

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

EXAMINATION HEARINGS

HOMEWORK NOTE 18

MATTER 16: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES (DM 1 – DM 22)

ISSUE 1: ARE THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES IN THE PLAN JUSTIFIED, EFFECTIVE AND CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL POLICY IN RESPECT OF THE SPECIFIC MATTERS SET OUT BELOW? ARE THERE ANY OTHER ISSUES CONCERNING THEIR SOUNDNESS?

HW18 - PARAGRAPH 4.52 AND THE MECHANISM FOR DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE

1. The Council provides this note which concerns Matter 16, Issue 1 (Policy DM 6) and the Inspector's request that the Council define the process by which communities are able to seek to designate Local Green Space in accordance with paragraph 4.52 of the LPSV.
2. The 2012 NPPF establishes the concept and identifies the tests for designation of Local Green Space in paragraphs 76-78 (now in substantially the same format at paragraphs 99-101 in the 2019 NPPF). However, it is the role of the Council, in partnership with local communities, to implement this at the local level through the local and neighbourhood plan process, in accordance with paragraph 76 of the NPPF (now paragraph 99 in the 2019 NPPF).

STAGE 1

3. As set out in paragraph 76 of the 2012 NPPF, Local Green Spaces can only be designated when a Local or Neighbourhood Plan is prepared or reviewed. The first stage for designation will therefore involve the identification of any candidate green areas of particular local importance as part of a consultation exercise undertaken as part of preparation or review of the Local Plan. This would involve, local communities through the town/parish councils or relevant neighbourhood plan groups being asked whether there are areas they would like to be designated and to provide information to support the designation and meet the tests outlined in the NPPF.
4. The exercise will be widely publicised using the Council's website.

STAGE 2

5. Having obtained information on potential sites the Council will assess their suitability for designation as a Local Green Space. The criteria for undertaking this assessment are described below. These have been informed by the principles established in the NPPF and the additional guidance provided in the NPPG (see Paragraphs: 005-022 Reference ID: 37-005-20140306).

Criteria 1	Does the site already have planning permission for an incompatible alternative use or is it allocated for an incompatible alternative use in the adopted Local Plan?	An initial planning history check will be undertaken for each site to establish whether the site has an extant planning permission or is allocated for an alternative use. Designation of Local Green Spaces will rarely be appropriate where the land either has planning permission or is allocated in the Local Plan. However, the site will be assessed to see if any approved
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		development is compatible with a Local Green Space designation or where it can be demonstrated that the planning permission or allocation cannot be feasibly implemented.
Criteria 2	Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?	<p>The NPPF states that a local Green Space should be reasonably close to the community it serves.</p> <p>The Council interprets this as being within an easy walking distance (within 5-10 minutes walking time) with a degree of discretion needed depending on topography of the area, mobility and size of the community the green space serves; the size and function of the green space itself; why the area is seen as special and the value placed upon it by the community.</p>
Criteria 3	Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	<p>The NPPF states that Local Green Space should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.</p> <p>The Council interpret local in character as implicitly being small in size (generally less than 2.5 hectares) with the area having identifiable and defined boundaries rather than open land not linked to any particular settlement.</p>
Criteria 4	Can the site be shown to be demonstrably special to a local community?	<p>To meet this requirement an area must fulfil one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Beauty</u> – This is open to interpretation but is generally related to the visual attractiveness and aesthetic value of the site, and its contribution to townscape, landscape, character and/or setting of the settlement. • <u>Historical Significance</u> – Its historic significance to the local community

		<p>could be based on the location of an historic asset within the area or its role in providing a setting for heritage assets or local landmarks or its association with cultural heritage and importance to local history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Recreational Value</u> – Providing an important asset for supporting recreational activity. • <u>Tranquility</u> – Generally a place for reflection and peaceful enjoyment away from infrastructure characterised by more urban environments. • <u>Wildlife</u> - The site may have a formal wildlife designation in place already, have its wildlife or biodiversity value acknowledged by the Council or other bodies, or have species, flora and fauna recognised as protected under national acts.
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6. The Council will complete a qualitative desk-based assessment of the proposed sites for designation in accordance with the criteria above. As part of this the Council will consider whether the designation could feasibly endure beyond the plan period and whether there are active community or custodian groups that might assist in maintaining its character.
7. In all instances the Council requires evidence as to why an area is of particular significance to the local community and why it warrants additional protection compared to other areas of open green space across the District. The Council will request additional evidence where needed.

STAGE 3

8. A report based on the evidence collected and compiled in the stages outlined above, will set out the conclusions of the assessment. This will form part of the Local or Neighbourhood Plan evidence base and will be used by the Council or Neighbourhood Planning Body to determine which areas should be designated as Local Green Space with further consultation on draft proposals as part of the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan process prior to formal adoption.