

LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION

A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITIES PREPARING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Introduction

The Natural Environment White Paper ([The Natural Choice](#): securing the value of nature 2011) highlighted “the importance of green spaces to the health and happiness of local communities”.

Green spaces, particularly natural green spaces, located close to local people provide a range of social, environmental and economic benefits, including –

- improved mental and physical health
- increased social activity
- increased physical activity
- reduced crime
- improvements to children’s learning
- increased voluntary action
- improved community cohesion and sense of belonging
- potential for local food growing
- more attractive places to live, work, play, visit and invest
- enhanced opportunities for wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors
- climate change adaptation for example by flood alleviation

The White Paper recommended that a new Green Areas designation be introduced that would give local people an opportunity to protect green spaces that have significant importance to their local communities.

“We propose that green spaces should be identified in neighbourhood plans and local plans which complement and do not undermine investment in homes, jobs and other essential services. Given the importance of green spaces to the health and happiness of local communities the Government considers the new designation should offer suitably strong protection to localised areas that are demonstrably special”

That recommendation was incorporated into the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) as the new designation of Local Green Spaces.

Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit aims to help communities designate Local Green Space through the preparation of neighbourhood plans in a robust, consistent and transparent manner.

The Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF provides the following information on Local Green Space designations -

- 76 *Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.*
- 77 *The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:*
- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
 - *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.*
- 78 *Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.*

Additional guidance is provided in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

Neighbourhood Plans

Local Green Spaces can be designated through neighbourhood plans. For those preparing neighbourhood plans the text of a model policy is included at Appendix 1.

Criteria for Designation

Any type of green space could be suitable for Local Green Space designation from recreational land with a sports pavilion or the area around a war memorial to allotments or an urban space that provides a tranquil oasis.

As Local Green Space designation means that development is highly unlikely to be permitted on a site, there is a strong possibility that land owners and others will challenge the designation. To meet that challenge the designation must be based on solid evidence that the site meets the relevant criteria. This will be easier to demonstrate if the steps in this toolkit are completed and the relevant evidence provided.

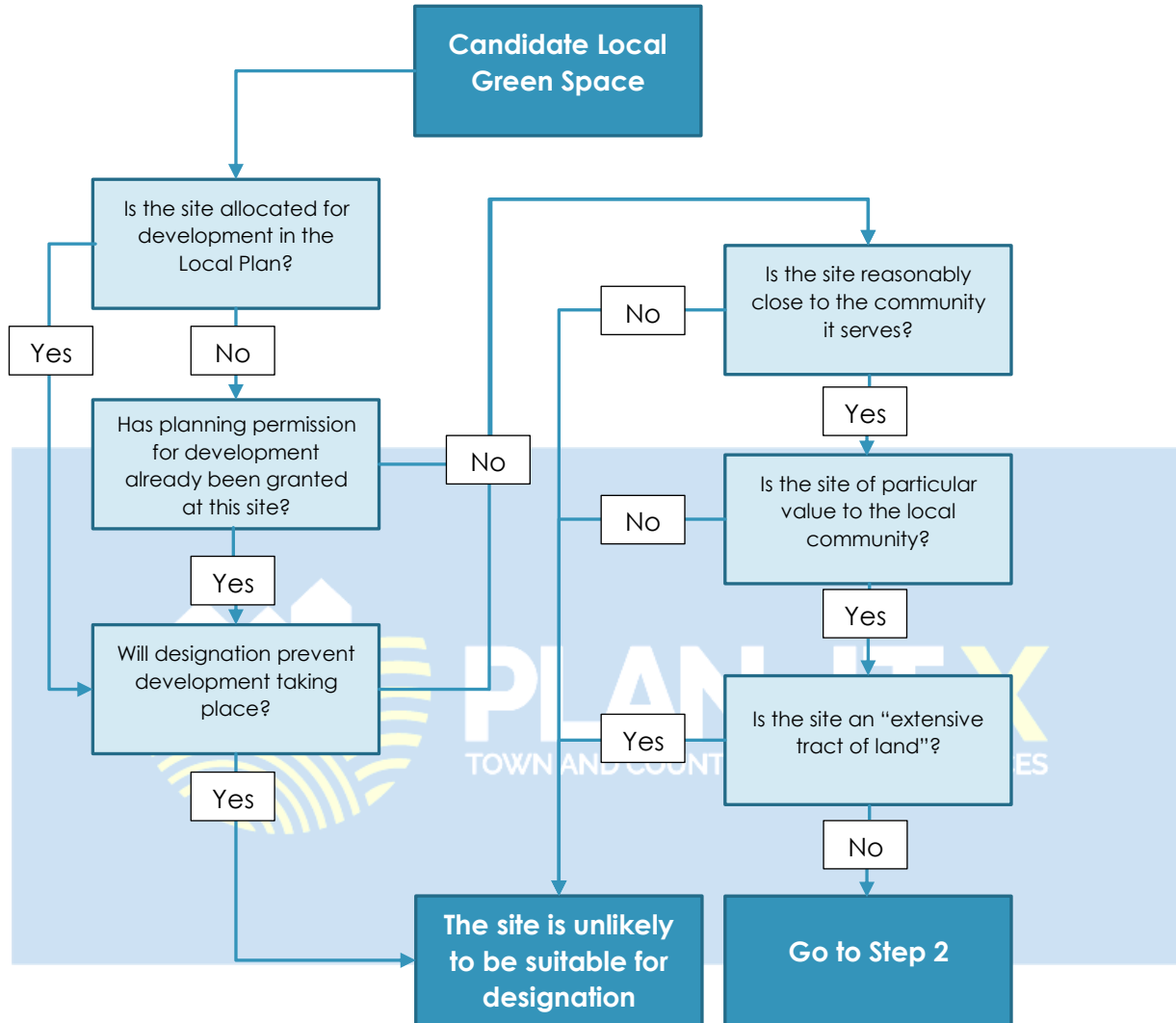
A potential Local Green Space site must meet the criteria set out in the NPPF, and further detailed in the National Planning Practice Guidance. These criteria are not specific – they do not give set distances or areas, but act as guidance which should then be interpreted at a local level.

In order to ensure that any designation in the is robust, we have created a checklist against which potential Local Green Space sites should be tested.



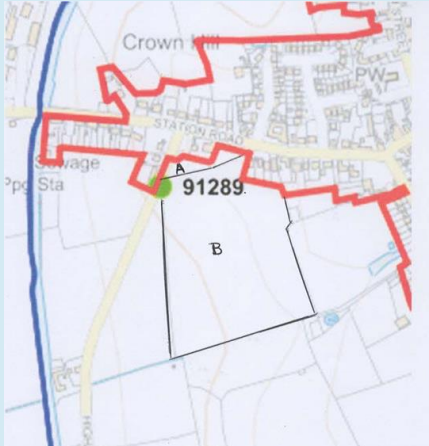
Step1: Quick check

Using the "decision tree" below, check to see whether a candidate Local Green Space is likely to meet the designation criteria.



Step 2: Complete checklist

If it seems that the candidate site may meet the designation criteria, complete the designation checklist below (and provide all the relevant evidence). The checklist should be completed for each candidate site.

1	General Information
1.1	Name and address of site <i>Some sites have several names and all known names should be given</i>
	Land south of Station Road & east of Higham Lane, Stoke Golding.
1.2	Site location plan <i>The plan can be at any scale, but must show the location and boundaries of the site. Please indicate the scale.</i>
	
1.3	Organisation or individual proposing site for designation <i>This will normally be a Town or Parish Council or a recognised community group</i>
	Stoke Golding Parish Council
1.4	Ownership of site if known <i>Information on land ownership can be obtained from the Land Registry. Some land parcels are not registered however local people may know the owner.</i>
	A. Hallmark Properties (Leic) Ltd B. Springbourne Homes Limited
1.5	Is the owner of the site aware of the potential designation? The owners were consulted as part of the regulation 14 consultation process and made no comment
1.6	Does the owner support the designation? <i>Sites may be designated as Local Green Spaces, even if there are objections from the site owners</i>
	Unknown
1.7	Photographs of site



The site is the field situated in the foreground of the white house to the left, the spire of St Margaret's Church and the historic core of the village of Stoke Golding spanning the whole horizon on the approach to the village from the South and West.

1.8	Community served by the potential Local Green Space <i>i.e. does the site serve the whole village/town or a particular geographic area or group of people?</i>
	Residents of Stoke Golding and Higham on the Hill and visitors to the area.
2	Planning History
2.1	Is there currently a planning application for this site? If planning permission has been permitted could part of the overall site still be used as a Green Open Space?
	Planning applications for both sites were refused in 2022.
2.2	Is the site allocated for development in the Local Plan? If allocated, could part of the overall site still be used as a Green Open Space?
	N/A
3	Size, scale and "local nature" of proposed Local Green Space
3.1	Area of proposed site <i>It is unlikely that a site of over 20ha (50 acres) would be considered suitable for designation.</i>
	Approx 6ha
3.2	Is the site an "extensive tract of land"? <i>(Extensive tracts of land cannot be designated as Local Green Space) e.g. how large is it in comparison to other fields; groups of fields; areas of land in the vicinity etc.? Does the site "feel" extensive or more local in scale?</i>
	The site is situated within the Stoke Golding Parish Boundary and adjacent to the settlement boundary. It is a similar size to other areas of land in the vicinity but forms the backdrop for a number of historic buildings and areas of special interest in the village to the North, West and East of the site.
3.3	Is the proposed site "local in character"? <i>e.g. does the site feel as though it is part of the local area? And why? How does it connect physically, visually and socially to the local area? What is your evidence?</i>
	The site is an integral part of the local area and frames views to Grade 1 Listed St Margaret's Church and the most historic part of the village and Conservation area. The field is the backdrop to our history from it's agricultural past in Saxon times through the industrial revolution. The importance of nearby heritage assets are outlined within the appendix

4	Need for Local Green Space
4.1	Is there a need for a local green space in this location? e.g. is there a shortage of accessible greenspace in the area? Is there a village needs survey or parish plan that provides evidence of that need. Further information – Natural England (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard)
	Yes, to protect the views into Historic Stoke Golding, and the significance of local and nationally important heritage assets
5	Evidence to show that “the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”
5.1	How far is the site from the community it serves? Is the site within 2km of the local community? Possible evidence – a map to show that distance
	The site falls within the parish boundary and adjacent to the settlement boundary. It is well within 2km for the local community
5.2	Are there any barriers to the local community accessing the site from their homes? e.g. railway line; main road Possible evidence – a map to show any potential barriers and how those can be overcome.
	The site is not accessible to the public but its amenity benefit is easily accessible from within the CA from Station Road and Higham Lane, from the Ashby Canal as well as from Higham on the Hill on the approach into the village.
6	Evidence to show that the green area is “demonstrably special to a local community”
6.1	Evidence of support from Parish or Town Council e.g. letter of support; Council minutes
	None
6.2	Evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals. e.g. letters of support; petitions; surveys etc.
	None
6.3	Evidence of support from community leaders e.g. letters of support from Ward Members; County Councillors; MP etc.
	None
6.4	Evidence of support from other groups e.g. letters of support from organisations such as Campaign to Protect Rural England; local amenity societies; local schools etc.
	None
7	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty,” (if applicable)
7.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	YES
7.2	Describe why the community feels that the site has a particular local significance for its beauty.

	The site is a large rolling field providing open views of the wider landscape and the Hlaew and forms a setting to the historic significance of Stoke Golding.
7.3	Site visibility <i>e.g. is it easy to see the site from a public place? Are there long-distance views of the site? Are there views of the site from any key locations?</i>
	Stoke Golding is characterised by being a ridge top settlement with strong historic links to the countryside. Views of the ridge top settlement along Station Road with the proposed site in the foreground are visible as far away as Higham on the Hill and set the context to the entrance to historic Stoke Golding, the Conservation Area, Bosworth Battlefield and the site of the Hlaew and medieval farmstead. The site is also visible from Locally Important Viewpoint B as outlined in the Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan (SGNP) as well as from the Higham Lane entrance to the village which is signposted as the “Birthplace of the Tudor dynasty”
7.4	Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designations? <i>e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Conservation Area; Special Landscape Area</i> <i>Further information –Natural England</i>
	Part of the site falls within Stoke Golding’s Conservation area
7.5	Is the site (or the type of site) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents? <i>Further information –Natural England</i>
	The site forms part of the Stoke Golding vale and rolling countryside as defined in Hinckley and Bosworth borough landscape character assessment September 2017. The photograph shown in 1.7 above is used within the LCA document to illustrate the hilltop setting of the village
7.6	Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building or other special feature?
	The site is physically adjacent to a number of Locally Valued Heritage Assets as defined in the SGNP and therefore critical to their setting. These include The Courtyard, Victorian former site Hall & Son’s Hosiery Factory, and the former Women’s Hall. The site is adjacent to and within the setting of scheduled monument (NHLE 1017678) Hlaew and medieval farmstead immediately south west of Park House. It is also within the setting of Grade 1 Church of St Margaret (NHLE 1074214), the registered battlefield, Battle of Bosworth (Field) 1485 (NHLE 1000004) and the Stoke Golding Conservation Area which it also falls partly within. See appendix A outlining the significance of adjacent nationally important & locally valued Heritage Assets
7.7	Is the site highlighted in literature or art? <i>e.g. is the site mentioned in a well-known poem or shown in a famous painting?</i>
	Not known
8	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance for example because of its historic significance” (if applicable)
8.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?

	Yes absolutely – see previous comments & appendix A outlining the significance of adjacent Heritage Assets and the importance of this site to their setting.
8.2	Are there any historic buildings or remains on the site? e.g. listed buildings; scheduled ancient monuments; registered parks and gardens; war memorials; other historic remains or structures. Further information –English Heritage; local history society
	See appendix A for details of nearby historic buildings.
8.3	Are there any important historic landscape features on the site? e.g. old hedgerows; ancient trees; historic ponds or historic garden features Further information –English Heritage; local history society
	Traces of ridge and furrow
8.4	Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? e.g. the old site of the town railway station; the old garden for the manor house etc.
	The site, which is immediately to the south and west of the medieval farmstead reflects the historic context of the Scheduled Monument and relationship with the land it managed. It is therefore important to preserve this setting which contributes to the monument’s historic significance. It is also adjacent to a number of Locally Valued Heritage Assets as defined in the SGNP. These include The Courtyard, Victorian former site Hall & Son’s Hosiery Factory, and the former Women’s Hall.
8.5	Did any important historic events take place on the site?
	The site is approx. 200m away from Crown Hill where Henry VII was crowned following the battle of Bosworth in 1485. Henry and Richard III’s camps were scattered around the vicinity of the Hill and wider battlefield site before and after the battle.
8.6	Do any historic rituals take place on the site? e.g. well-dressing; maypole dancing etc.
	Not known
9	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its recreational value (including as a playing field)”, (if applicable)
9.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	NO
9.2	Is the site used for playing sport? If so what sport? How long has it been used for sports provision? Is this sports provision free or is a club membership required? Further information – Sport England
	NO
9.3	Are the public able to physically access the site? e.g. are there any public rights of way across the site? Or adjacent to the site? Has access been allowed on a discretionary basis? Is there public access to the whole site or only part? Is there good disabled access to the site? (A site can still be designated even if there is no public access.)
	Not currently. Until the 1980’s there was a footpath across the northern part of the site linking Station Road with Higham Lane. There is an opportunity to reinstate this public footpath.

9.4	Is the site used by the local community for informal recreation? And since when? <i>e.g. dog walking; sledging; ball games etc.</i>
	NO
10	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its tranquillity” (if applicable)
10.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	Yes
10.2	Do you consider the site to be tranquil? <i>e.g. are there are any roads or busy areas close by?</i>
	The site can be viewed from Higham on the Hill, various points on Station Road and from the site entrance on Higham Lane – the surrounding roads being popular with cyclists and walkers. It is tranquil spot, generally used for grazing and provides the opportunity to witness the transition from the agricultural heritage of the village through its development during the industrial revolution and beyond.
10.3	Is the site within a recognised tranquil area? <i>e.g. within the Campaign to Protect Rural England’s tranquillity maps</i>
	No
11	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of the richness of its wildlife”; (if applicable)
11.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?
	YES
11.2	Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value? <i>e.g. as a site of special scientific interest; a key wildlife site etc Further information - Natural England</i>
	There is a locally designated wildlife site (Higham Lane Ash LWS 91289) situated at the entrance to the site.
11.3	Are any important habitats or species found on the site? <i>e.g. habitats and species listed in the UK priority habitats and species lists or in Biodiversity Action Plans or protected species or on the red/amber lists of birds of conservation concern.</i> <i>Further information - Natural England; National Biodiversity Network; RSPB</i>
	Unknown
11.4	What other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? <i>Further information - Natural England; National Biodiversity Network</i>
	Badgers, green woodpeckers, greater spotted woodpeckers, buzzards, tawny owls, field voles, pipistrelle bats, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown butterflies.
11.5	Is the site part of a long term study of wildlife by members of the local community? <i>e.g. long-term monitoring of breeding birds.</i>
	No
12	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for any other reason”; (if applicable)
12.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	Local significance already outlined

12.2	What are the other reasons why the site has a particular local significance for the local community?
	See appendix A below

Local Green Space Designation Proposal – Appendix A

Name and Address of Site:

Land South of Station Road, east of Higham Lane, Stoke Golding close to CV13 6EX

Land Registry Documents: LT243976 / LT2431454 / LT520347

On the 1844 tithe map, the site was divided into two fields – Armstone Close being situated to the north, and Thistley Close to the south.

Historic Setting

The proposed site is located adjacent to and within the setting of scheduled monument 'Hlaew and medieval farmstead immediately south west of Park House'. It is also within the setting of Grade I Church of St Margaret, the registered battlefield, Battle of Bosworth (Field) 1485 and Stoke Golding Conservation Area (CA), which it also falls partly within.

Significance of Heritage Assets Explained:

The Scheduled Monument

The monument comprises the earthwork and buried archaeological remains of a hlaew (Saxon burial mound) and a medieval farmstead.

The burial mound is located prominently at the top of a north to south running ridge. From the edge of the ridge, the land drops away to the west and south and extensive views are possible from the monument across the open, rural landscape. The burial mound is also highly visible from elsewhere in the landscape, such as in views across the site from Higham Lane and from the access to Park House on Main Street. From this access, the mound appears impressively outlined against the skyline and distant high ground. These views help us to understand and experience the hlaew's importance, and they emphasise how its landscape setting would have been important to its form, function and status.

The medieval farmstead was a characteristic feature of the medieval rural landscape. The farmstead at Stoke Golding includes a house platform, associated fishponds and closes within a defined enclosure. Today the landscape to the south and west, including the proposed LGS site, consists of agricultural fields. Hints of ridge and furrow from the medieval open field system of cultivation survive in places. These elements reflect its historic context and the farmstead's relationship with the land it managed, which can still be readily appreciated.

The rural and undeveloped character of the current landscape to the south and west therefore preserve the setting of the scheduled monument and contribute positively to its significance.

Non-designated archaeological remains directly related to the scheduled monument may survive within the proposed site. Such remains would also contribute positively to its significance.

The Registered Battlefield

A pivotal event in English history, the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 saw the death of the last Plantagenet king, King Richard III. Following his victory, the crowning of Henry Tudor as King of England is thought to have taken place on the hill now known as Crown Hill on the northern edge of Stoke Golding which is approximately 200m to the North of the proposed site. Features that point directly to the contemporary landscape help observers to immerse themselves in and understand the course of the battle.

Stoke Golding Conservation Area and St Margaret's Church

Stoke Golding is a ridge-top settlement with strong visual links to the countryside. These important characteristics are noted in the 2013 Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). Views from the south and approaching the settlement along Higham Lane demonstrate this particularly well, with the spire of the Grade I listed Church of St Margaret forming a focal point on the higher ground.

The proposed site is prominent in these views. It forms a band of open pasture which clearly defines the edge of the ridge and gently slopes down to the south and west. Views of the ridge top settlement along Station Road are visible as far away as Higham on the Hill and set the context to the entrance to historic Stoke Golding, the Conservation Area, Bosworth Battlefield and the site of the hlaew and medieval farmstead.

It also contributes positively to the setting of the CA in views looking out, preserving the visual links from Station Road to the landscape beyond. This is recognised in the CAA with the view from Station Road across the application site identified for protection.

Locally Valued Heritage Assets:

HJ Hall's Sock Factory opened in 1882 and continued to operate at this site until 1977 when the factory moved to a larger modern site in Hinckley. During the first world war, Hall's factory manufactured 35million pairs of socks which were transported by Blossom, the factory pony to nearby Stoke Golding Railway station for distribution to British, French and Belgian troops in Europe.

The factory building was converted to apartments circa 1995 and re-named The Courtyard. It is designated as a Locally Valued Heritage Asset in Stoke Golding's Neighbourhood Plan and illustrates how the village grew from agriculture to industry. The building is the last remnant of the hosiery industry in the village.



The proposed LGS site with visible ridge and furrow can be seen behind and to the left of the hosiery factory. Locally Valued Heritage sites 45 to 49 Station Road (including the former Women's Hall) are situated to the left of the factory. It is important that the setting to these LVHA's is retained.



The modern factory in the foreground, which was one of many hosiery factories in Stoke Golding is now a housing estate and only The Courtyard remains to remind the village of our industrial past.

Green Infrastructure and Tourism in Stoke Golding.

There are many opportunities to improve Green Infrastructure and to make the Historic Assets of the village more accessible for locals and tourists alike. For example HBBC's Green Infrastructure Strategy document proposes to develop **The Battlefield Trail** by "extending the existing route south of Shenton Station (and the end of the heritage

railway), across the Ashby Canal and linking up (and signposting to) Stoke Golding elements of the 1485 Sculpture Trail” (P119). Station Road is an important part of this trail linking the “Storm Breaks” sculpture to be situated at Fenn lanes, representing Bosworth Battlefield site, with “The New Order” sculpture at St Margaret’s Church representing Henry’s victory. The Sculpture Trail is now under way.

The Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan (SGNP) supports *The creation of a pedestrian and cycle route along the former Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway (policy SG8, or SG9 in the pre-submission version of the revised plan)*, and seeks to develop tourism linked with the Ashby Canal and Bosworth Battlefield (SG20/SG21).

The setting of the CA, Ashby canal, the battlefield and church, together with views in and out of the village along Higham Lane and Station Road are enhanced by the openness of the proposed LGS site as are opportunities for tourism in the area.



Step 3: Neighbourhood Plan Group considers designation

The Neighbourhood Plan Group should review the evidence provided and decide whether the site is suitable for designation and whether any additional evidence is required.

Not every potential site will meet every criterion, however all sites must meet the following criteria in the checklist -

2.1	not with an extant planning permission within which the Local Green Space could not be accommodated
2.2	not allocated for development in the relevant Neighbourhood Plan, unless it can be shown that the Local Plan housing allocation is not strategic and can be re-located somewhere else in the neighbourhood plan area; or alternatively that the Local Green Space could be incorporated within the site as part of the allocated development
3.2	Not an "extensive tract of land"
3.3	"local in character"
5	in "proximity to the community it serves"
6	"demonstrably special to the local community"

And all sites must meet at least one of the following criteria in the Checklist -

7	"particular local significance ... because of its beauty"
8	"particular local significance ... because of its historic significance"
9	"particular local significance ... because of its recreational value"
10	"particular local significance ... because of its tranquillity"
11	"particular local significance ... because of its wildlife"
12	"particular local significance ... for any other reason"

In order to provide greater certainty, the checklist incorporates Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) to define the likely size of a suitable Local Green Space and its distance from the local community.

A site of over 20ha (50 acres) is considered to be "an extensive tract of land" and therefore not suitable for designation as a Local Green Space.

If during the process it becomes evident that the site is not appropriate for local green space designation, there are other options that can be investigated (see Appendix 2).

Step 4: Consult landowner

The Neighbourhood Plan Group should consult the landowner.



Step 5: Neighbourhood Plan Designation

The site can now be designated in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site designation will be “tested” through the plan process. Anybody can object to policies or sites in a plan during the consultation process and these consultation responses must be considered.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be scrutinised by an Independent Examiner, who will ensure that the plan is robust and based on sound evidence. The completed checklist will form part of that evidence. The Neighbourhood Plan will also be subject to a local referendum.

Formal designation will be complete when the Neighbourhood Plan is ‘made’.



APPENDIX 1: MODEL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY AND SUPPORTING TEXT

Draft Supporting Text

National policy makes provision for local communities to identify green areas of particular importance to those communities, where development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances. The following sites have been designated as Local Green Spaces through the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process:

Draft Policy

Development that would harm the openness or special character of a Local Green Space (as designated on the Polices Map) or its significance and value to the local community will not be permitted unless there are very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Local Green Space.



APPENDIX 2: ALTERNATIVES TO LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION

Agreements with land-owners

It may be possible for local communities to reach either formal or informal agreements with the owner of the site to ensure access to the site for local people. This may be an appropriate option where the site owner has a long-term connection with the local area, for example the owner of a large historic estate. It may be possible for the land-owner to dedicate the site as "open access land".

Further information:

[Right of way and open access land - GOV.UK](#)

Community Purchase

In some instances local communities have purchased important sites to ensure that they remain in community control in perpetuity. The ownership can lie with the Town or Parish Council or with a specific trust.

Village Green status

Anyone can apply to register land as a green if it has been used by local people for lawful sports and pastimes 'as of right' (i.e. without permission, force or secrecy) for at least 20 years.

Further information:

[Town and village greens: how to register Open Spaces Society](#)

Local Nature Reserves

A Local Nature Reserve (LNR) provide people with special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it. Local Nature Reserves are designated by district or county councils and the Local Authority must control the LNR through ownership, lease or agreement with the owner.

Further information:

[Natural England](#)

Assets of Community Value

The Community Right to Bid gives community groups a fairer chance to prepare and bid to buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them. This could include village shops, pubs or allotments. The right covers private as well as public assets. It is important to nominate land and buildings to be part of the register of 'assets of community value', which is held by the Local Authority. If something on this register is offered for sale, the community then have up to six months to prepare a bid.

Further information:

[www.gov.uk My Community Rights](http://www.gov.uk/My-Community-Rights)



PLAN-IT X
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING SERVICES