



Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 Examination

Council Response to

IC6 (Inspector Question to the Council regarding Local Green Space)

10th September 2018

IC6 - Inspector Question to the Council regarding Local Green Space

I have read the Council's paper GR2. However, is there any more detailed evidence to support the proposed allocation of the land at the River Swift Floodplain, Lutterworth as Local Green Space?

Council's response to IC6

It is the consideration of the Council that Lutterworth Town Council's submission for the River Swift Flood Plain sufficiently met the Local Green Space criteria in the following ways:

a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; Yes, the location of the River Swift Flood Plain is within walking distance (approx. 500m) of Lutterworth Town Centre. It is not separated from the Town by physical constraints.

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; Yes, information received from the Town Council has demonstrated that the area has a reasonable amount of habitat and wildlife and could be improved by further careful management. The location of the flood plain in close proximity to the Town and the footpath access (footpath X31) ensures that the site can be enjoyed by the community for its tranquillity in an otherwise busy location. The links with John Wycliffe, and the scattering of his ashes into the River Swift in 1428 demonstrate historical significance of the site. The special significance to the community can therefore be demonstrated.

c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. Yes, the area (at 3.6ha) cannot be considered an extensive tract of land. The area is bounded by hedges and the road network.

There is no more detailed information supporting the proposed designation of the River Swift Floodplain as Local Green Space.

Information submitted by Lutterworth Town Council after a call for Local Green Space sites in 2012 and 2013 was as follows:

Description and Use: *Floodplain land partly agricultural with horse and cattle grazing*

Is the green area within settlement? Yes

Details concerning accessibility: *the site is within the boundary of settlement. It is not easily accessible, but there is a single footpath*

Is the green area outside settlement but easily accessible by walking or cycling? Yes

Is the green area important visually to street scene? Yes

Is the green area of historic importance? Yes

Is the green area important to the physical form of the settlement? Yes

Does the green area provide a setting for views to historic or heritage assets?
Yes

Is the green area of local significance because of its beauty? Yes

Is the green area of recreational value to community? No

Is the green area special due to the richness of wildlife or habitat? Yes

Does the green area link up other open spaces? Yes

Is the green area local in character and appropriate to the community it serves?
Yes

Further details provided by the Town Council:

The area is considered tranquil and there are plans to make the site of more recreational value.

Two surveys conducted in area One by EA in 2008 and the second by LRWT in May 2009. The 2009 survey concluded that the river qualified as a Local Wildlife Site and both surveys referred to the presence of otters native white clawed crayfish bank and field voles and potentially water voles. The area was described as a very nice wetland of moderate value for wildlife but could be considerably better if managed properly.

Clarification was sought by HDC from the Town Council in 2014 concerning the contact details for owners of the proposed sites and to clarify the historical significance to the community.

A verbal response was given by the Town Clerk that there was a connection to John Wycliffe concerning this land (Wycliffe's ashes were scattered in the River Swift in 1428.)

From the Harborough Museum Web page:

John Wycliffe: religious rebel and Bible translator

John Wycliffe (1330-1384), whose portrait is in the 'Religion and Belief' case at Harborough Museum, was a leading philosopher and theologian at Oxford University.

But he was also an influential religious rebel. Believing scripture to be more important than the Pope and the Church he and his followers, the Lollards, attacked many Catholic practices.

Wycliffe famously translated the whole Bible into English, despite opposition from the Church, making it accessible to all. But he died before the translation was finished so could not be convicted of heresy. However, the Church never forgave him and in 1428 Wycliffe's body was exhumed, his remains burnt and the ashes strewn into Lutterworth's River Swift.