



# **Yorkshire Wolds AONB Designation Project**

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## **Report on the 2024 Consultation**

**Final Report  
February 2026**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Scope of Work

- 1.1.1 Natural England is currently considering whether part of the Yorkshire Wolds should be designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). AONBs were rebranded as National Landscapes in 2024; however, when designating, Natural England still legally designates an AONB. To avoid confusion, this document refers to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or AONBs, throughout. If land within the Yorkshire Wolds is subsequently designated as an AONB, it will become known as the Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape.
- 1.1.2 In summer 2024, Natural England approved a set of formal technical assessments: identifying areas that meet the statutory criterion for designation as an AONB (the 'Natural Beauty Assessment'); whether the designation of this land is desirable for the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty (the 'Desirability Assessment'); and where the proposed boundary should be drawn (the 'Boundary Assessment'). Natural England also approved proceeding to the Statutory Consultation stage of the designation process.
- 1.1.3 Natural England is required by statute (Part IV, Section 83 of The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) to consult every local authority whose area includes any land proposed for designation, prior to making an Order to designate land as an AONB. For the purposes of AONB designation, 'local authority' means a principal council within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972; namely East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North Yorkshire Council, Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority, and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- 1.1.4 Natural England published its proposals and started a statutory and public consultation on 8 October 2024. The consultation ran for 14 weeks, closing on 13 January 2025.

## **2 Statutory Consultation Process**

### **2.1 Engagement Prior to Statutory Consultation**

- 2.1.1 In order to promote a collaborative approach to the designation process, Natural England established a Management Advisory Group (MAG), comprising representatives from Natural England, the Howardian Hills National Landscape (AONB) unit, and local authority planning officers and representatives, to advise and provide evidence throughout the technical and evaluation process. All principal local authorities (those with land in the Study Area) were invited to join the MAG.
- 2.1.2 A dedicated website was set up for the Yorkshire Wolds Proposed AONB project; providing information, and keeping people up to date, about the process, the proposals, the implications and how to be involved.
- 2.1.3 An informal early engagement was also undertaken involving a 'call for evidence' from Local Authorities and key stakeholder organisations at the start of the Natural Beauty Assessment. This provided some useful, though limited, evidence which was used to inform the evaluation process.
- 2.1.4 Following assessment (a desk study and initial field evaluation) a Provisional Candidate Area for Designation was defined (as shown on Figure 3 in the Natural Beauty Assessment report). This was published during a second period of wider public engagement which ran from June to July 2022. It included a series of webinars and drop-in events/workshops across the area. Respondents provided additional evidence relating to the proposed area, expressed a range of views regarding designation, and a number of requests were made to consider additional areas of land. These additional areas were reviewed as part of the detailed analysis which led to a Proposed Candidate Area (as shown on Figure 10 in the Natural Beauty Assessment report).
- 2.1.5 This Proposed Candidate Area formed the basis of the Desirability Assessment and subsequent definition of the proposed boundary.

### **2.2 Statutory & Public Consultation on the Proposed Designation**

- 2.2.1 The objective of the Statutory Consultation was to seek opinions and evidence about the proposed designation of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB, from all the relevant Statutory Consultees.
- 2.2.2 Letters were sent to each relevant statutory local authority, seeking formal organisational responses to the consultation. These included East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North Yorkshire Council (which includes the former Ryedale District and Scarborough Borough councils), and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

- 2.2.3 A new Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority (HEYCA) (comprising Hull City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council) was formed in early 2025, with mayoral elections held in May 2025. Therefore, in July 2025, HEYCA were consulted on the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB designation, and their response has been considered in this analysis report.
- 2.2.4 Cabinet Office guidance on community engagement recommends that communities and groups, which may be affected by policies and projects, should also be consulted. In line with national good practice, it was decided to combine the Statutory Consultation with a wider Public Consultation to include a wide range of local stakeholders including parish councils, local landowners and businesses, and the wider public. In recognition of the national status of AONB designation, relevant national organisations were also invited to respond to the consultation.
- 2.2.5 The approach adopted to achieve this wider engagement was informed by an Equality Impact Assessment, which was carried out by Natural England. The consultation aimed to seek the views of a wide range of other stakeholders, including the communities who live, work, visit, or otherwise have an interest in, or near, the areas under consideration. An engagement process was developed which aimed to ensure people had an opportunity to discuss issues with relevant Natural England staff and have access to information which was simple to understand and as inclusive as possible.
- 2.2.6 A range of methods were used in order to encourage as wide a response as possible. Pre-launch of the consultation activities included:
- Development of a communications handling plan, press release, Q&A and briefings to stakeholders, working with Local Authorities and partner organisations to share communication plans and support across their channels. This comprised inclusion in partner mail outs, newsletters and across social media, and parish newsletters and notice boards.
  - Letters were issued to Local MPs, Councillors, Parish Councils, local landowners and stakeholders to inform them of the consultation. Follow-up letters at the start of the consultation were sent with further information on how to respond.
- 2.2.7 Post-launch of the consultation activities included:
- Six daytime and evening online webinars to provide information about the proposal and to participate in the consultation (one for stakeholders and one for councillors, two open to the public and two aimed at farmers, landowners, and members of the NFU, CLA and other farming and/or land interest groups).
  - Ten daytime drop-in sessions for the general public held across the area including Market Weighton, Sherburn, Hunmanby, Thixendale, Bampton & Buckton, Milton, Pocklington, Millington, Driffield and Weaverthorpe. These events provided an opportunity for local people to discuss the proposals on a one-to-one basis with Natural England officers.

- Presentation of the designation process, proposals and key issues at an East Riding Rural Partnership in person meeting, followed by discussion in the room.
- Providing access to help, including requests for hard copies of consultation documents and responses to queries, via phone, email or post.

2.2.8 Natural England communications across the consultation period resulted in:

- 11 pieces of print and web coverage, including Yorkshire Post, BBC Online, and, ENDS Report;
- 5 pieces of trade media including CLA, Northern Farmer and NFU;
- 5 pieces of broadcast coverage including BBC Radio Yorkshire, BBC Radio Humberside, ITV Calendar and This Is The Coast Radio;
- Natural England Area Deputy Director interviewed on Farming Outlook;
- 351k reach, Yorkshire Post providing highest reach; and,
- 13 posts on social media throughout the consultation period (Natural England channels).

Coverage was overall positive or balanced with our quotes carried in full.

2.2.9 Large scale (A1 and A3) maps of the proposed area for designation and copies of the technical assessments were made available for information at all of the drop-in events, as well as copies of the Consultation Pack documents (see 2.3.1 below) and the Supporting Information documents (see 2.3.2 below).

2.2.10 Furthermore, a set of the Supporting Information documents (technical assessments, NE Board meeting minutes and the Natural England Guidance) was deposited at eight locations in the area including:

- Natural England Office, York
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council Customer Service Centre, Beverley
- North Yorkshire Council Office, Malton
- Howardian Hills National Landscape Office, Helmsley
- Filey Library, Filey
- Flamborough Library, Flamborough
- Malton Library, Malton
- Market Weighton Wicstun Centre and Library, Market Weighton

2.2.11 A full set of the Consultation Pack and Supporting Information documents were also available to view and download online.

2.2.12 A dedicated project mailbox was set up by Natural England, at [YorksWoldsDesignationProject@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:YorksWoldsDesignationProject@naturalengland.org.uk), where anyone could submit general enquiries about the consultation process and request project updates.

## 2.3 Consultation Method

2.3.1 A Consultation Pack was made available, containing a number of documents and maps summarising the designation process and proposals and providing a proforma for submitting a response to the consultation. The pack included:

- a Covering Letter;
- a Factsheet;
- a 'plain-English' Consultation Document;
- a set of Consultation Maps showing the proposed areas for designation;
- a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and Glossary document; and
- a Response Form.

2.3.2 In addition, more detailed material was made available for those requiring more technical information (the 'Supporting Information'). This included the following documents:

- Natural England's Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England (hereafter referred to as the Natural England Guidance) (updated June 2021);
- the Natural Beauty Assessment report (May 2024);
- the Desirability Assessment report (May 2024);
- the Boundary Assessment report (September 2024);
- proposed Boundary Maps; and,
- a copy of Natural England Board's Meeting Minutes (5<sup>th</sup> May 2021).

2.3.3 A questionnaire (Response Form) was devised to elicit structured responses about the different stages of the technical assessment and evaluation process, as well as about the proposed areas for designation. The Response Form included both open and closed questions in order to obtain simple quantitative data and more detailed supporting evidence that could be taken into consideration. For the proposed Inland and Coastal Areas for designation, the following questions were posed:

- Does this area have sufficient natural beauty to be designated as an AONB?
- Is it desirable to designate this area as an AONB due to its natural beauty?
- Is the proposed boundary appropriate?

2.3.4 The Response Form also requested respondents to provide basic information about themselves to obtain an understanding of their location and whether they were representing an organisation. It also enabled diversity monitoring. Space was also provided for respondents to supply any additional information that they felt to be relevant.

2.3.5 Consultees were given the opportunity to submit Response Form responses either online, or by completing and returning a printed Response Form. Responses by letter

or email were also accepted. The online Response Form was hosted on a Defra consult.gov consultation portal, and online responses were encouraged.

- 2.3.6 In recognition of accessibility issues, the documents listed above were also made available as printed documents on request. In addition, the locations of all of the technical reports on deposit were advertised through the dedicated Yorkshire Wolds Proposed AONB project website and the Defra consultation portal, as were the locations and timings of all webinars and drop-in events.
- 2.3.7 Statutory and other consultees were informed of the consultation by letter. A comprehensive database was set up to manage the consultation process and include details of the statutory local authority consultees; elected members, Parish Councils; local businesses, farming, amenity and recreation groups, and community organisations. A range of other national organisations were also informed by letter, as well as MPs with constituencies with land in, or adjacent to, the proposed area for designation. In addition to the initial consultation letter, follow up emails were also sent to all consultees on the database, shortly before the deadline for responses.
- 2.3.8 A communications plan was produced, and the consultation was promoted through a wide range of media. A press release resulted in local coverage in newspapers, on radio and on TV.



### 3 Analysis of Responses and Presentation of Results

#### 3.1 How analysis has been undertaken

- 3.1.1 Responses and evidence submitted during the consultation were collated into a single Excel database and sorted according to their location, i.e. Inland Area or Coastal Areas, and or 'theme'. Any responses and evidence submitted by email or post were also integrated into this database.
- 3.1.2 Responses and evidence received within 1 month of the consultation closing were added to the database. If evidence was received after this time, it was considered by the reviewing team but not added to the database or shown within the statistical analysis contained in this report.
- 3.1.3 The database was interrogated in order to determine the number of responses received and to understand the level of support for, or objection to, designation and whether it was desirable for areas to be designated and/or if respondents agreed with the boundary.
- 3.1.4 All responses were exported into a standard form format, printed and filed in lever arch files. Where respondents provided additional documents, including maps showing alternative boundaries, they were printed and collated with the relevant form and also stored in the lever arch files.
- 3.1.5 All responses (and corresponding evidence, where supplied) were reviewed and ordered into a series of common 'themes' including:
  - reasons for supporting, or not, the Natural Beauty criterion being met;
  - reasons for supporting, or not, the Desirability to designate;
  - and, grouping responses which requested the same or similar amendments to the Boundary.

Some respondents also commented on the method and approach used and these were also drawn out and sorted into themes.

- 3.1.6 All evidence was reviewed. This review included revisiting past assessment and additional time in the field, especially where a review of the boundary was required.
- 3.1.7 Analysis tables were then prepared for Method and Approach (Appendix 1), Desirability (Appendix 2), and in relation to the Natural Beauty and Boundary for the Inland and Coastal Areas (Appendices 3 & 4 respectively).
- 3.1.8 Some respondents submitted arguments and requests for more land to be included such that the Inland and Coastal Areas become contiguous. This type of response was received in relation to the Inland Area and also the Coastal Area. In order to reduce repetition in the analysis tables, all responses making this type of request are

responded to in Appendix 3 Detailed Analysis Inland Area.

- 3.1.9 A number of identical responses were received for the Goodmanham Dale area, reflecting some level of coordination; otherwise, responses reflected individual views or those of specific organisations.
- 3.1.10 Some respondents replied to the consultation by submitting a separate detailed response which related to both the Inland and Coastal areas. Where this occurred, information was collated into the tables for both areas.
- 3.1.11 Some respondents completed the online Response Form, answering the questions on natural beauty and desirability in the context of additional land they wished to see included, rather than in relation to the proposed areas for designation. In these instances, it was necessary to interpret the information provided, to ensure it was recorded in the correct location of the analysis tables.

### **3.2 Presentation of Statistics**

- 3.2.1 Not all respondents answered the Response Form questions in the way they were intended to be answered. Because of this, the statistical analysis, which uses the number of responses received, should be considered in the context of the following caveats:
  - The statistics reflect the 250 responses received both online and by paper/email in response to the Statutory and Public Consultation.
  - Not all respondents answered all questions on the Response Form.
  - For questions C1 (Inland) and C6 (Coastal), no distinction has been made between responses relating to a Proposed Area for designation and those which provide evidence relating to a suggested additional area.
  - Three respondents answered no to all questions on the Response Form for both the Inland and Coastal Areas (ANON-3WEG-5P9W-B, ANON-3WEG-5PD6-N, BHLF-3WEG-5P25-2).
- 3.2.2 Given these caveats, the statistical analysis and numbers quoted should be taken to give a broad indication only of levels of support or objection.

### **3.3 Presentation of Written Responses**

- 3.3.1 The presentation of the responses to the Statutory Consultation have been grouped into the following tables:
  - Method and Approach (Appendix 1)
  - Desirability Issues (Appendix 2)
  - Inland Area (Appendix 3)
  - Coastal Area (Appendix 4)
- 3.3.2 The analysis of responses is presented in tabular form and arranged as three

columns. The left-hand column identifies key themes, the middle column sets out specific points raised by respondent(s), while the right-hand column sets out Natural England's commentary in response and any proposed changes to the proposals and/or boundary as a result.

- 3.3.3 Throughout the analysis tables, responses from Local Authority consultees have been identified. Otherwise, all responses are anonymised and referred to with a unique reference. All responses are given equal weight.
- 3.3.4 A record of the response made is given as a quoted extract. In using quoted extracts from responses, care has been taken to provide a sense of the number and range of issues raised and, therefore, the weight and strength of views on specific issues. Whilst not all responses are quoted, or quoted in full, this does not mean they have been discounted. Care has been taken to reflect all key points and messages within the analysis, even if some responses are not quoted. Natural England has endeavoured to take account of all responses which were submitted during the consultation.
- 3.3.5 Throughout the tables reference is made to the 'Natural England Guidance' or 'the guidance'. This refers to the Natural England's *Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England*. The development of the approach set out in the Natural England Guidance was guided by legal Counsel, approved by the Natural England Board and adopted in 2011 following national consultation. It was successfully tested and found sound during the subsequent confirmation of Orders varying the boundaries of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks, and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. It was updated in 2021 to improve clarity of language, but with no changes to the process.

### **3.4 Where to find information**

- 3.4.1 The remaining sections of this report provide a summary of the results. The detailed analysis tables on which these summaries are based can be found in the relevant appendices which are bound separately as noted in paragraph 3.3.1 above.
- 3.4.2 The remaining sections of this report are as follows:
  - Section 4: Overview of Results
  - Section 5: Overview of Method and Approach Responses
  - Section 6: Overview of Desirability Responses
  - Section 7: Overview of Proposed Inland and Coastal Area Responses
  - Section 8: Conclusion

## Overview of Results

### 4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 251 consultation responses were received, of which the great majority (172) were received via the online Response Form on the Defra consult.gov consultation platform. A relatively small number of responses (79) were received as paper copies of the Response Form or letter/e-mail responses.

### 4.2 Question B1: Proposed new Yorkshire Wolds AONB

- 4.2.1 Question B1 asked 'Do you think the proposed areas (Coastal and Inland Areas) should be designated as AONB?' and gave four options:
- Yes I agree
  - I neither agree or disagree
  - I don't agree
  - I don't feel able to comment
- 4.2.2 This was a short tick box question in the Response Form. Respondents were able to tick as many boxes as they wished, and many ticked more than one box.

**Table 1: The number of respondents per area who answered Question B1.**

Areas Proposed for Designation	Question B1: Do you think the proposed areas should be designated as AONB?			
	Yes	I neither agree or disagree	I don't agree	Total No. of Responses
Inland	78% (178)	4% (9)	18% (42)	229
Coastal	85% (174)	6% (13)	9% (19)	206

- 4.2.3 The table above sets out the level of response to the Inland and Coastal areas with those who identified they were unable to comment removed. The figures are given as a percentage of the number of people who responded per area, with the actual number of responses shown in brackets. There were also 18 respondents who did not answer question B1 in relation to the Inland Area, and 28 respondents who did not answer question B1 in relation to the Coastal Area.
- 4.2.4 The figures show that marginally more people commented on the Inland area than the Coastal area and that for both areas there was a high level of support - 78% and over.
- 4.2.5 These percentages do not take account of responses which were submitted without using the Response Form and, in these latter cases, the reasons given frequently related to desirability and are recorded in the detailed analysis table on desirability

(Appendix 2).

- 4.2.6 During the consultation, one written response was received by a Member of Parliament on behalf of a local landowner/farmer. This has been reviewed and is reflected in the analysis tables and, in accordance with the handling of all other responses, the MP has not been named.

### 4.3 Response of Statutory Consultees

- 4.3.1 Formal responses were received from the statutory authorities, namely East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North Yorkshire Council and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- 4.3.2 A new Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority (HEYCA) (comprising Hull City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council) was formed in early 2025, with mayoral elections held in May 2025. Therefore, in July 2025, HEYCA were consulted on the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB designation. The response from HEYCA was therefore received at a later date to the main Statutory Consultation period, and has been added to the total number of responses of 251. However, this response is not included in the breakdown of statistical analysis contained in this report as the response did not specifically answer the consultation questionnaire.
- 4.3.3 A summary of the statutory authorities' responses are set out in Table 2 below and indicates a broad level of in-principle support for the proposed areas for designation and a desire to see land designated.

**Table 2: Summary of responses from Statutory Consultees.**

Local Authority	Details
North Yorkshire Council	Broadly supportive but wish to suggest a different boundary, that considers the inclusion of additional areas around the western and northern fringes, and in the central area between East Lutton and Foxholes.
York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority	Broadly supportive, including the boundary as proposed
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Broadly supportive but wish to suggest a different boundary to join the Inland and Coastal areas. Suggest consideration of the role of the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership and how the Coastal Area will be managed, given distance from Inland Area.
Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority (HEYCA)	Unanimously supportive of approach and proposals

## 5 Overview of Method and Approach Responses

### 5.1 Analysis of comments on the consultation method

5.1.1 A number of respondents commented on the method and approach adopted, including: the consultation process; the natural beauty assessment methodology; the implications of designation; and the definition of boundaries. Comments relating to the method and approach adopted are set out in detail in the corresponding analysis table (Appendix 1). The table is set out in relation to broad themes which emerged from an analysis of the responses. For some themes, there were both views in support and views which raised concerns.

5.1.2 The main themes relating to the method and approach include:

Support for:

- Approach adopted,
- Consideration of natural heritage.

Concern regarding:

- Level of engagement,
- Extent to which land was visited,
- Mapping,
- Missed information,
- Factual errors,
- Value of scrub habitat,
- Bigger, better and more joined up natural heritage,
- Weight given to cultural heritage,
- Effect of low-voltage transmission lines,
- Relative tranquillity and wildness,
- Lack of information on benefits of designation,
- Foregone conclusion and bias,
- Insufficient consideration of farming, economy, employment and policy,
- Whether an SEA was carried out,
- Timing and potential new legislation,
- Waste of taxpayers' money.

5.1.3 Natural England acknowledges a few factual errors within the main technical reports which have been brought to its attention by respondents<sup>1</sup>. These errors will be corrected in the technical reports prior to the Notice Period. Natural England does not consider that these errors materially alter the judgements made during the technical assessment, nor do they hamper the respondents' ability to understand Natural England's assessment. Natural England notes the need for the existing

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<sup>1</sup> As set out in Appendix 1 (Method & Approach)

Howardian Hills National Landscape boundary, as depicted on 1:25,000 mapping, to be checked in detail against the existing 1987 Designation Order Map. This will be undertaken before the Notice Period to ensure that the proposed Yorkshire Wolds AONB boundary departs from, and joins to, the Howardian Hills National Landscape boundary at the correct location.

- 5.1.4 Natural England is also aware that, during the period in which consultation responses have been reviewed, the status of potential development sites and current planning applications may have changed. Natural England has endeavoured to reflect the most up-to-date information at the time of writing and acknowledges the need to keep this under review as the designation process proceeds.
- 5.1.5 Overall, Natural England is of the view that the approach adopted is in accordance with its published Guidance and that the assessment is robust and defensible.

## 6 Overview of Desirability Responses

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A range of different responses relating to desirability were submitted by respondents. Overall, they fell into three broad categories:
- firstly, general comments both for and against designating of the Coastal and Inland areas in principle;
  - secondly, specific comments both for and against designating either the Inland or Coastal Area; and,
  - thirdly, comments in support of designating a much wider area beyond the proposed areas for designation.
- 6.1.2 The reasoning put forward in each of these categories was the same or similar. Therefore, it was concluded, in the interest of clarity and simplicity, to group all responses relating to desirability into broad desirability themes (Appendix 2).
- 6.1.3 Where desirability arguments are put forward, specifically in relation to the Coastal or Inland areas, they are noted in the relevant analysis table with Natural England's response cross referenced to the detailed desirability table. This has avoided significant repetition and duplication in the analysis tables.

### 6.2 Level of Support

- 6.2.1 Question C3 (Inland Area) and Question C8 (Coastal Area) of the Consultation Response Form asked if it was desirable to designate the proposed areas as AONB due to their natural beauty. The result for each area is summarised in Table 3 below. Percentage figures are provided with the actual number of responses shown in brackets. A number of separate and substantial responses were received from organisations in relation to desirability and many objected to designation of the proposed areas in principle and submitted their response separate from the on-line Response Form.

**Table 3: Desirability to designate land.**

Areas Proposed for Designation	Questions C3 and C8: Is it desirable to designate this area as AONB due to its natural beauty?			
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total number of responses
Inland Area	80% (168)	15% (32)	5% (11)	211
Coastal Area	78% (154)	7% (13)	15% (29)	196



- 6.2.2 The majority of respondents who answered Question C3 and/or C8 agreed it was desirable to designate the proposed Coastal or Inland Areas<sup>2</sup>. The Inland Area attracted a marginally greater number of responses.

### **6.3 Desirability Themes**

- 6.3.1 Respondents were also invited to provide any other information that they felt should be considered in the assessment of desirability (Question C4 – Inland Area and Question C9 – Coastal Area).
- 6.3.2 The identified themes in support of designation of the proposed Inland and Coastal Areas, either individually or together, are as follows.
- Benefits arising from additional resources
  - Benefits of integrated management to achieve conservation and enhancement
  - Statutory protection in planning
  - Benefits from improved access and visitor management
  - Connection to other Protected Landscapes
  - Improved rural economy through tourism
  - Equivalent to other chalk landscapes already designated as AONB or National Park
- 6.3.3 The identified themes against designation of the proposed Inland and Coastal Areas either individually or together, are as follows:
- Inadequate resourcing and funding for Protected Landscapes
  - Issues associated with managing two separate areas
  - Future of existing local landscape designation and heritage coast
  - New statutory AONB regulations / new legislation
  - Increased public access and visitor numbers
  - Impacts on coastal habitats
  - Removal of permitted development rights
  - Impacts on net zero infrastructure delivery
  - Increased bureaucracy and costs
  - Tourism diversification challenges
  - Benefits to communities are not clearly evidenced
  - Importance of area for food production and security
  - Impacts on mineral extraction
  - Beautiful area - no requirement for a label/status
  - Dilution of the brand
  - Increase in house prices
- 6.3.4 A number of respondents also put forward reasons why it was desirable to designate a much wider area than the proposed Inland and Coastal Areas to reflect cultural and historical landscape associated with the Wolds.

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<sup>2</sup> The majority of responses related to the proposed Inland and Coastal Areas although some responses related to a desire to designate a much wider area.

- 6.3.5 Natural England's response to these themes can be found in the tables in Appendix 2 (Desirability).

## 6.4 Format of Desirability Analysis Tables

- 6.4.1 The desirability analysis in Appendix 2 is divided into three tables. The first table considers those reasons put forward **in support** of designation of the Coastal or Inland Areas, the second considers those reasons put forward **against** designation and the third sets out the desirability responses which argue for the designation of additional land, beyond that which is considered to qualify. In most cases, desirability issues are set out as quotes related to individual respondents, however a number of respondents provided lengthy responses in the form of separate detailed submissions. Where necessary, and in the interest of succinctness, lengthy responses have been summarised or representative quotes used to illustrate points raised.
- 6.4.2 As set out in the Desirability Assessment report (para 1.3.2) *'the more directly or substantially a factor bears upon the achievement of the AONB purpose, the more weight Natural England will give it in the decision whether or not it is desirable to designate.'* For this reason, those themes which are considered to relate closely to the relevant desirability questions are set out first, with those which are considered less or not relevant following. Although all themes/issues are recorded and responded to (refer to Appendix 2) this does not imply they are relevant to the assessment of desirability.

## 6.5 Desirability of Designation

- 6.5.1 The Statutory and Public Consultation has demonstrated a clear level of consensus, including from Statutory Consultees, with regard to the desirability of designating the proposed Coastal and Inland areas as AONB, for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. However, it has also demonstrated a sizeable body of respondents who disagree with this conclusion, either in relation to the Inland Area or the Coastal Area or, more fundamentally, as an in-principle objection. Generally, respondents who put forward these latter views comprised organisations supporting the interests of local landowners and/or businesses as well as individuals and landowners.
- 6.5.2 Having considered all responses in detail, Natural England remains of the view that it is desirable, for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, that the Inland and Coastal Areas, as indicated on the maps in Appendix 5, are designated as a new AONB within the Yorkshire Wolds.

## **7 Overview of Natural Beauty and Boundary Responses for the Proposed Coastal and Inland Areas and Other Areas**

### **7.1 Introduction**

- 7.1.1 Part C of the Response Form allowed individuals or organisations to give detailed comments related specifically to the Coastal and/or Inland Areas. Both the paper and online forms allowed for this question to be missed completely, for either the Coastal or the Inland Areas to be commented on, or for both areas to be commented on by the same individual or organisation.
- 7.1.2 Part C of the Response Form set out questions relating to natural beauty and the proposed boundary as follows:
- Question C1 or C6: Does the area have sufficient natural beauty to be designated as AONB?
  - Question C5 or C10: Do you agree with the proposed boundary?
- 7.1.3 Questions C2 and C7 allowed respondents to provide further information and give their reasoning for their view.
- 7.1.4 The respondents were provided with links to various detailed documents, maps and guidance to assist them in reaching their conclusions.

### **7.2 Presentation of Results**

- 7.2.1 The responses for each area have been analysed in detail. Responses in relation to natural beauty and the boundary are considered separately in relation to the Coastal and Inland areas and are set out in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively. Where necessary, and in the interest of succinctness, lengthy responses have been summarised or representative quotes used to illustrate points raised.
- 7.2.2 Where respondents have asked for the inclusion of additional land which is separate from, and/or lies some distance beyond, the Coastal or Inland areas, this is considered in relation to the most relevant area.
- 7.2.3 Where respondents requested the inclusion or exclusion of land, these cases are set out in the tables respectively. Where, having considered the evidence submitted, Natural England has concluded that the boundary should be amended to either include or delete land from the proposed areas, this is described in the tables and indicated on the maps included in Appendix 5.

### **7.3 Overview of Natural Beauty Responses**

- 7.3.1 The natural beauty responses for the Coastal and Inland Areas have been sorted according to their answer (yes, no or not sure), as shown in Table 4 below.

Percentage figures are given with the actual number of responses shown in brackets.

**Table 4: Sufficient natural beauty to be designated as AONB.**

Areas Proposed for Designation	Question C1/C6: Does the area have sufficient natural beauty to be designated as AONB?			
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total number of responses
Inland Area	82% (175)	10% (22)	8% (16)	213
Coastal Area	81% (161)	2% (4)	17% (33)	198

- 7.3.2 This table shows the significant level of support for the view that the Inland and Coastal Area have sufficient natural beauty to support designation. The Inland Area attracted marginally more responses than the Coastal Area.
- 7.3.3 Where respondents did not agree that the areas had sufficient natural beauty, reasons given included intensive arable farmland and too many incongruous features. Three areas were highlighted as not having sufficient natural beauty, namely: the pylon corridor close to the Howardian Hills; areas of intensive arable farming on the wold tops; and road corridors for the A64, A166 and A614.

## 7.4 Overview of Boundary Responses

- 7.4.1 Of the 251 responses received during the Statutory Consultation, 197 answered boundary Question C5 for the Inland Area and 154 answered boundary Question C10 for the Coastal Area.
- 7.4.2 Analysis of responses relating to the proposed boundary has enabled them to be categorised into the relevant boundary sections A-K illustrated on the Boundary Maps<sup>3</sup> (Figures 1-15). Those who wished to suggest an alternative boundary included requests for additional land to be designated and/or requested the exclusion of land. The table below summarises the types of response received and illustrates that, for some sections, respondents asked only for additional land to be included whereas, for other sections, there were opposing views to both include and exclude land. The areas where directly opposing views were received were Section B (Northern Scarp), Sections D and E (Great Wold Valley) and Section H (area around Goodmanham). Those boundary sections which attracted a range of responses requesting relatively discrete additions to the boundary were Section A (Malton/Settrington/Scampston), Section I (between Londesborough and Bishop Walton) and Section L (Flamborough area).

<sup>3</sup> Forming part of the technical assessment documents

**Table 5: Responses per Boundary Section.**

<b>Boundary Section</b>	<b>Requests to include additional land</b>	<b>Requests to exclude land</b>
<b>Section A:</b> Sutton Wold to A64 Knapton	Land south of Malton Centenary Way and east of Settrington Settrington Quarry Scampston and West Knapton	
<b>Section B:</b> A64 Knapton to A1039 Flixton	Lower slopes of Northern Scarp	Lower slopes of Northern Scarp Land between Ganton and Muston
<b>Section C:</b> A1039 Flixton to North Cotes Road	Land towards Muston	Land south of Staxton Cans Dale and Folkton Wold
<b>Section D:</b> North Cotes Road to B1253	The Great Wold Valley Garton Bottoms near Cottam	Thirkleby Wold area West Lutton/Upper Great Wold Valley Cottam to Langtoft
<b>Section E:</b> B1253 to Warren Dale		
<b>Section F:</b> Warren Dale to Foxcovert Farm	Wetwang	
<b>Section G:</b> Foxcovert Farm to A614	Eastern dip slope and villages (Tibthorpe, Garton-on-the Wolds, North Dalton and Etton)	
<b>Section H:</b> A614 to Intake Hill	Kiplingcotes area South Dalton	Kiplingcotes and Goodmanham
<b>Section I:</b> Intake Hill to A166 Garrowby St	West of Londesborough Partridge Hall Farm West up to edge of Pocklington incl. Pocklington Wood Pocklington Bishop Wilton and Fangfoss area	
<b>Section J:</b> A166 Garrowby Street to Sutton Wold	West of Leavening to Aldby Park Menethorpe Beck and Welham Wold Farm	
<b>Section K:</b> Cat Nab to Dykes Plantation	Cliffs at Filey Danes Dyke	Reighton Sands Golf Course Land north of B1229 Land and properties north of Speeton
<b>Section L:</b> Dykes Plantation to Cat Nab	Cliff and beach at Sewerby to Bridlington Caravans and car parks Holmes Gut and Thornwick Bay and Pools Flamborough Golf Course and Lighthouse	

7.4.3 Respondents who wished to see significantly larger areas of land included, or land that was physically some distance from the proposed boundary, are considered at the end of the tables in Appendix 3. The significant additional areas people wished to see included are as follows:

- Octon and Thwing
- The land between the Inland and Coastal Areas
- Burton Fleming and Rudston
- Southern Wolds
- West of Pocklington to River Derwent and Stamford Bridge
- Whole of the Yorkshire Wolds National Character Area

## 7.5 Results of the Analysis of Boundary Responses

7.5.1 Having analysed all boundary responses for the Coastal and Inland Areas, and having checked the boundary to ensure consistency, Natural England has concluded that the boundary should be adjusted in a number of locations. These boundary changes comprise deletions, and no new land or additions are proposed. These changes are summarised in the Inland Area and Coastal Area analysis tables (Appendices 3 and 4 respectively) and are shown in the associated maps in Appendix 5. The largest amendment is that of Londesborough Avenue in Section G (Deletion 1 as indicated on Maps 10a & 11a), and the area with the greatest number of proposed amendments to the boundary is Section K on the coast at Speeton (Deletions 2 & 3 as indicated on Figure 14a).

**Table 6: Proposed Boundary Additions and Deletions**

Inland Area	Deletions	Map Reference
Londesborough Avenue	Deletion 1: Land west of Intake Hill	10a and 11a
Coastal Area	Deletions	Map Reference
Lower slopes	Deletion 2: Land north of B1229	14a
Development at Speeton	Deletion 3: Land north of Speeton	14a

7.5.2 Where a deletion is proposed, brief details of the revised boundary are provided in the analysis tables. Any proposed deletions which are carried forward, will require the technical assessments to be updated and approved by the Natural England Board prior to the commencement of the statutory Notice Period.

## 8 Conclusion

### 8.1 Summary of Results Analysis

- 8.1.1 Natural England has considered all of the consultation responses and analysed both quantitative and qualitative data in detail.
- 8.1.2 There was a significant majority of respondents in favour of designating the proposed Inland and Coastal Areas. There were some dissenting voices, with objections largely from land managers and their representative bodies, and concerns were principally related to matters of desirability.
- 8.1.3 Many respondents supplied additional evidence in support of their views, some very detailed, and Natural England considered whether this evidence necessitated changes to any of the proposals and especially proposed boundaries. It has concluded that a number of changes should be made to delete some previously proposed areas. The most substantial deletion is that of Londesborough Avenue, which was considered borderline in the previous evaluation work. Having reviewed the responses made during the Statutory and Public Consultation, Natural England has concluded that this area should now be excluded given its lower landscape quality and to ensure consistency with decision making to the south.
- 8.1.4 No additional land is proposed for designation as a result of the Statutory and Public Consultation. Natural England has therefore concluded that a second round of consultation will not be required.

### 8.2 Satisfying the Legislative Test

Natural England remains of the view that there is a clear weight of evidence that the proposed Inland and Coastal Areas meet the criterion of outstanding natural beauty required for AONB designation and that, where minor boundary refinements are required, they are appropriate. Taken together these areas form 'an area of land' of outstanding natural beauty as required by the legislation. Natural England considers that the designation of these qualifying areas, which is in part contiguous with the existing Howardian Hills National Landscape (AONB), is desirable and that the boundaries of the Inland and Coastal Areas are sufficiently robust and appropriate.