

KEY ISSUE FOUR: LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION: ROYTON AVENUE EXPLANATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE: POLICY LGS1 (6)

The Borough Council raises objection to this designation on the basis that it does not meet the NPPF criteria at paragraph 100. Concern is expressed that the designation of Royton Avenue would set a precedence for similar sites elsewhere in the Borough. The Borough Council is not aware of consultation with the landowner.

The land at Royton Avenue is owned by Lenham Parish Council. The Parish Council was consulted on the proposal. Minute 19/85 from the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd October 2019 records consultation on the proposal and the decision to include Royton Avenue as a local green space in the draft Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Plan.

NPPF, paragraph 100, gives three criteria for land to be designated as Local Green Space:

a) the land should be reasonably close to the community it serves

The land at Royton Avenue is directly opposite the houses at Royton Avenue and so the land clearly meets the criterion of proximity.

b) hold a particular local significance

This land holds significance to the population of Royton Avenue because it forms a buffer or 'green lung' between the Avenue and the very busy A20 trunk road to the north. Having at first decided not to identify this land as LGS (Consultation Statement, November 2019, page 31) the Parish Council reconsidered this matter and decided to incorporate the designation in the Regulation 16 Consultation version of the Plan.

The reason the Parish Council decided to make the designation was because it listened to local representations. It is a particular feature of neighbourhood planning that the process allows parish councils and other qualifying bodies to be respon to local consultation, especially when that decision is also based on a sound planning basis, as with the land at Royton Avenue.

c) local character and not an extensive tract of land

Partly because of its narrow width the area of LGS is held to be local. Although it runs for some distance along the A20 it cannot properly be regarded as an extensive tract of land in the sense envisaged in the NPPF.

The Royton Avenue LGS is clearly much smaller than the Court Lodge Meadow LGS (LGS1 (6)). It cannot therefore logically be the size of the designation that is objected to.

The Borough Council expresses concerns that the designation of this land could set a precedence for other similar sites elsewhere in the Borough. The Parish Council considers this land clearly meets the criteria for LGS and as such no harmful precedence would be established. The Examiner is therefore requested to support the designation of this land as Local Green Space.