

**North Lincolnshire Local Plan (2020 To 2038)
Publication Draft (Regulation 19)**

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**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN
LOCAL GREEN SPACE ASSESSMENT**

OCTOBER 2021

North Lincolnshire Local Green Space Assessment

1. Introduction

- 1.1 North Lincolnshire Council is preparing a new Local Plan as a framework for future development, which will cover the period to 2038. As part of the process North Lincolnshire Council has undertaken a number of pieces of work on both supporting evidence, and methodologies for proposed sites.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes policies relating to the designation of land that is significant to local communities as a 'Local Green Space' designation. This gives communities an opportunity to identify and protect demonstrably significant green spaces in their local area. The criteria by which the Local Planning Authorities will judge such applications for Local Green Space are set out within this assessment.
- 1.3 NPPF states that Local Green Space should only be designated when a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan is prepared or reviewed.
- 1.4 As part of the process of preparing a new Local Plan, the council has undertaken a 'Call for Sites' exercise, in which the public were invited to submit sites for various purposes. Amongst these submissions were some proposals for land to be designated as 'Local Green Space'. This document expands on the criteria that the council has used in order to assess these sites for their suitability, and includes the assessment of sites recommendations as an appendix.

National Policy Context

- 1.5 NPPF paragraphs 101, 102 and 103 are specifically related to Local Green Space designation.
- 1.6 Paragraph 101 stipulates that local communities can identify, through local and neighbourhood plans, green areas of particular importance to them to be granted special protection as Local Green Space. Such designation should only be designated when the plan is prepared or updated.
- 1.7 Paragraph 102 expands on how the appropriateness of such applications should be judged, including guidance on proximity, significance, and scale of a proposed site. This paragraph states that, Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- a) in reasonably close to the proximity to the community it serves
 - b) 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
 - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

- 1.8 This paragraph establishes broad criteria by which a Local Green Space proposal might be assessed: proximity, beauty, historical significance, recreational value, tranquillity, wildlife, and site size/scale. It does not, however, define what is meant by these specifically.
- 1.9 Paragraph 103 clarifies that local policy for managing development within Local Green Spaces should be consistent with Green Belt policy. This means that a Local Green Space could not be developed upon unless there are “very special circumstances”.
- 1.10 The NPPF does not define what is meant by terms such as “reasonably close”, “significant” or “extensive” for the purposes of this designation; however, Planning Practice Guidance does provide some clarification. Key points include:
- Local Green Space should not be used in a way that undermines the aim of plan making (plans must identify land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs);
 - Local Green Space will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development, although exceptions include where this can no longer be implemented, or the development is compatible with the designation;
 - New communities can designate Local Green Space if they are of particular significance to the community;
 - Local Green Spaces can be designated on land already protected by other designations (such as an SSSI), if this can provide additional benefits;
 - Designation of Local Green Space is a matter for local discretion, they must meet the criteria of paragraph 102.
 - Proximity of Local Green Spaces to the community it serves depend on local circumstances. If public access is a key factor then the site would normally be in easy walking distance of the community it serves.
 - Sites do not have to have public access to them; particularly areas protected for reasons of wildlife, historic significance and / or beauty may be protected without being able to be accessed by the public. Where sites are not in public ownership, the local planning authority or neighbourhood plan group should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate land. Management of the Local Green Space remains the responsibility of the landowner, unless local communities agree with the landowner a means of helping manage the site;
 - There are no minimum and maximum sizes providing the criteria of paragraph 102 are met, however blanket designation of open countryside is inappropriate.
 - Local Green Space can also be registered as an Asset of Community Value.
- 1.11 The Planning Practice Guidance provides useful additional information on how the government see Local Green Space designations being utilised, their scope and limits. The above summaries should be taken into account alongside NPPF paragraphs 101 - 103.
- 1.12 However, whilst the Planning Practice Guidance provides some clarification on Local Green Space designation, it does not specify how the qualifying criteria’s should be quantified and judged. These criteria’s have been left to Local Authorities to determine.

2. **North Lincolnshire Methodology**

- 2.1 Having regards to national guidance and local interpretations of the NPPF Local Green Space policy, a methodology for assessing applications for the designation of Local Green Space has been devised. This is set out below.
- 2.2 **Step 1: Site Submissions** – The NPPF is clear that it is local communities that should identify potential LGS's, through Local and Neighbourhood Plans. Local communities were given the opportunity to submit LGS's during the 'Call for Sites' period opened at the Initial Consultation (Regulation 18) between late February and mid-April 2017, Issues & Options (Regulation 18) in February and March 2018, and Preferred Options (Regulation 18) in February and March 2020. They were asked to provide a map of the site and supporting information as to how they believe the site meets the criteria for LGS designation.
- 2.3 **Step 2: Site Sieve** – Sites submitted for consideration as LGS were assessed by officers in the Place Planning team on a site by site basis. All the sites proposed for LGS have been mapped out on a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and given a unique reference number. Unfortunately, on some occasions it was not possible to identify LGS nominations from the information provided. Reasons for this include the omission of a clear site map or general statements provided for proposed land use, such as open space. These sites were removed from the assessment process.
- 2.4 **Step 3: Site Assessment** – The sites that remained were assessed via an Assessment Framework (Appendix 1) according to the criteria of the NPPF and Government guidance as detailed below.
- 2.5 The NPPF stipulates the conditions of Local Green Space designation: *"The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:*
- a) *in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
 - b) *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*
 - c) *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*
- 2.6 Therefore, proposed Local Green Spaces must be assessed against these criteria, however there are areas of ambiguity within the NPPF. For the purposes of this Local Green Space Assessment, the Council has defined the following characteristics in accordance with the NPPF.
- 2.7 For the purposes of this Local Green Space Assessment the following criteria will apply:
- "Reasonably close proximity" is defined as no more than 1.5km from the boundary of the settlement in question.

- “Demonstrably special to a local community” – It must be demonstrated that the site is special to the local community by meeting at least one of the following criteria: aesthetic, historic, natural, recreational and tranquillity value. To be designated as Local Green Space each site must be shown to have value in at least one of these areas and that this is significant in the context of the settlement in question. The Council can only assess sites based on the evidence that we can directly gather thus anecdotal evidence cannot be utilised in the assessment of the proposed site.
- “Local in character” will be defined as “Reasonably close proximity” as above.
- “Extensive tract of land” will be defined as a plot of land over 3 hectare in area.

2.8 The aesthetic, historic, natural, recreational value of proposed sites will be assessed as follows:

- Aesthetic – The site must be of significance due to its beauty. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to ‘natural beauty’, and the site could incorporate manmade features that contribute to its overall visual attractiveness. In addition to the visual attractiveness of the site consideration should be given as to how the site relates to the local landscape, townscape, and character, and how the site functions aesthetically within it. The site may also provide locally valued views to or from it.
- Historical – The site must be demonstrably historically significant, which may be because:
 - Historical features exist on the site, such as a scheduled monument, listed building or veteran trees and ancient hedgerows;
 - The site contributes to the significance of a heritage asset;
 - An event of demonstrable historical significance has taken place on the site, or historical rituals have occurred on the site. The site may also have a monument or memorial to a historical event or period located on it. This should be of significant local or community interest;
 - The site has a historical art or literature connection, or is mentioned in a historical text. Such links should be well documented, substantiated, and significant;
 - The character and appearance of the site contributes to an important historical setting
- Natural - There is evidence that the site has a richness of wildlife, and this can be objectively supported. Habitats, species, flora, and fauna found on the site may be recognised through an existing wildlife designation, or through wildlife protection regulations and acts. The site may also support irreplaceable habitats or form part of a wildlife corridor or green infrastructure. Additionally, the site may be demonstrably used by the local community for a local wildlife study, or for wildlife related activities. Such activities may not be available elsewhere in the locality or are specific to this site.
- Recreational - The public have access to the site, and the site supports a variety of recreational opportunities that are not supported on other open spaces within the local community.

2.9 The NPPF also stipulates the relationship between Local Green Space and the development needs of an area: *“The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular*

importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.” (NPPF Para 99)

2.10 The above makes it clear that Local Green Space designation cannot take priority over the development or service needs of an area. The purpose of Local Green Space is not to stop development within an area. Therefore, a general desire to stop development within an area cannot be used as a justification for the designation of a site as Local Green Space. The justification must relate to the site in question and specify why this site in particular is justified for Local Green Space Designation. In order to overcome this the following criteria are applied:

- Existing Permissions - Allocation of a site with an existing planning permission on it will not be permitted, unless it can be shown that:
 - The permission will no longer be implemented, or;
 - The designation would be compatible with the permission.
- Existing Allocations - Allocation of a site as Local Open Space on land already designated for an alternative use in the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans will not be acceptable, unless:
 - The Local Green Space can be incorporated into the site as part of the allocated development.
 - The site is no longer being promoted for this use or is incapable of being implemented.

2.11 Local Green Space is not the only potential way of conserving areas of green space. The Council has options to designate areas of recreation, natural or amenity importance at its own discretion. This is not subject to the same strict criteria of Local Green Space, but also is likely to provide a lesser degree of protection. Therefore, if a proposed site fails to be designated as Local Green Space it may be considered for other designations under the new North Lincolnshire Local Plan which could offer other forms of protection (e.g. playing fields, important open amenity areas).

2.12 The designation of sites for Local Green Space should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, in some cases, other designations may negate Local Green Space designation; e.g., Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are already protected and there would be no merit in designating such a site as Local Green Space.

2.13 Local Green Space sites must already exist prior to designation, e.g. proposed green space forming part of plans for a new residential development would not be considered for Local Green Space Designation.

2.14 **Step 4: Selecting Sites for LGS Designation** – A detailed assessment for each site (Assessment Framework) was created based on the information submitted during “Call for Sites”. A list of suitable sites has been established from this framework along with a justification as to why each site was suitable or why it has been rejected. A total of 17 sites are recommended for designation as LGS. It is important to note that this process will be replicated after each new “Call for Sites” engagement exercise.

2.15 Table 1-1 below identifies the assessment process utilising the agreed methodology and the recommendation using a RAG rating.

Designating a Local Green Space

2.16 Subject to the above criteria being met for designations, and subject to the Local Authority and, if relevant, Neighbourhood Planning groups being satisfied at the special nature of the sites proposed for this purpose, the sites can be included in the relevant emerging planning document as a proposed site allocation.

2.17 This proposal will then be tested at examination stage by an independent planning inspector, who will ensure that the whole plan, including the rationale for the proposed Local Green Space, is robust and sound.

2.18 Subject to this being found sound, the space will be formally designated upon adoption of the Local Plan. In accordance with the NPPF, the site will have a protected status.

2.19 The local planning authority received a number of representations for land to be allocated as local green space. These have been assessed as set out in Table 1-1.

2.20 For the North Lincolnshire Local Plan, the allocated Local Green Spaces sites are as follows:

Site Name	Location
Hood Field and 2 pieces of associated land to west of Haxey, Upper Thorpe Road Westwoodside (TACME)	Haxey
The Paddock, adjacent to Churchside, Appleby (RGNW0) (IPANA)	Appleby
Playing Field, Appleby (TTCYP)	Appleby
The Green Kirton in Lindsey (X5H2A)	Kirton in Lindsey
Whipping Post / Sunny Hill Triangle, Kirton in Lindsey (RJIL2)	Kirton in Lindsey
Cemetery, Grove Street, Kirton in Lindsey (GKQKS)	Kirton in Lindsey
Ash Well, Kirton in Lindsey (7JRKJ)	Kirton in Lindsey
Former RAF Kirton Playing Fields, Kirton in Lindsey (KOXG1)	Kirton in Lindsey
Playing field to the rear of former Brumby Hospital, East Common Lane, Scunthorpe (NJAHP) (HRGCK)	Scunthorpe
Land to the north of the track leading to Ladysmith Cottage, Top Road, Worlaby (TE9Y1)	Worlaby
Top Road, Worlaby (KQKKO)	Worlaby
Woodland adjoining the south side of The Hill, Worlaby and being contiguous with a wetland area to the south and to Hillside Plantation to the east. (KFOBT)	Worlaby
The Hill, Worlaby, (W8258) <i>(site joined with 6MPOM to form single site)</i>	Worlaby

Land within the Hurds Farm Estate, Worlaby (TO208)	Worlaby
The Hollows	Worlaby
Land adjacent to The Hill, Worlaby (6MP0M) <i>(site joined with W8258 to form single site)</i>	Worlaby

3. Next Steps

3.1 Sites recommended for designation as LGS are listed in the Local Green Space Assessment Framework and shown on the Policies Map that accompanies the Local Plan. Those sites not considered to meet the LGS criteria may still be protected under other policies in the Local Plan and/or other legislation. Members of the public, landowners and organisations will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed LGS designations as part of the Local Plan consultation process.