

South Worcestershire Authorities

South Worcestershire Green Belt Assessment

Part 1: Strategic Assessment of Green Belt Purposes





Report for

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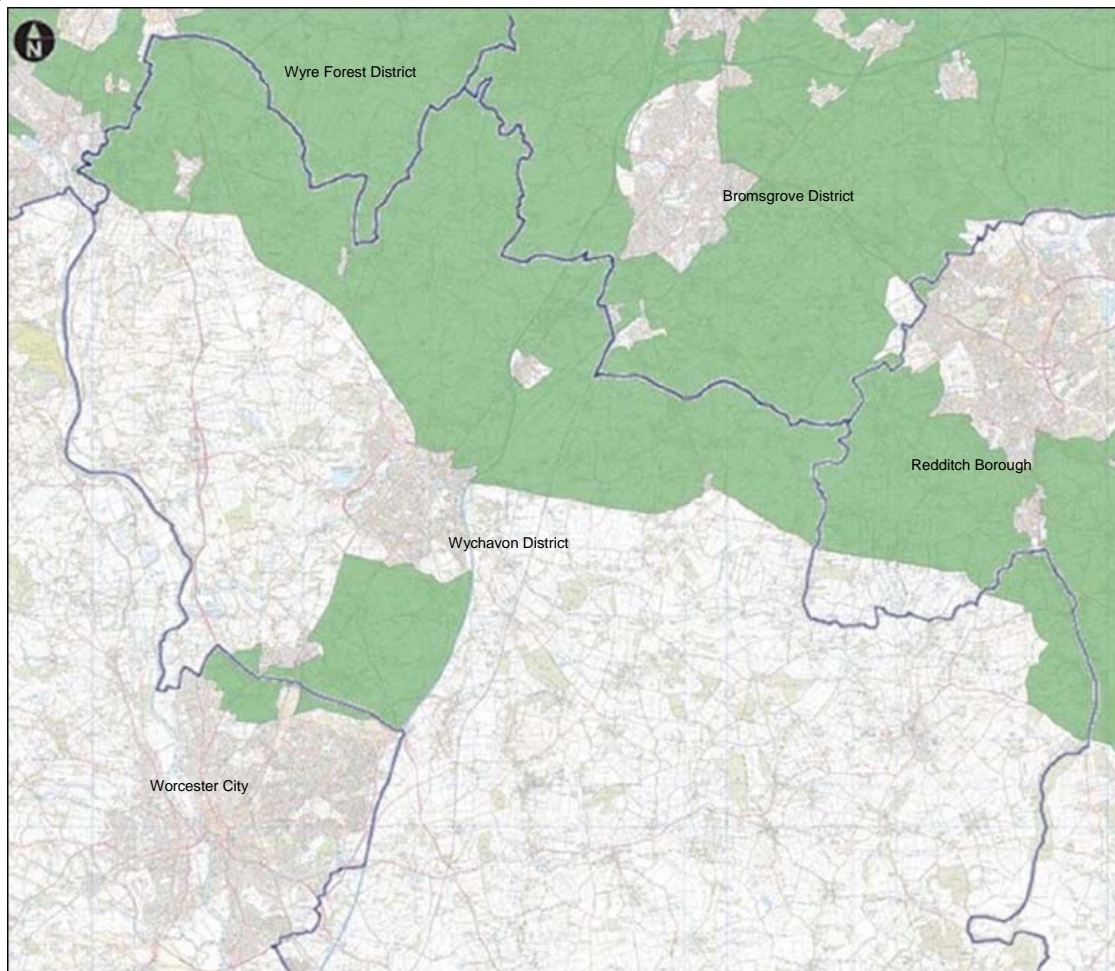
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Executive summary

Purpose of this report

1. This report has been produced for the purpose of providing the South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) (Wychavon District Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council) who have begun the production of a review of the South Worcester Development Plan (SWDP) that will allocate and guide development until 2041. As part of the preparation of the replacement SWDP, work has begun on gathering evidence to inform key land use planning issues including an assessment of the Green Belt within the SWDP area.
2. The SWDP study area extends to 1,300 km² and the Green Belt covers 2.3 km² in Worcester City and 88.3 km² in Wychavon District. The bulk of the Green Belt is part of the West Midlands Green Belt and the Green Belt lying between Droitwich Spa and Worcester was added at a later date.
3. The SWC require robust evidence to justify the appropriate approach that they can take with regard to the Green Belt in Development Plan. As such, the Councils appointed Amec Foster Wheeler (now known as Wood) to undertake a Green Belt Study.

Figure 1 The Green Belt within South Worcestershire Councils' Administrative Area



The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4. National policy for Green Belts is set out in the NPPF (2018) (paragraphs 133 - 147). The purposes of Green Belts (paragraph 134) are as follows:
 - ▶ 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; and
 - ▶ to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
5. The NPPF (paragraph 133) notes that the two 'essential characteristics' of Green Belts are 'their openness and their permanence'. Permanence is a planning consideration rather than a physical one. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there are benefits in using other features as Green Belt boundaries, where these are clearly defined on the ground and perform a physical and/or visual role in separating town and countryside. Although Green Belts might contain land which is of high quality and possibly recognised as a valued landscape, and land designated as being of nature conservation value, its purpose is not to protect such features but to keep land permanently open.
6. The NPPF allows Councils to alter Green Belt boundaries in 'Exceptional Circumstances' through the preparation of a Local Plan, also requiring the consideration of Green Belt boundaries in relation to washed over settlements.

Approach to the Assessment

7. The Green Belt Study comprises two parts: Part 1 is a strategic study which assesses the form and function of the Green Belt in respect of the fulfilment of the purposes set out in the NPPF. This serves as the context for more detailed analysis in Part 2 which will consider the role of the Green Belt against site-specific proposals.
8. The Part 1 Strategic Assessment (this document) provides the baseline for understanding the character of the Green Belt within South Worcestershire, and subsequently for considering the likely policy implications of development options and proposals which may arise as part of the evolution of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR). The Part 1 Assessment is an objective assessment of the way in which the Green Belt works as an instrument of development restraint. It is designed to work alongside other aspects of the evidence base (flood risk, ecology, landscape, cultural heritage etc) to help provide a rounded picture of the context within which development options can be considered. The assessment is based on maps, aerial photography and site visits and a set proforma based on national policy considerations to arrive at judgements on the role of the Green Belt, strategically and locally.

Land Parcel Definition and Terminology

9. Following recent good practice from Green Belt studies, and in order to make the assessment of the contribution of land to Green Belt purposes manageable, the study area is divided into discrete land parcels. The 60 parcels for assessment are defined at a scale which balances the number of parcels to be assessed with the usefulness of the outputs. For this analysis, the following broad geographic areas have been identified:
 - ▶ Land to the east of Stourport-on-Severn to the A442 (parcels NW1 – NW16)



- ▶ Land to the west of the M5 to the A442 (parcels WC1 – WC11)
 - ▶ Land to the east of the M5 (parcels EC1 – EC12)
 - ▶ Land around Astwood Bank (parcels E1 – E5)
 - ▶ Land between Droitwich Spa and Worcester (parcels S1 – S16)
10. Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photos have used to identify the parcels for assessment. These are sufficiently fine-grained to allow for subsequent analysis in terms of the likely impacts on openness and permanence of development. Roads, railways and other well-defined physical features have been used to define the parcels.

Assessment of Land Parcels

11. Each parcel is assessed in respect of its character (land use, degree of openness, relationship to the countryside, and relationship with historic centres) along with the robustness of the boundaries which define that parcel. The purpose of the Assessment is to consider the relative extent to which the land fulfils the purposes of Green Belt. The fieldwork provides confirmation of:
- ▶ The general character of the parcel.
 - ▶ The relationship of the parcel to the urban edge (if at all), in particular the quality of boundaries which define the contiguous built edge.
 - ▶ The perception of openness (physical and visual) as reflected in views into, and out of, the parcel, where these are publicly accessible.
12. In the Assessment, consideration is given to both the strategic and local roles of the Green Belt generally and in the context of settlement edges. The results of this exercise are recorded in a matrix which sets out comments on how each area performs against the defined Green Belt purposes.

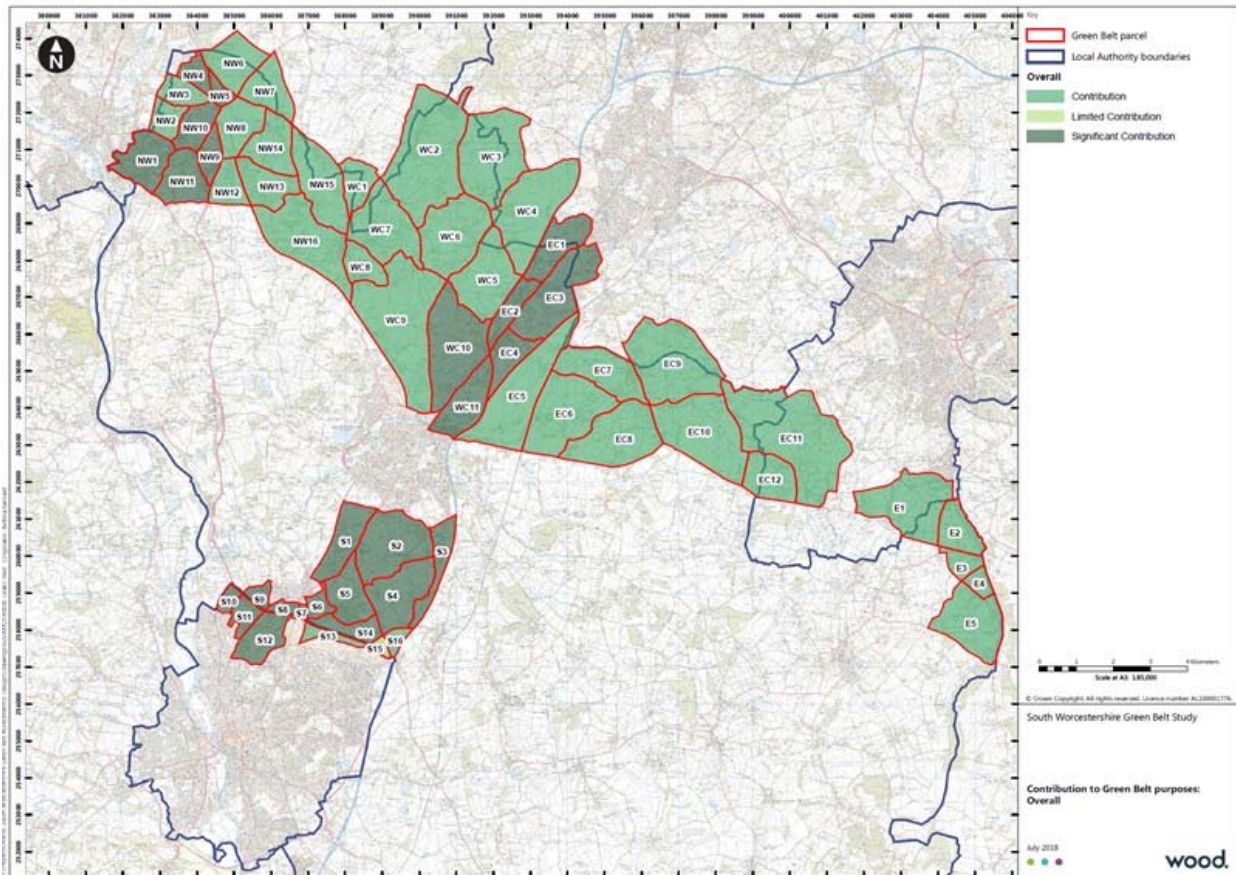
The Form and Function of the SWDP Green Belt in South Worcestershire

13. The Green Belt in South Worcestershire is part of the outer edge of the West Midlands Green Belt. As such it plays both strategic and local roles which complement one another, maintaining the broad distinction between town and countryside and preserving the separate identity of settlements in what is highly accessible countryside.
14. The Green Belt, serves two principal functions: restricting development within open countryside thus preserving openness, and preventing the merger of towns which are set within and adjacent to, the Green Belt. Green Belt policy appears to have been generally successful in performing these functions, reflected in the generally compact form of towns (notwithstanding some examples of physically and visually intrusive development), and the largely undeveloped character of the countryside, again despite the presence of instances of significant development, past and more recent.
15. Thus, the majority (around two thirds) of the Green Belt makes an overall Contribution to Green Belt purposes, reflecting the broad role set for it in terms of the protection of the countryside through maintaining openness. For many areas of open countryside, there is a low threshold beyond which additional development would begin to compromise the essential quality of openness, either as part of a single large incursion or through more widespread incremental change.

Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes - Summary

16. As set out the methodology, in order to assist with the interpretation of the judgements made, an overall contribution to Green Belt purposes is shown, reflecting both the fulfilment of (a) particular purpose(s) whereby a Significant Contribution to one or more purposes will translate into a Significant Contribution overall, but also in the accumulation of contributions where individually Significant Contributions are not merited.

Figure 2 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes



Land Making an Overall Significant Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

17. Reflecting the roles of preventing merger and containing strategic and more localised sprawl, this land is concentrated between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Worcester, and to the east of Stourport/Kidderminster. Within these areas, development would quickly compromise the role of the Green Belt.

Land Making an Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

18. Accounting for the majority of the Green Belt, land making a Contribution to Green Belt purposes is associated with the relatively remote countryside to the east and west of the Bromsgrove – Droitwich Spa – Worcester corridor where the incremental change of open countryside is prevented. Whilst development of various kinds and degrees is common, the threshold beyond which change would have

an impact on openness- both visual and physical – is relatively low. An urbanised character would be acquired reasonably quickly.

Land Making an Overall Limited Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

19. There is only one parcel, to the north of Worcester, where the extent and type of development is judged to be such that Green Belt purposes are not being met. Whilst this land nominally has sport and recreation uses, these are of a scale which severely limits any openness, either visual or physical, with no connection in terms of role to the wider Green Belt.

Settlements and Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt

20. The NPPF (paragraph 140) states that the status of villages currently washed over by Green Belt should be reviewed to determine whether this is still appropriate: *“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.”* The NPPF does not make reference to Major Developed Sites (MDS) which prompts the question of whether substantial developed sites, akin to large settlements, should remain within the Green Belt. Their boundaries have already been defined through MDS status. The following recommendations are made in respect of the consideration the inseting of settlements and former MDS.

Recommendations for Insetting of Settlements

Settlement	Recommendation
Waresley Manor	Inset within the Green Belt as an extension of Waresley
New End	Do not inset
Cladswell	Do not inset
Cookhill	Do not inset
Martin Hussingtree	Do not inset

Recommendations for Insetting of Major Developed Sites

Major Developed Site	Recommendation
Site 7 Trading Estate	Inset as a self-contained site of contiguous built form
Hartlebury Trading Estate	Inset as a self-contained site of contiguous built form
Hindlip	Do not inset
Sixways	Inset as a self-contained site of contiguous built form
Oak Park Trading Estate	Inset as a self-contained site of contiguous built form
Ikon Trading Estate	Inset as a self-contained site of contiguous built form

Conclusions

21. The Green Belt is judged to be performing its strategic function overall as part of the outer edge of the West Midlands Green Belt, and in respect of more localised roles. The Green Belt plays a significant role strategically in terms of maintaining the separation between the local towns, notably between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Worcester, and also more generally in preventing the incremental urbanisation of the wider countryside, both in the immediate vicinity of large built-up areas and more widely. Only one parcel (S15, site of the Sixways Stadium), which is strongly bounded and largely developed, has been identified as making a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes. The majority of the Green Belt in the study area is judged to overall make a Contribution to Green Belt purposes, reflecting the broadly open countryside character of the land which is relatively remote from built-up areas. Significant tracts of land between the major built-up areas and surrounding the main transport corridors are judged to make a Significant Contribution, reflecting the prevention of sprawl, merger and encroachment.
22. Locally, the Green Belt prevents sprawl along transport corridors and maintains the separate identity of settlements, particularly where these are in proximity to a large built-up area. The Green Belt across the study area contains several large developed sites and settlements and recommendations made on their potential for inseting into the Green Belt, that is the removal of Green Belt policy because they make no direct contribution to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes as a result of the character of their built form.
23. The contrast between built-up areas and the countryside is a notable feature of the Green Belt in the study area, with relatively few instances of the so-called 'urban fringe' where the character of town and country can become blurred and are characterised by complex land uses e.g. utility and road infrastructure, fragmented agricultural holdings, sports and recreational land uses and declining land management. The Green Belt in the study area largely comprises open countryside in predominately agricultural use characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads, isolated properties, hamlets and villages. The land is, however, highly accessible to the cities, towns and villages which it surrounds and contains several significant transport corridors, which, in the absence of Green Belt policy would make it vulnerable to development pressure and incremental change. In maintaining the openness of the countryside, the Green Belt is fulfilling its principal role.

Site-Specific Implications of the Strategic Assessment

24. The consideration of site-specific development will need to draw on the observations made on contributions to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes, strategically and locally. The degree to which there is likely to be harm to the Green Belt as a result of development depends upon its scale, its type and opportunities to mitigate that impact both on and off-site. Specific questions to be asked when interrogating site-specific proposals are:
 - ▶ What is the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt of removing the site from it?
 - ▶ To what extent could the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent?
 - ▶ If this site were to be developed as proposed, would the adjacent Green Belt continue to serve at least one of the five purposes of Green Belts, or would the Green Belt function be compromised by the site's development?
 - ▶ Has the Green Belt boundary around the site been defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent? Does it avoid including land which it is necessary to keep permanently open?

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1. Introduction

1.1 Study Remit

1. The South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) (Wychavon District Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council) have begun the revision of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) that will allocate and guide development until 2041. As part of the review, work has begun on gathering evidence to inform key land use planning issues including an assessment of the Green Belt within the SWDP area.
2. The SWDP study area extends to 1,300 km² and the Green Belt covers 2.3 km² in Worcester City and 88.3 km² in Wychavon District. The bulk of the Green Belt is part of the West Midlands Green Belt with the Green Belt lying between Droitwich Spa and Worcester was added at a later date.
3. There are a number of rural settlements within the Green Belt. They are all within Wychavon District. Some of them have defined development boundaries and are “washed over” by the Green Belt, for example: New End, Cladswell, Cookill and Martin Hussingtree. Other settlements with development boundaries are excluded from Green Belt designation e.g. Cutnall Green, Hanbury, Hartlebury and Wychbold. There also a few rural settlements which do not have a development boundary and which are “washed over” by the Green Belt and development plan policy allows for limited infilling, for employment uses, within the defined perimeter boundary.
4. The SWC require robust evidence to justify the approach that they take with regard to the Green Belt in the SWDP review. As such, the Councils have appointed Amec Foster Wheeler (AFW) to undertake a Green Belt Study.

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5. National policy for Green Belts is set out in the NPPF (2018) (paragraphs 133 – 147). The purposes of Green Belts (paragraph 134) are as follows:
 - ▶ 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; and
 - ▶ to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
6. The NPPF (paragraph 133) notes that the two ‘essential characteristics’ of Green Belts are ‘their openness and their permanence’. Permanence is a planning consideration rather than a physical one. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there are benefits in using other features as Green Belt boundaries, where these are clearly defined on the ground and perform a physical and/or visual role in separating town and countryside. Although Green Belts might contain land which is of high quality and possibly recognised as a valued landscape, and land designated as being of nature conservation value, its purpose is not to protect such features but to keep land permanently open. Openness should not be confused with the landscape character of an area. The methodology (Section 2 below) defines the matter of openness further.

7. The NPPF allows Councils to alter Green Belt boundaries in 'Exceptional Circumstances' through the preparation of a Local Plan, also requiring the consideration of Green Belt boundaries in relation to washed over settlements.

1.3 Approach to the Assessment

8. The Green Belt Study comprises two parts: Part 1 is a strategic study which assesses the form and function of the Green Belt in respect of the fulfilment of the purposes set out in the NPPF. This serves as the context for more detailed analysis in Part 2 which will consider the role of the Green Belt against site-specific proposals.
9. The Part 1 Strategic Assessment (this document) provides the baseline for understanding the character of the Green Belt within South Worcestershire, and subsequently for considering the likely policy implications of development options and proposals which may arise as part of the evolution of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR). The Part 1 Assessment is an objective assessment of the way in which the Green Belt functions and the results are designed to be considered alongside other elements of the evidence base (flood risk, ecology, landscape, cultural heritage etc) to help provide a balanced picture of the context within which development options can be considered. The assessment is based on maps, aerial photography and site visits and a set proforma based on national policy considerations to arrive at judgements on the role of the Green Belt, strategically and locally.

1.4 The Geography of the Green Belt in the Study Area

10. The Green Belt in South Worcestershire is principally part of the West Midlands Green Belt (Figures 1.1 and 1.2), with an 'outlier' between Droitwich Spa and Worcester. As such, the Green Belt needs to be considered both in its strategic context, relating to the containment of the West Midlands conurbation and locally relating to the containment of towns set within and on the periphery of the Green Belt.

Figure 1.1 The West Midlands Green Belt

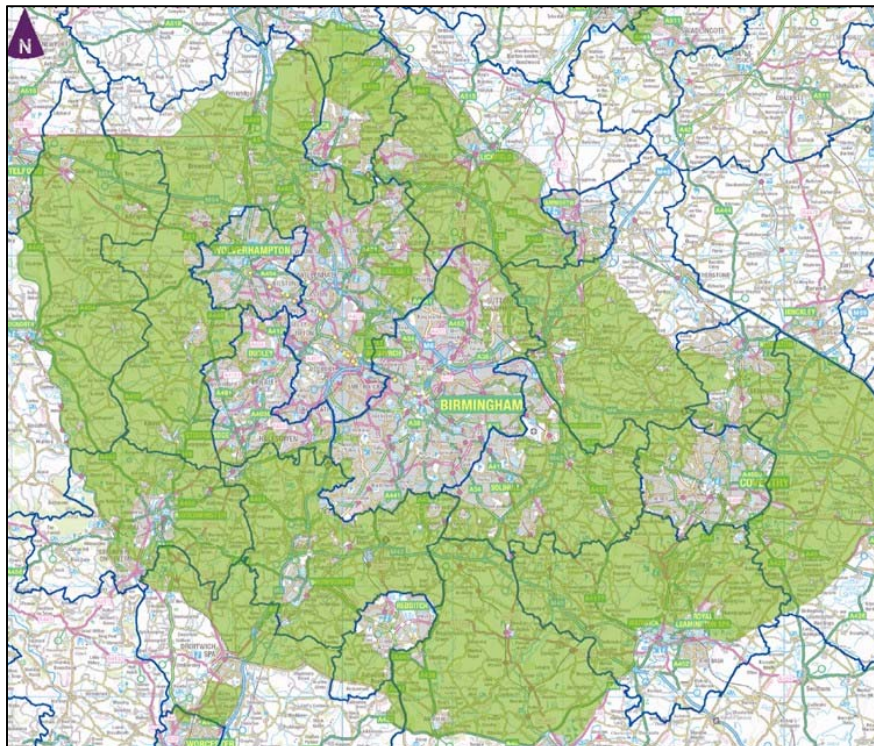
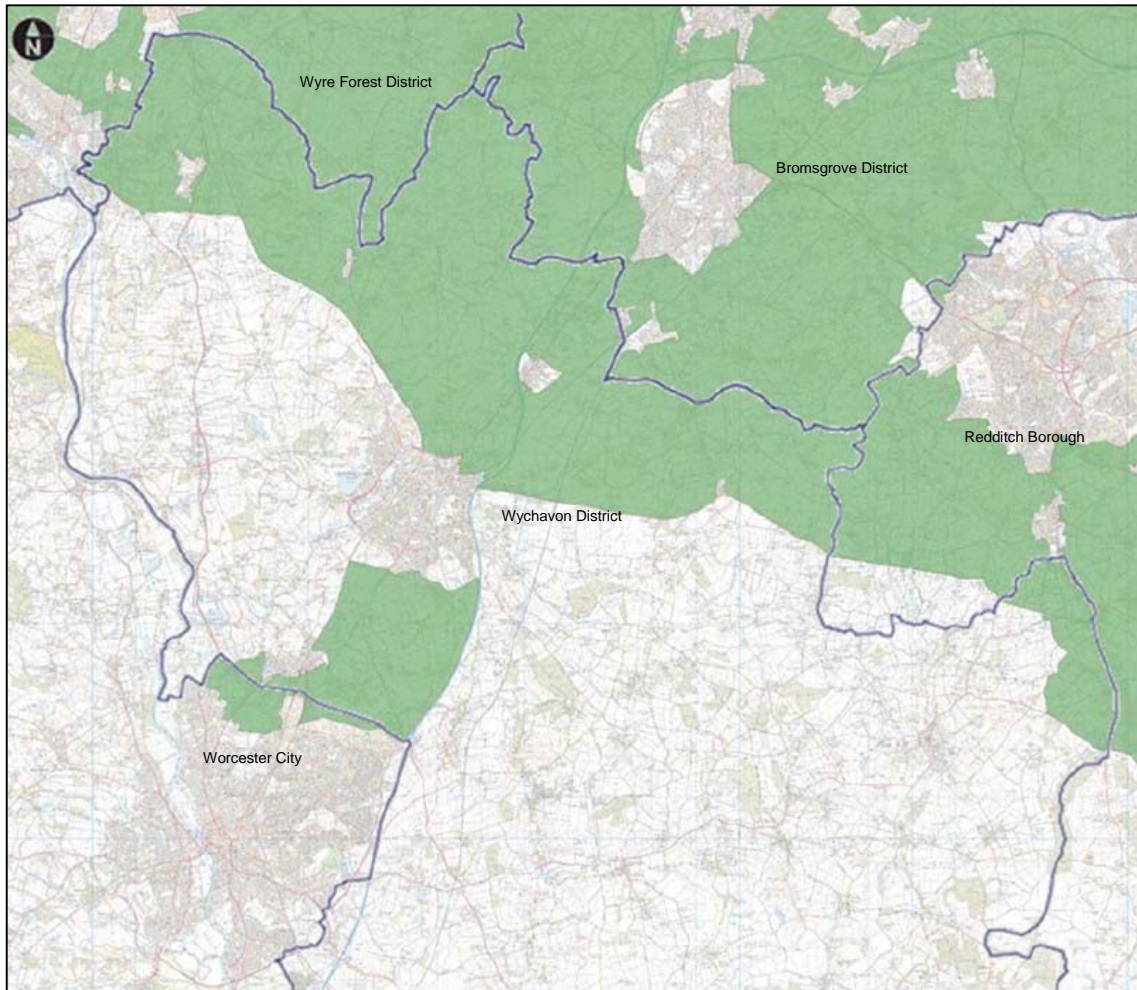


Figure 1.2 The Green Belt within South Worcestershire Councils' Administrative Area



11. The Green Belt comprises land predominantly in agricultural use (arable, pasture and forestry), but also contains some extensive built development, various villages and hamlets and numerous isolated domestic and farm properties. As such, the Green Belt is not undeveloped *per se*, but comprises built development which preceded designation, development which has subsequently been permitted under Very Special Circumstances (VSC) and various permitted uses such as sport and recreation and essential infrastructure.
12. The areas within the immediate ambit of Worcester, Droitwich Spa, Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and Stourport are more complex, which is typical for urban fringe localities. The various transport corridors, principally running north – south, including the M5, again create complex land use patterns, particularly where the land has become subdivided. Complex land ownership and land management regimes can also create distinctive visual appearance. For example, so-called 'horsiculture' with semi-improved pasture divided into small plots, is a common characteristic, as areas of under-managed woodland and farming enterprises which appear to be economically marginal.

1.5 Evolution of Green Belt Policy in the Study Area

Designation

13. The broad extent of the Green Belt within Worcestershire (in turn part of the West Midlands Green Belt) was defined as part of the County Development Plan in the late 1950s¹. In 1975 the Worcestershire Structure Plan enlarged the extent of the Green Belt in the county and included an area between Worcester and Droitwich Spa with the intention of maintaining the open countryside, which includes the settlements of Claines, Hindlip and Martin Hussingtree, between them and thereby preventing their coalescence. The prevention of the northward extension of the built-up area of Worcester was a particular aim.
14. In 1982 a proposed modification to the Structure Plan was put forward to extend the Green Belt boundary westwards as far as the River Severn and the proposal were subject to public consultation. In 1985 the Secretary of State (SoS) in the Notice of Approval for the Structure Plan modified the key diagram so that the western boundary to the Green Belt was an undefined line west of the railway line, which would be delineated in the Local Plan. It was the view of the SoS at the time that the Green Belt between Droitwich Spa and Worcester should not extend as far west as the River Severn. In relation to the Fernhill Heath, the SoS Proposed Modifications allowed scope for the Green Belt to take in the settlement itself but considered this to be a matter for the Wychavon District Local Plan.
15. The County Council did commence work on a County Green Belt Plan but this was not adopted and the Districts undertook to prepare their own Local Plans for the purpose of defining the Green Belt. The 1992 City of Worcester Green Belt Local Plan was adopted and was in general conformity with the Structure Plan and was only concerned with the area of open countryside in the Claines and Blackpole area. It is noted in the 1992 Green Belt plan that to extend the Green Belt beyond the designated area, for example around the whole City, would conflict with the express wishes of successive Secretary of States when approving the Worcestershire Structure Plan in 1975 and the Hereford & Worcester Structure Plan in 1985 and 1990.
16. The extent of the Green Belt in the County has remained broadly the same since 1975 and the boundaries of the Green Belt in the SWDP area have been subsequently been defined in detail in Local Plans.

Recent Planning History

17. The adopted Local Plans for the City of Worcester and Wychavon District now form part of the Local Development Frameworks for the respective authorities and the current Green Belt policies are set out in the planning policy chapter to this report.

Wychavon District

18. The 2005 Inspector's Report to the Local Plan objections made general conclusions on the plan strategy. In relation to the Green Belt the Inspector recommended at [2.3.108 ix]) that there is no good case for allocating any land for development in the Green Belt and that existing Green Belt boundaries should remain unaltered. However, in [2.3.109 x]) it was recommended that it was time to consider whether the existing Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs) in the light of the emerging West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy should be retained or deleted. The Inspector noted at para 2.13.7 that the ADRs all comprise greenfield land which falls between development boundaries and the defined Green Belt. They come within the policy ambit of "safeguarded land", described in PPG 2, paras.1.12-13 and Annex B.

¹ <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1961/nov/22/green-belts>

19. It was stated that PPG2 does not require such areas of safeguarded land to be defined, but it provides the policy justification for doing so in appropriate situations. Having regard to the evidence at the Local Plan Inquiry the Inspector did not recommend that any of the existing ADRs should be developed before 2011, or that any new ADRs be identified.
20. Of all the objections made to the emerging Local Plan the Inspector only made one recommendation for a very minor amendment to the Green Belt boundary at Sling Lane in Fernhill Heath to, in effect, correct an anomaly in the boundary.

City of Worcester

21. The 2004 Inspector's Report to the Local Plan objections stated clearly that the release of land in the Green Belt would not be supported. In relation to the Green Belt area consideration was given to the following key issues:
 - a. Whether the Green Belt boundary at Perdiswell was appropriately defined.
 - b. Whether the Green Belt designation north of Worcester and at the Moorlands Riding Centre, Hindlip Lane, should be removed to open up development opportunities.
 - c. Whether land between the A449 Ombersley Road in the west, the A38 Droitwich Road in the east and the A449 northern link road should be excluded from the Green Belt.
 - d. Whether the corridor of land either side of the A38 Droitwich Road should be excluded from the Green Belt.
 - e. Whether land lying between the A449 to the north, Blackpole Road to the west and the Worcester and Birmingham Canal to the south and east should be excluded from the Green Belt and allocated for employment development.
22. The Inspector recommended that no modifications be made to the Local Plan as a result of the objections forming the above key issues.

South Worcestershire Development Plan 2016

23. The portion of the Roxel site within Wychavon District was formally removed from the Green Belt under Exceptional Circumstances, which were: first, that there has never been any formal Local Plan proposal or inspector's recommendation to include it in the Green Belt; secondly, that it serves none of the Green Belt purposes, for the reasons set out in section 4 of the representations made on behalf of Roxel at pre-submission consultation stage; and thirdly, that there is an obvious and unjustifiable anomaly in the way in which the two halves of the site are treated, either side of the administrative boundary between Wychavon District and Wyre Forest District.
24. In addition, adjustments were made to the boundaries of the MDS at Hartlebury Trading Estate, to properly reflect the actual extent of the site, and at Hindlip Park to include the existing Jacky Smith training centre, the shooting range and the sports field, which form part of the curtilage of the buildings on the site.
25. Land at Hill End, Droitwich Spa, came under discussion at the Examination. The Inspector noted that: *"I visited and viewed an area of land at Hill End, which lies just inside the Green Belt boundary at the north-eastern edge of Droitwich. The land is largely undeveloped and is entirely rural in character, with only a few scattered buildings. A railway line, a main road and well-defined property boundaries provide strong demarcation between this Green Belt land and the relatively high-density development on the other side of the town's development boundary. Whatever may have been the circumstances that justified removal of land to the south from the Green Belt in the past, there are no exceptional circumstances that would justify further alterations to the Green Belt boundary in this area."*

2. Study Method

2.1 Land Parcel Definition and Terminology

25. Following recent good practice from Green Belt studies, and in order to make the assessment of the contribution of land to Green Belt purposes practicable, the study area is divided into discrete land parcels (Figure 2.1). The 60 parcels for assessment are defined at a scale which is considered appropriate as it balances the number of parcels to be assessed with the usefulness of the outputs; in short, a small number of large parcels can be as unhelpful as a large number of small parcels.
26. This approach remains consistent with the previous Green Belt Review² which identified five logical broad areas for study, namely:
- ▶ Area Between Stourport-on-Severn and A449
 - ▶ Area Between A449 and M5 (Includes Cutnall Green)
 - ▶ Area Between M5 and Littleworth; at the Boundary of the SWJCS Study Area
 - ▶ Area at North-Western Edge of SWJCS Study Area in the vicinity of New End and Cookhill
 - ▶ Area Between Droitwich Spa and Worcester
27. However, the use of finer-grained parcels to help describe and analyse the Green Belt means that patterns of the way in which the Green Belt meets the purposes set for it can be presented spatially, both as individual parcels and as clusters of parcels. For this analysis, the following geographic areas have been identified:
- ▶ Land to the east of Stourport-on-Severn to the A442 (parcels NW1 – NW16)
 - ▶ Land to the west of the M5 to the A442 (parcels WC1 – WC11)
 - ▶ Land to the east of the M5 (parcels EC1 – EC12)
 - ▶ Land around Astwood Bank (parcels E1 – E5)
 - ▶ Land between Droitwich Spa and Worcester (parcels S1 – S16)
28. Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photos have been used to identify the parcels for assessment. These are sufficiently fine-grained to allow for subsequent analysis in terms of the likely impacts on openness and permanence of development. Roads, railways and other well-defined physical features have been used to define the parcels. Figure 2.1 illustrates the parcels to be used for survey.
29. The Assessment uses four of the five Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF (paragraph 134). The purpose relating to urban regeneration is not used in this Assessment as it is considered to be a generalised purpose which cannot be analysed spatially at the same scale as the other four purposes. Table 2.1 sets out the interpretation of the purposes as used in this Assessment.

² DNS Planning and Design/ Nicholas Pearson Associates (July 2010) SWJCS Green Belt Review

Table 2.1 Definition of Terms to be Applied in the Assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Definition of Terms to be Applied in the Assessment
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>Sprawl – spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way (Oxford Dictionary online). This includes Ribbon development which is development along a main road, especially one leading out of a town or village (Oxford Dictionary Online). This includes historical patterns of, or current pressures for, the spread of all forms of development along movement corridors, particularly major roads.</p> <p>Large built-up areas – in the context of this study these are Worcester, Droitwich Spa, Bromsgrove, Stourport and Kidderminster</p>
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	<p>Neighbouring towns – this relates to the relationship between Worcester and Droitwich Spa and between Droitwich Spa and Bromsgrove.</p> <p>Merger/Coalescence – the physical or visual linking of two settlements or areas of built form.</p>
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Encroachment – a gradual advance beyond usual or acceptable limits (Oxford Dictionary online). The countryside – open land with an absence of built development and urbanising influences, and characterised by rural land uses including agriculture and forestry.</p> <p>Openness – a quality of the land which has a physical dimension (the extent of built development or other urbanising elements) and a visual dimension (the degree of enclosure by landform and vegetation). Not all built development is considered to impinge on openness; Green Belt land often includes buildings which, by virtue of their form and arrangement in relation to other development, are considered to be compatible with a Green Belt location. This applies most commonly to rural villages, hamlets and farmsteads, where the scale, form and density of existing development is such that it can be considered to be part of the countryside, rather than an extension of the urban/settled area, or part of the built-up area in its own right.</p>
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>Historic town – settlement or place with historic features identified in local policy or through conservation area or other historic designation(s).</p>

30. The methodology was consulted on with surrounding Local Authorities and Parish Councils. There were no responses which were considered to merit an adjustment of the methodology.

2.2 Site Visits and Assessment of Land Parcels

31. Each parcel is assessed in respect of its character (land use, degree of openness, relationship to the countryside, and relationship with historic centres) along with the robustness of the boundaries which define that parcel. The purpose of the Assessment is to consider the relative extent to which the land fulfils the purposes of Green Belt. The fieldwork provides confirmation of:

- ▶ The general character of the parcel.
- ▶ The relationship of the parcel to the urban edge (if at all), in particular the quality of boundaries which define the contiguous built edge.
- ▶ The perception of openness (physical and visual) as reflected in views into, and out of, the parcel, where these are publicly accessible.

32. In the Assessment, consideration is given to both the strategic and local roles of the Green Belt generally and in the context of settlement edges. The results of this exercise are recorded in a matrix which sets out comments on how each area performs against Green Belt purposes. Table 2.2 sets out the assessment criteria used to assess the contribution of the parcels to Green Belt purposes, and Table 2.3 details the assessment criteria used to judge the key matters of openness and permanence.

Figure 2.1 Parcels for Survey

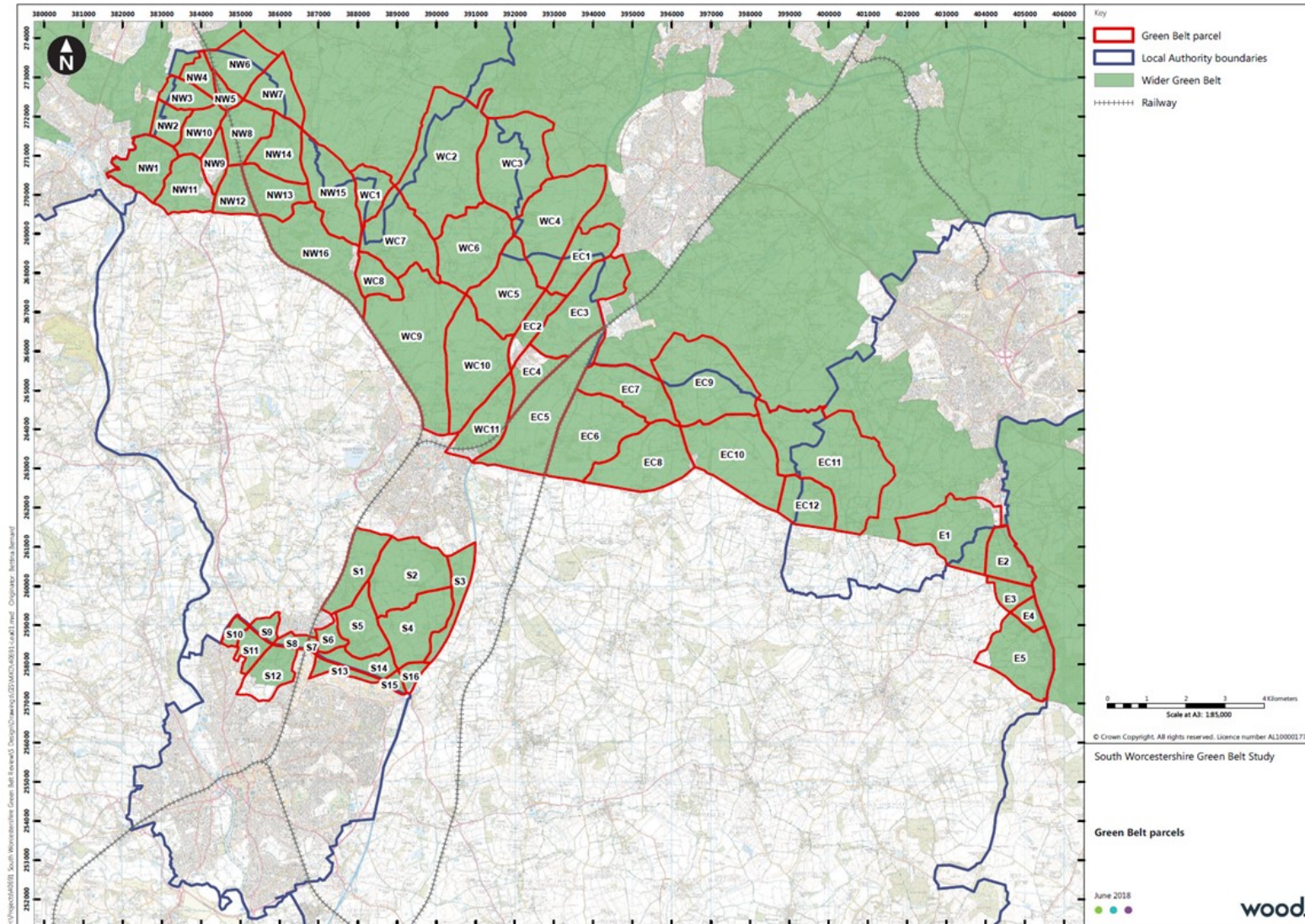


Table 2.2 Parcel Assessment Protocol

NPPF Purpose & Guide Question	Rating	Guide Criteria
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas <i>What is the role of the parcel in preventing the extension of an existing development into open land beyond established limits, in light of the presence of significant boundaries?</i>	Significant Contribution	Adjoins a large built-up area, where the built edge is poorly defined/bounded.
	Contribution	Adjoins a large built-up area and the built edge is more strongly defined/bounded.
	Limited or No Contribution	Does not adjoin a built-up area or does not support Green Belt which does.
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another <i>What is the role of the parcel in preventing the merger of settlements which might occur through a reduction in the distance between them?</i>	Significant Contribution	Located within a significant gap which would physically and/or visually be compromised by development.
	Contribution	Located within a significant gap which would unlikely to be physically and/or visually by development or could be mitigated.
	Limited or No Contribution	Not located within a significant gap.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment <i>What is the role of the parcel in maintaining a sense of openness, particularly in light of proximity to a settlement edge?</i>	Significant Contribution	Of countryside character which is at high risk of erosion from urbanising influences
	Contribution	Of countryside character which is at risk of erosion from urbanising influences.
	Limited or No Contribution	Not at risk of urbanising influences.
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns <i>What is the role of the parcel in respect of the proximity to, and degree of intervisibility with, the core (such as a Conservation Area) of an historic town or settlement?</i>	Significant Contribution	Contains, or is directly adjacent to, a Conservation Area or Historic Park & Garden and/or contributes physically and/or visually to their setting.
	Contribution	Related to a Conservation Area or Historic Park & Garden and/or partially contributes physically and/or visually to their setting.
	Limited or No Contribution	No relationship with a Conservation Area or Historic Park & Garden and/or does not contribute physically and/or visually to setting.
To assist in regeneration	Not graded – a generalised purpose	

Table 2.3 Assessment Criteria Associated with Openness and Boundary Quality

Visual Openness	High	Clear, middle and long-distance views across the land.
	Mixed	Partially enclosed (by landform, vegetation or built form) with filtered views in and out.

	Low	Enclosed by landform, vegetation or built form.
Physical Openness	High	No built form or very limited urbanising influences.
	Mixed	Some built form, but it is not a defining feature.
	Low	Existing development and urban influences are a prominent, defining element.
Quality of Boundaries	Strong	Prominent physical features (roads, railways, buildings/urban edge).
	Moderate	Less physical features (paths/tracks, watercourses, woodlands, hedgerows).

33. A straightforward colouring system (see below) and accompanying commentary is used to set out the conclusions for each parcel and to produce maps which summarise the extent to which each parcel fulfils each Green Belt purpose and an overall assessment (a summary matrix and accompanying maps). This provides a simple tabular and graphical presentation of the contribution of land to the purposes of the Green Belt. None of the judgements on the relative contribution of the parcel to Green Belt purposes are scored or weighted and the overall assessment reflects professional judgement on the contribution of the parcel to Green Belt purposes as a whole. Thus, a Significant Contribution in respect of a particular purpose, and a Limited Contribution in all other respects, can lead to an overall judgement of Significant Contribution reflecting the parcel's primary purpose. Equally, Contributions identified across a number of purposes may still only lead to a judgement of a Contribution overall.

The Colouring Assessment for Individual Green Belt Purposes

The parcel makes a **Significant Contribution** to a Green Belt purpose clearly and unambiguously against the assessment criterion.



The parcel makes a **Contribution** to a Green Belt purpose against the assessment criterion, although this is more diffuse in character and/or has been compromised by development.



The parcel makes a **Limited or No Contribution** to a Green Belt purpose because of either performing no clear role in a particular location and/or has been compromised by development.



2.3 Settlement and Major Developed Site (MDS) definition within the Green Belt

34. The Green Belt contains settlements and MDS which have been inset (i.e. excluded) from the Green Belt and others which remain 'washed over'.
35. The NPPF at paragraph 140 requires that the status of villages currently washed over by Green Belt should be reviewed to determine whether this is still appropriate: *"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."*
36. Policy in the NPPF does not preclude the definition of a village envelope, even if a village remains washed over by the Green Belt, which would allow for limited infilling at the discretion of the Council, thereby complying with paragraph 145 (e) and (f) which allows for *"limited infilling in villages, and*

limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan.” In practice this helps to ensure that the villages continue to be able to develop in a sensitive way. This will promote sustainable development that will help meet the needs of local communities through appropriate infill and/or meeting local needs, for example.

37. Matters for consideration of the relationship between settlements and MDS and the Green Belt comprise:
- Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt:
 - Character of built form including open space.
 - Connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views.
 - ▶ Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined).
 - ▶ Potential for inseting, and if so recommended, a draft settlement boundary including measures to ameliorate potential impacts.
38. The results of the Assessment of settlements and major sites within the Green Belt are set out in **Appendix B**.

3. The Form and Function of the SWDP Green Belt

3.1 Overview

The Form and function of the Green Belt in the SWDP Area

39. The local Green Belt is part of the outer edge of the West Midlands Green Belt. As such it plays both strategic and local roles which complement one another, maintaining the broad distinction between town and countryside and preserving the separate identity of settlements in what is evidently highly accessible countryside.
40. The Green Belt serves two principal functions: restricting development across the open countryside which constitutes much of the Green Belt and thus preserving openness and preventing the merger of towns which are set within and adjacent to, the Green Belt. Green Belt policy appears to have been generally successful in performing these functions, reflected in the generally compact form of towns (notwithstanding some examples of physically and visually intrusive development), and the largely undeveloped character of the countryside, again despite the presence of instances of substantial development, past and more recent.
41. For many areas of open countryside, there is a low threshold beyond which additional development would begin to compromise the essential quality of openness, either as part of a single large incursion or through more widespread incremental change.
42. There are a wide range of types of development which are acceptable under national and local Green Belt policy, including those relating to sport and recreation and to infrastructure such as waterworks, both typically requiring urban fringe locations. Whilst physical and visual openness can be compromised and an urbanised appearance created, although there usually remains a distinction from the contiguous built form of adjacent urban areas. In addition, the Green Belt contains several Major Developed Sites (MDS) and large villages. The NPPF makes no reference to MDS, and states (paragraph 140) that villages which are washed over by Green Belt should be assessed in respect of their relationship with the Green Belt. This has been carried out and recommendations made. Green Belt policy is judged to have broadly achieved its aims in South Worcestershire with limited evidence of the purposes being significantly compromised by development activity.

Matters of Openness and Permanence

43. The quality of openness is central to Green Belt policy. This is expressed through two components: the degree of enclosure by vegetation and topography (visual openness), and the extent of built form (physical openness). The Assessment has considered the character of the Green Belt in light of these factors and perhaps unsurprisingly found a considerable degree of variance, reflecting the character of the land over which Green Belt policy has been placed and also the subsequent changes of land use.
44. Equally, the matter of permanence (interpreted in the planning sense of the presence established boundaries beyond which development should not extend) is variable. Clear boundaries to existing built development are not always well established, with Green Belt acting to contain development which might otherwise be unconstrained. The complexity of the built edge which abuts the Green Belt means an inevitable degree of variety, and therefore the variation in the role of the Green Belt in ensuring permanence.

Parcel-by Parcel Assessment against Green Belt Purposes

45. Table 3.1 summarises the ratings accorded to each parcel drawn from the detailed parcel assessments set out in **Appendix A**. The parcel reference map of Figure 3.1 is reproduced below. Sections 3.2 – 3.9 set out the mapped outputs of the evaluations, enabling the recognition of the relationships between individual parcels and how they act in combination with one another in particular localities.

Figure 3.1 Green Belt Parcels for Assessment

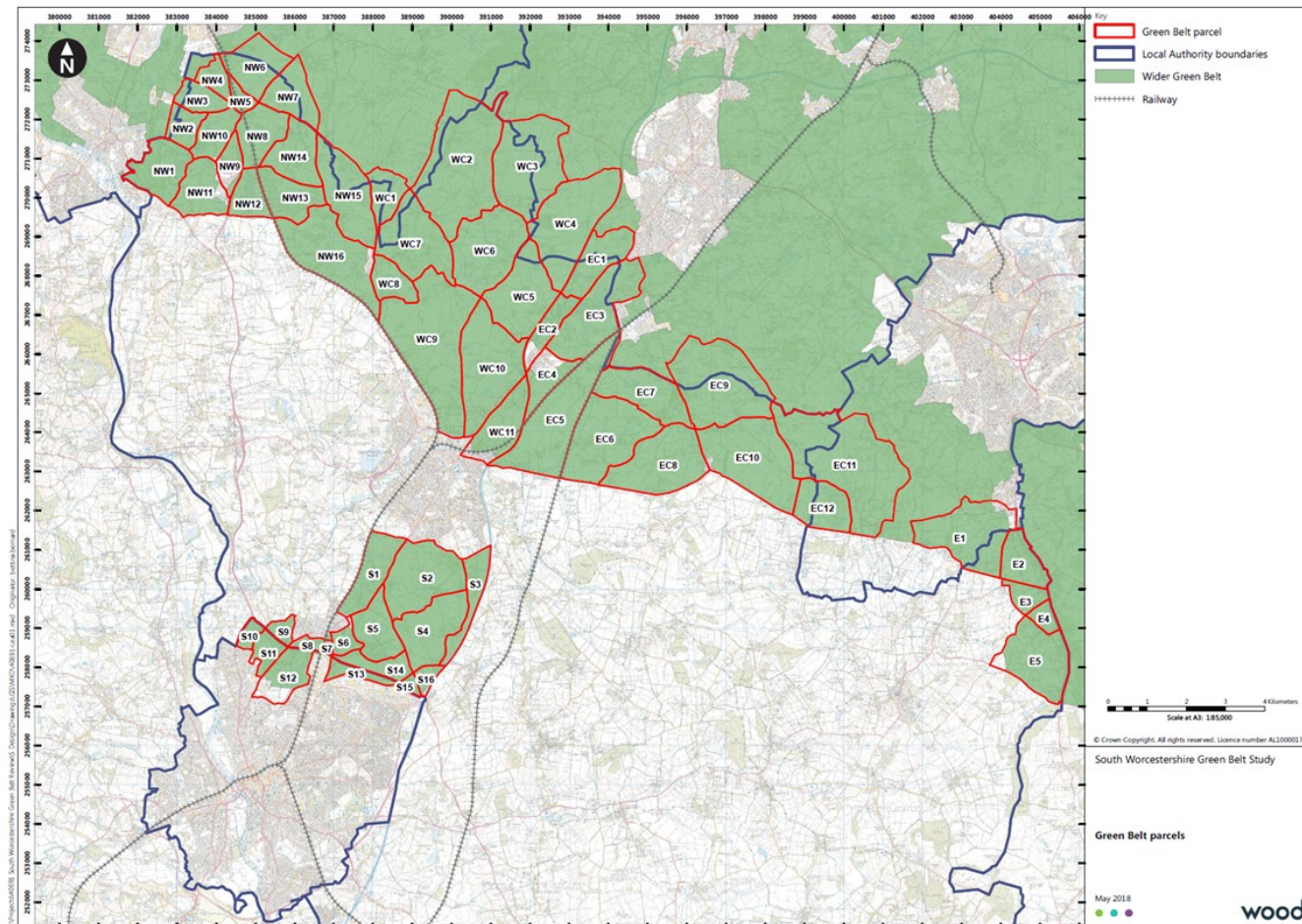


Table 3.1 Summary Gradings Against Green Belt Purposes

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
NW1	SC	LC	SC	C	SC	The Green Belt forms part of a clear distinction between town and country in this location, directly preventing sprawl of the unbounded built edge of Stourport and incremental urbanisation of the parcel as a whole. The Green Belt maintains the openness of the countryside, which is high visually and physically.
NW2	C	C	C	C	C	The parcel is open countryside, of high physical and visual openness, with expansive views to the east from Wilden Top Road. The parcel performs various supporting roles to Green Belt to the north, south and west which have a more immediate connection with the built extent of Stourport and Kidderminster.
NW3	C	C	C	C	C	The parcel comprises open countryside, of high physical and visual openness, with expansive views to the east from Wilden Top Road and to the south from Summerway Lane. The Green Belt contributes to all four purposes as well as supporting the Green Belt situated to the north, south and west which have a more immediate connection with the built extent of Stourport and Kidderminster.
NW4	SC	C	SC	LC	SC	The Green Belt in this location forms part of the southern boundary to Kidderminster and the transition to open countryside to the south. Notwithstanding development on its northern fringes and adjacent to the A449, the land has the character of open countryside with high physical and visual openness, which is vulnerable to both sprawl and encroachment through incremental urbanisation.
NW5	SC	C	C	LC	SC	The location and settlement history of the parcel means that it has a semi-rural character, with mixed physical and visual openness, and is vulnerable to localised sprawl associated with the busy road corridor of the A442 and A449. The current moderate degree of physical and visual openness would be readily eroded through further incremental development, and the Green Belt contains such pressures.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
NW6	C	C	C	LC	C	The Green Belt contributes to maintaining openness, which is high to mixed physically and high visually, where there is evidence of, and potential for, its erosion through incremental change, particularly associated with the A442 corridor, the village of Summerfield and more widely across this southeastern edge of Kidderminster.
NW7	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The Green Belt contributes to maintaining the openness, which is high to mixed physically and high visually, of the countryside through preventing incremental development in this relatively accessible location.
NW8	C	LC	C	LC	C	The parcel is characterised by high to mixed visual and physical openness, dominated by rural land uses, but also intruded by industrial development to the south, in turn adjacent to more significant industrial uses associated with Hartlebury Trading Estate. Green Belt designation contributes to maintaining the openness of the land in this locality through the prevention of incremental change, in what is an accessible location between the arterial roads of the A499 Worcester Road and the A442 Droitwich Road.
NW9	LC	LC	C	SC	SC	The land makes a Significant Contribution to maintaining the openness of the land, which is mixed physically and visually, as part of the northerly context for Hartlebury village and its Conservation Area, in particular.
NW10	LC	LC	C	SC	SC	The land makes a Significant Contribution to maintaining the openness, which is high to mixed physically and high visually, of the land as part of the northerly context for Hartlebury village and its Conservation Area to the west, in particular.
NW11	C	LC	C	SC	SC	The land makes a Significant Contribution to maintaining the openness, which is high to mixed physically and high visually, of the land as part of the southerly context for Hartlebury village and its Conservation Area, in particular.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
NW12	C	LC	C	LC	C	The Green Belt contributes to maintaining the openness of the countryside in this location, notwithstanding the recent introduction of development which has reduced the sense of openness to the west of the parcel. More widely, the land retains an open character, which is mixed to high physically and high visually, in largely mixed agricultural use.
NW13	C	LC	C	LC	C	Overall, the parcel is of low to mixed physical openness and mixed to low visual openness, dominated by the substantial footprint of the Hartlebury Trading Estate which is inset into the Green Belt. Potential localised sprawl and encroachment is prevented, particularly on land on open land to the north.
NW14	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The Green Belt prevents further incremental development within a parcel which has been subject to various kinds and degrees of development. Despite the parcel having a largely open countryside character, with high to mixed physical openness and high visual openness, it is nevertheless accessible and vulnerable to change from existing and potential development.
NW15	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The Green Belt prevents further incremental change within a parcel which has been subject to localised development. Despite the parcel having a largely open countryside character with a high to mixed physical openness and high visual openness, it is nevertheless accessible and vulnerable to change from existing and potential development.
NW16	C	LC	C	LC	C	The Green Belt prevents incremental development in accessible countryside, particularly associated with development in the vicinity of the A442 at Cutnall Green, which exhibits a high degree of physical and visual openness.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
WC1	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually), preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside.
WC2	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually), preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside.
WC3	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually), preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside.
WC4	LC	C	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually), through preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside, whilst supporting land to the east which prevents the merger of Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa.
WC5	LC	C	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually), through preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside, whilst supporting land to the east which prevents the merger of Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
WC6	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually), through preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside.
WC7	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually), through preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside.
WC8	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes primarily through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually). through preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside. Locally, the Green Belt helps to contain the village of Cutnall Green.
WC9	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with land to the east makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes primarily through the broad role of maintaining openness (which is high physically and visually) through preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside, and potential sprawl from Droitwich Spa immediately to the southwest.
WC10	C	SC	C	C	SC	The land, in combination with land to the east makes a Significant Contribution to Green Belt purposes, reflecting its role in preventing localised sprawl along the A38 corridor. More widely, Green Belt helps to maintain openness (which is high physically and visually) through preventing incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
WC11	SC	SC	C	C	SC	Reflecting the location of the land in the gap between Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa, the Green Belt makes a significant contribution to maintaining openness in an area which has a relatively strong open character (with mixed physical and visual openness) and is vulnerable to incremental change because of its size and location within a strategic road corridor.
EC1	C	SC	C	C	SC	The land forms part of a gap between Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa and despite being contained, and compromised to some extent by built form, makes a Significant Contribution to maintaining the openness of the land (which is high to mixed physically and visually) between the towns as part of open land across the A38 to the east and the open countryside across the M5 to the west.
EC2	C	SC	C	LC	SC	The land forms part of a gap between Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa and despite being contained, and compromised to some extent by built form (resulting in mixed physical openness, accompanied by mixed to low visual openness), makes a Significant Contribution to maintaining the openness of the land between the towns as part of open land across the A38 to the east and the open countryside across the M5 to the west.
EC3	SC	SC	C	C	SC	The land forms a significant part of a gap between Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa and despite being subject to incremental urbanisation through various forms of land use change, retains a largely open character, which is high to mixed visually and physically. Nevertheless, its location makes it vulnerable to further change from sprawl and encroachment.
EC4	C	SC	SC	LC	SC	The land forms part of a gap between Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa and despite being contained makes a Significant Contribution to maintaining the openness, which is high physically and visually, between them and as part of the wider countryside to the east.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
EC5	C	C	C	C	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness, which is high physically and visually, of the countryside in what is an accessible location between Droitwich Spa and Redditch. Locally, the Green Belt helps to prevent potential sprawl and supports land to the northwest which more directly prevents the merger of Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa.
EC6	LC	LC	C	C	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness of the countryside, which is high physically and visually, in what is an accessible location between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Redditch. Locally, the Green Belt helps to maintain the setting of Hanbury Hall and its associated park and garden.
EC7	LC	LC	C	C	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness of the countryside which is high physically and visually, in what is an accessible location between Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Redditch. Locally, the Green Belt helps to maintain the setting of Hanbury Hall and its associated park and garden.
EC8	LC	LC	C	C	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness of the countryside which is high physically and visually, in what is an accessible location between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Redditch. Locally, the Green Belt helps to maintain the setting of Hanbury Hall and its associated park and garden.
EC9	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness of the countryside which is high physically and visually, in what is an accessible location between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Redditch.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
EC10	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness of the countryside which is high physically and visually, in what is an accessible location between Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Redditch.
EC11	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness of the countryside which is high physically and visually, in what is an accessible location between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Redditch.
EC12	LC	LC	C	LC	C	The land acts in concert with the wider Green Belt in this location to help maintain the openness of the countryside which is high physically and visually, in what is an accessible location between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Redditch.
E1	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness, which is high to mixed physically and high visually, through preventing incremental encroachment into an accessible area of countryside. Land to the northeast of the parcel (within Bromsgrove District), adjacent to the built extent of Astwood Bank is potentially most vulnerable to such change, but also land to the west off Edgioake Lane.
E2	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness which is high to mixed physically and visually, through preventing further incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside. This is particularly the case for development associated with the A441, which is washed over by Green Belt.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
E3	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness which is high to mixed physically and high visually, through preventing further incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside, particularly in respect of its relationship with development along the A441.
E4	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness which is high to mixed physically and high visually, through preventing further incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside.
E5	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, in combination with adjacent parcels, makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the broad role of maintaining openness which is high to mixed physically and high visually, through preventing further incremental encroachment in an accessible area of countryside. This is particularly the case for development associated with the A441, which is washed over by Green Belt.
S1	SC	SC	SC	C	SC	Reflecting its location as a major part of open land between Droitwich and Worcester, which high to mixed physical and visual openness, the land makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt in this location, strongly related to Green Belt to the east across the A38.
S2	SC	SC	SC	C	SC	The land forms a major part of the land between Droitwich Spa and Worcester, having a high visual and physical openness, the land makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt in this location, strongly related to Green Belt to the west across the A38 and east across Newland Common Road.

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
S3	SC	SC	SC	C	SC	Reflecting its location and high physical and visual openness, the land makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt in this location, strongly related to Green Belt to the west across Newland Common Road and east across Newland Common Road/Hulls Lane/Smite Lane/Offerton Lane to the west.
S4	C	SC	SC	C	SC	The land, which has high physical and visual openness, makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt in this location, forming a substantial part of the land separating Droitwich Spa and Worcester and strongly related to Green Belt to the west across Newland Common Road and east across Newland Common Road/Hulls Lane/Smite Lane/Offerton Lane to the west.
S5	C	SC	SC	C	SC	Notwithstanding some intrusion by built development at Hindlip Hall, the land makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt in this location, with a high degree of visual and high to mixed physical openness. In combination with adjacent parcels, the land is a substantial part of the open land between Droitwich Spa and Worcester.
S6	C	SC	SC	C	SC	Reflecting its location and quality of openness (high physical openness and high to mixed visual openness), the land makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt in this location, strongly related to surrounding Green Belt to the east in particular which contains the built edge of the large village of Fernhill Heath.
S7	C	C	C	C	SC	Whilst the land makes a contribution to all purposes, reflecting its location, scale and bounded character, cumulatively the land makes a significant contribution to meeting Green Belt purposes. The quality of openness (high physical openness and mixed to mixed to low visual openness) has been maintained.
S8	C	C	C	C	SC	Whilst the land makes a Contribution to all purposes, reflecting its location, scale and bounded character, cumulatively the land, which has high physical and visual openness, makes a Significant Contribution to meeting Green Belt purposes.

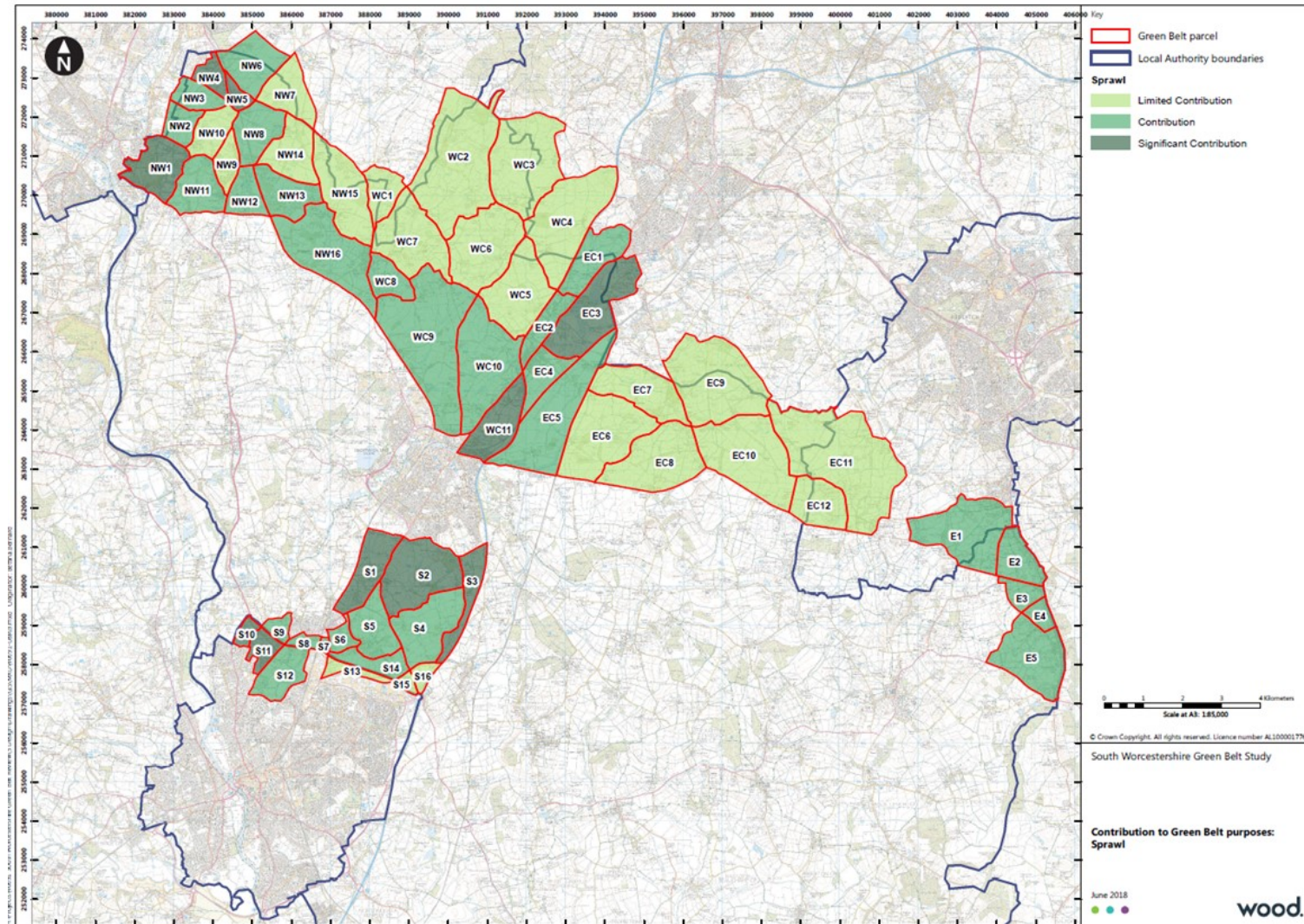
Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
S9	C	C	C	C	SC	Whilst the land makes a Contribution to all purposes, reflecting its location, scale and bounded character, cumulatively the land, which has high to mixed physical and visual openness, makes a Significant Contribution to meeting Green Belt purposes. Notwithstanding the extensive education and related playing field/sports uses, the quality of openness has been maintained.
S10	SC	C	C	SC	SC	Overall, the land, which has high physical and visual openness, makes a Significant Contribution to meeting Green Belt purposes, preventing localised sprawl of the built edge of Worcester at Northwick, and providing an important part of the setting for the Worcester and the village of Claines.
S11	SC	C	C	SC	SC	Overall, the land which has a high to mixed physical and visual openness, makes a Significant Contribution to meeting Green Belt purposes, preventing localised sprawl of the built edge of Worcester at Northwick, and providing an important part of the setting for Worcester and the village of Claines.
S12	C	C	C	SC	SC	Incremental development has created a complex land use pattern which limits the sense of visual and physical openness particularly around the periphery of the parcel. Whilst the land uses are not untypical of the urban fringe or Green Belt (schools, allotments, golf courses etc), the openness of the land has been compromised (with mixed physical and visual openness). Nevertheless, the land still makes a Contribution to three purposes and a Significant Contribution in respect of providing the northerly setting for Worcester.
S13	LC	C	C	LC	C	The land has been severed from its wider countryside context to the north of the A449, but nevertheless makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes through the prevention of merger (in combination with land to the north the A449) and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment reflecting its open character (which has high physical openness and mixed visual openness).

Parcel	Checking Unrestricted Sprawl	Preventing Merger	Safeguarding from Encroachment	Preserving Setting & Character	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	Overall Justification
S14	C	SC	SC	C	SC	Reflecting its location and quality of openness (which is high physically and visually), the land makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt in this location, strongly related to surrounding Green Belt, being party of the wider open land between Droitwich Spa and Worcester.
S15	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	The combination of the built character within the parcel (much of which is defined as a Major Developed Site), the high degree of physical enclosure and scale (resulting in low physical and visual openness) mean that the land makes only a minimal, if any, contribution to the Green Belt.
S16	LC	C	C	LC	C	Whilst the parcel is bounded by the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, the A4538 and the M5, it is nevertheless of high to mixed physical and visual openness and related to the land to the north and as such contributes to the fulfilment of the strategic role of preventing merger and the broader role of preventing encroachment into open land.

3.2 Purpose 1: Checking the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas

46. Fulfilment of this purpose is largely related to land in the vicinity of the transport corridors in the area, notably that of the M5, but also the A449 Kidderminster – Worcester road, the A442 Kidderminster – Droitwich road, and the A38 Droitwich Spa – Worcester Road, where there is evidence of past and more recent change. Sprawl from unbounded edges of urban areas is less common, and typically more localised, with notable examples being around Astwood Bank along the A441 and Hartlebury along the A449 where there is evidence of such change. Generally, however, sprawl has been contained by clear boundaries such as roads or rivers.

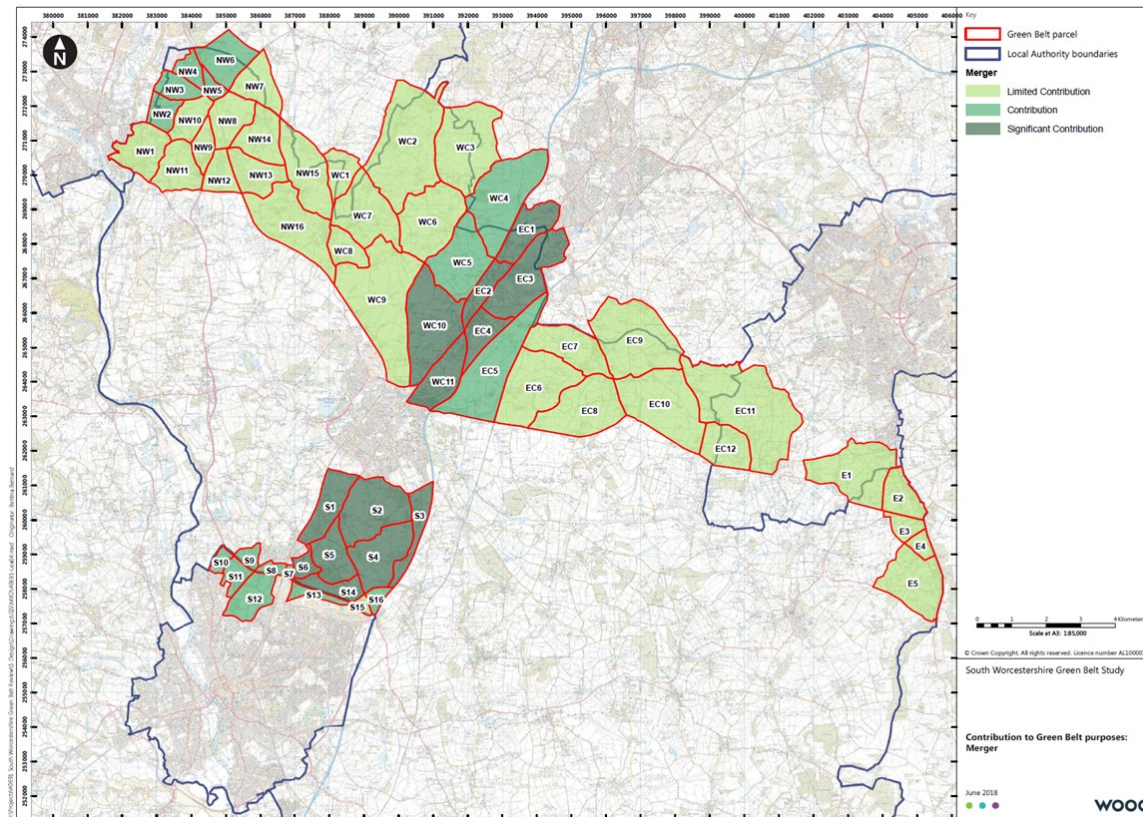
Figure 3.2 Checking Unrestricted Sprawl



3.3 Purpose 2: Preventing the Merger of Neighbouring Towns

47. The fulfilment of this aspect of Green Belt policy is most clearly expressed in the (largely) undeveloped gaps between Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa and Droitwich Spa and Worcester. The contribution can be indirect and localised in character where a parcel directly fulfilling the purpose is supported by adjacent land, most clearly expressed in the complex M5/A38/railway corridor between Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa, and also between Kidderminster and Stourport where the Green Belt is shared with Wyre Forest District. Locally, the prevention of merger relates to the maintenance of the identity of settlements, most clearly shown in the relationship between Worcester and Fernhill Heath but also between Astwood Bank and New End, Cladswell and Cookhill.

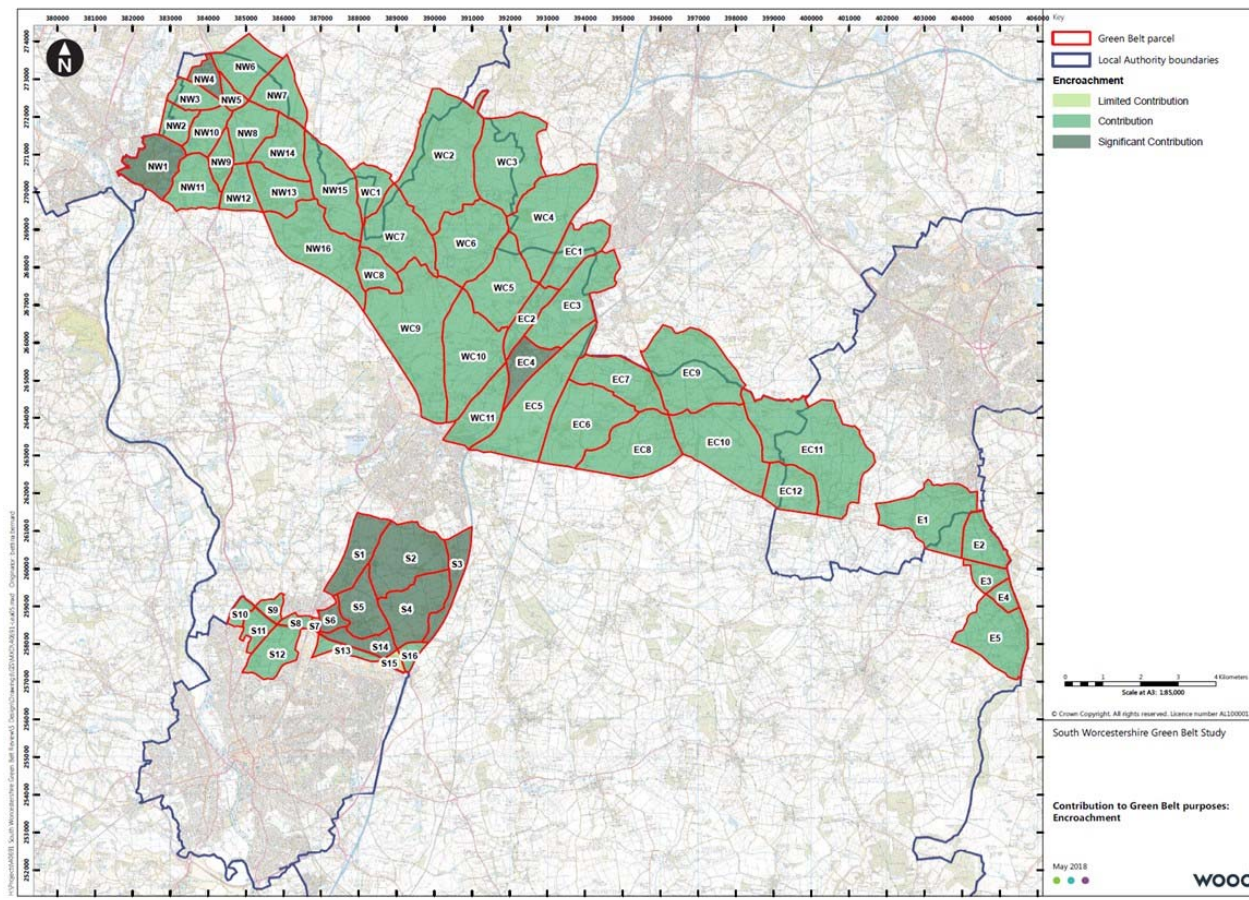
Figure 3.3 Preventing the Merger of Towns



3.4 Purpose 3: Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment

48. This purpose is typically fulfilled in a generalised fashion, reflecting the maintenance of physical and visual openness of the countryside in the face of pressure for incremental change, particularly in accessible areas in the vicinity of trunk roads and in the sphere of influence of towns. Without exception, every parcel makes at least a Contribution to this purpose, with Significant Contributions made in the land between Droitwich Spa and Worcester and on the eastern edges of Kidderminster and Stourport.

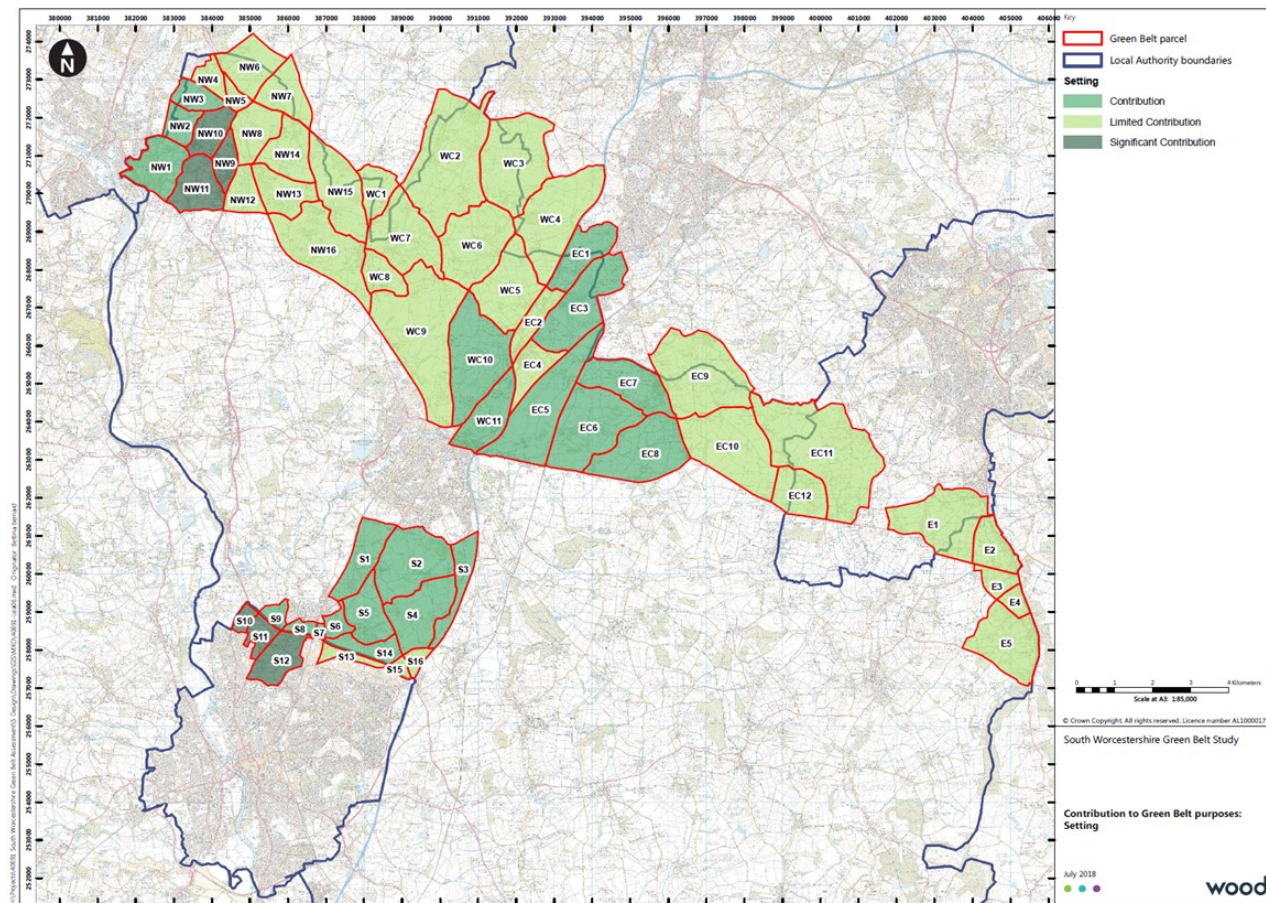
Figure 3.4 Preventing Encroachment into Open Countryside



3.5 Purpose 4: Preserving the Setting and Character of Historic Towns

49. Fulfilment of this purpose typically reflects a complex mix of strategic and local issues, with the Green Belt providing the setting for Worcester, Droitwich Spa, Bromsgrove and Stourport, all considered to have historic character, although, with the notable exception of Worcester, the visual link between the outskirts and the historic core has typically been lost. Locally, protection of Conservation Areas within villages such as Martin Hussingtree, Claines and Hartlebury and specific assets such as Hanbury Hall, is of note, and this role can raise the overall contribution to Green Belt purposes.

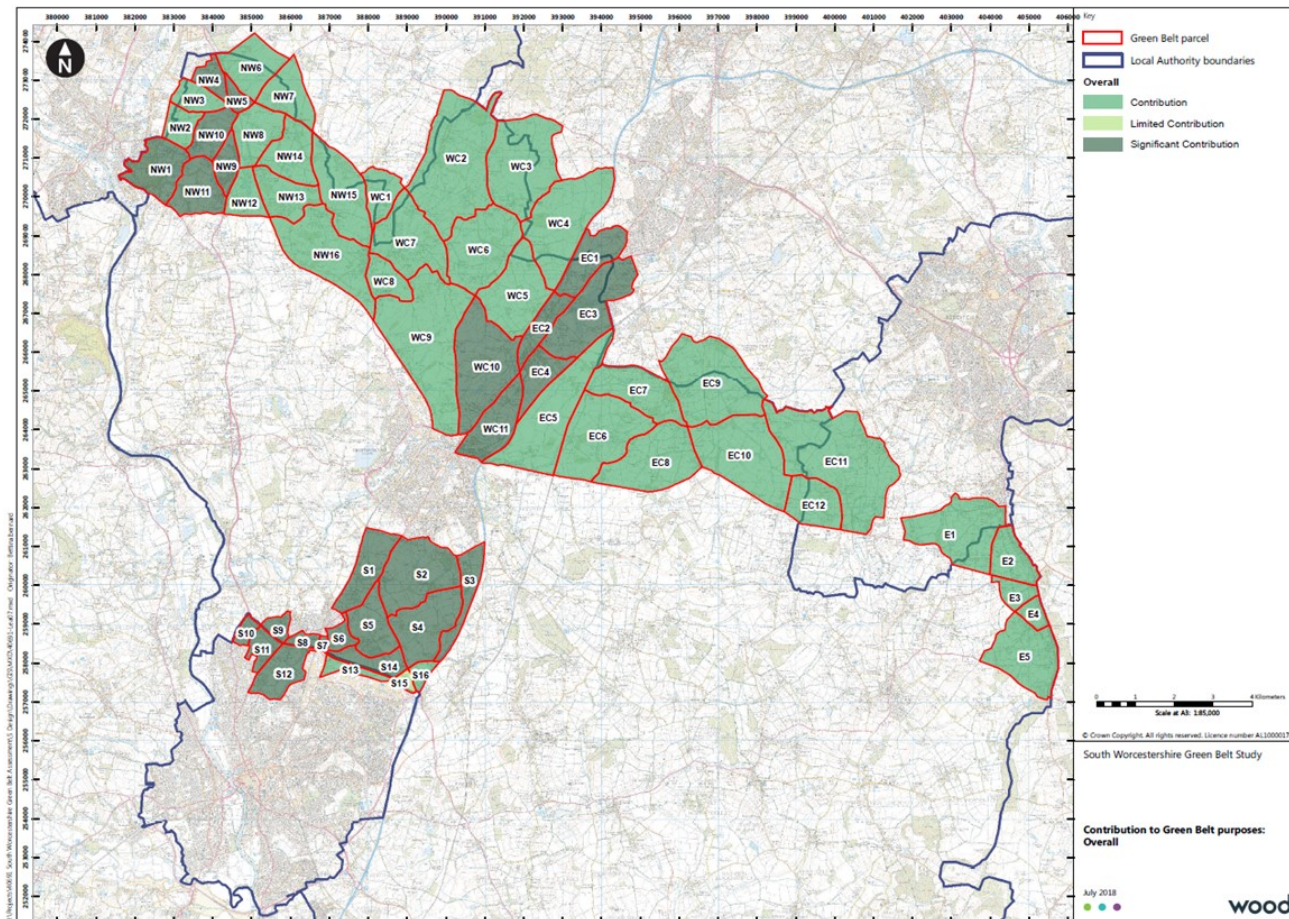
Figure 3.5 Preserving Setting and Character



3.6 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

50. As set out the methodology, in order to assist with the interpretation of the judgements made, an overall contribution to Green Belt purposes is shown, reflecting both the fulfilment of (a) particular purpose(s) whereby a Significant Contribution to one or more purposes will translate into a Significant Contribution overall, but also in the accumulation of Contributions where individually Significant Contributions are not merited.

Figure 3.6 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes



Land Making an Overall Significant Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

51. Reflecting the roles of preventing merger and containing strategic and more localised sprawl, this land is concentrated between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Worcester, and the to the east of Stourport/Kidderminster. Within these areas, development would quickly compromise the role of the Green Belt.

Land Making an Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

52. Accounting for the majority of the Green Belt, land making a contribution to Green Belt purposes is associated with the relatively remote countryside to the east and west of the Bromsgrove – Droitwich Spa – Worcester corridor where the incremental change of open countryside is prevented. Whilst development of various kinds and degrees is common, the threshold beyond which change would have an impact on openness- both visual and physical – is relatively low. An urbanised character can be acquired reasonably quickly.

Land Making an Overall Limited Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

53. There is only one parcel, to the north of Worcester, where the extent and type of development is judged to be such that Green Belt purposes are not being met. Whilst this land nominally has sport and recreation uses, these are of a scale which severely limits any openness, either visual or physical, with no connection in terms of role to the wider Green Belt.

3.7 Settlements in the Green Belt

54. The NPPF (para.140) states that the status of villages currently washed over by Green Belt should be reviewed to determine whether this is still appropriate: *"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."* The following villages have been 'inset' into the Green Belt with a Defined Settlement Boundary:

- ▶ Hartlebury/Waresley
- ▶ Cutnall Green
- ▶ Wychbold
- ▶ Fernhill Heath

55. In order to consider the case for inseting the following settlements were analysed: The nature of these settlements is generally dispersed in character, with some clusters of more dense development.

- ▶ Waresley Manor
- ▶ New End
- ▶ Cladswell
- ▶ Cookhill
- ▶ Martin Hussingtree

3.8 Major Developed Sites (MDS) in the Green Belt

56. The NPPF does not make reference to MDS which prompts the question of whether substantial developed sites, akin to large settlements, should remain within the Green Belt. Their boundaries have already been defined through MDS status. The following employment sites were defined as MDS within the South Worcestershire Development Plan:

- ▶ Site 7 Trading Estate
- ▶ Hartlebury Trading Estate
- ▶ Hindlip
- ▶ Sixways

57. The following trading estates were not identified as MDS, but are of a similar scale and density to Site 7.

- ▶ Oak Park Trading Estate
- ▶ Ikon Trading Estate

3.9 Recommendations for the Treatment of Settlements and former MDS within the Green Belt

58. The following recommendations are made in respect of the consideration the inseting of villages (Table 3.2) and former MDS (Table 3.3).

Table 3.2 Recommendations for the Insetting of Settlements

Settlement	Recommendation
Waresley Manor	Inset within the Green Belt , extending the defined settlement boundary of Waresley across the A449 to include the built footprint of the development at Waresley Manor, south and east of Manor Lane. The parkland to the south of the built development should remain within the Green Belt, reflecting its open quality. Reflecting the relatively dense character and the largely self-contained physical character of the development, along with the proximity to the inset village of Waresley, the built extent of development does not contribute to the Green Belt.
New End, Cladswell. Cookhill	Do not inset New End, Cladswell or Cookhill within the Green Belt. The character of the settlements maintains a moderate to strong relationship with the wider countryside in which they are set. As such they are judged to make a contribution to maintaining the openness of the Green Belt in this location.
Martin Hussingtree	Do not inset within the Green Belt. The character and location of the village makes a clear contribution to the Green Belt, which combined with the absence of any clear settlement boundary, meaning that inseting is inappropriate.

Table 3.3 Recommendations for the Insetting of Major Developed Sites

Major Developed Site	Recommendation
Site 7 Trading Estate	Inset within the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate as currently defined by the MDS boundary.
Hartlebury Trading Estate	Inset within the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate as currently defined by the MDS boundary.
Hindlip	Do not inset within the Green Belt. Whilst a site boundary has been identified through designation as a MDS, this contains substantial areas of open land and its boundaries are not defined by substantial features. If further developed, in density extent or height, the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt would be compromised.
Sixways	Remove all of the land from the Green Belt as currently defined by the MDS boundary. Whilst a very modest degree of openness is retained to the north of the site (thereby complementing Green Belt land to the east), substantial built form dominates the overall character. In light of this and its well bounded character, the land could be removed from the Green Belt.
Oak Park Trading Estate	Inset within the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate.
Ikon Trading Estate	Inset within the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Fulfilment of Green Belt Purposes

59. The Green Belt is judged to be performing its strategic function overall as part of the outer edge of the West Midlands Green Belt, and in respect of more localised roles. The Green Belt plays a significant role strategically in terms of maintaining the separation between the local towns, notably between Bromsgrove, Droitwich Spa and Worcester, and also more generally in preventing the incremental urbanisation of the wider countryside, both in the immediate vicinity of large built-up areas and more widely. Only one parcel (S15, site of the Sixways Stadium), which is strongly bounded and largely developed, has been identified as making a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes. The majority of the Green Belt in the study area is judged to overall make a Contribution to Green Belt purposes, reflecting the broadly open countryside character of the land which is relatively remote from built-up areas. Significant tracts of land between the major built-up areas and surrounding the main transport corridors are judged to make a Significant Contribution, reflecting the prevention of sprawl, merger and encroachment.
60. Locally, the Green Belt prevents sprawl along transport corridors and maintains the separate identity of settlements, particularly where these are in proximity to a large built-up area. The Green Belt across the study area contains several large developed sites and settlements and recommendations made on their potential for inseting into the Green Belt, that is the removal of Green Belt policy because they make no direct contribution to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes as a result of the character of their built form.
61. The contrast between built-up areas and the countryside is a notable feature of the Green Belt in the study area, with relatively few instances of the so-called 'urban fringe' where the character of town and country can become blurred and are characterised by complex land uses e.g. utility and road infrastructure, fragmented agricultural holdings, sports and recreational land uses and declining land management. The Green Belt in the study area largely comprises open countryside in predominately agricultural use characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads, isolated properties, hamlets and villages. The land is, however, highly accessible to the cities, towns and villages which it surrounds and contains several significant transport corridors, which, in the absence of Green Belt policy would make it vulnerable to development pressure and incremental change. In maintaining the openness of the countryside, the Green Belt is fulfilling its principal role.

4.2 Matters of Openness and Permanence

62. The analysis has explored the character of the Green Belt in respect of its openness (that is the general absence of built development) and permanence (that is the presence of substantial boundaries which can in principle contain development). Whilst Green Belt designation does not mean an absence of development (there being many 'permitted' and typical uses such as sports and utilities), there is nevertheless the protection of openness of the countryside through maintaining spatial and visual openness. In some instances, particularly where there has been intrusive development, the quality of openness can become compromised, but across the study area as a whole, the Green Belt is judged to be fulfilling its principal role.

4.3 Site-Specific Implications of the Strategic Assessment

63. The Strategic Assessment provides the context for the consideration of development proposals. It does not seek to determine where development may be more or less appropriate, but rather the extent and type of harm to the Green Belt that is likely to occur in respect of its relative sensitivity.
64. The consideration of site-specific development will need to draw on the observations made on contributions to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes, strategically and locally. The degree to which there is likely to be harm to the Green Belt as a result of development depends upon its scale, its type and opportunities to mitigate that impact both on and off-site. Specific questions to frame the interrogation of site-specific proposals are:
- ▶ What is the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt of removing the site from it?
 - ▶ To what extent could the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent?
 - ▶ If this site were to be developed as proposed, would the adjacent Green Belt continue to serve at least one of the five purposes of Green Belts, or would the Green Belt function be undermined by the site's development?
 - ▶ Has the Green Belt boundary around the site been defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent? Does it avoid including land which it is necessary to keep permanently open?
65. These matters help to test the implications of proposed development. Practically, they mean that development could occur on relatively sensitive land (i.e. that performing a stronger Green Belt role), but the level of required justification will be higher and the potential compensatory interventions (on- and off-site) greater.

4.4 Offsetting and Compensation for Green Belt Release

66. The NPPF includes the following requirements on how Green Belt release should be managed:
138. When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities 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. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. *They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.* [emphasis added]
67. The clear intention of the NPPF is that release of Green Belt land should not proceed without suitable off-site enhancement which reinforces Green Belt character and quality. The Part 2 site assessment work will explore the opportunities for links to be made with how Green Infrastructure might be used to help mitigate the effects of development on the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt.

Appendix A

Green Belt Parcel Assessments

See separate file



Appendix B

Settlement and Major Developed Sites Assessment

Settlements in the Green Belt

The NPPF (paragraph 140) states that the status of villages currently washed over by Green Belt should be reviewed to determine whether this is still appropriate: *"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."*

The following villages have been 'inset' into the Green Belt with a defined Development Boundary:

- Hartlebury/Waresley
- Cutnall Green
- Wychbold
- Fernhill Heath

In order to explore whether there was a case for further inseting, the following settlements were analysed. The nature of these settlements is generally dispersed in character, with some clusters of more dense development.

- Waresley Manor
- New End
- Cladswell
- Cookhill
- Martin Hussingtree

Major Developed Sites (MDS) in the Green Belt

The NPPF does not make reference to MDS which prompts the question of whether substantial developed sites, akin to large settlements, should remain within the Green Belt. Their boundaries have already been defined through MDS status. The following employment sites were defined as MDS within the South Worcestershire Development Plan:

- Site 7 Trading Estate
- Hartlebury Trading Estate
- Hindlip
- Sixways

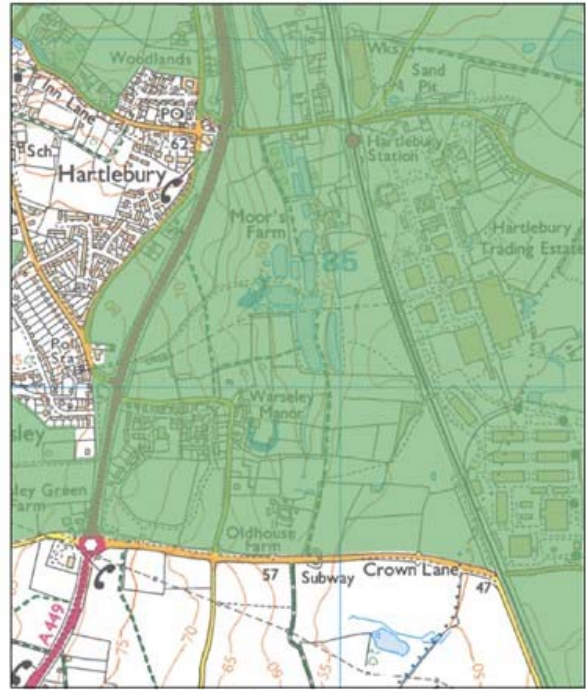
The following trading estates were not identified as an MDS, but are of a similar scale and density to Site 7.

- Oak Park Trading Estate
- Ikon Trading Estate

Waresley Manor



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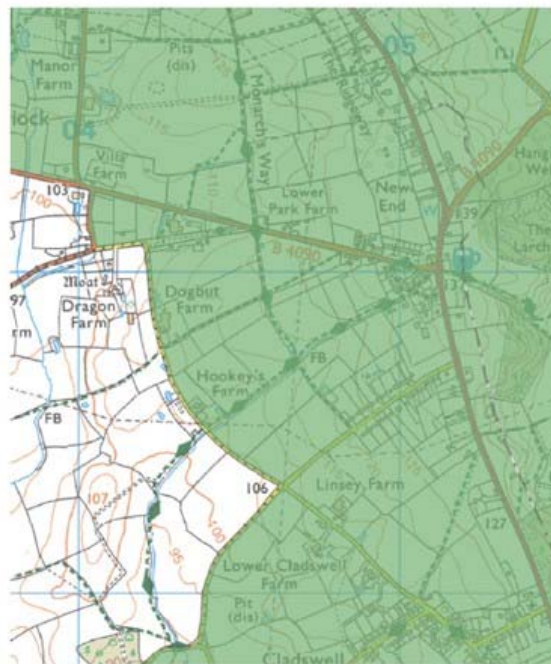


Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	The village of Waresley has been enlarged through recent (1980s?) development to the east of the A449. This development comprises approximately 80 dwellings clustered around Waresley Manor, enclosed to the north and east by Manor Lane. There is no clear sense of separate identity, although part of the original landscaped park of Waresley Manor remains to the south forming a focus for some of the properties.
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The development is based on standardised house designs built at a relatively high density.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	Notwithstanding the visual relationship between some of the properties and the remaining parkland to the south, the overall relationship with the surrounding landscape is limited, the focus of much of the development being adjacent properties.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	Whilst the development does not intrude upon the Green Belt <i>per se</i> , being contained by Manor Lane and screened by substantial vegetation, it does not contribute to its openness, with gardens being small and generally enclosed with the dense form of built development limiting views in and out.
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting.	The built extent of the development is considered to make a Limited Contribution to the Green Belt, reflecting its relatively dense, self-contained character. There is a clear built footprint to the development.
Potential for insetting	Judgement in light of the above	Reflecting the relatively dense character and the largely self-contained physical character of the development, along with the proximity to the inset village of Waresley, the built extent of development does not contribute to the Green Belt. Recommendation: Inset within the Green Belt, extending the defined settlement boundary of Waresley across the A449 to include the built footprint of the development at Waresley Manor, south and east of Manor Lane. The parkland to the south of the built development should remain within the Green Belt, reflecting its open quality.

New End/Cladswell/Cookhill



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User

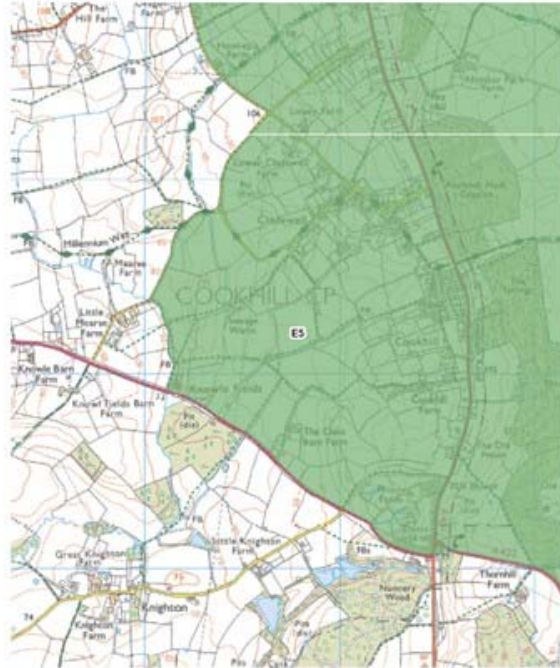


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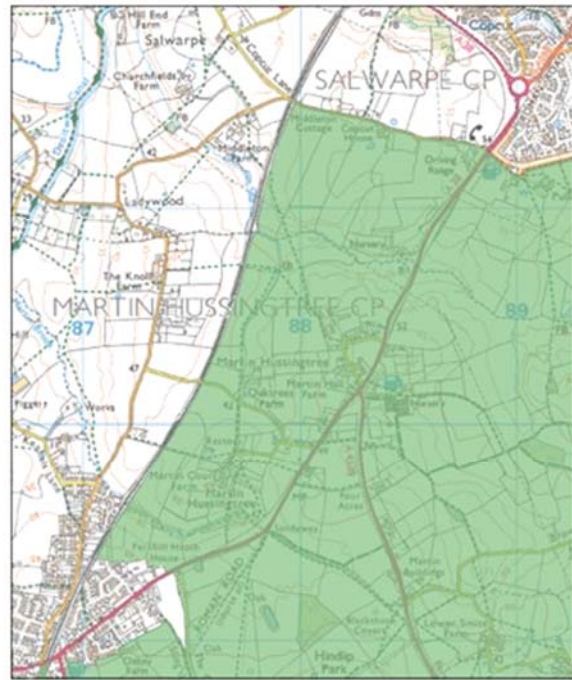
Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	These three settlements exhibit similar physical characteristics and can be considered together. They comprise distinct communities arranged in broad clusters to the west of the A441 Evesham Road (The Ridgeway), with scattered dwellings between them. Building styles and ages vary, but the majority appear to be post-war, and the result of largely incremental growth. The settlements are essentially street villages, without a clear core.
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The essential character of all three settlements is low-density dwelling sets in moderate to large plots, backing onto open land. Despite in-filling, a generally spacious character has been retained.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	Despite pockets of more contiguous built form there is typically a moderate to strong relationship with the countryside within which the settlements are set. Glimpsed views to the east are available, creating a clear relationship between the settlements and their setting.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	Notwithstanding extensive infill development of relatively recent origin, and the long run of development southwards from Astwood Bank, the settlement pattern contributes to the character of

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
		the Green Belt, being part of long-settled countryside focused on key transport corridors. As such, the settlements are part of the countryside character and do not overly detract from its physical or visual openness.
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The typically low density and irregular form of the settlements, with a variety of glimpsed views between dwelling of the wider contributes to the openness of the Green Belt. Further intensification would compromise this relationship, with the difficulty of defining a clear settlement boundary which enclosed contiguous development.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	The character of the settlements maintains a moderate to strong relationship with the wider countryside in which they are set. As such they are judged to make a contribution to maintaining the openness of the Green Belt in this location. Recommendation: do not inset New End, Cladswell or Cookhill.

Martin Hussingtree



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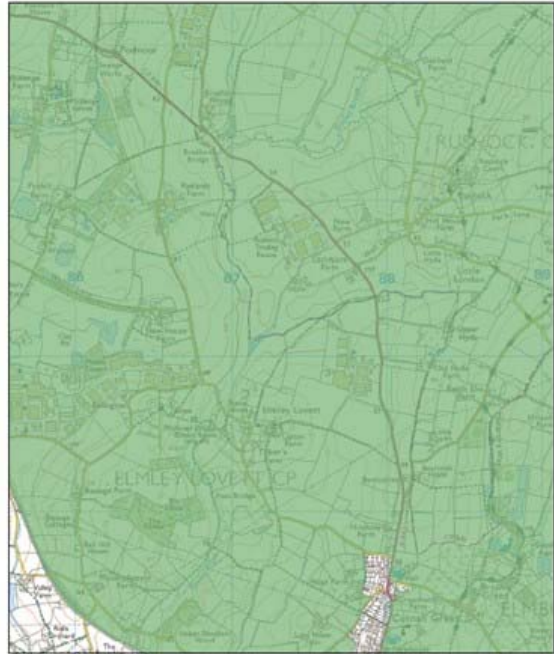
Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	A dispersed village set to the west of the A38, comprising two main clusters of dwellings arranged off Drury Lane and Church Lane. The village has strong historic origins, with a substantial Conservation Area focused on the parish church. Post-war housing is located along Drury Lane.

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The character of the village is a dispersed street village of very low density and a spacious character.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	Houses are generally one deep, with large gardens which merge into the wider countryside and various short, medium and longer distance views available from Drury Lane and Church Road.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	The southern part of Martin Hussingtree arranged along Church Lane, forms part of the vernacular of the countryside. As such maintains the contribute to maintaining the physical and visual openness of the Green Belt.
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The character of the village overall and its Conservation Area in particular, contribute to the prevention of encroachment and to the setting of an area of historic character, and to the prevention of localised sprawl along the A38. The village and its setting are also part of the strategic gap between Droitwich Spa and Worcester.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	The character and location of the village makes a clear contribution to the Green Belt, which combined with the absence of any clear settlement boundary, meaning that inseting is inappropriate. Recommendation: do not inset.

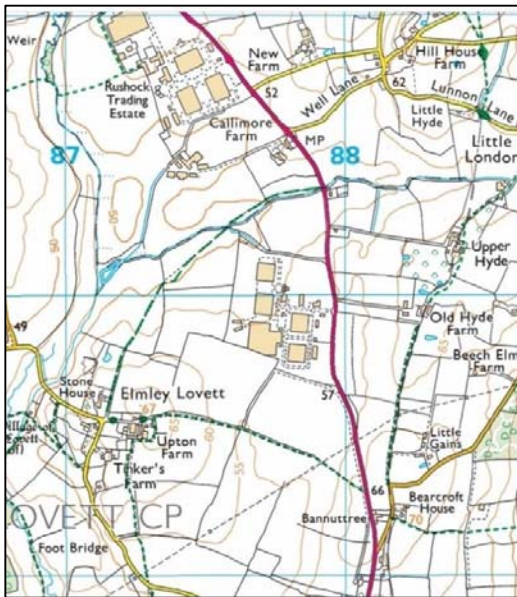
Site 7 Trading Estate



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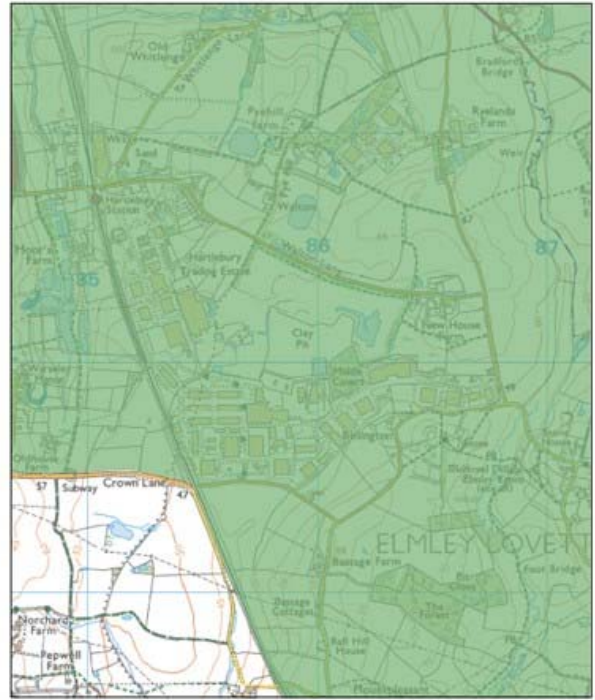
Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	This is one several trading estates formed from ex-RAF maintenance depots built in 1938, which were dispersed in the vicinity of Hartlebury. Buildings are characteristically substantial (two/three storeys high) of industrial appearance and arranged in a

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
		roughly rectangular shape. Their longevity means that they are familiar 'landmarks'.
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The plot is of a high density with a varying degree of enclosure from surrounding vegetation, with a clearly defined boundary creating a strong contrast between built development and its rural context.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	There is no connection with the wider landscape aside from being a developed focal point which draws the eye in an otherwise rural setting.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	The site makes no contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, indeed detracts from it (albeit on a relatively small scale).
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The site makes no contribution to any Green Belt purpose.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	Recommendation: inset into the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate as currently defined by the MDS boundary.

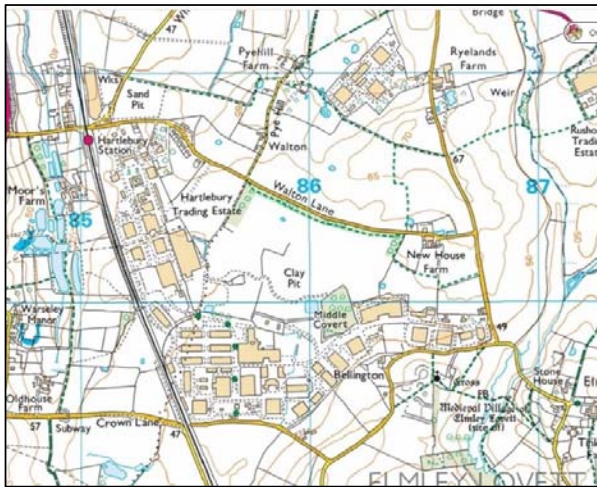
Hartlebury Trading Estate



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Development Plan Mapping Changes to the Policies Map associated with the Main Modifications (September 2015) - Modification to Hartlebury Trading Estate, (Major Developed Site in the Green Belt)



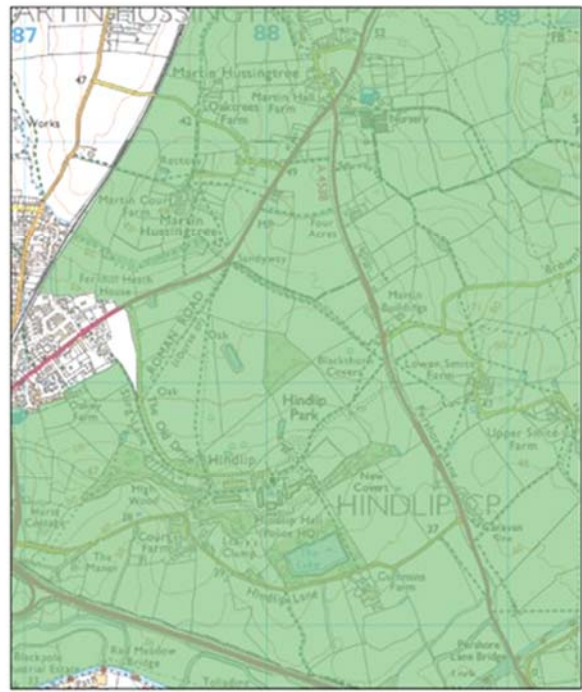
Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	This is the core and by far the largest of several trading estates formed from ex-RAF maintenance depots built in 1938, which were dispersed in the vicinity of Hartlebury. Buildings are characteristically substantial (two/three storeys high) of industrial appearance and arranged to the east of the Kidderminster – Worcester

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
		railway line. There is a notable diversity of uses, including brick manufacture (which spreads into the adjoining land through quarrying activity), a waste incinerator and a large number of B8 distribution warehouses.
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The plot is of a high density with a varying degree of enclosure from surrounding vegetation, with what appears to be a clearly defined boundary creating a strong contrast between built development and its rural context.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	Whilst clearly visible from various perspectives, topography and vegetation conceal the full extent of the built development associated with the site. Overall, however, there is no relationship between the contiguous built development of the site and the surrounding landscape. However, the wider quarry workings form a transition zone between open countryside and the built development of the site.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	The site makes no contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, indeed detracts from it from certain viewpoints (for example from parts of Walton Road and Whitleng Lane), being visually intrusive.
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The site makes no contribution to any Green Belt purpose.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	Recommendation: inset into the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate as currently defined by the MDS boundary.

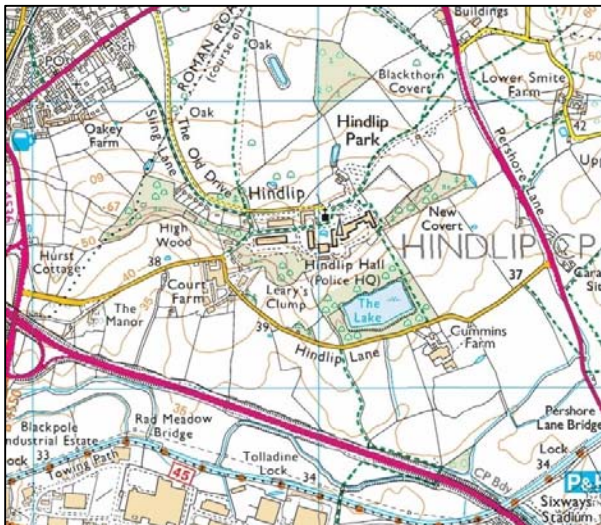
Hindlip



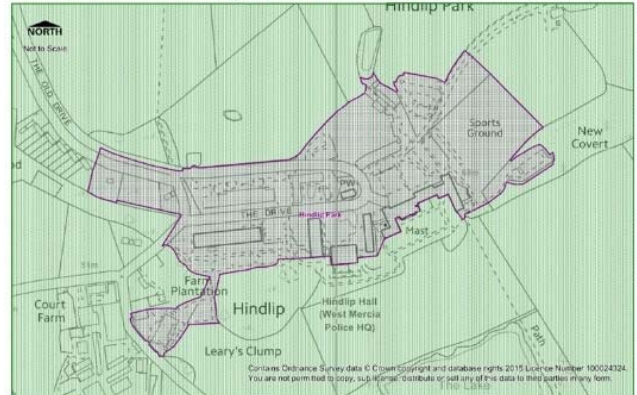
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Development Plan Mapping Changes to the Policies Map associated with the Main Modifications (September 2015) - Modification to Hindlip Park, (Major Developed Site in the Green Belt)



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Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	Focused on Hindlip Hall, this is a cluster of substantial buildings on a prominent hill-top site, albeit screened by substantial vegetation, particularly to the south. The most significant feature which draws the eye from surrounding land is the communications mast at the centre of the site.

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The overall density of the site is moderate to high, with various low-rise buildings of modern construction to the west of the nineteenth century Hindlip Hall.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	Whilst the original landscape setting of the Hall has largely been lost, the site retains a connection with the wider open countryside, with filtered views from and into the site.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	Notwithstanding the substantial cumulative physical footprint of the site's buildings, there remains a moderate degree of physical and visual openness, with generous space around the site's buildings (both soft landscaping and car parking).
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The site is judged to make a Contribution to maintaining the openness of the countryside in light of the continuing connection between the site and the wider countryside setting. The site also contains the Grade II* listed Hindlip Hall.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	Whilst a site boundary has been identified through designation as a MDS, this contains substantial areas of open land and its boundaries are not defined by substantial features. If further developed, in density extent or height, the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt would be compromised. Recommendation: do not inset.

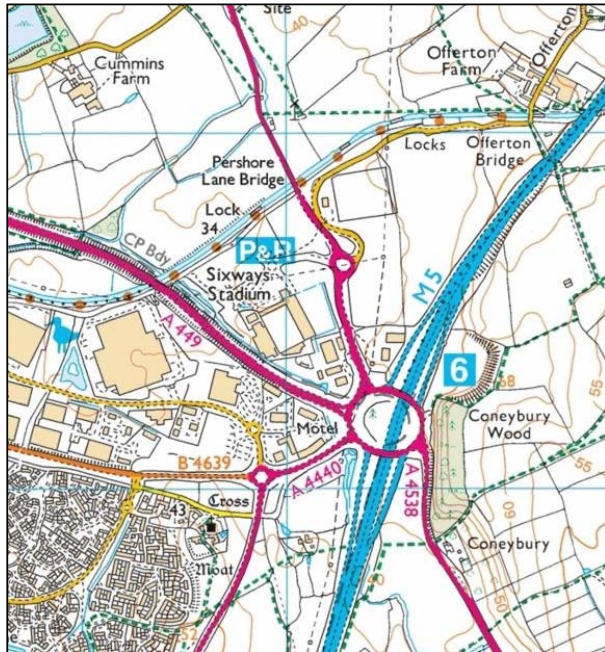
Sixways



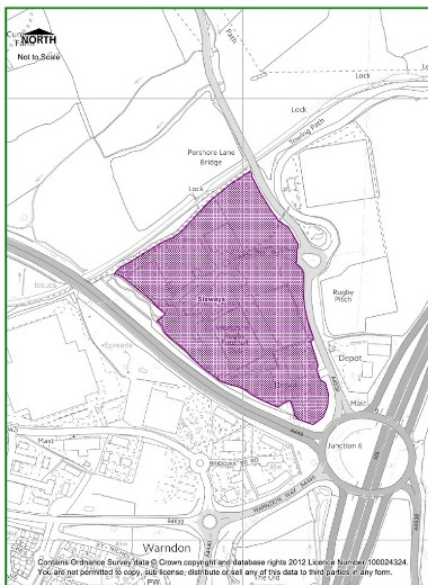
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Development Plan Major changes 2012 Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt - Sixways



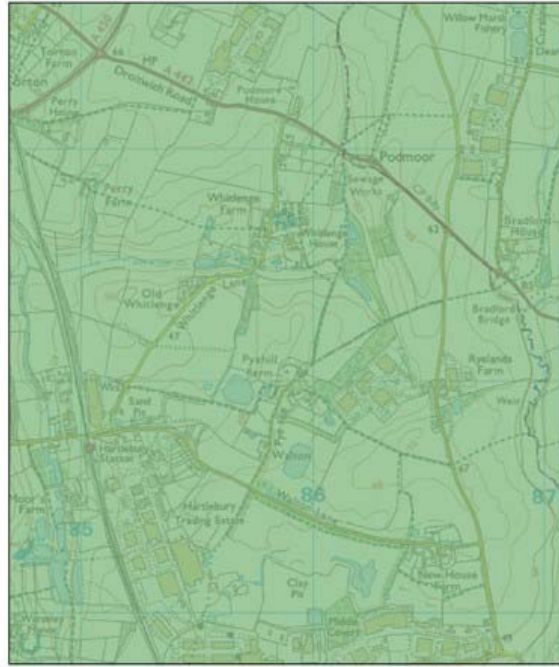
Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form,	Dominated by the Sixways Stadium, the site has been entirely developed for B8/B1 uses to the south and sport and recreation uses (and

	building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	associated car-parking to the north). The site is strongly bounded on all sides.
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	Whilst on plan the buildings appear well separated, the impression at grade is one of dense and substantial built form set within a curtilage of hard-standing used for car-parking which is strongly related to the dominant stadium use of the land.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	The site has only a limited connection with the surrounding landscape, with some views to the east across the M5. To the north, vegetation associated with the Worcester & Birmingham Canal obscures any visual connection with the wider open countryside, whilst to the south, the scale of built development largely obscures any outward views.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	The site, whilst being Green Belt, is dominated physically and visually by built form.
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The site makes only a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes, through the openness retained by car-parking uses to the north and the modest connection to Green Belt to the east.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	Whilst a very modest degree of openness is retained to the north of the site (thereby complementing Green Belt land to the east), substantial built form dominates the overall character. In light of this and its well bounded character, the land could be removed from the Green Belt. Recommendation: remove all of the land from the Green Belt as currently defined by the MDS boundary.

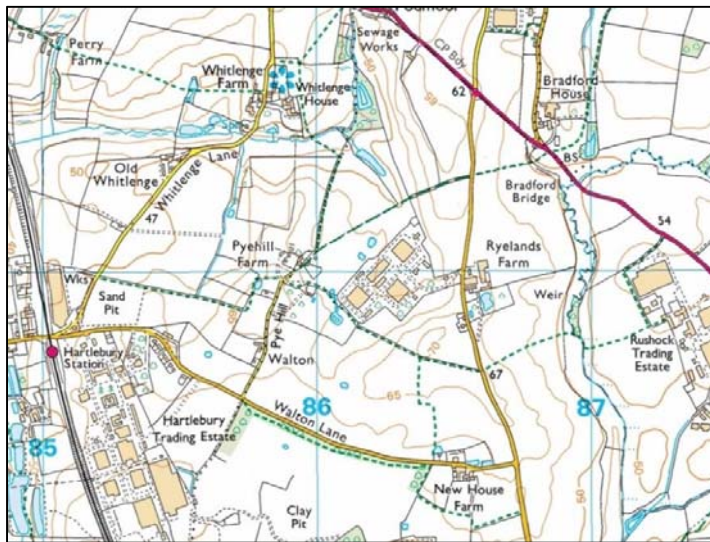
Oak Park Trading Estate



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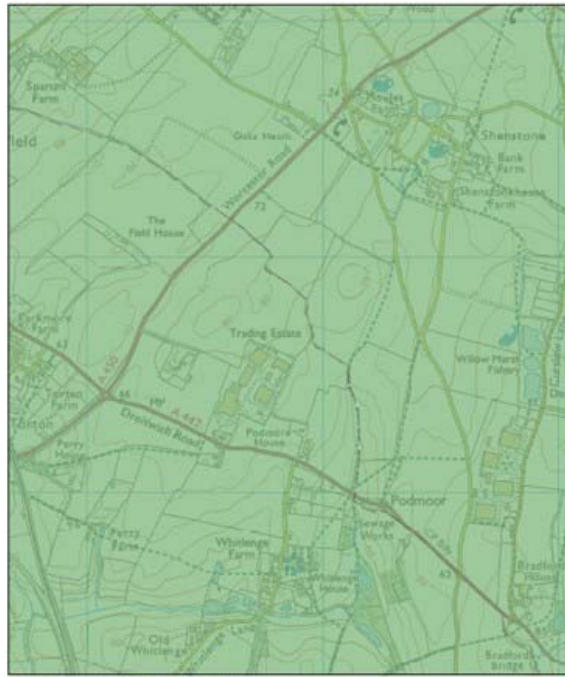
Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	This is one several trading estates formed from ex-RAF maintenance depots built in 1938, which were dispersed in the vicinity of Hartlebury. Buildings are characteristically substantial (two/three storeys high) of industrial appearance and arranged in a roughly rectangular shape. Their longevity means that they are familiar 'landmarks'.

Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The plot is of a high density with a varying degree of enclosure from surrounding vegetation, with a clearly defined boundary creating a strong contrast between built development and its rural context.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	There is no connection with the wider landscape aside from being a developed focal point which draws the eye in an otherwise rural setting.
Relationship with, and contribution to, the openness of the Green Belt	Influence of built form on the visual and physical openness of the Green Belt	The site makes no contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, indeed detracts from it (albeit on a relatively small scale).
Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The site makes no contribution to any Green Belt purpose.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	Recommendation: inset into the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate.

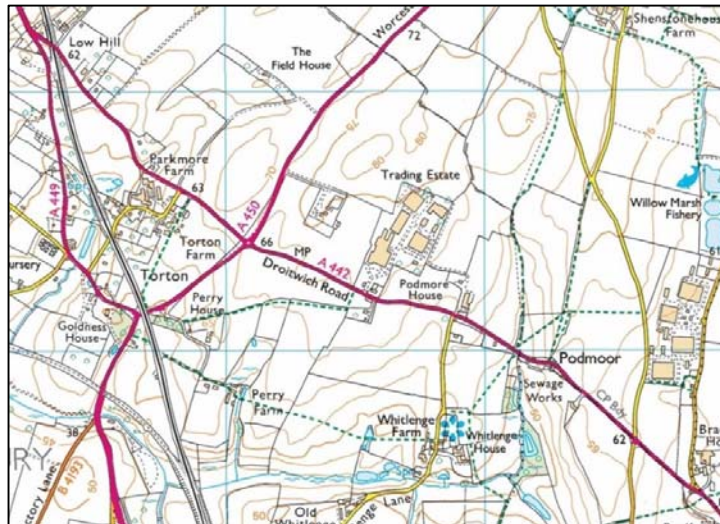
Ikon Trading Estate



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Topic	Criteria	Assessment
General character	Location and overall setting, topography, settlement/building form, building type/age, sense of identity and unity, key focal points	This is one several trading estates formed from ex-RAF maintenance depots built in 1938, which were dispersed in the vicinity of Hartlebury. Buildings are characteristically substantial (two/three storeys high) of industrial appearance and arranged in a roughly rectangular shape. Their longevity means that they are familiar 'landmarks'.

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
Density and layout of buildings	Degree of spaciousness/enclosure, rear garden character	The plot is of a high density with a varying degree of enclosure from surrounding vegetation, with a clearly defined boundary creating a strong contrast between built development and its rural context.
Interface with the surrounding landscape	Settlement/site depth and density, connection with the surrounding landscape including direct and filtered views to and from the settlement/site	There is no connection with the wider landscape aside from being a developed focal point which draws the eye in an otherwise rural setting.
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Contribution of the settlement to Green Belt purposes (nationally and locally defined)	Contribution to preventing sprawl, maintaining separation, preventing encroachment and providing setting	The site makes no contribution to any Green Belt purpose.
Potential for inseting	Judgement in light of the above	Recommendation: inset into the Green Belt using the clearly defined boundary of the built extent and immediate curtilage of the Trading Estate.

wood.

