



Werrington Neighbourhood Plan Evidence File

Open Space Assessment, Local Green Spaces,
Natural Habitat Areas, and Tree Review



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This assessment was undertaken in during 2020 and was compiled by the Steering Group with assistance from local residents, revised and updated in 2023.

Mapping:

Maps not to scale

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. One of Werrington’s key characteristics is its greenness with the presence of trees and other flora. This is evidence throughout the village extending into the newer areas of Werrington with formal and informal open spaces and planting as part of the residential areas. As part of the Werrington Neighbourhood Plan process it is possible to protect some of the green spaces that are of particular importance to the community.
- 1.2. This assessment reviews a number of open areas in and around Werrington to consider whether some form of protection would be suitable within the neighbourhood plan.

2. OVERVIEW

2.1 Local Green Space Designation

- 2.1.1 Open spaces can be protected through a number of means within a neighbourhood plan. One such way to afford this protection is through designation of areas as Local Green Space (LGS), a designation introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)(July 2021) which offers strong protection against development on areas of green space. By designating an area as a Local Green Space, a community can rule out development other than in very special circumstances.
- 2.1.2 The assessment has been carried out in accordance with the paras 98 to 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It has also had regard to the guidance provided in the Locality Toolkit for Local Green Space designations¹.
- 2.1.3. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF sets out the parameters as:
“Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport, and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”
- 2.1.4 Paragraph 101 of the NPPF states:
‘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. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.’
- 2.1.5 Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate in many circumstances and many open spaces will not meet the criteria required in order for this designation to be used. In order to be designated as a Local Green Space, paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that an open space must be:
 - In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
 - Demonstrably special to the local community and hold a particular local significance, such as for its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - Local in character and not an extensive tract of land

¹ <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/>

2.1.6 The NPPF does not define what is precisely meant in relation to the criteria for designating Local Green Space. Peterborough City Council has, however, provided the following clarification:

Extract from: Peterborough Local Plan: Local Green Space and Protected Green Space in Villages Evidence Report (PE10)

Table 3.1. Local Green Space Preferred Site Selection Criteria	
Criteria	Explanation
1. Are in close proximity to the community they serve	<p>The NPPG states the proximity of a Local Green Space will depend on local circumstances. If public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served.</p> <p>In Peterborough, the Local Green Space should be in easy walking distance (up to 300m or a 5-minute walk) from the local community it serves and must not be isolated or distant from communities.</p> <p>Consideration will also be given to physical connections to the site, such as footpaths and roads.</p>
2. Are local in character and not an extensive tract of land.	<p>There is no set size limit for a Local Green Space. Blanket designations of swathes of open land adjacent to settlements would not be appropriate (for example Green Wedges). Sites suitable for designation would normally be self-contained with clearly defined edges.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to whether a site feels local in character and scale and how the site connects to the local area, physically, visually, and socially.</p> <p>Where a site is considered to be an extensive tract of land, a smaller area or areas within this wider area may be considered for designation.</p>
3. Demonstrably special to the local community because of its:	<p>For a green area or open space to be designated as a LGS, it must meet at least one of the five demonstrably special criteria. (See section 3 Application of demonstrably special criteria below for further details)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty • Historic significance • Recreational value • Tranquillity • Richness of its wildlife 	
4. Consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs, and other essential services. Capable of enduring beyond the plan period.	<p>Local Green Space designations are not normally appropriate for sites with existing planning permission or allocated in the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan for other uses, unless it can be demonstrated that the Local Green Space can be incorporated within the site as part of the development.</p> <p>How a LGS will be managed in the future is an important consideration, if the features that make it special or locally</p>

Local Green Space Criteria Approach

In relation to the five demonstrable special criteria set out in the above table, Peterborough City Council considers the following information in applying the criteria:

i. Beauty

Whether an open space is beautiful is subjective and can be open to interpretation.

Assessment against this criterion considered:

- This visual attractiveness of this site as a whole.
- Whether the site makes a significant contribution to landscape or townscape character and local distinctiveness.
- Whether the site makes a significant contribution to the physical form and layout of a settlement or neighbourhood or to a particular street scene.
- Whether the site offers an important public view/s through or beyond a settlement or neighbourhood.
- Whether the site offers an important public view/s towards or out of locally valued landmarks.

ii. Historic Significance

The assessment of historic significance has been informed by consideration of:

- Whether the site provides a setting for heritage assets or other locally valued landmarks, such as war memorials.
- Whether the site contains any historical features, such as ancient trees.
- Whether the site is associated with a historical figure or event.
- Whether there are any regular historical or cultural events, such as a village fete, that are held on the site.

iii. Recreational Value

Most publicly accessible open spaces have some recreational value. However, to meet the criteria, sites should provide an important recreational asset for the community. This could be for a particular recreation activity or a range of activities, and formal and/or informal activities. Formal uses may include, for example, facilities such as play areas, football pitches and tennis courts. Informal uses may include, for example, dog walking, walking, and jogging. Sites with no public access are considered to have limited recreational value.

The Peterborough Open Spaces Strategy (2016) is a useful source for identifying areas deficient in certain types of open space. This will help determine the importance of a site to the community for its recreational value.

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.

School playing fields are generally not publicly accessible. Additionally, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to place great weight (at paragraph 72) on the need for schools to expand or alter. Because of this, LGS designations within school grounds, including playing fields, are very unlikely to be suitable for designation.

iv. Tranquillity

Sites need to demonstrate a high degree of self-containment, a feeling of remoteness and quiet contemplation for the majority of the site and a general lack of artificial noise and disturbance on site, such as road traffic or nearby industry.

v. Richness of Wildlife

Many open spaces offer some benefits to wildlife. However, for a site to meet this criterion, there would need to be evidence that it is rich in wildlife, such as species records, ecological evidence, or expert advice. Sites already designated, such as SSSIs or CWSs are generally not considered appropriate as for LGS designation, as these are considered to be adequately protected by national legislation and other policies in the Local Plan.

- 2.1.7 Where an open space does not meet the criteria for Local Green Space designation it does not mean that it does not necessarily warrant a different form of protection.

Other Open Spaces

Existing non designated open spaces will, in principle, be protected from development. New development that will result in the loss of existing open space will not be supported unless the criteria in the NPPF are met. In addition, if the requirements of the NPPF can be satisfied, the proposal must also demonstrate that:

- a. The open space does not make an important contribution to the green infrastructure network or connectivity of habitats, and the development would not result in landscape or habitat fragmentation or incremental loss; and
- b. The proposed development can be accommodated on the open space without causing significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, ecology, or any heritage assets.

2.2 Biodiversity areas and tree features

The criteria and process used for Local Green Space Designation was also able to be used to identify those areas important for biodiversity and wildlife connectivity.

- 2.2.1 Several of the areas assessed as part of the Open Space were especially rich in wildlife largely due to the range and wealth of habitat. This was usually where dense woodland or overgrown areas were adjacent to grassland and/or The Brook. These were considered for specific identification as important biodiversity areas.
- 2.2.2 Another part of this assessment was the importance of trees to residents being highlighted forming the backdrop to all parts of the Designated Area. There are numerous mature trees within gardens or part of the street scene within the Conservation Area and Wider Village, many subject to a Tree Protection Order too numerous to list. Whilst for the most part these are able to be included in as Open Green Space Designation or as a Biodiversity Area some do not, and a separate schedule of trees was compiled.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The assessment for designation underwent three stages:

Stage 1: A list of open spaces in and around Werrington was compiled for consideration. This was compiled using local knowledge, using the character assessment work, feedback received through the community consultations. The listings were collaborated on through several steering group and Forum meetings and (as seen in Appendix A).

Stage 2: The Steering Group reviewed the list of open spaces and applied the criteria for Local Green Space designation (seen in Appendix A).

Stage 3: 14 of these open spaces were then analysed in detail and an overview was completed in each case. These areas were chosen for their size, their importance to the local community and their importance for biodiversity (seen on Appendix B).

Stage 4: From this assessment six open spaces were identified for Local Green Space Designation; eight areas were determined to be important for biodiversity and list of important trees and tree features highlighted. The selection of these areas was publicised through meetings and consultation displays with residents encouraged to give feedback.

3.2 This assessment does not intend to review every area of undeveloped land in Werrington, but instead focuses on areas that are within the built-up area of Werrington, those with public access, and those of a particular other importance highlighted by the Neighbourhood Forum, through the community questionnaire, or through the Consultation events.

3.3 Certain areas already have a protective designation offered to them. The review therefore assessed an area only if a LGS designation would offer any additional benefit.

- i) The following areas are already designated as Open Green Spaces: Cuckoos Hollow LGS091 and LGS0954 (which includes the Brook area), Werrington Recreation Ground LGS095 (which includes Werrington Paddocks). These are referred to in the Peterborough Local Plan: Local Green Space and Protected Green Space in Villages Evidence Report (January 2018)
- ii) Werrington Village Green is already designated as a Protected Village Green. Village Greens receive considerable statutory protection under the Inclosure Act 1857 and the Commons Act 1876 which provide a greater degree of protection than that of LGS designation. As a result, spaces which are designated as Village Greens should not be designated as LGS. It is understood that the 'Middle Green' by the Parish Church also has similar designation.
- iii) Statutory Allotment sites need the consent of the Secretary of State and other criteria to be satisfied before disposal or loss of plots to development.² Despite this, allotments can be designated as Local Green Spaces, where they are demonstrably special.
- iv) Werrington Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is protected by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and local and national planning policy. Development within the area should protect and enhance the area. However, this is not considered to give the same degree of local protection to the space as LGS designation.
- v) For a churchyard to be designated as a LGS, "particular" significance is expected, going beyond the everyday reverence which is paid to such places although it would be classed as part of the Green Infrastructure. Unless very special circumstances exist, such spaces are not considered suitable for LGS designation.

²/www.gov.uk/government/publications/allotment-disposal-guidance-safeguards-andalternatives



Werrington Village Green



Werrington Middle Green

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1. The assessment identifies that each of the open areas considered in this assessment performs at least one important function, providing some benefit to the community, but not all warrant additional protection in the neighbourhood plan as a Local Green Space. Others fulfil an important role providing a range of habitats for nature and are appropriate to be noted as an Important Area of Natural Habitat.
- 4.2. Of the 35 areas assessed (in Appendix A and B), this assessment recommends that the following areas are allocated as Local Green Space in the Werrington Neighbourhood Plan where it is proposed that development will not be allowed other than in very special circumstances.

Designated Open Green Space
Werrington Allotments
Playing Fields adjacent to Ken Stimpson Academy
Playing Fields adjacent to William Law Primary School
Hodgson Avenue Playing Fields
Larks Green Playground and Playing Fields
Fox Covert, Sobrite Spring and Newt Pond Fields

- 4.3. Of the 35 areas assessed, there are eight areas that are important biodiversity areas and are appropriate to be identified as an Important Area of Natural Habitat within the Werrington Neighbourhood Plan.

Important Areas of Natural Habitat
Woodland and Meadows adjacent to The Pastures
Werrington Paddocks and Wildflower Meadow
Werrington Brook and Meadows
Cuckoos Hollow
Werrington Parkway Shelter Belt
Serjeants Way and Davids Close Shelter Belt
A15 shelter belt
Fox Covert, Sobrite Spring and Newt Pond Field
Land Adjacent to Werrington Allotments
Boundary woodland, hedgerows, and rewilding area of the Fields adjacent to Ken Stimpson Academy

4.4 Many of Werrington’s prominent trees have been included in the Open Space Assessment in Appendix B and are mostly part of a wider open space or more likely and Important Area of Natural Habitat. The following schedule details the prominent trees or tree features most valued by residents and which are considered appropriate to be identified within the Werrington Neighbourhood Plan.

Specific Tree Features
<p>Tree avenues of Werrington’s cycleways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coverdale Walk, - William Law Fields, - Hodgson Avenue Fields, - Adjacent Woodhall Rise, - Fox Covert Walk, - Stimpson Walk rear of Rowland Court
<p>Tree avenues of Werrington’s roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheldrick Walk / Rushden Avenue / Twelvetree Avenue - Staniland Way, - Southwell Avenue, - Goodwin Walk and Davids Lane)
Three pines in Parish Church Graveyard
Oak tree rear of Blue Bell public house
Willows adjacent close to Cuckoos Hollow Cycle Path adjacent to Welbourne

APPENDICES ARE FOUND IN THE SEPARATE DOCUMENT

