

Blaby Central Green Spaces Consultation

Background & Headline Results

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1. Introduction

Background

The Government stated, in the Coalition Agreement, its intention to create a new designation to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities. This intention has been restated in the Natural Environment White Paper and the draft National Planning Policy Framework. The County Council decided to prepare for the new designation by assembling evidence which would assist its implementation. This has been done by proactively engaging with local communities to understand which green spaces they value, including through the 27 community forums in Leicestershire and the use of an innovative online tool. The County report sets out the findings of this engagement exercise across the County. It is accompanied by 27 reports, of which this report is one, which set out the findings for each individual Community Forum area, and by a website www.lsr-online.org/greenspacesresults which gives local communities access to the data collected.

Understanding which green spaces local people particularly value, and why, will help local communities and councils decide where new homes and other developments needed by local communities are best located, designate local green spaces, and decide what steps might be taken to protect and enhance green spaces.

What is a Green Space?

A green space is generally defined as a managed or more natural space, which is either publicly accessible and / or provides visual amenity. The visual amenity might be to retain an important view within or beyond a settlement, or on a larger scale, such as green wedges, to prevent the merging of settlements, guide development form, provide a green lung and act as a recreational resource.

The draft National Planning Policy framework states that the local green space designation would only be appropriate where green space:

- is demonstrably special to a local community,
- is in reasonable close proximity to a centre of population,
- is local in character and not an extensive tract of land; and,
- does not overlap with Green belt.

This engagement exercise particularly collects information in relation to the first of the above bullet points. In designating local green spaces local councils and communities will also need to take account of the other requirements listed.

In running the county-wide engagement exercise, however, the

County Council did not start by defining what a green space is. The key purpose of the exercise was to allow local communities and residents to tell the County Council about which areas of open land are particularly valuable to them. The findings set out in this report, represent therefore, the views of local communities about green spaces in their area with no restrictions placed on what local communities could describe as a green space. In developing and implementing a local green spaces designation local councils and communities will need to do so in the context of national planning guidance and this may mean that some green spaces, such as for examples those which constitute 'an extensive tract of land', will not be eligible for designation.

The Consultation Exercise

The green spaces engagement exercise was carried out between January and April 2011. It involved two main components; an interactive exercise at each Community Forum across the County, and an online map-based tool **www.lsr-online.org/greenspaces**. In addition, comments were sent in by post and e-mail, and comments were also sent in by parish and town councils. All comments received have been taken into account.

The engagement exercise was well-received and increased attendance at many of the Community Forum meetings, by a substantial amount at some. The online tool piloted a new technique for community engagement and its success has demonstrated its potential application for other engagement exercises. Thank you for your input.

Reporting the results back to the community

The exercise has generated a rich dataset. This has been analysed and the data is being presented in ways which make it easy to understand and easy for local communities to make effective use of. The information collected is being reported back to communities and parish and town councils in the following ways:

- By making the collected data available online **www.lsr-online.org/greenspacesresults/** to local communities, parish and town councils and partner agencies so they can themselves use it in future neighbourhood and local planning activities;
- By presenting back to each Community Forum the results for that area;
- By producing for each Community Forum area a summary report setting out findings;

- By producing this County-wide summary report setting out the overall findings.

Data issues to be aware of when using this report

Considerable effort has been made throughout the processing of the data utilised within this report to ensure that it is accurate and consistent and provides a fair representation of views across Leicestershire. This has, however, been an exercise which has utilised new, innovative engagement tools and it is, therefore, important to be mindful of the following caveats when reading the report:

- While consultation was open to everybody, the respondents were self selecting, and certain types of people may have been more likely to contribute than others. In this instance, it is likely that some of those participating were more aware of, and engaged with, the green space debate and not, therefore, representative of the population as a whole.
- Many responses were made during public meetings and therefore may have been influenced, to some degree, by others attending those meetings.
- The location of Community Forum meetings may have influenced which local people were able to

attend and which green spaces were identified as valued.

- Across the different elements of the consultation, participants received differing levels of information about the subject. Some responses, therefore, are based on more information than others.
- The likelihood of a green space being 'lost' may have influenced the number and nature of responses received about green spaces. For example there might be highly valued green spaces which did not generate high numbers of responses because they are already considered to be protected by other designations (for instance as a country park or a site of special scientific interest). Conversely some green spaces may have been attributed a higher value at the time of the engagement exercise than they might have been at other times because they were considered under threat. In this context it is possible that local campaigns around particular proposed local plan allocations, planning applications and other perceived threats of development, will have generated a higher response rate. The engagement response marks, therefore, a snapshot in time.

- For analytical purposes green spaces were assigned to one community forum area. Those that spanned the borders of two or more community forums were assigned to the community forum in which they had their highest proportional coverage.
- The same people could have attended a forum and also used the online tool.

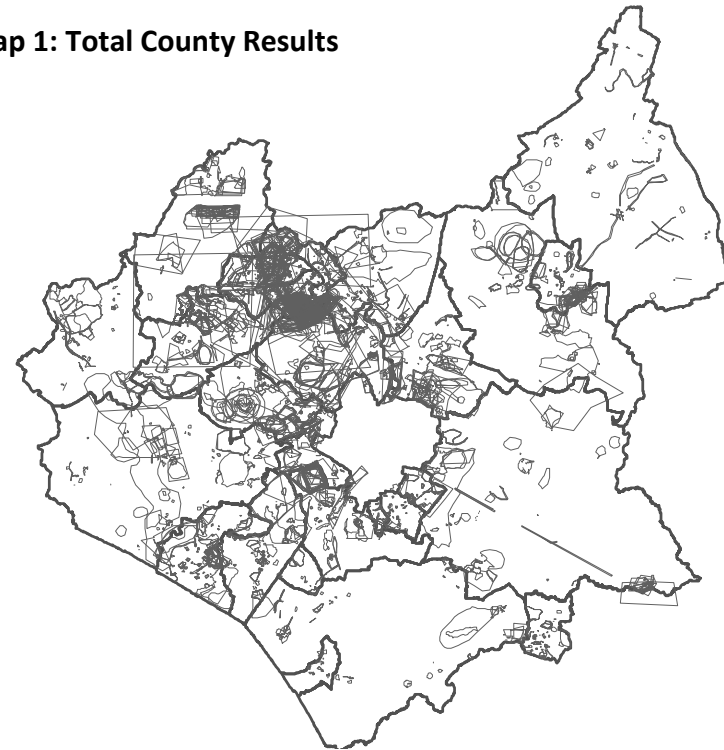
County Results

Across Leicestershire residents identified 3,114 'green spaces' through the consultation exercise as being valued by local communities. Of the total number of green spaces identified, 2,002 were identified at Community Forum meetings (attended in total by 1,200 people), and a further 1,112 were identified online, by 730 individual respondents.

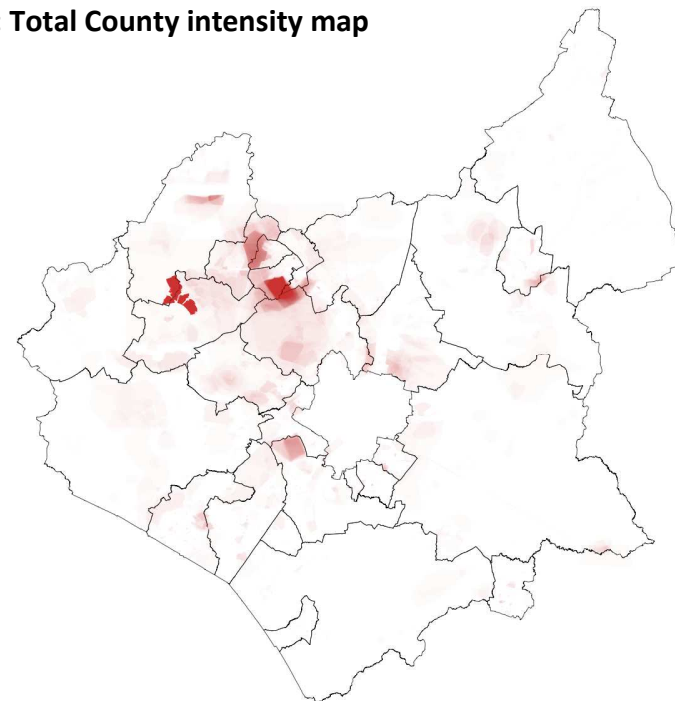
However, green spaces that spanned more than one Community Forum were double counted to ensure that all areas were identified to the Community Forums they covered. Therefore, in total, the online consultation identified 1,791 green spaces and Forum data identified 2,457 green spaces.

Map 1 shows all the areas selected from the online and forum consultation. As there is a large amount of overlap of selected areas in this map, the bottom map is an intensity map that provides an overview of where this overlap occurs.

Map 1: Total County Results



Map 2: Total County intensity map



2. Blaby Central Forum and Online results

Headline Summary

- In Blaby Central **124** 'green spaces' have been identified through the consultation exercise as being valued by local communities.
- Of the total number of green spaces identified **55** were identified at Community Forum meetings (attended in total by **19** people), and a further **69** were identified online.
- Overall, **18.9 km²**, or **33%**, of the forum land area was nominated as a green space. Further results are presented graphically on the dashboard on page 10.

Reporting results at a Community Forum level poses a particular problem because a sizeable proportion of recorded green spaces cut across a number of Community Forums. So the difficulty is whether to record the area just the once, and assign it to just one Forum, or to record it multiple times against each Forum. Since the aim of the report is to report back any area that should be considered of value to the local community, any cross-cutting green spaces have been counted multiple times and therefore identified to each relevant Community Forum.

Count of Online and Forum green spaces by Community Forum

Community Forum	Online	Forum	Total
Coalville	82	444	526
Loughborough South West	319	51	370
Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel & Birstall	264	101	365
Loughborough East	241	93	334
Valley	119	151	270
Shepshed & Hathern	97	123	220
Quorn, Barrow, Sileby & The Wolds	99	80	179
Loughborough North West	59	93	152
Markfield, Ratby & Groby	75	77	152
Bosworth	35	115	150
Blaby South	23	116	139
Hinckley Area	24	111	135
Melton West & Parishes	47	82	129
Blaby Central	69	55	124
Rural East	36	75	111
Blaby North	58	52	110
Rural West	31	75	106
Market Harborough	3	99	102
South Charnwood; Syston, Thurmaston & Wreake Villages	24	78	102
Melton Mowbray	23	73	96
Belvoir	19	76	95
Wigston	9	72	81
Oadby	17	57	74
Ashby, Measham & Moira	13	45	58
South Wigston	1	25	26
Lutterworth	3	19	22
Broughton Astley	1	19	20
	1,791	2,457	4,248

Forum meeting feedback

Although there was low public turnout at the meeting, what discussion generated by the Green Spaces interactive session was positive.

The following descriptions aim to provide a general summary of the views held at the forum compared to results from all the other forums held in the County. More detailed explanation of these findings is in the County Report on green spaces.

1. What spaces were valued?

Overall, respondents in this forum mainly value their green space for the sports facilities it offers and chances for community engagement. They cite the health aspects of playing sports (including school use) and in some cases state that it is the only playing field in the immediate vicinity. The green space also offers important community engagement opportunities, such as fetes and funfairs which helps to create/maintain social cohesion.

2. What spaces were important?

Overall, respondents in this forum mainly state that the importance of their designated green space derives from its landscape value, its location and the opportunities for play it offers children. Respondents state it offers peace and quiet, panoramic views with little noise or light pollution. Others

highlight the essential sports and play facilities for children (in some cases the only one in the area) of which is secure and safe (i.e. not having to cross a main road to access it).

3. How can spaces be improved ?

Overall, respondents in this forum mainly offer that the best way to improve their selected green space is to leave it alone. They state that it must be protected from all traffic and housing developments. They argue that no improvements need to be made aside from the planting of additional trees.

Blaby Central							
Summary of forum and online results total spaces in area: 124 ■ total spaces from online: 69 ■ total spaces from forums: 55 ■		Summary of what people valued Respondents in this forum value their designated green space for the sports facilities it offers and chances for community engagement. Concerning sports they cite the health aspects of playing sports and in some cases state that it is the only playing field in the immediate vicinity.		Profile of forum total population: 43,604 ■ urban population: 36,911 ■ rural population: 6,693 ■ area of forum: 57.6 km2			
Community forum results Date: 28-02-11 Venue: Enderby Civic Centre attendance: 33			Online results (from www.lsr-online.org/greenspaces) The Consultation ran from 31st January to 19 April 2011				
1. About the areas nominated # # of spaces nominated at forum event: 30 ■ # of spaces nominated from another forum event: 25 ■ % of forum land area nominated as green space: 25% ■ total area nominated: (km2) 14.3 ■		3. Value, importance and improvement # Why value? walking 7 ■ dogs 4 ■ Most important? open 5 ■ landscape 4 ■ How Improve? maintain 5 ■ improve 5 ■		1. About the areas nominated # # of areas nominated from online: 69 ■ % selected by forum resident: 96% ■ % of forum land area nominated from online: 22% ■ total area nominated (km2): 12.7 ■		2. The type, value and importance # Type of space? Farm land 51 ■ Meadow Grassland 28 ■ Why Value? Openness 59 ■ Wildlife and habitat 50 ■ Why Important? Landscape 48 ■ Recreational 45 ■	
2. Type of Green Space Recreational 9 ■ Natural 10 ■ Landscape 7 ■ Community 2 ■				3. About the responses avg response per person 1.3 ■ max respondent by a person 3 ■			

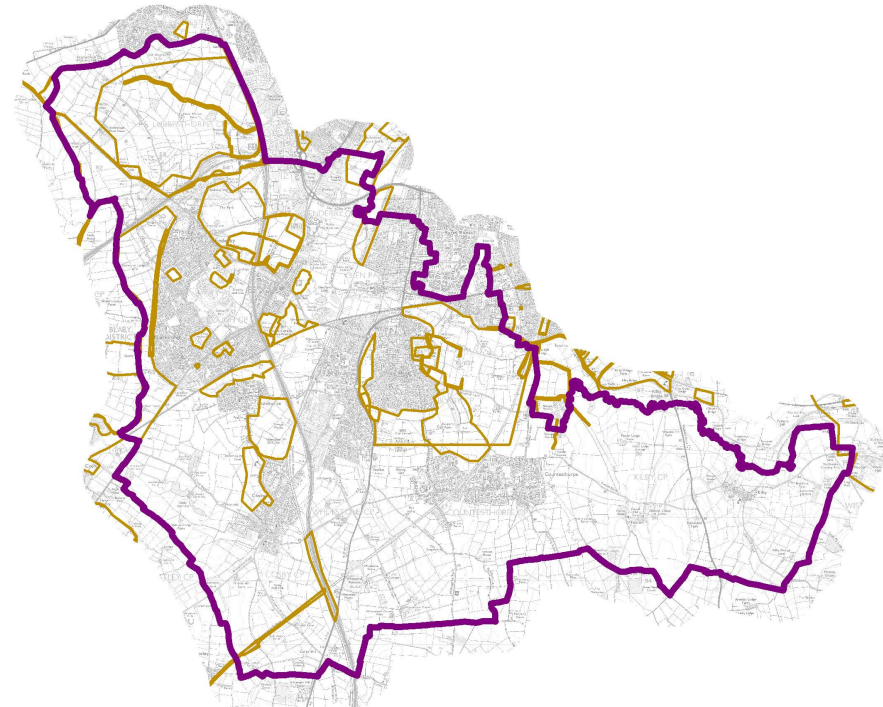
3. Where were green spaces selected?

Map 3 : Map of community forum area



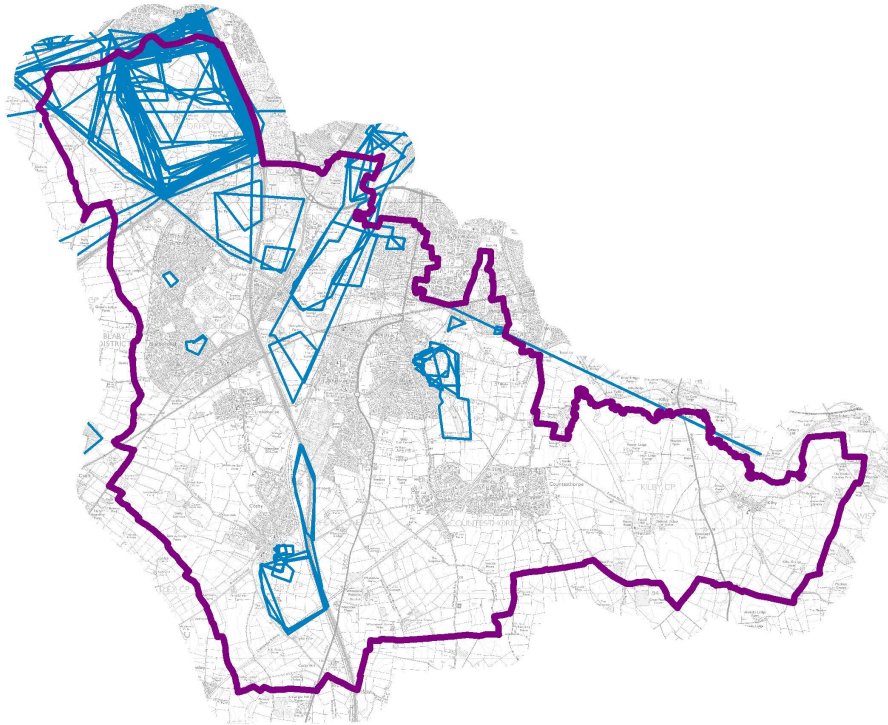
Map 4: Areas selected at community forum consultation

Summary: .A number of areas in the central and to the north of the forum including: Lubbesthorpe in the north west corner, north of Enderby, areas around Blaby including Bouskell Park.



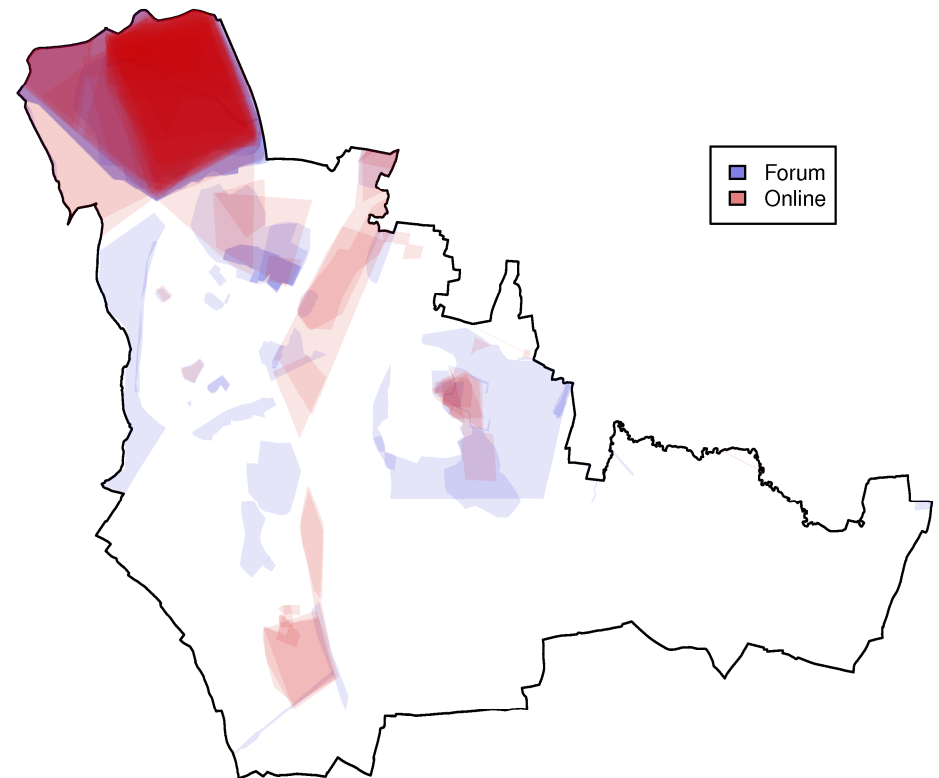
Map 5: Areas selected from online consultation

Summary: A number of areas to the north west covering Lubbethorpe. Areas covering the River Soar in the central part of the forum, Bouskell Park in Blaby and areas around Cosby to the south of the forum.



Map 6: Intensity map

As boundaries can be placed exactly on top of one another, thus making it difficult to see how many boundaries there actually are, this intensity map highlights the number of times each small square of land is included from the previous two maps. So an increase in the intensity of the colour, corresponds to a percentage increase in the number of times a given square has been chosen.



4. Comments from the Blaby Central forum held on the 28th February 2011

The Value, Importance and improvement of green spaces

At each forum people were asked to answer questions, around the value, importance and value of the green space they nominated. These were open-ended questions to encourage a full and meaningful answer using the subject's own knowledge and/or feelings of the area. However this does make the data harder to analyse and report back. A tag cloud is a visual representation for text data, typically used to visualize text. 'Tags' are usually single words, normally listed alphabetically, and the importance of each tag in the following pages is represented with font size or colour. This format is useful for quickly perceiving the most prominent terms and for locating a term alphabetically to determine its relative prominence.

Value	Similar to County responses. The words dogs and children are more prominently used in the Blaby Central forum
Importance	Different to the County responses. Local words more focused on wildlife and landscape
Improvement	Different from the County. Focusing on maintaining and developing facilities

Why do you value the green space?

Fig 1 - Blaby Central responses



Fig 2 - Total County responses



What's important to you about the green space?

Fig 3 - Blaby Central responses



Fig 4 - Total County responses



How can the green space be improved?

Fig 5 - Blaby Central responses



Fig 6 Total County responses



5. Parish Response

The views of parish and town councils on the important open spaces (including green wedges) in a parish area are very important, and a letter was sent to all parishes for their thoughts and comments. All the responses received are listed below: although for space reasons, the response has been edited to just highlight the important open spaces mentioned in the response. The full response is available at www.lsr-online.org/greenspaces

Enderby Parish Council highlighted green spaces in all land adjacent to the Park & Ride site in Enderby, the Green Wedges on both sides of Leicester Lane, Enderby, from the Foxhunter round a bout – all land up towards Blaby Road on the right hand side including the land behind Heron Way, Enderby, land from the back of Quarry Farm up M69 bridge towards Lubbesthorpe and all remaining undeveloped land on the Santander site, Narborough.

Cosby Parish Council highlighted all green spaces surround the village. Countesthorpe and Glen Parva highlighted green spaces within and surrounding the village.

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