

ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE IN WARFIELD PARISH

Updated 23 February 2018

1. Introduction

Warfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has set out to identify important areas of Local Green Space across the parish. These are areas that hold a particular importance to the community, which if designated in the Neighbourhood Plan would be protected from inappropriate development.

The Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP) already identifies some open space as 'Green Space'. However, designation as a Local Green Space is something different. Introduced by the Government in 2012, the designation focusses on protecting areas which hold a particular significance to the local community. Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear that this designation should be consistent with the strategic aims of the BFLP and should not be a means of preventing the wider development needs of the district.

The Parish Council together with the Warfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared this assessment to create a consistent and transparent methodology for evaluating potential Local Green Space.

This assessment establishes four tests which potential sites must pass in order to qualify as Local Green Space. It also demonstrates how each of the sites identified in the Pre-Submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan satisfies these tests.

2. Policy Background

National Planning Policy

In March 2012 the Government, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), introduced a new Local Green Space designation. NPPF §76 allows local communities, through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan process, to identify areas of Local Green Space which are important to them and which should be provided special protection.

NPPF §77 makes it clear that the designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space and should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community which 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.

NPPF §78 states that Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

Additional guidance on Local Green Space designation is provided in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) ID: 37 Paragraphs 005-022. Of particular relevance to the Warfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan are the following paragraphs.

- §007 – 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 [Reference ID: 37-007-20140306].

- §011 – If land is already protected by designation (e.g. AONB, conservation area), then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space [Reference ID: 37-011-20140306].
- §013 – Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis [Reference ID: 37-013-20140306].
- §015 – Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a ‘back door’ way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name [Reference ID: 37-015-20140306].
- §020 – 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 [Reference ID: 37-020-20140306].

Criteria for assessing Local Green Space

Conservation Areas and Green Space (as identified on the BFLP Policies Map) have been excluded as potential areas of Local Green Space from the long list in “Warfield Open Spaces 25.02.16”, as these areas are protected under specific BFLP policies. Private gardens would also normally be excluded, except where a particular case can be made for their inclusion (such as where an area of Local Green Space would have a more coherent shape due to the inclusion of a small area of garden).

Wherever feasible, physical boundaries have been used to define Local Green Space. However, where no suitable boundary exists, other features have been used to demarcate the area, such as the line created by a neighbouring boundary.

Based on the principles established in the NPPF and PPG, four tests have been devised for identifying Local Green Space across the parish.

Test 1. Does the site already have planning permission, or has it been allocated for development in the BFLP?

- The first stage in the assessment will be to review the planning history of each site to ensure that it is not subject to an extant planning permission and that it has not been allocated for development under the BFLP.
- The Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land already has planning permission for development, or where it has been allocated for development under the BFLP.
- An exception to this may be where it can be demonstrated that the Local Green Space designation would be compatible with the planning permission / BFLP allocation, or where the planning permission / BFLP allocation is no longer capable of being implemented.

Test 2. Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

- The NPPF states that to be designated as a Local Green Space an area should be in reasonably close proximity to the community which it serves. Sites which are entirely isolated from the community will not be considered.
- PPG requires that if public access is a key factor, then the Local Green Space should normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. As a guide, the Steering Group has defined ‘easy walking distance’ as being within 5 minutes’ walking time of the nearest settlement boundary.
- It is recognised that some discretion may be needed depending on the topography of the area, the mobility and size of the community, and the size and function of the Local Green Space itself.

Test 3. Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

- The NPPF makes clear that the area to be designated should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

- PPG states that blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements is not appropriate.
- Whilst there is no size threshold proposed for an area of Local Green Space, the Parish Council considers that any site of more than 6 hectares might reasonably be interpreted as ‘extensive’ or ‘blanket’ based on examination experience.

Test 4. Is the site demonstrably special to the local community?

- The designation of Local Green Space must be based on evidence which demonstrates why the area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance. To pass this test, an area must be demonstrably special and locally significant in one of the following categories.
 - **Beauty** – This relates to the visual attractiveness and aesthetic value of the site, and its contribution to the streetscape, landscape, character or setting of a settlement. To qualify, the site should contribute significantly to local character, for example by defining a sense of place, or by helping to define the physical form of a settlement.
 - **Historic significance** – This relates to the historic importance a site holds for the local community. This could be because it contributes to the setting of a heritage asset or some other locally valued landmark. It might be because the site holds cultural associations which are of particular significance to the local community. Where the site is already protected by a designation (e.g. AONB), consideration should be given as to whether any additional benefit would result from designation as Local Green Space.
 - **Recreational value** – Sites would need to hold local significance for recreation and be important to the community for a particular recreation activity or range of activities. These could be formal or informal activities.
 - **Tranquillity** – In order to qualify, the site would need to be viewed by local people as important for the tranquillity it provided, offering a place for reflection and peaceful enjoyment.
 - **Richness of wildlife** – A site would need to be locally significant for wildlife in a way that could be demonstrated. It might, for example, home to species or habitats of principal importance, veteran trees, or locally characteristic plants and animals such as mistletoe. Where the site is already protected by a designation (e.g. SSSI), consideration should be given as to whether any additional benefit would result from designation as Local Green Space.
 - **Other reason** – Sites might be special and locally significant for reasons other than those identified above. For example, a site might make a particular contribution to defining the individual character of a settlement, or it might be an asset of community value.

Areas identified as potential Local Green Space

The table below provides information about each of the sites proposed as Local Green Space in the Pre-Submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan (June 2017). These have been assessed against each of the four tests set out above.

Map #	Location	Designations	Current Use	TEST 1: existing planning permission or BFBC allocation	TEST 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	TEST 3: extent of area (Ha)	TEST 4: demonstrably special & holds a particular local significance (beauty, historic significance, recreation value, tranquillity, richness of wildlife, other)
1	Chuff Corner		Recreational open space	No	Adjacent	0.28	Green space in urban area, runs along Gough's Lane an ancient right of way in Warfield
2	Warfield Memorial Ground	Land for community use	Recreational open space	No	Adjacent	1.84	Historical setting, been used as a cricket ground since the 1920s, has a play area and has been the location for the village fete for many years.
3	Frost Folly and associated Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)	Green Belt Owned by Harrow Estates. SANG approved in 15/01161/FUL on 11 Nov 2016, to be delivered in 3 years.	Arable farmland	No	290 metres	12.57 Exceeds the acceptable size limit.	Recreational value – easy access from a number of settlements and well connected by footpaths and road. Clear views of Warfield and Bracknell.
4	Hayley Green		Paddocks, arable farmland	No	Adjacent	1.5	Site has recreational value and also maintains a green space in Hayley Green, contributing to the character of Hayley Green
5	Hayley Green Wood	Owned by Bracknell Forest Council	Woodland	No	Adjacent	2.07	Recreational value, tranquillity, contributes to the setting of Hayley Green

Conclusion

Map #	Location	Outcome	Comment
1	Chuff Corner	Proceed	Take forward as a Local Green Space
2	Warfield Memorial Ground	Proceed	Take forward as a Local Green Space
3	Frost Folly and associated Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)	Withdraw	Green Belt land. Being delivered as a SANG. Fails Test 3.
4	Hayley Green	Defer	As of 5 Feb 2018, the developer's plans for Hayley Green are not mature enough to identify the specific area that would become the Local Green Space for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. In order not to delay the Neighbourhood Plan until this area can be defined and agreed with the developers, this site is being deferred from the Neighbourhood Plan for the period until 2026. The developers have agreed to maintain a Public Open Space at the Hayley Green site of around 2.4 Ha. Once this has been delivered, the intention is that this Space be taken forward as a Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan from 2026 when the Neighbourhood Plan is revised.
5	Hayley Green Wood	Withdraw	Owned by Bracknell Forest Council and suitably protected by BFC policies, therefore not to be taken forward as Local Green Space, but still considered as a Community Asset.

Appendix A – List of open green space sites considered from “Warfield Open Spaces 25.02.16”

Item	Name	Site Ref	Area (Ha)	Outcome	Comment
1	All Saints Rise	1	0.21	Withdrawn	Owned by Bracknell Forest Council and suitably protected by BFC policies, therefore not to be taken forward as Local Green Space. Sites over 0.5 Ha considered as Community Assets.
2	Chestnuts Lane	30	0.52		
3	Derbyshire Green	38	0.20		
4	Edmunds Lane	44	0.60		
5	Edmunds Green	45	2.27		
6	Garth Meadows	58	7.12		
7	Garth Pond	59	0.6		
8	Goddard Way	60	1.79		
9	Harvest Hill	64	2.73		
10	Hayley Green Woods Local Nature Reserve	65	2.07		
11	Kennel Lane	73	0.13		
12	Lark's Hill	82	7.44		
13	Newt Reserve, accessed from Flemish Place	95	0.84		
14	Piggy Wood	103	2.28		
15	Piggy Wood Quelm Lane link	104	0.13		
16	Piggy Wood Quelm Lane link	105	0.36		
17	Priory Copse (buffer planting land)	111	0.66		
18	Priory Fields	112	3.0		
19	Sage Walk	117	0.04		
20	The Chestnuts	134	1.06		
21	Warfield Chase/Land at Bedfordshire Down	144	0.97		
22	Warfield Memorial Park	145	1.84	Proceed	Included in the body of this document – see above.

Item	Name	Site Ref	Area (Ha)	Outcome	Comment
23	Westmorland Park	147	6.71	Withdrawn	Owned by Bracknell Forest Council and suitably protected by BFC policies, therefore not to be taken forward as Local Green Space. Sites over 0.5 Ha considered as Community Assets.
24	Whitegrove Copse	148	3.47		
25	Warfield Primary School	195	0.72		
26	Edmund Lane	226	0.24		
27	Near the Chestnuts	229	0.10		
28	Walsh Avenue	232	0.10		
29	Lambrook Haileybury School	Part 236	Part of 9.97	Withdrawn	Two parts of the site are in Warfield Parish, with the main part in Winkfield Parish. The parts in Warfield Parish are inside the Local Gap to the East of Hayley Green.
30	Cricketers Lane	237	0.15	Withdrawn	Inside the Local Gap to the East of Hayley Green
31	St Michaels Church Graveyard	317	0.32	Withdrawn	This is outside the Warfield Conservation Area and owned by the Church of England.
32	St Michaels Church	318	0.21	Withdrawn	This is inside the Warfield Conservation Area and is adequately protected.
33	Chuff Corner		0.28	Proceed	Included in the body of this document – see above.
34	South of Flemish Place		0.45	Withdrawn	Classed as Open Space of Public Value by Bracknell Forest Council and suitably protected by BFC policies.
35	Bullbrook Drive (part near Julius Hill)	24	0.25	Withdrawn	Owned by Bracknell Forest Council and suitably protected by BFC policies, therefore not to be taken forward as Local Green Space. The northern part of the Bullbrook Drive Recreational Area.
36	Avery Lane		0.08	Withdrawn	Public Byway
37	Hedge Lane		0.1	Withdrawn	Public Footpath