

# **OUR PARISH – OUR FUTURE – OUR PLAN**



## **THE CATON-with-LITTLEDALE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2021 to 2031)**

**REGULATION 14  
CONSULTATION VERSION**

## **Acknowledgement**

Work on this Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been carried out by a Steering Group of local residents, assisted by Claire Bradley of Kirkwells Ltd (Planning Consultants). Much of the initial work on writing the Caton-with-Littledale NDP and preparing for its first Regulation 14 consultation was carried out by David Walmsley who died on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

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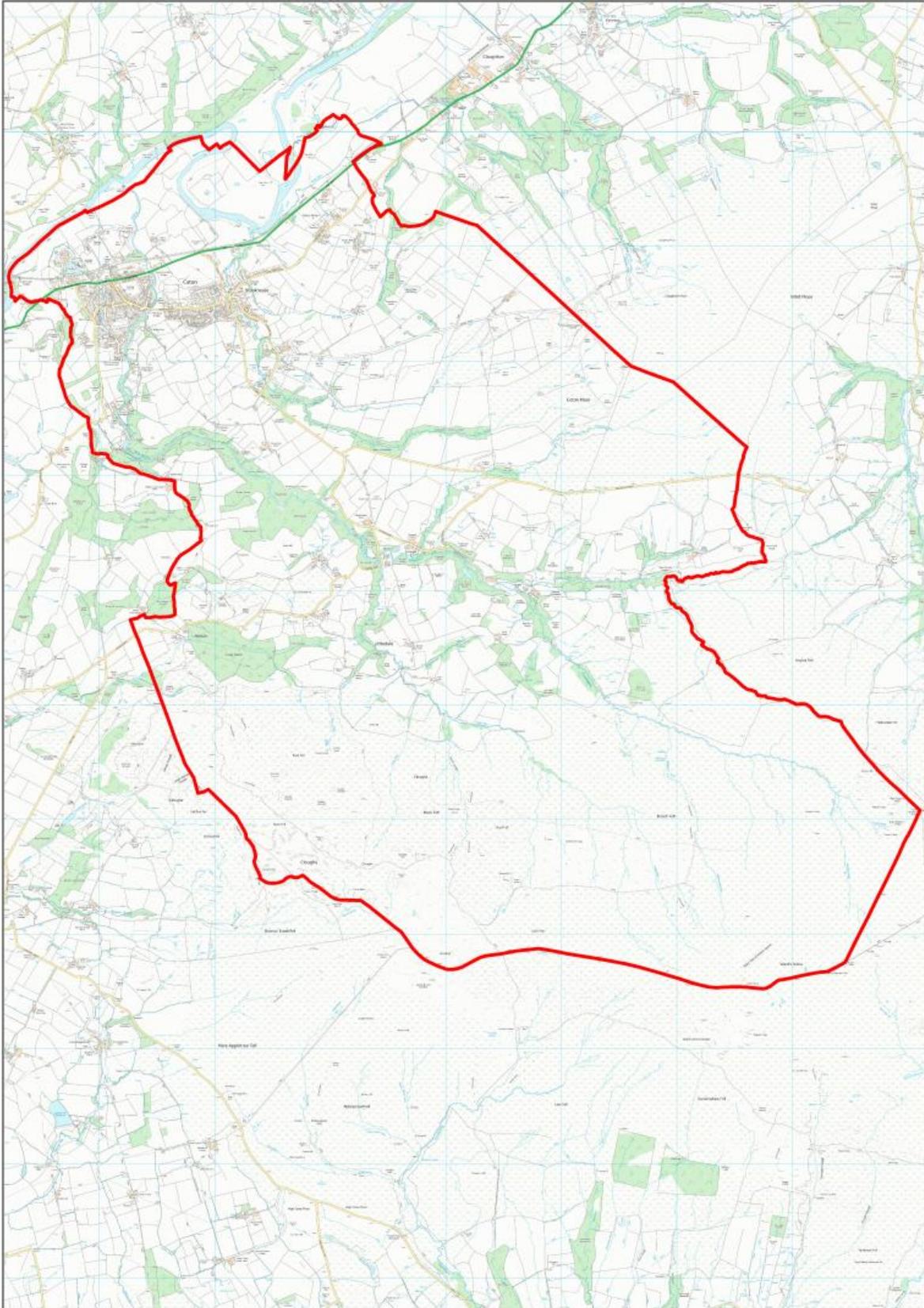
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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Lancaster City Council is a Local Planning Authority with statutory responsibility for the preparation of the Local Development Framework for the city region and is responsible for determining planning applications in its area. The Lancaster Local Plan, which is part of that Local Development Framework, sets out what development is needed in an area and contains policies to ensure that those needs are met in a sustainable way. These policies are used to determine planning applications and also to influence infrastructure provision and environmental management. Once adopted, a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) also becomes part of that Local Development Framework.
- 1.1.2 As a designated body, Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council is preparing an NDP for the Parish of Caton-with-Littledale. The whole of the parish lies within the Forest of Bowland area which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (see Map 1) with the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. This means that the area's landscape has been identified by the government as being of national importance. Designation as an AONB and the resulting legal powers and statutory obligations arise out of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 1.1.3 The preparation of the Caton-with-Littledale NDP is being undertaken by the Parish Council in consultation with both Lancaster City Council and the Forest of Bowland AONB. When complete, the NDP will be part of the City Council's Local Plan, prepared under the Planning Acts. It will be the principal planning document for part of the Forest of Bowland AONB (a designation that incorporates land in many parishes of five further local authority areas), but there is no single planning document for the whole AONB. This contrasts with the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB, where a [Development Plan Document](#) has been prepared jointly by Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council.
- 1.1.4 The Caton-with-Littledale NDP is modelled on the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document to provide consistency of approach for similarly designated areas within the Lancaster Local Plan area.
- 1.1.5 All AONBs are also required to produce Management Plans, prepared by the statutory AONB Partnerships under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. Management Plans are not part of the Local Plan for the areas they cover, but their content is a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities in making planning decisions. So, although prepared under different legislation for different purposes, the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan is an important document which is complementary to the NDP.

## Map 1 Caton-with-Littledale Neighbourhood Area



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- 1.1.6 The purpose of this second Regulation 14 Consultation Version of the Caton-with-Littledale NDP paper is to show how plan preparation has progressed since our earlier issues and consultations, including the previous Regulation 14 consultation. This includes setting out outcomes of the earlier consultations, how we have responded to the comments made (especially the reasons for changing to a combined site allocation and criteria-based approach), new information we have gathered, and how all these factors have influenced the site selection and assessments and the drafting of policies.
- 1.1.7 In this document the Parish Council is asking for your comments on the policies and proposed sites for development or protection contained within the Caton-with-Littledale NDP. The Parish Council would like to know whether the draft policies are fit for purpose and whether the most appropriate sites for development and sites to be protected have been selected. Your responses will be used to inform the final set of policies and sites, which will be submitted to Lancaster City Council in the final version of the NDP.

### **How to comment on this document**

**This is the second Draft Regulation 14 Consultation Version of the Caton-with Littledale NDP.**

**The consultation period will run from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021. All comments must be received by 5pm on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**

You are invited to give us your views and comment on this document. If you would like to do this, please use a representation form for each separate comment. Please comment electronically if possible.

The document, and representation forms are all available to view and download at the following website address:

<https://catonvillage.org.uk/caton-with-littledale-neighbourhood-plan/>

Hard paper copies of this document and representation forms are available from the Clerk of the Parish Council.

All comments should be returned as follows:

By email to: [catonneighbourhoodplan@outlook.com](mailto:catonneighbourhoodplan@outlook.com)

By post to:

Mrs G. Mason (Clerk to Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council)  
23 Maplewood Avenue  
Preesall  
Poulton-le-Fylde  
FY6 OPU

## 1.2 What is an NDP and why do we need one for Caton-with-Littledale parish?

- 1.2.1 A brief summary of what an NDP appears in the box. It allows local people to identify what their planning needs are and, once adopted, is a statutory document that **must** be taken into account by Lancaster City Council (LCC) when making decisions about planning in the area of that NDP.

### What is an NDP?

Neighbourhood planning lets our community decide what our needs are and how we want Caton-with-Littledale Parish to develop during the next 10 years in order to meet those needs. This process includes housing, businesses, services, and leisure facilities alongside the landscape we live in.

An NDP therefore carries much greater weight for our parish in determining future planning outcomes than any existing mechanism, including the previous Parish Plan (2005). An NDP can also complement and strengthen the role of other statutory consultees, such as the Forest of Bowland AONB.

There are some things an NDP must be consistent with, some things it cannot do, and a lot of things it can influence (*Guidance on Preparing Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Order, and Community Right to Build Orders. Lancaster City Council: Sept 2017*). The main points are summarised here:

#### Our NDP

- **must:**
  - have regard to the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, February 2019),
  - be in general conformity with LCC's adopted *Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)*.
  - take account of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan April 2019 – March 2024
- **cannot:**
  - be a "no growth" agenda, nor a veto against development taking place.
- **is:**
  - a statutory planning document once adopted and therefore must be used by the local planning authority when deciding planning applications.
  - the result of a series of community consultations (Section 2.2)
  - able to influence what types of homes are built including the

proportion that are affordable, in private ownership or have other tenure arrangements. It can also influence aspects of the style and appearance of housing. Similarly, particular types of business / employment developments may be encouraged both in the built-up areas and on farms where these enhance sustainability. In some cases, NDPs specify where such developments can occur. Desired leisure developments, enhanced facilities, infrastructure, and the preservation of the character of the parish with its biodiversity and landscape can be emphasised. Where the opportunity arises, funding for such items may be linked to a particular planning development eg for houses.

1.2.2 Caton-with-Littledale Parish is a special place set in the Forest of Bowland AONB. The parish mainly sits on sandstone, siltstone, gritstone and shale, and it forms an integral part of the landscape that is widely visible from a great distance. It is characterised by a complex mosaic of varied moorland heights, wooded brooks, valleys and gorges, rolling drumlin hills and the Lune valley floodplain, which contain a network of old stone walls and hedgerows enclosing small-to-medium-sized fields and pastures, scattered farmsteads and distinctive clustered settlements. Reflecting this situation, the Forest of Bowland AONB's key characteristics as stated in the Management Plan 2019-2024 are:

- *the grandeur and isolation of the upland core*
- *the steep escarpments of the moorland hills*
- *the undulating lowlands*
- *the serenity and tranquillity of the area*
- *the distinctive pattern of settlements*
- *the wildlife of the area*
- *the landscape's historic and cultural associations*

1.2.3 Natural beauty is at the heart of what makes the Forest of Bowland AONB special: it is the reason the Bowland landscape is designated for its national and international importance. It is also a key factor in attracting visitors. This natural beauty is derived from the area's largely unspoilt countryside, combined with a number of special qualities that contribute to the area's unique character or 'sense of place'. The special qualities of the Forest of Bowland AONB are numerous and varied, but in general terms they can be summarised as follows:

- *an outstanding landscape*
- *wild open spaces*
- *a special place for wildlife*
- *a landscape rich in heritage*
- *a living landscape*
- *delicious local food and drink*
- *a place to enjoy and keep special*

- 1.2.4 A more complete description and explanation of Caton-with-Littledale Parish and the Special Qualities of the Forest of Bowland AONB can be found in the accompanying background document available on the Parish Council website (<https://www.catonvillage.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan>)
- 1.2.5 The Forest of Bowland AONB straddles six planning authorities (Lancaster, Craven, Wyre, Ribble Valley, Preston, and Pendle) and, owing to these complexities, is not currently developing a Development Plan Document, unlike the Arnside and Silverdale AONB, where the two local authorities have jointly produced a DPD for the AONB.
- 1.2.6 Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council considers that planning and development should be managed in an equivalent way in the two AONBs, noting in particular that Lancaster City Council (along with other public bodies) has a statutory duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 to have regard to the statutory purpose of AONBs in carrying out their functions.
- 1.2.7 Within the AONB, Government policy requires that councils give great weight to conserving landscape and natural beauty. (NPPF paragraph 115). Furthermore, Sections 88 & 89 of the CRoW Act require publication of a Management Plan for each AONB. The fundamental principle underlying this is that any new development within an AONB that has a materially adverse impact can proceed only where it is demonstrated that it satisfies an overriding national need that cannot be met elsewhere. All development is expected to conform to a very high standard of design, to be in keeping with local distinctiveness, and should seek to conserve and enhance the AONB's natural beauty.
- 1.2.8 Management of the AONB is coordinated by the **Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership**, which is made up of landowners, farmers, tourism businesses, wildlife groups, local councils and government agencies. The Partnership adopted an updated **Statutory Management Plan** in 2019, which sets out the overall strategy for managing, conserving and enhancing the AONB. The Management Plan also sets out some key principles for this NDP, some of which are more developed in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB Management Plan and taken forward in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB DPD. The key principles for management and development in Caton-with-Littledale should:
- reflect the national importance of the AONB;
  - contain policies to conserve and enhance landscape quality and character, tranquillity, dark skies, local distinctiveness, settlement character, pattern and local vernacular architecture, and the natural and historic environment;
  - identify appropriate sites for the delivery of housing to meet local community needs (demonstrated by a rural housing needs survey for the Lower Lune Valley and by Caton-with-Littledale NDP Community Consultations) prioritising affordable housing and use of brownfield sites;

- support the development and retention of local services and facilities and advocate the need for local services to support community life and the local tourism industry;
- define and conserve areas of important open green space within settlements;
- protect the setting of, and conserve the views out from and into the AONB; and
- promote appropriate diversification and sensitive re-use of rural buildings.

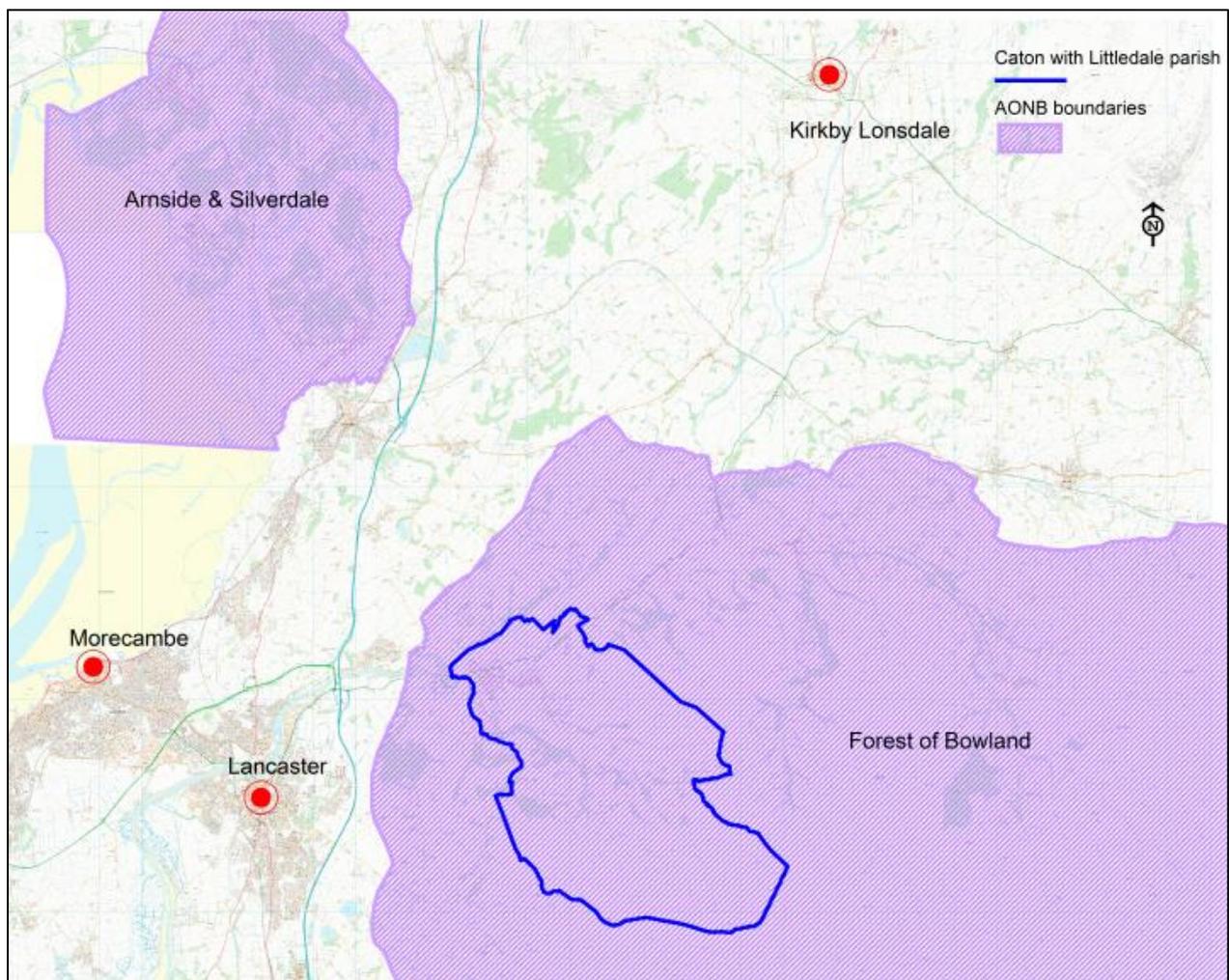
#### 1.2.9 Therefore the reasons for preparing this Caton-with-Littledale NDP are:

- Nationally, there is a housing shortage. Additional national planning issues include energy production, resources, transport, infrastructure, and flood prevention. The government has required councils to plan for a large increase in house building. LCC has to meet these perceived needs and to develop an appropriate local infrastructure for the wider area and economy. Therefore, all parishes are expected to work within these wider development perspectives. LCC has updated its Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Both the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document and the Review of the Development Management Development Plan Document were adopted by LCC in July 2020.
- Private landowners and developers are also involved. There have been a number of recent developments and planning applications in the parish including Moor Platt, the area off Sycamore Road and the Bargh TNT Garages site on the A683. Local people have expressed mixed views about these developments, but currently have had little influence on the outcomes.
- While the Parish of Caton-with-Littledale lies entirely within the Forest of Bowland AONB and is therefore an area of national landscape importance, there is no AONB Development Plan Document for it. This means that the City-wide Local Plan for Lancaster would not have the AONB or the particular interests of Caton-with-Littledale as its main focus.
- Further planning applications will continue to arise so that a better method of assessing them against local needs and landscape impact on a statutory basis is needed.
- The NDP will be an important means of bringing the wishes and needs of the parish to the fore when deciding planning matters and enable the community to be involved in shaping its future.
- The NDP can focus on its place in the AONB and have its conservation and enhancement at its heart.
- The NDP will give statutory development plan policy weight to some of the NDP issues and policies when planning applications are considered.
- The NDP will also be a complementary and important way of helping implement the aims and objectives of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan within the parish (in the absence of an AONB Development Plan Document).
- The special character of the parish within the AONB requires a different approach to local planning to that outside nationally important landscapes.
- Policies and decisions need to be consistent for similar areas in respect of the conservation significances and the response to development pressures.

Therefore this should be the case for the two AONBs within the LCC Local Plan area.

1.2.10 Caton-with-Littledale Parish covers approximately 3,380 hectares and has a population (2011 census) of 2,738. The main settlements are Caton, Brookhouse, Caton Green, Forge Mill and Littledale. Around 70 small businesses operate within the parish, which predominantly employ people living within the parish or nearby. Farming and land management are important. Other prominent sectors include education and health services. The parish has close links to Lancaster, Morecambe and Kirkby Lonsdale for employment and for services such as supermarkets and secondary education.

### Map 2 Caton-with-Littledale Parish in context



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### 1.3 Relevant Planning Policy

1.3.1 The Caton-with-Littledale NDP is one of a number of existing plans and strategies affecting the parish including the NPPF, LCC's DPDs and the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan.

#### National Planning Policy

1.3.2 NDPs must take account of national planning policies set out in the NPPF and of online National Planning Guidance (NPG).

1.3.3 The central theme of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that for plan making, this presumption means that:

*"Plans and decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:*

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;*
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas<sup>5</sup>, unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type, or distribution of development in the plan area<sup>6</sup>; or*
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."**

1.3.4 However, footnote 6, states: *"The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 176) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 63); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change."*

1.3.5 In relation to AONBs, the NPPF also states at paragraph 172 that *"great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues."*

1.3.6 Within the same paragraph it also states that *"Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and*

where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a. the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b. the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c. any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”

1.3.7 In terms of major development the footnote to the paragraph states:

*“For the purposes of paragraphs 172 and 173, whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.”*

1.3.8 While the issues around the presumption of sustainable development and the AONB are the starting point, the NPPF should be read as a whole and the appropriate balance applied to the merits (or lack of merits) of any planning application.

#### **Lancaster Planning Policy**

1.3.9 A strategic approach to development including policies is set out in some detail at a city level. The relevant documents of the Lancaster Local Plan are:

- the **Strategic Policies & Land Allocations DPD**, which was adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. This document guides how the future development needs of Lancaster City Council are met. It sets out a spatial vision for the area and establishes what the strategic development needs of the area are; a spatial strategy then describes how those needs will be distributed. The plan then sets out a series of land allocations to identify where development needs will be met and where areas that are of specific economic, environmental or social importance will be protected.
- the **Lancaster City Council Development Management DPD**, which was adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The Development Management DPD sets out the generic policies that will be used by both Development Management Officers and the Planning Committee to determine planning applications.

1.3.10 In the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD, no allocations have been made in those parishes preparing an NDP; however, it is expected that positive policies are prepared to meet local needs in those areas.

#### **The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2019-24**

1.3.11 The statutory AONB Management Plan, prepared by the AONB Partnership on behalf of its constituent local authorities, is a critical document. It describes

the Special Qualities of the area which contribute to the national significance of the landscape and identifies the major trends and opportunities for the area. It provides a policy framework and identifies a five-year programme of actions to help guide the work of the AONB partnership organisations towards achieving the purpose of the plan – to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural beauty of the Forest of Bowland landscape.

1.3.11 The Caton-with-Littledale NDP and other NDPs across the AONB will be key mechanisms by which this purpose and the wider vision of the Management Plan will be delivered.

1.3.12 The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan can be viewed at <https://www.forestofbowland.com/management-plan>

## 1.4 Evidence

- 1.4.1 In drafting the Caton-with-Littledale NDP, the Parish Council has drawn upon the existing evidence base for the Local Plan documents.
- 1.4.2 The Parish Council has prepared a document which details the special qualities of the parish to inform the NDP.
- 1.4.3 A Local Green Space assessment has been undertaken by the Parish Council to inform the allocation of Local Green Spaces.
- 1.4.4 Site assessments of residential sites have been undertaken by Lancaster City Council. Following this the Parish Council commissioned a *Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* to understand the cumulative landscape changes that might arise from the allocation of one or more sites within the parish. The report also looks at the impacts the sites have on the special qualities and character of the villages and the wider landscape. This work has informed the allocation of sites for housing growth in the villages.
- 1.4.5 The above documents are available on the Parish Council website at <https://catonvillage.org.uk/caton-with-littledale-neighbourhood-plan/>

## 1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.5.1 Lancaster City Council prepared a screening report to support Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council to determine whether the contents of the proposed NDP is likely to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This screening report states as follows:

- “4.1 Initial internal screening of the Neighbourhood Plan concludes that it is unlikely that the Neighbourhood Plan would result in a significant environmental effect. The strong focus of the Neighbourhood Plan on the protection of the environment, heritage assets, its AONB focus, and lack of allocations make it unlikely to result in significant effects.*
- 4.2 In order to ensure compliance with the SEA regulations it is recommended that a monitoring and implementation framework be included within the Plan to ensure that the effects of the plan are appropriately monitored and to identify what actions will be undertaken where implementation is not occurring as planned. Responsibility for actions should also be identified.*
- 4.3 Whilst environmental protection is at the forefront of the Plan the Plan does need to make specific reference to the Calf Hill and Cragg Woods SAC and Bowland Fells SPA and the need for development to be in compliance with the requirements of these designation and ensure their protection from both direct and indirect impacts. This amendment would ensure compliance with the SEA regulations.*
- 4.4 Subject to the above amendments the council is satisfied that the Plan is unlikely to result in significant effects.”*

### Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.5.2 Lancaster City Council prepared a screening report to support Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council in determining whether or not the contents of the proposed NDP is likely to require a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). This screening report states as follows:

- 6.1 The HRA Screening Report of the Caton-with-Littledale Neighbourhood Plan has considered the potential implications for European designated sites within and near the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary.*
- 6.2 The detailed screening of policies within table 3 has identified that several policies require amendments to their wording to improve the clarity of the policies. The City Council wish to make clear that the suggested amendments relate to improving the wording of policies and*

*are not suggested mitigation measures. The need for mitigation measures has not been suggested through this process.*

- 6.3 *Following the initial HRA screening the City Council are satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have any likely significant effects on the designated sites identified either alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects.*

1.5.3 The views of Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency were sought on the screening opinions. The responses were as follows:

- Environment Agency  
*No comments on the content and conclusion of the Screening Report and are happy with our conclusion.*
- Natural England  
*Because there are general policies supporting development in the neighbourhood plan (ie Policies CL1, CL3, CL10, CL11, CL12, CL13, CL14, CL15), and this neighbourhood plan is advancing ahead of an up-to-date Lancaster Local Plan, the neighbourhood plan needs a good environmental policy. This environmental policy will cover all existing site allocations, the policies which support development and other developments coming forward in the neighbourhood plan area.*

*Policy CL4: Natural Environment therefore needs to be strengthened. We would recommend including reference to the Habitats Regulations and net gain and we would suggest looking at Lancaster's emerging environmental policy 'DM44: The Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity' for inspiration. Part (IX) of the policy also needs to be revised as it currently confuses net gain with mitigation or compensation.*

*The accompanying neighbourhood plan HRA can then conclude no likely significant effects for all the general policies which support development because of the strengthened environmental policy.*

*We have no comments to make about the proposed site allocations or about the SEA screening opinion.*

- Historic England  
*Based on the analysis set out in the Screening Opinion, and within the areas of interest to Historic England, we advise that the emerging plan is likely to result in significant environmental effects (positive or negative) and, therefore, it does need SEA. In coming to this view we have taken the following factors into consideration:*

- *The plan area contains a number of heritage assets including several listed buildings, and the potential for non-designated assets.*

- *Heritage assets are fragile and irreplaceable and can be damaged by change through development both directly and indirectly by development in their setting.*
- *The plan is expected to allocate sites for development.*

1.5.4 The Conservation Team at Lancaster City Council has viewed the Historic England response and has confirmed that the Council would be happy to maintain that there is no significant effect despite alternative views from Historic England.

## 1.6 Community Engagement

1.6.1 A significant amount of community engagement has informed the preparation of the Caton-with-Littledale NDP. This will be detailed in the Consultation Statement to accompany the submission version of the NDP.

## 1.7 Structure of the Document

1.7.1 This document is split into 7 sections:

**Part 1** is this Introduction. It sets out what the NDP is for, the context of the NDP and the stages of preparation of the NDP. It also explains the structure of the document.

**Part 2** sets out the Vision and Objectives for the NDP.

**Part 3** sets out policies dealing with the overall strategy for development in the Caton-with-Littledale neighbourhood area.

**Part 4** sets out development management policies for the neighbourhood area, which will be applied in addition to other local and national policies as part of the development plan for the area.

**Part 5** sets out allocations for residential development.

**Part 6** identifies the planning commitments approved within the plan period.

**Part 7** explains the next steps for the NDP.

**Part 8** contains the Appendices.

## 2. Vision and Objectives

### 2.1 Vision

2.1.1 An NDP is required to have a vision and a clear set of objectives. The vision is a statement of how we envisage the parish in 2031. As Caton-with-Littledale Parish is in the Forest of Bowland AONB, the vision has been developed to be consistent with the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan Vision<sup>1</sup> and that set out in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB DPD.

#### **The Vision for Caton-with-Littledale Parish**

The parish maintains its character as four (*Caton, Brookhouse, Caton Green and Littledale*) distinct but inter-dependent communities within the rural setting of the Forest of Bowland AONB.

The loved and highly valued special qualities and landscape character of the parish and Forest of Bowland AONB and the way in which they combine to form a mosaic of landscape types and reflect a rich history and cultural heritage are maintained or enhanced to benefit the well-being, health and sustainability of the local communities and visitors. These special qualities are:

- the grandeur and isolation of the upland core;
- the steep escarpments of the moorland hills;
- the undulating lowlands;
- the serenity and tranquillity of the area;
- the distinctive pattern of settlements;
- the wildlife of the area;
- and the landscape's historic and cultural associations<sup>2</sup>.

The parish develops to meet its residents' needs ensuring a balanced housing structure for all ages of the community while enhancing appropriate local business, landscape, leisure, educational, health and transport facilities so that residents and visitors continue to enjoy the special qualities of this area into a prosperous future.

All development within the parish will be managed in harmony with and proportionately to its status in the AONB, contributing towards meeting the needs of those who live in, work in and visit the area in a way that:

- conserves and enhances the landscape, the natural beauty, the historic context and the special qualities of the parish within Forest of Bowland AONB;
- creates vibrant, diverse and sustainable communities with a strong sense of place; and
- maintains a thriving economy.

<sup>1</sup> Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024: Page 26;

<sup>2</sup> As in the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan

## 2.2 Aim and Objectives

### **Overall Aim:**

**To maintain the historic context and natural landscape of Caton-with-Littledale Parish and to promote proportionate, sustainable development up to 2031 commensurate with being part of the Forest of Bowland AONB, in order to enhance the quality of the environment and the well-being of parish residents and visitors.**

- 2.2.1 This will be achieved through the following seven objectives, which reflect the objectives set out in the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan, relevant Local Plans, national policy, the evidence gathered and the wider context:

### **Objectives:**

- **to conserve and enhance the outstanding landscape and natural beauty of Caton-with-Littledale Parish, including its landscape character and visual amenity, wildlife and geology, historic context, heritage, and settlement character;**
- **to ensure that all development is appropriate and sustainable in its location and design, and is of high quality;**
- **to provide sufficient supply and mix of appropriate types, sizes, and tenures of high-quality housing to contribute to meeting the needs of Caton-with-Littledale residents and the surrounding AONB, with an emphasis on affordable housing and without adverse impact on the landscape character of the AONB;**
- **to support a sustainable local economy, especially rural employment and livelihoods, and tourism;**
- **to protect and improve local community facilities and services, including for recreation and for sustainable public transport, paths, and cycleways;**
- **to provide the necessary services and infrastructure to support and improve both existing and new development;**
- **to manage and improve flood risk and water quality.**

### 3. Overall Landscape and Development Strategy

#### 3.1 The Development Strategy

- 3.1.1 This NDP places development more clearly in the context of the primary purpose of an AONB – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area – and, in the interests of people living and working here, to put this at the heart of planning for this parish which wholly sits within the Forest of Bowland AONB. Furthermore, it serves both to fulfil the Management Plan of the Forest of Bowland AONB within Caton-with-Littledale Parish and to achieve an equivalent strategy and methodology for planning and development between the two AONBs within the Lancaster City area while being consistent with the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD of the Local Plan.
- 3.1.2 The two policies that follow in this section are based on the equivalent section in the Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB DPD and are designed to ensure that the primary purpose of the AONB is at the heart of the overall approach to development in this parish, and to ensure that new development supports the Forest of Bowland AONB’s primary purpose and Special Qualities alongside the interests of residents.

#### **Policy CL1: Development Strategy**

A landscape capacity-led approach to development will be taken in the parish. Great weight will be given to the principle of conserving landscape and natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage in the parish due to its location in the Forest of Bowland AONB.

##### **1. All Development**

All development in the Parish of Caton-with-Littledale, located in the Forest of Bowland AONB, should be sustainable, consistent with the primary purpose of AONB designation<sup>3</sup>, and support the Special Qualities of the AONB as set out in the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan. Development must be determined by the capacity of the landscape to hold it and be in keeping with the primary purpose of the AONB. Within the parish, housing, employment, services, infrastructure and other development should contribute towards meeting the needs of those who live in, work in and visit the area in a way that:

<sup>3</sup> As set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; confirmed by Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:

- The primary purpose of the designation is to **conserve and enhance natural beauty**.
- In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to **promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment**.
- Recreation is not an objective of the designation, but the **demand for recreation should be met insofar as this is consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other uses**.

- conserves and enhances the distinctive landscape, the natural beauty, historic context, and the Special Qualities of the AONB; and
- creates a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable community with a strong sense of place; and
- maintains a thriving local economy.

Where any development proposal would create conflict between the primary purpose of the AONB and other uses of the AONB within the parish, greater weight will be attached to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the landscape and natural beauty of the parish.

## **2. Development within the Sustainable Settlements of Caton and Brookhouse**

To promote vibrant local communities and support services, small-scale growth and investment will be supported in the identified Sustainable Settlements of Caton and Brookhouse where it closely reflects identified local needs within the parish or immediately surrounding areas of the AONB, and conserves and enhances the local landscape and settlement character.

## **3. Development on the edge of and outside Sustainable Settlements**

Development proposals on the edge of and outside settlements, including in hamlets and the open countryside, will be treated as exceptions, and will be permitted only where they demonstrate that:

- the impact of the proposed development would conserve and enhance the landscape character and the setting of the settlement; or
- there is an essential need for a rural location; or
- it will help to sustain an existing business, including farm diversification schemes; or
- it contributes to the meeting of a proven and essential housing need in that location; or
- it represents a sensitive and appropriate reuse, redevelopment, or extension of an existing building.

## **4. Major Development**

As in other AONBs, proposals for major development will not be permitted in the Caton-with-Littledale Parish unless the proposal can be demonstrated to be in the public interest and exceptional circumstances exist.

Whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision-maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

In determining whether exceptional circumstances exist the Council will consider:

- the need for the development, including any national considerations, and the impact of permitting or refusing it upon the local economy; and
- the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the neighbourhood area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

The intimate nature of the AONB landscape means that even some smaller-scale proposals may be considered to be major developments depending on the local context.

## **5. Brownfield Land**

The categorisation of a site as brownfield does not negate or outweigh the need for the full and careful consideration of the impacts of a development on the AONB against the full range of policy requirements.

- 3.1.3 The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the landscape and natural beauty of the area. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the Development Strategy for the Parish of Caton-with-Littledale identifies a landscape-capacity led and criteria-based approach to development, consistent with this primary purpose and the Forest of Bowland AONB's Special Qualities. A strategy that does not put the conservation and enhancement of the landscape central to the approach to development would compromise the primary purpose and undermine the national designation and the value of the AONB.

### **Housing growth in the parish**

- 3.1.4 LCC has indicated that an important part of NDP preparation is ensuring that the NDP supports the Strategic Development needs of the City Council.
- 3.1.5 LCC has carried out a "Call for Sites" exercise, for the emerging Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD. However, where a parish is designated as a Neighbourhood Planning body, the City Council expects the Parish Council to plan positively for housing growth and to bring forward allocations for future housing development through the NDP.
- 3.1.6 As the AONB is a protected landscape, sites that are suitable for housing should be developed specifically to help meet local affordable or other locally identified housing or other needs, thereby contributing towards meeting the needs of those who live in, work in and visit the parish or Lower Lune Valley Ward (both of which lie within the AONB). To do otherwise would fail to address these needs, which could then only be met by releasing more sensitive sites, causing harm, and compromising the primary purpose of the AONB designation.

- 3.1.7 The Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) performed by Lancaster City Council (2018) formed the initial assessment of land availability for the parish, noting the methodology<sup>4</sup> which seeks to afford equivalent standards in the Forest of Bowland AONB as has been achieved for the Arnside & Silverdale AONB during preparation of its DPD.
- 3.1.8 An essential and integral report is the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) with recognition of the special qualities of the parish within this process, applying the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan and its Landscape Character Assessment<sup>5</sup>.
- 3.1.9 Site Allocation must then be performed on the basis of landscape capacity using the assessments described above, and whether the housing development needs of the parish and surrounding AONB have been met.
- 3.1.10 From time to time, additional or “windfall” development proposals will be made. These must include a landscape assessment proportionate to the scale of the proposal and the level of impact of the proposed scheme on the landscape. For larger or otherwise more sensitive sites or schemes (including most new development), this will require an LVIA undertaken by a qualified professional to Landscape Institute standards as set out above and showing how impacts may be minimised or mitigated.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-monitoring-and-information>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.forestofbowland.com/Landscape-Character-Assessment>

## 3.2 The Landscape Strategy

### **Policy CL2: Landscape**

Within the Parish of Caton-with-Littledale set in the Forest of Bowland AONB, development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they conserve and enhance the landscape, and the natural beauty of the area. Proposals will not be permitted where they would have an adverse effect upon the landscape character or visual amenity of the AONB or its setting.

Development proposals will be supported where they:

- take into account the Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment for the Caton-with-Littledale Parish area, and other relevant evidence;
- reflect the rural nature, historic character and local distinctiveness of the area including settlement character and separation, local vernacular traditions and building materials and native vegetation/planting;
- respect the visual amenity, views, tranquillity, dark skies, and the sense of space and place, avoiding the introduction of intrusive elements, or compromise to the skyline or settlement separation;
- take full account of the cumulative and incremental impacts of development having regard to the effects of existing developments (including unintended impacts and impacts of development that has taken place as a result of Permitted Development Rights, licensing, or certification) and the likely further impacts of the proposal in hand; and
- include a landscape assessment, the level of detail of which should be proportionate to the scale of the proposal and the level of impact of the proposed development on the landscape. For larger or otherwise more sensitive sites or schemes (including the majority of new developments), this will require a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) undertaken by a qualified professional to Landscape Institute Standards, showing how impacts may be minimised or mitigated.

3.2.1 The AONB benefits from the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty and great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing natural beauty when considering development proposals.

3.2.2 'Natural beauty' is not just an aesthetic concept, and 'landscape' means more than just scenery. The natural beauty of the AONB is strongly linked with its distinctive landscape character. The landscape of the AONB is largely due to natural features and processes such as geological diversity, landforms, climate, soil, water features, biodiversity and habitats, but is in part the product of many centuries of human modification and management, including

communities, settlements, heritage assets, people and perceptions. Many of these elements are recognised as being of national or international importance and are protected by law. The special qualities of the Forest of Bowland AONB, as set out in the Management Plan, define and describe the elements that give the area its natural beauty as well as those human elements that contribute to its unique landscape character.

- 3.2.3 The area was designated as a landscape of national significance due to a variety of factors:
- the grandeur and isolation of the upland core;
  - the steep escarpments of the moorland hills;
  - the undulating lowlands;
  - the visual contrasts between each element of the overall landscape;
  - the serenity and tranquillity of the area; the distinctive pattern of settlements; the wildlife of the area;
  - and the landscape's historic and cultural associations.
- 3.2.4 The area can be characterised as a complex interplay of many different landscape types, all intrinsic to its overall landscape character; from the dominant and wide-open moorland vistas of the high fells, to the more subtle, but no less important, lower-lying landscapes such as the rolling, pastoral farmland, woodlands, parkland, reservoirs, river valleys and floodplains. The area's distinctive character is determined not simply by the presence of particular natural elements or their rarity value, but also by the way in which they combine to form a mosaic of landscape types and reflect a rich history and cultural heritage.
- 3.2.5 The AONB forms part of the extensive Pennine Chain, which extends eastwards into the Yorkshire Dales National Park and southwards across Lancashire. The unique landscape character of the Forest of Bowland reflects its historical and present-day management for farming and sporting activities, from the royal forest of mediaeval times to the sporting estates of the present day. This has had a taming influence on the landscape.
- 3.2.6 It is the unique combination of characteristics in this area that makes the landscape so distinctive, and which creates the highly valued natural beauty of the area, resulting in a strong sense of place. The AONB is part of the cultural and natural heritage of the nation and if these characteristics are damaged, for example by insensitive development, then that will compromise the primary purpose of the AONB and the enjoyment of the area by the public.
- 3.2.7 National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment. The Caton-with-Littledale Parish is contained within 'Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill' (NCA 33)

3.2.8 In addition to the national landscape character assessment, a number of local landscape character studies have been undertaken to improve understanding of the character of the Forest of Bowland landscape and describe it. The most recent and comprehensive of these is the Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment:

3.2.9 [The Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment \(2009\)](#) has confirmed the diversity of the Forest of Bowland's landscapes, identifying, mapping and describing 14 Landscape Character Types and 82 Landscape Character Areas within only 803 square kilometres. The assessment seeks to provide a framework for developing a shared understanding of the current character of the Study Area's landscapes and its future management needs.

3.2.10 Caton-with-Littledale Parish contains seven of the Landscape Character types:

- A. Moorland Plateaux
- B. Unenclosed Moorland Hills
- C. Enclosed Moorland Hills
- D. Moorland Fringe
- F. Undulating Lowland Farmland with Wooded Brooks
- I. Wooded Rural Valleys
- J. Valley Floodplain

3.2.11 Particularly relevant characteristics of the Caton (F4) Landscape Character Area, which includes the villages of Caton and Brookhouse, are:

- a patchwork of small-to-medium pasture fields deeply incised by wooded brooks and river gorges;
- a network of hedgerows and stone walls delineating field boundaries;
- scattered farmsteads and clustered villages;
- panoramic, open and framed views northwards across the wide floodplain of the River Lune; and
- to the south, the dramatic rising profile of the moorland hills forming the skyline backdrop to views.

3.2.12 In the Lancaster Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Land Allocations (2011-2031), Policy SP7 seeks to maintain Lancaster's unique heritage and Policy SP8 seeks to protect the Natural Environment. Policy EN2 relates to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and states that the landscape and character will be protected, conserved and enhanced.

### **Local Evidence**

3.2.13 The Parish Plan (2005) noted: *"that residents ..... appreciated the special character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and ..... the central principle must always be borne in mind that our countryside, its plants and animals and the complex relationships they have with one another, are fragile and need particular care in their preservation."*

3.2.14 The environment was mentioned spontaneously during early NDP public meetings despite primarily discussing development issues, eg

- the need for good environmental planning with any development;
- keeping the village rural,
- protecting the countryside;
- ensuring wildlife is protected;
- preserving the Crook o' Lune area.

3.2.15 The November 2016-January 2017 Residents' Surveys confirmed very strong support for maintaining and enhancing the natural environment and for the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Responses to Q5 "*What do you like about your village?*" very strongly advocated the rural location and beautiful scenery / countryside including access to it from a village with friendly community spirit.

For Q16 94.9% rated the countryside around the village very important, 4.7% quite important and just 2 replies not at all important or "dependent on location, not that important if on outskirts".

3.2.16 In "Any other comments on the Forest of Bowland, landscape and countryside?" one comment seemed to sum up the many: "*We are undoubtedly privileged to live in such a beautiful landscape including moorland, farmland, sloping valley sides, wooded tributary valleys of the Lune and the Lune floodplain itself. Walking and cycling are very important local pastimes, and the Parish has an excellent network of paths and bridleways that local people (and visitors) clearly value enormously. Birdlife is abundant. Therefore, maintaining the rural environment in a manner that reflects the special statutes given to the AONBs is critical to the landscape legacy we leave to younger and future generations.*" There were many calls to preserve it, to protect green fields from development, use brownfield sites, to keep the dark starry skies at night, to enhance the wildlife areas and to keep the "*wonderful patchwork of varied habitats*" including woodland. Some commenters also wanted to get rid of the wind turbines.

3.2.17 The extensive list of favourite views with comments volunteered (Q15) also supports the value attached to this landscape.

3.2.18 The March 2017 informal consultation involved proposing options for inclusion in future NDP policies relating to protecting the landscape and natural environment of the parish and how the NDP would seek to do this. The responses received indicate that 94.6% of respondents agree with the proposed approach for protecting the landscape and natural environment.

## 4. Policy Issues

### 4.1 Housing Provision

- 4.1.1 The Forest of Bowland AONB is a protected landscape, within which Caton-with-Littledale Parish is located; therefore sites that are suitable for housing should be developed specifically to help meet local affordable or other locally identified housing needs.
- 4.1.2 To do otherwise would fail to address these needs, which could then only be met by releasing more sensitive sites, causing harm and compromising the primary purpose of the AONB designation. This policy seeks to ensure that the approach to housing delivery in the AONB reflects the local needs within the AONB and better ensures that new development supports the AONB's primary purpose and Special Qualities.

#### **Policy CL3: Housing Provision**

**Within the NDP area, the number, size, types, and tenures of all homes provided should closely reflect identified local needs in accordance with current parish housing needs evidence at the time of the application.**

**Proposals for new housing development will be supported where they deliver affordable housing in accordance with the relevant policy of the Lancaster Development Management DPD (Currently Policy DM6).**

**Priority will be given to the delivery of affordable housing and maximising the potential for meeting identified local needs and local affordable needs from development proposals. These will be expected to demonstrate that housing densities reflect local settlement character.**

- 4.1.3 The provision of new housing, especially affordable housing and starter homes, is one of the highest government priorities. Section 5 of the revised NPPF sets this out in some detail, beginning with the requirement that Local Planning Authorities will use their evidence base to ensure that their area-wide Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing, including identifying key sites for development. The Parish Council will work with Housing Associations and other providers to achieve the required mix of housing types.
- 4.1.4 New housing developments should offer a range of housing sizes, types, and tenures to meet identified local needs, including provision for vulnerable communities such as older people and people with disabilities.

- 4.1.5 The key challenge for the Caton-with-Littledale NDP is to determine how best to achieve sustainable development to meet local needs in an appropriate way for the parish, taking fully into account its location within the Forest of Bowland AONB. The need to conserve and enhance the landscape, natural beauty and rural character of the parish should be fully considered in determining the location and scale of any new housing development. Any proposals, even if they meet the requirements of a ‘providing new homes’ policy, would still be subject to the provisions of the other policies in the NDP.
- 4.1.6 Lancaster City Council has undertaken a city-wide housing needs assessment which provides up-to-date evidence about housing need and is in the process of producing a Supplementary Planning Document in relation to “Meeting Housing Needs”.
- 4.1.7 In the 2016–17 Residents’ Survey for Adults, responses to Q24 & Q25 indicate a need for smaller homes built in a variety of types suitable for both the young and the elderly and with a variety of tenures, especially affordable for both sale and rent, 50% also wanting rented accommodation reserved for local people. Putting this into a personal context, 203 of 296 residents replied to Q27: *“If you would like to stay in the village but move to a different house, which would you choose?”* Smaller homes, starter homes, bungalows and sheltered / retirement homes when taken together exceed the preference for larger homes.
- 4.1.8 In broad terms this accords with Lancaster City Council local housing needs predictions (2012) for the City’s population to 2031: *“The most significant feature is the projected growth of the 65+ age group by 61.8% over the forecast period, (amounting to) 15,200 more people, over 79% of the total growth”* and *“Within the 65+ age group, the 85+ group shows a large increase of 138.2%, 4,700 people by 2033”*. It accords with 2011 local census data on age and housing stock (Section 3: 3.30 & 3.31), with “post-it note” spontaneous feedback from NDP meetings and with specific comments made in the 2016-17 Residents’ Survey, namely that:
- there is an unmet need for smaller houses of various sorts.
  - there is a need for starter homes.
  - there is a lot of demand from older people wanting to downsize, avoid staircases, have access to shops and/or have sheltered/retirement homes where they have their social roots (see survey quotations below).
  - this last need is likely to increase over the next 15 years for demographic reasons.
- 4.1.9 The feedback comments include the following: *“This village does not need more large (3+ bedroom) houses. It needs 1–2 bedroom houses that can be bought”*; *“the trend to extending small dwellings has depleted the stock.....It is almost impossible to find a small home with a decent garden”*; *“I would like to emphasise the need for 2 bedroom houses to purchase at full price (not ‘affordable housing’ which is shared ownership housing)”*; *“would like some*

*over 55 housing to buy like a McCarthy and Stone development”; “I think sheltered flats for the elderly would be really helpful”; “Why do you not develop more apartment buildings such as on Station Road for older residents in order to release existing houses for families?”.*

- 4.1.10 Clearly more smaller homes of different types (including those suitable for the elderly) are needed in new developments to redress the imbalance seen in the parish, rather than the current planning application requests for executive style four-bedroom properties with little provision for affordable/intermediate small homes.
- 4.1.11 Affordable homes are widely requested and needed despite the high proportion of home ownership in the parish. Part of the reason lies in the increased cost of rural housing in the area (*LCC Meeting Housing Needs SPD 2013, Ch 5*) which is exacerbated in Caton-with-Littledale because of its AONB status, transport links and being in the catchment area of so many good secondary schools. Thus more affordable and starter homes are needed for the local community, as witnessed by answers to Q24 and 28, including 27 written comments to Q28: *“Do you know anyone who has left the village because they could not afford to live here? Or anyone who is living with family or friends when they would prefer a place of their own in the village?”* in the 2016-17 Residents’ Survey. Also, there were many answers to Q29: *“Anything you would like to add on housing in the village?”* asking for affordable housing for children and grandchildren. Older residents also need help: one answer mentions critical problems with the “*bedroom tax*”, another states *“I am unsure if I will be able to afford to live in the village once my child reaches 18 as the council tax will increase by 25% and also the child tax credits will stop – so I am dreading next year – how can people survive in the village with only 1% pay rises – we are a one parent family, and it can be very daunting.”* There are common calls to keep houses for local people (those born in the village) and to keep the price/rent of larger properties low for those needing to move for a growing family, eg *“Why are there so few rentals available in Caton? Is the village becoming gentrified?”* and *“We are hoping to move to a family home, there aren’t many in our price bracket”*. (answers to Q28 & Q29, Residents’ Survey 2016–17).
- 4.1.12 With regard to the siting of new housing development, the following comments have been made by residents (taken from parish surveys and consultations):
- feedback from consultations, surveys and discussions within the parish did not define any clear area(s) to investigate for development. A very small number of responses at meetings suggested the land separating Brookhouse from Caton on Brookhouse Road and land off Quernmore Road. However, significantly more were opposed to these sites being developed (see Section 4.3).
  - there is strong support for using brownfield sites (as evidenced by recent support for building houses on the Bargh TNT garage site adjacent to the A683, which helped overturn the original planning decision). However, while there was support for housing on the site, the design and architectural

style of the housing are not consistent with the design policies proposed in this NDP.

- when specifically asked where development should go (Q22) 86% selected *“Within the village on previously developed land (brownfield sites).”* If the Highways Depot were to become available, this has been suggested in several surveys for houses and/or light businesses in keeping with local trades. It is on level ground close to the shops, buses and the doctors’ surgery, so would be an ideal site for elderly or less mobile residents.
- only a few written comments (Q26 & Q29, 2016-17) support dispersed building through the villages, although this would potentially change the housing density and character of the villages, alter the green space balance (which residents strongly want to preserve) and lose the ability to include affordable housing in developments because of scale. When specifically asked where development should go (Q22), only about 15% selected *“within existing gardens.”* More than one answer was possible.
- in contrast, green spaces within the villages are strongly defended (see Section 4.3) in order to preserve the village character, wellbeing and wildlife. The continued separation of Brookhouse and Caton is also strongly favoured with those in favour of leaving the areas of separation undeveloped outweighing those against by two to one.
- there is strong support for preserving the green fields around the villages. Ribbon development should certainly be avoided to preserve village/landscape character. When specifically asked (Q22) *“Our village will have to find space for more housing. Where should it go?”* only about 13% ticked *“on green field land on the edge of the village.”* (More than one answer was allowed).
- from the AONB perspective, visibility, sky-line and scale of developments are all important aspects of siting.
- Q11 and Q12 (for farms) showed 9% wanted to diversify and 49% were unsure while 14% wanted to change the use of farm buildings. This could include conversion to housing or business premises. Q22 (for everyone) showed 73% were in favour of conversion of redundant agricultural buildings for development. Discussions in the NDP Steering Group also supported appropriate sympathetic conversion of unused barns in farmyards for other purposes if this is necessary for maintaining the security or sustainability of the farm. This needs exploration to see if planning can/should be eased. There is one written comment to this effect.

4.1.13 In the informal consultation carried out in March 2017, it was put to the community that the NDP approach to managing future housing growth would be through a criteria-based policy. 91% of respondents agreed with this approach. However, there was a response from an agent on behalf of a landowner who was concerned that, in taking this approach, the NDP does not fully address the future growth of the villages.

## 4.2 Natural Environment

4.2.1 Biodiversity and geodiversity are key environmental concerns for the Forest of Bowland AONB. There are sites which are subject to high levels of protection in national or international law which include Calf Hill and Cragg Woods Special Area of Conservation and Bowland Fells Special Protection Area. Lancaster City Council has comprehensive policies on biodiversity and geodiversity with clear implications for their protection and enhancement. This policy clarifies and expands on these to ensure that new development supports the AONB's natural environment, primary purpose and Special Qualities.

4.2.2 Natural capital assets are the elements of the natural world from which flow a series of services or benefits to society. For example, woodland, species-rich grassland, wetlands, peatland and other soils are all aspects of natural capital, while carbon storage, clean air and water and opportunities for recreation are some of the ecosystem services which flow from them.

### Policy CL4: Natural Environment

The high quality of the natural environment is a key feature of the parish within the Forest of Bowland AONB. New development will conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity, avoid the fragmentation and isolation of or disturbance to wildlife, habitats, and species. It will also help to create and reinforce green corridors and ecological networks and deliver ecosystem services<sup>6</sup> as a means of maximising wider public benefits and in reinforcing the local area's identity and sense of place.

To protect and enhance the robustness, function and value of the natural environment, development proposals must protect and contribute to the appropriate enhancement of the extent, value and/or integrity of:

- any site or habitat protected for its biodiversity or geodiversity value, at an international, national, or local level;
- any priority habitat or species;
- ecosystem services;
- ecological networks and their connectivity, including steppingstones, buffer zones, functionally linked land, corridors and other linkages;
- the mosaic pattern of habitats and species and the mosaic approach to their management and protection<sup>7</sup>;
- any other natural features or assets of significance and value in the AONB or characteristic of the AONB, including those that do not enjoy formal protected status.

<sup>6</sup> Ecosystem services are the benefits provided to us by the natural environment when it is allowed to function healthily, including clean air and water, climate and disease regulation, crop pollination and cultural, health and recreational benefits.

<sup>7</sup> The Mosaic Approach integrates the requirements of species into habitat management, ensuring that plants and wildlife have the places they need to live and reproduce.

Exceptions will be made only where:

- there is an overriding public need for the development; and
- the development cannot be located elsewhere; and
- mitigation is provided, or, where mitigation is not possible, compensatory measures are provided before the development's completion that result in enhancement (net gain) of the habitat's extent and value.

Before works to traditional buildings or features take place, appropriate species surveys should be undertaken and an appropriate plan for their protection, mitigation and enhancement put in place.

New buildings and conversions will be required to incorporate measures to support biodiversity as part of their fabric as is appropriate, based on site-specific and other local biodiversity evidence. These should include measures such as swift bricks, hedgehog highways, bat boxes, access tiles, living roofs or walls, and special consideration for species that are dependent on the built environment.

Development should restore and enhance water bodies, prevent deterioration, promote recovery, reduce flood risk and conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water. Where relevant, this should involve the opening up of culverts.

Proposals that enable or facilitate specifically tailored or targeted action to restore or enhance rare or priority species or habitats will be particularly supported.

### **Trees and woodland**

New development should protect and enhance existing trees unless there are clear and demonstrable reasons why their removal would aid delivery of a better development overall, and positively incorporate new trees.

Proposals that would result in the loss or deterioration of trees that are subject to Tree Preservation Orders, are Ancient, Veteran or located within Conservation Areas, or that are otherwise significant, will not be permitted unless:

- an overriding need for the development and its benefits in that location clearly outweigh the loss or harm; and
- compensatory planting is provided.

New or replacement planting in proposals for development should:

- be at appropriate ratio and of appropriate species to conserve and enhance the special character of the area and to reflect the purpose of the planting;
- promote a wider diversity of species, including diversity of height;
- reinforce adjacent habitats and reflect historic planting patterns in

the locality;

- be supported by an appropriate management regime; and
- support the need to manage mature or over-mature trees.

Landscaping in new development should remove invasive species. Account should be taken of the needs of particular species dependent on the retention of dead wood and mature trees within woodland.

Development proposals will be accompanied by a proportionate ecological survey including an assessment of the role the site plays in the local ecological network, taking into account connectivity and activity at different times of year. There should be clear links between the survey outcomes and any protection, mitigation and enhancement measures proposed.

- 4.2.2 The Parish has important wildlife and geology, with some sites protected at the highest level in national and international law and a number of locally-protected sites and priority habitats, as well as a wider environment rich in wildlife. Lancaster City Council has adopted comprehensive policies on biodiversity and geodiversity, which have clear implications for the protection of sites within the parish. However, there is scope in the NDP to expand on some of the detail, for example to ensure that biodiversity can be enhanced by creating or restoring habitats and including measures to help urban wildlife eg swift bricks and bat boxes. Particular measures, species, habitats, connectivity and geological features can be referenced.
- 4.2.3 Healthy, functioning blanket bog on the tops of the fells acts as a carbon store. Work to restore and re-wet areas of blanket bog will boost carbon sequestration. In addition, these blanket bogs are important in helping to mitigate downstream flood risk for communities, both inside and outside the parish and the AONB.
- 4.2.4 The need to protect the natural environment and develop robust ecological networks is now well established. At the time of publication, Section 15 of the revised NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to set criteria-based policies against which to judge proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites.
- 4.2.5 Effective conservation and enhancement of biodiversity means taking action at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries to develop robust ecological networks. Policies should protect and enhance the hierarchy of international, national, and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity and also wildlife habitat corridors and steppingstones that buffer and connect them.
- 4.2.6 Single trees, tree groups, woodland and hedgerows are all features of the natural environment of the AONB; in-field and boundary trees, fruit trees, mature and notable trees are particularly characteristic of the area. Ancient trees and woodland and veteran trees are an irreplaceable resource.

- 4.2.7 Habitats and species are sensitive to and can be harmed by new development, for example through degradation or absolute loss or through impacts caused by development, such as increased activity and light spillage. However, if approached imaginatively in a way that is appropriate to the context, there is scope for new development to enhance biodiversity.
- 4.2.8 The Forest of Bowland AONB supports many important habitats and species which contribute significantly to the area's landscape character and 'sense of place'. The Bowland fells (part of which is located in the south of the parish) support rare and endangered species associated with a very rare mosaic of upland habitats. At lower levels, the ancient woodlands contain an array of wild flowers; while the few remaining traditionally-managed pastures and meadows are an oasis for wild flowers and insects. Numerous rivers and watercourses provide habitats for salmon, brown trout and sea trout, as well as birds including kingfisher, dipper, grey wagtail, common sandpiper and oystercatcher. Otters are also present along rivers on the northern side of the Bowland Fells.
- 4.2.9 The Forest of Bowland is an internationally important area for conservation, as nearly one fifth of the AONB is designated as a Special Protection Area under the European Birds Directive, with a proportion being within the Parish of Caton-with-Littledale.
- 4.2.10 There is a Special Area of Conservation within the parish and two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) designated under UK legislation. Within Bowland Fells SSSI, the AONB management (with landowners) has been implementing a peatland restoration project. There are a number of other wildlife sites in the parish, which form part of a national network of non-statutory sites that are recognised for their ecological value. These are called Biological Heritage Sites (BHS). This valuable habitat is a big attraction for visitors to the AONB – many keen birdwatchers visit Bowland just to catch a glimpse of the hen harrier, the area's iconic bird of prey, which breeds in very few other places in England. Equally impressive are wading birds such as lapwing, snipe, curlew and redshank, which arrive in spring to nest and rear their young on the open farmland and moors of Bowland.
- 4.2.11 Restoring blanket bog so that it can become an active carbon store is a vital contribution to combatting climate change. Adapting to climate change can also be achieved through the AONB environment, especially when considering flood management.
- 4.2.12 Rivers, streams, woodland, trees and natural planting and landscaping play an important role in the local natural environment and contribute to the biodiversity of the parish. Multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI) is important to underpin the overall sustainability of development by performing a range of functions. This means encouraging developers to incorporate landscaping, open space and enhancements for local wildlife into new developments, to respond to climate change and to provide suitable opportunities for recreation, all at the same time.

4.2.13 The informal consultation carried out in March 2017 included a draft policy for protecting the landscape and included measures to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Of the respondents 94.6% agreed with the proposed approach for protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

### **4.3 Local Green Spaces and Area of Separation**

- 4.3.1 Open spaces are important to the health and wellbeing of a local community because of their contribution to a high-quality environment and opportunities for play, recreation and social activities, as well as maintaining an attractive environment for tourism.
- 4.3.2 Open spaces, green gaps and corridors are an important part of the landscape and the rural character of the parish, provide views from, into and within the settlements and help keep individual settlements distinct. The preparation of the NDP is an opportunity to designate both public and private important open spaces to protect them from development. This can include:
- sites that do not have public access, but which make a substantial and important contribution to the landscape and the look, feel and rural character of the parish, for example the green gap which separates Caton and Brookhouse; and
  - sites that do have public access and offer one or more types of recreational benefit, such as parks, gardens, children's play areas, general amenity space, civic space, or outdoor sports pitches/facilities/grounds.
- 4.3.3 The Parish Council, in consultation with the community, has identified a number of important areas of Local Green Space across the villages. These are of particular importance to the community and have been designated within this NDP to be protected from inappropriate development. Photographs of many of these areas can be seen in the Gallery on the village website <https://catonvillage.org.uk/gallery/>.
- 4.3.4 This is a new area of planning; it offers members of the public the opportunity to identify areas of green space that are demonstrably special to them.
- 4.3.5 While areas of open space and land of environmental value have always been identified (and will continue to be identified) in the Lancaster Local Plan, this designation as local green space provides an additional level of protection. Introduced by the Government in 2012, the designation focuses on the local community importance of identified areas. Importantly, national planning policy makes clear that this designation should be consistent with wider planning policy for an area and should look to complement investment in the provision of new homes and employment opportunities and other essential services. It should not be seen as a means to stop these wider development needs being met.
- 4.3.6 The NPPF makes clear that this designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or areas of open space and should only be used in the following circumstances:
- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community which it serves; and
  - where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 4.3.7 The villages of Caton and Brookhouse are separated by Artle Beck and an adjacent swathe of grazed farmland, which provide an attractive rural setting to the two villages, characteristic of the wider Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 4.3.8 This Area of Separation reflects the historic character of the settlements and creates a visual separation which is considered essential to maintaining the distinct identities of the two villages.
- 4.3.9 There is a strong visual link between Brookhouse Road and Hornby Road with far-reaching views stretching both across the valley towards Aughton Woods and up to the rising land towards Littledale. The Area of Separation is also distinct in views from elsewhere in the parish.
- 4.3.10 The area consists of small irregular fields bounded by mature hedgerows and trees with Artle Beck to the west, forming an important green habitat corridor between the settlements and a direct link to surrounding open countryside. This area contributes strongly to creating a pastoral feel highly characteristic of the rural nature of the settlements. The field pattern is recognised to be ancient enclosure.

### **Policy CL5: Area of Separation**

**In order to maintain the established pattern of development and conserve the character of the Forest of Bowland AONB and its distinctive villages, all future development should minimise the impact on the open character of the Area of Separation identified on Map 3. Development which would result in the further coalescence of Brookhouse and Caton will not be permitted.**

**Development will be assessed in terms of its impact upon the Area of Separation, including any harm to the effectiveness of the gap between settlements and, in particular, the degree to which the development proposed would compromise the function of the Area of Separation in protecting the identity and distinctiveness of settlements.**

### **Justification for the proposed boundaries**

- 4.3.11 There has been much deliberation in relation to the boundary for the area of separation. The following paragraphs detail the reasoning behind the proposed boundaries.

Northern Boundary.

4.3.12 The field adjoining the A683 is essential to visual amenity and the separation between the settlements especially when travelling from the East. The A683 therefore forms the Northern boundary.

Western Boundary.

4.3.13 The western Boundary follows the path of the Artle Beck from the A683 to the most southerly and westerly piece of woodland labelled Bridge End on the Map.

Southern Boundary.

4.3.14 This extends from the Point of the woodland where the Track moves from an East to West direction to a southerly one. The line following the natural field boundaries and hedge lines carries on in a westerly direction until it meets the field boundary of what is designated Site 39 in the LCC SHEELA.

Eastern Boundary.

4.3.15 The eastern boundary follows the natural field boundaries and hedge lines from the A683 turning in a westerly direction before moving southwards at Lane House Farm to follow the contours of the residential properties on both sides of Brookhouse Road and then forming the western boundary of Site 39.

4.3.16 It should be noted that that this area of separation is highly visible from viewing points along the Lune Valley and from Halton Park on the other side of the River Lune.

4.3.17 It is also the site of the main water pipe from the Thirlmere Reservoir supplying water to Manchester.

### Map 3 – Area of Separation



## **Policy CL6: Protecting Local Green Space**

**The following local green spaces (identified on Map 4 and individual maps in the Local Green Space Assessment) are designated in accordance with paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF:**

- 1) Becksid**
- 2) Caton Bowling Green**
- 3) Caton Primary School (formerly Caton Community School) Field**
- 4) Fell View**
- 5) The River Lune Millennium Park (Millennium Way) – Crook o' Lune to end.**
- 6) Parish Woodland**
- 7) Station Field**

**New development which impacts adversely on the openness and visual amenity of these sites will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances.**

**Very special circumstances will only exist where the potential harm caused by any new development is clearly outweighed by other considerations.**

**Each of the land parcels listed in this policy has been assessed for eligibility for designation as Local Green Spaces. The assessment may be found on the Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council website - <https://catonvillage.org.uk/caton-with-littledale-neighbourhood-plan/>**

4.3.19 The above policy is supported by the Local Green Space Assessment that has been produced on behalf of the Parish Council and justifies how and why each site satisfies the relevant criteria within the NPPF. The assessments include maps showing the extents of the Local Green Spaces. These can be accessed via the following links:

[Becksid](#)  
[Caton Bowling Green](#)  
[Caton Primary School Field](#)  
[Fell View](#)  
[Millennium Way](#)  
[Parish Woodland](#)  
[Station Field](#)

The following sections summarise the reasons for including these Green Spaces.

#### 4.3.20 **Beckside**

Beckside is an area of grassland maintained by the Parish Council, planted extensively with spring flowering bulbs. Trees were donated by a member of the community and make a valued and beautiful contribution to Beckside. It is a relaxing and tranquil area, with a Parish Council installed donated bench at the centre, which is well used. It creates a visually pleasing 'village green' feel to this area of Caton.

#### 4.3.21 **Caton Bowling Green**

This space is a traditional outdoor bowling green and surrounds which has been at the heart of village life for over a century and makes a vital contribution to the health, social wellbeing, and history of the community. It is bordered by substantial historic stone walls on all sides which provide shelter to both players and spectators enabling the enjoyment of fresh air and the stunning views of surrounding countryside. The upkeep of the bowling green is a matter of village pride and kept in one family for at least four generations.

#### 4.3.22 **Caton Primary School Field**

This site is highly valued as an open green space on the edge of the village of Caton, regularly and frequently used for both formal and informal recreation by residents of all ages for many generations and crossed by a historic footpath. The field is enjoyed both for its recreational value and for its natural beauty, tranquillity, and wildlife. It forms a transition between the urban setting of the village and the surrounding open farmland with far-reaching rural views characteristic of the Forest of Bowland AONB. It is fringed by wildlife-rich hedgerows with large trees, including a particularly special veteran oak. The sights and sounds of breeding curlew on adjacent pastures can be readily enjoyed in spring and summer.

#### 4.3.23 **Fell View**

This space is a 'green' with an open grassland area, sports facilities, trees and shrubs and a play area used daily by children of all ages throughout the year. The play area was designed with involvement from residents and plays a valuable role as a safe area in which children can play. The picnic tables are used intensively by parents and grandparents. The site is an informal meeting place and village focal point and is also used for community events, promoting a strong sense of community identity.

#### 4.3.24 **Millennium Way**

This space is an accessible pathway following the route of the old railway line fringed by trees, verges, hedgerows and stone walls. The pathway makes a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community and economy of the parish being a very well-used facility and popular visitor attraction. The pathway is also used for commuting by cycle into Lancaster. There are stunning views of the River Lune and surrounding countryside and the path is the backbone of many popular circular walks.

#### 4.3.25 **Parish Woodland**

This space is a distinctive 'surprise' area of natural woodland along the natural banks of Artle Beck. It is secluded with a beauty enhanced by the mottled sunlight on trees and water and the sights and sounds of the beck and is rich in wildlife. The site is used as a tranquil riverside location used by residents of all ages.

#### 4.3.26 **Station Field**

This space is an open sports field valued as a green space in the centre of Caton, in an otherwise built-up area. It has good views of the upland moors and a long history of use for recreational purposes and other community activities, including the annual Caton Gala and makes an important contribution to community identity. Formal sports pitches are managed by Caton Sports Association. The fringes of the field are left wild to attract a variety of flora and fauna.

#### 4.3.27 Information from consultation events shows:

- Spontaneous "post-it note" ideas from the two NP meetings clearly value green spaces. Some residents wanted additional ones creating, including allotments. Feedback examples include where building should and should not occur as well as more specific reference to green spaces in environment, leisure, views etc. An early controversial suggestion to consider house building between Caton and Brookhouse was specifically rejected in the 2016-17 survey and the March 2017 informal consultation as well as in earlier discussions at displays. There was an overwhelming desire to keep the area either side of Brookhouse Road as an undeveloped Area of Separation in order to maintain the distinct identities of the two villages in their rural setting.
- The 2016-17 Residents' Survey asked (Q14) for free text answers to "Which green spaces in Caton-with-Littledale matter to you and your family?" and over 90% responded. About 25% valued "all of them" with or without specifying their favourite(s). The next top four sites were the Station Field, the Parish Woodland, Fell View and the Millennium Way. .

4.3.28 Where given, reasons for keeping green spaces include sports and leisure especially for children, well-being and enjoyment of residents and visitors, and wildlife / wildlife corridors.

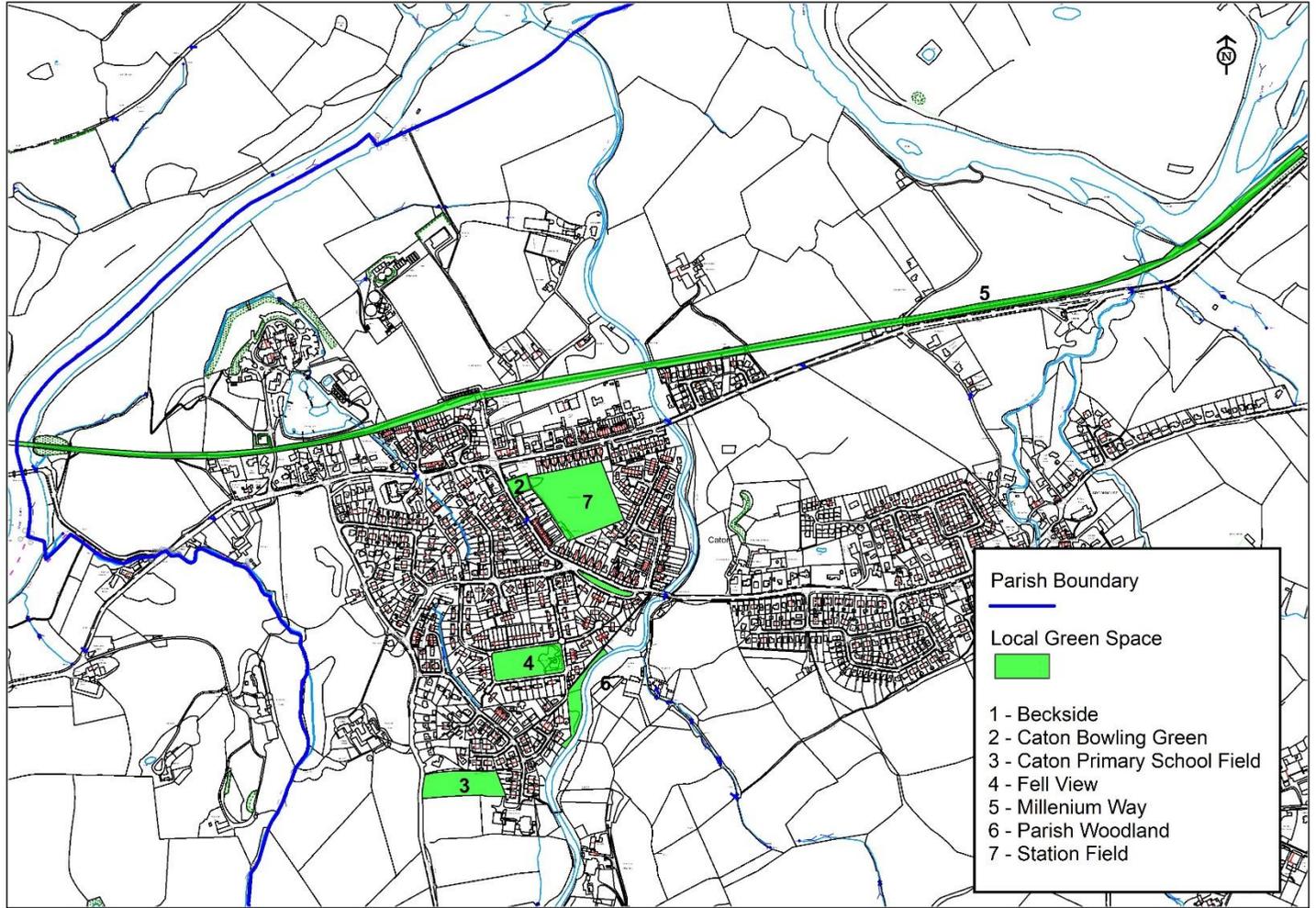
4.3.29 Results from the March 2017 informal consultation clearly show that 94.6% of respondents who answered the question agreed that the landscape character and natural environment of the area should be protected. In addition, many identified the specific Local Green Spaces which are included in this plan.

4.3.30 During the March 2017 Drop-In events, a star count was carried out in relation to the Green Spaces identified for inclusion in the emerging NDP. The star count for the Green Spaces was as follows:

Station Field	36
Millennium Way	43
Area of Separation	33
Caton Primary School Field	33
Fell View	30
Caton St Pauls Playing Field	30
Other	3

4.3.31 In addition, everyone who expressed an opinion at the drop-in sessions wanted all of the Green Spaces preserved.

# Map 4 – Local Green Space



## 4.4 Dark Skies

- 4.4.1 Over the last century large parts of Britain have rapidly lost access to naturally dark skies. Light in the wrong place, or obtrusive lighting, is one of the major unaddressed sources of pollution in this country and it affects people, wildlife and our landscapes. In 2009 the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution published its report on Artificial Light in the Environment and recommended that those responsible for the management of existing National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the equivalent National Scenic Areas in Scotland seek to eliminate unnecessary outdoor light and to design and manage better that which cannot be eliminated.
- 4.4.2 In the Forest of Bowland AONB the relative isolation means that there are areas of land still largely unaffected by light pollution; however, where lighting is obtrusive, this can seriously affect the quality of the landscape which was designated partly because of its tranquility and its value to heritage and biodiversity. In the words of the Royal Commission: *'we believe that access to the natural beauty of the night sky is every bit as important as the preservation of other aspects of natural beauty which society routinely seeks to protect for the enjoyment of its citizens and for posterity.'*
- 4.4.3 The Forest of Bowland is an area recognised for its dark night skies and visibility of the stars. A policy approach can ensure that any new development does not compromise this status by incorporating measures to minimise light spillage and avoid any intrusive lighting, reflecting the Forest of Bowland AONB [position statement](#).
- 4.4.4 Policy DM29 of the Lancaster Development Management DPD which sets out Key Design Principles refers to the need to mitigate light pollution. This policy provides a more detailed approach to how this will be achieved.

## **Policy CL7 Dark Skies**

**To minimise light pollution and to maintain the views of our night-time skies, planning proposals that include external lighting and significant openings that would allow internal lighting to be seen externally will have to demonstrate the following:**

- **They have undertaken an assessment of the need for lighting and can demonstrate need; and**
- **The proposed lighting is the minimum required and only appropriate to its purpose, so as to protect the area's natural surroundings and intrinsic darkness; and**
- **The nature of the proposed lighting is appropriate for its use and location. The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) has provided guidance on acceptable levels of illumination for specific areas. Applicants will be required to assess the need for lighting, whether the benefits of the lighting outweigh any harm caused, and any alternative measures available; and**
- **There is not a significantly adverse effect either individually or cumulatively on:**
  - a) **the character of the area; and**
  - b) **the visibility of the night sky; and**
  - c) **biodiversity (including bats and other light sensitive species; and**
  - d) **residents, pedestrians or drivers.**

**It is recognised that many traditional buildings may have 'significant openings' from which light spillage will occur.**

## **4.5 Historic Environment**

- 4.5.1 The parish contains a wide range of significant historic landscapes, a conservation area and historic buildings and features. Lancaster City Council has policies on the historic environment, which include Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and their settings. In addition, there is a policy in relation to development affecting non-designated heritage assets and their settings.
- 4.5.2 This policy sets out additional measures to ensure that new development supports the heritage assets and historic character of the parish within the Forest of Bowland AONB and reflects the AONB's primary purpose and Special Qualities.

### **Historic landscape and settlement character**

- 4.5.3 The rich cultural history of the parish is reflected in the landscape and settlement character, layout, form and pattern and numerous heritage features. Unlisted features, buildings, archaeology, and parts of settlement character such as field patterns may well be locally important through their contribution to the local landscape and heritage but are vulnerable to adverse effects from insensitive development. Gradual incremental erosion of historic character over time is also an issue to consider. Lancaster City Council is in the process of preparing a Local Heritage List which will identify any such buildings and features.
- 4.5.4 The NDP offers an opportunity to provide greater detail in planning policy to ensure local heritage is conserved and enhanced. Design of new development and alterations/extensions is critical to ensure that any new buildings are in keeping with the historic landscape and built environment.

### **Brookhouse Conservation Area**

- 4.5.5 Brookhouse is a small rural village with mediaeval origins. The Brookhouse Conservation Area, focused on St Paul's Church, abuts open countryside to north, south and east although the village has expanded westwards (almost merging with the larger settlement of Caton).
- 4.5.6 The Conservation Area comprises over 50 dwellings, the majority of which date from 1650-1900. These historic stone-built dwellings (detached, semi-detached and in short rows) combine with a church partly dating from Norman times and restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a school and a chapel to create a place of special historic interest with a strong local identity. In order to delineate a clear boundary, the Conservation Area includes some 20<sup>th</sup> century development that does not form part of the area's special historic interest.
- 4.5.7 The Brookhouse Conservation Area was first designated in 1981 by Lancashire County Council under provisions that are now contained in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This defines a Conservation Area as *'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*.

4.5.8 The Brookhouse Conservation Area Appraisal ([available on the Neighbourhood Plan website](#)) identifies negative features and issues in the Conservation Area. The above policy is included in the NDP to ensure that future development conserves and enhances the special characteristics of the Brookhouse Conservation Area.

### **Policy CL8: Historic Environment**

**All development proposals in the parish, because of its location within the Forest of Bowland AONB, must take into account the unique heritage assets and historic character of the area, including built, natural, historic, and cultural heritage features, and protect, conserve, and enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their setting) historic landscape character and the distinctiveness of settlements.**

**Before works to historic assets take place, surveys should be undertaken proportionate to the asset's importance, to record its historical interest and to understand the nature and scale of impact on its significance.**

**Development proposals affecting designated heritage assets or affecting non-designated heritage assets that are identified on any Local List or in the Historic Environment Record, or discovered during the application process, will be supported provided that they:**

- conserve and enhance the significance of the asset, including its contribution to the wider historic character and landscape of the AONB. This may include schemes that specifically aim to (or include measures to) protect, restore, enhance, reveal, interpret, sensitively and imaginatively incorporate, or record historic assets or features.**
- reflect local vernacular and the distinctive historic and settlement character.**
- conserve and enhance the character and setting of the asset; and**
- promote enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of the asset(s), as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing the AONB's identity and sense of place.**

**Development proposals will not be permitted where they are unjustified or where public benefits do not offset any harm that would occur to the significance of heritage assets including the area's historic landscape character, including cumulative impacts.**

**Proposals affecting ancient/historic field patterns should reinforce and reflect the pattern.**

**Within the Brookhouse Conservation Area, all new development will be expected to satisfy the relevant Lancaster City Council policies (currently DM38 and DM39)**

4.5.9 This topic was not directly addressed in any of the reports or surveys until the informal consultation (March 2017), and therefore was inferred from other commentary to that point. These all show the heritage is valued and developments should be in keeping with it:

- Dislike of modern developments and “off-the-peg housing” designs which do not fit the character of the villages was expressed through Parish Council meetings, verbal and “post-it note” responses at NDP public meetings and in free text answers to the 2016-17 survey. Similarly, there should be a presumption in favour of the retention of non-designated heritage assets. Any loss of the whole or part of such an asset will require clear and convincing justification. No such loss will be permitted without taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the proposed new development will proceed.
- Any special features which contribute to an asset’s significance should be retained or reinstated, where possible, in accordance with paragraph 135 of the NPPF.
- Any extensions or alterations should be designed sympathetically, without detracting from or competing with the heritage asset. Proposals should relate appropriately in terms of siting, style, scale, massing, height and materials.
- Proposals within the setting of a non-designated heritage asset will be required to give due consideration to its significance and ensure that this is protected or enhanced where possible.
- Positive settings should be protected, preserved and where possible enhanced by new development. A preference for vernacular design is clear.
- Favourite views identified as part of the NDP process include many historic features within older parts of Brookhouse, Caton and Low Mill, and wider views encompassing them. Some quotations from the 2016-2017 survey encapsulate the values attached to them: *“all are important, that’s why I came to live in Caton. If it becomes more developed and loses its village feel I will likely move.”* and *“I love the view in all directions, it’s a beautiful part of the country and the buildings are picturesque too, so fit in well with the backdrop of the countryside.”*
- The March 2017 informal consultation supported the approach of the draft NDP, some responses that disagreed with it doing so because it was not worded strongly enough rather than because of its direction. Some emphasised that conservation should *“not prevent thoughtful and well-planned development”*, but that this should include: *“Where buildings are adjacent to stone-built properties, then an appropriate match of re-constituted stone or real stone should be used to reflect the local existing stone buildings. Recent new builds ... have not been close enough and do not match the area.”*

## 4.6 Design

- 4.6.1 The quality of design and the character of the settlements within the parish are strongly linked to the surrounding landscape of the Forest of Bowland AONB. Settlement character is not only shaped by the landscape and topography, but also contributes to the landscape through its style, construction methods, materials, form, scale, layout and pattern. This policy ensures that new development throughout the parish continues and reinforces this mutual relationship, ensuring that the design of new development contributes fully to conserving and enhancing the landscape and settlement character and better supports the AONB's primary purpose and Special Qualities.

### Policy CL9: Design

For development proposals within the AONB the highest standards of design and construction will be required to conserve and enhance the landscape, built environment, distinctive settlement character and historic, cultural, and architectural features.

In addition to the design requirements set out in the relevant Lancaster Development Management DPD policies, the design of development proposals should:

- respond to the *character of the landscape and local built environment* including buildings, boundary treatments, open spaces, trees, roofscapes, historic village layouts and have particular regard to local vernacular traditions, building to plot/green space ratios and to the quality, integrity, character, and settings of natural, built, and historic features; and
- reinforce what is *special and locally distinctive* about design in the AONB through careful consideration of visual amenity, layout, views, scale, height, solid form, massing, proportions, alignment, design detailing, lighting, materials, colours, finishes and the nature of the development; and
- provide well designed *landscape schemes* that retain distinctive trees and include new structural planting that contributes to the character and amenity value of the area; and
- ensure that *boundary treatments, screening and entranceways* reflect local character and context including through retention (or appropriate replacement where necessary) of existing features of value such as hedgerows, trees, verges, and traditional stone walls and through the careful consideration of materials and heights for gates, gateposts and fencing and of appropriate species for planting; and
- avoid using *existing development that is harmful* to landscape and settlement character to inform the design of new development or proximity to it as justification for further poor quality or harmful development.

- 4.6.2 High quality design is fundamental to conserving and enhancing the character of the parish and ensuring any new development reflects local traditional character wherever possible including using local stone.
- 4.6.3 Modern development has led to a wide diversity of different building styles in the parish, but the NDP offers an opportunity to promote high quality design, including contemporary designs, in any new development as long as this does not harm the landscape or historic environment. Local distinctiveness and a sense of place should be promoted in contrast with the formulaic house designs often promoted by commercial housebuilders across the country. Climate change is an issue that affects us all and sustainable, energy and water efficient design must also be promoted.
- 4.6.4 Local distinctiveness and visual harmony between buildings and the surrounding landscape are important within the parish due to its location in the Forest of Bowland AONB. This is highly significant in the visual appeal of the landscape and built environment and is valued by the public – both residents and visitors to the AONB.
- 4.6.5 Gradual erosion of local distinctiveness, character and visual harmony has occurred within parts of Caton and has seen the addition of some modern development, often with little respect for the historic settlement pattern, character or materials. Harmful modern development should not be taken to set the character or provide a reference point for new development. Similarly, being in close proximity to existing development that is harmful to the landscape or settlement character of the AONB should not be used to justify further poor quality or harmful development.
- 4.6.6 The control of design, materials and cumulative impacts is crucial. Use of appropriate materials is essential to ensure that new development is in keeping with its surroundings and avoids the gradual, incremental erosion of character.
- 4.6.7 The grouping of buildings, use of local building materials, road and footway surfaces, signs, and lighting apparatus all affect settlement character and the quality of the street scene.
- 4.6.8 To sustain character and quality, development should reflect traditional materials, styles, and proportions. For proposals affecting the street scene and local landscape and settlement character, the following factors are important:
- retaining traditional surfaces and layouts, or reintroducing them;
  - ensuring that the scale, texture, colour, finish, and patterns of new materials are sympathetic to the area's character and appearance;
  - avoiding the creation of dominant or incongruous extensions and alterations to existing buildings;
  - ensuring that road layouts, construction materials, signs, lighting and markings are of appropriate scale, appearance, and quality, with no unnecessary duplication. Signs should be fixed, where possible and

appropriate, to buildings or existing street furniture. Every effort should be made to avoid or minimise clutter;

- minimising the use of lighting equipment as much as possible, confining it to built-up areas and locations where it is essential for safety. Lighting should be low intensity and appropriate in colour and design to minimise light spillage and disturbance to wildlife and to conserve landscape tranquillity and dark skies.

4.6.9 AONB status requires a higher standard of design in character with the vernacular buildings and landscape. Views expressed throughout all surveys are very strongly in favour of this, wishing to preserve the character of the parish and AONB from the many uniform / standard housing designs so often found elsewhere in the country, with field boundary character reflected in villages. The choices and comments on “favourite views” within the villages were almost entirely confined to traditionally built sites.

A very high proportion of respondents to the 2016–17 survey replied to Q26: *“People often have strong feelings about the design of new homes, .... Please tell us your views on what new homes should look like.”* Many gave additional views on this topic in Q29: *“Anything you would like to add on housing in the village?”* There was an almost uniform request for a vernacular style, with many adding comments including:

- using local building materials;
- facing or building in stone;
- limiting to two storeys without steep sloping roofs or “not too high”;
- having variety or avoiding “bland estate houses”.

Others suggested:

- matching colours to the area of building;
- not too crowded with adequate gardens and or lots of green space to keep the open village feel;
- enforcing AONB standards;
- avoid diluting standards;
- being ecologically sound and insulated;
- low density;
- not contributing to flood risk;
- allowing “creativity that is responsive to the environment”;
- decent size rooms / storage space in cupboards;
- including enough parking space.

Two other suggestions of building style were cited: one suggesting a modular approach to 2/3 room properties being erected on prepared sites suitable for the rental market; another suggesting they *“should fit in and .... some of the larger village houses in Brookhouse should be converted into flats or demolished and changed in to terraced houses as locals won’t be able to afford them”*. Others asked for terraced housing. One suggested that houses should be built in stone (if the new homes are located alongside old stone

properties), or something completely modern without trying to fit in. Renewable energy (solar panels, ground heating) was mentioned, as was low stone (boundary walls) commonly seen round gardens to reflect fields nearby. Three suggested specific examples of good practice (the new build in Arkholme, the houses opposite the bus stop at the end of Quernmore Road and the new terraced houses in Dunsop Bridge).

4.6.10 The informal consultation in March 2017 confirmed these points.

## 4.7 Economic Development

- 4.7.1 This policy seeks to ensure that the NDP provides a positive approach towards the promotion of economic growth and rural diversification within the parish.
- 4.7.2 LCC has policies that protect existing employment, promote small business generation and the rural economy. It is important that new employment opportunities within the parish are addressed and this policy seeks to promote small scale employment opportunities within the context of the Forest of Bowland AONB. This policy clarifies and expands on these to ensure that new development supports the AONB's natural environment, primary purpose, and Special Qualities.

### **Policy CL10 Economic Development**

**The development of new small-scale employment opportunities within the settlements of Caton and Brookhouse will be supported where they bring economic benefits to the AONB, the proposals allow businesses to adapt to alternative ways of working and the development:**

- **relates well to the existing built form of the village;**
- **is appropriate to the village and AONB landscape setting in terms of scale, location, design, and materials;**
- **demonstrates consideration of impact on infrastructure and incorporates mitigation measures to minimise any adverse impacts;**
- **provides adequate car parking for employees and visitors;**
- **consists of small-scale business / start up units or facilities which support local services and the visitor economy linked to the enjoyment of the countryside;**
- **includes business signage which is of appropriate design and scale, in keeping with the AONB landscape and village setting.**

**Proposals for employment uses in the wider rural area will be assessed against the relevant Lancaster City Council policies and will encourage developments that help secure the viability of local farms.**

- 4.7.3 The following policy seeks to ensure that the NDP provides a positive approach towards maintaining the vitality of local shopping and business areas in the parish.
- 4.7.4 Lancaster City Council has policies that promote small business generation, the rural economy and local centres and retail development outside defined centres. It is important that the services within the parish and specifically within Caton and Brookhouse are retained for existing and future residents. This policy clarifies and expands on the overarching policies to ensure that

new development supports the AONB's natural environment, primary purpose and Special Qualities.

- 4.7.5 Lancaster City Council provides additional guidance on the design of advertisements and shopfronts within the *Shopfronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document*.

### **Policy CL11 Maintaining the Vitality of Local Shopping/ Business Areas**

**Within existing shopping/business areas in Caton village centre, Brookhouse shopping area and Willow Mill business centre, development that help maintain the vitality and viability of the local shopping area will be supported subject to the following criteria:**

- a. new shop frontages are of high-quality design and scale and enhance local distinctiveness of appropriate design and scale in keeping with the setting by ensuring that corporate branding is subordinate to the site and appropriate materials are used; and**
- b. distinctive and detailed features of buildings are retained and enhanced; and**
- c. secure areas for refuse and recycling are included; and**
- d. cycle parking is included where possible.**

**The shared and flexible service and facility uses of buildings in Caton and Brookhouse centres will be supported where this will help the continued operation of key services.**

**Where planning permission is required, within the existing shopping / business areas, proposals which lead to the permanent loss of commercial units will only be supported where robust evidence demonstrates that their continued commercial use is no longer viable, or that an alternative use would positively enhance the viability and vitality of the village centre and it is in accordance with relevant Lancaster City Council policies.**

- 4.7.6 The future sustainability of the parish is dependent upon maintaining a buoyant local economy and services; otherwise there is a risk that Caton and Brookhouse could become solely satellite, commuter settlements.
- 4.7.7 The NDP offers an opportunity to support existing local businesses and encourage appropriate new employment development within the parish. Provision of small business units, live/work units, farm diversification (eg, farm shops and sustainable tourism) and businesses which contribute to the management of the landscape should be encouraged.
- 4.7.8 The type, location and scale of new employment opportunities should be balanced against the need to protect and value the distinctiveness of the rural

character, landscapes and villagescapes which are essential for sustainable tourism. Any development will be required to meet the requirements in other policies and no major development will be permitted.

4.7.9 The local economy is essential to sustainability. This is examined under the following categories: employment; maintaining existing businesses; enabling local business expansion and start-ups; and attracting new businesses.

#### 4.7.10 **Employment:**

The responses to Q7 in the 2016-17 NDP Survey, regarding employment status, showed that the largest group of respondents was retired people, followed by people working in full-time paid employment.

4.7.11 There is little information on the need for more local paid employment opportunities in the community. A small number of written comments were made in the 2016-17 Residents' Survey saying that work needs to be available for young people/children/grandchildren to stay in the village. There were eight complaints about the cost and frequency of buses making it difficult to work elsewhere (some young people were reported to have left the village for these reasons). This is supported by 19 calls for better bus services at the public meeting in October 2015 and suggests there may be a hidden need for employment for those unable to drive. One stated "*Not enough employment opportunities*" and another "*there is a desperate need to attract new employment to Caton and Brookhouse and more shops or even a market!*".

#### 4.7.12 **Maintaining existing businesses:**

- Respondents regretted the loss of some businesses (eg a bank and a butcher) and others stated that no more should be lost.
- The predominant request in this context from businesses and residents was for high speed broadband, specifically B4RN, to be rapidly introduced (see infrastructure).
- One wanted somewhere to store materials, another a safe lock up for tools, and a third wanted a garage to rent.
- Some wanted reinstatement of the former bus services.
- Despite their importance to local employment, schools and farms were not mentioned in this context; neither was car parking.

#### 4.7.13 **Enabling local business expansion and start-ups:**

Two sets of questions in the 2016-17 Residents' Survey were offered: one to people who had a business in the village (Q 8–10), the other to farms (Q 11–12). A further question for any other comments open to all followed (Q13). However, numbers show that Q9 on the position of new premises was answered by a lot more people than those involved in business and should be interpreted accordingly. See also some comments in 4.46-4.47 "Attracting New Business".

- Just under 10% of business respondents wanted to expand their business into another property. A similar number of farm respondents were looking to diversify.
- For new employment/business premises in the village, around 7% wanted units within a residential development and another 7% construction of new buildings, with 85% wanting conversion of redundant buildings, 11% uncertain.
- 14% of respondents living or working on farms are likely to need to change the use of buildings, 60% are unsure and 25% do not want to do so.

4.7.14 This demonstrates there is a planning/development need for existing small local businesses to thrive in the village and this may be part of the solution to increasing employment. Similarly, farms may need support for their developments.

**4.7.15 Attracting new businesses:**

As long ago as 1992, the Highways Depot was perceived as a location suitable for light workshop development should it become available. The site due to its central location would ideally be suitable for small business units and specialist housing for the elderly.

4.7.16 A similar site on the A683 (Bargh's TNT garage) became available, and although an application for planning permission for redevelopment for residential buildings was refused by Lancaster City Council because its preference was for business development, permission was later granted on appeal.

4.7.17 The survey responses suggested that there is no local demand for a site of this size, although there may be either for smaller units or for new businesses appropriate to the AONB. In addition, the Forest of Bowland AONB has policies and structures to ensure "resilient and sustainable communities" appropriate to the area and this includes businesses.

**4.7.18 Local Economy and Rural Services**

The NDP

- supports the retention of services (eg the health centres, the post office, schools, shops, public transport, public toilets and car parking) and resists developments which would result in their loss;
- supports affordable housing and workspace initiatives within the area, where development meets local housing, employment and business need and will also conserve and enhance the landscape; and
- supports landscape-sensitive delivery of super-fast broadband and mobile telecommunication networks.

**4.7.19 Sustainable Tourism**

The NDP supports the AONB stance on sustainable tourism

#### 4.7.20 Local Needs

In the 2016-17 NDP Residents' Survey and meetings, several views were expressed:

- A significant number suggested that the villages were large enough and do not need any more businesses – *“it’s not an industrial estate!”*, *“prevent urbanisation”* and similar comments.
- By contrast, a medium-sized supermarket was requested by one responder in the survey and two *“perhaps an Aldi or Lidl”* in the post-it note feedback from the October 2015 meeting. This clearly contradicts the AONB Management Plan policy.
- There were also calls for smaller local businesses of the right sort such as *“build on Parish strengths and small business types proportionate to the Parish and not become an out of town development for Lancaster.”* Specific suggestions were several for cafés or tea rooms (10 ticks in the November 2016 public meeting alone), a Bed and Breakfast, more shops and even a market, a studio in a craft centre, and conversion of unused farm barns. One called for home offices in gardens. Another wants to work from home but thought the rules on council house tenants needed changing.

## **4.8 Community and Recreational Facilities**

- 4.8.1 A vibrant and resilient local community requires services and facilities to function in a sustainable way. These make a major contribution to the health and wellbeing of local residents and their quality of life.
- 4.8.2 Caton-with-Littledale has a good range of services and facilities, which serve not only residents of the parish but also large areas of the Lune Valley. Consultation carried out so far shows that they are highly valued by local residents. As more development takes place across this whole area, demand for services and facilities is likely to increase.
- 4.8.3 Play, sport and recreation areas and facilities, both formal and informal, outdoor and indoor, enable local residents to lead healthy active lifestyles and are vital to the wellbeing of the community. These include play areas, playing fields, green spaces, footpaths and cycleways. Outdoor play areas and playing fields are of particular importance for the health of children and young people growing up in the village. There are no allotments in the parish.

### **Policy CL12 Community and Recreational Facilities**

#### **1. Existing Facilities**

**Existing Community and Recreational Facilities listed below will be protected in accordance with relevant Policies of the Lancaster City Council Development Management DPD:**

- **Station Field.**
- **Fell View Children’s playground and field.**
- **School grounds and playing fields.**
- **Bowling green.**
- **Tennis Courts.**
- **Memorial gardens.**
- **Millennium Way**
- **Places of worship**
- **Victoria Institute**
- **Scout Hut**
- **Church Halls**

#### **2. New Facilities**

**The NDP will support proposals for new community facilities and improvements to existing community facilities. Development will be permitted where it is in accordance with the following criteria:**

- **the site is located in or adjacent to the existing villages;**
- **the site is accessible by walking and cycling;**
- **there are opportunities to integrate services where relevant;**
- **detrimental impacts on road safety or traffic flow can be satisfactorily mitigated in the interests of both road users and users of the proposed development; and**

- **the proposal would not have an adverse effect on residential amenity.**
- **the proposal is in accordance with all other relevant policies.**

4.8.5 The following important parish facilities and services also provide local employment:

- Caton Health Centre
- Hillcroft Nursing Home at Caton Green
- a residential centre for addiction treatment at Littledale Hall
- two primary schools (one with a pre-school facility)
- a thriving village hall (The Victoria Institute) with community IT facilities and small community library
- five churches (one Church of England, one Baptist, two Methodist and one Roman Catholic)

4.8.6 Children travel to secondary schools in Kirkby Lonsdale, Lancaster, Carnforth and Milnthorpe. There is a church hall and scout hut (for Cubs, Beavers, Rainbows, Brownies, Scouts and Guides) close to St Paul's Church and a popular Scout and Guide camp in Littledale.

4.8.7 A mobile library visits Caton and Brookhouse every 3 weeks.

4.8.8 Regarding recreation, facilities include:

- a bowling green and a large recreational field (also used for the Village Gala) behind The Station public house in the centre of Caton;
- a small sports hall and playing and recreational fields with two junior football pitches hosted at Caton Primary School;
- outdoor public play and activity area for children aged up to 14 years on Fell View green, Caton;
- activities including dance and keep fit groups and a range of social groups for all ages at the Victoria Institute, which has a sprung floor;
- a tennis club;
- an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (Map 8);
- concessionary footpaths, cycle, and bridleways – Open Access Land is mainly at the top of Littledale on Clougha and Caton Moor;
- Millennium Way, which is a real asset for walkers, runners, horse riders and cyclists from the parish and beyond. The North Lancashire Cycleway and North Lancashire Bridleway also uses part of this route and some minor roads through the parish, encouraging visitors to the village.

4.8.9 The village has been twinned with the French community of Socx, near Dunkirk, since 2008.

4.8.10 At the informal consultation carried out in March 2017 all respondents agreed with the NDP approach that existing facilities should be protected and enhanced.

## **4.9 Supporting Infrastructure for New Development**

- 4.9.1 It is recognized that Caton and Brookhouse have been designated as Sustainable Settlements; therefore new development will provide homes and jobs for current residents of the parish.
- 4.9.2 Although development within the parish is unlikely to generate significant developer contributions, the NDP seeks to ensure that new development is supported by infrastructure that is appropriate to both the character and the needs of the AONB and that supports the AONB's primary purpose and Special Qualities.

### **Policy CL13 / Parish Aspiration 1 – Supporting Infrastructure for New Development**

**The Parish Council will work with relevant bodies to ensure that new development contributes towards new infrastructure or seeks to improve the capacity of existing infrastructure in a way that reflects the primary purpose of the Forest of Bowland AONB designation and conserves and enhances its landscape character and visual amenity.**

**Compliance with the following Development Management DPD policies is essential:**

- **DM60: Enhancing Accessibility and Transport Linkages,**
- **DM61: Walking and Cycling,**
- **DM62: Vehicle Parking Provision and**
- **DM29: Key Design Principles**

**in order to ensure that the issues raised for Caton-with-Littledale Parish in the City of Lancaster Highways and Transport Master Plan are fully addressed and any necessary mitigation measures identified.**

**The Parish Council will give high priority to supporting active travel and enhancing sustainable travel networks, including infrastructure investment to benefit walking, cycling and public transport.**

**Should external funds become available, the NDP priorities for spending within the parish are as follows:**

- **public transport links to local towns and facilities**
- **expansion of local routes and networks for walking, cycling and horse riding.**
- **accessibility for disabled people and those with limited mobility in relation to local routes and footpaths**
- **provision of green infrastructure**
- **wildlife enhancements**

**Opportunities will be taken to fund such improvements through planning applications. Proposals which support these aspirations are likely to be considered favourably.**

- 4.9.3 A strong community requires services and facilities that contribute to its quality of life, vibrancy, and vitality. Lancaster City Council has adopted policies to ensure that there are opportunities to develop and maintain features including recreation facilities, health services, allotments, shops, places of worship, pubs and village halls. There are also locally specific needs such as new pedestrian or cycle routes. In some cases, it will be possible for new development to contribute towards the provision or maintenance of these facilities, through the use of planning obligations, which may be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- 4.9.4 In the Lancaster Local Plan the following infrastructure needs have been identified:
- to investigate sustainable and innovative options for rural public transport provision in accordance with Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan (2016);
  - extension to the Lune Valley Cycle Network to deliver improvements and extensions to the Lune Valley Cycle Network in accordance with Lancashire Cycle and Walking Strategy (2016) & Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan (2016) ;
  - Flood Risk Prevention: Surface Water Run-Off Mitigation within new development, by the creation of permeable surfaces and other related design measures to ensure that surface water run-off is reduced to greenfield levels;
  - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) must be provided within new development to help to address matters of Climate Change and Flood Risk.
- 4.9.5 New development places a burden on existing infrastructure such as utility provision, highway capacity and school places. Planning obligations are designed to help mitigate the impact of development in a way that benefits local communities and supports the provision of local infrastructure. In addition to providing the minimum services and utilities necessary to support development proposals, it is expected that Lancaster City Council will negotiate a suitable package of supporting infrastructure to ensure proposals are self-supporting and do not harm the Special Qualities of the AONB.
- 4.9.6 Critical service and utility infrastructure can include access, clean water provision, wastewater and sewerage, power supplies and telecommunications connectivity. While the Council has cited better broadband speeds as one of the infrastructure needs, it is expected that within the duration of this plan much of the parish will have access to hyperfast broadband via the fibre optic broadband network provided by B4RN (Broadband for the Rural North).

## **4.10 Managing flood risk and water quality.**

**4.10.1 Flood Risk:** Storm Desmond and a local storm in November 2017 caused extensive flooding in the parish affecting a number of houses, farms, and businesses on the flood plain of the River Lune and along the Artle Beck and Bull Beck. In addition, many areas were affected by surface water run-off, particularly buildings at Low Mill, Forge Mill and Copy Lane. This demonstrates that water flow and drainage need careful attention and improvement.

### **Policy CL14 Managing flood risk and water quality.**

**New development should be designed to maximise the retention of surface water on the development site and to minimise runoff. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be implemented wherever possible.**

**The design of new buildings and infrastructure should take account of existing topography to manage the flow of water along specific flow routes away from property and into appropriate storage facilities and/or “slow the flow” systems.**

**Water attenuation facilities such as lagoons, ponds and swales should be provided within development sites.**

**Sustainable design of buildings which support rainwater harvesting are supported. Storage of rainwater for non-drinking water purposes such as watering gardens and flushing toilets is encouraged.**

**Areas of hard standing such as driveways and parking areas should be minimised and porous materials used where possible, with associated soakaway facilities.**

**The NDP will support initiatives that rationalise or improve the provision of wastewater treatment in areas not connected to mains drainage, including installing new treatment works.**

**New development should avoid overloading existing septic tank infrastructure. Any development proposing to make use of already overloaded, leaking or out-of-date septic tank infrastructure will be required to make provision for appropriate upgrading of the infrastructure.**

**For new development in locations where there are vulnerable aquifers, applicants will need to provide an assessment that demonstrates that surface and foul water will be kept out of the aquifer, and how.**

**Proposals for new development should reflect the specific circumstances and Special Qualities of the AONB and relevant current evidence in relation to probable impacts on and potential benefits for water quality, sewerage infrastructure and sustainable drainage.**

4.10.2 Policy DM34 of the Lancaster City Development Management DPD relates to surface water runoff and sustainable drainage and states that “*new development, which qualifies as ‘major’ development proposals under The Town and Country Planning (Development Management) (England) Order 2010, must incorporate a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) which will be subject to approval, conditions and/or legal agreement(s) by the SuDS Approval Body (SAB). New Development, which qualifies as ‘minor’ development under The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 should give due consideration to whether there is a requirement to gain SAB approval over the issue of sustainable drainage*”.

### **Local Evidence**

4.10.3 Managing flood risk is an issue of great concern for local residents, particularly after the effects of Storm Desmond in 2015 and a local storm in November 2017. Lancaster City Council has adopted policies to ensure that development is directed away from areas of highest risk from flooding. Some areas are not served by mains drainage or do not have mains sewerage systems. There are also areas that can be susceptible to surface water runoff, which can lead to flooding. Through their role as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Lancashire County Council now leads on flooding and drainage issues. As such, these issues are likely to be covered at County and city area levels. The Development Management DPD contains a policy (DM34), which deals with the new requirements for surface water and sustainable drainage, following the enactment of The Floods and Water Management Act 2010.

4.10.4 The NDP offers an opportunity to provide more specific detail to encourage sustainable drainage systems, natural flood risk management schemes and projects to improve water quality.

## **4.11 Energy and Communications**

4.11.1 Renewable energy is a more sustainable use of natural capital than burning fossil fuels. National planning guidance challenges all communities to respond to the need for sustainable energy generation, including through the use of renewable and low carbon technologies. Technological developments also heighten demand for telecommunications infrastructure. In practice this includes the delivery of faster broadband connections and scope for small-scale renewable and low-carbon energy schemes to be introduced in the AONB. This policy seeks to ensure that the communities of the AONB can make a contribution to and benefit from renewable and low carbon energy and up-to-date communications infrastructure in a way that supports the AONB's primary purpose and Special Qualities.

### **Policy CL15 Energy and Communications**

**Medium-to-large scale energy or communications infrastructure is likely to be major development contrary to national policy and will not be permitted in the parish owing to its location in the Forest of Bowland AONB.**

**Small-scale low-carbon energy, renewable energy or communications infrastructure schemes in the parish will be encouraged providing that:**

- (I) the siting, scale, design and appearance will not have an adverse impact upon landscape or settlement character or views into, out of and across the AONB, including from Public Rights of Way;**
- (II) they do not compromise heritage assets and their settings, historic character, biodiversity or geodiversity assets;**
- (III) noise, disturbance, vibration, stroboscopic effect, glint, glare, or electromagnetic interference will not have an adverse impact on adjoining uses, visual and residential amenity, tranquillity, or the quiet enjoyment of the AONB;**
- (IV) existing public access is not impeded; and**
- (V) they give careful consideration to cumulative impacts, the technology used, site location and decommissioning.**

**Development proposals that promote the AONB as a low carbon landscape will be particularly encouraged. This includes provision of low carbon, energy efficiency and renewable energy systems within new developments and through the retrofitting of existing buildings.**

**New development will include superfast broadband infrastructure, if appropriate. Opportunities to share communications infrastructure in order to enhance services while avoiding or minimising landscape impacts should be fully explored before additional infrastructure is considered. Sensitive developments that enhance mobile phone coverage will be supported.**

**Up-to-date evidence relating to low carbon energy, renewable energy and vertical infrastructure and its impacts should be used to inform planning applications and decisions. Definitions within this policy are provided within the Forest of Bowland AONB Renewable Energy Position Statement<sup>8</sup>.**

4.11.2 The character of the AONB landscape is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of energy and telecommunications development. Turbines, masts and power lines can detract from important open skylines that are otherwise free of vertical structures and can intrude into key views. Overhead cables and service poles can add visual clutter to the rural landscape. Also, turbines, buildings and other structures related to energy projects along with masts and other communications infrastructure can have an industrial character, which would be out of keeping with the rural landscape of the AONB. Such development can also detract from the character or setting of listed buildings, scheduled monuments or conservation areas.

4.11.3 Renewable or low-carbon energy schemes in the parish will be supported where the nature, type, scale, design and location of the installation does not adversely affect the Special Qualities. Whereas, for much of the country, permitted development rights apply to solar PV and solar thermal technologies, these do not automatically apply in designated landscapes including AONBs. There are also more specific restrictions that apply to the installation of renewable technologies in listed buildings or conservation areas. Potential applicants should seek guidance from the Lancaster City Council on the nature of these restrictions and the best way of accommodating renewable or low-carbon energy schemes, making use of relevant pre-application advice.

4.11.4 In the parish, renewable energy potential is diverse and appropriate schemes could include:

- wood fuel or wood chip boilers (biomass);
- domestic scale solar energy;
- anaerobic digestion plants that are fueled by agricultural feed stocks;
- ground, air, and water source heat pumps;
- micro hydro-electric power;
- other microgeneration schemes.

4.11.5 Policy CL16 draws on the approach to energy and communications infrastructure set out in the Forest of Bowland AONB Renewable Energy Position Statement 2014. The policy aims to ensure that new energy and communications infrastructure that supports the AONB objectives and Special Qualities is encouraged while protecting the AONB from the types, sizes and scales of infrastructure that would be inappropriate and harmful to the AONB.

4.11.6 It is important to remember that this policy sits alongside other policies in this document, national policy and other locally applicable policies set out in the Local Plan for Lancaster. This includes protecting the setting of the AONB.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.forestofbowland.com/Renewable-Energy-Position-Statement>

## 5. Proposed Development Allocations

### 5.1 Site Assessment and Selection

5.1.1 This section of the Caton NDP identifies the site allocated for residential development. The selection of this site has been conducted in line with the Development Strategy set out in Policy CL1 and has been informed by a considerable number of assessments, evidence-based studies, site visits and information gathering.

5.1.2 Each site considered has been subject to a detailed screening process, including specialist landscape and biodiversity assessments. The main evidence-based documents for housing are the Lancaster Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Part II) February 2018 Report undertaken by ARC<sup>4</sup> and the relevant sections of the SHELAA's.

#### Site proposed for allocation for development

5.1.3 This policy identifies the site that is allocated for development in the parish.

<b>Policy CL16 Housing Allocations</b>				
Site Ref/Policy No	Name	Gross ha	Development Platform Area	Estimated No of dwellings
CL17 (Site 98)	Land west of Quernmore Road	0.69		12

5.1.4 Following publication of SHELAA by Lancaster City Council, Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council considered it appropriate to commission a Cumulative Impact Assessment by an independent consultant to look at the cumulative impact of potentially allocating the sites deemed to be deliverable or developable in the Lancaster SHELAA.

5.1.5 The Caton-with-Littledale NDP Steering group used the report alongside the Lancaster SHELAA to identify which sites were potentially suitable for allocation.

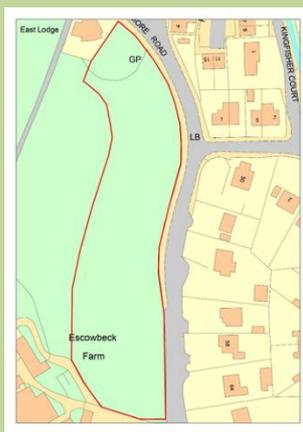
5.1.6 A public consultation event was held to engage the community in the site allocation process. Several very detailed comments were received from some residents which provided some insight into specific sites and prompted the Steering Group to engage with Lancashire County Council as Highway Authority to provide an opinion on whether suitable and safe access could be provided to the sites.

5.1.7 All the relevant information in relation to the site assessments can be found in the site assessment report on the Parish Council website.

## 5.2 Site Mini Brief

- 5.2.1 This section sets out policies detailing key expectations for the development of the allocated site. In most cases these will inform pre-application discussions between developers and Lancaster City Council. The mini brief is accompanied by indicative plans for the site. These are intended to guide development, which is expected to reflect these closely. It is accepted that alternative proposals may be acceptable where they meet policy requirements.
- 5.2.3 The eastern part of site 98, closest to Quernmore Road, is low lying. The height of the site and the containment of the stone boundary wall would help mitigate development of the site and integrate it into the wider landscape. The impact of the landscape setting and character could be further mitigated by siting the housing close to the road, and for housing to be single-storey dwellings that reflect the scale of the adjacent housing. This would prevent any development becoming dominant on the edge of the village. The materials should reflect the vernacular character of mill workers' cottages off Quernmore Road and traditional farm buildings at Escowbeck Farm. The traditional boundary hedge and retaining wall should be retained as important site features.

### CL17 (Site 98) – Land west of Quernmore Road.



#### **Amount of development:**

The site is capable of accommodating 12 dwellings. The site area is 0.69 hectares.

#### **Site description:**

This is a greenfield site located between Quernmore Road and Escowbeck Farm to the west of Caton village. The site is slightly sloping, rising towards Escowbeck Farm, and is currently used for grazing/pasture. Access is currently via a track located adjacent to East Lodge at the northern corner of the site. The site frontage comprises a stone wall and hedgerow.

**Policy Guidance:**

Land west of Quernmore Road, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for development for 12 dwellings. Detailed proposals that meet the following site-specific development requirements will be permitted:

- A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is required to inform the design and layout of the site proposals with particular attention to siting the development close to Quernmore Road and ensuring the development is low profile and single-storey to reflect the character of the surrounding area.
- Development proposals must be accompanied by drainage, surface water and sewerage plans and reports, demonstrating to the satisfaction of the relevant authorities that they provide resilience against flood, surface water and wastewater/sewerage issues, will not create or worsen such issues and will not overwhelm existing watercourses or create sewerage risks to existing properties.
- Biodiversity mitigation measures will be required, guided by existing evidence and an appropriate ecological survey of the site.
- Appropriate access arrangements from Quernmore Road, an extension of the footway along the length of the frontage of the site and parking arrangements are to be agreed to the satisfaction of the highway authority.
- Landscaping and scheme design should result in a net gain in visual amenity value in line with the local landscape character and the AONB's primary purpose and Special Qualities.
- Existing trees on the site boundaries should be retained.
- Design and materials should reflect the vernacular character of mill workers' cottages off Quernmore Road and traditional farm buildings at Escowbeck Farm.
- The existing traditional boundary hedge and stone boundary wall must be retained in any development as important site features.
- Development must retain and connect with existing public rights of way.

All proposals will have to accord with all other relevant policies within Lancaster City Council's Development Management DPD.

## 6. Planning commitments

6.1 Below is a table showing the planning applications for dwellings granted within the Lancaster Development Plan period.

Table correct as of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.

19/01048/VCN	Land west of Littledale Road Brookhouse	Erection of a detached dwelling (C3) with associated access (pursuant to the variation of condition 2 on planning permission 18/01348/FUL to amend the approved plans to include a first floor balcony, to amend windows and doors to the west elevation and to relocate the garage door)	Application permitted	1 dwelling
19/00867/ELDC	New Barn Deep Clough Roeburndale Road Littledale	Existing lawful development certificate for the continued use of the property as a dwelling (C3)	Lawful Development Certificate granted	1 dwelling
19/00292/OUT	Bank House Fly Fishery Car Park Lancaster Road Caton	Outline application for the erection of 1 dwelling	Application permitted	1 dwelling
19/00124/FUL	Woodfield House Moorside Road Brookhouse	Erection of a two-storey dwelling with detached garage, creation of a new access and installation of a package treatment plant	Application permitted	1 dwelling
18/01419/FUL	Hill Farm Littledale Road Brookhouse	Change of use of barn to two dwellings (C3), demolition of existing modern barns and erection of two new dwellings (C3), creation of passing place and erection of bin store	Application permitted	2 dwellings
18/01114/OUT	Ball Lane Caton	Outline application for the erection of a dwellinghouse (C3)	Application permitted	1 dwelling

		with associated access		
18/00002/ful	Land at Mill Lane, Low Mill Lane, Caton	Erection of 9 dwellinghouses with associated access, engineering works to provide sustainable drainage pond, construction of internal roads and footways and the provision of a package treatment plant	Application permitted	9 dwellings
16/00932/FUL	Neville House Moorside Road Brookhouse	Demolition of domestic store/workshop and erection of a 2-storey dwelling with associated landscaping	Application Permitted	1 dwelling
16/00104/CU	28 - 29 Low Mill Lane Caton	Change of use of one 2-bed apartment to two 1-bed apartments	Application Permitted	1 dwelling
14/00964/CU	Former Caton Youth Club Copy Lane Caton	Change of use of office (B1) to funeral directors (A1) and one 2-bed flat (C3) and erection of a garage to the front elevation	Application Permitted	1 dwelling
14/00270/OUT	Land Off Sycamore Road Brookhouse	Outline application for the demolition of existing bungalow and erection of up to 31 dwellings with associated access	Application Permitted	31 dwellings – RM – 22 dwellings
14/00459/OUT	Land to The Rear 71 Hornby Road Caton	Outline application for the erection of a detached residential dwelling	Application Permitted	1 dwelling
14/00768/OUT	TNT Garage Hornby Road Caton	Outline application for the erection of up to 30 dwellings	Appeal Allowed	30 dwellings
13/01183/CU	Land Adjacent No 8 The Croft Caton	Change of use of redundant barn to a one-bed dwelling (C3) with a single storey extension	Application Permitted	1 dwelling
13/00668/FUL	Moor Platt Lancaster Road Caton	Demolition of the existing 2 storey disused care home and the erection of 6 two-bed houses, 15 three-bed houses and 12	Application Permitted	33 dwellings

		four-bed houses including internal road layout and associated parking and landscaping		
13/00021/CU	27 - 31 Brookhouse Road Caton	Change of use from one 4 bed dwelling to one 1 bed dwelling and one 3 bed dwelling	Application Permitted	1 dwelling
13/00017/CU	Lancashire County Constabulary 37 Hornby Road Caton	Change of use from police office and community meeting house into residential dwelling	Application Permitted	1 dwelling
<b>Total dwellings approved in plan period since 2011 to March 2020</b>				<b>108 dwellings</b>

## 7. Next Steps

- 7.1 This Draft Plan has been prepared by the Caton-with-Littledale NDP Steering Group on behalf of Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council, supported by planning consultants Kirkwells.
- 7.2 The results of this formal consultation will be considered very carefully and used to finalise and amend the Draft NDP. A Consultation Statement will be published alongside the submission version of the NDP setting out how the representations received at this stage, together with the Screening Report for Strategic Environmental Assessment, have been considered and used to influence and inform the content of the Caton-with-Littledale NDP.
- 7.3 Following this, it is proposed that the amended (“Submission”) NDP, together with all supporting documentation, will be submitted to Lancaster City Council. A further consultation period will be carried out by Lancaster City Council. Any responses will be forwarded to an Examiner.
- 7.4 Following this, the Plan will be subjected to an Independent Examination by a jointly appointed Examiner, to consider whether the Plan meets the basic conditions, and also any outstanding objections.
- 7.5 It is likely that the Examiner will recommend changes before the Plan is subjected to a local Referendum. A straight majority vote (50% of turnout +1) of those on the Electoral Register will be required, before the City Council may “make” the Plan. The NDP will then be used to help determine planning decisions in the parish alongside local and national planning policies.
- 7.6 Where a policy topic is not included in the Caton-with-Littledale NDP, it is covered adequately elsewhere in the Development Plan for Lancaster area and/or through national policies.
- 7.7 Many policy topics and issues that apply to the Forest of Bowland AONB are covered adequately by national policy or international or national legislation or are covered by policies in other Local Plan documents. These policies and requirements all still apply to the parish of Caton, and the Caton-with-Littledale NDP is an extra layer of policy for the parish rather than a replacement for these, and all the relevant documents must be read in conjunction in order to provide the full picture of planning policy covering the parish within the Forest of Bowland AONB.

# **OUR PARISH – OUR FUTURE – OUR PLAN**



## **THE CATON-with-LITTLEDALE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2021 to 2031)**