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2E-J</p> <p><i>'Many farmers have buildings or barns which are no longer viable for modern agriculture and could be re-purposed for another use. Class Q and other permitted development rights often are not allowed in protected landscapes such as AONBs. [ANON] has been made aware of many cases where this barrier to development has led to those buildings falling into extreme disrepair or even collapse meaning a loss to the character of the area'.</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2V-3</p> <p><i>'Residents have expressed real concern too at the restrictions AONB status brings for permitted development and the evidence from other AONB areas that under such status planning authorities tend to impose more stringent conditions on small scale domestic developments. The streetscape of Thixendale whilst sitting in an attractive setting, is unremarkable with adequate existing protection in place for the solitary listed property. The current streetscape includes environmentally sensitive fixtures such as solar panels which because of the unique topography of the village must face the</i></p>	<p>classes of development, including associated limitations and conditions. In some classes of permitted development rights, there are additional limitations or conditions that apply as a result of land being 'Article 2(3) land' and/or designated as an AONB.</p> <p>With the exception of the exclusions and restrictions listed in Appendix 2 of the Desirability Assessment Report, PDRs generally apply equally within AONBs as elsewhere. Where PDRs do not exist, the standard planning application process applies.</p> <p>Classes of permitted development (GDPO, Schedule 2) that relate to specific concerns raised by respondents include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion of farm buildings: Part 3 (Changes of use), classes Q, R & S. Class Q (buildings on agricultural units and former agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses) is withdrawn for article 2(3) land under Q.1(k), but there is no specific reference to article 2(3) land, or AONB designation, in classes R (agricultural buildings to a flexible commercial use) & S (agricultural buildings to state-funded school). Natural England is aware of many examples from existing Protected Landscapes where proposals for a change of use of farm buildings as part of diversification take account of the special qualities of the area and receive permission from the local planning authority. • 28-day planning notice: Part 4 (Temporary buildings and uses), classes A (temporary buildings and structures) & B (temporary use of land) make no specific reference to article 2(3) land, or AONB designation. Part 6 (Agricultural and forestry) Class A (agricultural development on units of 5 hectares or more) makes no specific reference to article (3) land, or AONB designation. • Renewable Energy: Part 14 (Renewable energy), classes A to OA. Class H (installation or alteration etc of wind turbine on

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	<p><i>street which would generally not be permitted under the more restrictive planning regime of AONBs.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PY9-D</p> <p><i>'...the permitted development right to extract stone for agricultural purposes within one's landholding will probably be taken away with AONB designation so it is arguably only reasonable that matters that are important to land management/ownership rights in planning terms which NE's designation will consequently remove are relevant assessment factors in the landscape character assessment'.</i></p>	<p>domestic premises) and Class I (installation or alteration etc of stand-alone wind turbine on domestic premises) are excluded in relation to article 2(3) land. Classes J (installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises), K (installation or alteration etc of stand-alone solar equipment on non-domestic premises), N (installation etc of flue for biomass heating system on non-domestic premises) and O (installation etc of flue for combined heat and power on non-domestic premises) have additional restrictions in relation to article 2(3) land, whilst class A (installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on domestic premises) and OA (installation etc of a solar canopy on non-domestic, off-street parking) require prior approval determination in relation to article 2(3) land. The remaining classes under Part 14 make no specific reference to article 2(3) land or AONB designation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone extraction for agricultural purposes: Part 6 (Agricultural and forestry), Class A (agricultural development on units of 5 hectares or more) and Class C (mineral working for agricultural purposes) makes no specific reference to article 2(3) land or AONB designation. <p>Natural England notes that PDRs may change in the future, and that the GDPO should be checked for the latest updates. It is also important to note that Local Planning Authorities can tailor PDRs to their own local circumstances and may expand PDRs via a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order; or withdraw PDRs via an Article 4 direction. Natural England advises that anyone considering undertaking building works, alterations or a change of use of land or buildings within AONBs should seek appropriate advice before using PDRs and/or should consult their Local Planning Authority beforehand.</p> <p>Conclusion</p>

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
		<p>The restriction or withdrawal of some classes of Permitted Development Rights within an AONB does not prevent approval of the types of development affected, but it does provide an opportunity for local authorities to fully consider the proposals and ensure that such developments take into account the special qualities of the AONB, in line with planning policy and the local authority's statutory duty. Natural England remains of the view that the benefits arising from changes to PDRs as a result of designation outweigh any disbenefits, and that many of the scenarios raised by respondents, would not be materially impacted.</p>
Impacts on Net Zero infrastructure delivery	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PVW-8 (York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority)</p> <p><i>'For the York and North Yorkshire region to reach carbon negative by 2040, there is a need for increased renewable energy projects including geothermal and wind farms, as well as increased battery storage. Although the Yorkshire Wolds are limited in their ability to provide extensive land for these projects, the low-grade agricultural land within the Wolds has the potential to facilitate small-scale renewable energy production such as wind-turbines, preventing high-grade agricultural land from being taken out of food production elsewhere.</i></p> <p><i>Due to requirements and expectations for the AONB to comment on new planning applications, this could both slow and prevent renewable energy projects from being delivered. Despite this, it is expected that due to the relative size of the area designated in North Yorkshire, this will be limited, but potential implications for net zero infrastructure should be recognised. The AONB should avoid the inclusion of land on the edge of the proposed boundaries where any existing plans</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Government planning policy for England, and how it is expected to be applied, is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024), including how planning policies and decisions can deliver sustainable development, and conserve and enhance the natural environment. The NPPF applies within National Parks and AONBs as elsewhere. The planning term for AONBs in the NPPF is 'National Landscapes'.</p> <p>Whilst the NPPF (2024) includes specific policies (paragraphs 189 & 190) limiting development within a National Landscape (AONB), it does not preclude all development and recognises that in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, major development permission can be granted, subject to consideration of an assessment of its impact and proven need. The NPPF (2024) makes clear that the three overarching objectives of sustainable development - economic, social, and environmental - are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways, so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each. It also emphasises that the Framework should be read as a whole to ensure the delivery of sustainable development that meets the needs of local communities.</p>

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>or proposals have been published relating to renewable energy projects.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, there is likely to be implications for climate adaptation and improving the connectivity of communities including farm businesses. AONB designation will result in the need for the 'Environment Agency preparing and formally consulting with an AONB Joint Advisory Committee or Partnership on flooding, coastal defence and other related projects; and Electricity distribution network companies and telecommunications companies consulting an AONB at the pre-application stage and when consulting on proposals for infrastructure and other work.'</i></p> <p><i>Although relevant bodies consulting with the AONB will not necessarily lead to the prevention of climate adaptation or improvements to community connectivity, there is a potential for the delivery of projects to be slower and more costly. Improvements to the connectivity of communities in relation to the electricity grid and telecommunications should be considered.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P92-6</p> <p><i>'I am disappointed that a more holistic approach cannot be presented, that encapsulates the AONB and proposals for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, together with support to help rural businesses achieve net zero - quickly. These are more important issues to me than the preservation of natural beauty alone is....</i></p> <p><i>My concern is that if the AONB was approved, it could make it more difficult to get the inhabitants and businesses in the AONB area to agree to further measures in the near future for the purpose of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and</i></p>	<p>The National Landscapes Association recognises that National Landscapes (AONBs) are on the front line in the response to the climate and nature crises. It advocates for the inclusion of meaningful measures around climate change mitigation, adaptation and targets to support Net Zero in National Landscape (AONB) Management Plans. The signing of the Colchester Declaration by all National Landscapes (AONBs) in England reflects the commitment by all to take specific steps to achieving these goals.</p> <p>Natural England does not agree that designation as an AONB would prevent households and businesses from moving towards 'Net Zero'. Natural England remains of the opinion that designating a new AONB in the Yorkshire Wolds will provide a positive impetus with regard to future land management initiatives which seek to mitigate, and adapt to, climate change. What is more, the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework includes 3 major targets related to net zero and climate change that must apply to all Protected Landscapes, including AONBs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. • Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050. • Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline). <p>An important part of any new Yorkshire Wolds AONB Management Plan will be to address how these targets will be delivered across the landscape and in partnership with landowners, farmers, businesses and other stakeholders.</p>

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	<p><i>achieving net zero. If my concern was to be proven correct, that would be a grave mistake and an opportunity missed.'</i></p>	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>AONB designation should not be seen as an impediment to achieving Net Zero. On the contrary, designation offers a coherent framework for supporting and coordinating actions on climate resilience, landscape-scale environmental enhancement, and long-term sustainability. Natural England remains confident that a future Yorkshire Wolds AONB can make a positive contribution to local and national climate ambitions, while also respecting the area's distinctive landscape character.</p>
Increased Bureaucracy and Costs	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PZU-A <i>'Having friends in other national parks, I know the difficulties they have encountered in trying to obtain permissions and the red tape that they have to comply with in order to expand, improve or start their businesses.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P7P-2 <i>'This is an unnecessary, unneeded extra layer of bureaucracy which will add a burden to the tax payer with no net benefit.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PCJ-8 <i>'it will create more hurdles and challenges especially for the land owners in and near the designated areas... I fear an AONB does the opposite [does not protect farmland and farming development rights] allowing local authorities to shut countryside down control it, pickle or preserve it rather than letting it thrive as an economic environment.'</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England acknowledges that many objectors have a perception that designation will bring increased interference, regulation and bureaucracy; and recognises and understands the concerns raised by farmers, landowners, and local businesses regarding the potential implications of AONB designation.</p> <p>AONBs largely work through partnership and persuasion rather than regulation. A collaborative approach is particularly important when working in productive landscapes like the Wolds, where many landowners are both custodians of natural beauty and central to the local economy.</p> <p>Respondents have expressed specific concerns in relation to agricultural and farming, planning and development, infrastructure and renewable energy and collaboration. These are addressed in turn below, in order to provide some clarification. Issues raised by respondents concerning the impact of AONB designation on Permitted Development Rights are considered in the 'Removal of Permitted Development Rights' section below.</p>

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	<p>ANON-3WEG-5P9W-B <i>'The area is without doubt beautiful. But does not need designating an aonb. We have way too much red tape as it is.... We don't need another layer of bureaucracy. Such a waste of money'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKB-8 <i>'The presentation team have tried to stress that there would be minimal interference in the land management but if that is the case then what is the designation actually going to achieve?.... In short my objection is this , what is the benefit to the area of an additional layer of bureaucracy to steer it to a destination that it has arrived at anyway. Why should we risk limiting the opportunities of food production in an agricultural business environment which seems perpetually under pressure from groups who do not have it's best interests in mind?'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PVW-8 (York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority) <i>'Farm businesses within the designated area will also face new challenges where they seek to diversify or modify their business involving new or adapted buildings. AONB status could slow planning applications down and lead to increased objections to prospective farm business developments. Consultation inputs from farming representatives including the NFU and the CLA should be carefully considered in the designating of areas within the Yorkshire Wolds.'</i></p>	<p>Agriculture & Farming</p> <p>Whilst designation does not introduce new regulatory powers over farming or land use, Natural England acknowledges that there are some implications for certain types of agricultural project or activity due to the designation of land as an AONB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All land within an AONB is classified as a 'sensitive area' and a 'Semi-Natural Area' under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Agriculture) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2006. This means that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land defined as a 'semi-natural area' can include land that is physically and/or chemically cultivated; • the screening thresholds for 'uncultivated land projects' apply to all land within an AONB, not just to 'uncultivated land'; • carrying out a project to increase the productivity for agriculture of land within an AONB may need a screening decision from Natural England irrespective of its size; and, • the screening thresholds for 'restructuring projects' within, or partially within, an AONB are reduced compared to land not classified as a 'sensitive area'. • Designation as an AONB does not prevent the continuation of existing agricultural activities, provided that they comply with legislation that would apply anyway, nor does it interfere with participation in agri-environment schemes such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) or Countryside Stewardship. • Local planning authorities and other public bodies do not gain new powers to direct farming operations or control land use as a result of designation; although they must consider their statutory duty (to seek

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	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PVD-N</p> <p><i>'We operate a mixed farming operation in and out of the proposed area. Our concern relates to the area extending from Cowlam to Langtoft to the east of Sledmere. Agriculture is the major source of employment in the area and as such we are trying to stay sustainable and resilient to the ever changing economic policies. Designating an AONB with yet further tiers of regulation and constraint would halt any further diversification e.g. Permitted Development Rights extinguished, wind turbines developments etc. and as such question future viability for the next generation. It also does not align with the present governments policy of food security'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK8-X</p> <p><i>'Potential Restrictions on Farming Practices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Impact on my businesses flexibility: AONB designation can introduce additional regulations that may limit certain farming practices, such as the use of fertilizers, pesticides, or specific machinery, to preserve the landscape.</i> <i>Increased Bureaucracy: As a farmer, I may need to seek permission for activities that were previously routine, adding administrative burdens and delays.</i> <i>Reduced Viability for Younger Farmers: Restrictions could make farming less attractive or viable for the next generation, contributing to rural depopulation.</i> <p><i>Financial Implications</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Decreased Land Value for Development: The potential for restrictions on building or diversification projects</i> 	<p>to further the statutory purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty) when making decisions about development plans, policies, planning applications, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designation does not prevent farmers from innovating, diversifying, or adapting to changing conditions. On the contrary, AONB status can provide access to specialist advice and support from an AONB team, including: support in accessing funding (in some cases only available within a Protected Landscape such as an AONB); help with opportunities for collaborative marketing; support for new/young farmers entering the industry; and, advice on options for farm diversification and tourism. Natural England recognises that not all farm businesses wish to diversify into tourism or public-facing activities. These decisions are entirely at the discretion of the individual business, and AONB designation does not compel such changes. <p>Planning & Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only local authorities or the Secretary of State can give permission for development in, or affecting, an AONB. Under Section 85 of the CROW Act, all relevant public bodies – including local planning authorities - are required to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB when exercising their functions. AONB designation does not prevent development taking place in, or near to, the designated area but national policy, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, does provide clear direction that the scale and extent of development should be limited. The statutory duty of relevant authorities to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an area when exercising their functions means that the impact of a development on

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	<p>(e.g., converting land for housing or commercial use) may reduce its development potential and overall value.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Costs: Compliance with conservation requirements, such as maintaining hedgerows or specific landscape features, may lead to increased costs. We already manage the landscape and do not feel there is any need to improve or add more requirements to what is already done as a matter of course.' <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYZ-E</p> <p>'Farming businesses need to be able to adapt and use this land to ensure agri busses is resilient, profitable and sustainable. - we do our bit for the environment through defra SFI and CS already but AONB status means we are pickled, prisoned and preserved -development rights gone - our voice is small due to population density, yet we own this land and have absolutely no say and we are not being listened to.'</p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2E-J</p> <p>'The [ANON] conducted a survey of members within the propsoed area.... Key themes highlighted in the responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on farm diversification and ability to get planning permission for modernisation, essential for ensuring that farms stay in business, are perceived as disadvantages. Impacts on renewable energy potential is a concern. Restriction of farming activities and additional red tape to abide by. 	<p>the area's natural beauty must be taken into consideration during plan-making and when determining planning applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing National Parks, the Broads and National Landscape (AONBs). While there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within the NPPF 2024, protected areas like National Landscapes (AONBs) can influence the overall scale, type or distribution of development in a local plan area. Limited development may be acceptable in AONBs, and major development can be approved if exceptional circumstances exist. The NPPF (2024) makes clear that the three overarching objectives of sustainable development - economic, social, and environmental - are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways, so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each. It also emphasises that the Framework should be read as a whole to ensure the delivery of sustainable development that meets the needs of local communities. <p>Infrastructure and Renewable Energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan-led system in England directs what development is acceptable within an AONB in terms of planning applications made to the Local Planning Authority. Renewable energy proposals may still be granted permission within AONBs where they meet local plan policy and are compatible with landscape objectives. Designation as an AONB does not, in itself, prevent development taking place, but it does place greater scrutiny of proposals, and their impact on the natural beauty of the landscape. Although paragraph 190 of the NPPF (2024) states that there is a presumption that major development within National Landscapes (AONBs) will be refused,

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	<p><i>The overall opinions of members within the proposal area are generally negative. All but one category (receiving support from AONB staff) was considered disadvantageous to farming businesses. The overwhelming negatives were perceived as access and planning. 51% of members are not in support of the proposals.</i></p> <p><i>A second survey was carried out for [ANON] members in an existing local AONB and the planning process is highlighted as disadvantageous by farmers working and living within protected landscapes. It is recognised that a system designed to protect landscape character will lead to some frustrations, and there is a need for a careful balance. Members have cited extra costs and longer processes added through planning. The proposed AONB need to find ways to steer development towards maintaining local character while also recognising that in a working landscape those suggestions must not impact economic viability of the development.</i></p> <p><i>Direct support payments are decreasing, with the Basic Payment Scheme ending by 2027 and significant reductions in 2025. To survive, farmers must optimise resources and innovate. The Government emphasises food security as national security, underscoring the importance of domestic food production. [ANON] advocates diversification to secure the food supply chain long-term, needing supportive planning regulations, especially in environmentally sensitive areas.</i></p> <p><i>Rising energy costs prompt the [ANON's] push for greater energy independence on farm, through small scale on-site renewable electricity generation, aiming to cut emissions and support profitability. [ANON] believe farms can create green jobs and foster clean growth while producing sustainable food, renewable energy, and managing environmental assets. [ANON] are therefore concerned for the additional planning</i></p>	<p>permission can be granted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development is in the public interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similarly, the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1, updated January 2024) does not preclude the development of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) within an AONB, but notes that they should be designed sensitively and to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, to ensure that measures which seek to further the purposes of a designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development for projects that are within, or may impact on, an AONB. <p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designation would lead to the formation of a Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape Partnership, which would bring together a range of local stakeholders, including representatives from: the constituent local councils and parish councils; landowners and farmers; community & recreation groups; environment & heritage organisations; and businesses. An AONB Management Plan must be produced for each AONB; developed in collaboration with the AONB Partnership and setting out the vision for the AONB. Whilst it is non-regulatory, the AONB Management Plan provides guidance and strategic priorities; informing local planning policy and community action. It aids delivery of the statutory purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, and should respond to the specific characteristics, issues and priorities of the area; including policies and objectives that help to secure the vision.

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	<p><i>constraints that may affect farms looking to generate and use renewable energy.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2C-G</p> <p><i>[ANON] foresees negative outcomes as a consequence of this proposed designation - another layer of bureaucracy to contend with whenever anyone wants to do anything, additional costs, time delays, and increased hassle and stress for local residents, farmers and business operators.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2V-3</p> <p><i>'A key concern is the additional considerations required for planning and development under AONB status. This applies to both local businesses and residents. We have a number of successful farm diversification businesses that in actual fact provide the greatest employment for our village. These light industrial enterprises are legitimately concerned about potential restrictions and additional bureaucracy in navigating planning processes as their businesses grow which as a council we are keen to encourage to create a sustainable community. There is a real risk, as has occurred in other protected landscapes, that these kind of vital assets are discouraged by the restrictions of AONB status and locate elsewhere.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYB-P</p> <p><i>'I fear AoNB which results in Local authority management plans being put in place may be yet another hurdle put in front of farmers making it more challenging for them to produce</i></p>	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England recognises that designation may have impacts beyond the statutory purpose, but which are not relevant to the consideration of the desirability of designation in the statute. Whilst designation of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB would introduce a stronger duty on public bodies to consider the landscape when carrying out their functions, including planning, it would not give those authorities new powers over farming or business operations. For these reasons Natural England remains of the view that designation of an AONB within the Yorkshire Wolds is desirable.</p>

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	<p><i>food sustainability [sustainably] and operate resilient and economically viable business whilst we strive to engage with new opportunities from renewable energy, food and grain storage and drying- this numb AONB is preventative rather than supportive.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P9S-7 – Coastal</p> <p><i>'The land is already in a defined heritage coast area. It does fall into your designation criteria but given that the immediate coast and landscape adjoining this is already in an agreement is it really needed to extend that area to the settlements along the coast when your boundary is land that is outside of the local plan anyway? The fact that you are saying you are protecting the landscape from planning and potential development even though your boundary is land that isn't included in eligible land to be developed as per Scarborough Borough Councils Local plan?'</i></p>	
Tourism Diversification challenges	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PCJ-8</p> <p><i>'I do not want to host glamping sites or a tourist destination however this is what has traditionally happened in AONB in the past as they often seek to use the status to enhance their income- please you must understand that this area is different. Not all of us seek to turn to tourism- some of us are more than happy being food producers and farmers of livestock and arable and we do it pretty efficiently and effectively'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PKB-8</p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>Natural England acknowledge that not all land managers or rural businesses wish to diversify into tourism or hospitality, and it is not the purpose of AONB designation to promote one model of rural economic development over another. AONBs are first and foremost living, working landscapes, valued as much for the way they are actively managed by farmers and landowners as for their natural beauty.</p> <p>Many of the special qualities of the Yorkshire Wolds are derived directly from its long-standing agricultural traditions, and continued food production, livestock rearing, and arable farming are entirely compatible with</p>

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	<p><i>'The only benefit that I can discern would be to those involved in tourism in the area. That sector has already significantly increased over the last few years and whilst that may benefit some, it is a hindrance to those who are working in an industrial farming area. It is not the case that all those living in the area see tourism as a positive to be encouraged and promoted.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK8-X</p> <p><i>'Limitations on Non-Agricultural Ventures: If we are to consider diversifying (which the current state of farming and the government are pushing us to do more and more!) we may face difficulties diversifying into such things as tourism, renewable energy projects (like solar or wind farms), or other initiatives that could be restricted under AONB policies.</i></p> <p><i>Loss of Autonomy: Restrictions might limit innovation and adaptability in managing the land to respond to market or environmental changes.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYG-U</p> <p><i>'There may be seasonal, benefits linked to tourism, however, as a working landscape, it is important that the year-round economy is fully considered.'</i></p>	<p>designation. AONB status does not impose a requirement for tourism development, nor does it prevent farming businesses from continuing as they are. There is no expectation that landowners must diversify into visitor-facing enterprises.</p> <p>In terms of non-agricultural diversification — including projects such as small-scale renewables or other forms of land-based enterprise — these are not automatically prohibited in AONBs. Such proposals would continue to be considered through the local planning system, where relevant local plans, policies, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) apply. The NPPF recognises the need to balance environmental protection with appropriate, sustainable development that supports rural economies and communities.</p> <p>Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, relevant authorities, including local planning authorities, have a duty to seek to further the statutory purpose of AONB designation to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. They must apply the duty when undertaking any function in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB. In practical terms, this means that AONB designation introduces a higher level of planning scrutiny when decisions are made on planning applications, certain development undertaken through permitted development rights, and the drafting and delivery of policies in development plans. However, this does not equate to a restriction on development or innovation, and many AONBs across the country host a diverse range of rural enterprises that contribute to both economic resilience and landscape character, including: low-impact renewables; farm shops and hospitality venues; educational initiatives; tourist accommodation; and conservation-led farming.</p> <p>Natural England agree that the year-round rural economy must be supported, not just seasonal tourism. Designation provides a mechanism to work in partnership with landowners, businesses, and local authorities to</p>

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		<p>develop tailored management plans that reflect the specific economic and environmental context of the area, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>Natural England does not view designation as a constraint on farming, autonomy, or innovation. Rather, it is a tool for long-term landscape stewardship that recognises and supports the role of those who actively shape the land - especially farmers. Where diversification is appropriate, Natural England believe AONB designation can offer access to funding and support. Where it is not desired, farmers can continue to choose to focus on core agricultural activity.</p>
Benefits to Communities are not clearly evidenced	<p>ANON-3WEG-5P62-3</p> <p><i>‘...the only people who will benefit from imposing this status are those employed to run the scheme (which isn’t necessary, therefore there’s no need for this spend) and potentially visitors, there was no evidence as to how residents would benefit. There were a lot of ‘might’s’, no definitive answers and that does not seem a good enough reason to implement this scheme given that associated difficulties and costs that AONB present for people living in the area.’</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P6W-8</p> <p><i>‘It is clear that the area meets the criteria defined for an AONB. However the value of classifying as an AONB has not been proven.</i></p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>Natural England acknowledges that several respondents have concerns that designation as an AONB doesn’t bring any proven benefits to an area, but that it increases regulations and bureaucracy for landowners, farmers and individuals. Concerns relating to increased regulations and bureaucracy are addressed elsewhere in this document, as are concerns relating to planning, impacts on land management and the rural economy.</p> <p>The Desirability Assessment Section 7 sets out the ways in which designation of an AONB may bring benefits to the area. Benefits are also reiterated by respondents in support of designation set out on pages 1 to 27 above including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional resources • Integrated management

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	<p><i>As no tangible benefit has been offered it seems unreasonable to impose any new level of control/bureaucracy. Should the AONB be proven to bring benefit to the area proposed in anything other than increased attention/marketing I would change my position to being in favour. As it stands Natural England representatives confirmed there would be no additional environment protection, no controls on intensive farming techniques, no change to planning acceptance criteria, no guaranteed additional funding for local infrastructure (e.g. internet/phone, public transport, Thixendale's need for a parking area/signage etc.) and no other discernible direct benefits to the land/communities.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK8-X</p> <p><i>'Insufficient Evidence for Benefits: I strongly feel that the designation lacks clear evidence of benefits to the landowner or local economy.</i></p> <p><i>In a time where agriculture and farming, as a way of life, is being shafted at every opportunity, especially by the current Government, their pre election lies and their damming budget for Agriculture and small businesses, I do not trust or believe what I have been told during the consultation process and cannot see how the AONB would benefit or enhance my farm, my livelihood, my families future or the area in any way whatsoever.</i></p> <p><i>I urge the committee reviewing this project and the consultation process to seriously look at reducing the overall size of the designated area and remove as much of the productive arable land and farms as possible so that we can hopefully survive and possibly thrive and continue as an industry and small businesses, to feed the nation and remain</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory protection in planning • Improved access and visitor management • Connection to other protected landscapes • Improved rural economy • Equivalent to other designated chalk landscapes <p>A key benefit of designation is the requirement to develop an AONB Management Plan, which is created in partnership with local stakeholders and communities. This provides a structured and locally-informed approach to securing funding and delivering practical projects that support the statutory purpose to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty, including initiatives relating to nature recovery, farming, community priorities, and rural business — helping to ensure that the designation delivers real, tangible outcomes for people as well as landscape.</p> <p>These benefits have been realised in other designated landscape across England where local communities, farmers and businesses have worked in partnership with AONB teams to deliver initiatives tailored to local needs.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England considers that the benefits of AONB designation are clearly set out in the <i>Desirability Assessment</i> and are reflected in the views of many respondents who support designation. Evidence from other National Landscapes (AONBs), such as the Cotswolds and North Pennines, further demonstrates the positive economic and environmental impact of AONB status.</p> <p>Importantly, designation provides a framework — not a fixed outcome. The extent to which these benefits are realised depends on local engagement. Through the statutory AONB Management Plan and associated partnership</p>

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>custodians of the countryside which we all live in and love, as it currently is.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2C-G</p> <p><i>'[ANON] questions what can actually be gained by this proposed AONB designation for Langtoft, over and above the formal and informal systems already in place, which are already working.'</i></p>	<p>working, there is a real opportunity for communities, landowners, farmers and businesses to help shape how the designation delivers for their area.</p>
Importance of area for food production and security	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PCJ-8</p> <p><i>'For farming to continue with the challenges such as climate change we must rely more heavily in domestic food production and encourage its efficiency. We also must have the ability to store products both inputs and outputs to secure economic viability and yield. This does require industrial sized buildings and farm steads along with housing of livestock such as pigs to reduced our consumption of manufactured fert- again which reduces our co2 output and supports our economic and environmental resilience. This has not been taken into consideration...'</i></p> <p><i>I struggle to see the benefit of this designation AONB on arable farming land- and I hugely disagree that it is going to be beneficial for arable farm land to be managed as an AONB and this managerial role dictated by the local authority who have utterly no idea about food production. It is even leaning on communism if we are not very careful.....</i></p> <p><i>it is essential that those living and in my case farming in the rural areas identified are allowed to continue to produce food in any way they require along with the developing infrastructures required- whether this be renewable energy ,</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England recognises the vital importance of productive farming and food security, especially in the face of climate change and economic challenges. Natural England is committed to collaborating with farmers and land managers to achieve sustainable food production and nature recovery, ensuring a resilient future for farming and the natural environment. Food security is national security and supporting farmers to boost food security is one of Defra's top priorities.</p> <p>AONB designation is designed to protect and enhance natural beauty while supporting sustainable land management, including agriculture. The designation does not seek to restrict or prevent productive farming practices or necessary infrastructure such as storage facilities, renewable energy installations, or livestock housing. Instead, it seeks to encourage farming that is sympathetic to the landscape's character and promotes environmental resilience.</p> <p>Natural England acknowledges concerns about potential impacts on economic viability for food production and agriculture. AONB designation</p>

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	<p><i>storage systems for nutrient this designation should not change the economic output of this land..</i></p> <p><i>I think this could be detrimental to farming and farming businesses as the area proposed has not been considered carefully enough for the economic and longer term impact'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P6M-X</p> <p><i>'we need to ensure that the productive arable land within the area is not jeopardised with any unnecessary rules or regulations that would prevent us producing food'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYG-U</p> <p><i>'The area proposed is undoubtedly an active and managed landscape and we have not seen any detailed assessment of the impact upon the local economy of the proposed designation.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK8-X</p> <p><i>'Risk to Rural Economy: AONB designation might focus on preserving landscapes at the expense of productive agricultural land, potentially undermining the local farming economy'.</i></p>	<p>works within existing planning frameworks to balance conservation with productive land use.</p> <p>While some adjustments in land management may be encouraged to align with AONB objectives, these aim to support long-term resilience rather than limit agricultural activity. Natural England is aware that there is already positive engagement by landowners and farmers in the Yorkshire Wolds area to implement sustainable farm practices as part of their food production business e.g. Future Food Solutions Wolds Programme which covers a 10-mile diameter around Kilham. This initiative highlights the following farmer benefits: enhanced water quality; soil analysis and organic matter level testing; GPS driven soil quality management; reduced input costs and provision of over crops seed and advice for trials.</p> <p>A new AONB within the Yorkshire Wolds could build on initiatives such as this across a much wider area, working with farming communities to ensure that designation supports, rather than conflicts with, the vital role of agriculture in the area.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England does not believe that there should be any reason for a landowner or business to change their current land use, management or other business activity as a direct consequence of designation. Instead, Natural England considers that designation can open opportunities for farmers to access support and funding for sustainable practices that enhance both productivity and environmental outcomes.</p>
Impacts on Mineral Extraction	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYG-U</p> <p><i>'we are aware this area is largely identified in the East Riding Minerals Local Plan as a Mineral Safeguarding Area and</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p>

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	<p><i>within the North Yorkshire Minerals Plan. Notably, the aggregate landbanks in East Riding are under pressure and we have seen no evidence of alternative sources of aggregate being recognized. In North Yorkshire the crushed rock landbank is overly skewed towards Carboniferous and both Permian and Jurassic limestone landbanks are struggling to satisfy apportionments in the long term. In future, it will either mean that production will be severely compromised, or further permissions will have to come forward in protected areas.</i></p> <p><i>From a mineral planning perspective, the proposed AONB straddles both the East Riding and North Yorkshire. East Riding has a Sand and Gravel landbank figure of 3.9 year based on the Local Aggregates Assessment (2022) which is well below the minimum requirement of at least 7 years in the NPPF. Whilst the crushed rock landbank is healthier it is important to reflect that of the five Jurassic limestone sites in North Yorkshire, one is constrained by a National Park making future extensions to the site very difficult. In North Yorkshire, as mentioned earlier, the crushed rock landbank is overly skewed towards Carboniferous Limestone, with both Permian and Jurassic limestone landbanks</i></p> <p><i>Two more sites in North Yorkshire are within AONBs. Accordingly, when current reserves are exhausted it is unlikely future extensions will be permitted.</i></p> <p><i>One site is surrounded by the proposed new designation and its latest extension (if permitted) will likely be its last, if the designation proceeds.'</i></p>	<p>Natural England recognises that minerals are a nationally important resource and that mineral safeguarding areas, as identified in the Adopted East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull Joint Minerals Local Plan (October 2019) and North Yorkshire's Minerals and Waste Joint Plan 2015 - 2030, are critical for ensuring the long-term supply of aggregates.</p> <p>Designation of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty does not automatically prohibit mineral extraction or extensions to existing quarries, and there are numerous examples of active mineral extraction within Protected Landscapes, including within the North York Moors National Park, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale National Landscape. The planning system, through local mineral planning authorities, will continue to consider mineral proposals on their individual merits, balancing the need to protect important mineral resources with the primary purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the designated landscape.</p> <p>Any mineral extraction proposals within or adjacent to the proposed AONB would be subject to robust planning scrutiny, which includes consideration of landscape impact, environmental mitigation, and adherence to national and local planning policies.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>Natural England recognises that designation may have impacts beyond the statutory purpose, but which are not relevant to the consideration of the desirability of designation in the statute. Mineral planning authorities are required to take account of an AONB designation as a significant material consideration, but it does not constitute a blanket restriction. Natural England remains confident that the proposal to designate an area of the Yorkshire</p>

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		Wolds as an AONB will not have a significant impact on mineral planning within North Yorkshire Council and East Riding Council.
Beautiful area - no requirement for a label/status	<p>ANON-3WEG-5PZU-A <i>'It is a beautiful place but does not need a label to continue to be so!'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P62-3 <i>'The area is already a natural beauty and doesn't require any form of status to recognise this.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2C-G <i>'If Natural England considers that Langtoft should be an Area of Outstanding Beauty, this is because it already is one based on the efforts of existing residents and organisations. Why is there a need for designation, a label and another layer of bureaucracy?'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P22-Y <i>'It doesn't need to be AONB. People who lived there all their life do not need city folk or outsiders telling us what to do.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PK8-X <i>'Current Stewardship of the Land: As an arable landowner, we already manage the land responsibly and feel that additional protections are unnecessary. The landscape's character has been shaped by farming over centuries, and current practices</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England agrees with respondents that the landscape of the area is strongly influenced by agriculture, as well as other aspects of land management, and that these have given rise to, and continue to maintain, many aspects of the area's natural beauty. Natural England acknowledge that positive land management practices of local landowners, farmers and residents have contributed to the natural beauty found within the qualifying areas.</p> <p>Natural England recognises that the landscape's character has been shaped by centuries of farming and that positive land management practices have contributed to its natural beauty. The positive role that agriculture and farming can play in an area's natural beauty is recognised in legislation; with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (s.99) stating that land that is used for agriculture or woodlands is not prevented from being treated as being an area of outstanding natural beauty.</p> <p>Designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is not intended to impose a 'label' for the sake of it, nor does it imply that the area's value is not already recognised or appreciated locally. Rather, AONB designation is a legal mechanism to ensure that landscapes of national significance, like the Yorkshire Wolds, are formally recognised and celebrated; conserving and enhancing the landscape for the long term through access to specialist support, funding and management initiatives.</p>

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	<p><i>already align with conservation goals. Why change something that isn't broken.</i></p> <p><i>... The current level of voluntary stewardship schemes and existing environmental regulations are sufficient to maintain the area's natural beauty without the need for formal designation...</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2V-3</p> <p><i>'Another relevant piece of evidence is well made by our local farmers who poignantly point out that generations of their families have in fact created the very landscape that you may be seeking to protect as almost none of the land in the proposed area is not either cultivated or actively managed through grazing or other agricultural activity. It begs the pertinent question of why is landscape protection actually necessary? In their view which we as a council support, it is not.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2D-H</p> <p><i>'The area has beauty but does it require a label.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2T-1</p> <p><i>'The areas are farmland which have been worked for decades and will continue to be farmed regardless of a AONB but without the restrictions...We feel most of the proposed AONB is unnecessary as it is farm land'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2H-N</p>	<p>Natural England acknowledges the importance of local landowners, farmers and residents in the continued management of land within an AONB. This is formally recognised and encouraged through the establishment of AONB Partnerships; enabling local stakeholders to become involved in the wider management of an AONB through regular meetings and the opportunity to input into the development of priorities and policies in the AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England agrees that agriculture and woodland management has given rise to, and continues to maintain, many aspects of the area's natural beauty, and should continue to play an important part in the future. Designation recognises, and seeks to support, the ongoing efforts of those who live and work in the area to conserve and enhance its natural beauty for current and future generations.</p>

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	<p><i>'Areas which have been managed for decades and will continue to be managed does not necessarily need a label'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PCJ-8 <i>'it is [Coastal Area] alread[y] protected not too sure why the designation is also required.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYZ-E <i>'As a thriving countryside and rural economy which has never put the area in aesthetic danger and in fact relies on the quality of the environment , I'm not sure what the status of AONB will bring apart from limits, if it looks so good- leave it as it is as the guardians of the countryside must have been done a good enough job'</i></p>	
Dilution of the Brand	<p>ANON-3WEG-5P7P-2 <i>'Creation of more AONB merely dilutes the brand of those that exist.'</i></p>	<p><u>Commentary:</u></p> <p>Natural England does not agree that the designation of new AONBs dilutes the brand or value of existing National Landscapes (AONBs). Each AONB is designated because it meets the statutory criterion of natural beauty and is considered to be of national significance in its own right.</p> <p>Land which has been proposed for designation has been identified through detailed landscape evaluation and testing of the landscape against the natural beauty factors set out in the Natural England Guidance. The detailed evaluation tables contained in the Natural Beauty Assessment set out the judgements reached and provide transparency and reasoning.</p>

Desirability Theme Against Designation	Representations	Natural England Commentary
		<p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>The Yorkshire Wolds, with its outstanding natural beauty, nationally significant chalk landscape, rich biodiversity, and cultural heritage, complements the existing family of National Landscapes (AONBs). Rather than diluting the brand, the designation helps to strengthen the collective value and diversity of England's protected landscapes, promoting greater awareness and support for natural beauty across the country.</p>
Increase in house prices	<p>BHLF-3WEG-5PYW-B</p> <p><i>'It is expected that domestic property prices will increase in the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB and adjacent communities. Typically, 15% within other AONBs and 7% in areas bordering AONBs. There is a risk that homes in and around a Yorkshire Wolds AONB will become unaffordable for many people in local communities. We would therefore like to see early consideration given to ensure adequate provision of affordable homes to rent and buy for affected communities. This may fall outside the CRoW Act provisions; if so, it will be for the Local Authorities to review and amend Local Plans accordingly.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2V-3</p> <p><i>'A further concern is the likelihood, again based on experience in other AONB's, is the prospect of increased house prices as the status increases the desirability of property in these areas. We have already experienced exponential property price increases since the pandemic, rendering the village</i></p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>Natural England recognises that affordable housing availability is often a concern in rural areas, and that there are reports that suggest that house prices within AONBs tend to be higher than those located outside of designated landscapes, e.g. Nationwide's <i>National Parks Special Report 2024</i>. However, as noted in the Nationwide report, this premium may be a reflection of the attractiveness of the area itself, rather than its designation as an AONB. In addition, designation as an AONB would not prevent the provision of new and affordable housing within the Yorkshire Wolds, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) recognises the need for affordable housing within rural communities.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>Natural England does not agree that designation as an AONB would necessarily lead to homes within the Yorkshire Wolds becoming unaffordable for people in local communities; designating the proposed area as an AONB</p>

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	<p><i>increasingly unaffordable, particularly for younger less affluent families in an area with depressed average incomes . We would not wish to exacerbate this problem as it affects the sustainability of our community in which accessibility for young families plays a key part. It is of concern that the school roll in the primary school that serves Thixendale (in neighbouring Leavening) has been falling in recent years as younger families struggle to afford to buy or rent property in the area. This is a trend we would not wish to see exacerbated as further reductions in pupil numbers would bring the viability of the school into question.'</i></p> <p>BHLF-3WEG-5P2X-5</p> <p><i>'Little reassurance was given at the presentations regarding the impact of designation regarding house price increases. Second home demand and an influx of people who will require accomodating. New infrastructure such as public toilets, pathway and signs will not enhance the area.'</i></p>	<p>will not prevent the provision of appropriate affordable housing within the area.</p> <p>Natural England remains of the opinion that it is desirable to designate the proposed area of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB in order to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.</p>

Table C: Desirability Responses Supporting the Designation of Additional Land beyond Qualifying Area

Desirable to bring in land beyond the proposed areas to reflect cultural and historical landscape	ANON-3WEG-5PZY-E	Commentary
	<p><i>'The area proposed is incomplete and divides what is known culturally and historically known in Yorkshire as 'the Wolds'.....This does not represent the Wolds as it has been known for generations..... If the designation does not take into account the historic and culturally significant areas of the Wolds in its entirety, particularly in the area which is currently ignored in the East Riding of Yorkshire we would prefer that</i></p>	<p>Natural England acknowledges the strength of feeling expressed by respondents regarding the cultural, historical, and geographical identity of the Yorkshire Wolds. Many consultees emphasised the importance of ensuring that any designated area reflects the full extent of what has traditionally been understood as "the Wolds," and raised concerns about the exclusion of</p>

associated with the Wolds	<p><i>the designation fails as it would not be a true representation. The cultural heritage of the area is at significant risk if the proposed area is carried forward.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5PQW-3</p> <p><i>'In general I think all of the escarpment around the outer edge of the crescent should be included in the AONB. This will make the AONB more consistent with the geology and geography of the Wolds. This will also make more sense to visitors, walkers and cyclists as well as residents living in the area. In particular young people growing up in the East side of Yorkshire will understand the geography and geology more easily and come to appreciate the precious natural landscape if the vast majority of the Wolds are included within the boundary of the AONB.'</i></p> <p>ANON-3WEG-5P9V-A</p> <p><i>'Research conducted over the last 45 years in and around the village of West Heslerton show that the choice of the A64 as a northern boundary would exclude an area of demonstrated significant European archaeological significance between the A64v and the edge of the former wetlands visible in our published resource linked below. https://lrc.cast.uark.edu/map... to exclude and effectively trim the historic landscape in this way might be interpreted as cultural vandalism.'</i></p>	<p>certain areas – particularly in the East Riding and around West Heslerton – a that are seen as integral to this identity.</p> <p>Legal Framework and Assessment Methodology</p> <p>Designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a statutory process governed by specific criteria. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the key legal test is whether an area is:</p> <p><i>"of such outstanding natural beauty that it is desirable that it is designated for the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty."</i></p> <p>To assess whether an area meets this criterion, Natural England follows a published methodology: <i>"Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England"</i> (updated June 2021). This approach has been tested through public inquiry and upheld by Planning Inspectors.</p> <p>The methodology assesses the contribution of a range of factors to natural beauty, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape quality • Scenic quality • Relative wildness • Relative tranquillity • Natural heritage features • Cultural heritage, where visibly expressed in the landscape and contributing to the perception of natural beauty <p>Cultural or historical associations alone do not justify designation unless they are clearly evident in the landscape in a way that contributes directly to natural beauty. There needs to be an overall weight of evidence regarding natural beauty for an area of land to qualify for designation as an AONB.</p>
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		<p>National Character Area and Landscape Context</p> <p>The Yorkshire Wolds National Character Area (NCA 27), which defines the broader extent of the Yorkshire Wolds landscape, will remain unchanged. This NCA provides an important framework for understanding the wider landscape and its shared characteristics, and it will continue to guide strategic planning, environmental policy, and research.</p> <p>However, not all parts of an NCA necessarily meet the standard required for AONB designation. In fact, the partial recognition of valued landscapes within the Yorkshire Wolds NCA in existing local planning policies illustrates that only certain areas are considered to have a higher quality as set out in the Natural Beauty Assessment pages 23 and 24.</p> <p>Natural England does not consider that designating only part of the Yorkshire Wolds landscape precludes the continued cultural recognition of the Wolds as a whole. The name “Yorkshire Wolds” refers to a much wider area with historic, cultural, and geological coherence, and this identity will remain.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Natural England concludes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed AONB boundary reflects areas that meet the statutory natural beauty criterion, in accordance with nationally adopted methodology. • Cultural identity and historic associations, while important, are not the basis for designation alone – there needs to be a weight of evidence supporting natural beauty. • The broader Yorkshire Wolds National Character Area remains intact, but not all of it meets the threshold for AONB designation, this is consistent with past planning and policy recognition. • Areas excluded from the designation may still be integral to the cultural and educational narrative of the Wolds, and can be
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		<p>celebrated through interpretation, engagement, and future management planning.</p> <p>For these reasons, Natural England remains of the view that the proposed boundary is sound, proportionate, and appropriate for designation under the statutory framework.</p>
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