

# LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION

## A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITIES PREPARING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

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### Introduction

The Natural Environment White Paper ([The Natural Choice](#): securing the value of nature 2011) highlighted “the importance of green spaces to the health and happiness of local communities”.

Green spaces, particularly natural green spaces, located close to local people provide a range of social, environmental and economic benefits, including –

- improved mental and physical health
- increased social activity
- increased physical activity
- reduced crime
- improvements to children’s learning
- increased voluntary action
- improved community cohesion and sense of belonging
- potential for local food growing
- more attractive places to live, work, play, visit and invest
- enhanced opportunities for wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors
- climate change adaptation for example by flood alleviation

The White Paper recommended that a new Green Areas designation be introduced that would give local people an opportunity to protect green spaces that have significant importance to their local communities.

*“We propose that green spaces should be identified in neighbourhood plans and local plans which complement and do not undermine investment in homes, jobs and other essential services. Given the importance of green spaces to the health and happiness of local communities the Government considers the new designation should offer suitably strong protection to localised areas that are demonstrably special ....”*

That recommendation was incorporated into the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) as the new designation of Local Green Spaces.

### Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit aims to help communities designate Local Green Space through the preparation of neighbourhood plans in a robust, consistent and transparent manner.

# The Policy Context

## National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF provides the following information on Local Green Space designations -

- 76 *Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.*
- 77 *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; and*
  - *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*
- 78 *Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.*

Additional guidance is provided in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

## Neighbourhood Plans

Local Green Spaces can be designated through neighbourhood plans. For those preparing neighbourhood plans the text of a model policy is included at Appendix 1.

## Criteria for Designation

Any type of green space could be suitable for Local Green Space designation from recreational land with a sports pavilion or the area around a war memorial to allotments or an urban space that provides a tranquil oasis.

As Local Green Space designation means that development is highly unlikely to be permitted on a site, there is a strong possibility that land owners and others will challenge the designation. To meet that challenge the designation must be based on solid evidence that the site meets the relevant criteria. This will be easier to demonstrate if the steps in this toolkit are completed and the relevant evidence provided.

A potential Local Green Space site must meet the criteria set out in the NPPF, and further detailed in the National Planning Practice Guidance. These criteria are not specific – they do not give set distances or areas, but act as guidance which should then be interpreted at a local level.

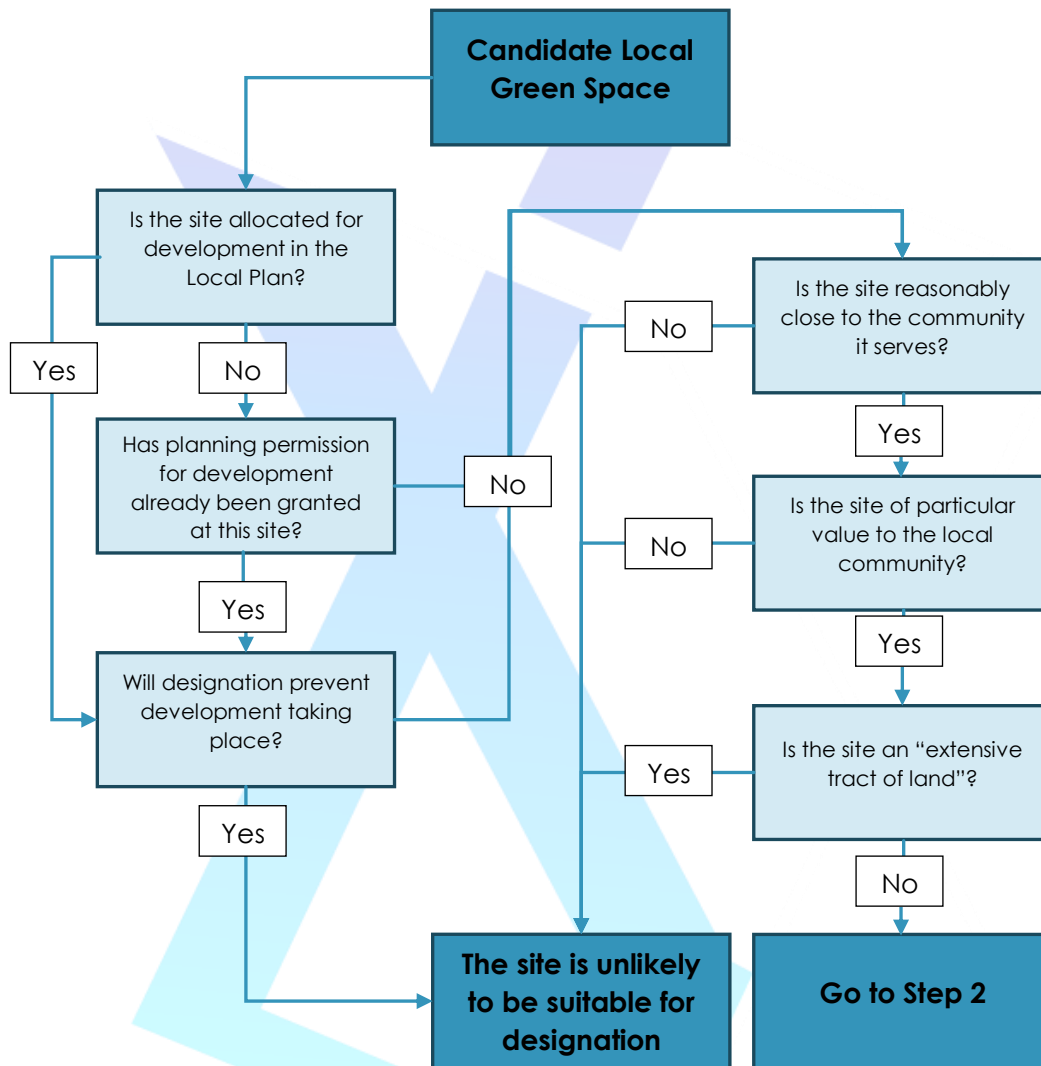
In order to ensure that any designation in the is robust, we have created a checklist against which potential Local Green Space sites should be tested.



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# Step 1: Quick check

Using the "decision tree" below, check to see whether a candidate Local Green Space is likely to meet the designation criteria.

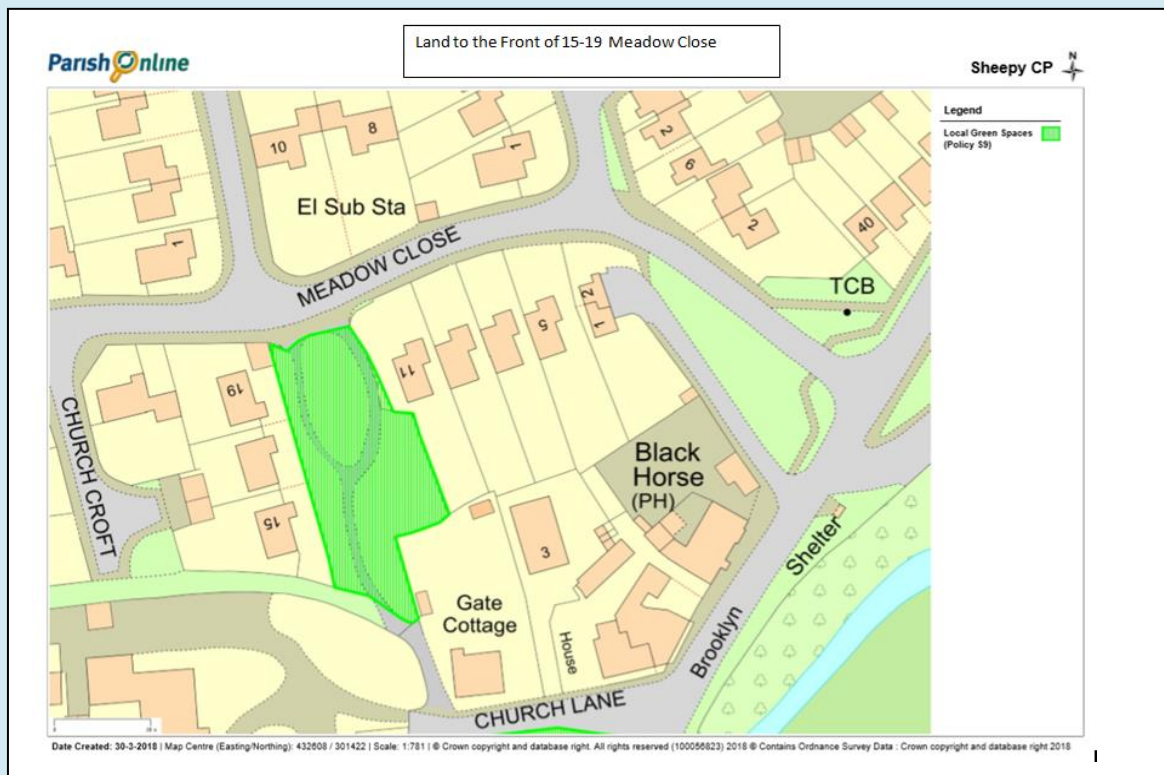
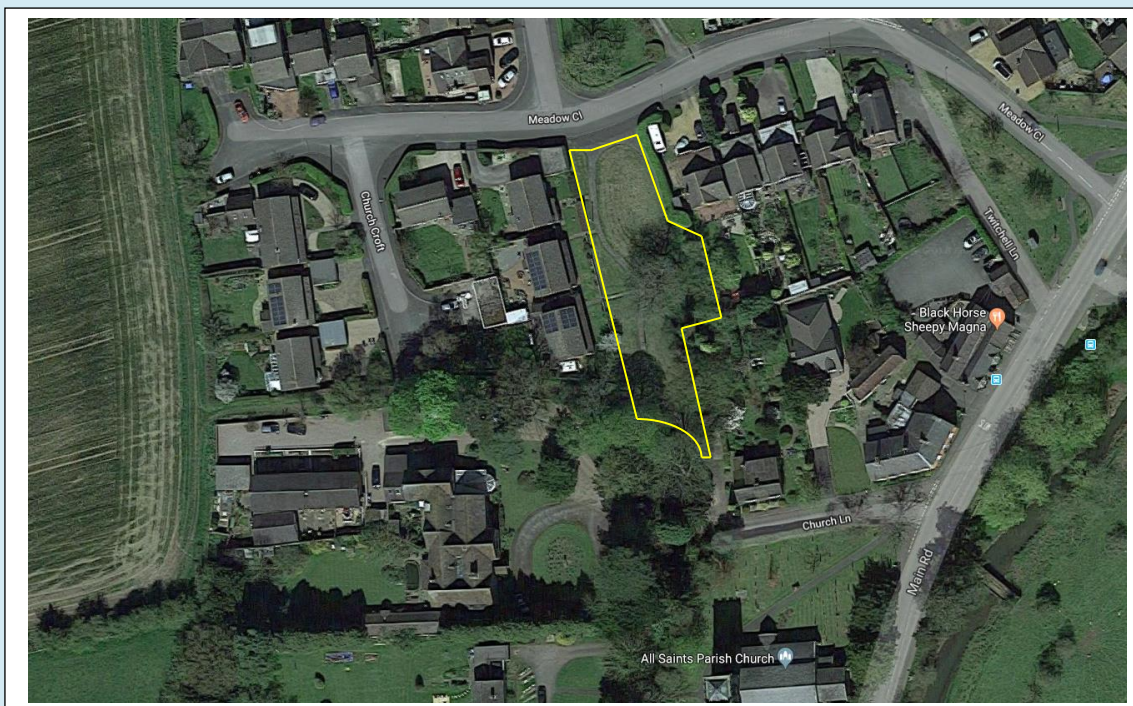


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# Step 2: Complete checklist

If it seems that the candidate site may meet the designation criteria, complete the designation checklist below (and provide all the relevant evidence). The checklist should be completed for each candidate site.

<b>1</b>	<b>General Information</b>
1.1	Name and address of site <i>Some sites have several names and all known names should be given</i>
	<b>Land to the Front of 15 - 19 Meadow Close Sheepy Magna CV9 3RA</b>
1.2	Site location plan





1.3	<p>Organisation or individual proposing site for designation  <i>This will normally be a Town or Parish Council or a recognised community group</i></p>
<p><b>Sheepy Parish Council</b></p>	
1.4	<p>Ownership of site if known  <i>Information on land ownership can be obtained from the Land Registry. Some land parcels are not registered however local people may know the owner.</i></p>
<p><b>Leicestershire County Council</b></p>	
1.5	<p>Is the owner of the site aware of the potential designation?  <b>The owner has been informed prior to submission of the Neighbourhood Plan.</b></p>
1.6	<p>Does the owner support the designation?  <i>Sites may be designated as Local Green Spaces, even if there are objections from the site owners</i></p> <p><b>Awaiting reply.</b></p>
1.7	<p>Photographs of site</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">  <p>Land to the front of 15-19 Meadow Close. 7 June 2017  Taken from entrance from Church Lane looking North.</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">  <p>Land to the front of 15-19 Meadow Close. 5 April 2018 looking South from Meadow Close</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">  <p>Land to the front of 15-19 Meadow Close. 30 March 2018 looking South towards the Church</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">  <p>Land to the front of 15-19 Meadow Close. 5 April 2018 looking North towards Meadow Close.</p> </div> </div>

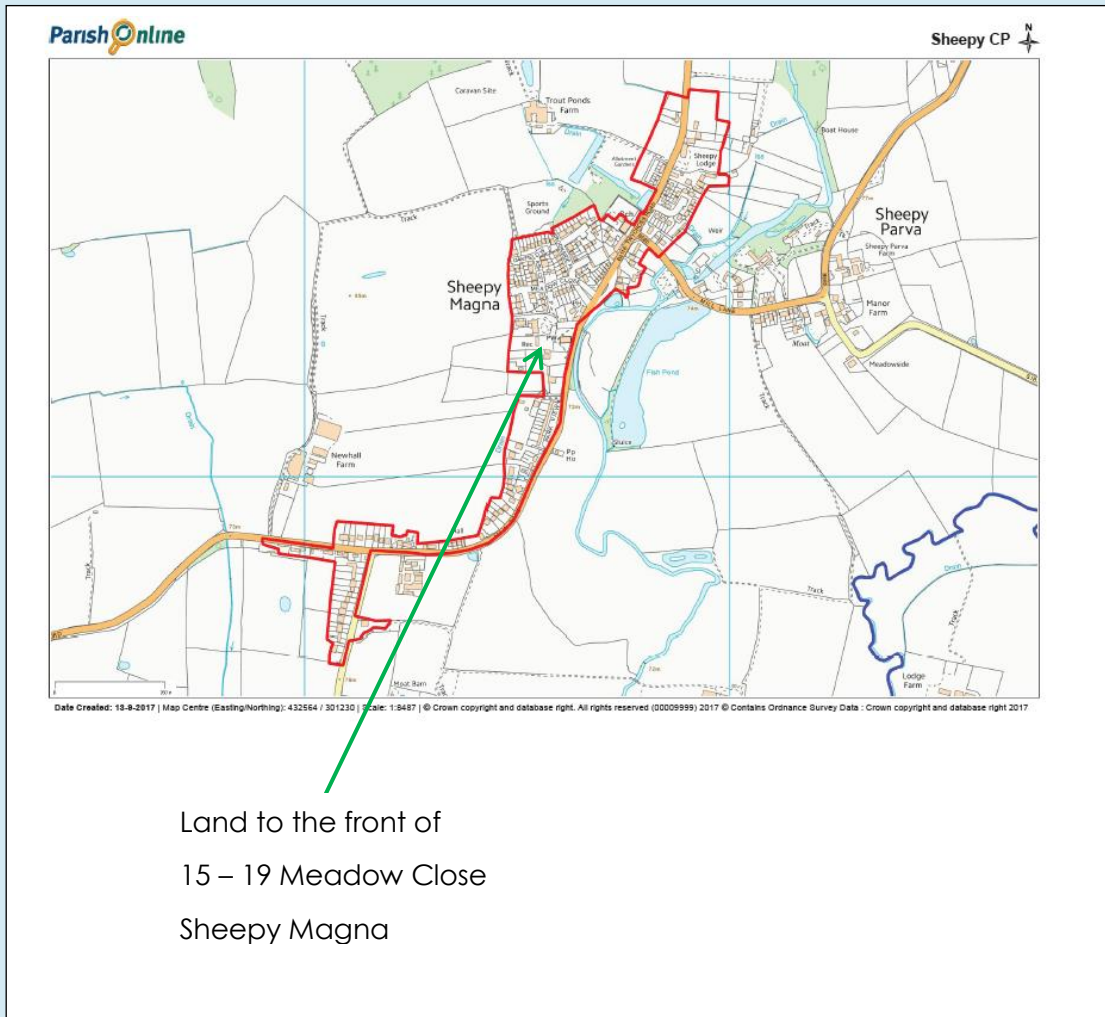
1.8	Community served by the potential Local Green Space <i>i.e. does the site serve the whole village/town or a particular geographic area or group of people?</i>
	<b>Serves Sheepy Parish, but principally Sheepy Magna.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Planning History</b>
2.1	Is there currently a planning application for this site? If planning permission has been permitted could part of the overall site still be used as a Green Open Space?
	<b>No</b>
2.2	Is the site allocated for development in the Local Plan? If allocated, could part of the overall site still be used as a Green Open Space?
	<b>No</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Size, scale and “local nature” of proposed Local Green Space</b>
3.1	Area of proposed site <i>It is unlikely that a site of over 20ha (50 acres) would be considered suitable for designation.</i>
	<b>0.124 ha</b>
3.2	Is the site an “extensive tract of land”? <i>(Extensive tracts of land cannot be designated as Local Green Space) e.g. how large is it in comparison to other fields; groups of fields; areas of land in the vicinity etc.? Does the site “feel” extensive or more local in scale?</i>
	<b>No.</b>
3.3	Is the proposed site “local in character”? <i>e.g. does the site feel as though it is part of the local area? And why? How does it connect physically, visually and socially to the local area? What is your evidence?</i>
	<p><b>The site is a small tract of mowed grass and flowers traversed by footpath T14.</b></p> <p><b>At the centre is a large chestnut tree which has a tree protection order.</b></p> <p><b>It complements the local character of Sheepy Magna with its’ southern border being the grounds of the Old Rectory consisting of an old wall and mature chestnut trees (With TPO’s). The eastern border consists of a mature laurel hedge and trees and the western border being low front garden walls to properties 15 – 19 Meadow Close.</b></p> <p><b>The northern border is Meadow Close.</b></p> <p><b>The view to the south through the chestnut trees is of the Old Rectory, All Saints Church and the Churchyard.</b></p> <p><b>It provides pleasant access on foot, for the residents of Meadow Close, Ash Croft and Oakfield Way to All Saints Church and Churchyard, the Black Horse Public House and the southern end of the village</b></p>

4	<b>Need for Local Green Space</b>
4.1	<p>Is there a need for a local green space in this location?  <i>e.g. is there a shortage of accessible greenspace in the area? Is there a village needs survey or parish plan that provides evidence of that need. Further information – Natural England (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard)</i></p>
	<p><b>This space was identified by some parishioners, as being an important view and recreational facility during the Neighbourhood Plan Drop in Events in January 2016 and again in the Sheepy Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Questionnaire Summer 2016.</b></p> <p><b>Following the Neighbourhood Plan Pre Submissions Consultation (November 2017 -5<sup>th</sup> January 2018) it was requested and agreed that this space be considered for designation as a Local Green Space.</b></p>
5	<b>Evidence to show that “the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”</b>
5.1	<p>How far is the site from the community it serves? Is the site within 2km of the local community?  <i>Possible evidence – a map to show that distance</i></p>
	<p><b>This area of land is situated between All Saints Church and Meadow Close, at the heart of Sheepy Magna which makes up 65% of the population of the Parish.</b></p> <p><b>The land was originally considered for the site of a ‘Children’s Play Area’, however, it was decided subsequently that the Children’s Play Area should be constructed on Sheepy Magna Playing Fields.</b></p>



5.2 Are there any barriers to the local community accessing the site from their homes?  
 e.g. railway line; main road  
 Possible evidence – a map to show any potential barriers and how those can be overcome.

**The majority of residents of Sheepy Magna can access the site without crossing a main road.**



**6 Evidence to show that the green area is “demonstrably special to a local community”**

6.1 Evidence of support from Parish or Town Council  
 e.g. letter of support; Council minutes

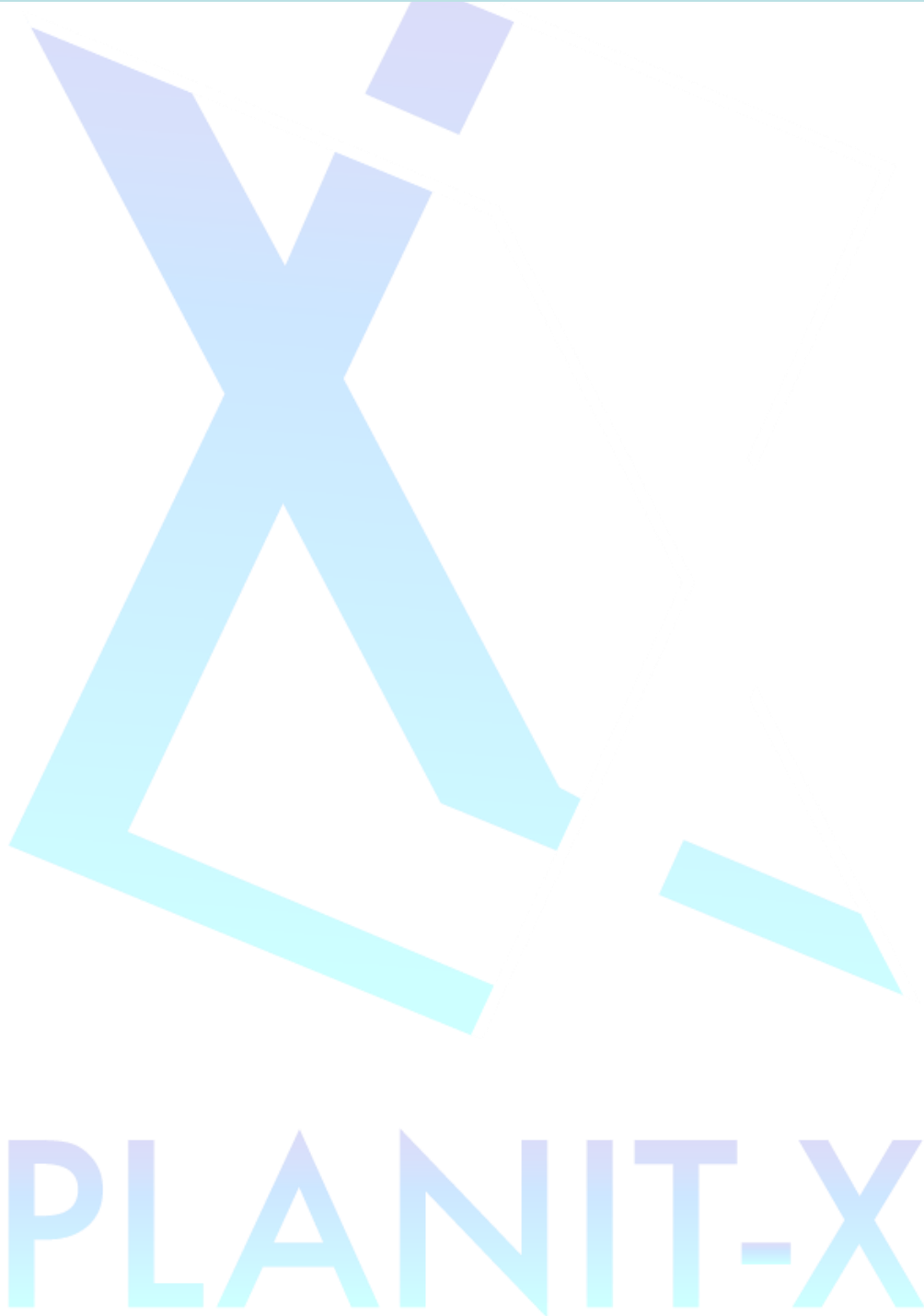
**Following the Neighbourhood Plan Pre Submissions Consultation (November 2017 -5<sup>th</sup> January 2018) all responses will be considered and the plan finalised. Sheepy Parish Council have to approve the finalised plan before it can progress to the next stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process.**

6.2	Evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals. <i>e.g. letters of support; petitions; surveys etc.</i>
	<b>This space was identified by some parishioners, as being an important view and recreational facility during the Neighbourhood Plan Drop in Events in January 2016 and again in the Sheepy Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Questionnaire Summer 2016. Following the Neighbourhood Plan Pre Submissions Consultation (November 2017 -5<sup>th</sup> January 2018) it was requested and agreed that this space be considered for designation as a Local Green Space.</b>
6.3	Evidence of support from community leaders <i>e.g. letters of support from Ward Members; County Councillors; MP etc.</i>
	<b>Not aware of any</b>
6.4	Evidence of support from other groups <i>e.g. letters of support from organisations such as Campaign to Protect Rural England; local amenity societies; local schools etc.</i>
	<b>Not aware of any</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty,” (if applicable)</b>
7.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	<b>See 7.2</b>
7.2	Describe why the community feels that the site has a particular local significance for its beauty.
	<b>This area has been discussed at Parish Council meetings with particular reference made to the importance of the chestnut tree at the centre and chestnut trees along its’ border.</b>
7.3	Site visibility <i>e.g. is it easy to see the site from a public place? Are there long-distance views of the site? Are there views of the site from any key locations?</i>
	<b>The site is visible from Meadow Close and also footpath T14 access from Church Lane.</b>
7.4	Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designations? <i>e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Conservation Area; Special Landscape Area Further information –Natural England</i>
	<b>Not aware of any</b>
7.5	Is the site (or the type of site) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents? <i>Further information –Natural England</i>
	<b>No</b>
7.6	Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building or other special feature?
	<b>The site is very close to All Saint Church – a Grade II listed building</b>
7.7	Is the site highlighted in literature or art? <i>e.g. is the site mentioned in a well-known poem or shown in a famous painting?</i>
	<b>Not aware of any</b>

<b>8</b>	<b>Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance for example because of its historic significance” (if applicable)</b>
8.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	<b>No</b>
8.2	Are there any historic buildings or remains on the site? <i>e.g. listed buildings; scheduled ancient monuments; registered parks and gardens; war memorials; other historic remains or structures.</i> <i>Further information –English Heritage; local history society</i>
	<b>No.</b> <b>See section 7.6</b>
8.3	Are there any important historic landscape features on the site? <i>e.g. old hedgerows; ancient trees; historic ponds or historic garden features</i> <i>Further information –English Heritage; local history society</i>
	<b>The chestnut tree at the centre has a tree protection order.</b>
8.4	Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? <i>e.g. the old site of the town railway station; the old garden for the manor house etc.</i>
	<b>Not aware of any</b>
8.5	Did any important historic events take place on the site?
	<b>No</b>
8.6	Do any historic rituals take place on the site? <i>e.g. well-dressing; maypole dancing etc.</i>
	<b>No</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its recreational value (including as a playing field)”, (if applicable)</b>
9.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	<b>Footpath T14 crosses the area. See 9.4</b>
9.2	Is the site used for playing sport? <i>If so what sport? How long has it been used for sports provision? Is this sports provision free or is a club membership required?</i> <i>Further information – Sport England</i>
	<b>No</b>
9.3	Are the public able to physically access the site? <i>e.g. are there any public rights of way across the site? Or adjacent to the site? Has access been allowed on a discretionary basis? Is there public access to the whole site or only part? Is there good disabled access to the site? (A site can still be designated even if there is no public access.)</i>
	<b>Yes from Church Lane and Meadow Close. The footpath is suitable for disabled access.</b>

9.4	Is the site used by the local community for informal recreation? And since when? <i>e.g. dog walking; sledging; ball games etc.</i>
	<b>From the Sheepy Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Questionnaire Summer 2016, footpath T14 was identified as used by 79 parishioners daily (13.9% of responders), 55 weekly (9.6%), 34 monthly(6.0%) and 174 sometimes (30.5%).</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its tranquillity” (if applicable)</b>
10.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site?
	<b>See 4.1</b>
10.2	Do you consider the site to be tranquil? <i>e.g. are there any roads or busy areas close by?</i>
	<b>The site is a quiet area adjacent to All Saints Church and the Old Rectory.</b>
10.3	Is the site within a recognised tranquil area? <i>e.g. within the Campaign to Protect Rural England’s tranquillity maps</i>
	<b>No</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of the richness of its wildlife”; (if applicable)</b>
11.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?
	<b>At the centre is a large chestnut tree which has a tree protection order.</b>
11.2	Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value? <i>e.g. as a site of special scientific interest; a key wildlife site etc Further information - Natural England</i>
	<b>No. However it is adjacent to All Saints Churchyard which is a designated wildlife site.</b>
11.3	Are any important habitats or species found on the site? <i>e.g. habitats and species listed in the UK priority habitats and species lists or in Biodiversity Action Plans or protected species or on the red/amber lists of birds of conservation concern. Further information - Natural England; National Biodiversity Network; RSPB</i>
	<b>Not aware of any</b>
11.4	What other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? <i>Further information - Natural England; National Biodiversity Network</i>
	<b>Not aware of any</b>
11.5	Is the site part of a long term study of wildlife by members of the local community? <i>e.g. long-term monitoring of breeding birds.</i>
	<b><a href="http://www.naturespot.org.uk/parish/sheepy">www.naturespot.org.uk/parish/sheepy</a> NatureSpot is a Leicestershire educational charity that aims to help the public to learn about and identify local wildlife and encourage community participation in its web-based wildlife recording and mapping tool for Leicestershire.</b>

12	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for any other reason”; (if applicable)
12.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site? <b>No</b>
12.2	What are the other reasons why the site has a particular local significance for the local community? <b>Not aware of any.</b>





## Step 3: Neighbourhood Plan Group considers designation

The Neighbourhood Plan Group should review the evidence provided and decide whether the site is suitable for designation and whether any additional evidence is required.

Not every potential site will meet every criterion, however all sites must meet the following criteria in the checklist -

2.1	not with an extant planning permission within which the Local Green Space could not be accommodated
2.2	not allocated for development in the relevant Neighbourhood Plan, unless it can be shown that the Local Plan housing allocation is not strategic and can be re-located somewhere else in the neighbourhood plan area; or alternatively that the Local Green Space could be incorporated within the site as part of the allocated development
3.2	Not an "extensive tract of land"
3.3	"local in character"
5	in "proximity to the community it serves"
6	"demonstrably special to the local community"

And all sites must meet at least one of the following criteria in the Checklist -

7	"particular local significance ... because of its beauty"
8	"particular local significance ... because of its historic significance"
9	"particular local significance ... because of its recreational value"
10	"particular local significance ... because of its tranquillity"
11	"particular local significance ... because of its wildlife"
12	"particular local significance ... for any other reason"

In order to provide greater certainty, the checklist incorporates Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) to define the likely size of a suitable Local Green Space and its distance from the local community.

A site of over 20ha (50 acres) is considered to be "an extensive tract of land" and therefore not suitable for designation as a Local Green Space.

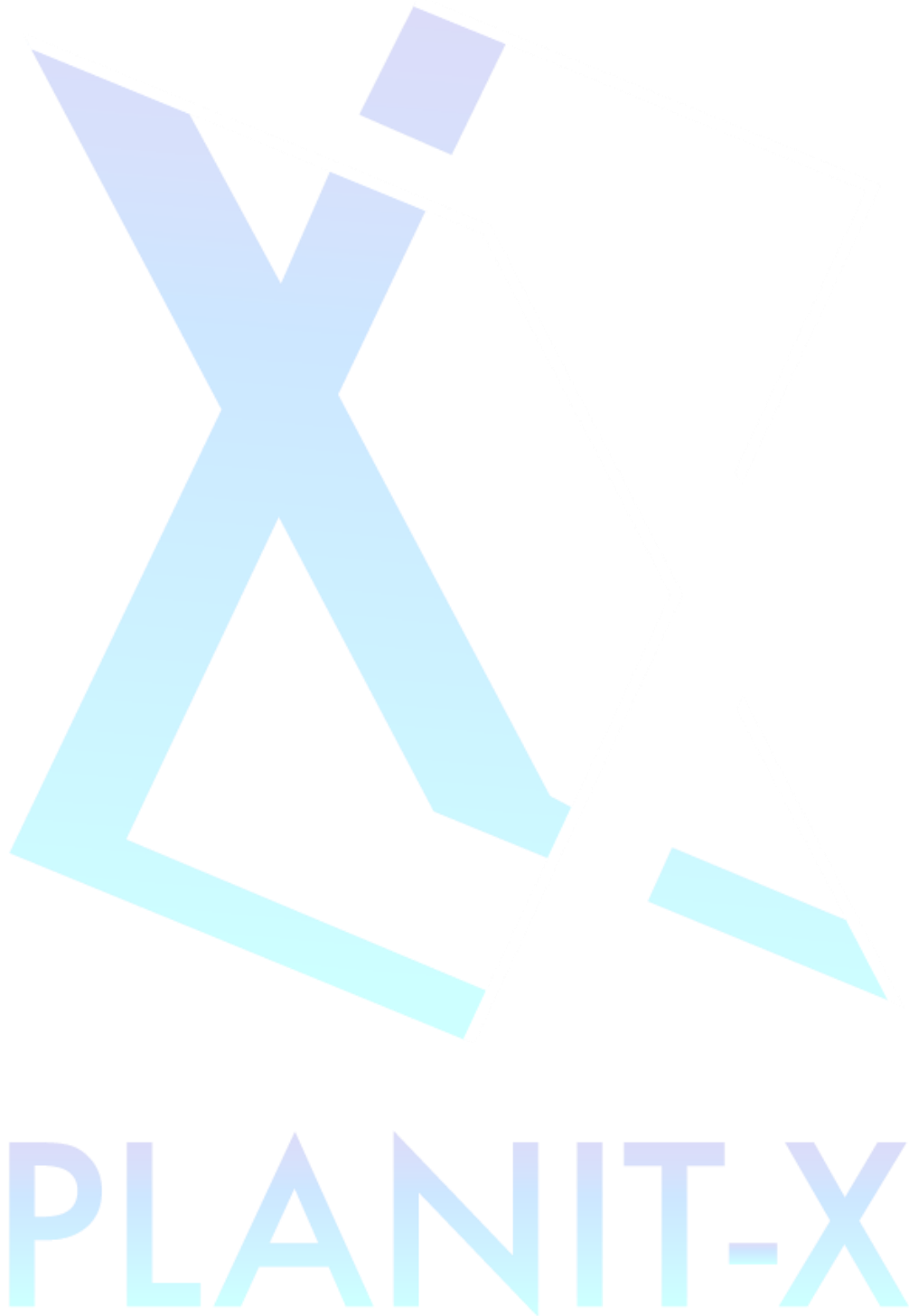
If during the process it becomes evident that the site is not appropriate for local green space designation, there are other options that can be investigated (see Appendix 2).

PLANIT-X

## Step 4: Consult landowner

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The Neighbourhood Plan Group should consult the landowner.



## Step 5: Neighbourhood Plan Designation

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The site can now be designated in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site designation will be “tested” through the plan process. Anybody can object to policies or sites in a plan during the consultation process and these consultation responses must be considered.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be scrutinised by an Independent Examiner, who will ensure that the plan is robust and based on sound evidence. The completed checklist will form part of that evidence. The Neighbourhood Plan will also be subject to a local referendum.

Formal designation will be complete when the Neighbourhood Plan is ‘made’.



PLANIT-X

# APPENDIX 1: MODEL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY AND SUPPORTING TEXT

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## Draft Supporting Text

National policy makes provision for local communities to identify green areas of particular importance to those communities, where development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances. The following sites have been designated as Local Green Spaces through the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process:

## Draft Policy

Development that would harm the openness or special character of a Local Green Space (as designated on the Polices Map) or its significance and value to the local community will not be permitted unless there are very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Local Green Space.



PLANIT-X

## APPENDIX 2: ALTERNATIVES TO LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION

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### Agreements with land-owners

It may be possible for local communities to reach either formal or informal agreements with the owner of the site to ensure access to the site for local people. This may be an appropriate option where the site owner has a long-term connection with the local area, for example the owner of a large historic estate. It may be possible for the land-owner to dedicate the site as “open access land”.

Further information:

[Right of way and open access land - GOV.UK](#)

### Community Purchase

In some instances local communities have purchased important sites to ensure that they remain in community control in perpetuity. The ownership can lie with the Town or Parish Council or with a specific trust.

### Village Green status

Anyone can apply to register land as a green if it has been used by local people for lawful sports and pastimes ‘as of right’ (i.e. without permission, force or secrecy) for at least 20 years.

Further information:

[Town and village greens: how to register Open Spaces Society](#)

### Local Nature Reserves

A Local Nature Reserve (LNR) provide people with special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it. Local Nature Reserves are designated by district or county councils and the Local Authority must control the LNR through ownership, lease or agreement with the owner.

Further information:

[Natural England](#)

### Assets of Community Value

The Community Right to Bid gives community groups a fairer chance to prepare and bid to buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them. This could include village shops, pubs or allotments. The right covers private as well as public assets. It is important to nominate land and buildings to be part of the register of ‘assets of community value’, which is held by the Local Authority. If something on this register is offered for sale, the community then have up to six months to prepare a bid.

Further information:

[www.gov.uk/MyCommunityRights](http://www.gov.uk/MyCommunityRights)