

Supporting
Evidence
Document – Local
Green Spaces

Firbeck Parish Draft
Neighbourhood Plan
2026 - 2041

August 2026

1.Introduction

This supporting evidence document provides Firbeck Parish Council with evidence to support the policy in the Firbeck Parish Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan') concerning Local Green Spaces.

It briefly sets out the background to their designation, context and explains the methodology used. A short description of what makes each one of the proposed spaces special with supporting photographic evidence is also provided.

2.Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ introduces the concept of Local Green Space (LGS) designation. It identifies and supports LGS designation to provide special protection against development for green areas of importance to local communities. It also identifies the important role of neighbourhood plans in the identification, as National Management Development Policy HC2: Local Green Space states, '*Local and neighbourhood plans may designate land as Local Green Space where this would safeguard green areas of particular value to the local community*'.

Adding, '*Local Green Space should be limited to situations where the land concerned is:*

- a. In 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 not an extensive tract of land.*

Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs. Local Green Space should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period'.

These requirements and guidance contained in the NPPF are developed in the National Planning Practice Guidance document 'Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space' and other supporting policies and documents².

The identification and protection of LGSs is also supported through local planning policies. Special mention here should be made to Policy CS 19 'Green Infrastructure' as contained in the Adopted Rotherham Core Strategy, with its emphasis on Rotherham's network of Green Infrastructure assets, including green spaces, will be conserved, extended, enhanced, managed and maintained throughout the borough

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/432424/NPPF_2019.pdf)

² [Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/432424/NPPF_2019.pdf)

3.Methodology

Whilst the NPPF establishes the concept of LGS designation and provides some guiding principles, it gives local communities preparing a neighbourhood plan some discretion to determine how to implement this at the local level. A four-stage approach was adopted by the group leading the preparation of the Plan.

Step 1: Identification of potential sites.

An initial list of potential sites was developed, including from input from the local community.

Step 2: Assessment against the NPPF criteria

These were then assessed to consider their suitability for LGS designation. To allow a comparative assessment of the sites, a form was created based on the criteria in the NPPF. Each potential site was assessed by the Steering Group as well as the consultants helping the Parish Council prepare the Plan.

The group, like most groups undertaking LGS analysis, faced challenges, in particular the number of potential local green spaces of some significance within the Parish. National planning policy enables a neighbourhood plan to protect those of local significance. Also, the absence of a statutory or commonly used definition of these terms, particularly what constitutes 'special' or comprises an 'extensive tract of land'. A common-sense approach was taken, while at the same time having regard to good practice and the experiences of LGS designations in approved Neighbourhood Plans.

The Group was also mindful of the fact that several sites are already given some protection through their location in the Green Belt (the whole of the Parish is designated as Green Belt) as well as other national (e.g. Listed Building) and local designations such as wildlife sites. National planning guidance on LGS designations suggests that, where land is already protected by another designation (specifically highlighting Green Belt) consideration should be given as to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS. This includes assessing whether the LGS designation would provide additional local benefits not already achieved by the existing protection.

Through this process two adjoining sites were identified that were considered demonstrably special to the local community and met the tests set out in the NPPF to be designated as an LGS.

Step 3: Further review

All the proposed sites were then reviewed for their appropriateness for designation as LGS by the independent consultant helping prepare the Plan acting in a 'critical friend' in consultation with planning officers at Rotherham MBC.

Step 4: Consultation

Satisfied that the proposed sites met, in principle, the criteria for LGS designation it was formally proposed for designation in it, and “tested” through the Plan preparation process.

4. Local Green Spaces Assessment Forms

The following section summarises how the site meets the Local Green Space criteria set out in the NPPF. Illustrative photographs are provided as well as a map

Table 1: Local Green Space Assessment

Reference No.	1.
Site	Green spaces at the junction of and straddling Kid Lane and New Road, Firbeck
Address/location	Junction of Kid Lane and New Road, Firbeck
Description/justification	These comprise two areas of well-maintained grassed areas, straddling Kid Lane, in the village of Firbeck. This green space is very pleasant, and an essential feature of the character and distinctiveness of the village and the wider parish. That they contain several heritage assets as well as a planters and bench add to their value and significance.
Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework criteria	
Is it reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?	Yes. Located in a prominent location close to the centre of the village.
Is it beautiful?	Yes. It makes an important contribution to the identity, character and sense of place of the village of Firbeck.
Does it have historic significance?	Yes, they contain several important heritage assets including the village sign and a fingerpost, both of which are proposed for designation as a Firbeck Parish Character Building and Structure of Local Heritage Interest in the Plan.
Is it of recreation value?	Yes, of some albeit limited recreation value, primarily informal. They contain a bench, which is popular for sitting and reflection, and offers attractive views of the village, included the nearby Church of St Martin, a Grade II Listed Building.
Is it tranquil?	Yes.
Does it have richness of wildlife?	Not especially.
local in character and is not an extensive tract of land?	Yes.
Public Access	Yes.

Does site contribute to national and local requirements for provision of homes, employment or services etc.?	No.
Other	It was identified the Plan preparation process, which provides further support and justification why the site is demonstrably special, and holds a particular local significance, to the local community.

Illustrative Photos





Location Plan

