

Leighton Linlade Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan

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”. The NPPF sets out the criteria that green space must meet in order to be designated as ‘Local Green Space’ and 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. With regard to Green Belt, Leighton-Linslade is surrounded by Green Belt throughout the area within Central Bedfordshire, but it is 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 Leighton-Linslade 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:

- Southcott Farm Stud
- Land adjacent to Linslade Wood (off Stoke Rd)
- Dunnock Drive Informal Recreation Space
- Aurora Drive Informal Recreation Space
- Vandyke Loop Meadow

Other sites designated as ‘Informal Recreation Space’ but not featuring on the base mapping were also considered as appropriate. One further site, the Cotefield Drive/Shenley Hill Green Space’ was also considered, having been noted during field visits. However, this has been excluded at Stage 1 as it was subsequently noted to be subject to an Outline Planning Permission.

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, this can be on the basis of remoteness from the local community, sifting out sites that are considered remote (1km is a general rule of thumb, but other factors such as existence of accessible routes are taken into consideration) is usually possible using a map.

Due to Leighton-Linslade being a large urban area with many green spaces within and around it, the process was streamlined to sift out at this stage those sites that are:

- Very small amenity green spaces (<0.1ha) – unlikely to meet the criteria in terms of value/community value;
- School playing fields – while it is essential that children have access to green spaces within the school environment for a range of activities, none are specifically under threat, and designation could affect vital expansion plans in the future;
- Sites wholly, or at least largely, within the Environment Agency’s Flood Zone 3 (highest level of risk) on the basis that development would not be permitted on such sites – this mapping has recently (2025) been updated;
- Churchyards – consecrated ground, no development threat;
- Road verges except where part of a wider green space.

There was also the issue of capacity and cost – surveying multiple small amenity spaces (usually mown grass) would have had a very small ‘return’ in terms of any put forward for designation.

There are green spaces within the Eastern Urban Extension, though these have not all been mapped (including by the Ordnance Survey and CBC). A small number have been included where they are defined green spaces already open/usable by the public, but it has not been possible to consider all of them. Additionally, some of these lie outside the parish boundary (as the Eastern Extension crosses into adjacent parishes) so have been excluded because the Leighton-Linslade Neighbourhood Plan cannot designate outside of the parish boundary. Where a site extends across the parish boundary, only the area within Leighton-Linslade parish can be considered.

It is recommended that green spaces within the urban extension are assessed at the earliest possible time (once they are established and mapped, and their value to the local community can be assessed), with a view to future designation.

This assessment has been carried out by Jon Balaam, BSc (Hons), Director of Development at the Greensand Trust. Jon has worked in the environmental sector for over 30 years, in Bedfordshire for 25 years and was involved in the development of both the Bedfordshire parish-level GI planning, and the process for assessing LGS in Central Bedfordshire. He has carried out Local Green Space assessments across nine parishes as part of Neighbourhood Plans, resulting in the designation of 112 spaces to date, with several ongoing. Jon is currently working (alongside Beds RCC) on an assessment of potential LGS sites across the whole of central Bedfordshire, on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council.

Table 1 below demonstrates this process. Not all sites identified within Figure 5 of the main document have been included below, and therefore numbers do not run sequentially, as sites excluded by category (noted above) have been removed first (those sites excluded on basis of Flood Zone 3 are included to clearly illustrate which these are).

Table 1 – Stage 1 (Desktop Analysis)

No.	Name	Publicly accessible?	Area (hectares) within the Parish	Subject to a planning permission for development?	Allocated for development within the Local Plan?	Equal designation in place?	Any other reason not to pass to Stage 2?	Pass to Stage 2
1	Heath Wood	Yes	8.76	No	No	No	No	Yes
2	Heath Wood Meadow	Yes	3.41	No	No	No	No	Yes
3	Ouzel Valley, Local Geological Site	Part accessible	84.86	No	No	No	Yes – considered extensive & within Flood Zone 3	No
4	Knolls Wood	Yes	6.36	No	No	No	No	Yes
8	Churchill Road Amenity Space	Yes	0.39	No	No	No	No	Yes
9	Ouzel Water Meadows	Yes	16.06	No	No	No	Wholly within Flood Zone 3	No
10	King’s Street Depot, Leighton Buzzard	Yes	1.08	No	No	No	Almost all within Flood Zone 3	No
11	Nelson Road Play Area	Yes	0.16	No	No	No	No	Yes

No.	Name	Publicly accessible?	Area (hectares) within the Parish	Subject to a planning permission for development?	Allocated for development within the Local Plan?	Equal designation in place?	Any other reason not to pass to Stage 2?	Pass to Stage 2
12	Linslade Wood	Yes	32.55	No	No	No	Further consideration in field required – although the largest site being considered, it is a distinct site right on the doorstep of a residential area, and wooded nature potentially brings a level of intimacy.	Yes
13	Alwins Fields Allotments	No	0.39	No	No	No	No	Yes
14	River Ouzel CWS	Yes	5.15 (13.08 total area)	No	No	No	Largely within Flood Zone 3 (rest within Flood Zone 2)	No
15	Linslade Recreation Ground	Yes	1.68	No	No	No	No	Yes
16	Parsons Close Recreation Ground	Yes	3.06	No	No	No	No	Yes

No.	Name	Publicly accessible?	Area (hectares) within the Parish	Subject to a planning permission for development?	Allocated for development within the Local Plan?	Equal designation in place?	Any other reason not to pass to Stage 2?	Pass to Stage 2
18	Derwent Rd/Lomond Drive Recreation Space	Yes	0.79	No	No	No	No	Yes
21	Mentmore Memorial Recreation Ground & Gardens	Yes	3.03	No	No	No	No	Yes
25	Ledburn Quarry	No	10.23	No	No	No	No	Yes
26	Tiddenfoot Waterside Park	Yes	12.87	No	No	No	No	Yes
27	Southern Meadows	Yes	6.68	No	No	No	Majority in Flood Zone 3	No
29	Rackley Hill Pit CWS	No	6.54	No	No	No	No	Yes
30	Mentmore Gardens Cycleway	Yes	1.27	No	No	No	More of a linear corridor, and cycle route is only part really used by people. Wooded corridor has landscape value, but threat of development	No

							is low. Suggest western part is included in Mentmore Rec.	
31	Church Meadows CWS	No	7.44	No	No	No	Virtually all within Flood Zone 3 (rest in Zone 2)	No
34	Leighton Buzzard Town Cricket Club/Tennis Club	No	2.66 / 0.22	No	No	No	Largely within Flood Zone 3 (rest in Zone 2)	No
35	Camberton Road Informal Recreation Space	Yes	0.76	No	No	No	No	Yes
37	Astral Park Lake Green Space	Yes	8.58 in parish (19.56 total area)	No	No	No	Considered potentially extensive – although smaller than Linslade Wood, includes a large body of water. Use is protected through planning, and only a portion is within parish (larger part is outside).	Yes – further assessment in field required.
38	Weston Avenue Playing Field	Yes	2.63	No	No	No	No	Yes
39	Weston Avenue Allotments	No	2.52	No	No	No	No	Yes

40	Pages Park Tennis Courts	No	0.47	No	No	No	Area subsumed within Pages Park -consider within 41.	See 41
41	Pages Park Recreation Ground	No	5.56	No	No	No	No – just need to exclude built footprint.	Yes
43	Astral Park	Yes	9.52	No	No	No	No	Yes
44	Stanbridge Meadows CWS	Yes	5.49	No	No	No	No	Yes
47	Danes Field	Yes	2.04	No	No	No	No	Yes
49	Clipstone Brook CWS	No	6.27 (11.43 total area)	No	No	No	Significant parts in Flood Zone 3, remainder in Zone 2	No
A	Clipstone Brook Amenity Space	Yes		No	No	No	Significant parts in Flood Zone 3, remainder in Zone 2	No
B	Clipstone Brook Amenity Space	Yes		No	No	No	Significant parts in Flood Zone 3, remainder in Zone 2	No
C	Clipstone Brook Amenity Space	Yes		No	No	No	Significant parts in Flood Zone 3, remainder in Zone 2	No

No.	Name	Publicly accessible?	Area (hectares) within the Parish	Subject to a planning permission for development?	Allocated for development within the Local Plan?	Equal designation in place?	Any other reason not to pass to Stage 2?	Pass to Stage 2
D	Clipstone Brook Amenity Space	Yes		No	No	No	Significant parts in Flood Zone 3, remainder in Zone 2	No
E	Clipstone Brook Amenity Space	Yes		No	No	No	Significant parts in Flood Zone 3, remainder in Zone 2	No
52	Vandyke Road Recreation Ground	Yes	2.27	No	No	No	No	Yes
56	Rock Lane CWS	Yes – bridleway runs through	0.74	No	No	No	No, but consideration needs to be applied to whether this is a 'space' or linear feature.	Yes
57	Dunnock Drive Informal Recreation Space	Yes	1.48	No	No	No	No	Yes
58	Field adjacent to Linslade Wood, off Stoke Road	No	1.04	No, but has been	No	No	No	Yes
59	Vandyke Loop Meadow	No	0.43	No	No	No	No	Yes

61	Amenity Space between Regents Street & Miles Avenue	Yes	0.17	No	No	No	No	Yes
62	Meadow Way Recreation Ground	Yes	1.33	No	No	No	No	Yes
63	Alwins Field Recreation Ground	Yes	1.71	No	No	No	No	Yes
64	Chelsea Green	Yes	0.77	No	No	No	No	Yes
65	Soulbury Road Verge Amenity Green Space	Yes	0.90	No	No	No	No	Yes
66	Bideford Gardens Amenity Green Space	Yes	0.74	No	No	No	No	Yes
67a	Grasmere Park Amenity Space (west)	Yes	1.39	No	No	No	No	Yes
67b	Grasmere Park Amenity Green Space (east)	Yes	0.57	No	No	No	No	Yes
68	Vimy Road Green Space	Yes	0.60	No	No	No	Flood Zone 3	No

No.	Name	Publicly accessible?	Area (hectares) within the Parish	Subject to a planning permission for development?	Allocated for development within the Local Plan?	Equal designation in place?	Any other reason not to pass to Stage 2?	Pass to Stage 2
70	Peace Meadow	Yes	0.73	No	No	No	Floodplain Zone 3	No
71	Cotefield Drive Green Space	Yes	1.32	No	Yes	No	Outline planning consent in place.	No
72	Liddell Way Green Space	Yes	0.52	No	No	No	No	Yes
73	Leighton Road/Meadway Amenity Green Space	Yes	0.63	No	No	No	No. Green space is substantively more than just a verge	Yes
74	Adams Bottom Green Space	Yes	0.65	No	No	No	No - Not identified within floodplain.	Yes
75	Fortuna Mead Informal Recreation Space	Yes	0.67	No (adjacent land is)	No	No	No	Yes
76	Aurora Rise Informal Recreation Space	Yes	0.72	No (adjacent land is)	No	No	No	Yes
	Southcott Farm Stud	No	Further analysis required	No	No	No – Conservation Area does not cover non-built area.	No, but need to ascertain whether there is a specific, identifiable space vs wider countryside.	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	Heath Wood	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d, e	Yes
2	Heath Wood Meadow	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d, e	Yes
4	Knolls Wood	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d, e	Yes
8	Churchill Road Amenity Space	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
11	Nelson Road Play Area	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
12	Linslade Wood	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c, d, e	Yes
13	Alwins Field Allotments	✓	✓	✓ c, d, f (food growing)	Yes
15	Linslade Recreation Ground	✓	✓	✓ b, c, d	Yes
16	Parsons Close Recreation Ground	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c, d, e	Yes
18	Derwent Road Recreation Space	✓	✓	✓ c, d	Yes
21	Mentmore Recreational Ground & Memorial Gardens	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c	Yes
24	Wyngates Allotments	✓	✓	✓ c, f (food growing)	Yes
25	Ledburn Quarry	✓	✓	✓ e	Yes
26	Tiddenfoot Waterside Park	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c, d, e	Yes
29	Rackley Hill Pit	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d, e	Yes
35	Camberton Road Informal Recreation Space	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
37	Astral Park Lake	X	✓	✓ a, c, e	No
38	Weston Avenue Playing Field	✓	✓	✓ c, d	Yes
39	Weston Avenue Allotments	✓	✓	✓ c, d, f (food growing)	Yes
41	Pages Park Recreation Ground	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c, d	Yes
43	Astral Park	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
44	Stanbridge Meadows	✓	✓	✓ a, b, c, d, e	Yes
47	Danes Field	✓	✓	✓ c, d	Yes
52	Vandyke Rd Recreation Ground	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
56	Rock Lane CWS	X	✓	✓ a, b, c, d, e	No

57	Dunnock Drive Informal Recreation Space	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
58	Field adjacent to Linslade Wood (off Stoke Road)	✓	✓	✓ a, e, f (value as buffer to Linslade Wood)	Yes
59	Van Dyke Loop Meadow	✓	✓	✓ a, b, e	Yes
61	Amenity Space between Regents Street & Miles Ave	✓	✓	✓ c, d	Yes
62	Meadow Way Recreation Ground	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
63	Alwins Field Recreation Ground	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d	Yes
64	Chelsea Green	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
65	Soulbury Road Verge Amenity Green Space	✓	✓	✓ a, c	Yes
66	Bideford Gardens Amenity Green Space	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
67a	Grasmere Park Amenity Green Space (west)	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
67b	Grasmere Park Amenity Green Space (east)	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
69	Leeston Park Play Area	✓	✓	✓ a, c	Yes
72	Liddell Way Green Space	✓	✓	✓ c	Yes
73	Leighton Road/Meadway Amenity Green Space	✓	✓	✓ a, c	Yes
74	Adams Bottom Green Space	✓	✓	✓ a, c, d	Yes
75	Fortuna Mead Informal Recreation Space	✓	✓	✓ c, e	Yes
76	Aurora Rise Informal Recreation Space	✓	✓	✓ c,e	Yes
	Southcott Farm Stud	X	✓	✓ a, b, d, e	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.

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

2c. Reasons for Rejection:

As noted above, due to the number of green spaces (77 listed, many more on the Greenspaces Map not specifically identified/numbered), it was necessary to adapt the process to allow the sifting out of sites and refine the list to those most likely to meet the criteria and be at greater risk, prior to even completing the Stage 1 Assessment. See Section 2a for the rationale behind this.

No sites were rejected on the basis of proximity to the population they serve, which was relatively unusual but can be explained by comparing the built-up area with the parish boundary – the latter being close to the urban edge throughout the parish.

Three sites (37, Astral Park Lake Green Space, 56, Rock Lane CWS and Southcott Farm Stud) were rejected on the basis of extensiveness. Although a site larger than Astral Park Lake (12, Linslade Wood) has been recommended, there are key differences:

- Astral Park Lake Green Space is made up in large part by a single, featureless and expansive waterbody, while Linslade Wood is a more intimate, wooded site.
- Astral Park Lake Green Space is split between two parishes, and only the smaller part is within Leighton-Linslade. The adjacent Billington Parish does not have a Neighbourhood Plan (either completed or in development). The part of the site within Leighton-Linslade parish cannot be considered a discrete site and there is no process underway to ensure designation by Leighton-Linslade Neighbourhood Plan would be followed up with designation the other side of the parish boundary.

Site 56 (Rock Lane County Wildlife Site) was rejected following field assessment. While the CWS has a specific boundary and area, the 'site' was considered to be difficult to discern from the field edge hedgerow either side, and is extensive in length. It is a very narrow corridor, and while rich in wildlife and historic features, these would not necessarily be protected from development by LGS status. The only legal access is via the public bridleway, and this access is protected by the current legal status of the bridleway – LGS status would not provide any added benefit.

Southcott Farm Stud was proposed through the public consultation, and as the table above indicates, it does have positive properties that could support a designation. However, it is a large site, and field survey demonstrated that while it was initially felt that a specific 'space' within this could be identified, it is not as simple as this and it is difficult to distinguish between any potential 'space' and the wider countryside. It has therefore been considered as 'extensive'.

Spaces cannot be designated if there is a current planning permission. Site 71 (Cotefield Drive) is within an area where there is an outline planning permission in place for a significant residential development, which includes accessible green spaces. While it will be important for the planning process to ensure the hedgerow around this site in particular is protected and enhanced, this is not a function of LGS designation.

Some objections were received at the Regulation 16 consultation stage on the basis of sites being subject to a 'live' planning permission. The assessment process did involve an audit of development allocations and searching of the CBC Planning Portal to help inform where this is the case.

These sites have been reviewed, and if it was clear that built development had been completed then these spaces remain as proposed LGS. Such examples include Dunnock Drive Informal Recreation

Space (57), Fortuna Mead and Aurora Drive Amenity Green Spaces (75 & 76 respectively). Additionally, these spaces are mapped on the 'My Central Bedfordshire' web-based mapping as Leisure Sites.

3. Next Steps

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

Therefore the role of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group/Leighton-Linslade Town Council is to:

- a) Inform and 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.

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 specific LGS map has not been created. Only those rejected after field visits are included in the field assessment section.

As noted above, significant numbers of sites were discounted at Stage 1. Additionally, some sites were not included within the assessment process because they are within the Eastern Urban Extension area, which is still being developed. Several green spaces within this area have not yet been mapped by any party (CBC, Ordnance Survey, Biodiversity Recording & Monitoring Centre) and some have not yet been completed. Others are outside of the Leighton-Linslade parish boundary. It is quite likely that some of these will become important and valued spaces warranting LGS designation in the future, and these should be considered at the earliest opportunity.

Such an opportunity will be the Central Bedfordshire 'Call for Sites' for Local Green Space designation through the current Local Plan Review. This will provide an opportunity to assess further sites put forward by town and parish councils.

4. Individual Site Summaries

No.	Name	Photo & Map	Recommend for LGS Designation?	Comments
1	Heath Wood	 <p>The map shows the 'Leighton Linslade Local Green Space' in 'Heath Wood'. It features a green shaded area representing the Local Green Space, surrounded by a black line for the Parish boundary. A scale bar indicates 0, 100, and 200 meters. A north arrow is also present. Below the map is a photograph of a wooded area with a path, showing trees and fallen leaves on the ground.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is clearly used a lot by local people and valued – well managed, with a local ‘Friends Group’ supporting management – good clear paths, no litter. Interpretation panel providing information. • Has wildlife value including trees, birds and mammals. • Landscape value – prominent and characteristic feature in local landscape (Wooded Greensand Ridge) and surrounds housing estate – screening views of housing. • Tranquil area away from road.

2

Heath Wood Meadow

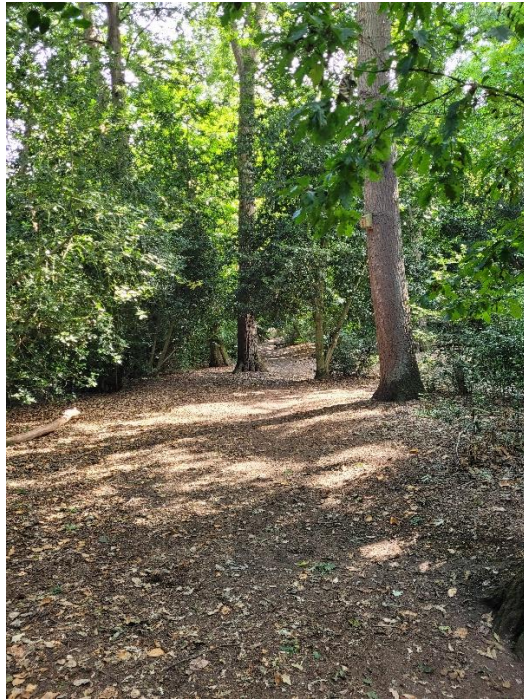


Yes

- Site is clearly used and valued by local people, with memorial benches at key viewpoints.
- Well-managed, with wildlife value integral.
- Although immediately adjacent to (2) it is a distinct and different site, being very open with good views. Clearly defined by Heath Wood, Old Linlade Road and the River Ouzel.
- Has wildlife value – both the Meadows and the adjacent River Ouzel are County Wildlife Sites. The meadow consists of acid grassland, a Priority Habitat identified within the Bedfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and linked to the acidic geology of the Greensand Ridge – a rare and important habitat.
- Landscape value - views of surrounding Ouzel valley from higher ground.

4

Knolls Wood



Yes

- Site is well used and valued by local people, also having its own 'Friends' group (utilising noticeboard/information panel). Well managed – no litter, clear paths.
- Woodland surrounds housing estate and is an integral feature of it.
- Wildlife value plus landscape / amenity and historic value – large specimen trees relating to previous designed landscape.
- Very tranquil.

8

Churchill Road
Amenity
Space (Oakley
Green Play
Area)



Yes

- Well-used and popular recreation space for variety of ages
- Includes play equipment, basketball etc.
- Area of open green space within built up area.
- Highly accessible – within residential area, surfaced path through it.

11

Nelson Road
Play Area

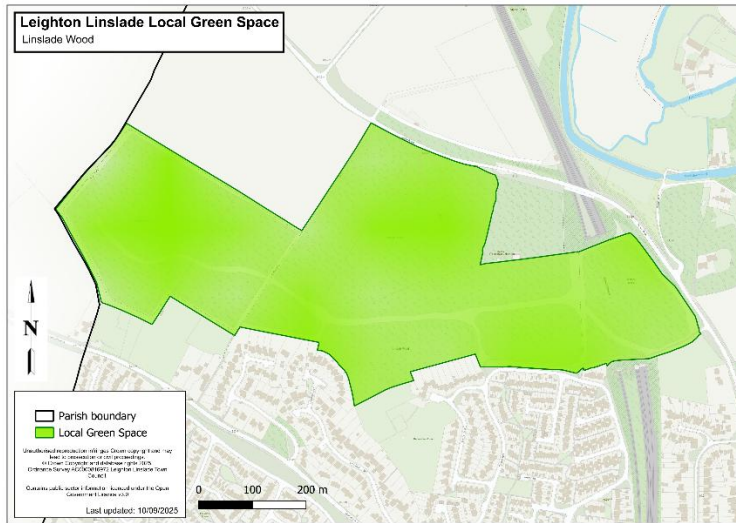


Yes

- Well-used, popular area including play area and open green space.
- Within residential area, part of buffer between older and more recent residential areas.
- Wildlife value – trees and hedge.

12

Linslade Wood



Yes

- High wildlife value – core is ‘Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland’, and site is a County Wildlife Site. Core part of habitat network identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- High level of community involvement, with very active ‘Friends Group’ – very clearly highly valued, well-managed and supported.
- Excellent network of paths – including surfaced perimeter path.
- Historic value – as an ‘ancient’ woodland it will have existed in this location since 1600 at least.
- Landscape value – important feature of Wooded Greensand Ridge, prominent in the local landscape when viewed from many directions.
- Tranquil away from road and rail.
- Although large not considered extensive. Clearly defined area. User experience is one of tranquillity and intimacy through woodland paths and rides.

13

Alwins Field Allotments

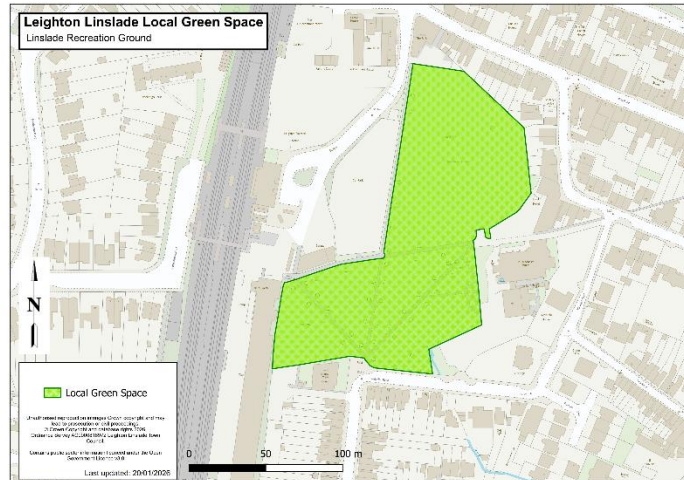


Yes

- Clearly very highly valued by local people for its recreational value – high occupancy, very well maintained plots.
- Also has wildlife value – adjacent to Linslade Wood, with flowering plants/crops providing nectar sources for insects.
- Peaceful location – high tranquillity.

15

Linslade
Recreation
Ground



Yes

- Well maintained and well used site – range of recreational users
- Evidence of community gardening activity
- Formal garden area – very attractive and well cared for.
- Historic value – Victorian style park, focal feature is fountain marking the occasion of the donation of the park to the town by a local benefactor (1903).
- Tree avenues – historic and visually attractive feature
- Wildlife value – Garden of Remembrance managed for pollinators.
- Play area – well used, well-equipped.
- Relatively tranquil – especially when compared to nearby railway station area.

16

Parsons Close
Recreation
Ground



- Very well maintained, attractive park – Green Flag award.
- Very popular recreational resource with a range of facilities for range of ages/groups
- Historic value – historic town recreation ground, tree avenues
- Wildlife value – wildflower areas, Clipstone Brook corridor.

18

Derwent Road
Recreation
Ground

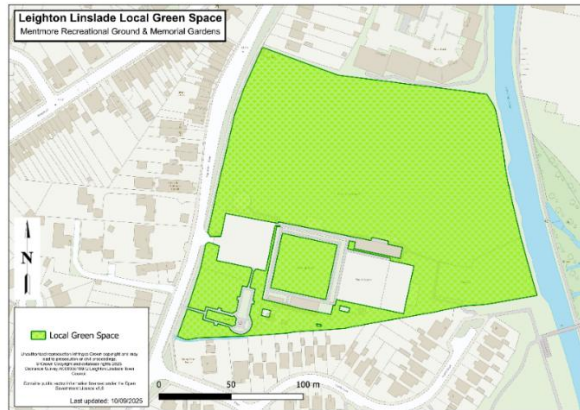


Yes

- Valued recreation ground – clearly well-used and well-maintained, with a range of equipment/features for different ages.
- High landscape value – elevated position, views to Chilterns hills.

21

Mentmore
Recreation
Ground and
Memorial
Garden



Yes

- Very popular and well-maintained recreation ground with range of features and activities (Green Flag Award).
- Memorial Garden is an integral part of the site, and provides added value.
- Also provides access to the Grand Union Canal, important in local landscape and history.
- Wildlife – substantial hedgerows, wildflower areas.
- Views to St Mary's church spire.

24

Wygates Allotments



Yes

- High recreational value. Attractive, well-maintained and popular allotment site – high occupancy. Sense of community.
- Accessible with car parking and surfaced path.
- No photograph – not accessible. Spoke to two users outside site.

25

Ledburn
Quarry



Yes

- High wildlife value, with open water, grassland, scrub and woodland habitats.
- Undisturbed and tranquil (with exception of occasional trains) – but acts as buffer/screen to railway and road.

26

Tiddenfoot
Waterside
Park



Yes

- Highly valued, well-used and maintained recreational space (Green Flag Award) with network of paths (surfaced and unsurfaced).
- Focal site for Linlade Canal Festival (annual event)
- Popular site with local anglers
- Car parking connecting to path network
- High wildlife value – CWS status, lake provides added interest and value.
- Active Friends Group involved in managing and promoting site.

29

Rackley Hill Pit

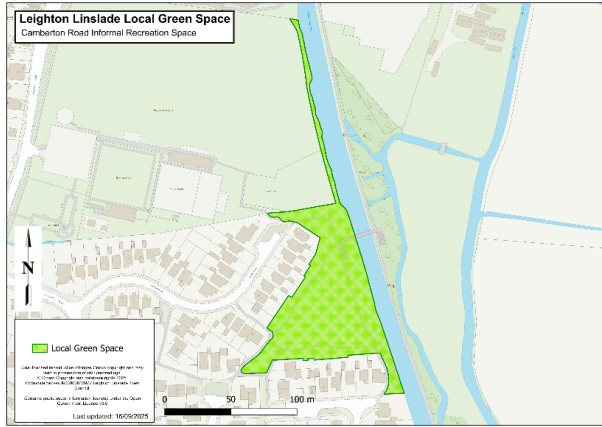


Yes

- Wildlife interest – range of habitats including open water, scrub, woodland.
- Recreational value – popular facility with local anglers.

35

Camberton Rd
Informal
Recreation
Space



Yes

- Attractive setting adjacent to Grand Union Canal. Contains open areas with mature trees.
- Important recreational value as a space and thoroughfare for local people.

38

Weston Avenue
Playing Field



Yes

- High recreational value – popular space close to residential area
- Well managed, very little litter.
- Part of a linked complex of sites, link through to Pages Park.
- Wildlife value – hedges, mature trees

39

Weston Avenue Allotments



Yes

- Well-maintained and popular allotment site – high recreational value, located within residential area, sense of community.

41

Pages Park
Recreation
Ground



Yes

- Very popular recreational space with wide range of activities/facilities including well-equipped play area
- Well managed – Green Flag site
- In addition to recreational value, is adjacent to Leighton Buzzard Railway
- Café facilities also adjacent

43

Astral Park



Yes

- Highly valued recreational site with play facilities, open green space, adjacent car parking.
- Wildlife value – pond and hedgerows.

44

Stanbridge
Meadows



Yes

- High wildlife value – especially highly diverse grassland habitat and mature hedges – has CWS status.
- Community orchard area also has high wildlife value.
- High recreation value – located on edge of residential development, informal paths through and around well-used.
- High landscape value, particularly panoramic views from higher areas across town and surrounding countryside.
- Tranquillity – peaceful site, remote enough from A505 bypass. Elevation provides a sense of detachment from surrounding areas.

57

Dunnock Drive
Informal
Recreation
Space



Yes

- Within relatively new development area, providing open space and focal feature - high local landscape value despite pylons running through it
- High recreational value, also connects through to larger greenspace with lake to east.
- Wildlife value – area of longer grass and scrub

58

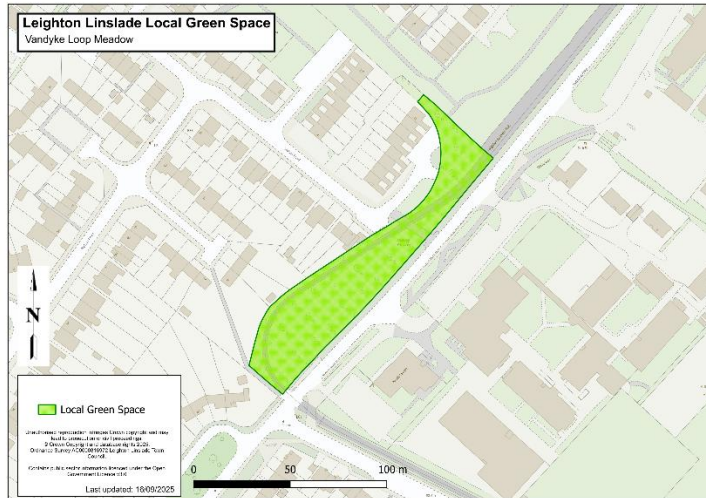
Field adjacent
to Linslade
Wood (off
Stoke Road)



- Proposed by members of the local community through consultation – valued for its location, buffering Linslade Wood
- Discrete space – not part of wood. Grassland habitat with significant mature trees (including potential veteran oak) on perimeter (high wildlife value)
- Significant amount of local opposition when previously proposed for development – further demonstration of value.

59

Vandyke Loop
Meadow



Yes

- Valued for wildlife – wildflower meadow created around narrow gauge railway and managed by local community group.
- High floristic diversity at time of visit, with significant numbers of bees, butterflies etc.
- Added value of setting for part of railway.

61

Amenity
Space
between
Regents St &
Miles Ave



Yes

- Attractive and well-managed amenity space nestled within residential area.
- Very built-up area – important green space and thoroughfare – access to/through by surfaced path.
- Wildlife value – areas managed for nature including planting for pollinators.

62

Meadow Way
Recreation
Ground



Yes

- Popular local green space with good access – hard surfaced paths across it.
- Range of facilities.
- Within residential area
- Wildlife value – stream along edge

63

Alwins Field
Recreation
Ground



Yes

- Popular facility in residential area, good facilities (including play area), well-maintained.
- High landscape value – elevated position, views across town to Chilterns, Linlade Wood as backdrop.

64

Chelsea Green



Yes

- Valued as open green space within residential area, focal feature for surrounding housing.

65

Soulbury Road
Verge
Amenity
Green Space



Yes

- High landscape value – creates more open, tree-lined feel as enter town from Soulbury Road/bypass.
- Large enough to have recreational value

66

Bideford
Gardens
Amenity
Green Space



Yes

- Valued recreational green space within residential area
- Adjacent to community centre
- Elevated at northern end – provides views across local area

67a

Grasmere
Park Amenity
Green Space
(West)



Yes

- Valued green space within residential development
- Surfaced paths provide good access and provide option of using as thoroughfare – alternative to roadside pavements
- Trees and hedges add wildlife value

67b
Grasmere
Park Amenity
Green Space
(East)

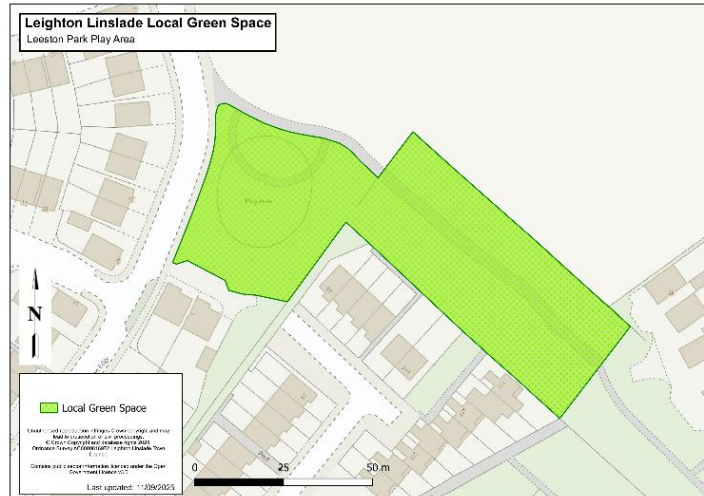


Yes

- Attractive green space within residential area
- Distinct from 67a – clearly separated from it by road
- Additional amenity and wildlife value provided by pond, which is a focal feature and well-maintained (duck house provided)
- Hedges and trees also add further wildlife value
- Also provides useful through route for local people.

69

Leeston Park
Play Area



Yes

- Within new development area, but incorporating pre-existing elements – e.g. mature tree avenue – high local landscape value
- Includes play area
- Important recreational space – location and connection value – includes open green space/green corridor.

74

Adams
Bottom Green
Space

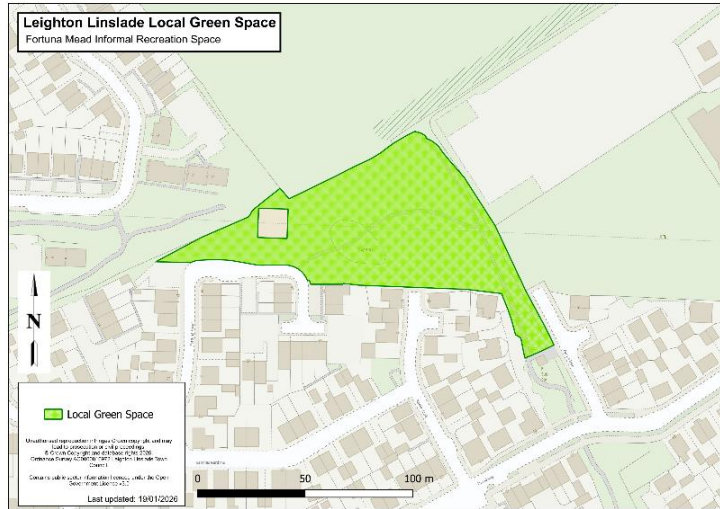


Yes

- Attractive and well managed green space within 'hollow' of a stream valley – high landscape value – especially when viewed from adjacent road.
- High recreational value – includes play area and connecting surfaced path through site.
- Within residential area, close to local schools
- High wildlife value – mature trees around perimeter, brook running through, three wildflower areas managed by Friends of the Earth.

75

Fortuna Mead
Informal
Recreation
Space

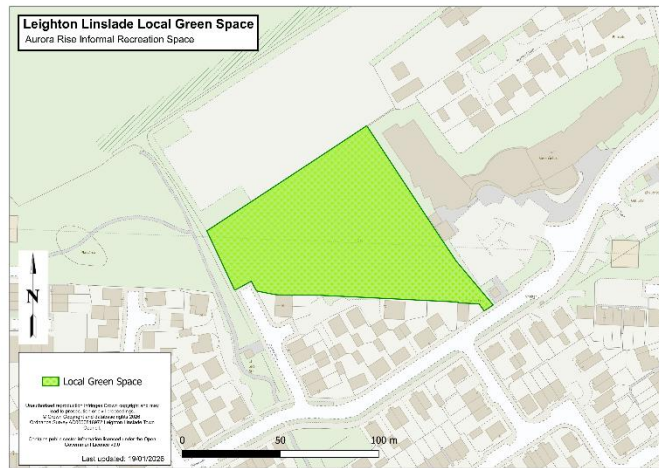


Yes

- Attractive green space – whilst a pylon stands in the site with others nearby, it still maintains an attractive, open quality
- Popular recreational site, adjacent to residential area.
- Play area, surfaced path – good level of facilities.
- Wildlife value – established mixed hedgerow. Was also noted that residents have hung up (and maintain) bird feeders in the hedge.



76

Aurora Rise
Informal
Recreation
Space



Yes

- Valued recreational site – adjacent to residential area.
- Established mature hedge along edge – wildlife value. Significant number of house sparrows, plus 5 other bird species observed during visit. Core area managed for taller vegetation/ for wildflowers.

		Sites rejected at Field Survey Stage		
	Southcott Farm Stud		No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly valued locally as open landscape and significant contribution to local landscape character. • Attractive area of small paddock-like fields and hedgerows – trees and hedgerows bring wildlife value <p>Space surveyed based on mapped information is not a clearly demarked space in its own right – difficult to divide this from open countryside. Further field survey would be required to ascertain if there is a distinct space.</p>
56	Rock Lane County Wildlife Site		No – considered to be an extensive linear feature rather than a specific green space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High wildlife value – mature, old hedgerow with significant trees • High historic value – ditch and bank feature prominent in places • High recreational value – well-used bridleway • High landscape value – buffer to urban edge.

37

Astral Lake
Park



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AC0000851074
Central Bedfordshire Council



No –
considered
extensive
(and only
part within
Leighton-
Linslade
parish) with
much of site
a large body
of open
water.

- Recreation value – including angling (but noted sections of perimeter path submerged and unusable)
- Landscape value – attractive setting/backdrop adjacent to residential development
- Wildlife value – open water, grassland and scrub habitats.

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 was 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

Lead author: Jon Balaam, Greensand Trust

Contributors: Cliff Andrews, BRCC, Laura Kitson & Sally Chapman, CBC