

# **Local Green Space Assessment**

**Evidence base under pinning the Local Plan for  
the Borough of Oadby and Wigston**



**November 2017**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report outlines the National Policy and Guidance on Local Green Space and sets out the methodology of how the nominated sites have been assessed against this policy and guidance. The report also identifies the sites nominated for designation as Local Green Space by the Community and the decision made by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council regarding the nominations.

## **2.0 Policy Background**

- 2.1 Paragraph 76 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that, '*local communities should be able to identify, for special protection green areas of particular importance for them. By designating land as Local Green Space, local communities will be able to rule out new development in all but 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, should not in any way undermine the aim of the plan and be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.*'
- 2.2 Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, Local Green Spaces 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. However, the Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The NPPF paragraph 77 states that the designation should only be used:
- '*Where the green space is in reasonable 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.'*
- 2.3 Some areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may 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. Areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may be crossed by public rights of way. There would be no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation.

- 2.4 The Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. The designation should not be used to restrict sustainable 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. Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with the policy for Greens Belts, as prescribed within Chapter 9 of the NPPF.
- 2.5 If land is already protected by designations such as National Park, Green Belt, Area of Outstanding natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monument or Conservation Area, then consideration should be given as to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space.
- 2.6 In addition to existing open space areas, new residential development areas may include green open space areas planned as part of the development. Such green areas could be designated as Local Green Space if they are demonstrably special and hold particular local significance.
- 2.7 A Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. However, the local planning authority should contact landowners 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. Designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners. Once adopted, the Council's new local Plan will contain a policy relating to Local Green Space and any designated Local Green Space will be identified on the adopted policies map. Management of land designated as Local Green Space will remain the responsibility of its owner.
- 2.8 Land designated as Local Green Space may potentially also be nominated for listing by the local authority as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). Listing gives community interest groups an opportunity to bid if the owner wants to dispose of the land. For further information regarding ACV's, please visit the Council's website at [www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk](http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk).

### **3.0 Nomination of Sites**

- 3.1 Nomination of sites is usually undertaken through a Call for Sites as part of producing the Local Plan. Sites for consideration as Local Green Space can be nominated by anyone who lives within the area, in this case the Borough of Oadby and Wigston and Oadby, or their representative. The nominee is required to provide the location and details of the site along with an explanation why each site is considered to have significance to the local community and should therefore be considered as Local Green Space.
- 3.2 As part of the new Local Plan preparation, the Council undertook a Call for Sites process. Fifteen sites were nominated for designation as Local Green Space in South Wigston and one in Oadby. A full list of the sites and the Council's decision for or against approval is provided at Chapter 5.

### **4.0 Methodology**

- 4.1 The methodology used to determine compliance with each of the criteria listed at paragraph 2.2 is outlined below;
  - a. Close Proximity. 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. Due to this, no specific distance was used to establish whether a proposed site was in close proximity to the community. Instead consideration was given to the distance from the community, physical connections such as footpaths and roads and the nature of the site.
  - b. Particular Significance. The NPPF gives examples of the types of significance that may be considered as reasons to designate a site as a Local Green Space.
    - Beauty. Where the site makes an important contribution towards the townscape or landscape character.
    - Historic. Where the site forms part of a heritage asset (designated or undesigned) or part of its setting.
    - Recreational. Whether the site provides opportunity for outdoor sports and recreation.
    - Tranquillity. Whether the site provides the opportunity for quiet reflection.
    - Wildlife. Whether there are features of biodiversity value which are enhanced by the management of the site.
  - c. Extensive Tract of Land. 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. Therefore, no specific threshold has been applied to the size of sites considered. An assessment of the size of the site in comparison with the community it serves is made. However, the NPPF 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, albeit by another name. There is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space.

- d. Additional to these, the following will also be considered:
  - Where there are existing designations that apply to the site, it will also have been considered, whether the site has significance over and above that of the existing designation.
  - Other factors put forward are considered on a case by case basis.

- 4.2. **Nature of Assessment.** Each site was mapped and a site visit undertaken. An assessment was then undertaken to ascertain whether the Council was of the opinion that the nominated sites fulfilled national policy and guidance and therefore should be designated. A map of the location of the each site within the Borough and each site assessment can be found at Appendix 1 for South Wigston and Appendix 2 for Oadby, (there are currently no nominated sites for Wigston). Photographs of the sites taken during site visits are also provided in Appendix 3. Where a site was inaccessible to visit and/or photograph an image has been taken from satellite map data.

## 5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 The table below sets out the recommendations regarding the sites nominated for Local Green Space designation. At Appendix 2 and 3 is a description and photograph of each site and an assessment and recommendation of whether the proposed site meets the criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the NPPF to be designated a Local green Space.

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
SW1	Wigston Railway Triangle	South Wigston	To designate
SW2	Land Rear of 11-35 Marstow Avenue	South Wigston	To designate
SW3	Donnelly Call Centre Frontage on Saffron Road	South Wigston	To designate
SW4	DEFRA Site Frontage on Saffron Road and Tigers Road	South Wigston	To designate
SW5	Territorial Army Frontage on	South Wigston	To designate

	Tigers Road		
SW6	Service Master Frontage on Tigers Road	South Wigston	To designate
SW7	Rear of Donnelly Site on Tigers Close	South Wigston	Not to designate
SW8	Crete Avenue Green	South Wigston	To designate
SW9	The copse to the West of Ladysmith Road/Hindoostan Avenue, and open Green Space and mature trees known as the 'kick about', West of Namur Road.	South Wigston	To designate
SW10	Green Space with protected trees on the corner of Ladysmith Road/Hindoostan Avenue	South Wigston	To designate
SW11	Salvation Army frontage on Saffron Road.	South Wigston	To designate
SW12	Salvation Army green space on the Southern side of the rear entrance to the site on Ladysmith Road.	South Wigston	To designate
SW13	The Area of Green Space on the corner of Namur Road and the eastern exit of Aisne Road.	South Wigston	To designate
SW14	Grounds and Mature Trees to the rear of the Territorial Army Headquarters on Tigers Road.	South Wigston	To designate
SW15	A green corridor designation for the line of mature trees that stretch along the ancient hedge line on the Western Boundary with the prison from the railway line, north along the prison car park and boundary wall up to Sturdee Road Park, in the City.	South Wigston	Not to designate
O1	Highcroft Park	Oadby	To designate

## Appendix

Appendix 1 – Sites Nominated for South Wigston.

Appendix 2 – Sites Nominated for Oadby.

Appendix 3 – Photographs of the Sites.