

# Markfield, Ratby & Groby 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](http://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 example 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](http://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/](http://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.

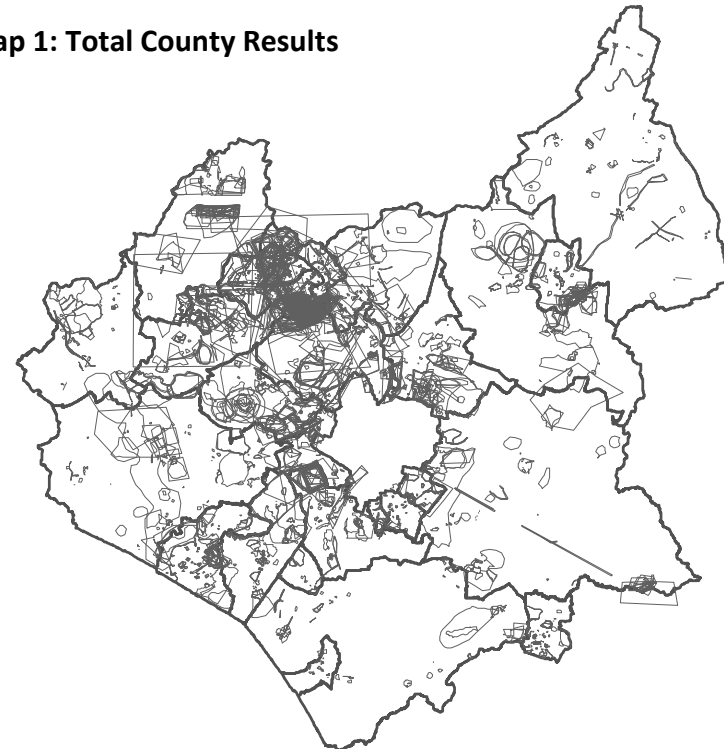
### County Results

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.

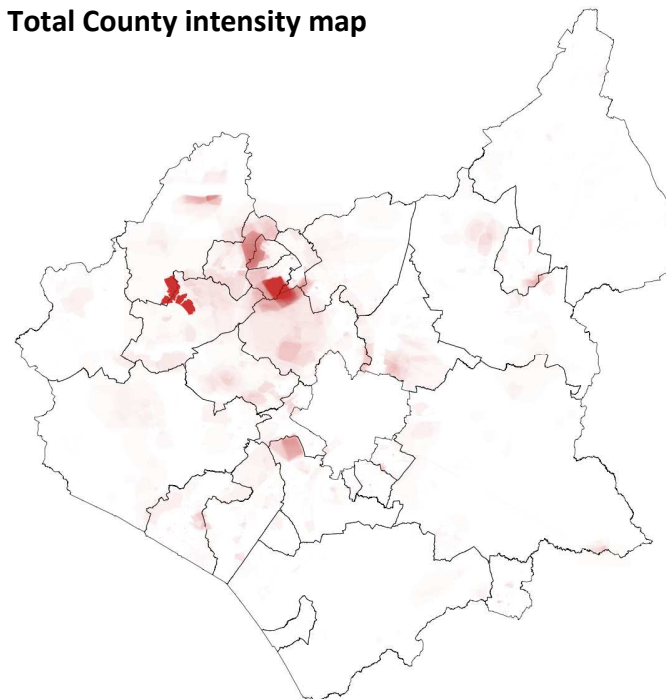
However, green spaces that spanned more than one Community Forum were double counted to ensure that all areas were identified to the Community Forums they covered. Therefore, in total, the online consultation identified 1,791 green spaces and Forum data identified 2,457 green spaces.

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. Markfield, Ratby & Groby Forum and Online results

### Headline Summary

- In Markfield, Ratby & Groby **152** 'green spaces' have been identified through the consultation exercise as being valued by local communities.
- Of the total number of green spaces identified **77** were identified at Community Forum meetings (attended in total by **33** people), and a further **75** were identified online.
- Overall, **40.3 km<sup>2</sup>**, or **81%**, 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**

The Green Spaces exercise undertaken at the forum meeting was well received. Most participants engaged in constructive discussion and really enjoyed the interactive element of the meeting.

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 green space for the opportunity it gives them to walk their dogs and to take in the natural surroundings (within a traffic free area). In this segment the green space was more often than not identified as a park. The prospect of peace and quiet is also valued as the physical beauty.

#### **2. What spaces were important?**

Overall, respondents in this forum mainly state that the importance of their green space derives from the opportunity it offers various members of the community to play and/or learn a new activity safely. This includes children playing safely (within a fenced area with limited supervision). Respondents also cite the green space as offering magnificent views within

areas of natural beauty.

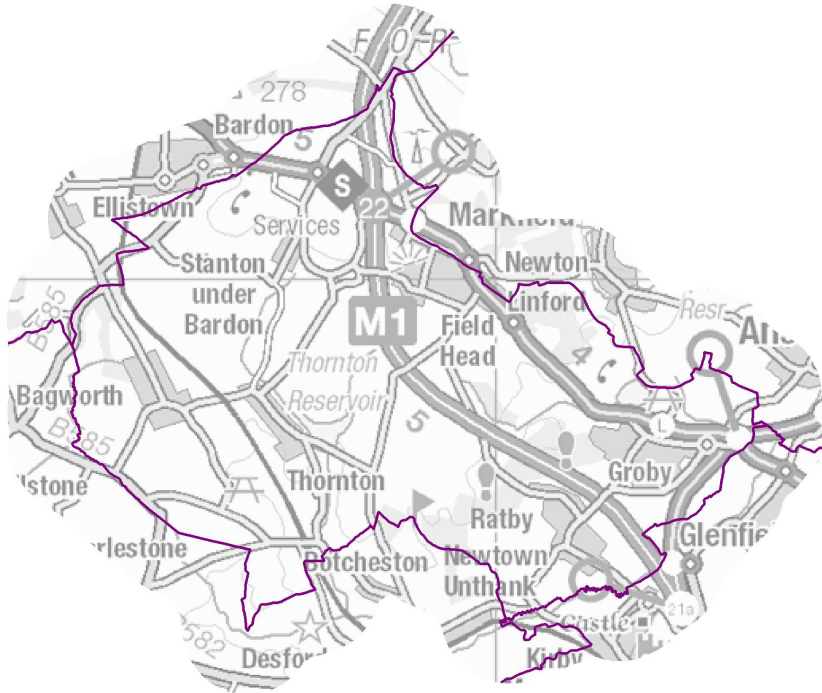
#### **3. How can spaces be improved?**

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.

Markfield, Ratby & Groby			
<b>Summary of forum and online results</b> total spaces in area: 152 ■ total spaces from online: 75 ■ total spaces from forums: 77 ■		<b>Summary of what people valued</b> Respondents in this forum value green space for the opportunity it gives them to walk their dogs and to take in the natural surroundings (within a traffic free area). The green space was more often than not identified as a park. The prospect of peace and quiet is also valued as the physical beauty.	
		<b>Profile of forum</b> total population: 19,257 ■ urban population: 10,990 ■ rural population: 8,267 ■ area of forum: 49.8 km2	
<b>Community forum results</b> Date: 10-02-11      Venue: Groby College      attendance: 33		<b>Online results (from www.lsr-online.org/greenspaces)</b> The Consultation ran from 31st January to 19 April 2011	
<b>1. About the areas nominated</b> # # of spaces nominated at forum event: 61 ■ # of spaces nominated from another forum event: 18 ■ % of forum land area nominated as green space: 41% ■ total area nominated: (km2) 20.5 ■		<b>3. Value, importance and improvement</b> # <b>Why value?</b> walking 18 ■ wildlife 10 ■ <b>Most important?</b> walking 6 ■ views 6 ■ <b>How Improve?</b> protect 9 ■ leave 7 ■	
<b>2. Type of Green Space</b> Recreational 12 ■ Natural 20 ■ Landscape 15 ■ Community 14 ■		<b>1. About the areas nominated</b> # # of areas nominated from online: 75 ■ % selected by forum resident: 82% ■ % of forum land area nominated from online: 74% ■ total area nominated (km2): 36.6 ■	
		<b>2. The type, value and importance</b> # <b>Type of space?</b> Public right of way 32 ■ Woodland 25 ■ <b>Why Value?</b> Close to where I live 48 ■ Openness 45 ■ <b>Why Important?</b> Landscape 50 ■ Biodiversity 42 ■	
		<b>3. About the responses</b> avg response per person 1.6 ■ max respondent by a person 17 ■	

### 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 selected include Thornton Reservoir, Thornton Woods, Hill Hole Quarry, Groby Pool and the disused railway track in the south of the forum.



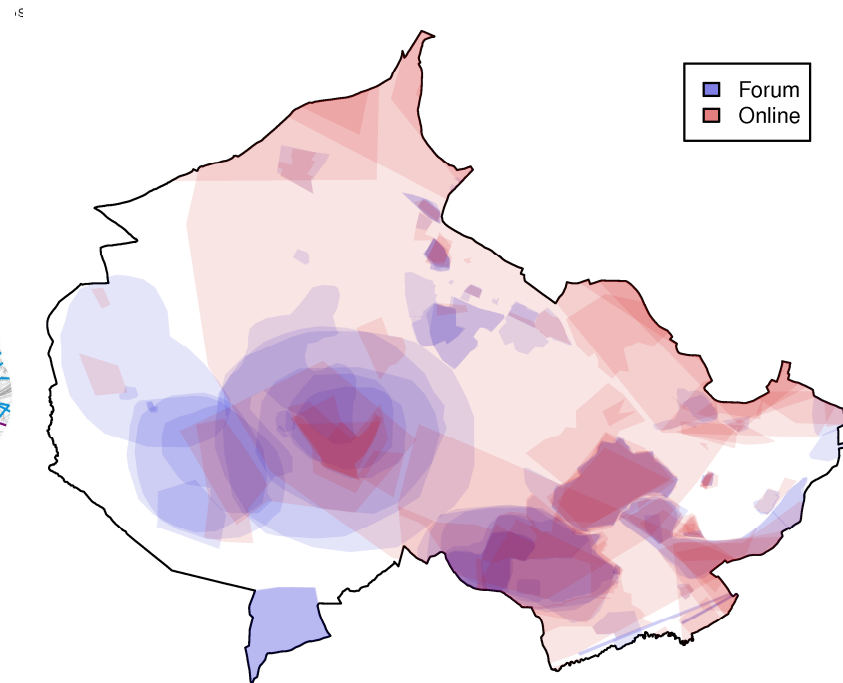
### Map 5: Areas selected from online consultation

**Summary:** A number of areas selected across the forum including Thornton Reservoir, Martinshaw Woods and a number of areas surrounding Ratby and Groby.



### 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 Markfield, Ratby & Groby forum held on the 10th 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 word <b>walking</b> is more prominently used in the Markfield forum
Importance	Similar to County responses. The word <b>walking</b> is more prominently used in the Markfield forum
Improvement	Similar to the County. Focusing on the protection of spaces

### Why do you value the green space?

Fig 1 - Markfield, Ratby & Groby responses



Fig 2 - Total County responses



### What's important to you about the green space?

Fig 3 - Markfield, Ratby & Groby responses



Fig 4 - Total County responses



### How can the green space be improved?

Fig 5 - Markfield, Ratby & Groby responses



Fig 6 - Total County responses





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