

Local Green Space designations

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Details on Local Green Space (LGS) designations are set out in paragraphs 99-100 of the National Planning Policy Framework (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf). There is also related guidance in the National Planning Policy Guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>).
- 1.2. The sections below are intended as a guide to help you ensure that the national policy requirements are fulfilled.

2. Identification of sites

- 2.1. Identify the spaces you want to designate – Stratfield Mortimer asked the community to put forward sites.

3. Assessing sites

- 3.1. Assess the spaces against the criteria set out in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf), however keep in mind that the NPPF comments that LGS designations will not be appropriate for most green areas or open spaces.
- 3.2. Keep these assessments as they will form part of the evidence to underpin the neighbourhood plan. You can go back and update the assessments as the plan develops.
- 3.3. Neighbourhood plan examiners have commented that examiners find it is very frustrating when LGS designations are proposed but the criteria in the NPPF is ignored so they have to make modifications to plans to remove them from the plan. The examiner of the Stratfield Mortimer plan felt some spaces were inappropriate to designate (see paragraphs 216-222 of the Examiner’s report <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=43909&p=0>).
- 3.4. The Locality guidance on designating LGS in neighbourhood plans (<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/>) includes a template assessment tool, however it is worth considering the following in any assessment:

Criteria		Explanation of criteria/evidence prompts
1.	It will rarely be appropriate to designate spaces that are the subject of a planning permission for development	<p>Is the space subject of a planning permission for development?</p> <p>LGS designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the planning permission or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented.</p> <p>Information of planning permissions is available from: https://publicaccess.westberks.gov.uk/online-</p>

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		<p>applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application. The Planning Duty Officer (available on 01635 519 111 weekdays between 9.30am – 12.45pm) may also be able to provide assistance.</p> <p>Planning applications are also shown on the West Berkshire online map: https://gis1.westberks.gov.uk/applicationtemplates/onlineimap/.</p>
2	<p>It will not be appropriate to designate spaces that are allocated or proposed for development in the Local Plan, unless it can be shown that the Local Green Space could be incorporated within the site as part of the allocated development.</p>	<p>Is the space allocated or proposed to be allocated in a Local Plan? Further information on the Local Plan is available from: http://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplan. Work on the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2036 (which will replace the Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations Plan and the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006) is in progress.</p> <p>The designation of LGS' should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.</p> <p>The NPPG states that: <i>“Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.”</i></p> <p>The space should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.</p>
3	<p>The space must not be an extensive tract of land and must be local in character</p>	<p>Designated spaces would normally be fairly contained with clearly defined edges.</p> <p>There is no definition of an ‘extensive tract of land’ in national planning policy and guidance, however an examiner of a NDP commented that spaces over the size of 19 hectares would not be suitable.</p> <p>Why does the space or combination of adjoining spaces “feel” local in character and scale, in respect of the local community that the space serves?</p> <p>Is the proposed space larger than other areas of land in the vicinity? Is it contained with clearly defined edges?</p> <p>How does the space connect physically, visually and socially to the local area? What is your evidence?</p> <p>Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements is not appropriate. Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How large is the site in comparison to the community it serves and areas of land in the vicinity? • Does the site feel extensive? • Does the site surround all or part of the village/town/local area? • How has the size of the site been decided? • Does the whole site justify designation or could a section of the site be designated?
4	<p>The space must be within close proximity to the community it serves</p>	<p>The space would normally be within easy walking distance of the community it serves.</p> <p>How close is the space to the community it serves? A map showing the nearest and furthest distances could evidence this.</p>

Criteria		Explanation of criteria/evidence prompts
5	The space must be demonstrably special to the local community.	<p>Blanket designation of all/most green areas or open space within an area is not appropriate. The space must be demonstrably special by meeting at least one of criterion 6-11.</p> <p>Is the proposal to designate supported by any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A friends group • Local community groups • A parish plan etc. • The Town/Parish Council • The Ward member(s) • The MP
6	The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty.	<p>This relates to the visual attractiveness of the space, and its contribution to townscape, landscape, character and/or setting of the settlement, which would normally be expected to be significant.</p> <p>How is the proposed space of particular local significance, in respect of its beauty?</p> <p>Is the space covered by other landscape or townscape designations? (e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Conservation Area)</p> <p>Does the space have a literature or art connection?</p>
7	The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its historic significance.	<p>How is the proposed space of particular local significance, in respect of its historic significance?</p> <p>Does the proposed space or elements of the space have local historical significance?</p> <p>Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the space? (e.g. listed building, scheduled monument)</p> <p>Are there any important historic landscape features on the space? (eg. old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features?)</p> <p>Does the space have a historic literature or art connection?</p> <p>Did any important historic events take place on the site?</p> <p>Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? (eg. part of the grounds for a manor house, site of an old railway station, village green).</p> <p>Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the space?</p>
8	The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value.	<p>How is the proposed space of particular local significance, in respect of its recreational value?</p> <p>Is the site used for playing sport? Which sport? Is the sports provision free or is club membership required?</p> <p>Is the site used for informal recreation, and if so since when?</p> <p>National Planning Practice Guidance (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space) states that there is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply</p>

Criteria		Explanation of criteria/evidence prompts
		to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation.
9	The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity.	<p>How is the proposed space of particular local significance, in respect of its tranquillity?</p> <p>Green spaces may provide value to the local community in terms of providing an oasis of calm, perhaps in a busy town, or a space for quiet reflection. Reflect on why the space is considered to be tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting?</p>
10	The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its richness of wildlife.	<p>How is the proposed space of particular local significance, in respect of its richness of wildlife?</p> <p>Is the proposed space formally designated for its wildlife value? (eg. is it a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife site?).</p> <p>Are any important habitats or species found in the space? These include bats, breeding birds, barn owls, great crested newts, water voles, otters, white clawed crayfish and badgers? You could contact Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre or Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to obtain this information.</p> <p>Does the proposed space support irreplaceable habitats such as ancient semi-natural woodland and veteran trees?</p> <p>Does the proposed space function as part of a wildlife corridor or green infrastructure enabling the dispersal and favourable status of species of flora and fauna?</p>
11	The proposed space is of particular local significance because of another reason not covered by criteria 6-10.	<p>Are there any other reasons why the proposed space has a particular local significance for the local community?</p> <p>Also consider accessibility to the space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there barriers to the local community accessing the site? • Is the site open to public access? • Is access necessary to benefit from the site? • Are there any physical barriers such as a main road or railway line and if so, how are these overcome?

4. Identify and contact the landowners of the space

4.1. It is for the neighbourhood plan steering group to contact the landowners of the space proposed for designation. The landowners can be identified by undertaking Land Registry searches. There is a small fee for this and further details are on the Government's website (see: <https://www.gov.uk/search-property-information-land-registry>). When you know who the landowners are, send a letter to the landowners informing them/explaining:

- that you would like to designate their land as Local Green Space;
- why you want to designate their land;
- what neighbourhood plans are;
- what a LGS designation means in planning terms (you could refer them to national planning policy/guidance);
- set out how the landowner can comment on the proposals, eg. when the draft neighbourhood plan is consulted on. Also explain that neighbourhood plans

must undergo independent examination and can only be adopted if they are successful at a local referendum.

- 4.2. You could speak to Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council to establish how they contacted landowners. Bramley (within Basingstoke and Deane) have included LGS designations in their plan so maybe speak to them too.
5. **Include Local Green Space Designations within the draft neighbourhood plan**
- 5.1. The examiner will consider whether or not the areas that are proposed to be designated as Local Green Space meet the criteria.