

Ashby De La Zouch Neighbourhood Plan– Important Local Green Spaces Site Selection Criteria

1. Introduction and Policy Context

Ashby De La Zouch Town Council is leading on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan through a Steering Group established for the purpose. One of the emerging priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan is to protect and enhance important local green spaces.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced a new concept of a Local Green Space designation. This is a discretionary designation to be made by inclusion within a Local Development Plan or Neighbourhood Plan.

The NPPF states

“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.

- 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”.

2. Ashby De La Zouch Site Selection Criteria

The NPPF requires that any Local Green Space designation must meet the specified criteria. The criteria contained in the NPPF tends to be general rather than specific – for example it states that it needs to be reasonably close to the community it serves but does not give set distances or areas. It is intended to act as guidance which should then be interpreted at a local level. To assist in the designation process a number of agencies have developed checklists that are consistent with and help develop the NPPF criteria, and against which potential local green space designations could be tested. The one below is drawn from the criteria developed by the Open Spaces Society and is specifically designed to assist in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

A scoring system, based on a Traffic Based RAG scores (i.e. Red, Amber, Green) has been adopted. This reflects good and common practice especially as it is easier to understand and use.

- Red was scored for a negative assessment where significant mitigation was required or there are more serious issues ;
- Amber was scored where mitigation might be required;
- Green was scored for a positive assessment.

Evidence for the RAG scoring was obtained from a range of sources, including emerging findings from community consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Site	Westfields Recreation Ground
Location of Site	Westfields Recreation Ground, Abbey Drive, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire, LE65 2LD.
Description of Site	The site is a recreation ground which is surrounded by a large estate of largely social housing. It is a valuable piece of open space which contains a pavillion which is used by the local football team .There is also a small play area .A football pitch is marked out but the space is largely used for informal outdoor activities and dog walking. it is the only piece of open public space in that part of town.



Criteria 1: Public Access (Some areas may already be available for public access, other land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access)

Red	Amber	Green
		Public access to all areas.

Criteria 2: Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves (there is no definition of this in the NPPF and it will be up to individual planning authorities to define. This may vary depending on the size of the community to which the green space relates, the size of the green space or the value placed on it by the community. The land must not be isolated from the community and would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. Some local planning authorities have introduced a maximum distance between the space and the community. For instance, Leicester has stated it must be within 400 metres)

Red	Amber	Green
		Adjacent to large social housing estate

Criteria 3: Demonstrably special to a local community - Evidence must be provided of the land's value to and use by the local community to show the land holds a particular local significance. The land must fulfil one or more of the following criteria:

Criteria 3a: Beauty (This relates to the visual attractiveness of the site, and its contribution to landscape, character and or setting of the settlement. Local green spaces would need to contribute to local identity, character of the area and a sense of place, and make an important contribution to the physical form and layout of the settlement. It may link up with other open spaces and allow views through or beyond the settlement which are valued locally)

Red	Amber	Green
		This is a large open green space and is lined on one side by established trees and shrubbery.

Criteria 3b: Historic significance (The land should provide a setting for, or allow views of, heritage assets or other locally-valued landmarks. It may be necessary to research historic records from the County Archaeologist or National or Local Records Office)

Red	Amber	Green
		This is protected by the “Field in Trust” charity . Who were founded back in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association by King George V. “Our mission is the same now and as it was then: to ensure that everyone – young or old, able or disabled and wherever they live – should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation. These spaces are vital to building happy and healthy communities and sadly continue to be threatened by all kinds of development. We are a national charity and operate

		throughout the UK to safeguard recreational spaces and campaign for better statutory protection for all kinds of outdoor sites.”
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Criteria 3c: Recreational value (It must have local significance for recreation, perhaps through the variety of activities it supports, and be of value to the community)

Red	Amber	Green
		Westfields Recreation Ground has facilities for football . There is children’s play-park and it is used by the general public for dog-. The small pavilion is used by local football team .

Criteria 3d: Tranquillity (An oasis of calm and a space for quiet reflection)


Red	Amber	Green
		Westfields Recreation Ground is an essential open green space in this area of Ashby which is openly used by all the residents for public recreation. It is in easy walking distance of Ashby residents and provides a space for relaxation .

Criteria 3e: Richness of wildlife (This might include the value of its habitat, and priority areas may have been identified by the council. It may require some objective evidence, such as a designation, like a wildlife site or Local Nature Reserve)

Red	Amber	Green
		Westfields Recreation Ground contains significant numbers of trees which are habitat to local birdlife and mammals such as squirrels.

Criteria 4: Local in character, not an extensive tract of land (The criteria may differ between settlements depending on their physical size and population. The areas would normally be fairly self-contained with clearly-defined edges. Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. There is a no minimum size limit for local green spaces)

Red	Amber	Green
		This is a well defined area at the western side of the town bounded by a social housing estate.

Date	Name of Assessor (s)	Signature of Assessor (s)
11-6-16	Dr Barbara Kneale	

PLEASE REMEMBER IF UNDERTAKING A SITE ASSESMENT TO DO THIS IN A LOCATION THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC AND IS SAFE INCLUDING BEING AWAY FROM THE ROAD AND OTHER POTENTIAL HAZARDS. DO NOT TRESPASS.