

Barton-le-Clay Local Green Space Assessment

1. Background

The Local Green Space Designation was introduced by the National Planning Policy Framework (2011) as “a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities”. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF sets out the criteria that green space must meet in order to be designated as ‘Local Green Space’: “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
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.

In addition to these criteria, National Planning Practice Guidance states:

“Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented”.

Other existing designations, such as Green Belt or Conservation Area status, do not necessarily preclude or support designation as Local Green Space, but it is necessary to consider whether the additional designation is necessary and would serve a useful purpose. While Barton-le-Clay is surrounded by Green Belt, it was noted that this had been ‘rolled back’ previously to allow development to take place, and was therefore not considered to always be sufficient protection from development.

The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2015-35) supports the principle of Local Green Spaces being designated through a Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore the Barton-le-Clay GI Plan includes this assessment of green spaces for consideration as LGS, and provides recommendations for those that should be designated through the Neighbourhood Plan. The assessment follows a process developed by the Greensand Trust and the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Council, working alongside Central Bedfordshire Council, included in full as **Annex 1** of this document.

2a. The Desktop Assessment – Stage 1

The first stage is a desktop assessment which results in a shortlist from the list of greenspaces created as part of the GI Plan. This list includes sites put forward as potential LGS through consultation activities. These were:

- Pasture to the north of Ramsey Manor Lower School
- Land adjacent to Sharpenhoe Rd

Because a space has to meet all of the criteria to be proposed for designation, those that do not meet one or more can be rejected at this stage. It is possible to identify whether a site has an existing planning permission, is allocated in a development plan or has an existing designation that would mean LGS designation would add little or no additional protection as part of desktop research.

Where it is possible to identify where the site does not meet any of the other criteria in Stage 2 during desktop analysis it is possible to reject the space at Stage 1. For example, site 3a was rejected on the grounds of being remote from the community at this stage, as this could be ascertained from the map. **Table 1** below demonstrates this process, with **Figure 5** (within the main GI Plan document, not illustrated here) showing the location and relative size of each site.

Table 1 – Stage 1 (Desktop Analysis)

No.	Name	Subject to a Planning Permission for development?	Allocated or proposed for development in the Local Plan?	Equivalent designation in place?	Take forward to Stage 2?
1	Barton Quarry CWS	No	No	No – although technically within AONB considered a vulnerable location.	Yes
2	Barton Pit CWS	No	No	No	Yes
3	Barton Hills SSSI	No	No	Yes – SSSI & National Nature Reserve	No
3b	Barton Hills CWS (areas 3 plus 3b)	No	No	No	No – considered remote
4	Barton Gravel Pits CWS	No	No	No	No – considered remote.
5	Barton Scrubby Grasslands CWS	No	No	Yes – within AONB	No – remote,
6	Barton-le-Clay Burial Ground	No	No	Yes – consecrated ground	No
7	St Nicholas Church Cemetery	No	No	Yes – consecrated ground	No
8	Arnold Recreation Ground and Tennis Courts	No	No	No	Yes
9	Community Garden	No	No	No	Yes
10	Barton-le-Clay Allotments	No	No	No	Yes
11	Arnold Middle School Playing Field	No	No	No	Yes
12	Ramsey Manor Lower School Playing Field	No	No	No	Yes
13	Luton Road Sports Field	No	No	No	Yes
14a	Barton Rovers Football Club	No	No	No	Yes
14b	Barton Rovers Football Club Training pitch	No	No	No	Yes
15	Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club	No	No	No	Yes
16	Former Orchard	No	No	No	Yes
17	Lime Close Amenity Space	No	No	No	Yes

18	Norman Road/Cromwell Avenue Play Area	No	No	No	Yes
19	Orchard School Playing Field	No	No	No	Yes
20	Saxon Crescent Amenity Space	No	No	No	Yes
21	Higham Gobion Road Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
22	Woodland north of Faldo Farm (Higgins Wood)	No	No	No	No – considered remote
23	Hanover Place Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
24	Simpkins Drive Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
25	Greenspace between Burr Close and Ashby Drive	No	No	No	Yes
26	Stream corridor adjacent to A6	No	No	No	Yes
27	Beechener's Spinney	No	No	No	Yes
28	Pasture to North of Ramsey Manor School	No	No	No	Yes
29	Lively Land	No	No	No	Yes
30	Grange Close Greenspace and Green Corridor	No	No	No	Yes
31	Meadhook Drive Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
32	Franklin Avenue Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
33	Manor Farm Close Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
34	Arnold Close Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
35	Dunstall Road Greenspace	No	No	No	Yes
36	War Memorial	No	No	No	Yes
37	Land adjacent to Sharpenhoe Road	No	No	No	Yes

2b. Assessment Stage 2 – Field Assessment

Further analysis, including field visits carried out in late 2022 and early 2023, looked at those sites that had been passed at Stage 1. The sites being proposed as LGS are also illustrated in **Figure 2** of this appendix (Figure 5e in the main report) and the detailed justification is recorded in the individual site summaries (Section 4 below). Those sites considered to be ‘borderline’ were discussed with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group before proceeding.

Table 2: Stage 2 – Field Survey results

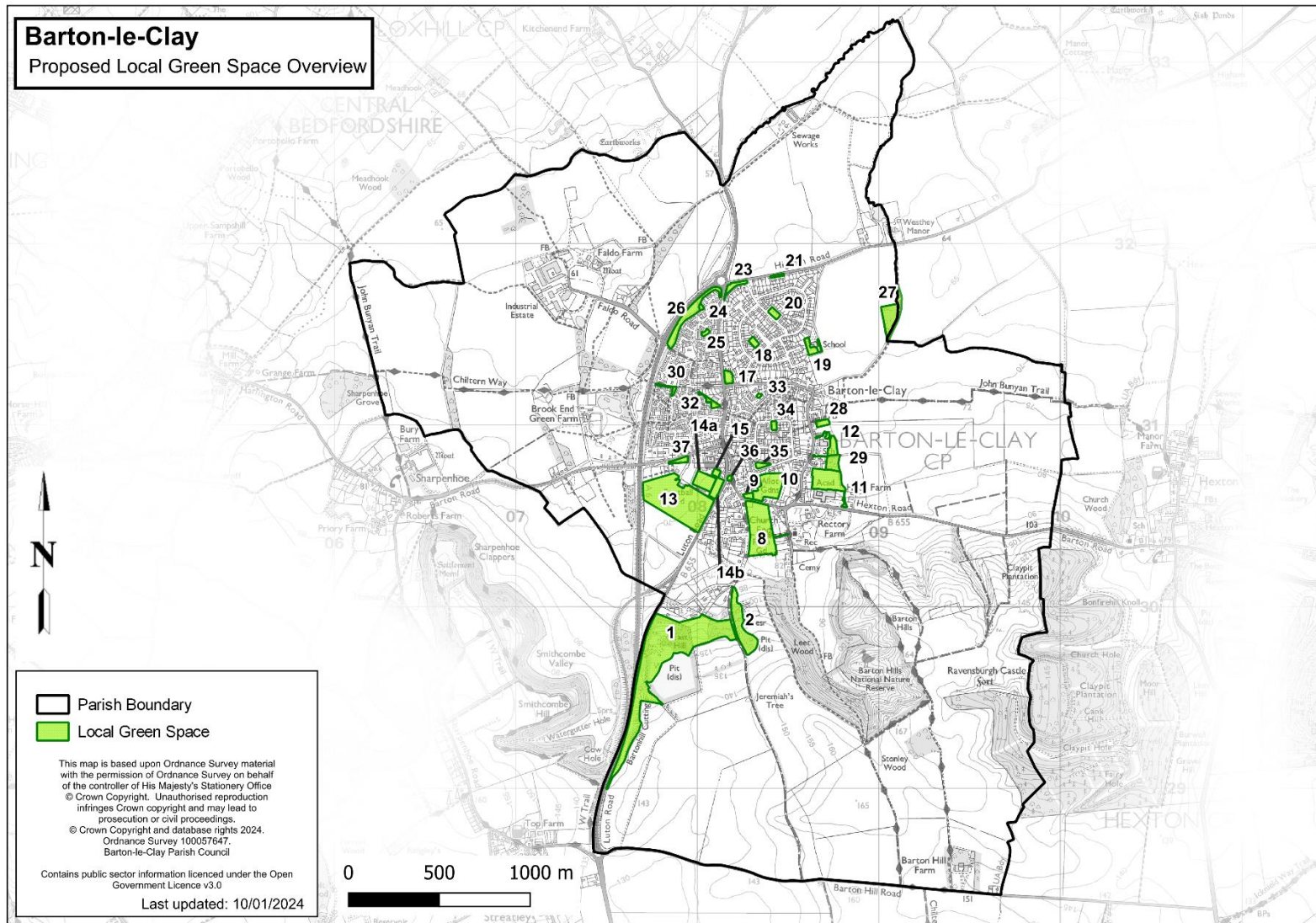
Site No.	Name	Not Extensive	Close Proximity	Demonstrably Special and Locally Significant*	Recommend Designation?
1	Barton Quarry CWS	✓	✓	✓ c, e	Yes
2	Barton Pit CWS (Lovers Walk)	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c, d, e	Yes
8	Arnold Rec	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d	Yes
9	Community Garden	✓	✓	✓ b, c	Yes
10	Allotments	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
11	Arnold Academy Playing Fields	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
12	Ramsey Manor School Playing Field	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d, e	Yes
13	Luton Road Sports Field	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d	Yes
14a	Barton Rovers FC	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
14b	Barton Rovers FC Training Pitch	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
15	Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club	✓	✓	✓ c, d	Yes
16	Former Orchard	✓	✓	X	No
17	Lime Close Amenity Space	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c	Yes
18	Norman Rd/Cromwell Ave Play Area	✓	✓	✓ c, d	Yes
19	Orchard School Playing Field	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
20	Saxon Crescent Amenity Space	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
21	Higham Gobion Rd Amenity Greenspace	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
23	Hanover Place Greenspace	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
24	Simpkins Drive Greenspace	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
25	Greensapce bet. Burr Close & Ashby Drive	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
26	Stream corridor adjacent to A6	✓	✓	✓ e	Yes
27	Beechener’s Spinney	✓	✓	✓ a, c, e	Yes
28	Pasture to N of Ramsey Manor School	✓	✓	✓ c, d, e	Yes
29	Lively Land	✓	✓	✓ c, d, e, f	Yes

30	Grange Close Greenspace & Green Corridor	✓	✓	✓ c, e	Yes
31	Meadhook Drive Greenspace	✓	✓	X	No
32	Franklin Ave Greenspace	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
33	Manor Farm Close Greenspace	✓	✓	✓ b, c	Yes
34	Arnold Close Greenspace	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
35	Dunstall Rd Greenspace	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
36	War Memorial	✓	✓	✓ b, c	Yes
37	Land adj to Sharpenhoe Rd	✓	✓	✓ a, e	Yes

* The matrix should record which of the 'Locally Significant' sub-criteria (a-f) the site meets the requirement with, and be accompanied by a written commentary to justify this. Only one of the sub-criteria needs to be met for a site to be scored positively.

a beauty b historic c recreation d tranquillity e wildlife f other

Figure 2 – Candidate Local Green Spaces



2c. Reasons for Rejection:

It was possible to reject several sites at Stage 1 on the basis of proximity (or rather remoteness), or being adequately protected by being within the Chilterns AONB at the desk study stage: Sites 3, 3b, 4, 5 and 22 were rejected on either or both of these grounds.

Sites 6 (Burial Ground) and 7 (Cemetery) was rejected on the basis of being consecrated ground and considered to have significant protection.

Two further sites were rejected at the field survey stage:

Site 16 (Former orchard). While sites that have been orchards in the past sometimes still contain fruit trees, or are valued by the local community because of this history, this site did neither.

Site 31 (Meadhook Drive green space). When carrying out field survey this site was felt to be too small to be of any real use and value. There was no evidence of use or value, with it consisting solely of a mown area of grass. The hedge/trees to the rear have value in visual and audible shielding from the A6, but the site is not known to be under any threat of development, and it is difficult to see how this could happen in such a small area.

A further site was suggested at the May 2023 consultation event – ‘Site of the Old Scout Hut’. This site was visited immediately after the event, and was not considered to meet the criteria, being a very small, largely obscured piece of landlocked land.

3. Next Steps

This assessment has resulted in a list of sites recommended for designation as Local Green Spaces, as part of the Barton-le-Clay Green Infrastructure Plan. As noted above, the power to designate is through the Neighbourhood Plan, and not the Green Infrastructure Plan.



Therefore the role of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is to:

- a) Discuss with landowners
- b) Assess the list of proposed LGS and the justification for them, and include in the Neighbourhood Plan those that they feel are appropriate;

It should be noted that although landowner consent is not required to designate, it is considered fair and appropriate to discuss with landowners prior to designation. Any discussion should highlight what LGS designation means to the site in question. For those sites not owned by BLCPC, a template letter was provided to help with this and frame communications.

Further information on the sites and the reasons for proposed designation are included in the individual site summaries below. Note that where a site has not been recommended for designation, a map has not been provided.

4. Individual Site Summaries

No.	Name	Photo & Map	Recommend for LGS Designation?	Comments
1	Barton Quarry (County Wildlife Site)		Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for wildlife (County Wildlife Site Status), scrubby mosaic of habitats present. Valued for recreation (4x4 club use is a demonstration of this).
2	Barton Pit CWS		Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for wildlife (County Wildlife Site status). Evidence of significant usage demonstrates recreational value. Note alternative local name – ‘Lovers’ Walk’. Features in several ‘Favourite Walks’ identified during consultation.
3	Barton Hills SSSI		No	<p>Considered extensive.</p> <p>National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest status provide adequate protection.</p>
3b	Barton Hills CWS (areas 3 plus 3b)		No	Essentially part of the same site, just not designated as SSSI.

4	Barton Gravel Pits CWS		No	Remote from community
5	Barton Scrubby Grasslands CWS		No	Remote from community – closer of areas has no public access, which adds to feeling of remoteness.
6	Barton-le-Clay Burial Ground		No	Already sufficiently protected as a burial ground – consecrated ground.
7	St Nicholas Church Cemetery		No	Already sufficiently protected as a burial ground – consecrated ground.
8	Arnold Recreation Ground	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for recreation – evidence of significant usage by a range of individuals and groups for a variety of purposes including play, sport and dog walking. Identified as a 'Favourite Place' by local people during consultations. Landscape value – large open space with views. Southern end is left 'wilder' and has some wildlife value.

9	Community Garden			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for recreation – significant response to May 2023 event Already has historic value – dedicated as ‘Coronation Garden’
10	Barton-le-Clay Allotments			Yes	Valued for recreation – high level of occupancy, well cared for.
11	Arnold Academy Playing Field			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for sport/recreation, used extensively by school; High visual amenity – green space on edge of village, views up to Hills/North Chilterns escarpment and over open countryside.

12	<p>Ramsey Manor Lower School Playing Field</p>	 <p>Ramsey Manor Lower School RMLS 23 Jan · 🌐</p> <p>Rainbows are reading The Three Billy Goats Gruff this week. We enjoyed the story whilst out in Lively Land and the children built bridges for the Troll to live under.</p>	Yes	<p>Valued for recreation, wildlife and visual amenity – significant evidence of range of uses including bug hunting, craft activities, storytelling etc not just by school – also other groups e.g. Rainbows.</p>
13	<p>Luton Road Sports Field</p>	 <p>Luton Road Sports Field</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for recreation – significant sports uses and recreational activities including dog walking Visual amenity/beauty – stunning setting with views of North Chilterns escarpment (including Sharpenhoe Clappers) as backdrop. Wildlife value – hedge and scrub along border.




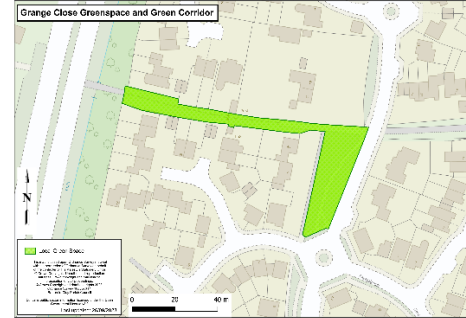
14a	Barton Rovers Football Club	 <p>The photograph shows a large green football pitch with a blue fence and stadium lights in the background under a cloudy sky. The map, titled 'Barton Rovers Football Club', shows a large green rectangular area representing the pitch, surrounded by buildings and roads. A legend and scale bar are included in the map.</p>	Yes	Valued for recreation – part of village’s heritage.
14b	Barton Rovers FC Training Pitch	 <p>The photograph shows a green training pitch viewed through trees and a hedged boundary. The map, titled 'Barton Rovers Football Club Training Pitch', shows a green rectangular area representing the pitch, with a hedged boundary and mature trees. A legend and scale bar are included in the map.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valued for recreation. • Some wildlife value – hedged boundary with mature trees
15	Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club	 <p>The photograph shows several people playing bowling on a green lawn. The map, titled 'Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club', shows a green rectangular area representing the bowling green, with a building and trees nearby. A legend and scale bar are included in the map.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valued for recreation • Visual amenity – views of North Chilterns in background

16	Former Orchard		No	No evidence of fruit trees/orchard heritage.
17	Lime Close Amenity Space	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational value – village centre location • Historic value – part of original, larger village green within Conservation Area of village centre. • Visual amenity.
18	Norman Road/Cromwell Avenue Play Area	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational Value – well used. • Tranquillity – secluded location.
19	Orchard School Playing Field	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational use by school • Visual amenity – valuable open area on edge of village, soon to be enclosed by development to east. • Wildlife value – mature trees, corridor

20	Saxon Crescent Amenity Space			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity value. • Recreational value • Some wildlife value from mature trees
21	Higham Gobion Road Greenspace			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity value – village edge feel • Recreational value • Some wildlife value – trees including new planting
23	Hanover Place Greenspace			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity value, helps screen residents from road, especially wooded part. • Recreational value • Wildlife value – tree and scrub belt quite extensive

24	Simpkins Drive Greenspace	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity value – helps break up denser residential area • Recreational value • Wildlife value – hedges and trees, connectivity to stream corridor to west
25	Greenspace between Burr Close and Ashby Drive	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity value – open space within built-up area • Recreational value – using and passing through.
26	Stream Corridor	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Value – important corridor for wildlife, largely undisturbed. • Chalk Stream – important habitat nationally. • Amenity value – shields village from A6

27	Beechener's Spinney			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty – wooded clump in wider landscape • Recreational value – alongside popular footpath • Wildlife – woodland habitat with chalk stream flowing through.
28	Pasture to North of Ramsey Manor School			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational value – popular footpath passes alongside • Visual amenity – important to keep eastern side of village open • Wildlife – chalk stream runs along eastern edge, part of wildlife/green corridor along eastern edge, recent tree planting.

29	Lively Land	<p>Ramsey Manor Lower School RMLS 21 Apr 2022 · 🌐</p> <p>Year 2 were out in Lively land this afternoon spending time in the sunshine. Our Science topic this half term is growing. We began by sketching observational drawings of the plants we found.</p>  	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational/educational value – used by school for various activities • Wildlife value – relatively undisturbed scrubby patch with chalk stream running along edge -part of wildlife/green corridor on eastern edge of village • Visual amenity – green buffer on eastern edge of village.
30	Grange Close Green Corridor	 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational value – part of green corridor route • Visual amenity – open space in built up area. • Some wildlife value – connectivity through to stream corridor on east of village.
31	Meadhook Drive Greenspace		No	Space considered to be too small to be of value. No evidence of community value on site visit.

32	Franklin Avenue Greenspace			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational value • Visual amenity – green corridor very close to village centre
33	Manor Farm Close			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational value – used for events • Amenity and historic value.
34	Arnold Close Greenspace			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity value – mature greenspace within built-up area • Some wildlife value – trees • Recreational value – central feature.

35	Dunstall Road Greenspace			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational value – quite large open area • Amenity value – open space within built-up area, focal feature
36	War memorial			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic value of war memorial feature • Amenity value – green space in busy location • Some wildlife value – mature trees
37	Meadow adjacent to Sharpenhoe Rd			Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife value – meadow habitats becoming increasingly rare. Mature hedge and trees on boundary • Amenity value – close to edge of village.

Annex 1

Process for Identifying Potential

'Local Green Spaces' in Central Bedfordshire

Background

The following has been developed (using local experience in Bedfordshire and best practice from elsewhere in the country) as a methodology for identifying spaces that should be considered for designation as Local Green Spaces (LGS) according to the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and subsequent Government guidance (Planning Practice Guidance: Local Green Space designation).

The approach is currently being piloted in Central Bedfordshire, as part of the Neighbourhood Planning support offered by Central Bedfordshire Council (in Central Bedfordshire, currently LGS can *only* be designated through a Neighbourhood Plan). It is, however, not restricted to Central Bedfordshire in terms of applicability.

The LGS Designation:

The National Planning Policy Framework (2011) introduced the Local Green Space designation as “a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities”. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF sets out the criteria that green space must meet in order to be designated as ‘Local Green Space’:

“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
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.

In addition to these criteria, National Planning Practice Guidance states:

“Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented”.

Other existing designations, such as Green Belt or Conservation Area status, do not necessarily preclude or support designation as Local Green Space, but it is necessary to consider whether the additional designation is necessary and would serve a useful purpose.

The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2015-2035) supports the principle of Local Green Spaces being designated through a Neighbourhood Plan (para 15.14.2). Therefore this GI Plan includes an assessment of green spaces for consideration as LGS, and provides recommendations for those that should be designated through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Process

The criteria to be used are listed below, along with guidance on how they can be addressed and key questions to support an assessment. All criteria must be met, therefore simple scoring matrices based on 'Yes/No' answers are illustrated. Some elements can be assessed via desktop research, which means that it is possible to carry out an initial sift of a list of potential sites against these 'Stage 1' questions and create a shortlist for on-site evaluation (Stage 2). It may also be possible to sift out other spaces during the Stage 1 analysis where it is clear that they would not meet one of the Stage 2 criteria, however if there is any doubt then the space should be carried forward for field analysis.

The scoring of sites against the criteria, to cover the eventuality of multiple sites being proposed for designation where it is felt they all meet the criteria, was considered. However, with several of the key questions being straight 'yes/no' questions, a scoring system would be relatively limited in scope. Ultimately the requirement is for a high level of rigour in answering the questions, and only 'passing' those sites that demonstrably meet the criteria without question. It is not appropriate to artificially restrict the number of LGS being designated in any particular parish or area – if a site meets the criteria then it should be put forward for designation, recognising that some parishes will include several sites that meet the criteria, and others very few or even none.

In carrying out an assessment, evidence of how a site does/does not meet the criteria must be recorded, along with site plans (at an appropriate scale, showing clear boundaries for the site) and photographs.

The Criteria – Stage 1 (Desktop Analysis)

If any of the key questions in Stage 1 is answered with a "yes" then the space should not be recommended for designation.

1. Land is not the subject of a planning permission for development.

Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the designation would be compatible with the planning permission or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented. (NPPG Paragraph: 008)

Information on planning permissions is available from local authority websites/Planning Portal

Key question:

Does the proposed space have an existing planning permission?

2. Space is not allocated or proposed for development in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan.

(Unless it can be shown that the Local Green Space could be incorporated within the site as part of the allocated development)

Local Green Spaces should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. (NPPF Paragraph 76)

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. (NPPG Paragraph: 007)

The space should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. (NPPF Paragraph 76)

Further information on the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan is available from:

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>

Key question:

Is the proposed space a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan allocation or proposed site?

3. The space is not covered by another designation of equal weight

If the space is already covered by another designation of equal weight such as SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), Scheduled Ancient Monument, Registered Historic Park or Garden or Green Belt then it is not appropriate to put it forward for LGS designation as this will not add any greater degree of protection.

Key question:

Is the proposed space covered by an existing designation of equal or greater weight?

Stage 1 Assessment Matrix – Example

The following provides an example of a matrix recording assessment against the criteria for ‘sample’ sites:

	No current Planning Permission?	Not allocated for Development	Not already Designated	Pass to Stage 2
Site 1	✓	✓	✓	Yes
Site 2	✓	✗	✓	No
Site 3	✓	✓	✗	No
Site 4	✗	✓	✓	No
Site 5	✓	✓	✓	Yes
Site 6	✓	✓	✓	Yes

In the example above only sites 1, 5 and 6 are progressed to Stage 2 assessment.

Stage 2 – Field Analysis

4. The space is not an extensive tract of land and is local in character

Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area is not an extensive tract of land. Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. (NPPG Paragraph: 015). Proportionality is an important consideration – for example, a site of less than 10ha could still be considered extensive, particularly in the context of a small village or where it resembles the open countryside in character (agricultural use does not preclude designation). However, this does not imply that for larger settlements larger sites automatically qualify – this will only be the case where all of the criteria are demonstrably met.

Key questions:

Does the proposed space have clearly defined edges?

Does the space feel local in character and scale?

How does the proposed space connect physically, visually and socially to the local area?

Is the space clearly distinct from surrounding farmland?

5. The space is within close proximity of the community it serves

The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, but it must be reasonably close. For example if public access is a key factor, then the site would need to be within easy walking distance of the community served. (NPPG Paragraph: 014). If it is important because of its landscape value, views need to be accessible from the community/settlement.

As with the criteria above, 'close proximity' can be a relative concept and will depend on the settlement, terrain and accessibility. Therefore a specific maximum distance from where people live is not suggested,

Key questions:

How close is the space to the community it serves?

Where are the nearest centres of population?

How does it relate to accepted access standards e.g. Natural England's ANGSt, Local Authority Greenspace/Leisure Strategy

6. The space is demonstrably special to the local community and holds particular local significance.

Local green spaces may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community, whether in a village or a neighbourhood in a town. (NPPG Paragraph: 009). The space must also be demonstrably locally significant by meeting at least one of criteria a-f below:

Key questions:

Is the proposal to designate supported by any of the following: A friends group, local community groups, a parish plan, the Town/Parish Council, the Ward member(s)?

Is the space the focus of locally important events and/or activities?

Has the community previously demonstrated its views about the space?

a. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty

Does the space contribute to the visual attractiveness of the townscape or character / setting of the settlement?

Is the space covered by other landscape or townscape designations? (e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Conservation Area, Local Landscape Designation)

b. The proposed space is of particular local historic significance

Further information on heritage is available from: Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record

Does the proposed space or elements of the space have local historical significance? (e.g. Conservation Area)

Are there any historic buildings or structures in the space? (e.g. listed building or scheduled monument)

Is the space important in terms of the context of a historic building, structure or feature?

Are there any important historic landscape features on the space? (e.g. veteran trees or old hedgerows)

Does the space have a cultural (e.g. historic literature or art) connection?

c. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value

What variety of recreational activities does the space support? (e.g. the space is used for playing sport or for informal recreation). How is it accessible for recreation? (e.g. public or permissive footpaths?)

Is the space already identified in the Council's Leisure Strategy or Outdoor Access Improvement Plan?

Note: There is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation. (NPPG Paragraph: 018) but linear corridors can be proposed if they meet the criteria.

d. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity

Why is the space considered to be tranquil? Has any tranquillity mapping been carried out covering the area?

Is the space used for quiet reflection? Is there background noise?

e. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its wildlife

Are there records of wildlife, especially species or habitats considered to be rare or threatened? Has the site been designated because of its wildlife value e.g. County Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve (note – if the site has SSSI or NNR status then LGS designation will not add any further protection, and it should not have passed Stage 1).

f. The proposed space is of particular local significance for another reason

There may be a reason why the space is considered to be of particular local significance but not covered by the above, nevertheless considered to be of significance.

The answers to these questions should be recorded systematically for each site, along with photographs and maps/plans. A matrix should be created as a quick and simple reference guide.

Stage 2 - Example matrix:

Note only those 'sample' sites that made it through the Stage 1 assessment are included.

	Not Extensive	Close Proximity	Demonstrably Special/Locally Significant*	Recommend for Designation?
Site 1	✓	✗	✓ (b)	No
Site 5	✓	✓	✓ (c)	Yes
Site 6	✗	✓	✗	No

* The matrix should record which of the 'Locally Significant' sub-criteria (a-f) the site meets the requirement with, and be accompanied by a written commentary to justify this. Only one of the sub-criteria needs to be met for a site to be scored positively.

Site (5) is therefore (in this example) the only space recommended for designation

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