

Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan 2031

Response to Consultation Representation by Cornbury Park

We note the representation made on behalf of Cornbury Park, as landowners of three sites designated as local green spaces (LGS) within the draft plan including counsel opinion. We thank Cornbury Park for their engagement with the Regulation 14 consultation process and for the matters raised which have been given careful consideration during the revision of the draft plan, ahead of submission to WODC.

We recognise the strong objections raised to the LGS designations of sites LGS7 (Cricket Club Grounds), LGS8 (Field East of Railway Station) and LGS17 (Field North of Forest Road) and the detailed reasons given for these objections including counsel opinion.

Following the Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Consultation of the draft Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan 2031 (CNP), held during autumn 2019, a detailed review was undertaken of LGS designation proposals, including a reappraisal of the criteria for designation, where strong objections had been expressed by landowners or others. This review, carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, included the three sites mentioned above and recommended that two of these sites (LGS7 and LGS17) should be removed from the revised CNP. The review also concluded that the designation of site LGS8 remained justified and recommended that it remain within the revised plan. These recommendations were approved by Charlbury Town Council and consequently designation of sites LGS7 and LGS17 has been removed from the revised draft plan. The reasons for the review recommendations for these three sites are summarised below and this information is also included within the document "Addendum to LGS Assessments", an additional supporting document available to view on the Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan website (www.charlburynp.org.uk).

LGS7 – Cricket Club Grounds

Following reappraisal of the criteria for LGS designation, Charlbury Town Council has agreed to remove this site from the list of designated LGS sites for the following reasons:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 97 provides strong protection for playing fields such as this. In order for the land to be built on it would have to be demonstrated either that the facility was surplus to requirements, the facility would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location, OR that any proposed development of the site would itself provide sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which could be shown to clearly outweigh the loss of the current facility.
- The site is also protected by its prominent location within the sensitive landscape of the Evenlode Valley and within the Cotswolds AONB in accordance with Local Plan 2031 policy EH1, by the policies of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and by policies NE1, NE2 and NE3 of the Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan 2031 (CNP).
- The site is also located within the Evenlode Blue/Green Corridor which must be protected and enhanced in accordance with Local Plan 2031 policy EH3 and policy NE6 of the CNP.
- Finally, the site is located in the flood plain of the River Evenlode and has been subject to severe flooding on a number of occasions, notably in 2007. Development in this location is therefore

unlikely to be acceptable given the essential requirement to reduce flood risk in accordance with Local Plan 2031 Core Objective 15 and policy EH5 as well as policy NE8 of the CNP.

LGS8 – Field East of Railway Station

Following reappraisal of the criteria for LGS designation and notwithstanding the opposition of the site owner, Charlbury Town Council (CTC) remains of the opinion that LGS designation of this site is appropriate and justified based on the appraisal included in the original LGS assessment (see supporting document “Local Green Space Assessments” available to view on www.charlburynp.org.uk) and consequently this has been retained within the revised CNP.

In this case, particular significance was given to the prominence of the site in defining the setting of the town, especially for those arriving or passing through by train. This matter was endorsed by other representations to the consultation. In addition, we did not accept the argument that LGS designation in this case may prevent future extension of the station car park as we believe that such a car park expansion could be achieved on alternative sites, avoiding substantial harm to the environment, landscape and character of the town.

LGS17 – Field North of Forest Road

The importance of this site to the strong landscape of the Cotswold AONB and the approach to Charlbury are, in our opinion, beyond question. We also note the important role this site plays in preserving the separate identity of the hamlet of Walcot. However, following reappraisal of the criteria for LGS designation Charlbury Town Council has agreed to remove this site from the list of designated LGS sites for the following reasons:

- The site and the views across it, from and towards the town, are protected by the site’s prominent location within the sensitive landscape of the Evenlode Valley and within the Cotswolds AONB in accordance with Local Plan 2031 policy EH1, by the policies of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan. Policies NE1, NE2 and NE3 of the Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan 2031 (CNP) have also been strengthened to improve this protection within this site and beyond.
- We also argue that development on this site would also be contrary to Local Plan 2031 policy OS2 as it would lead to the loss of identity of the hamlet of Walcot and its coalescence with Charlbury.