

# **Neighbourhood Planning Advice Notes**

## ***Local Green Space***

**May 2024**

### **1. Introduction**

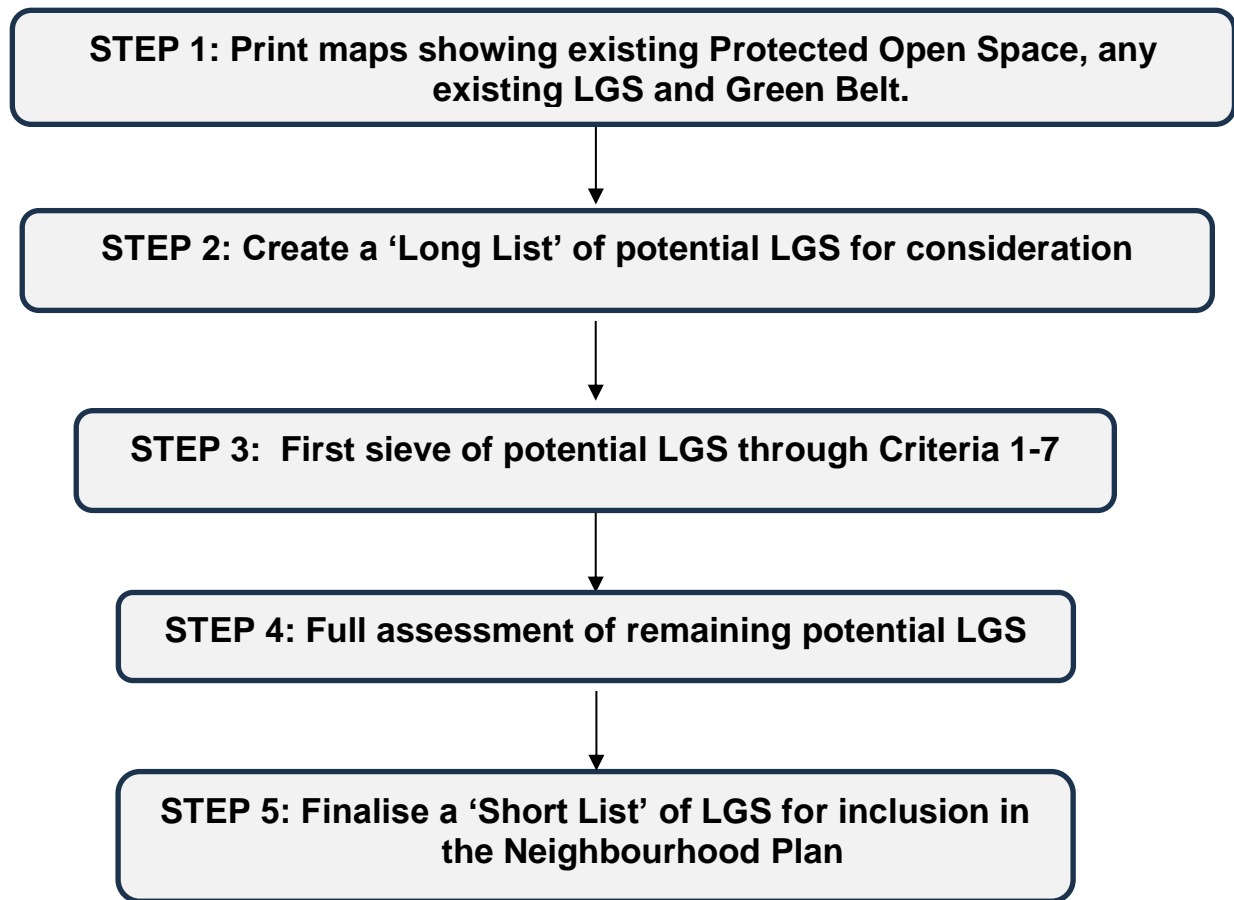
- 1.1 This Advice Note is intended to help town and parish councils involved in neighbourhood planning that wish to designate areas of Local Green Space (LGS).
- 1.2 LGS designation is a way to protect green areas spaces against development where they are of particular importance to local communities. LGS designations can be made in a policy in a neighbourhood plan and would be identified on the policy map.
- 1.3 Once designated, LGS receive protection consistent with national Green Belt policy.

### **2. Planning policy background**

#### **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 2.1 The designation of land as LGS through neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance.
- 2.2 LGS should only be designated where the green space is:
  - in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, (for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife); and
  - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 2.3 Once designated, the policy for managing development within a LGS should be consistent with that for Green Belts. National Green Belt policy requires that development deemed inappropriate, that is harmful to the designated land, will only be permitted where very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

### 3. Methodology for Designating Local Green Space



#### **Step 1: Identification of green open spaces**

- 3.1 The first step is to identify designated green spaces in the Parish, such as Protected Open Space, existing Local Green Spaces and / or Green Belt. A range of information sources can be used to inform this process (see Appendix 1).

#### **Step 2: Create a Long List of potential Local Green Spaces for consideration**

- 3.2 Secondly, identify spaces that have the potential to be new LGS. These may be identified by the group, by using maps or research or the community may be asked for suggestions.
- 3.3 You do not need to make any assessments at this stage. Keep all suggestions and a copy of this Long List to evidence the process has been properly undertaken.

#### **Step 3: First sieve of potential LGS through Criteria 1-7**

- 3.4 Once the Long List of green spaces has been compiled, members of the steering group will assess their suitability for designation as LGS against the criteria in the NPPF and NPPG as outlined below:
- 3.5 In order to be identified as LGS all of the criteria 1-7 must be met:

- **CRITERION 1: Sites with planning permission**

*LGS 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. (Paragraph 008 Reference ID: 37-008-20140306)*

- **CRITERION 2: Sustainable Development**

*Designating any LGS 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 LGS should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making. (Paragraph 007 Reference ID: 37-007-20140306)*

- **CRITERION 3: Allocated Sites**

*LGS designation should not normally be made on sites allocated for development in the Northumberland Local Plan, such as for housing or employment land.*

- **CRITERION 4: Green Belt land**

*If land is already protected by Green Belt policy, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS. One potential benefit in areas where protection from development is the norm (e.g. villages included in the green belt) but where there could be exceptions is that the Local Green Space designation could help to identify areas that are of particular importance to the local community. (Paragraph 010 Reference ID: 37-010-20140306)*

- **CRITERION 5: Other designations**

*If land is already protected by designation, for example, as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS. (Paragraph 011 Reference ID: 37-011-20140306). Sites that are already protected in other ways, for example graveyards owned and protected by the Anglican Church and designated wildlife sites may not require further consideration either.*

- **CRITERION 6: Size of LGS**

*LGS 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. (Paragraph 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306)*

- **CRITERION 7/8: Local in character / Proximity to the community**

*The proximity of a LGS to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close. For example, if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. (Paragraph 014 Reference ID: 37-014-20140306)*

### 3.6 Also consider the following when sieving the Long List:

- **New residential areas**

*These may include green areas that were planned as part of the development. Such green areas could be designated as LGS if they are demonstrably special and hold particular local significance. (Paragraph 012 Reference ID: 37-012-20140306)*

- **Type of LGS**

*In order to be designated as LGS, the green area will need to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis. (Paragraph 013 Reference ID: 37-013-20140306)*

- **Public access**

*Land can be designated as LGS even if there is no public access. Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access beyond any rights that existed prior to designation. (Paragraph 017 Reference ID: 37-017-20140306)*

- **Public rights of way**

*Areas that may be considered for designation as LGS may be crossed by public rights of way. There is no need to designate linear corridors as LGS simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation. (Paragraph 018 Reference ID: 37-018-20140306)*

- **Public ownership**

*A LGS does not need to be in public ownership. However, before any land is proposed for designation as LGS it is essential that landowners are made aware of that intention at an early stage of plan preparation. Landowners will have opportunities to make representations in respect of proposals in a draft plan. (Paragraph 019 Reference ID: 37-019-20140306)*

- **Restrictions or obligations on landowners**

*Designating a green area as LGS would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners. (Paragraph 020 Reference ID: 37-020-20140306)*

- **Managing the LGS**

*Management of land designated as LGS will remain the responsibility of its owner. If the features that make a green area special and locally significant are to be conserved, how it will be managed in the future is likely to be an important consideration. Local communities can consider how, with the landowner's agreement, they might be able to get involved, perhaps in partnership with interested organisations that can provide advice or resources. (Paragraph 021 Reference ID: 37-021-20140306)*

- 3.7 Conclude with whether all the nationally required criteria have been met.

#### **Step 4: Full assessment of remaining potential LGS**

- 3.8 Once the Long List of green spaces has been filtered down, members of the steering group will assess their suitability for designation as LGS against the 'demonstrably special' criteria in the NPPF and NPPG as outlined below:

- ***Demonstrably special***

*LGS may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community, whether in a village or in a neighbourhood in a town or city. LGS may be special and / or hold particular significance for one or more reasons, for example, because of its beauty, its historic significance, its recreational value, its tranquility, or its richness of wildlife. (Paragraph 009 Reference ID: 37-009-20140306)*

- 3.9 At this stage provide more detailed site assessments for those sites considered suitable as LGS. A suggested template that could be used is provided in Appendix 3. In addition, photographic evidence should be provided for each site plus an outline map.

#### **Step 5: Finalise a 'Short List' for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan**

- 3.10 For sites that are not considered to meet the required criteria, consideration should be given to whether they could be designated as *protected openspace*, for example to reflect their value in terms of local amenity or informal recreation.
- 3.11 Prior to formal consultation on the proposed LGS, contact should be made with the owners of the sites (where ownership information is available).

## **Appendix 1. Sources of Information**

[Northumberland Local Plan interactive policies map](#)

[Northumberland Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Assessment](#)

[Northumberland Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)

[South East Northumberland Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)

[Conservation Areas in Northumberland](#)

[Historic Landscape Character](#)

[Heritage Gateway \(Historic Environment Record\)](#)


[DEFRA Magic Map](#)

[Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment, Part A: Landscape Classification](#)

[Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment Part B: The changing Landscape](#)

[Northumberland Key Land Use Impact Study Part A: Landscape Sensitivity at Settlement Edges](#)

## Appendix 2. LGS Assessment Example

Site Ref	LGS01	
Site Name	Millennium Garden	
Ownership	Owner - Northumberland County Council Tenant – Warkworth Parish Council	
		
All the following criteria must be met	Yes / No	Comments
1. Site is subject to planning permission	No	N/A
2. Site is required to meet other needs of the Neighbourhood Plan	No	N/A
3. Site is allocated for development in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan	No	N/A
4. The site is designated as Green Belt land	No	N/A
5. The site is subject to other designations like National Park or AONB	No	N/A
6. Site is an extensive tract of land	No	A small area of land adjacent to the bridge tower and bridge.
7. Site is local in character	Yes	Located within the village centre.
8. Site is within close proximity of the community it serves	Yes	Walkable from all parts of the village.

**Answer must be 'NO' to Criteria 1-6 and 'YES' to criteria 7/8 in order to progress onto the significance assessment below.**

<b>Demonstrably Special criteria</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Comments</b> <i>Add detail to justify the importance of the site.</i>
<b><i>Site is particularly beautiful</i></b>	Yes	The garden overlooks the old Bridge and fortified bridge tower. 196 people in the survey valued it for its beauty.
<b><i>Site has particular historic significance</i></b>	Yes	Like many other towns and villages, a Millennium Garden was created to celebrate the Year 2000. The site is within the Conservation Area.
<b><i>Site has recreational value</i></b>	Yes	Part of the gardens are maintained by the 'In Bloom' community group. There are several planted areas with a wide range of flowers and shrubs. There is a boat filled with flowers too. The area has several mature trees, with seating areas beneath. It is used by dog walkers, residents and visitors. We also have our Little Free Library situated in the corner of the garden, ideal for those who can't access a library out of the village. For some residents with mobility issues, the garden is the only safe and accessible place they can get to.
<b><i>Site has tranquility</i></b>	Yes	For those who are unable to walk along the riverbank footpaths, this garden provides the perfect place to sit and rest and watch the world go by.
<b><i>Site has rich wildlife</i></b>	No	N/A
<b><i>Site has significance because of another reason</i></b>	No	N/A

An LGS site must be demonstrably special to the local community and hold particular local significance. Please note an LGS might have only one type of special value. Enter 'No' and leave comment box blank where a value is not relevant.

### **Summary**

As one resident described it, the Millennium Garden is 'the face of the village'. It is the first area you see when you enter the village by crossing the bridge, and as such, provides the first impression of the village. The garden is a beautiful part of the village. It is highly valued by residents for its recreational value, tranquility and beauty, as evidenced in the resident's survey. The site therefore meets the requirements of local green space designation.



### Appendix 3. LGS Assessment Blank Template

<b>Site Ref</b>		
<b>Site Name</b>		
<b>Ownership</b>		
<b>All the following criteria must be met</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>1. Site is subject to a planning permission</i>		
<i>2. Site is required to meet other needs of the Neighbourhood Plan</i>		
<i>3. Site is allocated for development in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan</i>		
<i>4. The site is designated as Green Belt land</i>		
<i>5. The site is subject to other designations like National Park or AONB</i>		
<i>6. Site is an extensive tract of land</i>		
<i>7. Site is local in character</i>		
<i>8. Site is within close proximity of the community it serves</i>		
<p><b>Answer must be 'NO' to Criteria 1-6 and 'YES' to criteria 7/8 in order to progress onto the significance assessment below.</b></p>		

Demonstrably Special criteria	Yes / No	Comments <i>Add detail to justify the importance of the site.</i>
<i>Site is particularly beautiful</i>		
<i>Site has particular historic significance</i>		
<i>Site has recreational value</i>		
<i>Site has tranquility</i>		
<i>Site has rich wildlife</i>		
<i>Site has significance because of another reason</i>		
<p>An LGS site must be demonstrably special to the local community and hold particular local significance. Please note an LGS might have only one type of special value. Enter 'No' and leave comment box blank where a value is not relevant.</p>		
Summary		
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