

**Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council**  
**Cheltenham Local Plan Examination:**  
**Submission in response to the Inspector's Questions**

**Matter 4: Question 5 - Justification for size of the Leckhampton LGS**

The suitability and size of the proposed Leckhampton LGS and whether it would constitute “an extensive tract of land” was examined by Inspector Ord at the request of the JCS authorities and with the agreement of all parties including developers. Inspector Ord examined the evidence from all parties in great depth through several days of hearings and three escorted visits to the Leckhampton Fields and Leckhampton Hill. The evidence submitted included Exam 121A from the Parish Council, which on the Inspector's instruction contained detailed analysis of each individual area of the Leckhampton Fields. The Leckhampton LGS meets all the criteria of the 2012 NPPF paragraph 77 and it is local in area with its rich network of footpaths and routes across the whole LGS serving the local community on all sides.

The Leckhampton Fields were actually used as an example in formulating the 2012 NPPF. Councillor Martin Horwood, who was at that time the Member of Parliament for Cheltenham, played a major role in putting forward the LGS concept in the NPPF, working with officials. The whole of the Leckhampton Fields, not just the smaller area now proposed as LGS, was used as an example of LGS that was large but definitely not what was meant by “an extensive tract of land” by those framing the wording of the NPPF. This wording was left vague in the NPPF with the intention that cases should be judged on their merits, as Inspector Ord has duly done. The third bullet of NPPF paragraph 77 is differentiating LGS with its local character against Green Belt, which is an extensive tract of land and for a different purpose.

A list of references relating to the Leckhampton Fields is appended. Not all of these are now available openly on the web because the JCS database has now been closed, but they should all be available to the current inquiry if required.

**Matter 4: Question 7 - Detailed boundaries of the Leckhampton LGS**

Inspector Ord left the detailed boundary of the Leckhampton Fields LGS to be defined in the Cheltenham Plan or in the Neighbourhood Plan. In doing this she did not advocate any reduction in size.

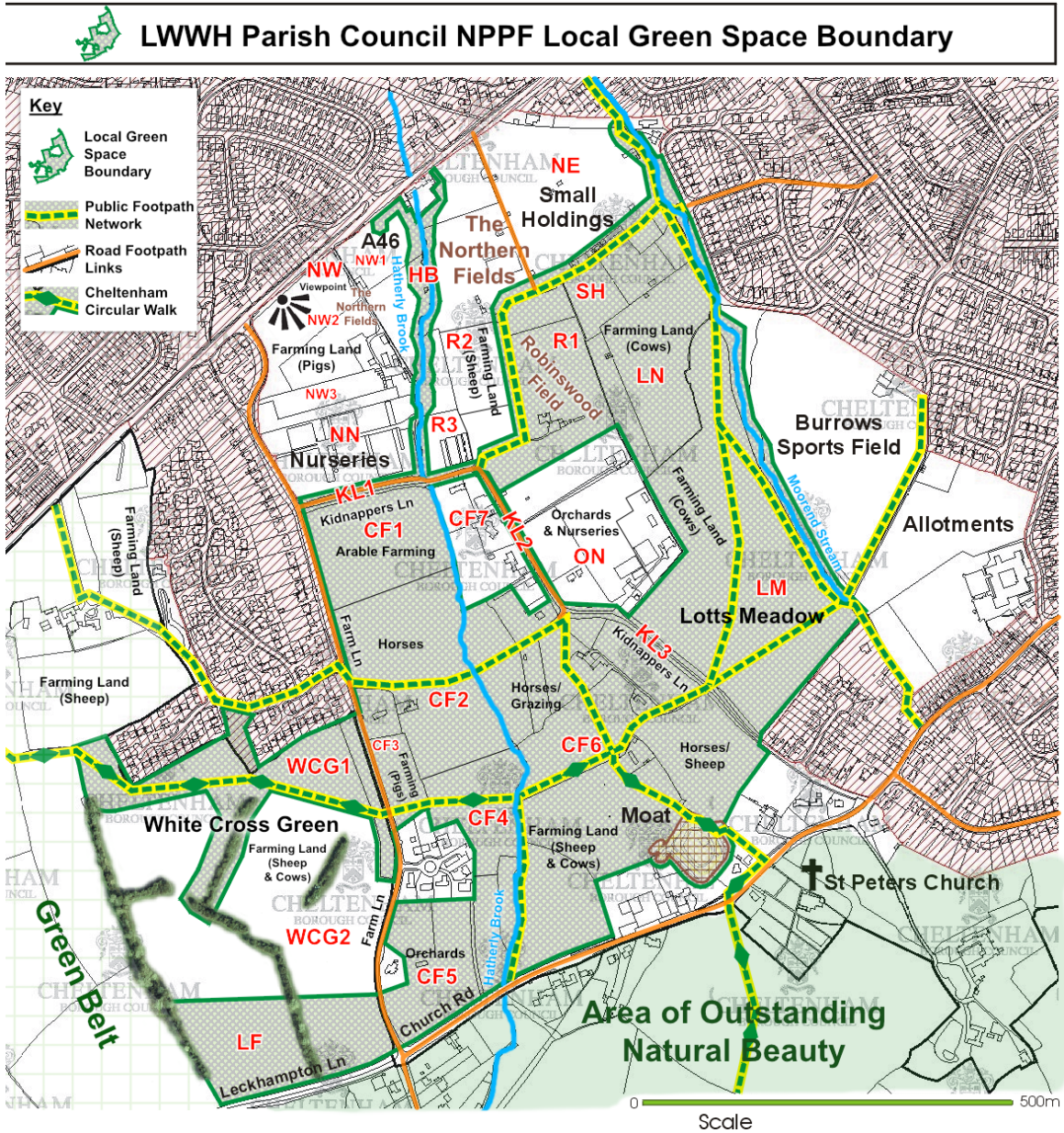


Figure 1 Leckhampton Local Green Space as submitted to Inspector Ord, showing the boundary, the area identifiers used in the supplementary notes, the network of footpaths and the public access points. The area west of Farm Lane was subsequently removed when Tewkesbury Borough Council's decision to approve development on that area, contrary to Inspector Ord's preliminary findings, was validated by the High Court.





<https://www.google.com/maps/@51.8809282,-2.0890269,248m/data=!3m1!1e3>



Figure 2: Satellite view of the smallholdings and showing the boundary of the Northern Fields in red and the boundary of the LGS in green.

Most of the LGS boundary was clear from the Parish Council's submitted map, but there were, and still are, issues of detail particularly concerning the boundary with the Northern Fields, the area where Inspector Ord recommended that development would be acceptable, and also with the boundary in areas R2, R3 and along Kidnappers Lane. These matters were being resolved through discussions between the Parish Council and

Miller Homes, the Northern Fields developer. The discussions were suspended in December 2017 along with the other work on the development and neighbourhood plan because of GCC's proposal to locate the new secondary school on the Northern Fields in place of some of the planned housing. However it is worth explaining the issues and where the discussions had reached.

A key issue is to preserve the rural character of the footpath through the smallholdings and in Robinswood Field. As shown in the satellite pictures in figure 2, the boundary of the Northern Fields and LGS runs along a fence on the north side of the smallholdings. The smallholdings between this boundary and the public footpath provide area for screening the housing and preserving the rural character on both sides of the path.

The Parish Council proposed to try as far as possible to retain the current usage, which includes poultry, sheep and previously also pigs, as well as horticulture. However, some of the smallholding tenants have left, either evicted or unwilling to continue on the short leases offered. The Parish Council understands that tenants will return if given longer leases. So there is prospect but not certainty of restoring the smallholdings to their previous quality.

Alternatively, some land could provide public allotments and the orchard might become a community orchard. Miller Homes suggested part of the land could become a recreation space, complementing the amenities at Burrows Field and also serving the new development. It was agreed that the Parish Council would consult residents about which options they would prefer. Miller Homes also proposed transferring the smallholding land into the ownership of the Parish Council with the Council managing its use and restoring and maintaining the trees important to the screening and urban edge. In the top satellite picture a line of trees can be seen along the boundary of the Northern Fields. These trees would need enhancing. There are also trees in the southern part of the smallholdings that provide valuable screening, but more are needed. Many of the trees are willows that are overgrown and starting to collapse.

LGS status only protects against development. The maintenance and protection of the landscape remains the responsibility of landowners. If the LGS is serving the local community, the community through the Parish Council and other volunteer organisations should take part of the responsibility and cost of maintaining the landscape including the tree stock and screening. There is a strong local tradition of maintaining the countryside in this area with groups including FOLK (Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common) and the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens. LEGLAG has over 1000 members.

In area R2 and along Kidnappers Lane there is a strip of LGS along the hedgerow. Its purpose is to protect the rural character of the path and lane by preserving good screening. Miller Homes agreed to thicken the hedgerows and tree cover along Kidnappers Lane as part of the development.

Miller Homes also wish to put some housing on areas R2, but Inspector Ord ruled this out. R2/R3 is included in the allocation in the Cheltenham Plan but the Borough Council has confirmed to the Parish Council that this does not mean allowing development on this area in conflict with Inspector Ord's findings. For housing to be acceptable, large trees must be planted and given sufficient time to mature to maintain a well screened urban edge as viewed from Leckhampton Hill. The Parish Council and Miller Homes were discussing this when plans were suspended in December 2017.

Another boundary issue is the strip of land along Hatherley Brook included in the LGS to protect the fine line of trees along the brook and to provide a footpath for residents in Warden Hill to access the Leckhampton Fields. Miller Homes have included the tree protection and new footpath in their development proposal and also considerably enlarged the open area along Hatherley Brook using this to site their balancing ponds. This wider area preserves a good view to Leckhampton Hill along the line of trees. Thus, if the development proceeds as planned there may be no need to include area HB in the LGS. However, for the moment it is prudent to have it in case circumstances change, as the GCC secondary school proposal well illustrates.

## **REFERENCE LIST**

REF [1] Landscape and Visual Appraisal November 2017, LEPUS Consulting Ltd. October 2017 [118 pp]. Available at:  
LC-315\_Leckhampton\_Warden\_Hill\_LVA\_6\_281117WE.docx

REF [2] River Habitat Survey of Hatherley Brook and Moorend Stream, LEPUS Consulting Ltd. October 2017 [46 pp]. Available at:  
LC 318\_Leckhampton\_Warden\_Hill\_RHS\_11\_201017EN.docx

[REF 3] Land at Farm Lane/Church Road Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Landscape and Visual Appraisal (Final Report) – Landscape Design Associates, Oxford, 32pp, July 2003. Accessed on 11/10/17. Available at:  
[https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3076/leckhampton\\_landscape\\_and\\_visual\\_appraisal.pdf](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3076/leckhampton_landscape_and_visual_appraisal.pdf)

[REF 4] Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council Neighbourhood Planning NPPF Concept Plan & Local Green Space Application. July 2013, 75pp. Available at:  
[http://www.leglag.org.uk/LEGLAG/Welcome\\_files/Leckhampton%20with%20Warden%20Hill%20Parish%20Council%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20and%20NPPF%20LGS%20Application.pdf](http://www.leglag.org.uk/LEGLAG/Welcome_files/Leckhampton%20with%20Warden%20Hill%20Parish%20Council%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20and%20NPPF%20LGS%20Application.pdf)

[REF 5] CBC Engaging Communities Project Report, Part 2, Chapter 4 – Leckhampton, GRCC. January 2017. Available at:  
[https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5642/cecp\\_part\\_2\\_chapter\\_4\\_leckhampton\\_with\\_warden\\_hillpdf.pdf](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5642/cecp_part_2_chapter_4_leckhampton_with_warden_hillpdf.pdf)

[REF 6] Report to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by P W Clark MA MRTPI MCMI. Inquiry held on 22 – 25 September and 29 September – 2 October 2015. Land at Kidnappers Lane Leckhampton, Cheltenham. File Ref: APP/B1605/W/14/3001717 11 January 2016 AND Secretary of State covering letter, Julian Pitt, APP/B1605/W/14/3001717, 5 May 2016.  
Available at:  
[http://www.leglag.org.uk/LEGLAG/News/Entries/2016/5/6\\_Good\\_News\\_\\_Outline\\_Planning\\_Application\\_for\\_650\\_Houses\\_in\\_Leckhampton\\_REJECTED.html](http://www.leglag.org.uk/LEGLAG/News/Entries/2016/5/6_Good_News__Outline_Planning_Application_for_650_Houses_in_Leckhampton_REJECTED.html)

[REF 7] Inspector's Preliminary Findings on Green Belt Release Spatial Strategy and Strategic Allocations - EXAM 146, 18th Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core->

Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx

[REF 8] Inspector's Interim Report – EXAM 232, 31st May 2016. Available at:  
<http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 9] Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council Neighbourhood Planning Revised Local Green Space Application - Dec 2015, EXAM 121A. Available at:  
<http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 10] EBLO 106 JCS Landscape and Visual Sensitivity (Oct 2012), South Cheltenham is section 6, p14-17, extract [E1]. Available at: <http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 11] ENAT 100 JCS Greenbelt Assessment (Final, Sept. 2011), sections (5.2.6), (5.4.5) and (7.3.8). Available at: <http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 12] Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board – Position Statement 2010 – Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB.  
<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/setting-position-statement-2016-adopted-with-minor-changes-30616-1.pdf>

#### JOINT CORE STRATEGY CORE REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

EXAM 121 LHWHPC Priorities for the Leckhampton fields green space  
EXAM 121A Community LGS common ground requested by the Inspector  
ENAT 101 Habitats regulations assessment – screenings report (Dec 2011)  
ENAT 106 Ecological Survey Work (Cheltenham 2010, 2011, 2012, Gloucester 2006, 2010: Tewkesbury 2009, 2010, 2011)  
ENAT 107 Joint Core Strategy Historic Environment Assessment (Mar 2014)  
ENAT 108 Green Infrastructure Strategy (2014)  
EXAM 108A Natural England greenspace guidance June 2010