



New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan

Review of proposed Local Green Spaces

New Alresford Town Council

Draft for Client Review

Prepared by LUC

June 2026

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New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 LUC was commissioned in April 2026 to review the sites proposed for Local Green Space designation in the emerging New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan (NANP).

1.2 New Alresford Town Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the town and wider parish. Winchester City Council (WCC), as the local authority, designated the neighbourhood area in September 2021 to coincide with the boundary. The NANP is being prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee (NPAC), which is made up of New Alresford Town Councillors and residents. NPAC is an Advisory Committee to the Town Council, which is the qualifying body for the neighbourhood plan.

1.3 The neighbourhood plan presents the Town Council with an opportunity to designate spaces that are particularly valued by the community, and which meet certain criteria, as Local Green Space. This is a special designation that would protect such spaces in perpetuity from inappropriate development, as defined in chapter 13 of the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) **[See reference 1]**.

1.4 Following on from a series of engagement events and other activities, the NPAC identified 44 potential sites for designation as Local Green Space. Each site was assessed against the criteria as set out in the NPPF and 37 sites were considered to meet the requirements. The remaining seven spaces were rejected for designation for a variety of reasons.

Purpose of this study

1.5 The purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, it reviews the evidence that has been collated for each of the 37 proposed Local Green Spaces in the emerging NANP. The report provides advice on whether this is sufficiently robust or if additional information would be needed, to ensure that each space meets the criteria for designation as Local Green Space, as defined by the NPPF (2024). Secondly, it considers the evidence for the seven spaces not proposed for designation, to advise on whether any of these would in fact be appropriate as Local Green Space.

1.6 This study forms part of the evidence base to support New Alresford Town Council's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

1.7 The outputs of this study will inform the Town Council's decision on which areas to designate as Local Green Space in their draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 This section sets out the methodology for the assessment. This includes information on approach, the assessment criteria and process followed.

The legislative framework

2.2 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area

2.3 The NPPF, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in December 2024 (with minor amendments in February 2025) sets out the government's planning policies for England. Paragraphs 106 to 108 introduce a Local Green Space designation (LGS) to protect local green areas of special importance to local communities.

106. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should 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 updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

107. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

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

108. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of this Framework (excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land set out in chapter 13).

2.4 Planning Practice Guidance provides some additional detail, including:

- Provided land can meet the criteria at paragraph 107 of the NPPF, there is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space (Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 37-01620140306).
- Designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners (Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 37-021-20140306).
- Management of land designated as Local Green Space will remain the responsibility of its owner (Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 37-017-20140306).

- Some areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may already have largely unrestricted public access, However, other land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306).
- Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate (Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306).
- 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 (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 37-008-20140306).

Evidence drawn on for this report

2.5 This report has drawn on evidence compiled by the NPAC. This comprises:

- New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment January 2025 (Draft) – this is a report prepared by consultants Troy Planning and Design for the Town Council.
- Consultant Report on Public Consultation (21st November to 17th December 2024) – this report summarises the responses from WCC and the Public to the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- Proposal for Local Green Space Designation – Barn Meadow - document setting out the justification for inclusion of this site as a Local Green Space.
- Letter of objection from Alresford Bowling Club, 27 November 2024.

Defining a robust assessment

2.6 This report considers whether each site identified by the NPAC has met all three criteria for designation, namely:

- Reasonable proximity to the community it serves.
- Demonstrably special to the local community for one or more of the following reasons: beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity, richness of wildlife.
- Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

2.7 In order to establish a framework for analysis, a series of questions has been identified related to each of the criteria as set out above. These questions have been informed from the government guidance and experience of working with other neighbourhood planning groups, including examinations.

2.8 The sequence of questions is shown in Table 2.1.

2.9 The findings as set out in the New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment January 2025 (Draft) have been used to consider each of the questions and an overall rating ('Yes', 'Partial' and 'No') has been provided for each criterion in Section 3 of this report.

2.10 It should be noted that a space only needs to be demonstrably special for one of the reasons provided to meet this criterion.

2.11 In terms of determining whether a space is 'local in context', there is no definitive government guidance as to what constitutes an extensive tract of land. Therefore, this has been determined based on the size of the space in the context of the settlement and whether it has definable edges.

2.12 If the site meets all three criteria, recommendations have been made with a view to the suitability of supporting a Local Green Space designation.

Limitations

2.13 The assessment of the sites needs to be considered against the criterion set out within Paragraph 106 of the NPPF - “Designating land as Local Green Space should 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 updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period”. While a view is offered on this matter, the Local Planning Authority will be required to make further judgement on these matters in each case.

Table 2.1: Methodology for assessment

Criteria for designation	Questions
Reasonable proximity	Is the site close to the community it serves? Does the site have good pedestrian and/or cycle access? Does the site serve the whole town or a particular geographic area or group of people? Is the site accessible (physically, socially) from surrounding areas? Note: there is no requirement for a space to be publicly accessible, but it still needs to be close to the community.
Demonstrably special – beauty	Is there good visibility of the site? Are there long-distance views of the site? Are there views of the site from key locations? Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designation? Is the site specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents? Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building or other special feature? Is the site highlighted in literature or art?

Criteria for designation	Questions
Demonstrably special – historic significance	Are there any historic buildings on the site? Are there any important historic landscape features on the site? Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the town? Did any important historic events take place on the site? Do any historic rituals take place on the site?
Demonstrably special – recreational value	Is the site used for playing sport? Are the public able to physically access the site (e.g. public rights of way across or adjacent to the site, discretionary access, good disabled access, access to all or part of the site) Is the site used by the local community for informal recreation (e.g. dog walking, sledging, ball games etc.) Is the site used for community events/ schools etc.?
Demonstrably special – tranquillity	Is the site minimally affected by sources of nearby noise pollution? Is the site within a recognised tranquil area (e.g. on the CPRE Tranquil Map)? Are there natural features on/ adjacent to the site that contribute to visual tranquillity?
Demonstrably special – richness of wildlife	Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value? (e.g. as a site of special scientific interest, a local wildlife site etc.) Are any important habitats or species found on the site? (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 list of birds of conservation concern).
Local in character/ not an extensive tract of land	Is the site contained by clearly defined edges? Is the site physically, visually and socially connected to the local area? Is the site characteristic of the local area?

Criteria for designation	Questions
	Does the site convey local distinctiveness and sense of place? Is the site of a sufficient size to not be considered 'an extensive tract of land?'

2.14 The consistency of the proposed designation with the local planning of sustainable development: The proposed designation of Local Green Spaces also needs to accord with the more general elements of paragraph 106 of the NPPF. In this regard there are two key tests. The first is that the proposed designation is consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complements investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. The second is that it is capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.

Chapter 3

Review Outcome

Review of sites proposed for designation

3.1 A summary of the overall ratings for each of the proposed 37 sites across each of the criteria is provided in Table 3.1. The reference numbering in the table relates to the numbering as shown in the New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment January 2025 (Draft).

3.2 A fuller commentary about how well the 37 spaces meet the criteria is provided below the table.

3.3 In summary, this report concurs that the 37 sites proposed for designation in the draft NANP meet the criteria for designation for Local Green Space.

Table 3.1: Summary of findings against the three criteria – sites proposed for designation

Ref.	Proximity	Beauty	Historic	Recreation	Tranquil	Wildlife	Local in character / not extensive tract	Sustainable development	Overall rating
1. Nicholson Place	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.45 ha)	Yes	Yes
2. Mitford Road Roundabout	Yes	Partial	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.12 ha)	Yes	Yes
3. Stratton Bates Recreation Ground and Play Area	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes: 2.53 ha	Yes	Yes
4. Lovells Walk	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.03 ha	Yes	Yes
5. Makins Court	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.14 ha	Yes	Yes
6. Meryon Road	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.11 ha	Yes	Yes
7. Fair View A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 0.07 ha	Yes	Yes

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Ref.	Proximity	Beauty	Historic	Recreation	Tranquil	Wildlife	Local in character / not extensive tract	Sustainable development	Overall rating
8. Fair View B	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 0.18 ha	Yes	Yes
9. Hasted Drive	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 0.02 ha	Yes	Yes
10. Orchard Close	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Partial	Yes: 0.17 ha	Yes	Yes
11. Appledown Close	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 0.16 ha	Yes	Yes
12. Lindley Gardens	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.12 ha	Yes	Yes
13. Sun Hill Recreation Ground and Play Area	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 1.06 ha	Yes	Yes
14. Oak Hill Open Space	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.03 ha	Yes	Yes
15. Benenden Green	Yes	Partial	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.45 ha	Yes	Yes

Chapter 3 Review Outcome

Ref.	Proximity	Beauty	Historic	Recreation	Tranquil	Wildlife	Local in character / not extensive tract	Sustainable development	Overall rating
16. Brill Close	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.03 ha	Yes	Yes
17. Carpenters	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.09 ha	Yes	Yes
18. Chestnut Walk	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes: 0.25 ha	Yes	Yes
19. Nursery Road	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.03 ha	Yes	Yes
20. Ash Walk	Yes	Partial	No	Yes	Partial	No	Yes: 0.04 ha	Yes	Yes
21. Sun Lane	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 0.11 ha	Yes	Yes
22. Alresford Bowling Club	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes: 0.13 ha	Yes	Yes
23. The Avenue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 1.08 ha	Yes	Yes
24. Thornton Close	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes: 0.03 ha	Yes	Yes

Chapter 3 Review Outcome

Ref.	Proximity	Beauty	Historic	Recreation	Tranquil	Wildlife	Local in character / not extensive tract	Sustainable development	Overall rating
25. St. John the Baptist Church Yard	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes: 1.25 ha	Yes	Yes
26. Paddock Way	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes: 0.10 ha	Yes	Yes
27. Arlebury Park Recreation	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Partial	Yes: 4.21 ha	Yes	Yes
28. Arlebury Park – Rugby Grounds	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes: 3.05 ha	Yes	Yes
29. Memorial Gardens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes: 0.08 ha	Yes	Yes
30. Capt. Robert Cogswell Memorial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes: 0.08 ha	Yes	Yes
31. Spring Garden Allotments	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 0.69 ha	Yes	Yes

Chapter 3 Review Outcome

Ref.	Proximity	Beauty	Historic	Recreation	Tranquil	Wildlife	Local in character / not extensive tract	Sustainable development	Overall rating
32. New Allotments	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes: 0.55 ha	Yes	Yes
33. Watercress Meadow	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes: 0.06 ha	Yes	Yes
34. Watercress Line Picnic Area	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes: 0.15 ha	Yes	Yes
35. De Lucy Avenue	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes: 0.02 ha	Yes	Yes
36. Windermere Gardens	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes: 0.01 ha	Yes	Yes
37. Huxley Drive	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes: 0.03 ha	Yes	Yes

3.4 Reasonably close to the community: In terms of being in reasonable proximity to the local community, all of the 37 sites proposed for designation in the draft policy are located within the Parish. The majority of these are also within the Settlement Boundary. Sites 23, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 32 are located either wholly or mostly outside the Settlement Boundary. Nevertheless, each of these is considered to be valued for recreational reasons and they are accessible to residents. Some are also historically important, for example, the Memorial Gardens (site 29) and the Capt. Robert Cogswell Memorial (site 30).

3.5 Whilst not a requirement, all of the sites are publicly accessible with the exception of the Alresford Bowling Club (site 22) and Paddock Way (site 26).

3.6 In the case of the Bowling Club, the owners have written as part of the November 2024 consultation to object to inclusion as a Local Green Space. This is largely on the basis that that the green is open to members only. Whilst this is true, this is the only Bowling Green in the town and has been in situ since at least the 1870s, hence the space has both recreational and historical significance to the town. The site meets all of the other criteria. There are other examples of such facilities being designated as Local Green Space in neighbourhood plans, for example Alcester. In addition, when the Localism Act was introduced in 2011, bowling greens were specifically mentioned by the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, as suitable for designation: “Bowling is one of the nation’s most popular pastimes and the bowling green has long been part of the fabric of our towns and villages. The new powers we are proposing can help to preserve this part of England’s sporting and cultural heritage for years to come. The local pitch, pavilion, park or playing field are at the heart of community life, where people come together to play sport and socialise. Making sure people can go on enjoying their local amenities is at the heart of the changes being made to the planning system. We are putting power in the hands of communities and increasing protections for those spaces that are important to them.” [\[See reference 2\]](#)

3.7 With regards Paddock Way (site 26), the site is not publicly accessible but is considered to be demonstrably special for biodiversity reasons and was recently allocated as an ecological mitigation area as part of an approved planning application (15/00077/FUL). It meets all other Local Green Space criteria.

3.8 Demonstrably special: All of the sites can demonstrate that they are demonstrably special for at least one of the reasons as set out in the legislation.

3.9 Local in character: All of the spaces are considered to meet this criterion as none are an extensive tract of land, including those located outside the settlement boundary.

3.10 The consistency of the proposed designation with the local planning of sustainable development: None of the sites have been put forward for consideration for development. Therefore, they would not hinder the delivery of homes in the neighbourhood area. The majority are identified as demonstrably special for recreational reasons, which would contribute to sustainable development and complement investment in essential services. All are considered to be capable of lasting beyond the Plan period.

Review of sites not proposed for designation

3.11 In addition to the 37 sites noted above, seven spaces were identified as potentially suitable for Local Green Space designation. The review of these undertaken by the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultant found that none of these spaces met the full set of criteria for designation. A further review is provided below.

Assessment January 2025 (Draft))

3.12 Sun Hill Junior School sports field (R1) and Perins School Playing Fields (R2): The Locality Guidance [\[See reference 3\]](#) refers to national policy in relation to sports pitches and playing fields. Paragraph 104 of the NPPF

states: “Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use”. In this way, these spaces may be considered to be well protected from loss.

3.13 Nevertheless, paragraph 107 of the NPPF explicitly states that playing fields can be designated for their recreational value. On this matter, the Locality guidance advises that “designating sports pitches and playing fields as Local Green Space would be useful where the intention is to protect the specific facility in the specific location. However, if there is a possibility of alternative or better facilities being provided in future, perhaps in a better location, then Local Green Space designation would be inflexible.” In these cases, paragraph 104 of the NPPF (cited above) would provide a more appropriate form of protection.

3.14 The New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment January 2025 (Draft) correctly references Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010 and Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which also offer a level of protection for school playing fields.

3.15 Whilst the playing fields are not accessible to the wider community, clearly they are demonstrably special to those sections of the community using them for schooling. There are examples of other neighbourhood plans that have successfully designated school playing fields as Local Green Space, including Godstone Neighbourhood Plan in Surrey. However, caution should be taken when considering designating school land (including playing fields) as Local Green Space as this could restrict possibilities and opportunities for expansion of the school facilities, if required in the future. This brings into question whether the designation would support the local planning of sustainable development and would be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.

3.16 Recommendation: As the spaces are already significantly protected under existing legislation, the Local Green Space designation is not considered necessary unless it is to protect the assets in their existing specific locations. Even so, there are potentially other ways to achieve this that would offer greater flexibility for the sites, for instance including a policy in the neighbourhood plan to safeguard existing education provision. It is recommended that the spaces are not designated as Local Green Space.

3.17 River Arle (R3): The space is located within the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As such it is already afforded a high level of protection in national policy. Paragraph 193 (b) of the NPPF, for example, states that “development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.” Any development that might adversely affect the River Itchen SAC would also be subject to the Habitats Regulations 2007 (as amended), which involve stringent tests that must be met before a development is granted planning permission.

3.18 Recommendation: The site is adequately protected and the Local Green Space designation would not offer additional benefits.

3.19 Barn Meadow (R4): This is a 6.12 hectare site located in the west of the parish, beyond but adjacent to the settlement boundary. The New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment January 2025 (Draft) suggests that the site is too large to be designated as a Local Green Space and that it is being considered as a potential housing allocation. It recommends that the site is therefore unsuitable for Local Green Space designation.

3.20 A proposal for Local Green Space designation has been submitted to the NPAC in relation to this site, which sets out how the space is considered to meet the national criteria. This submission includes letters of support for the

designation from the CPRE and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The submission has been reviewed in light of the NPPF and government planning guidance.

3.21 Reasonably close to the community: The site is located just outside but adjacent to the settlement boundary. There is no formal public right of access onto the site, although this is not a requirement for designation. Drove Lane borders the site to the east, and the southern boundary is adjacent to the B3047. The Arle Valley includes a stretch along Drove Lane, which borders the site to the east, but does not enter the site. The Wayfarer's Walk and the Watercress Way include a stretch along the northern part of Drove Lane, although beyond the boundary of the site. The site could therefore be considered to be reasonably close to the community.

3.22 Demonstrably special: An assessment has been undertaken of the criteria, where one or more needs to be demonstrated.

3.23 Beauty: Drove Lane, which borders the site to the east, offers views across the site. These views, and Barn Meadow itself, are mentioned explicitly in the Arle Valley Trail guide. The space is located within the setting of the South Downs National Park and long-distance views are visible from the National Park onto it.

3.24 The space is located in the Upper Itchen Valley Local Character Area, where characteristic features include watercress beds and water meadows. This area was previously designated by the City Council as an Area of Special Landscape Quality.

3.25 Historic: There are no designated heritage assets within or adjacent to the space. Historic England considers that the buildings at Borough Farm may be non-designated heritage assets, as it is the site of the former railway line. The earthworks and structures of the former working water meadows at the space can still be identified, and in this regard the space has been described by the CPRE as having a "rich and interesting heritage".

3.26 Recreation: The site is not publicly accessible, although is visible from various locations. It is unlikely to meet the requirements for being demonstrably special for recreational reasons.

3.27 Tranquillity: Located on the north-west edge of the town, adjacent to river corridor, the space is somewhat protected from light and noise pollution although this is not considered to be a significant factor.

3.28 Wildlife: The space is directly adjacent to River Itchen, which is designated here as a SAC and SSSI. Those areas closest to the western and southern boundary fall within the Impact Risk Zone for the SAC. There have been reported sightings of numerous flora and fauna, including orchids, slow worms, sparrow hawks and buzzards. The area is frequented by swifts and was the focus of a swift population recovery project in 2023. Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre's Living Record notes sightings of Eurasian otters within 300 metres upstream and 50 metres downstream of the site in the last few years. The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has submitted a letter of support for the Local Green Space designation citing the space as an essential part of the wider green infrastructure network and "essential connection to wild and green space, contributing to improving health and wellbeing of local people."

3.29 Local in character: 6.12 hectares, although the space is on the larger side, there is no definitive national guidance on how large a space may be. Planning guidance states: "There are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be because places are different and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed". However, paragraph 100 of the NPPF is clear that Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. Consequently, blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a 'back door' way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name." It could be argued that the site at 6.12 hectares is local in size within the context of the town and notably when compared to, for instance, the new parkland open space being delivered as part of the development east of Sun Lane.

3.30 The consistency of the proposed designation with the local planning of sustainable development: It is important to consider the extent to which the designation of Barn Meadow as a Local Green Space would be consistent with sustainable development and complements investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. WCC has indicated that there is a housing need of approximately 100 dwellings to be delivered in the neighbourhood area by way of the neighbourhood plan. Opportunities for new development within the existing built-up parts of the parish are heavily constrained because of available sites. Six sites have come forward, via the local Call for Sites that have the potential to contribute to this housing requirement. One of these is Barn Meadow.

3.31 Although the site meets many of the criteria for designation as a Local Green Space, it is also being considered as a potential housing allocation. Given the parish's need to deliver at least 100 homes, protecting the site from development could be viewed as inconsistent with the objective of achieving sustainable development and may not be supported by an independent examiner. As Local Green Space designation is intended to endure beyond the plan period, it may not be appropriate to apply this level of protection to a site that may be needed to meet future housing needs.

3.32 Recommendation: Taking account of the information available, it is not clear that the proposed designation of Barn Meadow as a Local Green Space meets the requirements of national policy as set out in paragraph 106 of the NPPF. For this reason, it is recommended that the space is not designated as Local Green Space.

3.33 Old Alresford Pond (R5) and Alresford Golf Course (R6): These two sites are located outside the Neighbourhood Area.

3.34 Recommendation: The sites are not within the Neighbourhood Area and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan has no influence over them. They cannot be designated in the NANP.

3.35 Sun Lane Green Infrastructure (R7): This relates to a mixed use development located to the east of Sun Lane, on the eastern side of the town. The planning application was granted outline planning permission in March 2020, and reserved matters were approved in September 2024. The New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment January 2025 (Draft) suggested that the green spaces planned for the site be rejected at this stage for Local Green Space designation due to the fact that the detailed design had not yet been approved. Instead, the recommendation was to ensure that it was identified as Open Space in the emerging Local Plan.

3.36 The site is now under construction and will comprise an area of recreational green space, potentially to include play equipment, within the housing development at the northern part of the site. In addition, a large area of parkland in the centre of the site will be developed, to include open space, trees and planting and potentially a BMX circuit.

3.37 Recommendation: As the site has now been approved and a layout, including open space and other facilities, has been identified, it is recommended to revisit the inclusion of the open spaces it comprises as Local Green Space in the NANP. This could include the space identified within the residential part of the site and also the parkland.

3.38 While the parkland area may be considered to be fairly large at approximately 16 hectares, there is no definitive national guidance on the size issue, and it may be capable of being considered as 'local in scale' in the context of the wider town. Once completed, it will be a self-contained green space within the settlement boundary of the parish, enclosed by residential development to the north and west, employment land to the south and a solar installation to the east. It would not be practical to identify a smaller part of the proposed space as Local Green Space. The space will be fully accessible and is designed for recreational use by the wider community, with a network of access points and formal and informal footpaths within the space. It would appear to be a consistent and coherent green space based on the various access points and the network for formal and informal footpaths planned within the space. In the context of the existing town, it could be therefore be considered to be 'local in scale'.

Chapter 4

Summary and next steps

4.1 This report provides an objective assessment of the long-list of potential Local Green Spaces that have been considered for inclusion in the New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 In total, 44 spaces were put forward for consideration. Of these, 37 are considered to meet the national criteria and are suitable for designation as Local Green Space.

4.3 Of the remaining seven spaces, two (Old Alresford Pond and Alresford Golf Club) fall outside the Neighbourhood Area boundary and are therefore unsuitable for designation.

4.4 Two spaces (Sun Hill Junior Schools Sports Field and Perins School playing fields) are adequately protected through legislation as school playing fields. The Local Green Space designation is not considered necessary for either unless it is to protect the assets in their existing specific locations. Even so, there are potentially other ways to achieve this, that would offer greater flexibility for the sites, for instance including a policy in the neighbourhood plan to safeguard existing education provision.

4.5 One space (River Arle) is considered to be adequately protected as it is located within the River Itchen SAC and SSSI. The Local Green Space designation would not offer additional benefit.

4.6 The Sun Lane Green Infrastructure site is in the process of being developed, having recently been granted as part of a mixed use planning application. It comprises two spaces: an area of parkland located between the planned employment and residential uses, and an area of green within the residential area. As the layout for the site is now understood, it is considered

References

that these spaces could be taken forward for Local Green Space designation. It is recommended to liaise with the developer on this matter.

4.7 The Barn Meadow space is considered to meet the Local Green Space tests on community value, proximity, and size, but designating it may conflict with sustainable development aims in NPPF para 106. The Neighbourhood Area must plan for about 100 new homes, with limited sites available; six potential sites were identified via the Call for Sites, including Barn Meadow, so capacity to meet the housing need is uncertain.

4.8 Because overall growth options are unclear, it is uncertain whether protecting Barn Meadow as Local Green Space would be compatible with delivering required development. While Barn Meadow is well-managed and integral to local green/blue infrastructure, the planning context is changing and the landowner has previously promoted some development there, casting doubt on its ability to endure as protected space beyond the plan period. For this reason, it is recommended that this space is not included for designation as a Local Green Space.

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