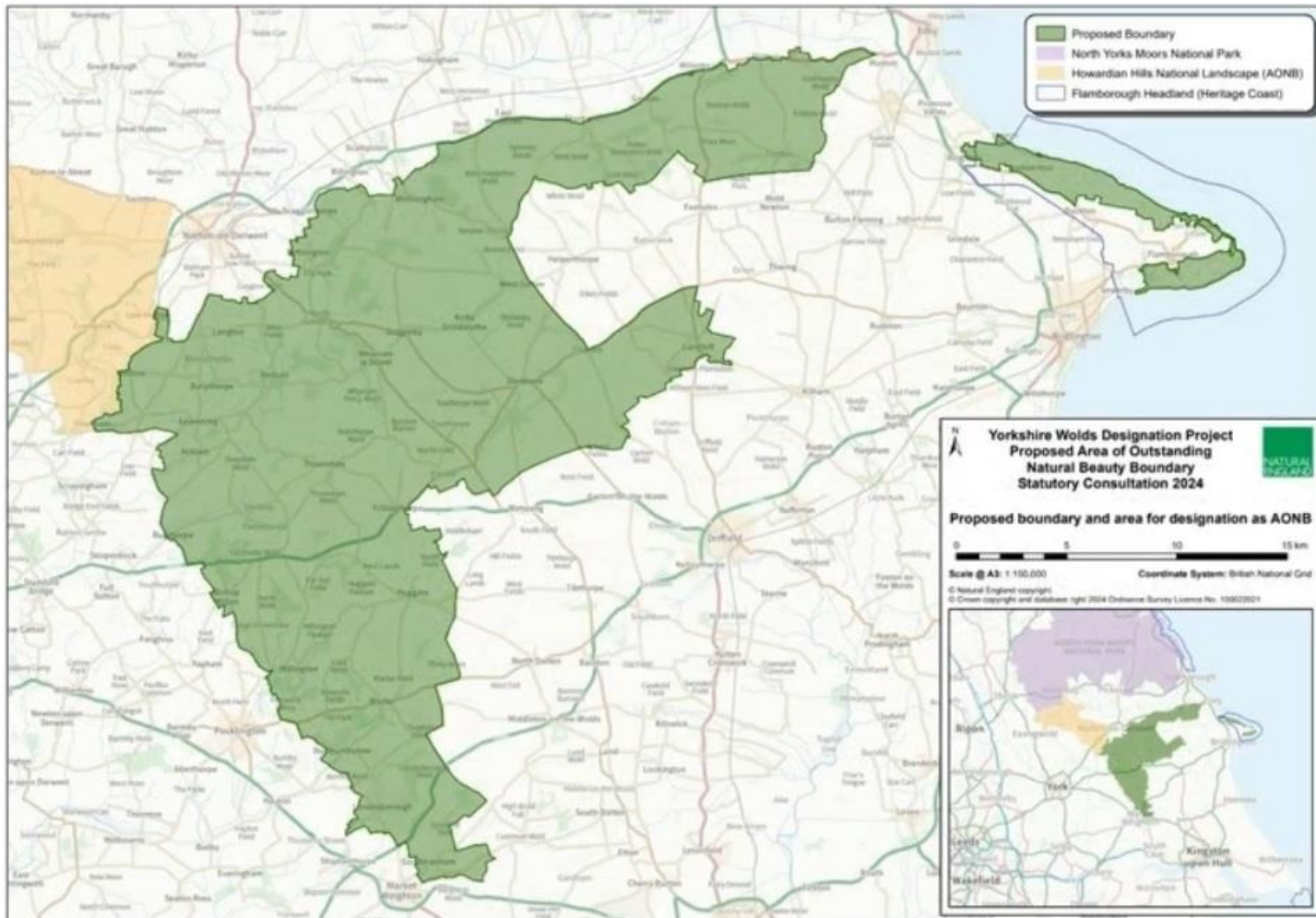


Yorkshire Wolds Proposed Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Designation Project

We have submitted a response on behalf of the Area. The proposed area is



Since the original Candidate area has now been enlarged to include the two areas we proposed at the earlier stage – the Cottam Dale and Fordon Grasslands complexes, in our on-line response we concentrated on by providing evidence where we could to show that the landscape satisfied Natural England’s Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion. We did not suggest further enlargement of the area but said that we would support any proposal to extend the area to the south of Market Weighton. Below is a summary of the responses we gave to the main questions on the on-line form.

Tom Halstead

11 January 2025

Inland Area

Does this area have sufficient natural beauty to be designated as AONB?

Yes. The Yorkshire Wolds contain the best-known scenery of any part of the East Riding. At their seaward end the chalk rises sheer for up to 400 feet in the Cliffs of Buckton, Bempton and Flamborough. Inland the distinctive landscape presents a dramatic western scarp facing the Vale of York and, to the East, wide vistas of open rolling chalk uplands with large arable fields, dotted with isolated farmsteads, surrounded by mature shelter-belts. These wolds are dissected by a dendritic pattern of steep-sided dry valleys, where many of the unspoilt villages and deserted settlements of historical interest lie, offering much visual interest in patterns of land cover.

The area is relatively tranquil and natural sounds, such as birdsong, are predominant. There are some breathtaking views from bracing field tops, giving a sense of openness and exposure, while the valleys, which contain large area of unimproved grassland, have remained largely unchanged for centuries, give a sense of enclosure and isolation, and are mapped as open access.

The area is crossed by only one major road the A166, which is not a major transport route and there is no major road running below the western escarpment.. Generally there is very little traffic noise. The area, as is the case with many National Parks and AONBs, is traversed by a recognised long distance footpath, the Wolds Way, and other named footpaths eg the Minster Way, the Centenary Way, the Chalkland Way a lovely 40 mile walking route linking the Wolds villages of Great Givendale, Bishop Wilton, Bugthorpe, Thixendale, Fimber, Wetwang and Huggate, the Wilberforce Way and the Hudson Way. These together with a network of footpaths, bridleways, country lanes and open access land in over 60 of the dry valleys, offer some of the most picturesque walking routes in the UK.

Along with the North York Moors NP, the Yorkshire Dales NP and the Howardian Hills AONB, the Yorkshire Wolds are a very popular walking destination. Over the last 14 years one quarter of the weekly led-walks organised by the East Yorkshire & Derwent Area Ramblers Groups were in the Wolds, and there are also several other affiliated walking groups who regularly lead walks in the Yorkshire Wolds. Numerous walking guides are available (both books and on-line, eg. Open Access Walks, pub. East Riding Council, Open Access Walks North Yorkshire, pub. Ramblers) giving suggestions of circular and linear walks, both long and short in the Yorkshire Wolds.

Is there any other important information that we should include in our assessment of this area's natural beauty

Yes. Other factors which we think should be taken into consideration include the unique geology, archaeology, history and ecology and cultural heritage of the Yorkshire Wolds.

Natural Heritage

In the area there are 22 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Geology:- The dry valleys comprise the most northerly chalk karstic landscape in Britain and differ from that of southern England in its structure, hardness and its fossils. This chalk geology forms the basis for the present cultural landscape that has been developed and used by its peoples since the end of the last Ice Age.

Archaeology:- The Yorkshire Wolds represents a significant archaeological landscape, which, along with Orkney and Wessex, is of international importance and features over 190 Scheduled Monuments. In particular, it has a high density of prehistoric barrows, tracks and dykes, many of which were excavated by pioneers such as JR Mortimer, W Greenwell and EM Cole during the late 19th century.

The earliest evidence for human settlement in the area is that provide by Mesolithic hunters and fishers. The outstanding site of this period is at Starr Carr lies just outside the proposed boundary but flints have been discovered elsewhere in the area, including at West Heslerton, Vessey Ponds and Garton-on-the-Wolds. Traces of Early Neolithic occupation have been recovered from beneath long

barrows at eg. Beacon Hill, Garton-on-the-Wolds. A Middle Neolithic long barrow and several groups of Late Neolithic Age bowl barrows are to be found along the chalk escarpment, which overlooks the Vale of York. Upwards of 1400 bowl barrows are known to exist in the Wolds. Sharpe Howe is the largest of a group of 5 bowl barrows forming a cemetery at the head of Lang Dale. During the Bronze Age a massive system of linear earthworks, known locally as dykes, was constructed, including Queen Dike that runs across the Wold from the head of Water Dale. The chariot burials at Garton Slack date from the Iron Age as does the great earthwork of Dane's Dyke. There are few visible Roman remains in the area.

Ecology:- Most of the dry valleys are recorded in the Priority Habitat Inventory as Lowland Calcareous Grassland. These unimproved grasslands support a rich calcicolous flora and invertebrate fauna. Many roadside verges are also worthy of protection.

Cultural Heritage

History :- The distribution of Anglian burials on the Wolds shows that after the Romano-British period, settlers were spreading into the area from across the North Sea. Anglian village names contain the elements -ing, -ingham or -ham. The Danes founded new villages bearing the endings -by and -thorpe. In the Wolds village names occasionally suggest that ponds provided the initial attraction, eg. Sledmere and Fim[mere]ber. Domesday Book tells us that during the Norman harrying of the North, the wasting was most severe on the Wolds. Colonisation from then on created the early medieval landscape, by scrub clearing, introduction of sheep-runs around monastic granges and open-field and strip-farming around villages. Following the Black Death, a number of villages were deserted, of which Wharram Percy is the best-known, others include: Raisthorpe, Burdale, Towthorpe and Heslerton Magna. The countryside was transformed in the 18C and 19C by large-scale enclosure of open fields and commons, creating new farmsteads, ponds, field boundaries, woodland and wide straight roads. There is probably nowhere in Britain where changes brought about by the Agricultural Revolution can be better observed as the present landscape provides a detailed record of the agricultural and settlement history of the area.

Artistic Associations:- The Yorkshire Wolds provided the backdrop for a series of paintings of the area by David Hockney that have been exhibited over the years in international locations. Pevsner praises the several churches in the area, especially those built by Street for Tatton Sykes.

Is it desirable to designate this area as AONB due to its natural beauty?

Yes. Development threats to the scenic, scientific, and archaeological quality of the High Wolds include 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.

Is there any other important information that we should include in our assessment of the desirability of designating this area?

No.

Coastal Area

Does this area have sufficient natural beauty to be designated as AONB?

Yes. The cliffs at Bempton are some of the highest chalk cliffs in England offering visitors dramatic cliff-top walks, spectacular sea views giving a sense of openness and exposure. The area is relatively tranquil and natural sounds, such as the wheeling of seabirds are predominant. The area is crossed by no major roads hence there is very little traffic noise. The area, as is the case with many National Parks and AONBs, is traversed by a recognised long distance footpath the King Charles III Coast Path, which runs for 12 miles along the cliff top always within sight of the sea, and over another 5 miles of public rights of way. This makes it a very popular walking destination and East Yorkshire & Derwent Area Ramblers Groups frequently organize led-walks in this area.

Is there any other important information that we should include in our assessment of this area's natural beauty?

Yes. We think the natural and cultural heritage of the headland should be taken into consideration.

Natural Heritage

Geology:- Flamborough Head is a Special Area of Conservation, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Heritage Coast. The headland is renowned for its geological significance and unique hard chalk vegetated cliffs. It is the northernmost chalk outcrop in the UK and features a complete sequence of strata from the upper Jurassic through to the top of the Cretaceous period.

Ecology:- Bempton Cliffs RSPB Reserve is arguably the best place in England to see puffins, gannets, guillemots and other nesting birds in one of the most important seabird colonies in Europe. Flamborough Outer Headland Local Nature Reserve is a cliff top site with breathtaking views, lighthouse, café and access to the beach. It is excellent for bird watching and has a network of permissive conservation walks on adjacent farmland. The areas around Holmes Gut attract migrating thrushes, finches and warblers and is rich in flowers, attracting butterflies and uncommon moths. The Old Plantation is a mature sycamore woodland on the western side.

Cultural Heritage

History:- The Heavy Anti-aircraft gun sites on Flamborough Head are a Scheduled Monument which include standing, earthwork and buried remains of a pair of World War II Heavy Anti-aircraft gun sites known as Stations BJ and BJ1. These were established as part of Operation Diver to counter the threat from the V1 flying bombs. South Landing It is the likely location of a medieval harbour, which existed from the early C14 to the late C16.

Is it desirable to designate this area as AONB due to its natural beauty?

Yes. *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.

Do you agree with the proposed boundary?

Not sure. We would support any proposal to extend the area south of Market Weighton west of the A 1034.

(Your response ID is ANON-3WEG-5PKC-9.)