

Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan

Local Green Spaces Assessment Paper

on behalf of Harpenden Town Council

February 2018

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1.0 Introduction and Policy Context

Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the assessment process undertaken by the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to inform the selection of sites suitable for designation as Local Green Spaces.

Policy Context

- 1.2 Paragraph 76 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that through Neighbourhood Plans local people should be able to identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection, ruling out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 76 also states that the spaces should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.
- 1.3 Paragraph 77 elaborates on what green spaces could be eligible for Local Green Space Designation, as follows:

“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”.*

- 1.4 Planning Practice Guidance adds detail to Paragraph 77 in the section on “Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space”. Of particular note to the green spaces assessed in this paper are the following paragraphs:

“How is land designated as Local Green Space?”

Local Green Space designation is for use in Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans. These plans can identify on a map (‘designate’) green areas for special protection. Anyone who wants an area to be designated as Local Green Space should contact the local planning authority about the contents of its local plan or get involved in neighbourhood planning.

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 37-006-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014”

“What if land is already protected by Green Belt or as Metropolitan Open Land (in London)?”

If land is already protected by Green Belt policy, or in London, policy on Metropolitan Open Land, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space.

One potential benefit in areas where protection from development is the norm (eg villages included in the green belt) but where there could be exceptions is that the Local Green Space designation could help to identify areas that are of particular importance to the local community.

Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 37-010-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014”

“What if land is already protected by designations such as National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monument or conservation area?”

Different types of designations are intended to achieve different purposes. If land is already protected by designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space.

Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 37-011-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

What types of green area can be identified as Local Green Space?

The green area will need to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.

Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 37-013-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

How close does a Local Green Space need to be to the community it serves?

The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close. For example, if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served.

Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 37-014-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

How big can a Local Green Space be?

There are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be because places are different and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed. However, paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. Consequently blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a 'back door' way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name.

Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

Is there a minimum area?

Provided land can meet the criteria at paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework there is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space.

Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 37-016-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

What about public access?

Some areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may already have largely unrestricted public access, though even in places like parks there may be some restrictions. However, other land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (eg green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty).

Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present. Any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with land owners, whose legal rights must be respected.

Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 37-017-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

Does land need to be in public ownership?

A Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. However, the local planning authority (in the case of local plan making) or the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space. Landowners will have opportunities to make representations in respect of proposals in a draft plan.

Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 37-019-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

- 1.5 NPPF Paragraph 78 states that protection of Local Green Spaces should be consistent with Green Belt development policy.

2.0 Assessment

- 2.1 The Steering Group compiled a list of potential Local Green Spaces based on available data of green spaces in Harpenden (from the District Council) and from local knowledge.
- 2.2 In carrying out the assessment, the Steering Group determined to only designate sites that did not benefit from alternative protection from development, such as being a Local Nature Reserve, protection under the Common Land Act or sitting within the Green Belt, in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance. Table One details green spaces excluded during this exercise.

Place	How protected
Rothamsted Park	Green Belt
Harpenden Common – includes Town Greens, Hatching Green.	Common Land Act
Batford Springs Nature Reserve – includes Marquis Meadow	Local Nature Reserve
Greenway Spinney	Local Nature Reserve
Kinsbourne Green Common	Common Land Act
Porters Hill Park	Green Belt
Crabtree Fields (area around Scout Hut)	Green Belt
Green Space adjacent to Derwent Road	Green Belt
Highfield Oval	Green Belt
Allotment sites	Protected by Neighbourhood Plan Policy ESD12
St Nicholas Church Yard	Graveyard

- 2.3 Table two assesses each potential Local Green Space in the context of the qualifying criteria set out in Paragraph 77 of the NPPF.

Green Space	Is the Green Space in reasonably close proximity to the people it serves?	Is the Green Space Special and does it hold a particular local significance?	Is the Green Space local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Outcome
Lydekker Park	Yes – It is surrounded by residencies and is located in the Town Centre for convenient access from all directions.	Yes – It was given to the town for local people to enjoy, and to commemorate Lydekker family members who died during WW1.	Yes - this is a local urban park containing many trees and a pond. It is not large.	Lydekker Park merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Oakley Road	Yes - it is a local area community recreation space.	Yes – It is special and significant to the residents of	Yes – a local recreation area, contributed to	Oakley Road merits designation

Green Space	Is the Green Space in reasonably close proximity to the people it serves?	Is the Green Space Special and does it hold a particular local significance?	Is the Green Space local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Outcome
		this part of town. It has a play area for which there was a local campaign to raise money.	locally, not extensive in size.	as a Local Green Space.
Parva Close	Yes – Part of a residential road.	Yes – It is special and significant to the local residents. It has been supported with funds raised by the local community.	Yes – A small local space.	Parva Close merits designation as a Local Green Space.
The Nickey Line	Yes – It is a narrow green corridor that passes through local communities serving as a recreational area as well as a foot and cycle way.	Yes – It is special and significant to the residents of Harpenden for leisure activities, as a green transport route, and as the remains of a historic railway line.	Yes - It is a narrow green corridor local to the communities that it passes through. It is a designated safer route to school.	The Nickey Line merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Lea Valley Walk	Yes – It is a narrow green corridor that passes through local communities serving as a recreational area as well as a foot and cycle way.	Yes – It is special and significant to the residents of Harpenden for leisure activities and as a green transport route.	Yes - It is a narrow green corridor local to the communities that it passes through.	Lea Valley Walk merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Roundwood Lane	Yes - it is a local area community recreation space.	Yes – It is special and significant to the residents of this part of town. It is equipped with a playground used by local children.	Yes – a local recreation area, not extensive in size.	Roundwood Lane merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Wood End play area	Yes - it is a local area community recreation space.	Yes – It is special and significant to the residents of this part of town. It is equipped with playground equipment used by local children.	Yes – a local recreation area, not extensive in size.	Wood End play area merits designation as a Local Green Space.

Green Space	Is the Green Space in reasonably close proximity to the people it serves?	Is the Green Space Special and does it hold a particular local significance?	Is the Green Space local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Outcome
Westfield Recreation Ground	Yes - it is a local area community recreation space.	Yes – It is special and significant to the residents of this part of town. It is equipped with new playground equipment used by local children. It is designated as Fields In Trust.	Yes – a local recently re-equipped recreation area, not extensive in size.	Westfield Recreation Ground merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Southdown Green	Yes – Close proximity to Southdown local centre.	Yes – Used for the annual Christmas tree and Christmas lights switch on. Equipped with benches.	Yes – a small local area.	Southdown Green merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Fovant Close	Yes – located within a residential area.	Yes – It is a community orchard.	Yes – a local area, not extensive in size.	Fovant Close merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Alezey Gardens Green Space	Yes – It is located amongst residential areas	Yes – This is a green lung heavily used by local residents for picnics, dog walking, and as a play area for children including on their bikes.	Yes – a local area, between residential areas, not extensive in size.	This area merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Broom Common	No - It appears to be a small island of green bounded by private roads with no identified usage known.	No - nothing significant known.	Yes - It is not an extensive tract of land.	Broom Common does not merit designation as a Local Green Space.
Porters Hill Green Space	Yes – It is surrounded by local houses.	Yes – It is a green area played on by local children. The local community use it annually for a street party.	Yes – a local area, not extensive in size.	Porters Hill road island merits designation as a Local Green Space.

Green Space	Is the Green Space in reasonably close proximity to the people it serves?	Is the Green Space Special and does it hold a particular local significance?	Is the Green Space local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Outcome
Tallents Crescent Green Space	Yes – It is within a local residential area.	Yes – It is a green area used by local residents and played on by local children. It used to be equipped with goal posts.	Yes – a local area, not extensive in size.	Green space off Tallents Crescent merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Gilpin Green	Yes – It is close to local houses.	Yes – It has recreation value for local people. It has many trees and is a place where children play and climb trees.	Yes – a local area, not extensive in size.	Gilpin Green merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Wheathampstead Road verge	Yes	No	Yes	No merit
Small green Ashley Gardens	Yes	No	Yes	No merit
Small green Tuffnells Way	Yes	No	Yes	No merit
Brambleton Model Railway Site	It is not known where their members reside. It is a secure site accessible by the general community on just two days a year.	It has been the home of the model railway club since 1961.	It is not an extensive tract of land, but is not accessible by the local community apart from on the two annual open days.	Brambleton Model Railway Site does not merit designation as a Local Green Space.
Fairway Close/Oakfield Road spinney	Yes	No one uses it – it is densely wooded and not used for recreation.	No	No merit.
Welbeck Rise Green Space	Yes – It is amongst local houses.	Yes – It has recreational value as a place of play for children, and a walking venue.	Yes – a local area, not extensive in size.	Welbeck Rise green space merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Grove Road Green Space	Yes – It is close to local houses.	Yes – It has recreational value as a place of play for children, and a walking venue.	Yes – a local area, not extensive in size.	Grove Road merits designation as a Local Green Space.
Granary Lane	Yes	No	Yes	No merit.

Green Space	Is the Green Space in reasonably close proximity to the people it serves?	Is the Green Space Special and does it hold a particular local significance?	Is the Green Space local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Outcome
Green space at the corner of Broadstone Road/Cranbourne Drive	Yes	No	Yes	No merit.

Summary

2.4 The following will be designated as Local Green Spaces in the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan:

1. Lydekker Park
2. Oakley Road Green Space
3. Parva Close Green Space
4. The Nickey Line (urban area)
5. Lea Valley Walk
6. Roundwood Lane Green Space
7. Wood End Play Area
8. Westfield Recreation Ground
9. Southdown Green
10. Fovant Close Community Orchard
11. Alzey Gardens Green Space
12. Porters Hill Green Space
13. Tallents Crescent Green Space
14. Gilpin Green
15. Welbeck Rise Green Space
16. Grove Road Green Space

2.5 These Local Green Spaces are detailed in Neighbourhood Plan Policy ESD7 and a plan of all sites is shown at Neighbourhood Plan Figure 6.1. An individual plan of each Local Green Spaces is appended to this Report.

Appendix A: Local Green Spaces Boundaries

1. Lydekker Park



St George's
School

Play

Play

2. Oakley Road Green Space



Alın Çama

Alın Çama

Sokaklar

Meydan

Meydan



3. Parva Close Green Space



4. The Nickey Line (urban area)



5. Lea Valley Walk



6. Roundwood Lane Green Space



Recreation
Ground

7. Wood End Play Area



Wood End
Street

8. Westfield Recreation Ground



9. Southdown Green

NDEN

Common

St John's Wood

West Common



10. Fovant Close Community Orchard

ENDEN

Enden Common



11. Alzey Gardens Green Space



Schools

School

Alton Collins

Alton
Minn

12. Porters Hill Green Space



Roon Rd

Raunsey Wood
Primary School

Batford

13. Tallents Crescent Green Space



Batford

Batford Farm

Allet Green

14. Gilpin Green



St. Dominic



St. Dominic
RC School

Aloha Gardens

15. Welbeck Rise Green Space



Hiding School

125m

125m

Alton Gdns

Rear Gd

Baunoy Wood
Primary
School

16. Grove Road Green Space



Cross Farm

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