



Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan

Environment and Green Space
Working Group Topic Paper
Identifying Local Green Space

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1. INTRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT AND GREENSPACE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. The vision for the Compton NDP Green Space and Environment working group has been developed into an objective for the NDP, which states what the plan is aiming to achieve through its overall strategy and policies in relation to the environment and allocation of designated Local Green Space.
- 1.2. The core objective of the NDP for green spaces is to create integrated and safe green spaces in new developments that are linked to the existing green infrastructure network and wider AONB, and to ensure conservation of key habitats with biodiversity net-gain across the Parish.
- 1.3. This Topic Paper provides supplementary evidence and information that supports policy C16 of the Compton NDP. It sets out why green space is important and discusses its value in terms of health and community benefits to the residents of Compton, as well as to the ecological and wider environmental aspects of the Parish, Village and the ex-Pirbright institute site. It demonstrates how the data collected from the residents' survey has been used to draft the NDP policies in general and specifically in relation to policy C16.
- 1.4. Policy C16 seeks to protect valued areas of green space while being permissive of appropriate development that would enhance its use or enjoyment for the community. The policy is described below.

C16: Local Green Space

The areas (as identified on the map below) is designated as a Local Green Space as defined in paragraphs 99 to 101 of the NPPF. New development will not be permitted on land designated as Local Green Space, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

- Cricket Ground at Pirbright
- Recreation Grounds (PC owned)
- Wilson Close Allotments (PC owned)
- Newbury Lane Allotments (PC owned)
- Land at Gordon Crescent (PC owned)
- Land at Meadow Close
- Grassed area in Manor Crescent



Figure 1: Map showing location of Local Green Spaces designated under policy C16

1.5. In addition, the approach to mapping and assessing potential green space was approached in the context of providing evidence used to create policy C17: Biodiversity, which states:

C17: Biodiversity

All new developments should maintain and enhance existing on-site biodiversity assets and provide for wildlife needs on site where possible. All new development must provide measurable net gains for biodiversity. Development proposals should be landscape-led, showing regard to the ecological, arboricultural and landscape surroundings at an early stage in the design process.

Development proposals that result in a loss or deterioration of green infrastructure that support protected habitats, priority habitats or species will not be supported.

2. APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE PLAN

2.1. The Compton NDP and Environment and Green Space working Group have taken their approach and working methodology from the toolkit for neighbourhood planners provided by Locality (<https://locality.org.uk>) and the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019). The following paragraphs reproduce the steer, advice and methodology that was followed by the group in the collection of data for this report and used in the development of and the justifications for the Compton NDP policy statements that relate to Green Space designation.

2.2. Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The Neighbourhood plan can identify on a map and formally designate green areas for special protection. Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.

2.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that:

“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 end of the plan period”.

2.4. 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), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c) *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

How close does a Local Green Space need to be to the community?

2.5. The proximity of a Local Green Space 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. For example, if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served.

How big can the Local Green Space be?

2.6. There are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be because places are different, and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed. However, the NPPF is clear that Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. Consequently, blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will

not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a 'back door' way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name. There is no lower size limit for a Local Greenspace.

Access, Public Rights of Way and Ownership?

- 2.7. Some areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may already have largely unrestricted public access, though even in places like parks there may be some restrictions. However, other land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (e.g., green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty).
- 2.8. Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present. Any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with landowners, whose legal rights must be respected.
- 2.9. Areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may be crossed by public rights of way. There is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation. A Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. However, NDP group should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space. Landowners will have opportunities to make representations in respect of proposals in a draft plan.

How can Local Green Space be protected through Policy?

2.10. The NPPF states that "*Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.*" This doesn't mean that the policy should simply repeat green belt policies, themes for addressing green space could include:

- Ensuring the space remains open and its community value is maintained
- Protecting the character of the area, including historic areas
- Ensuring adjacent development complements its setting
- Securing a natural corridor through development that enable people and wildlife to travel in and through
- Setting out design requirements for new development around green space, including providing access into the space
- Enabling changes of use to allow a wider range of activities to take place
- Opportunities to create linkages between sites and address gaps in existing networks by the creation of new rights of way.

2.11. A policy specific to Local Green Space could make clear that development should not compromise the open character and community value of spaces or set out where limited development may be allowed to enhance the community use of the space.

2.12. The following process overview is reproduced from the toolkit for neighbourhood planners published by locality (<https://locality.org.uk>) and is the process that has been followed to identify the Green Spaces proposed in the NDP policy.

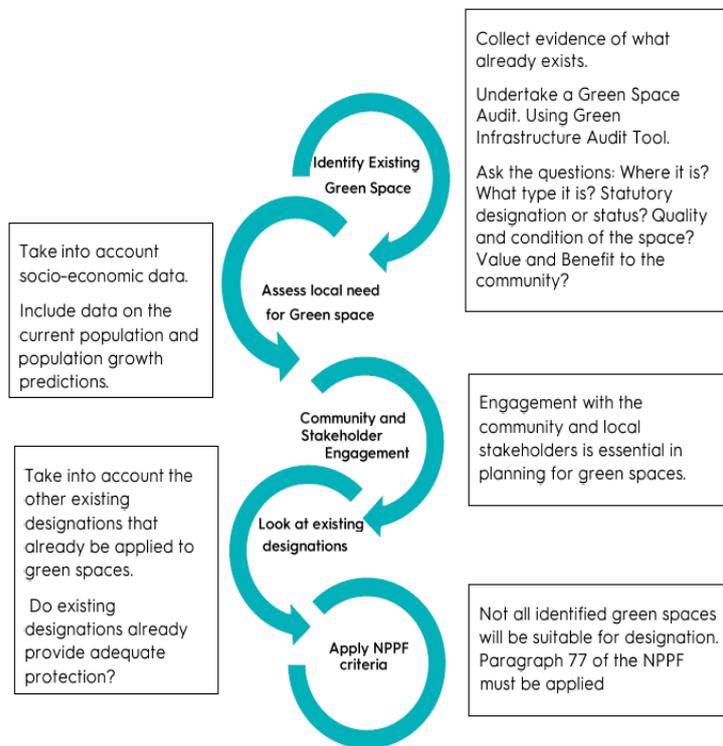


Figure 2: Green space assessment process.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN COMPTON

3.1. During in 2019-2020 the Environment and Green Space NDP working group has worked to;

- Collect evidence of the Green space in the village that already exists via a green space audit.
- Consider the location, the type of green space, and whether it has statutory designation or status already
- Assess the local need for green space as evidenced in the Compton NDP survey and through community dialogue.
- Consider and take into account the existing designations that have already been applied to green spaces and considered if they provide adequate protection
- Follow and apply the guidance offered in the NPPF (paragraphs 99,100)

3.2. An understanding of the local landscape context of Compton is important in understanding the Green Space designations. In its wider context Compton sits within the Blewbury open downland and is washed over by the AONB; characterized by a sparsely wooded open downland environment.

- 3.3. Access to high quality open spaces not only provides health and recreation benefits to the people living and working nearby, but also holds ecological value and contributes to the local green infrastructure; overall playing an important role in the achievement of sustainable development. This is recognised in policy CS7 of the WBC Core Strategy which seeks provision of high quality and multifunctional open spaces.
- 3.4. With its proximity to the Ridgeway and location as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB), the village is ideally positioned not only to provide recreational walking activities for residents, but to attract further tourism through the NDP process. This is consistent with and evidenced by the Government 'Landscapes Review' report in September and its findings including accessibility of ANOB to the general public.
- 3.5. Compton is surrounded by vast expanses of agricultural land, countryside and open space, however within the village itself, there are a number of recreational facilities and open spaces which the community are keen to ensure remain accessible and attractive for leisure use. These include:
- Recreation Ground: The recreation ground lies in the middle of the village and arguably provides the main public open space in the village adjacent to the Village Hall and Wilkins Centre
 - Allotments: There are two allotment sites owned by the Parish Council, situated on School Road (Wilson Close) and at Newbury Lane
 - Downland School and Sports Centre.
- 3.6. Additionally, there is an extensive network of public Rights of Way and Bridleways within the parish.

4. COMPTON PARISH GREEN SPACE INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT.

- 4.1. The process for identifying the type of land followed the principle already described above, but in general covered these areas within the parish boundary and the village settlement.
- Informal green spaces
 - Village greens
 - Allotments
 - Cemeteries
 - Road verges
 - Footpaths
 - Bridleways
 - Byways
 - river courses
 - Sports grounds
- 4.2. The Group has considered the existing natural green spaces within the parish boundaries and within the settlement extent, so that we could assess how the green spaces of the village connect

into the wider landscape to form interconnected corridors that could benefit wildlife and biodiversity and enhance the rural feel of the village. The map below shows the green corridors along public rights of way, river courses and the decommissioned Didcot to Southampton railway line, and how these features are related to the open downland and existing woodland.

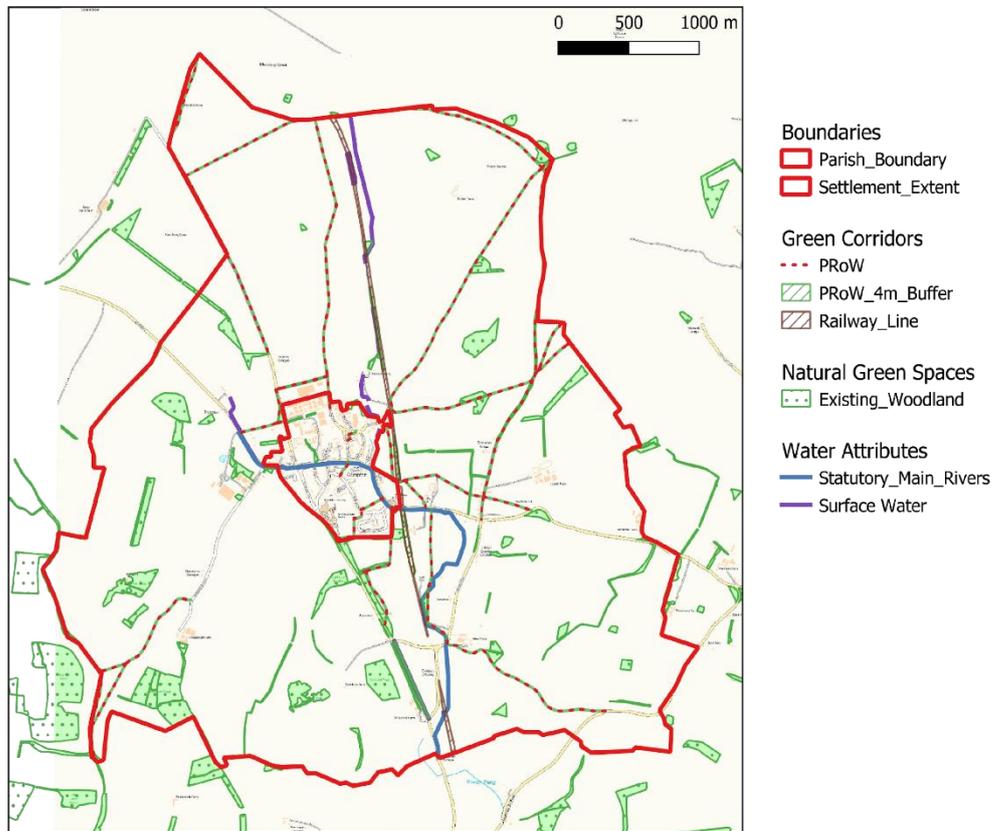


Figure 4 Compton Parish extent with Green corridors.

4.3. The existing green spaces in the village settlement boundary were then identified by a field survey and from existing mapping data. These were categorised as:

- Recreation and amenity space
- Green corridors
- Indicative green spaces within the Pirbright site
- Natural green spaces
- Water attributes

4.4. These sites include those identified as potential green spaces for inclusion in policy C16 and are mapped below, split into settlement north and settlement site. Also identified on this map are certain other landscape features such as trees with preservation orders, and mature trees.



Figure 5 Compton North settlement, existing green space.



Figure 6 Compton south settlement, existing green space

Map key for figures 5 and 6

Boundaries	 Existing_Woodland
 Parish_Boundary	
 Settlement_Extent	
Green Corridors	Recreation and Amenity Space
 PRow	 Compton Primary School
 PRow_4m_Buffer	 Downs School
 Railway_Line	 Newbury Lane Allotments
	 Wilson Close Allotments
Pirbright - Indicative	 Play Park
 Pirbright_Hedgerows	 Recreation Grounds
 Pirbright_Mature_Trees	Water Attributes
 Pirbright_Green_Spaces	 Statutory_Main_Rivers
 Cricket Pitch	 Surface Water
Natural Green Spaces	Mapping Files
 Public_Mature_Trees	OpenStreetMap
 Public_Hedgerows	
 Public_Green_Spaces	
 Public_Verges	
 Tree_Preservation_Order	

4.5. The table below shows the output of the Compton audit of village green space within the settlement boundary and lists the areas identified as potential areas to designate as Local Green Space.

Site	Location	Sites identified as green space with the Compton settlement boundary		
Site ID	Grid ref	Name	Description and purpose	Quality of facility (including any deficiencies)
S1	SU51753 79986	Cricket field, South-west corner of the Pirbright site.	Formal playing field. Has previously used for sporting activities and recreational walking. It is currently inaccessible to village residents.	Grass is well maintained. Site is fairly well screened from main road by existing vegetation. An important feature in the village for sporting activity. Site will flood periodically from the winterbourne River Pang.
S2	SU52218 79753	Recreation ground, on School Road	Village recreation ground owned by the Parish Council A focus for village activities, for example, the football club, village fetes Informal play, also the site of the play equipment	Large well-maintained area. The main focus of village sporting activities and outdoor events. Has green hedgerows and boundaries.

S3	SU52382 79673	Compton Primary School School Road	Primary school and playing fields	Playing fields are the focus of school sporting activity.
S4	SU51930 79570	Downs School	Secondary school and playing fields	Playing fields are the focus of school sporting activity.
S5	SU1749 79751	Newbury Lane allotments	Plots of land made available for individual, non-commercial gardening or growing food plants.	Plots are managed via the Parish Council and are assigned to individuals or families and are well maintained
S6	SU52363 79785	Wilson Close Allotments	Plot of land made available for individual, non-commercial gardening or growing food plants.	Plots are managed via the Parish Council and are assigned to individuals or families and are well maintained.
S7	SU52251 79811	Play park (in recreation ground)	Playpark in the recreation ground.	Core lay facility for play maintained by the Parish council.
S8	SU52386 80188	Railway Line	Linear green corridor formed by the decommissioned Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway (DN&SR)	Landscapes corridor along the disused railways are the places that host a wide array of wildlife and form an important corridor to interconnect green spaces.
S9	SU51734 80474	Public rights of way (4m green buffer)	Potential need for buffer strips around public rights of way.	Potential need for buffer strips around public rights of way may host a wide array of wildlife and form an important corridor to interconnect green spaces.

S10	SU52109 80097	Meadow Close Green Area	Open area of grass adjacent to Meadow Close with scrub/hedgerow/trees boundary.	Acts as a buffer between the residential area of meadow close and Hockham Road. Used as an informal play area.
S11	SU51915 79752	Manor Crescent Green Area	Open area of grass adjacent to Meadow Close with scrub/hedgerow/trees boundary.	Acts as a buffer between the houses and Road. Used as an informal play area. Currently often used to park cars.
S12	SU52045 79761	Gordon Crescent	Open area of grass adjacent to Meadow Close with scrub/hedgerow/trees boundary.	Acts as a buffer between the houses and Road. Used as an informal play area. Currently often used to park cars.
S13	SU51820 80098	Pirbright Site	Within the Pirbright site there are many open wooded and scrubland, areas and green boundaries at the perimeter of the site and between areas within the site.	The Pirbright site itself contains a mosaic of green space and ecological significant habitats that may form the basis of designated green spaces. For example, hedgerows, mature trees, open grassland areas that could form high quality spaces for wildlife and recreation. There is also the opportunity for some of these spaces to connect into the wider context of the AONB downland landscape and preserve the rural feel of the village, which is a core objective of the NPD, as evidenced by the NDP village survey responses.

Table 1 Compton audit of village green space

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE IDENTIFIED GREEN SPACES AGAINST THE NPPF CRITERIA

5.1. From the above audit, seven areas of green space have been taken forward for designation, these green spaces have been assessed against the NPPF criteria in para. 99-100;

- a) *Must be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) *be demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c) *be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.*

5.2. The following tables summarise this assessment:

5.3. **Cricket Field**

Site Details		
Site	Grid Reference	Description and purpose
Cricket field, South-west corner of the Pirbright site.	SU51753 79986	The site of the Compton village cricket field.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	Part of the Pirbright site	Subject to the current Pirbright planning process.
NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife	local in character and not an extensive tract of land
Within the centre-west of the village	The cricket ground, located to the southwest of the Pirbright site, is an area of open space which makes a positive contribution to the pattern of open spaces throughout the village and is highly valued by the local community given its historical significance and recreational value. The cricket ground has a close relationship to the Compton Conservation Area which should be conserved and enhanced, whereby the cricket ground forms a positive part of the Conservation Area setting and should be retained as part of the green infrastructure for community use and potential flood alleviation. The designation of the cricket ground as Local Green Space is therefore appropriate.	The site was the local cricket field and so complies with the criteria.

5.4. Recreation ground, on School Road

Site Details		
Site	Grid Reference	Description and purpose
Recreation ground, on School Road	SU52218 79753	Village recreation ground owned by the Parish Council A focus for village activities, for example, the football club, village fetes Informal play, also the site of the play equipment
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	Parish owned recreation ground	None
NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife	local in character and not an extensive tract of land
Within the centre of the village	The recreation ground is the key community playing field setting and should be retained as part of the green infrastructure for community use. The designation of the recreation ground as Local Green Space is therefore appropriate.	The site is the only recreation area within the village and so complies with the criteria.

5.5. **Newbury Lane allotments**

Site Details		
Site	Grid Reference	Description and purpose
Newbury Lane allotments	SU1749 79751	Plots of land made available for individual, non-commercial gardening or growing food plants.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	Village Allotments	none
NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife	local in character and not an extensive tract of land
Within the centre-west of the village	Plots are managed via the Parish Council and are assigned (rented) to individuals or families and are well maintained. They form an invaluable community resource as well as a rich habitat for wildlife, enhancement of biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors.	The site is the site of village allotments and so complies with the criteria.

5.6. **Wilson Close Allotments**

Site Details		
Site	Grid Reference	Description and purpose
Wilson Close allotments	SU52363 79785	Plots of land made available for individual, non-commercial gardening or growing food plants.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	Village Allotments	none
NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife	local in character and not an extensive tract of land
Within the centre-east of the village	The Wilson Close plots are managed via the Parish Council and are assigned (rented) to individuals or families and are well maintained. They form an invaluable community resource as well as a rich habitat for wildlife, enhancement of biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors.	The site is the site of village allotments and so complies with the criteria.

5.7. Meadow Close Green Area

Site Details		
Site	Grid Reference	Description and purpose
Meadow Close Green Area	SU52109 80097	Open area of grass adjacent to Meadow Close with scrub/hedgerow/trees boundary. Acts as a buffer between the residential area of Meadow Close and Hockham Road. Used as an informal play area.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None
NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife	local in character and not an extensive tract of land
Within the centre of the village	As this is an open area of grass adjacent to Meadow Close with scrub/hedgerow/trees boundary it fulfils a variety of functions that would be lost if it became part of the built environment. Acts as a buffer between the residential area of Meadow Close and Hockham Road. Used as an informal play area. As it is adjacent to the Conservation area it helps maintain the character of the junction between the modern housing estate of Meadow Close and the 17 th Century buildings that exist in the conservation area.	A small area within the village settlement that provides and so complies with the criteria.

5.8. Manor Crescent Green Area

Site Details		
Site	Grid Reference	Description and purpose
Manor Crescent Green Area	SU51915 79752	Open area of grass adjacent to Manor Crescent. Acts as a buffer between the residential area of Manor Crescent and the road Used as an informal play area.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None
NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife	local in character and not an extensive tract of land
Within the centre of the village	As this is an open area of grass adjacent to Manor Crescent with some mature trees. It fulfils a variety of functions that would be lost if it became part of the built environment. Acts as a buffer between the houses of Manor Crescent and Manor Crescent. Used as an informal play area. It preserves the rural an open character of the areas and provides valuable space for wildlife within the centre of the village. If designated as green space it would also discourage residents and visitors to Compton parking their cars in this grassed area.	A small area within the village settlement that provides and so complies with the criteria.

5.9. Gordon Crescent

Site Details		
Site	Grid Reference	Description and purpose
Gordon Crescent Green Area	SU52045 79761	Open area of grass adjacent to Gordon Crescent with. Acts as a buffer between the residential area of Manor Crescent and the road Used as an informal play area.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	None	None
NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to a local community and hold local significance, for example beauty; historic significance; recreational value [including as a playing field]; tranquility; or richness of its wildlife	local in character and not an extensive tract of land
Within the centre of the village	As this is an open area of grass adjacent to Gordon Crescent with some mature trees. It fulfils a variety of functions that would be lost if it became part of the built environment. Acts as a buffer between the houses of Gordon Crescent and Gordon Crescent Road. Used as an informal play area. It preserves the rural an open character of the areas and provides valuable space for wildlife within the centre of the village. If designated as green space it would also discourage residents and visitors to Compton parking their cars in this grassed area.	A small area within the village settlement that provides and so complies with the criteria.