

Review of Metropolitan Open Land

Land south of Shirley Oaks Hospital

November 2015

Why Metropolitan Open Land was reviewed

As part of the Partial Review of the Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies a review of the borough's Metropolitan Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land was carried out. This was part of work to explore a potential development option that included release of land in these designations to help meet the need for homes in the borough. Further details of this review can be found in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal for the Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies (Partial Review).

The development option that included the de-designation of Metropolitan Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land was not taken forward either as a preferred or an alternative option because it conflicted both with the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

How the review of Metropolitan Open Land was undertaken

The borough's Metropolitan Open Land was assessed against the four purposes of Metropolitan Open Land set out in Policy 7.18 of the London Plan.

Purpose of Metropolitan Open Land

- Contributes to the physical structure of London;
- Includes open air facilities which serve the whole or significant parts of London;
 - Contains features or landscapes of national or metropolitan importance; or
- It forms part of a green chain or a link in a network of green infrastructure and meets one of the other criteria above.

In the event that land did not meet any of the above criteria then it was also considered against the locally set criteria for designation as Local Green Space, a designation which offers the exact same level of protection as the Metropolitan Open Land designation. The criteria for designation as Local Green Space are set out below.

Criterion 1

Site is publically accessible and has at least *one* of the following functions (and, therefore, would meet the tests for designation as Local Green Space were it not for the fact that is already Metropolitan Open Land, as this designates Local Green Space of London-wide importance):

- An Historic Park or Garden (of either local or national importance);
 - A community garden;
 - A children's play area;
- A natural and semi-natural open space;
- A cemetery, church yard or burial ground;
- A Site of Nature Conservation Importance; or
 - A playing field or recreation ground.

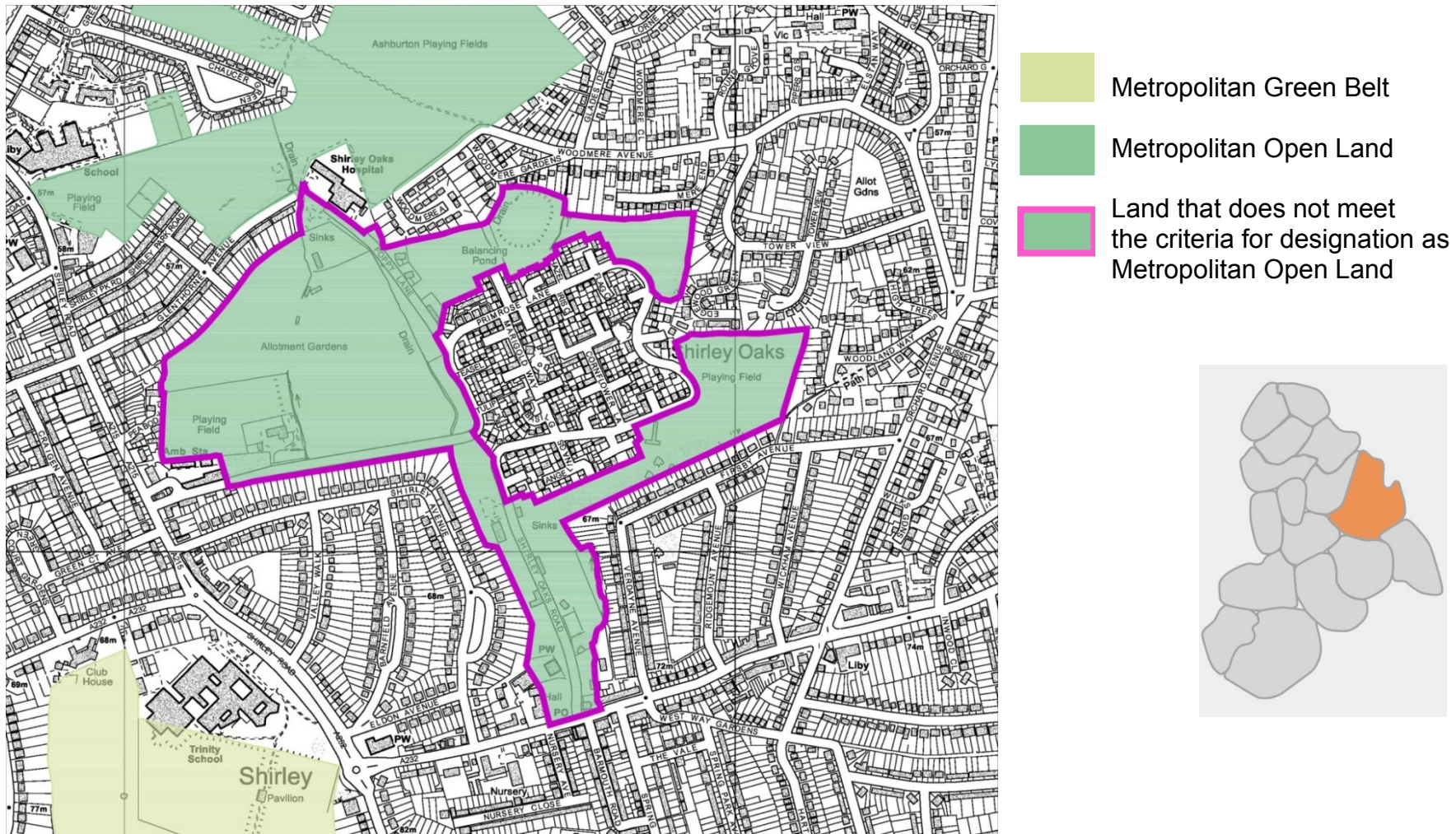
Criterion 2

Site has *three* or more of the following functions (and, therefore, would meet the tests for designation as Local Green Space were it not for the fact that is already Metropolitan Open Land):

- An Historic Park or Garden (of either local or national importance);
 - A community garden;
 - A children's play area;
- A natural and semi-natural open space;
- A cemetery, church yard or burial ground;
- A Site of Nature Conservation Importance; or
 - A playing field or recreation ground.

Findings of review for land south of Shirley Oaks Hospital

Land south of Shirley Oaks Hospital as shown on the map below was found not to meet the criteria for designation as Metropolitan Open Land.



The land does not include open air facilities which serve the whole or significant parts of London and it does not contain features or landscapes of national or metropolitan importance. In addition, because it is separated from the wider open area made up of Ashburton Playing Fields, South Norwood Country Park and Beckenham Cemetery by Shirley Oaks Hospital and its car park it does not contribute to the physical structure of London. Currently the car park of the hospital is designated Metropolitan Open Land.

On the ground there is a physical barrier between Ashburton Playing Fields and the land south of Shirley Oaks Hospital, it not being possible to walk directly from one area to the other because of a fence separating the hospital car park from Ashburton Playing Fields.

The separation of the land south of Shirley Oaks Hospital is shown quite clearly in the aerial photo below.



Impact of proposed change

If the land south of Shirley Oaks Hospital were to be removed from Metropolitan Open Land then the following would apply:

- The car park of Shirley Oaks Hospital is part of a community facility and any development proposals would have to be considered against the Local Plan policies on protecting sites used for community facilities;
- The existing allotments on Primrose Lane and the existing allotments on Glenthorne Avenue have statutory protection because they are allotments and cannot be used for any other purpose;
- The balancing pond between Primrose Lane and Woodmere Gardens is considered to be essential infrastructure and therefore, not suitable for development;
- The playing field adjacent to Stroud Green Pumping Station is publically accessible and includes a playing field or recreation ground, as well as natural and semi-natural open space. Therefore it meets the criteria set out in the Local Plan for designation as Local Green Space set out earlier in this note. This designation would provide them with the same level of protection as the existing Metropolitan Open Land designation;
- The area of land between Firsby Avenue and the Shirley Oaks estate is also publically accessible and includes a playing field or recreation ground, as well as natural and semi-natural open space. Therefore it too meets the criteria set out in the Local Plan for designation as Local Green Space set out earlier in this note. This designation would provide them with the same level of protection as the existing Metropolitan Open Land designation;
- An area of land opposite Shirley Oaks Hospital is being consulted upon as an alternative option because it is considered that its location makes it unsuitable for development because it could not be integrated well with other built up areas; and
- The Stroud Green Pumping Station, land either side of Shirley Oaks Road, land between Poppy Lane and the balancing pond, and land to the rear of Honeysuckle Gardens are proposed for residential development.

The land south of Shirley Oaks Hospital covers an area of 27.68ha. Of this, were it to be removed from Metropolitan Open Land then 19.1ha (nearly 70% of the land) would still be protected from development. The remaining 8.58ha would be considered suitable for the development (with residential use being the preferred option as other uses are not likely to be suitable for this location).