New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan

Review of proposed Local Green Spaces

New Alresford Town Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

October 2026

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Draft	A Eardley	T Livingston	T Livingston	11.06.2026
2	Draft Final	A Eardley	T Livingston	T Livingston	21.10.2026
3	Final Report	A Eardley	T Livingston	T Livingston	21.10.2026











Land Use Consultants Limited
Registered in England. Registered number 2549296. Registered office: 250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD. Printed on 100% recycled paper

Contents

Chapter 1 5
Introduction

Purpose of this study 6

Chapter 2 7
Methodology

The legislative framework 7
Evidence drawn on for this report 9
Defining a robust assessment 9

Chapter 3 14
Review Outcome

Chapter 4 29
Summary and next steps

References 31

Table of Tables

Table 2.1: Methodology for assessment 11
Table 3.1: Summary of findings against the three criteria – sites proposed for designation 15

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 Policy HC2 of the 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) **[See reference** 1**]**.

1.4 Following on from a series of engagement events and other activities that took place in 2024, 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 for 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 (2026). 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, alongside other evidence base studies, such as the assessment of potential development site allocations.

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 August 2026 sets out the government's planning policies for England. Policy HC2 introduces a Local Green Space designation to protect local green areas of special importance to local communities:

> Policy HC2: Local Green Space
>
> Local and neighbourhood plans may designate land as Local Green Space where this would safeguard green areas of particular value to the local community. Local Green Space should be limited to situations where the land concerned is:

a. In 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 not an extensive tract of land.

2. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs. Local Green Space should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

2.4 Planning Practice Guidance provides some additional detail, including:

- Provided land can meet the criteria at Policy HC2(1) 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 of the NPPF 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 additional requirement within Policy HC2 of the NPPF - "*Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs. Local Green Space should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period*". While a

view is offered on this matter, both New Alresford Town Council and Winchester City Council as 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?
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?

Criteria for designation	Questions
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? 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 clause 2 of Policy HC2 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 the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs. 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

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

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

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

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 as potential development locations for the Neighbourhood Plan. 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 by providing access to green space for residents. 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, Troy Planning and Design, in 2025 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 previous

national policy in relation to sports pitches and playing fields. Policy HC7 of the 2026 NPPF continues to state that: "*Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space and allotments, 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 location which offers comparable or improved accessibility for the community it serves; or c) is for public service infrastructure, and the resulting loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality; or d) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use*". Therefore, these two spaces (R1 and R2), which are existing sports and playing fields, are already well protected in national policy from loss to development.

3.13 Nevertheless, Policy HC2 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 the case of R1 and R2, Policy HC7 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 (Policy N6). 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 below.

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 Trail 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 for demonstrably special below, which shows that for demonstrably special below, one or more could be demonstrated:

- **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.
- 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.
- **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*".

- **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.
- **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.
- **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*."

3.23 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, Policy HC2 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.

3.24 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 the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs as required by Policy HC2 of the NPPF. 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.

3.25 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. Whilst this in itself is not a reason to exclude the site from being considered as a Local Green Space, given the parish's need to deliver at least 100 homes, protecting the site from development in perpetuity 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. However, it is recognised that the potential suitability of this site for development will also need to be assessed as part of the evidence base for the New Alresford Neighbourhood Plan.

3.26 Recommendation: Taking account of the information available, Barn Meadow is considered to be in close proximity to the community it serves, demonstrably special to the local community it serves and is local in character and not an extensive tract of land. However, the proposed designation must also be considered in the context of the neighbourhood area’s housing requirement and the proposal for this site to be allocated for housing.

3.27 If the site is not selected as a housing allocation site, and the neighbourhood plan is able to meet the requirement to allocate approximately 100 dwellings through the allocation of other, more suitable sites, the immediate conflict between the proposed designation and the delivery of the area's

housing requirement would be reduced. However, this would not necessarily remove the longer-term consideration. Local Green Space designation is intended to endure beyond the plan period, and a site that is not considered suitable or necessary for housing at the present time may potentially become relevant to meeting future development needs. Consequently, there remains a risk that the permanent protection of Barn Meadow could in future be considered inconsistent with sustainable development and the need to maintain sufficient land for homes and other uses.

3.28 On balance, if the site is not allocated and the neighbourhood plan can demonstrate that its housing requirement can be met through other suitable sites, the case for designating Barn Meadow as Local Green Space would be stronger. However, the Town Council should carefully consider the longer-term implications of permanent designation and whether it can demonstrate that the site is capable of being safeguarded beyond the end of the plan period without prejudicing the future delivery of sustainable development.

3.29 Ultimately, the decision on the suitability of the site for either housing development or the Local Green Space designation would rest with the independent examiner of the neighbourhood plan.

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

3.31 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.

3.32 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.

3.33 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.

3.34 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.

3.35 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 exiting 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 us 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

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 Policy HC2. 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 until a detailed assessment of the suitability of these six sites for development is undertaken..

4.8 The assessment of suitability for development has not yet been undertaken and decisions have not been made about which sites will be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, 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 a protected space beyond the plan period. If the site is not allocated and the neighbourhood plan can demonstrate that its housing requirement can be met through other suitable sites, the case for designating Barn Meadow as Local Green Space would be stronger. However, the Town Council should carefully consider the longer-term implications of permanent designation and whether it can demonstrate that the site is capable of being safeguarded beyond the end of the plan period without prejudicing the future delivery of sustainable development.

References

1 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2026) [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6aabe97844ec1aa417346c0b/National_Planning_Policy_Framework.pdf

2 Pickles, E. (2011) Bowling greens to be given special protections under new planning rules [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bowling-greens-to-be-given-special-protections-under-new-planning-rules

3 Locality (2011) Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan [online] Available at: https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/

Report produced by LUC

Bristol
12th Floor, Beacon Tower, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 4XE
0117 929 1997
bristol@landuse.co.uk

Cardiff
16A, 15th Floor, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Rd, Cardiff CF24 0EB
0292 032 9006
cardiff@landuse.co.uk

Edinburgh
Atholl Exchange, 6 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG
0131 202 1616
edinburgh@landuse.co.uk

Glasgow
37 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JJ
0141 334 9595
glasgow@landuse.co.uk

London
250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD
020 7383 5784
london@landuse.co.uk

Manchester
6th Floor, 55 King Street, Manchester M2 4LQ
0161 537 5960
manchester@landuse.co.uk

Sheffield
32 Eyre Street, Sheffield, S1 4QZ
0114 392 2366
sheffield@landuse.co.uk

landuse.co.uk

Landscape Design / Strategic Planning & Assessment / Transport Planning
Development Planning / Urban Design & Masterplanning / Arboriculture
Environmental Impact Assessment / Landscape Planning & Assessment
Landscape Management / Ecology / Historic Environment / GIS & Visualisation