

November 25th, 2018

For the attention of Town and Parish Councils across Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Urgent action is needed to establish a Local Green Spaces policy within the Joint Local Plan for all communities where there is no Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

National policy supports the designation of Local Green Spaces as a way for communities to protect areas of land they value highly and save them from speculative developers. Currently in Babergh and Mid Suffolk a local community can only nominate a Local Green Space for designation and inclusion in the JLP through an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). This is a complex process likely to take a number of years.

Only four Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted across the two Districts and only two of these have designated highly valued local green spaces within their NDP.

Speculative developers are targeting both districts and have taken advantage of Para11 in the NPPF – the presumption in favour of sustainable development when councils do not have a five-year housing land supply. BMSDC and local people are being forced to spend time and money they can ill-afford fighting off developer-led applications for housing in highly unsuitable locations.

We believe BMSDC needs to act now to provide a policy and a process so that **all communities** can nominate highly valued Local Green Spaces for inclusion in the emerging Babergh-Mid-Suffolk Joint Local Plan. Designation would be dependent on successfully meeting criteria laid down in the 2018 National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) Councillors Nick Gowrley and David Burn also believe this should be a high priority. We are asking Town and Parish Councils across both districts to add weight to the Councillors' recommendation that this matter be acted on ASAP by:

1. Writing to your District Councillors to ask them to take up this cause
2. Speaking with and writing to other organisations / individuals to increase momentum and raise awareness of how a Local Green Space policy is vital to protect and safeguard land valued by local communities

We urge you to add your voice to ours and those of Councillors Gowrley and Burn. Please copy me in to any letters or emails you send. If you would like to join a group to raise further awareness of the value of Local Green Spaces, please email me your name, organisation and contact details. Your support now will really help to make a difference for all local communities.

Yours sincerely

Judith Thompson

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on behalf of the Tinkler's Meadow Campaign Group

PS: Please see further information overleaf about our group, local and national policy and useful links including Councils that have successfully implemented Local Green Space policies without having adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans.

FURTHER INFORMATION

About our group

Our group has objected to speculative outline planning proposal on a highly valued tract of land to the west of Stowmarket. A specific field will be lost forever, the only undeveloped green space separating the parishes of Stowmarket with neighbouring parish Onehouse (Tinklers Meadow – DC/18/01217).

This green space exemplifies the intrinsic beauty of rolling hills, wooded river valley and historic landscape features located at the scenic gateway into Stowmarket separating countryside from built environment. Tinklers Meadow is within the locally designated Special Landscape Area of Rattlesden River Valley, is rich in biodiversity and located next to three County Wildlife Sites.

BMSDC Local Green Spaces – more information about the current position can be found in the BMSDC Joint Local Plan Consultation Document (interactive but closed on November 10th, 2017) in the Strategic Chapter on Infrastructure / Healthy Communities. A paragraph states ‘Local Green Space designation enables local communities to identify and protect green spaces that are demonstrably special to the local community and have particular local significance’. The Council states their initial preference regarding ‘Protection of existing spaces’, is to include a policy (Option POS 2) which protects open spaces and sports facilities in line with the NPPF approach, but which also recognises the local distinctiveness afforded by open spaces in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Local Green Spaces – extract from the 2018 National Policy Planning Framework - Para 99. The designation of land as Local Green Space *through local* and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

Para 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.

Link for further information: Open Spaces Society – campaigns for stronger protection and opportunities for everyone to enjoy commons, greens and paths and help to defend open spaces against loss and pressures from development www.oss.org.uk

Links to Councils that have established Local Green Space policies and processes

North Norfolk District Council - Amenity Green Space Topic Paper www.north-norfolk.gov.uk

North West Leicestershire District Council – Proposed Local Green Space Nomination
www.nwleicsw.gov.uk

Reading Borough Council – Local green Space and Public Open Space Background Paper
www.reading.gov.uk

Corby Borough Council – Technical Guidance Note Local Green Space Designation
www.corby.gov.uk