

Local Green Space Paper (2023)



South Tyneside Council: Local Greenspaces Paper

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Introduction

1. The local green space (LGS) designation is a way to protect green areas or open spaces from development where they are of particular importance to local communities. LGS designations are made for use in local plans or neighbourhood plans. These plans can identify on a map ('designate') green areas for special protection. Once designated, LGSs receive protection consistent with national Green Belt policy.

Purpose

2. LGSs can only be designated through the Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans. The Borough has an emerging Local Plan and 2 'made' (i.e. adopted) Neighbourhood Plans. The Council has received 3 applications for land to be designated as LGS in the emerging Local Plan. The purpose of this paper is to set out these applications and how they have been assessed.

Applications for Local Green Space

The playing fields, grounds and associated lands on the site formerly occupied by Brinkburn School

3. An application has been submitted to have land at former Brinkburn School designated as LGS. The request states *'that the playing fields, grounds and associated lands on the site formerly occupied by Brinkburn School are protected from potential development in the Local Plan and designated as Local Green Space to safeguard their future as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework'*. The Regulation 18 version of the draft South Tyneside Local Plan was consulted on between 20 June and 14 August 2022. The proposal was submitted as part of a written response to the Regulation-18 consultation.

Disco Park, Boldon Colliery

4. Separately from the Local Plan process, on 5 August 2022, a petition was submitted to the Council with a total of 495 signatories which formally requested that Disco Park, Boldon Colliery be designated as LGS. The petition was reported to the Full Council meeting of 24th November 2022.
5. An application has also been submitted for the Disco Park to gain Fields in Trust status. Fields in Trust works in partnership with landowners to protect land through a Deed of Dedication, a binding legal commitment with the landowner (South Tyneside Council) which secures spaces in perpetuity for current and future generations to enjoy. The application has been approved.

Open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens, West Boldon

6. Also separately from the Local Plan process, an application was submitted by West Boldon Residents Association on 12 June 2023, to have the open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens designated as LGS. The request stated *'Dipe Lane enables and supports Boldon Residents with healthy lifestyles and as such addresses local health and well-being needs through the provision of a safe and accessible green infrastructure with a small play park attached to benefit the children of the area also'*.
7. West Boldon Residents Association also requested that the land is considered for Fields in Trust status *'as soon as is practically possible'*. This request is pending determination.

National Policy & Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework

8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides the guiding framework for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. Paragraph 101 of the NPPF provides the option of designating land as Local Green Space. It states:

'The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the plan period'.

9. Paragraph 102 sets out the criteria that must be met for Local Green Space to be designated. It states the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
 - 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; and*
 - Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land'.*
10. Paragraph 103 states *'Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts'.*

Planning Practice Guidance

11. The NPPF is supported by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The section 'Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space' in the PPG includes the following guidance on LGS:

- Plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the LGS designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making;
- LGS designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development;
- LGS may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community;
- If land is already protected by another designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS;
- Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion;
- The proximity of a LGS to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close;
- The LGS designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land;
- There is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space;
- Land can be designated as LGS even if there is no public access e.g. green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty;

- There is no need to designate linear corridors as LGS simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation;
- A LGS does not need to be in public ownership;
- Designating a green area as LGS would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt;
- Management of land designated as LGS will remain the responsibility of its owner;
- Land designated as LGS may potentially also be nominated for listing by the local authority as an Asset of Community Value.

Local Policy Context

The South Tyneside Core Strategy (2007) and Site-Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (2012)

12. Both of these documents were prepared prior to national policy providing the opportunity to designate LGS. Neither document therefore contains any land identified as LGS.

The Draft South Tyneside (Regulation 18) Local Plan 2021-2039

13. The emerging Local Plan includes a green infrastructure policy and a policy for protecting and enhancing open spaces. The plan does not allocate any land as LGS.

14. The Plan proposed to allocate part of Disco Park, Boldon Colliery for housing and all of the land associated with the former Brinkburn School, South Shields apart from the land now used as a community centre, for housing. The Plan also allocates the open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens, Boldon Colliery for housing.

The Draft South Tyneside (Regulation 19) Local Plan

15. The Site Selection Topic Paper (2024) sets out the justifications for why sites have or have not been allocated in the Regulation 19 Publication draft Local Plan. The Plan does not carry forward the housing allocation that was proposed in the Draft (Regulation 18) Local Plan for the Disco Park, and the open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale sites.

16. The Plan allocates the majority of the land associated with the former Brinkburn School for housing. As already referenced, the PPG states ‘Designating LGS needs to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. Plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the LGS designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making’ (Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 37-007-20140306). For this reason, the land associated with the former Brinkburn School has been scoped out from this assessment and is not assessed any further.

The Whitburn Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2036 and East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2036

17. Both Neighbourhood Plans allocate land as LGS. These plans highlight the importance and value of open space to local communities.

Methodology

18. The NPPF and PPG can be summarised in relation to LGS as requiring the following in order to qualify for a designation and this has informed the methodology that is set out at Table 1:

- is in **reasonably close proximity** to the community it serves

- is **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
- is **local in character** and is not an **extensive tract of land**
- is **likely to endure** beyond the plan period (considerations which are relevant to this include is the green space is likely to continue to be valued and there are no existing planning consents or allocations in the development plan that would undermine the LGS designation)

Disco Park, Boldon Colliery - is the land capable of being designated as Local Green Space?

Criteria	Explanation	Questions	Assessment	Comments
<p>If the space is designated as LGS, is it likely to endure beyond the plan period</p>	<p>LGS designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the designation would be compatible with the planning permission or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented. (NPPG Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 37-008-20140306)</p>	<p>Q. Does the space have planning permission? Q. Is the space allocated or proposed to be allocated in a Development Plan?</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The Open Space Study (2023) identifies the sites as a park and recreation ground with some play space (child) inset within the site Appendix 6 shows open space supply by ward and study area. The supply for Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined) for Boldon Colliery is -9.92 ha. The supply for play space (child) is -0.75 ha. The explanatory text states 'Positive figures show where the study area/wards meet the quantity standard for the open space typology, and negative figures show where there is a shortfall in supply against the quantity standard.'</p> <p>The Open Space Study assessed sites for quality. The assessment for the site in the study was 'fair'.</p> <p>Part of the space was proposed to be allocated for development in the Draft (Regulation 18) Local Plan 2021-2039. However this has not been carried forward to the Regulation 19 Local Plan.</p> <p>The Regulation 19 Local Plan has, consistent with the findings of the Open Space Study, designates the site as recreational open space.</p>
<p>The space is not an extensive tract of land</p>	<p>LGS designation should only be used where the green area is not an extensive tract of land. Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to</p>	<p>Q. Is the space an extensive tract of land?</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The space is not an extensive tract of land and is self-contained and has clearly defined boundaries (built development, the B1298 and Cotswold Lane).</p>

		settlements will not be appropriate. (NPPG Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306)			
The space is in close proximity to the community it serves		The LGS designation should only be used where the space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves (NPPF Para 102)	Q. How close is the space to the community it serves?	✓	The space primarily serves the communities of Boldon Colliery and West Boldon. Whilst the B1298 does represent an obstacle to pedestrian connectivity to West Boldon, it is close to both communities.
The space is demonstrably special for any of the following reasons:	Beauty	LGS may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community, whether in a village or a neighbourhood in a town. (NPPG Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 37-009-20140306)	Q. Is the space intrinsically beautiful in its own right?	x	Tree survey work undertaken in 2021 shows that there is significant tree cover on the space which adds greatly to the character and appearance of the space. However whilst this enhances the visual relief from urban form that the space provides, it is not sufficient to justify describing the site as intrinsically beautiful.
	Historic significance		Q. Are there any designated or non-designated heritage assets in or within the setting of the space?	x	The space is not identified in the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record. It has no designate or non-designated heritage assets.
	Recreation		Q. Does the space offer a variety of recreational opportunities, informal and/or formal?	✓	Tree survey work undertaken in 2021 shows that there is significant tree cover on the space which can add to the recreational enjoyment of the space and support wildlife. The space is well-used by dog walkers and contains a well-used playground. It also provides visual amenity and an opportunity for exercise to the residents

					<p>of the adjacent Henley House (home for older persons).</p> <p>There is another space nearby (Coronation Park) but this is much smaller and has no play area.</p> <p>Located to the east of the space is the New Road Play Area. This includes a skate park and play equipment. Whilst these are important benefits, the location has the feeling of being out on a limb in relation to Boldon Colliery. The New Road Play Area can only be accessed from Boldon Colliery along a busy main road and that road also represents an obstacle to pedestrian connectivity with West Boldon.</p> <p>The high number responses to the consultation on the Draft (Regulation 18) Local Plan 2021-2039 that objected to the allocation of housing on part of the space and the number of signatories to the petition requesting its designation as Local Green Space are evidence that the informal recreational opportunities it provides are of special significance to the local community.</p>
	Tranquillity		Q. Is it a peaceful, calm space that allows for quite reflection and enjoyment?	x	<p>A site visit was undertaken to assess the tranquillity of the site. It is considered that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The space does provide some visual relief from urban form • The southern boundary is close to the B1298. Whilst there is a

					<p>degree of tree buffering from the road, there is still noise intrusion into the site, albeit this progressively diminishes further away from the road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site appeared to be reasonably well-used with approximately 12-15 people observed during the 20-minute Officer site visit. These consisted of dog walkers and adults with children at the play space. <p>On balance it is considered whilst it clearly provides recreational value, it is not a peaceful, calm space that facilitates quite reflection and enjoyment.</p>
	Richness of wildlife		<p>Q. Is the site subject of any formal wildlife designations? Q. Have surveys identified the presence of priority habitats or species?</p>	x	<p>The park is broadly comprised of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity grass Several pockets of planted fir trees A row of black poplars along the southern boundary Several young trees throughout the site Dense continuous ornamental scrub Hardstanding playpark <p>The habitats are common and widespread though they do form part of the South Tyneside Wildlife Corridor as a stepping-stone (it is ~28m from the nearest primary or secondary site).</p>

					<p>These habitats are suitable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgehog, a priority species, which may use this site for resting and foraging • Birds, a protected species, which may use this site for nesting and foraging however the species present are likely to be those common in the urban environment • Bats, a protected species, which may use this site for foraging, but no suitable features for roosting were identified <p>Overall, although the site provides a level of suitability for biodiversity, there are no priority habitats present and the site is unlikely to be used by species that are less than common in urban greenspaces.</p> <p>Whilst it is absolutely the case that the site will support a range of species, it would not be considered 'demonstrably special' from an ecological point of view. The site is managed more for its amenity use with regularly mown grassland and limited tree / shrub areas which will limit its value for wildlife. As a consequence the majority of the species present are likely to be considered common and widespread.</p> <p>The site has the potential to be better for wildlife but this would require a</p>
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					complete change in management away from amenity grassland.
Whether the site holds particular local significance for any other reason		Q. Is there evidence that the proposed site holds particular local significance for the community for reasons other than those already identified above.	x		<p>Disco Park was initially gifted to the residents of Boldon Colliery by the National Coal Board to the then Urban District Council of Boldon on 5th April 1961, with restricted covenants affecting the land which "requires it not to be used for any purposes whatsoever other than a recreation ground or agriculture."</p> <p>It could be viewed therefore as being of historic significance in respect of the evolution of the settlement but its particular local significance to the community is considered to derive primarily from its recreational value.</p>
Conclusion	The space can be considered to meet the criteria in Paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF				

The open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens, West Boldon - is the land capable of being designated as Local Green Space?

Criteria	Explanation	Questions	Assessment	Comments
If the space is designated as LGS, is it likely to endure beyond the plan period	LGS designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the designation would be compatible with the planning permission or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented. (NPPG Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 37-008-20140306)	Q. Does the space have planning permission? Q. Is the space allocated or proposed to be allocated in a Development Plan?	✓	The Open Space Study (2023) identifies the site as Amenity Greenspace with some play space (child) inset within the site. Appendix 6 shows open space supply by ward and study area. The supply for Amenity Greenspace for Boldon Colliery is -2.61 ha. The supply for play space (child) is -0.75 ha. The explanatory text states 'Positive figures show where the study area/wards meet the quantity standard for the open space typology, and negative figures show where there is a shortfall in supply against the quantity standard.' The Open Space Study assessed sites for quality. The assessment for the site in the study was 'good'. The space was proposed to be allocated for development in the Draft (Regulation 18) Local Plan 2021-2039. However this has not been carried forward to the Regulation 19 Local Plan. The Regulation 19 Local Plan has, consistent with the findings of the Open Space Study, designated the site as recreational open space.
The space is not an extensive tract of land	LGS designation should only be used where the green area is not an extensive tract of land.	Q. Is the space an extensive tract of land?	✓	The space is not an extensive tract of land and is self-contained and has

		Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. (NPPG Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306)			clearly defined boundaries (built development and Dipe Lane).
The space is in close proximity to the community it serves		The LGS designation should only be used where the space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves (NPPF Para 102)	Q. How close is the space to the community it serves?	✓	The space primarily serves the community of West Boldon and is close to the community.
The space is demonstrably special for any of the following reasons:	Beauty	LGS may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community, whether in a village or a neighbourhood in a town. (NPPG Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 37-009-20140306)	Q. Is the space intrinsically beautiful in its own right?	x	The site provides visual relief from urban form but it is not sufficient to justify describing the site as intrinsically beautiful.
	Historic significance		Q. Are there any designated or non-designated heritage assets in or within the setting of the space?	✓	The 2024 Heritage Impact Assessment paper identifies a number of heritage assets within the setting of the open space at Dipe Lane, including the locally listed Hall Green Farm adjacent to the open space. The site is also located within the West Boldon Conservation Area.
	Recreation		Q. Does the space offer a variety of recreational opportunities, informal and/or formal?	✓	The space is well-used by dog walkers and contains a well-used playground. There is a substantial area of Amenity Greenspace nearby (known locally as 'The Leap'). However the topography of this site means that it has limited accessibility for people with mobility issues. There is also a significant green corridor along the River Don. However this is less accessible for residents in the southern part of West

					Boldon who have to cross a busy road (the A184).
	Tranquillity		Q. Is it a peaceful, calm space that allows for quite reflection and enjoyment?	x	<p>A site visit was undertaken to assess the tranquillity of the site. It is considered that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The space does provide some visual relief from urban form. This is notwithstanding that the site is located on the edge of the settlement where there is also visual relief from urban form provided by the fields that form part of the adjacent Green Belt. • 3 people were observed during the 20-minute Officer site visit. These consisted of an adult with 2 children at the play space. • Although the site is adjacent to a road, this was not particularly busy so noise intrusion was minimal. <p>On balance it is considered whilst it clearly provides recreational value, it is not a peaceful, calm space that facilitates quite reflection and enjoyment.</p>
	Richness of wildlife		<p>Q. Is the site subject of any formal wildlife designations?</p> <p>Q. Have surveys identified the presence of</p>	x	<p>The site does not have any formal wildlife designation. There have been no surveys so the presence or absence of priority habitats or species has not been ascertained, however given the site use and current management, the likelihood of these is considered to be low.</p>

			priority habitats or species?		
Whether the site holds particular local significance for any other reason		Q. Is there evidence that the proposed site holds particular local significance for the community for reasons other than those already identified above.		x	<p>The land is protected by covenants dated 8 April 1930 which restrict any building on the land, except apparatus necessary for recreational purposes, without the consent of the Vendor or his successors in title.</p> <p>It could be viewed therefore as being of historic significance in respect of the evolution of the settlement but its particular local significance to the community is considered to derive primarily from its recreational value.</p>
Conclusion	The space can be considered to meet the criteria in Paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF				

Should the Council designate the land as Local Green Space?

19. This paper responds to applications to have the playing fields, grounds and associated lands on the site formerly occupied by Brinkburn School, the Disco Park, Boldon Colliery and the Open Space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens, West Boldon designated as LGS. For the reason stated at paragraph 16 of this paper, the land associated with the former Brinkburn School has been scoped out from this assessment and is not assessed any further.
20. The assessment of Disco Park, Boldon Colliery and of the open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens has followed a methodology that has been informed by national planning policy and guidance. The appraisal has also been informed by an up-to-date Open Space Study which as provided quality and value information for the site. The assessment has concluded that both sites can be considered to meet the criteria for designation as LGS.
21. There is a robust evidence base which supports the designation of both sites as Recreational Open Space. The Open Space Study (OSS) shows a deficit of 9.92 ha for Parks and Recreations [combined] for Boldon Colliery. This supports the designation of Disco Park, Boldon Collier as Recreational Open Space.
22. The OSS shows a deficit of 2.61 ha for Amenity Greenspace for Boldon Colliery. This supports the designation of the open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens as Recreational Open Space. The OSS also shows a deficit of 0.75 ha for play space (child) which supports the designation of both spaces as Recreational Open Space.
23. The PPG states 'If land is already protected by another designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS' (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 37-010-20140306).
24. The Disco Park has been awarded 'Fields in Trust' status since the Regulation 18 Local Plan was consulted upon Fields in Trust works in partnership with landowners to protect land through a Deed of Dedication, a binding legal commitment with the landowner (South Tyneside Council) which secures spaces in perpetuity for current and future generations to enjoy. The council considers that the open space designation and the awarding the Fields in Trust status to the site offers a level of protection to the site from development. In accordance with the NPPG guidance, it is not considered that designating Local Green Space status to this site would result in additional local benefit.
25. Whilst this has not been determined, it is also expected that 'Fields in Trust' status will be conferred upon the open space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens; and therefore, the council also concludes that the LGS designation would not result in any additional local benefit.
26. It is therefore proposed that the Publication draft Local Plan does not identify sites to be designated as Local Green Space apart from those already designated in Neighbourhood Plans.

Appendix 1: Site boundary - The Playing fields, grounds and associated lands on the site formerly occupied by Brinkburn School



Appendix 2: Site boundary – Disco Park, Boldon Colliery



Appendix 3 – Views of Disco Park, Boldon Colliery



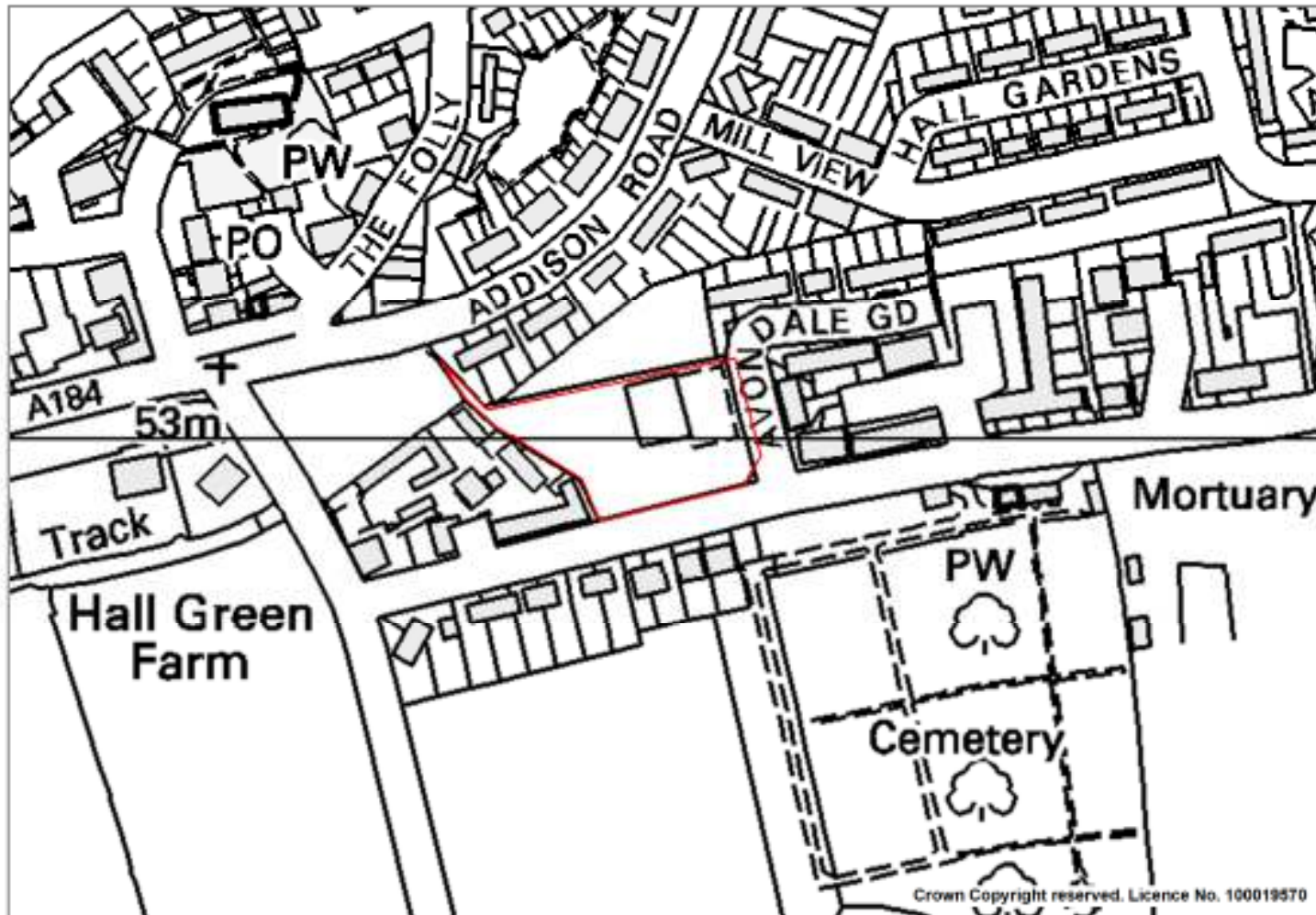
Appendix 3 – continued



Appendix 3 - continued



Appendix 4: Site boundary – The Open Space at Dipe Lane /Avondale Gardens



Appendix 5 – Views of the Open Space at Dipe Lane/Avondale Gardens



Appendix 6: Open space supply (ha) by ward and open space study area

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space
Beacon and Bents	-3.29	9.16	5.18	-0.48	-0.26	-9.41
Bede	-2.24	7.75	-10.57	-0.65	-0.67	19.53
Biddick and All Saints	-1.46	-1.43	-12.73	-0.86	-0.80	7.25
Boldon Colliery	6.19	-2.61	-9.92	-0.75	-0.74	49.88
Cleadon and East Boldon	2.23	-2.06	-1.08	-0.57	-0.79	30.04
Cleadon Park	-2.68	-6.01	50.16	-0.61	-0.67	-7.65
Fellgate and Hedworth	-2.58	-1.84	-10.31	-0.67	-0.69	18.52
Harton	-2.89	-2.28	-11.57	-0.83	-0.83	-8.27
Hebburn North	-0.19	-1.40	12.97	-0.83	-0.79	9.08
Hebburn South	-3.08	3.14	-0.36	-0.75	-0.73	14.56
Horsley Hill	2.64	4.99	-4.68	-0.92	-0.92	86.83
Monkton	-2.68	-3.54	5.01	-0.61	-0.72	20.59
Primrose	2.72	2.00	-2.68	-0.58	-0.55	46.12
Simonside and Rekendyke	-3.25	2.45	-13.02	-0.79	-0.83	-9.30
West Park	3.46	-6.06	2.42	-0.53	-0.61	-7.58
Westoe	-2.84	-4.34	-8.79	-0.71	-0.77	-8.11
Whitburn and Marsden	1.37	-3.46	-1.15	-0.30	-0.74	58.62
Whiteleas	-2.43	-2.81	15.81	-0.73	-0.81	-8.09
Borough wide	-11.03	-2.99	4.67	-12.14	-12.89	302.65

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