

Local Green Space - Technical Note

1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides background paper to the Local Plan Issues and Options document in relation to the potential designation of Local Green Spaces.

1.2 This document will:

- Define what is a Local Green Space designation;
- Highlight what feedback we received from the community earlier in 2019;
- Explain why the sites within the Issues and Options document are being proposed (including a list of sites);
- Explain why other sites are not being proposed for Local Green Space designation within the Issues and Options document (including a list of sites); and
- Outline next steps.

2. What is the Local Green Space designation?

2.1 Local Green Space designation is a designation under the National planning system that gives protection from development to the site it applies to. The definition, as taken from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) can be seen below.

2.2 Local Green Space designation is just one possible designation that can offer protection to green spaces. There are many others, depending on the use and value of the site, such as Historic Park and Garden, Site of Special Scientific Interest and others.

National Planning Policy Framework

“100. 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.

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

3. Croydon Local Plan 2018 adoption, Local Green Space proposal

3.1 During the examination of the adopted 2018 Croydon Local Plan, Croydon Council put forward a number of sites for Local Green Space designation. All of these were rejected by

the Planning Inspector¹. As a result, there are currently no green spaces in the borough with this particular designation.

3.2 The Planning Inspector rejected the sites for a number of reasons, namely because:

- There was not sufficient evidence to demonstrate the particular importance of each one and the Inspector could not visit each site. Local Green Space designation is designed to be applied to green spaces that are significant and demonstrably special beyond their everyday use as a green and/or open space. As has been made clear by the Planning Inspectors comments, the designation should not be used to simply protect every space that serves our open space needs;
- The Inspector was not happy that it was the Council suggesting the sites and would prefer for the sites to be put forward by the community for the community;

4. Consultation on green spaces so far

4.1 In light of the unsuccessful attempt to gain Local Green Space designation in 2018, during this Local Plan Review further work has been done to ensure we have the right evidence to support our proposed Local Green Space designation sites. In June 2019 we opened up two public surveys; one to gain feedback around the green spaces that were previously proposed, in order to obtain local knowledge and data; and a second the learn of any additional green spaces that the community feel are eligible for the designation. See figure 1.

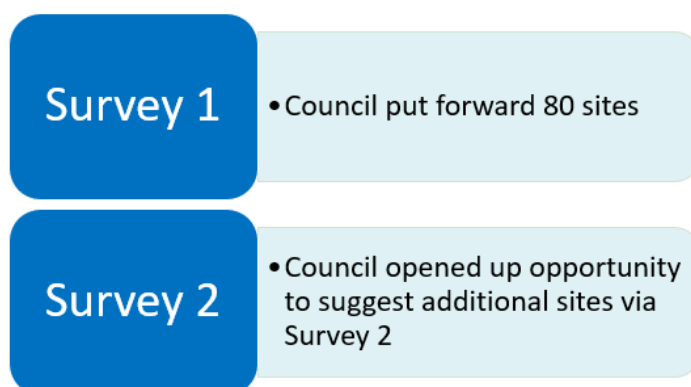


Figure 1 Public Surveys from June 2019

4.2 Survey 1 received 7000+ responses.

4.3 Survey 2 received 700 responses that resulted in 210 additional new sites. As this survey was designed to capture sites that are potentially eligible for the designation, the qualitative data as to why the sites are demonstrably special is still needed.

5. Why sites have been proposed for Local Green Space designation

5.1 Based on the feedback received via both the surveys, 42 sites have been included in the Issues and Options consultation for potential designation.

¹ A Planning Inspector is a Secretary of State appointed Inspector who examines a Local Plan prior to approving it to be adopted. The Planning Inspector analyses the Plan to ensure it accords with National and Regional Planning Policy – in Croydon’s case this is both the National Planning Policy Framework and the London Plan.

- 5.2 Sites being put forward at this point in time for Local Green Space designation are highlighted within the Issues and Options document.
- 5.3 These sites have been selected because it is believed they comply with the NPPF criteria and could stand up during the Planning Inspector's examination.
- 5.4 The criteria that is most vital to determining a site's eligibility is around its ability to demonstrate its particular significance to the community that it serves. This is about being able to demonstrate that the site is special to the community beyond its everyday use as a park or green space. Officers have reviewed the feedback received via the surveys and used the information provided to determine which sites meet this criteria and could possibly demonstrate this in examination.
- 5.5 The sites being proposed for the designation at this point, are those that we were told and/or given evidence about the particular significance of the site via the engagement period earlier this year. The 42 sites being proposed are green spaces that provide a special importance to the community in a way that is more than what an average green space offers. For all of these sites, it was made clear by the community that they hold a special purpose and/or use that is irreplaceable and of significant importance to them.
- 5.6 For example, some of the proposed sites offer formal and regular opportunities for community-led events or activities. In addition, the nature of these events or activities could not take place elsewhere which adds argument to the case that the site is of particular significance to the local community that it serves.
- 5.7 Judgement of a site being demonstrably special at examination is high. An Evidence and Evaluation form for each proposed site will be needed for each proposed site prior to the sites being submitted to the Planning Inspector. It is important to note that physical evidence will be requested from community members who took part in the previous survey where it has not already been submitted.
- 5.8 The Spatial Planning team will be contacting those who have previously shared their feedback to ask for physical evidence where needed, especially for those sites put forward via survey 2 that did not have accompanying feedback.

6. Why sites have been proposed for 'Other Green Space' designation

- 6.1 Of the sites that did not meet the threshold for Local Green Space designation, many are proposed for other protection. 44 of these have been included in the Issues and Options consultation document however some of the smaller spaces have not been listed as they are too numerous.
- 6.2 These sites have been selected as we were informed via engagement earlier this year that these sites were important green spaces due to their function as a green space. In other words, these sites are worthy of protection because of their contribution to our open space needs. They are nice green spaces that offer; opportunity for access to nature; opportunity for tranquillity; opportunity for leisure.
- 6.3 Policy G4 '*Open Space*' of the emerging New London Plan states that development plans should "include appropriate designations and policies for the protection of open space to meet needs and address deficiencies".
- 6.4 Table 8.1 of the emerging New London Plan defines a number categories of public open spaces. It is these categories and definitions that have been applied to spaces within Croydon and set out in the Issues and Options document.

7. What happens next?

- 7.1 As mentioned above, we still need to verify the feedback received, plus analyse and verify any new data that comes in during this consultation stage.
- 7.2 After the close of the consultation period early 2020, we will begin working on an Evidence and Evaluation form for each of the sites still believed to be eligible for Local Green Space designation.
- 7.3 A final list will be prepared and presented back to the community later in 2020.