

Oulton Neighbourhood Plan



Local Green Spaces
Assessment Document March 2022

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
POLICY CONTEXT.....	3
ASSESSMENT	4
1. OULTON MARSHES.....	5
2. JENKIN’S GREEN AND POND.....	6
3. OULTON COUNTRY PARK.....	7
4. THE PADDOCKS, CAMPS HEATH.....	8
5. ST MICHAEL’S CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD.....	9
6. OULTON COMMUNITY CENTRE PLAYING FIELD.....	11
7. CAMPS HEATH GREENSPACE	12
8. WORKHOUSE WOOD.....	13
9. FLIXTON HOLES.....	14
10. BURIAL GROUNDS, NEAR UNION LANE.....	15
11. BELT OF TREES ALONG GORLESTON ROAD.....	17
12. WHITING ROAD PLAY AREA	18
13. BRENDON WAY PLAY AREA	19
14. BLOOMSBURY CLOSE PLAY AREA	21
15. DUNSTON DRIVE PLAY AREA.....	22
16. BOWLING GREEN, QUEEN’S HIGHWAY, CAMPS HEATH	23
17. FOOTBALL PITCH, CAMPS HEATH	25
18. PARKHILL WOODS	26
RECOMMENDED DESIGNATIONS	27

Introduction

1. Oulton is preparing a neighbourhood plan which will include a policy designating areas of Local Green Space which are particularly valued by the community.
2. In consultation with the community in early 2021, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group identified **18** areas of green space. Each of these was visited and further evidence gathered on them to determine whether they meet the national criteria for Local Green Space designation.
3. This document provides the assessment and evidence in support of those green spaces which have been designated in the plan.

Policy Context

4. Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2012 (revised July 2021) introduced the concept of Local Green Space designation¹.
5. Paragraph 101 of the NPPF sets out that communities should be able to identify green spaces of particular importance through neighbourhood plans, with para 101 Determining:

The Local Green Space 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), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c) *Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.*

6. In addition, the National Planning Practice Guidance states:

Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented.

7. Other designations, such as Special Areas of Conservation, do not necessarily preclude or support designation as a Local Green Space. However, it is necessary to consider whether the additional designation is necessary and would serve a useful purpose.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100575/9/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

8. In applying the NPPF criteria, close proximity would normally mean easy walking distance, which based on Natural England standards would mean 1.25 miles or less.
9. Consideration of whether the green space is local in character, and not an extensive tract of land, suggests spaces within a locality, rather than for example, extensive green areas in the countryside.
10. The East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan and Local Plan for the Broads both include strategic policies for the neighbourhood area. Planning Practice Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning sets out that plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan if it is to meet the basic conditions.

Assessment

11. The Local Green Space Assessment Tool from *My Community: Neighbourhood Planning Local Green Spaces*² has been used as the basis to assess each site identified by the community. This includes:
 - Oulton Marshes
 - Jenkins green and pond
 - Oulton Country Park, also known as Woods Meadow Country Park
 - The Paddocks, Camps Heath
 - St Micheal's church and churchyard
 - Community Centre playing field
 - Camps Heath Greenspace
 - Workhouse Wood
 - Flixton Holes
 - Burial Ground, near Union Lane
 - Tree belt along Gorleston Road/Mobbs Way Industrial area
 - Whiting Road play area
 - Brendon Way play area
 - Bloomsbury Close Play area
 - Dunston Drive play area
 - Bowling Green Camps Heath
 - Football pitch, Hall Lane

² <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations- neighbourhood-plan/>

1. Oulton Marshes



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Oulton Marshes	Marshy area to the north of Oulton Broad

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None, although the site is a local nature reserve managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust and parts of it a County Wildlife Site	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Within 500m of the Camps Heath part of Oulton	The entire area is identified as priority habitat and is demonstrably special to the community due to its wildlife value, tranquility and recreation. There is public access to the reserve, which is managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust and a public footpath runs through part of it.	151ha

Reason for designation
Not designated as LGS.

2. Jenkin's Green and Pond



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Greenspace and community pond at Jenkin's Green	Small grassed open area surrounding a pond which is managed by a local community group

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Within the Parkhill Estate	The pond has significant wildlife value, there are ducks, a variety of nesting birds within the trees, owls and bats which have been spotted. It also has a recreational benefit, with many people visiting the pond/greenspace to relax or see the ducks. It has brought significant benefit to the local community who recently formed a structured group to oversee pond maintenance.	1.2ha

Reason for designation
Jenkin's Green and pond is being designated as an LGS because it is considered demonstrably special to the community for its wildlife and recreational value. The site is used for informal recreational reasons, where one can relax, admire the variety of wildlife which are nesting and using the pond area. By having an area to relax and enjoy the tranquility of peacefulness and hearing the wildlife can help one's mental wellbeing when taking a break from their daily lives.

3. Oulton Country Park



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Oulton Country Park, Lime Avenue, sometimes known as Woods Meadow Country Park	Recently established Country Park with warden. The park was included as part of the Woods Meadow development for 800 homes, shopping centre, community hall, primary school and play park in 2013. It is a semi-natural area with visitor amenities including seating, trails and play area.

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	Established as part of a site allocation in the previous Waveney Local Plan. Ownership transferred to East Suffolk Council in 2019.	Recent permission for a workshop and volunteer hut which will be managed by the Park Warden.

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Within close proximity of the main residential areas, including new Woods Meadow development	Principally the park is of recreational benefit to the community, containing walking / cycle trails, play equipment, space for ball games and picnics. It is also of wildlife value, with many trees and shrubs.	20ha

Reason for designation
Not designated as LGS

4. The Paddocks, Camps Heath



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Paddocks	Various stables and grazing land for horses – 17 paddocks in total, a key characteristic of Camps Heath

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	No recent permissions

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Within close proximity of Camps Heath	Recreational value, various stables scattered around small parcels of land. Well maintained and used by the local community.	20.4ha total area

Reason for designation
Not designated as LGS.

5. St Michael's Church and Churchyard



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Grade I listed St Michael's Church and churchyard	Church located in a stunning setting, on the edge of Oulton marshes

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
Grade I Listed building	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Approximately 450m west of the residential area of Oulton, accessible via a public footpath	Historic value, site of the Grade I listed parish church, originally 12 th century. Tranquility, the church is on the edge of the marshes which is a particularly picturesque and calming setting. Wildlife, adjacent an area of priority habitat, with the churchyard attracting a range of flora and fora.	0.85ha

Reason for designation
St Michael's Churchyard is being designated as an LGS because of three reasons. These are because of its historic value to the parish and being the greenspace of the Grade I listed parish church. The church brings tranquility and beauty to the

parish which the community wish to preserve for its calm setting where people can rest and sit quietly. The churchyard also offers value to the local wildlife of the area and is adjacent to an area of priority habitat.

6. Oulton Community Centre Playing Field



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Playing field at the community centre	Green space that is identified as a satellite park providing good play value for all ages in the Play Development Evaluation Report 2017 for Waveney District Council.

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
The community centre is a focal point within Oulton	Recreational value with the park attracting people of all ages. It includes an outdoor gym and children's playground. Used for organized football and cricket. Wildlife value as the park contains a number of trees and hedgerow around its perimeter.	1.3ha

Reason for designation
Oulton Community Centre Playing Field is being designated as an LGS predominantly because of its recreational value to the community. As stated above it is a place which offers a range of recreational uses for all ages with play equipment, gym equipment and offering an area for physical sports and for people to relax. This is a vital space for residents and visitors to be able to use to enhance their physical wellbeing.

7. Camps Heath Greenspace



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Greenspace in Camps Heath part of Oulton	Local green used by residents of Camps Heath

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Within Camps Heath area of Oulton	Wildlife value with the green space having an array of trees and shrubs which attract birds and other wildlife. Further tree planting currently in progress. Recreation, popular park for dog walking, games and picnics. 2 benches.	0.35ha

Reason for designation
Camp Heath Greenspace is being designated as an LGS because of its wildlife and recreational value. The community are currently in the process of planting further trees to the array of trees and shrubs already present in the space. The area attracts birds which from a recreational perspective the community can admire whilst they are relaxing, exercising or playing in the park. It is well used.

8. Workhouse Wood



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Workhouse Wood	Privately owned deciduous woodland

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Lies just outside the parish boundary	Wildlife value, provides a nesting place for birds, home to squirrels and an abundance of insects.	1.7ha

Reason for designation
Not designated as LGS.

9. Flixton Holes



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Flixton Woods	Woodland area with excavated graves dating from c.500 AD to mid-7 th century.

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Lies just outside the parish boundary	Heritage value, former burial ground. Wildlife value, with the deciduous woodland providing habitat for a range of birds, mammals and reptiles.	1ha

Reason for designation
Not designated as LGS.

10. Burial Grounds, near Union Lane



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Burial grounds, off Union Lane	Former burial ground for the workhouse

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	The site is allocated for approximately 150 dwellings under policy WLP2.14 of the local plan. The allocation policy states that development should avoid impacts on and enhance the historic burial ground.	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Within close proximity of the centre of Oulton	Historical value, the workhouse dates back to 1765, with the earliest reference within a register of burials in 1834. People buried would have been paupers who died in the workhouse, with their bodies not able to be returned to the town or parish in which they resided. The last person to be buried there was Jacob Crane of Burgh Castle, aged 61 in 1899. People often visit the burial ground looking for their ancestors who have been buried there.	0.15ha

Reason for designation

Burial Grounds off Union Lane is being designated as an LGS because of its historic value. Since this site is within a former burial ground it holds local historic significance to the community with its connections to previous ancestors; being an area where the community can reflect with the past. As stated above it is a place the community visit to explore if past ancestors are buried here having a connection to the place Oulton once was.

11. Belt of trees along Gorleston Road



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Tree belt, Gorleston Road	Belt of mature trees which runs along Gorleston Road acting as a buffer for Mobbs Way Industrial Area.

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	Adjacent an employment allocation in the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Just off the main road through Oulton	Some value to wildlife acting as a linear green corridor along a busy road. Community benefit in acting as a buffer for Mobbs Way industrial area.	1.1ha

Reason for designation
Not designated as LGS.

12. Whiting Road Play Area



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Play area at Whiting Road	Well used fenced children's area with play equipment maintained by Orwell Housing

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Within residential development	Although this play area clearly has recreational value and is well used by local children and families, upon visiting for the assessment it is clear that it does not contain any green space. Instead it is hard standing with a range of play equipment including basketball court and hoops.	0.01ha

Reason for designation
Not designated as LGS.

13. Brendon Way Play Area



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Play area at Brendon Way	Small play area adjacent housing on Brendon Way

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Yes adjacent Brendon Way residential area	Recreation value, the play area includes a range of play equipment for younger children, including a slide / climbing frame and swing set. The area is well used by local families.	0.09ha

Reason for designation

Play area at Brendon Way is being designated as an LGS predominantly because of its recreational value to the community living nearby especially families with children. It is a place which offers recreational use for younger children, with play equipment, offering an area for physical sports and families to chat. This is a vital space for residents to be able to use to enhance their physical wellbeing, allow children to have a place to play, and have a place to relax.

14. Bloomsbury Close Play Area



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Play area at Bloomsbury Close	Fenced off play area with a range of equipment within the residential area. Maintained by East Suffolk Council.

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Located in the centre of a housing development	Recreational value, well used local play park with a variety of equipment including slides, swings and climbing frame. Particularly valued by families living within Bloomsbury Close.	0.1ha

Reason for designation
Play area at Bloomsbury Close is being designated as an LGS because of its recreational value to the community living nearby especially families with children. It is a place which offers recreational use for younger children, with play equipment, offering an area for physical sports and families to chat. This is a vital space for residents to be able to use to enhance their physical wellbeing, allow children to have a place to play, and have a place to relax.

15. Dunston Drive Play Area



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Play area at Dunston Drive	Fenced off children's play area with a variety of equipment for younger and older children including climbing frame, slide, seesaw, swings and basketball area. Maintained by East Suffolk Council.

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Adjacent Dunston Drive residential area	Recreational value, well used by local families and young people.	1.3ha

Reason for designation
Play area at Dunston Drive is being designated as an LGS because of its recreational value to the community living nearby especially families with children. It is a place which offers recreational use for younger children, with play equipment, offering an area for physical sports and families to chat. This is a vital space for residents to be able to use to enhance their physical wellbeing, allow children to have a place to play, and have a place to relax.

16. Bowling Green, Queen's Highway, Camps Heath



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Bowling Green	Oulton bowling green, well maintained and used by Waveney Outdoor Bowls Club which was established in 1993.

Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Located in Camps Heath and is within walking distance of many who live in Oulton	Recreational value, used by a very active bowls club with a good mixture of women and men playing in local leagues. Matches also attract spectators and a number of benches surround the green. Real pride is taken in the management of the green. Wildlife value, the green itself is surrounded by a number of mature trees, which attract birds and other wildlife.	0.85ha

Reason for designation

The Bowling Green is being designated as an LGS predominantly because of its recreational value to the adults within this community. It is a place which offers recreational use and tournaments, offering an area for physical sports and for people to spectate and relax. The area also offers wildlife value being surrounded by mature trees attracting different birds and wildlife.

17. Football Pitch, Camps Heath



Site Details	
<i>Site</i>	<i>Description and purpose</i>
Oulton football pitch	Standard sized football pitch with floodlights. Home to Oulton Athletic prior to Covid.

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
None	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it serves</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land</i>
Located in Camps Heath	Recreational value, various football teams which play in the league, including U15s.	1.5ha

Reason for designation
Oulton Football Pitch is being designated as an LGS predominantly because of its recreational value to the children and adults within this community. It is a place which offers recreational use and tournaments, offering an area for physical sports and for people to spectate and relax.

18. Parkhill Woods



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Parkhill Woods	Parkhill Woods exhibits flora typical of ancient woodland, directly opposite Grade II listed building, Parkhill Hotel. The woods are privately owned and are managed for game birds. They are not open to the public.

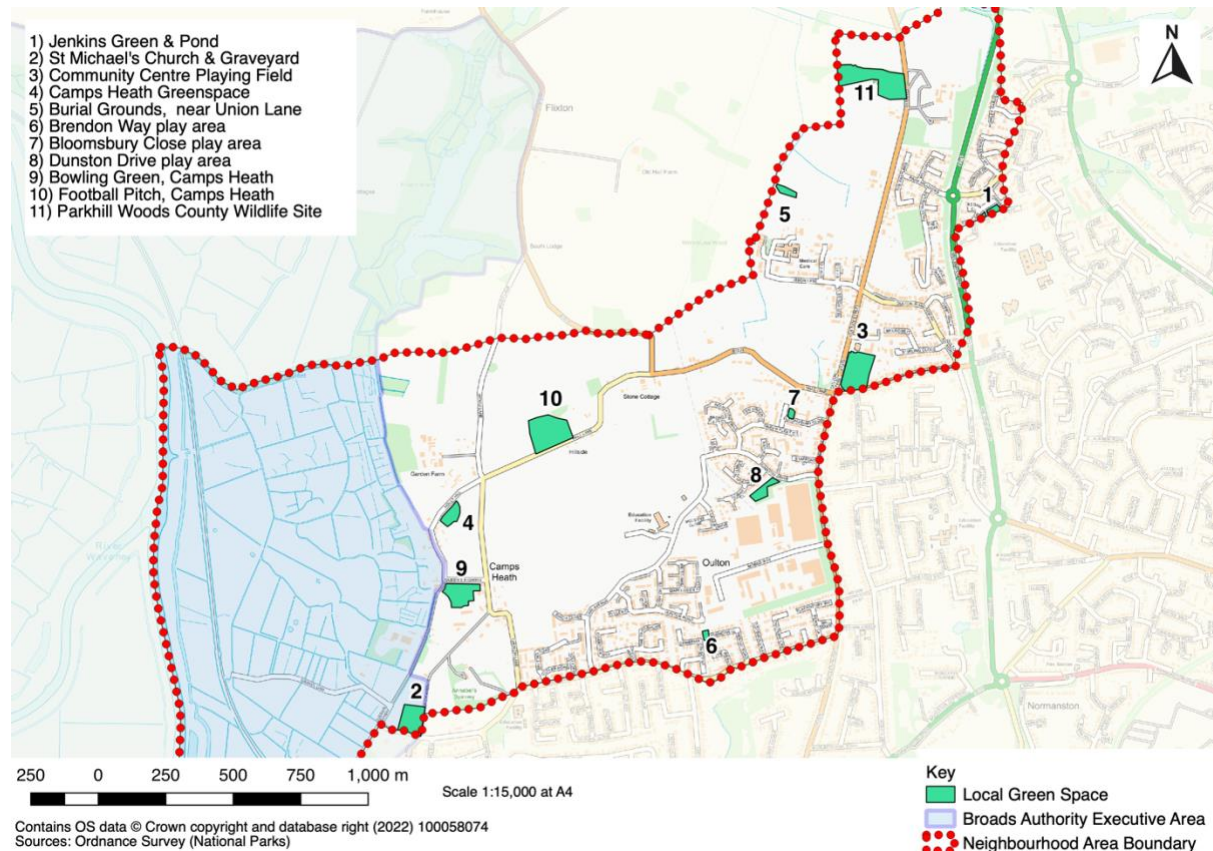
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None, but it is a County Wildlife Site	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other)	Local in character and not extensive tract of land
Located adjacent Parkhill residential area	Wildlife value. This is a mixed woodland consisting of ash standards with field maple, hornbeam and sycamore in some areas. There are colonies of the uncommon early-purple orchid in good numbers. Tawny owls are present in the wood and it also provides nesting and feeding sites for many common woodland birds.	1.8ha

Reason for designation
Parkhill Woods is being designated as an LGS because of its wildlife value to the community. As stated above the area is home to mixed woodland and attracts different birds and wildlife including the nesting of Tawny owls and other woodland birds.

Recommended Designations

12. From the assessment work, 12 Local Green Spaces have been determined to meet the national criteria for designation. These are highlighted below.



13. Six green spaces put forward by the community were considered not to meet the criteria, the reasoning for which is provided below:

Green Space	Reason not designated
Oulton Marshes	Too large, could be considered an extensive tract of land. Also, a level of existing protection as a local nature reserve managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust
Oulton Country Park	Too large, could be considered an extensive tract of land. It is also recognised that the Country Park is newly established and the nature of it may be developed and change over time. For example, there has been a recent planning permission for a workshop and volunteer hut. A Local Green Space designation could restrict positive development of the space.
Whiting Road Play Area	Whilst valued by the community for recreational purposes, this play area does not actually contain any green space but is instead hard standing.
Tree Belt along Gorleston Road	This greenspace comprises a line of trees providing a buffer for the Mobbs Way industrial area. Although of value to wildlife, overall it is not considered to be demonstrably special.

Green Space	Reason not designated
Flixton Holes	This is not within Oulton Parish, but adjacent the parish boundary
Workhouse Wood	This is not within Oulton Parish, but adjacent the parish boundary
Camps Heath Paddocks	There are numerous paddocks in Camps Heath and together they extend over 20ha, which could be considered an extensive tract of land. It is recommended that further evidence is gathered about the paddocks which may support their inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan as Special Character Area rather than for Local Green Space Designation.

