

LOCAL GREEN SPACE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY (TRACKED CHANGES VERSION)

Local Green Space Assessment 1

Is there a planning permission or policy allocation conflict with a Local Green Space allocation?

Local Green Space will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development, therefore sites with extant planning permission will be scoped out unless the proposed development is no longer capable of being implemented or the approved development would be compatible with the Local Green Space allocation.

Because allocation as Local Green Space has to be consistent with local planning policy, sites which have been allocated for an incompatible alternative use will also be scoped out.

Method

- Check for allocations in the adopted Local Plan.
- Check site planning history.
- Check Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Local Green Space Assessment 2

Is the site already subject to a sufficient designation?

Scope out any sites which are wholly designated as:

- Special Areas of Conservation;
- Special Protection Areas;
- Site of Special Scientific Interest;
- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Local Nature Reserves;
- Registered village greens;
- Common land;
- Strategic Green Space; [or](#)
- [Minerals Safeguarding Area](#).

Method

Check GIS mapping.

Local Green Space Assessment 3

Is the site within reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?

What is the community that the Local Green Space serves? What evidence is there that this particular site meets the needs of that community? In reviewing these two points we will take into account our accessibility standards in figure 3.2 of the Local Plan.

Method

Officer assessment based on the following:

- Check GIS mapping.
- Accessibility standards

Local Green Space Assessment 4

Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

The NPPF is clear that the Local Green Space allocation should only be used where the site is not an extensive tract of land. Planning Practice Guidance further states: 'blanket designations of open countryside will not be appropriate'.

Whilst there is no size limit on how small or large a Local Green Space can be, a judgement will need to be made to ensure that the proposed space is of a size that reasonably relates to the community that it serves. Therefore we have defined the following key tests:

How does the site relate to the local area? Does the site feel part of the local area? If yes, how? Does the site connect physically, visually and/or socially to the area? Is the site distinct from its context by virtue of its size, land type or landscape features, e.g. what are its boundary conditions?

Is the site an extensive tract of land? How large is the site in comparison to the community it serves and areas of land in the vicinity? In any event, we propose a maximum size limit of 10ha, including cumulative areas of adjacent green spaces.

How has the size of the site been decided? Does the site follow natural features or existing constraints? Does the whole site justify allocation as Local Green Space or is some of the site unnecessarily included? Is the site unusually large for its use?

Method

Officer review of Open Space Assessment information.

Site visit where required.

Local Green Space Assessment 5

The proposed allocation must be based on evidence that shows why the green space is of particular local significance specifically taking account of beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility and richness of wildlife.

[Does the site include a notice board or an information panel addressing the sites' beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness in wildlife? – Site visit.](#)

Assessment 5.1 – Beauty

This criterion relates to the visual attractiveness of a site. To meet this criterion the site must be beautiful in its own right. To determine whether the site holds local significance due to its beauty, we will use the following key questions:

- Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas? Can you articulate the specific beauty characteristics of the site? – Site visit.
- Site visibility - Is the site visible from a public place? Are there views of the site from any key locations? - Fig.4.2 of the PPULSA & site visit.
- Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments, conservation area appraisals or similar documents? – PPULSA, CAAs & POSA.
- Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designations? – TPO records, PPULSA & POSA.
- Are there any cultural references to the site's scenic quality?
- Does the site bring interest from further afield to the local area?
- Does the green space help to improve the overall appearance of the area by means of its features? – PPULSA, CAAs & POSA.

Method

Officer assessment based on the following:

- Plymouth and Plymouth's Urban Fringe Landscape and Seascape assessment will be used as the key evidence base (PPULSA).
- Plymouth Policy Area Open Space Assessment (POSA).
- Conservation area appraisals (CAAs).
- Site Visit to confirm characteristics.

Assessment 5.2 – Historic Significance

In order to meet this criterion, there must be evidence to demonstrate that the site is of historic importance to the Community. To determine whether the site holds any local historical significance, we will use the following key questions:

- Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, and war memorials. – PPULSA, CAAs, POSA, GIS mapping & Historic maps.
- Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features, ancient woodlands. – TPO records, PPULSA, POSA, CAAs, GIS mapping & Historic maps.
- Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green. – PPULSA, CAAs & Historic maps.
- Did any important historic events take place on the site? Is there a longstanding event which takes place on the site? For example, fete's, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg rolling, plays, market – POSA.

Method

Officer assessment based on the following:

- Plymouth and Plymouth's Urban Fringe Landscape and Seascape assessment will be used as the key evidence base (PPULSA).
- Plymouth Policy Area Open Space Assessment (POSA).
- Conservation area appraisals (CAAs).
- GIS mapping & Historic maps.
- Site Visit.

Assessment 5.3 – Recreational Value

There must be evidence to show that the space has local significance for recreation and is of value to the community.

Whilst a large number of green spaces will offer some form of recreational value, it will be necessary to identify why a particular space offers something unique that could not realistically be accommodated on other spaces that would serve the same community.

To determine whether the site holds any recreational value for its community, we will use the following key questions:

- Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport or is it included in the playing pitch strategy to deliver sports provisions? GIS mapping, POSA & Playing Pitch Strategy.
- Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby? GIS mapping, POSA & Playing Pitch Strategy.
- Does the Green space incorporate play provision or is it included in the play strategy to deliver new play provision? - GIS mapping & Play Strategy.
- What is the quality of the play area? – POSA & Play Strategy.
- Are there any other play provisions within a 240m for local playable space or 600m for strategic play space? – GIS mapping & Play Strategy.
- Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily? Are there desire-lines present on site? – POSA & Site Visit.
- Does the site incorporate any recreational routes, e.g. bridleways, Public Rights of Way (ProW), National Cycle Routes, key pedestrian and cycle links (these need not be legally designated)? - GIS mapping & POSA.

Method

Officer assessment based on the following:

- Plymouth Policy Area Open Space Assessment (POSA).
- Playing pitch strategy.
- Play strategy.
- GIS mapping.
- Site Visit.

Assessment 5.4 – Tranquility

There must be evidence to show that the site is viewed to be of importance to the local community because of the tranquility it provides offering a place for reflection and peaceful enjoyment. This is a subjective assessment and the Council will provide a clear justification as to why an area is considered of a particular value, based on the following key questions:

- Is the site considered to be tranquil? - PPULSA, POSA, GIS mapping & site visit.
- What features make it feel tranquil? - PPULSA, POSA, GIS mapping & site visit.
- Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? - PPULSA, POSA, GIS mapping & site visit.
- Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting and by reducing the appearance of noise and light impacts? - PPULSA, POSA, GIS mapping & site visit.

Method

Officer assessment based on the following:

- Plymouth and Plymouth's Urban Fringe Landscape and Seascape assessment will be used as the key evidence base (PPULSA).
- Plymouth Policy Area Open Space Assessment (POSA).
- GIS mapping.
- Site Visit.

Assessment 5.5 – Richness of Wildlife

There must be evidence to show that the site is viewed to be of local significance because of the wildlife it is home to. To determine whether the site holds any specific wildlife value for its community, we will use the following key questions:

- Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value? -POSA & GIS mapping.
- If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? - POSA & GIS mapping.
- Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site?
- Has the site been defined as part of the JLP biodiversity network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site? – POSA, JLP Biodiversity Network Map & GIS mapping.
- Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site? - POSA & GIS mapping.

Method

Officer assessment based on the following:

- Plymouth Policy Area Open Space Assessment (POSA).
- JLP Biodiversity Network Map.
- GIS mapping.
- Site Visit.

Local Green Space Assessment 6

Is the site demonstrably special to the local community and of particular importance to them?

The initial Local Green Space nomination process information and consultation responses will be used to demonstrate importance to the local community. This assessment will have regard to alternative green space provision with the same offer of characteristics that serves that community. Information relating to this assessment will be supplemented by a further consultation process on sites that meet the criteria of assessments 1-5.

Method

Evidence of local support.

Previous Consultation Responses.

Officer Assessment based on the following:

- Assessment 5 Information.
- GIS mapping.
- Site Visit.

Local Green Space Assessment 7

Could the site help to mitigate against the effects of climate change [on the local community](#)?

Urban green spaces can contribute towards the mitigation of climate change [at the local level](#) by helping to cool the climate through evapotranspiration from plants, shading effects and [mitigate flooding through rainfall interception, storage](#) and percolation. In addition, green spaces can provide opportunities for ~~local food cultivation~~, tree planting and offer breathing spaces in built up areas. Urban green space may also have secondary benefits, for example, a green space may facilitate local recreation [and food cultivation](#) that could negate travel to the countryside and reduce energy consumption.

Whilst not a specific criteria on its own for designating Local Green Space, the provision of LGS can bring benefits to the local community in terms of opportunities to tackle climate change. The Council will also assess sites to see if the characteristics of the site provide any opportunities to mitigate for climate change [that could benefit the local community](#). This is a subjective assessment and the Councils will provide a clear justification as to why an area is considered of a particular value, based on the following key questions:

Temperature

~~What natural features are within the green space? E.g. trees, vegetation, groundcover, soil type, topography, site orientation, etc.? What is the landscape character of the site?~~

- ~~What size are the trees and to what extent of shading do they provide would the leaves provide a canopy for shading?~~
- [What is the level of ground cover? E.g. the more cover provided, the cooler the area is in hot weather conditions.](#)

Flooding

- ~~What surfacing is within the green space? Could it facilitate percolation and drainage or hold coastal or river flood water?~~
- [Is the site within a flood risk area?](#)
- [Does the site have a history of flooding?](#)
- [To what extent does the existing vegetation help to assist in absorbing water?](#)

Reducing the need to travel by car

- ~~Would the green space facilitate a range of recreational activities that could reduce the likelihood of people travelling to the countryside?~~
- [Are there walking or cycling paths?](#)

Climate Change Adaptions

- [Are there any plans or opportunities for climate change adaptions e.g. to plant trees or create features to help flooding?](#)
- [Check each site against the measures set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan to see if the site is able to assist in the delivery of these actions. Is there scope to integrate low carbon technologies within the green space? E.g. ground heat pump underneath sport pitches, water collection, etc.](#)

Method

- GIS mapping
- [Flood data held by the EA and LLFA](#)
- Site Visit
- [Climate Emergency Action Plan \(CEAP\)](#)

