

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.

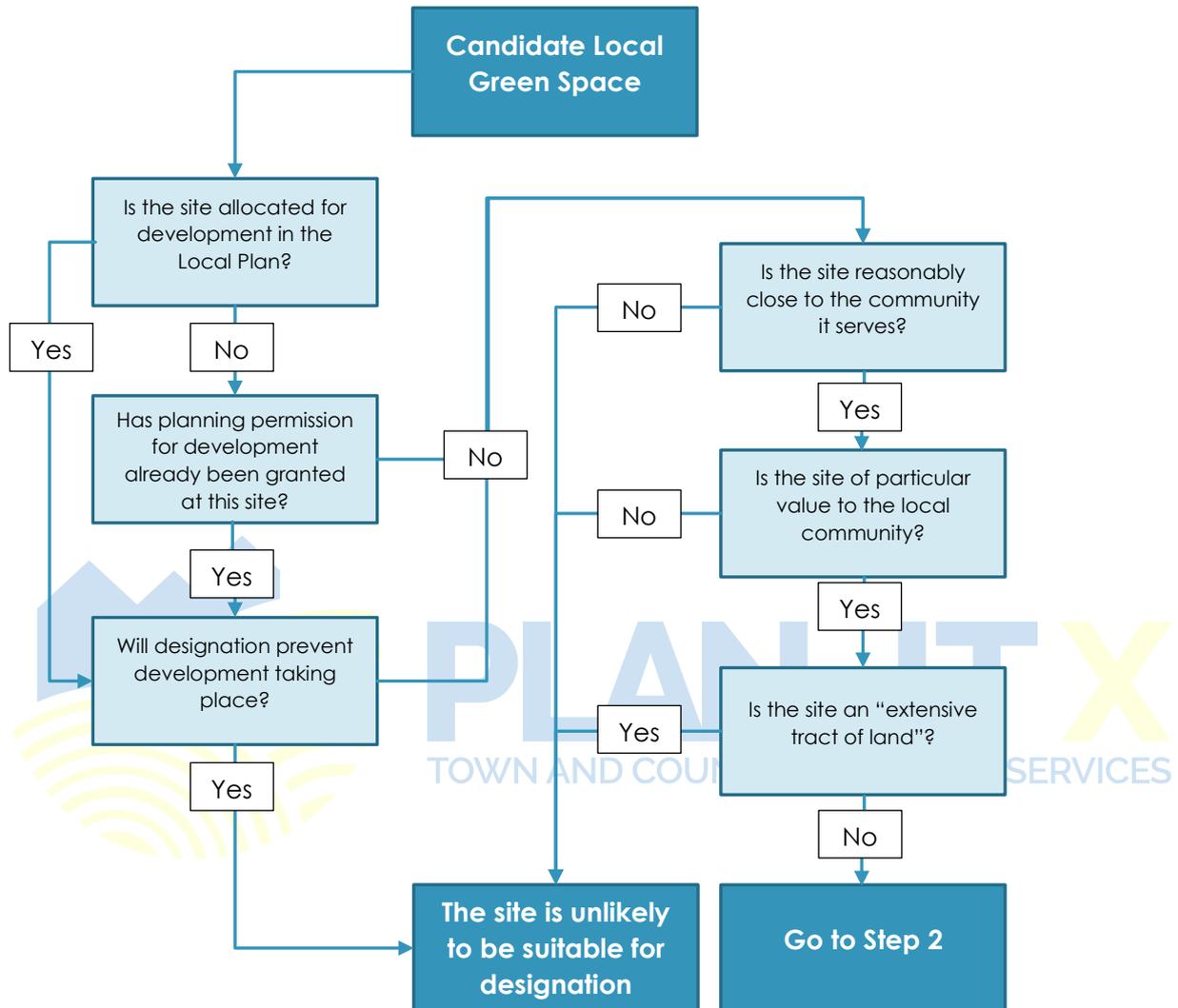
In order to ensure that any designation in the is robust, we have created a checklist against which potential Local Green Space sites should be tested.



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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.



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
	<p><i>Stoney Stanton War Memorial Playing Fields, Carey Hill Road, Stoney Stanton, LT340805</i></p> <p><i>Land Laying to the South of Carey Hill Road, Carey Hill Road, Stoney Stanton, LT122095</i></p> <p><i>Boundary Farm, Stanton Lane, Sapcote, LT389794. Small area that is leased to the War Memorial Playing Fields</i></p>
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>
	Please see map in the attached documentation, scale is 1inch to 25m
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>
	Stoney Stanton 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>
	Stoney Stanton Parish Council, Stoney Stanton War Memorial Playing Fields & Leicestershire County Council
1.5	Is the owner of the site aware of the potential designation? Yes
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> Yes
1.7	Photographs of site Please see those that are in the attached document.
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> Whole village and other surrounding villages. Supports multiple sports groups including Croft Junior Football, Stoney Stanton Lawn Tennis & Youth Clubs
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?
	No
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?
	No
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>
	14.8ha (Please see map B in the attached pack)
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>
	No the area is not extensive The area of separation between Stoney Stanton and Sapcote is some 50.2Ha in size and the area is comparable in nature to the surrounding green agricultural land. The area proposed is in 3 succinct areas that are playing fields, arboretum and meadow that fits really well into and complements the surrounding areas.
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>

Yes

The land is fully integrated into the surrounding areas and forms the transition from the urban area of the village into the rolling fields that form the area of separation. The areas are split between an arboretum of mature trees, a meadow land with mature hedgerows that are replicated throughout the village and the playing field and play area that are so important to the wellbeing of the people within the village.

The land is fully integrated into the local community, it is surrounded by the homes of local people and is the start of access into the more rural outskirts of the village and surrounding areas. Many people use the space to meet and complete walks further afield as well.

The area is the main outdoor social space within the village and is central to many events, for example the village carnival uses the space, including as the start and finish of the annual fun run. There are many local clubs which use the central area such as Youth Club, Junior Football, 5 a side teams and many other smaller groups and exercise classes

Map B in the attached documentation shows how integrated into the local community the proposed Local Green Space is and the central location within the village showing the car park and other amenities nearest to the village and within the proposed green space.

The use of the area for social events is well documented on the village Facebook groups and displayed as physical photos in the village hall. There are a couple of supporting documents in the supporting pack that show the history of the area and recognition of the area by Blaby District Council of the areas existence. The land registries referenced above show the boundaries and evidence the extended periods the land has been used for local green space.

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. The land provides a centralised green space within the village and there are currently no other sites that offer the facilities or are large enough to have even a portion of the facilities and diversity that this site holds. There are other sites within the village but without the facilities, scale, location or access to all.

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 local community is built around the site including homes that back on to the playing fields at Underwood Drive, Martin Close, Riley Close, Shadrack Close, Townsend Road, Sapcote Road and Johnson Rise. There is extensive car parking to support visitors from further afield or those with limited mobility. All areas of the Parish designated area are within 2km of the location.

See Map B

5.2	<p>Are there any barriers to the local community accessing the site from their homes? <i>e.g. railway line; main road</i> <i>Possible evidence – a map to show any potential barriers and how those can be overcome.</i></p>
	<p>No. The site is accessible and surrounded by unclassified roads, the nearest B classified road is 400m from the site with numerous pedestrian crossing points and the nearest A road is 1.8km away and outside the village and neighbouring village boundaries.</p>
6	Evidence to show that the green area is “demonstrably special to a local community”
6.1	<p>Evidence of support from Parish or Town Council <i>e.g. letter of support; Council minutes</i></p>
	<p>Letter of Support from the Parish Council dated 2002 and a further letter from 2016 and 2021. This letter also gives the history of the War Memorial Playing Fields, how it was founded and the support referenced against people’s names who supported the plan for the playing fields and Parish Land to be used by the people of the village for recreational purposes and a specific committee governed by a constitution was set up and put in place.</p>
6.2	<p>Evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals. <i>e.g. letters of support; petitions; surveys etc.</i></p>
	<p>Detailed evidence in letters regarding the forming of the War Memorial Playing Fields (Letter 1) and recognition of the facilities in the “Stoney Stanton Parish Profile by Blaby District Council 1992” (Document 1)</p> <p>The war memorial playing fields are a used by many local groups such as Croft Juniors Football Club, Stoney Stanton Tennis Club, Youth Club, Squash Club as well as many individuals who use the area for playing with children, bike riding, dog walking and community exercise groups.</p>
6.3	<p>Evidence of support from community leaders <i>e.g. letters of support from Ward Members; County Councillors; MP etc.</i></p>
	<p>Please see attached letters 2 & 3 that are supporting letters from Cllr Maggie Wright for Leicestershire County Council and Alberto Costa MP for South Leicestershire</p>
6.4	<p>Evidence of support from other groups <i>e.g. letters of support from organisations such as Campaign to Protect Rural England; local amenity societies; local schools etc.</i></p>
	<p>Letter of support from the Youth Club in supporting pack</p>
7	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty,” (if applicable)
7.1	<p>Is this criteria relevant to this site?</p>
	<p>YES</p>
7.2	<p>Describe why the community feels that the site has a particular local significance for its beauty.</p>

	<p>The area is not stand out beautiful but is an area where people can go to for an escape, to relax or meet with others. The area is characterised by the open playing fields and Tennis Club to the north, to the north west by the mature arboretum with winding paths through the trees. The section in the centre is a mix of secluded open areas that have been managed to allow groups to picnic or meet. The area to the south is the meadow land with long grasses, ponds and wildflowers with a stream to the south border of the land. The entire section of proposed land is criss crossed with footpaths and public footpaths allowing access to all areas.</p> <p>The Playing Fields land (LT340805) was purchased from the "Mountsorrel Granite Company" in 1952 for a sum of £100 that was raised by local people to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice through the World Wars hence the naming of the playing fields. The three lower football pitches are leased to the War Memorial Playing Fields from Leicestershire County Council without any boundary to the lands.</p> <p>The land that is now owned by the Parish Council (LT122095) was donated by Mountsorrel Granite Company to the people of the village in 1981 to be used as recreational space and previously formed the rail road link between Carey Hill Quarry and what is now Stoney Cove Diving Centre. The area was returned to the condition it is now in by the people of the village and is maintained via funding through the precept by Stoney Stanton Parish Council.</p>
7.3	<p>Site visibility e.g. <i>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></p>
	N/A
7.4	<p>Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designations? e.g. <i>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Conservation Area; Special Landscape Area</i> <i>Further information –Natural England</i></p>
	N/A
7.5	<p>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></p>
	N/A
7.6	<p>Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building or other special feature?</p>
	N/A
7.7	<p>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></p>
	N/A
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?

	NO
8.2	Are there any historic buildings or remains on the site? e.g. <i>listed buildings; scheduled ancient monuments; registered parks and gardens; war memorials; other historic remains or structures.</i> <i>Further information –English Heritage; local history society</i>
8.3	Are there any important historic landscape features on the site? e.g. <i>old hedgerows; ancient trees; historic ponds or historic garden features</i> <i>Further information –English Heritage; local history society</i>
8.4	Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? e.g. <i>the old site of the town railway station; the old garden for the manor house etc.</i>
8.5	Did any important historic events take place on the site?
8.6	Do any historic rituals take place on the site? e.g. <i>well-dressing; maypole dancing etc.</i>
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?
	YES
9.2	

	<p>The area has been used as a sports field since its inception and various facilities such as the play park, muga, pavilion and squash courts have been added as funding has allowed. The Playing field have been in formal existence since 1952.</p> <p>The area is used and has areas designated for use for Football, Tennis, Cricket and exercise classes. There is a sports pavilion that houses changing facilities, showers and meeting rooms, alongside a separate building that houses a gym and squash court. There is also a Muga artificial grass playing area that is enclosed and used by organised groups and the youth clubs.</p> <p>There is also a community skate park that was completed in 2005 and the funds were raised from local businesses and events, as well as multiple grants. The £52,00 took 3 years to raise, spearheaded by local resident Gerry Gracais who remains a village resident.</p> <p>The playing areas are open to the public and can be used for free at anytime. The uses of the playing fields for organised sport requires a fee to be payed to cover the upkeep of the fields and facilities, this is a not for profit fee. The tennis club requires a fee to be paid towards upkeep or a membership. The facilities offer important support for the local youth from the village and those surrounding villages and both the Tennis and football clubs attract large groups and are recognised as excellent.</p> <p>Both the tennis clubs and Croft Juniors who use the facilities are recognised by Sports England as clubs and have received funding to develop the facilities throughout their existence.</p>
9.3	<p>Are the public able to physically access the site?</p> <p>The whole area is able to be accessed by the public with the exception of the tennis club. There is a public car park with 102 spaces and 4 recognised public footpaths and 12 informal marked routes through the area. The area is open 24/7.</p>
9.4	<p>Is the site used by the local community for informal recreation? And since when?</p> <p>The area has been open to the public since 1952 and remains so. The people of the village use the area for exercise and dog walking throughout the year and groups regularly use the area to meet. Many people use the area for picnics and recreational activities with families and groups</p>
10	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its tranquillity” (if applicable)
10.1	<p>Is this criteria relevant to this site?</p> <p>YES</p>
10.2	<p>Do you consider the site to be tranquil?</p>

	Due to its location in the centre of small roads and housing, with green open spaces to the south the area is quiet and free from many of the noises of general life. Specific areas such as the arboretum and meadow are especially peaceful and due to their location very quiet and tranquil. The spaces are recognised in the community as a space for chilling out and in the recent pandemic have been used by people to relieve stress and 'get away from the world'.
10.3	Is the site within a recognised tranquil area?
	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?
	No
11.3	Are any important habitats or species found on the site?
	No
11.4	What other wildlife of interest has been found on the site?
	The meadow land to the south of the proposed local green space has a vast array of wildlife and recent surveys have found evidence of owls, newts, bats and various species of frog and toads. The boundaries of the land have long established hedgerows that harbour many difference species of nesting birds, hedgehogs and insects in abundance.
11.5	Is the site part of a long term study of wildlife by members of the local community?
	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?
	YES
12.2	What are the other reasons why the site has a particular local significance for the local community?

The land of the playing fields was bought by monies donated by the people of the village to honour those who had given the greatest sacrifice of their life during the World War conflicts.

The rest of the land was donated by the Mountsorrel Granite Company to the Parish Council to be enjoyed by the people of the village and provide an escape for them.

There are plaques to celebrate these things in the meadow and in the playing fields and both areas of land are recognised in the History of the Village book that was published by Leicestershire Libraries in 1978.



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Appendix – Supporting Documentation



Map B – Outline of the proposed Local Green Space within Stoney Stanton

1st June 2021
Maggie Wright
County Councillor
Stoney Stanton and Croft Division
Mobile 07815450031

Letter of Support

I am happy to provide a letter of support to Stoney Stanton Parish Council, in their request to designate the War Memorial Playing Fields and adjacent parish land as local green space, in the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan.

I have personally known these areas as local green spaces since childhood and for my adult life. I know they have long been established amenities for the village of Stoney Stanton. The War Memorial Playing Fields were brought in 1952 by donations from the Village. The Parish Land was donated in 1981. Over recent years this amenity value and use has certainly increased as the village has grown with substantial housing developments. The opportunities offered by these local open spaces are numerous and inclusive. Such facilities offered include a children's play area, the Pavilion, arboretum and meadow. Something for every resident to enjoy and improve their health and wellbeing. Specifically relevant during the recent national COVID19 pandemic.

In addition, the areas are used on a regular basis by numerous local groups and affiliated sports clubs. The spaces provide facilities to play football, tennis and cricket. Again, offering opportunities for a large cross-section of residents. As a village community with limited public transport the playing fields give opportunities to young people unable to gain access easily elsewhere.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help further.

Yours faithfully

Cllr. Maggie Wright

Letter 1 - **County Councillor Maggie Wright, Leicestershire County Council 19Map B**

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.



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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’.



PLAN-IT X
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING SERVICES

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