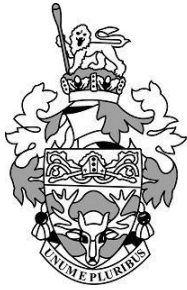


# Topic Paper

## Local Green Space

January 2020

To accompany the Draft Local Plan Update consultation



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 This topic paper provides background and evidence and justification for Wokingham Borough Council's designation of Local Green Space. It sets out the relevant policy guidance and details the methodology used for determining Local Green Space, and includes the individual assessments for promoted sites.
- 1.2 The topic paper supports the Local Plan Update: Draft Plan Consultation January 2020. The Draft Plan is a key step in producing the final Wokingham Local Plan Update. It sets out a set of draft policies for comment, and is supported by a series of evidence studies and papers.
- 1.3 The council will review all representations received to the consultation, including those relating to background and evidence. An amended Plan will then be submitted to the government for examination.

## 2. Planning Framework

### National Planning Policy Framework

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the government on 19 February 2019. It sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development should be produced.

2.2 The NPPF introduced a new optional designation of Local Green Space with paragraph 99 stating:

“the designation of land as a Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.”

2.3 Local Green Space designations are not required to be included in local plans, but may help to achieve broad planning aims required by the NPPF, such as creating sustainable communities, ensuring access to open space and recreation, conserving historic assets and preventing harmful development on or adjacent to public open space.

2.4 Paragraph 100 continues to consider the circumstances in which land may be allocated as Local Green Space:

“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.”

2.5 Paragraph 101 states that:

“policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”

### Planning Practice Guidance

2.6 The NPPF is supported by a series of Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The PPG ‘Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space’ provides further guidance on Local Green Space.

2.7 The PPG reinforces the NPPF’s position that Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities<sup>1</sup> and that designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area, including meeting identified development needs<sup>2</sup>. It also advises that anyone who wants an area to be designated as Local Green Space should contact the local planning authority about the contents of its local plan or get involved in neighbourhood planning<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 37-005-20140306.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 37-007-20140306.

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 37-009-20140306

- 2.8 The PPG specifically states that the green area will need to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 100 of the NPPF<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.9 The PPG continues to set out some useful guidelines for interpreting NPPF paragraph 100 including:
- green areas can include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.<sup>5</sup>
  - the proximity of a Local Green Space 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<sup>6</sup>.
  - there are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be because places are different and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed<sup>7</sup>.
  - Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. Consequently blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate<sup>8</sup>.
  - There is no requirement for the Local Green Space to have public access<sup>9</sup>.

#### Local Policy Context

- 2.10 The council's adopted planning policies are set out in the Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) (2014) local plans. Since the Core Strategy pre-dated the introduction of the Local Green Space designation through the NPPF (2012), it is absent in these existing adopted planning policies and is being considered for the first time.
- 2.11 Core Strategy and MDD local plans do however contain planning policies relating to public open space. These are summarised below
- Policy CP3: General Principles for Development – ensures proposals are of a high quality design without detriment to amenities of adjoining land users, including open space and provide a framework for open space.
  - Policy CP14: Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre – ensures development proposals retain and enhance the historic market town character of Wokingham by providing and maintaining public open space for a range of activities.
  - Policy TB08: Open Space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development – ensures sufficient protection of existing open spaces and the provision of typologies of open space associated with residential development.
  - Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping – ensures development proposals consider the integration with adjoining public open space or countryside.

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 37-013-20140306.

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 37-013-20140306.

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 37-014-20140306.

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306 and Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 37-016-2014.

<sup>8</sup> Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306.

<sup>9</sup> Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 37-017-20140306.

- Policy SAL04: New open space associated with residential development within and adjoining the Borough – allocates a range of sites for open space uses as specified on the Adopted Policies Map.

2.12 In addition, some specific site allocations identified in the adopted Core Strategy and MDD require the including of open space, or that developers improve access to nearby open spaces.

2.13 Draft Plan Policy HC4 Local Green Space provides a policy framework for considering development impacting on designated Local Green Space.

### 3. Methodology for Assessment

#### Site Selection

- 3.1 Local Green Spaces are designated for their value to a local community. Therefore, the starting point for considering Local Green Space is those areas put forward by the community.

#### Assessment Criteria

- 3.2 Based on the requirements of the NPPF and PPG, the following criteria have been used to assess each promoted area for its suitability as Local Green Space. The criteria are based on the NPPF and PPG (see Section 2: Planning Framework).

| Test   | Criteria  | Justification  |
|--------|---|--|
| Test 1 | Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?  | The NPPF is clear that Local Green Space should be reasonably close to the community. Local Green Spaces should normally be within walking distance (400 metres) of the community <sup>10</sup> .  |
| Test 2 | Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?  | The size of Local Green Spaces should reasonably relate to the community that it serves.<br><br>The NPPF is clear that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the land is not an extensive tract of land. Area(s) would normally be located where they are self-contained with clearly defined edges or boundaries.   |
| Test 3 | Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to the local community or hold a particular local significance (an area must fulfil one or more of the following criteria) | <u>Historic significance:</u><br><br>The site is considered to be of particular local significance due to its historic importance to the local community. For example, a site could provide the setting for a heritage asset or other locally valued landmark, or establishes a local identity or distinctiveness to the community. Justification for this criteria has been informed by available and up-to-date evidence, including the borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment and any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisals.<br><br><u>Recreational value:</u><br><br>The site is considered to be of particular local significance due to its recreational value. For example, a site could accommodate for a variety of recreational |

<sup>10</sup> Recommended standard established in best practice by the Chartered Institute for Highways and Transportation (CIHT)

| Test | Criteria | Justification  |
|------|----------|--|
|      |          | <p>and sporting activities or is of a particular value to the local community.</p> <p><u>Tranquillity:</u></p> <p>The site is considered to be of importance for its tranquil value. For instance, where it can be demonstrated that it has a sense of remoteness (in spite of its proximity to the community) or lacks artificial noise from vehicles or industry. Justification for this criteria has been informed by the Campaign for Protection of Rural England's (CPRE) Tranquillity mapping for England (2007) and Landscape Character Assessment.</p> <p><u>Richness of wildlife:</u></p> <p>The site is considered to be of ecological value. For example it is designated as a Local Wildlife Site, includes a significant area of semi-natural or natural priority habitats as defined in the Local Plan Update or UK Biodiversity Action Plan or include important landscape features, such as ancient woodland or veteran or mature trees.</p> |

### Assessment

- 3.3 An assessment of each promoted site was undertaken against each of the defined criteria. The assessment has taken into account a variety of information, including that provided by communities regarding the importance of the area as part of earlier stages of preparing the Local Plan Update. In addition, the council also had regard to other information available, such as information on heritage assets.
- 3.4 A full copy of each assessment is provided in Appendix 1.

## 4. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide background and evidence to support a Draft Local Plan Policy HC4 on the designation of Local Green Space. Specifically, it sets out the factors which the council has considered in reaching its draft conclusions, and includes the individual assessments for promoted sites.
- 4.2 Through the individual assessments set out in Appendix 1, which are based on the method set out in Section 3: Methodology for Assessment, the Draft Local Plan proposes the allocation of eight sites as Local Green Spaces. These are:
- a) Elms Field, Wellington Road;
  - b) Howard Palmer Gardens, Cockpit Path;
  - c) Barkham Recreation Ground, Latimer Road ;
  - d) Langborough Recreation Ground, Gipsy Lane;
  - e) King George V Playing Field, Goodchild Road ;
  - f) Land south of Reading Road, Bulmershe, Earley
  - g) Fox Hill, Woosehill ;and
  - h) Joel Park and Holt Copse, Wokingham.

### Next Steps

- 4.3 Moving forwards, the council will review all representations received commenting on this topic paper. If appropriate, and where necessary in response to the representations, the assessment will be revisited.
- 4.4 In the event that additional areas are promoted for Local Green Space, the council will consider these as the LPU moves forward. To assist this process, community representatives are encouraged to undertake a shadow assessment using the criteria outlined in Section 3 of this paper.

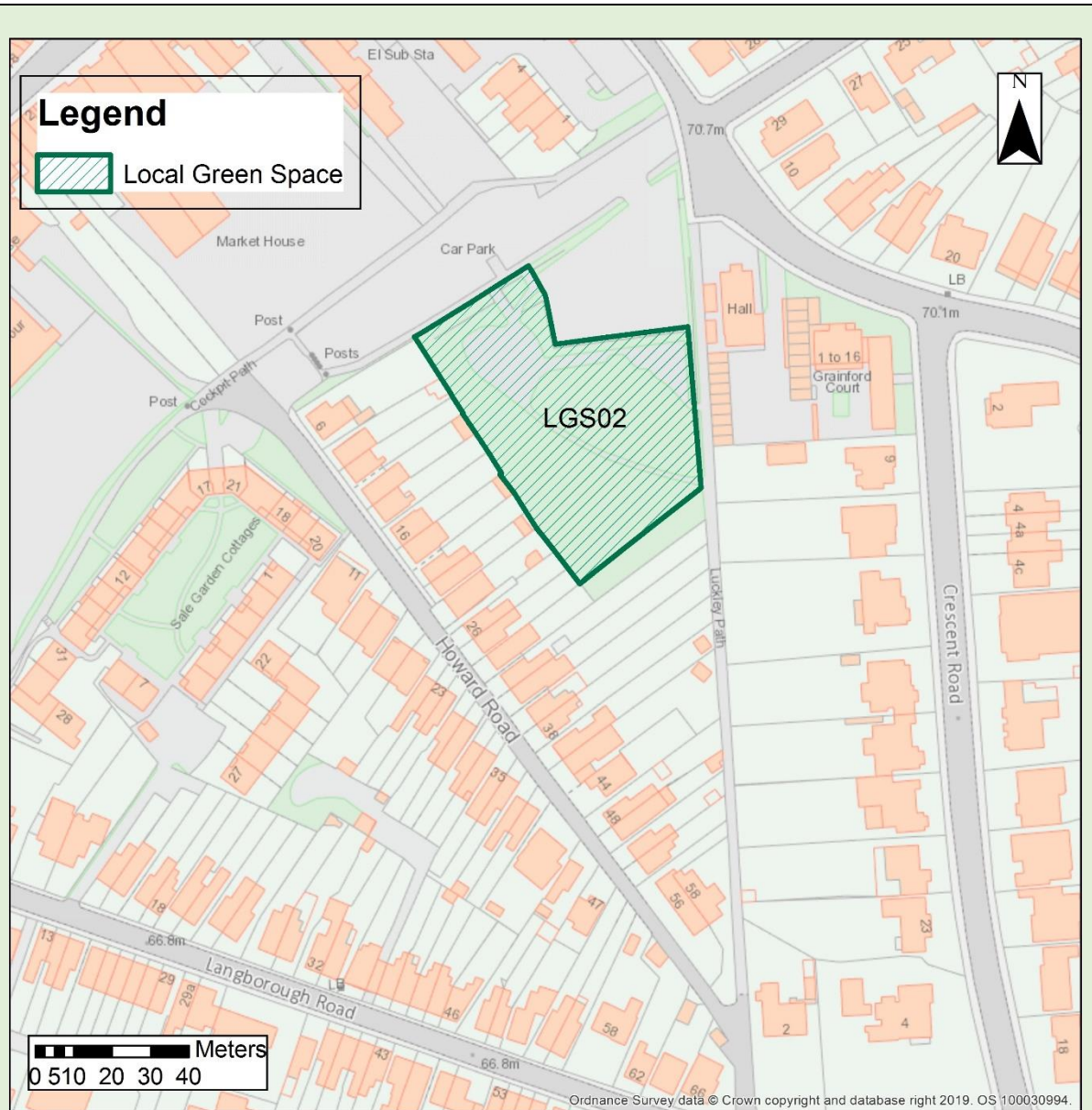
## Appendix 1: Site Assessments

1. Elms Field, Wellington Road
2. Howard Palmer Gardens, Cockpit Path
3. Langborough Recreation Ground, Gipsy Lane
4. Barkham Recreation Ground, Latimer Road
5. King George V Playing Field, Goodchild Road
6. Land to the east of Maiden Erlegh Lake
7. Bulmershe, Earley
8. Fox Hill, Wokingham
9. Land between Thames Valley Business Park and Napier Road, south of the River Thames
10. Joel Park and Holt Copse, Wokingham



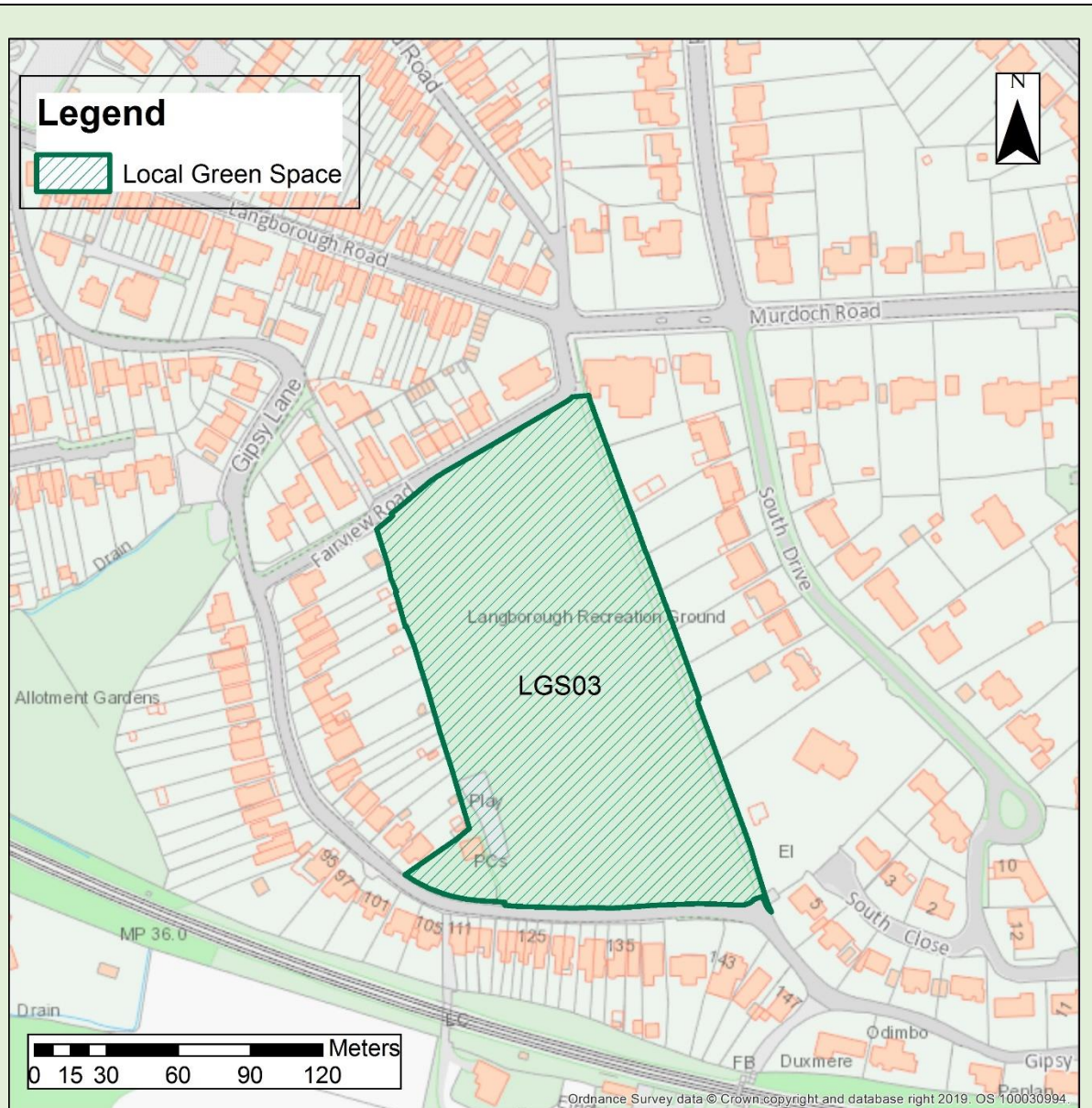
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| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS01</b>   |
| Site name  | Elms Field   |
| Site address   | Wellington Road, Wokingham   |
| Site size  | 1.71ha   |
| Site Description   | A town park located immediately adjacent to Wokingham Town Centre. The site is currently Public Open Space in the form of a park and garden. The site is used as a recreational space for children and a civic space for community events such as the Wokingham May Fayre. The site contains several veteran trees and is considered by the community as a 'green lung' for accessing the town centre.   |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is located immediately adjacent to Wokingham Town Centre within easy walking distance for existing residents and visitors.  |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | The site area is not considered to be an extensive tract of land, as it relates well to the local area, within close proximity to Wokingham Town Centre. The site is clearly self-contained, surrounded by residential and commercial uses and has clearly defined edges.  |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | <p>The site holds recreational value in the form of provision for children's play and offers a variety of other recreational activities in the surrounding area. The site has frequently been used to host a range of public events such as the Wokingham May Fayre and the annual food and drink festival. The site is regularly used by local residents for a range of other informal and formal recreation activities.</p> <p>Although this site has relatively low tranquillity, due to it being characterised by predominantly urban development, it is considered by the local community to act as a 'green lung' for accessing Wokingham Town Centre and is recognised by the community as a future event/green space to maintain the high level of civic space provision in Wokingham Borough.</p> <p>The site has been improved as part of the regeneration of Wokingham Town Centre.</p> |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation   | Yes. The site is demonstrably special to the local community because of its recreational value and the area forming a 'green lung' for access Wokingham Town Centre and to maintain a high level of civic provision in Wokingham Borough.  |

# Howard Palmer Gardens, Cockpit Path



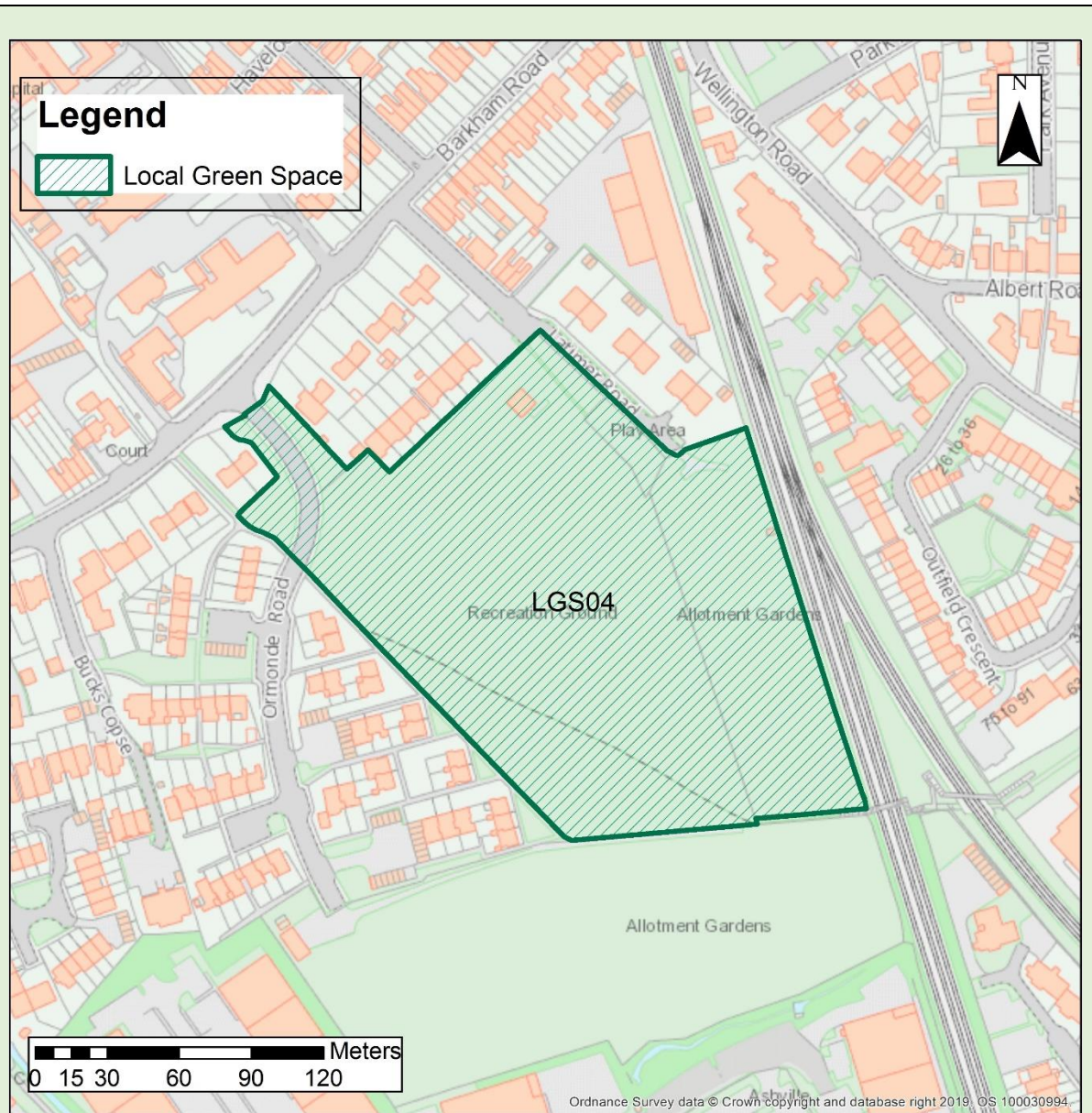
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|--|---|
| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS02</b>  |
| Site name  | Howard Palmer Gardens   |
| Site address   | Cockpit Path, Wokingham   |
| Site size  | 0.32ha  |
| Site Description   | A small park located behind the Cockpit Path car park in Wokingham Town centre. The site is currently Public Open Space in the form of a park and garden and is situated within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area.  |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is located immediately adjacent to Wokingham Town Centre and is within 140m walking distance of Wokingham Town Hall.   |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | The site is recognised by the local community as a civic space and a park and garden and is not considered to constitute an extensive tract of land. It is well contained and surrounded on all sides by residential development.   |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | <p>The site is managed by Wokingham Town Council, having been transferred as a Deed of Gift in 1968 to remember Mr Howard Palmer, who was a prominent local resident of Wokingham and Chairman of Huntley &amp; Palmers, the biscuit makers for Reading.</p> <p>Although the site has a low level of tranquillity due to the influence of busy roads and commuter routes into and out of Wokingham, it is located within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, one of the first to be designated in Berkshire in 1970 to preserve the qualities of the townscape. The Conservation Area contains a number of buildings that have a varied scale and colour which make the area rich in character.</p> <p>The site also features a sundial which was specifically designed by pupils at Emmbrook School and defines a local identity and distinctiveness to this area.</p> <p>The site has also hosted a range of community and charitable events, including the Wokingham Walk which starts and finishes at Howard Palmer Gardens.</p> |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation   | Yes. The site is demonstrably special to the local community because of its recreational and historical value. The site has historic significance associated with a prominent historic figure in Wokingham and the presence of the site being located within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, the first to be designated in Berkshire.  |

# Langborough Recreation Ground, Gipsy Lane



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|--|--|
| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS03</b>   |
| Site name  | Langborough Recreation Ground  |
| Site address   | Gipsy Lane, Wokingham  |
| Site size  | 2.17ha   |
| Site Description   | A recreation ground located south of Fairview Road, within the Langborough Road Conservation Area and in close proximity to the Murdoch Road Conservation Area. The site is currently Public Open Space and part of the site is also registered as a village green.  |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is located within close proximity to existing residents of Murdoch Road and Langborough Road, and is within easy access to Wokingham Town Centre.   |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | <p>The site is not considered to constitute an extensive tract of land as it is well contained and bounded by residential development along Gipsy Lane and Fairview Road. The site is located within the Langborough Road Conservation Area and in proximity to the Murdoch Road Conservation Area, entirely local in character. The Langborough Road Conservation Area has distinct characteristics, separate to the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area. The area is associated with Victorian development characterised by large ornate villas and small artisan cottages which are attractive in their character and appearance, giving the area distinct character and a unique identity.</p> <p>The area to the south of Langborough Recreation Ground, and towards the fringes of Wokingham form a sense of openness associated with open views to the countryside across a flat landscape and a lack of enclosure.</p> |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | The site is owned by Wokingham Borough Council and is partly registered as a village green under section 29 of the Commons Act 1876. The site is located near two Conservation Areas and is of particular recreational value due to the provision of a children's play area which is well used by existing residents. The site has a relatively low level of tranquillity.   |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation   | Yes. This site provides important recreational and amenity value for the existing residents of Murdoch Road and Langborough Road and is located within two Conservation Areas. Although part of the site is designated as a village green under section 29 of the Commons Act, and provides an element of protection under legislation, it is considered that the distinctive local and historic character of the whole site and the surrounding area warrants further designation as a Local Green Space.   |

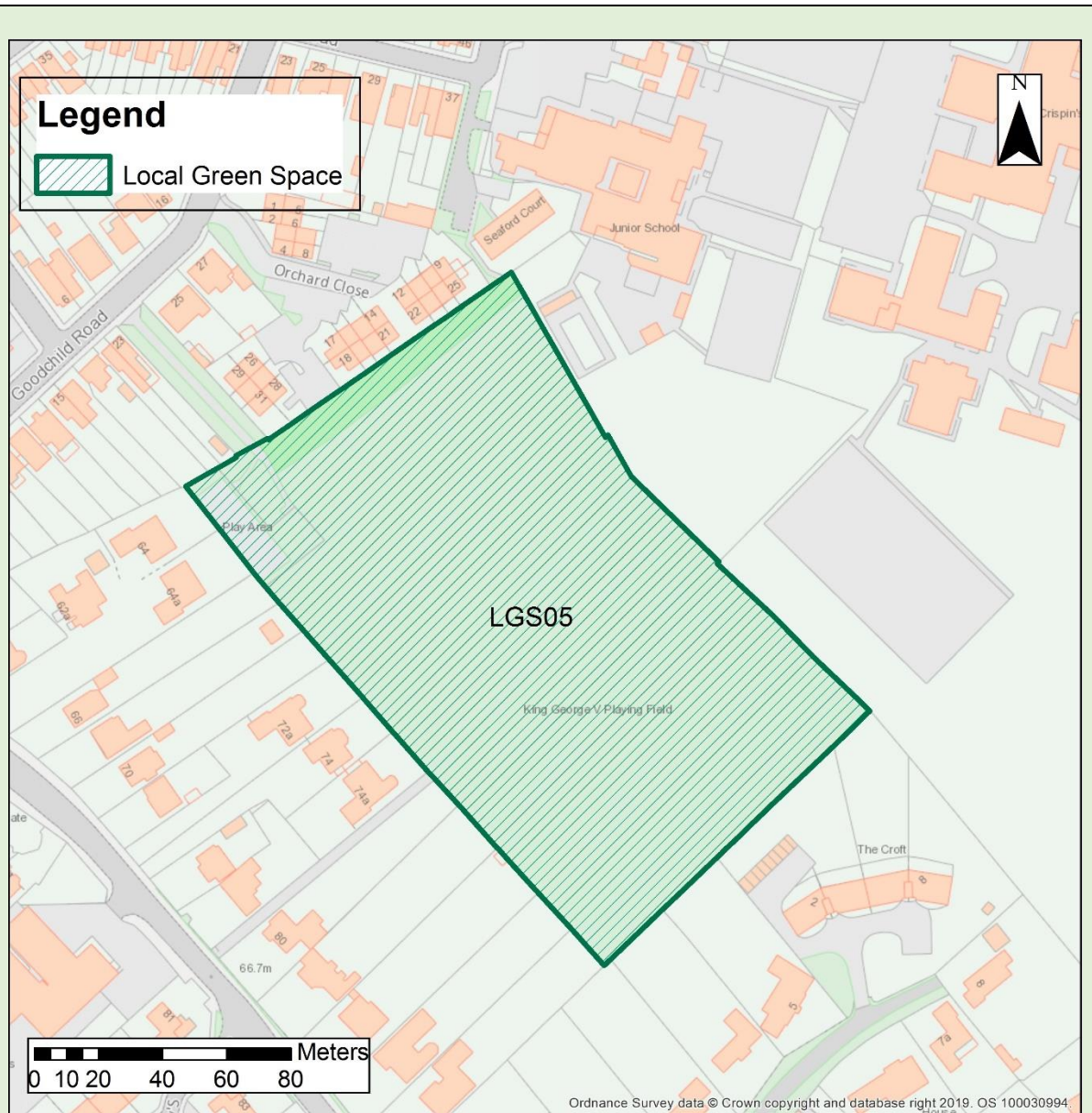
# Barkham Recreation Ground, Latimer Road



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|--|--|
| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS04</b>   |
| Site name  | Barkham Recreation Ground  |
| Site address   | Latimer Road, Barkham  |
| Site size  | 2.34ha   |
| Site Description   | A recreation ground located west of the main railway line. The site contains an allotment and a community garden and is used for leisure and recreation activities for children and teenage/youth provision. The site is bordered by an avenue of veteran lime trees. An existing Public Right of Way runs across the site providing access to Wokingham Town Centre.  |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is located within close proximity to existing residents of Barkham and within reasonable distance for residents towards the south of Wokingham Town Centre via Barkham Road. Barkham Recreation Ground is accessible from Barkham Road and Ormonde Road. An existing Public Right of Way also runs across the site along the southern boundary, providing access to Wokingham Town Centre.  |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | <p>The site is not considered to constitute an extensive tract of land as it is well contained and surrounded by residential development along its western and northern boundaries, for instance Ormonde Road and Latimer Road, Molly Millars Industrial Area to the south and the railway line to the east.</p> <p>The site also contains an allotment for 60 plots and a community garden which are very popular with residents of the town of Wokingham and the parishes of Arborfield and Barkham.</p>   |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | <p>The site currently holds recreational value due to the presence of existing play provision which is well used by children. Barkham Recreation Ground offers recreational provision in the form of a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and children/teenage provision. The site also contains two football pitches which are for community, but also used regularly for senior matches.</p> <p>Wokingham Town Council hold, in conjunction with the Wokingham Horticultural Association (WHA), their annual allotments open day, which has run for seven consecutive years in support of National Allotments Week. The latest event was held on Saturday 10 August 2019 and provided an opportunity for visitors to explore the allotment sites as well as participating in a range of activities and listening to local live music.</p> <p>Although the site has relatively low levels of tranquillity, the site is bordered by an avenue of veteran lime trees planted to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935, and gives the area a local identity and distinctiveness.</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Site reference</b>                            | <b>LGS04</b>  |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation | Yes. The site is demonstrably special to the local community because of its recreational, historic and ecological value. The site has an important visual amenity value and functions as an allotment site that is valued by the local community. The site is also bordered by an avenue of veteran trees associated with the celebration of King George V Silver Jubilee, giving the area local identity and an element of distinctiveness, worthy of Local Green Space designation. |

# King George V Playing Field, Goodchild Road



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS05</b>   |
| Site name  | King George V Playing Field  |
| Site address   | Goodchild Road, Wokingham  |
| Site size  | 2.02ha   |
| Site Description   | King George V Playing Field is located off Goodchild Road, adjacent to St Crispin's playing field. The site is Public Open Space and is also a protected space by Fields in Trust. The site is used for leisure, sport and recreation activities for younger and older children.   |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is located within close proximity to the residents of Goodchild Road and within easy walking distance to the eastern part of Wokingham Town Centre.   |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | The site is considered not to constitute an extensive tract of land as it is well contained and surrounded by residential development to the north, south and west along Goodchild Road and Easthampstead Road and St Crispin's School to the west.  |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | <p>The site is managed by Wokingham Town Council using funds from the King George V Trust Appeal. The herald plaques at the entrance of the site signifies its status as a King George V Field and were provided by the King George's Field Foundation set up in 1936, to commemorate the King's death.</p> <p>The site currently holds its recreational value as a playing field adjacent to St Crispin's School. The site is divided by existing play provision for younger and older children.</p> <p>King George V Playing Field offers sport and recreational provision in the form of a football pitch which is available to hire, a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and youth/teenage provision.</p> <p>The site is particularly valuable to residents towards the eastern part of the town of Wokingham, as the existing sport and leisure facilities located at St Crispin's School are for private access only.</p> |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation   | Yes. Although the site is public open space and therefore protected by national and local policy, the site is considered to be demonstrably special to the local community because of its recreational and historic value. The site has an important visual amenity for existing residents of Goodchild Road and those located to the eastern part of Wokingham Town Centre, particularly as the existing facilities at St Crispin's School are for private use only. The presence of herald plaques at the entrance of the site, associated with the commemoration of King George V's death provide a sense of local identity and element of distinctiveness to the area, warranting its designation as a Local Green Space.  |

# Land to the east of Maiden Erlegh Lake



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS06</b>   |
| Site name  | Land to the east of Maiden Erlegh Lake   |
| Site address   | Laurel Park, Lower Earley  |
| Site size  | 0.32ha   |
| Site Description   | A small area of land situated in the heart of Laurel Park which is Public Open Space, providing a range of leisure, sport and recreational opportunities. The site is adjacent to the Maiden Erlegh Lake, a Site of Urban Landscape Value and Maiden Erlegh Wood, a designated Local Wildlife Site.  |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is situated in the heart of Laurel Park and provides leisure, sport and recreation facilities for existing residents in the surrounding area.   |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | The site is not considered to constitute an extensive tract of open land as it is well contained, surrounded by residential development to the south and west and recreational uses, such as Laurel Park and the Recreation Ground to the north and east.  |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | The site has moderate levels of tranquillity, associated with the adjacent Site of Urban Landscape Value and the designated Local Wildlife Site at Maiden Erlegh Wood.   |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation   | No. Although the site has an element of tranquillity, associated with the adjacent Maiden Erlegh Wood and the Site of Urban Landscape Value, the site is not considered to be of any recreational value, due to the presence of Laurel Park and Recreation Ground which solely provide formal and informal opportunities for sport and recreation. It is therefore considered that no additional local benefit would be gained from Local Green Space designation. |

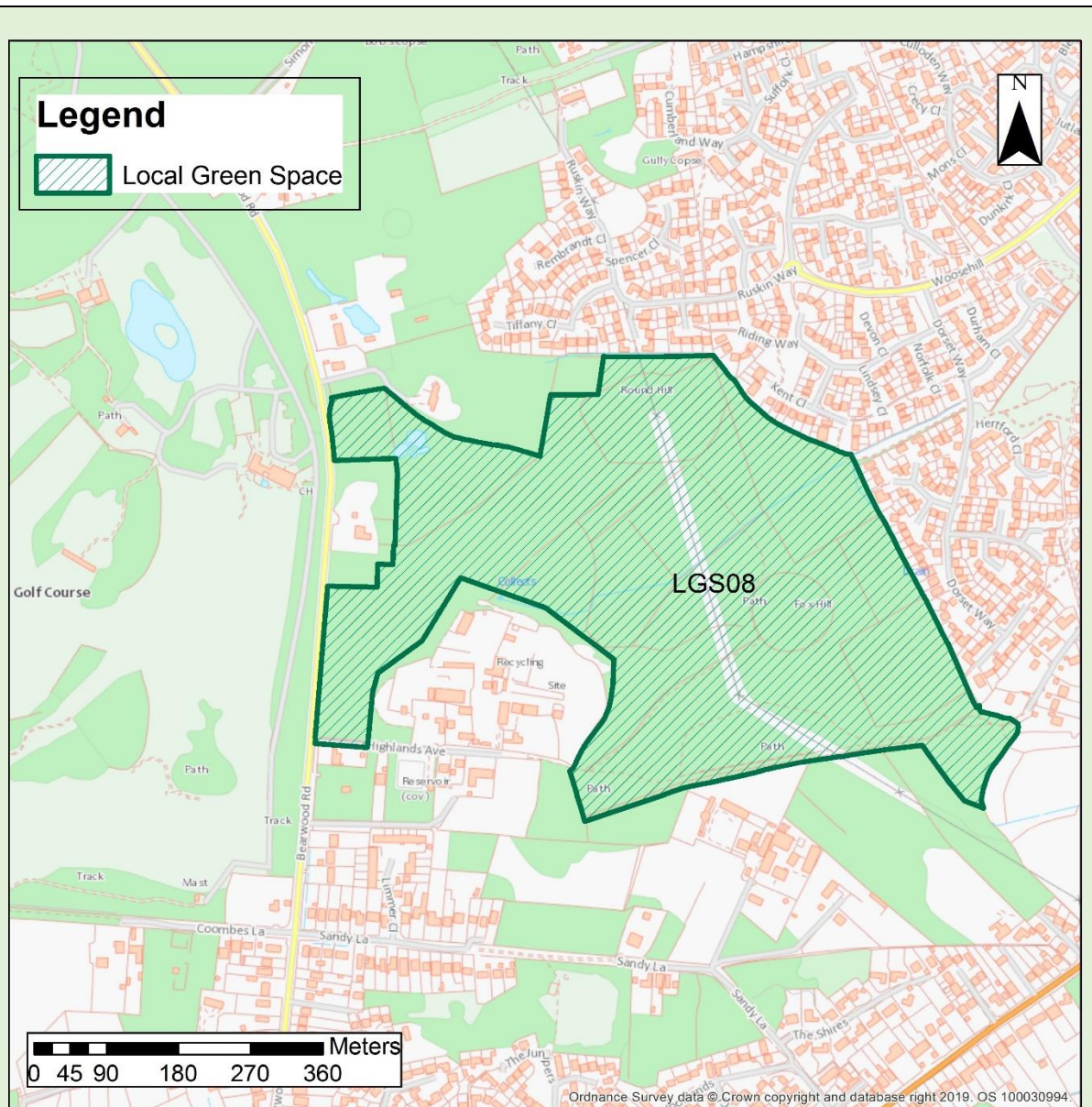


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|--|--|
| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS07</b>   |
| Site name  | Bulmershe, Earley  |
| Site address   | Land south of Reading Road, Bulmershe, Earley  |
| Site size  | 69ha   |
| Site Description   | The site is currently designated as a Site of Urban Landscape Value in Policy TB22 of the Managing Development Delivery Document (MDD) in which the Inspector, in his final report, acknowledged the separation between the settlements of Earley and Woodley at Bulmershe. The site contains allotments to the north and south of the site. The site is predominantly covered by ancient woodland, scrub and heathland and contains a Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site, playing fields and public open space in the centre.  |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?          | The site is situated to the west of the settlement of Woodley and is within close proximity to existing residents in the surrounding area. The site currently serves the western edge of Woodley and the north of Earley, in particular the Wards of South Lake and Bulmershe & Whitegates. Woodlands Avenue runs through the centre of the site, with minor residential roads running adjacent to parts of the site's eastern boundary. The southern portion of the site adjoins Woodlands Avenue/Church Road and provides public access and opportunities for informal recreation for the area's residents. Existing Public Rights of Way run through the centre of the site and along the eastern boundary, providing pedestrian access for residents in Woodley and Earley via a footbridge over the A3290. A connection of footpaths link Town Lane/Bulmershe Park to the north to High Wood and South Lake to the south. An existing bridleway is also adjacent to High Wood.  |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land? | <p>The site is well contained, surrounded by Addington School, Bulmershe School and Highwood Primary School to the east of the site and the University of Reading Bulmershe Campus to the west. The A329M forms the southern boundary. Residential development forms the remaining boundaries of the site.</p> <p>The MDD currently acknowledges that this area is open, undeveloped and provides an important contribution to local character, townscape and urban form. The site is an important and much-valued recreational resource and offers a level of tranquillity, particularly in the context of the conurbation of Reading which is predominantly urban in character along the eastern edge.</p> <p>The site provides a diverse range of uses and habitats which provide a significant open and undeveloped space within an attractive green setting, which act as a 'green lung' between the settlements of Woodley and Earley. The MDD recognises that the site forms part of the setting and identity between these two settlements and is considered an important open space with features such as ponds, woodlands and hedgerows. Furthermore, the formation of tree groups within and around the site provide a unifying visual feature.</p> |

| Site reference  | LGS07   |
|---|---|
| <p>Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community?</p> | <p>The value of the Bulmershe SULV was first articulated by Earley Town Council and Woodley Town Council in the Wokingham District Plan 1996-2004 and previous to this, in the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006. Its longstanding designation as a SULV has set precedence in current planning policy through the MDD.</p> <p>The site has since been consistently supported by Earley Town Council, Woodley Town Council and the Association of Central Earley Residents, through an historic campaign during the Local Plan process, the Managing Delivery Development (MDD), and is supported by local communities in Earley and Woodley. Both Woodley Town Council and Earley Town Council have formed a Joint Working Group and Statement to protect the Bulmershe SULV, advocating the designation's importance in maintaining the green lung between the western edge of Woodley and the north of Earley. Both Town Councils continue to campaign for this site's additional protection through local and national policy. The site also has an element of historical significance associated with John Claudius Loudon, an influential city planner and landscape architect who advocated the concept of 'breathing spaces' to provide access for residents to recreational areas within easy walking distance of their homes.</p> <p>The site itself contains a diverse range of habitats and forms an area of mixed woodland, wetland and a mix of improved grassland for use of the playing fields and allotments.</p> <p>The site contains several trees within the rear gardens of properties along Pitts Lane to the north-west and woodland to the north and south which provide a wooded horizon, seen as a distinctive characteristic of the SULV.</p> <p>Part of the site has moderate to high levels of tranquillity, characterised by High Wood Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site located to the south of the site. This consists of a small area of heathland and contains a number of ancient woodland indicator species which create a strong sense of place. The presence of exotic tree specimens are associated with a former arboretum within the grounds of Woodley Lodge.</p> <p>The SULV is also used as an area for informal and formal recreation, particularly the playing fields associated with the grounds of Bulmershe School, Addington School and the University of Reading Campus. High Wood Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site are also located to the south of the site, which contain exotic trees, including Giant Redwood and Monkey Puzzle within the ground of Woodley Lodge.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation for Local Green Space designation</p>   | <p>Yes. Although the site is covered by several designations, including a Site of Urban Landscape Value, and is therefore protected by local policy, the site is considered to be demonstrably special to the local community, and its designation as a SULV is set as a precedence in</p>  |

| Site reference | LGS07  |
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|                | <p>previous planning policy, including the Berkshire Structure Plan and Wokingham District Plan. The site has been historically campaigned by local residents, the Association of Central Earley Residents, Woodley Town Council and Earley Town Council through the Local Plan process, including the MDD to protect and maintain the 'green lung' and the physical and visual separation between the settlements of Earley and Woodley.</p> <p>The site has an important visual and recreational amenity for residents to the west of Woodley and the north of Earley, in particular the wards of South Lake and Bulmershe &amp; Whitegates.</p> <p>The longstanding history of this site and its value and significance to the local community, along with the SULV's distinctive, local and special qualities associated with High Wood Local Nature Reserve and the Local Wildlife Site, warrant its designation as a Local Green Space. It's designation as a LGS will offer the site sufficient policy protection and ensure the site's quality and capacity is capable of enduring beyond the plan period.</p> |

# Fox Hill, Wokingham



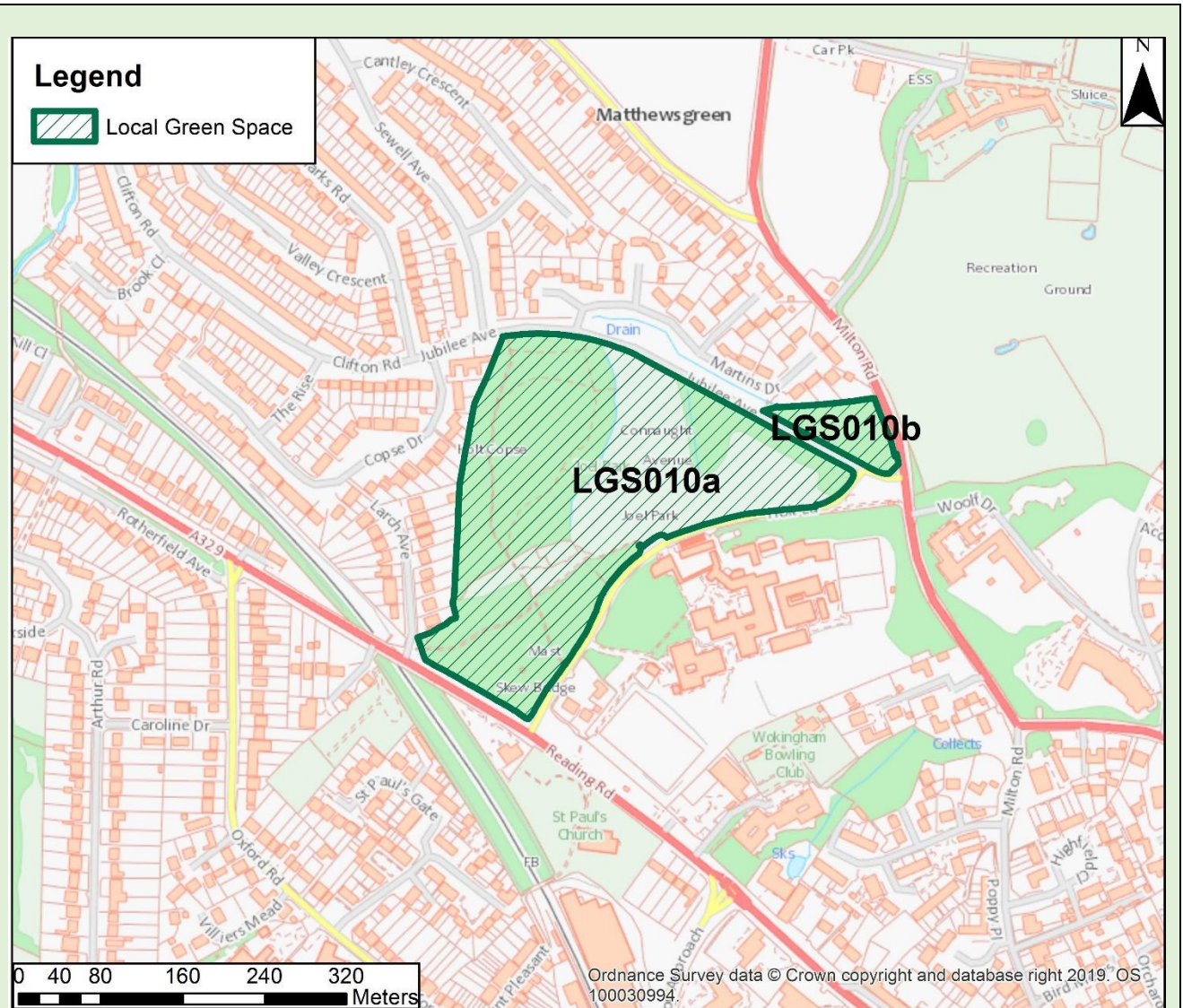
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| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS08</b>  |
| Site name  | Fox Hill  |
| Site address   | Fox Hill, Wokingham   |
| Site size  | 27.6ha  |
| Site Description   | The site is predominantly woodland and scrubland and is used for recreational activities including walking and cycling and as a community space for local Scout groups and pupils of Forest School.   |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is located within close proximity to existing residents of Woosehill and Barkham. Several Public Rights of Way exist along the southern boundary of the site, providing pedestrian access for existing residents at these settlements.   |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | Whilst the site is self-contained by residential development at Woosehill and Limmerhill, part of the site is also open countryside in the form of Coombes Wood and Bearwood Estate which is designated as a Registered Park and Garden and Local Wildlife Site. However, the site also forms an important separation between the settlements of Woosehill and Barkham due to undulating hills characterised by dense woodland which provide local character and distinctiveness to the area.   |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | <p>Part of the site is designated as ancient and semi-ancient woodland and is also situated within the setting of Bearwood College (Royal Navy Merchant School) a Grade II* Listed Building and a Registered Park and Garden which are entirely local in their historic character. The site is regularly used for a range of recreational and leisure activities, including walking and cycling.</p> <p>The site has a relatively high level of tranquillity associated with the undulating hills and dense woodland of Coombes Wood and Bearwood Estate.</p>   |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation   | Yes. The site is demonstrably special to the local community because of its recreational, historic and ecological value. The site is an important visual amenity as it is frequently used by walkers and cyclists for recreational and leisure activities. Furthermore, the site's presence within the setting of Bearwood College, a Grade II* Listed Building, Registered Park and Garden and Local Wildlife Site is entirely local in character. The site also forms an important separation between the settlements of Woosehill and Barkham and has a sense of tranquillity associated with the undulating hills and dense woodland of Coombes Wood and Bearwood Estate. |

Land between Thames Valley Business Park and Napier Road, south of the River Thames



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| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS09</b>   |
| Site name  | Land between Thames Valley Business Park and Napier Road   |
| Site address   | Land between Thames Valley Business Park and Napier Road, Reading to the south of the River Thames and north of the Great Western Main Railway line  |
| Site size  | 1.78ha   |
| Site Description   | The site forms part of the Thames Path National Trail, a designated long distance route for walking, cycling and horse riding. The site is also adjacent to Sutton Business Park and Thames Valley Park, an allocated employment and commercial site in the adopted Managing Development Delivery Document (MDD). The area of land identified for potential Local Green Space designation is also safeguarded for strategic transport network improvements in Policy CP10 of the adopted Core Strategy and Policy CC08 of the adopted MDD (notably a high quality express bus service or mass rapid transit along the A4 and A329 corridors). The site also includes an area of land safeguarded for the potential extension of the Crossrail Project. |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is situated along the Thames Path National Trail providing information and formal recreation for visitors/residents accessing Reading and the surrounding area by walking and cycling.  |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | The site is not considered to constitute an extensive tract of open land. It is bound to the south by the railway embankment and to the west by employment premises. The norther boundary is open to the River Thames. Part of the site also contains an overhead electricity cable and pylon, leading to visual intrusion of these elements into an otherwise open area.  |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | Although the site is located along the Thames Path National Trail, a designated long distance route for walking, cycling and horse riding, this is mainly used as a route to access Reading town centre to the east and other villages/settlements along the River Thames to the west e.g. Sonning. The site holds no formal recreational or historical value.   |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation   | No. Although the site holds an element of recreational and ecological value, associated with the Thames Path National Trail and riverside environment, the site is not considered to be of particular local significance.<br><br>The majority of the site is also surrounded by commercial and employment development (notably Sutton Business Park and Thames Valley Park) which are dominant in the landscape. The presence of overhead electricity cables and pylons has led to some visual intrusion in the open landscape, which is not considered to be local in character, and therefore does not warrant further consideration as a Local Green Space designation.   |

# Joel Park and Holt Copse, Wokingham



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| <b>Site reference</b>  | <b>LGS10</b>  |
| Site name  | Joel Park and Holt Copse  |
| Site address   | Joel Park and Holt Copse, Wokingham   |
| Site size  | 5.2ha   |
| Site Description   | A park owned by Wokingham Town Council situated between Reading Road, Holt Lane and Jubilee Avenue. The site is currently designated as a Site of Urban Landscape Value (SULV) in Policy TB22 of the Managing Development Delivery Document (MDD), in which the Inspector, in his final report, acknowledged the site's visual and ecological significance. The site is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site and a Local Nature Reserve dominated by mature trees and vegetation which have high ecological value. The park is Public Open Space used for formal and informal recreation in the form of a park and garden, and a play area. Joel Park also encompasses Holt Copse; an area of ancient and semi-natural woodland which provides valuable biodiversity.   |
| Is it in close proximity to the community it would serve?  | The site is located immediately adjacent to Reading Road, Holt Lane and Jubilee Avenue, serving an accessible and attractive open space for the local communities in this area. The presence of a 'greenway route' through the site provides excellent accessibility for visitors or local residents coming from Wokingham Town Centre and Wokingham Station. The site also have strong linkages to Cantley Park which is adjacent to the eastern boundary, and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to the north. Joel Park and Holt Copse are also easily accessible for existing residents at Woosehill and Emmbrook, along with the new communities established at Matthewsgreen.   |
| Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?   | The site is recognised by Wokingham Town Council and the local community as an important public open space and is not considered to constitute an extensive tract of land. It is a self-contained area of land surrounded by development on all sides, with clearly defined edges and boundaries along Holt Lane, Jubilee Avenue and Reading Road. Holt Copse is surrounded by land uses consisting of residential development, parkland and secondary woodland. Joel Park is located on the rural fringes adjacent to Cantley Park and creates a wooded character giving a sense of seclusion in places where views to the adjacent residential areas are restricted, which is unusual to find being so close to Wokingham Town Centre. The woodland within Holt Copse also contributes to the wider sense of place and the wooded characteristics of Wokingham. The woodland and trees provide a setting to Holt School and St Paul's Church. |
| Does the site have a particular local significance? Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community? | The site is owned and managed by Wokingham Town Council, having been previously transferred by local families Crutchley and Heelas (the owner of Heelas which moved to Reading to become part of the John Lewis Partnership). Joel Park and Holt Copse has a rich heritage dating back to 1453, where the woodland and adjoining land formed part of the Beaches Manor Estate. As part of the transfer to Wokingham Town Council, it was agreed that this area should be used to provide public open space as recreational use for local residents.   |

| Site reference                                   | LGS10  |
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|  | <p>Today, the park continues to be used extensively by the local community, including dog walkers, families and children as a popular area for formal and informal recreation all year round, including in the Winter. Informal recreation is provided within Holt Copse through the use of marked 'woodchip' paths within the woodland. The site also holds recreational value due to the presence of existing play provision in the form of a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and children/teenage provision at Joel Park.</p> <p>Relating to the maintenance of the site, the Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV) was formed by some local residents in 1999, who manage and maintain Holt Copse and Joel Park on behalf of the Town Council. HCCV has set up an extensive programme for the site's continued management and maintenance to improve its civic amenity and ecological value to the local community. HCCV's continued success was recognised nationally, receiving a number of environmental awards including the Dorothy Morley Conservation Award. This a scheme open to groups in Berkshire that involve their local community in managing green spaces that are treasured and valued to them.</p> <p>The site routinely forms part of the Wokingham in Bloom competition. Membership of the group has increased significantly with volunteers joining from the surrounding area and receiving sponsorship from other organisations, demonstrating its significance to the local community.</p> <p>Although the site has relatively low levels of tranquillity, the site is bordered by two distinct oak avenues, forming seventy trees at Long Avenue consisting of Green Oaks and Silver Birches, and Short Avenue, consisting of Red Oaks and Lombardy Poplars. These were planted to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935, and gives the area a sense of local identity and distinctiveness.</p> <p>Holts Copse is a Local Wildlife Site. The woodland and part of Joel Park are also designated as a Local Nature Reserve which are of local and County importance. These areas consist of ancient and semi-natural mixed deciduous woodland in an urban area and informal grassland, including drainage ditches. These features provide a natural habitat for a variety of ecological species including oak, wild cherry, alder and ash and protected species such as bluebells.</p> <p>The trees within Joel Park and Holt Copse provide a wooded horizon to the northern parts of Wokingham, which is a distinct characteristic of this part of Wokingham.</p> |
| Recommendation for Local Green Space designation | Yes. Although the site is covered by several designations, including a Site of Urban Landscape Value, and is therefore protected by national and local policy, the site is considered to be demonstrably special to the local community, as evidenced by Wokingham Town Council and the establishment of the Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV). This   |

| Site reference | LGS10  |
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|                | <p>group actively seeks to protect, restore and improve the sites' ecological and amenity value to the community.</p> <p>The site has an important amenity value for formal and informal recreation which is valued by residents at Joel Park, Woosehill and Emmbrook. The site is bordered by two oak avenues associated with King George V Silver Jubilee and contains semi and semi-natural woodland which is rich in ecology and distinctive in character.</p> <p>The longstanding history of this site and its value and significance to the local community, along with the SULV's distinctive and special qualities associated with the Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site, warrant its designation as a Local Green Space.</p> |