

Question 4

Does the 10-ha site at Longbury Hill meet the requirements set out in Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the 2012 NPPF for designation as Local Green Space, including whether it can be described as an extensive area of land?

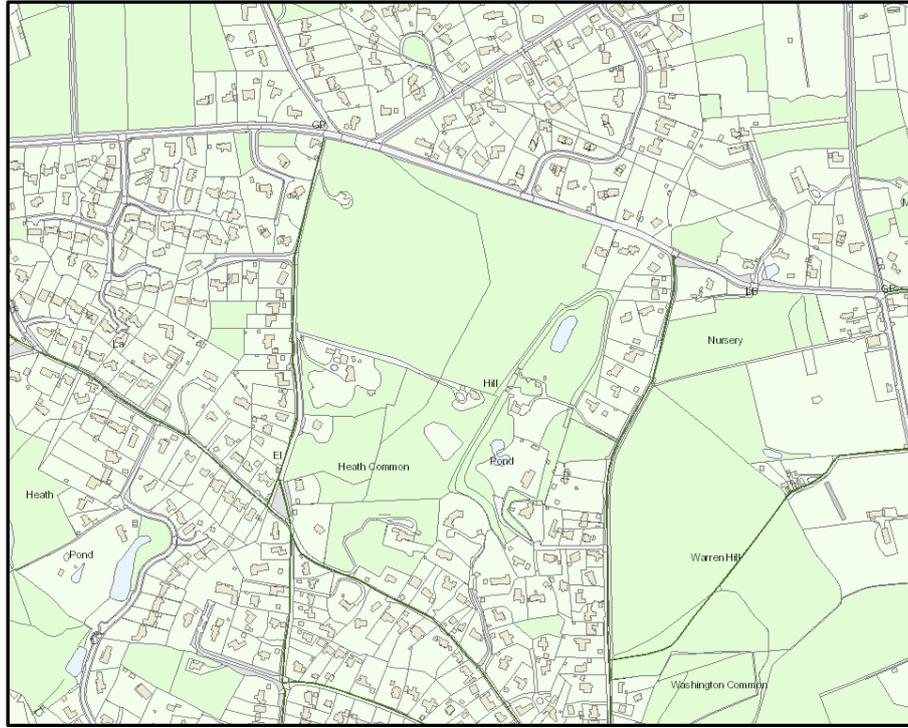
- 4.1 Throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, Horsham District Council has provided advice and assistance to the Qualifying Body. This included the advice that sites proposed for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan as a Local Greenspaces will need to accord with the provisions of the NPPF. In response the Qualifying Body have commissioned the South Downs National Park to undertake the Local Greenspaces Assessment and have also undertaken their own evidence base updates.
- 4.2 As has been set out elsewhere, the Qualifying body has undertaken extensive evidence base work, including the site assessment and sustainability appraisal process to ensure that the overall plan is consistent with the aims of sustainable development and that land which has been identified for local greenspace designation meets this criterion of paragraph 76 of the NPPF.
- 4.3 In terms of paragraph 77 it is clear that the site is in close proximity to the community it serves and therefore meets the one of the key tests in the Framework. Within a 0.3 sq mile radius there are approx. over 100 households within a relatively short walking distance of the site. There is Hampers Lane PRow which abuts the western boundary of the woods. Please refer to Appendix B.
- 4.4 The Qualifying Body have identified a number of reasons as to why the land at Longbury Hill Wood is demonstrably special to the local community. For example the land is identified in the [Heath Common Design Statement SPD](#) (July 2018) outlining the historical significance of the Woods. Please refer to Appendix A. A significant proportion of the representations received during the Regulation 16 consultation concerned Longbury Hill Wood (over 90 reps) demonstrating the value of the site to the local community as well as consultation survey results which supports the retention of this space. Furthermore, Longbury Hill Wood can be seen from South Downs Way (Please refer to Appendix C).
- 4.5 HDC's [Green Infrastructure Study 2014](#) notes the area Heath Common as part of a valued Green Infrastructure network which serves the local community. The ANGSt standard will assist the Council identifying area where there are current deficiencies in accessing green infrastructure as put of any local plan review next year.
- 4.6 There is no legal definition or government guidance as to what constitutes an extensive tract of land. However the setting of Longbury Hill Wood within an area of land which contains residential development around it help to ensure that the area is local in its character. Longbury Hill Wood the site is relatively contained by Rock Road to the north and Hampers Lane to the west form. The private road to Rosebay to the south form the southern edge to the site and housing to the east abutting Georges Lane. This helps to limit the extent of the site.

Appendix A.
Extract from the Heath Common Design Statement (adopted July 2018)
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LONGBURY HILL WOOD

- xxii. This is an area of dense pine, mature woodland and Rhododendron, extending to approximately 10 hectares. It sits outside the Built Up Area Boundary, bordered by the large wooded gardens of residential properties to the east, Hampers Lane bridleway to the west, a long access track to Rosebay Cottage to the south and Rock Road to the north.*
- xxiii. The Anglo-Saxon Washington charters of 947 and 963 both name Longbury Hill as 'Benna's Hill' or 'Tumulus' and remains of what is believed to be the ancient boundarybank is partly visible in the woodland just south of the access track to Rosebay Cottage and which is a uniquely surviving feature. Longbury Hill remains a prominent landmark, on which philanthropist Vera Pragnell installed a Calvary in the 1920s.*
- xxiv. The woodland is regarded as an integral feature of the surrounding 'Heath Common Lanes', being close to the community it benefits. It is not currently accessible to the public, but its boundary with the public bridleway of Hampers Lane provides attractive conditions and recreational value to residents, walkers, horse riders and hikers. It also forms part of an attractive habitat for a wide range of birds and wildlife, closely situated between Warren Hill, owned by the National Trust, and Sullington Warren, itself a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. Data from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre record sightings of 150 protected and designated species within 0.5km of the area. Three ponds exist within 500m of the woodland, and are well connected to the site, indicating that the protected Great Crested Newt Triturus Cristatus, could potentially be using it as a terrestrial habitat. A juvenile female of the species was sighted in nearby Georges Lane, and reported to the Records Centre in December 2017.*
- xxv. Whilst privately owned, and subject to periodic management under licence from the Forestry Commission, the area is allocated as a protected green space in the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan.*

Appendix B
Longbury Hill Wood at the centre of Heath Common.



Appendix C
View of Longbury Hill from South Downs Way



Views taken of Longbury Hill Wood from South Downs Way in 2015 and 2016.

Longbury Hill Woods positively contributes and enhances the special wooded character of the area and is seen as an extension to Heath common. Longbury Hill contributes to the experience of distance views from the South Downs National Park towards Storrington and the countryside beyond by assisting in integrating the residential area within the wider panorama.



June 2015



April 2016