

Summary

- Cooperation between stakeholders is key to an effective planning system.
- The NPPF requires strategic policy making bodies to engage with relevant organisations.
- Engagement through public consultations can lead to more revisions of draft local planning policy and the preception that cooperation is a barrier to the process.
- The Lincolnshire Planning Partnership was formed in 2018 consisting of Natural England, the Environment Agency, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.
- The GLNP coordinated a joint response by the Lincolnshire Planning Partnership for South Kesteven District Council's Local Plan, leading to the preparation of a statement of common ground (SOCG) to ensure the Plan met environmental policy requirements.
- Work on the SOCG led to the GLNP coordinating joint working between the Lincolnshire Planning Partnership and the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Team, in 2020, to ensure environmental policy was given due consideration in the preparation of Central Lincolnshire's Local Plan.
- All parties agreed that this streamlined the engagement process.
- Environmental policy in the Local Plan taken to examination was more robust and required no further comments from statutory bodies.
- Work is underway to ensure this level of engagement is replicated across Lincolnshire.

Benefits

- A streamlined spatial planning process
- Creating a precedent for collaborative approach between Local Planning Authorities and environmental organisations
- Fulfilling the duty to cooperate as well as identifying the merits of collaborative work separate from said duty
- Sharing of specialist knowledge and expertise



Sinclair Bank @ GLNP

Background

Communication and joint working between all stakeholders is key to achieving a more effective planning system. It is important that organisations with the relevant expertise are proactively engaged in the preparation of planning policy to ensure that the duties placed on public bodies to protect and enhance the natural environment are included from the earliest stage possible.

With the Environment Act 2021 and the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies this has become even more important, while potential future changes to the planning system mean that it is just as important to showcase the benefits of partnership working.

In 2018 the Lincolnshire Planning Partnership was established with representatives from the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) with the aim of making engaging with the planning easier. In the same year a GLNP coordinated joint response to a consultation on South Kesteven's Local Plan, led to joint working with the District Council on the preparation of sound environmental policy, through the preparation of a statement of common ground.

The planning partnership's work with South Kesteven and discussions between the GLNP and the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Team on biodiversity net gain and biodiversity opportunity mapping (BOM) created and opportunity to engage with the preparation of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan review in its early stages from 2020.

Inputs

Joint working on the Local Plan required some commitment from the stakeholders involved, for example:

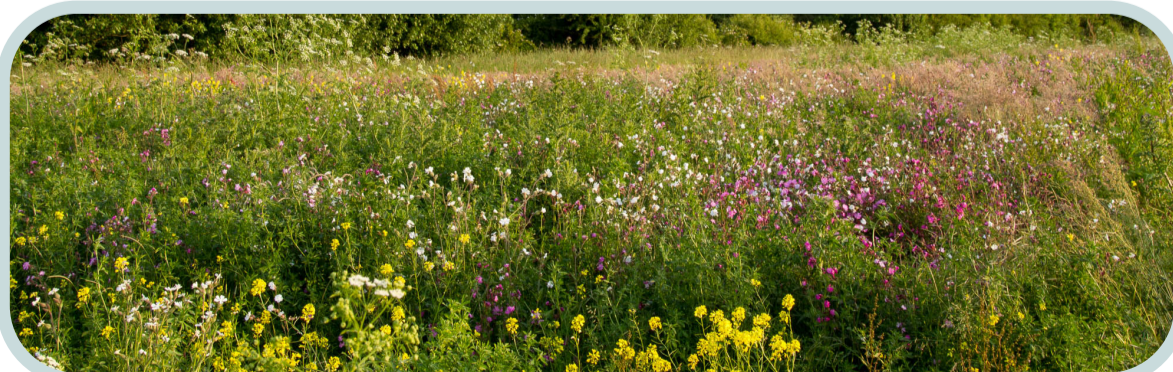
- Local Planning Authorities need to be willing to take the time to discuss potential policy and consider anything raised
- Statutory bodies and other environmental organisations must be willing to take time to add their expertise and advice, beyond their usual duty or intention to respond to formal consultations

Outputs

- More robust environmental policy
- Local policy compliant with national policy
- Reduced need for input in official consultations
- Less changes required to policy through consultations
- Reduced number of objections to policy which leads to shorter hearing sessions at examination
- Opened the door to working with South Kesteven District Council on their Local Plan

Moving forward

- Collaboration can be over reliant on individual relationships: it is important that these are converted into organisational relationships to ensure continued joint working.
- Discussions underway with the remaining Lincolnshire Planning Authorities to ensure that joint working on local planning policy becomes the norm across the County



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