

North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036

EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENT: LOCAL GREEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2021



Background

North Crawley Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for North Crawley. Consultation carried out with local residents as part of this process has revealed that the local community values many of the open green spaces around the village and wish to see them protected from development. This assessment has been prepared to establish whether it is appropriate for these areas to be designated as Local Green Spaces.

Local Green Spaces are a designation that provides special protection for areas that are of particular importance to the local community for leisure, recreation, or amenity reasons. They were introduced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012. Paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF address the purpose and criteria for designating Local Green Spaces as follows:

101. 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.

102. 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.*

The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which provides additional guidance on Green Spaces. Relevant advice in the NPPF includes:

103. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

The proximity of a LGS to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special e.g., if public access is a factor, then the site should be in easy walking distance.

There are no hard and fast rules about how big a LGS can be because places are different and a degree of judgement will inevitably be needed.

Some areas that may be considered for designation as LGS may already have largely unrestricted public access, however land could be considered for LGS designation if there is no public access (e.g., if valued for biodiversity, historic significance and/or beauty). LGS designation in itself does not confer any rights of public access over what exists at present.

Local Green Spaces in North Crawley

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for North Crawley identified four areas from consultation to be considered for Local Green Space designation; Kilpin Green, Nixey’s Walk, The Recreation Ground, and the Orchard Way Verge. These are shown on the Policy Map extract below:

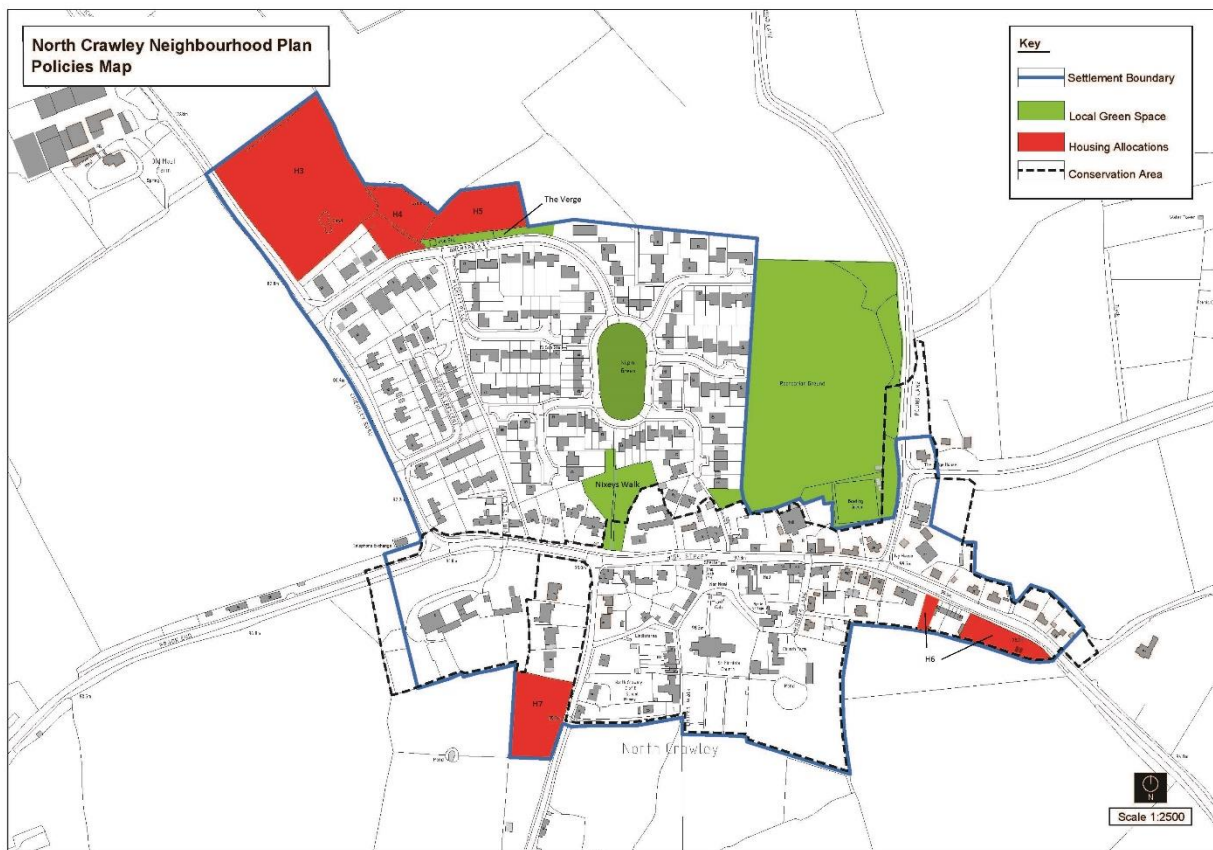


Figure 1: Policy Map extract showing proposed Local Green Space designations; Kilpin Green (1), Nixey’s Walk (2), Recreation Ground (3), The Verge (4)

The table below demonstrates how each of these areas was assessed as being suitable for Local Green Space designation with reference to the criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF and the advice of the Planning Practice Guidance:

Site	Paragraph 102 criteria						Other criteria				Conclusion	
	Proximity	Special character					Extensive tract of land	Accessibility	Existing designations	Planning permission		Complementary and consistent with sustainable development.
		Beauty	History	Recreation	Tranquility	Biodiversity						
KILPIN GREEN	The area is located at the centre of the largest existing residential area in North Crawley. The majority of the village's population are therefore in daily proximity to it.	Y	N	Y	Y	N	No – the area is around 0.3Ha and forms the centre-point of an established housing estate.	The site is accessible around its entire perimeter via Kilpin Green itself, with many properties fronting it directly.	Plan:MK allocates this as amenity space	None.	The site fulfils a valuable amenity purpose within the daily lives of North Crawley and Kilpin Green residents. It complements the existing vitality of village life and its designation as a LGS therefore contributes to sustainable development.	Kilpin Green is of local significance as an area of visual amenity in an otherwise built-up area. It provides an informal recreation opportunity for families living on Kilpin Green and has particular benefit in this respect due to its high levels of natural surveillance, which is particularly important for young children.
NIXEY'S WALK	The area is located between Kilpin Green and the village centre. It is therefore in close proximity to the majority of the village's population.	Y	N	Y	Y	N	No – the area is around 0.12Ha and forms a 'leftover' parcel between the historic core of the village and the more modern Kilpin Green.	The site forms a thoroughfare between Kilpin Green and the village centre. It is therefore inherently accessible, with an existing right of way through it.	Plan:MK allocates this as amenity space	None.	The site fulfils a valuable amenity purpose within the daily lives of North Crawley and Kilpin Green residents. It complements the existing vitality of village life and its designation as a LGS therefore contributes to sustainable development.	Nixey's Walk is an important 'green thoroughfare' for pedestrians around North Crawley. It provides a visual benefit in providing a tranquil and open area between other more built-up parts of the village. It also has recreational value with the area away from the main path being large enough for games or other outdoor leisure. A wildlife area has been created, which provides an outdoor learning opportunity for children at the local school.
RECREATION GROUND	The area is well-located within walking distance of the village population and, together with The Institute building, provides a focal point within the village.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	No – the site is the largest proposed LGS at 2.5 hectares, although this is commensurate with its function as a multi-sport facility.	The site is located at the centre of the village and benefits from a public car park at its southern end, as well as informal pedestrian access from both the west and east.	Plan:MK allocates this as recreation and open space.	None.	The site forms an important recreational purpose for North Crawley residents and offers opportunity for sport and leisure that would not be available if the land were to be developed for an alternative purpose. It provides a mix of uses within the village and therefore contributes to sustainable development.	The recreation ground has, by its definition, local significance in terms of leisure and recreation. It is also held in historical regard as it has long been the home of local sports teams and has a thriving Institute associated with it. In visual terms, the openness of the recreation ground is important in offering views of the countryside to the north of North Crawley, which has an intrinsic natural beauty.
THE VERGE	The area is located on Orchard Way. It is opposite the existing dwellings on the southern side of the road. It is a narrow strip of land, planted with a varied selection of mature trees. It is used frequently by dog walkers and also by residents who have enhanced the Verge by planting spring bulbs and providing nest boxes and bird feeders.	Y	N	Y	N	Y	No – the site is around 0.05 of a hectare in size and is a narrow strip of land that separates site H5 from Orchard Way.	The site is adjacent to a pedestrian walkway and access road, which connects Chicheley Road and Orchard Way with Kilpin Green. It will provide a green buffer between Orchard Way and proposed development on site H5.	It is designated as an Asset of Community Value.	None.	The allocation of this site as a LGS directly complements the proposed allocation directly to the north as well as providing a green buffer between houses on Orchard Way and the new development on site H5.	The Verge forms an important area for recreational, ecological, and visual reasons. It is well-used as a route for leisure walking due to its connectivity. The trees and hedgerows on the site are important for wildlife, particularly as a 'buffer' between Orchard Way and new development on site H5. It also has a pleasing visual benefit in this respect, providing a green corridor between houses, thus softening the urban character of this area.

Conclusion

The table above demonstrates that the four areas proposed for Local Green Space designation in North Crawley all meet the necessary criteria. Each of them displays an abundance of qualities that provide value to the local community whilst there are no factors that suggest a Local Green Space designation may otherwise be inappropriate.

The only criteria in the NPPF that is not addressed in the table above is the reference in paragraph 101 to LGS designations being capable of enduring beyond the plan period. Each of the proposed LGS designations is a self-contained area of land that is set within a context that is unlikely to fundamentally change beyond the plan period.

The Local Green Spaces are referenced on the Neighbourhood Plan Policy Map and included in a specific policy (L1). Once the Neighbourhood Plan has passed examination and referendum, and is made part of the Development Plan, these areas will be afforded protection under the terms of paragraph 101 of the NPPF. The Neighbourhood Plan itself includes a review mechanism, which will cover the Local Green Spaces. These will also be reviewed, should any subsequent revision of the NPPF amend the criteria or other national policy governing Local Green Space designation.