

Local Green Space Designation Report

June 2018

Darlington Borough Draft Local Plan
2016-2036

Introduction

The Natural Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature 2011) highlighted “the importance of green spaces to the health and happiness of local communities”. Green spaces, particularly natural green spaces, located close to local people provide a range of social, environmental and economic benefits, including:

- improved mental and physical health
- increased social activity
- increased physical activity
- reduced crime
- improvements to children’s learning
- increased voluntary action
- improved community cohesion and sense of belonging
- potential for local food growing
- more attractive places to live, work, play, visit and invest
- enhanced opportunities for wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors
- climate change adaptation, for example by flood alleviation

The White Paper recommended that a new Green Areas designation be introduced that would give local people an opportunity to protect green spaces that have significant importance to their local communities.

‘We propose that green spaces should be identified in neighbourhood plans and local plans which complement and do not undermine investment in homes, jobs and other essential services. Given the importance of green spaces to the health and happiness of local communities the Government considers the new designation should offer suitably strong protection to localised areas that are demonstrably special’

That recommendation was incorporated into the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the new designation of Local Green Spaces.

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF provides the following information on Local Green Space designations –

76. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore 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 reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- where the green area is 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*
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

78. Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

Additional guidance is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Local and Neighbourhood Plans

Local Green Spaces can be designated through the emerging Darlington Local Plan or through neighbourhood plans. A policy, related to Local Green Spaces, will be included in the emerging Darlington Local Plan.

Where relevant an appropriate policy should also be included in neighbourhood plans.

Submission of Sites

The Council held a consultation between February and March 2018 for six weeks to allow sites to be submitted for consideration. Notification emails were sent to all parish councils and information on the consultation was posted on both the Darlington corporate website and Local Plan website. In total sixteen sites were submitted for consideration (one site with minor variations to its boundary was submitted by two separate groups). These are:

LGS01 - Beech Road/Whinbush Park

LGS02 - Springfield Park

LGS03 - Green Lane Bridleway

LGS04 & LGS13 - Skerningham Countryside Park

LGS05 - Fryers Field Recreation Ground

LGS06 - Gouldsmith Gardens

LGS07 – Muscar House Farm

LGS08 – Sparrowhall Drive

LGS09 – Bishopton Conservation Area

LGS10 – Bishopton Playing Field

LGS11 – Bishopton Lake and Windsurfing Centre

LGS12 – North Park

LGS14 – Merrybent Community Woodland

LGS15 – Almora Hall Field, Middleton St George

LGS16 – Middleton St George Playing Field

LGS17 – Water Park, Middleton St George

Plans of the submitted sites are included at **Appendix A**.

As part of the draft local plan consultation running between 21st June and 2nd August 2018 there is the opportunity to submit further sites for consideration prior to the submission of the plan.

Criteria for Designation

There are no restrictions on the type of green space which can be designated as Local Green Space.

Allotments or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis could be designated. Land which is partly developed with structures such as sports pavilions, boating lakes or war memorials could also be appropriate. The key characteristic for the designation should be the particular importance to the local community.

The NPPG advises that land already subject to a designation could be proposed as Local Green Space, but that consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space. Following this advice, Darlington Borough Council does not envisage there would be a beneficial gain in designating the following:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest: protected under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Local Nature Reserves: protected by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These sites are owned, leased or managed by Darlington Borough Council.
- Registered village greens and common land: protected by the Commons Act 2006
- Registered Parks and Gardens. For Darlington these are South Park and West Cemetery, which are protected by Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953

A site proposed as Local Green Space must meet the criteria set out within the NPPF:

1. Land must meet all the following criteria:

- Demonstrably special to local community

- Reasonable close proximity to the community serves
 - Local in character
 - Not an extensive tract of land
 - Not an area with extant planning permission within which the Local Green Space could not be accommodated
2. Land must hold particular local significance for at least one of the following reasons:
- Beauty
 - Historic Significance
 - Recreational value
 - Tranquillity
 - Wildlife
 - Other reason
3. Designating land as Local Green Space should:
- be consistent with local planning of sustainable development
 - complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services

Assessment Methodology

In order to assess sites submitted against the criteria the following assessment methodology was used:

Assessment 1: Does the site have an extant planning permission for an alternative use that would be incompatible with a Local Green Space designation? Is the site allocated within an existing Local Plan for an incompatible alternative use? Is the site likely to be allocated for an incompatible alternative use within an emerging plan?

Method	Assessment
Check site planning history Check HELAA	Scope out sites with extant planning permission/allocations/proposed allocations unless the proposed development is no longer capable of being implemented or the approved development would be compatible with the Local Green Space designation.

Assessment 2: Is the site already subject to a designation?

Method	Assessment
Check GIS mapping.	Scope out any sites which are wholly designated as: Sites of Special Scientific Interest: protected under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

	Local Nature Reserves: protected by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Registered village greens and common land: protected by the Commons Act 2006.
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Assessment 3: Is the site within reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?

Method	Assessment
Check GIS mapping.	<p>The following standards can be used to assess whether the site is considered to be within reasonably close proximity to the community it serves:</p> <p>Parks and Gardens: 1 km Natural and Semi Natural Greenspaces: 3 kms Outdoor Sports Facilities: 3 kms Amenity Greenspace (includes green corridors): 1 km Provision for children and young people: 1 km Allotments and community gardens: 1 km Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds: 3 km in the main urban area, 1 km in all other areas.</p>

Sites not meeting these standards can be scoped out, unless evidence has been provided to show that the special characteristics and/or features of a site serve communities from a wider area.

Assessment 4: Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Method	Assessment
Officer review of submission Site visit where required	<p>The NPPF is clear that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the site is not an extensive tract of land. Extensive tracts of land on the edge of settlements and blanket designations of open countryside will not be appropriate.</p> <p>Whilst there is no size limit on how small or large a Local Green Space can be, a judgement will need to be made to ensure that the proposed space is of a size that reasonably relates to the community that it serves. As such, we would expect the areas submitted to be fairly self-contained and to have clearly defined boundaries.</p> <p>Larger areas of the open countryside and long-distance green ways/river corridors will not generally be considered appropriate for Local Green Space designation.</p> <p>How does the site relate to the local area? Does the site feel part of the local area? Why? How does it connect physically, visually and socially to the area? Is the site distinct from surrounding countryside by virtue of its size, land type or landscape features?</p>

	<p>Is the site an extensive tract of land? How large is the site in comparison to the community it serves and areas of land in the vicinity? Does the site surround all or part of the village/town/local area?</p> <p>How has the size of the site been decided? Does the site follow natural features or existing constraints? Does the whole site justify designations or is some of the site unnecessarily included? Is the site unusually large for its use?</p>
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Assessment 5: Does the site hold a particular local significance?

Method	Assessment
Officer assessment	The proposed designation must be based on evidence to demonstrate why the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and is of particular local significance. To meet this requirement an area must fulfil one or more of the criteria below.
Officer assessment of whether the site holds particular local significance because of its beauty	<p>This criterion relates to the visual attractiveness of a site. To meet this criterion the site must be beautiful in its own right. Sites which allow views to other areas but are not beautiful in their own right will not meet this criterion. Sites which contribute to the character of the wider area but cannot be said to be beautiful in their own right are not appropriate for designation.</p> <p>Officer assessment of whether the site holds particular local significance because of its beauty. Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?</p> <p>Site visibility - Is the site visible from a public place? Are there views of the site from any key locations?</p> <p>Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments, conservation area appraisals or similar documents?</p> <p>Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designations?</p> <p>Does the site bring interest from further afield to the local area?</p>
Officer assessment of whether the site holds particular local significance because of its historic significance	<p>In order to meet this criterion, there must be evidence to demonstrate that the site is of historic importance to the community.</p> <p>Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.</p> <p>Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features.</p> <p>Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.</p> <p>Did any important historic events take place on the site?</p>

	<p>Is there a longstanding event which takes place on the site? For example, fete's, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg rolling, plays, market.</p>
<p>Officer assessment whether the site holds particular local significance because of its recreational value</p>	<p>There must be evidence to show that the space has local significance for recreation and is of value to the community. Whilst a large number of green spaces will offer some form of recreational value, it will be necessary to identify why a particular space offers something unique that could not realistically be accommodated on other spaces that would serve the same community.</p> <p>Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?</p> <p>Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?</p>
<p>Officer assessment of whether the site holds particular local significance because of its tranquillity</p>	<p>There must be evidence to show that the site submitted is viewed to be of importance to the local community because of the tranquillity it provides offering a place for reflection and peaceful enjoyment. This is a subjective assessment and the council will require clear justification as to why an area is of particular value.</p> <p>Officer assessment of whether the site holds particular local significance because of its tranquillity Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?</p>
<p>Officer assessment of whether the site holds particular local significance because of its richness of wildlife</p>	<p>There must be evidence to show that the site is viewed to be of local significance because of the wildlife it is home to. Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value? If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site? Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?</p>
<p>Officer assessment of whether the site holds particular local significance for any other reason</p>	<p>There must be evidence that the proposed site holds particular local significance for the community for reasons other than those identified above. What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area? What features make this site important?</p>

Assessment 6: Is the site demonstrably special to the local community?

Method	Assessment
Evidence of local support	<p>Submitted evidence will be reviewed to determine: How the site was identified? Was it instigated by the community or parish council? Or an individual? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has the site been subject to discussion or planning processes before? Is there a petition? Are the signatures from local people? Does the petition relate to just this one site? Do the letters of support show that they clearly understand the justification for designating the site as a local green space? Was the site received favourably during Issues and Scoping Consultation? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site? Have there been any objections to the designation? Who are these from and on what grounds is the objection made? Do their comments undermine or cast doubt on how special the site may be to the wider community? Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this type of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?</p>

Assessment Conclusions

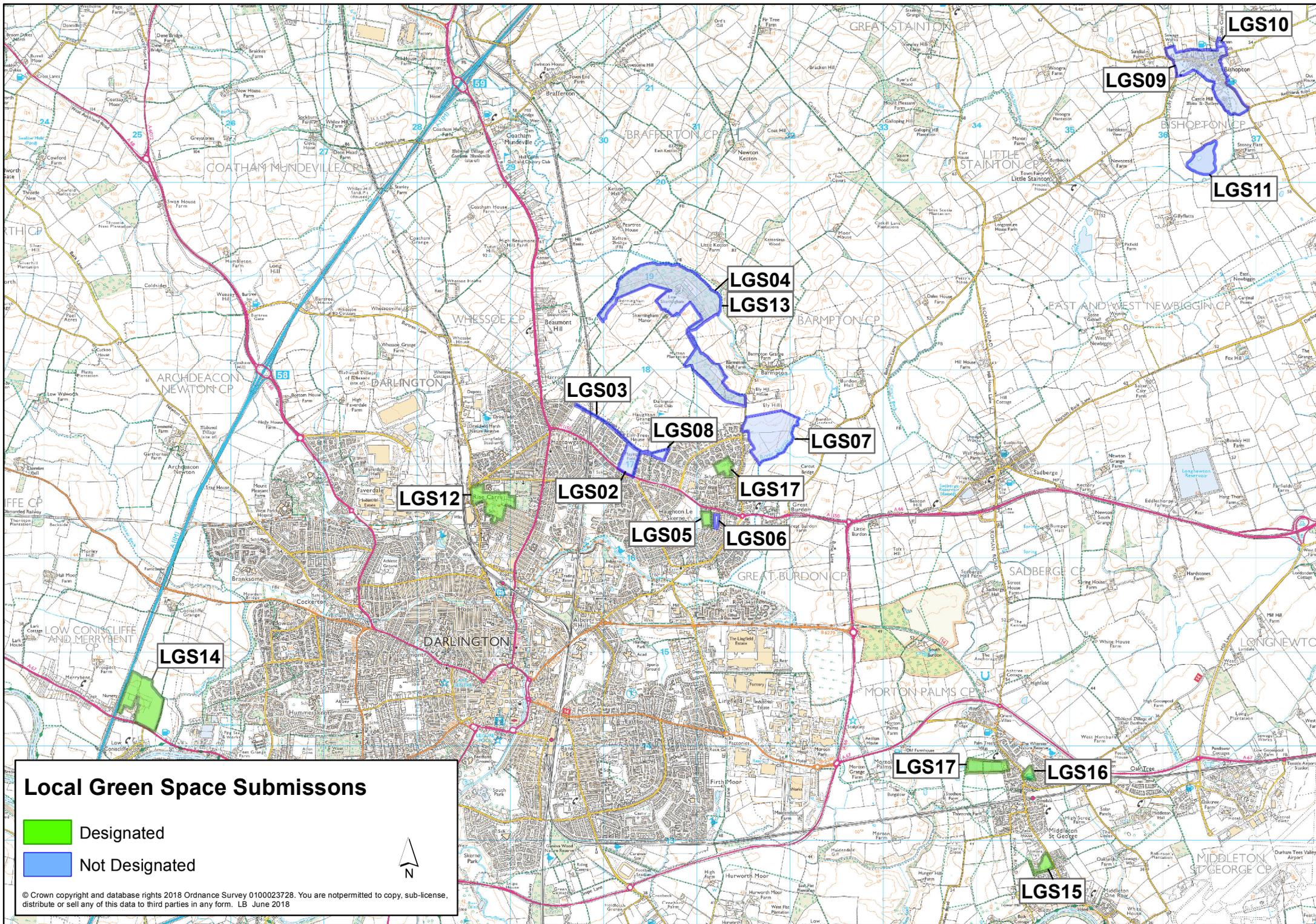
Detailed assessment forms are available for each site included at **Appendix B** and **Appendix C** of this report. The assessment forms clearly explain why a site has been assessed as being suitable for designation or, conversely, why a site is not considered suitable for designation.

Of the sixteen unique sites submitted for consideration seven have been suggested for designation in the Draft Local Plan. These are:

- LGS01 - Beech Road/Whinbush Park
- LGS05 - Fryers Field Recreation Ground
- LGS12 - North Park
- LGS14 - Merrybent Community Woodland
- LGS15 - Almora Hall Field, Middleton St George
- LGS16 - Middleton St George Playing Field
- LGS17 - Water Park, Middleton St George

Appendix A

Site Submission Plans



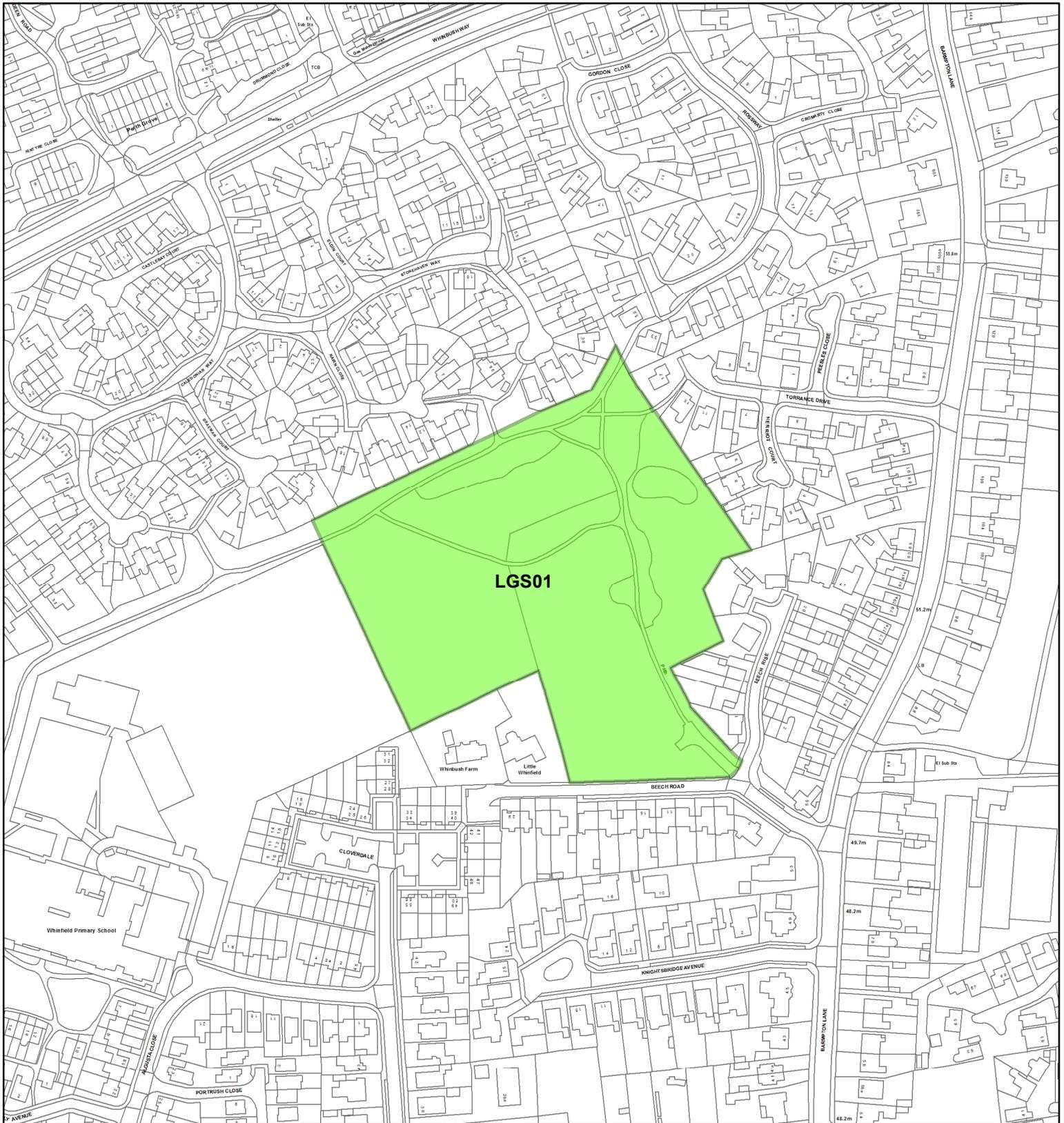
Local Green Space Submissions

- Designated
- Not Designated



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LGS01 - Beech Road/Whinbush Park



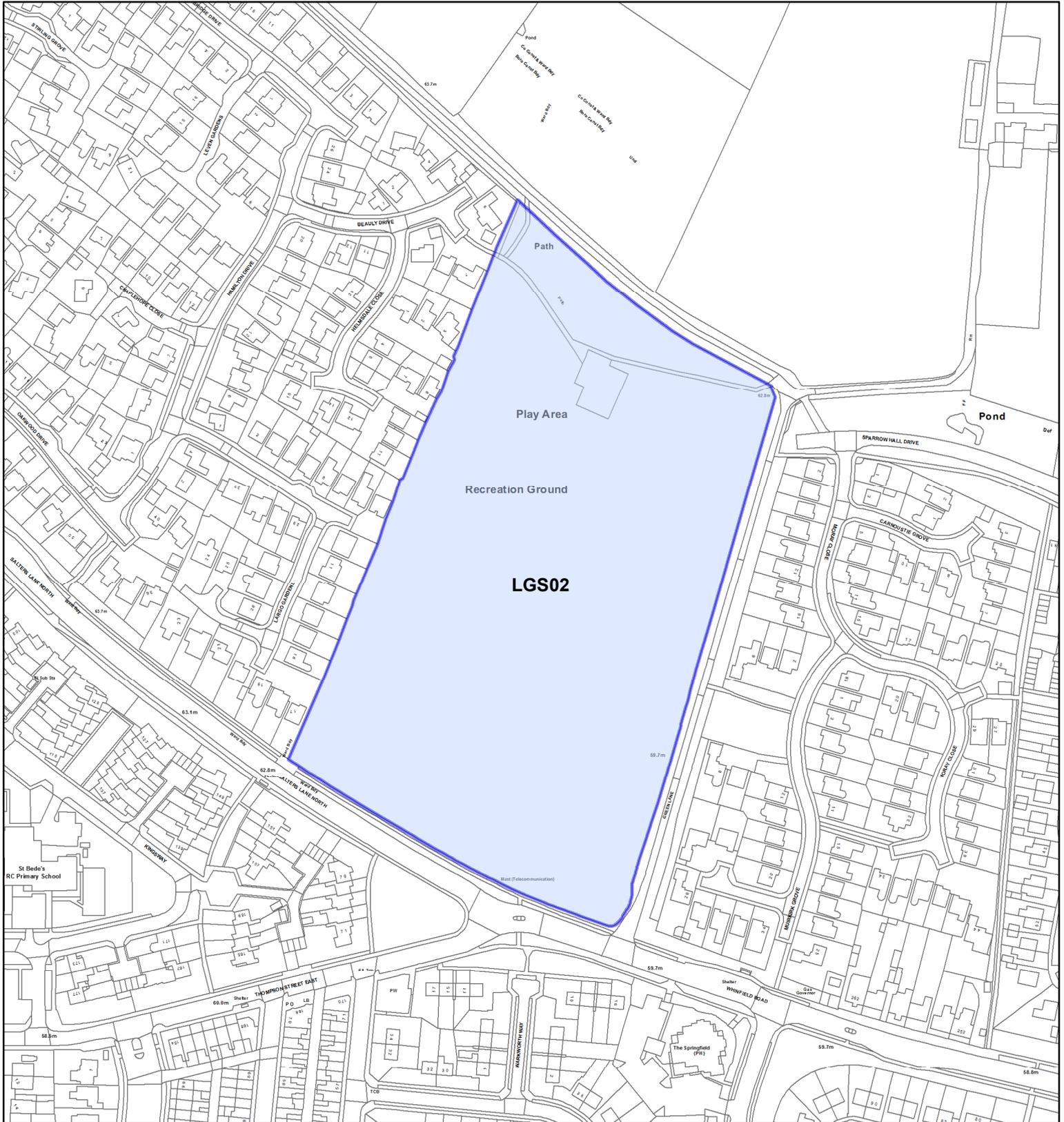
Local Green Space Submissions - Designated

- Designated
- Not Designated

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LGS02 - Springfield Park



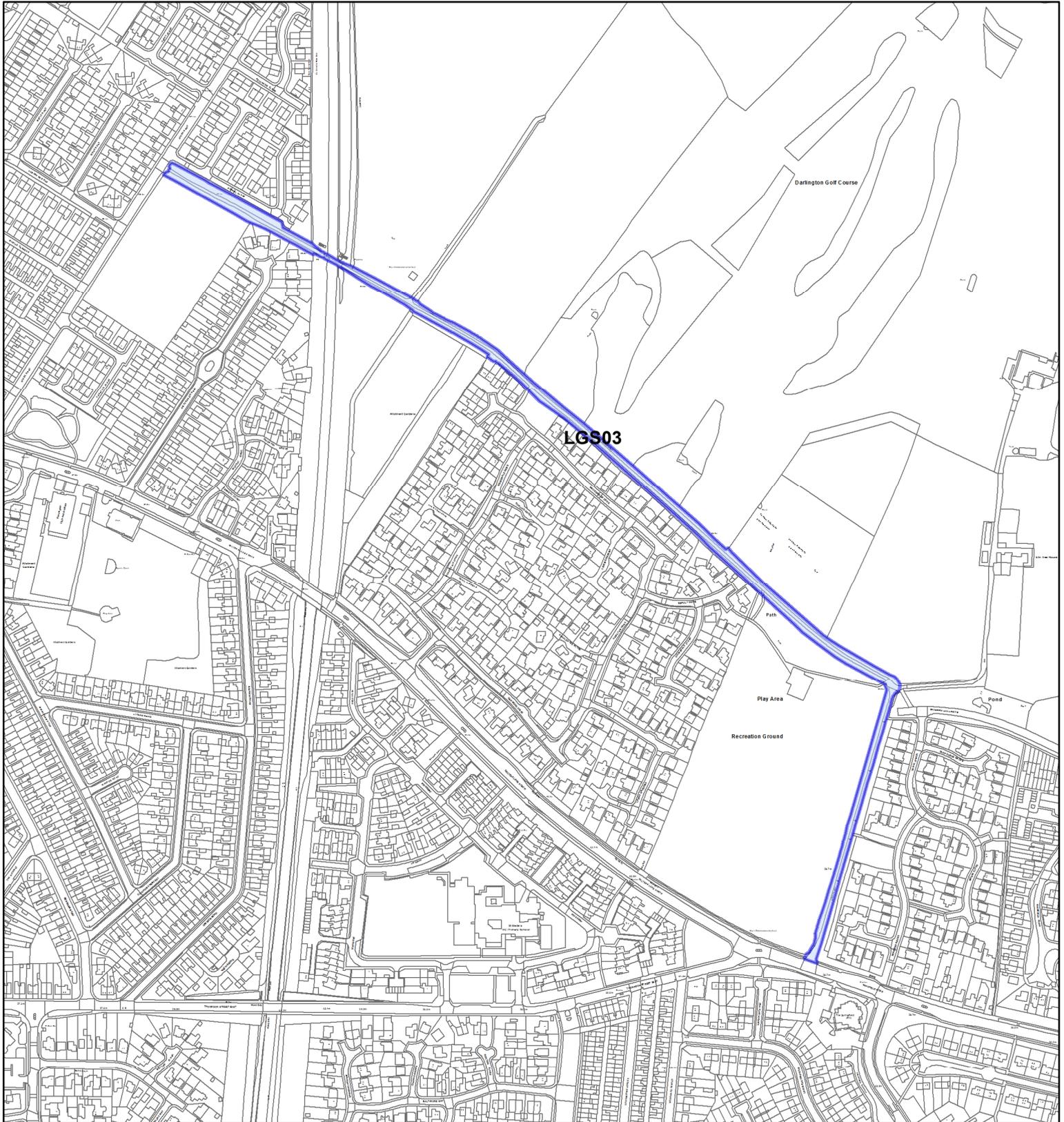
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

- Designated
- Not Designated

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LGS03 - Green Lane Bridleway



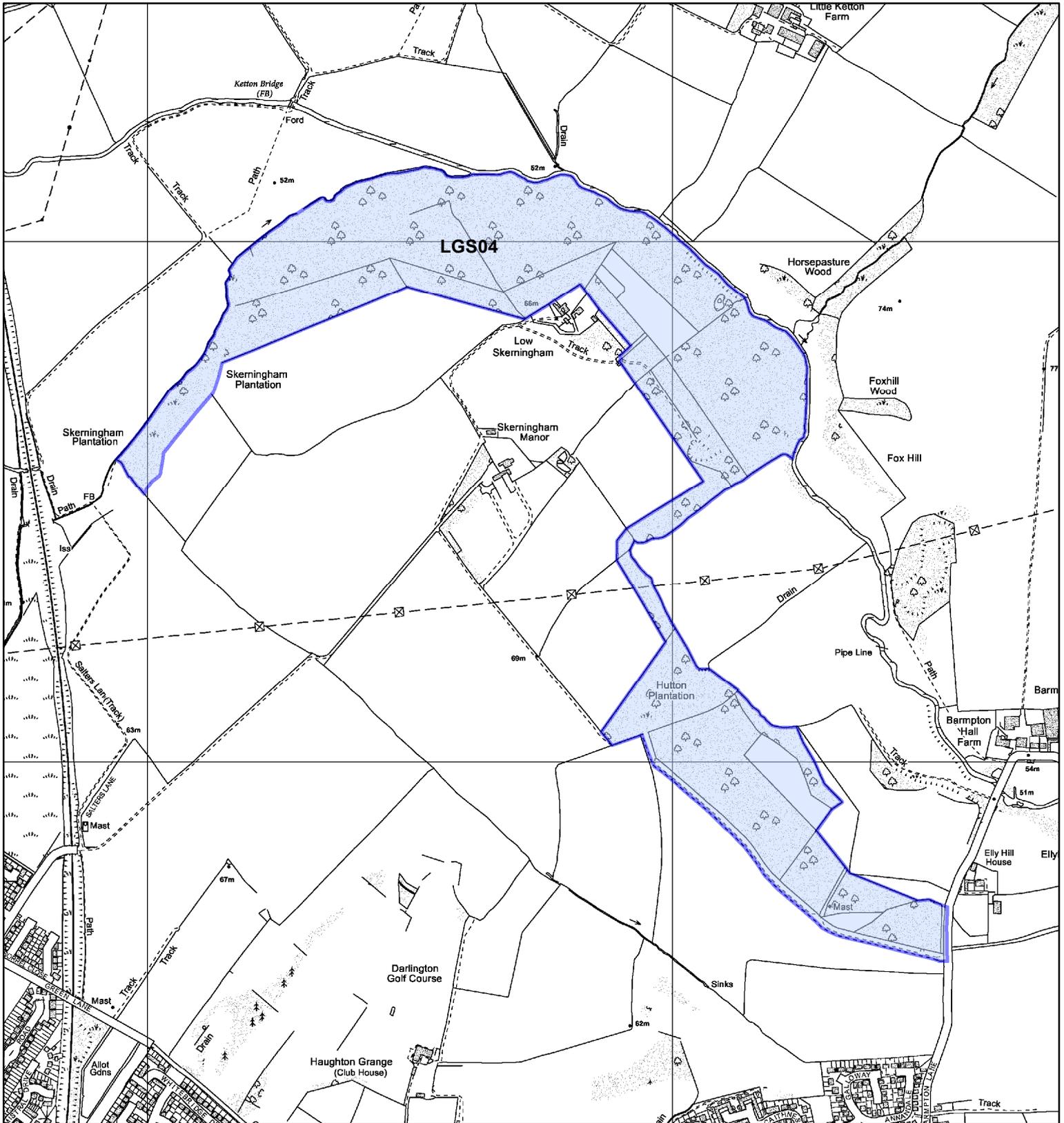
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

-  Designated
-  Not Designated

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LGS04 - Skerningham Countryside Park



Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

-  Designated
-  Not Designated

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LGS05 - Fryer Field Recreation Area



Local Green Space Submissions - Designated

- Designated
- Not Designated

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LGS06 - Gouldsmith Gardens



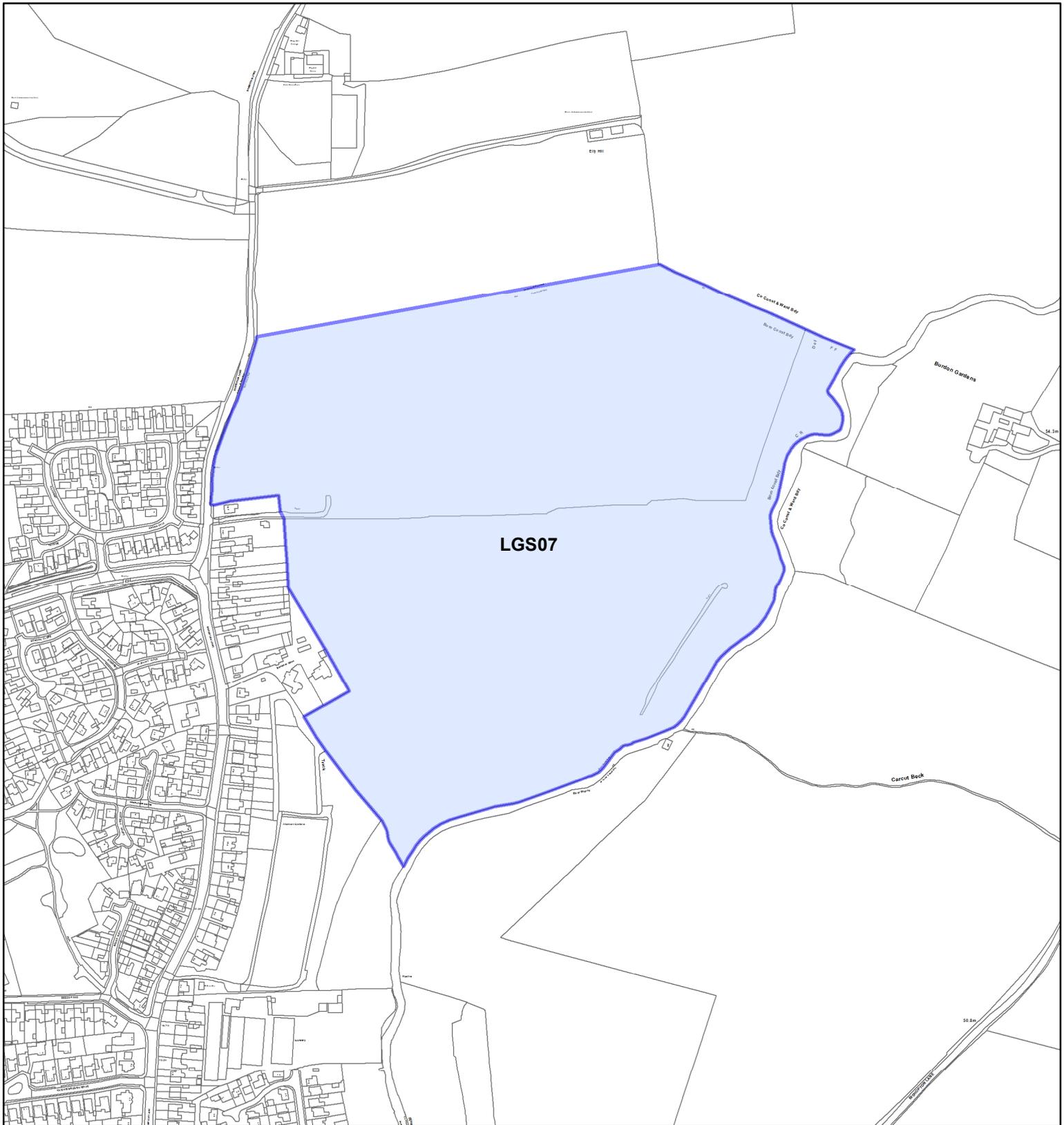
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

- Designated
- Not Designated

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LGS07 - Muscar House Farm



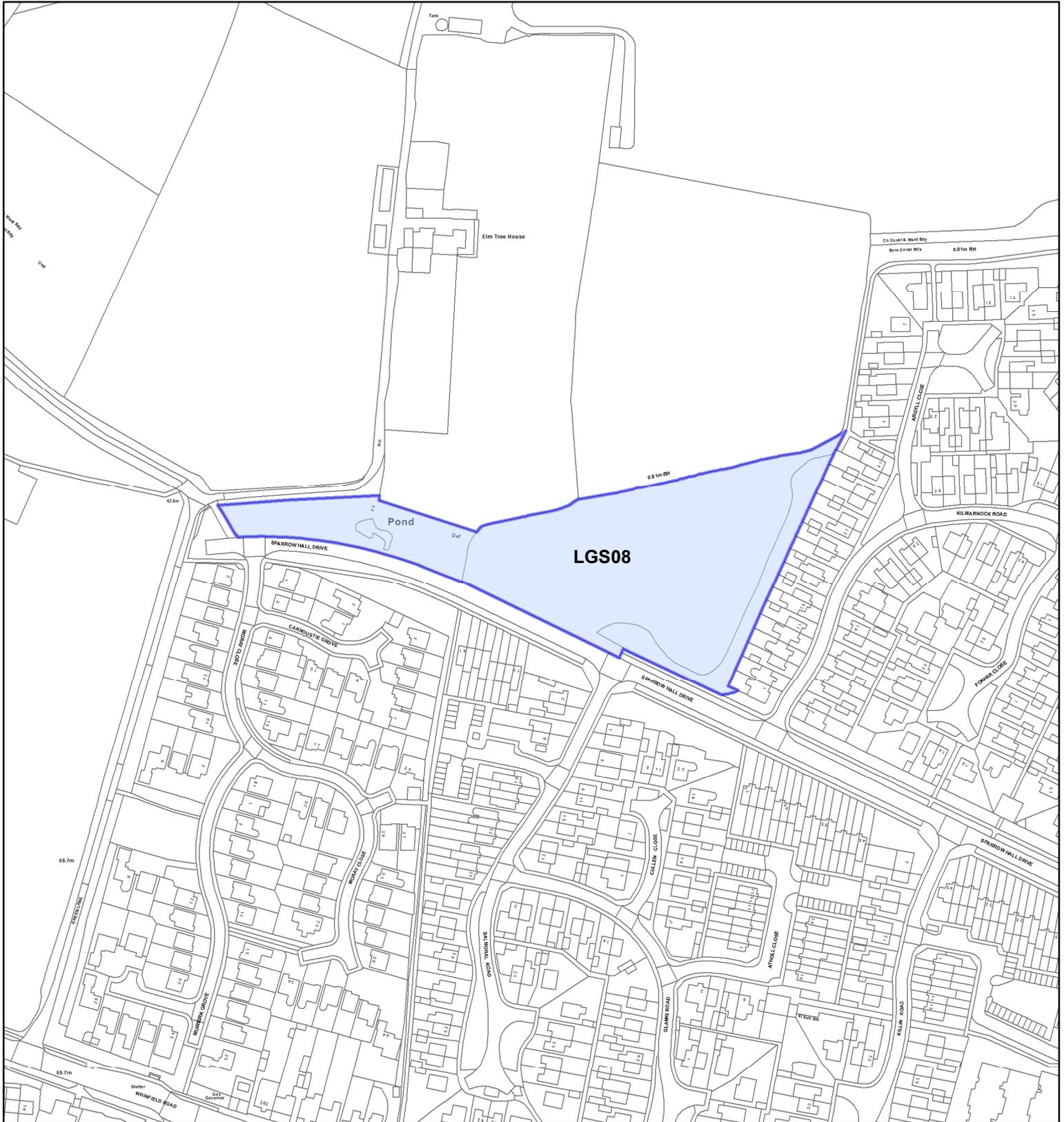
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

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- Not Designated

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LGS08 - Sparrowhall Drive



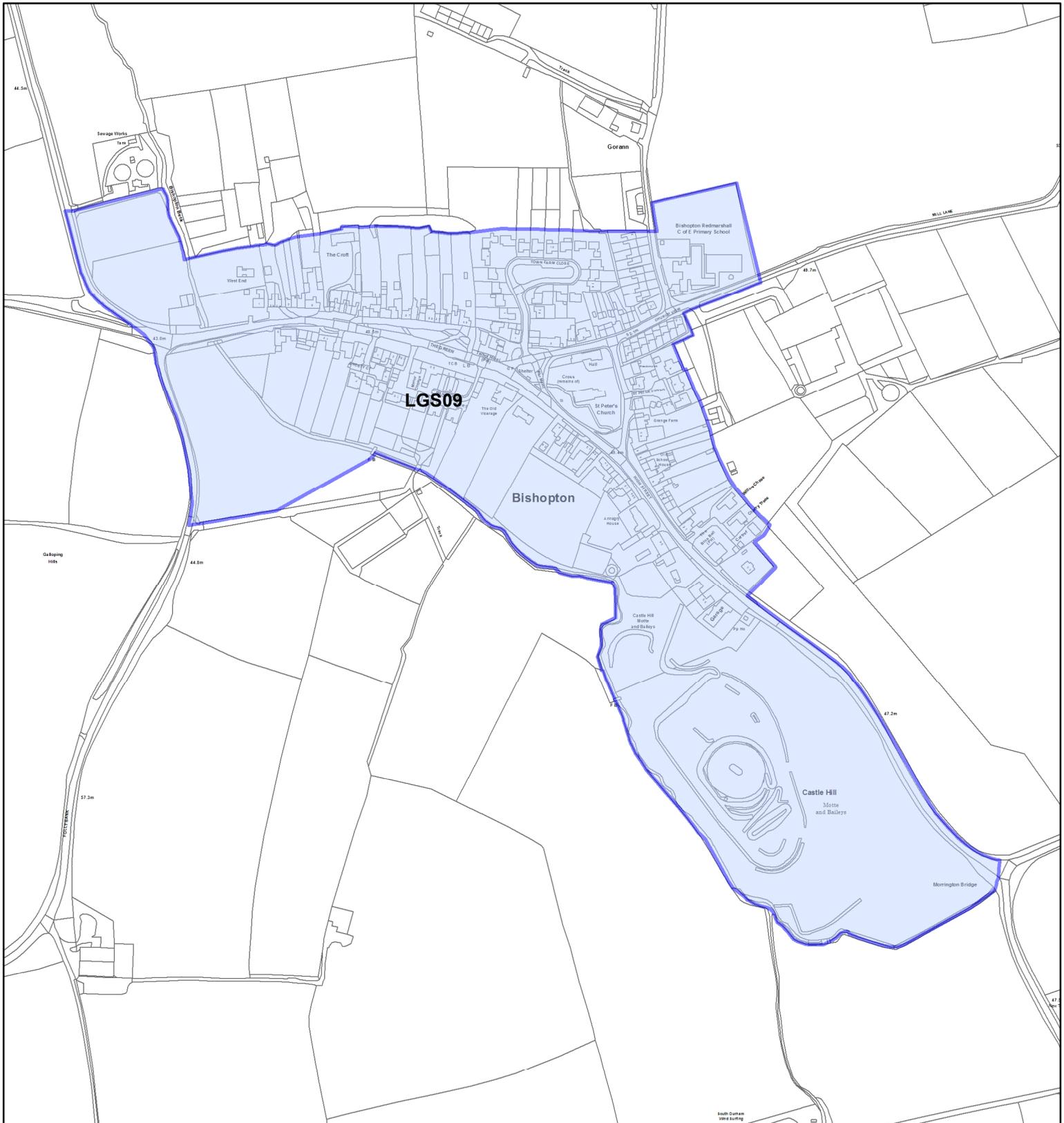
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

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LGS09 - Bishopton Conservation Area



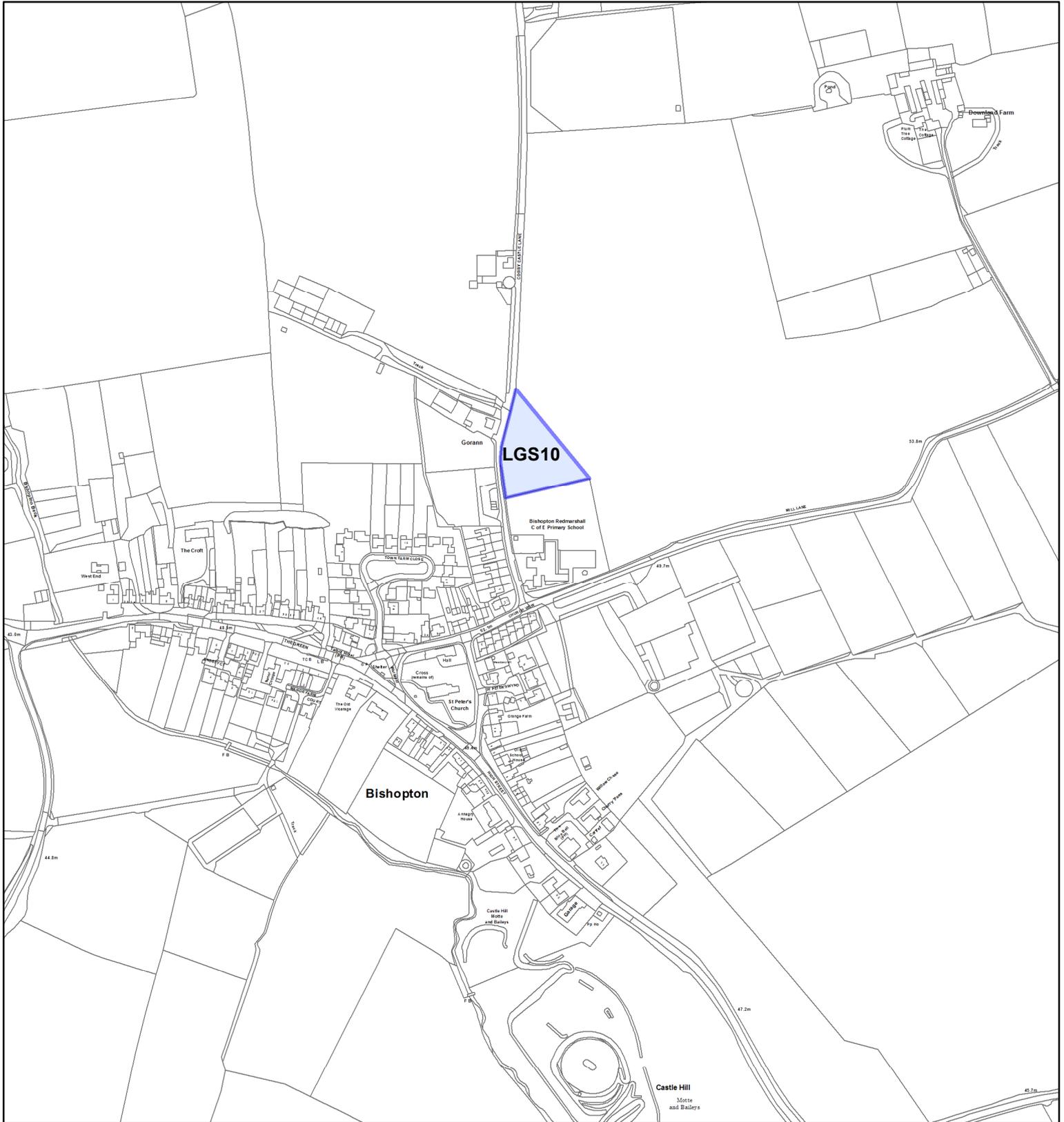
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

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LGS10 - Bishopton Playing Field



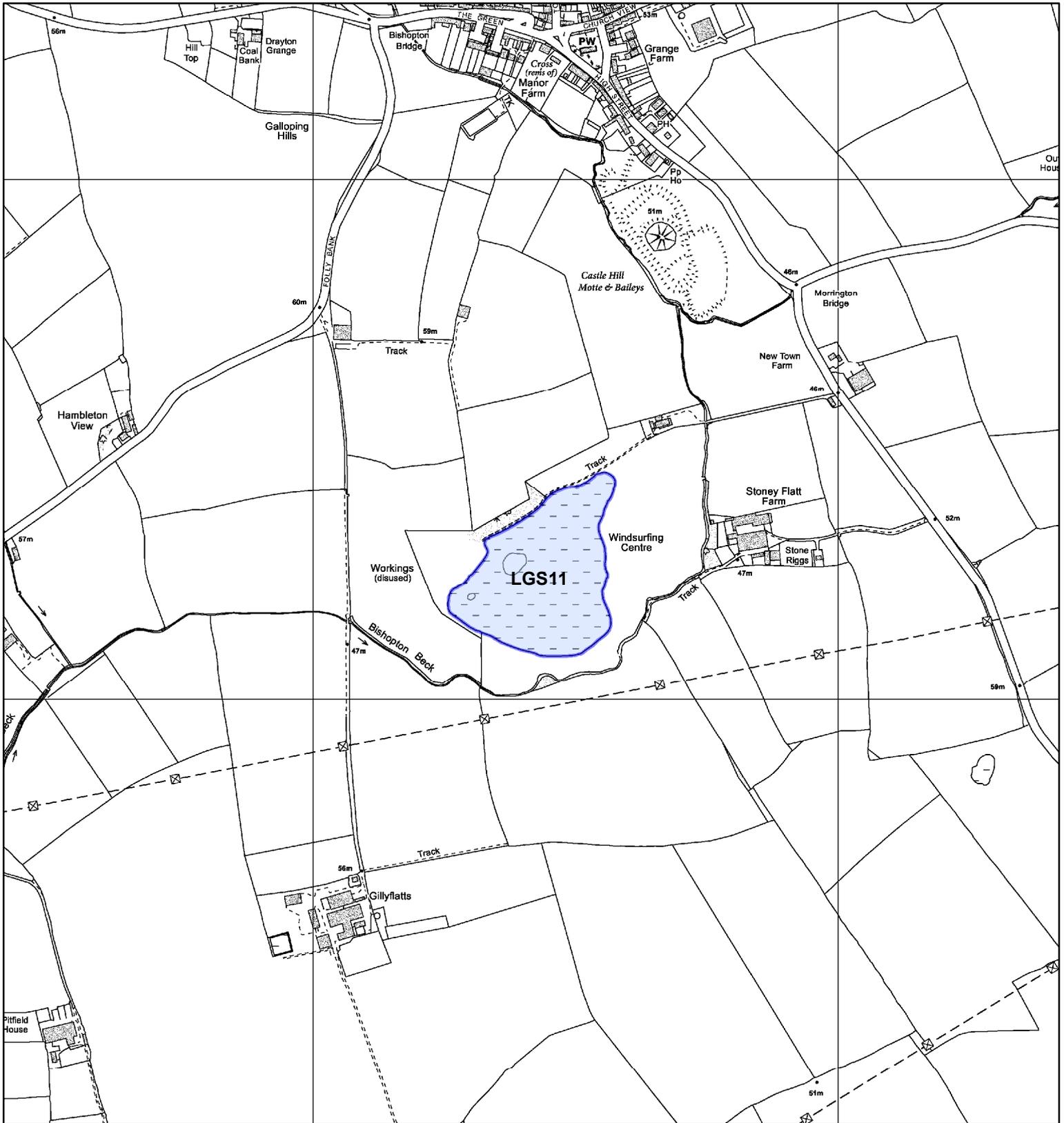
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

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LGS11 - Bishopton Lake and Windsurfing Centre



Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

- Designated
- Not Designated

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LGS12 - North Park



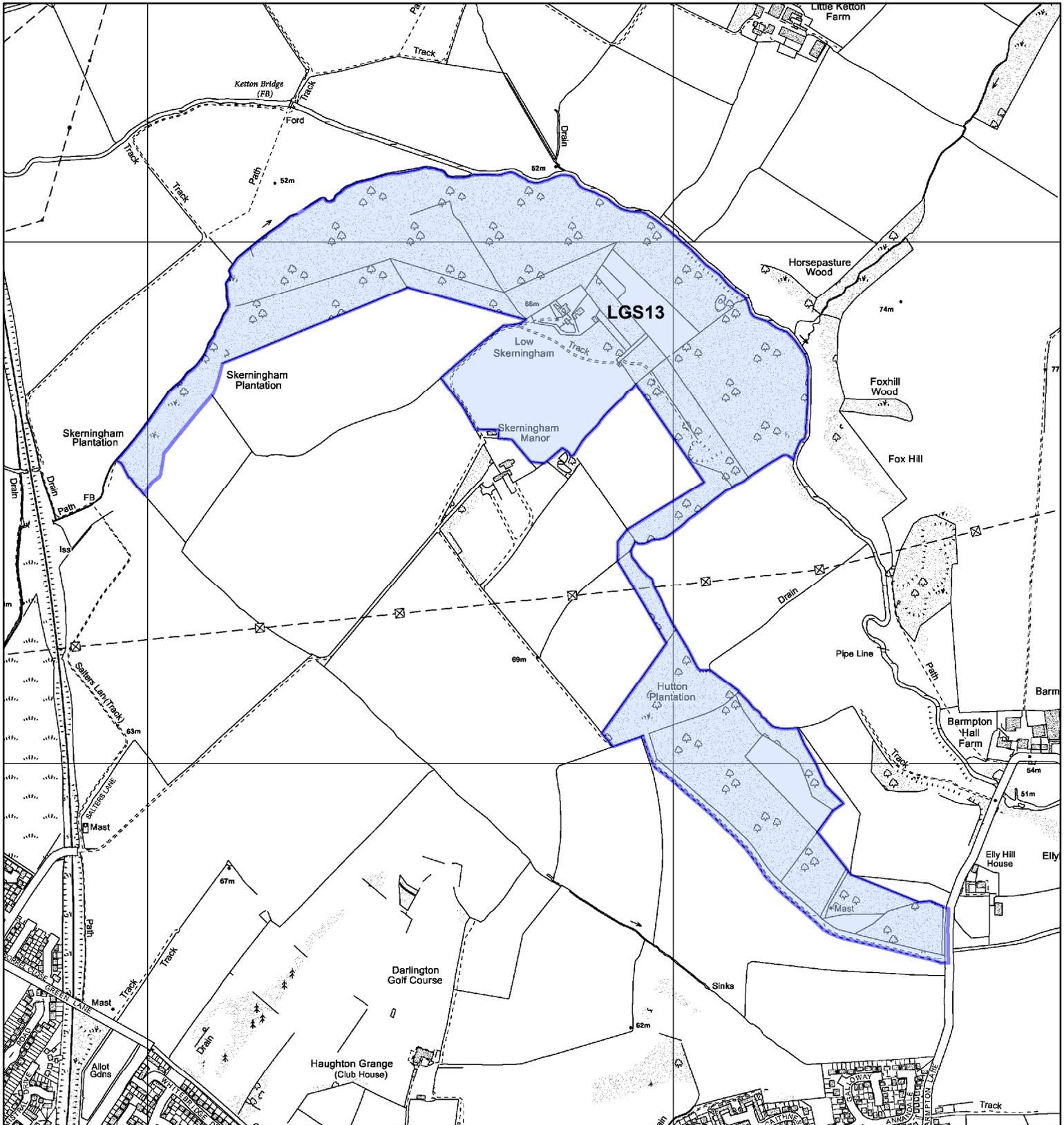
Local Green Space Submissions - Designated

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LGS13 - Skerningham Countryside Park



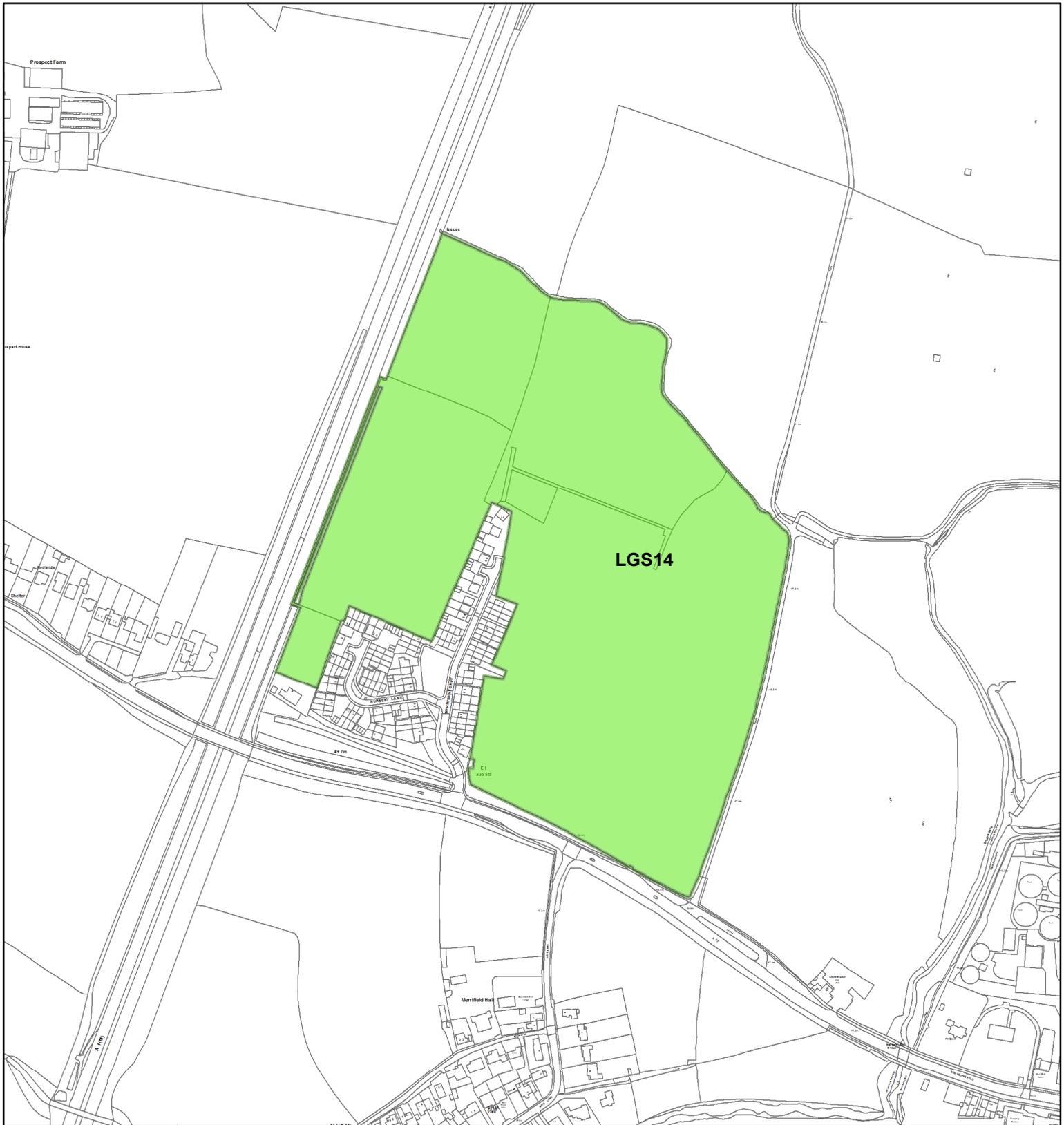
Local Green Space Submissions - Not Designated

-  Designated
-  Not Designated

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LGS14 - Merrybent Community Woodland



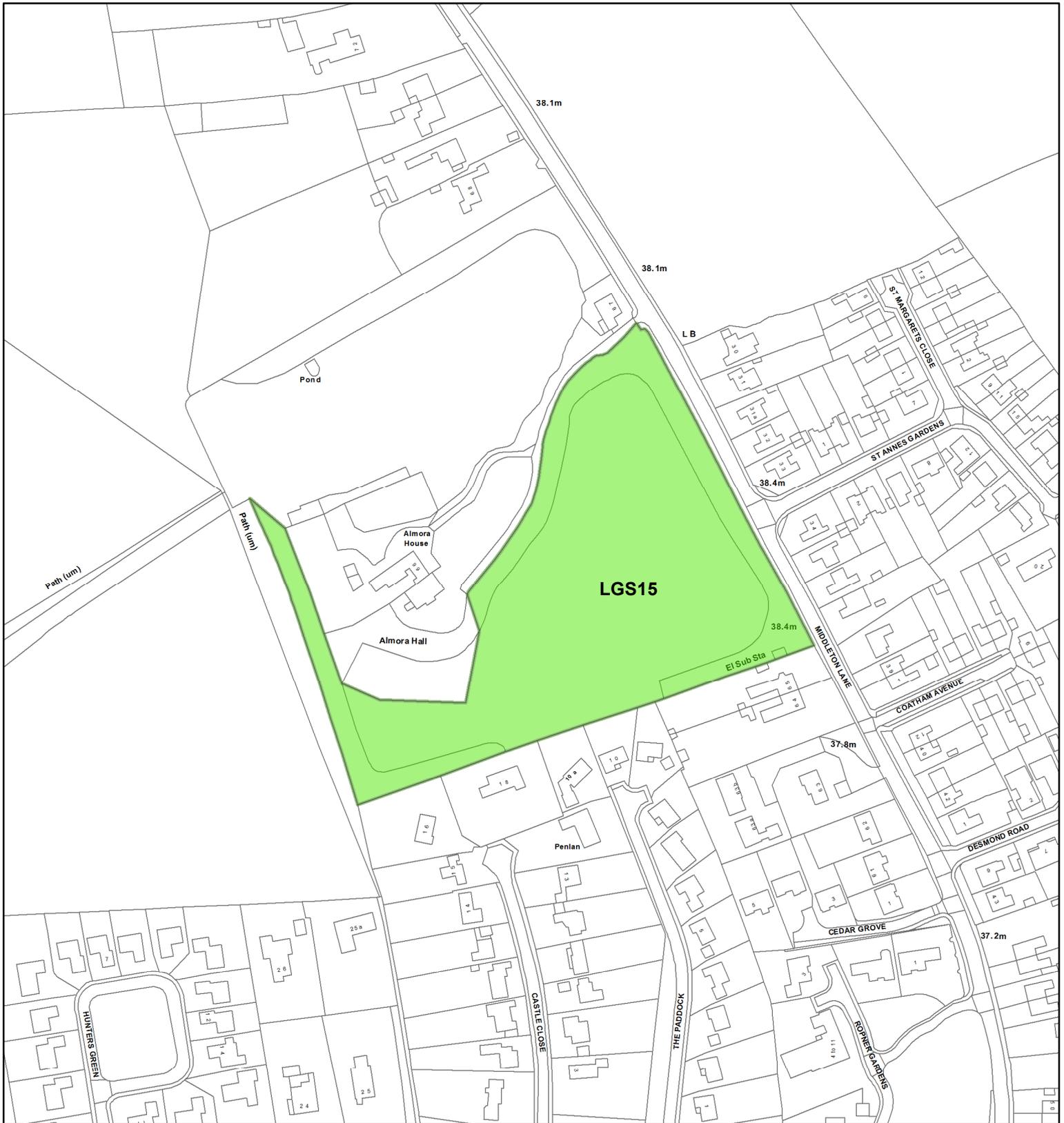
Local Green Space Submissions - Designated

-  Designated
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LGS15 - Almora Hall Field, Middleton St George



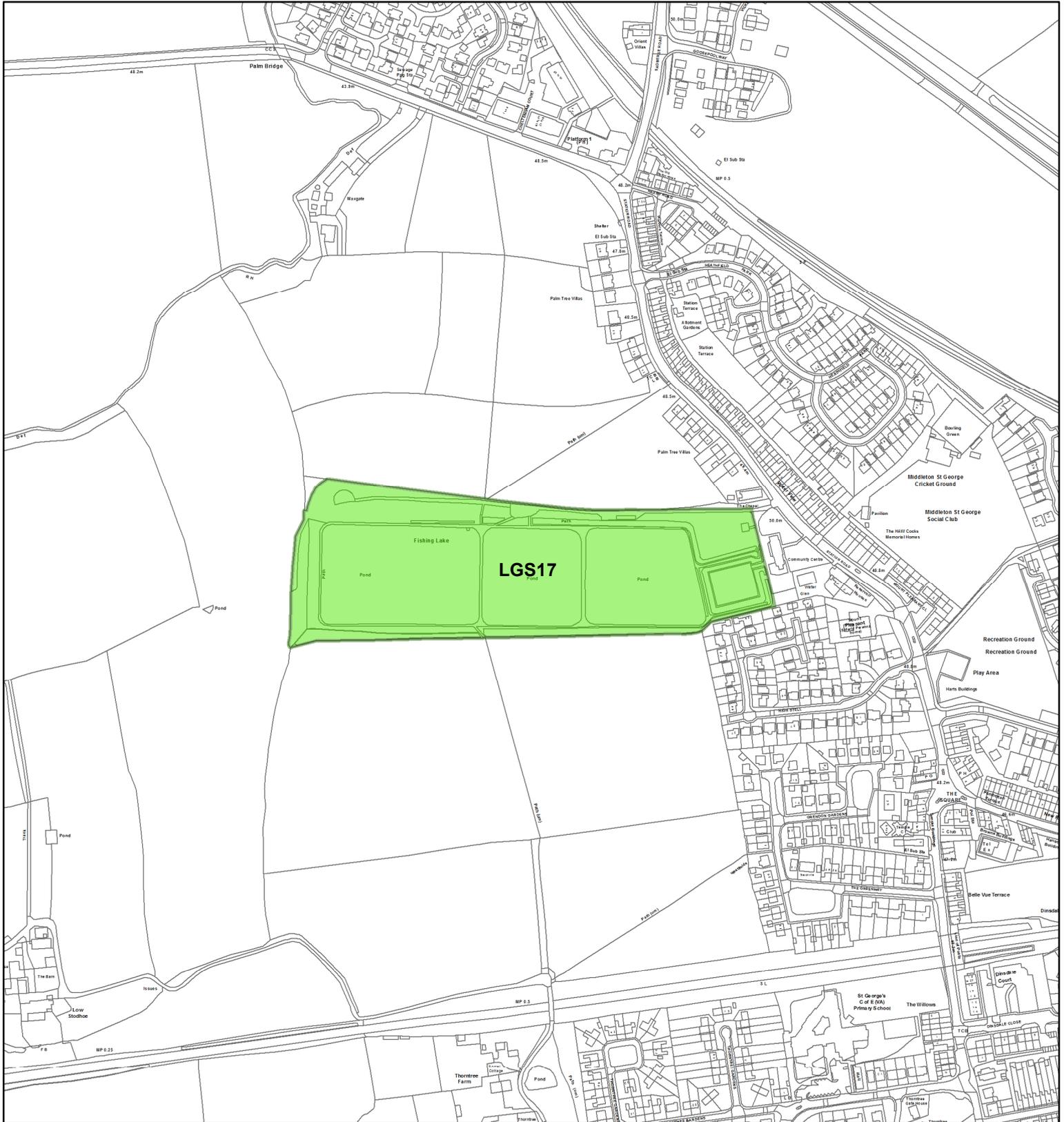
Local Green Space Submissions - Designated

- Designated
- Not Designated

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LGS17 - Water Park Middleton St George



Local Green Space Submissions - Designated

-  Designated
-  Not Designated

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Appendix B
Site Assessment Table

LGS Ref	Site name	Ward	Assessment One		Assessment Two	Assessment Three	Assessment Four	Assessment Five (see Appendix C for detail)						Assessment Six	Summary and Recommendation
			HELAA 2017	Recent Relevant Planning History	Existing protective designations	Is the site within reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?	Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Beauty	Historic Significance	Recreational Value	Tranquility	Wildlife	Other	Is the site demonstrably special to the local community?	
LGS01	Beech Road/Whinbush Park	Whinfield	Yes (Site 127)	None	None	Yes	Compact park centrally located. Provides connectivity and a green buffer within a mainly residential area.	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Overall this site represents a valuable local green asset within its community. It has a range of informal recreation uses and close to forming part of the River Skerne Green Corridor. Recommend for designation.
LGS02	Springfield Park	Whinfield	Yes (Site 123 and 251)	Within the potential Skertingham strategic development allocation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Site is within a potential strategic allocation area. Development of this area is to be informed by a masterplan. The council expects that there will be a range of sport and recreational facilities within the green infrastructure network as part of the sites development. The potential to allocate Springfield Park will be reviewed once there is more certainty on the future provision of sport and recreation facilities in the area. If this is not possible by the time the plan is submitted it can be undertaken during the next local plan review. Scoped out of assessment and not recommended for designation.
LGS03	Green Lane Bridleway	Harrowgate Hill Ward & Whinfield	Yes (Site 251 and adjoins sites 123, 21 and 030)	None	Existing PROW protected under Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	Yes	Area an existing Public Right of Way and does not form part of a wider 'green space' and is therefore scoped out of further assessment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	As the area is wholly designated as a Public Right of Way it is protected under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Scoped out of assessment and not recommended for designation.
LGS04	Skertingham Countryside Park	Sadberge and Middleton St George	Yes (Site 251)	Within the potential Skertingham strategic development allocation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Site is within a potential strategic allocation area. Development of this area is to be informed by a masterplan. The council expects that there will be a net gain in the area of community woodland as part of the sites development. The potential to allocate the community woodland as a local green space will be reviewed once there is more certainty on the future extent of the woodland area. If this is not possible by the time the plan is submitted it can be undertaken during the next local plan review. Scoped out of assessment and not recommended for designation.
LGS05	Fryers Field Recreation Ground	Haughton and Springfield	No	None	Existing PROW protected under Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	Yes	Compact local park with play equipment and space for informal play. Valuable Green Buffer.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Overall this site represents a valuable local green asset within its community. It has historic interest in relation to its historic gifting to the people of Haughton Village and the evidence of ridge and furrow is an interesting relic of its former use and rural setting. It also offers local tranquility and informal recreation and play. Recommend for designation.
LGS06	Gouldsmith Gardens	Haughton and Springfield	No	None	None	Yes	Grassed area with some trees. Not an extensive tract of land.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Although of some visual benefit to residents within the immediate vicinity the wider benefits of this green space are limited and it is not considered demonstrably special. Not recommended for designation.
LGS07	Muscar House Farm	Whinfield	Yes (Site 053 and 251)	Within the potential Skertingham strategic development allocation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agricultural land with a permissive footpath offering only public access. At 21.9 hectares with limited public access this is considered an extensive tract of land on the edge of the settlement. Site is within a potential strategic allocation area. Development of this area is to be informed by a masterplan. Scoped out of assessment and not recommended for designation.
LGS08	Sparrowhall Drive	Whinfield	Yes (Site 126 and 251)	Within the potential Skertingham strategic development allocation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Site is within the strategic allocation area of Skertingham and subject to individual HELAA site submissions. The council expects that there will be a range of sport and recreational facilities within the green infrastructure network as part of the sites development. The potential to allocate green spaces in this area will be reviewed once there is more certainty on the future provision of sport and recreation facilities in the area. If this is not possible by the time the plan is submitted it can be undertaken during the next local plan review. Scoped out of assessment and not recommended for designation.

LGS Ref	Site name	Ward	Assessment One		Assessment Two	Assessment Three	Assessment Four	Assessment Five (see Appendix C for detail)						Assessment Six	Summary and Recommendation
			HELAA 2017	Recent Relevant Planning History	Existing protective designations	Is the site within reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?	Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Beauty	Historic Significance	Recreational Value	Tranquility	Wildlife	Other	Is the site demonstrably special to the local community?	
LGS09	Bishopton Conservation Area	Sadberge and Middleton St George	No	None	Yes. Conservation Area, Village Green, Scheduled Ancient Monument (Remains of Motte and Bailey Castle) and various TPO's	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	The submission site is for the entirety of the existing Bishopton Conservation Area and although there are some green spaces within this area the majority is covered in built development or private gardens. The remaining green spaces are protected either by the conservation area designation itself or specific village green designation. It is not considered appropriate to have a blanket designation for a conservation area on this scale. Scoped out of assessment and not recommended for designation.
LGS10	Bishopton Playing Field	Sadberge and Middleton St George	No	17/00497/FUL - Permission Granted for change of use from agricultural land to playing field and play ground.	None	Yes	The proposed play area is modest in size (1ha) and does not represent an expansive tract of land.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Until such time as the play area is created it is not considered this site is demonstrably special. Allocation at this stage would be premature with uncertainty around implementation. Once established the site may be able to demonstrate special recreation value. Not recommended for designation.
LGS11	Bishopton Lake and Windsurfing Centre	Sadberge and Middleton St George	No		None	Evidence provided suggests this has a regional catchment area. Therefore is not considered suitable for consideration as a Local Green Space. Also access is by appointment so is not readily accessible. It is therefore scoped out of further assessment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Site provides a valuable outdoor recreational facility however access is by appointment and serves a much wider community than that in the locality. Scoped out of assessment and not recommended for designation.
LGS12	North Park	North Road	No		None	Yes	9 hectare urban park. Does not represent an expansive tract of land relative to the size of community it serves.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	North Park is a well used urban park that offers a range of recreation facilities and hosts a number of events. Within the urban area this represents a tranquil and beautiful area that has been part of the towns development. The area is considered demonstrably special to the community it serves. Recommended for designation.
LGS13	Skerningham Countryside Park (Almost identical area to LGS04 so assessments and evidence merged)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Almost identical area as LGS04 so assessments and evidence merged.
LGS14	Merrybent Community Woodland	Heighington and Coniscliffe	No (Adjoins Site 041)	None	None	Yes	Created as part of the former Tees Forest partnership this area is relatively new but is establishing itself as a valuable green space between the urban area and the A1 motorway. Area is well defined by existing boundaries and does not represent an expansive tract of land for a community woodland area with open public access.	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Community woodland created around 11 years ago. Is still establishing and maturing but already provides benefits for recreation and wildlife to the local community. The space adds an area of beauty and tranquillity to an area identified in the draft plan for further development so could serve a much larger community than it does at present. Recommend for designation.
LGS15	Almora Hall Field, Middleton St George	Sadberge and Middleton St George	No	None	Middleton One Row Conservation Area. Group TPO and numerous individual TPO's.	Yes	It is a central site within the village between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row, with mature trees and grassed areas. Not publically accessible.	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	The site is already subject to significant protection owing to its location within the Middleton One Row Conservation area and with trees subject to TPO. Despite lack of public access it is considered that the tree belt on Middleton Lane and the views from the public right of way to the west do contribute to the beauty and tranquillity of this rural gap between the two settlements of Middleton One Row and Middleton St George. Recommended for designation.

LGS Ref	Site name	Ward	Assessment One		Assessment Two	Assessment Three	Assessment Four	Assessment Five (see Appendix C for detail)						Assessment Six	Summary and Recommendation
			HELAA 2017	Recent Relevant Planning History	Existing protective designations	Is the site within reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?	Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?	Beauty	Historic Significance	Recreational Value	Tranquility	Wildlife	Other	Is the site demonstrably special to the local community?	
LGS16	Middleton St George Playing Field	Sadberge and Middleton St George	No	None	None	Yes	The playing field is of a scale expected serving a settlement of this size. It's central location makes it accessible to a significant proportion on the local population. It is considered local in character and not extensive.	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Overall this site represents a valuable local green asset within its community. For the sites recreation value and beauty and ready accessibility it is considered this site fulfils the necessary criteria. Recommended for designation.
LGS17	Water Park, Middleton St George	Sadberge and Middleton St George	No (Is located between Sites 045 and 099)	None	None	Yes	Although clearly a man made structure (former reservoir) the site has been long established within the landscape. Site is clearly defined and does not represent an extensive tract of land.	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Overall this site represents a valuable local green asset within its community. For the sites recreation value, beauty and tranquility and ready accessibility it is considered this site fulfils the necessary criteria. Recommended for designation.

Appendix C

Assessments Five and Six Site Specific Criteria Assessment

Site LGS01 Beech Road/Whinbush Park

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	Site offers a good mix of open informal recreation and mature trees. Within its surroundings this area can be considered beautiful.	Y
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	Wider views are very limited. Only really visible from the cul-de-sac of Beech Road.	N
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents?	No	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		N

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials. (GIS Check)	No	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features (Evidence)	Some TPO trees to the western boundary with Beech Rise. Trees are worthy of protection but not considered 'ancient'. May have formed part of the grounds of Whinfield Hall but any interpretation of this appears to have been lost.	N

Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green. (Evidence)	No evidence provided.	N
Did any important historic events take place on the site? (Evidence)	No evidence provided	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market. (Evidence)	No	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		N

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?	No. Site is not large enough. Better facilities are available within the locality.	N
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	Yes. Site is freely accessible and large enough for informal recreation. Evidence provided that it is also popular with local dog walkers.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		Y

Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	Yes the site does represent a tranquil area within the locality. No busy roads are visible and most of the surrounding housing development is screened by boundary planting and trees.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		Y

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value? (GIS)	No	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	The site forms part of the River Skerne Corridor as part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy. (Site 3C)	Y
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	Evidence has been submitted that the wood is home to many species of birds. Bats and hedgehogs are also residents in the wood. The Whinfield Residents Association has added bird and bat breeding boxes to trees the wood.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		Y

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area?	Evidence provided that the main importance of the site lies in it being the only site of its type in the ward, a combination of quiet attractive woodland and grassy open space. It is close to the residential area it serves, well used and highly valued by residents in Whinfield. These points are already covered in the assessment above.	N
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	Proposed by Whinfield Residents Group and also has a Friends of Beech Wood. Does represent a key urban greenspace in the Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy and has previously been designated as open space in Local Plan Policies.	Y
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of	No evidence submitted to clearly demonstrate wider community support.	N

the community use or value the site?		
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Yes. As Identified in the Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy.	Y
Does the site hold any other significance?	No evidence provided	N
Is the site Demonstrably Special?		Y

Site LGS02 Springfield Park – Scoped out see Assessment Table

Site LGS03 Green Lane Bridleway – Scoped out see Assessment Table

Site LGS04 Skerningham Countryside Park - Scoped out see Assessment Table

Site LGS05 Fryers Field Recreation Ground

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	The area is not particularly beautiful but does offer some local amenity benefits.	N
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	Wider public views are limited as it is located behind residential development and adjoined to the west by Darlington Education Village which isn't publically accessible.	N
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character	No	N

assessments or similar documents?		
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		N

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	No.	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	The site still shows evidence of ridge and furrow farming. Site is bounded on two sides by old hedgerows.	Y
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	Evidence has been provided that the field was gifted in 1930 to the former Haughton Parish Council by Mr Frederick Fryer. With a restrictive covenant that the recreation ground was for the children of the village (of Haughton) and it should not be used for anything else.	Y
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	No	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	No	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		Y

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?	No. Although there are some facilities for informal recreation (see below)	N
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	Childrens play as well as informal football and basketball facilities are provided. Also popular with walkers and dog walkers.	Y

Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		Y
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Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	Yes the site does represent a tranquil area within the locality. No busy roads are visible and most of the surrounding housing development is screened by boundary planting and trees.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		Y

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	No evidence provided	N
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	No evidence provided	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		N

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide	No evidence provided	N

key views across or looking out of the local area?		
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	Nominated by the Friends of Fryer's Field Recreation Ground. Historic value.	Y
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	No further evidence of support provided	N
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Yes. It does represent a beneficial facility serving primarily Haughton to the South of the busy Whinfield Road. Although the Education Village adjacent has large playing fields these are not widely accessible.	Y
Is the site demonstrably special?		Y

Site LGS06 Gouldsmith Gardens

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	No. It does act as a valuable green space for the residents of the immediate area but its lack of other features do not make it particularly beautiful.	N
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	Other than views from residential streets within the immediate locality site visibility is limited. Strip of land on Whinfield Road is detached from the main green space and of limited value.	N
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character	No	N

assessments or similar documents?		
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		N

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	No.	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	No.	N
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	No. Although evidence is submitted that this was part of a larger area associated with the nearby Fryers Field.	N
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	No.	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	No.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		N

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?	No. Sites is not used or is particularly suitable for formal recreation. Nearby Fryer Field offers more facilities.	N
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	Site is readily accessible and could be used for informal recreation although the facilities and provision on Fryer Field only a short distance away is likely to be preferable.	Y

Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		N
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Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	The site is surrounded by housing and residential streets. Limited planting and screening mean although a useful green space it has limited tranquillity.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		N

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No.	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	No.	N
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	No.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		N

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide	None submitted.	N

key views across or looking out of the local area?		
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	Nominated by the Friends of Fryer's Field Recreation Ground.	N
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Was the site received favourably during Issues and Options Consultation? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	No further evidence provided. Value likely to be to those within the immediate vicinity with the nearby Fryer Field offering greater community value.	N
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Fryer Field provides a greater range of facilities and benefits to the wider community.	N
Is the site demonstrably special?		N

Site LGS07 Muscar House Farm – Scoped out of further assessment

Site LGS08 Sparrowhall Drive – Scoped out of further assessment

Site LGS09 Bishopton Conservation Area – Scoped out of further assessment

Site LGS10 Bishopton Playing Field

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	No.	N
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	No.	N
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents?	No.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		N

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	No.	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	No.	N
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	No.	N
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	No.	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	No.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		N

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?	No.	N
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	Once implemented the site is to be a playing field whilst the rest will be a children's playground. It would be the only facility of it's kind in the village. As it is not implemented yet it cannot demonstrate a recreation significance at this time.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		N

Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	No evidence provided.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		N

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No.	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	No evidence provided.	N
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest	No evidence provided.	N

has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?		
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		N

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area?	No other reasons provided other than those detailed above.	N
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	No evidence provided.	N
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	No evidence provided.	N
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Once implemented it would represent a valuable facility for recreation within the village. A similar provision could be provided elsewhere around the village.	N
Is the site demonstrably special?		N

Site LGS11 Bishopton Lake and Windsurfing Centre – Scoped out see Assessment Table

Site LGS12 North Park

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	Yes. The park contains mature tree lined avenues, undulating topography, grassed areas and wildflower areas.	Y
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	Clearly Visible From the Junction of Whessoe Road and Longfield road. As well as views along the terraces between Cumberland Street and Lansdowne Street.	Y
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents?	No	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		Y

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	Cast Iron Bandstand from 1898 was regenerated by the community and the council. It was officially re-opened in March 2011. It is not a listed building but is of local interest.	Y
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	There are veteran trees in the park, some being in place before opening in 1898. Evidence has been submitted with a 1856 map showing many of the large trees are in the same position as now, which makes them over 170 years old.	Y
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	No evidence provided	N
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	No.	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site?	Evidence has been provided of numerous events such as an annual Fun	Y

For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	<p>Day event held each summer which links everyone and everything together, filling the park with people. Everything is in use - the bandstand, sports pitches etc with many organisations & agencies with community info along with stalls and fairground rides.</p> <p>Sledging is a great winter past-time in the snow [sledges, bin bags, tin trays] on informal basis and links to people's memories across generations.</p> <p>The local school use the park as an outdoor classroom varying from nature and bark rubbings, collecting leaves, to pushing and pulling experiments using the play equipment.</p> <p>Paste Egg rolling is tradition & continues informally down 'Brewery Bank' at Easter.</p>	
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		Y

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?	Evidence has been provided that the full size football pitch is used every week in season by two Sunday morning league teams in addition to informal use. Bowling Green has several teams playing in season.	Y
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	Used for walking, dog walking, picnics, sledging, rounders, cricket, races, kite flying, nature watching etc. The modern Multi Use Games Area [MUGA] has low level lighting from dusk to 9pm funded by The Youth Club and provides a space for recreation away from housing.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		Y

Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil?	Within an urban setting the park is large enough to offer areas of tranquillity.	Y

What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?		
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		Y

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No.	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	Nesting birds, roosting bats, oak trees encouraging butterflies. The park provides a 'dark space' allowing nocturnal species to hunt naturally. The Friends of North Park's aspirations are to create a more wildlife friendly habitat to support a more diverse ecology. A long Naturally wild area was created some years ago adjacent to that of Harrowgate Hill's Primary Eco Schools new wild area which allowed a doubling of the size to support wildlife.	Y
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	Evidence of woodpeckers, foxes and hedgehogs provided.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		Y

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area?	Being the highest point in the area, the park affords a long distance view across rooftops to the Cleveland Hills to the east. Its location between four schools also makes it an important outdoor learning opportunity	Y
Does the site hold any other significance?		Y

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	Identified by the Friends of North Park & North Cemetery.	
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	No surveys or petitions submitted but evidence of the numerous well attended events indicate this area is very popular within the local community. Links to nearby schools.	
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Yes there is a shortage of formal parks in this part of Darlington. Formal and informal sport provision is also important within the vicinity	Y
Is the site demonstrably special?		Y

Site LGS13 Skerningham Countryside Park (Same Area as LGS04 so assessments and evidence merged)

Site LGS14 Merrybent Community Woodland

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	Deciduous woodland area was planted in 2007 and is continuing to mature. Offers more diversity than surrounding land uses and looks attractive.	Y
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	Visible form the A67 and bridleway to the eastern boundary.	Y
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character	No	N

assessments or similar documents?		
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		Y

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	No. Former site of Village Hall and Co-op nurseries but these are of limited historic value.	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	Old hedgerows extend north towards Coniscliffe Moor.	Y
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	No.	N
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	Evidence is submitted the site is within close proximity to some recent archeological excavations but no evidence is submitted directly relating to the site.	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	No	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		N

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?	No	N
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal	Site is popular with walkers, dog walkers and people interested in wildlife. Site has open access via three access points.	Y

recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?		
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		Y

Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	As the woodland continues to mature the screening and feeling of remoteness will continue to develop. The proposed allocation in the draft plan for Coniscliffe Park South will also increase the importance of this area to create an area of relative tranquillity. Impact of the nearby A1 is limited owing to it running through a substantial cutting at this point which minimises visual and noise impacts	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		Y

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	Evidence is provided of bats and the speckled wood butterfly using the area as a habitat.	Y
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	Evidence of wild deer using the site has also been provided. There are a number of mature hedgerows on the site.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		Y

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important?	No further evidence that isn't already covered in the above assessment is provided.	N

Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area?		
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	The community forest was created via a section 106 agreement in 2004 between Darlington Borough Council, the Co-operative group and the North England Community Forest Development Co Ltd. The agreement requires the Community Forest to be 'maintained for recreational purposes to a reasonable and proper standard in perpetuity'.	Y
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	Has formed part of the emerging Low Coniscliffe Neighbourhood Plan.	Y
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Serves the immediate communities of Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent. But also provides an area of accessible woodland for western Darlington. There is space to replicate a similar woodland on agricultural land within the vicinity but this would lose the 11 years of establishment that it has already had.	Y
Is the site demonstrably special?		Y

Site LGS15 Almora Hall Field, Middleton St George

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	Area is undoubtedly attractive. Main feature of wider public benefit is the extensive tree belt along Middleton Lane. This tree belt is already offered significant protection by its inclusion in a group TPO and the Middleton One Row	Y

	Conservation Area. Also identified as a rural gap in the emerging local plan.	
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	From Middleton Lane and the public right of way to the West.	Y
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents?	It is mentioned in the Middleton St George Conservation Character Appraisal as being of value.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		Y

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	Not formally designated. Almora Hall is identified as being of local interest in the Middleton One Row Character Appraisal.	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	Numerous mature trees protected by existing TPO's	Y
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	Yes. Site is part of the grounds of Almora House, a large detached Victorian villa built circa 1860-1880.	Y
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	No evidence provided.	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	No evidence provided.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		Y

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club	No.	N

membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?		
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	No.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		N

Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	Owing to the lack of public access it is difficult to assess the significance of the tranquillity within the site. From Middleton Land the tree belt does provide a section of natural/rural character between the two settlements. Similarly the public rights of way to the west benefit from the views and feeling of remoteness the site provides in this rural gap.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		Y

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	No	N
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	Evidence submitted that the mature trees provide a valuable habitat to a range of species including foxes, badgers, grey squirrels, rabbits and birdlife.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		N

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area?	None provided.	N
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	Owner requested designation with support of Parish Council.	Y
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	Letter of support from Parish Council. No wider evidence of support.	Y
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	With the site not being accessible the wider public benefit is from the trees surrounding the site. Within this setting and acknowledging the historic importance of this being the grounds of Almora Hall it is not considered this space could be provided elsewhere.	Y
Is the site demonstrably special?		Y

Site LGS16 Middleton St George Playing Field

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	No but it does represent a central expanse of publically accessible greenspace within the village.	Y
Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there	The site is highly visible from Station Road the main route through the village.	Y

views of the site from any key locations?		
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents?	No evidence is provided.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		Y

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	No	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	No	N
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	Evidence is provided that the site was formerly an iron works and that the site was identified and purchased post Second World War as a playing field for the children of Low Dinsdale Parish Council and Middleton St George Parish Council. Evidence is provided from a book where this is documented. Although relatively recent it is considered the site has played an important role in the development of the village.	Y
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	No evidence provided.	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	No evidence provided.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		N

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport?	The football pitch is used by village football teams (both youth and adult) for training and fixtures. It is the only facility	Y

Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good quality? Are there better facilities nearby?	of its type within easy access of the village.	
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	The site has open access and can be used for informal recreation.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		Y

Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	No. The site is surrounded by development or highways on all sides. Although there is some boundary screening it is not considered particularly special because of it's tranquillity.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		N

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No.	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	No evidence provided.	N
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	No evidence provided.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		N

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?
What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area?	No further evidence provided.	N
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	Site identified by the Parish Council on behalf of the local community. Has been identified as important in documents like parish plans etc.	Y
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	No evidence submitted of wider support.	N
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Yes. Particularly for formal recreation in such a central location within the village. Childrens play equipment is also a valuable resource and not one in abundance within the village.	Y
Is the site demonstrably special?		Y

Site LGS17 Water Park, Middleton St George

Beauty	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site discernibly beautiful or more beautiful than the surrounding areas?	Although man made the water park does offer variation and interest to the local area.	Y

Site visibility: is the site visible from a public place; are there views of the site from any key locations?	Not widely visible from public locations.	N
Is the site (or type of landscape) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents?	No.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its beauty?		Y

History	Comments	Criterion Met?
Are there any historic buildings, features or remains on the site? For example, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, war memorials.	No.	N
Are there any historic landscape features on the site? For example, old hedgerows, ancient trees, historic ponds, historic garden features	No.	N
Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? For example, part of the grounds for the manor house, site of an old railway station, village green.	The ponds in the Water Park were formerly reservoirs serving Yarm, Stockton on Tees and Middlesbrough and were built in the 1850s. This is of interest but not particularly important.	N
Did any important historic events take place on the site?	No	N
Is there a long-standing event which takes place on the site? For example, well-dressing, maypole dancing, pace egg plays, market.	No	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its historic significance?		N

Recreation	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for playing sport? Which sport? Is this sports provision free or is club membership required? Is it good	Fishing in ponds 2 and 3. The club issues permits for fishing.	Y

quality? Are there better facilities nearby?		
Is there evidence or is it feasible that the site is used for informal recreation? Can the site be accessed easily?	Pond 1 is used by the Darlington and District Model Boat Club for use on a weekly basis. Also used for walking/running.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its recreation value?		Y

Tranquillity	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site considered to be tranquil? What features make it feel tranquil? Does it enhance the feeling of tranquillity within the local area through a feeling of remoteness? Does it provide an area of tranquillity within a busy setting by hiding man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or lighting?	The physical separation of the park from roads, the three ponds, the footpaths in the park, the surrounding trees and bushes and the access to public rights of way and the countryside makes the park feel tranquil, enhances the feeling of tranquillity within the area and gives a sense of well-being.	Y
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its tranquillity?		Y

Wildlife	Comments	Criterion Met?
Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value?	No	N
If the site is not formally designated, is there any evidence that there are important habitats or species found on the site? Have ecological surveys been undertaken on or close to the site? Could it form part of an ecological network? Is the site adjacent to a designated site?	Bats, breeding birds, newts, water voles, white clawed crayfish, badgers and foxes have been found in the park. Although no evidence of surveys has been provided.	Y
Is there any evidence, or is it likely that other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Are there ancient hedgerows, woodland, veteran trees on the site?	No.	N
Does the site hold particular local significance because of its wildlife interest?		N

Other	Comments	Criterion Met?

What are the other reasons which make the site significant for the local community? What features make this site important? Is the site a focal point or stopping place? Does it provide key views across or looking out of the local area?	None submitted.	N
Does the site hold any other significance?		N

Demonstrably Special	Comments	Criterion Met?
How was this site identified as being special? Was it raised at a meeting or through a survey? Has it been subject to discussion or planning processes before?	Site identified by the Parish Council on behalf of the local community. Has been identified as important in documents like parish plans etc.	Y
Is there evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals? What letters of support, petitions, surveys etc. have been submitted? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?	No evidence submitted of wider support.	N
Is there a need for Local Green Space in this location? Is there a shortage of accessible green space in the area? Is there evidence of a need for this kind of space in particular? Could the use of the green space be replicated elsewhere in the vicinity?	Yes. Particularly for informal recreation. MUGA is also a valuable resource for children and not one in abundance within the village.	Y
Is the site demonstrably special?		Y