

3rd October 2024

Dear Docking Parish Council

Re: Docking Neighbourhood Plan – Local Green Space

I write in response to the Parish Council proposing to designate the following 2 pieces of land within my client's ownership as Local Green Space:

- Manor Pond, Bradmere Lane (LGS2)
- Grove Field, Mill Lane

It is cited in the letter received from the Parish Council that the local community have identified the land because they add special character to the village by contributing to all or some of the following:

- the tranquillity and beauty of the area
- biodiversity and wildlife
- healthier lifestyles and recreational value for the community
- the historical character of Docking and identified historic assets

At paragraph 102 of the NPPF, it is stated that planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. The Draft Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Review (2021-2040) that is currently at examination is supported by a Green Infrastructure Study (2009/2010). It is important to note that the study does not indicate that there is a deficit of open space within Docking. Furthermore, whilst it is acknowledged that the Docking local community has highlighted the desire for more open space, this desire is not supported by any assessment of need for such facilities.

Paragraph 105 of the NPPF provides the framework for local plans or neighbourhood plan to designate land of Local Green Space. The designation should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development. Local Plan Review Draft Policy LP23 Protection of Local Open Space supports local communities in designating local green space for protection in neighbourhood plans where this meets the criteria for local Green Space as detailed in the NPPF and does not conflict with other policies in the Borough's Local Plan.

Paragraph 105 continues by stating that Local Green Space should only be designated when the plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

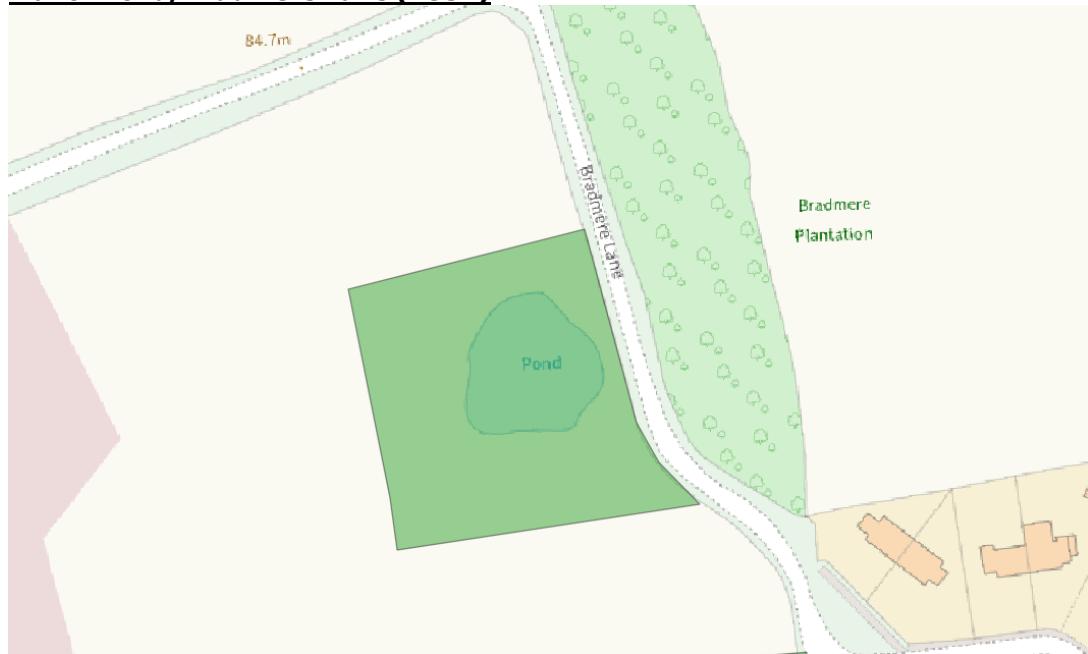
Paragraph 106 of the NPPF provides the following 3 criteria for the designation of Local Green Space stating that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

- 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.

Below I have assessed our client's sites against the NPPF requirements in paragraph 105 (capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period) and paragraph 106.



Manor Pond, Bradmere Lane (LGS2)



NPPF Criteria	Parish Council Local Green Space Assessment Response	Mather Jamie Review
a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;	The greenspace is within 150m walking distance to other community facilities such as the recreation ground, the allotments and residential dwellings.	The pond is in reasonably close proximity to the community but is difficult to access on foot due to there being no footways along the road. There is no public access, and this would remain the case if it was designated. There are no public rights of way within the vicinity of the site.
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	The pond is special for local wildlife and a source for species and habitats which thrive in blue spaces. Local wildlife the community has witnessed here include frogs and toads. Barn owls have been seen hunting on the surrounding field. The consultation analysis from the initial community survey conducted in Docking April-May 2024	There is no demonstrable evidence to support how the pond is special to the local community or holds local significance. The pond does not have any recreational value as it is inaccessible. The pond does not have any historic significance and there is no objective evidence to assess the pond's ecological significance. We are certainly not aware of any access having been requested to



	<p>showed that this area in the parish is special to the community with some referencing this space as a place to designate.</p>	<p>undertake assessments on my client's private land.</p>
c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	<p>The area size is approximately 0.417ha. It is local in character to Docking serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.</p>	<p>The pond is local in its character and location. The site is small and is not an extensive tract of land</p>
Para 105 - capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period	-	<p>There is no evidence to support the continued use of the site as it is for the duration of the plan.</p>

Conclusion

The pond does not perform all the functions of a Local Green Space designation, and there is no rationale provided for the extent of designation being proposed, which does not follow any physical boundaries for 3 of its 4 sides.

Grove Field, Mill Lane





NPPF Criteria	Parish Council Local Green Space Assessment Response	Mather Jamie Review
a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;	<p>The greenspace is within the core of the village and within 300m walking distance to other community facilities and residential dwellings.</p>	<p>The field is in reasonably close proximity to the community and is within the village boundary. There is no public access, and this would remain the case if it was designated. There are no public rights of way within the vicinity of the site.</p>
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	<p>This open Pasture field is the historic setting for Grove Farmhouse and the Grove Cottages within Village Conservation Area with rural views towards the park and the aspect is enjoyed by local walkers using Mill Lane & Little Lane as a circular walk or accessing the Mill Lane byway popular with dog walkers.</p> <p>Has an attractive and original brick & stone wall to Little Lane and post & rail fencing with trees to Mill Lane frontage. Many species of wildlife including rare birds, raptors, owls and bats have been spotted & feeding over this important open green space. (the drone photo on your front cover shows Grove Field & The Park)</p> <p>The consultation analysis from the initial community survey conducted in Docking April-May 2024 showed that this area in the parish is special to the community with 141 people referencing this space as a place to designate.</p>	<p>The field is located within the Docking conservation area. Whilst it is historically connected to the Grove Farmhouse, it performs more of an agricultural use as opposed to having any recreational, beauty or wildlife value. There is no functional relationship between this parcel and any surrounding properties, and no public access to the site.</p> <p>No assessments have been undertaken to determine the site's biodiversity or wildlife value.</p> <p>There is no local significance to the field, which remains in private ownership and is used for occasional grazing, with no public access.</p>
c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	<p>The area size is approximately 0.965ha. It is local in character to Docking serving the purposes of the</p>	<p>The field is local in its character and location. The site is small and is not an extensive tract of land</p>



	local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.	
Para 105 - capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period	-	There is no evidence to support the continued use of the site as it is for the duration of the plan.
<u>Conclusion</u>		
The site does not perform all the functions of a Local Green Space designation.		

I have reviewed the other potential Local Green Space Designations within the assessment and note that other pieces of the land perform much better against NPPF Criteria in terms of the recreational use and special character of the sites in comparisons to the 2 sites that are within my client's control.

It is therefore recommended that my client's 2 sites are removed from the Local Green Space designation as they do not perform the function of the designation as intended by the NPPF.

If the Parish Council would like to discuss any of the matters raised in this letter further, please get in touch and we can arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

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Planning Manager