

Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan Group

Locally Valued Open Land Assessment

February 2020

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The terra firma Consultancy Ltd was appointed in November 2019 to undertake a review of areas identified as Local Gaps in Policy OA5 of the Wisborough Green Neighbourhood Plan (Post examination version) 2014-2029 (WGNP).
- 1.1.2 Policy OA5: Local Gaps: Development proposed within the local gaps identified in Figure 8a must comply with the following criteria to be acceptable:
- The proposal must not consolidate the local gap by visually and physically reducing the break between the central core and outlying areas.
 - The proposal should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment to demonstrate no diminution in openness and views in the local gap.
 - Proposals should be accompanied by a mitigation plan showing how the local gap can be enhanced by planting and other amelioration.
 - Important trees and hedgerows within the local gaps should be retained as part of any development proposal.
 - Positive community uses of the open areas in the local gaps will be supported where these can enhance visual impact and biodiversity and enhance the range of facilities available.
- 1.1.3 The aim of this review was to define the gap boundaries in more detail and to identify the value and purpose of the gaps in terms of their strategic and environmental importance in protecting the village form, character and identity.
- 1.1.4 Initial consideration of the 5 mapped gap areas and the supporting text identified a number of issues with the existing policy:
- The 'bow tie' shapes are diagrammatic, with boundaries vague and generally unrelated to any features on the ground.
 - The gaps include areas that are already developed with houses in their curtilages.
 - The criteria for the gap locations and extent are not clearly based on evidence set out in relevant local documents.
- 1.1.5 terra firma proposed that a more wide-ranging review was undertaken, focussing not just on the gaps separating the central core of the village from peripheral ribbon development, but on the general importance of areas of open land and how these areas of open land define what local residents value about their village and its form, as set out in the WGNP, Wisborough Green Village Design Guide (VDG), the Wisborough Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal (WGCACA), as well as the Chichester Local Plan Review 2035 Landscape Capacity Study (LCS).
- 1.1.6 Therefore, this study is named a Locally Valued Open Land Assessment with the following key aim:
- To identify the value and purpose of open land in and around the village core in terms of its importance in contributing to the way in which the village form, character and identity are perceived.

2 Locally Valued Open Land

2.1 Open Land Definition

- 2.1.1 The definition of 'open' in this report means largely undeveloped and generally not within domestic curtilage, consisting of fields, greens, verges and allotments which are important characteristics in the experience of the village's pattern and form.
- 2.1.2 Open land within and around the village core has been assessed against the key criteria set out in section 2.1.3 below. These criteria reflect locally expressed appreciation and value and do not include all characteristics or elements which have value in other ways such as historic, nature conservation, flood alleviation. The criteria are based principally on visual perception from public viewpoints as this

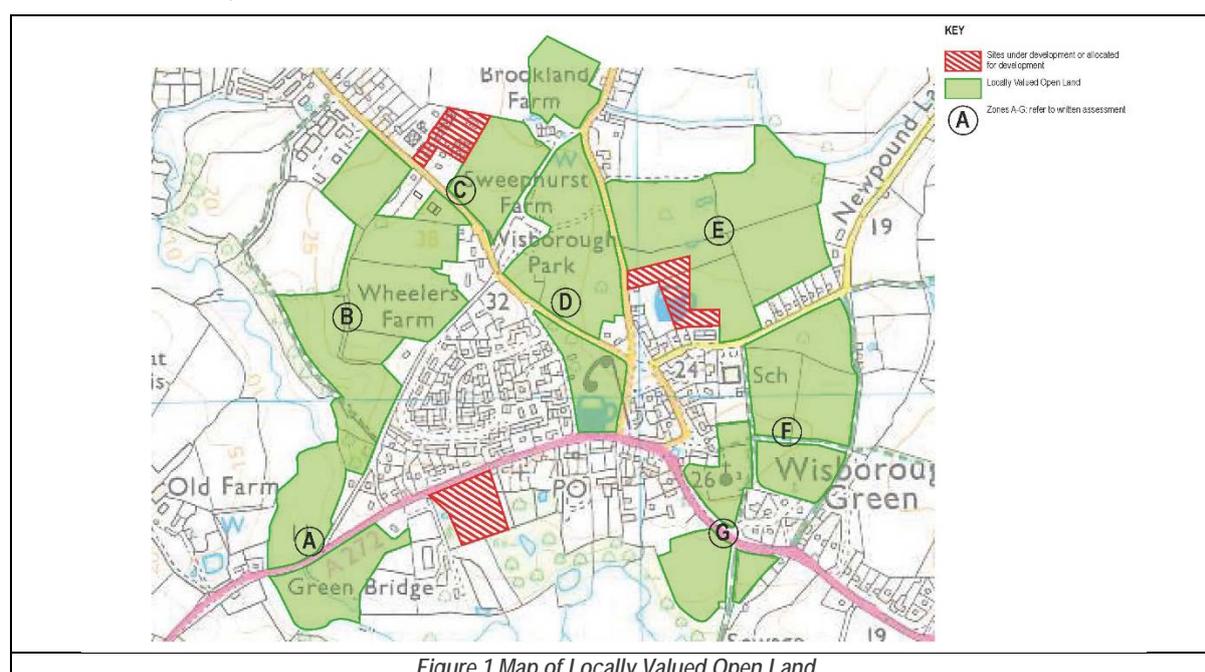
is the chief way in which the village form and character is perceived. This results in some areas not being included as Locally Valued Open Land as they are not visible from roads, footpaths or other public spaces. Notably, this applies to the wooded corridor of the River Kird along the southern edge of the village which is clearly sensitive for other reasons and is likely to be important as the countryside setting for adjacent properties south of the A272.

2.1.3 Key criteria identified in local documents are:

- Feeling of spaciousness
- Green spaces, including the Village Green, pond, allotments, scout hut site, school field
- Settlement character / pattern (central core and outlying linear form)
- Range of views / vistas across countryside including close connection to South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Valued views to and from the church
- Valued views to surrounding countryside
- Valued views to and from the Conservation Area
- Views that include sensitive hydrological features (streams, ditches, riparian habitats)
- Tree-lined / hedge-lined roads
- Wide green verges, including adjacent to the A272 below the church and north of the allotments, top of Harsfold Lane
- Houses set back from roads
- Public footpaths
- Separation between the central village core and areas of peripheral ribbon development.
- Traditional village setting – a generally well-vegetated settlement edge
- High quality natural environment with wildlife on the doorstep

2.1.4 Based on the above criteria, the identified Locally Valued Open Land is shown shaded green on Fig 1 of this assessment. Mapping of the green areas aims to provide clear definition of valued open land, focussing on the village's central core and the existing gaps, with the addition of important areas at the heart and edge of the village, using established boundary features. In order to clearly report on the assessment findings the letters A-G have been added to indicate approximate zones which correspond to the reporting sections within this report. Zones A-G are not precisely mapped as there is overlap between the zones.

2.1.5 The following sections describe each area, with supporting photographs and with reference to the valued aspects criteria set out in 2.1.3 above.



2.2 Open Land Area A: Green Bridge

- 2.2.1 Open Land Area A partly corresponds with VDG Character Area C Petworth Road, and with one of the OA5 local gaps which spans the A272 Petworth Road. Open Land Area A is an undeveloped area containing part of the River Kird corridor, between the village core and the outlying, loosely developed area containing Olde Farm, Amblehurst Manor and Bowyers Court. Area A forms the rural approach to the village along the busy A272 from the south-west and offers views along the valley floor in both directions. These views, as well as views west from further north on The Luth, are identified in the VDG and LCS and provide a strong and close visual and physical connection between the village core and the river corridor. The village is not visible from this general area, screened by mature trees (including TPO trees) and high hedges which continue towards the village centre, creating a leafy transition between the countryside and the village green and well-vegetated settlement edge. The Open Land Area in zone A covers both sides of Green Bridge approximately coinciding with the extent of views across this open area. The wider river corridor and valley floor although not included in Open Land Area A have importance in landscape character, wildlife and flood alleviation terms.



View north along River Kird from the A272 at Green Bridge



View south-east along River Kird valley from the A272 at Green Bridge

2.3 Open Land Area B: Wheelers Farm

- 2.3.1 Open Land Area B also partly corresponds with VDG Character Area C Petworth Road and abuts the edge of VDG Character Area B Estates and Wyatt Close. Open Land Area B forms the western countryside edge of the village but does not span an approach so is not considered to be a local gap in the WGNP. It is a largely undeveloped area along the valley side of the River Kird corridor, forming an abrupt, but well-vegetated edge between the village and its countryside setting. There are views from The Luth / Carters Way west across the River Kird valley and towards the Downs. These views, which provide a strong sense of place and rural character, are identified as one of the top 6 group of views in the VDG and are also included in the LCS. The footpath crossing the fields from The Luth is one of the top 6 in the VDG. The countryside edge is lined by mature trees (which are identified as significant in the VDG) and the relatively dense and modern development of Carters Way / Butts Meadow. The Open Land Area in zone B as indicated on Figure 1 coincides approximately with the extent of views across this open area from The Luth, extending north-west to the high ground known as Windmill Hill (north-west of Wheeler's Farm). The wider countryside beyond and away from the settlement, although not within the mapped Open Land Area, has importance in landscape character, wildlife and flood alleviation terms.



View north-west along the footpath which follows a linear woodland running alongside the River Kird



View north-west on rising ground at the edge of Carters Way, across the River Kird valley with the South Downs visible in the distance

2.4 Open Land Area C: Kirdford Road

- 2.4.1 Open Land Area C includes parts of both VDG Character Area A Conservation Area and VDG Character Area E Durbans Road. It partly reflects the WGNP local gap which spans Kirdford Road but does not include parts of the 'bow tie' area containing houses and gardens. As set out in the WGNP, the purpose of the local gap in this area is to separate the village core, and particularly the conservation area, from the ribbon development further along Kirdford Road. Due to the already developed areas south-west of the road (a cluster of buildings including listed buildings), the open area is staggered along the road although there are important belts of TPO and locally significant trees, high hedges and wide verges that line the road and create a leafy transition between the countryside and the historic village core. There are VDG valued views from Kirdford Road and the footpath linking north to Durbans Road, which is one of the VDG top 6 footpaths. These views look north across the field which forms a narrow gap between the village core and the ribbon development, including the park homes which are glimpsed on the other side of the field. The nearby high ground of the Wealden Hills is visible, giving a strong sense of place, and the field north of Brookland Farm is also visible, hence shaded green on Figure 1. Open Land Area C forms the rural approach to the village core along the Kirdford Road from the north-west with intermittent views across the two fields identified in Open Land Area C, in both directions. Views are identified in the VDG and provide a strong and close visual and physical connection between the village core and the surrounding countryside.



Valued view north from footpath across the open field and woodland towards the Wealden Hills.



View north-west along Kirdford Road looking away from village towards gap with mature trees, high hedges and wide verges

2.5 Open Land Area D: Durbans Road and Village Centre

- 2.5.1 Open Land Area D includes parts of both VDG Character Area A Conservation Area and VDG Character Area E Durbans Road. It partly reflects the WGNP local gap which spans Durbans / Loxwood Road whose purpose, as set out in the WGNP, is to separate the village core, and particularly the conservation area, from the ribbon development north of Brooklands Farm. The area includes the parkland grounds of Park House which are visible from the village green and from the north, and although high hedges line Durbans Road, the mature trees within the grounds of Park House (included in a group TPO) are visible above and through gaps in the hedges. The village green and pond are included as clearly valued and protected spaces at the heart of the village and key to its special identity, traditional village character and feeling of spaciousness. The green is a VDG top 6 Favourite Spot, Favourite View and Favourite Footpath. There are also valued views from Durbans Road across the grounds of Park House and across the village green from various angles, as well as to the church. Open Land Area D forms the rural approach to the village core from the north, in combination with Open Land Area E (see below 2.6) with views in both directions.



Valued view north-west from Durbans Road across parkland grounds of Park House.



View south along Durbans Road towards village centre and church, with high hedges lining the road

2.6 Open Land Area E: Durbans Road to Newpound Lane

- 2.6.1 Open Land Area E abuts VDG Character Area A Conservation Area, VDG Character Area E Durbans Road, and VDG Character Area G Newpound Lane. It partly reflects the WGNP local gap which spans Durbans / Loxwood Road whose purpose, as set out in the WGNP, is to separate the village core, and particularly the conservation area, from the ribbon development north of Brooklands Farm. It also forms part of the local gap which spans Newpound Lane, forming a narrow gap between the village core and ribbon development north of Newpound Lane to the east of the village. The area includes a group of fields which are visible for some distance from Durbans Road, above and through gaps in the hedges. Open Land Area E forms the rural approach to the village core from Newpound, with high hedges and intermittent groups or individual houses, in combination with Open Land Area F (see below 2.7) with views in both directions.



View south-east from Durbans Road across farmland which wraps around the north-eastern edge of the village.



View north across narrow gap between village core and ribbon development north of Newpound Lane - area allocated for public open space. Temporary fencing related to development of site round corner to left is visible.

2.7 Open Land Area F: South of Newpound Lane

- 2.7.1 Open Land Area F abuts VDG Character Area A Conservation Area, and VDG Character Area G Newpound Lane. It partly reflects the WGNP local gap which spans Newpound Lane, forming a narrow gap between the village core and ribbon development north of Newpound Lane, in combination with Open Land Area E. Open Land Area F includes a group of fields which are visible from a number of public footpaths, and includes important views from the elevated churchyard identified in the VDG and also included in the LCS. The area also forms the rural setting for views towards the church. Open Land Area F forms the rural, hedge-lined approach to the village core from Newpound, in combination with Open Land Area E (see above 2.6) with views in both directions. VDG significant tree groups are identified lining the footpath south of Newpound Lane along the east of the Open Land Area.



View north-east from the churchyard across farmland which forms the countryside setting to the eastern part of the conservation area and village. This valued view could benefit from the introduction of appropriate planting to better integrate views of the school.



View west from public footpath south of Newpound Lane (summer view).

2.8 Open Land Area G: Church Area

- 2.8.1 Open Land Area G is within VDG Character Area A Conservation Area, and includes part of and abuts VDG Character Area D Billingshurst Road. Area G partly reflects the WGNP local gap which spans the A272 to the south-east of the village, forming a narrow gap between the village core and outlying development to the east, north of the A272. Open Lane Area G includes the visually prominent church and church yard, along with associated important tree groups, as well as the allotments. The area contains a number of important views identified in the VDG, including one of the top 6 views, and is included the LCS. The area also forms the rural setting for views towards the church and includes one of the VDG's top 6 Favourite Spots and top 6 Favourite Footpaths. Open Land Area G forms the rural, hedge-lined and wide-verged approach to the village core from the east, with grass verges along the A272 and Harsfold Lane identified as Important Open Spaces in the VDG.



Valued view south from the churchyard across trees in the foreground towards the South Downs.



View on approach to village from west, with wide grass verges, mature trees and high hedges, opening to views of the church.