

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.

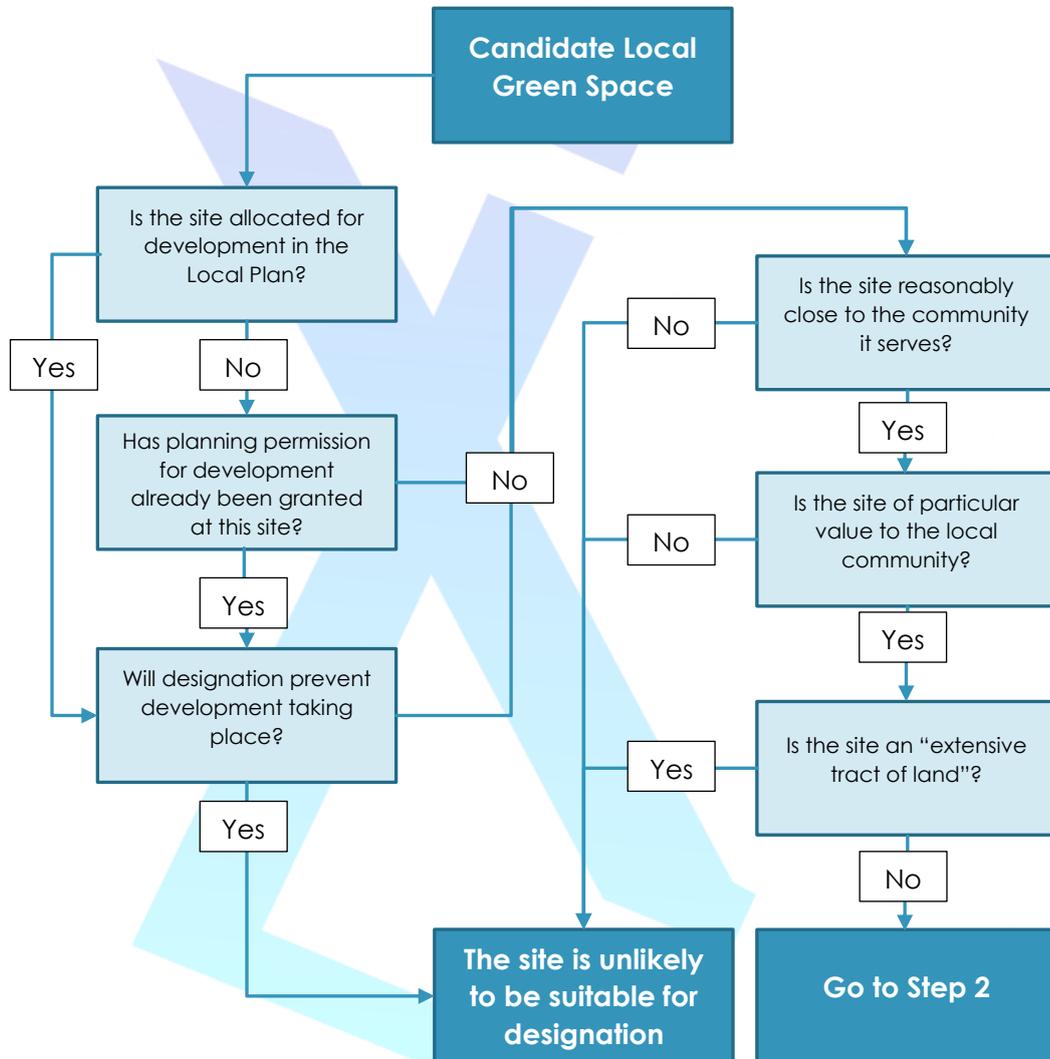
In order to ensure that any designation in the is robust, we have created a checklist against which potential Local Green Space sites should be tested.



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Step1: Quick check

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



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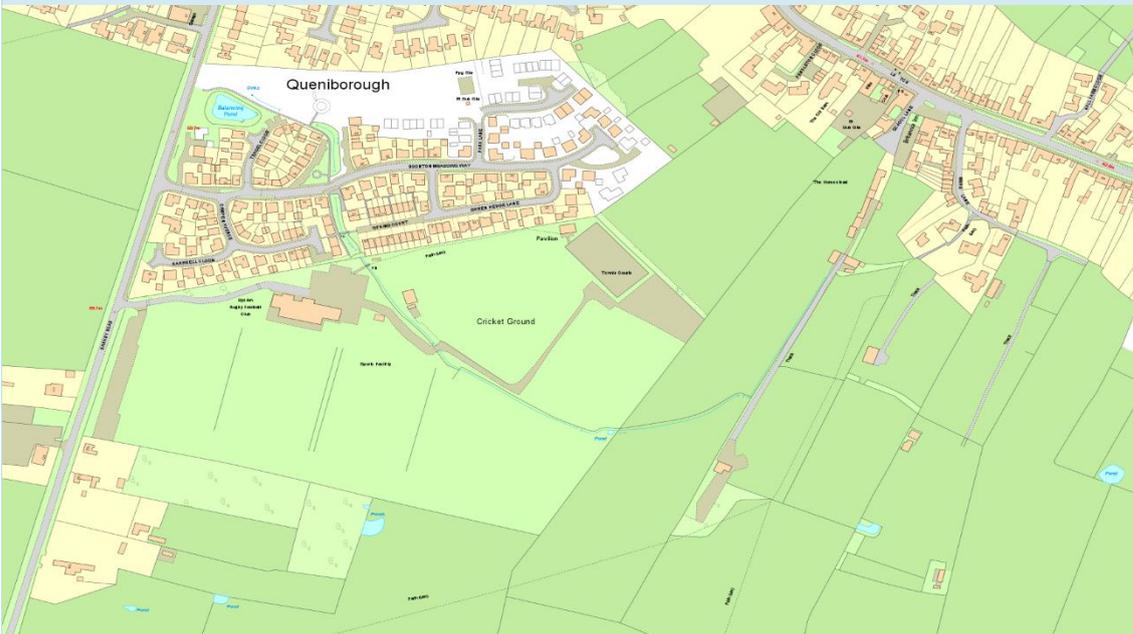
Step

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1
1.1
1.2

Insert here or attach separately



1.3	<p>Organisation or individual proposing site for designation <i>This will normally be a Town or Parish Council or a recognised community group</i></p> <p>Queniborough NPG</p>
1.4	<p>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></p> <p>Membership under constraints from RFU / DEFFRA</p>
1.5	<p>Is the owner of the site aware of the potential designation?</p> <p>YES (unofficially)</p>
1.6	<p>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></p> <p>NO</p>

1.7	Photographs of site
	
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</i>
2	Local area with Rugby, Tennis, Cricket , Gym , Physio , Archery , Martial arts party
2.1	Planning History
	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
2.2	No. however deal agreed to use land to construction access for land at the rear.
	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?
3	No
3.1	Size, scale and “local nature” of proposed Local Green Space
3.2	Area of proposed site <i>It is unlikely that a site of over 20ha (50 acres) would be considered suitable for</i> 26 acres
	Is the site an “extensive tract of land”? <i>(Extensive tracts of land cannot be designated as Local Green Space)</i>
3.3	No
	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</i> Situated on the edge of the village on one of the busy access routes for thirty years, the village housing stock has now reached its northern boundary. The

4	Amenities referred to in item 1.8 are widely used by the village community & are
4.1	Need for Local Green Space
	Is there a need for a local green space in this location? <i>e.g. is there a shortage of accessible greenspace in the area? Is there a village</i>
	The lack of green space / open areas was a major point raised by those responding to the QNP questionnaire , Syston RFC is the ideal location on the
5	Southern boundary of the village to provide this. The Youth QNP in particular identified the need for activities that the SRFC provide
5.1	Evidence to show that “the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”
	How far is the site from the community it serves? Is the site within 2km of the local community?
5.2	The site is connected to the village by road & pavement & has housing on two boundaries
	Are there any barriers to the local community accessing the site from their homes?
6	No, access is available by pavement or local road net work
6.1	Evidence to show that the green area is “demonstrably special to a local community”
	Evidence of support from Parish or Town Council <i>e.g. letter of support; Council minutes</i>
6.2	N/A
	Evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals. <i>e.g. letters of support; petitions; surveys etc.</i>
6.3	N/A
	Evidence of support from community leaders <i>e.g. letters of support from Ward Members; County Councillors; MP etc.</i>
6.4	N/A
	Evidence of support from other groups <i>e.g. letters of support from organisations such as Campaign to Protect Rural</i>
7	N/A
7.1	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty,” (if applicable)
	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
7.2	NO

	Describe why the community feels that the site has a particular local significance for its beauty.
7.3	N/A
	Site visibility e.g. <i>is it easy to see the site from a public place? Are there long-distance views</i>
7.4	N/A
	Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designations? e.g. <i>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Conservation Area; Special</i>
7.5	N/A
	Is the site (or the type of site) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents?
7.6	N/A
	Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building or other special feature?
7.7	N/A
	Is the site highlighted in literature or art? e.g. <i>is the site mentioned in a well-known poem or shown in a famous painting?</i>
8	N/A
8.1	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance for example because of its historic significance” (if applicable)
	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
8.2	The site provides valuable organised safe recreational facilities for all age groups along with a social facility for families .
	Are there any historic buildings or remains on the site? e.g. <i>listed buildings; scheduled ancient monuments; registered parks and</i>
8.3	No
	Are there any important historic landscape features on the site? e.g. <i>old hedgerows; ancient trees; historic ponds or historic garden</i>
8.4	NO
	Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town?
8.5	NO

	Did any important historic events take place on the site?
8.6	NO
	Do any historic rituals take place on the site? e.g. well-dressing; maypole dancing etc.
9	NO
9.1	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
	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
9.2	YES
	Is the site used for playing sport? <i>If so what sport? How long has it been used for sports provision? Is this sports</i>
9.3	The site is dedicated to sport & leisure, Rugby, Cricket , Tennis, tug of war, children`s funs days , long distance running venue Gym, caravan club events club house available to hire out for functions
	Are the public able to physically access the site? <i>e.g. are there any public rights of way across the site? Or adjacent to the site?</i>
9.4	There are no physical barriers to pedestrians accessing the site, because of the sport being played dog walkers are asked not to use the area to exercise their dogs.
	Is the site used by the local community for informal recreation? And since when?
10	The site is predominately for organised sporting activities, dog walking is therefore not permitted . Any one is welcome & encouraged to attend the organised Sessions with coaching available for all standards across a range of sports .
10.1	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its tranquillity” (if applicable)
	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
10.2	YES
	Do you consider the site to be tranquil? <i>e.g. are there are any roads or busy areas close by?</i>
10.3	The site forms the beginning of the green space between Queniborough & both the Town of Syston & the village of Barkby . Keeping these communities separate Is a major concern of the village community raised at both drop in meetings & the QNP questionnaire
	Is the site within a recognised tranquil area? <i>e.g. within the Campaign to Protect Rural England’s tranquillity maps</i>
11	No

11.	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for
	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?
11. 2	YES / NO
	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</i>
11. 3	NO
	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</i>
11. 4	
	What other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? <i>Further information - Natural England; National Biodiversity Network</i>
11. 5	NO
	Is the site part of a long term study of wildlife by members of the local community?
12	NO
12.	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for
	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
12. 2	YES
	What are the other reasons why the site has a particular local significance for the local community?
	This site is the major centre of organised outdoor recreational sport in the village & a the largest venue for social events with its internal & external facilities.

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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.

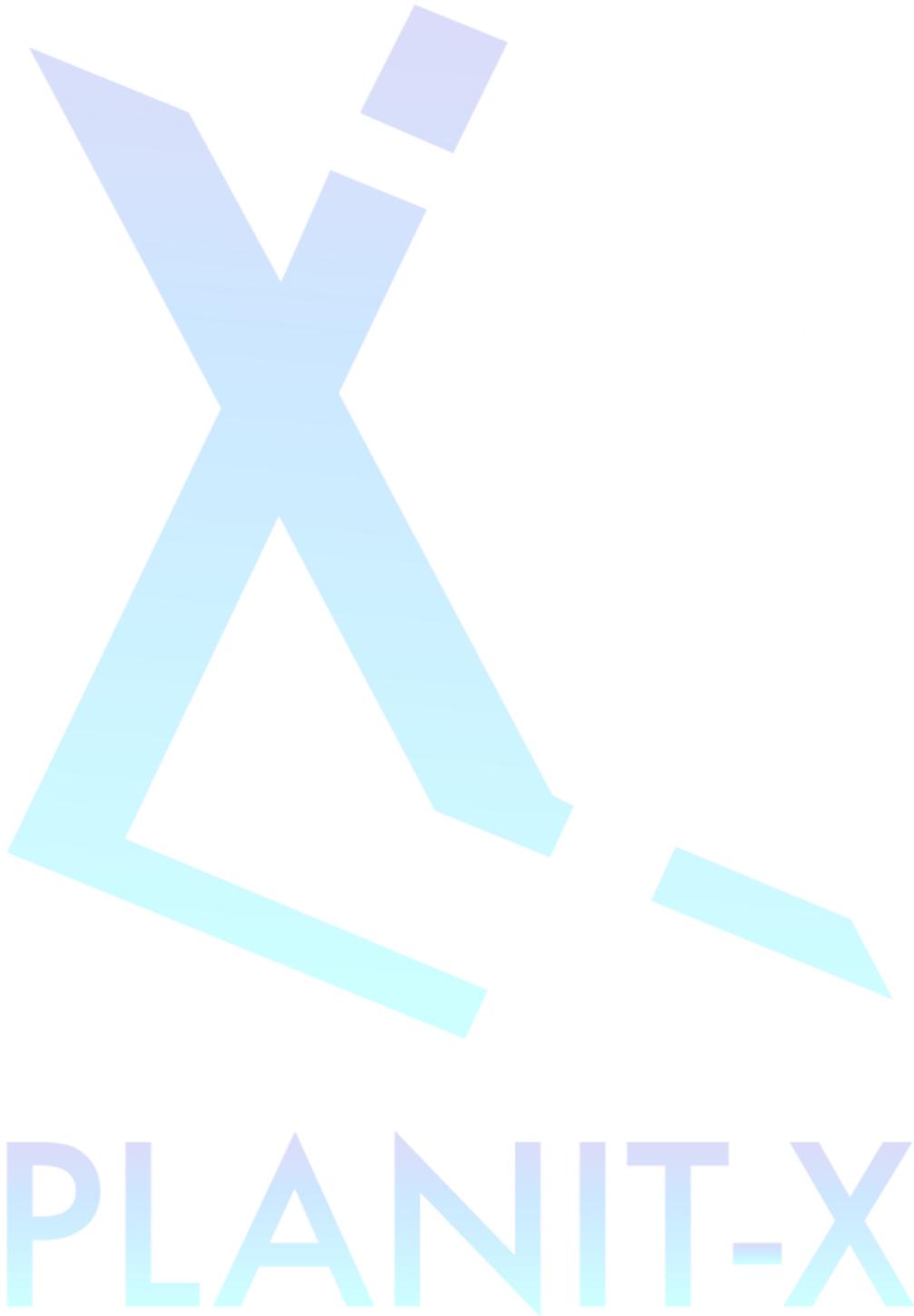
A site of over 20ha (50 acres) is considered to be "an extensive tract of land" and therefore not suitable for designation as a Local Green Space.

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).

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Step 4: Consult landowner

The Neighbourhood Plan Group should consult the landowner.

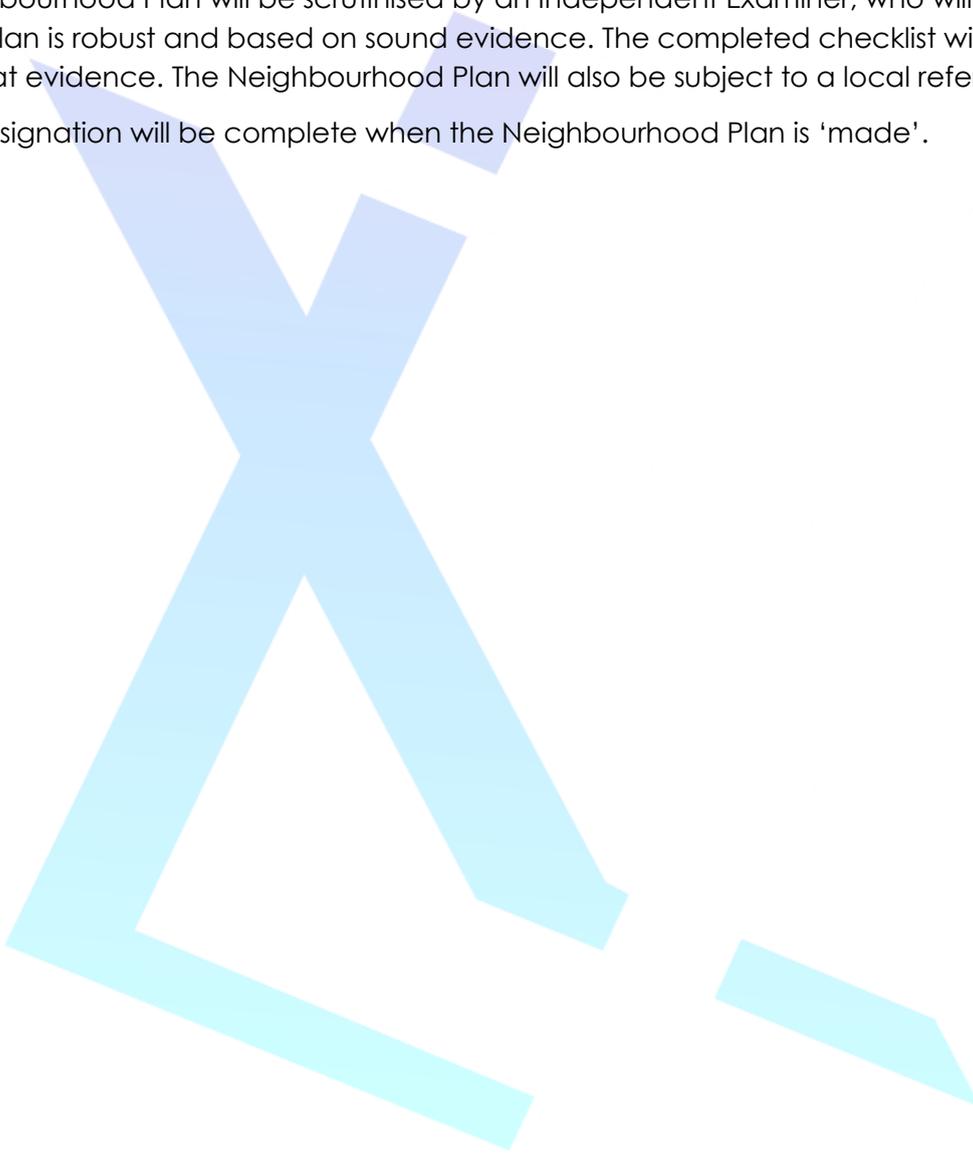


Step 5: Neighbourhood Plan Designation

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’.



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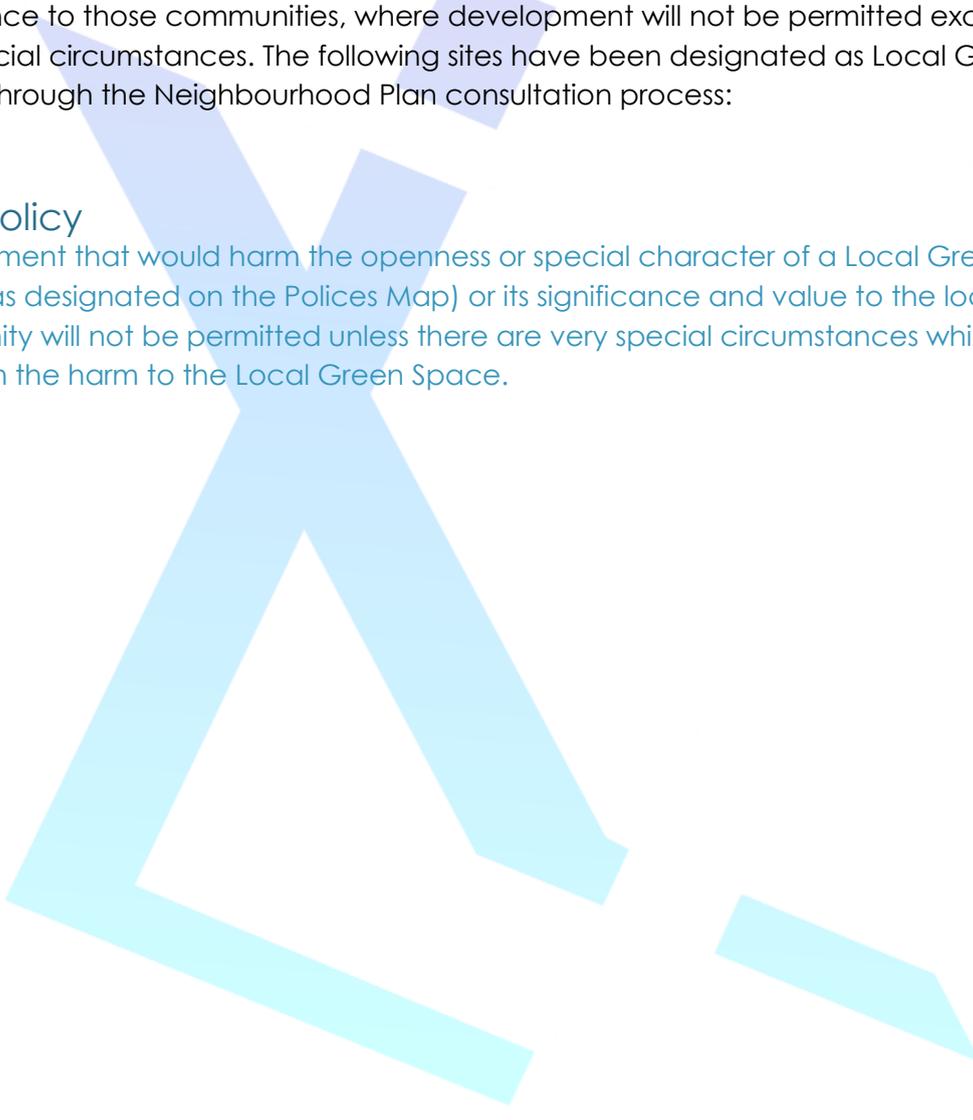
APPENDIX 1: MODEL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY AND SUPPORTING TEXT

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.



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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