

# Silsoe Green Infrastructure Plan 2018

## Appendix 3

### Local Green Space Assessment

#### 1. Background

The Local Green Space Designation was introduced by the National Planning Policy Framework (2011) as “a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities”. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF sets out the criteria that green space must meet in order to be designated as ‘Local Green Space’:

“The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.

In addition to these criteria, National Planning Practice Guidance states:

“Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented”.

Other existing designations, such as Green Belt or Conservation Area status, do not necessarily preclude or support designation as Local Green Space, but it is necessary to consider whether the additional designation is necessary and would serve a useful purpose.

The Pre-Submission Central Bedfordshire Local Plan makes provision for Local Green Spaces to be designated through a Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore the Silsoe Neighbourhood Plan includes this assessment of green spaces for consideration as LGS, and provides recommendations for those that should be designated through the Neighbourhood Plan. The assessment follows a process developed by the Greensand Trust and the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Council, working alongside Central Bedfordshire Council, included in full as **Annex 1** of this document.

#### 2. The Assessment – Stage 1

The first stage is a desktop assessment which results in a shortlist from the list of greenspaces created as part of the GI Plan. Because a space has to meet all of the criteria to be proposed for designation, those that do not meet one or more can be rejected at this stage. It is possible to identify whether a site has an existing planning permission, is allocated in a development plan or has an existing designation that would mean LGS designation would add little or no additional protection as part of desktop research.

Where it is possible to identify where the site does not meet any of the other criteria in Stage 2 during desktop analysis it is possible to reject the space at Stage 1. **Table 1** below demonstrates this process, with **Figure 5** (within the main GI Plan document) showing the location and relative size of each site.

**Table 1 – Desktop Analysis**

<b>Label</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Not subject of a Planning Permission</b>	<b>Not allocated for development</b>	<b>Not already Designated</b>	<b>Pass to Stage 2?</b>
1	Millennium Green inc Parish Council Playing Fields & Play Area	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Allotments	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Playing Fields	✓	✓	X Part of Conservation Area	✓
4	Churchyard	✓	✓	X Consecrated	X
5	Village Green	✓	✓	✓	✓
6a	Village Park	✓	✓	✓	✓
6b	Community Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
6c	Western Green Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Buckle Grove CWS	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Wrest Park Grounds CWS	✓	✓	X Part of Conservation Area	X
9a	Wrest Park Play and Picnic Area	✓	✓	X Part of Conservation Area	X
10	Cain Hill woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Orchard off Barton Road	Orchard not – wider site is.	✓	✓	✓ Area outside development footprint only
14	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓

17	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Thrift Wood CWS	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Silsoe Springs Nature Reserve	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Silsoe Pit CWS	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Flit Valley CWS	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Simpsonhill Plantation CWS	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Warren Wood CWS	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Acre Pond	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Woodland/scrub and pond	✓	✓	✓	✓
31	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
32	Woodland	✓	✓	✓	✓
33	Gardens adjacent to Nursing Home	✓	✓	✓	X Not part of Nursing Home, private garden. No community value.
34	Orchard beside Cherry Blossom Close	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	Rowans Amenity Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Land off Park Ave Amenity Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Hawthorn Way Gault Pit	✓	✓	✓	✓
38	School Playing Field	✓	✓	✓	✓
39	Forest Path Play Area	✓	✓	✓	✓
40	West End Play Area	✓	✓	Play area only – no green space. Sufficiently protected.	X
41	Olney Green	✓	✓	✓	✓
42	Lodge Green	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Assessment Stage 2

Further analysis, including field visits carried out in the autumn of 2017 and spring 2018, looked at those sites that had been passed at Stage 1. It also considered a further 'site' put forward at the second community drop-in workshop in January 2018, which meets the Stage 1 assessment criteria. This additional sites is included in **Table 2**, which summarises the second stage assessment, but because it is not being proposed as a Local Green Space it does not have a number. Those sites recommended for designation are also illustrated in **Figure 1** below (Figure 5b in the main report).

**Table 2: Stage 2 – Field Survey results**

Site No.	Name	Not Extensive	Close Proximity	Demonstrably Special	Locally Significant*	Recommend for Designation?
1	Millennium Green	Y	Y	Y	Y (c, d)	Y
2	Allotments	Y	Y	Y	Y (c, d)	Y
5	Village Green	Y	Y	Y	Y (c, f – landscape setting)	Y
6a	Village Park	Y	Y	Y	Y (a, c, e, f – landscape setting)	Y
6b	Community Woodland	Y	Y	Y	Y (c, d, e)	Y
6c	Western Greenspace	Y	Y	Y	Y (c, d)	Y
7	Private woodland adjacent to Barton Road	Y	Y	N	N	N
8	Buckle Grove CWS	Y	Y	Y	Y (a, b, c, d, e)	Y
10	Cain Hill Woodland	Y	N	N	N	N
11	Woodland	Y	Y	N	N	N
12	Woodland	Y	Y	N	N	N
13	Orchard off Barton Road	Y	Y	Y	Y (b, c)	Y (not devpt footprint)
14	Woodland	Y	Y	N	N	N
15	Woodland	Y	N			N
16	Woodland	Y	N			N
17	Woodland	Y	Y	N	N	N
18	Thrift Wood CWS	Y	Y	Y	Y (a, b, e)	Y
19	Woodland	Y	Y	N	N	N
20	Woodland	Y	Y	N	N	N

21	Woodland	Y	Y	Y	Y (a)	Y
22	Silsoe Springs Nature Reserve	Y	Y	Y	Y (b, c, d)	Y
23	Silsoe Pit CWS	Y	Y	Y	Y (e)	Y
24	Flit Valley CWS	N	N	Y	Y (a, b, c, e)	N
25	Simpsonhill Plantation CWS	Y	Y From landscape perspective	Y	Y (a, b, c, e, f – landscape setting)	Y
26	Warren Wood CWS	Y (section in Silsoe, inc part of 27 below)	Y From landscape perspective	Y	Y (a, b, c, d, e, f – landscape setting)	Y
27	Woodland	Y	Y	Y	Y (a, b, e, f – landscape setting)	Y Section in Silsoe
28	Woodland	Y	N			N
29	Acre Pond	Y	N			N
30	Woodland/scrub and pond	Y	N			N
31	Woodland	Y	N			N
32	Woodland	Y	N			N
34	Orchard	Y	Y	Y	Y (b, c)	Y
35	Rowans Amenity Space	Y	Y	Y	Y (c)	Y
36	Land off Park Avenue Amenity Space	Y	Y	Y	Y (c)	Y
37	Hawthorne Way Gault Pit	Y	Y	Y	Y (b, e)	Y
38	School Playing Field	Y	Y	N	N	N
39	Forest Path Play Area	Y	Y	Y	Y (c)	Y
41	Olney Green	Y	Y	Y	Y (c, d)	Y
42	Lodge Green	Y	Y	Y	Y (b, c, e, f – setting)	Y
	Land behind Church Road – formerly tennis courts	Y	Y	N	N	N

\* The matrix should record which of the 'Locally Significant' sub-criteria (a-f) the site meets the requirement with, and be accompanied by a written commentary to justify this. Only one of the sub-criteria needs to be met for a site to be scored positively.

a beauty      b historic      c recreation      d tranquillity      e wildlife      f other

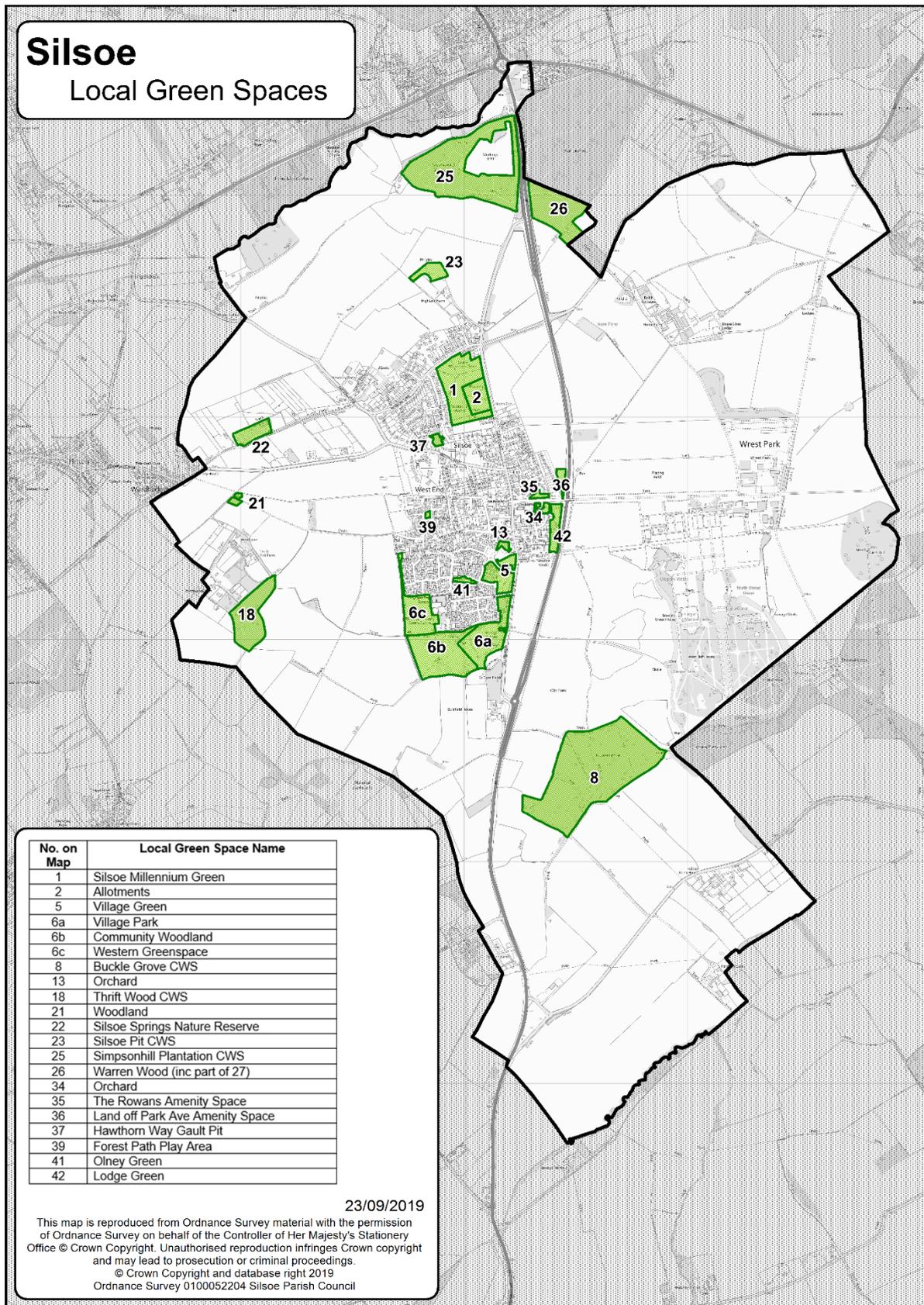
### Reasons for Rejection:

The Flit Valley CWS was rejected as it was considered 'extensive'. Although there is not a specific recommended cut-off size, this 'site' is not a single site or space, rather a collection of fields along the river valley (Flit Valley CWS).

Several sites were rejected due to not being in 'close proximity' – largely these were small areas of private woodland a significant distance from the village, often with no public access. This rejection was reinforced by these sites not being mentioned through the consultation exercises, demonstrating that they are not of significant value, or perhaps local people are not even aware of them. Simpsonhill Plantation and part of Warren Wood are recommended for designation – although slightly further away from the village than the distances usually considered 'close proximity', they are proposed primarily on the basis of the significant contribution they make to the landscape setting of Silsoe and the A6 in the parish, forming a wooded 'gateway'. In recreational terms, they both serve more than one community (also easily accessible from Maulden and Clophill), and were mentioned through consultation.

Several sites were rejected on the grounds of not being demonstrably special/locally significant, these were mainly small areas of woodland that had no access, and were not large enough to make a contribution to the wider landscape in their own right. There was no knowledge of their wildlife value, and some were not even large enough to be considered 'spaces'. It was also noted that the Nursing Home grounds had been included without the knowledge that these were not part of the Nursing Home, and were actually a private garden. The value that an area of Nursing Home grounds would have to its residents is high, but only if accessible to them. While this garden still provides an attractive outlook for a small number of residents, it was not considered appropriate to consider it for designation.

Figure 1: Proposed Local Green Spaces



### **3. Next Steps**

This assessment has resulted in a list of sites recommended for designation as Local Green Spaces, as part of the Silsoe Green Infrastructure Plan. As noted above, the power to designate is through the Neighbourhood Plan, and not the Green Infrastructure Plan.

Therefore the role of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is to:

- a) Assess the list of proposed LGS and the justification for them, and include in the Neighbourhood Plan those that they feel are appropriate;
- b) Notify landowners as appropriate.

It should be noted that although landowner consent is not required to designate, it is considered fair and appropriate to discuss with landowners prior to designation. Any discussion should highlight what LGS designation means to the site in question.

Further information on the sites and the reasons for proposed designation are included in the individual site summaries below.



## Site 2: Silsoe Allotments



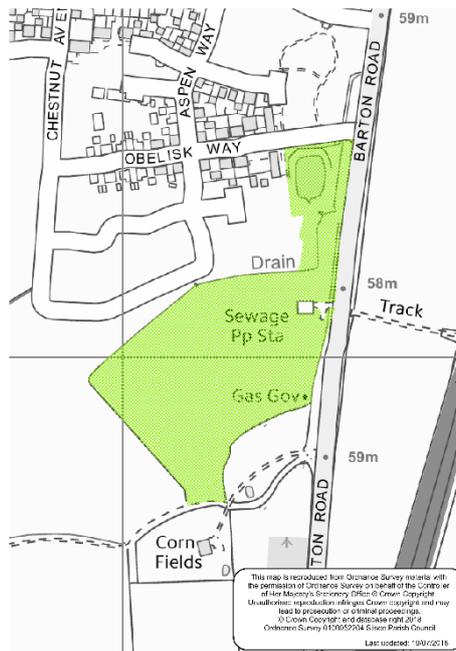
<b>Site Number</b>	2
<b>Site Name</b>	Silsoe Allotments
<b>Site Owner</b>	Silsoe Parish Council
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to northern end of High Street (next to Millennium Green)
<b>Status/Designations</b>	Allotment Gardens
<b>Size</b>	1.35ha
<b>Description</b>	A rectangular allotment site adjacent to the Millennium Green.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Hedged on all boundaries.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village (northern end)
<b>Uses</b>	Allotment gardening, quiet relaxation.
<b>Quality</b>	High – evidently well-looked after, with few vacant plots.
<b>Facilities</b>	Allotment plots, water supply.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – plots are well kept, mature hedgerow around the site.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Has been an allotment site for many years.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	High.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Moderate – some light traffic on adjacent High Street at time of visit.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – perimeter hedgerow is mature and well-managed. Pollen sources within the allotments.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly on the basis of their quiet recreation value.

## Site 5 – Village Green



<b>Site Number</b>	5
<b>Site Name</b>	Village Green
<b>Site Owner</b>	Bloors (developer) – to be handed over to the community
<b>Location</b>	Between Barton Road and new development on former agricultural college site.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	No specific status or designation.
<b>Size</b>	1.49ha
<b>Description</b>	Amenity green space area with path, tree clumps, drainage ditch. Mature trees in northern part of the site.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Barton Road to east, Obelisk Way to south, development to other sides.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village.
<b>Uses</b>	Informal recreation.
<b>Quality</b>	High – well managed.
<b>Facilities</b>	Paths, benches.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High. An attractive buffer to adjacent development highly visible from main road. Trees in northern part reflect 'parkland' nature of the wider area.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Part of former agricultural college site.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate – relatively small and adjacent to road.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Low/moderate – Barton Road was relatively busy with traffic at time of visit.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – trees and damp areas provide habitat variety.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly on the basis of the important visual buffer it provides to adjacent development,

Site 6a – Village Park



<b>Site Number</b>	6a
<b>Site Name</b>	Village Park
<b>Site Owner</b>	Bloors (Developer) – to be handed over to the Parish Council.
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to Barton Road, to south of new development on former agricultural college site.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None.
<b>Size</b>	3.2ha
<b>Description</b>	Landscaped green space with trees, hedgerows, paths and a pond, including an area formerly used as a cricket pitch.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Barton Road to east, development to north, hedgerows on other boundaries.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Immediately adjacent to southern edge.
<b>Uses</b>	Informal recreation. There is an expectation that the former cricket pitch area will be re-created.
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate.
<b>Facilities</b>	Surfaced paths.

<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	Moderate – the current lack of aftercare in parts of the site reduces the visual appeal, but it is still an attractive setting.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Part of former college site. Includes former cricket pitch and mature hedgerow.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate – is regularly used by people despite quality issues.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Moderate/High – some traffic noise close to Barton Road.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – hedgerows, pond (with a small reed bed), meadow areas provide habitat variety, but better management is required to increase value.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – although quality/management issues are evident, local people value the existence of this site and their desire to see it improved, cricket pitch created and other improvements is evidence of value. It is also important as the only green space (alongside adjoining sites) in this part of the village.

### Site 6b – Community Woodland



<b>Site Number</b>	6b
<b>Site Name</b>	Community Woodland
<b>Site Owner</b>	Bloors (Developer) – to be handed over to the Parish Council.
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to Barton Road, to south of new development on former agricultural college site.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None.
<b>Size</b>	4.78ha
<b>Description</b>	Landscaped green space with areas of planted trees, hedgerows, meadow, paths and a pond.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Hedgerows to east (some fencing), west and south, development to north, small car park area to north.

<b>Distance from Village</b>	Immediately adjacent to southern edge.
<b>Uses</b>	Informal recreation and nature conservation.
<b>Quality</b>	Low/Moderate.
<b>Facilities</b>	Surfaced paths, bridges. Car park adjacent.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	Moderate – the current lack of aftercare reduces the visual appeal, with rank vegetation growth obscuring the planting pattern and meadows, but it is still an attractive setting.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Part of former college site (former plantation).
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate – is regularly used by people despite quality issues.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – hedgerows, meadows, pond and tree plantation provide habitat variety, but better management is required to maintain and increase value.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – as with site 6a, although quality/management issues are evident, local people value the existence of this site. It is also important as the only green space (alongside adjoining sites) in this part of the village.

#### Site 6c – Western Green Space



<b>Site Number</b>	6c
<b>Site Name</b>	Western Green Space
<b>Site Owner</b>	Bloors (Developer) – to be handed over to the Parish Council.
<b>Location</b>	To the west of new development on former agricultural college site.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None.
<b>Size</b>	2.48ha
<b>Description</b>	Open green space with short mown grass and adjacent hedgerow. Used at times as a football pitch.

	Includes a 'finger' of land extending to the north between the built environment and the hedgerow to west.
<b>Boundaries</b>	New housing to north, hedgerow to west and south, school and community centre to east.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Immediately adjacent to south-west edge.
<b>Uses</b>	Informal recreation and sport. At the time of visiting the grass had just been cut and people were using it to walk in the area, including with dogs. There were football pitch markings visible in one location. It is likely it is also used by users of the community centre and school.
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate/High – it is well managed.
<b>Facilities</b>	Sports pitch. Car park and community centre adjacent.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	Moderate – the site is visually sparse but does provide a buffer between the new development and the wider countryside.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Part of former college site.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate/High – appears to be regularly used by people, and adjoin the school and community centre.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – hedgerows. Close-mown pitch of low wildlife value.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – due to its recreational value and value as a buffer between a very modern development and the wider countryside. It is also important as the only green space (alongside adjoining sites) in this part of the village.

#### Site 8 – Buckle Grove CWS



<b>Site Number</b>	8
<b>Site Name</b>	Buckle Grove CWS
<b>Site Owner</b>	Privately owned
<b>Location</b>	South-east of the village, to the east of the A6
<b>Status/Designations</b>	County Wildlife Site
<b>Size</b>	16.14ha It should be noted that although relatively large in size this site was not considered 'expansive'. Its two main values to the

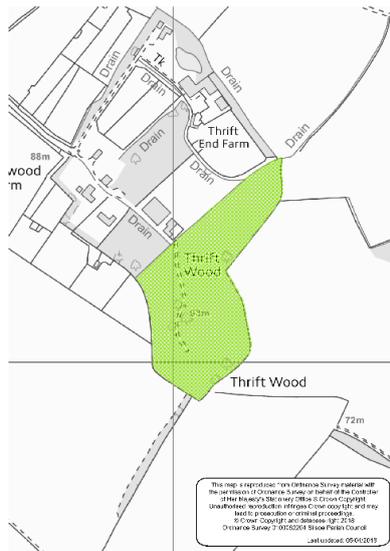
	community are landscape and recreation related, the contribution to the former is as an area of clearly demarcated woodland forming part of the backdrop of and visible from the village and A6, and the contribution to the latter is via a single public right of way. The experience of the user is of an intimate woodland setting and not an expansive site.
<b>Description</b>	An ancient semi-natural woodland highly visible from the A6.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Clear, distinct woodland edge – with ditch and bank (ancient woodland feature).
<b>Distance from Village</b>	600m from southern edge of the main part of the village. Although crossing the A6 is required to reach it, there is a good quality, easy to access bridleway route from Park Drive to and through the site which avoids ‘at grade’ crossing of the A6 (approximately 750m walk).
<b>Uses</b>	From the site visit, which was restricted to the public bridleway, the site appears to be used for pheasant shooting (spent cartridges present on visit) and timber has been harvested in the past.
<b>Quality</b>	High – although the site does not appear to be in completely active management, and there are significant areas that would benefit from intervention, it is an attractive area of woodland with a range of tree and plant species present. The bridleway provides a good quality experience.
<b>Facilities</b>	Surfaced bridleway passing through the wood.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	An important landscape feature close to the village, and an attractive area of woodland, visually linked with woodland in Wrest Park.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	High – a significant part of the site is ancient semi-natural in origin. Features include woodbanks, ancient pollards and old coppice stools.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate/High – although not an ‘accessible’ site in the context of the GI Plan, it does have a public bridleway running through it providing a very pleasant experience and evidently well-used by walkers, cyclists and equestrians.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High – on the day of the visit there was a little background noise from the A6 at the edge.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	High – has County Wildlife Site Status. Some old ash and oak trees were observed, and dogs mercury (an ancient woodland indicator species) was prominent at the ride edge.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly due to its wildlife value and contribution to the wider landscape.

### Site 13: Orchard off Barton Road



<b>Site Number</b>	13
<b>Site Name</b>	Orchard off Barton Road
<b>Site Owner</b>	Privately owned
<b>Location</b>	To west of A6 in the southern part of the village, adjacent to other open spaces.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	The orchard trees have been protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
<b>Size</b>	0.16ha
<b>Description</b>	A small greenspace with a number of old orchard trees and 3 mature sycamores.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Wall/garden fences to on three sides, remainder of boundary is defined by an approved development footprint.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village.
<b>Uses</b>	An area of green space within the village. It was not evident from the visit whether the orchard is utilised for its fruit, but it is likely that people collect fruit.
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate/High – the trees are potentially becoming over-grown and require some specialist management, but are still in good condition. There is evidence that the site is managed to a degree – for example grass has been mown on occasions.
<b>Facilities</b>	None
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	Moderate
<b>Historical Significance</b>	High – orchard has historic value.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Moderate – adjacent road was relatively busy at time of survey.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly because of its historical/cultural value.  This site is subject to a planning permission, within which the safeguarding of the orchard is an important element bound up in the permission. The area suggested for LGS designation excludes any of the built footprint/car parking.

**Site 18: Thrift Wood CWS**



<b>Site Number</b>	18
<b>Site Name</b>	Thrift Wood CWS
<b>Site Owner</b>	Privately owned
<b>Location</b>	West of the village sitting on top of a low clay ridge.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	County Wildlife Status
<b>Size</b>	3.39ha
<b>Description</b>	An area of ancient woodland overlooking the village.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Clear, distinct woodland edge.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Approximately 600m
<b>Uses</b>	The site is not accessible and it was not possible to identify specific uses.
<b>Quality</b>	As above.
<b>Facilities</b>	None
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – sitting on a ridge overlooking the village it is a prominent landscape feature to the west. Joint top ‘favourite view’ subject – views of and from the site were very popular in community consultation.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	High – ancient woodland site.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	High – although not accessible itself, the site is the focus of local walk routes and was frequently cited as part of a ‘favourite walk’.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	High – CWS status.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly on the basis of its landscape and wildlife value.

## Site 21: Woodland



<b>Site Number</b>	21
<b>Site Name</b>	Woodland
<b>Site Owner</b>	0.20ha
<b>Location</b>	North-west of the village on top of a low clay ridge.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None
<b>Size</b>	0.20ha
<b>Description</b>	A small area of plantation woodland.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Clear woodland edges.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Approximately 750m
<b>Uses</b>	Still a relatively young area of plantation woodland – it is not known whether timber is intended to be harvested. It appears to have been planted as part of an agri-environment scheme some time ago (signage observed on site related to a Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food scheme) and was intended as a landscape feature, particularly in terms of linking up with hedgerows and grass margins.
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate/High
<b>Facilities</b>	None
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – sitting on top of a clay ridge, the woodland is a valuable landscape feature, and helps ‘knit together’ hedgerows in the area.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Low
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate/high – public rights of way pass through and along the edge of the site in an area popular with walkers.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – woodland small and relatively young, but links into hedgerow and grass margin network.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly on the basis that it is a feature in the landscape.

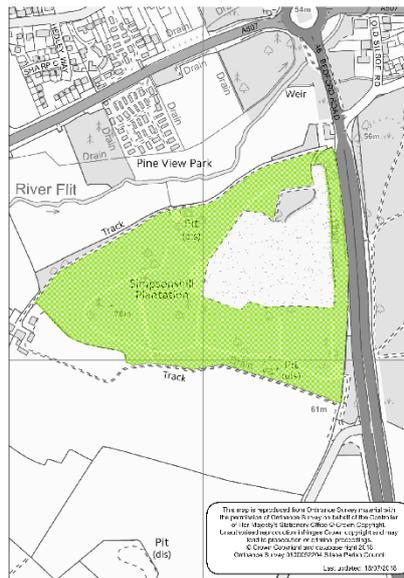
Site 22: Silsoe Springs Nature Reserve



<b>Site Number</b>	22
<b>Site Name</b>	Silsoe Springs Nature Reserve
<b>Site Owner</b>	Privately owned
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to bridleway to west of the village.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None
<b>Size</b>	1.06ha
<b>Description</b>	A secluded site focused around small spring-fed lakes/large ponds.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Clear boundaries. Track to east, fence to north, hedge to west, hedge/bund adjacent to bridleway to south.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Approximately 600m
<b>Uses</b>	Lakes are used for fishing – by arrangement with the owner – groups of local children and anglers. There is a small ‘classroom’ on site. Managed as a ‘nature reserve’.
<b>Quality</b>	High – very well managed.
<b>Facilities</b>	Small classroom used by visiting groups.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Moderate – springs are main feature of historic value.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	High – used by groups by invitation only, but provide opportunity for young people in particular to engage with the countryside.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	High – a good site for birds and dragonflies/damselflies in particular.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – due to the wildlife value and educational value. It should be noted that LGS designation does not confer access rights of any sort.



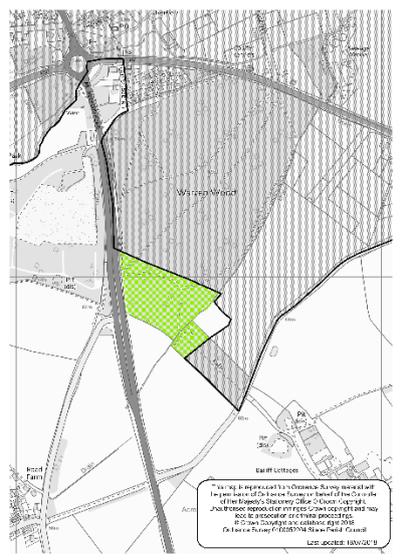
Site 25: Simpsonhill Plantation



<b>Site Number</b>	25
<b>Site Name</b>	Simpsonhill Plantation CWS
<b>Site Owner</b>	Privately owned
<b>Location</b>	To north of village on slope of greensand outlier, overlooking the Flit Valley and adjacent to A6
<b>Status/Designations</b>	County Wildlife Site. Strip adjacent to the A6 is Roadside Nature Reserve.
<b>Size</b>	13.9ha It should be noted that almost a quarter of this area is taken up by a quarry and therefore the site is considered to be around 10ha.
<b>Description</b>	An area of woodland on an outlier of the Greensand Ridge, with sandy soils and sweet chestnut coppice. The site encircles a quarry which is now only rarely active.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Clearly defined woodland edge (ditch and bank in places, hedgerow to south), A6 to east (with woodland on other side). The quarry boundary consists of palisade fencing.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Approximately 600m from edge of the village.
<b>Uses</b>	Public right of way passes through. Not clear whether actively managed – no evidence of this from the right of way. Quarry on eastern side is occasionally active (approximately once a year).
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate/High

<b>Facilities</b>	None
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – forms an important component of landscape, particularly visible from the A6 (where it forms a wooded gateway at a high point on the Greensand Ridge alongside Warren Wood) and the Flit Valley. Quarry is well screened from the road and right of way.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	High. Area of ancient semi-natural woodland with ditches/banks, old coppice stools.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate/High – public right of way running through – part of the Flit Valley Trail (under development)
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High in western end of site, lower close to the busy A6 at the eastern end.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	High – CWS status due to ancient woodland. Also contains areas of acid grassland. Quarry and roadside edge are of geological interest, with exposed faces of sandstone.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly with regard to wildlife value and also the historic value as an ancient woodland.

### Site 26 – Warren Wood



<b>Site Number</b>	26 (also incorporating the part of the adjacent site 27 in Silsoe Parish as this is part of Warren Wood).
<b>Site Name</b>	Warren Wood
<b>Site Owner</b>	Private landowner.
<b>Location</b>	To east of A6 at northern end of the parish.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	CWS
<b>Size</b>	Section in Silsoe parish is 4.05ha including part of site 27.
<b>Description</b>	Ancient woodland site on top of Greensand Ridge outlier with paths and rides.
<b>Boundaries</b>	A6 to west, lane to south, agricultural land on other sides. Area within Silsoe parish marked on map above.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	500m from northern end of the village.

<b>Uses</b>	Informal recreation including walking, dog walking.
<b>Quality</b>	High
<b>Facilities</b>	Public right of way.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – an important landscape feature, provides a wooded ‘gateway’ to the Greensand Ridge.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	High – ancient semi-natural woodland with sweet chestnut coppice. Influence of the Wrest Park estate is evident to south.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	High – is regularly used by people, including those from Clophill and Maulden which are immediately adjacent. Those from Silsoe either have to cross the A6 dual carriageway or drive to the northern edge of the site.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Moderate – traffic noise from A6 evident in section within the parish.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	High – CWS status, ancient semi-natural woodland site.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly due to its contribution to the landscape and setting of the A6, and its wildlife value.

#### Site 34: Orchard (The Beeches)



<b>Site Number</b>	34
<b>Site Name</b>	Orchard (The Beeches)
<b>Site Owner</b>	Silsoe Parish Council
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to Park Avenue on the eastern edge of the village.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None.
<b>Size</b>	0.21ha
<b>Description</b>	An area of greenspace with widely spaced fruit trees.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Either sandstone wall or parkland style metal fencing.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village.
<b>Uses</b>	Quiet recreation and community orchard.
<b>Quality</b>	High – evidently well looked after.
<b>Facilities</b>	None.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – forms part of the experience of leaving the village and entering Wrest Park.

<b>Historical Significance</b>	Moderate/High – old sandstone wall, part of Wrest Park ‘entrance’ and context of gatehouses.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate – attractive greenspace but relatively small. Orchard trees add interest.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Moderate – several vehicles entered/left Wrest Park during visit. It is likely that tranquillity drops to ‘low’ at peak times for Wrest Park, as Park Avenue is the only vehicular entrance to Wrest.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly because it forms an important part of the village amenity, as an attractive open space close to the village centre and part of the experience/context of the avenue into Wrest Park.

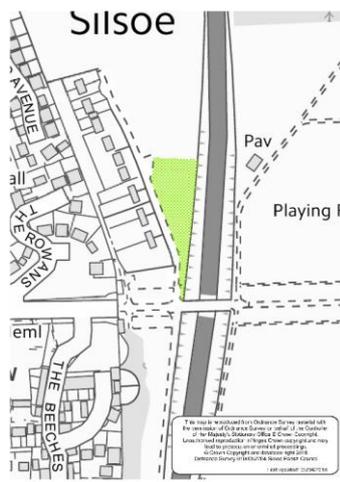
### Site 35: Rowans Amenity Space



<b>Site Number</b>	35
<b>Site Name</b>	Rowans Amenity Space
<b>Site Owner</b>	Silsoe Parish Council
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to Park Avenue on the eastern edge of the village.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None
<b>Size</b>	0.17ha
<b>Description</b>	An area of amenity greenspace.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Sandstone wall to south, road/pavement to north.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village
<b>Uses</b>	Quiet recreation
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate – sandstone wall is in need of significant repair at one end.
<b>Facilities</b>	None
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	Moderate/High – although not of significant value in its own right, it forms an important part of the entrance experience to Wrest Park, with a sandstone wall alongside Park Avenue mirroring the one on the southern edge of the road.

<b>Historical Significance</b>	Moderate/High – site is within the context of Wrest Park gatehouses. Sandstone wall is of some antiquity.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Medium/Low (as with site 34)
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – a few trees.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes, particularly because of the contribution it makes to the entrance experience to Wrest Park, alongside site 34 above.

### Site 36: Land off Park Avenue Amenity Space



<b>Site Number</b>	36
<b>Site Name</b>	Land off Park Avenue Amenity Space
<b>Site Owner</b>	Silsoe Parish Council
<b>Location</b>	To north of Park Avenue, immediately to west of A6 cutting.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None
<b>Size</b>	0.28ha
<b>Description</b>	An area of grassed amenity space.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Hedgerow along top of A6 cutting to east, arable field to north, road to west and track to south.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	On village edge.
<b>Uses</b>	Amenity green space.
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate – the site has no facilities and a low level of management.
<b>Facilities</b>	None.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	Moderate – hedgerow along boundary is mature and attractive, and the site offers views to the north.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Moderate – within Registered Parkland area.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate – open space but no facilities and relatively small.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Low – A6 nearby.
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – mature hedgerow.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes, on the basis it is an important buffer between the village and the A6, linking to the open countryside.

Site 37: Hawthorn Way Gault Pit



<b>Site Number</b>	37
<b>Site Name</b>	Hawthorn Way Gault Pit
<b>Site Owner</b>	Central Bedfordshire Council
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to Hawthorn Way
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None
<b>Size</b>	0.21ha
<b>Description</b>	A former quarry site, now containing trees and a pond.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Residential fencing.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village
<b>Uses</b>	No specific uses – left to wildlife.
<b>Quality</b>	Moderate – appears to be relatively unmanaged.
<b>Facilities</b>	None.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	Moderate/high – although a small space it is secluded and quite attractive, with the pond adding to this.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	Former gault clay pit.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Low – currently not accessible. Gate locked.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate/High – pond adds to value – breeding amphibians present in a follow-up visit.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes, on the basis of its wildlife value and historic significance.

## Site 39: Forest Path Play Area



<b>Site Number</b>	39
<b>Site Name</b>	Forest Path Play Area
<b>Site Owner</b>	Silsoe Parish Council
<b>Location</b>	Within new development area on western side of village close to West End Road.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None
<b>Size</b>	0.53ha
<b>Description</b>	An equipped play area within a grassed setting.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Metal fencing.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village
<b>Uses</b>	Play and quiet recreation
<b>Quality</b>	High – new site, very well maintained.
<b>Facilities</b>	Well-equipped play area, benches and bins.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – an attractive focal point within the new development, creating a 'square-like' feel.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	None.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	High
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Low
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly due to its recreational value and the contribution it makes to the built environment.

Site 41: Olney Green



<b>Site Number</b>	41
<b>Site Name</b>	Olney Green
<b>Site Owner</b>	Silsoe Parish Council
<b>Location</b>	Within new development area on western side of village between Aspen Way and Chestnut Avenue.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	None
<b>Size</b>	0.18ha
<b>Description</b>	A landscaped area within a residential development.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Low hedge or street edge
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Within the village
<b>Uses</b>	Quiet recreation
<b>Quality</b>	High – new site, well maintained.
<b>Facilities</b>	Surfaced paths. It is believed that the intention was to include a small play area but this does not appear to have materialised.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – an attractive focal point within the new development, with houses facing onto it. Existing mature trees add to attractiveness.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	On site of former Silsoe College.
<b>Recreational Value</b>	Moderate.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	High
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Low
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly due to the contribution it makes to the built environment.

## Site 42: Lodge Green



<b>Site Number</b>	42
<b>Site Name</b>	Lodge Green
<b>Site Owner</b>	Private ownership
<b>Location</b>	South of Park Avenue, between the village edge and the A6.
<b>Status/Designations</b>	Part of Registered Park and Garden (Wrest Park)
<b>Size</b>	0.88ha
<b>Description</b>	An open grass area with a tree avenue.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Mature hedge to east (A6), Park Avenue to north, village edge to west, fence and hedge to south.
<b>Distance from Village</b>	Immediately adjacent.
<b>Uses</b>	Informal recreation.
<b>Quality</b>	High – well maintained.
<b>Facilities</b>	None.
<b>Visual Attractiveness</b>	High – mature hedge, tree avenue and sloping aspect.
<b>Historical Significance</b>	High – originally part of Wrest Park (pre A6 bypass).
<b>Recreational Value</b>	High – although access is legally via a public footpath only it is on route to Wrest Park.
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Low – road noise from adjacent A6
<b>Wildlife Value</b>	Moderate – mature hedgerow.
<b>Recommend as a LGS?</b>	Yes – particularly due to its value as a landscape buffer to the village and recreational route.

## Annex 1

### Process for Identifying Potential

### ‘Local Green Spaces’ in Central Bedfordshire

#### Background

The following has been developed (using local experience in Bedfordshire and best practice from elsewhere in the country) as a methodology for identifying spaces that should be considered for designation as Local Green Spaces (LGS) according to the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and subsequent Government guidance (Planning Practice Guidance: Local Green Space designation).

The approach is currently being piloted in Central Bedfordshire, as part of the Neighbourhood Planning support offered by Central Bedfordshire Council (in Central Bedfordshire, currently LGS can *only* be designated through a Neighbourhood Plan). It is, however, not restricted to Central Bedfordshire in terms of applicability.

#### The LGS Designation:

The National Planning Policy Framework (2011) introduced the Local Green Space designation as “a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities”. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF sets out the criteria that green space must meet in order to be designated as ‘Local Green Space’:

“The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.

In addition to these criteria, National Planning Practice Guidance states:

“Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented”.

Other existing designations, such as Green Belt or Conservation Area status, do not necessarily preclude or support designation as Local Green Space, but it is necessary to consider whether the additional designation is necessary and would serve a useful purpose.

The draft Central Bedfordshire Local Plan makes provision for Local Green Spaces to be designated through a Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore this GI Plan includes an assessment of green spaces for consideration as LGS, and provides recommendations for those that should be designated through the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **The Process**

The criteria to be used are listed below, along with guidance on how they can be addressed and key questions to support an assessment. All criteria must be met, therefore simple scoring matrices based on 'Yes/No' answers are illustrated. Some elements can be assessed via desktop research, which means that it is possible to carry out an initial sift of a list of potential sites against these 'Stage 1' questions and create a shortlist for on-site evaluation (Stage 2). It may also be possible to sift out other spaces during the Stage 1 analysis where it is clear that they would not meet one of the Stage 2 criteria, however if there is any doubt then the space should be carried forward for field analysis.

The scoring of sites against the criteria, to cover the eventuality of multiple sites being proposed for designation where it is felt they all meet the criteria, was considered. However, with several of the key questions being straight 'yes/no' questions, a scoring system would be relatively limited in scope. Ultimately the requirement is for a high level of rigour in answering the questions, and only 'passing' those sites that demonstrably meet the criteria without question. It is not appropriate to artificially restrict the number of LGS being designated in any particular parish or area – if a site meets the criteria then it should be put forward for designation, recognising that some parishes will include several sites that meet the criteria, and others very few or even none.

In carrying out an assessment, evidence of how a site does/does not meet the criteria must be recorded, along with site plans (at an appropriate scale, showing clear boundaries for the site) and photographs.

## **The Criteria – Stage 1 (Desktop Analysis)**

If any of the key questions in Stage 1 is answered with a "yes" then the space should not be recommended for designation.

### **1. Land is not the subject of a planning permission for development.**

Local Green Space 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. (NPPG Paragraph: 008)

Information on planning permissions is available from local authority websites/Planning Portal

#### ***Key question:***

Does the proposed space have an existing planning permission?

### **2. Space is not allocated or proposed for development in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan.**

(Unless it can be shown that the Local Green Space could be incorporated within the site as part of the allocated development)

Local Green Spaces should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. (NPPF Paragraph 76)

Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making. (NPPG Paragraph: 007)

The space should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. (NPPF Paragraph 76)

Further information on the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan is available from:

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>

**Key question:**

Is the proposed space a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan allocation or proposed site?

**3. The space is not covered by another designation of equal weight**

If the space is already covered by another designation of equal weight such as SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), Scheduled Ancient Monument, Registered Historic Park or Garden or Green Belt then it is not appropriate to put it forward for LGS designation as this will not add any greater degree of protection.

**Key question:**

Is the proposed space covered by an existing designation of equal or greater weight?

Stage 1 Assessment Matrix – Example

The following provides an example of a matrix recording assessment against the criteria for ‘sample’ sites:

	No current Planning Permission?	Not allocated for Development	Not already Designated	Pass to Stage 2
Site 1	✓	✓	✓	Yes
Site 2	✓	✗	✓	No
Site 3	✓	✓	✗	No
Site 4	✗	✓	✓	No
Site 5	✓	✓	✓	Yes
Site 6	✓	✓	✓	Yes

In the example above only sites 1, 5 and 6 are progressed to Stage 2 assessment.

**Stage 2 – Field Analysis**

**4. The space is not an extensive tract of land and is local in character**

Local Green Space 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. (NPPG Paragraph: 015). Proportionality is an important consideration – for example, a site of less than 10ha could still be considered extensive, particularly in the context of a small village or where it

resembles the open countryside in character (agricultural use does not preclude designation). However, this does not imply that for larger settlements larger sites automatically qualify – this will only be the case where all of the criteria are demonstrably met.

***Key questions:***

Does the proposed space have clearly defined edges?

Does the space feel local in character and scale?

How does the proposed space connect physically, visually and socially to the local area?

Is the space clearly distinct from surrounding farmland?

**5. The space is within close proximity of the community it serves**

The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, but it must be reasonably close. For example if public access is a key factor, then the site would need to be within easy walking distance of the community served. (NPPG Paragraph: 014). If it is important because of its landscape value, views need to be accessible from the community/settlement.

As with the criteria above, ‘close proximity’ can be a relative concept and will depend on the settlement, terrain and accessibility. Therefore a specific maximum distance from where people live is not suggested,

***Key questions:***

How close is the space to the community it serves?

Where are the nearest centres of population?

How does it relate to accepted access standards e.g. Natural England’s ANGSt, Local Authority Greenspace/Leisure Strategy

**6. The space is demonstrably special to the local community and holds particular local significance.**

Local green spaces may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community, whether in a village or a neighbourhood in a town. (NPPG Paragraph: 009). The space must also be demonstrably locally significant by meeting at least one of criteria a-f below:

***Key questions:***

Is the proposal to designate supported by any of the following: A friends group, local community groups, a parish plan, the Town/Parish Council, the Ward member(s)?

Is the space the focus of locally important events and/or activities?

Has the community previously demonstrated its views about the space?

**a. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty**

Does the space contribute to the visual attractiveness of the townscape or character / setting of the settlement?

Is the space covered by other landscape or townscape designations? (e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Conservation Area, Local Landscape Designation)

**b. The proposed space is of particular local historic significance**

Further information on heritage is available from: Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record

Does the proposed space or elements of the space have local historical significance? (e.g. Conservation Area)

Are there any historic buildings or structures in the space? (e.g. listed building or scheduled monument)

Is the space important in terms of the context of a historic building, structure or feature?

Are there any important historic landscape features on the space? (e.g. veteran trees or old hedgerows)

Does the space have a cultural (e.g. historic literature or art) connection?

**c. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value**

What variety of recreational activities does the space support? (e.g. the space is used for playing sport or for informal recreation). How is it accessible for recreation? (e.g. public or permissive footpaths?)

Is the space already identified in the Council's Leisure Strategy or Outdoor Access Improvement Plan?

Note: There is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation. (NPPG Paragraph: 018) but linear corridors can be proposed if they meet the criteria.

**d. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity**

Why is the space considered to be tranquil? Has any tranquillity mapping been carried out covering the area?

Is the space used for quiet reflection? Is there background noise?

**e. The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its wildlife**

Are there records of wildlife, especially species or habitats considered to be rare or threatened? Has the site been designated because of its wildlife value e.g. County Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve (note – if the site has SSSI or NNR status then LGS designation will not add any further protection, and it should not have passed Stage 1).

#### **f. The proposed space is of particular local significance for another reason**

There may be a reason why the space is considered to be of particular local significance but not covered by the above, nevertheless considered to be of significance.

The answers to these questions should be recorded systematically for each site, along with photographs and maps/plans. A matrix should be created as a quick and simple reference guide.

#### Stage 2 - Example matrix:

Note only those 'sample' sites that made it through the Stage 1 assessment are included.

	<b>Not Extensive</b>	<b>Close Proximity</b>	<b>Demonstrably Special/Locally Significant*</b>	<b>Recommend for Designation?</b>
Site 1	✓	✗	✓ (b)	No
Site 5	✓	✓	✓ (c)	Yes
Site 6	✗	✓	✗	No

\* The matrix should record which of the 'Locally Significant' sub-criteria (a-f) the site meets the requirement with, and be accompanied by a written commentary to justify this. Only one of the sub-criteria needs to be met for a site to be scored positively.

**Site (5)** is therefore (in this example) the only space recommended for designation

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