Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study

Final Report

Prepared by LUC
November 2016
**Project Title:** Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study

**Client:** Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council

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Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study

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1 Introduction

1.1 LUC was commissioned jointly by Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council to undertake an assessment of the Green Belt within Central Bedfordshire and Luton.

1.2 The Study was overseen by a Steering Group comprising officers and Members from both local planning authorities.

Study scope, aims and stages

1.3 The overall aim of the Study was to assess the extent to which the Green Belt land within the Study area contributes to the purposes of Green Belt, as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.4 The NPPF attaches great importance to Green Belts and stresses that their essential characteristics are ‘openness and permanence’. It also advises that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a Local Plan.

1.5 In determining the relative performance of different areas of Green Belt land against the Green Belt purposes it is possible to draw conclusions on the potential risk of harm to the Green Belt if different areas were released for development.

1.6 However, the Study does not advise on the suitability or potential of land in the Green Belt for development. Alongside other assessments, including the Luton Housing Market Area (HMA) Growth Options Study, the Study will assist the local authorities in considering the extent to which some existing Green Belt land could be used to accommodate sustainable forms, patterns and types of new development. Should the local authorities conclude that there are exceptional circumstances for making alterations to the existing Green Belt boundaries, these changes, including any allocations of land for development, will be taken forward through the Local Plan-making process.

1.7 The Study does not have regard to environmental, policy or land-use constraints and designations that exist within the Green Belt, such as landscape areas, SSSIs, and floodplains - except insofar that these are considered to be relevant to the purposes of Green Belts and the definition of permanent, readily recognisable Green Belt boundaries.

Other Considerations

1.8 The brief indicated that the Study should assess the:

a) Performance of land that currently lies outside the Green Belt, isolating areas of non-Green Belt land that fulfil the purposes of Green Belt and advising on the exceptional circumstances for designating new areas of Green Belt.

b) Openness of existing settlements in the Green Belt, making recommendations on which settlements should be ‘washed over’ by Green Belt and which settlements should be ‘inset’ (i.e. fall outside the Green Belt, but surrounded by it).

1.9 At the beginning of the Study it was agreed that the former would be excluded from the Study. This conclusion was reach because of the strong ‘tests’ set out in paragraph 82 of the NPPF which require local planning authorities to demonstrate exceptional circumstances before establishing new Green Belt. To meet these exceptional circumstances, Central Bedfordshire and Luton must have a clear idea of their preferred spatial distribution of development, which will not be known for some time.
1.10 The Study was undertaken in two stages, as outlined below.

**Stage 1**

1.11 Stage 1 was a desk-based assessment of the degree to which the Green Belt within Central Bedfordshire meets the purposes of the Green Belt designation, as set out in the NPPF. Defined parcels were assessed and rated. These ratings are supported by text that describes any spatial variation in the contribution of land to the purposes within each parcel.

1.12 In addition, Stage 1 assessed the openness of Central Bedfordshire’s main settlements within the Green Belt, making recommendations on which settlements should be inset and which settlements should be washed over.

1.13 Luton Borough Council completed a Stage 1 strategic assessment of the six parcels of Green Belt within the Borough in 2014. These parcels were therefore not assessed again in Stage 1 of this Study.

**Stage 2**

1.14 Stage 2 drew on the Stage 1 assessments, including Luton Borough Council’s 2014 Stage 1 assessment, to isolate areas of the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt which perform relatively weakly against the Green Belt purposes and are therefore likely to cause less harm to the Green Belt if released for development.

1.15 All weakly performing areas of the Green Belt were visited for further on-site assessment. The field visits were used to verify and where necessary expand upon judgements made remotely. Where appropriate, permanent and readily recognisable boundaries defining relatively weak performing areas have been highlighted as potential alternative Green Belt boundaries.

1.16 In addition, three of Central Bedfordshire’s washed over Green Belt settlements were visited at Stage 2 to verify whether urbanising influences identified remotely during Stage 1 sufficiently compromised their openness to recommend that they be inset in the Green Belt.

**Report structure**

1.17 The reminder of the report is structured in the following Chapters:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the context to the Study, in terms of planning policy and the evolution and character of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt.
- **Chapter 3** describes the Study methodology, including the criteria used to assess the Green Belt.
- **Chapter 4** reports the findings of the Stage 1 assessment work.
- **Chapter 5** reports the findings of the Stage 2 assessment work.
- **Chapter 6** sets out the conclusions of the study and recommended next steps.
2 Study Context

National Green Belt policy

2.1 The principle of maintaining a ring of open country around cities can be traced back to the 16th century when Elizabeth I forbade any building on new sites within three miles of the city gates of London. This was motivated by public health reasons, to prevent the spread of the plague, and to ensure a constant supply of food for the metropolis.

2.2 The importance of these considerations was later recognised by Ebenezer Howard, a pioneer of British town planning, in his book of 1898 Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform in which he referred to 'an attractive setting within the town could develop and which would maintain, close at hand, the fresh delights of the countryside - field, hedgerow and woodland'.

2.3 The only mechanism available at the time to realise this vision, however, was the acquisition of land by public authorities. In 1935 the London County Council Regional Planning Committee therefore put forward a scheme ‘to provide a reserve supply of public open spaces and of recreational areas and to establish a Green Belt or girdle of open space lands, not necessarily continuous, but as readily accessible from the completely urbanised area of London as practicable’. This arrangement was formalised by the 1938 Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act.

2.4 In 1955, Government Circular 42/55 codified Green Belt provisions and extended the principle beyond London. This was replaced by Planning Policy Guidance 2 in 1988 and in 2012, the Government replaced PPG2 with paragraphs 79–92 of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This has since been supplemented by relevant National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

2.5 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that ‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence’. This is elaborated in NPPF paragraph 80, which states that Green Belts should serve five purposes, as set out below. The NPPF does not infer that any differential weighting should be applied to the five purposes. This is elaborated in NPPF paragraph 80, which states that Green Belts should serve five purposes, as set out below.

The purposes of Green Belt
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2.6 The NPPF emphasises in paragraph 83 that local planning authorities should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. It goes on to state that ‘once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period’.

2.7 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF indicates that ‘when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling..."
development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary'.

2.8 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF suggests that Local Planning Authorities may wish to identify areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt to accommodate long-term development needs well beyond the plan period. New boundaries must have regard for the permanence of the designation by redefining boundaries which endure beyond the Local Plan period. New boundaries should be defined clearly, using readily recognisable, permanent physical features.

2.9 Paragraph 82 of the NPPF indicates that, if proposing a new Green Belt, local planning authorities should:

- demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;
- set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;
- show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;
- demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with Local Plans for adjoining areas; and
- show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.

2.10 Current guidance therefore makes it clear that the Green Belt is a strategic planning tool designed primarily to prevent the spread of development and the coalescence of urban areas. To this end, land should be designated because of its position, rather than its landscape quality or recreational use. However, the NPPF states "local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land" (Paragraph 81).

2.11 It is important to note, that the lack of a positive role, or the poor condition of Green Belt land, does not necessarily undermine its fundamental role to prevent urban sprawl by being kept permanently open. Furthermore, openness is not synonymous with landscape character or quality.

Good practice learned from planning inspectors' reports

2.12 Several recent planning inspector decisions have influenced current practice in Green Belt assessments. The main lessons reinforced by the Planning Inspectorate have been:

- Green Belt studies should be "fair, comprehensive and consistent with the Core Strategy’s aim of directing development to the most sustainable locations". Green Belt reviews should be ‘comprehensive’ rather than ‘selective’.
- Green Belt studies should be clear "how the assessment of ‘importance to Green Belt’ has been derived" from assessments against the individual purposes of Green Belt. Such assessments against the purpose should form the basis of any justification for releasing land from the Green Belt.
- In reviewing land against the purposes, Green Belt studies should consider the reasons for a Green Belt’s designation as they are related to the purposes.

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1 This NPPF requirement will be met as part of the wider Local Plan preparation process, although the findings of this review will form part of this.
2 Inspector’s report (A Thickett) to Leeds City Council (September 2014)
3 Inspectors’ Letter (L Graham) to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils (May 2015)
4 Inspector’s interim findings (H Stephens) to Durham City Council (November 2014)
5 Inspector’s interim findings (H Stephens) to Durham City Council (November 2014)
• Green Belt studies should “take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, as required by paragraph 85 of the NPPF [even if] such an exercise would be carried out through the SEA/SA process.”

2.13 Meanwhile, case law has consistently confirmed that Green Belt alterations require ‘exceptional circumstances’ to be demonstrated by the local planning authority. For example the judgement in Gallagher Homes Ltd v Solihull Borough Council [2014] EWHC 1283 (Admin), Hickinbottom J cited the considerable amount of case law on the meaning ‘exceptional circumstances’ and concluded that “it is not arguable that the mere process of preparing a new Local Plan could itself be regarded as an exceptional circumstance justifying an alteration to a Green Belt boundary”. Case law also confirms that decision-makers should take into account the consequences for sustainable development of any review of Green Belt boundaries, including patterns of development and implications for additional travel.

Good practice from planning guidance

2.14 There is no definitive guidance within National Planning Practice Guidance or elsewhere on how to undertake Green Belt reviews, although a few advice notes have been published, notably by Planning Officers Society (POS)\textsuperscript{7} and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS)\textsuperscript{8}. Both documents provide a useful discussion of some of the key issues associated with assessing Green Belt and subsequently reviewing/revising Green Belt boundaries, most notably:

Green Belt assessments

2.15 Parcels of land around the inner edge of the Green Belt should be identified and delineated for assessment. To the greatest extent possible, each should have clearly defined boundaries using recognisable features.\textsuperscript{7}

2.16 The assessment of the performance of Green Belt should be restricted to the Green Belt purposes and not consider other planning considerations, such as landscape, which should be considered in their own right as part of the appraisal and identification of sustainable patterns of development.\textsuperscript{8}

2.17 Parcels which fully meet any one purpose make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt.\textsuperscript{7}

2.18 Areas of land that make a relatively limited contribution to the overall Green Belt would be where new development would effectively be ‘infill’, with the land partially enclosed by development; new development would be well contained by the landscape, e.g. with rising land; new development would be of little harm to the qualities that contributed to the distinct identity of separate settlements in reality; and, a strong boundary could be created with a clear distinction between ‘town’ and ‘country’.\textsuperscript{8}

Green Belt reviews

2.19 Before undertaking a Green Belt review and making boundary revisions, Councils must be able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.\textsuperscript{7}

2.20 Revisions to a Green Belt should only be considered in the areas which are serious candidates for development, i.e. relatively large settlements which, as functioning population centres, are likely to be the most sustainable locations for growth.\textsuperscript{7}

2.21 The purpose of a Green Belt review is not to identify the most appropriate locations for development\textsuperscript{7} but to inform the identification of the most appropriate alterations to the designation’s boundary, alongside other planning considerations as part of an overall spatial strategy in the local plan-making process.\textsuperscript{8}

2.22 The most sustainable locations for development may well be in Green Belts and these locations should be identified in plans unless the positive effects of the allocation would be outweighed by...
effects on the overall integrity of the Green Belt according to an assessment of the whole of the Green Belt according to the five purposes.  

The local context

2.23 Understanding the origins and character of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt is an important first step in understanding its role and value and re-evaluating its performance. A summary of the local context is provided below.

The South Bedfordshire Green Belt

2.24 Central Bedfordshire is a largely rural authority; conversely, Luton is predominantly urban. Approximately 40% of Central Bedfordshire (28,214ha) is Green Belt, whereas only 3% of Luton (136ha) is designated Green Belt.

2.25 The concept for the South Bedfordshire Green Belt was first introduced in 1944 as part of Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan, but it was not until the early 1960s that the Green Belt was mapped and relevant policies were applied.

2.26 The main purposes of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt were to contain the outward sprawl of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linslade, Ampthill and Flitwick, and to prevent them merging with one another and other neighbouring settlements.

2.27 The adoption of the Bedfordshire County Structure Plan in 1980 gave the Green Belt statutory force. The extreme pressure for growth around the area’s large built-up settlements was cited as the primary justification for the designation. Policy 8 of the Structure Plan stated: 'It is the policy of the County Council to maintain a Green Belt in the south of the County having a width of up to 12 miles measured from the south-western boundary of the County (but excluding that part of the County lying to the east of Hexton in Hertfordshire) for the purpose of containing the outward growth of Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis; Leighton-Linslade; and Ampthill and Flitwick and to prevent the coalescence of settlements within that area.'

2.28 The South Bedfordshire Green Belt continues to play an important role in shaping the pattern of local development. The current extent of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt is shown in Figure 2.1.
Figure 2.1: South Bedfordshire Green Belt

- Study Area
- Planning Authority boundary
- Green Belt

Map Scale @ A3: 1:150,000
Local Plan preparation within Central Bedfordshire and Luton

2.29 This Green Belt Study represents a key component of the evidence bases for plan-making in Central Bedfordshire, Luton and the wider Luton HMA.

2.30 Central Bedfordshire Council submitted its Development Strategy to the Secretary of State on 24th October 2014 for Examination. Following the initial hearings, the Inspector issued a letter indicating that his report would conclude that the Council had failed to meet the duty to co-operate. Central Bedfordshire Council subsequently withdrew from the Examination process and is now in the early stages of developing a new Local Plan.

2.31 Luton Borough Council consulted on its Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) in November and December 2015. The plan covers the period up to 2031. Following consideration and approval by Full Council in March 2016 the Luton Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2016.

2.32 The Green Belt Study excluded Green Belt land earmarked for permitted strategic development sites from assessment, such as Houghton Regis North 1 and 2, East of Leighton Linslade and Chaul End north of Caddington. Parcels were drawn along the consented boundaries of these consented schemes.

Local Green Belt assessments

2.33 In acknowledgement of the importance of consistency across the wider HMA, a review of the Green Belt assessment methodologies employed in Aylesbury Vale, North Hertfordshire and Luton was undertaken prior to assessment. While a number of differences were identified between the studies (e.g. in the specific criteria used for assessment), the overarching principles of these studies were found to be consistent with one another and the methodology outlined below. These are:

- Green Belt and non-Green Belt land is divided into parcels for broad strategic assessment against the Green Belt purposes;
- The definition of assessment criteria is structured around the Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF, with the exception of purpose 5 which is generally not assessed;
- ‘Large built-up areas’, ‘towns’ and ‘historic towns’ are defined alongside other key terminology, such as sprawl, merging, encroachment and openness;
- Ratings and supporting text are provided for each of the five purposes, with no weighting applied to any of the five (in accordance with the NPPF’s lack of inference in this respect).
3 Study Methodology

3.1 In the absence of definitive national guidance on how to undertake Green Belt studies, a method statement was drawn up based on LUC’s extensive experience of undertaking Green Belt assessments, information collated on the context and background of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt and good practice elsewhere (see Chapter 2).

Method statement consultation

3.2 The first draft of the method statement was prepared by LUC and circulated to the Steering Group for review and feedback. The methodology was subsequently refined in conjunction with planning officers from Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council and in consultation with their wider duty to co-operate partners (i.e. adjoining authorities in surrounding Housing Market Areas (HMAs)).

3.3 A final draft of the method statement was circulated to Aylesbury Vale District, Bedford Borough Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Milton Keynes Council, North Hertfordshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, St Albans City and District Council and Stevenage Borough Council. The neighbouring authorities were asked to review and comment on the method statement prior to and during a Stakeholder Workshop which took place on 26th May 2016.

3.4 Bedford Borough Council and Milton Keynes Council provided comments on the Method Statement in advance of the Stakeholder Workshop and North Hertfordshire District Council attended the Stakeholder Workshop. A record of the duty to co-operate discussions around the method is available in Appendix 3.

3.5 A key part of the methodology was the development of an assessment framework that appropriately reflected the context and priorities of both Central Bedfordshire and Luton, whilst remaining true to the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF. Following the definition of an agreed set of assessment criteria, the assessment of the Green Belt within the Study area was undertaken in two stages – Stage 1 and Stage 2 – as set out below.

Defining and agreeing the assessment criteria

3.6 Table 3.1 below sets out the agreed assessment framework for assessing the relative performance of Green Belt parcels and broad areas against each Green Belt purpose. This is followed by a description of the rationale for the assessment criteria adopted.

3.7 For Green Belt purposes 1-4, Table 3.1 sets out:

- The settlements considered relevant for the assessment of the purposes (not all settlements are considered large built-up areas (Purpose 1), towns (Purpose 2) or historic towns (Purpose 4).
- The key assessment factors affecting a parcel’s rating against each of the purposes.
- A range of scenarios likely to result in specific contributions to each Green Belt purpose to ensure consistency and clarity in assessment judgements/ratings.
- Further comments and definitions to aid assessment.

3.8 A 5-point scale was used to rate each parcel and broad area as making either a strong, relatively strong, moderate, relatively weak contribution, or weak/no contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
Strong Contribution
Parcel performs well against the purpose.

Relatively Strong Contribution
Parcel performs relatively well against the purpose.

Moderate Contribution
Parcel performs moderately well against the purpose.

Relatively Weak Contribution
Parcel performs relatively weakly against the purpose.

Weak/No Contribution
Parcel makes a weak or no contribution to the purpose.

3.9 **Table 3.1** also explains why the Study does not include a parcel by parcel assessment of the fifth purpose of Green Belts, which assists urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. This is based on the reasoning that the contribution of individual parcels of land to encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land does not vary spatially across the Study area, and that it is the collective contribution of the Green Belt designation as a whole which achieves this purpose.

**Table 3.1: Assessment Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose 1: Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</th>
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<td>Settlements considered to be 'large built-up areas': Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton Linslade.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key assessment factors:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development/land-use: less development = stronger contribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location: closer to settlement = stronger contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separating features: stronger relationship with countryside than settlement = stronger contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting features: weaker relationship between settlement and countryside = stronger contribution</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strong Contribution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relatively Strong Contribution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Contribution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relatively Weak Contribution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weak/No Contribution</strong></td>
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**Further Notes/Definitions:**
Urban sprawl is the spread of urban areas into the neighbouring countryside. This could be in the form of ribbon development or non-compact development which doesn’t relate well to the existing urban area. Development means any built structure.
### Purpose 2: Prevent neighbouring towns from merging

**Settlements considered to be 'towns':** Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis, Leighton Linslade, Ampthill and Flitwick.

**Key assessment factors:**
- Development/land-use: less development = stronger contribution
- Location: juxtaposed between towns = stronger contribution
- Separating features: lack of features to increased perceived separation between towns = stronger contribution
- Connecting features: stronger relationship between towns = stronger contribution

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Strong</strong> Contribution</th>
<th>Development of this parcel would result in physical or visual coalescence of towns, or a significant narrowing of the physical gap with no landscape elements to preserve separation</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relatively Strong</strong> Contribution</td>
<td>Development of this parcel would result in physical or visual coalescence of settlements which form a significant proportion of the land between towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate</strong> Contribution</td>
<td>Development of this parcel would result in significant narrowing of the physical gap, but landscape feature(s) would preserve a sense of separation; or Development of this parcel would result in a moderate narrowing of the physical gap, but with no landscape feature(s) to preserve separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relatively Weak</strong> Contribution</td>
<td>Development of this parcel would result in a moderate narrowing of the physical or perceived gap, but with landscape feature(s) to preserve separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weak/No</strong> Contribution</td>
<td>Development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between towns</td>
</tr>
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**Further Notes/Definitions:**
This purpose seeks to prevent settlements from merging to form larger settlements. The PAS guidance states that distance alone should not be used to assess the extent to which the Green Belt prevents neighbouring towns from merging into one another. Two key elements have therefore being used – the extent of the actual or perceived visual and physical gap.

### Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

**Applies to the countryside around all settlements** – i.e. all Green Belt parcels.

**Key assessment factors:**
- Development/land-use: less urbanising land use and more openness = stronger contribution
- Location: further from settlement = stronger contribution
- Size: larger parcel = stronger contribution
- Separating features: stronger relationship with countryside than settlement = stronger contribution
- Connecting features: weaker relationship between settlement and countryside = stronger contribution

| **Strong** Contribution | The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development – development would represent encroachment into the countryside |

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Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study

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November 2016
### Relatively Strong Contribution
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than the settlement and lacks urbanising development

### Moderate Contribution
The parcel relates to both the settlement and the wider countryside or has a degree of separation from both; or
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than to the settlement, but openness is compromised by urbanising development within it

### Relatively Weak Contribution
The parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than to the wider countryside; or
The parcel relates to both the settlement and the wider countryside, or has a degree of separation from both, but openness is compromised by urbanising development within it

### Weak/No Contribution
The parcel is too lacking in openness to be considered countryside, or has little countryside within it and lacks relationship with the wider Green Belt countryside

### Further Notes/Definitions:
Encroachment from urbanising influences is the intrusion / gradual advance of buildings and urbanised land beyond an acceptable or established limit.

Urbanising influences include any features that compromise ‘openness’, such as roads lined with street lighting and pavements, large areas of hard standing, floodlit sports fields, roads, pylons etc. They do not include development which is commonly found within the countryside, e.g. agricultural or forestry related development, isolated dwellings, historic schools and churches.

Countryside is land/scenery which is rural in character, i.e. a relatively open natural, semi-natural or farmed landscape.

### Purpose 4: Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

**Settlements considered to be ‘historic towns’:** Ampthill, Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and Luton.

**Key assessment factors:**
Development/land-use: less development = stronger contribution
Location: contains key characteristics, or important in views to or from them = stronger contribution
Separating features: lack of features to increase perceived separation from historic town = stronger contribution
Connecting features: stronger relationship between historic town and countryside = stronger contribution

### Strong Contribution
The parcel’s openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and key characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting – development would detract significantly from the town’s historic character

### Relatively Strong Contribution
The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting – development would detract from the town’s historic character

### Moderate Contribution
The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting, but development would have only a moderate impact on historic character
Relatively Weak Contribution

The parcel forms a minor element in the setting of an historic town; or forms a more major element but has limited openness

Weak/No Contribution

The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town

Further Notes/Definitions:

To inform assessments against purpose 4, relevant evidence bases were used to define the setting and special character, i.e. the ‘historic character’ of each historic town. These historic characteristics are outlined below in paragraphs 3.45 to 3.56 below.

At Stage 1, topographic OS base mapping and aerial and road-side imagery were used to establish the role of Green Belt parcels and broad areas in contributing to the setting and special character of historic towns. Stage 1 parcels considered remotely to be making a contribution (strong – relatively weak) to purpose 4 were visited during site-based assessments in Stage 2 to verify desk-based judgements in the field.

Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Green Belt has the potential to make a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the land available for development and encouraging developers to seek out and recycle derelict / urban sites. It is considered that it is not possible to distinguish the extent to which each Green Belt parcels delivers against this purpose and therefore the parcels have not been individually assessed against Purpose 5.

Rationale behind the assessment criteria

3.10 National planning policy and guidance provides limited material on how the five purposes of the Green Belt should be interpreted. Based on the review of relevant guidance, recently adopted Local Plans, and detailed discussions with the Steering Group, this section sets out LUC’s rationale and local interpretation of the Green Belt essential characteristics and purposes for the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study.

The ‘essential characteristic’ of Green Belt

3.11 The NPPF refers to two essential characteristics of Green Belt: ‘openness’ and ‘permanence’.

3.12 Openness in a Green Belt sense relates to lack of built development more than visual openness, although the two often go hand in hand. The key distinction is that where vegetation provides visual enclosure this does not reduce Green Belt openness, even though it might in practice mean that development would have less visual impact9. Openness should therefore be judged based on the scale and density of existing development. The extent and form of existing development affects the degree to which a parcel can be considered to be part of the countryside rather than an extension of the urban/settled area, or a built-up area in its own right.

3.13 The concept of permanence is a planning consideration rather than a physical characteristic, so it cannot be assessed in the same way that openness can. However, when redefining a Green Belt boundary, new boundaries should be drawn along features which are clearly defined and which also play a physical and/or visual role in separating town, i.e. the urban, and countryside, i.e. the rural.

Assessing land parcels’ contribution to the Green Belt purposes

3.14 Assessments of land against the Green Belt purposes are routed in the relationship between individual land parcels, settlements and the wider countryside as influenced by the following common factors10:

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9 This point is made in paragraph 22 of the judgement in Heath & Hampsted Society v London Borough of Camden [2007] EWHC 977 (Admin) (3rd April 2007)
10 These factors can be addressed without allowing landscape quality to influence the assessment.
• **Development and land use** – the extent and form of existing development, and land use characteristics, affect the degree to which parcels of land are considered to be part of the countryside rather than an extensions of the urban/settled area;

• **Location** – the position of land parcels in relation to settlements affects the significance of their role in influencing the potential expansion of those settlements;

• **Separating features** – landscape elements such as woodland blocks, rivers and ridges, motorways and railways, have a physical and visual impact on the relationships between settlements and the countryside;

• **Connecting features** – roads or rail links and landforms like valleys can draw areas together.

3.15 All these factors have the potential to influence a parcel of land’s contribution to any one of the Green Belt purposes.

*Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas*

3.16 It is possible to argue that all Green Belt prevents the unrestricted sprawl of large built up urban areas, because that is its principal purpose as a strategic planning designation. However, the study requires us to distinguish one area (or parcel) from another in terms of the extent to which they perform this purpose. This requires a detailed, site specific assessment against this strategic purpose.

3.17 There is no definition provided in the NPPF or a standard definition for a ‘large built up area.’ The Office for National Statistics defines a ‘large’ built up area as a settlement with between 0.5-1 million people; much larger than the settlements within the Study area. It was therefore necessary to decide on what constitutes a ‘large built up area’ for the purposes of the Study.

3.18 Following discussions with the Steering Group the following conurbations were defined as large built-up areas:

1. Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis
2. Leighton Buzzard and Linslade
3. Milton Keynes

3.19 These merged urban conurbations are significantly larger than any of the other settlements within or directly adjacent to the Study area. Milton Keynes does not lie within or directly adjacent to the South Bedfordshire Green Belt; however, the settlement of Woburn Sands, which has a strong connection with the large built-up area of Milton Keynes, does. As there is no Green Belt in between Milton Keynes and Woburn Sands forming a barrier to sprawl of the large built-up area, the Green Belt to the south and east of Woburn Sands plays a role in checking the sprawl of Milton Keynes.

3.20 The permitted mixed-use urban extensions north of Houghton Regis and east of Leighton Linslade were mapped and used to define the new urban edges of these large built-up areas. Assumptions about the extent and form of future development which have not been permitted cannot be made.

3.21 There is no clear definition of what constitutes urban sprawl. The PAS guidance\(^\text{11}\) states in relation to Purpose 1:

> “The terminology of ‘sprawl’ comes from the 1930s when Green Belt was conceived. Has this term changed in meaning since then? For example, is development that is planned positively through a local plan, and well designed with good masterplanning, sprawl?”

3.22 The guidance emphasises the variable nature of the term ‘sprawl’ and questions whether positively planned development constitutes ‘sprawl’. The RTPI Research Briefing No. 9 (2015) on Urban Form and Sustainability is also not definitive on the meaning of sprawl:

> “As an urban form, sprawl has been described as the opposite of the desirable compact city, with high density, centralised development and a mixture of functions. However, what is considered to be sprawl ranges along a continuum of more compact to completely dispersed development. A

variety of urban forms have been covered by the term ‘urban sprawl’, ranging from contiguous suburban growth, linear patterns of strip development, leapfrog and scattered development.”

3.23 Therefore, sufficiently well-located and planned urban extensions may not constitute ‘urban sprawl’. For the purpose of this study, urban sprawl is defined as uncompact and/or ribbon development which does not relate well to the existing urban form of the ‘large built-up areas’ as defined above.

3.24 Given this definition, land parcels adjacent to the large built up areas are likely to contribute to checking sprawl, unless it is separated from the wider countryside by landscape features significant enough to prevent any subsequent development beyond the parcel being directly relatable to a large built-up area.

3.25 The smaller the area of land the greater the potential for a stronger relationship with a large built-up area than with the wider countryside, whether due to the extent of existing urban influence within the parcel or to the presence of landscape elements which separate it from the wider countryside.

3.26 Therefore, sufficiently well-located and planned urban extensions may not constitute 'urban sprawl'. For the purpose of this study, urban sprawl is defined as uncompact and/or ribbon development which does not relate well to the existing urban form of the 'large built-up areas' as defined above.

3.27 Given this definition, land parcels adjacent to the large built up areas are likely to contribute to checking sprawl, unless it is separated from the wider countryside by landscape features significant enough to prevent any subsequent development beyond the parcel being directly relatable to a large built-up area.

3.28 The smaller the area of land the greater the potential for a stronger relationship with a large built-up area than with the wider countryside, whether due to the extent of existing urban influence within the parcel or to the presence of landscape elements which separate it from the wider countryside.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another

3.26 The NPPF specifically refers to preventing the merging of neighbouring towns, not the merging of towns with smaller satellite settlements, or the merger of smaller settlements with each other. It is, however, acknowledged that smaller intervening settlements can affect the nature and size of the perceived gaps between neighbouring towns.

3.27 Central Bedfordshire’s latest settlement hierarchy was used to identify the settlements within the Study area which broadly fall under the term ‘neighbouring towns’. All Green Belt settlements defined as 'Major Service Centres' in the hierarchy were considered large enough to be defined as 'towns':

- Ampthill
- Dunstable
- Flitwick
- Houghton Regis
- Leighton Linsalde

3.28 Luton was considered as a ‘town’. In addition, Milton Keynes to the north west and Harpenden to the south east – both outside but in close proximity to the study area – were considered to be of an equivalent size to Central Bedfordshire’s ‘Major Service Centres’ and Luton to also be considered as ‘towns’.

3.29 There are a number of factors which are relevant to a land parcel's contribution to purpose 2:

- A land parcel's location and size. For example, a parcel that represents all or most of the physical gap between neighbouring towns is likely to make a significant contribution to preventing the coalescence of towns.
- The role of landform and land cover within a land parcel in connecting or separating neighbouring towns visually or in terms of the character of their settings.
- The character of the towns themselves, i.e. the strength of the relationship between the towns and the land parcels that form the gaps that separate them.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

3.30 All Green Belt land adjacent to settlements inset within or directly adjacent to the Green Belt within the Study Area was considered as having potential to be vulnerable to encroachment and was therefore parcelled and assessed against purpose 3.

3.31 The contribution a parcel makes to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment can be directly related to the extent to which it:

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12 Central Bedfordshire’s latest settlement hierarchy is outlined in its withdrawn Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire, Central Bedfordshire Council, 2014
• Displays the characteristics of countryside.
• Relates to the adjacent settlement and to the wider countryside, regardless of administrative boundaries.

3.32 The word ‘countryside’, is typically defined as land/scenery which is rural in character, i.e. a relatively open natural, semi-natural or farmed landscape that falls outside of, or inset into, the defined boundaries of settlements. Countryside lacks dense, urbanising development. Urbanising influences were considered to include any features that compromise the rural character and openness of the countryside. Development commonly found within the countryside, such as agricultural or forestry related development, isolated dwellings, historic schools and churches were not considered to have an urbanising influence.

3.33 PAS guidance states that:

“The most useful approach is to look at the difference between urban fringe – land under the influence of the urban area - and open countryside, and to favour the latter in determining which land to try and keep open, taking into account the types of edges and boundaries that can be achieved.”

3.34 It is important to recognise that Green Belt does not function as a series of isolated parcels: the assessment of a defined parcel will reflect the nature of landscape elements or characteristics within that parcel but must also reflect its relationship with the wider Green Belt.

**Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

3.35 Whilst many settlements have historic elements, this Green Belt purpose is only relevant to settlements of a certain size – towns – which retain a historic character connected to surrounding landscape elements, and which it is impractical to protect solely through Conservation Area designations. This connection between a historic town’s historic character and the wider countryside does not have to be physical, indeed successions of development often isolate core historic areas from the surrounding countryside; it is often a visual connection. This visual connection can be defined through movement through the area or views into or out of the settlement.

3.36 A desk-based review of relevant local planning documents and evidence bases was undertaken by LUC, Central Bedfordshire and Luton to identify towns within the study area which could be appropriately defined as historic towns.

3.37 The South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review\textsuperscript{13} stated:

“\textit{...the South Bedfordshire Green Belt serves the purpose of preserving the setting and special character of the historic town of Leighton Buzzard. The town has its origins as a crossing point on the River Ouzel and although 19th and 20th century development has masked this relationship to some extent, the application of Green Belt policies has ensured that the riverside landscapes of the Ouzel Valley still extend into the heart of the urban area and that the setting of All Saints Church and the adjoining historic town centre and views to it from the meadowland to the south of the town, have been retained.}”

3.38 The Luton/South Bedfordshire Local Development Framework Issues Paper \textsuperscript{14} stated that purpose 4 “is only applicable, in southern Bedfordshire, to Leighton-Linslade where Green Belt boundaries have been carefully drawn so as to retain the open land of the Ouzel Valley which is important in the context of the setting and character of the historic core of Leighton Buzzard.”

3.39 Therefore, Leighton Linslade was identified as a historic town.

3.40 Luton Borough Council’s Stage 1 Green Belt Study\textsuperscript{15} assessed the pockets of Green Belt within the Borough to determine their contribution to the Green Belt purposes, including contribution to the setting of the historic town of Luton for purpose 4. Therefore, for consistency, Luton has been defined as a historic town.

\textsuperscript{14} Luton/South Bedfordshire Local Development Framework Issues Paper 1, Luton Borough Council and South Bedfordshire Council, 2006
\textsuperscript{15} Luton Green Belt Study, Luton Borough Council, 2014.
Finally, at the Stakeholder Workshop on 26th May 2016, it was agreed by the cooperating authorities and present neighbouring authorities that Ampthill should be defined as a historic town. The town’s Conservation Area Character Appraisal was adopted in April 2005 but updated by Central Bedfordshire officers and external consultants in June 2013. However, the updated appraisal was not published. Although still in draft form, the 2013 update clearly describes the town’s large Conservation Area including Ampthill Park and its historic core whose historic character is intrinsically linked to the surrounding landscape, including the landscaped parks and the Bedford Plain beyond. It is these features, which form a green backdrop to much of the town, which were considered justify the definition of Ampthill as a historic town in Green Belt terms.

To assess the contribution of parcels of land to the setting and special character of specific historic towns (Green Belt purpose 4) requires an appreciation of each historic town’s distinctive qualities or historic characteristics – more specifically the landscape elements and relationships which contribute to the setting or special character of each historic town.

Relevant landscape elements tend to be distinct from historic towns, forming part of their open surroundings, open surroundings which, more often than not, also contribute to the prevention of encroachment on the countryside (Green Belt purpose 3). These landscape elements do not have to form part of the visual setting of a historic town to preserve its setting and special character. Where successive settlement expansion around a historic town’s historic core might screen it from the wider landscape, the open countryside can still play an important role in preserving the approach to and arrival in to a town, as to views out from it.

The relevant historic characteristics of Ampthill, Leighton Linslade and Luton used in the assessment of Green Belt land parcels against purpose 4 are outlined below.

**Ampthill**

The Ampthill Conservation Area Appraisal provides information regarding the key elements of Ampthill’s setting. The principal elements are the elevated medieval parklands on the greensand ridge to the north and west which create a sheltered setting. A list of factors creating “the special interest that justifies designation of the Ampthill Conservation Area” includes “landscaped parks to the north and west which form a green tree lined backdrop to much of the town” and which provide a “rural setting which sits very close to the core of the Conservation Area in places”. The Conservation Area incorporates Ampthill Park to the north and north-west, and the avenue of the trees known as the Alameda (which runs from the town westwards up to Cooper’s Hill). The appraisal notes that “the compact and enclosed nature of the town is often seen in stark contrast to the open landscape beyond viewed between and above buildings. The wider landscape particularly in relation to Ampthill Park is constantly forming a dynamic and interesting backdrop to the traditional built form of the town. The treed backdrop of the town and the richness and diversity of the park landscaping are crucial elements of its character.”

The Conservation Area appraisal also notes the importance of the parish church: “There are excellent open views to the church from Church Street as the traveller approaches the town from the east. The varied species of trees of Church Hill and Rectory Lane make a significant contribution to long views into the town from this approach. The topography is such that the Church of St Andrew sits as part of a very high quality group of historic buildings somewhat detached from the town centre but no less important. The church remains the dominant building in these important and highly sensitive views.” However, fieldwork undertaken as part of the study revealed that there were no significant views of the church from beyond the inset settlement edge, particularly since the recent construction of a residential development to the north of Church Street.

There is little reference in the Conservation Area appraisal to the southern side of Ampthill, but tree cover here does play a role in containing the settlement, maintaining separation from Flitwick.

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16 Ampthill Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update (unpublished), Mid Bedfordshire District Council, June 2013.
17 It should be noted that settlements which have not been defined as ‘historic towns’ can have equally distinctive landscape settings which make equally important contributions to purpose 3.
Leighton Linslade

3.48 The South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review\(^{18}\) stated that “the application of Green Belt policies has ensured that the riverside landscapes of the Ouzel Valley still extend into the heart of the urban area and that the setting of All Saints Church and the adjoining historic town centre and views to it from the meadowland to the south of the town, have been retained.”

3.49 The Luton/South Bedfordshire Local Development Framework Issues Paper 1\(^{19}\) stated that the Green Belt boundary around Leighton Linslade “have been carefully drawn so as to retain the open land of the Ouzel Valley which is important in the context of the setting and character of the historic core of Leighton Buzzard.”

3.50 The Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment\(^{20}\) makes reference in the Ouzel Greensand Valley character area analysis to “extensive areas of historic meadowland, with watercourses and cross-ditches deriving from the management of meadows and water supply for Grange Mill” (7B1.21), and there is also reference to the “Grand Union Canal and towpath, Sandhole Bridge and remains of other canal structures of industrial heritage interest and now providing significant opportunities for recreation” (7B1.24). Views to All Saints Church are noted in The Toddington – Hockcliffe Clay Hills character area assessment when considering “local views to historic features including churches (e.g. All Saints Church) which would be vulnerable to unsympathetic development within their setting” (8A1.28).

3.51 Leighton Linslade also has prominent surrounding hills, with associated woodland to the north in particular, for example the “wooded context provided by the surrounding Woburn Greensand Ridge (6a) to the north of Leighton Buzzard” (7B1.25), and to the south the Billington Clay Hills character area: “largely undeveloped hill sides which are visible in distant views through gaps in vegetation or in channelled views along road corridors from the surrounding clay vale, the edge of Leighton Buzzard and east to Totternhoe Knolls located on the nearby Chalk Escarpment (9b)” (8B.10).

3.52 Although the 2004 Local Plan Review only makes reference to the meadow to the south of the town centre, the river valley to the north is also noted in the Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment as having an “intimate, rural character including picturesque qualities such as the setting of Old Linslade Church.” (7B1.18).

Luton

3.53 Luton Borough Council provided the following text on 10/06/2016 to inform the consideration of setting characteristics for the town:

“Luton became an established settlement during the Medieval period formed around the River Lea within the Chiltern Hills chalk spring line which played an important role in the early development of the town and its setting within historic landscapes including Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Dreys Ditches and Strip Lynecets at Stopsely Common) and more recently, Luton Hoo and Putteridge Bury. Its original Medieval layout can be understood through many of the road names within the town centre such as Bridge Street, Castle Street and Mill Street. The town centre saw large expansion from its historic core, including Victorian and Edwardian buildings and frontages (e.g. High Town), the River Lea and Wardown Park (Registered Park and Garden) during the 19th and 20th century in which Luton grew into a successful market town. The straw hat industry also saw great success within the town and by the end of the 19th century was established and largely influenced the built form of the town centre such that the town sustains five Conservation Areas, notably the predominantly commercial Conservation Areas of the Town Centre; High Town (Luton’s earliest suburb); and Plaiters Lea and the primarily residential Conservation Areas of Rothsay; and Luton South.”

3.54 The key elements of this description with regard to settlement setting are the references to its relationship with the River Lea and the surrounding hills and historic landscape features: Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and estate parklands. The SAM and Registered Park and

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\(^{19}\) Luton/South Bedfordshire Local Development Framework Issues Paper 1, Luton Borough Council and South Bedfordshire Council, 2006

\(^{20}\) Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, LUC, 2015.
Garden designations provide a degree of protection to their settings in the same way that Conservation Areas do, but it is the relationship between these features and the inset settlement which is important for Green Belt assessment purposes. There are no Green Belt landscape elements which have particular relationships with Conservation Areas that increase their contribution.

3.55 The Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment makes reference to landscape elements which are relevant to the setting of Luton, and the distinctive chalk hills and escarpments, which provide viewpoints from which the landscape setting can be appreciated, are key elements in this. For example, the assessment for the Warden Hill - Stopsley Common Chalk Escarpment character area notes that it provides an “important rural setting and backdrop to the suburban and urban context of Luton” (9D1.13). With regard to visual sensitivity it identifies the “open, exposed skyline forming a backdrop in views from the urban area” (9D1.21). To the south of Luton there is reference in the South Dunstable Chalk Escarpment character area assessment to the “glimpsed views of the scarp” which “provide a dramatic backdrop from retail and housing estates at the foot of the scarp” (9), and the Caddington – Slip End Chalk Dipslope character area assessment notes the “value of the area in providing a buffer or rural setting to the Luton-Dunstable conurbation; the scarp acting as a natural containment to growth” (11B1.21). To the north, the Houghton Regis – North Luton Rolling Chalk Farmland character area assessment notes small pockets of ancient woodlands and makes reference to an ancient routeway: “Thiodweg, including a section of Dray’s Ditches – is a historic landscape feature of major importance, but vulnerable to being breached by any northward extension of Luton’s urban area” (10B1.19).

3.56 With regard to historic parklands and to the River Lea, the Luton Hoo Chalk Dipslope character area assessment states that “the designed landscapes of Luton Hoo Manor House and Stockwood Country Park impart a designed, managed character on the landscape, sensitive to changes in management or views to modern development” (11C1.15), and notes the “strong perception of an elevated landform with clear visual relationship with the adjacent Lea River Valley” (11C1.17).

**Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

3.57 Green Belt assessments tend not to assess individual parcels against purpose 5, rating all parcels equally or not at all. This is based on the reasoning that the contribution of individual parcels of land to encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land rarely varies spatially; rather it is the contribution of the Green Belt designation as a whole which achieves this purpose.

3.58 The view of the PAS guidance (see 2.6 above) is that:

“...it must be the case that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. If Green Belt achieves this purpose, all Green Belt does to the same extent and hence the value of various land parcels is unlikely to be distinguished by the application of this purpose.”

**Rating the contribution of land parcels to the Green Belt purposes**

3.59 There is no accepted standard on how to rate the contribution of land to the Green Belt purposes. It is, however, important to use a scale of ratings that clearly draws out variations in the contributions of individual parcels across the Study Area.

3.60 The NPPF does not weight the purposes; however, in practice, purpose 3 is relevant to all parcels of land and only parcels that lack the ‘essential characteristic’ of openness will make no contribution to it. Purposes 1, 2 and 4, on the other hand, are only relevant to parcels in the vicinity of large built-up areas, juxtaposed between neighbouring towns or within the settings of historic towns.

3.61 The significance of this in terms of the results of assessments is that many parcels which might be considered ‘core’ Green Belt rate highly against purpose 3 but make lower contributions to the other purposes. Assessments which aggregate ratings to provide an overall assessment may as a result rate parcels that make a low or moderate contribution to a number of purposes higher than those which make a strong contribution to purpose 3 only. The NPPF does not require all the purposes to be met simultaneously. Therefore, parcels of land can make a significant contribution without performing all the purposes at the same time. However, it would not be unreasonable to
assume that a parcel that rates highly against a number of different purposes potentially has more value in Green Belt terms than one which rates highly against only one purpose.

3.62 Short of defining Green Belt parcels around individual agricultural fields and carrying out thousands of assessments, a scale of assessment which is both impractical and inappropriate for a strategic assessment of the Green Belt, variations in the contribution of land within parcels to individual purposes is inevitable. This variation is an added source of complication when providing assessment ratings: should a rating reflect the strongest level of contribution, or should it represent an average within the parcel?

3.63 At Stage 1, parcels ratings reflect the highest contribution portions of land within the parcel make to each purpose; however, each rating is supported by detailed text which describes how a judgement has been reached, i.e. which factors have influenced the rating given. This text also draws out the variations in contribution of land across a parcel. These textual judgements recorded at Stage 1 of the Study were invaluable for the first task of Stage 2 of the Study, isolating the portions of the Green Belt which make relatively weak contributions to all the Green Belt purposes and are therefore likely to pose less risk of harm to the wider Green Belt if released for development.

**Stage 1**

3.64 Stage 1 was a desk-based assessment to establish the degree to which the Green Belt within Central Bedfordshire meets the purposes of the Green Belt designation, as set out in the NPPF. Defined parcels were assessed and rated. These ratings are supported by text that describes the spatial variations in the contribution of land to the purposes within each parcel.

3.65 In addition, Stage 1 involved remotely assessing the openness of Central Bedfordshire’s main settlements within the Green Belt, making recommendations on which settlements should be inset and which settlements should be washed over.

3.66 Luton Borough Council completed a Stage 1 strategic assessment of the six parcels of Green Belt within the Borough in 2014. These pockets of Green Belt were not assessed again.

**Definition of Stage 1 land parcels**

3.67 The ‘Examination in Public’ (EiP) of the Leeds Core Strategy highlighted the importance of assessing the performance of all Green Belt within a Plan area, particularly where the scale of planned growth is likely to lead to pressure to release Green Belt land for development. Therefore, all Green Belt land within Central Bedfordshire was parcelled for assessment at Stage 1.

3.68 Green Belt is a strategic designation designated at a landscape scale. It is therefore important that strategic assessments of Green Belt, designed to inform the definition of sustainable patterns of development, are undertaken at an appropriate scale, i.e. assessment parcels are defined at a scale which enables the study to draw out the spatial differences in strategic contribution of land to the Green Belt purposes. In Central Bedfordshire, this was achieved by defining smaller assessment parcels adjacent to the main inset settlements where development pressures, and therefore variations in contribution to the purposes of Green Belt, are likely to be greatest:

- Ampthill
- Barton-le-Clay
- Caddington
- Dunstable
- Eaton Bray
- Flitwick
- Harlington
- Heath and Reach
Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study

3.69 Parcels were defined by taking the built-up area boundaries of Central Bedfordshire’s inset settlements as the ‘inner edges’ and working outwards to consistent and significant landscape features, which were defined as the ‘outer edges’ of each parcel. In an effort to try and isolate variations in the strategic contributions of Green Belt land to the purposes of Green Belt before any assessment work, consideration was also given to marking out visual changes in the relationship between inset settlements and countryside.

3.70 GIS maps (based on Ordnance Survey and Mastermap mapping), local proposals maps and aerial images were used to identify notable permanent and readily recognisable boundaries on the ground (as referenced in paragraph 85 of the NPPF) – physical features such as substantial watercourses and water bodies, motorways, A roads and railway lines, and established infrastructure and utilities such as sewage treatment works. Woodland, hedgerows, tree lines, streams and ditches were also considered to be recognisable but less permanent boundaries. Where appropriate, these were also used to define land parcel boundaries.

3.71 Land with planning permission for large strategic developments was excluded from defined parcels and therefore the assessment. Permitted developments included the major mixed-use urban extensions north of Houghton Regis and east of Leighton Linslade and the Chaul End north of Caddington. Parcels were drawn along the consented boundaries of these consented schemes, with the large urban extensions at Houghton Regis and Leighton Linslade becoming the new urban edges of their respective Green Belt settlements. The final Green Belt boundaries around these permitted developments will be defined as part of their detailed design and construction stages.

3.72 The Stage 1 parcels for assessment are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Definition of Stage 1 broad areas

3.73 Given the strategic nature of the Study, it was considered inappropriate and impractical to define and assess small parcels of Green Belt across the large areas of Green Belt that lie away from the urban edges of the main inset settlements. Therefore, having parcelled the land around all the inset settlements within and directly adjacent to the Central Bedfordshire Green Belt, the remaining areas of Green Belt were subdivided into larger ‘broad areas’ for assessment.

3.74 The same criteria for assessment were used for the broad areas as for the smaller parcels.

3.75 The Stage 1 broad areas for assessment are defined in Figure 3.1.

Assessment of Non-Green Belt parcels

3.76 The brief indicated that the Study should assess the performance of land that currently lies outside the Green Belt, isolating areas of non-Green Belt land that fulfil the purposes of Green Belt and advising on the exceptional circumstances for designating these areas as Green Belt.

3.77 At the beginning of the Study it was agreed that this assessment would be excluded from the Study because of the strong ‘tests’ set out in paragraph 82 of the NPPF which require local planning authorities to demonstrate exceptional circumstances before establishing new Green Belt. To meet these exceptional circumstances, Central Bedfordshire and Luton must have a clear idea of their preferred spatial distribution of development, which will not be known for some time.
Figure 3.1: Stage 1 Assessment of Central Bedfordshire Green Belt – Parcels and Broad Areas

- Study area
- Planning Authority boundary
- Green Belt
- Parcel
- Broad Area
- Permitted urban extensions in Green Belt
  1: East of Leighton Linslade
  2: Pulford Corner
  3: Houghton Regis North 1&2
- Permitted strategic development in Green Belt - Chaul End

Map Scale @ A3: 1:100,000

Source: Central Bedfordshire LUC, LUC
**Desk-based assessment of Stage 1 parcels and broad areas**

3.78 Each land parcel and broad area was assessed using the agreed assessment criteria, OS maps, aerial images and relevant GIS data to gain a clear understanding of how they performed against the Green Belt purposes. Ratings and detailed notes on the judgements for each land parcel and broad area were input into an Access database. All ratings were rigorously cross-checked and reviewed to ensure consistency, clarity and transparency in all judgements.

3.79 Clear, colour-coded GIS maps linked to the Access database were prepared illustrating the defined land parcels and broad areas and the overall assessed contribution of each land parcel and broad area to each of the purposes of Green Belt.

**Assessment of Central Bedfordshire’s main Green Belt settlements**

3.80 The brief indicated that the Study should assess the Study area’s main settlements inset within and washed-over by Green Belt to determine whether they should remain inset or washed over by the designation.

3.81 All Major and Minor Service Centres, Large and Small Villages listed in Central Bedfordshire’s latest settlement hierarchy\(^2^1\) were assessed. Despite being in the Study area, Luton was not assessed because the town cannot be regarded as ‘inset’; rather it forms part of the built up area which justified the Green Belt. Other settlements which are not included in Central Bedfordshire’s settlement hierarchy are small and have a rural character. As such it was considered that they should not be assessed.

**Table 3.2: List of settlements assessed within the Green Belt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Belt Settlements</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Service Centres</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ampthill</td>
<td>Inset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunstable</td>
<td>Inset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flitwick</td>
<td>Inset</td>
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<tr>
<td>Houghton Regis</td>
<td>Inset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leighton Linslade</td>
<td>Inset</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minor Service Centres</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Barton-Le-Clay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Toddington</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Large Villages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspley Guise</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eaton Bray</td>
<td>Inset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlington</td>
<td>Inset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2^1\) Central Bedfordshire’s latest settlement hierarchy is outlined in its withdrawn Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire, Central Bedfordshire Council, 2014
### Green Belt Settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heath and Reach</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockliffe</td>
<td>Inset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slip End</td>
<td>Inset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westoning</td>
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<td>Woburn</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
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### Small Villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aspley Heath</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalton</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eversholt</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husborne Crawley</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kensworth</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgmont</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanbridge</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steppingley</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streatley</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studham</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilsworth</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totternhoe</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Sundon</td>
<td>Washed Over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.82 The methodology for assessing inset and washed over settlements within the Green Belt was based on guidance outlined in paragraph 86 of the NPPF:

"If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt."

3.83 Based on this guidance, each Green Belt settlement’s contribution to the openness of the Green Belt was assessed through an evaluation of its character. Green Belt settlements were not assessed against the Green Belt purposes.

3.84 At Stage 1, topographic OS base mapping and aerial and road-side imagery were used to remotely evaluate the character of each settlement. Lower density settlements with a more rural character were considered to contribute to the openness of the Green Belt and were

recommended to be washed over by the designation. More densely developed, compact settlements, which contrasted with the openness of the surrounding Green Belt, were recommended to be inset within the Green Belt.

3.85 Settlements that contained strong characteristics that contradicted their status as either inset or washed over settlements were highlighted in the Stage 1 desk-based assessment and visited at Stage 2 to verify the desk-based judgments made in Stage 1. These verified judgements were used to inform the recommendations made in Chapter 5.

Stage 2

3.86 The first task conducted at Stage 2 of the Study was to draw on the Stage 1 assessment of Central Bedfordshire’s Green Belt and Luton Borough Council’s 2014 Stage 1 assessment to isolate areas of the Green Belt judged to make no more than a ‘relatively weak’ contribution to all of the Green Belt purposes.

3.87 Land achieving higher ratings (i.e. ‘moderate’, ‘relatively strong’ or ‘strong’ contributions) was not isolated at Stage 2 on the grounds that releasing land making higher contributions to just one Green Belt purpose posed a greater risk of harm to the fulfilment of that Green Belt purpose and thus the integrity of the Green Belt. The framework shown in Table 3.3 fully translates the ratings recorded at Stage 1 of the Study into a forecast for harm to the Green Belt purposes if land within a parcel were released for development.

### Table 3.3: Framework for assessing harm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1 assessment ratings</th>
<th>Risk of harm from release</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makes a STRONG contribution to at least one Green Belt purpose.</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Not taken forward to Stage 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a RELATIVELY STRONG contribution to at least one Green Belt purpose. No strong contribution to any purpose.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a MODERATE contribution to at least one Green Belt purpose. No strong or relatively strong contribution to any purpose.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas considered to be borderline, i.e. making a moderate to weak contribution to all Green Belt purposes, were taken forward for site-based assessment to minimise the chance of missing weakly performing areas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a RELATIVELY WEAK contribution to Green Belt purposes. No strong, relatively strong or moderate contribution to any purpose.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Taken forward to Stage 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a WEAK contribution to Green Belt purposes. No strong, relatively strong, moderate or relatively weak contribution to any purpose.</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes NO contribution to any GB purposes. No strong, relatively strong, moderate, relatively weak or weak contribution to any purpose.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.88 As outlined above, variations in the performance of land within individual parcels and broad areas were noted in the assessment text (Appendix 1). It was these textual judgements drawing out spatial variations in the contribution of parcels to the Green Belt purposes which were used to isolate the portions of parcels and broad areas which performed relatively weakly across all the Green Belt purposes and not the individual purpose ratings for each parcel, which prudently reflect the portions of land within each parcel which make the greatest contribution to each purpose.
At this stage of the Study it was acknowledged that the desk-based judgements had been made remotely and had yet to be verified in the field. Therefore, when identifying the Stage 2 areas of relatively weak contribution, LUC erred on the side of caution by deliberately defining Stage 2 areas which were considered to be borderline moderate to weak contribution, minimising the chance of missing weakly performing areas.

Interpreting Luton Borough Council’s Stage 1 Green Belt Study

The conclusions of Luton Borough Council’s Stage 1 assessment of Green Belt were reviewed alongside and in the same way as the textual judgements of the Central Bedfordshire Stage 1 Study to determine whether there were any pockets of Green Belt within Luton which were relatively weak performing for all purposes.

The Luton Stage 1 Study identified six existing Green Belt areas and five non-Green Belt areas for assessment against detailed criteria based primarily on the five Green Belt purposes. It was agreed that it was ‘almost impossible and impractical’ to appraise each parcel against purpose 5. Therefore all parcels identified for assessment within the Borough were considered to perform equally well against purpose 5.

Using the criteria, professional judgement was used to assess the level of contribution of each parcel to each purpose. A traffic light system was used to communicate the high, medium or low contribution of parcels against each purpose. An overall score was then determined based on these separate levels of contribution and other recorded considerations such as use, function, openness, sustainability and permanence to assess the overall importance of Green Belt areas and whether boundary changes are recommended. Assessments were recorded using a standard pro-forma. Boundaries of the Green Belt designation were checked to ensure that they followed discernible physical features and other relevant Local Plan designations were recorded.

Overall, all six existing Green Belt areas (a total of 136ha) were found to still meet Green Belt purposes; the non-Green Belt areas were not considered to meet the purposes. Table 5.1 in Chapter 5 records the evaluation of the conclusions of Luton Borough Council’s Stage 1 assessment.

Site-based assessments of weakly performing areas of Green Belt

Following the identification of the weakly performing areas of Green Belt based on the Stage 1 desk-based assessment, all weakly performing areas were visited in the field. The field visits were used to:
- Verify and where necessary expand upon judgements made about the weak performing areas remotely.
- Identify alternative permanent and readily recognisable boundaries around the weakly performing areas of the Green Belt to minimise harm to the Green Belt.

Three of Central Bedfordshire’s washed over Green Belt settlements were visited at Stage 2 to verify whether urbanising influences identified remotely during Stage 1 sufficiently compromised their openness to recommend that they be inset in the Green Belt.

The Stage 1 parcels considered remotely to be make a contribution (strong – relatively weak) to purpose 4 were visited during the site-based assessments undertaken at Stage 2 to verify the Stage 1 desk-based judgements in the field.

Upon completion of the site-based assessment work, final ratings and detailed notes on the judgements for each land parcel and broad area were input into an Access database and exported to individual parcel reports (see Appendix 2). Each parcel report contains a detailed map centred on the parcel and a record of the ratings and judgements associated with each parcel. Environmental constraints able to render any significant development proposal within the Green Belt inappropriate were also mapped within the reports:
- Internationally and Nationally protected biodiversity sites: Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, RAMSAR Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves;
• Ancient woodland;
• Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
• Scheduled Monuments;
• Registered Parks and Gardens; and
• Flood Zone 3.

3.98 These environmental constraints provided valuable context; however, their presence did not influence any ratings or judgements – except insofar that they were considered to be relevant to the purposes of Green Belts and the definition of permanent, readily recognisable Green Belt boundaries. For example, while landscape quality is not directly included in the purposes of Green Belt, there are aspects of landscape quality and character that are indirectly incorporated – i.e. in relation to safeguarding the countryside. Furthermore, the boundaries Ancient Woodlands, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens may represent appropriate permanent, readily recognisable boundaries.

3.99 Clear, colour-coded overview maps of the Study area were prepared illustrating the weakly performing areas contribution to the purposes alongside the Stage 1 parcel and broad areas contribution to the purposes.

**Reporting and review**

3.100 Following the completion of the Stage 2 assessment work, the Study was written-up into a report for publication. This report draws together the findings of the Stage 1 desk-based assessments and Stage 2 site-based assessments and makes general recommendations on how the Councils might take forward the findings of the Study through the plan-making process (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

3.101 Drafts of the final report were prepared, each responding to the Steering Group’s comments received. Whilst not all members of the Steering Group agreed with the ratings of individual parcels, following the final changes to the report, Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council agreed to accept the report as an important piece of independent/objective evidence for the Steering Group’s Growth Options Study and for their respective Local Plans. This report represents the final version, responding to all outstanding comments.
4 Stage 1 Assessment Findings and Recommendations

4.1 The main aim of Stage 1 of the Study is to provide a comprehensive, robust, transparent and clear understanding of how the Green Belt land within Central Bedfordshire performs against the purposes of Green Belt. In this Chapter, the application of the agreed methodology outlined in Chapter 3 results in a helpful and informative strategic overview of the performance of Green Belt within Central Bedfordshire.

4.2 A total of 65 parcels and 8 broad areas of Green Belt land were defined in Central Bedfordshire at Stage 1 and assessed against the Green Belt purposes (i.e. purposes 1-4) defined in the NPPF. A series of maps present the ratings given to each parcel and broad area against each purpose (Figures 4.1 to 4.4). Appendix 1 contains all the assessment sheets for all broad areas and parcels assessed at Stage 1. The assessment sheets contain the detailed judgements behind the ratings against each Green Belt purpose including any variations in the performance of land within each parcel. It is therefore essential that the detailed commentaries on the parcels (as set out in Appendix 1) are read alongside Figures 4.1 to 4.4 and/or Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 below.

4.3 The information in these Figures and Appendix 1 essentially fulfils the Stage 1 Study’s overall aim. However, the Steering Group requested that the findings should be brought together to show how parcels and broad areas rate against each purpose and overall against the all Green Belt purposes. Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 show the ratings of each parcel and broad area against each purpose, respectively.

4.4 Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 do not present an aggregation of the parcels’ and broad areas’ ratings against all the purposes. As noted earlier, the NPPF does not require all the purposes of Green Belt to be met simultaneously and a Strong or Relatively Strong, even a Moderate, rating against any Green Belt purpose could be sufficient, on its own, to indicate an important contribution. Equally, even if an area of Green Belt scores highly against one or more purposes, the NPPF does not suggest that a review of its boundaries would not be appropriate, if exceptional circumstances were demonstrated.

4.5 Figure 4.5 illustrates the overall contribution of each broad area and parcel to the Green Belt purposes not by aggregating ratings against the purposes, but by only showing the highest contribution each made to any one of the Green Belt purposes.

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24 At this strategic stage, no methodology was defined for precisely mapping variations. Therefore, references in the detailed assessments to variations of performance within a parcel/broad area are informative rather than rigorous. More detailed analysis will be required if the local authorities intend to remove areas of land from the Green Belt.
Figure 4.1: Stage 1 Parcel and Broad Area Contribution to Purpose 1 – To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas

- Study area
- Planning Authority boundary
- Parcel
- Broad Area
- Green Belt
- Permitted urban extensions in Green Belt
  1: East of Leighton Linslade
  2: Pulford Corner
  3: Houghton Regis North 1&2
- Permitted strategic development in Green Belt - Chaul End

Purpose 1 contribution:
- Strong contribution
- Relatively strong contribution
- Moderate contribution
- Relatively weak contribution
- Weak/No contribution

Central Bedfordshire and Luton Joint Green Belt Study

Map Scale @ A3: 1:100,000

Source: Central Bedfordshire, LUC
Figure 4.2: Stage 1 Parcel and Broad Area Contribution to Purpose 2 – To Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging into One Another

- Study area
- Planning Authority boundary
- Parcel
- Broad Area
- Green Belt
- Permitted urban extensions in Green Belt
  1: East of Leighton Linslade
  2: Pulford Corner
  3: Houghton Regis North 1&2
- Permitted strategic development in Green Belt - Chaul End

Purpose 2 contribution
- Relatively strong contribution
- Moderate contribution
- Relatively weak contribution
- Weak/No contribution

Map Scale @ A3: 1:100,000

Source: Central Bedfordshire, LUC

Figure 4.3: Stage 1 Parcel and Broad Area Contribution to Purpose 3 – To Assist in Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment

Study area
Planning Authority boundary
Parcel
Broad Area
Green Belt
Permitted urban extensions in Green Belt
1: East of Leighton Linslade
2: Pulford Corner
3: Houghton Regis North 1&2
Permitted strategic development in Green Belt - Chaul End

Purpose 3 contribution
Strong contribution
Relatively strong contribution
Moderate contribution
Relatively weak contribution
Weak/No contribution

Map Scale @ A3: 1:100,000
Figure 4.4: Stage 1 Parcel and Broad Area Contribution to Purpose 4 – To Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns

- Study area
- Planning Authority boundary
- Parcel
- Broad Area
- Green Belt
- Permitted urban extensions in Green Belt
- 1: East of Leighton Linslade
- 2: Pulford Corner
- 3: Houghton Regis North 1 & 2
- Permitted strategic development in Green Belt - Chaul End

**Purpose 4 contribution**
- Strong contribution
- Relatively strong contribution
- Moderate contribution
- Relatively weak contribution
- Weak/No contribution

Map Scale @ A3: 1:100,000
Figure 4.5: Highest Contribution each Stage 1 Parcel and Broad Area makes to a Green Belt Purpose
### Table 4.1: Assessment ratings for Stage 1 parcels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Purpose 1</th>
<th>Purpose 2</th>
<th>Purpose 3</th>
<th>Purpose 4</th>
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<td>Relatively strong contribution</td>
<td>Weak/No contribution</td>
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<td>Luton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
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<td>Strong contribution</td>
<td>Relatively strong contribution</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Strong contribution</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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### Parcel Contribution

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL11</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Slip End

- **SE1**: Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution, Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution
- **SE2**: Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution, Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution

### Toddington

- **T1**: Weak/No contribution, Weak/No contribution, Strong contribution, Weak/No contribution
- **T2**: Weak/No contribution, Weak/No contribution, Strong contribution, Weak/No contribution
- **T3**: Weak/No contribution, Weak/No contribution, Strong contribution, Relatively weak contribution
- **T4**: Weak/No contribution, Weak/No contribution, Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution

### Westoning

- **WE1**: Weak/No contribution, Weak/No contribution, Relatively strong contribution, Weak/No contribution
- **WE2**: Weak/No contribution, Relatively weak contribution, Relatively strong contribution, Weak/No contribution
- **WE3**: Weak/No contribution, Weak/No contribution, Relatively strong contribution, Weak/No contribution

### Woburn Sands

- **WS1**: Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution, Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution
- **WS2**: Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution, Strong contribution, Weak/No contribution
- **WS3**: Moderate contribution, Weak/No contribution, Strong contribution, Weak/No contribution

### Table 4.2: Assessment ratings for Stage 1 broad areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Area</th>
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<td>Purpose 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Relatively weak contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Weak/No contribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 Table 4.3 summarises the assessment findings of the Stage 1 assessments, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcel against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.3: Summary of assessment findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Belt Purposes</th>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Only parcels and broad areas immediately adjacent or within close proximity to the large built-up areas of Luton/Dunstable and Houghton Regis, Leighton Linslade and Milton Keynes are considered to make a contribution to this purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher rated parcels tend to be those which represent open areas of countryside directly adjacent to large built-up areas, e.g. LL7, HR1 and L4, or containing features which, if unchecked by Green Belt, have the potential to facilitate the sprawl of large built-up areas in the long term, e.g. Broad Areas A and F.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lower rated parcels are generally found to the north and south of the large built-up areas, or where urban sprawl has already occurred to some degree and/or a parcel’s relationship with the wider countryside is more limited. The presence of sprawling development within parcels does not imply that these areas are less valuable as Green Belt as the remaining open land in a parcel significantly affected by urban sprawl could be considered more valuable in preventing further development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher rated parcels are found between the settlements defined as ‘towns’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The highest rated parcels contain open land which represents a significant proportion of the gap between neighbouring towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parcels which make a less significant contribution tend to represent smaller proportions of the gap between settlements and or contain landforms or land cover which play a role in separating/containing towns and therefore limit the perception...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Green Belt Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | - Almost all parcels contribute to this purpose to a greater or lesser extent.  
- Higher rated parcels and broad areas are generally further away from the larger settlements, where there is a stronger sense of openness and countryside character.  
- Lower rated parcels are less open either as a result of being more contained or developed/urbanised. |
| 4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | - Green Belt contributing strongly to the setting and special character of the historic towns of Ampthill, Leighton Linslade and Luton are generally confined to those parcels which lie in close proximity to the towns’ key historic characteristics.  
- Parcels and broad areas that form part of the wider setting of the historic towns make less significant (moderate and relatively weak) contributions to this purpose.  
- The parcels which lie furthest away from the historic towns tend to make the weakest or no contribution to preserving their setting and special character. This is generally because they’re the least visible in views into or out of the historic towns, or from the main highways that surround them. |

4.7 The broad areas represent the largely open and undeveloped countryside away from the urban edges of the inset urban settlements. As such they can often be described as the ‘main body’ of the Green Belt, considered to make a strong contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

4.8 Broad Area G is an exception in so far as it sits in isolation on the outer edge of the Green Belt. This rural area does not relate strongly to Leighton Linslade to the north due to the presence of the A4146 dual-carriageway at its northern edge. Built development here would constitute significant encroachment on the countryside; however, the parcel’s outer edge location could be considered to reduce its role, with the area to the south of the A4146 adding little to the function already performed by adjacent Green Belt land to the north. However, whilst the A4146 could constitute a strong alternative boundary feature to the existing tree belts and hedgerows along the southern and western edges of the area, the existing Green Belt edge abuts the Registered Park and Garden at Ascott.

4.9 As well as the above ‘purpose and parcel specific’ findings, it was noted that the South Bedfordshire Green Belt has helped to maintain the sense of openness and rural character of the washed over, rural settlements the majority of which lie within the broad areas. This is broadly related to, and supports, Purpose 3 ‘To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment’.
Assessment of Central Bedfordshire’s main Green Belt settlements

4.10 This section summarises the findings of the desk-based assessment of Central Bedfordshire’s main Green Belt settlements, including Major Service Centres, Minor Service Centres, Large Villages and Small Villages, carried out at Stage 1 of the Study.

4.11 Recommendations are made where settlements should remain inset or washed over by the Green Belt. Settlements that contained strong characteristics that contradicted their status as either inset or washed over settlements were recommended for on-site assessment at Stage 2. These contradictory characteristics were then visited in the field at Stage 2 to verify the desk-based judgements made at Stage 1 and inform the final recommendations made in Chapter 5.

Ampthill

Figure 4.1: Ampthill

4.12 Ampthill is a densely developed urban settlement.

4.13 It is therefore recommended that Ampthill continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
Dunstable

Figure 4.2: Dunstable

4.14 Dunstable is a densely developed urban settlement contiguous with the urban areas of Houghton Regis to the North and Luton to the east.

4.15 It is therefore recommended that Dunstable continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
Flitwick

Figure 4.3: Flitwick

4.16 Flitwick is a densely developed urban settlement.

4.17 **It is therefore recommended that Flitwick continue to be inset within the Green Belt.**
4.18 Houghton Regis is a densely developed urban settlement contiguous with the urban areas of Dunstable to the south and Luton to the east.

4.19 It is therefore recommended that Houghton Regis continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
4.20 Leighton Linslade is a densely developed urban settlement comprised of the contiguous urban areas of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade.

4.21 It is therefore recommended that Leighton Linslade continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
4.22 Barton-Le-Clay is a densely developed urban settlement.

4.23 It is therefore recommended that Barton-Le-Clay continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
4.24 Caddington comprises a dense network of residential cul-de-sacs connected to dense development along its main roads, namely Dunstable/Luton Road and Manor Road.

4.25 The settlement’s edges are defined by private gardens backing on to agricultural fields.

4.26 While the village contains private gardens, playgrounds and playing fields, its overall density contrasts with the openness of the surrounding Green Belt.

4.27 **It is therefore recommended that Caddington continue to be inset within the Green Belt.**
Toddington

Figure 4.8: Toddington

4.28 Toddington comprises a dense network of residential cul-de-sacs connected to dense development along its main roads, namely High Street and Leighton Road. The development along Station Road at the northern end of the parcel is largely one house deep either side of the road and therefore retains a more open character than the majority of the village. This area, however, is still contiguous with the rest of the settlement.

4.29 The settlement’s edges are lined by private gardens backing on to agricultural fields.

4.30 While the village contains private gardens, playgrounds and playing fields, its overall density contrasts with the openness of the surrounding Green Belt.

4.31 **It is therefore recommended that Toddington continue to be inset within the Green Belt.**
Aspley Guise

Figure 4.9: Aspley Guise

4.32 Aspley Guise is a sprawling and disjointed settlement, comprising both rural and urbanising influences. The majority of the settlement is made-up of large detached dwellings set within large gardens and set back from roads behind generous verges, hedges/walls, which contributes to the sense of openness and ‘ruralness’.

4.33 Sprawling ribbon development from Woburn Sands along Weathercock Lane/West Hill grows denser towards the historic centre of the village. However, the red brick buildings and walls and mature vegetation contribute to the rural scene.

4.34 The undulating topography, open green spaces and tall trees within and around the village add to a sense of integration with the surrounding countryside. Development is largely restricted to the northern side of Woodside Road at the southern edge of the settlement and the western side of Woburn Lane at the eastern edge of the settlement. This maintains open views out to the surrounding agricultural land and woodland.

4.35 However, the following features contribute to a more urban character:

- The densely-packed semi-detached and terraced dwellings along Duke Street and San Remo Road.
- The relatively modern detached dwellings along The Mount cul-de-sac.
- Despite the density in these parts of the village, the vast majority of this development is one dwelling deep either side of the roads.
While it was considered unlikely that the urban characteristics in Aspley Guise were significant enough to compromise the rural character and openness of the majority of the village, it was recommended that the village be visited at Stage 2 to verify these judgements and establish whether further consideration might be given to insetting Aspley Guise in the Green Belt.

**Eaton Bray**

Figure 4.10: Eaton Bray

Eaton Bray comprises a dense network of residential cul-de-sacs connected to dense semi-detached and terraced ribbon development along its main roads, notably Tottenhoe Road/High Street/Moor End. The development along Moor End is merged with similar development associated with the village of Edlesborough in the neighbouring District of Aylesbury Vale and outside the Green Belt.

The majority of the settlement’s edges are lined by private gardens backing on to agricultural fields – the settlement is inward facing towards the road.

While the village contains private gardens, junction verges, playgrounds and playing fields, its overall density contrasts with the openness of the surrounding Green Belt.

It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
Harlington

Figure 4.11: Harlington

4.41 Harlington is comprised of a dense network of suburban residential streets containing a mixture of relatively modern detached, semi-detached houses and maisonettes.

4.42 The edges of southern half of the settlement are largely lined by private gardens backed on to agricultural fields, creating the feeling of a settlement inward facing towards the road. The northern half is lined by roads which are open to agricultural fields, creating a greater sense of openness.

4.43 A large secondary school represents a significant urbanising influence on the countryside at the northern edge of the settlement.

4.44 While the village contains private gardens, junction verges, playgrounds and playing fields, its overall density contrasts with the openness of the surrounding Green Belt.

4.45 **It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be inset within the Green Belt.**
4.46 Heath and Reach is comprised of a dense network of suburban residential streets and cul-de-sacs containing a mixture of relatively modern dwellings and historic red brick buildings. The change in topography between the south eastern and north western halves of the settlements, combined with a large area of allotments creates a sense of openness within parts of the village; however, this sense of openness is significantly less than the wider countryside.

4.47 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
Hockliffe

Figure 4.13: Hockliffe

4.48 Hockliffe is a very compact, dense village of ribbon development along Watling Street (Roman road). Several historic buildings line the wide, open Roman road; however, the vast majority of village is comprised of densely developed suburban and urban cul-de-sacs to the north of the Roman road.

4.49 These densely developed cul-de-sacs have relatively little public open space and small private gardens which back on to agricultural fields, limiting the sense of openness within the majority of the settlement.

4.50 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
4.51 Slip End comprises a dense network of suburban residential streets containing a mixture of relatively modern detached, semi-detached houses and maisonettes, two terraced streets at its northern end (Summer Street and Front Street) and a large area of hardstanding used to store cars.

4.52 The majority of the settlement’s edges are lined by private gardens backing on to agricultural fields – the settlement is inward facing towards the road. Mature trees line the terraced streets to the north and car storage area to the west, marking the urban edge apart from the wider open countryside.

4.53 While the village contains private gardens, junction verges, playgrounds and playing fields, its overall density contrasts with the openess of the surrounding Green Belt.

4.54 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
Westoning

Figure 4.15: Westoning

Westoning is comprised of a dense network of residential streets and cul-de-sacs connected to dense ribbon development along Park Road/High Street.

The majority of the settlement’s edges are lined by private gardens backed on to agricultural fields, the exception being its eastern edge which borders a railway line.

Small clusters of private gardens and the playing fields of the village school represent the only significant open spaces that punctuate the dense urban areas; however these make a limited contribution to opening out the settlement to the wider open countryside.

It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be inset within the Green Belt.
Woburn

Figure 4.16: Woburn

4.59 Woburn is compact, historic settlement containing a long avenue of tall town houses in its historic core and pockets of more suburban detached, semi-detached and bungalow dwellings clustered around cul-de-sacs, including Drakeloe Close to the north, Timber Lane to the west and London End to the south.

4.60 The main roads along which this historic village has developed are relatively wide, creating a strong sense of openness in contrast to the strong urbanising influences; however, the suburban cul-de-sacs are more enclosed and inward facing with limited views of the wider countryside.

4.61 **It was recommended that the village be visited at Stage 2 to verify these judgements and establish whether further consideration might be given to insetting Woburn within the Green Belt.**
Aspley Heath

Figure 4.17: Aspley Heath

4.62 Aspley Heath mainly comprises large, detached dwellings set back from the wooded Church Road. The vegetation and sense of openess afforded by the large private gardens contribute to a rural character.

4.63 The northernmost end of the village (north of the church) is the much more densely developed and urban in character and includes a dense cluster of flats and maisonettes at Aspley Court. This portion of the village is more consistent in character with the larger, denser and altogether more urban village of Woburn Sands which sits to the north of Hardwick Road and Aspley Hill, just outside the Green Belt; however, these two roads represent the most appropriate permanent and readily recognisable boundaries for the Green Belt within the immediate vicinity.

4.64 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
Chalton largely consists of ribbon development along Luton Road. The majority of the buildings are relatively modern in character giving a suburban feel to the village; however, almost all the dwellings that line the roads within the village are one house deep, maintaining a sense of openness across the majority of the village.

A long cul-de-sac, Chalton Heights, sits at the southern end of the village. Lined by inward-facing houses and bungalows with private back gardens backing on to agricultural land, it is suburban in character. Similarly, in the northern third of the village, Forge Close, contains a small collection of inward-facing homes arranged around communal parking areas and garages.

The suburban characteristics of this small village are mitigated by the gradient of the land upon which the village sits, which gradually grows in height toward its southern end giving open views of the countryside to the north, particularly from Charlton Heights.

It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
Eversholt

Figure 4.19: Eversholt

4.69 Eversholt comprises a disparate collection of detached dwellings spread unevenly along a number of small country lanes. It is rural in character with no clear settlement edge.

4.70 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
4.71 Husborne Crawley comprises a disparate collection of detached dwellings spread unevenly along Turnpike Road. It is rural in character with no clear settlement edge.

4.72 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
Kensworth is a long thin village with two distinct character areas – ribbon development and suburban estates.

The sprawling ribbon development along Common Road/Isle of Wight Lane largely comprises of detached dwellings of varying densities and sizes. The vast majority of this development is one dwelling deep and often set back from the road, maintaining openness and a connection with the wider countryside along the full length of the road.

Two densely developed estates emanate from the southern side of Common Road and represent a significant urbanising influence on the countryside within the immediate vicinity. The estates contain a diverse range of modern housing types which are much denser and more enclosed than the rest of the village. The tightly-packed dwellings have relatively small private gardens and small pockets of communal open space which do little to improve the sense of openness.

The combined scale of the suburban estates compromises the rural character and openness of a significant proportion of the village. It was therefore recommended that the village be visited at Stage 2 to verify these judgements and establish whether further consideration might be given to insetting Kensworth, or part of it, in the Green Belt.
Ridgmont is a relatively small, historic village largely comprising ribbon development along High Street and Eversholt Road. The buildings along the roads vary in density and scale but are generally only one dwelling deep, which maintains a sense of openness. There are views of the wider countryside from the core of village around the open ground that surrounds the church.

It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
Stanbridge

Figure 4.23: Stanbridge

4.79 Stanbridge comprises of four roads of ribbon development arranged in a diamond formation around a small cluster of irregular-shaped agricultural fields. The fields in the centre of the village maintain a strong sense of openness along the roads which face on to them. The ribbon development along the southern road (Peddars Lane) is dominated by large detached dwellings set within large private garden with open views of the countryside to the south. The ribbon development along the western road (Station Road) is comprised of denser detached and semi-detached dwellings built closer to the road edge, but with open views of the fields to the east and west. The northern end of the western road opens out into a village green which lines the southern edge of the northern road (Stanbridge Road/Tilsworth Road). Stanbridge Road/Tilsworth Road runs east into the centre of the village complete with village church, school and hall which overlook the open green, churchyard and open countryside to the south. There are also intermittent views of the higher open agricultural fields to the north.

4.80 The densest area of development within the village lies in its north eastern corner along Orchard Way and the cul-de-sacs of Beacon View, Lords Close and Green Close. The roads are lined by detached dwellings set within private gardens. All four roads overlook the open countryside to the south.

4.81 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
Steppingley

Figure 4.24: Steppingley

4.82 Steppingley is a small, open cluster of detached dwellings, a pub and a church centred on a junction between three country roads – Rectory Road, Eversholt Road and Flitwick Road. The buildings are spread unevenly with no clear settlement edge.

4.83 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
Streatley is a thin irregular shaped village centred on a junction between two country roads – Sharpenhoe Road and Church Road. The village’s historic centre sits between Sundon Road and Sharpenhoe Road and contains the village church and a cluster of detached dwellings, most of which are set within large, private gardens. The church grounds and gardens create a strong sense of openness. The ribbon development emanating north and south from the village’s centre is largely situated on one side of the road, maintaining open views of agricultural fields to the east and west.

4.85 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
Studham village can be split into two distinct character areas:

- A small cluster of historic dwellings, a village pub and hall north of the rural junction on which the village is centred. The buildings are relatively dense in distribution but wholly rural in character with open views of the open countryside to the south and east. Open allotments sit to the east of this cluster of development.

- The majority of the village’s development is located to the west of the open junction off Church Road. The road slopes upwards into scattered pockets of remnant woodland. The trees grow amongst detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings organised along three cul-de-sacs – Swanells Wood, Church Close and Valley Close. Many of the dwellings are set back from the roads within large private gardens. While the trees screen views of the wider countryside, the gardens combined with the mature trees give a strong sense of openness.

The dwellings organised around an open patch of greenspace in Church Close represent the most suburban and closed area of development in the village, but the greenspace in the centre of the close maintains openness.

It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.
4.89  Tilsworth is a small historic village largely comprised of ribbon development along Stanbridge Road. The buildings along the road vary in density and scale but are generally only one dwelling deep maintaining a sense of openness. Openness is further improved by intermittent long range views of the wider countryside to the south. Most of the dwellings within the village are set back from the road within large private gardens adding to the strong sense of openness.

4.90  Open village greens clearly define the two junctions in the village to the rural residential Dickens Lane and Bury Rise, which contains the densest and most modern dwellings within the village. Although suburban in character, this inward-facing cul-de-sac is too small to have a significant effect of the overall rural and open character of the village.

4.91  **It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.**
4.92 Totternhoe village is dominated by a long stretch or ribbon development along Castle Hill Road/Church Road. The road runs along a south-facing slope which offers long-ranging views of the open countryside to the south. This feature maintains a strong sense of openness and a connection with the wider countryside along the full length of the road.

4.93 The densest areas of development within the village sit to the north of the road within cul-de-sacs which cut up and along the sloping sections of the ridge – Castle Close, Brownlow Road, Park Avenue and Lancotbury Close. Two narrow caravan parks emanate from the southern side of the road. While the majority of the dwellings along roads and within the cul-de-sacs are modern and suburban in character, the uninterrupted views of the wooded slopes to the north and long-ranging views of the open countryside to the south and east mitigate their urbanising influence.

4.94 The gradient of the slope in and around Church End to the east is much gentler; however, open views of the Dunstable Downs to the east and the countryside to the south. Furthermore, the age and character of the dwellings grows older and openness is maintained by a large recreation ground to the north, larger private gardens and small pockets of agricultural land and allotments.

4.95 **It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.**
Upper Sundon

Figure 4.29: Upper Sundon

4.96 Upper Sundon largely consists of ribbon development along Common Lane/Streatley Road. The buildings – a mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses – are at a relatively high density along the roads, but are generally only one house deep so that open views of the wider countryside are felt in the village. The sense of openness is improved by open agricultural fields which sit in between and opposite sections of ribbon development.

4.97 A large densely developed cul-de-sac at the south western end of the village (Hills View) has more suburban character, containing collections of inward-facing houses, maisonettes and bungalows arranged around communal parking areas and garages. In isolation, this cul-de-sac is relatively small and has a limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt within the rest of the village and indeed the wider countryside.

4.98 It is therefore recommended that the village continue to be washed over by the Green Belt designation.

Settlements requiring on-site assessment at Stage 2

4.99 Following the desk-based assessment of Central Bedfordshire’s Major Service Centres, Minor Service Centres, Large Villages and Small Villages in the Green Belt using topographic OS base mapping and aerial and road-side imagery, three settlements were found to contain characteristics of a scale and nature which contradicted their status as washed over settlements in the Green Belt:

- Aspley Guise
• Kensworth
• Woburn

4.100 These contradictory characteristics were visited in the field at Stage 2 to verify the desk-based judgements made at Stage 1 and inform final recommendations.
5 Stage 2 Assessment Findings and Recommendations

5.1 The main aim of Stage 2 of the Study is to isolate areas of the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt which perform relatively weakly against the Green Belt purposes and are therefore likely to cause less harm to the Green Belt if released for development.

5.2 The first task conducted at Stage 2 of the Study was to draw on the Stage 1 assessment of Central Bedfordshire’s Green Belt and Luton Borough Council’s 2014 Stage 1 assessment to isolate areas of the Green Belt judged to make no more than a ‘relatively weak’ contribution to all of the Green Belt purposes.

5.3 Land achieving higher ratings was not isolated at Stage 2 on the grounds that releasing land making higher contributions to just one Green Belt purpose posed a greater risk of harm to the fulfilment of that Green Belt purpose and thus the integrity of the Green Belt.

5.4 As outlined above, variations in the performance of land within individual parcels and broad areas were noted in the assessment text (Appendix 1). It was these textual judgements drawing out spatial variations in the contribution of parcels to the Green Belt purposes which were used to isolate the portions of parcels and broad areas which performed relatively weakly across all the Green Belt purposes and not the individual purpose ratings for each parcel, which prudently reflect the portions of land within each parcel which make the greatest contribution to each purpose.

5.5 At this stage of the Study it was acknowledged that the desk-based judgements had been made remotely and had yet to be verified in the field. Therefore, when identifying the Stage 2 areas of relatively weak contribution, LUC erred on the side of caution by deliberately defining Stage 2 areas which were considered to be borderline moderate to weak contribution, minimising the chance of missing weakly performing areas.

5.6 The conclusions of Luton Borough Council’s Stage 1 assessment of Green Belt were reviewed in the same way as the textual judgements of the Central Bedfordshire Stage 1 Study.
5.7 **Table 5.1** records the evaluation of the conclusions of Luton Borough Council’s Stage 1 assessment drawing on the Study’s findings to isolate areas of weaker-performing Green Belt for further consideration at Stage 2.

**Table 5.1: Review of Luton Borough Council’s Stage 1 Green Belt Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Belt Parcels</th>
<th>Ratings Against Green Belt Purposes</th>
<th>Overall Contribution</th>
<th>Summary of Stage 1 Commentary</th>
<th>Stage 2 Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – Restricting Sprawl</td>
<td>2 – Preventing Merging</td>
<td>3 – Safeguarding Countryside</td>
<td>4 – Preserving Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 1: Warden Hill</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The existing Green Belt boundary is not clearly defined on the ground, as a result of the proposed Luton East Circular Road (North) proposal. The current Green Belt boundary follows the outer edge of the safeguarded road boundary. Rated highly due to the land within the site being designated as AONB, a County Wildlife Site and a scheduled earthwork, Drays Ditches, running along the northern boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 2: Stopsley</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Regional Sports Centre at the southern edge of the parcel has been demolished and replaced by the Inspire: Luton Sports Village, which is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Site 3: Oaket Wood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Belt Parcels</th>
<th>Ratings Against Green Belt Purposes</th>
<th>Overall Contribution</th>
<th>Summary of Stage 1 Commentary</th>
<th>Stage 2 Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural woodland representing a clear robust boundary.</td>
<td></td>
<td>positioned on the eastern corner of the area. The western third of the site is dominated by a steep chalk escarpment. The southern end of the escarpment has been identified as part of the route for the Luton East Circular Road (North), which also skirts the majority of the western edge of the parcel. In this area, the existing Green Belt boundary is not clearly defined as a result of the Luton East Circular Road (North) proposal. The eastern section of the site categorised as 2D Farmland to the west of Butterfield Green Road, now contains the Inspire Luton Sports Village building, and carpark, sports pitches and informal recreational areas should remain covered as Green Belt. A more detailed study and analysis of land to the west of Butterfield Green road including Land Unit 2D is recommended in the Stage 2 Green Belt study.</td>
<td>majority of Green Belt purposes. In line with the recommendations of the Stage 1 Green Belt assessment, it was proposed that the land to the west of Butterfield Green road including Land Unit 2D be reviewed at Stage 2 and visited in the field.</td>
<td>‘Site 3’ at Oaket Wood lies adjacent to Green Belt within North Hertfordshire District – outside the area of this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Belt Parcels</td>
<td>Ratings Against Green Belt Purposes</td>
<td>Overall Contribution</td>
<td>Summary of Stage 1 Commentary</td>
<td>Stage 2 Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 4: Putteridge</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 5: Dane Street</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 6: Sommersies</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.8 **Table 5.2** and **Table 5.3** record which Stage 1 parcels and broad areas in Central Bedfordshire contain portions of land performing relatively weakly against all Green Belt purposes with justification on why or why not. **Figure 5.1** illustrates the location of the relatively weak performing areas.

5.9 Following the identification of the weakly performing areas of Green Belt based on the Stage 1 desk-based assessment, all weakly performing areas were visited in the field.

**Table 5.2: Review of Stage 1 parcels in Central Bedfordshire to identify relatively weak performing areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel</th>
<th>Stage 2 Area</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AH1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution(^{26}) to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fields around the schools in the south-western corner of the parcel may make a weaker contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The area to the north of the B655, contained by the inset settlement on three sides, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The parcel, or parts of it, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The contained fields in which Caddington Village School and the village Playing Field are located may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{26}\) Parcels and broad areas considered to make a strategic contribution to the Green Belt purposes contain land which was considered to make at least a 'moderate contribution' to one or more of the Green Belt purposes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel</th>
<th>Stage 2 Area</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The houses and gardens on Tring Road at the northern end of the parcel may make a relatively weak contribution to Green belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the parcel is considered to make a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Caddington Park and adjacent land in a narrow strip at the foot of the scarp, and the area around Manshead and Streetfield schools, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fields at the junction of Totternhoe Road and The Rye, and to either side of The Meads (including allotments to the west) may make a weaker contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The land between Maulden Road Industrial Estate and Flitwick Moor may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The area between the inset settlement edge at the northern end of the parcel and the River Flit may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel</td>
<td>Stage 2 Area</td>
<td>Justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fields on the southern edge of Harlington are contained by mature hedgerows and trees and relate well to existing development with adjoining back gardens quite open, and may therefore make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAR1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The parcel, or parts of it, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAR2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Small areas adjacent to the settlement around Holly Tree Farm are more contained and relate better to the built edge, and may therefore make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The contained field adjacent to Augustus Road may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The area to the south of Sundon Road may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>There is a small, isolated island of Green Belt to the north of the A1081 Airport Way dual carriageway, contained on all sides by roads. This may potentially make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel</td>
<td>Stage 2 Area</td>
<td>Justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Small fields adjacent to the village of Caddington may make a relatively weak contribution to Green belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>There are three areas of open space to the south of Linslade Wood which may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The area occupied by Cedars School, and the allotments between the school and the railway line, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The fields adjacent to Bunkers Lane to the south of Southcott may make a weaker contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The parcel, or parts of it, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Oak Bank School and its playing fields may make a relatively weak contribution to Green belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The development at Evans Yard, and fields to the north and west of it, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL9</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pepperstock and all of the parcel to the north of it may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel</td>
<td>Stage 2 Area</td>
<td>Justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fields adjacent to settlement edge east of Leighton Road and to the south of Alma Farm Road may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The settlement edge field may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fulbrook Middle School and its grounds may make a weaker contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The partially developed land on the settlement edge to the north of Aspley Woods may make a weaker contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The developed area at the north of the parcel, adjacent to the inset settlement edge, may make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.3: Review of Stage 1 broad areas in Central Bedfordshire to identify relatively weak performing areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Area</th>
<th>Stage 2 Area</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land in Broad Area A is considered to make a strategic contribution to Green Belt purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the broad area is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the broad area is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the broad area is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the broad area is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This area is rural and does not relate strongly to a settlement, so built development here would constitute significant encroachment on the countryside. In this respect contribution to Green Belt purposes is strong, but the parcel's outer edge location could be considered to reduce its role, with the area to the south of the A4146 adding little to the function already performed by adjacent Green belt land. However, whilst the A4146 could constitute a strong alternative boundary feature the fact that the existing Green belt edge abuts the Registered Park and Garden at Ascott could be considered to strengthen the role of the current boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All of the land within the parcel is considered to make a strategic contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.1: Areas of Relatively Weak Performing Green Belt Identified at Stage 2 using Stage 1 Assessments

- Study area
- Planning Authority boundary
- Relatively weak performing areas
- Permitted urban extensions in Green Belt
  1: East of Leighton Linslade
  2: Pulford Corner
  3: Houghton Regis North 1 & 2
- Permitted strategic development in Green Belt - Chaul End
- Green Belt

Highest contribution in Stage 1 assessments
- Strong contribution
- Relatively strong contribution
- Moderate contribution
- Relatively weak contribution
- Weak/No contribution
- Green Belt within Luton**

Note:
** All Green Belt assessed within Luton Borough Council's Stage 1 Study made a strong contribution to at least one Green Belt purpose.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:100,000
Findings of Stage 2 assessment

5.10 A total of 29 weakly performing areas were defined in Central Bedfordshire and Luton. Each area was visited in the field to:
- Verify and where necessary expand upon judgements made about the weak performing areas remotely.
- Identify alternative permanent and readily recognisable boundaries around the weakly performing areas of the Green Belt to minimise harm to the Green Belt.

5.11 Appendix 2 contains all the assessment sheets for all 29 weakly performing areas identified and visited at Stage 2. The Stage 2 assessment sheets expand on the desk-based judgements made at Stage 1 and draw on additional judgements made during the site visits to draw out finer variations in the overall contribution of land within the Stage 2 areas to the Green Belt purposes, thus isolating in more detail the areas of the Green Belt which are likely to cause less harm to the Green Belt if released for development.

5.12 Figure 5.2 presents the finer variations in the contribution of land within the Stage 2 areas to the Green Belt purposes. All Green Belt in Central Bedfordshire and Luton outside the mapped Stage 2 areas was assessed in the Stage 1 assessments to be making at least a moderate contribution to the Green Belt purposes. There are, however, small pockets of Green Belt land along the existing urban edges of inset settlements which perform less strongly – weakly even – against all of the purposes. These pockets of land tend to be influenced by the urbanising effects of the settlements they lie adjacent to, compromising the characteristics of countryside and/or limiting their relationship with the wider countryside. It is the limited openness and ‘ruralness’ of these locations which is often why they make limited contributions to the Green Belt purposes.

5.13 The information in Figure 5.2 and Appendix 2 fulfils the Stage 2 Study’s overall aim to isolate areas of the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt which perform relatively weakly against the Green Belt purposes and are therefore likely to cause less harm to the Green Belt if released for development.

Findings following site-based assessments of washed over settlements

5.14 At Stage 1, three settlements – Aspley Guise, Kensworth and Woburn – were found to contain characteristics which may question their status as washed over settlements in the Green Belt. These settlements were visited at Stage 2 to verify the desk-based judgements made at Stage 1 and inform the final recommendations outlined below.
Figure 5.2: Findings of the Stage 2 Site-based Assessments of Relatively Weak Performing Areas

- **Study area**
- **Planning Authority boundary**
- **Relatively weak performing areas**
- **Green Belt of at least moderate contribution**
- **Permitted urban extensions in Green Belt**
  - 1: East of Leighton Linslade
  - 2: Pulford Corner
  - 3: Houghton Regis North 1&2
- **Permitted strategic development in Green Belt - Chaul End**
- **Green Belt**

**Stage 2 contribution**
- **Moderate contribution**
- **Relatively weak contribution**
- **Weak/No contribution**

**Note**

**All Green Belt in Central Bedfordshire and Luton outwith the mapped Stage 2 areas was assessed at Stage 1 to be making at least a moderate contribution to the Green Belt purposes.**

Map Scale @ A3: 1:100,000

Source: Central Bedfordshire, LUC
Three key elements distinguish Aspley Guise from the adjoining inset settlement of Woburn Sands: elevation, tree cover and dwelling density. Aspley Guise mostly lies on higher ground to the east and south of Woburn Sands, and these slopes are associated with stronger tree cover and, partly in consequence of both of these factors, typically larger dwellings arranged in a more dispersed pattern. There are several locations where houses are more closely arranged, such as Duke Street and San Remo Road, but these are separated from the inset edge by areas with a more open development form, and lack any landscape features to provide clear distinction from their surroundings.

It is therefore recommended that Aspley Guise should remain washed over by the Green Belt.
5.17 The urban form and character of the estates centred on Ridgway and Poplar Road suggest that insetting may be appropriate if it could be achieved without weakening the adjacent Green Belt. Viewed from the main road (the B4540 Common Road) there is little in terms of townscape character to distinguish this area from the rest of the linear settlement, but the tree-lined drive to Blake Hall (to the east) and Dove House Lane (to the west) provide physical landscape elements that could form boundaries. To the east of the Blake Hall drive a field provides a gap in the roadside housing, and to the west of Dovehouse Lane, Dovehouse Farm, although adjacent to the settlement edge, has a rural character.

5.18 The outer settlement edge between the Blake Hall drive and Dovehouse Lane is not strongly defined, but three small fields adjacent to it are contained by a strong hedgerow which is also a public right of way and which is in part edged by a road (leading to Kensworth Sawmills). Were these to be assessed as a Green Belt parcel it is likely that they would be considered to make a relatively weak contribution as they occupy a flat ridge top which, to the south, descends into a strong valley (along Buckwood Road).

5.19 While the effect of insetting the estates and the fields to the south on the remainder of the Green Belt could be limited, it is recommended that Central Bedfordshire District Council makes this policy decision alongside other relevant planning considerations.

5.20 Another housing estate, The Chilterns, lies to the east of the field noted above as forming a gap to the east of the Blake Hall drive. It has a relatively strong edge to the east, Clay Hall Lane, but
in isolation it is not considered large enough to warrant insetting, and to do so would weaken the Green Belt contribution of the field.

**Woburn**

**Figure 5.5: Woburn**

5.21 Woburn has clusters of dense development but does not have an urban character. Although it has a clear centre it is not a strongly compacted settlement: areas of open space features prominently – for example to the sides of Park Street – and several of the denser areas of development – Timber Lane to the west and Eleanor Close and Drakeloe Close to the north – lie on the fringes of the village in quite rural settings. Dwellings around London End near the village centre are quite dense, but their layout, variety of ages and forms and presence of mature trees gives the area a rural, village character.

5.22 Most parts of the village are close to elements of the strong historic landscape structure associated with the Woburn Abbey estate that plays a strong role in the setting of the village – the Wayn Close avenue of trees to the south, Cowhill Belt to the east and Lower Drakeloe Pond to the north – so the village as a whole has a strong relationship with its landscape setting.

5.23 **It is therefore recommended that Woburn should remain washed over by the Green Belt.**
6 Conclusions and Next Steps

6.1 This Study is an important part of Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council’s Local Plan evidence bases and will inform the Luton Housing Market Area (HMA) Growth Options Study commissioned by the four authorities that fall within the Luton HMA; Aylesbury Vale District Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Luton Borough Council and North Hertfordshire District Council.

6.2 The Luton HMA Growth Options Study will identify the most sustainable patterns for future growth within the HMA, providing an important framework within which to plan and negotiate the necessary supply of land to meet current and emerging housing and employment needs.

6.3 This final chapter draws some overall conclusions and recommendations.

Overall performance of the Green Belt

6.4 The results of the Study reported in Chapters 4 and 5 represent a baseline assessment of the extent to which parcels of land making up the Green Belt within Central Bedfordshire and Luton meet Green Belt purposes 1, 2, 3 and 4 outlined in the NPPF. In doing this the Study highlights variations in contribution to the purposes, notably the areas that perform relatively weakly.

6.5 The majority of the Green Belt in Central Bedfordshire and Luton continues to serve its purposes very well, safeguarding the identity of South Bedfordshire by maintaining the openness of the countryside and protecting the dispersed settlement pattern. However, over 25 pockets of Green Belt land were identified at Stage 2 (Figure 5.2 and Appendix 2) to be making a weak or relatively weak contribution to all the Green Belt purposes. These relatively small pockets of Green Belt all lie adjacent to the existing urban edges of inset settlements.

6.6 In terms of purpose 5 (encouraging the recycling of urban land), it can be concluded that the entire Green Belt has helped to meet this purpose historically and will continue to do so, noting that there remain some significant areas of brownfield land in the urban areas, many of which have already been earmarked for regeneration. It is important that the role of the Green Belt in supporting regeneration, particularly through the recycling of land, is considered appropriately in developing a long term spatial plan for the region and, along with other relevant issues, is factored into the development and appraisal of policy options.

Making changes to the Green Belt

Helping to meet development requirements

6.7 The NPPF requires changes to the Green Belt to be made through the Local Plan process. This should include:

i. demonstration of exceptional circumstances, such as unmet housing or employment land needs, that cannot be met elsewhere; and

ii. consideration of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, considering a range of local, regional and national issues such as economic growth, health and wellbeing, accessibility and biodiversity, cultural heritage and climate change resilience, as well as an assessment against Green Belt purposes.

6.8 A common interpretation of the policy position is that, where necessitated by development requirements, plans should identify the most sustainable locations, unless outweighed by adverse
effects on the overall integrity of the Green Belt according to an assessment of the whole of the Green Belt based around the five purposes. 27

6.9 In other words, the relatively poor performance of the land against Green Belt purposes is not, of itself, an exceptional circumstance that would justify release of the land from the Green Belt. Therefore, the Stage 1 and Stage 2 parcel boundaries and potential alternative Green Belt boundaries identified in Stage 2 (Appendix 2) are not intended to reflect potential development areas and the Study cannot be used as a means of allocating development land.

6.10 The evaluation of options for development in the Green Belt will need to be the subject of further work, drawing on the findings of this Study alongside other considerations (such as infrastructure, environmental sensitivity) and related studies like the Luton HMA Growth Options Study.

6.11 Should the cooperating authorities decide to release land from the Green Belt, we recommend that outline masterplans are prepared to, amongst other things, minimise harm to the Green Belt. These masterplans should draw on the findings of this Green Belt Study to indicate precise development areas, new defensible Green Belt boundaries (existing or new features) and appropriate development heights and densities. Such an approach, together with specific policies for the development of the land, would help to engender public confidence and support, as well as mitigate harm to the remaining Green Belt.

6.12 Further evaluation and definition of development options in the Green Belt may benefit from more detailed/fine grained Green Belt assessment work, including targeted reassessment of parcels surrounding any potential Green Belt releases to inform judgements on the:

- potential harm caused by specific developments on the wider Green Belt; and
- potential measures to mitigate harm, for example, the type, layout, massing, materials and landscaping of development.

6.13 Any further work should draw on the methodology and findings of this Green Belt Study.

**Considering the need for safeguarded land**

6.14 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF indicates that, when defining Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should, where necessary, identify areas of ‘safeguarded land’ between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period. No further guidance is provided on the circumstances where safeguarded land may be necessary.

6.15 On the basis of current trends, there are likely to be unmet housing needs beyond the plan period. We therefore recommend that the cooperating Councils collectively consider the need for safeguarding land. Where areas of the Green Belt are identified as being suitable for release in this plan period, parts of them may be retained as safeguarded land. The location of such areas should be informed by this Study and other evidence.

**Making additions to the Green Belt**

6.16 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to demonstrate exceptional circumstances before establishing new Green Belt. These exceptional circumstances cannot be demonstrated on the basis of a Green Belt study alone – they depend on a wider range of factors, including the definition of a preferred spatial strategy and the role that new Green Belt would play in this.

6.17 As noted in Chapter 3, in the absence of Green Belt land between Milton Keynes and Woburn Sands, the Green Belt to the south and east of Woburn Sands was considered to play a role in checking the sprawl of Milton Keynes into Central Bedfordshire. It is recommended, however, that Central Bedfordshire Council engages in further discussions with Milton Keynes Council about formalising the role of the Green Belt in shaping the growth of Milton Keynes. This may represent an exceptional circumstance for extending the Green Belt in this area.

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27 Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, Planning Advisory Service (PAS), 2015
Potential for alternative designations to Green Belt

6.18 Much of the Green Belt within and close to urban areas plays an important role as ‘green infrastructure’. This is particularly relevant to the corridors of Green Belt which extend into the urban area. These include parcels LL2, LL4 (also assessed at Stage 2 as LL4a) and LL10 (a portion of which was assessed at Stage 2 as LL10a) in Leighton Linslade and the southern half of Stage 1 parcel L1 (assessed at Stage 2 as L1a) in Luton. These green corridors make the towns better places to live, promoting health and wellbeing, biodiversity and resilience to climate change. Despite their positive uses, Stage 2 parcels LL4a and LL10a and a significant proportion of parcel L1a have been found to have little connection with the wider countryside and make a relatively weak contribution to the Green Belt purposes. Central Bedfordshire Council may therefore wish to explore alternative mechanisms for protecting the positive uses of these areas.

6.19 One option might be to re-designate the areas as ‘Local Green Spaces’, securing their protection as strongly as Green Belt. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF supports such an approach, although not specifically in relation to Green Belt land. Local Green Spaces are described as land of particular ‘beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife’. Some enhancement measures may be required in these locations before the case for re-designation can be made. For example, parcel L1a is currently made-up of open agricultural fields adjacent to the M1 motorway; however, the development of the large urban extension Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 to the west may enable appropriate investment into the positive use of the land at parcel L1a.

Encouraging positive use of land in the Green Belt

6.20 Although the positive use of Green Belt land is not directly related to the purposes of Green Belt, the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to secure positive use of land in Green Belts, once defined.

6.21 The Study did not include a detailed assessment of existing positive uses of land in the Green Belt. However, the South Bedfordshire Green Belt does include significant areas of productive agricultural land, The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area, Country Parks, Registered Parks and Gardens and other green and open spaces. The Green Belt also includes scrubland, woodland and the floodplains of several rivers. Despite this, there remains considerable scope to enhance the positive use of the Green Belt – particularly in terms of providing for informal recreation at the urban-rural edges of settlements. Key barriers include significant infrastructure adjacent to the existing urban edges of settlements, such as the Luton to Bedford railway, the M1 and a number of busy A roads, which make it difficult to access the surrounding countryside on foot or by bicycle. In addition, there is often a lack of convenient parking places that allow people to easily access the existing public footpath network.

6.22 It is recommended that, as part of the overall review of the Green Belt, the cooperating authorities should develop a strategy to secure greater positive use of the Green Belt with the aim of enhancing the environmental and social benefits derived from this important area of open land, helping underpin the region’s ambitious plans for economic growth and regeneration.
Appendix 1
Stage 1 assessments
Land Parcel Ref: A
Parcel Type: Broad Area
Area (ha) 7,755.5
Parcel description

Countryside occupying most of the land between Luton and Milton Keynes, to the north of the A5 Watling Street. This is mostly farmland but also includes large areas of parkland, heath and woodland, mostly belonging to the Woburn Estate. A number of washed-over villages and hamlets lie within this broad area, including Aspley Guise, Woburn, Eversholt, Tingrith, Milton Bryan and Tebworth. Land around the larger inset village of Toddington is assessed as separate parcels.

The River Flit forms the eastern boundary of the broad area, beyond which lie land parcels adjacent to the large built-up area of Luton and the inset village of Harlington. The south, field boundaries, minor roads and the A5 separate the area from parcels defined around Luton, Hockliffe and Leighton Buzzard. The District boundary, running through wooded heathland, marks the western edge of the broad area, other than where smaller parcels are defined around the eastern edge of Woburn Sands. Railway line, the M1 and the A507 form the northern edge.

Urban settlements have little association with this large, rural area, other than on the western boundary where there is no strong separation between the inset village of Woburn Sands and Aspley Guise. There is little separation in turn between Woburn Sands and Wavendon, and between Wavendon and the large built-up area of Milton Keynes.

The M1 and A5 both provide connection through/alongside the broad area between Milton Keynes and Luton. This area is not identified as containing landscape elements that contribute significantly to the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard, and is too distant from Luton to play any significant role in its setting.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to large built-up areas, but has sufficient connection for development here to have some association with it. Land closer to both Luton and Milton Keynes plays a stronger role in this respect.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The broad area occupies the bulk of the gap between Luton and Milton Keynes, although the wooded heathland around the western edge creates a degree of separation. The size of the broad area, and the extent of visual screening within it, mean that smaller areas would contribute less to this purpose.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The broad area constitutes a large area countryside which has a sense of separation from urban areas and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside. Aspley Guise potentially has a stronger connection to urbanising development in Woburn Sands, but landform provides some distinction between the two settlements.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
<table>
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<th>Parcel Type: Broad Area</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>7,755.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.

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**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel extends from the built up area of Ampthill towards the inset settlement of Maulden, connected by Ampthill Road from east to west. The parcel is mainly comprised of open arable and pasture fields defined by tree belts and small linear woodland copses. Existing development includes a small number of farmsteads in the south located off Flitwick Road and Abbey Lane. These are generally isolated and sit within open agricultural fields. A localised area of detached houses are also located on the western edge off Church Street and is well contained by tree planting.

The residential edge of Ampthill runs along the western boundary largely separated by a series of small ponds and tree belts. Back gardens of Maulden run along much of the eastern boundary. The northern boundary marks the edge of the Green Belt and is formed of tree belts with arable fields further beyond whilst the southern boundary is defined by the tree lined Abbey Lane. This means that the parcel relates fairly strong to the wider countryside.

Trees along Ampthill Road on the eastern approach, and the higher ground in the northern part of the parcel, contribute to the contained historic setting of the town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built up and development here would be associated with the settlement of Ampthill.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel lies adjacent to Ampthill and although it is some distance from the nearest town, it extends to the Maulden in the east.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel lacks urbanising features and the well-treed context and sloping topography characterising the northern area help to distinguish it from the adjacent settlements, but the parcels location at the Green belt edge limits it contribution to safeguarding the wider Green Belt countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: AH2  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 63.4
Land Parcel Ref: AH2  
Parcel Type: Parcel  
Area (ha): 63.4

**Parcel description**

The parcel is mostly open, comprising large blocks of woodland and agricultural fields to the south of Ampthill but contains localised areas of built development concentrated in the west. Redborne School Farm and Redborne Upper School and Community College with their associated grounds cover an area in the centre of the parcel along Flitwick Road with a small number of residential properties situated adjacent. Grange Stud Farm and Ampthill Grange are situated to the west of Flitwick Road amongst a pastoral land use covering a small hillock. In addition, Ampthill Recycling Centre is located off Abbey Lane in the north east of the parcel set within an area of woodland.

This relatively small parcel adjoins Ampthill in the north where back gardens of properties are orientated over the parcel, although it is largely separated from the urban edge by open arable fields. Flitwick Road forms the boundary to the west, where a lack of vegetation means that the parcel has a relatively strong relationship with the wider countryside. The tree lined A507 runs along the southern and western edge providing strong visual separation.

Flitwick lies adjacent to the parcel in the south approximately 150 metres away although intervening vegetation along the A507 prevents much intervisibility between the settlements. The parcel also forms part of the historic setting to Ampthill: separation from Flitwick is important in retaining the natural sheltered slope setting of Ampthill.

**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Ampthill.

**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**
Physical gap is very narrow and the hill of the higher ground at Grange Farm forms a barrier. Field boundary to the south is weak with football ground and fuel garage beyond. The eastern area makes a weaker contribution to this purpose.

**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel relates fairly strong to the settlement in the north west and is separated from the wider countryside by mature tree belts and a thick block of woodland in the centre of the parcel. The parcel also has a strong relationship with the wider countryside in the east where boundaries are more open.

**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution
Notes:
The parcel's openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting of Ampthill. Development of this parcel would detract from the town’s historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel is located to the west of Ampthill Industrial Estate separated by a railway line. The industrial estate is in itself separated from Ampthill to a degree by the A507 with the settlement edge some distance from the parcel. Built development is limited to a single farmstead and a few isolated buildings situated along the perimeter of the parcel off Fordfield Road. The farm buildings are situated within open arable fields and the smaller buildings being much more enclosed by hedgerows and tree planting.

The A507 forms the northern boundary with farmsteads adjacent and pasture fields beyond. Managed hedgerows along Fordfield Road together define the western limit between the parcel and Woburn Forest whilst a thick tree belt makes up much of the southern edge.

The railway provides a strong separating feature from the neighbouring settlement. Woburn Forest to the west provides a degree of separation from the countryside although the southern fields relates strongly to the agricultural fields beyond.

The parcel is close to Ampthill and along the approach into the town and forms part of the wider rural setting.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would not be associated to such.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not make a significant contribution to any countryside gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside being separated from the settlement by a railway line and lacking urbanising features. Development in the parcel would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes: The parcel forms a minor element in the historic setting of Ampthill.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: AH4
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 63.5
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a contrast of pasture fields and blocks of woodland associated with Cooper's Hill, located to the north west of Ampthill, neighboured to the south and east by the settlement edge. Existing development within the parcel is limited to a single farmstead and a few isolated dwellings off Station Road which runs along the southern boundary. Properties at Ampthill currently front onto Station Road and Alameda Middle School abuts the eastern edge, although large blocks of woodland on the outer edges of the parcel limit the relationship existing development has with the parcel.

The B530 adjoins with the A507 in the north to form the northern boundary and together with the well-treed railway line and a small part of Ampthill New-Tunnel making up the western edge, provide a degree of separation from the countryside. The fields of Ampthill Rugby Club and associated buildings are also located along the northern edge with Ampthill Park situated beyond.

Woodland and hill landform creates a strong distinction from settlement. Areas to the west of the A507 is very separate from the town.

The parcel lies between Ampthill and Ampthill Park with trees lining main routes into the town. The parkland character and tree-lined routes, including the Almeda, are key to the historic setting of Ampthill.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would be associated with Ampthill.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: Development of this parcel would result in little to no perception of the narrowing of the gap between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: Cooper's Hill and associated woodland means that the parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development here would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel's openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and the key characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting. Development here would detract from the
town's historic character.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

The majority of the broad area sits between Luton (to the south), Flitwick (to the north), Barton-le-Clay (to the east) and Harlington (to the west), with a smaller pocket of land to the north of Barton-le-Clay. The land within broad area B is arable and pastoral farmland, with occasional woodland blocks. The wooded chalk scarp slope is a prominent and distinctive landscape element following a meandering course between Harlington and Barton. Development is limited to the small village of Sharpenhoe, a modern housing development at Lovett Green and occasional isolated farmsteads.

A railway and the A6 traverse the fringes of the broad area and provide connectivity between Luton and settlements to the north, but the area lacks any significant urbanising influences.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The broad area is not adjacent to the large built-up area, and is separated by a considerable distance so that development here would not be associated with it.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The broad area occupies the major part of the gap between Luton and Flitwick, and between the smaller inset settlements of Harlington and Barton-le-Clay. It therefore makes a significant contribution to settlement separation.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
This is a broad area of countryside lacking in urbanising influences. Development here would represent encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The wooded hills in the southern area of the broad area form a minor element in the historic setting of Luton.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: BC1
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 153.2
Parcel description

This parcel adjoins the northern edge of Barton-le-Clay and is made up of large scale arable fields defined by hedgerows. It is largely free from development save for a small sewage works in the north and a couple of warehousing units in the south east.

Tree-lined watercourses and hedgerows provide the separation between the parcel and the wider countryside in the north and east whilst the A6 forms the western edge. The eastern edge of the parcel is also the District boundary. Higham Road runs along the southern boundary out to the washed-over hamlet of Higham Gobion, and separates the parcel from adjacent properties in Barton which have a minor urban influence on the wider parcel.

The parcel lacks urbanising development and has a sense of openness and rurality. The outer boundaries create some limited separation from the wider countryside but the parcel is a large rural area in its own right, and forms part of a wider landscape of similar countryside.

The parcel is not close to any towns.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Barton-le-Clay.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not juxtaposed between towns and so development here would result in little to no perception of the narrowing of the gap.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel has no urbanising development, and there is no significant distinction in land use between this area and the arable farmland land around it.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.
| Land Parcel Ref: | BC1               | Parcel Type: | Parcel | Area (ha) | 153.2 |

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel extends eastwards from the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay up to Higham Gobion in the north east and Hexton in the south east. It comprises irregular arable fields largely free from existing development. Arnold Academy, Ramsey Manor Lower School and Orchard School are all situated adjacent to the built edge in the west of the parcel, contained by tree belts and hedgerows. Ravendale Farm, a single isolated farmstead, is also located in the north east with its access track combining with a small stream and hedgerows to form the eastern parcel boundary.

Minor roads comprising Higham Road and Hexton Road make up the northern and southern boundaries respectively. Other than the built edge in the west, the boundaries are largely open with further arable fields located beyond meaning that the parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside.

The parcel is not close to a town and has no relationship with a historic town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would be associated with Barton-le-Clay.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel provides the entire gap between Barton-le-Clay and Higham Gobion and Hexton but is not juxtaposed between towns considered in this assessment and development here would result in little or no perception of the gap between such.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside although the school grounds are relatively well contained and make a weaker contribution.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
This parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
<table>
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![Map of the parcel](image_url)
Parcel description

This parcel comprises the Church End part of Barton-le-Clay, to the south of the B655 Hexton Road, with St Nicholas Church and dwellings along Church Lane framed by a recreation ground to the west and grassland around Rectory Farm to the east. It also includes allotments and Barton Village Hall to the north of the B655.

Dwellings on the eastern edge of the inset settlement are set back behind a grassland strip and the tree-lined Old Road, forming the western edge of the parcel. Strong hedgerows form the southern edge, beyond which farmland and woodland blocks occupy the steeply rising slopes of Barton Hill frame a narrow valley. A hedgerow forms the eastern edge of the parcel, with arable farmland beyond. Arnold Middle School, also in the Green Belt, lies to the north of the parcel edge along the B655 and residential roads within the inset settlement bound the allotments and village hall on three sides.

There is a distinction between the open, rural character of built development along Church Lane, including the adjacent farm, and the form of development in the inset settlement, and the open land in the western part of the parcel and strong boundaries along Old Street and the B655 add to this separation. However, the parcel has strong outer boundaries too, including the sharp change in landform to the south, which create separation from the wider countryside. The school is an urbanising influence.

The parcel is not close to any towns.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to the large built up area and development here would be associated with the settlement of Barton-le-Clay.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not juxtaposed between towns and development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between such.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has a degree of distinction from both the inset settlement of Barton-le-Clay and the wider countryside. The allotment area to the north of the B655 is more contained and therefore potentially makes a weaker contribution.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: BC4
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 31.9
Land Parcel Ref: BC4  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 31.9

Parcel description

This parcel comprises a mix of arable, pastoral and recreational fields to the south of Barton-le-Clay. Barton Rovers Football Club and associated sports pitches are situated adjacent to the settlement edge in the north with agricultural fields well-defined by hedgerow and hedgerow trees located further south. Built development is limited to small buildings associated with the football club and scout hut in the north and stables in the southern corner.

The parcel abuts the inset settlement along Sharpenhoe Road to the north and the B655 Luton Road to the east, and is set within a broader arable landscape. The tree-lined A6 forms the western boundary, whilst to the south wooded slopes mark the scarp edge of the Barton Hills.

Mature hedgerow field boundaries limit the extent to which housing on Sharpenhoe Road has an urbanising influence over the parcel, but the A6 creates strong separation between the parcel and the wider countryside to the west, and woodland and the change in terrain have a similar effect to the south. There is weaker separation between the settlement edge on Washbrook Close and the paddocks that form the south-eastern part of the parcel.

The parcel is not close to any towns.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with the settlement of Barton-le-Clay.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not make a significant contribution to any countryside gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Containment by settlement and by strong road and landscape edges separate this parcel from the wider countryside, although urbanising influences are limited. Fields adjacent to the settlement edge individually make a weaker contribution than the parcel as a whole.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
| Land Parcel Ref: | BC4 | Parcel Type: | Parcel | Area (ha) | 31.9 |

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

A parcel mostly comprising arable fields interspersed with irregular blocks of woodland to the west of Barton-le-Clay. An industrial estate, a shopping village and Brook End Farm are situated within the parcel and are enclosed by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and linear swathes of woodland. There are also a small number of residential properties in the south off Barton Road.

The tree-lined Faldo Road connects the industrial estate and shopping village to the A6 which runs along the eastern boundary between the parcel and the inset settlement edge. The western and northern boundaries follow the route of a small, tree-lined stream with further arable fields beyond. Barton Road forms the southern boundary with further agricultural fields beyond.

The presence of trees along the A6 creates a strong separation between the parcel from the settlement whilst the small vegetated watercourse provides a barrier feature to the countryside.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not make a significant contribution to any countryside gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than to the settlement and development within the parcel has a limited urbanising influence.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: C
Parcel Type: Broad Area
Area (ha): 498.5
Parcel description

The broad area consists of arable fields interspersed with small blocks of woodland, situated along the slopes and surrounds of the valley of the River Lea between Luton and Harpenden. The B653 and a railway line run along the valley floor, which is also the location of a sewage works and a cluster of residential development associated with East Hyde. A number of farmsteads and cottages are also located in the north.

The valley landform with hilltop woods provides a strong sense of rurality to the area and strong relationship with the wider countryside.

The District boundary also marks the eastern edge of the parcel, but there is continuity between the landscape to the east. Luton Hoo Estate adjoins the broad area in the north providing much of the separation between the settlement of Luton and the broad area whilst the settlement of Harpenden is located a short distance to the south.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The broad area is not adjacent to the large built-up area of Luton and is separated by some distance. The land between the broad area and Luton provides a strong role in preventing sprawl. Development within this parcel would relate more to Harpenden.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The broad area covers a large part of the gap between Luton and St Albans and plays a considerable role in maintaining the separation between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The broad area of countryside has a sense of separation from urban settlements and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development here would represent encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The broad area’s openness relates to the River Lea valley with views to the adjacent Luton Hoo Estate. These characteristics are identified as important to the historic setting of Luton.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
**Parcel description**

A parcel of mostly arable farmland, with generally weak dividing hedgerows, situated to the south and east of the inset village of Carrington. There is residential and farm development at several locations around the outer fringes of the parcel: at Aley Green, Lower Woodside and Woodside. Several areas of peripheral development at Carrington fall within the Green Belt: a close of houses (Woodlands), a sports club and Five Oaks Middle School.

The M1 forms the parcel boundary to the east, beyond which lies Stockwood Park on the edge of Luton. Minor roads form boundaries to the south (Woodside Road), west (Manor Road) and north-east (Luton Road), with further farmland beyond. At Carrington, houses back onto open fields in many places along an uneven settlement edge.

There is no great separation between Carrington and the farmland within the parcel, and development in the hamlets around the parcel edge does have an urbanising influence, but there is sufficient openness for the area as a whole to retain a rural character, particularly to the east. Although physically close to Luton, separation is provided by the M1 and Stockwood Park, but two roads cross under the motorway to provide connections. The inset village of Slip End, including a large area of airport parking, is a short distance to the south of Woodside Road, but is for the most part well-screened from view.

Stockwood Park is highlighted as a significant feature the historic setting of Luton, but this parcel does not affect the relationship between the town and the parkland. There is little distinction between the elevation of the terrain in this parcel and that of the nearby Farley Hill area of Luton.

**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel has a stronger relationship with the surrounding countryside than with Luton, but is close enough to the large built-up area for extensive development to be perceived as associated sprawl. Development around the margins of Caddington would be associated with that settlement, so land here would potentially make a weaker contribution to this purpose, but only if a significant gap between Caddington and Luton were maintained.

**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
Development in this parcel would not contribute significantly to the likelihood of towns merging, but coalescence between Caddington and Slip End could be perceived as sprawl associated with Luton (purpose 1).

**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel has a number of urbanising features but these are spaced within a wider agricultural landscape and so have a limited influence over the parcel as a whole. Smaller areas on the margins of Caddington are likely to make a weaker contribution in this respect.
Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the setting of Luton.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: C2  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 55.4
Parcel description

Arable fields to the south of Caddington, including the washed-over settlement of Aley Green and also part of the washed-over settlement of Lower Woodside, occupying the sides and floor of a narrow valley. Minor roads form the parcel edges, other than to the south of Aley Green and Lower Woodside, where hedges and a short stretch of the B4540 mark the County boundary. The parcel contains a significant amount of built development, but there is sufficient separation between villages, to which landform and tree cover makes a significant contribution, to retain countryside character. The valley within the parcel forms part of a much longer landscape feature.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes: Land closer to Luton makes a stronger contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: Development in this parcel would not contribute significantly to the likelihood of towns merging.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes: Development has some urbanising influence, but there is separation from the inset settlement of Caddington and a relationship with landscape beyond the parcel.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel is largely made up of arable and pasture fields on the western edge of Caddington with a number of small areas of development located along the roads which form its boundaries. A small row of residential properties together with a single farmstead are located along the inner edge of the northern boundary, whilst the Cotswold Business Park and a few large houses are situated in the west. Eden Brae Business Park is situated in the north western corner of the parcel and there are also a number of dwellings and farmsteads in the east forming part of the hamlet of Aley Green on the eastern edge.

Dunstable Road forms the northern boundary before it meets Millfield Lane marking the western extent. Millfield Lane converges with Pipers Lane just south of the parcel and makes up the southern boundary together with a hedge-lined field boundary around an isolated dwelling. Pipers Lane joins Mancroft Road, which forms the eastern boundary, connecting Aley Green with Caddington. The majority of the roads are lined with hedgerow and hedgerow trees.

The parcel abuts the urban edge of Caddington with back gardens forming the parcel boundary, so there is some urbanising influence on the parcel, but the fields form part of a wider agricultural landscape.

The parcel is not close to any towns.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would be associated with the settlement of Caddington.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not make a significant contribution to any countryside gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: The parcel relates well to the wider countryside, although there is a greater urbanising influence in the vicinity of Caddington, and to a lesser extent Aley Green.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises pasture fields inset with small pockets of housing and residential park development on the northern edge of Caddington. Existing development is located along minor roads extending from the built edge and is largely enclosed by woodland planting.

The parcel abuts short stretches of the inset settlement edge on Dunstable Road and on Winchfield, with woodland separating the latter from the Collinswood residential park. Between these, hedged allotments and a small copse separate the parcel from Caddington. Chaul End Road, with associated housing, forms the eastern boundary. Tree belts and woodland copses make up most of the north western edge, and a hedged lane marks the south western boundary. Mostly arable farmland lies beyond these boundaries.

Tree and hedgerow cover around the parcel fringes creates a degree of separation from the wider arable landscape but also contains the urbanising influence of existing pockets of development within the Green Belt, and along with the allotments, creates separation from the inset settlement edge.

The parcel is reasonably close to Luton but no closer than Caddington. Luton is considered a historic town, but landform limits its relationship with the parcel.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Caddington.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not make a significant contribution to any countryside gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has a degree of separation from both the countryside and adjacent settlement.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel plays a minor element in the historic setting of Luton due to its location but because of its relatively small size and its containment from vegetation, it has a limited sense of openness and little intervisibility with the historic core of Luton.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: D
Parcel Type: Broad Area
Area (ha): 2,673.6
**Parcel description**

This broad area covers much of the Dunstable Downs to the south of Dunstable and comprises a patchwork of pasture, arable and woodland. Kensworth Chalk Quarry is located in the northern area, a short distance from the settlement edge and is well contained by woodland. ZSL Whipsnade Zoo also occupies a relatively large area in the west on the escarpment.

The villages of Studham, Holywell, Whipsnade and Kensworth are situated within the parcel all varying in form connected by a number of B roads and country lanes. Trees are abundant in and around the settlements, giving them a rural character. Intervening woodland and undulating topography also help to assimilate the villages into the landscape. The chalk downland is distinctive, enhancing the sense of separation from the urban area to the north and connecting it to the wider Chiltern Hills landscape to the south and west.

The higher downland towards the northern end of the parcel plays a role in the wider setting of Luton.

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**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Relatively weak contribution

**Notes:**
The northern end of the parcel is very close to the large built-up area of Dunstable, but the downland escarpment creates a strong separation.

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**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Relatively weak contribution

**Notes:**
The broad area forms approximately half of the c.12km gap between Dunstable/Luton and the Hertfordshire towns of Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamstead. Smaller parts of the broad area make a weaker contribution to this gap.

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**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Strong contribution

**Notes:**
The broad area is considered to be countryside containing only a few urbanising influences.

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**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

**Rating:** Relatively weak contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel forms a minor element in the wider downland setting of Luton.

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**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Parcel Ref:</th>
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<th>Area (ha)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Broad Area</td>
<td>2,673.6</td>
</tr>
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</table>

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

The parcel comprises large, arable fields between Dunstable and the chalk escarpment to the west, the wood and pasture slopes of the escarpment itself, on which the village of Sewell is located, and the flat floor of the River Ouzel valley south of the A505. The A5 marks the boundary to the north. To the south the parcel stops at the edge of the escarpment above the village of Totternhoe, but includes fairly steep slopes above Church End. There is no development in the parcel aside from Sewell, which has low density dwellings with a rural character, the edge of the hamlet of Chalk Hill on the A5, and a few isolated buildings mostly on the outskirts of Church End.

The western settlement edge of Dunstable ends unevenly, with modern housing directly abutting weak field boundaries other than towards the northern end of the parcel, where a large area of scrub vegetation forms a buffer. The large, open arable fields, with weak boundaries, form a homogeneous area that is distinct from the settlement. To the west and south the topography forms a strong edge, creating separation from the escarp-edge settlements and valley landscape beyond. The grass field to the south of the settlement edge adjacent to The Avenue, with arcs of trees representing the route of a residential road planned in the 1930’s but not subsequently built, has a closer relationship with the town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
Expansion into the open, arable landscape of this parcel would be viewed as sprawl, but the uneven settlement edge and absence of a defining boundary feature means that smaller areas adjacent to the settlement edge would make a weaker contribution to this purpose. It is largely distinct from the wider countryside but constitutes a considerable area of countryside in its own right.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
This parcel forms a relatively small part of the gap between Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, but development that breached the chalk escarpment to the west would have a proportionately greater impact on perceived settlement separation.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The area to the west and south of the chalk escarpment relates strongly to the wider countryside and is very separate from the inset settlement of Dunstable. The large arable fields adjacent to Dunstable also, through their openness and homogeneity, have a degree of distinction from the settlement and lack urbanising development. The field to the south of The Avenue makes a slightly weaker contribution in this respect, but is still considered to make a moderate contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
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<th>Parcel Type: Parcel</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>506.4</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Rating:**  
Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**  
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

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**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

The parcel adjoins the large built-up area of Luton-Dunstable along the B489 Tring Road, and includes houses along the eastern side of Tring Road. The majority of the parcel consists of undulating, mostly arable farmland lying to the north and south of the large, open grassland of the London Gliding club. There is scattered, isolated residential development elsewhere in the parcel, buildings associated with the gliding club and a farm-based business park.

The B489 forms the northern and western edges of the parcel. In Dunstable there is residential development along the western side of the road but to the south the road is generally well-treed. The scrub and chalk grassland open access land of Dunstable Downs, sloping up steeply from the parcel edge, lies along the western side of the parcel. The B4506 Dagnall Road and the B4540 separate the parcel from further farmland to the south.

There is no clear distinction between houses within the parcel on the eastern side of Tring Road and those to the west within the defined built-up area. In the long gardens to the rear of these properties, tree cover merges with the scrub-covered downland slopes, but a sharp change in slope angle creates a degree of separation.

To the south there is a sharp change from the tree-lined boundary of the end house on Tring Road to the open farmland and airfield grassland to the south. The proximity of high ground to the east strengthens the relationship between the parcel and the wider countryside.

None of the built development further south in the parcel has a significant urbanising influence. The scale of residential development is too small, and commercial development is too isolated and too well contained within the wider landscape.

The parcel is not close to any non-Green Belt settlements, other than Dunstable, and has no relationship with the historic town of Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The northern end of the parcel, with existing residential development and associated gardens, is adjacent to the large built-up area of Luton-Dunstable and relates more strongly to this than to the wider countryside. The majority of the parcel has some separation from the large built-up area and relates strongly to the wider countryside, but is close enough to perform a role in preventing sprawl. Development would represent significant expansion of the large built-up area into countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Development in this parcel would not contribute significantly to the likelihood of towns merging.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution
Notes:
The majority of the parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the
settlement and lacks urbanising development; so development would represent encroachment into the
countryside. The houses and gardens on Tring Road make a weaker contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of
derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

The parcel consists of the steep, open-access chalk grassland and scrub slopes of the western scarp of Dunstable Downs, extending south from the edge of the large built-up area of Luton-Dunstable. It contains no built development.

The sharp break in slope at the foot of the downs marks the western boundary of the parcel, also coinciding with a change in land use to arable farmland. To the east of the scarp crest, marked by the B4541 Whipsnade Road, the flatter downland summits, shallower east-facing slopes and coombes are occupied by open grassland, several woodland blocks and belts, and Dunstable Downs Golf Course. Houses on Royce Close, and the long back gardens of houses on the B489 Tring Road, separated from the parcel by strong tree lines, mark the settlement edge to the north, and the B4540, beyond which the downs continue southward to Whipsnade, marks the southern edge of the parcel.

There is a very strong distinction between the steep, undeveloped downland slope, the settlement to the north and the farmland to east and west. The parcel forms part of a longer chalk scarp which is a very distinct countryside landform, clearly separate from any built-up areas.

The west face of Dunstable Downs forms a significant element in the landscape setting of Dunstable but has a weaker relationship with Luton. There are no other non-Green Belt settlements in the vicinity.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
Any development on the chalk scarp would be viewed as extending the large built-up area of Luton-Dunstable beyond its natural setting, and would constitute sprawl.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Development in this parcel would not contribute significantly to the likelihood of towns merging.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development – development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the setting of Luton.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Dunstable Downs Golf Club covers a large portion of this undulating high ground to the east of the chalk escarpment, sloping down northwards to Dunstable and bounded by Kensworth Quarry to the south. There is strong tree cover along the settlement edge, and to the east a patchwork of fields and woodland blocks occupy the narrow belt of land between the settlement and the quarry. The parcel is largely free from development with a few residential properties and the Dunstable Downs Golf Club House situated along the inner western edge.

The wooded downs are a distinctive landscape that is strongly separated from the town and forms part of the wider area of open, undeveloped high downland.

The downland edge forms a significant element in the landscape setting of Dunstable but has a weaker relationship with Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Dunstable but has a degree of separation from it and relates more strongly to the wider countryside. Development here would represent significant expansion of the large built-up area into countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between towns due to the considerable distance and landscape features to the south.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development here would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the setting of Luton.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
**Land Parcel Ref:** D4  |  **Parcel Type:** Parcel  |  **Area (ha):** 180.4

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

The parcel forms the major part of an area of undulating high downland to the south of Luton between Dunstable and the M1, comprising predominantly of pastoral and arable fields defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees connecting with sporadic blocks of woodland. Caddington Golf Club covers a small area along the eastern boundary whilst a school complex is situated in the west. A number farmsteads are also interspersed throughout the parcel. Of particular note is the striking landform of the Downs rising up steeply from the settlement edge to the north and west. There is a small area of park home development at the foot of the escarpment adjacent to the settlement edge, at Caddington Park.

The parcel spans the area of land between Dunstable, Caddington and Chaul End, its outer edges largely defined by minor roads. On its western edge it includes Manshead and Streetfield schools, and surrounding playing fields, located on the northern side of a narrow valley along which the A5 Watling Street passes.

The roads forming the boundaries are typically lined with hedgerows and hedgerow trees providing a relatively weak separation from more arable and pasture fields beyond. The steep incline of the Downs along the edges of Luton and Dunstable provides a strong separation between the parcel and the settlement edge, other than at the southern tip of Dunstable, where the two schools sit below the steep slope.

The chalk escarpment provides a dramatic backdrop to glimpsed views from Luton, and is key element in the historic setting of the town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Dunstable/Luton but has strong separation from it and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development would represent significant expansion of the large built-up area into the countryside. The western edge of the parcel alongside the A5 has less distinction from the settlement, both in terms of landform and the extent of built development associated with the schools.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between towns although it would coalesce with Caddington.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
Most of the parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lack urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside. The area around Manshead and Streetfield schools, and the open land alongside Caddington Park, make a weaker contribution to this purpose.
Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel's openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and the historic setting of Luton. Development would detract significantly from the town's historic character. The edge of the parcel along Watling Street has no visual relationship with Luton and so does not contribute to this purpose.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Land Parcel Ref:</th>
<th>Parcel Type:</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
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Parcel description

A broad area of arable fields to the west of Dunstable, extending from the green belt villages of Church End in the north to just short of Edlesborough in the south. Residential dwellings and farmsteads of Church End are located in the northern area with several isolated properties and farm buildings largely spaced within an agricultural landscape along minor roads traversing the area. There is a small hamlet at Well Head, alongside a well-treed water course of the same name which bisects the area from east to west.

The tree and hedge lined B489 runs along the eastern edge of the broad area leading to the south west of Dunstable. The River Ouzell forms the south-western boundary of the broad area, also the County and Green Belt boundary. The broad area is located within a predominantly farmed landscape with further arable fields in all directions. Tree cover associated with the River Ouzel creates separation between Edlesborough, which is outside of the Green Belt, and the parcel.

The relatively open boundaries in the north and west together with the rural character of the broad area mean that it has a strong relationship with the wider countryside.

The parcel is located a short distance from Dunstable but is separated from it by steep slopes.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The broad area is not adjacent to the large built-up area of Dunstable. Land closer to the town plays a strong role in preventing sprawl and development here would have little or no association with it.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
Although the broad area occupies the gap between the smaller washed over settlements of Church End and Edlesborough, between Dunstable and the village of Eaton Bray, development of this parcel would result in a moderate narrowing of the gap to Leighton Buzzard.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
There is some localised urbanising development at Church End, and to a lesser extent at Well Head, but the broad area in the main is very open and relates more strongly to the wider countryside than to urban settlement.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
### Land Parcel Ref: E
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel Type:</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad Area</td>
<td>270.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
The broad area does not form part of the setting to a historic town.

---

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Parcel Ref:</th>
<th>EB1</th>
<th>Parcel Type:</th>
<th>Parcel</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>195.5</th>
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</thead>
</table>

![Map Image]

Parcel description

A patchwork of arable and pasture fields well defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees to the west of Eaton Bray. A couple of remnant orchards are also located in the north and east. Development within the parcel is limited to several farmsteads and houses, mostly in a dispersed group along the south side of The Rye at Eaton Green, a small residential caravan site (Chiltern View) on Northall Road and St Mary’s Church on the southern edge of Eaton Bray.

The tree lined River Ouzell forms the southern boundary, and a small tributary Ouzell Brook forms the western edge. The Rye passes through Eaton Green to mark the northern boundary.

The western edges of the inset village of Eaton Bray are quite exposed, exerting some urbanising influence, but the openness of most of this farmed landscape relates it strongly to the wider countryside. Smaller, well-hedged fields in the eastern part of the parcel are more contained by landscape and built development.

Eaton Bray and Edlesborough combine to form a long, linear village, located in between Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard but offset to the south, away from the direct road link along the A505.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up and development here would be associated with Eaton Bray.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes: Development of this parcel result in a moderate narrowing of the physical gap between Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard although a considerable distance would still remain.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, lacks urbanising development and for the most part has a sense of separation from urban settlement. The contribution is less at several locations adjacent to Eaton Bray where built development has a more containing influence.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel mostly comprises rectilinear arable and pasture fields well defined by hedgerows and tree belts and is situated between the washed-over villages of Totternhoe in the north and Church End in the east, and the inset village of Eaton Bray to the south and west. Roads linking the villages define the outer edges of the parcel, and elements of all three settlements lie within its margins, but the main body of the area is open, arable farmland.

The bordering villages frame the parcel to the north and south, and contain some urbanising elements, but their influence over the wider parcel is limited by intervening vegetation. A tributary of the River Ouzell forms a clear boundary to the south of Tottenhoe, and small, well-hedged fields around Eaton Bray and Church End, some with orchard trees, create separation between the settlements and the larger arable fields. Further arable fields are situated beyond the parcel to the east and west, which creates a strong relationship with the wider countryside.

The parcel is situated between the towns of Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would be associated with the adjacent villages.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes: Development of this parcel could result in a coalescence of adjacent villages and a resultant narrowing of the perceived gap between Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, but smaller areas adjacent to Eaton Bray make a weaker contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: The majority of the parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Many of the smaller fields adjacent to the inset settlement edge are contained from both the settlement and the wider countryside but still make a moderate contribution to this Green Belt purpose.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Parcel Ref:</th>
<th>Parcel Type: Broad Area</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>1,159.8</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Parcel description**

A patchwork of relatively small arable and pasture fields, delineating by the A5 to the east, the A505 to the south, the A4012 to the north and minor roads to the west. Hockliffe lies just beyond the northern edge of the broad area, and the western edge of the consented urban extension to the north of Houghton Regis touches the south-eastern tip of the area at the A5.

The near-contiguous washed over villages of Tilsworth and Stanbridge lie within the broad area, and have some localised urbanising influence, but elsewhere there is only isolated development and the area's open land relates strongly to the wider farmed landscape in which it sits.

The area forms a significant proportion of the countryside gap between Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard, adjacent to principal connecting roads in a visually open landscape.

**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Strong contribution

**Notes:**

Development in the south-eastern corner of the broad area would be associated with expansion of Houghton Regis across the A5, which would constitute a step-change in expansion of the settlement.

**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**

The area forms a significant proportion of the gap between Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard.

**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Strong contribution

**Notes:**

The area relates strongly to the wider countryside, and is mostly free from urbanising influences. Some of the fields around Stanbridge and Tilsworth have a closer relationship with built development, but both settlements retain a fairly uncompact overall form which retains rural character.

**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**

The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: FW1
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 98.6
Parcel description

A patchwork of arable and pasture fields adjoining the northern edge of Flitwick, occupying the southern side of a valley which separates Flitwick from Ampthill. The A5120 passes through the parcel in the west directly connecting Flitwick and Ampthill. Flitwick Football Centre is located to the east of the road whilst a car garage and adjacent office complex are to the west. The associated buildings front onto the roads but are well contained by tree belts to the south. Elsewhere the parcel is mainly free from development. A sewage works located along the northern boundary is contained by woodland to the north and west, but is largely open to the south and east.

The settlement edge of Flitwick is exposed to the parcel in places but contained by woodland belts in others. The A507 forms the northern boundary with tree belts and linear strips of woodland either side. The railway line raised on an embankment with associated tree cover forms the western boundary and Maulden Road with some associated tree planting forms the eastern boundary. Agricultural land lies to the west, east and north-east of the parcel. To the north, to either side of Flitwick Road, school buildings and associated playing fields occupy most of the space between the parcel edge and the inset settlement of Ampthill.

The service station and football centre on the A5120 have some urbanising influence on the western part of the parcel but further east the parcel constitutes a broader belt of farmland with more limited urban influence. The railway line and A507 provide strong separation from land to the west and north, but the eastern side of the parcel has less distinction from further arable farmland.

The parcel occupies a significant proportion of the narrow gap between Flitwick and Ampthill, but the tree-fringed A507 prevents any significant intervisibility between the two towns and limits the extent to which the parcel contributes to the contained historic setting of Ampthill.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would be associated with Flitwick.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: Development at the western end of this parcel, around Ampthill Road, would result in a significant narrowing of the physical gap between Flitwick and Ampthill, although landscape features would preserve visual separation. The eastern part of the parcel makes a weaker contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes: The parcel relates to both the settlement of Flitwick in the west where urbanising features are present, and the wider countryside to the east where the parcel has more of rural character.
Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the historic setting of Ampthill to the north.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel is largely free of built development and consists of a mix of arable and pasture fields to the east of Flitwick. Flitwick Moor, a large block of woodland, also covers a considerable area in the centre of the parcel. A small number of farmsteads and a single substation are located in the north east of the parcel along Maulden Road. These are typically set within the arable fields with limited tree planting.

The A507 forms the northern boundary whilst Greenfield Road runs along the southern edge. Maulden Road runs along the western boundary extending from the settlement edge of Flitwick with small stretches of hedgerow and hedgerow trees lining the roadside. Maulden Road Industrial Estate and a row of housing are located adjacent to the west. The River Flit makes up much of the eastern limit with the back gardens of properties at Greenfield situated adjacent but separated by a mature tree belt.

Flitwick Moor covering a large mass in the centre of the parcel provides a strong separating feature to both the settlement and wider countryside. The western area between the built edge and Flitwick Moor is quite contained and relates more strongly to the settlement than the wider countryside, whereas the eastern and northern areas have a strong rural character and relate more strongly to the wider countryside.

The parcel forms the gap between Flitwick and the village of Greenfield and forms part of the wider rural setting of Ampthill.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Flitwick.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
This parcel lies adjacent to Flitwick but development in this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than the settlement and lacks urbanising development, although this is considerably weaker in the area adjacent to the built edge.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the historic setting of Ampthill.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel mostly comprises pasture and arable fields interspersed with farmsteads, and is bisected from north to south by a railway line. Flitwick Cricket Club, Flitvale Garden Centre and a small row of housing are also located along the A5120 which traverses the western area of the parcel from north to south. The River Flit passes through the parcel from the south west to the north east and is located along the northern edge.

The River Flit forms much of the northern boundary with the settlement of Flitwick immediately adjacent. Greenfield Road extends from the east of Flitwick to make up the rest of the northern boundary before it joins with Westoning Road running along the eastern edge. Westoning Road continues around to the south where it leads into the village of Westoning and the settlement edge forms much of the southern boundary. The western perimeter is made up of a tree belt forming a field boundary connecting with a linear swathe of woodland along the River Flit.

Limited hedgerows and hedgerow trees lining the eastern and western boundaries means that much of the parcel has a relatively strong relationship with the agricultural fields and countryside beyond, but Flitwick Moor and woodland alongside the River Flit create greater separation between the area adjacent to the settlement edge at the northern end of the parcel and the wider countryside. The settlement edge of Westoning is quite open, but adjoins large arable fields. The garden centre along the A5120 has a minor urbanising influence on the parcel.

The parcel extends between Flitwick and Westoning, which are connected by a railway line which also links southward to Harlington and then Luton. It has no relationship with a historic town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Flitwick or Westoning.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes: The parcel is located adjacent to Flitwick so there is a significant gap to Luton, the nearest town to the south; however in reducing the gap between smaller settlements adjacent to the railway line development would cause some reduction in the perceived rural gap between the towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: The parcel relates more strongly to the countryside than the settlement and urbanising features such as the railway are well screened by tree planting.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: FW4  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 611.0
Parcel description

Predominantly open, rectilinear agricultural fields to the west of Flitwick, on undulating land sloping down towards the village. The small washed-over settlement of Steppingley is located on a ridge at the centre of the parcel, where Flitwick Road and Eversholt Road meet. Church Road also passes through the parcel in the south. There is a scattering of farmsteads across the area.

Steppingley Road forms the north-western edge of the inset settlement, and Flitwick Wood and adjoining hedgerows abut the settlement edge to the south of this. The outer edges of the parcel are mostly contained by blocks of woodland and mature tree belts, including Woburn Forest to the north.

The woodland framing the parcel provides some distinction from the wider countryside but the parcel lacks urbanising influences with woodland also providing separation from the settlement edge. Steppingley is a dispersed rural settlement and the parcel displays a homogenous farmland character.

The high ground within the parcel forms part of the wider rural setting of the historic town of Ampthill.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Flitwick.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Development in the north-eastern part of this parcel could result in a moderate narrowing of the physical gap between Flitwick and Ampthill but intervening farmland to the south west of Ampthill, and the tree-edge railway line, would preserve the separation.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The majority of the parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the wider historic setting of Ampthill.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel consists of a geometric pattern of agricultural fields with occasional hedgerow trees and spans the entire gap between Flitwick and Ampthill. Existing development within the parcel is limited to a small hospital in the south west, a single farmstead in the south and an isolated dwelling in the west.

Steppingley Gardens is a new development of 200 homes under construction on the edge of Flitwick and abuts Froghall Road to the south of the parcel. The northern boundary is delineated by a distinct change in landform and a linear swathe of woodland whilst the western extent is marked by Fordfield Road. The eastern limit is formed by the railway with Ampthill Industrial Estate located adjacent and largely contained by woodland.

Froghall Lane provides a boundary to the settlement of Flitwick whilst the railway and woodland creates a relatively strong separation from Ampthill. Despite the topography to the north providing a degree of separation from pasture fields further north, the less vegetated boundaries in the west mean that the parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside to the west.

The parcel is located a short distance from Ampthill and forms part of the wider historic setting.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Flitwick or Ampthill.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: The parcel extends from the north of Flitwick to the west of Ampthill and development of this parcel would result in near physical coalescence of the two towns, although the railway line would still constitute a degree of separation. Smaller parts of the parcel can be considered to make a weaker contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes: The parcel relates to both the settlements of Flitwick and Ampthill but also to the wider countryside, and contains no urbanising development.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the historic setting of the town.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This broad area comprises a mix of agricultural fields and woodland plantations to the south-west of Linslade. Development is limited to a single barn located off a private access road and the A418 bisects the area from the north east to the south west.

The A4146, in part dual-carriageway, forms the north and eastern edge of the area, with farmland lying beyond it to the north of the A418. Tree belts and hedgerows which form the southern and western edges of the area also form the Green Belt's outer boundary. Parkland associated with Ascott House, agricultural fields and woodland are located beyond.

The broad area is a considerable distance from any urban areas and therefore has no relationship with the settlement. Woodland and farmland within the parcel relate strongly to the further woodland and agricultural fields in the surrounding countryside.

The broad area forms part of the gap between Linslade and the small settlement and National Trust house at Ascott, with the village of Wing located just beyond.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: This broad area is not adjacent to a large built-up area and there is a large separation between the broad area and the nearest settlement of Linslade.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not make a significant contribution to any countryside gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The broad area is countryside, lacking relationship with any inset settlement.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The broad area is located within close proximity to Linslade but does not form part of the historic setting.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
| Land Parcel Ref: | G | Parcel Type: | Broad Area | Area (ha) | 56.2 |

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: H
Parcel Type: Broad Area
Area (ha): 513.6
Parcel description

This broad area mostly comprises large expanses of woodland associated with Stockgrove Country Park and King's Wood. The remainder of the area consists of a more farmed landscape with arable and pasture fields framing the woodland, interspersed with a number of farmsteads and isolated properties. The River Ouzel and the Grand Union Canal meander through the southern area, lined with trees. Grange Water Mill is also situated along the River. The northern area is characterised by disused pits which have since become large pools encompassed by swatches of woodland.

The A5 runs along the northern edge and is well treed for much of the boundary whilst a railway passing the parcel mostly at grade marks the southern limit. The western boundary is formed by further woodland and tree belts creating a relatively good relationship with the wider countryside. Minor roads around Leighton-Linslade and Heath and Reach together make up the majority of the eastern edge.

Woodland covering the majority of the parcel creates a strong relationship with the wider countryside whilst the open fields further south provide a degree of separation from the nearby settlement.

The broad area is situated close to Leighton-Linslade and contributes to the wooded backdrop which forms part of the town's historic setting. More significantly the parcel also includes a short stretch of the River Ouzel and Grand Union Canal, which are significant features in the town's historic setting, with particular reference to the rural separation of Old Linslade.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
This broad area is not adjacent to a large built-up area and there is a clear physical separation between the majority of the broad area and the nearest settlement of Leighton-Linslade.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The broad area is some distance from the settlement edge of Leighton Linslade but covers a sizeable gap between Leighton-Linslade and Milton Keynes, extending along the A5. Although a large expanse of wooded heathland and agricultural fields maintains a degree of separation, development of this parcel would result in a moderate narrowing of the perceived gap.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The broad area relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from Leighton-Linslade and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Notes:
The broad area’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting – development would detract from the town’s historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: H1  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 86.7
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a number of irregular arable and pasture fields framing Harlington Upper School. Fields are defined by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees and there are small areas of woodland located in the north. Existing development is limited to a single residential dwelling and few farmsteads located adjacent to the school along the northern edge of Harlington.

The tree-lined Goswell End Road connects with Harlington Road to form the southern boundary with the settlement of Harlington situated adjacent. A railway lined by mature trees runs the extent of the western boundary along embankment and in cutting. Hedgerows and trees to field boundaries delineate the northern and eastern limits with further agricultural fields beyond.

The settlement has a relatively strong separation from the parcel due to the tree-lined roads making up the southern edge. A small woodland block on higher ground close to the western edge of the parcel creates distinction between the fields to the north and land adjacent to the settlement. Limited vegetation along the northern boundary creates a strong relationship between the parcel and the wider countryside. The school constitutes a limited urbanising influence.

The parcel is not close to any towns but occupies the gap between the inset villages of Harlington and Westoning.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Harlington.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not close to any towns but forms the gap between the inset villages of Harlington and Westoning, therefore makes a limited contribution to the perceived separation of the towns of Luton and Flitwick.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The northern and eastern parts of parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, have a sense of separation from the settlement and lack urbanising development. The fields in the south-west of the parcel have more containment and urban influence but are still considered to make a moderate contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Predominantly an irregular pattern of arable fields to the south east of Harlington bisected by Sundon Road. Small areas of pasture and recreation including a cricket ground are situated next to the built edge. These are well defined by mature hedgerows and trees which provides a strong sense of separation from the adjacent arable fields. The parcel is mostly free of development with a few farmsteads scattered throughout. A church, parish hall and a small number of dwellings are all located adjacent to the settlement around the cricket ground.

A railway runs along the western boundary on a small, treed embankment providing a strong barrier feature. The southern limit is delineated by tree belts whilst a country lane lined with hedgerows and hedgerow trees wraps around the western edge.

The parcel has a strong rural character and relates strongly to the wider countryside. The landform of the parcel and limited vegetation along the settlement edge means that Harlington has a localised urbanising influence over the parcel. The area around the church also has a strong separation from the inset settlement edge.

The parcel is not close to any towns but occupies the gap between the inset villages of Harlington.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Harlington.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not close to towns but makes up the gap between inset villages between Flitwick and Luton and therefore makes a limited contribution to the perceived separation. The fields around the church would make a weaker contribution, however.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
Existing development has limited urbanising influence on the parcel and so it relates more strongly to the wider countryside than the settlement. However, smaller pasture fields south of Pilgrims Close are contained by the mature hedgerows and trees are likely to have a weaker relationship with the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

A patchwork of arable fields to the west of Harlington defined by belts of trees, linear swathes of woodland and private access roads. A motorcross track also covers an area in the centre of the parcel. Toddington Road bisects the parcel from east to west and is where a single farmstead and small number of residential properties are located. A farmstead is also located along the inner edge of the southern boundary and a small row of housing extends from Harlington along Westoning Road in the north.

Westoning Road with hedgerows and the occasional hedgerow tree forms the northern boundary, whilst Harlington Railway Station and associated railway mark the eastern limit. The River Flit meanders around the western edge combining with the M1 to form the southern boundary.

Despite adjacent mature tree belts and the rail infrastructure providing a physical separation from the settlement edge, Harlington is situated on a hill and is clearly visible across the railway although this change in landform adds to the distinction between the settlement and parcel. Tree cover is relatively limited along the Flit with predominantly low-lying scrub covering the river banks providing an open edge to the wider countryside. The parcel sits within a wider agricultural landscape though the A5120 and the M1 and associated service station are a short distance from the western and southern boundaries, creating a minor urbanising influence.

The parcel is not close to any towns but occupies the gap between the inset villages of Harlington and Westoning. The M1 forms a strong edge but there is still some limited reduction in perceived separation.

### Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up town and development here would be associated with Harlington.

### Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

**Rating:** Relatively weak contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel is not close to towns but makes up the gap between inset villages between Flitwick and Luton and therefore makes a limited contribution to the perceived separation.

### Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**
This parcel has a strong separation from the settlement and the wider countryside. However, the small amount of existing development within the large parcel is widely spaced within the agricultural landscape and is well-screened by thick tree planting so portrays a strong rural character. Urbanising development is also located close to the outer edges of the parcel and has a minimal influence.

### Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
<table>
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<th>Land Parcel Ref:</th>
<th>H3</th>
<th>Parcel Type:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Weak/No contribution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td>The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.</td>
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</table>

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Parcel Ref</th>
<th>Parcel Type</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
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<tr>
<td>HAR1</td>
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</table>
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a series of recreational and pasture fields framing a disused sand pit on the settlement edge of Heath and Reach. Existing development is concentrated around the perimeter of the parcel near to the settlement and consists of St Leonards Lower School, Kingswood Farm and a small number of residential properties.

Boundaries of the parcel are formed by minor roads and dense woodland. Woburn Road connects with Linslade Road in the east and together with a number of pockets of inset development make up the western boundary. Linslade Road continues round to form much of the southern boundary whilst Brickhill Road marks the northern limit, again with some inset housing.

The areas of inset development situated along the roads create a strong relationship between the parcel and the settlement of Heath and Reach. Furthermore, large areas of woodland associated with Bakers Wood and Stockgrove Country Park contain the parcel to the west and provides a strong barrier to the wider countryside.

The parcel is situated a short distance from Leighton Buzzard but the topography and juxtaposition of Heath and Reach mean that it plays no role in the historic setting.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Heath and Reach.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is situated on the western edge of Heath and Reach, where containment by woodland means that it makes no significant contribution to any settlement gaps.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Woodland forms a very strong outer boundary so the parcel has a minimal relationship with the wider countryside. The parcel has a strong relationship with existing development.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: HAR2  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 93.5
Parcel description

Predominantly working sand pits and associated buildings surrounded by a small number of pasture fields and stables. Isolated residential properties are located along the few country lanes traversing the parcel and also forming the majority of the boundaries.

Woburn Road marks the northern limit and continues round to the west into Heath and Reach where the properties edge the parcel. Small blocks of woodland and short tree belts remain in the western area of the parcel which limits the influence adjacent development has over the wider parcel. The boundary to the east is formed of Overend Green Lane before it meets Eastern Way running along the southern perimeter.

Tree cover creates some separation between the settlement and the parcel, and there is no significant distinction between the parcel and the wider countryside. The settlement edge is more open to the south of Gig Lane.

The parcel is fairly close to Leighton-Linslade but has no significant relationship with the historic town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would be associated with the settlement of Heath and Reach.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: This parcel is not juxtaposed between towns and development of this parcel would result in little of no perception of the narrowing of the gap between such.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: Most of the parcel has a strong separation from the settlement edge of Heath and Reach and relates to the wider countryside. The smaller fields close to the settlement edge south of Gig Lane make a weaker contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel consists of a patchwork of pasture fields interspersed with a number of farmsteads. A few country lanes traverse the parcel with a small cluster of residential properties and church located in the centre, as well as a row of housing extending along Church Lane. A small number of properties including a caravan park extend beyond the inset edge of Hockliffe along the A5. Field boundaries are well defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees and vegetation surround the buildings within the parcel.

Hedgerows and tree lines provide some distinction between the smaller pasture fields around the settlement and the larger arable fields around it. The western extent follows a tree belt marking a field boundary and continues around to the north to the line the sides of the A5 which leads into the village of Hockliffe. The A4012 runs along the southern edge from the A5 and is also lined with hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The meandering, tree-lined Clipstone Brook forms the south-western edge.

Urbanising influences are generally well-screened within the parcel and intervening vegetation limits the relationship that it has with the settlement of Hockliffe. There is a strong landform distinction between the inset linear settlement on fairly level ground along the A5 and the dispersed rural settlement on the steeper hillsides to the west. Also, Clipston Brook forms a strong edge.

The parcel is some distance from Leighton Buzzard but provides the openness to the Toddington and Hockliffe clay hills which form part of the town's historic setting.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Hockliffe.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not make a significant contribution to the extent of any countryside gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: There is a strong separation between most of the parcel and the inset settlement, as well as a degree of separation from the surrounding countryside. There is less distinction at the eastern end alongside the A5, where there are shallower slopes and existing urbanising influences in the parcel, but Clipstone Brook still provides separation from the inset settlement. There is a greater sense of containment and relationship with the settlement edge in the south eastern corner, behind Augustus Road, where a dwelling is located within the Green Belt.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes: The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting, but development would have only a moderate impact on historic character.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
**Parcel description**

A large arable field covers much of this parcel with small, rectilinear pasture fields and a small business park occupying a small area in the west and east respectively.

The A4012 runs along much of the northern boundary into the centre of Hockliffe where it adjoins with the A5. The settlement edge of Hockliffe makes up the remainder of the northern edge and extends along the A5 around the eastern boundary. Hockliffe Business Park is also situated along the A5 in the east. Woodcock Lane wraps around the western boundary and continues around to the south. A thick tree belt along the bank of a small stream forms the eastern edge between Woodcock Lane and the A5.

A tree belt along the edge of Hockliffe and the A5 provides a degree of separation from the settlement although the boundary to the business park is more open and so has some urbanising influence over the wider parcel. Although developed, the business park has a built form which retains some distinction from residential development on the inset settlement edge, and also physical separation by the A5 and open land to the west. The treed stream in the east forms a relatively strong separation but Woodcock Lane in the west is much less treed and so the parcel relates more strongly to the arable fields and wider countryside beyond.

The parcel forms part of the wider rural setting of a historic town.

**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area and development here would be associated with Hockliffe.

**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel does not make a significant contribution to the extent of any countryside gaps between towns.

**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Moderate contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel has a degree of separation between both the settlement and wider countryside.

**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel forms part of the wider setting of Leighton-Linslade.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

A geometric pattern of rectilinear agricultural fields well-defined by hedgerow and hedgerow trees, on ground rising increasingly steeply from Hockliffe up to Tebworth. Farmsteads associated with Tebworth occupy the inner eastern boundary with occasional built development along the A5 and on Tebworth Road/Hockliffe Road to the south.

The western edge of the parcel abuts Hockliffe, with no significant boundary features. Hockliffe Road leads into Tebworth in the east from the A5 with maintained hedgerows lining either side of the road. Clipstone Brook forms the northern boundary, reinforced with mature tree cover on its banks. A small tributary joins the Brook in the north after it runs underneath The Lane, which runs along the eastern edge also leading into Tebworth.

The parcel lacks considerable urban influences and the limited amount of development is well-contained by adjacent planting and field boundaries, which means that the parcel has a strong relationship with the wider countryside. However, there are smaller fields adjacent to Hockliffe on gentler slopes, which have a stronger relationship with the settlement.

The parcel is not close to any towns and has no relationship with a historic town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to a large built-up area and development here would be associated with Hockliffe.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not juxtaposed between towns and development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between such.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside. The area adjoining the settlement edge of Hockliffe make a weaker contribution to this purpose, but the consistent edge to the settlement means that any development eastwards would still represent a moderate degree of encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
**Notes:**
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: HP1
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 76.9
Parcel description

Large, arable fields abutting the inset edge of Harpenden across the A1081 in the eastern half of the parcel. Thrales End Lane forms the northern edge of the parcel, along the crest of a valley-side that slopes up from the A1081. More arable fields slope down from the road to the north. At its eastern end the road dips into a short lateral valley, creating separation from the main valley-side to the east where two smaller fields within St Albans District lie between the parcel and the inset edge of Harpenden. The tree-lined West Hyde Road forms a strong edge on the valley-side to the west. The parcel is contained from the wider countryside by its valley-side location but related in terms of land use. Landform and the A1081 also create distinction from the inset settlement to the south, and there is separation from the inset settlement edge to the north of the A1081.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Any development in this parcel would be associated with Harpenden. Land closer to Luton plays a strong role in protecting against urban sprawl.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel lies adjacent to the A1081, a link between Harpenden and Luton, but development to the south of the road means that it makes only a limited contribution to the settlement gap.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The adjacent settlement has some urbanising influence in the south of the parcel, but there is a consistent settlement edge and the whole area relates more strongly to the wider countryside. There is no urban development within the parcel itself.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: HR1
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 348.0
Parcel description

This parcel covers a large expanse of agricultural fields defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees to the south of Tebworth. The parcel is mostly free from development with a small number of farmsteads and residential properties situated along the inner edge of the parcel in the north, west and south. The landform slopes uphill, increasing steeply, from the southern edge towards Wingfield and Tebworth.

Tebworth Road runs along the northern perimeter where it converges with Hockliffe Road which forms the western boundary together with the A5. The A5 continues for much of the southern edge leading into Dunstable. Boundary roads lack tree cover save for the A5 which is relatively well screened by mature tree belts. A consented strategic urban extension to Houghton Regis covers the land between the parcel and the existing settlement edge of Houghton Regis. The approved scheme proposes a major road link between the A5 and the M1, fringed by a belt of trees.

The limited amount of development within the parcel has a rural character and the relative openness of the boundaries means that the parcel has a strong relationship with the wider countryside. The sloping landform of the parcel creates distinction from the strategic urban extension area to the south, and the A5-M1 link road, with associated boundary vegetation, will form a strong edge to the expanded Houghton Regis.

Houghton Regis forms, along with Luton and Dunstable, a large built-up area. It has no relationship with the historic town of Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
This parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Houghton Regis and development beyond the new link road would represent expansion of the built-up area into the countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is situated adjacent to Houghton Regis some distance from Leighton Buzzard. Development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap due to intervening topography and vegetation.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks considerable urbanising development. Development here would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
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Parcel description

This parcel extends along the eastern edge of the M1 and comprises the small settlement of Chalton and a sewage works, surrounded by a large pattern of irregular arable fields. Fields are defined by drainage ditches and hedgerows, and are interspersed with small geometric blocks of woodland. The B579 runs through Chalton, bisecting the parcel from the south east to the north west. Additionally, Toddington Service Station is located in the north with a single farmstead and isolated dwelling in the west. A strong ridge runs east-west through the parcel just to the south of Chalton, with a pronounced valley to the south of it.

The River Flit gently meanders through the parcel from south to north before forming much of the northern boundary together with a smaller tributary. The A5120 also runs along the western edge. With the exception of the M1 to the east, the boundaries of the parcel are relatively open with Chalgrave Manor Golf Club adjoining the parcel to the north and more agricultural fields to the north and west. A consented strategic urban extension to Houghton Regis covers the land between the parcel and the existing settlement edge of Houghton Regis. The approved scheme proposes a major road link between the A5 and the M1, with an associated tree belt, which would form the parcel boundary, running along the valley floor to the south of the ridge.

The proposed road together with the change in landform creates a strong separation between the expanded settlement and the parcel. The openness of the boundaries to the north with further agricultural fields beyond creates a strong relationship with the wider countryside.

The parcel accounts for much of the gap between Luton / Houghton Regis and Harlington, which in turn represents a sizeable proportion of the open space between Luton and Flitwick.

For the purpose of this assessment, this parcel is considered to be adjoining Houghton Regis, although it has no relationship with the historic settlement of Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the settlement of Houghton Regis and development here would represent significant expansion into the wider countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel is located adjacent to Houghton Regis and there is a significant gap to Flitwick, the nearest town northward; however in reducing the gap between smaller settlements development would cause some reduction in the perceived rural gap between the towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than the settlement and lacks considerable urbanising development.
Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This narrow parcel extends along the M1 from the northern edge of Luton. The parcel is relatively free from existing development with the main land use characterised by agricultural fields and woodland. There are a small number of cottages and a single farmstead located in the centre along minor roads that traverse the parcel. The chalk escarpment crosses the parcel just to the north of this road.

The settlement of Luton adjoins the parcel to the south and comprises a number of warehouse units within an Industrial Estate. The parcel is bound by the M1 to the west and a railway line to the east before they almost converge in the north after cutting through the chalk escarpment. The inset settlement of Chalton and a sewage treatment works are located beyond the parcel to the west with Sundon Chalk Pit to the north east.

The motorway and railway create strong containment to the east and west, and the chalk ridge forms a strong edge across the parcel. There is no significant separation from warehousing associated with North Luton Industrial Estate to the south, which has a strong urbanising influence over the parcel. The narrow northern end of the parcel, although contained by strong boundaries, is on lower ground that is isolated from the large built-up area.

The parcel lacks features which contribute to historic setting, but the northern part of the parcel breaches the alignment of the ancient Thiodweg track, which is preserved to the west as the Public Right of Way that adjoins Houghton Road, and to the east as the Public Right of Way that runs along the entire northern edge of Luton, to Warden Hill.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area but has some separation from it and relates more strongly to the wider countryside. Development in the northern area would represent considerable expansion of the built-up area into the countryside. The southern area adjacent to the industrial estate makes a much weaker contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel extends from the settlement edge of Luton but development of the parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between neighbouring towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The southern end of the parcel relates strongly to the settlement edge. The parcel as a whole is contained by strong edges, but change in elevation and distance from Luton mean that the northern end has a stronger relationship with the wider countryside.
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<td>Area (ha)</td>
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**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**
Due to its well contained nature adjacent to the M1, the southern part of the parcel does not form a significant part of the historic setting of Luton, but the northern part extends beyond the line of the important ancient Thiodweg track, and so by remaining open contributes to preservation of this route as a significant historic landscape element.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: L2  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha): 756.4
Parcel description

This parcel is made up of predominantly arable and pasture fields interspersed with a small number of woodland blocks adjoining the northern edge of Luton. This includes disused pits in the north west that have since been restored as woodland. The chalk dip-slope rises up northwards to a plateau along the northern edge of the parcel, although there is a valley towards the eastern side. The parcel also covers the rural settlements of Streatley, Upper Sundon and Lower Sundon.

The A6 extends from the built edge connecting Luton and Streatley to form the eastern boundary. Streatley Road runs along much of the northern edge between the villages of Streatley and Sundon whilst a railway marks the western limit. Low hedgerows and intermittent trees line these roads with further agricultural fields located beyond the parcel to the north and east. In contrast, the M1 is situated close to the western boundary which together with the railway provides a fairly strong barrier feature.

The chalk slopes and agricultural fields create a strong rural character and together with the limited vegetation lining the country lanes in the north mean that the parcel has a relatively strong relationship with the wider countryside. Tree belts along the edge of Luton and the adjacent sloping topography also creates a degree of separation from the settlement edge.

The parcel is adjacent to Luton and plays a role in its historic setting due to its wooded high ground and also its position to the north of the Public Right of Way along the inset settlement edge which marks the route of the ancient Thiodweg track.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Luton but relates more strongly to the wider countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in some narrowing of the gap between Luton and Harlington, which in turn would reduce the extent of countryside between Luton and the nearest town, Flitwick, but intervening landscape features and the size of remaining gaps would limit the impact.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The adjacent settlement has some urbanising influence in the south of the parcel, but there is a consistent settlement edge and the whole area relates more strongly to the wider countryside. There is no urban development within the parcel itself.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel's openness, particularly on the higher ground, and location to the north of the Thiodweg, contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to historic setting. Development would detract from the town's historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
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<td>Area (ha)</td>
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Parcel description

A patchwork of undulating, open arable fields defined by low hedgerows and interspersed with small blocks of woodland to the north of Luton. Development is limited to a single farmstead and isolated cottage, located along the inner edge of the western perimeter whilst a small part of South Beds Golf Club extends into the parcel in the south west.

The A6 leads from the built-up area of Luton to form the western edge whilst Lilley, a country lane lined by hedgerows, marks the northern extent. A hedged track forms the southern boundary creates a strong edge to the settlement. Tree belts separating the parcel from the adjacent golf course together with hedgerows delineating field boundaries following the administrative boundary form the eastern boundary. The golf course sits on the lower western slopes of the prominent Galley Hill with further arable farmland to the north and west.

The topography and lack of structure vegetation lends itself to the rural character of the parcel and a strong relationship with the wider countryside whilst the strong southern edge provides degree of separation from the settlement.

The parcel is adjacent to Luton and forms part of the rural setting associated with Warden Hill and Galley Hill. It lies to the north of the route of the Thiodweg, the ancient track which, as a Public Right of Way, forms a consistent northern edge to Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the built-up area of Luton and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development here would represent significant expansion of Luton into the countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel spans the gap between Luton and Steatley but development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between neighbouring towns considered in this assessment.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment
Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development here would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Rating: Relatively strong contribution
Notes:
The parcel's openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting and development of the parcel would detract from the town's historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel consists of wildflower meadows and pasture fields associated with the chalk escarpment at Warden and Galley Hill, South Bedfordshire Golf Club occupying the slopes along the western edge and arable fields sloping down to the east and the upper end of a valley to the south of the escarpment. The Bushmead suburb of Luton lies adjacent to the parcel in the west whilst development is limited to a single farmstead in the east and the buildings relating to the golf club.

The Icknield Way extends from the settlement edge in the east to form the northern boundary to the parcel and is lined with hedgerows and tree belts for much of its route along the parcel. The eastern and southern boundaries are defined by hedgerows and private tracks following the administrative boundary with further agricultural fields further east. The land slopes up from the built edge on the western side of the parcel where the hedged Links Road forms a strong edge.

The steep slopes and unity of open, undulating arable chalk landscape creates a strong separation from the settlement, whilst the openness and lack of urbanising features creates a strong rural character and relationship with the wider countryside.

The parcel is adjacent to Luton and the Warden and Galley Hills and the chalk escarpment are prominent landforms defining the built-up area and providing a striking backdrop and setting to Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Luton but has some separation from it and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development would represent significant expansion of the built-up area into the countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between neighbouring towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Strong contribution
Notes:
The parcel's openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and key characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting. Development here would detract significantly from the town's character.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Luton Hoo Estate covers a large portion of the parcel consisting of formal parkland and gardens as well as a private golf course. Arable fields interspersed with large swathes of woodland make up the remaining of the parcel with the River Lea bisecting the parcel from north to south. The B653 and railway run parallel to the River with a linear swathe of woodland buffering these traffic corridors. In the west, development is limited to the buildings associated with the Luton Hoo Estate sitting within a well-treed context whilst a small number of farmsteads and cottages are situated in the east in a more open agricultural landscape.

The parcel adjoins the southern edge of Luton including London Luton Airport. The A1081 leads from the airport along the northern boundary before wrapping around the west of the parcel with strong associated tree cover. W Hyde Road connects with the A1081 in the south before it passes along the southern and much of the eastern perimeter. Chiltern Green Road makes up the remaining eastern edge.

The strong woodland along the inner northern edge as well as the ridge-top runway just beyond creates a strong separation from the settlement. The Luton Hoo Estate imparts a distinctive parkland character on the parcel and the southern boundary is largely open. The strong valley landform continues to the south which creates a strong relationship with the wider countryside.

The parcel is adjacent to Luton and covers a considerable amount of the gap between Harpenden. The valley landform as well as the river and rail connections reduces the perception of the gap. The Luton Hoo Estate and the valley landform allow for views across the River Lea and these are recognised as important to the historic setting of Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Luton but has some separation from it and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development would represent significant expansion of the built-up area into the countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in significant narrowing of the physical gap between Luton and Harpenden.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than the settlement and blocks of woodland largely screen the urbanising development.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Notes:
The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting. Development within the parcel would significantly detract from the town’s historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Parcel Ref: L6</th>
<th>Parcel Type: Parcel</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>246.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The map shows a parcel of land with a land parcel reference of L6 and a type of Parcel. The area of the parcel is 246.2 hectares. The map includes various geographical features and is labeled with place names such as Chaul End, Luton, and Caddington. The map is credited to Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey.
Parcel description

This parcel mainly comprises an irregular pattern of arable fields defined by hedgerows and belts of trees to the south west of Luton. Development is limited across the parcel with several farmsteads situated along the inner edge of southern and western boundaries. The northern area is more elevated and wooded, with woodland containing a large vehicle compound as well as buildings associated with Caddington Golf Club along the north western edge. A number of residential properties are also located next to the golf club and sit within a small area of enclosed pasture.

The M1 runs along the eastern boundary whilst the A505 crosses the motorway to form the northern boundary. Existing mature tree belts run along both sides of these roads, which combined with topography creates strong separation from the large built-up area of Luton. Luton Road forms the southern edge of the parcel, with roadside tree cover helping to create a degree of separation from countryside to the south. The south-western corner of the parcel abuts the inset edge of Caddington, where several small, contained fields lie between the village and Manor Farm.

The parcel is located adjacent to Luton, and its elevated, wooded high ground, particularly the steeper slopes in the vicinity of Chaul End, contributes to the town’s historic setting.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area but is separated by the M1 motorway. The parcel is also partially separated from the countryside by Caddington and roads leading into it but due to the sloping topography, relates more strongly to the wider countryside than to the settlement.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is located close to Dunstable but it is acknowledged that Luton and Dunstable have already coalesced.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has strong separation from Luton but small fields in the south-western corner have a relationship with the inset village of Caddington.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting – development would detract from the town’s historic
**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: LL1
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 82.9
Parcel description

This triangular-shaped parcel consists of Linslade Wood and a small number of arable fields to the north of Linslade. Stoke Road and Old Linslade Road traverse the parcel and development is limited to a single farmstead along the inside of the eastern boundary.

A railway runs along the eastern edge before it enters a short tunnel near to the settlement edge in the south. The railway is at grade level for much of its route with little vegetation along its banks and the River Ouzel and Grand Union Canal are located just beyond. A small hedgerow marks the western edge following the administrative boundary and providing the separation between a large expanse of arable fields further west.

The relatively open boundaries to the east and west create a relatively strong relationship with the wider countryside whilst the thick area of woodland in the south, which sits on a spur of high ground, provides a strong separation from the inset settlement edge of Linslade. There are three small areas of open space to the south of the woodland which are closely related to the urban area.

The rural character of the river valley approaching Linslade contributes to the historic setting of the town, particularly with respect to the isolated rural setting to Old Linslade Church, just to the east of the parcel.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Linslade but has distinct separation from it. Development here would represent expansion beyond a natural boundary into the countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in a minor narrowing of the gap between Linslade and Milton Keynes but with a considerable distance still remaining.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Any development in or north of Linslade Wood would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively strong contribution
Notes:
The parcel's openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting of Linslade. Development would detract from the town's historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel extends along a stretch of the River Ouzel and the Grand Union Canal and comprises pasture fields interspersed with belts of trees and small strips of woodland. No public roads traverse the parcel and development is limited to a sewage works, strongly contained by tree cover, a few farmsteads and a large manor house.

The built edge of Linslade adjoins the parcel to the south and continues around the eastern boundary. The settlement edge is largely wooded with plantations encompassing much of the settlement edge to the east. Woodland extends to the north and together with Old Linslade Road make up the northern boundary. Stoke Road and a railway also run along the western perimeter. High ground to the south of the sewage works separates the parcel from the main urban area, although inset development has encroached along the hillside facing the canal.

The meandering form of the river valley, well-wooded boundaries and absence of urbanising development within it distinguish the parcel from the residential edge and relate it to the wider rural landscape.

The River Ouzel and Grand Union Canal meander through the parcel flowing from the town in the south. The rural character of this river valley is a key characteristic of the historic setting of Linslade, and it contributes to the isolated setting of Old Linslade Church and Manor.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Linslade but has some separation from it and relates more strongly to the wider countryside. Development here would represent expansion into the countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes: Development of this parcel would result in a minor narrowing of the gap between Linslade and Milton Keynes but with a considerable distance still remaining.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Strong contribution
Notes:
The parcel's openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and the key characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting. Development would detract significantly from the town's historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

The parcel comprises predominantly woodland plantations with a small housing development and a number of cottages inset by the massing of woodland and separate from the settlement in the south. A small pasture field also covers a small area along the inner western edge.

Plantation Road extends along the eastern boundary from the north of Leighton Buzzard before it joins with Old Linslade Road in the north. Old Linslade Road continues along the western edge before the River Ouzel passes underneath it to mark the edge of the plantation and the remainder of the western boundary.

The existing development within the parcel has minimal urbanising influence over the parcel because of its containment by thick swaths of woodland and the wooded nature of the parcel provides a relatively strong separation from the countryside as well as the adjacent settlement.

Woodland in the parcel contributes to the setting of the River Ouzel and Grand Union Canal, which are important to the historic setting of Leighton Linslade.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Linslade but has some separation from both the settlement and the wider countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in a minor narrowing of the gap between Linslade and Milton Keynes but with a considerable distance still remaining.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has a degree of separation from both the settlement and the wider countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel's openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade. Development would detract from the town's historic character.
| Land Parcel Ref: | LL3 | Parcel Type: | Parcel | Area (ha) | 32.5 |

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel consists entirely of woodland save for a small area of pasture in the east, whilst existing development is limited to a single dwelling along the inner eastern edge adjacent to the small pasture field.

A tree lined footpath forms the northern boundary with Leighton Buzzard Golf Club situated beyond and the back gardens of properties make up the boundaries of the parcel to the east, south and west.

Woodland typically has a weak relationship with settlement, but this parcel is almost entirely contained by residential development and so has a weak relationship with the wider countryside.

Woodlands are characteristic of the setting of Leighton Linslade, but this parcel’s containment within the urban fringe and context with respect to the extent of woodland to the north of the town means that it has only a limited setting role.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is situated within the extent of the large built-up area and development here would not be perceived as sprawl.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in no perception of the narrowing of the gap between neighbouring towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than to the wider countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Leighton Buzzard Golf Club occupies the majority of the parcel with Old Bank School and associated grounds covering a small area in the south east. Amenity grassland and sporadic belts of trees and swathes of woodland make up the parcel with existing development limited to a small number of buildings relating to the golf course and school in the south and one isolated house, Rushmere Manor, on the northern boundary.

Linslade Road and Sandy Lane run along the northern and southern boundary respectively before they connect with Plantation Road forming the western boundary. The inset settlement of Heath and Reach adjoins the north eastern edge with pasture fields and settlement at Leighton Buzzard marking the rest of the eastern extent.

Woodland cover is concentrated in the north and west extending beyond to Rushmere Park. This provides a relatively strong separation from the countryside. Tree belts around the neighbouring settlements also create a sense of separation from urban edges.

The parcel is adjacent to Leighton Linslade and tree cover in this area contributes to the wider rural setting of the town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Leighton Buzzard but has some separation from it and relates more strongly to the wider countryside. Development would cause Leighton Buzzard to merge with Heath and Reach and this would accentuate sprawl.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in a moderate narrowing of the gap between Leighton Buzzard and Milton Keynes but a considerable distance and woodland planting would still remain. Development would cause Leighton Buzzard to coalesce with Heath and Reach though.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has a degree of separation from both the settlement and the wider countryside, but Oak Bank School and its grounds have a stronger relationship with the settlement edge.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution
Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the historic setting of Leighton Linslade.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

The parcel comprises a patchwork of arable and pasture fields with current and disused sand pit workings covering a large area. Small blocks of woodland and thick tree belts are also interspersed throughout the parcel. Buildings include the Stonehenge Works, part of the Leighton Buzzard railway depot and museum, and a number of properties and farmsteads including Evans Yard situated along Leighton Road. Leighton Road also dissects the western area of the parcel and connects the north of Leighton Buzzard to the south of Heath and Reach.

Minor roads lined with mature tree belts delineate most of the parcel with Eastern Way to the north, Mile Tree Road and Leighton Buzzard Railway to the east, and Shenley Hill Road to the south. Further agricultural fields and mineral workings are located beyond the parcel to the north and east. The western edge roughly follows a tree belt marking the extent of Leighton Buzzard Golf Club beyond. An approved application (CB/11/02827/OUT) for a large urban extension means that the settlement edge of Leighton Buzzard will neighbour the parcel to the south.

The highways forming the boundaries act as a separating feature although there is already some development north of Shenley Road. The parcel demonstrates a stronger relationship with the inset settlement to south of Heath and Reach where the field to the north of Evans Yard is contained by development. The sloping land through the centre of the parcel means that the eastern portion is separate from settlement.

The parcel adjoins the northern edge of Leighton Buzzard and allows for views to the hills beyond.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Leighton Buzzard but has some separation from it and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development would lead to the loss of separation from Heath and Reach which would increase the sense of sprawl. Small areas adjacent to Heath and Reach are more contained by development and would make a weaker contribution.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in a moderate narrowing of the physical hap between Leighton Buzzard and neighbouring towns but a considerable distance would still remain. Development would however cause Leighton Buzzard to coalesce with Heath and Reach.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside although the area around Leighton Road makes a weaker contribution.
Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel's openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and key characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting. Development would only have a moderate impact on the town's historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel covers an expanse of relatively open pasture and arable fields with intermittent trees delineating the remnant field pattern. Small areas of woodland are also situated in the northern and southern areas whilst a number of minor watercourses bisect the parcel including Clipstone Brook which flows through the parcel from east to west. Existing development is limited to several farmsteads concentrated around the inside of the perimeter.

The northern boundary is formed of the Eastern Way before it meets the A5 running along much of the eastern edge. Tree belts forming field boundaries around Hockliffe make up the remainder of the eastern boundary.

The A4012 runs along the southern edge whilst the western extent is marked by a private access road and further tree belts forming field boundaries. Agricultural fields continue beyond the parcel to the north, east, south and much of the west. An approved application (CB/11/02827/OUT) for a large urban extension means that the settlement edge of Leighton Buzzard will adjoin the parcel in the west.

The main roads running along much of the perimeter are relatively open and together with the undulations in landform create a sense of openness from within the parcel. Additionally, the farmsteads are fairly spaced within a predominantly agricultural landscape which provides a strong rural character.

The openness of the parcel allows for views to the clay hills around Hockliffe, which form part of the wider historic setting of Leighton Buzzard.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: Once the approved application in constructed, the parcel will be adjacent to the large built-up area of Leighton Buzzard but has some separation from it and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development would represent significant expansion of the large built-up area.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes: Although a considerable distance would still remain, development would be discernible from the A5 and would be perceived as a significant narrowing of the gap between Leighton Buzzard and Houghton Regis and Dunstable.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Notes:
The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting, but development would have only a moderate impact on historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel consists almost entirely of arable and pasture fields delineated by hedgerows and traversed by a few minor roads. A few small hills with a number of hilltop farmsteads are located adjacent to the settlement edge. Rectilinear blocks of woodland are also located around the small village of Eggington in the northern area of the parcel. Existing development is concentrated around Eggington in the north and Stanbridge in the east, and comprises residential properties and farmsteads orientated along roads.

The A4012 runs between Leighton Buzzard and Hockliffe, and forms the northern edge. Mill Road leads from the A4012 into Stanbridge where it joins with Tilsworth Road and Station Road to form the eastern edge. Station Road extends down the A505 which runs along the southern perimeter whilst the settlement edge of Leighton Buzzard marks the western limit. This includes an approved large urban extension to Leighton Buzzard (Application No. CB/11/02827/OUT).

Most of the development within the settlement is set back from the parcel with tree belts delineating the boundary. This limits its urbanising influence and the relationship between the parcel and settlement. The parcel also has a degree of separation from the wider countryside due to the well treed A505 in the south and the treed settlement edge of Stanbridge in the east. However, the parcel has a strong relationship with the agricultural landscape and the hilly topography creates a sense of openness and a clear distinction from the edge of the approved development. The hills contribute to the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the built-up area of Leighton Buzzard but has some separation from it and relates more strongly to the wider countryside. Development would represent considerable expansion of the built-up area into countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in significant narrowing of the gap but a considerable distance would still remain between neighbouring towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively strong contribution
Notes:
The parcel's openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and key characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard. Development would detract from the town's historic character.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: LL9  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 643.3
Parcel description

This parcel contains a geometric pattern of arable and pasture fields, largely defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees. A large waterbody associated with the extraction of sand occupies a large area in the west. Existing development is concentrated around the village of Billington on a prominent hill in the centre of the parcel though a small number of caravan parks are situated towards the perimeter. The A4146 bisects the parcel and runs through Billington with a few other more minor roads intersecting the parcel and converging in the centre.

The A505 combines with the A4146 to form the northern boundary whilst the River Ouzel wraps around the western, southern and eastern boundary. Tree buffer planting lines much of the A505 and A4146 with limited tree belts and free standing trees sporadically located along the banks of the river. Agricultural fields continue to the west, south, east and much of the north.

Development within the settlement edge of Leighton Buzzard is set back from the parcel and mostly screened from the road by roadside planting. This provides a relatively strong separation from the settlement and the lack of vegetation along the Ouzel means that the parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside.

The River Ouzell and Grand Union Canal flow along the southern boundary whilst the Billington Clay Hills rise out the vale in the centre of the parcel. These features are recognised as contributing to the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Leighton Buzzard but has some separation from it and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development would represent significant expansion of the built-up area into the countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in significant narrowing of the gap but a considerable distance would still remain between neighbouring towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside, has a sense of separation from the settlement and lacks urbanising development. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
Development within the settlement edge of Leighton Buzzard is set back from the parcel and mostly screened from the road by roadside planting. This provides a relatively strong separation from the settlement and the lack of vegetation along the Ouzel means that the parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside.

The River Ouzell and Grand Union Canal flow along the southern boundary whilst the Billington Clay Hills rise out the vale in the centre of the parcel. These features are recognised as contributing to the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard.
Notes:  
The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting – development would detract from the town’s historic character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a mix of pasture, recreational fields and disused mineral extraction pits as well as a number of schools. The River Ouzel and Grand Union Canal bisect the parcel from south to north with Clipstone Brook flowing from east to west and adjoining the river in the north. Tiddenfoot Lake and a number of waterbodies within disused pits are also located in the southern area and are well contained by woodland planting. A number of school buildings and leisure facilities are interspersed throughout the parcel including Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre in the centre of the parcel.

A relatively well-treed railway and electricity infrastructure run along the western edge with further woodland situated beyond. The A4146 marks the southern boundary with a belt of trees and small woodland covering the banks and land adjacent. The A4012 adjoins the A4146 in the south before it leads into an industrial estate on the southern edge of Leighton Buzzard. The road and warehousing form the eastern boundary. The settlement edge continues around to the north where it contains much of the parcel.

The parcel is very contained by development although it has some strong boundaries to preserve separation. The canal and river are key features, and provide some connectivity with the wider countryside despite separation by A roads in the south.

The River Ouzel and Grand Union Canal flow through the parcel and the adjacent meadows are recognised as important to the historic setting of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, with particular reference to All Saints Church.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area and has a degree of separation from both the settlement and the wider countryside.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in little to no perception of the narrowing of the gap between neighbouring towns. The area occupied by Cedars School, and the allotments to the west, are more influenced by development and separated from the river and canal than the rest of the parcel, and so make a weaker contribution.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has a degree of separation from both the settlement and the wider countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
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</table>

**Rating:** Strong contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel’s openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and key characteristics identified as contributing to special character or historic setting – development would detract significantly from the town’s historic character.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a pattern of enclosed pasture and open arable fields as well as a large plantation of woodland with the contrasting areas separated by Wings Road. The land slopes up quite strongly from the settlement edge whilst existing development within the parcel is limited to an isolated cottage within the wooded area as well as a farmstead and row of cottages along the inner edge of the northern boundary.

The A4146 forms the southern perimeter in a minor cutting whilst a field boundary marks the western extent along the administrative boundary. Roadside tree belts extend along much of the road and some woodland plantations neighbour the parcel to the south. Arable fields wrap around the rest of the southern edge and continue up to the west. A railway spans the eastern boundary and runs into Leighton Buzzard Station a short distance from the parcel with allotments and a restored pit beyond. The settlement edge of Linslade adjoins the parcel in the north with properties largely set back along residential roads.

The A4146 and adjacent tree planting provide some degree of separation from the countryside although the western edge is largely open creating a relatively strong relationship with the wider countryside. The strong distinction is between enclosed pastures and open arable land, which the A4146 cuts through. Strong settlement edge containment and sloping terrain with lots of treed field edges creates a strong distinction between settlement and countryside across most of the parcel, but the field adjacent to Bunkers Lane to the south of Southcott has a stronger relationship with the settlement.

The parcel is adjacent to Linslade and, as rising ground with some woodland, contributes to the rural backdrop of the town.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes:
The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area but has some separation from it and relates strongly to the wider countryside. Development would represent significant expansion of the built-up area into the countryside although individual fields close to the settlement edge would make a weaker contribution.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
Development of this parcel would result in a moderate narrowing of the gap, but a considerable distance would remain between neighbouring towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes:
The pasture fields do not relate strongly to the wider countryside but are a sizeable area of distinctive countryside lacking urbanising development in their own right. The field adjacent to the settlement edge on Bunker Lane, to the south of Southcott, makes a weaker contribution.
Land Parcel Ref: LL11  Parcel Type: Parcel  Area (ha) 158.5

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Relatively weak contribution

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the setting of Leighton Linslade.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
<table>
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**Parcel description**

This parcel comprises a band of arable and pasture fields wrapping around much of the eastern and southern edge of Slip End and is bisected by Front Street from east to west. Slip End Lower School and a few residential dwellings are situated adjacent to the built edge in the west and are relatively well contained by tree planting. Away from the inset settlement edge the parcel contains development at Pepperstock, consisting mostly of caravan park homes. Isolated dwellings are contained by mature tree belts along Front Street, and a small warehousing unit is also located along Front Street a short distance to the east of the settlement edge opposite an allotment.

The B4540 Church Road forms the northern edge of the parcel, passing underneath the motorway and through Slip End. A strong hedgerow runs along the inset settlement edge between Church Road and Front Street, but to the south-east there is no separation between the settlement and the parcel. To the south-west, along Markyate Road and Rossway, the inset settlement edges have stronger tree and hedgerow cover. The outer edges of the parcel are defined by the M1 (around Junction 10) to the north and east, a woodland block, Birchin Grove, to the south and a field boundary hedgerow to the south-west. Stockwood Park lies to the north of the motorway, separating the parcel from the large built-up area of Luton. To the south-west the land falls away towards a narrow, steep-sided valley, part of a wider network of valleys which run out from the high chalk ridge to the south of Dunstable.

The motorway forms strong containment to the north and east, but hedgerows provide a reasonably strong visual barrier and there is no built development within the parcel north of Front Street. To the south-east the land located between Slip End and Pepperstock is more contained by development, and so relates less strongly to the wider countryside.

The parcel is too separated from Luton to contribute to its historic setting.

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**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Moderate contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel has a weak relationship with the settlement of Luton, and development here would still retain a degree of separation from Luton and would relate to Slip End rather than being associated as sprawl.

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**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel lies adjacent to Luton and although it is some distance from the nearest town, development would cause the coalescence with the inset village of Slip End.

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**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Moderate contribution

**Notes:**
Most of the parcel relates more strongly to settlement than the wider countryside, and both Slip End and Pepperstock have an urbanising influence. Land to the south of Pepperstock is more remote from the inset settlement.
Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Despite the parcel's location close to Luton, the M1 provides considerable separation between the parcel and Stockwood Park to the south of Luton. Stockwood Park is more important in forming the historic setting.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises mostly arable fields to the north and west of Slip End, subdivided by Grove Road. A retirement home, church and recreation ground are located in the north western corner and are relatively well contained by tree planting. Further dwellings and a small business park associated with Lower Woodside are located along the inside of the western boundary, contained by well-treed hedgerows. The parcel is bounded by the B4540 to the south/east, by the M1 to the north-east and by Woodside Road, on which the washed over settlements of Woodside and Lower Woodside are located, to the north/west. The inset settlement edge is largely marked by hedging containing a large airport parking area, but a close of houses, Prebendal Drive, faces onto the parcel to the east of Grove Road and houses along Markyate Road form the inset edge to the south-west. The parcel is located within a broader farmed landscape of mostly arable fields with a number of small washed-over settlements. Stockwood Park lies across the M1, separating the parcel from central Luton, although there is intervisibility between Slip End and the Farley Hill suburb to the north. The parcel has no relationship with the town’s historic setting.

Strong boundaries create distinction between Slip End and Lower Woodside, and the land in between them slopes downhill relatively steeply to the south into a valley, part of a wider network of valleys which run out from the high chalk ridge to the south of Dunstable. This strengthens the relationship between this part of the parcel and the wider countryside. Elsewhere there is no significant separation between the arable fields within the parcel and those to the north and west.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has a weak relationship with the settlement of Luton, and development here would still retain a degree of separation from Luton and would relate to Slip End rather than being associated as sprawl.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel adjoins the settlement edge of Luton although Stockwood Park lies between the parcel and the built-up area. Development of this parcel would result in little or no perception of the narrowing of the gap between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel has a degree of separation from both the settlement and the wider countryside. Topography makes land at the southern end of the parcel more distinct from the inset settlement of Slip End.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the historic setting of Luton.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Mostly arable farmland on land sloping down northwards from the edge of the inset village of Toddington. Fields are large and open, but with several belts of trees to provide some subdivision. On the higher slopes adjacent to the settlement, land associated with dwellings within the inset edge has strong tree cover. There is linear development within the Green Belt to either side of the A5120 Harlington Road, to the north-east of Toddington. Elsewhere within the parcel development is limited to isolated farmsteads. The parcel is bounded by field edge hedgerows and trees to the west and north, also with a watercourse along the northern edge, and by Harlington Road and Junction 12 of the M1 to the east. It sits in a broader arable landscape, with the well-wooded Toddington Park estate to the west. The tree cover adjacent to the settlement edge, combined with the change in landform from hilltop to hillside, creates strong separation between the main body of the parcel and Toddington and a strong relationship with the broad valley landscape to the north. The enclosed fields at the settlement edge are separated from the wider countryside but adjacent development within the inset settlement is low in density and well treed, and so does not exert much urbanising influence. The houses within the Green Belt on Harlington Road are separated from the inset settlement by a belt of trees, and are also set in well-treed surrounds. The parcel forms part of the wide gap between Flitwick and Houghton Regis, but accounts for only a small proportion of it.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not close to a large built-up area.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is too separated from the nearest towns to make any significant contribution to the settlement gap.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel has strong separation from Toddington and forms part of a wider rural landscape.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of any historic towns.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Farmland sloping down eastwards from the edge of the inset village of Toddington. A steep-sided valley cut into the hillside, with an associated watercourse and a block of woodland at its head, on the settlement edge, is a strong landscape element. Conger Hill Motte, the earthwork of a Norman castle, is a distinctive landmark on the Green Belt edge adjacent to the settlement. A line of houses to either side of the A5120 Harlington Road lies within the Green Belt just beyond the inset edge of Toddington, but elsewhere there are only a few isolated buildings within the parcel. The A5120 forms the northern boundary of the parcel, the B579 marks the southern edge and the B530 forms the outer, eastern edge at the foot of the hillside. Farmland occupies the land beyond all these edges. The parcel's landform, combined with tree cover along much of the settlement edge and the presence of the Conger Hill Motte, creates strong separation from Toddington and a relationship with the broader valley landscape to the east. The houses outside of the defined settlement along Harlington Road are well contained by tree cover, and separated from the village by a belt of trees. The parcel forms part of the wide gap between Flitwick and Houghton Regis/Luton, but accounts for only a small proportion of it.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not close to a large built-up area.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form a significant part of any settlement gaps.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Strong contribution

Notes: The parcel has strong distinction from the inset settlement and relates well to the wider countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel has no relationship with any historic towns.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: T3
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 57.9
Parcel description

Farmland on the hill top and south-west facing slopes to the south of Toddington, bounded by the B579 Luton Road to the north-west, hedgerows to the south and the A5120 to the west. A house and farm are located in well-treed surroundings at the foot of the hillside in the eastern corner of the parcel and there are several other isolated farmsteads. The parcel overlooks a wider farmed valley landscape to the east and there is also farmland on the plateau to the west. Chalgrave Manor Golf Club occupies the hillside to the south. The settlement edge has no landscape barrier, so there is urbanising influence on the hill top, but to the south and east of Crowbush Farm the land slopes away and relates more strongly to the wider countryside. The parcel accounts for only a small proportion of the wide gap between Houghton Regis / Luton and Flitwick. The open hillsides to the south of Toddington play a minor role in the wider historic setting of Luton.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: **Weak/No contribution**

Notes:
Development here would be associated with Toddington rather than Houghton Regis / Luton. Land closer to the large built-up area plays a strong role in preventing sprawl.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: **Weak/No contribution**

Notes:
The parcel has a negligible role in settlement separation.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: **Strong contribution**

Notes:
Most of the parcel is on sloping ground which is distinct from the hilltop settlement of Toddington and relates strongly to the wider countryside. The flat ground on the hill top plays a weaker role in this respect, and lacks separation from the settlement edge, but also lacks any containing landscape features.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: **Relatively weak contribution**

Notes:
The parcel forms a minor element in the setting of Luton.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Pasture fields to the west of the inset village of Toddington. Internal field boundaries are mostly weak, but there are some denser hedgerows and a small copse towards the southern end. A short row of terraced houses on Leighton Road and a farmstead, both close to the inset settlement edge, are the only dwellings in the parcel and do not have a strong urbanising influence.

Park Road marks the northern edge of the parcel and a belt of woodland, the western half of which is immature, marks the southern edge. The parcel abuts a short stretch of the A5120 at the southern edge of the village. Field boundary hedgerows defined the outer western edge. There is little vegetation, other than back garden planting, along the inset settlement edge.

Slopes on the western side of Toddington are more gentle than those to the north and east, and the eastern side of the parcel is relatively flat and consistent with the elevation of the inset settlement, so there is no strong distinction between the village and the parcel. There is no significant physical or visual separation between the fields within the parcel and farmland to the west, but there is a distinct change from smaller pasture fields to larger arable ones. The western side of Toddington is not juxtaposed between any nearby towns.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
Any development in this area would be associated with Toddington, and not the large, built-up area of Luton / Houghton Regis to the south.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel makes no significant contribution to settlement gaps.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel relates to both the settlement and the wider countryside, but there are fields adjacent to the settlement edge which have a stronger relationship with the former.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel does not form a significant part of the setting of any historic towns.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Arable farmland centred on Clayhill Farm, fairly flat in the northern half of the parcel but more steeply sloping to the south, where Sampshill Road crosses a ridge of high ground. A railway line, with associated bankside vegetation, separates the inset village of Westoning from the parcel. Greenfield Road passes beneath the line and forms the north-western edge of the parcel, and Sampshill Road, a minor road linking only to farms, crosses under it near the southern edge. The outer edges of the parcel are defined by field boundary hedgerows, and by a solar farm to the north. To the west, south and north of the parcel a broad belt of higher ground creates a degree of containment, but this is nonetheless a sizeable area of farmland strongly separated from Westoning and lacking urbanising influences.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not close to any large built-up areas.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: Development in this area would not reduce any gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: The parcel forms part of a wider landscape that is contained by higher ground, but is strongly separated from the inset village of Westoning and has no urbanising elements.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of any historic towns.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Land Parcel Ref: WE2
Parcel Type: Parcel
Area (ha): 58.1
**Parcel description**

Open farmland to the south of the inset village of Westoning, sloping gently downhill to the A5120 which forms the western edge of the parcel. There are small commercial developments in the north-western and south-eastern corners of the parcel, and also allotments and a garden cemetery adjacent to the latter. The field immediately adjacent to the edge of Westoning has not been farmed for some years and is developing a scrub vegetation. A railway line with associated tree cover forms the eastern edge of the parcel, and Westoning Road forms the southern boundary, linking the A5120 to the inset village of Harlington, which lies just across the railway line to the east. A short row of dwellings extends out from Harlington under the railway bridge along the south side of Westoning Road, facing the parcel, but the landscape to the south is principally arable farmland. To the west of the A5120 is the parkland landscape of Westoning Manor and Manor Park Stud Farm. There is no significant separation between the inset settlement and the field at the northern end of the parcel, and a hedgerow separates this field from the larger, arable fields to the south. The railway and A5120 provide strong containment to the east and west respectively. The parcel occupies most of the gap between Westoning and Harlington, which in turn forms part of the gap between the towns of Luton and Flitwick.

**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel is not located close to a large built-up area.

**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Relatively weak contribution

**Notes:**
Development would close the gap between Westoning and Harlington, but would still leave significant areas of countryside between the towns of Luton and Flitwick.

**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Relatively strong contribution

**Notes:**
Most of the parcel does not have a strong relationship with Westoning, and relates relatively strongly to the wider countryside, but the field adjacent to the inset settlement is fairly well contained. The limited amount of development at the south-eastern corner of the parcel has a minor urbanising impact.

**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.
| Land Parcel Ref: | WE2 | Parcel Type: | Parcel | Area (ha) | 58.1 |

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Paddocks around Manor Park Stud Farm and parkland around Westoning Manor. The manor house is subdivided into apartments and houses have been built in the grounds, but extensive mature tree cover creates separation between this area and the inset settlement edge to the east. The south-facing settlement edge, adjacent to grazing land, has no separation from the open land in the parcel. Trees form strong outer edges to the parcel, particularly to the north-west, separating the estate from its mainly arable surroundings. The A5120 forms the eastern edge to the south of Westoning.

The more densely vegetated area around Westoning Manor has a distinctive character and clear separation from the inset settlement, and the low density development in a wooded setting is not significantly urbanising in character. A strong tree line separates this area from the stud farm, where fields have a stronger relationship with the settlement.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel is not close to any large built-up areas.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel makes very little contribution to the gap between Luton and Flitwick.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Relatively strong contribution

Notes: The Manor and its parkland are contained from the wider landscape but have a distinctive character and strong separation from the inset settlement. There is less separation between Westoning and the Stud Farm.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of an historic town.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Land at the north-eastern edge of the Green Belt, to the east of the Woburn Sands, sloping up from lower ground to the north and east to a hill top on the edge of the inset village of Aspley Guise. The parcel is mostly occupied by the tree-lined fairways of Aspley Guise and Woburn Sands Golf Club, which forms a visual buffer between the northern ends of the two settlements. Weathercock Lane forms the Green Belt edge to the south-west, so houses along the northern side of the road lie within the parcel. Houses continue to the east along West Hill and Church Street, so there is no physical separation between Woburn Sands and Aspley Guise, but the size of plots means that housing density is low, and tree cover along the road and between the backs of houses and the golf course limits urbanising impact. A railway line forms the northern edge of the parcel, and also marks the Green Belt's outer limit.

Although contained by built development, urbanising impact is for the most part greatly limited by tree cover, and landform creates additional separation from most of Aspley Guise. There is little separation between Woburn Sands and Wavendon, and between Wavendon and the large built-up area of Milton Keynes.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel is not adjacent to the large built-up area of Milton Keynes, but has sufficient connection for development here to have some association with it. There is no Green Belt closer to Milton Keynes to form a barrier. Smaller parts of the parcel can be considered to make a weaker contribution, but land close to the outer Green Belt edge is more likely to be perceived as making a contribution to preventing sprawl.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Rating: Weak/No contribution

Notes:
The parcel is largely enclosed by built development, and so does not contribute to retaining a gap between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Rating: Moderate contribution

Notes:
The parcel's terrain and land cover is generally distinct from the inset settlement of Woburn Sands, but it doesn't serve to protect the wider Green Belt, being located on the outer edge. Fulbrook Middle School has a stronger relationship with the inset settlement edge of Woburn Sands, and strong containment from the golf course to the east.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes:
The parcel does not form part of the setting of any historic towns.

**Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Parcel description

Most of the parcel comprises Ashley Wood, with mature tree cover forming a wide, dense arc around the edge of the non-Green Belt settlement of Woburn Sands and the washed-over village of Aspley Guise, and a disused quarry and recent replanting to the south and west of this. The road Aspley Hill marks the Green Belt boundary, and also the District boundary, on the edge of Woburn Sands. Development of an urbanising nature has extended across into the Green Belt at the north-eastern corner of the parcel, close to the A5130, but density decreases, and tree cover increases, further east along Aspley Hill. Parcel boundaries are formed by Woodside and Aspley Lane to the east, leaving a belt of open farmland between the roads and Aspley Wood which visually links to more extensive farmland to the east. The A5130 forms the parcel edge to the west and south, but a more extensive area of woodland, Aspley Heath, lies beyond it. The north-eastern part of the parcel, contained between Woburn Sands and Aspley Wood and already in part developed, has a strong relationship with the settlement and is separated from the wider countryside, but the rest of the parcel is strongly distinct from the urban area.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
Rating: Moderate contribution
Notes: Connectivity to Milton Keynes, through Woburn Sands and Wavendon, means that development in this area would have some association with the large built-up area, with no Green Belt to form a barrier. The small part of the parcel to the north of Aspley Wood makes little contribution in this respect.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes: The parcel does not form a significant part of any gaps between towns.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment
Rating: Strong contribution
Notes: Aspley Wood is strongly distinct from Woburn Sands, and relates strongly to Aspley Heath to the west. Open farmland on the eastern edge of the parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside to the east. The partially-developed area contained between the non-Green Belt settlement and Aspley Wood makes little contribution in this respect.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
Rating: Weak/No contribution
Notes: The parcel does not form part of the setting of any historic towns.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
**Parcel description**

The parcel comprises the settlement and woodland of Aspley Heath, with dense coniferous woodland in the eastern half and the settlement set within woodland in the western half. There are several pasture fields on the north-western edge of the parcel, and one area of grassland to the north east. The A5130 marks the eastern edge of the parcel, but there is further woodland, Aspley Wood, beyond it, and Aspley Heath woodlands continue to the south and west, forming part of a very extensive wooded heathland landscape. To the north-west an open line of trees forms the parcel, District and Green Belt edge, with pasture fields to both sides of the boundary occupying the space between the heath woodlands and the settlement edge of Woburn Sands.

The woodlands are strongly distinct from the non-Green Belt settlement to the north, and relate strongly to the surrounding wooded heathlands. Containment of the settlement at Aspley Heath by trees makes most of it distinct from Woburn Sands, but there is no significant difference in the nature of built development to either side of the Green Belt edge where Church Road meets the A5130 Woburn Road at the parcel edge.

**Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**Rating:** Moderate contribution

**Notes:**
Connectivity to Milton Keynes, through Woburn Sands and Wavendon, means that development in this area would have some association with the large built-up area, with no Green Belt to form a barrier. The open grassland and developed areas of the parcel to the north of Aspley Wood makes little contribution in this respect.

**Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel does not form a significant part of any gaps between towns.

**Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

**Rating:** Strong contribution

**Notes:**
The Aspley Heath woodland is strongly distinct from Woburn Sands, and relates strongly to surrounding woodlands. The grassland fields on the north-western edge of the parcel have no distinction from the adjacent fields outside of the Green Belt, and do not serve much function in preventing encroachment into the wider countryside, but their separation from the urban edge means that they come under no urbanising influence. The field to the north-east is also separate from any urbanising settlement edges.

**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

**Rating:** Weak/No contribution

**Notes:**
The parcel does not form part of the setting of any historic towns.
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.
Appendix 2
Stage 2 assessments
Parcel description

This parcel consists of Ramsey Manor Lower School, Arnold Middle School and Hyde Farm on the eastern edge of Barton-le-Clay. The school grounds make up a considerable portion of the parcel and are separated from Hyde Farm by a small stream.

The B655 runs the entirety of the southern boundary leading into the centre of Barton-le-Clay. The uneven settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay made up of back gardens of adjacent properties and Manor Road forms the western boundary and continues around to a stretch of the northern boundary. The eastern extent is defined mostly by tree belts and hedgerows forming field boundaries.

The schools within the parcel comprise relatively large buildings and associated infrastructure which together with the uneven settlement edge has an urbanising influence and creates a strong relationship with the settlement. The eastern edge is more open where hedgerow loss has occurred. The pasture fields around Hyde Farm have a degree of separation from the settlement by a heavily treed watercourse and relate more strongly to the wider countryside to the east.

Conclusion

The area adjacent to the built edge including Ramsey Manor Lower School and Arnold Middle School makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes, and the heavily-treed watercourse to the east of the schools would make a strong potential alternative Green Belt edge. The land to the east of the watercourse, around Hyde Farm, is considered to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises an area of allotments with Barton village hall and doctors surgery in the west and a small number of residential properties in the south.

The parcel is surrounded by development on all 4 sides. The back gardens of adjacent properties make up the northern and eastern edge whilst the B655 runs along the southern boundary and continues around the west. Several properties are located adjacent to the B655 but are set back from the road and are contained by tree planting.

The built edge is relatively open and the parcel contains urbanising development which creates a strong relationship with the settlement. Trees are located along the southern edge and together with the B655 provide a strong separation from the wider countryside beyond.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a relatively weak overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. The tree-lined B665 provides a strong distinction from the wider countryside and would create a strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Land Parcel Ref: BC4a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 31.9
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a mix of arable, pastoral and recreational fields to the south of Barton-le-Clay. Barton Rovers Football Club and associated sports pitches are situated to the settlement edge in the north with agricultural fields well-defined by hedgerow and hedgerow trees located further south. Built development is limited to small buildings associated with the football club and scout hut in the north and stables in the southern corner.

The parcel abuts the inset settlement along Sharpen hoe Road to the north and the B655 to the east, and is set within a broader arable landscape. The tree-lined A6 forms the western boundary, whilst to the south wooded slopes mark the scarp edge of the Barton Hills.

The football ground and associated buildings in the north have a relatively strong urbanising influence over the parcel and the hedgerow along Luton Road allows for relationship between the northern fields and settlement. The land slopes away to south, to a shallow valley with a watercourse and associated hedgerow, creating a degree of separation from the settlement edge and a stronger relationship with Barton Hills beyond. To the east of Luton Road there is weaker separation between the settlement edge on Ashbrook Close and the paddocks that form the south-eastern part of the parcel, but the landform rises to the south and has a strong relationship with Barton Hills.

Conclusion

The area in the north containing Barton Rovers Football Club and training facilities makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. The A6 to the west and mature hedgerow to the south would constitute a strong potential alternative Green Belt edge, aligning fairly closely to the existing edge to the east of Luton Road (south of Washbrook Close). Land further south within the parcel is considered to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
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- **Stage 2 Parcel**
- **Relatively weak contribution**

Caddington Village School

Parcel description

The parcel comprises the majority of the buildings of Caddington Village School (the part that was formerly Five Oaks Middle School), and associated playing fields. The buildings are clustered close to the inset settlement edge on Five Oaks. The parcel also abuts the inset edge to the west, on Fairgreen Road, although mature trees create some visual separation along part of the boundary. A hedgerow separates the north-eastern corner of the parcel, close to the school buildings, from the rest of the school site (the buildings and playing fields of the former Willowfield County Primary), and a block of woodland, Heath Wood, is a prominent feature along the eastern edge of the parcel. A fence and broken tree line separate the school from a large arable field to the south. The school buildings relate fairly strongly to the built-up edge, in what is a fairly flat landscape, and whilst the playing fields are undeveloped the presence of Heath Wood creates containment to the east, and trees provide some separation to the south.

Conclusion

The parcel is considered to make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries: Heath Wood would form a strong boundary to the east, and the tree-line along the southern edge of the school site is consistent with the settlement edge further west.
Parcel description

The parcel contains the Church of St Thomas the Apostle and Caddington and District Sports and Social Club, consisting of a building and associated area of hard surfacing adjacent to Manor Road and a sports field to the east. The parcel has a relationship with the inset settlement edge to the north, where Ledwell Road ends at the edge of the playing field, and the Catholic Church is immediately adjacent to the last house on Manor Road, but trees along the road in front of the church, and between it and the sports club building, do create some distinction. A strong hedgerow contains the sports field to the south, but there is a stronger visual relationship with the open arable field to the east, and across Manor Road the parcel faces more arable farmland.

Conclusion

On balance this parcel has sufficient openness, distinction from the settlement edge and relationship with the wider countryside to make a moderate contribution to preventing countryside encroachment. The inset settlement edge on Manor Road, Ledwell Road and Fairgreen Road is consistent, and any expansion of development in this direction would also weaken the gap between Caddington and the smaller settlements of Aley Green and Lower Woodside, in turn reducing the gap to the inset village of Slip End.
**Parcel description**

Dwellings along the eastern side of Tring Road, between the Downs Service Station (close to the junction with Totternhoe Road) and the edge of Dunstable, and their long back gardens. A strong belt of trees and scrub, strengthened by trees within the residential gardens, forms the eastern edge of the parcel, which is further defined by the strong break in slope that marks the foot of the Dunstable Downs chalk escarpment. The Chiltern Way long distance path and the Dunstable and Whipsnade Downs SSSI also follow this edge. To the south there is a clear distinction between the residential edge and a very open, undulating arable landscape to the south.

Tree cover within the parcel combines with trees within the inset settlement to the west of Tring Road to soften the settlement edge and create a transition to the more densely development area to the north, but regardless of this there is a strong distinction between the parcel and the downs to the east, and there is no significant distinction between the density of development to either side of Tring Road.

**Conclusion**

There is a clear distinction between the parcel and the wider countryside, and development within it relates it strongly to the inset settlement. Tring Road is a clear boundary feature, but the scarp foot would also be a strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary, marking a distinction between the settlement and the downland landscape beyond, and strengthened by the SSSI status of the Downs. Therefore the parcel is considered to make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Parcel description

A cluster of buildings associated with three schools - Manshead Upper School, Streetfield Middle School and St Mary's Lower School - surrounded by playing fields. The parcel occupies the floor of a steep-sided valley running south from Dunstable to Markyate and Flamstead, with the A5 Watling Street providing a road link. Reasonably strong hedgerows mark the edges of the parcel adjacent to the inset settlement edge, the well-hedged A5 forms a strong edge to the south-west and Dunstable Road forms the south-eastern boundary. To the north-west, close to the valley floor, the parcel edge is marked in part by the entrance drive to the schools, beyond which lies arable farmland, and in part by a hedgerow separating the area from a public recreation ground.

The strong topographical form of this parcel relates it to the urban area to the north but also to the open valley landscape to the south. Built development forms a fairly dense cluster, and although this has an urbanising influence it leaves open space to the south and east that relates to the broader, rural valley more than to Dunstable. There is a fairly narrow gap between the school buildings and the residential edge on Norfolk Road, but strong hedgerows and the absence of any vehicular access from this direction emphasise the separation between the two.

Conclusion

Despite the extent of development in this area it is felt that there is sufficient separation from the inset settlement, which currently has a fairly even edge across both sides of Watling Street, and sufficient relationship between the site and the wider countryside, for any further settlement extension to constitute countryside encroachment. All of the parcel is therefore judged to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Parcel description

A narrow strip of land which is split into an area of grassland to the east and a park home site, Caddington Park, to the west, accessed from Skimpot Lane. Dense tree cover occupies the remaining land to the west and south of Caddington Park.

The parcel is hemmed in by transport routes: the Luton-Dunstable Busway, edged by strong tree cover, separates it from the inset edge of Dunstable to the north and the A505 Hatters Way, also tree-lined, forms the southern edge. The short eastern and western edges of the parcel are marked by the M1 and the A505 Skimpot Road respectively. There is also a visual relationship with development in the urban area to the north.

Topographically there is some distinction between the eastern and western halves of the parcel in relation to the chalk scarp slope that defines this edge of Dunstable, with the eastern half situated beneath the foot of the slope but the steeper western half forming part of the slope, but the routeways and associated boundary vegetation are strong features which dominate the landscape structure.

Conclusion

Although physically separated from the inset settlement this parcel is too contained to make any significant contribution to the wider countryside. Existing development within it and its strong relationship with urbanising features mean that it makes a weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. Hatters Way, the M1 and Skimpot Road would form a strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Parcel description

Grazing fields in an area bounded by Totternhoe Road to the east and Greenways to the south, marking the inset settlement edge of Eaton Bray, with The Rye to the north and field boundaries and the boundary of a residential dwelling to the west. The parcel contains no development, but houses to the south and across Totternhoe Road to the east have some urbanising influence. The Rye, and a single dwelling off it, set in well-treed grounds, provide additional containment. To the west the fields have only fenced boundaries, with further grazing land beyond, but a hedgerow with trees c.70m to the east creates a degree of separation from the wider countryside.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. The fenced boundaries of the identified area are not visually strong, but align with the inset settlement edge to the south and so would make an appropriate potential alternative Green Belt boundary, although at the northern end the hedged boundary to a residential property may make a more suitable boundary than the parcel edge, which runs through the gardens. The hedgerow to the east could form an alternative boundary both here and to the south, but expansion into this area would increase encroachment on the countryside.
Land Parcel Ref: EB1b  Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel  Area (ha) 2.1

**Parcel description**

An area of open grassland to the east of The Meads and allotments and a small area of tree-fringed grassland to the west. The allotments align with housing on Church Lane, abut development on Woodside, and are distinct from open arable farmland to the south-east, from which they are separated by a hedgerow. The small grassland area to the north-west of the allotments, although distinct in character due to its tree cover, is contained by housing on three sides and lacks a significant relationship with the wider countryside. The larger area of grassland on the other side of The Meads has housing along two sides - Perry Mead to the north and Knights Court to the east - although a hedgerow limits visibility of the latter. To the south there is no feature along what was formerly a hedgerow boundary, but orchard trees occupy the area to the south and so create some distinction.

**Conclusion**

All of the defined area is considered to make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes, having a strong relationship with the settlement form and a degree of separation from the wider countryside. The hedgerow between the allotments and the arable field to the south-east forms a clear potential alternative Green Belt boundary feature, and combining this with a new edge along the former field boundary to adjoin the hedgerow to the south of Knight's Court would create a shorter Green Belt edge.
Land Parcel Ref: FW2a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 20.2
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a series of arable fields to the east of Flitwick. Existing development is limited to a couple of agricultural barns associated with Folly Farm in the northern corner of the parcel.

The woodland of Flitwick Moor contains the parcel to the east, and strong hedgerows connect it to the settlement edge to the north and south. The settlement of Flitwick adjoins the parcel to the west with Malden Road and back gardens of properties along Malden Road making up the boundary. Malden Road Industrial Estate is also located along Malden Road to the west.

Tree planting is limited along the western edge which creates a relatively hard built edge and the commercial warehousing within the industrial estate with garish signage has a strong urban influence over the wider parcel. Flitwick Moor is a dense woodland and provides a strong separating feature from the wider countryside. The containment from the countryside and openness along the urban edge means that the parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than to the wider countryside.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a relatively weak overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. The dense woodland to the east and connecting hedgerows to the north and south, the form associated with a Public Right of Way and the latter with the River Flit, would make a strong potential alternative Green Belt edge.
Land Parcel Ref: FW3a  Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel  Area (ha) 13.3
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a series of pasture fields defined by guppy hedgerows and tree belts.

The River Flit splits just north of the parcel and runs along much of the eastern and western perimeter flowing round to the south. The northern boundary follows Greenfield Road leading into Flitwick whilst the settlement edge runs along the western boundary. A length of railway on embankment also marks the western extent and a large swathe of woodland forms the southern edge and continues round to the east.

The parcel has a degree of separation from the wider countryside to the south east by woodland and a distinct change in landform, although the north eastern edge around Greenfield Road is more open and relates more to the countryside. The watercourse running along the settlement edge with substantial vegetation creates some distinction from the settlement of Flitwick, and although the urban edge is less visually contained in the north the designation of a SSSI adjacent to the inset edge in this area creates a barrier to settlement expansion. Land adjacent to the settlement edge at the southern end of the parcel is functional floodplain, strengthening the role of the watercourse as a boundary.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes, and the channel defining the existing settlement edge constitutes a strong boundary.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a series of pasture fields well-defined by mature hedgerows. The parcel is free from development and vegetation is limited to field boundaries.

The settlement edge of Harlington abuts the parcel to the north with some trees situated within back gardens along the boundary. A railway forms the western boundary and a mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees defines the southern extent whilst larger scale arable fields are located beyond. Sundown Road makes up the eastern edge and a small woodland copse is situated adjacent.

The hedge line to the south together with the tree-lined road in the east and railway embankment in the west provides a strong separation from the wider countryside. The openness of the built edge with Pilgrims Close facing out over the parcel has an urbanising influence and creates a relatively strong relationship between the parcel and settlement.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a relatively weak overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. Containing hedgelines would make a relatively strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Land Parcel Ref: HAR1a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 30.4
Parcel description

The parcel comprises a series of recreational and pasture fields framing a disused sand pit on the settlement edge of Heath and Reach. Existing development is concentrated around the perimeter of the parcel near to the inset settlement and consists of St Leonards Lower School, Kingswood Farm and a small number of residential properties.

Boundaries of the parcel are formed by minor roads and dense woodland. Woburn Road and Linslade Road, with a number of pockets of inset development to the west of these roads, make up the western boundary. Linslade Road continues round to form much of the southern boundary whilst Brickhill Road marks the northern limit, again with some inset housing.

The areas of inset development to the west of Woburn Road and Linslade Road create a strong relationship between the parcel and the settlement of Heath and Reach. Furthermore, large areas of woodland associated with Bakers Wood and Stockgrove Country Park contain the parcel to the west and provides a strong barrier to the wider countryside. However, the northern end of the parcel, around Kingswood Farm, is more distinct from the settlement and has a greater relationship with the countryside.

Conclusion

The area adjoining the settlement edge of Heath and Reach, excluding the area around Kingswood Farm, makes a relatively weak contribution to Green belt purposes, and the woodland to the west would form a strong potential alternative Green Belt edge. A hedgerow provides distinction from the Kingswood Farm area to the north, which is considered to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Land Parcel Ref: HAR2a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 1.9
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a small number of pasture fields and the back gardens of adjacent properties to the south east of Heath and Reach.

Gig Lane and Eastern Way extend from the settlement along the northern and southern boundary respectively. Tree belts run either side of Gig Lane with an existing mineral workings further north. Post and rail fencing form the boundary to Eastern Way with a farmstead located beyond. The eastern edge is more varied with post and rail fencing contrasting with stretches of mature tree belts. The settlement edge in the west is also varied with tree belts along the western boundary and within gardens containing adjoining development.

The relatively strong settlement edge where boundary vegetation lines back gardens contrasts with the weaker edge where adjoining properties overlook parcel and have a minor urbanising influence. Small belts of trees provide localised areas distinct from the countryside but there are gaps where development would be perceived as sprawl.

Conclusion

There is sufficient openness for the parcel to be considered to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Parcel description

This parcel contains an area of rough grassland and a single dwelling on the western edge of Hockliffe. A small number of free standing trees are also located throughout the area.

The A4012 runs along the southern boundary where it passes over a small, tree-lined stream which flows along the western edge into Clipstone Brook in the north. Clipstone Brook is well-treed and bounds the parcel to the north extending from the settlement edge in the west.

The heavily treed watercourses form a strong separation from the wider countryside. The relatively open settlement edge and existing property within the parcel has a urbanising influence and creates a strong relationship between the settlement and parcel.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. The water courses and thick tree belts which surround it would form a strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Land Parcel Ref: L1a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 37.3
Parcel description

Mostly arable farmland, located in a strip to the west of the Vauxhall Aftersales Warehouse between the B579 Luton Road and the M1, and in two fields to the north of the warehouse, divided by a hedgerow and contained by Luton road to the west, the railway line to the east and Sundon Road to the north. Although related in terms of land use to the broader rural landscape around it, the strong relationship with commercial development to the south and also across the railway line to the east at Sundon Park and strong containment by infrastructure limit the parcel's connection to the wider Green Belt. Land to the west of the M1, up to a point just south of the Sundon Road motorway bridge, is to form part of a large urban extension to Houghton Regis, delimited to the north by a new road currently under construction. It is noted, however, that the landform slopes gently uphill away from the urban edge as far a low ridge in the northernmost field, roughly parallel to Houghton Road, after which it slopes downward more steeply into the valley which forms the head of the River Flit. The field to the north, although contained by Sundon Road, is also physically close to outlying residential development to the east of the railway line.

Conclusion

The future settlement edge to the west of the M1 will align with the edge of the Sundon Park industrial estate to the east of the railway line, so the land that lies between these to the south - i.e. the strip to the west of the Vauxhall warehouse and the field immediately to the north - will make little contribution to Green Belt purposes. However the northernmost field topographically relates more strongly to the wider countryside to the north, and also serves a role in maintaining the separate character of the hamlet of dwellings on Sundon Road, and so is considered to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. The hedgerow separating the two arable fields would be suitable as a potential alternative Green Belt boundary feature.
Parcel description

A small piece of steeply sloping ground occupying an island in between the A1081 Airport Way, the B653 Lower Harpenden Road and the A505 Gypsy Lane. The parcel is populated with Scots Pine. Airport Way forms the Green Belt inner boundary along most of Luton's edge between the M1 and the airport, and the parcel is entirely disconnected physically from its surroundings by major roads, but its tree cover does create a relationship with similar woodland on the northern edge of the Luton Hoo estate to the south.

Conclusion

Despite its visual relationship with other woodland, to either side of the Green Belt boundary, the parcel is too small and too contained to make any significant contribution in Green Belt terms, and Airport Way would form a strong, potential alternative Green Belt boundary, as it already does to the east and west. However there may be little purpose in removing it from the Green Belt, given its development constraints and its visual value as part of the urban-rural landscape interface.
Land Parcel Ref: L6a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 3.7
Parcel description

There are two parts to this parcel: the space between the inset settlement edge on Luton Road and the edge to the west on Rushmore Close and, to the north, an area adjacent to Chaul End Road. The former includes All Saints Church and its grounds and one dwelling on Luton Road and, to the north of these, an arable field. The latter is occupied by an extension of Rushmore Close and an adjacent children’s playground and recreational open space.

The churchyard is largely contained by built development. It has strong surrounding tree cover which gives it a degree of distinction from surrounding residential development, but it has a limited relationship with the wider countryside. The arable field is also strongly contained by tree cover; it abuts the inset settlement edge to the west and south-east, and the buildings of Manor Farm to the north-east, but the latter are not urbanising in character. The gap between the inset settlement edges and the farm complex contributes to countryside setting of the farm.

Dense residential development on Rushmore Close occupies most of the parcel area alongside Chaul End Road, which is strongly contained by well treed hedgerows. A hedgerow separates the recreational space from the housing, but it is to well-contained to have any significant role in preventing encroachment on the wider countryside.

Conclusion

The extension to Rushmore close and the adjacent recreational area make only a weak contribution to Green Belt purposes, and the trees surrounding the parcel make a relatively strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.

The churchyard is too contained to make more than a relatively weak contribution to preventing countryside encroachment, and the hedgerow along its northern edge would form a stronger Green Belt boundary than the current one, where there is no clear distinction between the one house within the Green Belt and the adjacent block of similar houses which are inset.

The arable field plays a stronger role in preventing countryside encroachment by preserving the gap between the settlement edge and Manor Farm, and so is considered to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Land Parcel Ref: LL1a  Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel  Area (ha): 2.1
Parcel description

This parcel contains a series of small rectilinear pasture fields as well as a small covered reservoir on the northern edge of Linslade. The fields are mostly defined by post and wire fencing with tree cover concentrated around the edges of the parcel, although a small tree belt is situated between the reservoir and adjacent fields.

The tree-lined Leighton Road runs along the southern edge connecting the centre of Linslade to the north west whilst the back gardens of existing properties make up the eastern edge. Linslade Wood marks the northern extent and a small tree belt provides the separation between an isolated dwelling and the parcel.

Linslade Wood provides a great sense of enclosure and a strong distinction from the wider countryside. Mature tree belts running along the perimeter of the parcel limit the relationship the parcel has with the adjacent settlement. Existing development is set back and mature boundary vegetation creates a soft settlement edge and acts as a clear separating feature.

The parcel is distinct from the wooded high ground of Linslade Wood and so does not contribute to the historic setting of Linslade.

Conclusion

The parcel has a sense of separation from both the countryside and the settlement and so makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Land Parcel Ref: LL1b
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 2.1

Stage 2 Parcel
Relatively weak contribution

Linslade Wood

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Parcel description

This parcel comprises a recreation ground and includes open playing fields, allotments and a children's playground on the northern edge of Linslade.

Back gardens of existing settlement border the parcel to the east, south and west whilst Linslade Wood marks the northern edge.

Despite a thick tree belt running along the western boundary, housing in the south and east have a considerable urban influence over the parcel, which creates a strong relationship between the parcel and the settlement. Woodland of Linslade Wood beyond the allotments contains the parcel to the north and provides a strong separation from the wider countryside.

The parcel is distinct from the wooded high ground of Linslade Wood and so does not contribute to the historic setting of Linslade.

Conclusion

The parcel relates more strongly to settlement than to the wider countryside and so makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. Linslade Wood, which already forms the Green Belt boundary along most of the settlement edge in this area, would make a strong alternative Green Belt boundary.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises an area of rough grassland and a relatively large property in the south eastern corner. Formal gardens surround the isolated dwelling and are generally well contained by trees.

A highspeed railway runs along the western boundary in cutting just before it enters a tunnel under Linslade Wood, which together with a mature field boundary marks the northern edge. Stoke Road defines the eastern extent and is reinforced by a thick tree belt along the outer edge of the field. Back gardens of properties adjoin the southern edge and is relatively open save for a small tree belt that also contains the property within the parcel.

Mature field boundaries to the north and east, together with Linslade Wood beyond provide a relatively strong distinction from the wider countryside. The land gently slopes up from the built edge but the adjacent development and railway infrastructure places an urbanising influence over the parcel so that it relates relatively strongly to the settlement.

The parcel is distinct from the wooded high ground of Linslade Wood and so does not contribute to the historic setting of Linslade.

Conclusion

The parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than to the wider countryside and so makes a relatively weak contribution to the Green Belt. Mature field boundaries to the north and east, with Stoke Road alongside the latter, would form a strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Land Parcel Ref: LL4a  
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel  
Area (ha): 4.6


Parcel description

This parcel consists entirely of woodland save for a small area of amenity grassland in the east, whilst existing development is limited to a single dwelling along the inner eastern edge.

A tree lined footpath forms the northern boundary with Leighton Buzzard Golf Club situated beyond and the back gardens of adjacent properties make up the boundaries to the east, south and west.

Woodland typically has a weak relationship with the settlement, but this parcel is almost entirely contained by residential development and so has a weak relationship with the wider countryside.

The parcel is situated within the extent of Leighton Buzzard and has a minimal relationship with the historic setting.

Conclusion

The parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than to the wider countryside and so makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. The bridleway that runs along the northern edge of the parcel would constitute a relatively strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary that would be simpler in form than the extended existing Green Belt edge defined by the parcel's woodland boundaries.
Parcel description

This parcel consists of Oak Bank School and includes the associated playing fields to the north of Leighton Buzzard.

A thick tree belt contains the parcel to the north and west whilst existing properties make up the eastern and southern edges. Swathes of woodland within the golf club join up with the parcel boundary in the south west before the land gently slopes up to the centre of the course further west.

Urbanising development in the form of the school buildings and adjoining properties has a large influence. Mature tree belts provide a relatively strong separation between the parcel and Leighton Buzzard Golf Club beyond. Trees within back gardens soften the built edge to a degree but the school premises combine with the new properties along the school access road to form a strong relationship between the parcel and settlement.

The well-treed nature of the golf club just beyond the parcel forms part of the wider rural setting.

Conclusion

The parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than to the wider countryside and so makes a relatively weak contribution to the Green Belt. The parcels tree boundaries would form a relatively strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises rectilinear pasture fields containing a small barn and stable block and is bisected by a public footpath. The parcel also includes Evans Yard, a small number of residential properties in the centre off Leighton Road.

Existing development forms the northern edge of the parcel and encompasses the northern field on 3 sides. Leighton Road forms the eastern edge whilst mature hedgerows and trees define the southern and western extent. A few isolated properties are situated close to the western boundary but these are generally well treed and distinct from the adjacent pastures.

Vegetation to the south and west provides a strong separation from the few adjoining properties and wider countryside beyond. Urbanising development overlooks the northern field and runs along the northern edge which creates a strong relationship with the settlement. Development at Evan's Yard, off Luton Road also has an urbanising influence, but the property on Leighton Road to the south of Evans Yard has more in common in terms of character with other adjacent Green Belt dwellings.

Conclusion

Most of the parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than to the wider countryside and so makes a relatively weak contribution to the Green Belt, but the property on Leighton Road to the south of Evans Yard makes a moderate contribution. Trees and hedgerows provide potential alternative Green Belt boundaries.
Land Parcel Ref: LL10a  
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel  
Area (ha): 20.8
Parcel description

This parcel comprises Linslade Middle School, The Cedars School and Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre and associated playing fields, as well as a small allotments occupying a small area along the western edge. Mentmore Road also bisects the parcel from north to south.

The parcel extends from the settlement of Linslade in the north with properties running close to the boundary. The Grand Union Canal and railway line defines the eastern and western extent respectively whilst the woodland surrounding Tiddenfoot Lake and a mature hedgerow forms the southern edge.

A disused railway runs along a small stretch of the northern perimeter and provides a degree of separation between the parcel and settlement. However, the school buildings, flood lighting relating to the sports facilities and adjoining residential properties at Mentmore Gardens have a strong urbanising influence over the parcel and creates a strong relationship with the settlement. Strong boundary features also provide a strong separation from the wider countryside.

The Grand Union Canal passes along the eastern edge and is listed as a key characteristic to the historic setting of Linslade. The parcel has a limited relationship with the setting due to the containment provided by mature tree belts running along the associated footpath and the openness of fields further east of the parcel relate more strongly. Similarly the high ground to the west of the railway line plays a role in the setting of Linslade, but the openness of the parcel doesn't contribute to the setting role of that high ground.

Conclusion

The parcel relates more strongly to the settlement than the wider countryside and so makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. The railway line, hedgerow, woodland and canal form a strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Parcel description

This parcel comprises sloping pasture fields on the south western edge of Linslade. Development is limited to a small sub-station, situated along the northern edge.

Southcott Village and Bunker Lane make up the northern and eastern boundaries with residential properties fronting on to them. Wing Road runs along the southern edge and a tree belt marks the western extent with further pasture fields beyond.

The openness of the northern and eastern boundaries creates a relatively strong relationship with the settlement. A ridge line runs east-west across the parcel and the land slopes away from it to the south which creates a strong distinction from the settlement in the southern area and a greater relationship with the wider countryside.

Conclusion

The small, northern field at the junction with Southcott Village and Bunkers Lane makes a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. It is surrounded on 3 sides by existing built development, with clear outer boundary hedge and tree lines that could constitute a potential alternative Green Belt edge. The field to the south is more strongly separate from the inset settlement, and makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
Parcel description

The parcel includes, from south to north, Lothair Road Recreation Ground, the Inspire Luton Sports Village, the buildings of Manor Farm and several adjacent residential dwellings, grazing land around the farm complex and an arable field to the north.

The parcel abuts the inset settlement edge along Lothair Road and the A505 Hitchin Road to the south, and along Butterfield Green Road, where land to the east is allocated in current saved (2001-11) and submission (2011-31) local plan policies for development of the Butterfield Green Technology Park. Hedgerows with strong tree cover, and a block of woodland to the north-west of the recreation ground, bound the western side of the parcel, other than a gap to the east of the woodland block, and the dead-end Butterfield Green Road and the hamlet of Butterfield Green (inset from the Green Belt alongside adjacent land to the east) lie to the north.

Stopsley Common is a large and very open plateau to the west of the parcel, running up to the steep chalk scarp-top above Bushmead, so a key consideration is the relationship between this parcel and the common. The Inspire building and associated parking have no separation from the inset settlement edge, and so make little contribution to Green Belt purposes, but are relatively contained by vegetation and distinct in form from the residential edge. Lothair recreation ground is a contained area, but tree cover behind houses along Lothair Road also creates a degree of separation from the built-up area. Trees and scrub vegetation create some separation between Inspire Luton and Manor Farm, so the latter, and other dwellings along Butterfield Green Road, retain a rural character. The relationship between the northern half of the parcel and the urban edge could change if Butterfield Green Technology Park is developed, but regardless of this it contributes to preserving an open link between Stopsley Common and countryside to the north.

Conclusion

The Inspire Luton Sports Village represents significant development within the Green Belt, but Lothair Park is large enough, and sufficiently separate from the built-up edge, to retain an open, countryside character, and therefore make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Removal of this area from the Green Belt would significantly extend the inset settlement edge. Manor Farm and the fields to the north are considered to make a moderate contribution to preventing countryside encroachment, even in the event that the Butterfield Green Technology Park is developed.
Land Parcel Ref: SE1a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 45.7
Parcel description

This parcel comprises a band of arable and pasture fields wrapping around much of the eastern and southern edge of Slip End and is bisected by Front Street from east to west. Slip End Lower School and a few residential dwellings are situated adjacent to the built edge in the west and are relatively well contained by tree planting, and isolated dwellings along Front Street are contained by mature tree belts. A small warehousing unit is also located along Front Street a short distance to the east of the settlement edge, opposite an allotment. Away from the inset settlement edge the parcel extends south-eastwards out to Half Moon Lane, including park homes at Brickhill Park.

The B4540 Church Road forms the north-western edge of the parcel, passing underneath the motorway and through Slip End. A strong hedgerow runs along most of the inset settlement edge between Church Road and Front Street, but to the south-east there is no separation between the settlement and the parcel. To the south-west, along Markyate Road and Rossway, the inset settlement edges have stronger tree and hedgerow cover. The outer edges of the parcel are defined by the M1 (around Junction 10) to the north and east, Half Moon Lane to the south-east and a field boundary hedgerow to the south-west. Stockwood Park lies to the north of the motorway, separating the parcel from the large built-up area of Luton. To the south-west the land falls away towards a narrow, steep-sided valley, part of a wider network of valleys which run out from the high chalk ridge to the south of Dunstable.

The motorway forms strong containment to the north and east, but a mature, well-treed hedgerow provides a strong visual barrier and there is no built development within the parcel north of Front Street. The landform in this area adds to a sense of distinction from the inset settlement: a distinct valley cuts through the centre of the northernmost field, parallel to Church Road, and to the east the land slopes down towards the motorway.

Land to the south-east between Slip End and Pepperstock is more contained by development and also occupies high ground at a similar elevation, and so relates less strongly to the wider countryside, but to the west of this the landform falls away, and the parcel's outer boundary is weaker, giving the area a stronger relationship with the countryside to the west.

The parcel is too separated from Luton to contribute to its historic setting.

Conclusion

The fields contained by Front Street, by the inset settlement edge of Slip End on Crawley Close, by Half Moon Lane and by a hedgerow to the south-west, as indicated on the map above, are considered to make a relatively weak contribution to Green Belt purposes. These features would form a stronger potential alternative Green belt boundary than the existing inset edge, but would call into question the status of the adjacent park home development at Pepperstock. Land within the Stage 2 parcel to the west of this area, and to the north of Front Street, is judged after on-site assessment to make a moderate contribution to preventing encroachment on the countryside.
Land Parcel Ref: T4a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 7.0

Stage 2 Parcel
Moderate contribution

Alma Farm
Reservoir (covered)
Mast
Pp Ho

Toddington

Parcel description

This parcel comprises a large, open and rectilinear pasture field gently sloping away from the built edge of Toddington.

The northern boundary is made up of Alma Farm Road and the back gardens of adjoining properties. Existing properties front on to Leighton Road which runs along the eastern edge. A mature hedgerow also runs along the inner edge of the eastern boundary and continues round to the south with a communication mast and covered reservoir just beyond. The southern extent is also defined by a hedgerow and contains a few hedgerow trees.

Although the stark built edges of Toddington to the north and east have an urbanising influence that strengthen the relationship the land within the parcel has with Toddington, the limited vegetation in and around the parcel together with the slightly elevated position of the land which slopes down to the south west, away from the built edge, means that there is a sense of openness and a relatively strong relationship with the wider countryside.

Conclusion

The parcel is considered to make a moderate contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
Parcel description

This parcel consists of two rectilinear fields and a small playground to the south west of Toddington. A small barn is also situated close to the northern edge.

Leighton Road runs along the western boundary whilst mature tree belts make up the southern and eastern edges. A small terrace of housing and some barns are located off Leighton Road just south west of the parcel. More pasture fields continue beyond the parcel to the south and west. Back gardens of existing properties adjoin the parcel to the north with some tree planting along the boundary.

The well-treed boundaries to the east, south and west provide a relatively strong separation from the wider countryside whilst the hard built edge has an urbanising influence over the parcel and provides a strong relationship with settlement. The landform within the parcel is consistent with that within the settlement, with no strong separating features between the parcel and the urban edge.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a relatively weak overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. The tree belts and woodland block that contain the parcel would make a relatively strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Land Parcel Ref: WE2a
Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel
Area (ha): 5.5

Stage 2 Parcel
Relatively weak contribution

West View Farm
Track

Parcel description

This parcel comprises an area of scrubby grassland to the south of We stoning and a derelict farmstead located along the western edge.

The parcel extends from the southern edge of We stoning bound to the west by the A5120 and to the east by a railway. The residential edge is largely open with limited tree planting within back gardens. A hedgerow marks the southern limit and continues around the perimeter to the east and west. Pasture fields neighbour the parcel to the west whilst larger scale arable fields occupy the area beyond to the south and east.

Strong boundary features in the way of the A5120, railway and hedgerow provide a clear distinction between the parcel and the wider countryside. The relatively open settlement edge has an urbanising influence and creates a strong relationship between the parcel and settlement.

Conclusion

The parcel makes a relatively weak overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. Its outer hedgerow, together with the A5120 and railway line, would make a strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Parcel description

The buildings and playing fields of Fallbrook Middle School. The school buildings lie in the eastern corner of the site, adjacent to the inset settlement edge on Weathercock Lane to the south and Burrows Close to the north. A broad belt of trees creates strong separation from Aspley Guise and Woburn Sands Golf Club to the north-east and trees also bound the south-eastern side of the school grounds, adjacent to houses along Weathercock Lane.

The parcel is largely open, but clearly relates to the settlement and is contained from the wider countryside. Houses to the east on Weathercock Lane, although within the Green Belt, are not significantly different in form to those within the inset edge to the south of the road, and their exclusion from the defined built-up area reflects the strength of Weathercock Lane as a boundary rather than a less urban built form.

Conclusion

The parcel is sufficiently contained from the wider landscape, and related to the urban area, to make only a relatively weak contribution to Green belt purposes. The trees to the north and east would make a relatively strong potential alternative Green Belt boundary.
Parcel description

Land to the south of Aspley Hill, contained by Woodside to the east, the A5130 Woburn Road to the west and Aspley Wood to the south. The western end of the parcel is mostly developed, with properties fronting onto Aspley Hill and Woburn Road and also houses set behind these, on Dene Close. Further west developed is more dispersed, with tree cover adding to the distinction between this and the inset settlement edge to the north of Aspley Hill.

The majority of the parcel has a distinctly lower development density than the adjacent inset settlement. It is contained to the south by extensive woodland, and so relates strongly to the settlement; however elevation does create some distinction, with the parcel occupying similar terrain to the washed-over settlement areas to the east, between Woodside and West Hill, and to the west along Sandy Lane and Church Road.

Conclusion

The area is largely contained from open countryside, but there is consistency in terms of the location of the inset settlement boundary along main routes through the settlement - West Hill, Aspley Hill and Hardwick Road - marking a degree of transition to generally less dense settlement, with more tree cover. Contribution to Green Belt purposes is therefore considered to be moderate.
Land Parcel Ref: WS3a  Parcel Type: Stage 2 Parcel  Area (ha) 3.5
Parcel description

Development along the southern side of Hardwick Road, and around the northern end of Church Road and Sandy Lane, contained by the A5130 Woburn Road to the east and a small woodland block to the west. St Michael's churchyard provides open space to the south, aligning with the southern edge of the Aspley Court development to the east of Sandy Lane, but there is no clear edge to the parcel in the middle between Church Road and Sandy Lane.

The density of development at the northern end of Church Lane, including Aspley Court and Hardwick Mews, is similar to that within the inset settlement to the north of Hardwick Road, but the land slopes uphill relatively steeply away from the settlement edge, and tree cover, particularly in the western half of the parcel, gives the area a stronger relationship with the rest of Aspley Heath to the south than with Woburn Sands. Open, undeveloped fields to the west, and to the south of Aspley Court, add to the relationship between this area and the wider countryside.

Conclusion

The parcel is considered to be sufficiently distinct from the inset settlement of Woburn Sands to make a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Hardwick Road forms a consistent Green Belt edge with Aspley Hill and West Hill, marking a degree of transition southwards to generally less dense settlement, with more tree cover.
Appendix 3
Record of duty to co-operate discussions, including method statement consultation

A key part of the Study was the development of an assessment framework that appropriately reflected the context and priorities of both Central Bedfordshire and Luton, whilst remaining true to the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF. Appendix 3 records the duty to co-operate discussions around the method.

The first table summarises comments received from neighbouring authorities in advance of the Stakeholder Workshop with duty to cooperate partners. The comments were discussed by the Steering Group at the Stakeholder Workshop.

The table is followed by a chronological record of the minutes from the Steering Group meetings, as well as selected e-mails recording key methodological discussions.

A record of the duty to cooperate discussions on the final report can be found in paragraph 3.101 in the main body of the report.
A final draft of the method statement was circulated to Aylesbury Vale District, Bedford Borough Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Milton Keynes Council, North Hertfordshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, St Albans City and District Council and Stevenage Borough Council. The neighbouring authorities were given one week to review and comment on the method statement prior to and during a Stakeholder Workshop which took place on 26th May 2016.


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<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Comments Summary</th>
<th>Steering Group Responses/Actions to Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bedford Borough Council</td>
<td>“…we would like to see further explanation of the statements in paragraphs 5.13 and 5.14 of the Method Statement, in particular why it would be premature to review smaller settlements in the Green Belt before the definition of the spatial strategy and the methodology that will be used to determine whether settlements should be washed over or inset.”</td>
<td>It was agreed at the stakeholder workshop that the assessment of consistency between inset and washed-over settlements in the Green Belt would not be delayed until the completion of the Growth Options Study. The smaller settlements within the study area which are currently washed over by and inset within the Green Belt were therefore subjected to a desk-based assessment in Stage 1 of the Study. The methodology and findings of this assessment are outlined in the main body of the final report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes Council</td>
<td>“…we would like to receive further explanation of the relationship between the Green Belt Study and the Luton Housing Market Area Growth Options Study.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Milton Keynes Council supports in principle the concept of a Green Belt review in Central Bedfordshire and Luton.”</td>
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<td>“In view of the current work being undertaken by the National</td>
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Extract from e-mail from Central Bedfordshire Council to Bedford Borough Council (06/07/2016):

“Whilst both of these studies are being undertaken by LUC, they are being done separately. There are different teams working on the two studies and the Green Belt review is due to be completed in July. The outcomes of this study will then feed in to the Growth Options Study. It is not the purpose of the Green Belt Study to identify land to be removed from the Green Belt as a result of the Growth Options Study.

In the event that the Growth Options Study identifies a location which is within the Green Belt which we wish to take forward to deliver growth, it will be the responsibility of the Council to determine if there are exceptional circumstances to remove the land from the Green Belt through the local plan.

I hope this provides the clarification you were after. Please feel free to come back to me if you have any further queries.”

Extract from e-mail from Central Bedfordshire Council to Milton Keynes Council (08/06/2016):

“We discussed this point with the consultants at the workshop and at this stage we
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<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure Commission on promoting the potential of the Cambridge – Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor and the key transport infrastructure planned for this corridor including east-west rail and an Expressway. You may wish to consider making an assessment of the land south of the Bletchley to Bedford railway line, east of parcel WS1, which is within the study area. Should this land be retained as it contributes to the purposes of the Green Belt or alternatively should this land or some part of it be released to facilitate the growth potential of the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor?</td>
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<td>Buckinghamshire County Council</td>
<td>LUC received a phone call from Buckinghamshire County Council on 02/06/2016 requesting another copy of the method statement for their review. (The original had been sent to the Council’s Development Management team).</td>
<td>not reviewing parcels that do not have known or committed development. We do recognise the potential opportunities that the EWR project may offer but will be looking at this separately from the Green belt review. We are hoping to arrange a meeting with yourselves in the near future to discuss this and the work we are progressing around our Local Plan. I sent an email to Sam Dix earlier today to try and arrange.”</td>
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Buckinghamshire County Council responded to LUC (02/06/2016):

“Thank you very much for this email. Very helpful.”

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Please be aware that this Council concluded in April public consultation on a Plan:MK Strategic Development Directions document as part of the process of producing a new Local Plan (Plan:MK) for the Borough. For more information about Plan:MK and its progress please see the Council’s website at: [https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/plan-mk](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/plan-mk)
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<td>We will review the information and respond with any comments as soon as possible.“</td>
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<td>No response was received.</td>
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Minutes  Luton HMA Growth Options Study & Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study

Purpose  Joint Inception Meeting

Meeting Date  23/03/2016

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lynsey Hillman-Gamble</td>
<td>Central Bedfordshire Council</td>
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<td>Andrew Marsh</td>
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<td>Kevin Owen</td>
<td>Luton Borough Council</td>
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<td>David Carter</td>
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<td>Troy Hayes</td>
<td>Troy Planning / Luton Borough Council</td>
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<td>Jon Grantham</td>
<td>LUC</td>
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<td>Philip Smith</td>
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<td>Jon Pearson</td>
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<td>Josh Allen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Pritchard</td>
<td>BBP Regeneration</td>
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Meeting Purpose
The purpose of the Inception Meeting was to introduce the project teams, begin discussions on the two studies’ scopes, methodologies and work programmes.

Representatives from Central Bedfordshire Council, Luton Borough Council, LUC and BBP Regeneration attended the joint inception meeting. A summary of discussions and the subsequent actions relating to the Green Belt Study is provided below.

Green Belt Study Actions

1  Study Method
LUC agreed to draft a detailed method statement outlining an approach to the Joint Green Belt Review, including drafted detailed assessment criteria, key definitions etc.

Considering the methodological discussion during the inception meeting, the method statement will provide direction and clarity on the roles of Stages 1 and 2 of the study.

Once agreed with the commissioning authorities, the method statement will be disseminated to the neighbouring authorities for consultation in advance of a ‘stakeholder workshop’ with officers (date of workshop to be confirmed).

2  New Green Belt
Agreed the existing Green Belt will be comprehensively reviewed to inform the Growth Options Study; however, consideration and assessment of parcels of non-Green Belt land for designation will be completed once the outcomes of the Growth Options Study are known.

3  Planned Development Sites in the Green Belt
Agreed to exclude strategic development sites within the Green Belt with planning permission, such as Houghton Regis North 1 & 2 and East of Leighton Linslade, from assessment. The inner boundaries of parcels for detailed assessment against the purposes will therefore be drawn along the consented boundaries of the new development sites.

Post-meeting note: LUC received GIS data from Central Bedfordshire Council which marked areas representing the planned urban extensions to Luton and Leighton Linslade. These were used to define the new permitted urban edges of Luton and Leighton Linslade.
Minutes  Central Bedfordshire & Luton Green Belt Study

Purpose Stakeholder Workshop

Project number 6773

Date 26/05/2016

Meeting Purpose
The purpose of the stakeholder workshop was to obtain feedback on the draft Green Belt method statement from participating and neighbouring authorities, with a view to reaching agreement on the methodology for the study and key cross-boundary considerations.

Representatives from Central Bedfordshire, Luton and North Hertfordshire attended the workshop. Comments were received from Milton Keynes Council and Bedford Council in advance of the meeting. All comments were discussed at the meeting. A summary of these discussions and the subsequent actions is provided below.

Minute

1  Feedback on the methodology
Discussion on the timing and role of Stage 2 of the Green Belt Study. Consensus reached that Stage 2 should not consider potential to mitigate harm to the Green Belt, including the consideration of preferred allocations and specific mitigation measures.

Stage 1 to assess the strategic contribution of Central Bedfordshire's Green Belt to the Green Belt purposes.

Stage 2 to isolate areas of least harm to the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt, drawing on Stage 1 judgements and site visits.

LUC clarified that the assessments of Broad Areas would draw-out the strategic differences in contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

Action
CBC to consider, at a later stage, whether they would like to commission LUC to advise on the potential to mitigate harm to the Green Belt at specific locations following the definition of a preferred development strategy.

On reflection of the discussions re: the scope and timing of Stage 2, LUC wrote clarifying text on the roles of Stages 1 and 2 and a streamlined work programme. Method statement revised accordingly.
LUC confirmed that the commentary on the contribution of parcels/broad areas to the Green Belt purposes will consider the contribution of land in preventing merging between villages. This will not affect parcel ratings, but may assist in Local Plan policy development.

Assessment of consistency between inset and washed-over settlements in the Green Belt to be completed before the completion of the Growth options Study.

Discussion between authorities on the scope and robustness of the definition of ‘historic towns’. Consensus was reached that Ampthill would be included as a historic town.

The contribution of Green Belt land to the setting and special character of the historic town of Luton was discussed and the contributions of land parcels assessed in Luton & North Hertfordshire’s Green Belt studies to date noted.

Method statement revised accordingly.

Luton Borough Council to provide further text on the characteristics of the historic town of Luton. Central Bedfordshire to provide further evidence to support the inclusion of Ampthill, and potentially other settlements, as historic town.

2 Parcelling Feedback
It was agreed to include an additional parcel at the edge of Harpenden (HP1).

Discussion on the outer boundary of D4 and whether the quarry should be included. It was concluded that the long term permission for extraction was justification for not extending the parcel further to the south.

3 Cross-boundary Feedback
Discussion on the need to engage Milton Keynes in discussion on the gap between Milton Keynes and Central Bedfordshire.

CBC to contact Milton Keynes to discuss their intentions with regard to this gap and to gauge their potential reaction to a proposal to extend the GB across this area. Following further duty-to-cooperate dialogue between CBC and MK, a decision will made as to whether this area is considered further in the Green Belt study.

North Hertfordshire in the process of amending their Green Belt review work.

North Hertfordshire to provide copy of amended Green Belt study once complete so that the outcomes of both studies can be checked for consistency.

CBC to coordinate the drafting of responses to neighbouring authorities which have provided feedback on the method.
LUC to draft text to support CBC’s response on:

- Assessment of consistency between inset and washed-over settlements in the Green Belt to be completed before the completion of the Growth options Study.
- Clarification on the maturity of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor plans, including the exact route of east-west rail link and Expressway.

4 Other Feedback
Discussion and agreement that only permitted allocations/infrastructure would be acknowledged in the parcelling and assessment of Green Belt. All other allocations, e.g. South of Stockford Park and Junction 10a, will be ignored.

Discussion on New Green Belt/alternative designations to protect meaningful gaps etc. Case for new Green Belt to be revisited once CBC identified exceptional circumstances.

Discussions on enhancement of the Green Belt and positive uses.

CBC to send through boundary of permitted Chaul End Green Belt development, so that this can be excluded from assessment.

LUC to provide high-level advice on the potential for alternative designations in final report. Clarified in Method Statement.

LUC to provide high-level advice on the potential for positive uses in the Green Belt in final report. Clarified in Method Statement.
Minutes Central Bedfordshire & Luton Green Belt Study

Purpose Progress Meeting

Project number 6773

Date 23/06/2016

Name Organisation / Email Att. Dist.

Lynsey Hillman-Gamble Central Bedfordshire • •
Andrew Marsh Central Bedfordshire • •
Cllr Sue Clark Central Bedfordshire • •
Troy Hayes Luton • •
Kevin Owen Luton • •
Philip Smith LUC • •
Richard Swann LUC • •
Josh Allen LUC • •

Meeting Purpose
The purpose of the progress meeting was to obtain feedback on the draft outputs of Stages 1 and 2 of the Green Belt study to date, with a view to finalising the areas to visit in the field.

Central Bedfordshire Council confirmed that the Council was broadly very happy with the outputs of the Study to date. Luton Borough Council requested more time to review the outputs. Luton Borough Council’s comments on the outputs and LUC’s subsequent responses are recorded separately below.

Minute Action

Stage 1 Assessments

LUC gave an overview of some minor alterations to the Green Belt parcels.

Discussion around the study’s definition of Milton Keynes as a ‘large built-up area’ (in Green Belt terms). The Stage 1 assessment of parcels WS1, WS2 and WS3 and Broad Area A currently recognise it as such; however, the role that the Green Belt land within the parcel plays is recorded as moderate-relatively weak in recognition of the fact that there is a significant area of open countryside between Milton Keynes and Woburn Sands.

LUC provided a high-level explanation of the assessment process.

Inset/Washed over Settlement Assessment

LUC summarised that Aspley Guise, Woburn and Kensworth would benefit from visits to determine whether their urbanising features compromise the openness of these washed over settlements.

LUC to change reference to Development Strategy Settlement Hierarchy from adopted

Aspley Guise, Woburn and Kensworth to be visited.

LUC sent e-mail illustrating these minor parcel alterations for clarity. LUC’s e-mail clarifying minor alterations to the Green Belt parcels is outlined below.

LUC agreed to report this clearly in the Final Report and recommend further dialogue between authorities going forward.
Minutes  Central Bedfordshire & Luton Green Belt Study

Purpose  Progress Meeting

Reporting

Central Bedfordshire stressed importance that the final report clearly communicates the method used to define the Stage 2 parcels of weak performing Green Belt.

Central Bedfordshire suggested that it would be valuable to have an ‘overview’ map in the final report, illustrating each Stage 1 and Stage 2 parcels contribution to all Green Belt purposes.

LUC agreed and confirmed that an ‘overview’ map illustrating both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 parcels contributions to all purposes will be prepared for the final report.

Programme

Luton expressed a need for more time to review the Stage 1 and Stage 2 outputs in detail before the study move forward and agreed to feedback on the outputs early w/c Monday 27th June.

LUC agreed to prepare a revised work programme for Steering Group approval.

Luton Borough Council’s comments on the outputs are recorded below.
E-mail sent by LUC to Steering Group on 24/06/2016 following Progress Meeting on 23/06/2016

Title: Minor amendments to Green Belt parcels

Good afternoon,

I mentioned in our progress meeting yesterday that we made some minor changes to the Green Belt parcels/Broad Areas during the assessments.

Upon assessing Broad Areas B and C, it became apparent that the assessment would be simpler and clearer if the isolated pockets of Broad Areas B and C were assessed as part of neighbouring parcels. These changes had no significant effects on the ratings for the affected parcels/broad areas.

**Broad Area B Change**

![Before and After Broad Area B Change](image1)

**Broad Area C Changes**

Including the westernmost portion of Broad Area C into the Caddington parcels, resulted in a greater contrast between the northern and southern areas of parcel C1. Therefore, in order to draw out any subtle differences in contribution of land to the GB purposes, it made sense to separate-out the southern portion of parcel C1 into a new parcel (C2).

![Before and After Broad Area C Changes](image2)

Kind regards...

**No further discussion occurred on this matter.**
On 27th June 2016 Luton Borough Council issued comments (in black below) on the Green Belt Study outputs circulated by LUC on 20th June 2016

On 28th June 2016 LUC issued clarifications in response (in red below) to Luton Borough Council’s comments. The clarifications were subsequently accepted by both Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council.

1. It is unclear from the documents provided what Stage 1 is comprised of and we would like clarification of this. It was our understanding that Stage 1 would have its own section of the GB Study and that the assessment of parcels in Luton would be part of Stage 2 and that critically Stage 2 would assess parcels that cross boundaries irrespective of their performance as that was the logic of doing a joint study.

• Stages 1 (complete) and 2 (partially complete) have been undertaken in accordance with the methodology that we agreed at and following the workshop on 26 May. In summary:
  • **Stage 1** represents an assessment of the contribution of Central Bedfordshire’s Green Belt to the Green Belt purposes. Defined parcels have been assessed and rated. These ratings are supported by text that describes the spatial variations in the contribution of land to the purposes within each parcel. In addition, the brief requires LUC to consider whether the settlements within the Green Belt should remain inset within or washed over by the Green Belt designation. Therefore, the openness of Central Bedfordshire’s main settlements within the Green Belt has also been reviewed and recommendations made on which settlements should be inset / washed over (three settlements have been identified for further consideration). The Stage 1 outputs therefore include:
    o four overview maps of the Stage 1 Study area illustrating the ratings for each Stage 1 parcel/broad area against each of the four purposes.
    o Stage 1 assessment reports for each parcel/broad area, including detailed descriptions of each parcel, performance ratings against each purpose and accompanying commentary.
    o Green Belt Settlement Assessment of openness with recommendations.

• **Stage 2** draws on both Central Bedfordshire and Luton’s separate Stage 1 assessments to identify the areas of the Green Belt in both local authorities that make the least contribution to the Green Belt purposes and are therefore likely to cause less harm to the Green Belt if released for development (although other factors may dictate otherwise). On-site assessments of these areas will be undertaken to verify and where necessary expand upon judgements made remotely. These on-site assessments will inform recommendations on alternative permanent and readily recognisable boundaries, which will have regard to primary constraints (listed in the method statement) and highlight ‘areas of least harm’ to the Green Belt. In addition, LUC has confirmed it will visit the three washed over settlements identified at Stage 1 for further consideration as inset settlements. To date, we have prepared the following Stage 2 outputs:
    o An overview map illustrating draft ‘relatively weak performing’ areas of Green Belt for site-based assessment and boundary definition.
A schedule showing the relationship between Central Bedfordshire’s Stage 1 parcels and the ‘relatively weak performing’ areas isolated for further consideration at Stage 2.

A review of Luton’s Stage 1 assessment, including justification for why each Luton Stage 1 parcel was or was not been taken forward to Stage 2.

• At the inception meeting LUC raised the possibility of parceling the Green Belt land with both Luton and Central Bedfordshire at Stage 1, which would have created cross-boundary parcels; however, concerns were raised by Luton that this might undermine the judgements made in the Borough’s separate Stage 1 study. It was therefore agreed that the Borough’s Stage 1 study would be reviewed alongside Central Bedfordshire’s Stage 1 study to identify ‘weaker performing areas’ for further consideration at Stage 2. There is no reason why these ‘weaker performing areas’ shouldn’t cross the Green Belt boundary, it just so happened, following the review of both Stage 1 assessments, that they didn’t. Defining and assessing separate parcels at Stage 2 that specifically crossed the Borough boundary (irrespective of performance) would only result in a duplication of the work carried out within both authorities’ Stage 1 assessments, and any ‘weaker performing areas’ identified within these ‘cross-boundary’ parcels would be the same as those already identified. Indeed the value of a joint study is the methodology and outputs are agreed by both authorities as an appropriate evidence base.

• Our submission costed and programmed for the preparation of one final report which will outline the relationship between the Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessments and their outputs.

2. A key comment from LBC is regarding the areas selected for detailed assessment in Stage 2. It is unclear as to how or why these locations were selected. We do not have the benefit of a draft report to explain this so we have relied on the study methodology. Paragraph 5.1 of the methodology states that:

Stage 1 of this Study represents a strategic assessment of Central Bedfordshire’s Green Belt. Defined parcels will be assessed and rated to determine their contribution as a whole to Green Belt purposes. These ratings will be supported by text which, where appropriate, will describe spatial variations in the contribution of land to the purposes within each parcel. Areas which, in their entirety or in part, are considered to potentially make no more than a ‘relatively weak’ contribution to any of the Green Belt purposes will be mapped and taken forward for assessment at Stage 2. Luton Borough Council has already completed a strategic assessment of its Green Belt. This will also be analysed to identify any areas of potentially weaker performance for further consideration at Stage 2.

The above statement in the methodology is quite clear that any area, either in its entirety or in part considered to potentially make no more than a relatively weak contribution to any of the Green Belt purposes will be taken forward to Stage 2 for detailed assessment including site visits.
• The chosen wording in paragraph 5.1 of the agreed method statement is confusing. The text should read ‘to all of the Green Belt purposes’. To be clear, the areas selected for on-site assessment represent areas of land which have been judged to make no more than a ‘relatively weak’ contribution to all of the Green Belt purposes. This is an important clarification.

• There is no value in taking forward to Stage 2 areas that make a ‘relatively weak’ contribution to any Green Belt purpose, as parcels of land only need to make a contribution one Green Belt purpose to be important Green Belt (the NPPF does not weight the purposes).

• The definition of the areas of ‘relatively weak’ contribution is based on the detailed commentary supporting the judgements made in both Stage 1 assessments and not the overall ratings for parcels. This is because the Stage 1 parcel ratings reflect the strongest level of contribution within the parcel for each purpose, whereas the commentary supporting these ratings importantly point out any variations in contribution across parcels. This perhaps reflects a limitation of the ‘parcelling’ approach to Green Belt assessment, as the extent of variation only becomes clear once the parcels have been assessed.

3. In addition, Para 3 of the Green Belt Study Brief says, "The primary purpose of the study will be to assess all Green Belt land .... to identify any land which may only be making a limited or moderate contribution to Green Belt function". Therefore the project brief sought to identify areas that were making a moderate contribution or less.

• The full text of the section of the brief described above specifically refers to Stage 1 of the Study.

• A 5-point scale has been used in Stage 1 of the Central Bedfordshire study, identifying land making a strong, relatively strong, moderate, relatively weak contribution, or weak/no contribution each Green Belt purpose (1-4).

• A 3-point scale has been used in Stage 1 of the Luton study, identifying land making a high, medium and low contribution to each Green Belt purpose (1-4).

4. On the basis of the above, it is considered that the sites selected for Stage 2 have not followed the methodology. Using the methodology, it is considered that the following parcels should be taken forward to Stage 2 for assessment. If the project brief were to be used to determine parcels to take forward to Stage 2 then the parcels that contribute ‘moderately’ to the Green Belt would also need to be added to the list below:

• The full text of the section of the brief described above specifically refers to Stage 1 of the Study, not Stage 2.

• The areas selected for on-site assessment at Stage 2 represent areas of land which have been judged to make no more than a ‘relatively weak’ contribution to all of the Green Belt purposes.

• There is no value in identifying areas that make a ‘relatively weak’ contribution to any Green Belt purpose, as parcels of land only need to make a contribution one Green Belt purpose to be important Green Belt (the NPPF does not weight the purposes).

• We question the value of looking at moderately performing Green Belt parcels further at Stage 2 given that the main purpose of Stage 2 is to identify locations that
would minimise harm to the Green Belt. Furthermore, taking forward areas of land which have been judged to make no more than a ‘moderate’ contribution to all of the Green Belt purposes is likely to significantly increase the number of Stage 2 parcels required for assessment, well beyond the estimated 40 Stage 2 parcels budgeted and programmed for.

**Purpose 1**

- A (Relatively Weak)
- B (Weak / No Contribution)
- C (Weak / No Contribution)
- D (Relatively Weak)
- E (Weak / No Contribution)
- G (Weak / No Contribution)
- AH1 – AH4 (Weak / No Contribution)
- EB1 – EB2 (Weak / No Contribution)
- F1 – F5 (Weak / No Contribution)
- WE1 – WE3 (Weak / No Contribution)
- H1 – H3 (Weak / No Contribution)
- BC1 – BC5 (Weak / No Contribution)
- T1 – T4 (Weak / No Contribution)
- HL1 – HL3 (Weak / No Contribution)
- HAR1 – HAR2 (Weak / No Contribution)
- LL10 (Relatively Weak)
- C3 – C4 (Weak / No Contribution)
- HP1 (Weak / No Contribution)

**Purpose 2**

- D (Relatively Weak)
- G (Weak / No Contribution)
- H (Relatively Weak)
- AH1, AH3, AH4 (Weak / No Contribution)
- FW2, FW3 (Weak / No Contribution)
- FW4 (Relatively Weak)
- WE1, WE3 (Weak / No Contribution)
- WE2 (Relatively Weak)
- T1, T3, T4 (Weak / No Contribution)
• T2 (Relatively Weak)
• BC1 – BC5 (Weak / No Contribution)
• L2 (Relatively Weak)
• L3, L4, L6 (Weak / No Contribution)
• HR1 – HR2 (Weak / No Contribution)
• HL1 – HL3 (Weak / No Contribution)
• HAR1 – HAR2 (Weak / No Contribution)
• LL1, LL2, LL3, LL10, LL11 (Relatively Weak)
• LL4 – LL5 (Weak / No Contribution)
• EB1 (Relatively Weak)
• D2 – D5 (Weak / No Contribution)
• C1 – C4 (Weak / No Contribution)
• SE1 – SE2 (Weak / No Contribution)
• HP1 (Relatively Weak)

**Purpose 3**

• G (Relatively Weak)
• BC4 (Relatively Weak)

**Purpose 4**

For this purpose it is probably easier to list those parcels that were assessed as performing ‘moderately’ or better:

• A1, A2, A4
• L2 – L5
• D4
• C
• H
• LL1 – LL4, LL6 – LL9
• HL1
• AH1, AH2, AH4

**Findings regarding Purpose 4**

5. It is currently unclear from the assessments why the following parcels around Luton have made a ‘relatively strong’ or ‘strong contribution’ to the Green Belt in terms of their role in preserving the setting and special character of Luton. We note the
assessment of parcels in the Oxfordshire Green Belt Study prepared by LUC which provide locally specific and detailed reasons for scoring the parcels. For example see assessment of Parcel OX22 in Cherwell District below:

**Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue 4a - Significance of historical and/or visual setting to the historic town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the parcel contribute to the setting and 'special character' of Oxford?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating:** Medium

**Notes:**

There is no visual relationship between this mostly low-lying area and the historic core of Oxford or other Oxford conservation areas, but in views from hills to the north-west (to the west of Yarnton, over which Shakespeare's Way approaches the city) the visual role of this area as a gap between Yarnton and Oxford is evident. With regard to Oxford's special character the approach from Yarnton/Kidlington is less significant than the approach along the Thames and Cherwell Valleys, but the presence of the Oxford Canal and associated long distance path, which run through the centre of the parcel, does add to significance. The canal is a conservation area, and its rural setting is one of its valued characteristics; the higher ground at the southern end of the parcel in particular is important in preserving this sense of rurality on approach to an area characterised by numerous transport routes. The majority of the parcel makes a 'medium' contribution but the higher ground at the southern end is considered to make a 'high' contribution.

- The structure of the Central Bedfordshire assessment outputs is slightly different to that of the Oxfordshire study. In the latter, all the assessment text was set out under the Green Belt purpose headings 1-5, but for Luton and Central Bedfordshire we have a box labelled ‘description’ which sets out all the information required to support the judgements made under the purpose 1-5 headings. It is in this description box, that references are made to the landscape elements which are considered to be significant in terms of historic settings, whilst the ‘purpose 4’ box has just a succinct conclusion, using terminology reflected in the definitions provided in Table 5.1 of the Method Statement. This approach is felt to provide a clearer assessment, in which repetition of comments under different purposes is avoided.

- Relevant comments from the ‘description’ section for each of the parcels you have referenced are appended below:

6. Detailed and locally specific reasons are required to justify each parcel’s contribution to each purpose if the study is to stand up to scrutiny. **Parcels L2, L3, L4, L5, D5.** These are considered in turn below.

- **Parcel L2:** The parcel is assessed as making a ‘relatively strong’ contribution to Purpose 4. The assessment pro-forma states that: *The parcel's openness, particularly on the higher ground, contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to historic setting. Development would detract from the town’s historic character although there is less distinction between the parcel and the settlement in the east. It is unclear where the higher ground being referred to is located on the parcel or what characteristics are being considered as contributing to historic setting. It is unclear why development would detract from the town’s historic character.*

- The parcel is adjacent to Luton and plays a role in its historic setting due to the relationship with the wooded Sundon Hills further north.

- **Parcel L3:** The parcel is assessed as making a ‘relatively strong’ contribution to Purpose 4. The assessment pro-forma states: *The parcel's openness*
contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting and development of the parcel would detract from the town’s historic character. This description provides no concrete locally / site specific reasons for assessing this parcel the way it has.

- The parcel is adjacent to Luton and forms part of the rural setting associated with Galley Hill.
  
  - **Parcel L4**: The parcel is assessed as making a ‘strong contribution’ to Purpose 4. The assessment pro-forma states: The parcel’s openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and key characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting. Development here would detract significantly from the town’s character. Again, there are no locally specific reasons / justification given for assessing this parcel as making a ‘strong contribution’.

- The parcel is adjacent to Luton and the Warden and Galley Hills are prominent landforms defining the built-up area. They also provide a striking backdrop and setting to Luton.
  
  - **Parcel L5**: The parcel is assessed as making a ‘strong contribution’ to Purpose 4. The assessment pro-forma states: The parcel’s openness contributes to the relationship between the settlement and characteristics identified as contributing to the historic setting. Development within the parcel would significantly detract from the town’s historic character. As with the other parcel assessments, no locally specific reasons / justification is provided here.

- The Luton Hoo Estate and the valley landform allow for views across the River Lea and these are recognised as important to the historic setting.

  - **Parcel D5**: The parcel is assessed as making a ‘strong contribution’ to Purpose 4. The assessment pro-forma states: The parcel’s openness is a key element in the relationship between the settlement and the historic setting of Luton. Development would detract significantly from the town’s historic character. The edge of the parcel along Watling Street has no visual relationship with Luton and so does not contribute to this purpose. This assessment provides some local detail however it still does not explain why development would detract significantly from the town’s historic character.

- The chalk escarpment provides a dramatic backdrop to glimpsed views from Luton which is key element in the historic setting of the town.

7. In respect of Purpose 4, The Methodology states in Table 5.1 (Assessment Framework) that “site visits are used to inform judgements regarding intervisibility between the historic cores of defined historic towns and their open surroundings. Landscape Character Assessments and Conservation Area Appraisals are used to inform the assessment of the contribution of setting to ‘special character’”

The assessment framework provides quite a clear need for site visits in order to inform judgement about intervisibility between historic cores of defined historic
towns and their open surroundings. It is therefore suggested that the parcels around historic settlements are subject to site visit before conclusions can be made about their contribution to this purpose.

- We have budgeted and programmed to only visit Stage 2 parcels. It is possible using topographic mapping, aerial imagery and remote street views to state with confidence where parcels do not make a strategic contribution to the setting and special character of historic towns. We would, however, be happy to verify in the field the parcels judged to make a contribution to purpose 4. We could do this alongside our visits to the Stage 2 parcels.

In addition, it is not currently evident from the assessments if or how Landscape Character Assessments or Conservation Area Appraisals have been used to inform the assessment of the contribution of setting to ‘special character’.

- We use all evidence available to us, which include Landscape Character Assessments and Conservation Area Appraisals. Where available, both have been used in this study; for example in relation to Ampthill (see para 4.13 of the method statement). The final report will include cited characteristics of each historic town used in the assessment of purpose 4, including text provided by Luton on 10/06/2016.

Luton Borough Council responded to LUC’s clarifications via e-mail on 30th June 2016.
Pertinent extracts from the e-mail are provided below:

“Thank you for your responses to the points we raised...As you suggested in your comments, site visits to these parcels around Luton would be very helpful to clarify / verify your assessments ‘on the ground’ for Purpose 4 - and presumably the other purposes could also be verified as part of these site visits without much additional resource required.

As per the protocol in the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group (see below) we would ask that our comments (27 June) provided are logged and reported as part of the final study.

We are happy for the study to proceed on this basis.”

LUC responded via e-mail to Luton Borough Council’s e-mail dated 30th June 2016.
Pertinent extracts from the e-mail are provided below:

“Thank you for your comments.

As confirmed in our previous response, we have only budgeted and programmed for visiting the Stage 2 parcels. At Stage 1, topographic mapping, aerial imagery and ‘Google Street View’ was used to establish the role of Green Belt parcels and broad areas in contributing to the setting and special character of historic towns. We are confident that this desk-based assessment is sufficient where it is clear that parcels make no contribution. However, we have made arrangements to visit all Stage 1 parcels considered in the desk based assessment to be making a contribution (strong – relatively weak) to purpose 4 - to verify the level of contribution. For the record, this includes the following parcels:
• Ampthill parcels – AH1 – AH4
• Broad Areas B, C, D and H
• Caddington parcel – C1 and C4
• Dunstable parcels – D3 and D5
• Flitwick parcels – FW1, FW2 and FW3
• Hockliffe parcel – HL1
• Leighton Linslade parcels – LL1 – LL11
• Luton parcels – L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6
• Toddington parcel – T3

The minutes from our 3x meetings and your comments dated 27th June (alongside our responses) will be recorded in an Appendix to the final report.”