



# **Oxford Green Belt Study**

## **2024 Update**

### **South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils**

#### **Final report**

Prepared by LUC

May 2024

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Oxford Green Belt Study



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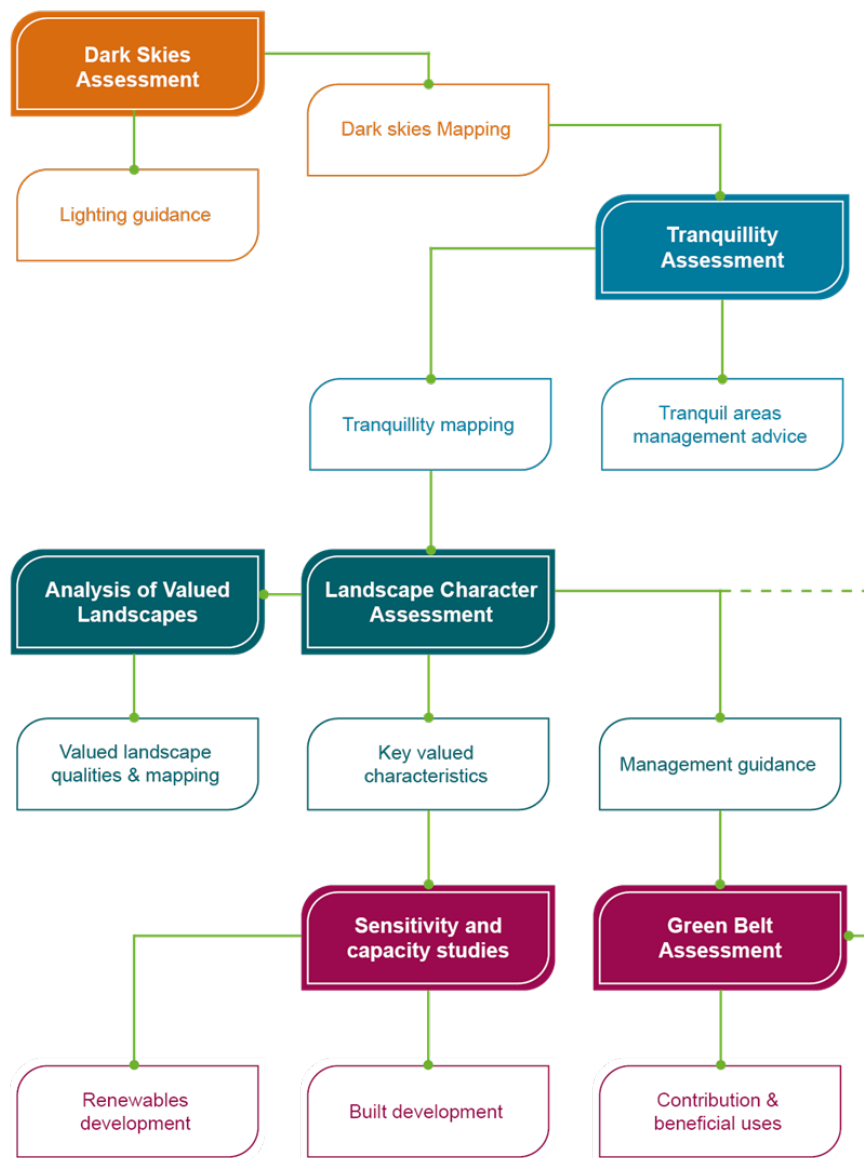
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**1.1** In January 2023, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils commissioned LUC to produce landscape evidence contributing to the Joint Local Plan that will guide development in the districts to 2041. An overview of the suite of landscape evidence commissioned is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

**Figure 1.1: Suite of landscape evidence bases**



**1.2** This report covers the Green Belt assessment element of work.

## Study aims

**1.3** This report aims to:

- Update the findings of the Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) relevant to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse:
  - Where Green Belt boundaries have been revised.
  - To merge criteria 1a and 1b into a single contribution assessment of Green Belt Purpose 1, in line with more recent good practice.
- Explore the potential to create new Green Belt land in line with the requirements of paragraph 144 of the NPPF.

## Report authors

**1.4** This report has been prepared by LUC on behalf of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. LUC has completed Green Belt studies at a range of scales for over 60 English local planning authorities in the past ten years.

## Report structure

**1.5** The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** contains a summary of the methodology and findings of the Green Belt evidence prepared in 2015, sets out changes in national Green Belt policy, guidance and associated case law since its publication and determines whether these changes require changes to the original assessment methodology and its findings.

- **Chapter 3** reviews the scale and extent of previous changes to the Districts' Green Belt boundaries and the scale and extent of inappropriate development permitted in the Green Belt since the publication of the 2015 Green Belt assessment and determines whether the impacts of these requires alterations to the original assessment findings.
- **Chapter 4** summarises the updated study findings based on the changes outlined in **Chapters 2** and **3**.
- **Chapter 5** explores the national policy requirements for designating new Green Belt land and outlines next steps for building a case.
- **Appendix A** contains the individual parcel assessment proforma that set out the justifications for contribution ratings identified in relation to the Green Belt purposes for parcels of land across the two districts.

## Chapter 2

# Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) Review

**2.1** There is no defined approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [See reference 1] or National Planning Practice Guidance [See reference 2] as to how Green Belt assessments should be undertaken. However, national Green Belt policy, guidance and associated case law inform such assessments. This section summarises the assessment methodology and findings set out in the 2015 Green Belt Assessment Review [See reference 3], before setting out later changes in national Green Belt policy, guidance and associated case law since the Green Belt review publication in 2015. The report then considers whether these changes require modifications to the original assessment methodology and its findings.

## Green Belt assessment methodology and findings (2015)

### Parcelling

**2.2** The assessment defined Green Belt parcels that contain land of the same or very similar land use or character, bounded by recognisable physical features including:

- Natural features; for example, substantial watercourses and water bodies.
- Man-made features; for example, motorways, A and B roads and railway lines, and established infrastructure and utilities such as sewage treatment works.

**2.3** Two distinct types were identified:

- Smaller parcels adjacent to Oxford City and the inset settlements where judgements are most likely to be considered for either retention or removal from the Green Belt.
- Broad areas which represent the main 'body' of the Green Belt, rather than land at the edges of Oxford City and the inset settlements enclosed by the Green Belt. Smaller parcels were not identified around settlements 'washed over' by Green Belt; however, commentary considering these settlements in relation to the Green Belt purposes is provided in the assessment of the broad areas.

**2.4** Small parcels were defined around the following inset settlements in the study area:

- Vale of White Horse:
  - Abingdon-on-Thames.
  - Botley.
  - Cumnor.
  - Kennington.
  - Radley.
  - Wootton.
  - Appleton.
- South Oxfordshire:
  - Berinsfield.
  - Wheatley (including Littleworth).

## Assessment criteria

**2.5** Criteria were developed to assess the performance of each Green Belt parcel against the Green Belt purposes, using a four point rating system:

- High.
- Medium.
- Low.
- No contribution.

**2.6** The assessment criteria used to assess the Green Belt within the smaller land parcels adjacent to Oxford City and the inset settlements are set out in Table 3.2 of the 2015 study [See reference 4]. The same criteria for assessment were used for the broad areas as for the smaller parcels.

**2.7** Key policy terms set out in the NPPF (2023) were defined in the local context to assess the relative performance of the Green Belt parcels to each Green Belt purpose.

## **Purpose 1 – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

**2.8** To assess Green Belt Purpose 1 (to check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) Oxford and the almost merged urban areas of Botley and Kennington in Vale of White Horse were defined as the '*large built-up area*', the assessment of Purpose 1 was split in two:

- Criterion 1a assessed the presence of urbanising influences associated with or in close proximity to the large built-up area that was judged to constitute sprawl of the large built-up area. The degree of urbanising influence and its effect on openness influenced whether each parcel received a high, medium or low rating.
- Criterion 1b assessed the influence of boundary features, settlement form and roads facilitating or inhibiting sprawl of the large built-up area.

**2.9** The parcels not adjacent to the large built-up area and all of the broad areas were judged to make no contribution to Purpose 1 criteria 1a and 1b as they are



not located immediately adjacent to the large built-up area. Broad Areas sit at some distance from the large built-up area or beyond boundary features that provide strong distinction between the urban area and open countryside.

**2.10** The findings for Criterion 1b were presented separately and not combined with Criterion 1a. If the findings of the assessment against Criterion 1b were combined with Criterion 1a, it could have suggested that a parcel had additional value in Green Belt terms because of its boundaries, which was judged to be misleading.

## **Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

**2.11** To assess Green Belt Purpose 2 (to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) all settlements inset from the Green Belt were defined as ‘neighbouring towns’ (listed above – para. 2.4). Oxford including the urban villages and settlements within Oxford (e.g. Summertown, Marston and Northway, West Oxford, East Oxford, Rose Hill, Littlemore, Grandpont, New Hinksey etc.) were also included within the definition of a town.

**2.12** The significance of the role parcels and broad areas played in preventing neighbouring towns from merging has influenced their rating against Purpose 2 Criterion 2a.

## **Purpose 3 – to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**

**2.13** To assess Green Belt Purpose 3 (to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), “urbanising influences” were defined as any features that compromise the countryside character, such as roads lined with street lighting and pavements, large areas of hard standing, floodlit sports fields, roads, pylons etc. They did not include development which is commonly found within the

countryside, e.g. agricultural or forestry related development, isolated dwellings, historic schools and churches.

**2.14** The presence or lack of urbanising influences that could constitute encroachment of the countryside and their countryside characteristics influenced parcel and broad area ratings against Purpose 3 Criterion 3a.

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

**2.15** With regards to the assessment of Green Belt Purpose 4 (to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) the assessment focussed on the contribution of the Green Belt to preserving the setting and special character of the City of Oxford (as opposed to all conservation areas/ historic towns within the Green Belt).

**2.16** LUC's 2002 study 'A Character Assessment of Oxford City in its Landscape Setting' and the 2014 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones' were used to inform the assessment of contribution to Oxford's setting and special character. Reference was also made to landscape character assessments prepared for Oxfordshire as a whole. Contribution to the setting and special character of the City of Oxford is largely based on where there is intervisibility between the historic core of Oxford and its open surroundings.

**2.17** There were three main reasons for this. Firstly, the original impetus for the Oxford Green Belt was the strategic role it would play in protecting the special character and setting of the City. Secondly, the smaller historic towns such as Abingdon and Woodstock lie at the edge of the Green Belt and are not surrounded by it. If the intention had been to protect the historic setting of Abingdon, it is reasonable to assume that the town would have been encircled by Green Belt. The Green Belt to the North of Abingdon has little relationship with the historic core of the town. Thirdly, it is important to note that this does not mean that other settlements in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse do not have special and unique characteristics worthy of preservation, it is just

that these characteristics are not directly relevant to an assessment of Green Belt Purpose 4. Other Green Belt purposes seek to maintain openness of the countryside and maintain separation between towns, which may directly or indirectly contribute to preserving such special and unique local characteristics, and there are other local planning mechanisms to protect the setting and character of these other towns and smaller settlements within the Green Belt.

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

**2.18** With regards to the assessment of Green Belt Purpose 5 (to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land), this purpose was not assessed at the individual parcel level since no meaningful distinction could be made between parcels.

## **2015 study findings**

**2.19 Table 2.1** illustrates the contribution ratings of parcels and broad areas that fall within the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Green Belt, as assessed in 2015. **Figure 2.1** illustrates the location and extent of the parcels and broad areas defined across Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire in 2015.

**Table 2.1: Contribution ratings for parcels and broad areas in 2015**





Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1		Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
		1a	1b			
AP1	Vale of White Horse	N/C	N/C	Medium	High	Low
AP2		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	N/C
AP3		N/C	N/C	Low	High	N/C
AP4		N/C	N/C	N/C	High	N/C
AP5		N/C	N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
AP6		N/C	N/C	N/C	Medium	Low
AT1		N/C	N/C	Low	High	N/C
AT2		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	N/C
AT3		N/C	N/C	Low	High	Low
AT4		N/C	N/C	Low	High	Low
AT5		N/C	N/C	High	Medium	Low
AT6		N/C	N/C	High	Medium	Low
AT7	South Oxfordshire ; Vale of White Horse	N/C	N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF1	South Oxfordshire	N/C	N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF2		N/C	N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF3		N/C	N/C	N/C	Medium	Low
BF4		N/C	N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF5		N/C	N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF6		N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C

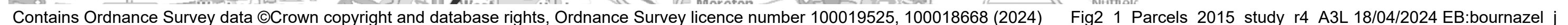
Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1		Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
		1a	1b			
BO1	Vale of White Horse	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
BO2		High	High	High	High	High
BO3		Medium	High	Medium	High	High
BO4		Medium	Medium	Low	High	High
BO5		Low	High	N/C	High	Medium
BO6		High	High	High	High	Low
Broad area 2	South Oxfordshire ; Cherwell	N/C	N/C	Low	High	High
Broad area 4	South Oxfordshire	N/C	N/C	N/C	High	Low
Broad area 5		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	High
Broad area 6	South Oxfordshire ; Vale of White Horse	N/C	N/C	Low	High	High
Broad area 7	South Oxfordshire	N/C	N/C	N/C	High	Low
Broad area 8		N/C	N/C	Low	High	Low
Broad area 9	Vale of White Horse	N/C	N/C	Low	High	High
Broad area 10		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	High
Broad area 11		N/C	N/C	N/C	High	High
Broad area 12	Vale of White Horse;	N/C	N/C	Low	High	High

Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1		Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
		1a	1b			
	West Oxfordshire ; Cherwell					
CU1	Vale of White Horse	N/C	N/C	Low	High	Medium
CU2		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	Low
CU3		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	Low
KE1		Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High
OX10	South Oxfordshire	High	High	Medium	High	High
OX11		High	High	Medium	High	High
OX12	South Oxfordshire ; Oxford	High	High	Low	High	High
OX13	South Oxfordshire	High	High	High	High	Low
OX14		High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
OX15		Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium
OX16		Low	High	N/C	Medium	Low
OX17	Vale of White Horse; South Oxfordshire	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High
OX19	Vale of White Horse; Oxford	Medium	High	High	Medium	High
OX3	South Oxfordshire ; Oxford	Medium	High	N/C	Medium	High
OX8		High	High	N/C	High	High
OX9	South Oxfordshire	High	High	N/C	High	Medium

Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1		Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
		1a	1b			
RA1	Vale of White Horse	N/C	N/C	High	High	Medium
RA2	Vale of White Horse; South Oxfordshire	N/C	N/C	High	High	High
RA3		N/C	N/C	N/C	High	High
WH1	South Oxfordshire	N/C	N/C	Medium	High	High
WH2		N/C	N/C	N/C	Medium	High
WH3		N/C	N/C	N/C	Low	N/C
WH4		N/C	N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
WH5		N/C	N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
WH6		N/C	N/C	Low	High	Low
WH7		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	Medium
WH8		N/C	N/C	Medium	High	Low
WH9		N/C	N/C	High	High	Medium
WT1	Vale of White Horse	N/C	N/C	High	Medium	Medium
WT2		N/C	N/C	High	High	Medium
WT3		N/C	N/C	High	High	N/C
WT4		N/C	N/C	Low	High	Low



-  District boundary
-  Neighbouring Local Authority
-  Parcel 2015 study
-  Green Belt





## Changes in national Green Belt policy and guidance since 2015

### Changes to national planning policy

**2.20** There have been revisions to the NPPF since the 2015 study was undertaken in 2018, 2019 and 2023 that resulted in changes in Green Belt policy. Changes were also made to the NPPF in 2021; however, these changes did not materially affect national Green Belt policy set out in Chapter 13 of the NPPF. These changes are summarised below.

**2.21** A revised NPPF was published in 2018, followed by additional minor revisions in 2019. These updates included additional policy wording on how local planning authorities should “evidence and justify” alterations to Green Belt boundaries through the local plan making process. The 2023 NPPF now states that the “strategic plan-making authority should have examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development” before concluding that the exceptional circumstances exist, specifically whether the strategy:

- “makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
- optimises the density of development, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres, and other locations well served by public transport; and
- has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.”

**2.22** Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should now 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.

**2.23** These changes relate to the process for demonstrating the necessary exceptional circumstances for making alterations to Green Belt to accommodate development, which the Council has no plans to do at this stage in the plan-making process for the emerging Joint Local Plan. These changes have no direct relevance to the assessment of the performance of existing Green Belt land and the potential impact of its release on the designation. Therefore, they have no impact on the original assessment methodology and its findings. Whilst the 2015 Oxford Green Belt Study did not reference the above NPPF updates, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan was adopted after being examined against the 2019 NPPF, so these NPPF changes were taken into account in the plan making processes.

**2.24** A further change was made in the 2023 NPPF clarifying that “there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated” but that “authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.” These clarifications do not change Green Belt planning policy given the NPPF has never required Green Belt boundary revisions and the mechanism for making changes remains unchanged.

**2.25** The only change with potential to affect the original assessment findings relates to the addition of the following land uses considered to be appropriate in the Green Belt:

- Allotments that preserve the openness of the Green Belt;
- burial grounds that preserve the openness of the Green Belt; and,
- needed affordable housing on previously developed land that would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

**2.26** The reference to the need to preserve openness associated with each of these potentially appropriate land uses acknowledges their potential to be inappropriate where openness is affected. However, where the impact on openness is limited, such land uses may have been considered to affect the openness of the Green Belt in the original study, but now, having been deemed appropriate uses they would not [\[See reference 5\]](#).

**2.27** Allotments are only mentioned a handful of times in the detailed South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse parcel assessments of the original 2015 study:

■ Vale of White Horse:

- Parcel AP2: the Purpose 3 judgement references a small allotment adjacent to the small village of Eaton; however, the parcel is rated high overall so the land use was not considered to reduce the contribution to this Green Belt purpose.
- Parcel AT2: the Purpose 3 judgement references a large allotment at its eastern edge; however, it is the enclosed nature of the parcel and inappropriate built development associated the washed over village of Shippon which influence the parcels contribution. Therefore, the parcel's low rating for this purpose would remain the same regardless of the influence of the allotment.

■ South Oxfordshire:

- Parcel WH7: the Purpose 3 judgement references an allotment; however, the parcel is rated high overall so the land use was not considered to reduce the contribution to this Green Belt purpose.

**2.28** These references do not explicitly judge the land use to be inappropriate, but make reference to built development associated with them, which may affect openness and/or increase open Green Belt land's associated urban areas. Therefore, the original study's assessment of allotments in the Green Belt is in conformity with the latest national planning policy and case law.

**2.29** No mention is made of cemeteries, burial grounds, graveyards or affordable housing on previously developed land in the detailed parcel assessments of the original 2015 study.

## New planning practice guidance

**2.30** In 2019, the NPPF's Green Belt policies were supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The guidance sets out some of the factors that should be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of Green Belt land. The factors referenced are not presented as an exhaustive list, but rather a summary of some common considerations borne out by specific case law judgements. The guidance states openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects [\[See reference 6\]](#). Other circumstances which have the potential to affect judgements on the impact of development on openness include:

- the duration of development and its remediability to the original or to an equivalent (or improved) state of, openness; and
- the degree of activity likely to be generated by development, such as traffic generation.

**2.31** The guidance also elaborates on paragraph 147 of the NPPF (2023) which requires local planning authorities to 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 the remaining Green Belt land. The guidance endorses the preparation of supporting landscape, biodiversity, or recreational need evidence to identify appropriate compensatory improvements, including:

- “new or enhanced green infrastructure;
- woodland planting;
- landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
- improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;

- new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and
- improved access to new, enhanced, or existing recreational and playing field provision.”

**2.32** Finally, the guidance offers some suggested considerations for securing the delivery of identified compensatory improvements – the need for early engagement with landowners and other interested parties to obtain the necessary local consents, establishing a detailed scope of works and identifying a means of funding their design, construction and maintenance through planning conditions, section 106 obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

**2.33** Relevant to the expansion of the definition of openness having both spatial and visual impacts in guidance, the updated study gives consideration to the influence of urbanising development immediately adjacent to Green Belt parcels, and the screening influence of existing and planned separating features. The other guidance does not influence the assessment of the performance of Green Belt land carried out in 2015.

## Changes to assessment methodology

**2.34** In the absence of any material changes in formal guidance on how specific Green Belt terms should be interpreted, the original definitions, methodology and findings set out in the 2015 study are considered to be in conformity with national Green Belt policy. However, in light of the potential misleading influence of the original study’s Criterion 1b findings on the overall findings (see para. 2.17), the decision has been taken to update the assessment of Purpose 1 (to check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) to a single consolidated criterion. This updated assessment considers the same factors assessed and the same definitions outlined in the 2015 study but reorganised to deliver a single rating for Purpose 1.

**2.35** A Green Belt Assessment of South Oxfordshire's Strategic Site Options at the time was prepared by LUC in December 2018 [\[See reference 7\]](#). This included a consolidated assessment of Purpose 1 contribution before consideration was given to the strength of each site's alternative Green Belt boundaries and the harm of their release to the designation. The assessment methodology used in the 2018 South Oxfordshire Green Belt assessment has been applied to the parcels identified in the 2015 Oxford Green Belt study that fall within Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire.

**2.36** In summary, Green Belt land needs to have a relationship with a large built-up area to make a contribution to Purpose 1. Therefore, consistent with the Oxford Green Belt Study (2015), parcels and all broad areas not adjacent to the large built-up area are judged to make no strategic contribution to Purpose 1. All Green Belt land within the study area makes some contribution to preventing sprawl, but land that is not adjacent to the large built-up area does not directly contribute to preventing its expansion. Land closer to the large built-up area performs that role.

**2.37** Where land has a relationship with the edge of a large built-up area, the strength of its contribution will be greater if it has a stronger relationship with the surrounding countryside than with the urban area, and lacks urbanising influences. Conversely a parcel will make a weaker contribution to this purpose if it: has a stronger relationship with the adjacent large built-up area than with the wider countryside; lacks proximity to the built-up area; or is already developed. Separating features such as roads, railways and rivers retaining the large built-up area can maintain distinction between the Green Belt and the urbanising influence of the large-built-up area, increasing the contribution it makes. Conversely, connecting features such as roads, railways and rivers emanating out from the large built-up area can weaken the contribution it makes.

**2.38** Key questions asked in relation to Purpose 1 include:

- Does the parcel lie in, adjacent to, or in close proximity to the large built-up area?
- To what extent does the parcel contain existing urban sprawl?

- To what extent does the parcel exhibit the potential for sprawl? i.e. Does land relate sufficiently to a large built-up area for development within it to be associated with that settlement or vice versa?
- Does land have a strong enough relationship with the large built-up area, and a weak enough relationship with other Green Belt land, to be regarded more as infill than expansion?

**2.39** In line with the Oxford Green Belt Study (2015), Oxford and the almost merged built-up areas of Botley and Kennington in Vale of White Horse are collectively defined as the 'large built-up area'. The openness of each parcel is assessed drawing on the Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) findings and considering the influence of any additional inappropriate development that has occurred since 2015. Furthermore, in line with the above influence of separating features marking distinction between existing and planned inset areas, the assessment of urbanising influences covered through the assessment of Purpose 3 has been reviewed to reference both urbanising influences within parcels and adjacent where appropriate, noting where adjacent urbanising influences are screened or influence the distinction of Green Belt land.

**2.40** No further changes to the 2015 Green Belt study assessment methodology are proposed and further updates to the original 2015 study findings are limited to the influence of subsequent changes in Green Belt boundaries and development in the Green Belt since 2015 set out in **Chapter 3**.

**2.41** Should the Councils identify a need to release Green Belt land to accommodate growth in future plans, further work will be required to explore the potential harm of release across the Green Belt to the designation and identify locations where Green Belt harm associated with Green Belt release might be minimised.

## Chapter 3

# Green Belt Boundary Changes and Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

## Green Belt boundary changes since 2015

**3.1** Areas of the Oxford Green Belt have been removed since 2015 through the plan-making process with the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 2031. **Figure 3.1** illustrates the location and extent of the removed areas.

**3.2** South Oxfordshire removed the following land on the southern and eastern edges of Oxford:

- South of Grenoble Road (3,000 new homes and 10ha of employment land);
- At Northfield (1,800 new homes); and,
- North of Bayswater Brook (1,100 new homes).

**3.3** The inset area of Wheatley was expanded northwards to include the Wheatley Campus and 500 new homes.

**3.4** In addition, South Oxfordshire inset and expanded the previously washed over Green Belt village of Berinsfield (1,700 new homes and 5ha of employment land) and the science park at Culham, and the land adjacent to the Culham science park (3,500 homes and 7.8ha of employment redevelopment).



## **Chapter 3** Green Belt Boundary Changes and Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

### **3.5** Vale of White Horse removed Green Belt land:

- North West of Abingdon (200 homes);
- South of Abingdon (800 homes);
- South of Kennington (270 homes); and,
- North West of Radley (240 homes).

**3.6** In addition, Vale of White Horse inset and expanded the previously washed over Green Belt village of Shippon at Dalton Barracks(1,200 new homes) partially into the Abingdon Airfield.

**3.7** The authorities set out the strategic and local exceptional circumstances for each defined release as part of the examination of each now adopted Local Plans. Further details on the circumstances that led to release of each allocation from the Green Belt can be found on the Councils' respective Local Plan Examination document libraries [\[See reference 8\]](#) and [\[See reference 9\]](#).

**3.8** The parcels originally defined in Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) have been appropriately redrawn to exclude and surround these new inset areas. The inseting at Berinsfield, Culham Science Centre and Shippon/Dalton Barracks within the Green Belt has also resulted in the need for the creation of parcels surrounding these new inset areas for consistency with the Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) methodology. All settlements inset from the Green Belt were defined in the Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) as 'neighbouring towns' of relevance to the assessment of contribution to Green Belt Purpose 2. The inseting and expansion of Berinsfield, Culham and Shippon therefore qualifies them for definition as neighbouring towns.

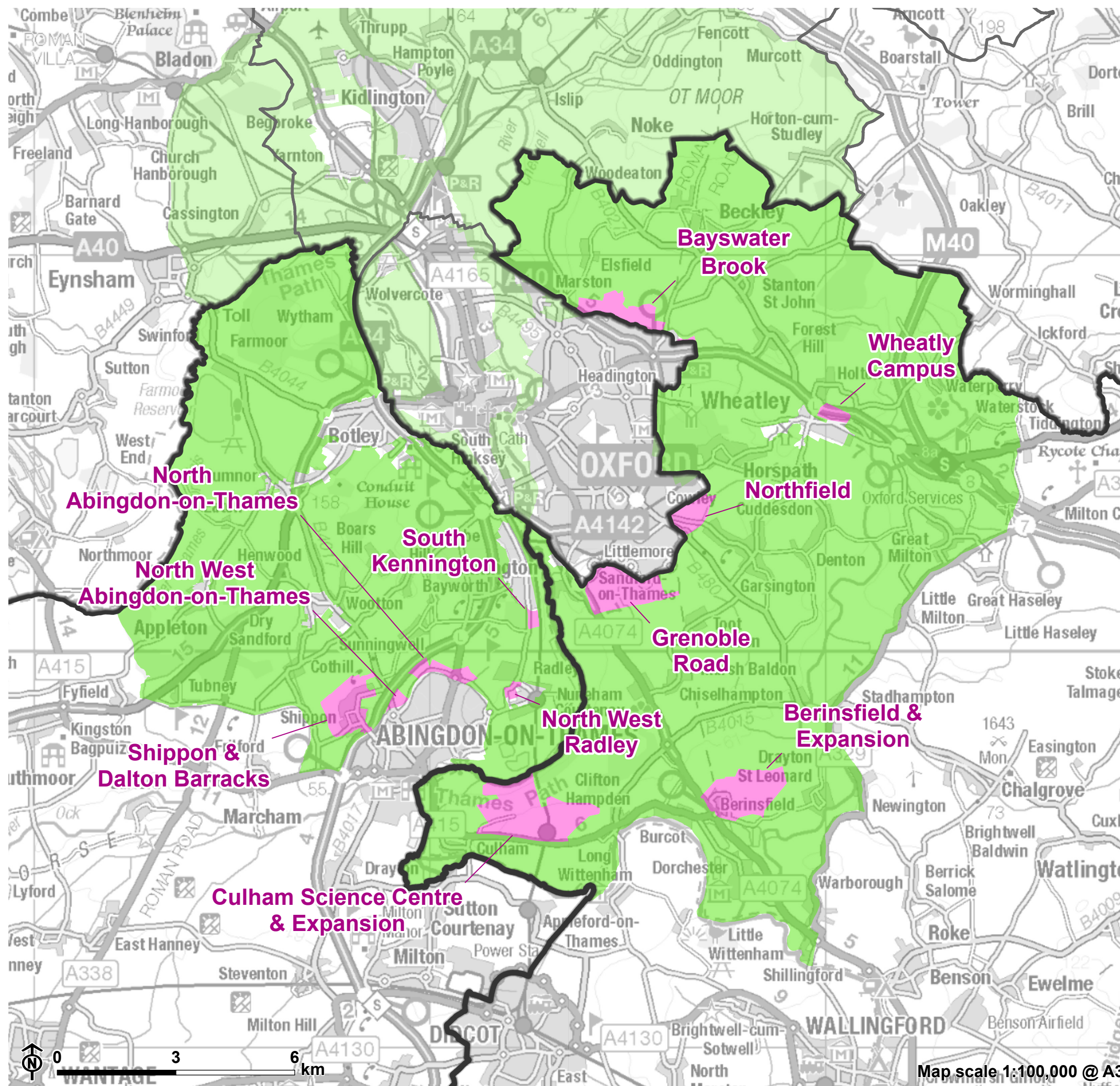


Figure 3.1: Land removed from the Green Belt since 2015



## Inappropriate development in the Green Belt since 2015

**3.9** To update the findings of the Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) it is necessary to review the inappropriate land uses that have been permitted in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse since it was undertaken. The Councils provided LUC with a GIS shapefile marking the location and extent of all inappropriate land uses permitted within the Districts' Green Belt since 2015. This layer has been used to determine whether the openness of the Green Belt and the cumulative urbanising influence of inappropriate development within each parcel has changed enough to affect the contribution of each Green Belt parcel to each Green Belt purpose.

**3.10** While any inappropriate development can be considered to diminish openness, this strategic study focussed on drawing out high-level strategic variations in contribution to the Green Belt purposes and therefore only recognises the influence of notably large pockets of inappropriate development.

**3.11** NPPF (2023) paragraphs 152 and 153 state that 'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances...'. New buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt. There are exceptions to this which are set out in two closed lists. The first is in paragraph 154 which sets out the following exceptions:

- "buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

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- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- limited infilling in villages;
- limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan; and
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
  - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development, or
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”

**3.12** NPPF (2023) paragraph 155 sets out other forms of development that are not inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. These are:

- “mineral extraction;
- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation or for cemeteries or burial grounds); and
- development, including buildings brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**3.13** Appropriate development within the Green Belt cannot, according to case law [**See reference 10**], be considered to have an urbanising influence and

## **Chapter 3**      Green Belt Boundary Changes and Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

therefore harm Green Belt purposes. For the purposes of this study therefore, development deemed to be 'appropriate' within the Green Belt (as defined in the closed lists within paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF (2023)) is not considered to constitute an urban land use, or an urban influence in the countryside. However, what is deemed to be appropriate development in the NPPF (2023) has to be carefully considered, as developments such as the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments are only considered appropriate as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

**3.14** Caution is therefore exercised in the application of what is defined as an appropriate use. It is not possible within a strategic Green Belt study to review each form of development within the Green Belt and ascertain whether it was permitted as appropriate development or not, unless it is clear cut. For example, buildings for agriculture and forestry are deemed to be appropriate development regardless of whether they preserve openness, or conflict with Green Belt purposes in this regard. For other land uses such as outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments, a considered view is taken on the extent to which the proposed land use has affected Green Belt purposes, for example by affecting openness, or encroaching on the perception of countryside i.e. the sense of distinction between the urban area and countryside.

**3.15** The NPPF's (2023) Green Belt policies are supplemented by additional planning practice guidance that sets out some of the factors that can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of Green Belt land. The factors referenced are not presented as an exhaustive list, but rather a summary of some common considerations born out through specific case law judgements. The guidance states openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects. Other circumstances which have the potential to affect judgements on the impact of development on openness include the duration of development and its remediability to the equivalent, or an improved state of, openness, and the degree of activity likely to be generated by development, such as traffic **[See reference 11]**.

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**3.16** In some cases, land on the fringe of an inset settlement, outside of the Green Belt, may not currently be developed. Unless the development of such land is constrained by other factors or designations the assumption is made that it will be developed, and that it therefore cannot be considered 'open'.

**3.17** The consideration of openness does not extend to the consideration of the urbanising influence of development that lies outside of an assessment parcel. This is considered separately, when looking at the relationship between urban and open land.

**3.18** The review of the inappropriate land uses permitted within the Districts' Green Belt since 2015 revealed no new inappropriate development in the Green Belt of sufficient scale, form, density and location to affect the original judgements, in part due to the effectiveness of the NPPF's (2023) very special circumstances test, but also due to the fact that planned large scale inappropriate developments were released from the Green Belt through the adoption of the District's Local Plans.

## Chapter 4

### Updated Study Findings (2024)

**4.1** A total of 10 broad areas and 64 parcels of Green Belt land have been reviewed and redefined in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. A series of maps present the overall results of the assessment for each of the assessed Green Belt purposes (i.e. Purposes 1-4) (**Figures 4.1-4.4**). **Appendix A** contains all the assessment sheets for all the broad areas and parcels. The assessment sheets contain the detailed judgements behind the ratings against each Green Belt purpose including any variations in the performance of a land parcel. It is therefore essential that the detailed commentaries on the parcels (as set out in **Appendix A** are read alongside **Figures 4.1-4.4** and/or **Table 4.1** below.

**4.2 Table 4.1** does not present an aggregation of the parcels' and broad areas' ratings against all the purposes as no weighting was applied to the purposes. The NPPF (2023) does not require all the purposes of Green Belt to be met simultaneously and a High rating against any Green Belt purpose could be sufficient, on its own, to indicate an important contribution. Equally, even if an area of Green Belt scores highly against one or more purposes, the NPPF (2023) does not suggest that a review of its boundaries would not be appropriate, if exceptional circumstances were demonstrated.

**Table 4.1: Assessment ratings**

Unique Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
AP1	Vale of White Horse	N/C	Medium	High	Low
AP2		N/C	Medium	High	N/C
AP3		N/C	Low	High	N/C
AP4		N/C	N/C	High	N/C

Unique Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
AP5		N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
AP6		N/C	N/C	Medium	Low
AT1		N/C	Low	High	N/C
AT2		N/C	Medium	Medium	N/C
AT3		N/C	Low	Low	Low
AT4		N/C	High	High	Medium
AT5		N/C	Low	Medium	Low
AT6		N/C	High	Medium	Low
AT7		N/C	High	Medium	Low
AT8	South Oxfordshire	N/C	Medium	High	Low
BF1		N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF2		N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF3		N/C	N/C	High	Low
BF4		N/C	Medium	Medium	Low
BO1	Vale of White Horse	Medium	Low	Medium	High
BO2		High	High	High	High
BO3		High	High	Medium	Low
BO4		Medium	Medium	High	Low
BO5		High	Low	High	Medium
BO6		Medium	N/C	Low	Medium
BO7		High	Low	High	High
Broad area 2	South Oxfordshire	N/C	Low	High	High
Broad area 3		N/C	N/C	High	Low



Unique Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
Broad area 4		N/C	N/C	High	Low
Broad area 5		N/C	Medium	High	High
Broad area 6		N/C	Low	High	High
Broad area 7		N/C	N/C	High	Low
Broad area 9	Vale of White Horse	N/C	Low	High	High
Broad area 10		N/C	Medium	High	Low
Broad area 11		N/C	N/C	High	Medium
Broad area 12		N/C	Low	High	High
CH1	South Oxfordshire	N/C	High	High	Low
CH2		N/C	Low	High	Low
CH3		N/C	High	High	Low
CH4		N/C	Medium	High	Low
CH5		N/C	Medium	High	Low
CU1	Vale of White Horse	High	High	High	Medium
CU2		N/C	Medium	High	Low
CU3		N/C	Medium	High	Low
KE1		High	Medium	Medium	High
OX3	South Oxfordshire	High	N/C	Medium	Medium
OX8a		High	N/C	High	High
OX8b		High	N/C	High	High

Unique Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
OX9		High	N/C	High	Medium
OX10		High	Medium	High	Medium
OX11		High	Medium	High	High
OX12		High	Low	High	High
OX13		High	High	Medium	Low
OX14		High	Medium	High	Medium
OX15a		High	Low	High	Medium
OX15b		High	Low	High	Medium
OX16		Medium	N/C	Medium	Low
OX17	South Oxfordshire; Vale of White Horse	High	High	Medium	High
OX19	Vale of White Horse	High	High	Medium	High
RA1		High	High	High	Medium
RA2		High	High	High	High
RA3		N/C	Medium	High	Medium
SH1		N/C	High	High	N/C
WH1	South Oxfordshire	N/C	Medium	High	Medium
WH2		N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
WH3		N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
WH4		N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
WH5		N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C
WH6		N/C	Low	High	Low
WH7		N/C	Medium	High	Medium
WH8		N/C	Medium	High	Low

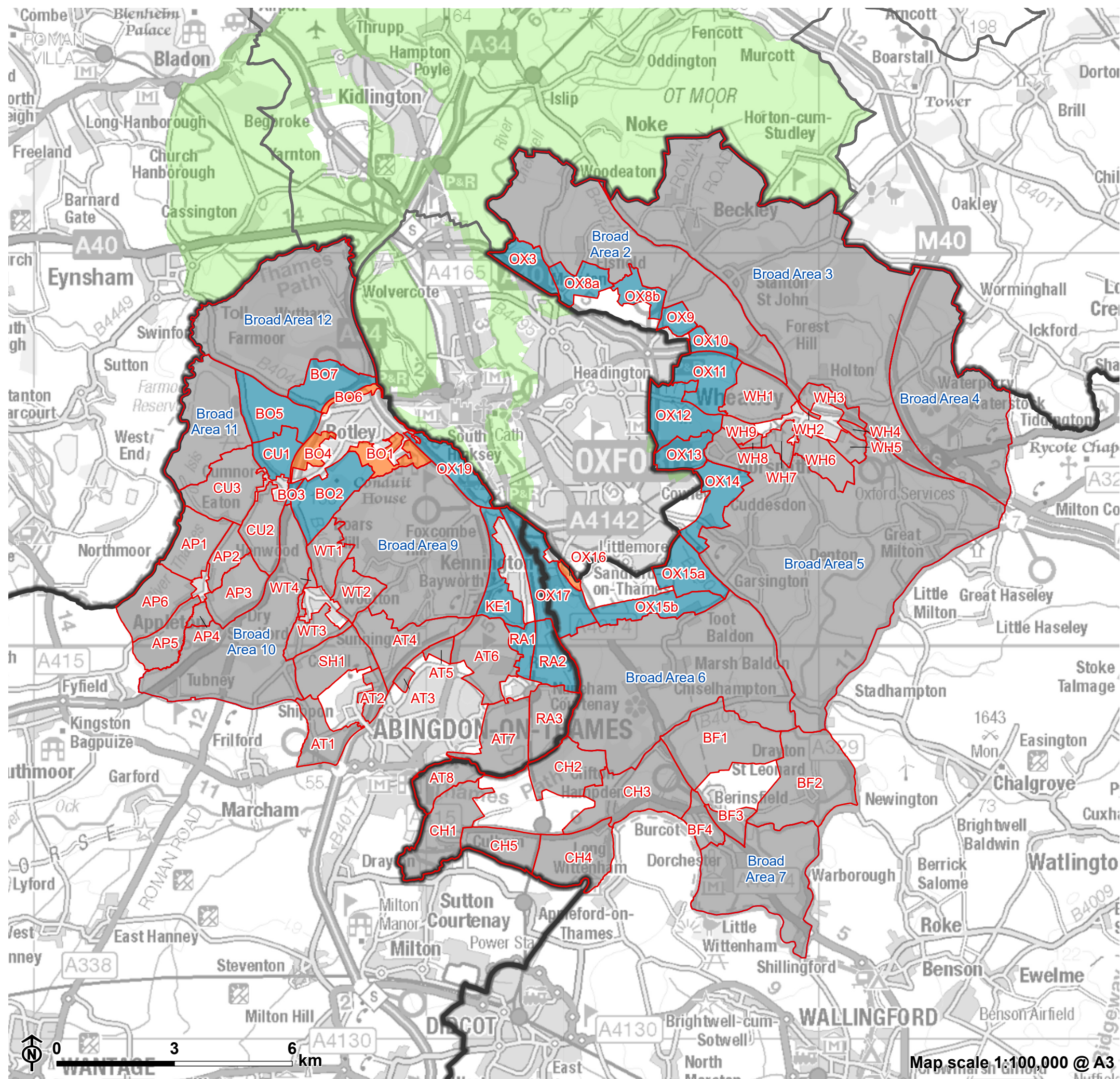
Unique Reference	Local Authority	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
WH9		N/C	High	Medium	Medium
WT1	Vale of White Horse	N/C	Medium	Medium	Medium
WT2		N/C	Low	High	Medium
WT3		N/C	Low	High	N/C
WT4		N/C	Low	High	Low

**4.3** In the absence of clear factors capable of distinguishing the extent to which each Green Belt parcel and broad area delivers against purpose 5, all Green Belt land is considered to contribute equally to purpose 5.

**4.4** References in the detailed assessments to variations of performance within a parcel/ broad area are informative rather than rigorous. No methodology was defined for dealing with such variation and more detailed analysis will be required if the Local Authorities intend to remove areas of land from the Green Belt in future plans.

**4.5 Table 4.2** summarises the assessment findings, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

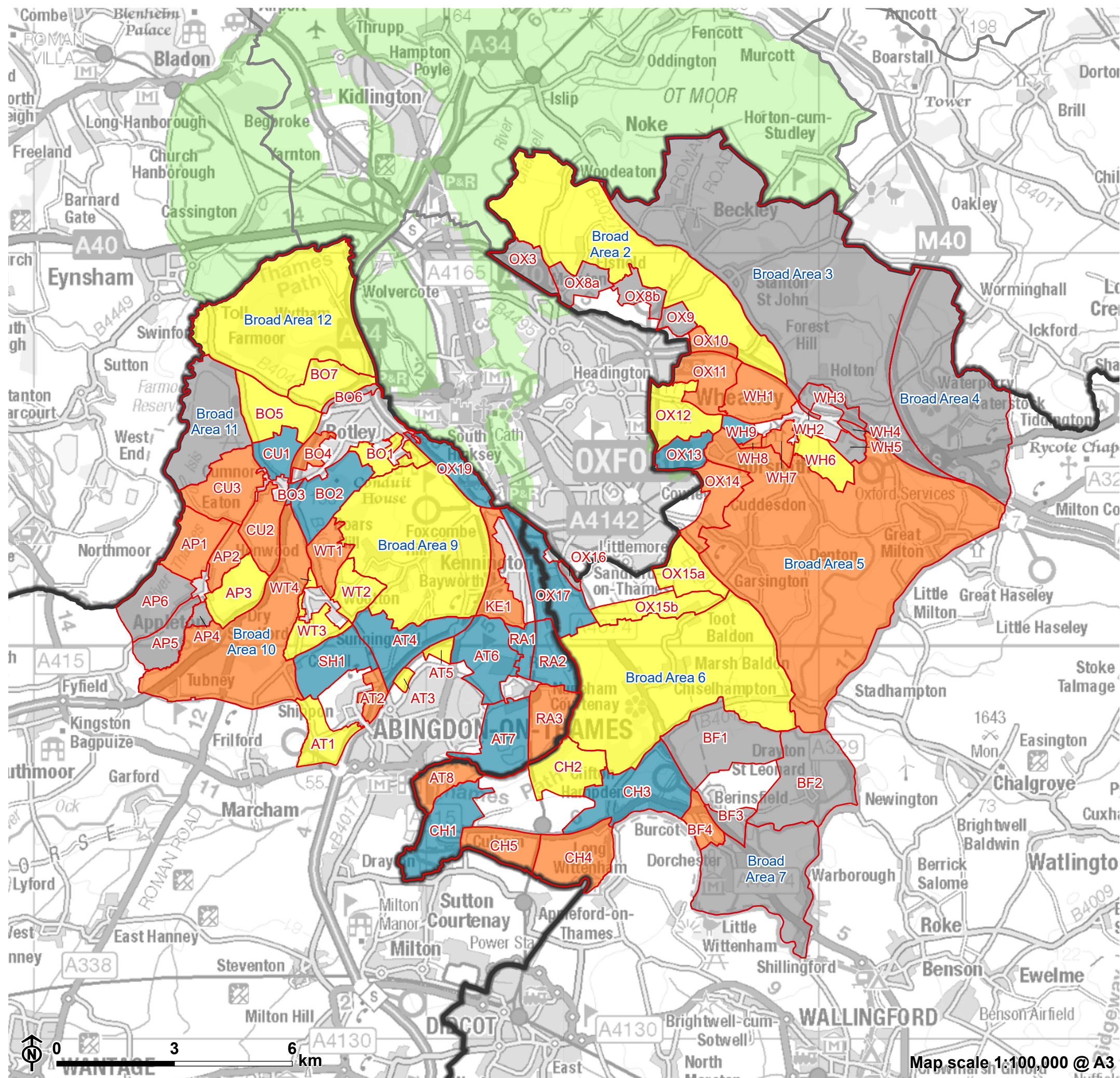




**Figure 4.1: Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

- District boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority
- Green Belt parcel
- Broad Area parcel
- Green Belt
- Contribution rating**
  - High
  - Medium
  - Low
  - No contribution

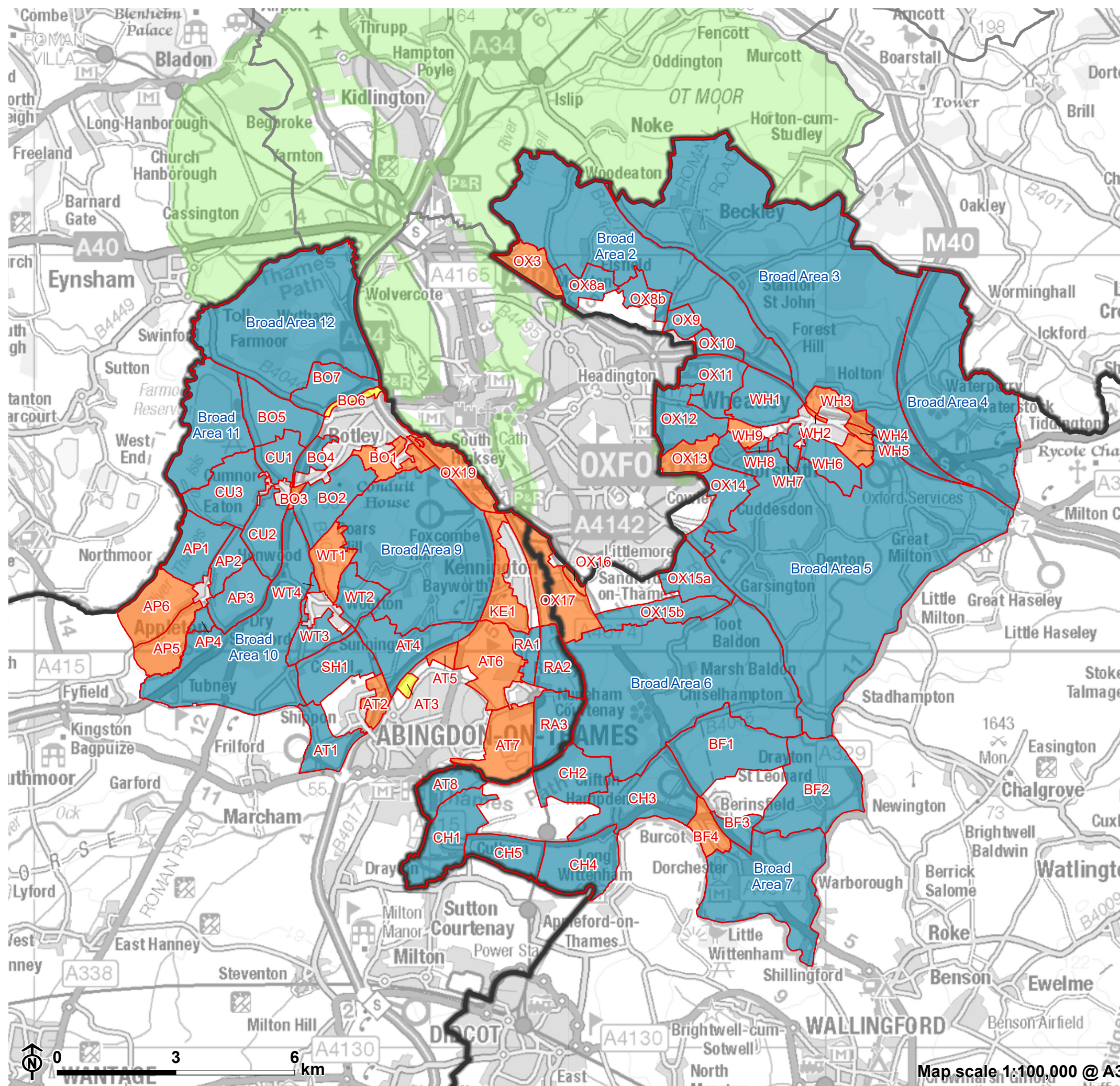




**Figure 4.2: Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- District boundary
  - Neighbouring Local Authority
  - Green Belt parcel
  - Broad Area parcel
  - Green Belt
- Contribution rating**
- High
  - Medium
  - Low
  - No contribution

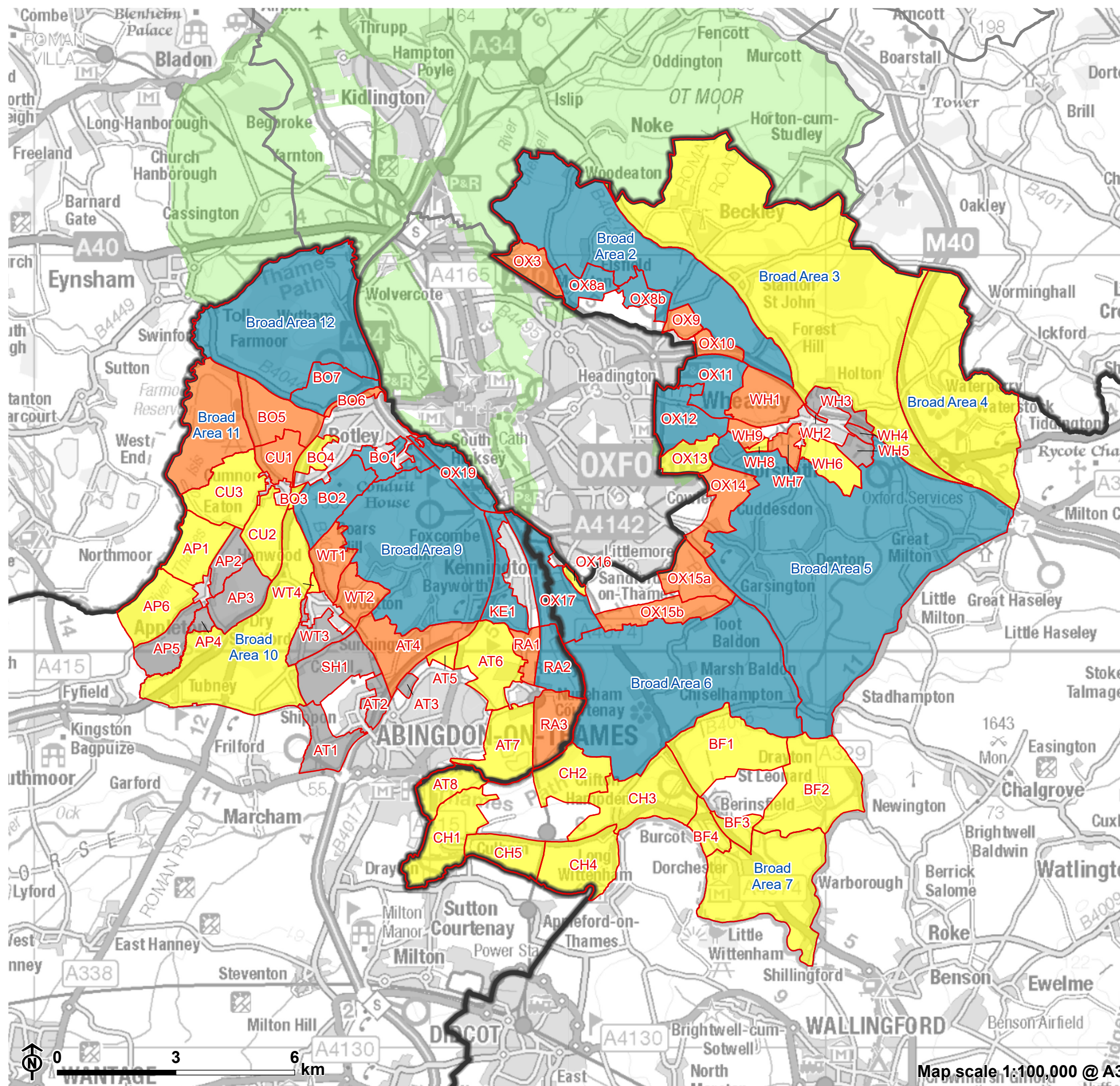




**Figure 4.3: Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- District boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority
- Green Belt parcel
- Broad Area parcel
- Green Belt
- Contribution rating**
  - High
  - Medium
  - Low
  - No contribution





**Figure 4.4: Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

- District boundary
  - Neighbouring Local Authority
  - Green Belt parcel
  - Broad Area parcel
  - Green Belt
- Contribution rating**
- High
  - Medium
  - Low
  - No contribution

**Table 4.2: Summary of Updated Assessment Findings**

Green Belt Purpose	Summary of Findings
<p>1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Only parcels adjacent to the ‘large built up area’ (comprising Oxford, Botley and Kennington) were assessed against this purpose.</li> <li>■ Higher rated parcels are those with strong distinction from the large built-up area by virtue of their openness, strong relationship with the wider countryside and/or the presence of strong consistent features screening urbanising influence. Often these areas are subject to other protective designations and constraints (such as SSSI or floodplain), which also maintain their openness and limit urbanising influence.</li> <li>■ Lower rated parcels are often more contained by the large built-up area and have less distinction from its urbanising influence, either as a result of urban sprawl within the parcel and its effect on openness, a lack of strong consistent features screening urbanising influence and/or the presence of features that retain and separate the parcel from the wider countryside.</li> <li>■ It should be noted that remaining open land in a parcel significantly affected by urban sprawl could be considered more valuable in preventing further development.</li> </ul>
<p>2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Higher rated parcels are found, not surprisingly, in the narrower gaps between settlements considered under Purpose 2.</li> <li>■ Higher ratings are also given in relation to gaps associated with smaller settlements between larger settlements defined as neighbouring towns,</li> </ul>



Green Belt Purpose	Summary of Findings
	<p>such as settlements between Oxford and Wheatley where the gaps either side of the smaller settlements are considered to make an important contribution to the overall perception of the Oxford-Wheatley gap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parcels on the ‘outer side’ of the neighbouring towns tend to have a lower rating.</li> </ul>
<p>3 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All parcels contribute to this purpose to a greater or lesser extent.</li> <li>■ Higher rated parcels and broad areas are generally further away from the larger settlements, where there is a stronger sense of openness and countryside character. All broad areas make a high contribution to this purpose for this reason.</li> <li>■ It is noted that the Green Belt has helped to maintain the sense of openness and rural character of the ‘washed over’, rural settlements.</li> <li>■ Lower rated parcels contain more inappropriate urbanising influences both within and potentially adjacent to the parcel and/or have less of a relationship with the wider countryside.</li> </ul>
<p>4 - To preserve the setting and special character of Oxford</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Smaller parcels close to the urban area, from which there are views into and out of the City are generally rated highly.</li> <li>■ Smaller parcels on the ‘outer side’ of the surrounding towns and which tend to have weaker physical or visual links to the historic core of Oxford tend to rate lower.</li> <li>■ Similarly, broad areas that are within the ‘zone of theoretical visibility’ and /or form part of the</li> </ul>

Green Belt Purpose	Summary of Findings
	physical setting of the City are generally rated highly. Broad areas further away from the City, where the physical or visual connection is more limited, achieve lower ratings.

**4.6** The application of the agreed methodology results in a helpful and informative strategic overview of the performance of the Oxford Green Belt, on a parcel by parcel or broad area basis, against the purposes defined in the NPPF (2023). Variations in performance against particular criteria within individual parcels are noted in the assessment text (**Appendix A**). This cannot be reflected in single strategic parcel and broad area ratings, and will need to be considered when interpreting the study findings. The parcel boundaries used in this study are not intended to reflect potential development areas and the study cannot be used in isolation to justify the allocation of Green Belt land for development. Consideration must first be given to the impact of releasing specific site areas to the designation.

## Chapter 5

# Designating New Green Belt Land

**5.1** NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 emphasises that “the general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established” and “new Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions”. The NPPF (2023) also states that when proposing new Green Belt, local planning authorities must through strategic policy:

- demonstrate why alternative policies would not be adequate;
- set out the major change in circumstances to make the designation necessary;
- communicate the consequences for sustainable development; and,
- highlight the consistency of the new designation with neighbouring plan areas and the other objectives of the NPPF (2023).

**5.2** NPPF (2023) paragraphs 144 and 145 state that “proposals for new Green Belts should be set out in strategic policies’ but their detailed boundaries may be defined ‘through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans”.

**5.3** The necessary evidence to justify a new Green Belt must therefore be gathered early in the local plan-making process alongside the definition of the relevant principles of strategic planning policy, with detailed boundary definition being done later in the local plan-making process during the definition of more detailed local plan policy, or after the adoption of local plans through the definition of new neighbourhood plans in conformity with the adopted local plan.

**5.4** NPPF (2023) paragraph 17 states that “strategic policies can be produced in different ways, depending on the issues and opportunities facing each area. They can be contained in:

- joint or individual local plans, produced by authorities working together or independently (and which may also contain non-strategic policies); and/or
- a spatial development strategy produced by an elected Mayor or combined authority, where plan-making powers have been conferred.”

**5.5** The former route of individual plans is currently open to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Districts Councils, who are currently embarked on the preparation of a joint local plan.

**5.6** There is no nationally prescribed order of considerations or detailed guidance on how to shape and justify the designation of a new Green Belt. The following section considers the NPPF (2023) requirements relevant to designating a new Green Belt and offers some thoughts on how each might be delivered by the District Councils.

## Meeting development needs beyond the plan period

**5.7** NPPF (2023) Paragraph 22 states “strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure. Where larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take into account the likely timescale for delivery.” This long-term vision is likely to be an important component of a new Green Belt strategic policy, given that NPPF Paragraph 144 states that “New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions”. It therefore stands to reason that a new Green Belt strategic policy should be compatible with meeting these needs over the plan period and beyond, i.e. that the new Green Belt would not restrict long term future growth needs, but would in fact help shape a planned sustainable pattern of

development over the long term. Knowing how much growth is likely to be required in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse beyond the plan period, and where it is likely to go in broad terms, is therefore an important early consideration. The Councils have started this process. Table 5.1 illustrates committed development in and around Didcot over the past five years and beyond.

**Table 5.1: Planned development in and around Didcot**

Site	Status	Total Homes	2019 /24	2024 /29	2029/ 34	2034 /39	2039 /44	2044 /50	2050>
Didcot North East	Construction	2316	544	1071	701				
Didcot Gateway	Not started	144		144					
Ladygrove East	Not started	750		125	250	250	125		
Orchard Centre Phase 2	Not started	100			81	19			
Vauxhall Barracks	Not started	300				81	219		
Richards House	Construction	14	14						
Land at Lady Grove	Not started	150		150					
Georgetown Filling Station	Construction	28		28					
Valley Park	Not Started	4254		1356	1134	450	450	540	324
North West Valley Park	Not Started	800			171	570	59		

**5.8** Supply exceeds demands in both Districts overall by the end of the forthcoming Plan period (up to 2041). Looking further ahead, the Districts should consider where needs beyond the forthcoming plan period (up to 2041) will likely be met and explore how new Green Belt land might help play a role in distributing and shaping future settlements and patterns of growth over the longer term, beyond 2041.

**5.9** This will require cooperation with neighbouring planning authorities in the Oxford Green Belt to confirm that any new Green Belt will not inhibit the ability of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse to continue to work with neighbouring authorities' to meet their evidenced unmet needs, if any exists at that time.

### **Duty to Cooperate – demonstrating the consistency of a Green Belt policy with strategic policies in adjoining authorities**

**5.10** NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 states that proposals for new Green Belts must demonstrate that the Green Belt is consistent with the strategic policies of adjoining authorities.

**5.11** NPPF (2023) paragraph 27 states that “strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these”. Assuming any new Green Belt land would be as an extension to the existing Green Belt, new Green Belt land has the potential to have cross-boundary implications for wider Oxfordshire authorities, depending on the specifics of the proposal. Consideration should therefore be given to having discussions about the potential of new Green Belt additions and subsequently forming statements of common ground with these neighbours,

and potentially further afield depending on the extent of the extensions being considered.

## **Demonstrate the necessity for new Green Belt**

**5.12** NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 states that “the general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established”, despite the pressure for growth across the country. Therefore, the overall growth the Districts have received over the last 60 years, including the recent allocation of new garden settlements, is not enough in isolation to necessitate the designation of more Green Belt land, nor is it useful to compare the extent and scale of this growth with other parts of the country that have more Green Belt land.

**5.13** NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 also states that proposals for new Green Belt land must demonstrate the necessity for it, including any major changes in circumstances that necessitate the exceptional measure, such as a significant change in the pattern of development (both existing or planned) at and around the Green Belt’s edge since the adoption of the Districts’ current Local Plans.

**5.14** The updated assessment of the performance of Green Belt land within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse has established that vast majority of the Districts’ Green Belt land continues to make a strong contribution to the national Green Belt purposes. Recent releases of Green Belt land across the Oxford Green Belt have demonstrated the necessary exceptional circumstances and have not significantly impacted the ability of the remaining Green Belt to fulfil the purposes. The designation of new Green Belt land is therefore unlikely to significantly improve the function of the Oxford Green Belt.

**5.15** The necessity for a new Green Belt cannot be demonstrated until it is demonstrated that the Districts can meet their own development needs in the long term. The section titled ‘Meeting development needs beyond the plan period’ above sets out the Districts’ current evidence and outlines how this

might be supplemented. Once this has been robustly evidenced, the necessity to protect undesignated open countryside against additional development through the designation of more Green Belt land can be seriously considered alongside the other tests set out in NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 (discussed in further detail below).

**5.16** Given how tightly drawn the Green Belt boundary is to the urban edge of Oxford the only locations where the Oxford Green Belt could be significantly extended in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are at its outer edge. Assuming future development needs and new Green Belt land could both be accommodated (see sections above outlining the current evidence on development needs vs supply) the Oxford Green Belt could be extended in any direction in order to shape long term sustainable patterns development. Notable future patterns of development that might necessitate significant extensions to the Green Belt might include:

- The allocation of additional development in between Abingdon-on-Thames, Drayton, Sutton Courtenay and Didcot. Southern extensions to the Oxford Green Belt in this area would contribute to preventing the neighbouring towns of Abingdon-on-Thames and Didcot from merging in the long term (Purpose 2).
- The creation of new large settlements (towns) and/or the significant expansion of smaller settlements close to the outer edge of the Green Belt and defined Green Belt towns (Abingdon-on-Thames, Appleton, Berinsfield, Culham Science Centre and Shippon/Dalton Barracks) such that the new/expanded settlements reach a scale and status as to be appropriately defined as new neighbouring Green Belt towns. Smaller existing settlements include Drayton, Marcham, Long Wittenham, Steventon or Sutton Courtenay.
- The significant expansion and merging of Abingdon-on-Thames and Didcot to create a new large built-up area similar in scale to the city of Oxford. A southern extension to the Oxford Green Belt that surrounded the new large built-up area would check its unrestricted sprawl (Purpose 1).



**5.17** The exact location and contribution of any new Green Belt land under each of the above scenarios cannot be established until the Districts have identified their preferred sustainable pattern of development over the long term.

**5.18** The above scenarios are unlikely to affect the setting and special character of historic Oxford (Purpose 4) due to the significant distance and separating/screening features between them. Any new Green Belt, regardless of its location and scale, would contribute to safeguarding the newly designated countryside from encroachment (Purpose 3) and assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land (Purpose 5), so contribution to these Green Belt purposes is not considered to be sufficient justify new Green Belt in a specific location, in isolation.

## Demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate

**5.19** NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 states that proposals for new Green Belts must demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate.

**5.20** South Oxfordshire District Council has local planning policies related to the protection of the countryside/open land in the currently adopted Local Plan (South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, [\[See reference 12\]](#)) as follows:

- Policy ENV1: Landscape and Countryside – The policy protects South Oxfordshire’s valued landscapes, including Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs now called National Landscapes), from harmful development, with only development that would conserve and enhance character being permitted. The policy makes a direct contribution to Green Belt purposes through maintaining the openness of the countryside that could be impacted by harmful sprawl and encroachment.

- Policy STRAT3: Didcot Garden Town – requires for proposals within the Didcot Masterplan Area to demonstrate how they will positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles, which include maintaining distinction with surrounding towns and villages, respecting and protecting their rural character and setting. This is developed further through the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan [\[See reference 13\]](#) which identifies broad locations for the formal definition of green gaps and potential woodland buffers to the north of the garden town towards Abingdon, Culham, Long Whittenham and Thames and south towards Harwell and East and West Hagbourne.

**5.21** Vale of White Horse District Council has local planning policies related to the protection of the countryside/open land in the currently adopted Local Plan (Local Plan 2031 Part 1; Local Plan 2031 Part 2 [\[See reference 14\]](#)) as follows:

- Development Policy 29 – The policy requires development proposals to demonstrate that physical and visual separation is maintained between settlements. The policy contributes to preventing coalescence of settlements, as set out in Green Belt Purpose 2.
- Core Policy 44 – The policy requires that distinctive features of the District's landscape will be protected from harmful development and, where possible, enhanced. Development proposals should seek to integrate into the landscape character and/or townscape of the area and high priority is given to the conservation and enhancement of the North Wessex Downs AONB (now called the North Wessex Downs National Landscape). The policy contributes to maintaining the openness of countryside and preserving its special character, which directly fulfils Green Belt purposes.

**5.22** Furthermore, South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy STRAT3: Didcot Garden Town and Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 Core Policy 16b: Didcot Garden Town require proposals within the Didcot Masterplan Area to demonstrate how they will positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles, which include maintaining distinction with surrounding towns and villages, respecting and protecting their rural character

and setting. This was informed by the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan [See reference 15] which identifies broad locations for the formal definition of green gaps and potential woodland buffers to the north of the garden town towards Abingdon, Culham, Long Whittenham and Thames and south towards Harwell and East and West Hagbourne. Since the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan in 2017, Neighbourhood Plans within the vicinity and elsewhere within the Districts have subsequently defined or are in the process of defining Green Gap/Green Corridor policies through the adoption and review of Neighbourhood Plans. Collectively, this work makes a direct contribution to the Green Belt purposes through the prevention of the sprawl of Didcot, its encroachment into the surrounding countryside and merging with surrounding settlements, including neighbouring towns.

**5.23** South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are currently working on a Joint Local Plan for up to 2041, which will include policies related to the protection of countryside and open land.

**5.24** Together these local planning policies directly fulfil the national Green Belt purposes. Other local planning policies protecting other environmental sensitivities such as landscape character, agricultural land, ecology and the historic environment help to maintain the openness of the countryside and thus indirectly contribute to the national Green Belt purposes too.

**5.25** It is likely too early to tell whether the Districts' recently adopted local planning policies have generally been successful or not, i.e. whether the vast majority of allocated and permitted windfall development has been in conformity with the District's adopted spatial strategy and associated local planning policies, and how made Neighbourhood Plans expand upon them. Evidence could be gathered to determine the success/inadequacy of existing relevant local planning policy as part of the Districts' Local Plan annual monitoring processes. It is however considered that Green Belt policy represents a more permanent designation, providing longer term protection, compared to local policies which can be changed in every new Local Plan.

**5.26** In preparing the Joint Local Plan, it is assumed that the Councils will consider consolidating the existing relevant local planning policies summarised above into a single or suite of strategic planning policies. Such an approach would likely be much easier to define and justify compared to new Green Belt and is therefore the primary alternative that would need to be ruled out prior to the pursuit of an extension to the Oxford Green Belt. The following subheadings explore the most common local policy alternatives the Districts could consider as reasonable alternatives through the Sustainability Appraisal of the Joint Local Plan.

### Area of separation policies and designations

**5.27** Consideration could be given to consolidating all existing areas of separation, settlement gap and countryside gap policies in the adopted Local Plans under a single strategic Joint Local Plan policy. This could include similar policies in made neighbourhood plans or not, and/or facilitate or prohibit the designation of future areas under specific local circumstances. As part of this consolidation process, consideration could be given to designating new or expanding some of the existing areas of separation.

**5.28** Areas of separation designations protect gaps between neighbouring settlements to protect the individual settlements' identities and/or the open countryside that lies between them. Unlike Green Belt policy, these settlements do not necessarily have to be recognised as towns.

**5.29** Areas of separation are reasonably easy to implement as long as the protected characteristics of each defined gap are clearly communicated in policy. However, as primarily protectionist policies designed to limit growth, they generally do not conserve and enhance the other benefits of open countryside, such as their landscape and ecological assets, they would also do little protect wider areas of open countryside not located within sensitive gaps.

## Landscape policies and designations

**5.30** Consideration could be given to consolidating landscape policies and areas in need of protection under a single strategic Joint Local Plan policy. This could include the designation of specific areas of open countryside.

**5.31** Landscape designations focus on the protection of recognised landscape qualities and sensitivities supported by evidence. They go a step further than the common strategy to prohibit development in the open countryside by defining specific areas of sensitivity and spelling out measures to ensure their conservation and enhancement.

**5.32** Much like areas of separation they are largely protectionist generally offering less scope to conserve and enhance the other values of open countryside, such as their ecological assets. However, unlike areas of separation, they have greater potential to cover larger areas of the Districts, including sensitive gaps between settlements. Local landscape policies would likely not prohibit development in the open countryside if such development could demonstrate minimal impacts on its protected characteristics and sensitivities.

## Regional or country parks

**5.33** Consideration could be given to the creation of new regional or country parks in between but in close proximity to settlements. As proactive land uses, parks offer greater scope to deliver multiple functions and benefits for local communities and wildlife; however, securing the land and finding funding for their long term maintenance would be a significant undertaking. Furthermore, such parks would likely only prohibit some development within their boundaries, and may in fact encourage development immediately beyond their boundaries.

**5.34** Country parks tend to be larger than 10 hectares and have a recreation focus and are generally designated to be accessible to urban populations, redirecting them away from sensitive environments.

**5.35** Regional parks are much larger than country parks (over 400 hectares) often serving a population greater than a single authority area, and often extending across multiple local authority boundaries. Regional parks provide a more integrated, landscape-scale policy intervention than country parks, generally serving more needs – recreation, landscape, nature recovery and climate change adaptation – on a more ambitious scale.

## Green and blue infrastructure policies and designations

**5.36** Consideration could be given identifying specific areas of green and blue infrastructure for protection and enhancement coupled with building standards to reinforce and expand them over time. Funding for implementation and maintenance over the long term could be made available through developer contributions towards open space and biodiversity net gain (where these cannot be provided on site).

**5.37** The Districts have a multifunctional network of urban and rural green and blue spaces capable of delivering a wide range of benefits for local communities and wildlife. Policies and designations that protect and encourage their enhancement could go a significant way towards fulfilling Green Belt purposes, albeit indirectly. Such policies and designations vary significantly in scope and detail, from broad strategies and the identification of opportunity areas to standards for new development or specific detailed initiatives with clear budgets and deliverables.

**5.38** Given the multifunctional nature and broad extent of green and blue infrastructure, policies that maintain, connect and enhance it offer greater scope to proactively enhance the open countryside over a wide area. However, their

breadth and extent can also be seen as their greatest limitation given they generally have to be more strategic and general, and require long term funding streams to realise their full potential. Furthermore, they would likely not prohibit development in the open countryside if such development could demonstrate it was compatible and could deliver green and blue infrastructure enhancements.

# Demonstrate how the Green Belt would meet the objectives of the NPPF (2023)

**5.39** NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 states that proposals for new Green Belts must set out what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development and demonstrate how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the NPPF (2023). NPPF (2023) paragraph 8 sets out the overarching objectives of the framework for achieving sustainable development, which include:

- Sufficient land for growth/improved productivity, homes for present and future and infrastructure.
- Accessible services and open spaces that meet current and future needs.
- Protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.
- Making effective use of land and natural resources.
- Improving biodiversity.
- Minimising waste and pollution.
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change.

**5.40** It would be necessary to demonstrate that the new Green Belt would not undermine the ability of the District Councils to deliver any of these objectives. To do this there would need to be a clear understanding of where future growth would be located in the long term, how the new Green Belt would help shape this sustainable pattern of development and deliver the conservation and



enhancement of the open countryside's assets. The Local Plan evidence base and sustainability appraisal would be key to demonstrating this.

## Defining detailed Green Belt boundaries

**5.41** NPPF (2023) paragraph 145 states that once “a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans”.

**5.42** When defining Green Belt boundaries NPPF (2023) paragraph 148 states local planning authorities should:

- demonstrate consistency with local plan strategy, most notably achieving sustainable development;
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- safeguard enough non-Green Belt land to meet development needs beyond the plan period;
- demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and
- define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

**5.43** The most likely scenario to justify the creation of new Green Belt is when planning for large new settlements in the countryside. Should new settlements be planned in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse on the edge of the existing Green Belt, which has not been justified in the current emerging Joint Local Plan, an assessment of likely contribution to the five Green Belt purposes would be needed to inform judgements on the most appropriate extent of an extension to the Green Belt around such settlements, including consideration of appropriate readily recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundaries.

**5.44** South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils need not define detailed Green Belt boundaries in the Joint Local Plan. As long as the extent of the new Green Belt land is sufficiently well established to clearly understand the implications of its designation and meet the tests set out in NPPF (2023) paragraph 144, the drawing of detailed boundaries can be left until the boundaries of relevant non-strategic site allocations and associated development management designations are finalised in neighbourhood plans.

### Relevant case law

**5.45** The following case law relates to cases in which local authorities have proposed extensions to existing Green Belts. These cases supplement national policy by drawing attention to some additional considerations in making a robust case for designating new Green Belt land.

### Carpets of Worth Ltd v Wyre Forest DC (1991)

**5.46** The Court of Appeal considered the correct approach to paragraph 3(a) of Circular 14/84: “once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved as part of the structure plan for an area it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. ...Similarly detailed green belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans...should be altered only exceptionally’. Purchas LJ observed at 345-346 that ‘the zoning of any particular area as a Green Belt sterilises that area except for [a] limited category of purposes...[and was therefore a]...kind of planning blight...’, continuing: “as it directly prejudices landowners in the otherwise proper development of their land an extension to the Green Belt should not be brought into effect unless it can be justified directly by those purposes for which the Green Belt is designed. There must therefore be an inhibition in extending a Green Belt so as to avoid sterilising unnecessarily neighbouring land...just as much as reductions in the boundaries of the Green Belt, which would prejudice the purposes of that Green Belt, must also only be made in exceptional circumstances”.

**5.47** This case law is helpful in highlighting that a case for designating new Green Belt land is helped by establishing the likely contribution new Green Belt land would make to the five purposes of national Green Belt policy.

## COPAS v RB Windsor and Maidenhead [2001]

**5.48** The Court of Appeal considered the updated test under PPG 2, paragraph 2.7: “where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the structure plan have been approved or other exceptional circumstances exist, which necessitate such a revision”. Simon Brown LJ agreed that the test under paragraph 2.7 was “very stringent” and further observed “...where the revision proposed is to increase the Green Belt [this] cannot be adjudged to arise unless some fundamental assumption which caused the land initially to be excluded from the Green Belt is thereafter clearly and permanently falsified by a later event. Only then could the continuing exclusion of the land from the Green Belt properly be characterised as ‘an incongruous anomaly’” [\[See reference 16\]](#).

**5.49** This case law is in general conformity with NPPF (2023) paragraph 144 which states the need to demonstrate the necessity for a new Green Belt, including any major changes in circumstances that necessitate the exceptional measure (if they exist). The case law confirms that the evidential threshold for increasing the extent of or designating a new Green Belt is a high one.

## Gallagher v Solihull MBC [2014]

**5.50** This case law confirms that Carpets of Worth and COPAS remain applicable under the NPPF (2012), stating: “...the fact that a particular site within a council’s area happens not to be suitable for housing development cannot be said without more to constitute an exceptional circumstance, justifying an alteration of the Green Belt by the allocation to it of the site in question.” Whether development would be permitted on the sites concerned in this case, were they to remain outside the Green Belt, would depend upon the

Council's assessment of the merits of any planning application put forward. Moreover it is to my mind significant that in essence the merits or demerits of the possible use of these sites for housing have not apparently changed since 2005 when the same Inspector took a view diametrically opposed to his conclusion at paragraph 137: in March 2005 he had clearly concluded that the sites did not need to go into the Green Belt (and in the Solihull Urban Development Plan of 2006 they were earmarked for review for housing). Yet at paragraph 137 of his current Report the Inspector makes no reference to his earlier opinion. For good measure, the Solihull Local Plan itself (paragraph 11.6.6, which I have read) plainly does not return the sites to the Green Belt for a Green Belt reason [\[See reference 17\]](#).

**5.51** This case highlights that preparing a new local plan is not, of itself, an exceptional circumstance justifying alteration to a Green Belt boundary. In essence, in order to demonstrate exceptional circumstances for adding land to an existing Green Belt there needs to be a fundamental change in circumstances since the time when the extent of the Green Belt was established previously and the land in question was not included in the Green Belt. Exceptional circumstances are required for any revisions to Green Belt boundaries, regardless of the appropriateness of land for development.

## Conclusions

**5.52** The Districts have yet to gather all the necessary evidence to determine whether an exceptional circumstances case can be made for the designation of new Green Belt land in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. In order to do so, it is recommended that the Districts continue to work on the following:

1. Finalise development needs over the forthcoming plan period, which is already well advanced.
2. Define and justify a sustainable spatial strategy for the development over the forthcoming plan period, again which is well advanced.

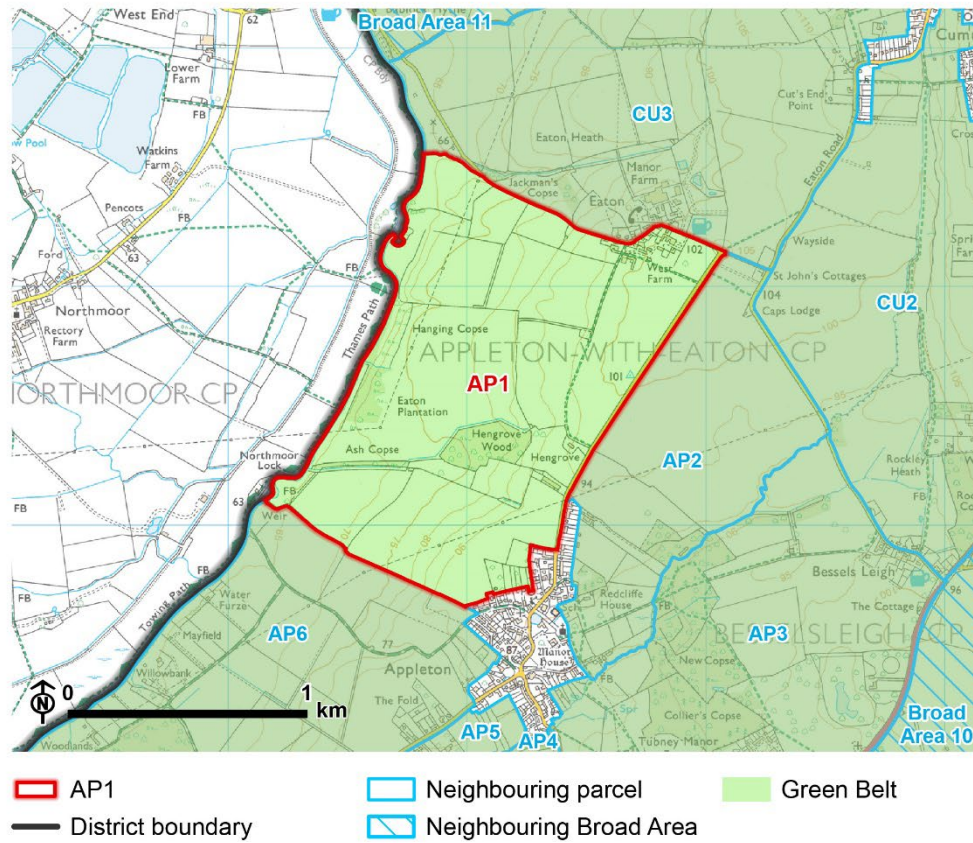
3. Consider whether the preferred sustainable pattern of development may necessitate the designation of new Green Belt to shape sustainable development over the longer term, i.e. it represents a fundamental change in circumstances since the Green Belt boundaries were last revised (see some potential scenarios in paragraph 5.16).
4. If the answer to 3 is yes, appraise the new Green Belt policy alongside local reasonable alternatives to explore why the latter would not be adequate, both in isolation and in combination.
5. In the absence of any long term certainty with regards to the developments needs beyond the forthcoming plan period and in neighbouring authority areas, work to demonstrate that the new Green Belt boundary would not inhibit the ability for the Districts and neighbours to meet likely development needs over the longer term (beyond 2041).
6. Define the new Green Belt boundary or set out how it will be defined through subsequent plan-making processes.

**5.53** Recommendations as to the exact location and contribution of any new Green Belt land cannot be established until the Districts have identified their preferred sustainable pattern of development over the long term. Paragraph 5.16 outlines some potential development/new Green Belt scenarios that could be explored by the Districts as part of the definition and appraisal of a preferred spatial strategy and its reasonable alternatives.

## **Appendix A**

### Parcel and broad area assessment reports

# Parcel AP1





## Parcel AP1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Appleton which is not considered to be a large built-up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The south eastern corner of the parcel borders Appleton and the northern boundary passes through the small village of Eaton, which in turn is in relatively close proximity to Cumnor. Appleton and Cumnor are considered as settlements under Purpose 2 for this study. The parcel is an area of mostly arable land with some strong hedgerows and woodland blocks, but the size of the arable fields in the east of the parcel and the falling topography towards the River Thames to the west give it an open character. Close to Appleton, smaller pastures with strong tree cover predominate. The proximity of Cumnor and Appleton means that any encroachment along Eaton Road from Eaton, which sits midway between Appleton and Cumnor, could result in a perceived reduction of the rural settlement gap. Loss of openness in the immediate vicinity of Appleton, to the south of Hengrove, would have less impact in this respect and the western part of the parcel also plays less of a role in terms of settlement separation.

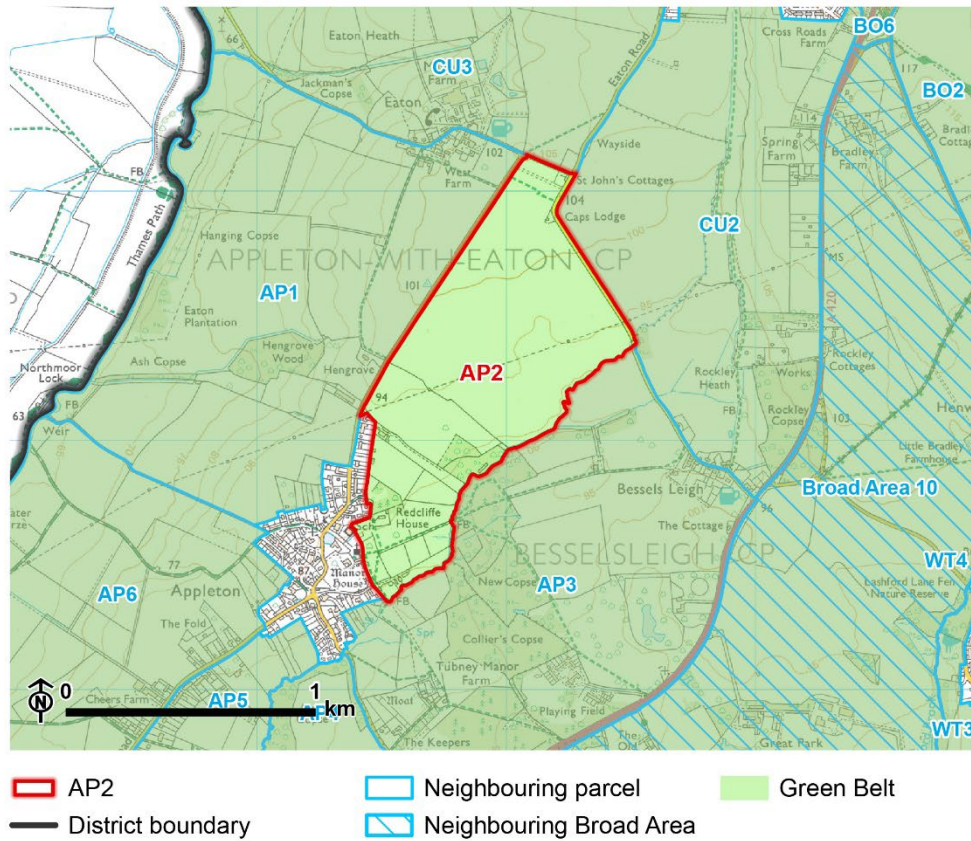
**Purpose 3 – To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of large regular-shaped agricultural fields on the eastern side of the River Thames. Sloping down the River Thames at the western edge of the parcel the open fields have excellent views of the wider countryside to the north west, west and south west. Two lines of pylons run through the parcel. The parcel contains two farms – one off Eaton Road at the eastern edge of the parcel and the other within the small village of Eaton in the north eastern corner of the parcel. In addition to the farm in Eaton, the parcel also contains a number of detached dwellings within the village. However, due to its size and the rural character of the buildings, these developments are not considered to be urbanising influences on the countryside within the Green Belt.

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

- The slope is west-facing, away from Oxford, and higher ground prevents any visual relationship. The continuity of the rural approach into the heart of Oxford along the Thames Valley does play a role in Oxford's special character, but the meandering form of the river valley means that this parcel is some distance from the City along that route.

## Parcel AP2



## Parcel AP2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1a	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	N/C

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Appleton which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The south western corner of the parcel borders Appleton and the northern boundary is adjacent to Eaton, which in turn is in close proximity to Cumnor. Other than an area of small pasture fields alongside Cumnor, the parcel consists of large arable fields with a very open character, on topography which gently falls away to the southeast. Appleton is fairly well screened from view on approach from the north, but the proximity of the settlement to Cumnor means that any loss of openness along Eaton Road could result in a perceived reduction of the rural settlement gap. The fields in the immediate vicinity of Appleton, to the east of the village and the eastern part of the parcel, play less of a role in settlement separation.

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

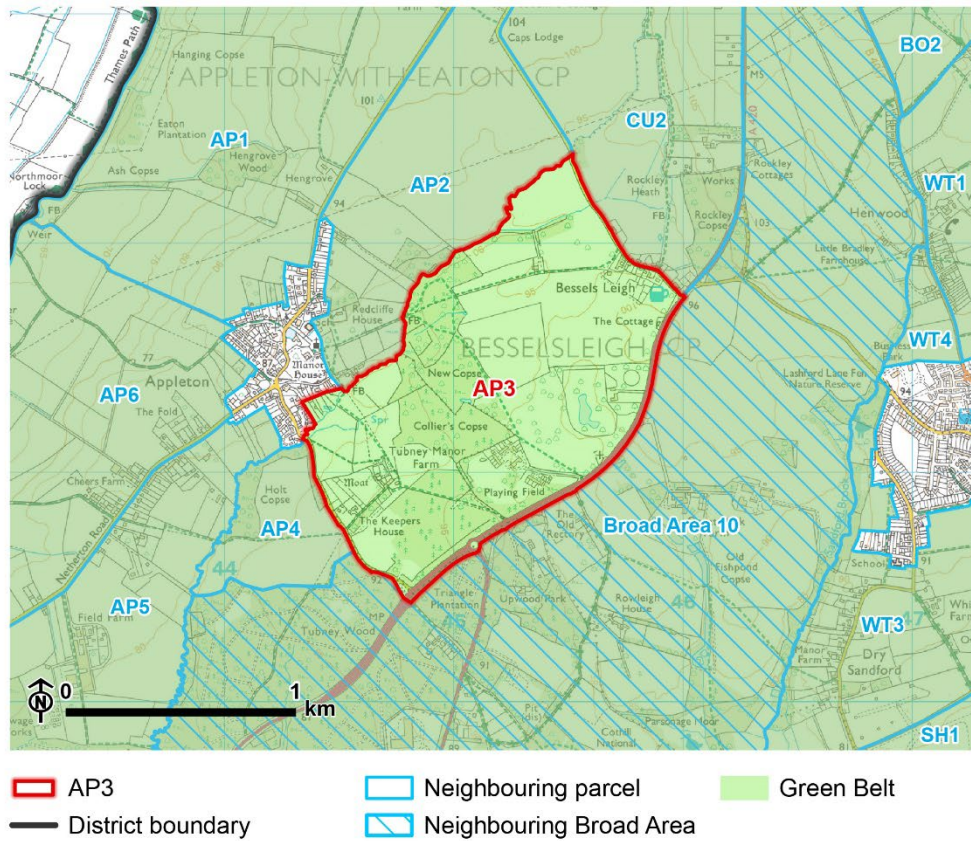
- The parcel is predominantly made-up of agricultural fields, with a very large regular-shaped and open field in the north and centre of the parcel and small irregular-shaped fields lined by trees adjacent to the edge of

Appleton in the south of the parcel. There is a small pocket of allotments adjacent to the small village of Eaton at the northern tip of the parcel. The countryside is very open in the large field which makes-up the majority of the Green Belt parcel; views are also provided to the surrounding countryside particularly north and south along Eaton Road, between Appleton and Cumnor. The parcel contains a farm, stables and a few isolated dwellings, including a very small terrace at the northern tip of the parcel. The nature and disparate distribution of the development is common in the surrounding countryside and they are not considered to be urbanising influences.

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

- Parcel comprises of open, evenly sloping arable farmland on the south-facing side of a broad valley between Eaton and Bessels Leigh. There is no intervisibility with Oxford, with well wooded and/or higher ground to the east and south, and no sense of this area forming part of Oxford's historic setting.

# Parcel AP3





## Parcel AP3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	N/C

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

- The parcel abuts Appleton which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The western corner of the parcel borders Appleton and the eastern boundary borders the A420. The parcel has a strong sense of openness and includes areas of woodland, a sand pit and Bessels Leigh School. The eastern boundary is in relatively close proximity to Wootton, but terrain, extensive woodland, absence of direct road linkage and the intervening A420, with its bounding hedgerows, form a physical and visual barrier which create separation. The northern boundary is in relatively close proximity to Cumnor, but the juxtaposition of a large area of woodland screens views between this part of the parcel and Appleton. The parcel therefore plays only a limited role preventing the erosion of settlement gaps.

#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

- The parcel is well treed in character, including the large Bessels Leigh Common ancient woodland, vegetated stream channels and the parkland treescape around Bessels Leigh School. There are also some large regular-shaped agricultural fields which represent the most open areas of

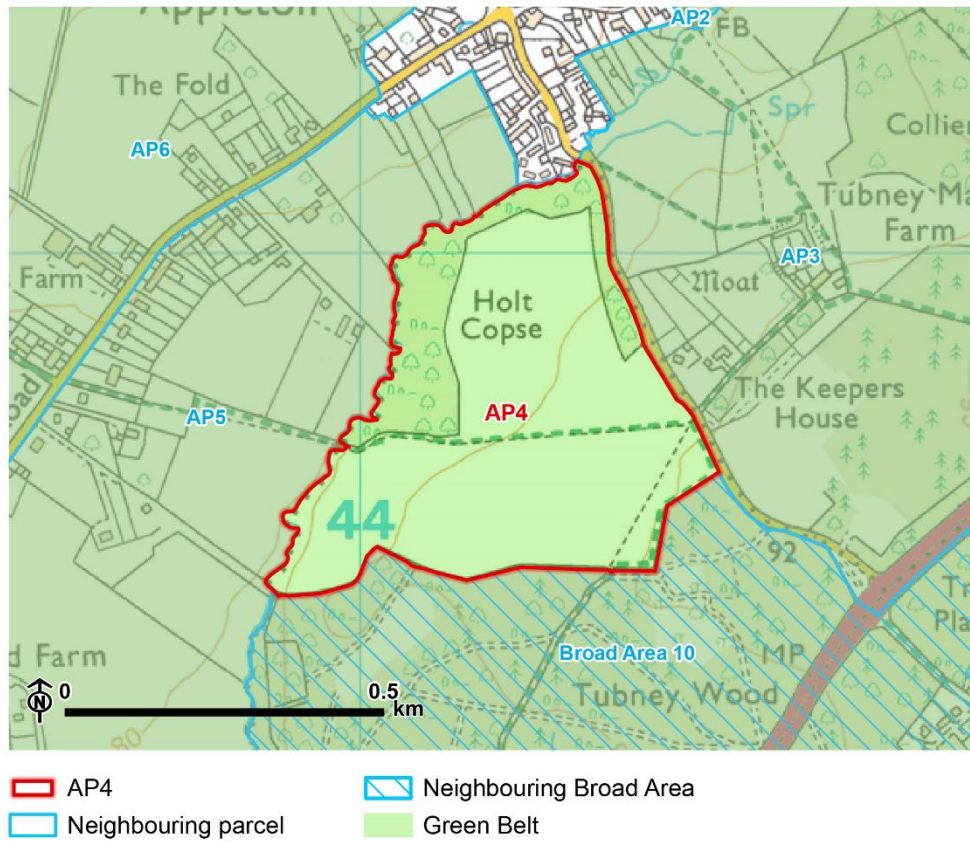


the parcel, with good views of the countryside immediately to the north. Developments are scattered throughout the parcel, but most are rural in character and not considered to be urbanising influences, for example, St Lawrence Church, Tubney Manor Farm and the large isolated dwellings, including those within the small village of Bessels Leigh in the northern corner of the parcel. There are relatively modern buildings and areas of hardstanding associated with Bessels Leigh School, but the extent of screening by large woodland blocks and belts means that these are not considered to be significant urbanising influences on the wider countryside.

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

- The land parcel includes an elevated, undulating, well-wooded landscape, with parkland elements, sloping generally downhill to the west. There is no visual relationship with Oxford. The eastern fringes of the parcel contribute to perception of rural landscape on approach to Botley along A420, but most of the parcel lacks any intervisibility with the road.

## Parcel AP4



## Parcel AP4

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	N/C

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Appleton which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is located to the south of Appleton, with the southern boundary bordering Tubney Wood. Hedgerows and associated trees close to the roadsides of the northern most boundaries of the parcel form a physical barrier creating visual separation from the parcel and its surroundings, whereas the south-eastern boundary is more open with partial views into parcel AP3. The parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose, and Wootton which is the nearest settlement to Appleton to the east is quite distant. Due to the size and location of the parcel it makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between the inset settlements.

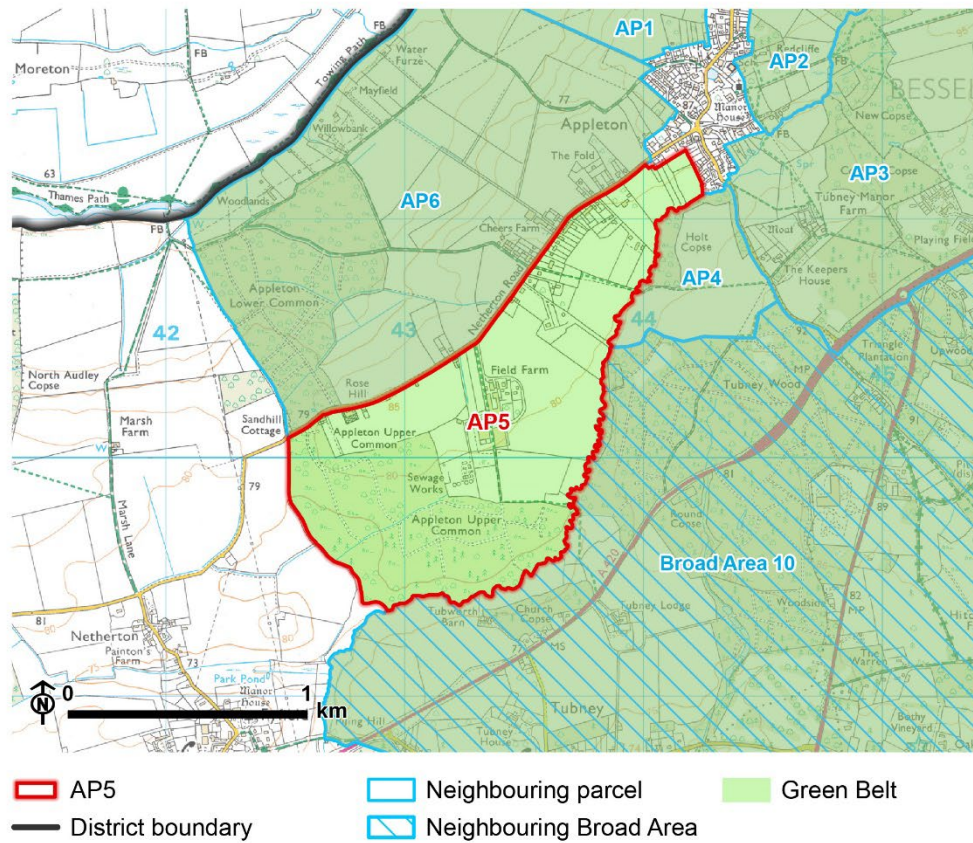
#### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of one large irregular-shaped field lined by woodland with the large Tubney Wood to the south. There is no development within the parcel and no urbanising influences.

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

- This is a west-facing slope of a stream valley which feeds into the Thames west of Appleton Common. It is a very contained parcel, surrounded by woodland, with no sense of any relationship with either Oxford or the Thames Valley approach to Oxford.

# Parcel AP5



## Parcel AP5

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Appleton which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is located to the south of Appleton, and is a large area of open land, with a gently sloping topography as you move south away from Appleton. The northern boundary of the parcel is bordered by Netherton Road, which provides open views across the parcel. The parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose and makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.

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

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of irregular-shaped fields lined by woodland to the south and east including Appleton Upper Common which sits in the parcel. There is a large open field adjacent to the very large Field Farm complex in the south of the parcel. There is a significant amount of development within the parcel but distinction can be made between the western part of the parcel, which retains an open, rural character, despite there being a number of scattered dwellings along Netherton Road and would score 'high' in its own right, and the eastern

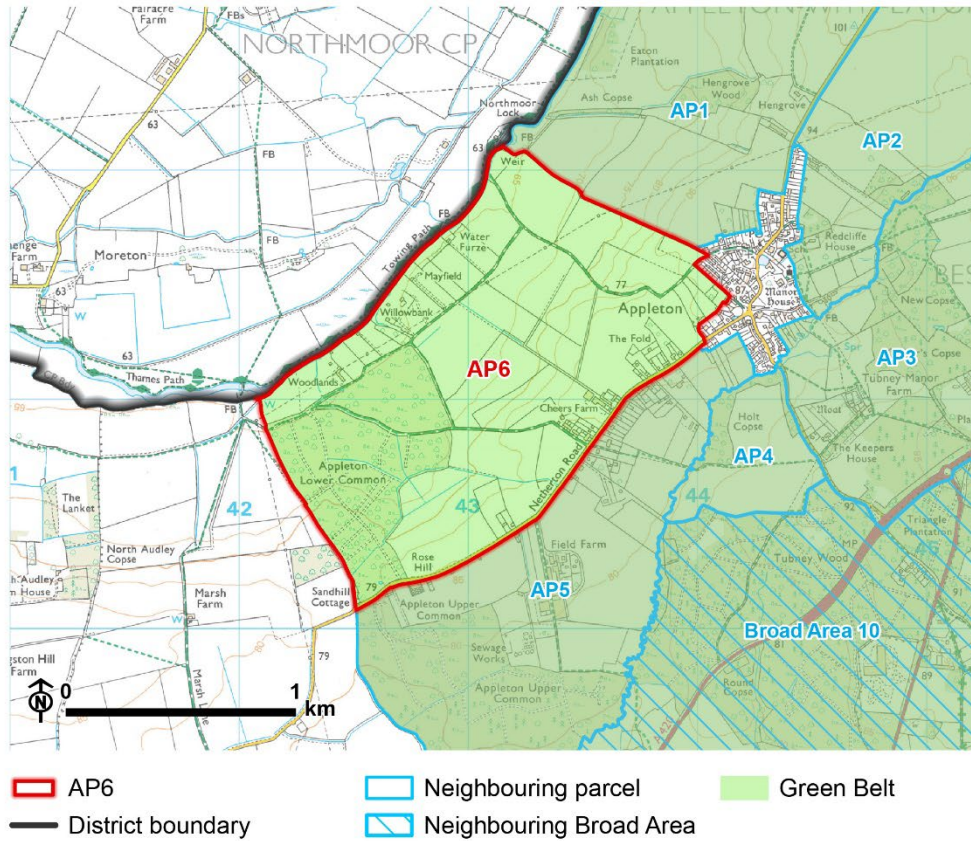
part, which is characterised by continuous sprawling development out from the historic core of Appleton. The sewage treatment works in the south of the parcel is well screened by trees and does not have a major impact on the character of the wider landscape.

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

- The land parcel comprises of south-facing farmed slopes of a shallow valley which carries a stream into the Thames to the west of Appleton Common. The southern end of the parcel is woodland, and woodlands frame the shallow valley slopes to the east. There is no visual relationship with Oxford or the Thames Valley.



# Parcel AP6



## Parcel AP6

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	Medium	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Appleton which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is situated to the southwest of Appleton and is bordered by the River Thames on the western boundary and Netherton Road on the eastern/southern boundary. The parcel is a large area of open land with a gently sloping topography as you move southwest away from Appleton. The western and southern boundaries border the edge of the Green Belt and therefore the parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose and makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.

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

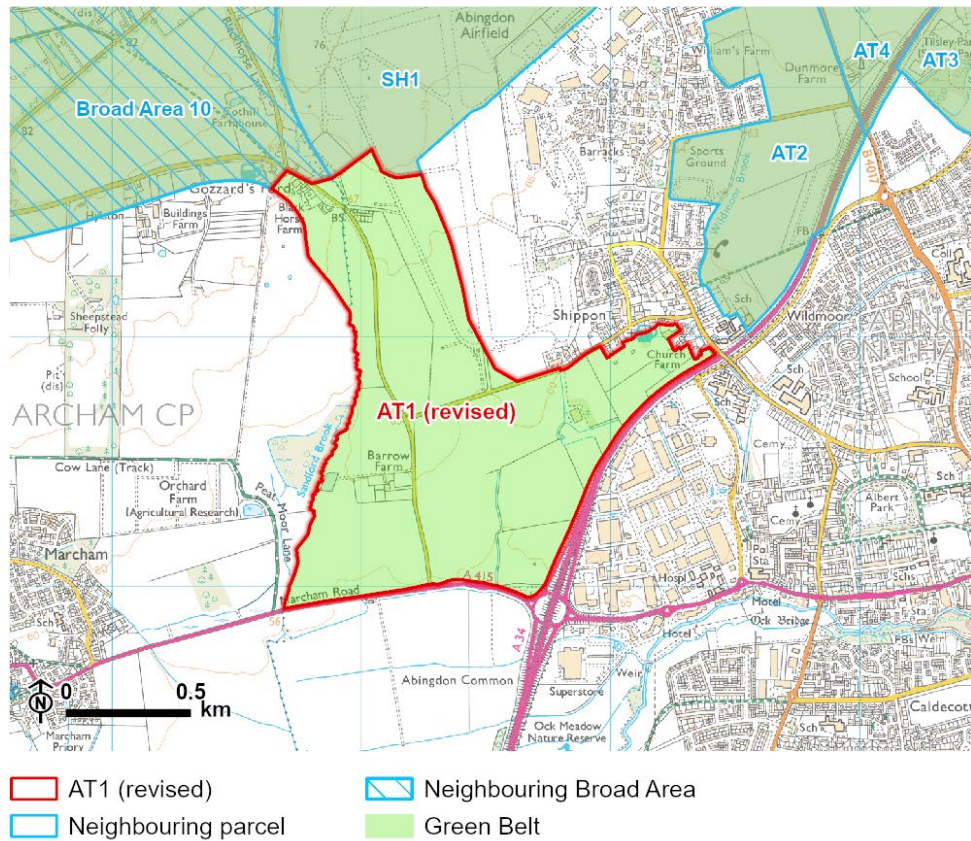
- The parcel is predominantly made-up of large regular-shaped agricultural fields on the eastern side of the River Thames. Appleton Lower Common Wood sits in the south western portion of the parcel. Sloping down to the River Thames at the western edge of the parcel, the open fields have excellent views of the wider countryside to the north west, west and south west. The parcel contains a farm (Cheers Farm) and surrounding linear

development out from Appleton along Netherton Road and Millway Lane. There is also dispersed modern riverside development along the Thames, accessed via Millway Lane, but this is set in a well-treed landscape with little wider impact. Modern expansion of Appleton has an urbanising influence on the countryside in the vicinity, but much of the parcel still has a rural character, and the western part would in isolation rate as 'high' against this criterion.

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

- The parcel lies c.9-10km from central Oxford. The slope is west-facing, away from Oxford, and higher ground prevents any visual relationship. The continuity of the rural approach into the heart of Oxford along the Thames Valley does play a role in Oxford's special character, and the parcel is crossed by several rights of way that link (across a footbridge) the Thames Path to Appleton. However the meandering form of the river valley means that this parcel is some distance from the city along that route.

# Parcel AT1



## Parcel AT1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	N/C

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Shippon and Abingdon-on-Thames which are not considered to be large built up areas. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is situated to the west of Shippon, and is bordered by the A34 and Abingdon to the east, the A415 to the south and a strategic site allocation (Dalton Barracks – VLP093) to the north and east. The northeastern corner of the parcel falls within the strategic allocation but is to be retained as Green Belt; however, Core Policy 8b in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part Two states ‘any development on this area will be limited to Green Belt-compatible development [and] will include parkland. Emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that the western extent of development within the allocation will include Green Belt reinforcement, which will reduce urbanising influence within the parcel. The parcel has a strong sense of openness and is a relatively flat area of land with views across it from the surrounding roads. The parcel is not within a gap between two neighbouring towns considered against this purpose, but 20th century development has closed the gap between Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon so that only the presence of the A34 constitutes a gap between the two at its narrowest point. Marcham to the west is not a Green Belt town and the Green Belt designation does not cover the full



width of the gap with Abingdon. Loss of openness in this parcel could cause more of a merging of the two settlements, which would have some impact in terms of the wider gap between an enlarged Abingdon-on-Thames and Wootton to the north, but this is limited by the location of this parcel to the west of Abingdon-on-Thames, away from the B4017 (which provides a direct link between the two settlements).

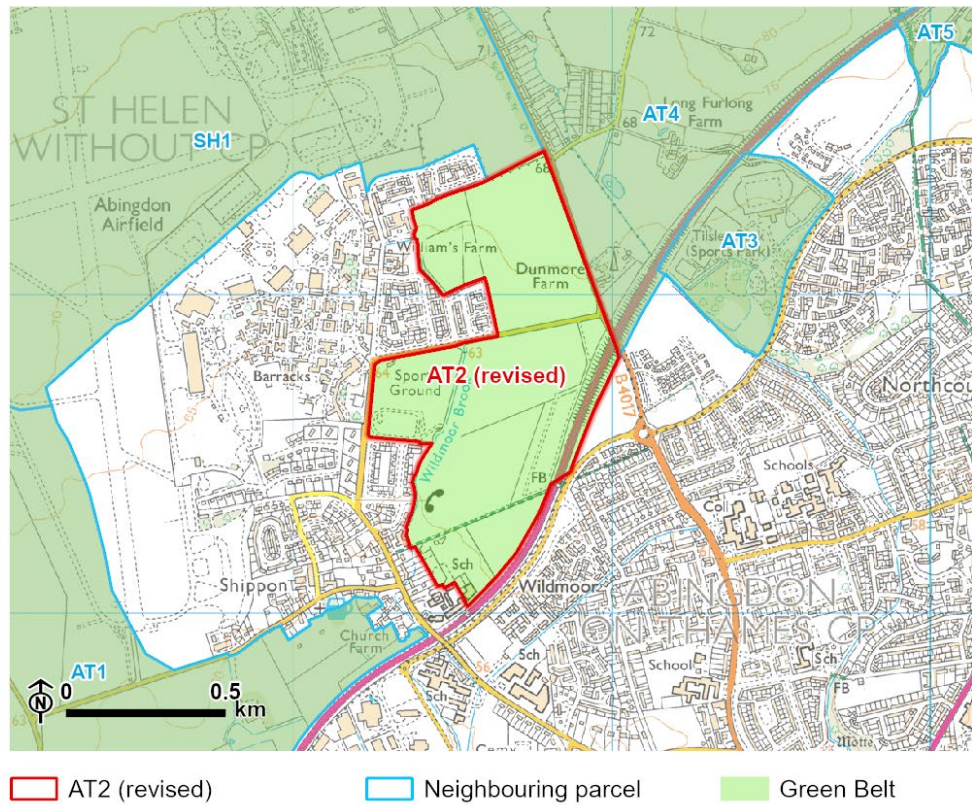
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of large irregular-shaped agricultural fields. The open fields have excellent views of the countryside to the south and west. As well as lying adjacent to the town of Abingdon-on-Thames, the parcel is also adjacent to Shippon and a strategic allocation (Dalton Barracks – VLP093) that adjoins the west of this settlement. The northeastern corner of the parcel falls within the strategic allocation but is to be retained as Green Belt; however, Core Policy 8b in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part Two states ‘any development on this area will be limited to Green Belt-compatible development [and] will include parkland. Emerging indicative concept plan work at Dalton Barracks suggests that the boundary between the allocation and the parcel will be reinforced and enhanced with green infrastructure, helping to limit the urbanising influence of the extension on the parcel. The parcel contains a large barn in the centre of the parcel and an area of hardstanding used as a lorry stop in its south eastern corner. Only the lorry stop is an urbanising influence on the countryside within the parcel, but its limited size and well treed boundaries ensure it is not considered to be a significant urbanising influence.

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

- There is no visual relationship with Oxford and it makes little contribution to the rural character of Oxford's wider setting, being related more closely to Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon.

## Parcel AT2





## Parcel AT2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	Medium	N/C

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon which are not considered to be large built up areas. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel lies to the north/west of the A34, between Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon. The parcel is open with views across it from the bordering roads (e.g. A34). The A34 and associated tree cover provides screening from the urban area to the east. Residential development within Shippon has a strong urbanising influence within the parcel given that there is little boundary strength between the parcel and the settlement. 20th century development has closed the gap between Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon so that only the presence of the A34 constitutes a gap between the two at its narrowest point. Loss of openness in this parcel could cause more of a merging of the two settlements and would reduce the gap between and enlarged Abingdon-on-Thames and Wootton to the north. Development at Whitecross to the immediate south east of parcel AT2 on the B4017 increases the fragility of this gap and is already close to Shippon and adjacent to the edge of this parcel.

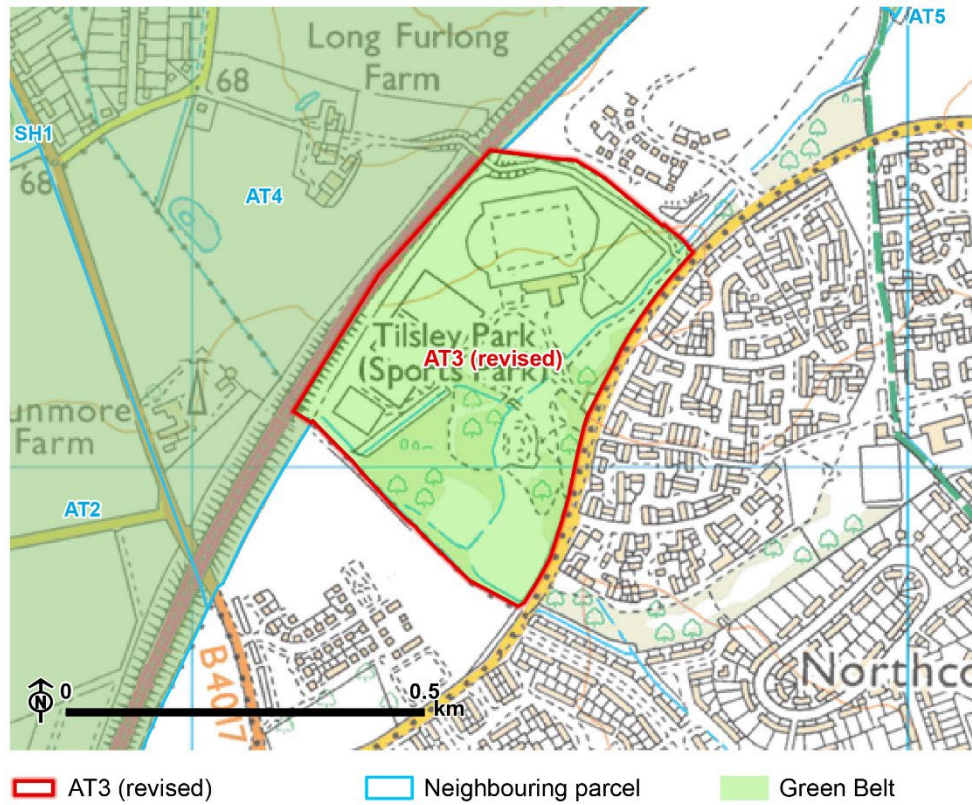
**Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of large regular-shaped agricultural fields and a large allotment at its eastern edge. The open fields have limited views of the countryside to the north. However, it is bordered by the A34 to the east, including an elevated section crossing the B4017, and by the built-up areas of Shippon to the west. As such it is considered the countryside within the parcel is relatively enclosed. The parcel contains grass sports pitches in the west, as well as some outdoor sports facilities in the south (some of which are hardstanding). The land uses in these areas of the parcel limit the extent to which they are perceived as countryside, but the parcel is fundamentally open.

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

- There is no visual relationship with Oxford and little sense of being part of the city's wider rural surrounds, despite its proximity to the A34. In terms of setting the parcel is more associated with Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon.

## Parcel AT3



## Parcel AT3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	Low	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Abingdon-on-Thames which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel lies to the west of Dunmore Road and it is contained by the A34 to the west and by two new strategic site allocations immediately beyond Abingdon-on-Thames to the north (VLP070 – North West of Abingdon-on-Thames) and south (VLP074 – North of Abingdon-on-Thames). The parcel is a relatively flat area of land containing Tilsley Park Sport Complex and tree cover. The parcel is relatively distant from Wootton and is contained by the elevated A34 and new urban areas therefore plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between Wootton and Abingdon-on-Thames. The parcel also lies in a gap between Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon to the west, but these settlements are already connected by development that lies further southwest, and the A34 acts a significant boundary feature between land in the parcel and the remaining areas of this settlement gap.

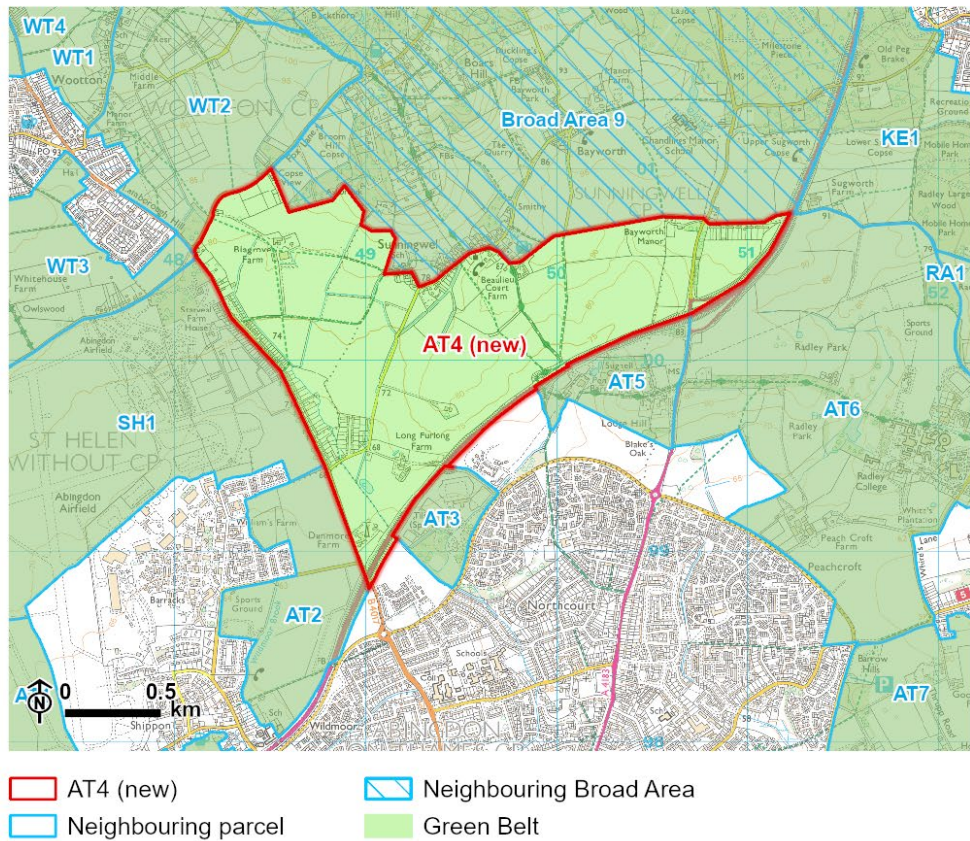
#### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel largely consists of a sizeable sports centre, which contains a large building adjacent to a large floodlit car park, surrounded by several floodlit outdoor sports pitches and an athletics track. All of these features are considered to be significant urbanising influences on the countryside within the Green Belt. The parcel is contained on three sides by residential development within Abingdon-on-Thames, but tree cover at the parcel edges provides a degree of screening from urbanising influence. The remaining land within the parcel is comprised of tree cover and grassland, but there is a limited relationship between the parcel and the wider countryside given that it is contained by the A34 and recent strategic site allocation to the south (North West Abingdon-on-Thames – VLP070) and north (North Abingdon-on-Thames – VLP074) and Abingdon-on-Thames to the east.

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

- This parcel is located between the A34 and Abingdon-on-Thames and consists of a sports centre and areas of tree cover. There is no intervisibility with Oxford. As views open out from the A34 across farmland towards the wooded hills that abut the south-western edge of Oxford there is a greater sense of the City's wider rural setting. The parcel contributes little to this, being to the east of the A34 and contained by two new strategic site allocations to the north (VLP070 – North West of Abingdon-on-Thames) and south (VLP074 – North of Abingdon-on-Thames).

# Parcel AT4





## Parcel AT4

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	High	High	Medium

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to the northern side of Abingdon-on-Thames, which is not part of the large built-up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is situated to the north of Abingdon-on-Thames over the A34, which provides a strong degree of screening from the settlement to the south. The parcel is comprised of large agricultural fields with the southern half of the village of Sunningwell lying in its northern edge. The inset settlements of Wooton and Kennington lie along connecting roads to the north west and north east respectively. To the south west, 20th century development has closed the gap between Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon so that only the presence of the A34 constitutes a gap between the two at its narrowest point. Loss of openness in this part of this parcel would connect Abingdon-on-Thames to linear development along White Cross Road (B4017), significantly increasing the fragility of the settlement gap between Abingdon-on-Thames combined with Shippon and Wooton. Loss of openness in the east of the parcel would weaken the gap between Kennington and Abingdon-on-Thames.



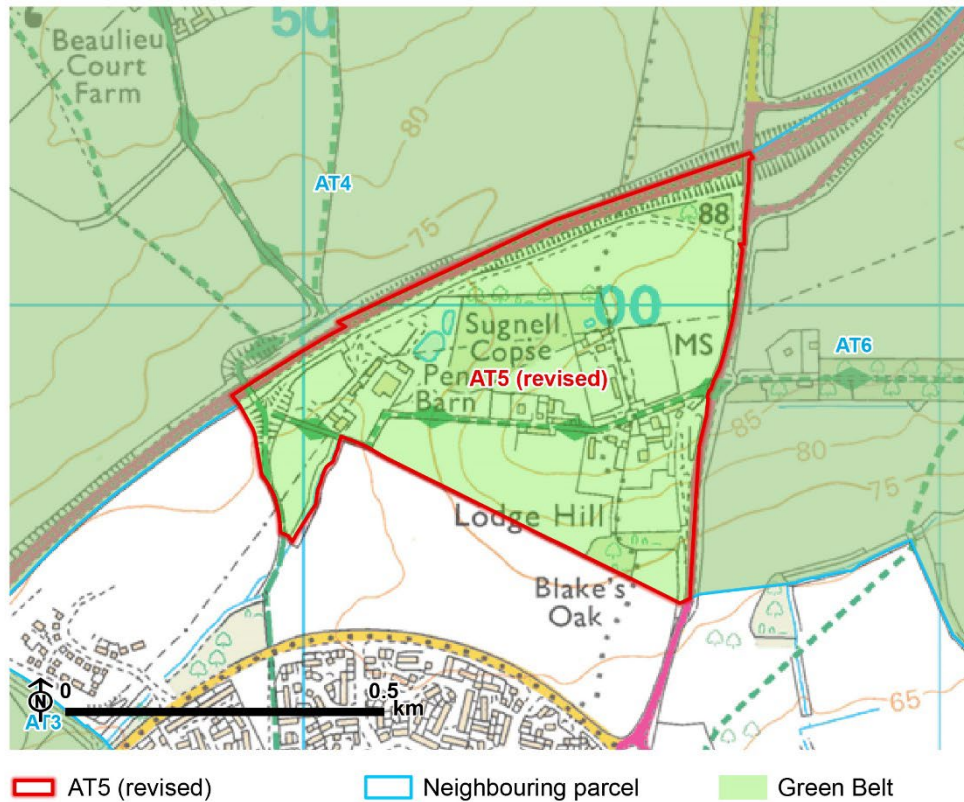
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is largely comprised of agricultural land. Land in the parcel is predominately open and shares views over the countryside to the north, east and south, and from its higher northern slopes to the west and south. The most significant urbanising influences within the parcel are located along its western edge associated with the significant length of ribbon development along the B4017 at Whitecross, but being only one dwelling deep and set within a wider open area with high ground to the north east, this development is not considered to be a significant urbanising influence. Similarly, the residential development at the higher northern edge of the parcel associated with the rural village of Sunningwell has a limited urbanising influence on the wider parcel. The agricultural buildings in the parcel do not have an impact on openness. The A34 and associated tree cover maintain strong distinction from Abingdon-on-Thames to the south.

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

- Separated from Oxford by the wooded ridge to the north, including Boars Hill, the elevated, gently sloping arable farmland in this parcel nonetheless performs a role in defining the rural character of Oxford's broader setting by providing an open foreground to views of the wooded ridge from the A34.

## Parcel AT5



## Parcel AT5

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	Medium	Low

#### Purpose 1 – Protection of open land from urban sprawl

- The parcel lies adjacent to Abingdon-on-Thames which is not considered to be a large built up area. The parcel is not therefore considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel lies to the north of Abingdon-on-Thames and is contained by the A34 to the north and the A4183 to the east. The parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose but lies adjacent to parcel AT6 which plays a key role in preventing the merging of Abingdon-on-Thames with Kennington. The topography within the parcel gently rises in elevation away from the land to the south, where a well treed hedgerow provides a visual boundary between the parcel and a strategic site allocation to Abingdon-on-Thames (VLP074 – North of Abingdon-on-Thames).

#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

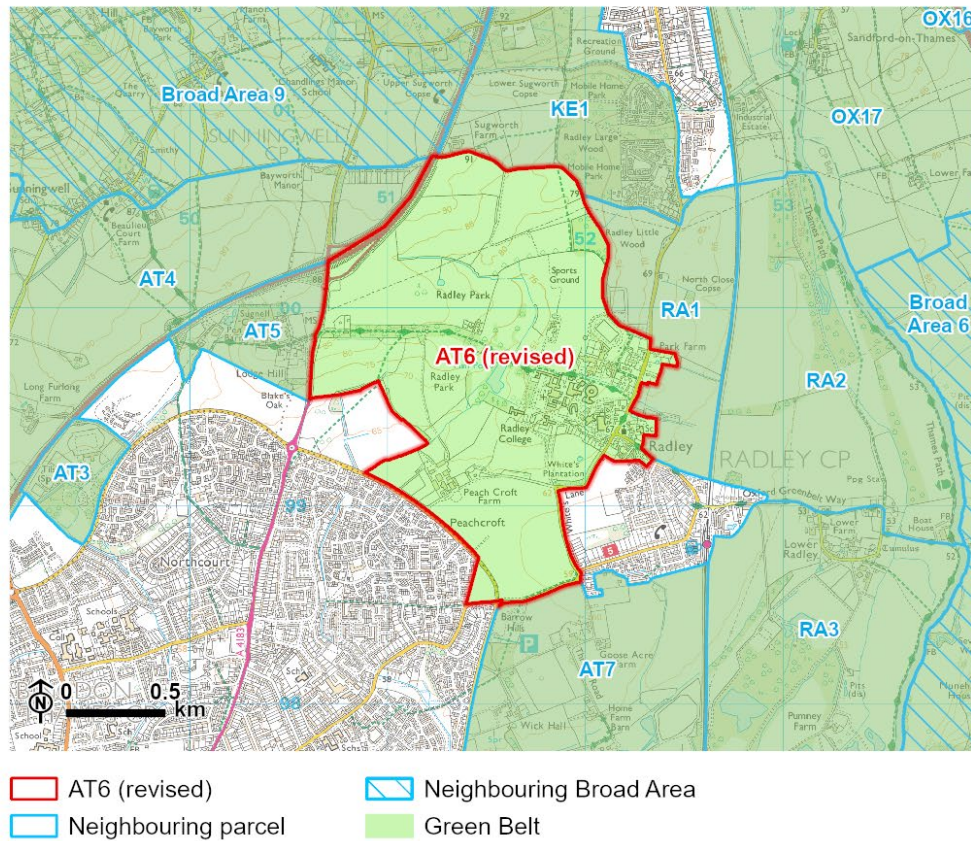
- The parcel contains a band of development running east west along Lodge Hill road. The development includes several large detached dwellings, a car showroom, and an open-air depot containing construction machinery and large warehouse buildings. This band of development has an urbanising influence on the Green Belt within the parcel. The parcel

contains tree cover adjacent to Lodge Hill road and open farmland to the north and south, with the latter forming a rural setting to the northern side of Abingdon-on-Thames, where a strategic allocation (VLP074 – North of Abingdon-on-Thames) is in the process of being developed. A well treed hedgerow provides a visual boundary between the parcel and this development.

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

- There is no intervisibility with Oxford and there are unlikely to be any locations where parcel would be viewed in same visual context as Oxford. Its proximity to A34 and the screening of development from this direction by tree cover means that it makes some contribution to the generally rural character of the landscape on approach to Oxford, especially as it is on elevated ground (Abingdon-on-Thames already abuts the A34 to the south-east, but on lower ground than Lodge Hill).

# Parcel AT6



## Parcel AT6

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	High	Medium	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Abingdon-on-Thames which is not considered to be a large built up area. The parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The southern area of the parcel separates the settlements of Abingdon-on-Thames and Radley which are in close proximity to one another. The parcel plays an essential role in preventing the merging or erosion of the physical gap between the two settlements, particularly as the parcel occupies the whole width of the settlement gap. The land between the two settlements in the parcel has a strong sense of openness and the topography is relatively flat, thereby providing views between the settlements. Mature hedgerows along Twelve Acre Drive at the urban edge of Abingdon-on-Thames provide some screening from the urban area. The parcel therefore plays a strong role in preventing the merging of the two settlements, as any encroachment by either settlement would clearly result in reduction of the gap.
- The northern and southern boundaries of the parcel are also positioned between Abingdon-on-Thames (to the south) and Kennington (to the north). While the gap between the settlements is larger than that between Abingdon-on-Thames and Radley, the settlements are still in relatively close proximity to one another, but elevated ground at the centre of the



parcel reduces the importance of the northern and southern fringes by blocking intervisibility.

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

- The majority of the parcel is free from built development, with open, regular, arable fields to the north, west and south, but the central-eastern part of the parcel contains Radley College. This is a large, independent boarding school with a significant number of modern buildings and associated infrastructure, including floodlit sports pitches and car parks. These constitute an urbanising influence on the Green Belt, but only to a limited extent due to the extent of tree cover (including parkland planting) screening them from views from the wider area. The only prominent building in views from the edge of Abingdon-on-Thames (Twelve Acre Drive) is Radley Hall, the early 18th century house which formed the original core of the College, so its character in external views is principally rural. The parcel also includes the College's golf course, a couple of small, isolated dwellings and a large farm; however, these developments are not considered to have a significant urbanising influence on the countryside within the parcel as a whole. The existing urban edges of Abingdon-on-Thames and Radley are visible from within the parcel, including a strategic site allocation north of Abingdon-on-Thames (North Abingdon-on-Thames – VLP074) and north west of Radley (North West Radley – VLP082); however, well treed field boundaries, Twelve Acre Drive and White's Lane screen their urbanising influence on the wider parcel.

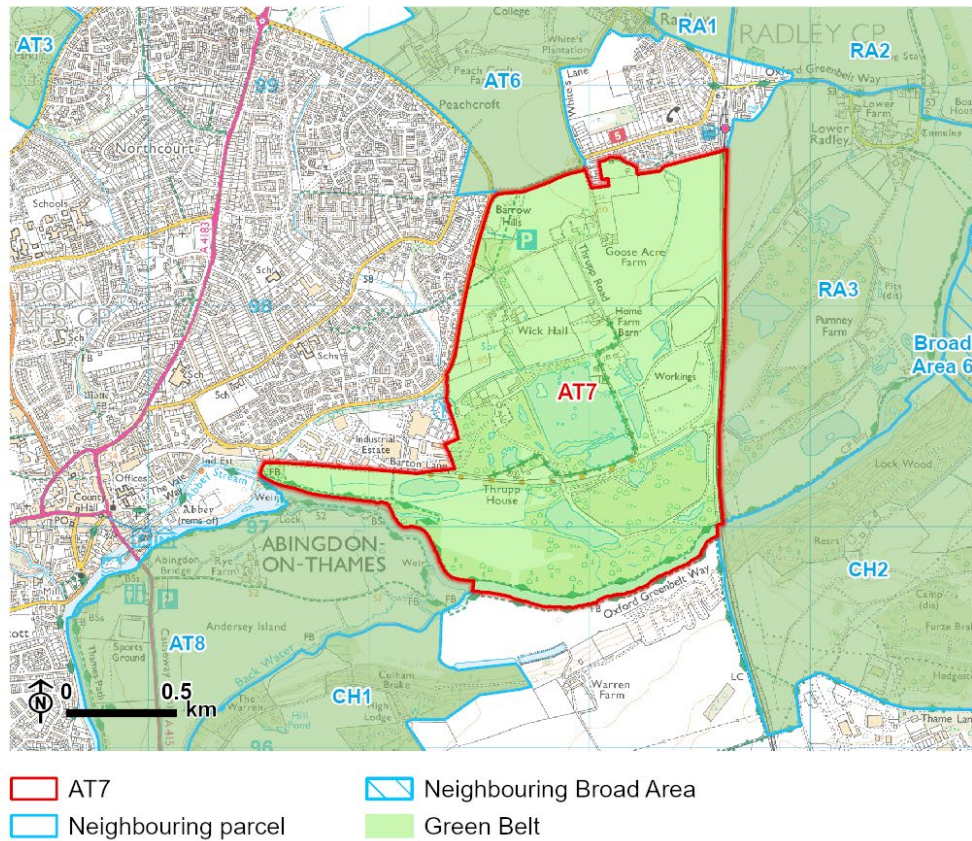
### **Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

- Largely occupied by Radley College and Park, with arable farmland to north and south. The well-treed landscape hides most buildings from the wider view, even though on rising ground above Thames terrace.
- There is no intervisibility with the historic core of Oxford. Although not as prominent as the higher hills to the north (Boars Hill, Bagley Wood), these slopes constitute part of the rural ring around Oxford, which drops down to



the Thames Valley at Radley but climbs up again at Nuneham Courtenay to the south-east. The rural character is important as backdrop to the undeveloped Thames Valley, viewed on approach to Oxford along A4074. Lower ground at the southern end of the parcel, between Abingdon-on-Thames and Radley village, is less sensitive in terms of Oxford's historic setting.

# Parcel AT7



## Parcel AT7

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	High	Medium	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Abingdon-on-Thames which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The north-western area of the parcel separates the neighbouring inset settlements of Abingdon-on-Thames and Radley which are in close proximity to one another, and the land between the two settlements has a strong sense of openness and the topography is relatively flat. Tree cover at the urban edge of Abingdon-on-Thames in the north west of the parcel provides some screening from the settlement. This part of the parcel therefore plays a strong role in preventing the merging of the two settlements and is rated 'High', as any encroachment by either settlement would clearly result in closing the gap. The southern and eastern parts of the parcel lie in a settlement gap between Abingdon-on-Thames, Radley and the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated strategic site allocation next to the centre (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), which together represent a new neighbouring town in the Green Belt. Loss of openness in the southern and eastern portions of the parcel would weaken the perceived separation between these inset settlements, although the floodplain of the River Thames acts as significant separating feature. Furthermore, the emerging indicative concept plan for the land adjacent to Culham Science Centre retains a

significant area of open countryside to the north of the developed area up to the River Thames, maintaining visual separation. The southern and eastern portions of the parcel are therefore considered to play a more 'Medium' Purpose 2 role.

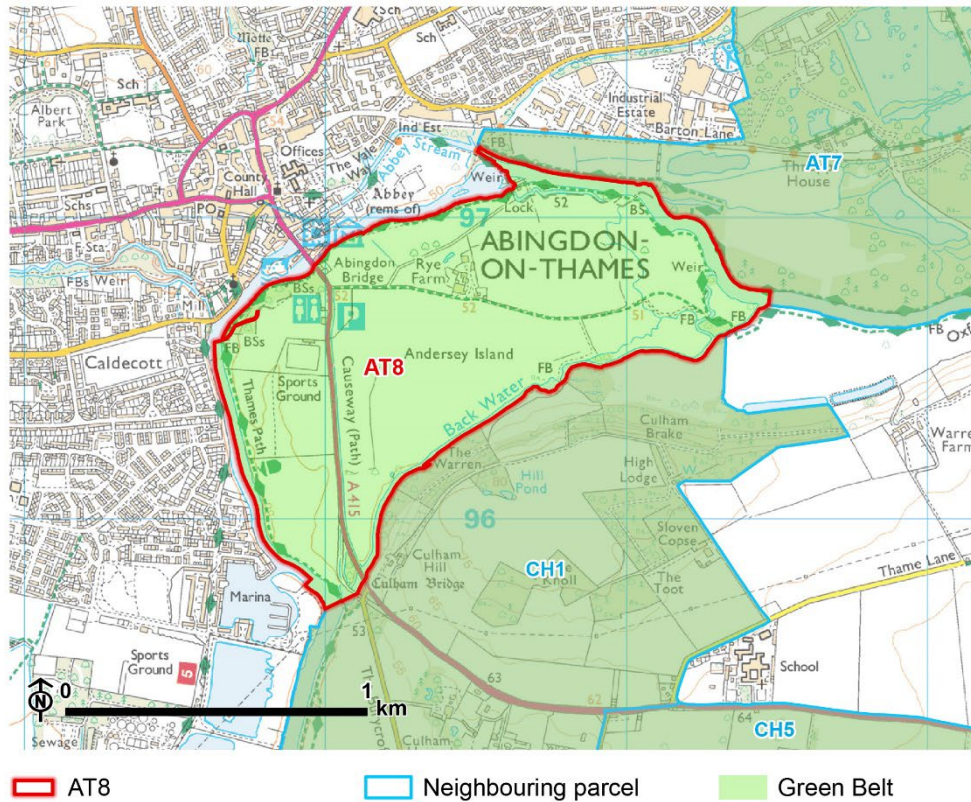
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- Much of the parcel sits within the flat and open flood plain of the River Thames which follows the southern border of the parcel. Most of the southern two thirds of the parcel are functional wetlands with large areas of standing water associated with historic gravel extraction within the parcel. The remaining areas are scrubland and woodland on the edge of the River Thames and large regular-shaped agricultural fields in the north of the parcel. The strategic allocation (Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre - SLP045) lies to the south of the parcel over the River Thames. It is well screened by tree cover associated with the River Thames and emerging indicative concept plan work showing green buffers along the allocations outer edges will limit its urbanising influence on the countryside within the parcel. A high hedge screens most but not all of the urbanising influences of the inset urban area to the west of Audlett Drive. Abingdon-on-Thames Science Park is largely screened from view by mature tree cover. Northern portions of the parcel are partially urbanised by the visible inset urban area of Radley village. In the northern third of the parcel is a large coal storage and distribution centre. Further south, amongst the wetlands, is a gravel extraction facility and an industrial area containing a haulage vehicle mechanics and other aggregate processing facilities. These three facilities represent urbanising influences on the countryside within this parcel of Green Belt; however the parcel still retains the characteristics of countryside and has a significant amount of woodland within the parcel. In addition, there is a farm and a large country house (Wick Hall). The vegetation and low topography, in combination with the raised railway line running along the eastern edge of the parcel, screen views of the wider countryside from large areas of the parcel.

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

- There is no visual relationship with Oxford but its role in setting relates to the continuity of landscape character along the riverside extending all the way into the heart of Oxford. This is experienced by users of the Thames Path approaching Oxford along the Thames Valley. The extent of riverside tree cover, much of its 20th century planting in regular forms, reduces the setting significance of the central and northern parts of the parcel.

## Parcel AT8





## Parcel AT8

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Abingdon-on-Thames which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is located to the south of Abingdon-on-Thames and includes Andersey Island, and is bordered by the River Thames on the northern and western boundaries. The River Thames provides a strong degree of separation between the parcel and the urban area and tree cover along some of its banks provides some screening from the urban area of Abingdon-on-Thames. The parcel is an area of flat low lying land, which has a strong sense of openness. The parcel lies in a settlement gap between Abingdon-on-Thames and the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated strategic site allocation adjacent (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), which together represent a new neighbouring town in the Green Belt. Loss of openness in the parcel would weaken the perceived separation between these inset settlements, although tree cover to the south east of the parcel and the floodplain of the River Thames and Swift Ditch/Back Water watercourse act as significant separating features. Furthermore, the emerging indicative concept plan for the land adjacent to Culham Science Centre retains a significant area of open countryside to the north up to the River Thames, north west and west of the developed area, maintaining visual separation.



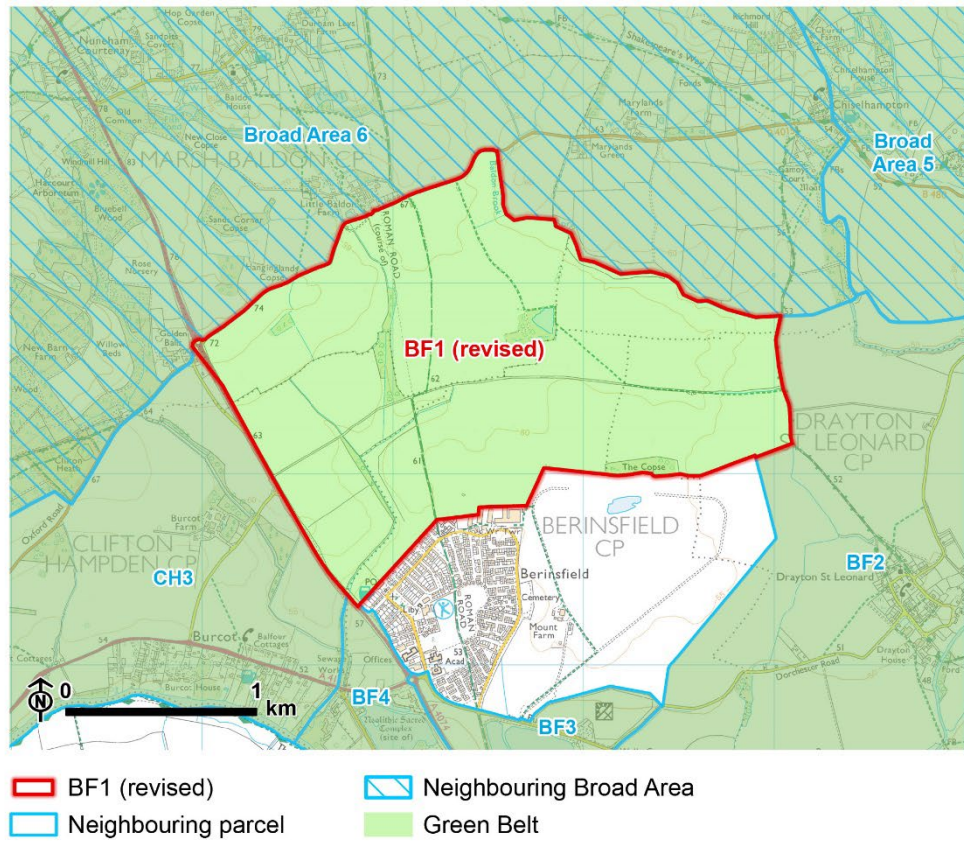
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The entire parcel sits within the flat and open flood plain of the River Thames which follows the northern, eastern and western borders of the parcel, and creates a strong degree of separation from Abingdon-on-Thames. The southern border of the parcel follows another smaller watercourse – Swift Ditch/Back Water. The parcel contains areas of scrubland and woodland on the edges of the watercourses and large irregular-shaped agricultural fields. There are two developments within the parcel: Rye Farm and two outdoor sports pitches for Abingdon-on-Thames Town Football Club and Abingdon-on-Thames Vale Cricket Club. There is a large floodlit car park adjacent to the sports facilities and the football ground is also floodlit. The football ground and car parks are the only urban features within the parcel and have a very limited urbanising influence over the parcel as a whole. The parcel abuts a strategic allocation (Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre – SLP045) in its north east corner. Emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that the western boundary of this strategic allocation will be reinforced with green infrastructure, which in combination with the existing mature woodland to the south east reduces the potential for intervisibility with the parcel.

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

- The parcel consists of Thames-side meadowland, largely surrounded by tree belts. There is no intervisibility with Oxford but it forms part of the undeveloped Thames Valley landscape that extends all the way into the centre of the city, thus giving it a relationship with Oxford that relates to one of the key elements of its special character. However distance does limit the extent of this contribution. The riverside long distance path is well used and a popular riverboat service links Oxford and Abingdon-on-Thames, so the landscape between the two historic towns is viewed as a sequence.

# Parcel BF1



## Parcel BF1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Berinsfield which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is a large area of relatively flat land that has a strong sense of openness. The parcel does not lie in a notable gap between neighbouring towns and therefore makes no contribution to this purpose.

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

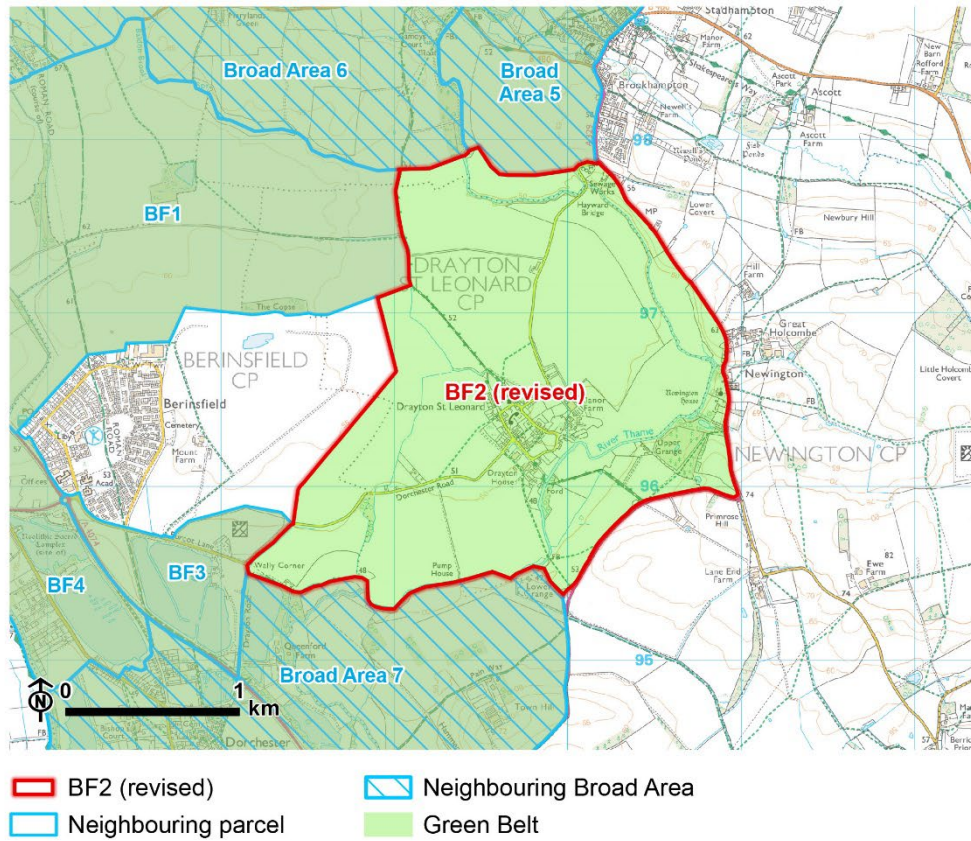
- The parcel contains very large and open agricultural fields in relatively flat land adjacent to the floodplain of Baldon Brook, which is located to the north east of the parcel. There are small areas of woodland in the centre and south east of the parcel and there are good views of the surrounding countryside. The now inset Berinsfield and the associated adjacent site allocation (SLP048 – Land at Berinsfield ) lie to the south of the parcel. The existing urban edge of Berinsfield has an urbanising influence on the Green Belt land immediately adjacent to it in the settlement, but wide ranging views of the countryside ensure that these influences do not dominate. Emerging indicative concept plan work at Berinsfield suggests that the boundary of Berinsfield Garden Village will be reinforced with

planting and green links, which will reduce urbanising influence on this parcel. There is no development within the parcel.

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

- Over 11km from central Oxford, with no visual relationship, but the distinctive form of the wider landscape in this area gives it some setting significance in relation to Oxford. The loop of the Thames between Long Wittenham and Dorchester, the surrounding arable landscape, and the hills to the north which hide Oxford, are all exposed to view from high ground to the south (e.g. Wittenham Clumps), and the open character of the Thames Valley extending all the way into the heart of Oxford is one of the special qualities of the City's setting.

# Parcel BF2



## Parcel BF2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Berinsfield which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is a large area of flat, agricultural land with the River Thame lying to the east. The parcel contains the washed over village of Drayton Saint Leonard, which impacts openness locally, but the parcel is otherwise considered open. It shares a boundary to the west with Berinsfield Garden Village, a strategic allocation (SLP048), and plays a role in preventing the merging of Berinsfield and Drayton St Leonard, but is not in close proximity to any settlements considered against this purpose.

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

- The parcel contains very large and open agricultural fields in relatively flat land containing the floodplain of the River Thame, which is located within the east and south of the parcel. There are good views of the surrounding countryside and the rural settlement of Drayton St Leonard lies within the parcel and part of the village of Newington lies in the east. Whilst there is some impact on openness locally within the villages, the urbanising influence on the wider parcel is limited given their rural nature. The now



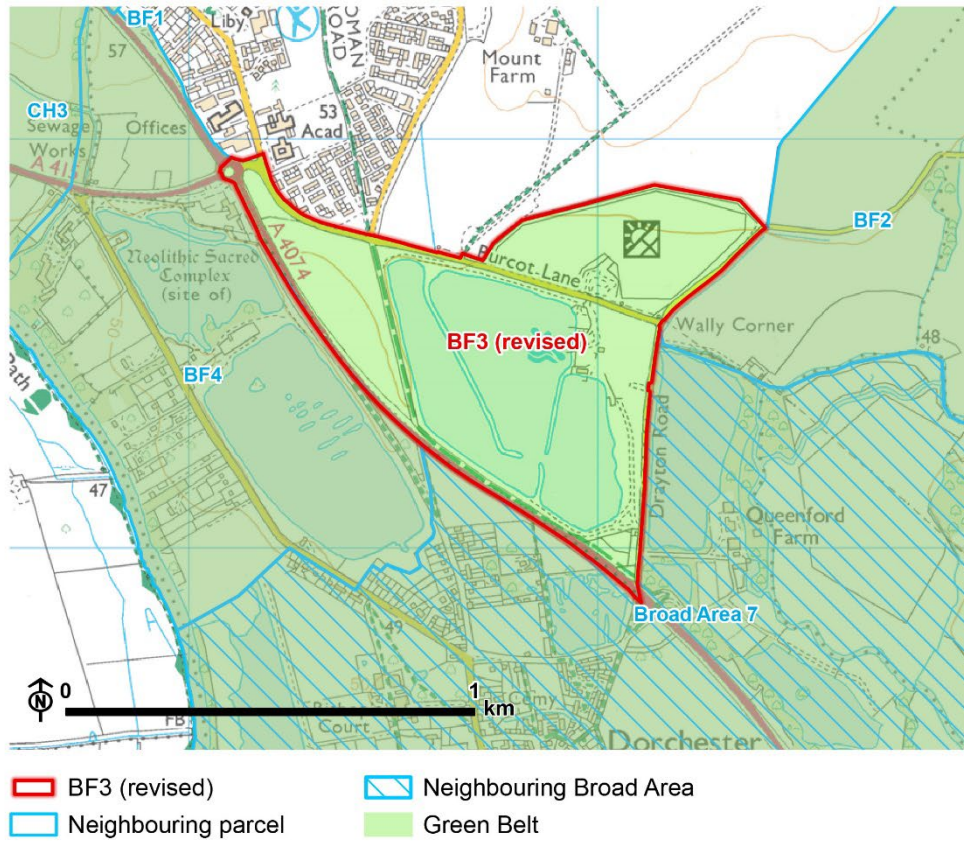
inset Berinsfield and the associated adjacent site allocation (SLP048 – Land at Berinsfield) lies to the west of the parcel. Emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that the boundary of Berinsfield Garden Village will be reinforced with planting and green links, which will reduce urbanising influence on this parcel.

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

- Over 11km from central Oxford, with no visual relationship, but the distinctive form of the wider landscape in this area gives it some setting significance in relation to Oxford. The loop of the Thames between Long Wittenham and Dorchester, the surrounding arable landscape, and the hills to the north which hide Oxford, are all exposed to view from high ground to the south (e.g. Wittenham Clumps), and the open character of the Thames Valley extending all the way into the heart of Oxford is one of the special qualities of the City's setting.



## Parcel BF3



## Parcel BF3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Berinsfield which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the south of the now inset Berinsfield and the associated adjacent site allocation (SLP048 – Land at Berinsfield) and includes a small area of open land in its western portion, a water sports lake in its eastern portion and a solar farm in the north east. It is flat in topography and is bordered by the A4074 to the south. The parcel does play a key role in preventing the merging of Dorchester with Berinsfield, but Dorchester is washed over by the designation and is not considered to be a neighbouring town relevant to this purpose. It therefore makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between inset settlements.

#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

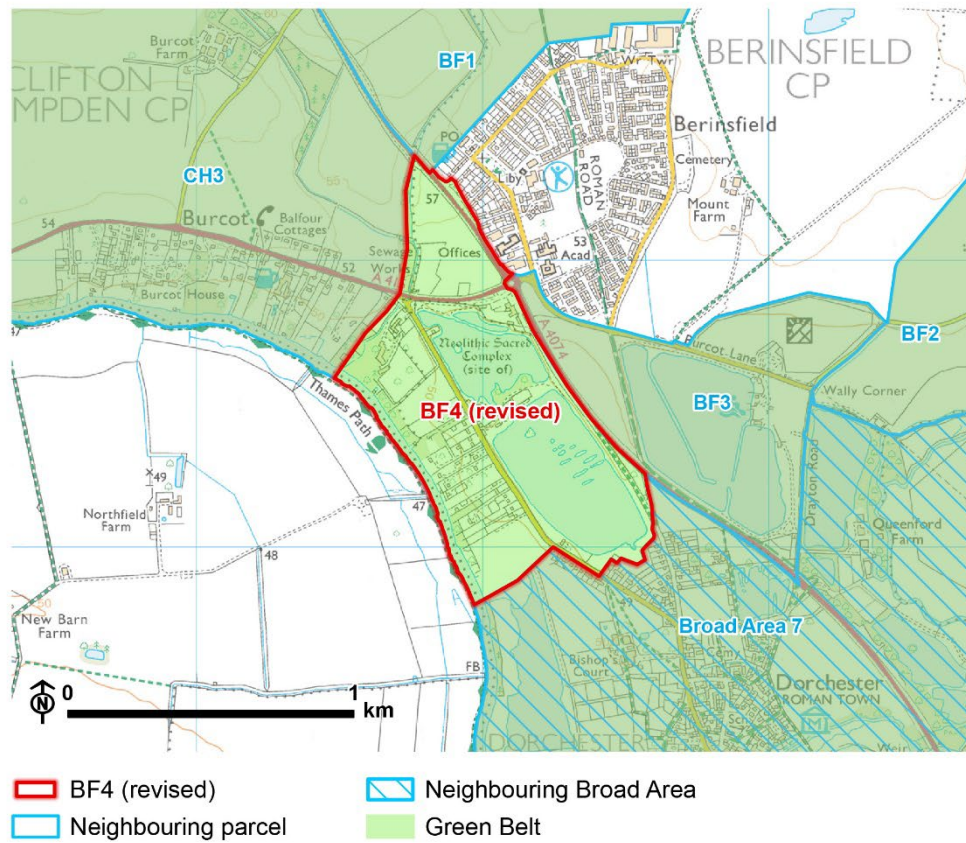
- The parcel contains one agricultural field in its western third, two water bodies associated with former gravel extraction adjacent to the floodplain of the River Thames to the east of the parcel and a further field in the north east that contains a solar farm. Intervisibility with the surrounding

landscape is mostly limited by perimeter tree planting. Berinsfield Garden Village, a strategic allocation (SLP048), lies to the north of parcel, but tree cover along Burcot Lane provides screening, and emerging indicative concept plan suggests this will be reinforced as part of the development. The parcel contains a collection of small buildings used by the Oxford Wakeboard and Ski Club, which do not represent a notable urbanising influence. The solar farm in the north east of the parcel is a notable urbanising influence; however, its temporary nature will not affect the Green Belt over the long term.

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

- Over 11km from central Oxford, with no visual relationship, but the distinctive form of the wider landscape in this area gives it some setting significance in relation to Oxford. The loop of the Thames between Long Wittenham and Dorchester, the surrounding arable landscape, and the hills to the north which hide Oxford, are all exposed to view from high ground to the south (e.g. Wittenham Clumps), and the gravel pits are also distinctive landscape features. The open character of the Thames Valley extending all the way into the heart of Oxford is one of the special qualities of the City's setting, although proximity to existing housing limits the importance of the parcel in this respect.

## Parcel BF4



## Parcel BF4

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	Medium	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Berinsfield which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is located to the south of the now inset Berinsfield and the associated adjacent site allocation (SLP048 – Land at Berinsfield) and includes two lakes which are used by Dorchester Sailing Club, some agricultural land in the north and some grassland and part of the washed over hamlet of Burcot in the west. The parcel is flat in topography and is bisected by Abingdon Road (A415) to the north. The A4074 lies to the east and the River Thames to the west. The parcel lies in a settlement gap between the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre) to the west and the newly inset Berinsfield area, which together represent new neighbouring towns. The fragility of the gap is increased by Burcot and the development that lies along Abingdon Road between the two settlements; however, the parcel's outer edge does not extend significantly further than existing built up edge of Berinsfield to the north and the meandering River Thames and its floodplain maintain separation with the southern half of the parcel. Mature woodland at the northwestern edge of the parcel also maintain some separation. The parcel also plays a role in preventing the merging of Burcot and Dorchester with Berinsfield,

but these settlements are not considered to be neighbouring towns of relevance to this purpose. Loss of openness in the parcel would increase the connection of Berinsfield with Burcot, increasing the fragility of the gap to the nearby town at Culham.

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

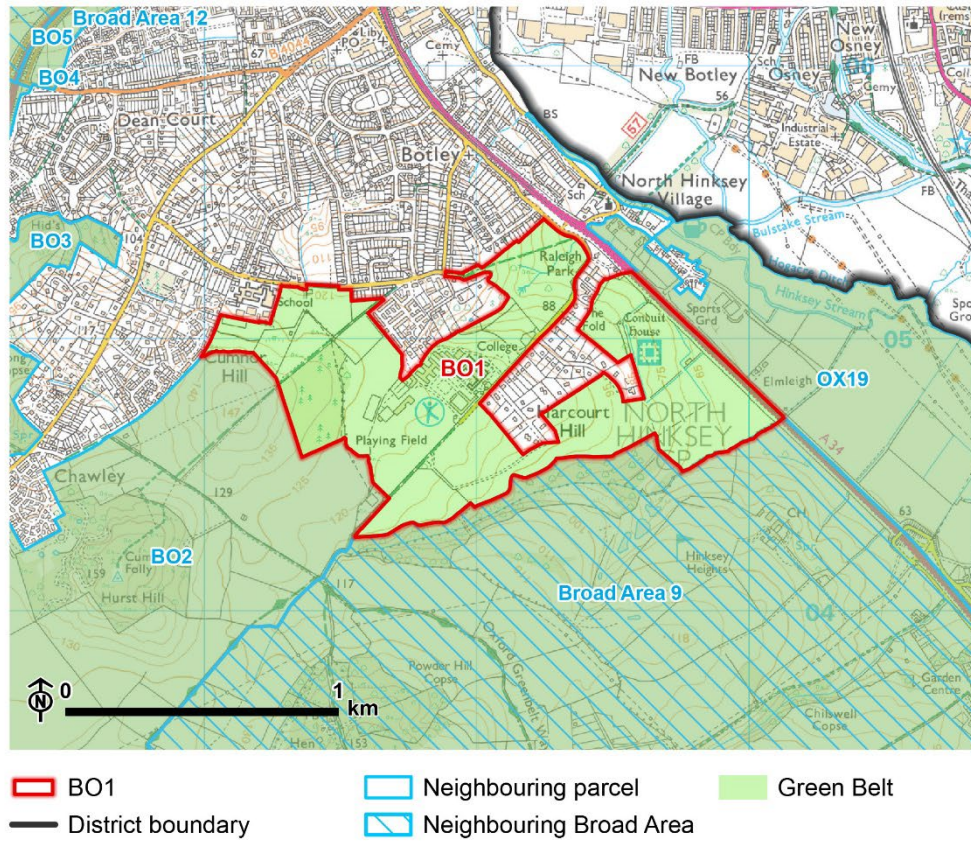
- The parcel contains two water bodies associated with the floodplain of the River Thames, some agricultural land and part of the washed over hamlet of Burcot, west of Abingdon Road, which do have an urbanising influence in the west of the parcel. There are also a collection of retail facilities in the north eastern corner of the parcel, including a café and large car sales lot; and the Dorchester Sailing Club in the centre of the parcel. The buildings and areas of hardstanding associated with these uses have a degree of urbanising influence over the parcel. There are some views of the surrounding countryside; however these are largely broken by tree cover along the edges of the water bodies and the River Thames to the west.

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

- The parcel consists of flooded gravel pits used for water sports, some agricultural land and residential dwellings. Over 11km from central Oxford, with no visual relationship, but the distinctive form of the wider landscape in this area gives it some setting significance in relation to Oxford. The loop of the Thames between Long Wittenham and Dorchester, the surrounding arable landscape, and the hills to the north which hide Oxford, are all exposed to view from high ground to the south (e.g. Wittenham Clumps), and the gravel pits are also distinctive landscape features. The open character of the Thames Valley extending all the way into the heart of Oxford is one of the special qualities of the City's setting, although the proximity to existing housing limits the importance of the parcel in this respect.



# Parcel BO1



## Parcel BO1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
Medium	Low	Medium	High

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

- The parcel sits to the south of Botley, which is considered to be part of the large built-up area of Oxford. The Southern By-pass Road (A34 dual-carriageway) borders the north eastern edge of the parcel. The centre of the parcel contains a higher education college - the Harcourt Hill campus of Oxford Brookes University - with several large buildings, associated floodlit sports facilities and car parks. This development reduces openness and is an urbanising influence locally, but the remaining areas of the parcel are comprised of agricultural fields, sports fields and tree cover, which are considered open. The inset urban edge is irregular, containing large portions of the Green Belt within the parcel, and there are relatively few strong boundary features maintaining distinction between the urban area and the open countryside; however, the elevated land around Cumnor Hill and Harcourt Hill maintains open views of the surrounding countryside.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is predominantly an open area situated on elevated topography that reduces in elevation from Cumnor Hill in the northwest towards the A34. The irregular inset, urban edge within the parcel has a containing presence on land in the parcel, exerting some urbanising influence. Botley and the suburb of New Botley are separated by a very narrow gap in parcels OX19 and OX20, so BO1 located to the south-east of Botley, makes a more limited contribution to settlement separation. The presence

of existing development within the parcel, on elevated ground visible from Oxford but separated by the A34 and Thames corridor, also limits the extent to which further development would result in perceived erosion of the settlement gap. The parcel does not contribute significantly to separation between Botley and any other settlements considered under this Green Belt Purpose, with wooded hills providing clear separation to the south and west.

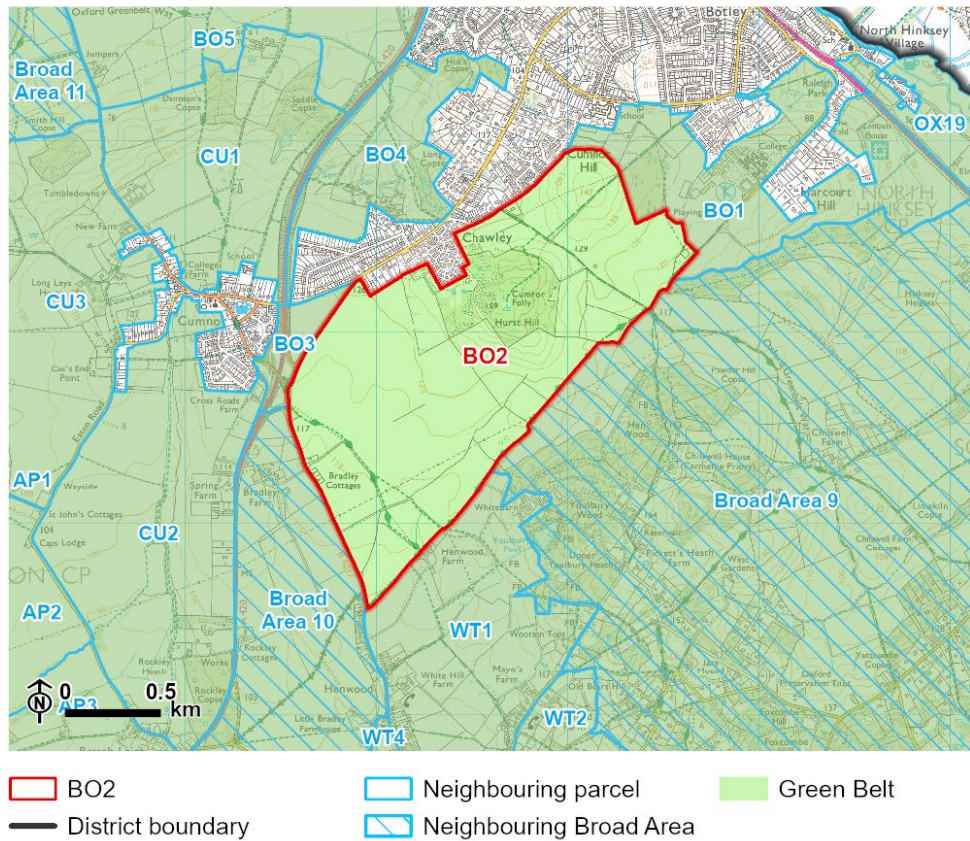
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The centre of the parcel contains a higher education college with several large buildings, associated floodlit sports facilities and car parks, and development immediately to the north and south of the college combines with this to have an urbanising influence on the countryside in the immediate vicinity. The inset urban edge is irregular, containing large portions of the Green Belt within the parcel, and there are relatively few strong boundary features maintaining distinction between the urban area and the open countryside; however, the elevated landscape to the west provides long views encompassing the higher ground around Oxford, and the wooded Raleigh Park and proximity to the wooded stream valley to the south of Harcourt Hill add rural character.

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

- The parcel is urban-edge in character, being largely occupied by sports pitches associated with the Harcourt Hill campus of Oxford Brookes University and Matthew Arnold School, but its largely green space contains Harcourt Hill and Cumnor Hill, which form part of the green backdrop to Oxford as seen in views from the city centre and high ground to the east. Raleigh Park, on the lower slopes of the area, provides one of the key views into central Oxford identified in the 'viewcones' policy. The rights of way through the parcel, leading from the city centre through North Hinksey to Hurst Hill and Youlbury, add to its significance, as does the presence of one of the conduit houses built in the early 17th century to supply water to Oxford.

# Parcel BO2





## Parcel BO2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	High	High	High

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

- The parcel sits to the south of Botley, which is considered to be part of the large built-up area of Oxford. Most of the land within the parcel has been divided up into large irregular-shaped and open agricultural fields. There are just a few small isolated dwellings within the parcel and, therefore, it has a strong sense of openness. Despite being relatively regular in form, there are no significant boundaries features at the urban edge to the north, but the parcel contains two areas of high ground: Cumnor Hill in the northern third of the parcel and the largely wooded Hurst Hill SSSI in the centre of the parcel. These landforms create distinction from the inset area to the north and mean that land in the parcel shares views with the surrounding countryside.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The northern boundary of the parcel runs along the southern settlement limits of Cumnor Hill, and the eastern boundary is also in close proximity to the southern end of Botley. Residential development within the urban area where the parcel abuts Chawley and Cumnor Hill has some urbanising influence within the parcel. The western edge is separated by only a narrow belt of land from the village of Cumnor, although the A420, which is dual carriage way at this point with strong boundary tree/hedge lines, runs through it. The parcel is a relatively large area of open land that is undulating in topography, including the elevated points of the wooded Hurst Hill and part of Cumnor Hill which provide strong views. The

openness of the fields to the west of Hurst Hill makes a contribution to the sense of separation between Cumnor Hill and the village of Cumnor, but the extent of screening between the two limit the extent to which this contributes to Cumnor's distinct character. More significantly, the western slopes of Hurst Hill also contribute to visual separation between Cumnor/Cumnor Hill and Wootton, where the linear settlement of Henwood already occupies much of the physical gap between the two along the B4017. The parcel therefore plays an essential role in preventing the loss of open land which would cause the visual and physical coalescence of the settlements, and which would potentially be perceived as expansion of Oxford beyond its natural setting. On the eastern side of Hurst Hill there are no settlements considered under this Purpose for which the parcel functions as a gap.

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

- The parcel contains two areas of high ground: Cumnor Hill in the northern third of the parcel and the largely wooded Hurst Hill in the centre of the parcel. Residential garden boundaries at the urban edge of Chawley and Cumnor Hill provide little screening from the urban area in the north of the parcel. Most of the land within the parcel has been divided up into large irregular-shaped and open agricultural fields. From the summits and slopes of these hills there are excellent views of the surrounding countryside. There is very little development within the parcel – just a few small isolated dwellings which are not considered to be urbanising influences on the countryside within the land parcel.

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

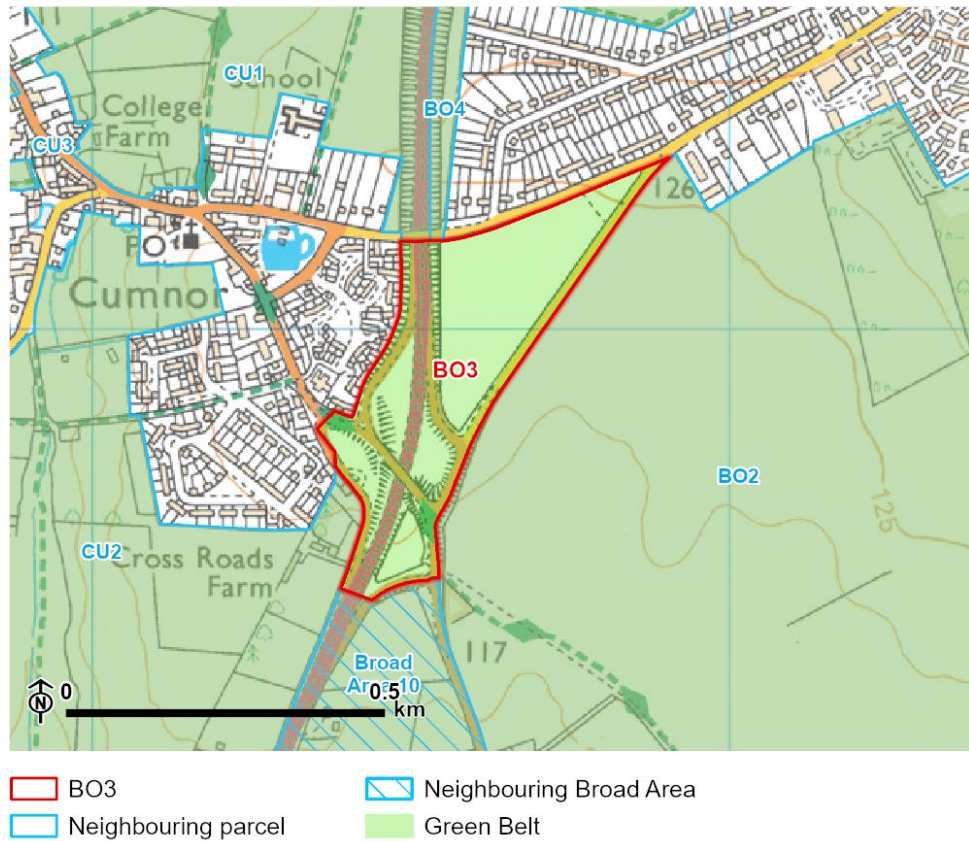
- The wooded Hurst Hill forms part of the green skyline backdrop to Oxford, as seen from parts of the city and from viewpoints on high ground to the east, and so is important as a setting. The area to the east, whilst screened from Oxford by Cumnor Hill, is still important as part of this 'inner ring', and its undeveloped character can be appreciated by users of the several rights of way that pass through the area. The western half of the



## **Appendix A** Parcel BO2

parcel - open, relatively flat arable land between Cumnor and the ridgeline  
- is less important in this respect but does still contribute to Oxford's distinctive setting by emphasising the rural character of the hills that frame the city.

## Parcel BO3



## Parcel BO3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	High	Medium	Low

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

- The parcel abuts both Cumnor village and Cumnor Hill, encompassing the A420 which separates them and a road bridge which connects them. Cumnor Hill is considered to be part of the large built up area, so unlike the other Cumnor parcels, this parcel is assessed against Purpose 1. A clear distinction can be made between the roads associated with the junction, the gaps between which are mostly wooded to provide screening, and the area to the east which is occupied by one large arable field, containing no development. Apart from the road networks, the parcel does not contain any built development and is therefore considered open. Tree cover and the A420 provides a strong boundary between the majority of the parcel and Cumnor village to the west, although the Oxford Road provides a less significant boundary at the urban edge of Cumnor Hill to the north east. Loss of the remaining open countryside either side of the A420 would effectively merge Cumnor village with the large built-up area to the east, contributing to its westwards sprawl.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- There is a clear difference in character between the village of Cumnor, to the west of the A420, and modern ribbon development in Chawley and Cumnor Hill to the east. Whilst there has been modern development close to the A420 on the western side of the road there is still a clear visual separation between the settlements on the two sides of the main road, despite their proximity. Loss of the remaining open countryside either side

of the A420 would effectively merge Cumnor village with Cumnor Hill. Distinction can be made between the western part of the parcel, including the trees and roads, which play an essential role in separating the settlements, and the arable field in the eastern half; however, development in the latter would significantly increase the extent of the developed boundary between the two areas. The treelined A420 would still constitute a significant separator.

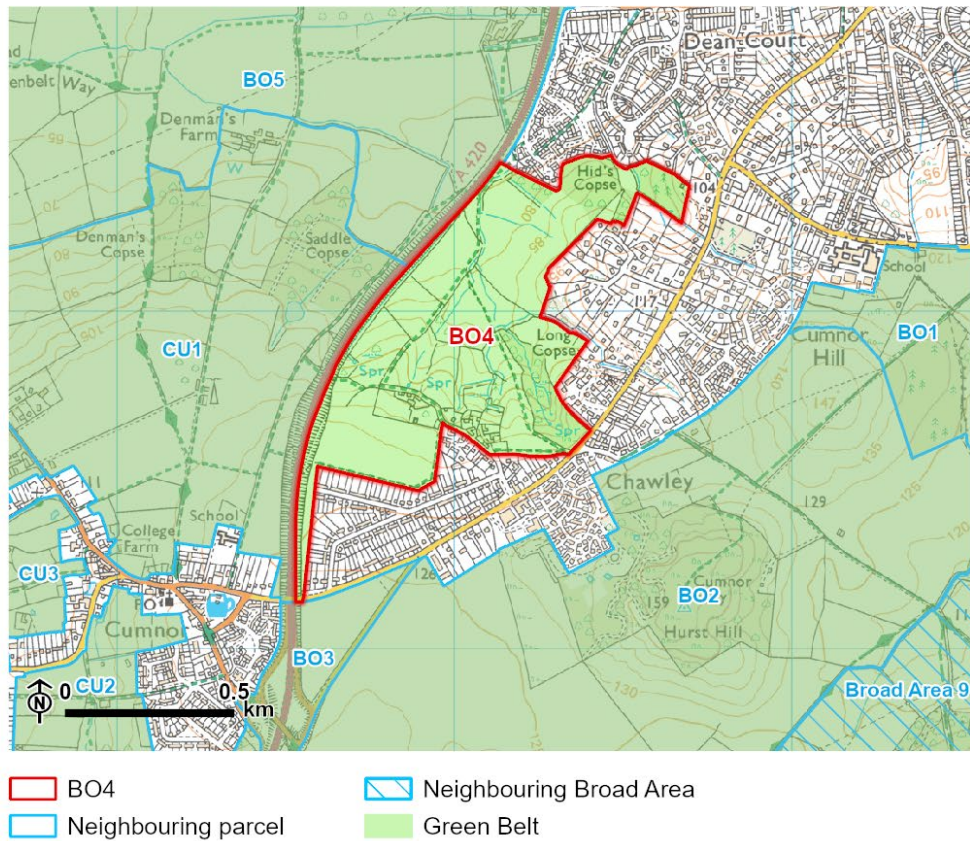
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- A clear distinction can be made between the roads associated with the junction, the gaps between which are mostly wooded to provide screening, and the area to the east which is occupied by one large arable field, containing no development. Although adjacent to the A420, and therefore influenced by traffic noise, the field has a strong visual attachment to the broader arable landscape to the east, from which it is separated only by a road with low hedges, running up the slopes of The Hurst and Youlbury to form an expansive open rural area.

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

- The parcel is screened from Oxford and high ground to the east of the city by the wooded Hurst Hill and Youlbury. Open views across this parcel towards Youlbury and Hurst Hill contribute to the rural character of this area, which in turn generates a sense of the City being contained by a rural landscape, despite its proximity via the developed route through Cumnor Hill and Botley to the city centre. The small size of the parcel limits the extent to which the parcel contributes to this.

## Parcel BO4



# Parcel BO4

## Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
Medium	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel sits to the west of Botley, which is considered to be part of the large built-up area of Oxford. With the exception of a cluster of large largely detached dwellings in the south of the parcel off Chawley Lane there is very little development within the parcel and, therefore, it is considered open. Most of the land within the parcel has been portioned up into small irregular-shaped fields lined by mature woodland, screening views of the surrounding countryside. However, in the larger fields it is possible to see long range views of the countryside to the north and north west of the parcel. The inset urban edge is irregular, containing large portions of the Green Belt within the parcel but tree cover along much of the urban edge provides a physical boundary from the settlement. Furthermore, the parcel slopes downwards away from the urban area limiting the dominance of the containing urban area and maintaining open views of the wider countryside. It is this topography that limits the significance of the A420 as a strong retaining feature preventing sprawl of the large built-up area beyond it, given that any development in the parcel would be visible and have an urbanising influence on the land beyond. Loss of openness in the south western corner of the parcel would narrow what remains of the gap between the large built-up area and neighbouring Cumnor village; however, the urban edge of Cumnor Hill already extends northwards along the road facing Cumnor village and the treelined A420 maintains some separation.



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

- The parcel is situated between Botley to the north and Cumnor Hill to the south and is generally well screened from urbanising influences by tree cover, apart from in the south west of the parcel. These settlements are already joined along the B4044, but the valley form of this parcel to the north of Chawley creates a separation which limits the sense of connection between them. Loss of openness in the south western corner of the parcel would narrow what remains of the gap between Cumnor Hill and Cumnor Village; however, the urban edge of Cumnor Hill already extends northwards along the road facing Cumnor village and the treelined A420 maintains some separation.

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

- The parcel to the north of Chawley Lane is on undulating ground, sloping relatively sharply down from south to north. Most of the land within the parcel has been portioned up into small irregular-shaped fields lined by mature woodland, screening views of the surrounding countryside, although in the larger fields it is possible to see long range views of the countryside to the north and north west of the parcel. With the exception of a cluster of large largely detached dwellings in the south of the parcel off Chawley Lane there is little development within the parcel. Dwellings are rural in character and are not considered to have an urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt parcel. The A420 is not a sufficiently strong presence in the landscape to detract from rural character. The flatter field at the south western corner of the site is more exposed to development within the adjacent urban area on Norreys Road, and so would score less highly.

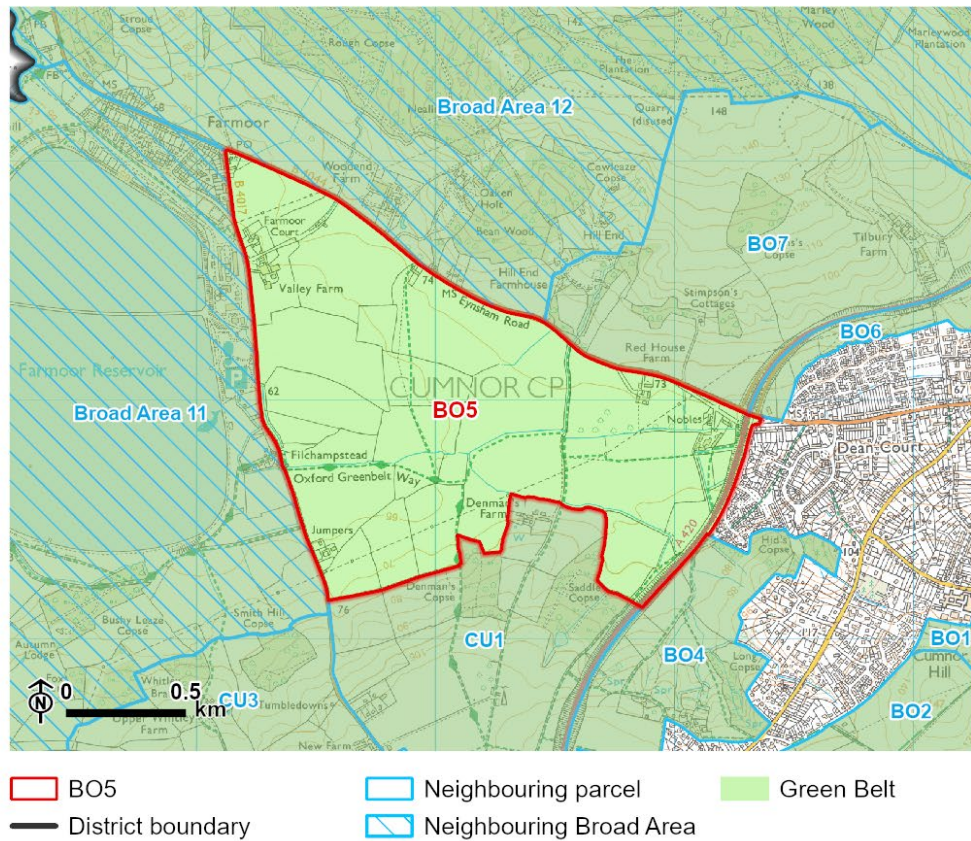
**Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

- These north and west-facing fields and woodland blocks have no intervisibility with Oxford, except potentially to a limited extent at the high, southern end of the parcel. The developed higher hillsides to the north (Dean Court), east and south present a surprisingly wooded appearance in

## **Appendix A** Parcel BO4

views from lower ground to the west, to which the lower slopes within the parcel contribute only to a limited extent.

# Parcel BO5



## Parcel BO5

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Low	High	Medium

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

- The parcel sits to the west of Botley (the Dean Court area), which is considered to be part of the large built-up area of Oxford. The parcel is made-up of large irregular-shaped agricultural fields and is considered open. There are two farms within the parcel – Valley Farm and Red House Farm. There are a few isolated dwellings, a modern housing development in the north eastern corner on Nobles Lane and there are some buildings located in the village of Farmoor at the western edge of the parcel along Cumnor Road (Farmoor Court contains several medium-size buildings used as office space by local businesses). This development does not have a significant impact on openness within the parcel. The A420 dual-carriageway and a woodland block form a strong boundary between the urban area of Botley and land within the parcel, which limit any urbanising influence from the settlement and maintain strong distinction. The land within the parcel slopes down to Farmoor Reservoir to the west. Areas of high ground immediately to the north and south of the parcel limit the views of the wider countryside to those across Farmoor Reservoir and the River Thames beyond, but provide strong open views over the parcel (e.g. from Cumnor Road).

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel borders Botley on its eastern boundary, with Cumnor situated to the south. The A420 provides separation at present, but a loss of openness to the west of the main road could, due to the visibility of the

parcel in the landscape, be viewed as a reduction in the extent of the settlement gap. There is however no significant intervisibility between the settlements. Eynsham, to the north west, has little visual relationship with the other settlements. Development along the B4044 would narrow the gap between Botley and Farmoor; however, Farmoor is not included as an inset settlement for the purpose of this assessment.

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

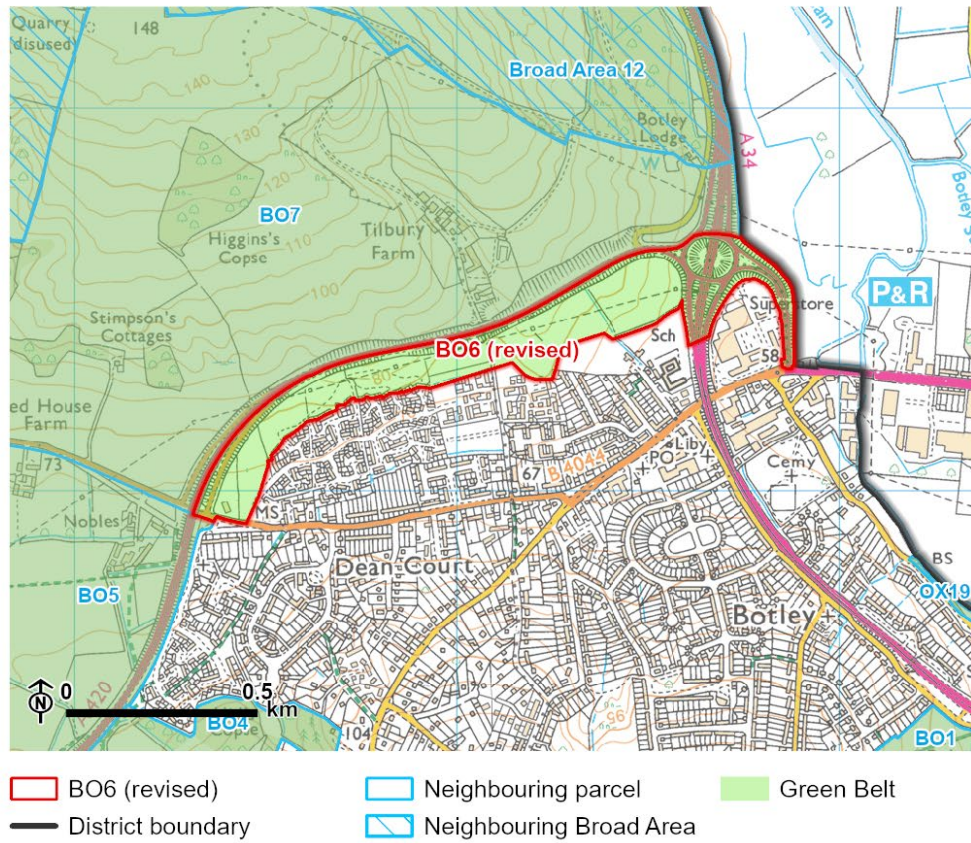
- The parcel is important as a very visible, open rural landscape close to the urban edge at Botley, with strong views from surrounding higher ground. In places these views also encompass the reservoir at Farmoor, which adds to the sense of openness. The impact of urbanising development in this context is currently small, and limited to the parcel's fringes. The parcel is well screened from the urban area of Botley and Cumnor Hill as the A420 and woodland blocks create a strong boundary.

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

- This is an open, flat, agricultural landscape of large fields. There is no intervisibility with central Oxford, but heading towards the city from Eynsham/Farmoor, the character and form of the wooded hills that frame the west side of Oxford is apparent, with the Chawley/Dean Court/Botley urban area being well screened by tree cover. The fields in this parcel contribute to that rural setting, and are very open to view from the higher ground that surrounds them on three sides.



# Parcel BO6





## Parcel BO6

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
Medium	N/C	Low	Medium

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

- The parcel sits to the north of Botley (which is considered to be part of the large built-up area of Oxford in the study) on the lower slopes of Wytham Hill, and contains a thin strip of undeveloped land in between the settlement edge and the A420. There are three fields within the parcel and one thin pocket of woodland. A line of pylons runs through the thin parcel and a small community building sits in the western corner, but there is no significant development within the parcel and therefore it is considered open. Within the open fields it is possible to see out over the village of Botley to the south and Oxford to the east; however, there are relatively few views of the wider countryside from the parcel. Sandwiched between the village and the A420, the openness of this strip of ground is considered to be strongly affected by the adjacent urban area. However, land slopes upwards from the urban area and tree cover in the west of the parcel also creates some land cover distinction.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel plays no role in settlement separation, being contained within the A420, and from settlements to the north by Wytham Hill.

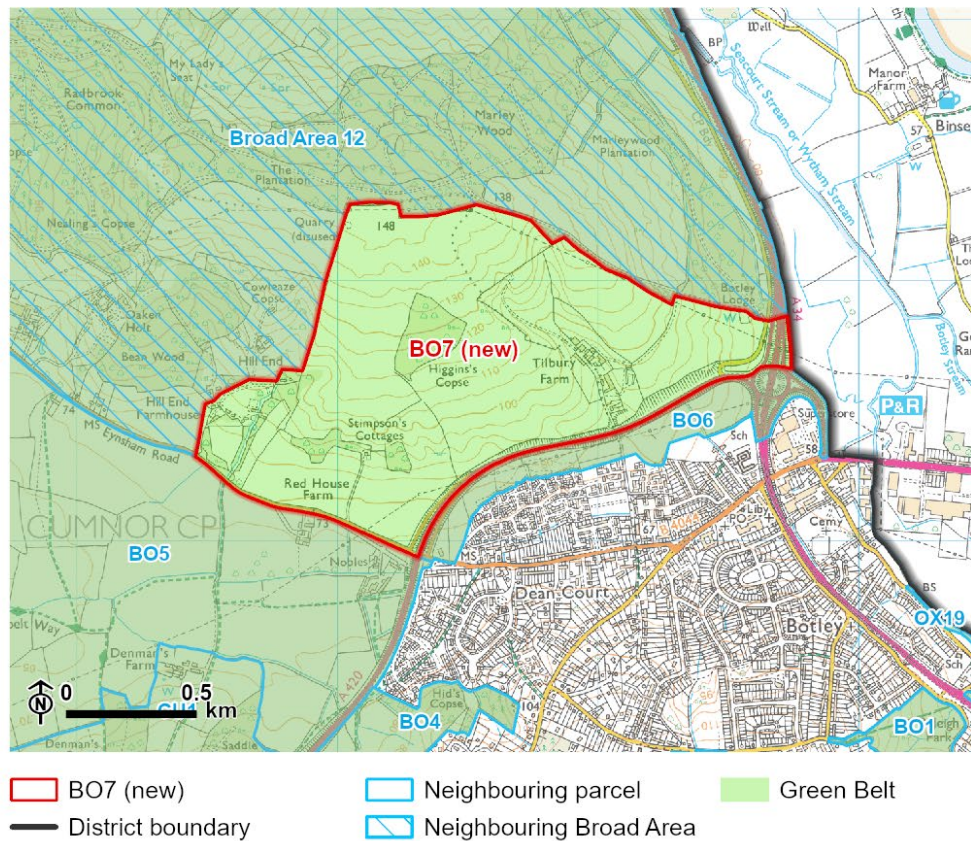
#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

- This narrow strip of land between Botley and the A420 is significantly affected by urban influences, and separated from the wider countryside by the dual-carriageway.

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

- Eynsham Road / West Way run through the lowest part of Botley, with most of the urban area rising upslope to the south. There is some limited development up from the valley floor to the north, but the undeveloped slopes up to Wytham Hill are a significant feature in the containment of Oxford within its 'ring' of hills. The location of the parcel to the south of the A420 suggests some separation from Wytham Hill, but this sloping land is potential visible from high points in central Oxford - e.g. the University Church of St Mary - as part of the rural backdrop to views across the city rooftops and spires. The pylons within and near the parcel already detract, and visible development set against a wooded backdrop (which hides the A420) would detract further.

# Parcel BO7



## Parcel BO7

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Low	High	High

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

- The parcel sits to the north of Botley (the Dean Court area), which is considered to be part of the large built-up area of Oxford, separated only by the A420 and adjoining roads at its south western and south eastern corners. The parcel is made-up of large irregular-shaped agricultural fields separated by pockets of woodland on the lower slopes of Wytham Hill and is considered open. There are small, isolated clusters of farm buildings and cottages which do not have a significant impact on openness within the parcel. The A420 forms a strong boundary between the urban area of Botley and land within the parcel. The rising topography within the parcel maintains open views of the wider countryside. Together they limit any urbanising influence from the settlement and maintain strong distinction from it.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel sits in a wide gap between Eynsham and Botley; however, the topography of the parcel and the land to the north limits the potential for settlement merger. Development along the B4044 at the parcel's southwestern edge would narrow the gap between Botley and Farmoor; however, Farmoor is not included as an inset settlement for the purpose of this assessment.

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

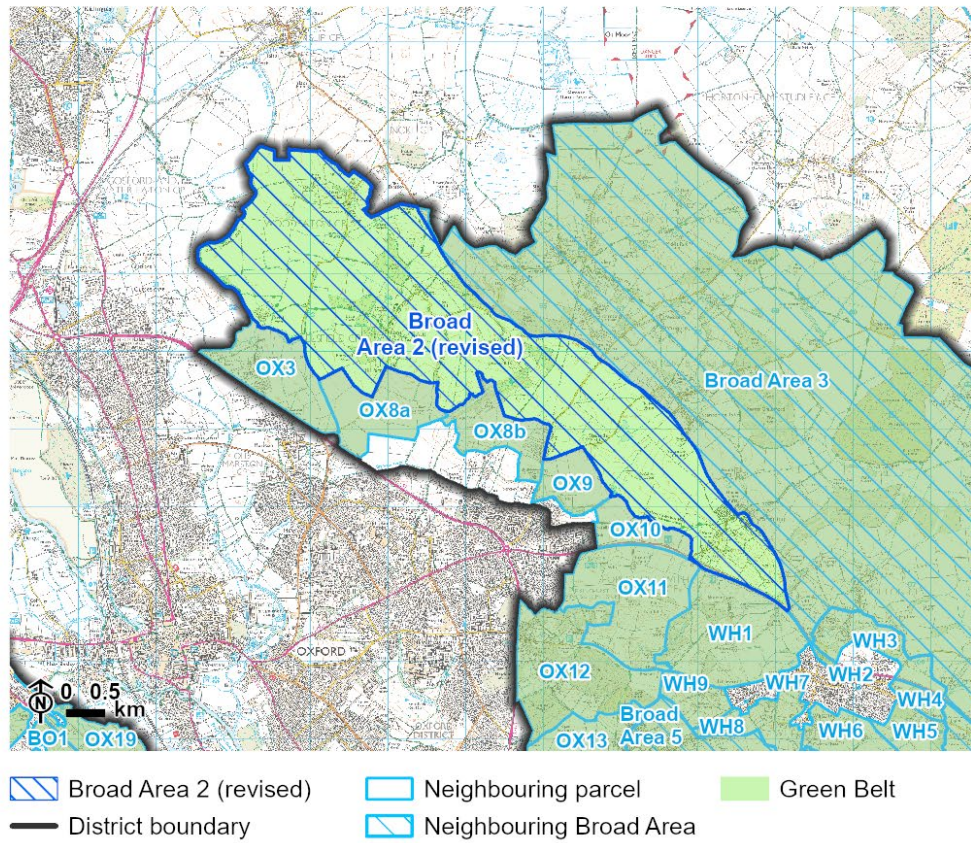
- The parcel is important as a very visible, open rural landscape close to the urban edge at Botley, with strong views of with wider countryside from its upper northern slopes. There are small, isolated clusters of farm buildings and cottages which do not have a significant impact on openness within the parcel. The parcel is well screened from the urban area of Botley by the A420 although the urban area is visible away from the urban edge as the land within the parcels rises.

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

- Wytham Hill with its associated woodland forms the bulk of the parcel. This is an important landscape feature, forming a green backdrop to views from the city and from viewpoints to the east.



## Broad Area 2





## Broad Area 2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	High

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The southern part of the Broad Area is located to the north of Oxford and Wheatley, and the northern area is situated to the east of Kidlington. The Broad Area is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose, with the exception of the area around Forest Hill in the south eastern corner being located between Oxford and Wheatley, so overall it makes only a small contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.
- The Broad Area does however include the settlements of Elsfield in the central area of the Broad Area, and Forest Hill in the eastern area, both of which are in relatively close proximity to Oxford, and Forest Hill is also in close proximity to Wheatley. Both settlements, due to their elevated positions, have views between their respective settlements and Oxford. The Green Belt therefore plays a role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between these settlements and Oxford/Wheatley.

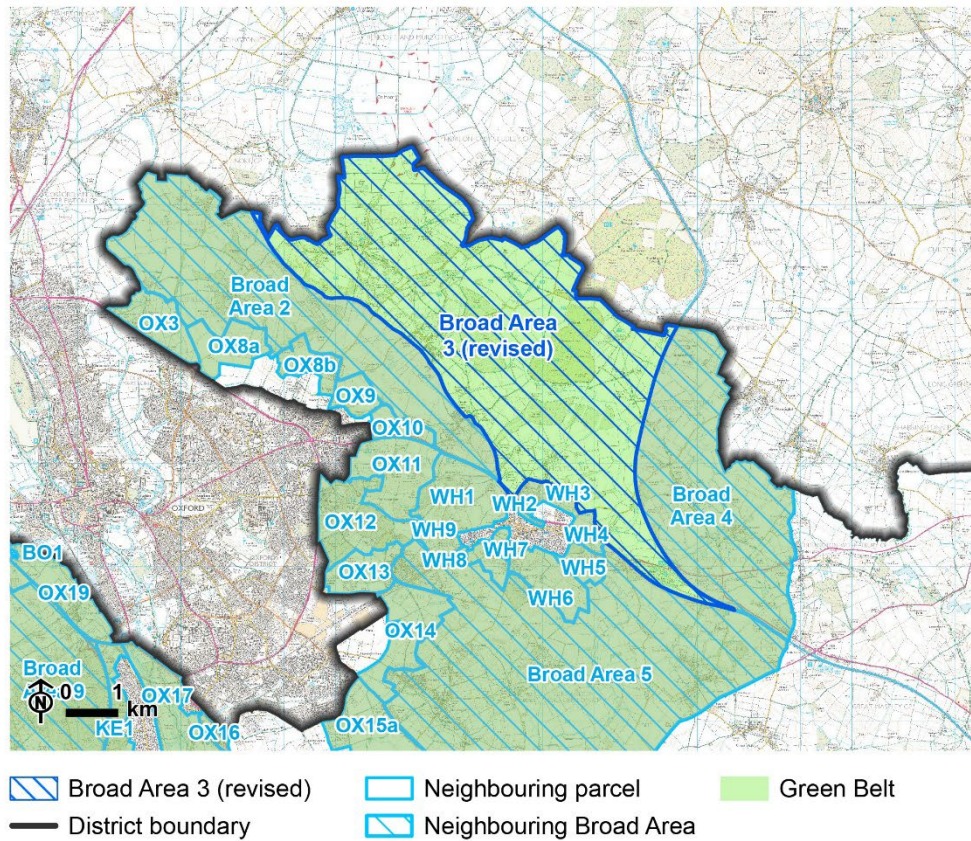
#### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The Broad Area contains four villages – Woodeaton, Elsfield and Forest Hill, all of which are rural in character. The River Cherwell and its floodplain flow along the north western edge of the Broad Area. The rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open agricultural fields, typically with open views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- The higher ground at the northern end of the parcel forms the eastern side of the Cherwell Valley, rising up to the hilltop north of Woodeaton provides a distinctive marker of the edge of Oxford's visual setting. The ridge and slopes to the south provide a backdrop to views out from Oxford, and to views from the hills to the west of the city. Elsfield provides one of the key viewpoints over Oxford featured in the 'viewcones' policy.

## Broad Area 3



## Broad Area 3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	Low

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area is a large expanse of land with the main area of the Broad Area located to the north of Oxford, the southern area located north of Wheatley and the northern area located to the northeast of Kidlington. The Broad Area has a strong sense of openness throughout its landscape, including the flatter lower lying topography in the northern area and the more undulating southern topography. The Broad Area is not, however, in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose and makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between and makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.
- The northern area of the Broad Area includes Islip and Charlton-on-Otmoor which are in relatively close proximity of one another and on relatively flat topography providing limited views between one another. Beckley is located in the southern central area of the Broad Area in close proximity to Horton-cum-Studley, both of which are located within undulating topography thereby limiting views between the settlements. The Green Belt therefore plays a limited role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between these settlements. These settlements are

not relevant to this purpose in isolation but their continued separation inhibits the creation of a larger urban area over the long term.

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

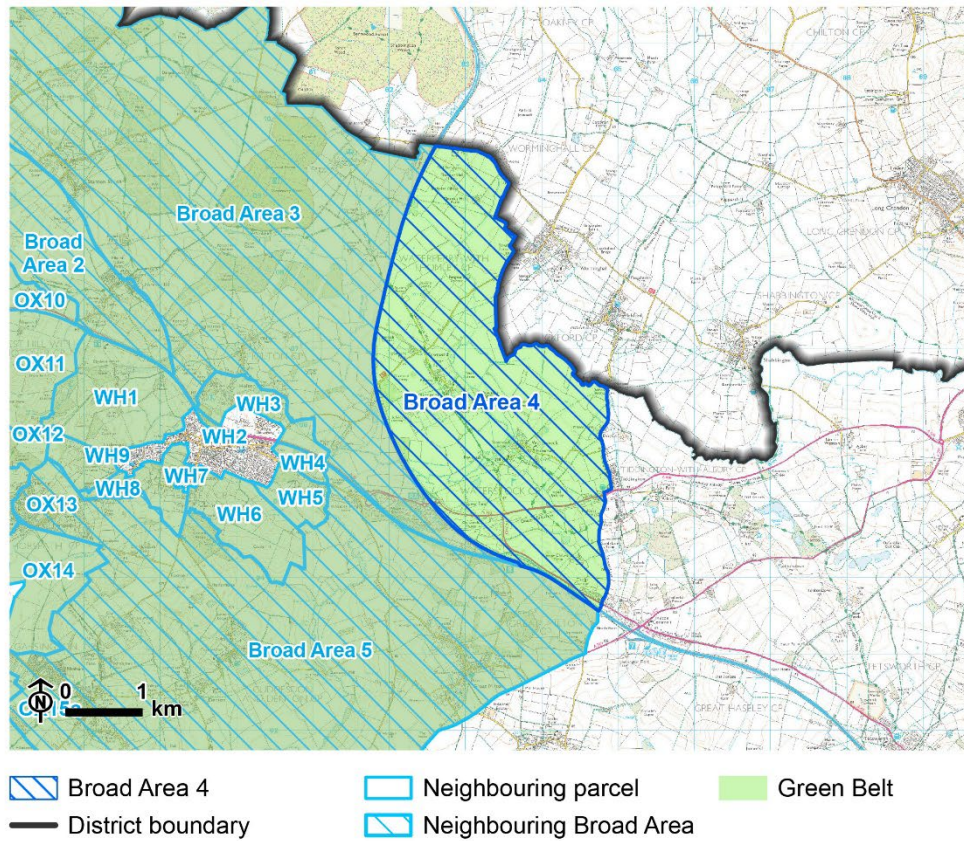
- The broad area contains nine villages: Islip, Noke, Beckley, Oddington, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Fencott, Murcott, Horton cum Studley and part of Forest Hill. All are rural in character; however the size and density of Islip and Charlton-on-Otmoor compared to the other settlements makes them more urbanising influences. The most urbanised area of the broad area is located at its southern tip in between the M40 and A40. This thin strip of land contains a gypsy and traveller site, an open-air depot and Wheatley Service Station, which in combination with the two major roads represents a significant urbanising influence on the Green Belt within the surrounding area. Other significant features within the broad area include Otmoor, the River Ray and Holton Brook and their associated floodplains. There are several SSSI scattered throughout the broad area on the moor and in ancient woodlands. The rest of the broad area is made-up of open agricultural fields with excellent views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- The northern end of parcel, around Otmoor, is a very open, sparsely settled, low-lying landscape alongside which the A34 Bicester-Oxford road passes before entering the Cherwell Valley on the approach to Oxford. The ridge along the south-western side of the parcel provides extensive views across a very wooded, rural landscape to the east which, in the absence of any visual relationship with Oxford, or any major routes towards it, feels less connected in terms of setting but nonetheless contributes to the city's wider rural context.



## Broad Area 4





## Broad Area 4

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	Low

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area is located to the east of Wheatley and the M40 Motorway. The Broad Area is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose and makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.
- The Broad Area includes the small settlements of Waterperry and Waterstock which are situated amongst open, flat land with views between one another, and the small settlement of Tiddington lies to east outside but bordering the Green Belt. These settlements are not relevant to this purpose in isolation but their continued separation inhibits the creation of a larger urban area over the long term.

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

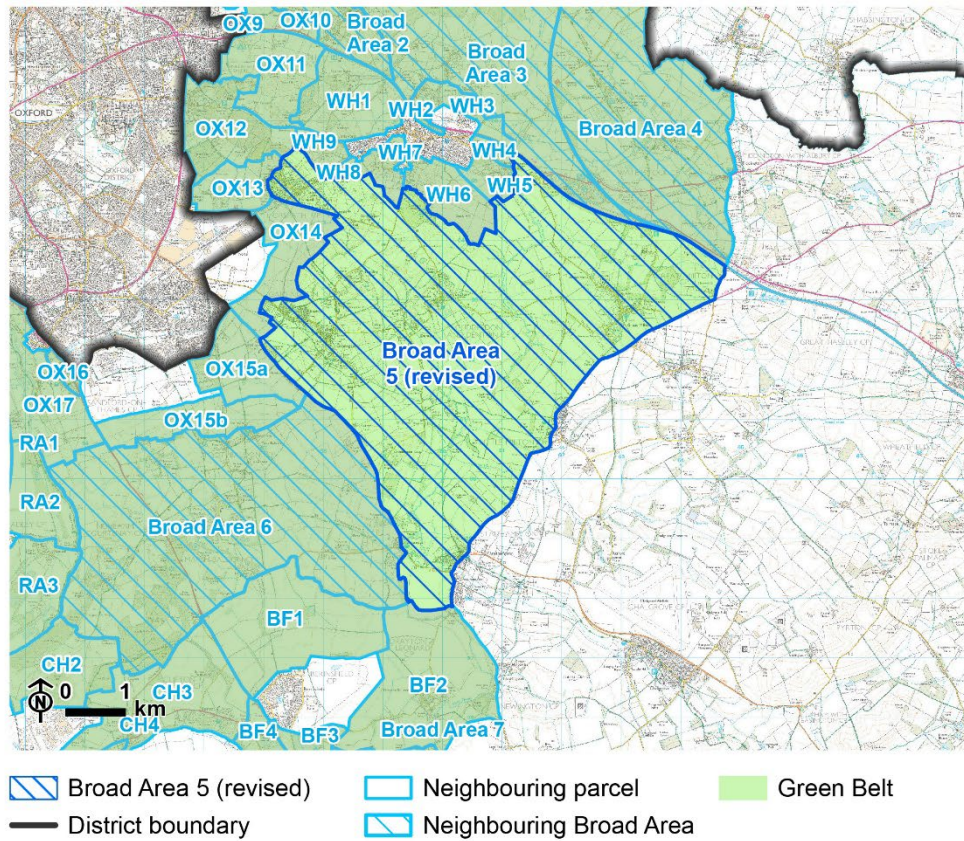
- The Broad Area contains and/or borders three villages – Tiddington, Waterstock and Waterperry. All are rural in character. Waterstock lies adjacent to a large golf course – Waterstock Golf Course. The River Thame and its floodplain flow through the centre of the Broad Area. The

rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open agricultural fields with excellent views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- The parcel is physically and visually detached from Oxford. It contributes to the general rural character of the city's surroundings, experienced on approaching from the M40/A40, but there is no great sense of being in Oxford's setting. The River Thame, which passes through the area, joins the Thames some way south of the city, at Dorchester, and so does not provide a strong landscape connection.

## Broad Area 5



## Broad Area 5

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	High

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area is located to the south of Wheatley and southeast of Oxford. The Broad Area plays some role in preventing the reduction of the visual and physical gap between Oxford and Wheatley as it encompasses most of the village of Horspath, together with some open land to the east which constitutes part of the gap between Horspath and Littleworth (which adjoins and is therefore considered to form part of Wheatley). The loss of this open land would be perceived as reducing the gap between the settlements. In isolation, this section of the Broad Area could be rated as high against Purpose 2.
- The Broad Area also includes the settlements of Garsington and Cuddesdon which are in close proximity of one another and close proximity of Oxford and Wheatley respectively. The elevated positions of Garsington and Cuddesdon, in relation to the surrounding landscape, provide views between them and the surrounding settlements across the areas of open land. The openness of the parcel therefore plays a role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between these settlements and between the settlements and Oxford and Wheatley. These settlements are not relevant to this purpose in isolation but their

continued separation inhibits the creation of a larger urban area over the long term.

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

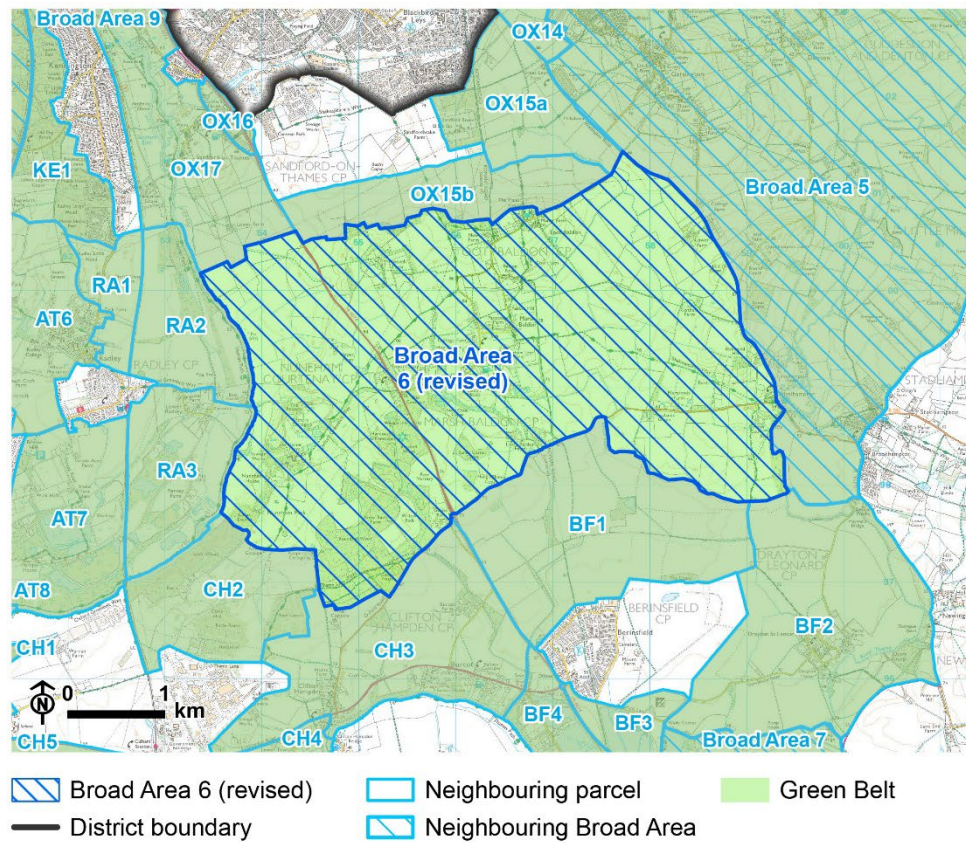
- The Broad Area contains seven villages – Horspath, Garsington, Denton, Cuddesdon, Great Milton, Little Milton and Stadhampton. All are rural in character; however the size and density of Horspath, Garsington and Stadhampton make them more urbanising influences. The River Thames and its floodplain flow through the centre of the Broad Area. The rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open agricultural fields with excellent views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- The western part of the Broad Area includes high ground which forms part of the ring of hills that encompasses much of Oxford's immediate visual setting. The Broad Area is only a short distance from the fringe of Oxford, but in area that has a modern, urban edge character (Blackbird Leys and the Mini plant at Cowley) rather than any sense of association with the historic city. There is visibility of the City centre spires from the vicinity of Garsington, although Cowley dominates these views, but the hills around Garsington and also above Horspath form part of the green backdrop to views from towers in the City centre (views in which buildings in Cowley are barely visible). To the east the area comprises the valley of the River Thames, a broad, open valley in which the agricultural surrounds of Oxford, and the role of the hills that frame the city, can be appreciated on approaching along the B480. There is less of a sense of relationship with Oxford's setting where the landform and roads relate more to the River Thames and its tributary brooks (e.g. around Cuddesdon and Great Milton).



## Broad Area 6





## Broad Area 6

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	High

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area and so is not assessed against this Purpose.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area is located to the south of the Oxford urban area, to the east and southeast of Radley and to the north of Culham Science Centre and Berinsfield. All of these settlements are relatively distant from one another other than Culham Science Centre and Berinsfield, but the Broad Area does not lie directly between them and so is not considered to make more than a low contribution to settlement separation.
- The Broad Area also includes the smaller unassessed settlements of Toot Baldon and Marsh Baldon which are in close proximity to one another, and in relatively close proximity to the south of Oxford. The two settlements are on elevated ground in comparison to their surroundings and have limited views between one another, and towards Oxford. The Broad Area therefore plays some role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between these settlements, and between them and Oxford. These settlements are not relevant to this purpose in isolation but their continued separation inhibits the creation of a larger urban area over the long term.

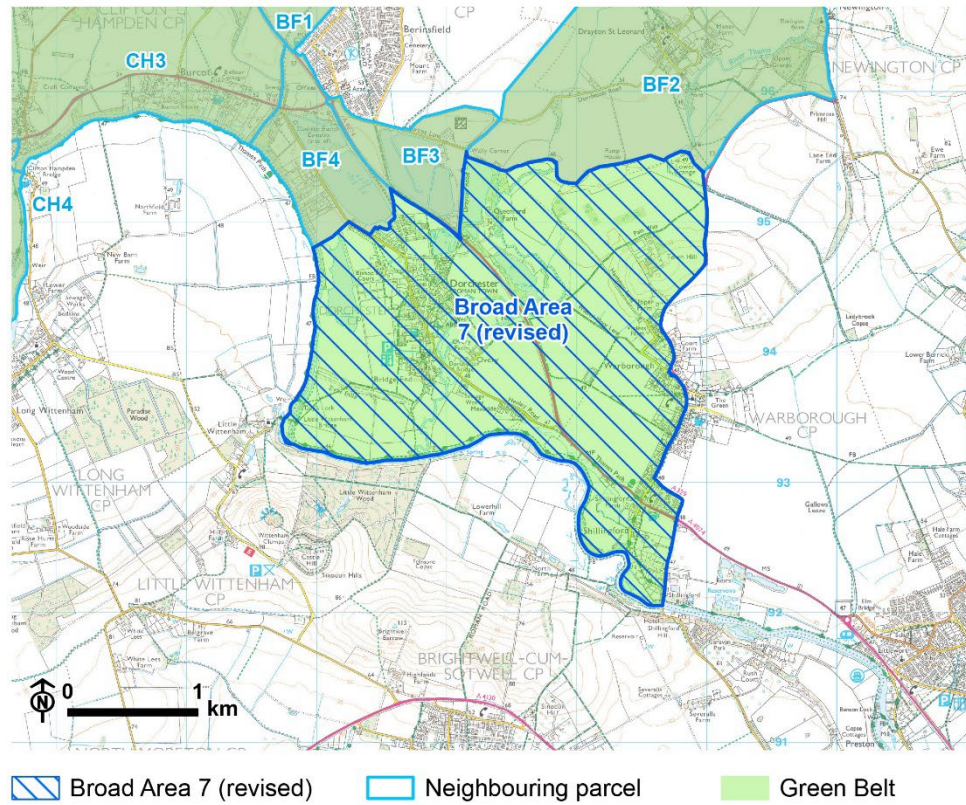
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The Broad Area contains four villages – Nuneham Courtenay, Toot Balson, Marsh Baldon and Clifton Hampden. All are rural in character. The centre of the Broad Area contains the large Grade I listed Nuneham Courtenay Registered Park and Garden with its large ancient woodlands and open fields. The River Thames and its floodplain flows along the western edge of the Broad Area. The rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open agricultural fields with open views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- The hills to the south of Oxford are for the most part lower than those that frame the city to the east and west, but they provide important vistas along the Thames Valley approach to the city, in particular from Nuneham Park (one of the viewpoints in Oxford's viewcones policy). Nuneham House in its parkland setting, and the wooded ridgeline above the valley, are an important element of the city's setting. The river valley itself, on the western edge of the parcel, provides an important link between the city centre and the countryside, and although the importance of this reduces to the south of Abingdon-on-Thames the distinctive meanders and historic riverside settlements can still be seen to contribute to the Oxford's historic character, and are seen in context with Oxford by those approaching by river or on the Thames Path. Away from the Thames and the higher ground facing Oxford, to the south east, the Broad Area plays a less direct role in the city's setting but still provide a rural setting that can be appreciated on approach along the A4074 and B480. The 'high' rating relates to the Thames Valley approach to Oxford, whilst the rest of the parcel is considered to make a 'medium' contribution.

# Broad Area 7



## Broad Area 7

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	Low

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area lies south of the inset settlement of Berinsfield and is located on the southern limits of the Green Belt. The nearest settlement considered under Purpose 2 is Culham Science Centre, but the area is separated by a wider meander of the River Thames and is peripheral to the gap, significantly limiting its contribution to maintaining separation. The Broad Area includes the village of Dorchester and part of the villages of Warborough/Shillingford in the south east. These settlements are in close proximity of Berinsfield but are more distant from one another. Due to the openness of the Broad Area and the flat topography, the Green Belt plays a role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between these settlements and Berinsfield (e.g. in views from Wittenham Clumps) just to the south of the Broad Area. With the exception of newly inset Berinsfield, these settlements are not relevant to this purpose in isolation but their continued separation inhibits the creation of a larger urban area over the long term.

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

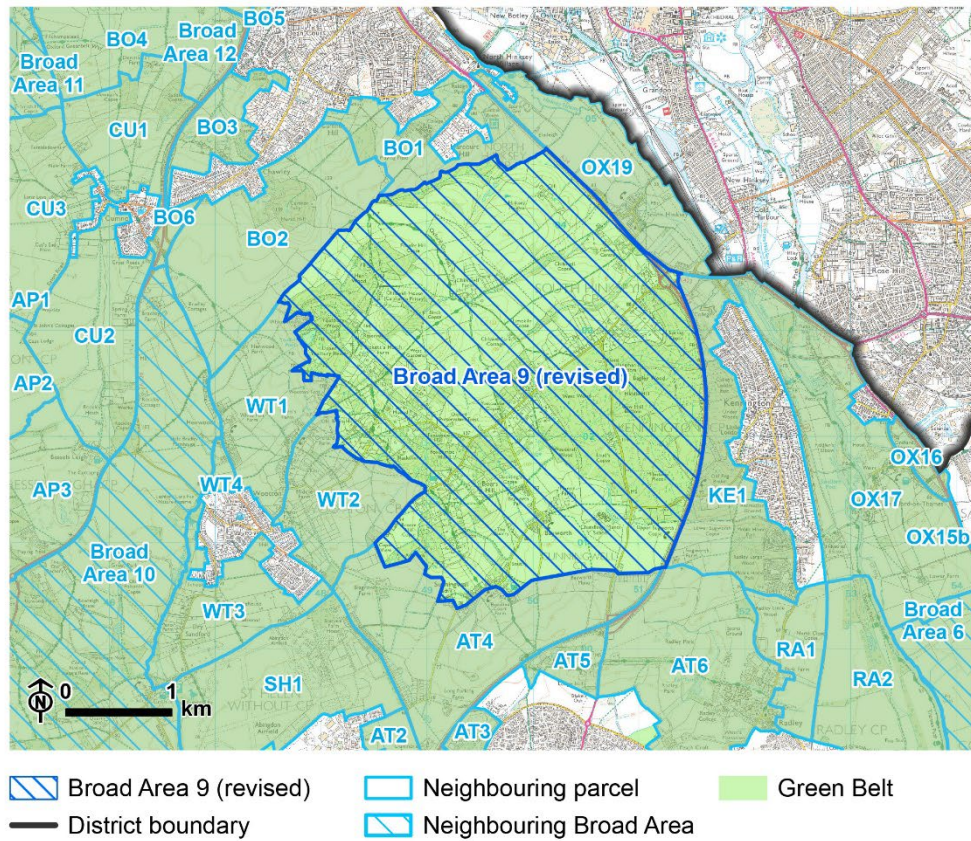
- The Broad Area contains three villages – Dorchester, Warborough and Shillingford. All are rural in character; however the size and density of Dorchester make it more of an urbanising influence. There are several large Scheduled Monuments within the parcel. The River Thames follows along the western and southern border of the Broad Area with a significant area of its floodplain spilling into it. The southern bank of the River Thames marks the northernmost extent of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. The River Thame runs through the centre of the Broad Area, joining the River Thames at its southern border. The rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open agricultural fields with excellent views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- The parts of this Broad Area close to the Thames, where it cuts a distinctive course in the vicinity of Shillingford, Dorchester, Burcot and Clifton Hampden, play some role contributing to Oxford's setting and special character. Whilst there is no visual connection with Oxford, the historic riverside settlements set the scene for those approaching the city by boat, along the Thames Path or on the A4074. This creates a perception of rural tranquillity which along the river is largely preserved all the way into the city centre, although distance does limit the extent of this contribution.



## Broad Area 9



## Broad Area 9

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	High

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area is surrounded by the settlements of Oxford, Kennington, Abingdon-on-Thames, Wootton and Botley, which are all relatively distant from one another. The Broad Area plays a minor role in preventing the reduction of the physical gap between the settlements. The Broad Area includes small, including Boars Hill, the northern half of Sunningwell and Bayworth, which are in close proximity to one another and Wootton to the west but are not assessed against this Purpose. The land between these villages and Wootton is relatively open with views between the settlements. The Broad Area also plays a role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between settlements.

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

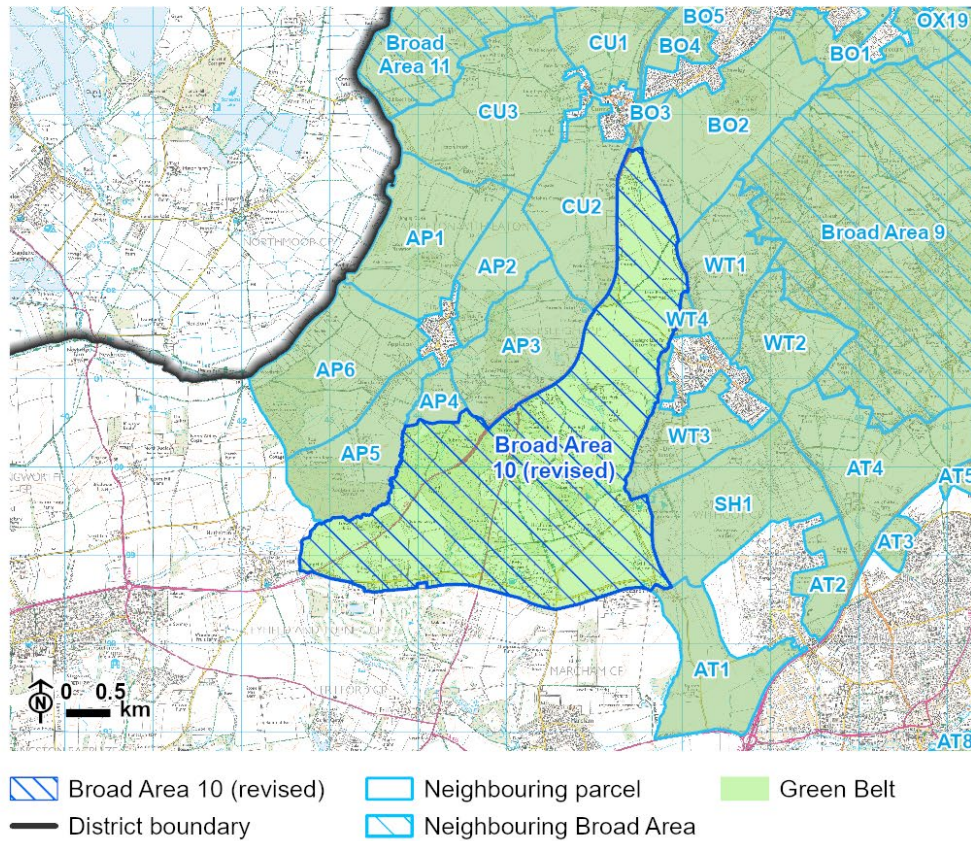
- The Broad Area contains several small, linear rural settlements made-up of large detached residential dwellings in wooded settings. Open agricultural fields with views of the surrounding countryside sit in between the pockets of woodland. There are some notable urbanising influences, e.g. the Peking University HSBC Business School UK Campus; however, sitting on open, high ground within significant areas of woodland,

combined with the intermittent wide ranging open views of the wider countryside limit their significance as encroachment of the countryside.

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

- The Broad Area contains a number of linear, dispersed settlements in wooded settings. The higher east-facing slopes are important as a green backdrop to views from high points in Oxford centre, and in views from high ground to the east of the City. The presence of trees dominate over built development with some distinctive ornamental planting (e.g. Scots pine) but this doesn't detract from the impression of a rural setting.
- The Broad Area includes some locations with key views: Jarn Mound and the Oxford Preservation Trust monument at Boars Hill (to which open foreground slopes make an important contribution) and the A34 at Hinksey Hill. A number of rights of way from the City also pass through this area.
- There is no visual relationship between land to west of hilltops and Oxford, but open slopes up to wooded high ground contribute to the perception of Oxford's historic rural setting on approach, including from the A34.

# Broad Area 10





## Broad Area 10

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The northern portion of the Broad Area is surrounded by the settlements of Cumnor, Appleton and Wootton. While the south eastern portion of the Broad Area is located directly to the west of the gap between Abingdon-on-Thames (merged with Shippon) and Wootton to the north of them.
- The settlement of Tubney, not assessed against this Purpose, is located on the southernmost boundary of the Broad Area and is relatively distant from other settlements with rising topography to the north separating it from settlements such as Appleton. The Broad Area plays a limited role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between Appleton and Tubney.

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

- The Broad Area contains the villages of Bessels Leigh, Cothill and Tubney. They are rural in character but there is a large facility (Oxford Instruments) in Tubney Woods. The influence of this urbanising feature on the surrounding Green Belt is significantly reduced by its location in the wood. Other significant features within the Broad Area include Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI and the large wood of Tubney Wood,

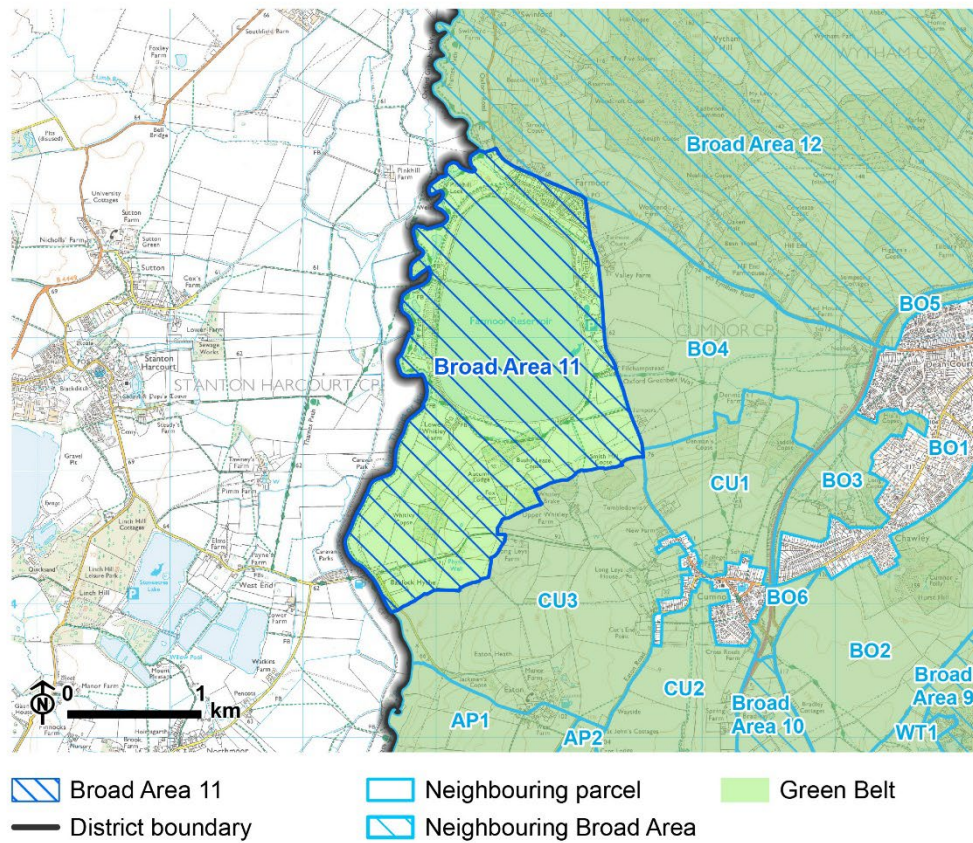
including ancient woodlands. The rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open agricultural fields with open views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- Gently undulating landform, generally falling in a southerly direction, bisected by several shallow stream valleys. Well wooded to the south-west, with smaller fields, and more open and arable to the north towards Cumnor. There are no visual links with Oxford, and there is little sense of this area having any connection to the city through its landscape character. However, the hills that form the western side of the ring around Oxford are more evident from the open, arable landscape in the north, including from the A420 approaching Cumnor and Botley, and this makes a contribution to the perception of the wider rural setting of Oxford.



# Broad Area 11



## Broad Area 11

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	High	Medium

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area is adjacent to the western most limits of the Green Belt, to the west of Botley and Cumnor. The Broad Area is not however in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose and makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.

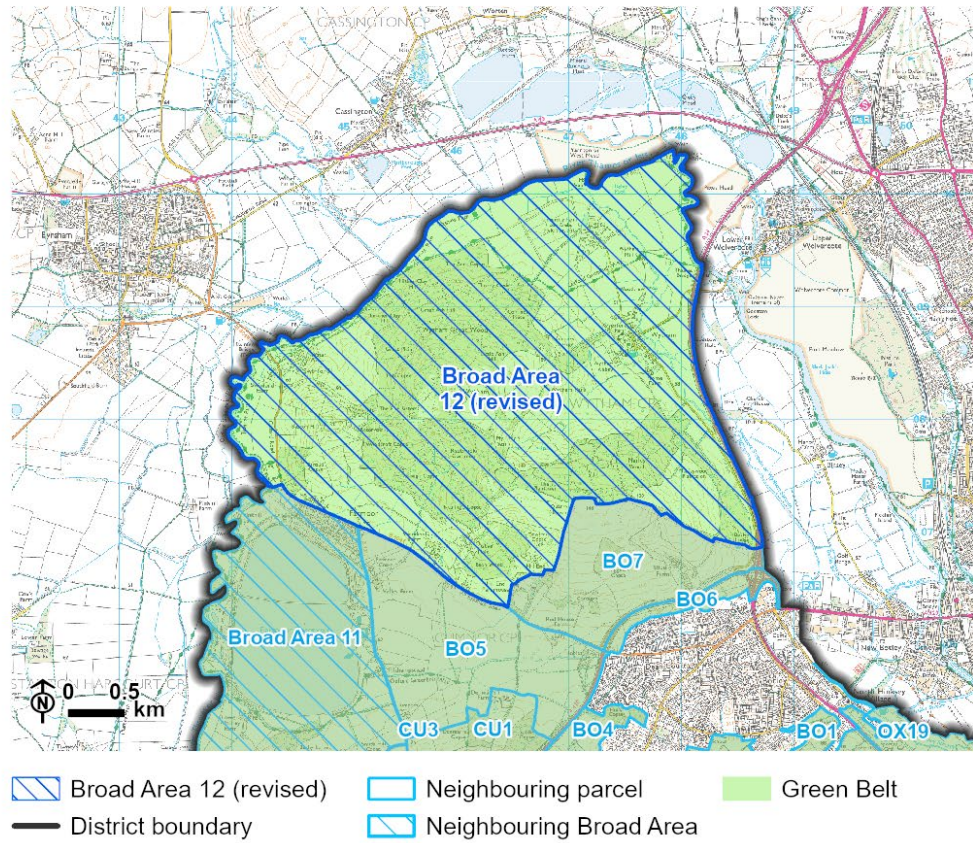
#### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The Broad Area contains the village of Farmoor and the large Farmoor Reservoir. Farmoor is rural in character; however, the eastern bank of the reservoir contains a large sewage treatment works and recreation facilities linked to the reservoir. These features represent the only significant urbanising influences on the countryside within the area. The River Thames follows the western border of the Broad Area with its floodplain spilling into the western portions of the area. The rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open, relatively flat agricultural fields with open views of the surrounding countryside.

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

- Farmland with woodland blocks at the southern end of the area slope down westward towards the Thames, and to Farmoor reservoir, which occupies much of the Broad Area. Despite being close to Botley and the A420 the screening effect of trees means that the area retains a rural character. There is no intervisibility with Oxford, but the proximity of this area to the City and to the Thames, and its links to the city in terms of recreational use (water sports and walking) add value in terms of setting.

# Broad Area 12



## Broad Area 12

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	High

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

- The Broad Area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The Broad Area sits in a wider gap between Eynsham and Botley; however, the topography of the Broad Area limits the potential for settlement merger.

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

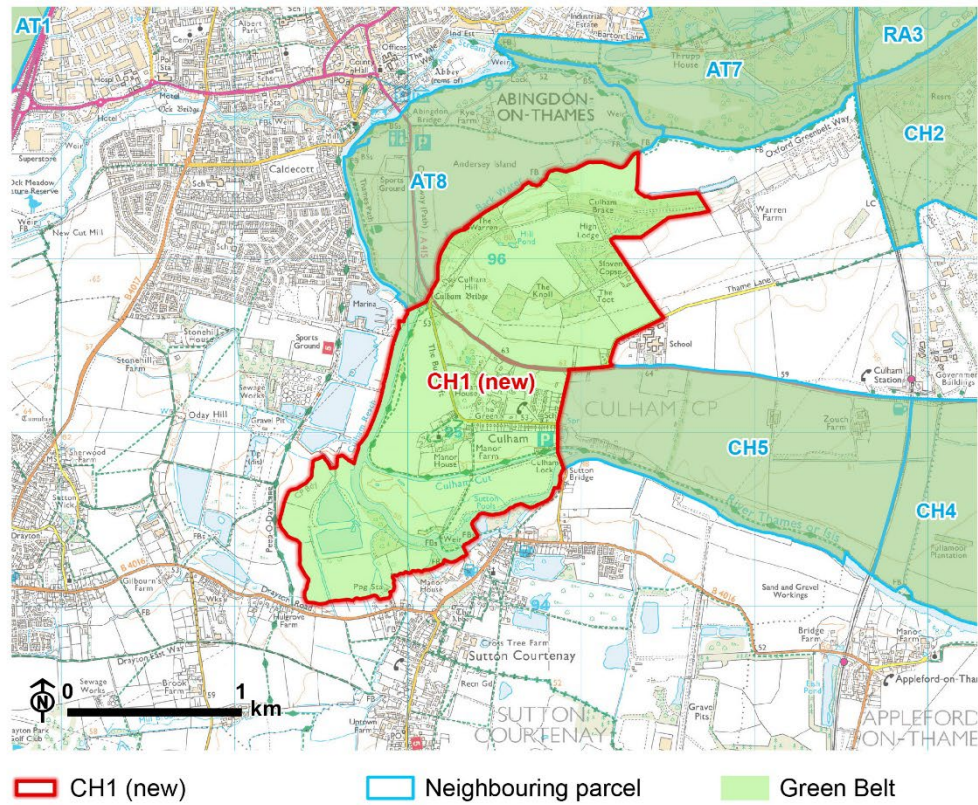
- The Broad Area contains the village of Wytham which is rural in character. The only urbanising influence within the Broad Area is the Swinford Water Works next to the River Thames at the western edge of the Broad Area. The River Thames follows the western edges of the Broad Area with its floodplain spilling into the northern and western portions of the parcel. Wytham Woods, some of which is ancient woodland, sits on top of Wytham Hill which rises steeply from the floodplain of the River Thames and has open views of Oxford and the surrounding countryside. The portions of the Broad Area that are not wooded or flood plain are open agricultural fields.

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



- Wytham Hill with its associated woodland forms the bulk of the Broad Area. This is an important landscape feature, forming a green backdrop to views from the city and from viewpoints to the east. The Thames flows through the northern part of the area as it turns east then south towards Port meadow and the central area of the city, so this too forms a key element of Oxford's setting. Whilst the western side of the area lacks intervisibility with Oxford, the wooded hillside and the gap through which the Thames passes are nonetheless distinctive landscape features closely associated with the City.

# Parcel CH1



## Parcel CH1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	High	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to a strategic allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre) that adjoins Culham Science Centre, which are not part of the large built-up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is comprised of agricultural land and areas of tree cover, with Culham Brake SSSI lying adjacent to Swift Ditch/Back Water watercourse in the north. The southern half of the parcel contains the washed over village of Culham. The parcel lies in a settlement gap between Abingdon-on-Thames and the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated adjacent strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), which together represent a new neighbouring town in the Green Belt. Loss of openness in the northern half of the parcel would weaken the perceived separation between these inset settlements, although the floodplain of the River Thames acts as significant separating feature. Furthermore, the emerging indicative concept plan for the land adjacent to Culham Science Centre retains a significant area of open countryside to the north and west of the developed area to maintain views, maintaining visual separation alongside the existing mature woodland within the parcel.

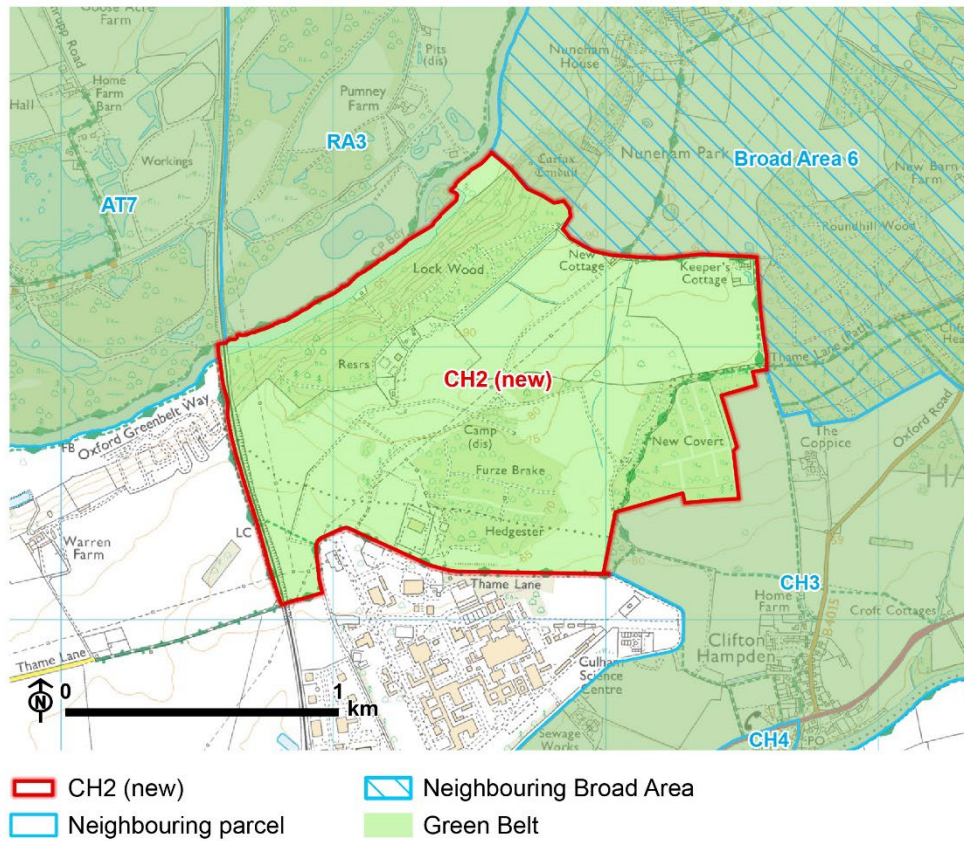
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel lies to the south of Swift Ditch/Back Water, a tributary of the River Thames, and is comprised of agricultural fields and areas of tree cover. The southern half of the parcel contains part of the River Thames and the village of Culham. The village has some impact in reducing openness locally, but the majority of the parcel is considered open. The parcel abuts Sutton Courtenay to the south and a strategic allocation (Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre – SLP045) to the east. Culham Hill north of the village and the River Thames mark distinction between the Green Belt within the parcel and Abingdon-on-Thames to the west. The treelined River Thames marks distinction between the parcel and Sutton Courtenay to the south. Similarly, existing tree cover and emerging indicative concept plan work showing green buffers along the strategic allocations outer edges will limit its urbanising influence on the countryside within the parcel.

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

- The parcel consists of Thames-side meadowland and tree cover. There is no intervisibility with Oxford but it forms part of the undeveloped Thames Valley landscape that extends all the way into the centre of the city, thus giving it a relationship with Oxford that relates to one of the key elements of its special character. However, distance does limit the extent of this contribution. The riverside long distance path is well used and a popular riverboat service links Oxford and Abingdon-on-Thames, so the landscape between the two historic towns is viewed as a sequence.

## Parcel CH2





## Parcel CH2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to the north of Culham Science Centre, which is not part of the large built-up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel partially lies on the periphery of two settlement gaps: one to the north between Radley and the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated adjacent strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), which together represent a new neighbouring town in the Green Belt, and one to the east between Berinsfield and the new inset settlement, both of which result in some low contribution to this purpose. The parcel is open and generally well screened, apart from in the south west and south east where it abuts Culham Science Centre. However, the parcel's outer edges do not lie much closer to the neighbouring settlements than the existing urban edge of Culham Science Centre to the south of the parcel and the planned urban edge of the land to the west of the railway line. Furthermore, the high wooded ground of Lock Wood and the River Thames beyond to the north and the woodland in the east of the parcel represent strong separating features.

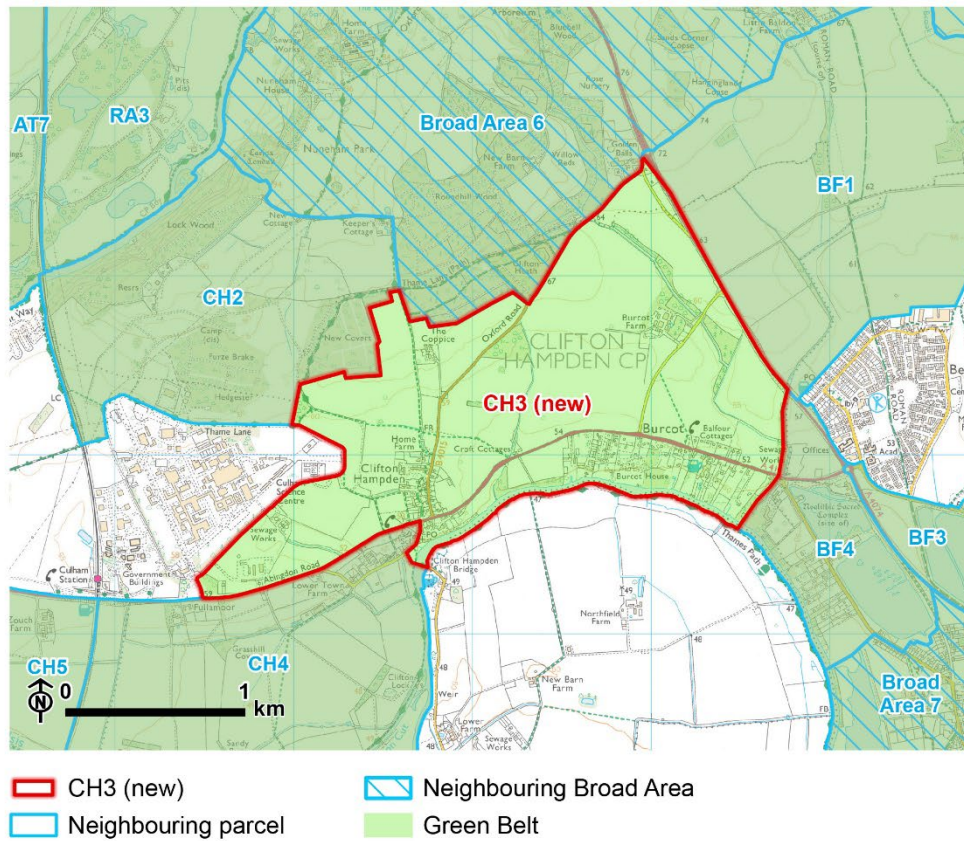
#### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel lies to the north of Culham Science Centre and is comprised of agricultural land and woodland, including the sloping Lock Wood on the edge of the River Thames in the north of the parcel. The parcel is open apart from a warehouse in the south and a reservoir and ancillary buildings in the north. It shares open views with the surrounding countryside, particularly to the west from the high ground within the parcel. The large buildings within Culham Science Centre to the south are visible from within the parcel, but tree cover and rising land in the parcel maintains distinction from the newly inset urban area.

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

- The parcel consists of agricultural land and tree cover. There is no intervisibility with Oxford but it forms part of the undeveloped Thames Valley landscape that extends all the way into the centre of the city, thus giving it a relationship with Oxford that relates to one of the key elements of its special character. However, distance does limit the extent of this contribution.

# Parcel CH3



## Parcel CH3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	High	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies between the newly inset Berinsfield and Culham Science Centre which are not considered to be large built up areas. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel lies in settlement gap between the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated adjacent strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre) to the west and the newly inset Berinsfield urban area, which together represent new neighbouring towns. The fragility of the gap is increased by the washed over hamlet of Burcot and washed over village of Clifton Hampden which lie along the connecting Abingdon Road between the two inset settlements, which do not have an overly urbanising influence in the parcel given its low density and rural nature. Culham Science Centre has a number of large buildings, but these are screened to a degree by tree cover around Thame Lane. The south-eastern boundary of the parcel is adjacent to Berinsfield, with the western boundary adjacent to Thame Lane at the eastern side of Culham Science Park. The parcel generally has a strong sense of openness and is a relatively flat area of land. However, the parcel does contain part of the village of Clifton Hampden and River Thames adjacent residential development to the south of the A415. The boundaries of the parcel are well screened by mature trees and hedgerows. Loss of

openness in the parcel would increase the connection of Berinsfield with Burcot and/or Culham Science Centre with Clifton Hampden, increasing the fragility of the gap between the wider neighbouring towns.

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

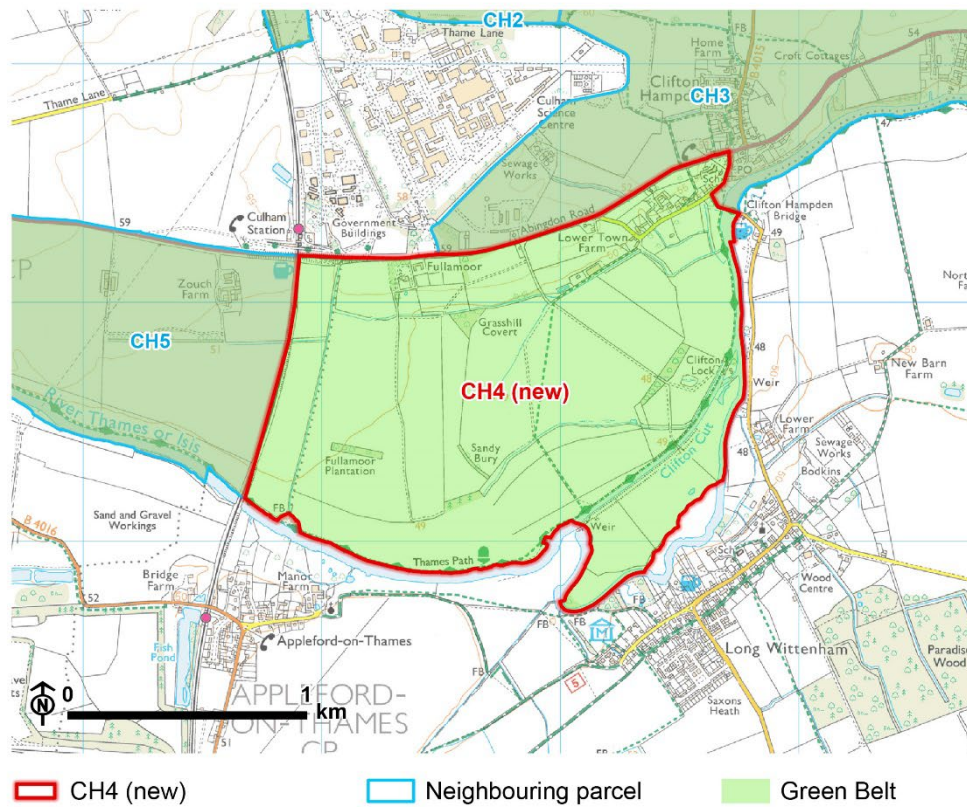
- The parcel contains large agricultural fields and areas of woodland that lie to the north of the River Thames. The open agricultural fields have excellent views of the surrounding countryside. There is development within the parcel associated with the washed over hamlet of Burcot along Abingdon Road and part of the washed over village of Clifton Hampden lies in the west. This development does not have an overly urbanising influence in the parcel given its low density and rural nature. While the sewage treatment works is considered to be an urbanising influence, its location within woodland significantly reduces this influence on the countryside within the surrounding Green Belt. Tree cover to the east and west of the parcel provides largely screen the inset urban areas of Berinsfield and Culham Science Centre from view.

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

- There is no visual relationship with Oxford, but the distinctive form of the wider landscape in this area gives it some setting significance in relation to Oxford. The loop of the Thames between Long Wittenham and Dorchester, the surrounding arable landscape, and the hills to the north which hide Oxford, are all exposed to view from high ground to the south (e.g. Wittenham Clumps). The open character of the Thames Valley extending all the way into the heart of Oxford is one of the special qualities of the city's setting, although proximity to existing housing limits the importance of the parcel in this respect.



## Parcel CH4



## Parcel CH4

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies to the south of Culham Science Centre, which is not part of the large built-up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is located to the south of Culham Science Centre. The parcel is comprised of a number of agricultural fields that lie adjacent to the River Thames, with part of the village of Clifton Hampden lying in the north east of the parcel. The parcel is on the periphery of a settlement gap between the now inset Culham Science Park and the associated strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), which together represent a new neighbouring town in the Green Belt and the newly inset settlement of Berinsfield to the east. Although the meandering course and flood plain of the River Thames separates the parcel from Berinsfield, the fragility of this peripheral portion of the gap is increased by development that lies along Abingdon-on-Thames Road between the two settlements at the northern end of the parcel.

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

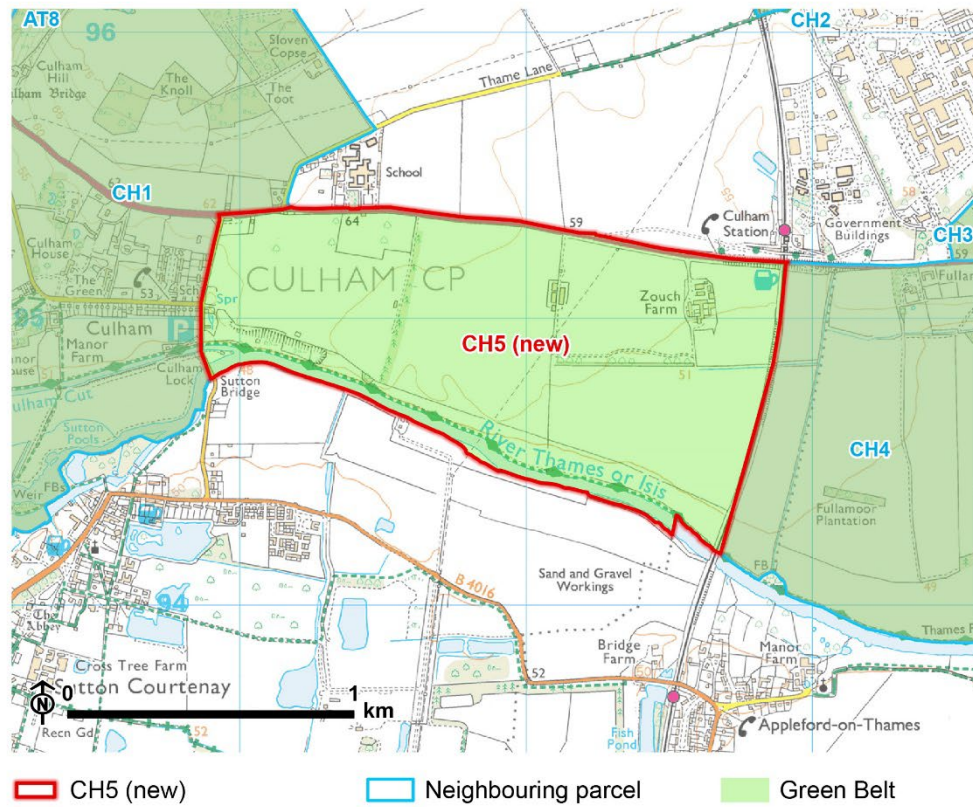
- The parcel lies to the south of Culham Science Centre and is comprised of agricultural land forming the setting of part of the River Thames. Part of

the village of Clifton Hampden lies in the north east of the parcel. Residential properties associated with Clifton Hampden reduce openness at a local scale in the north east of the parcel, but the majority of the parcel is open. The urbanising influence of this village is limited given that it is small and rural in nature. The large buildings within Culham Science Centre to the north are visible from within the parcel, but tree cover along the A415 (Abingdon-on-Thames Road) provides a degree of screening from the urban area. The parcel forms part of the visual setting of a meander of the River Thames adjacent to Long Wittenham.

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

- The parcel consists of agricultural land. There is no intervisibility with Oxford but it forms part of the undeveloped Thames Valley landscape that extends all the way into the centre of the city, thus giving it a relationship with Oxford that relates to one of the key elements of its special character. However, distance does limit the extent of this contribution.

# Parcel CH5



## Parcel CH5

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies to the south west of the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated adjacent strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), which is to the north. The new settlement is not part of the large built-up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the south west of now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated adjacent strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre). The neighbouring town of Abingdon-on-Thames is located to the north west. The washed over village of Culham is located between the two at the western edge of the parcel, increasing the fragility of this settlement gap, but the River Thames and its floodplain acts as a significant separating feature. With the exception of its western end, the parcel is largely located to the south of Culham, resulting in only some contribution to preventing the merger of these settlements. Despite the allocation to the north, further development to the south and the potential merging of the village of Culham with the Culham Science Centre would significantly narrow the gap between the towns to the west.



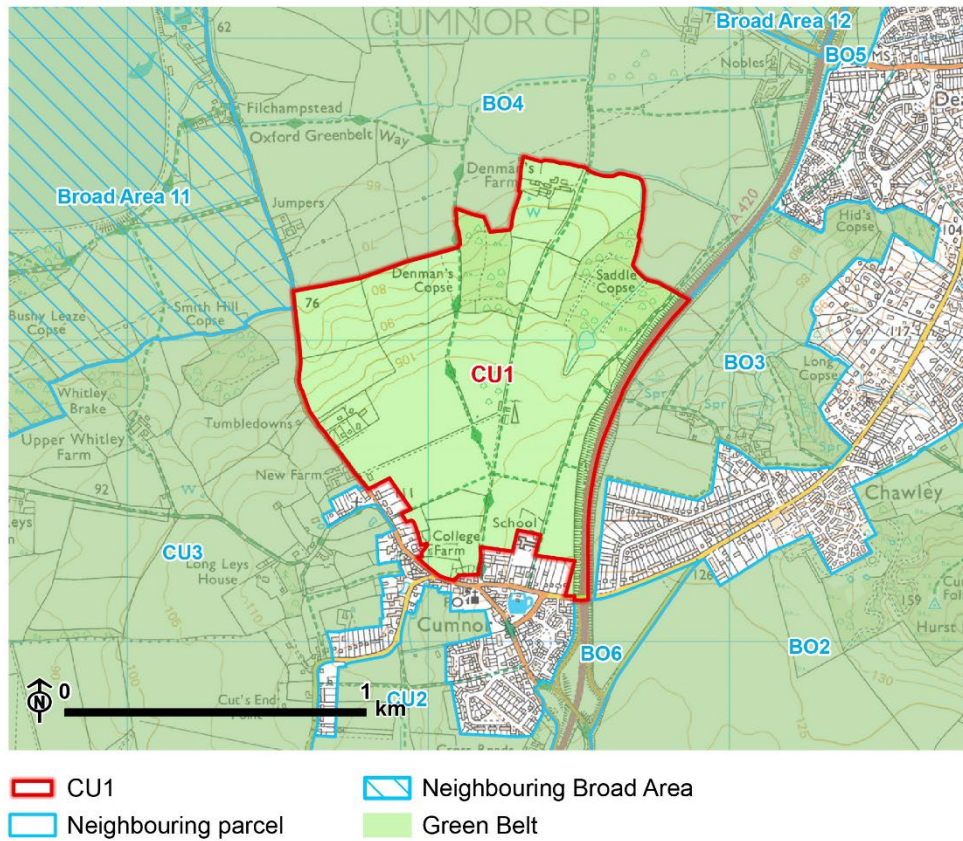
**Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel lies to the south west of the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated adjacent strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre) and is comprised of agricultural land forming the setting of part of the River Thames that follows its southern boundary. There are some agricultural buildings in the parcel but it is largely open and shares views with the surrounding countryside over the River Thames. Abingdon (A415) lies between the parcel and the new settlement to the north. Emerging indicative concept plan work for the allocation suggests that its southern boundary with Abingdon Road will be reenforced with planting, which will reduce urbanising influence within the parcel. Residential development in Culham village to the west along Tollgate Road is visible from within the parcel but its low density and rural setting limit its urbanising influence.

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

- The parcel consists of agricultural land. There is no intervisibility with Oxford but it forms part of the undeveloped Thames Valley landscape that extends all the way into the centre of the city, thus giving it a relationship with Oxford that relates to one of the key elements of its special character. However, distance does limit the extent of this contribution.

# Parcel CU1



## Parcel CU1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	High	High	Medium

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Cumnor, which in turn, separated only by the A420, adjoins Cumnor Hill. The latter is considered to be part of the large built up area, demonstrating clear characteristics of ribbon development. The outer edges of Cumnor, other than where it faces the A420, retain a village character despite in places being subject to 20th century infill. Tree cover and the A420 provides a strong boundary between the parcel and the large built-up area to the east. Although development north of Cumnor village would not be considered to be a continuation of the urban sprawl of Cumnor Hill, it would extend the urban edge of the village with the large built-up area to the east. Loss of the remaining open countryside immediately to the west of the A420 would almost merge Cumnor village with the large built-up area to the east, contributing to its westwards sprawl.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the north/northeast of Cumnor and is bordered by the A420 to the east and B4017 to the south/ southwest. The parcel is relatively open, and flat towards the southern half of the parcel before the landform falls away towards the north, so there is no intervisibility between Cumnor and parcel BO4 to the north. There is limited intervisibility across the A420 between this parcel and the Cumnor Hill urban area. Although development north of Cumnor village would not significantly narrow the gap between the village and neighbouring Cumnor Hill, it would extend

the urban edge of the village with the neighbouring town to the east. Loss of openness in the south eastern part of the parcel plays a role in reducing the perceived settlement gap. Although tree cover and the A420 provides a strong boundary between the two neighbouring towns, development immediately west of the A420 would narrow an already fragile gap.

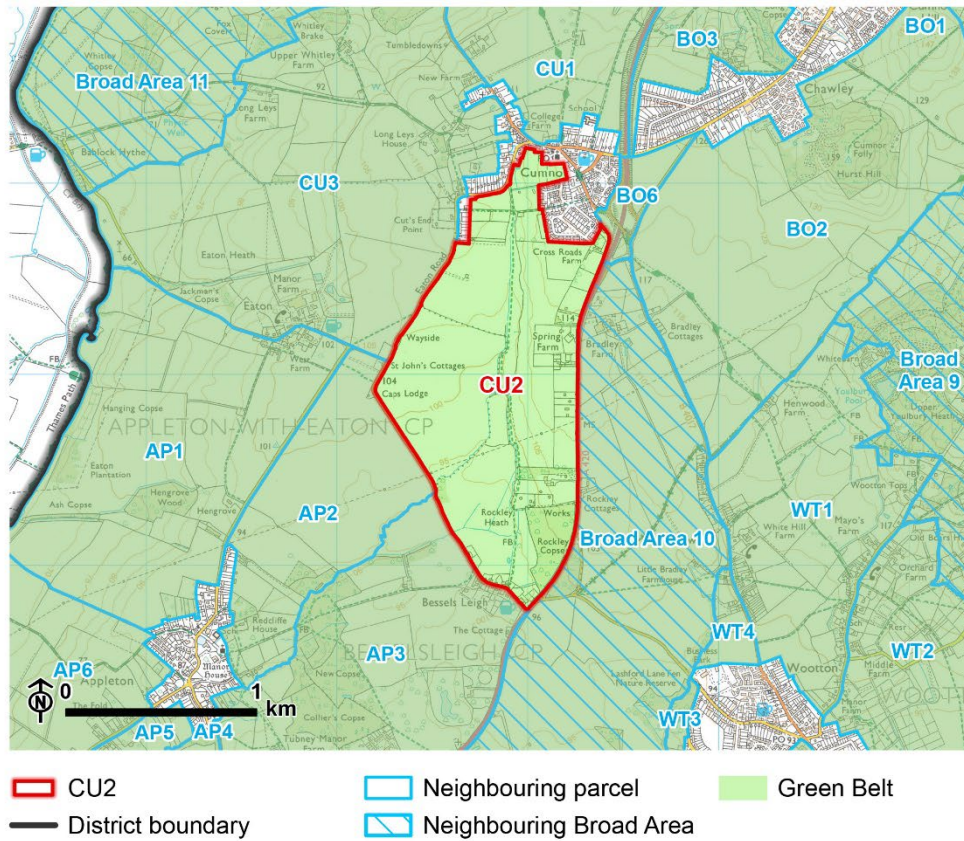
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel contains large irregular-shaped fields and two pockets of woodland – Denman's Copse and Saddle Copse - on high ground overlooking Farmoor Reservoir and the River Thames valley. The southern half of the parcel sits on the relatively flat land upon which the village of Cumnor has been built, whereas the northern half of the parcel slopes down steeply towards Farmoor. The parcel contains a limited amount of development, none of which is considered to have an urbanising influence on the countryside within the parcel, namely Denman's Farm, a plant nursery and a small collection of large detached dwellings on Cumnor Road. Cumnor lies adjacent to the south, but is rural in nature and it does not therefore have a significant urbanising influence on the parcel.

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

- The two woodland blocks in this parcel contribute to Oxford's setting when viewed from the high ground to the north east of the city (including Elsfield, a viewcones policy viewpoint), but any development in the area would be screened by Botley. There is no intervisibility with the historic centre of Oxford. The parcel is important in relation to Farmoor Reservoir, adjacent lower ground to the west of Botley and the wooded Wytham Hill to the north, as these landscape elements combine to form a distinctive and visually expansive rural area, the first arable farming landscape that is encountered on leaving the city via Botley.

# Parcel CU2





## Parcel CU2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to Cumnor, which in turn, separated only by the A420, adjoins Cumnor Hill. The latter is considered to be part of the large built up area, demonstrating clear characteristics of ribbon development, but the outer edges of Cumnor, other than where it faces the A420, retain a village character despite in places being subject to 20th century infill. Development around Cumnor would not therefore be considered to be a continuation of the urban sprawl of Cumnor Hill, so the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up area.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel spans an area between Cumnor to the north and the village of Bessels Leigh to the south, and the eastern boundary comes close to the village of Eaton. The village is relatively well screened from the parcel by tree cover. Whilst the north of the parcel is more contained, the urbanising influence is limited due to the rural nature of the settlement. Wootton and Appleton are the nearest settlements to the south considered under Purpose 2. The A420 and associated hedgerows forms a physical and visual barrier between Wootton and Cumnor but there is less of a sense of separation between Cumnor and Appleton. The parcel is relatively flat, with predominantly large, arable fields and a strong sense of openness. There are no direct views between the settlements, but any increase in

settlement size at Cumnor would be perceived as reducing the distance between the two.

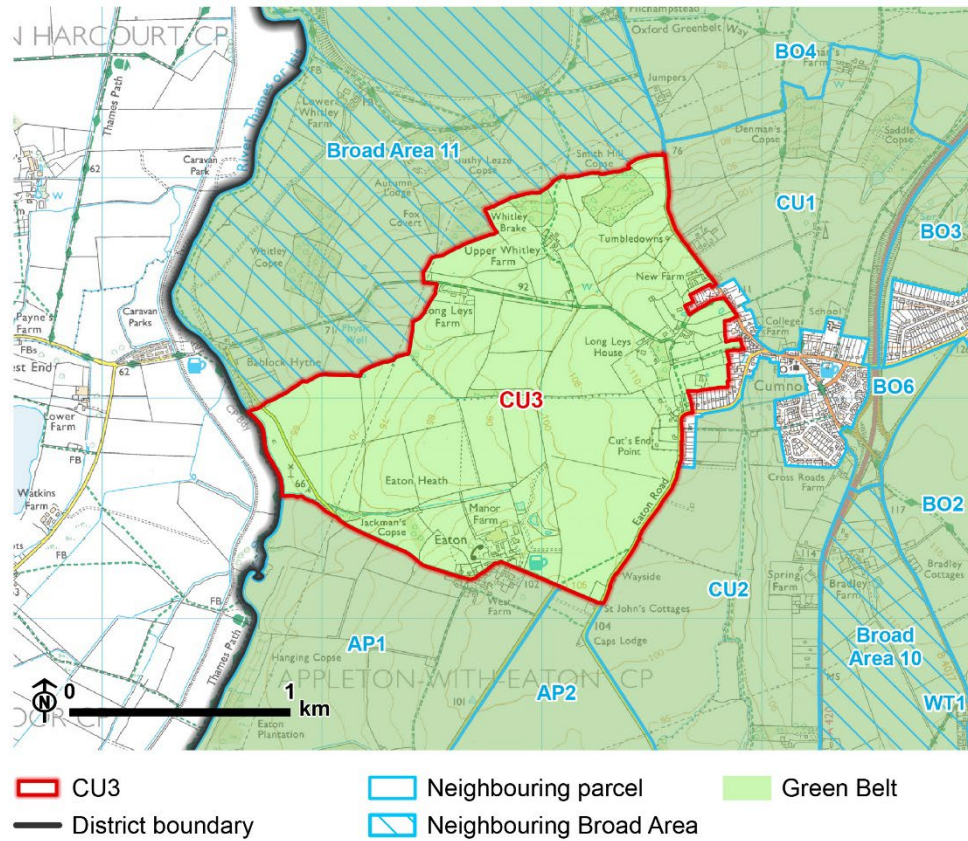
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel contains open irregular-shaped agricultural fields which become larger as the land moves south of the village of Cumnor. A small pocket of woodland – Rockley Copse – lies in the south eastern corner of the parcel. From the open fields it is possible to see out in to the wider open countryside immediately surrounding the parcel. A cricket pavilion and associated car park sit close to the village in the north of the parcel. To the south east along the western side of the A420 lie several isolated and detached dwellings, including those within the small village of Bessels Leigh on the southern border of the parcel. North of Bessels Leigh is the only significant urbanising feature within the parcel: a large office block and associated car park but this is deemed to have a very limited urbanising influence on the parcel. The north of the parcel is relatively contained by the village of Cumnor, but any urbanising influence is limited by tree cover and the rural nature of development.

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

- There is no intervisibility with Oxford, with well wooded and/or higher ground to the east and south, and a limited sense of this area forming part of Oxford's historic setting. However, the presence of the A420 along the eastern edge of the parcel does add a little sensitivity in that the rural character of the area can be appreciated shortly before reaching the more developed area around Botley.

# Parcel CU3



## Parcel CU3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel abuts Cumnor, which in turn, separated only by the A420, adjoins Cumnor Hill. The latter is considered to be part of the large built up area, demonstrating clear characteristics of ribbon development, but the outer edges of Cumnor, other than where it faces the A420, retain a village character despite in places being subject to 20th century infill. Development around Cumnor would not therefore be considered to be a continuation of the urban sprawl of Cumnor Hill, so the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The eastern boundary of the parcel is adjacent to Cumnor, but the village is mostly well screened by tree cover and is rural in nature. The mostly arable landscape has a strong sense of openness and is relatively flat where it is adjacent to Eaton Road; however the topography falls away the further west you go toward the River Thames. The southern boundary of the parcel runs through the village of Eaton, which is in relatively close proximity to Appleton and intervisible with Cumnor (which sits on higher ground) although not with Appleton. Loss of openness in the landscape between Cumnor and Eaton would be perceived as reducing the physical gap between Cumnor and Appleton.

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

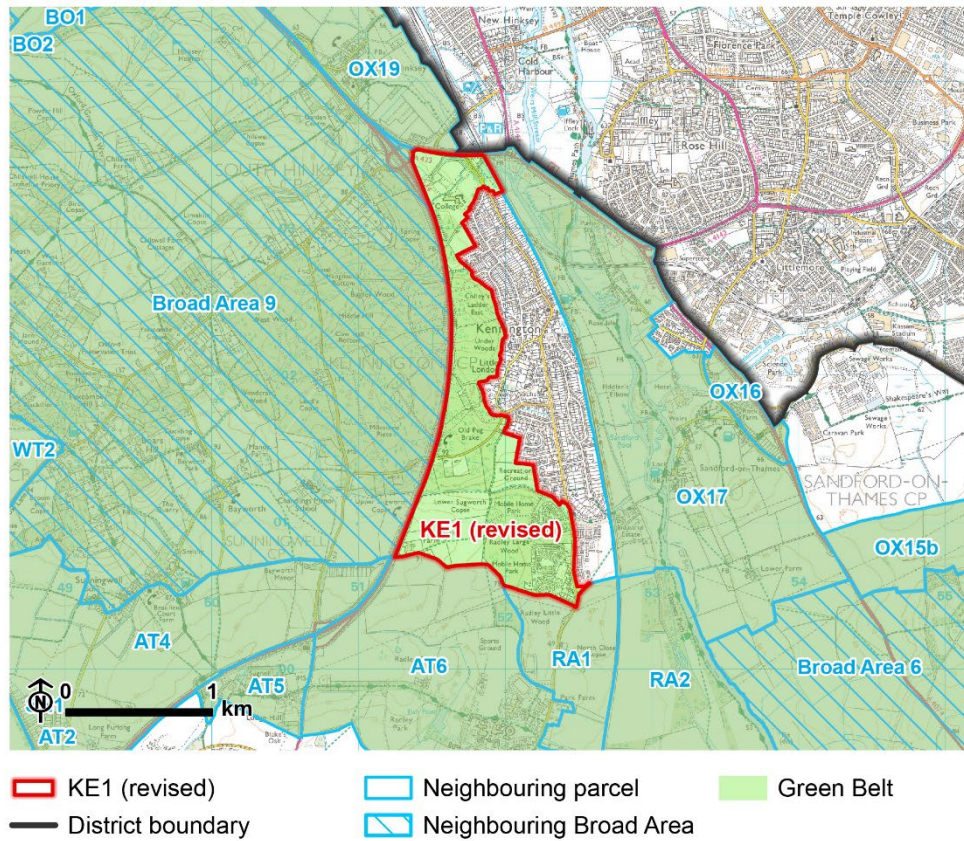
- The parcel contains large regular-shaped agricultural fields and four small pockets of woodland. The south eastern half of the parcel is on higher ground which slopes away to the north and west towards Farmoor Reservoir and the River Thames, providing excellent views of the wider countryside to the west and north. A line of pylons runs through the centre of the parcel. There are also several large detached and isolated dwellings adjacent to the village of Cumnor in the eastern half of the parcel, three farms (Manor Farm, Long Leys Farm and Upper Whitely Farm) and a small collection of large detached dwellings along Bablock Hythe Road within the small village of Eaton. None of these developments are considered to be significant urbanising influences of the countryside within the Green Belt. The parcel abuts the village of Cumnor at its eastern end, but any urbanising influence is limited by tree cover and the rural nature of the village.

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

- This parcel comprises arable farmland to the west of Cumnor, sloping downhill to the River Thames. The rural character of the Thames Valley as it approaches Oxford is important in that it provides a consistent character link all the way into the city centre, but at this distance from Oxford (along the river), the significance is lower than is the case where the city can be viewed in association with the river valley.



# Parcel KE1



## Parcel KE1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Medium	Medium	High

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

- The parcel sits in between the western urban edge of Kennington, which is considered to be part of the large built-up area of Oxford, and the A34 dual-carriageway which joins the southern by-pass road at the northern tip of the parcel. The majority of the parcel contains the woodland from Bagley Wood, which maintains strong distinction with the urban area. There are two breaks in the woodland in the south western and south eastern corners of the parcel. These breaks contain open agricultural fields with views to the countryside to the south and west. There are some significant developments within breaks in the wood, notably two large isolated dwellings to the west of Kennington, Templeton College to the north of Kennington, a very large mobile home park in woodland to the south of Kennington and housing along Sugworth Lane. In addition, in the south western corner of the parcel is a small business estate. The more substantial areas of development have some impact on openness locally, but not significantly change the openness of the wider Green Belt. The wooded land cover in the majority of the parcel creates a significant degree of distinction from the urban area.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The southern boundary of the parcel is in reasonably close proximity to Radley, with large, open arable fields separating the two. Existing development along Sugworth Lane already abuts a section of this boundary, but is fairly well contained by woodland in wider views. Tree

cover within the parcel screens any urbanising influence from Kennington in the majority of the parcel. The open area in the south east of the parcel is more significant in terms of the perception of a gap between Kennington and Radley, and is visible in long views from high ground to the east. Development in this area would not remove the settlement gap but it would clearly reduce it.

- Kennington is considered to be part of the large urban area. The gap between the northern edge of the settlement and the Redbridge Park and Ride being crossed by the A423 by-pass and a railway line, but the wooded character of the northern end of this parcel, and of the adjacent parcels OX17 and OX19, nonetheless create a sense of separation. From the by-pass there is no perception of the urban area spreading out beyond the road, so the northern end of this parcel is still considered to constitute a gap, and its elevated position means that there is potential for visual coalescence in some views. This northern part of the parcel in isolation would rate 'high'.

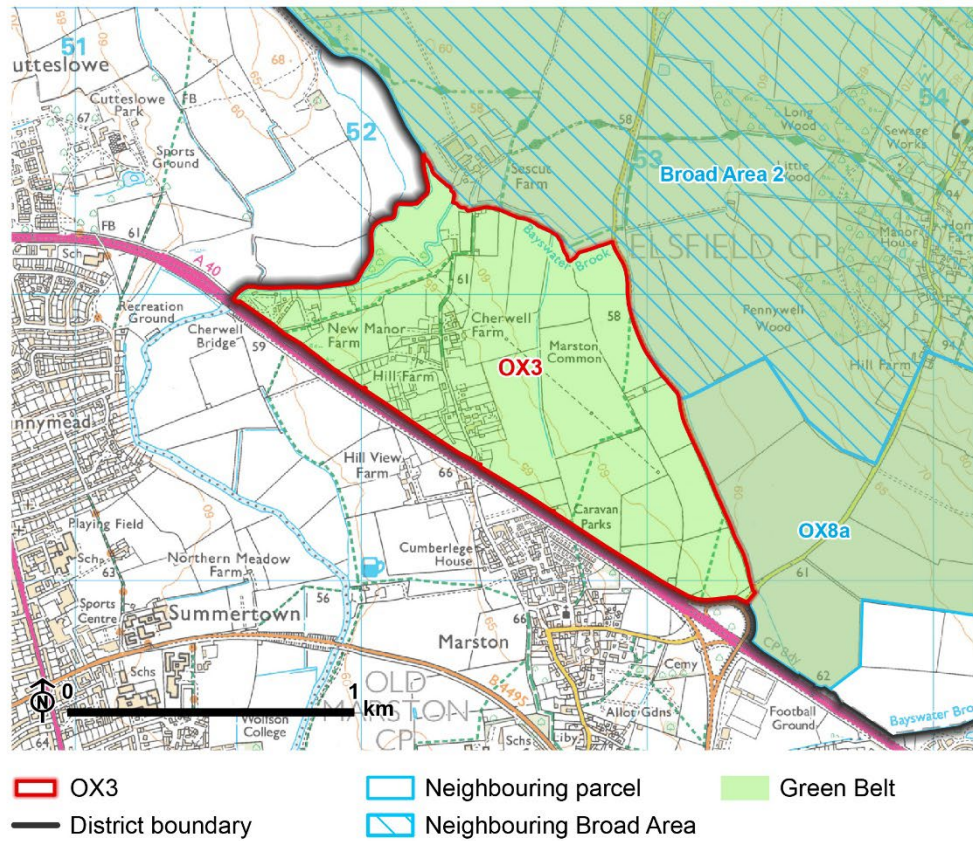
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The majority of the parcel contains the woodland from Bagley Wood to the west of Kennington, which screens the majority of the parcel from urbanising influence. There are two breaks in the woodland in the south western and south eastern corners of the parcel. These breaks contain open agricultural fields with views to the countryside to the south and west. There are some significant developments within breaks in the wood, notably two large isolated dwellings to the west of Kennington, Templeton College to the north of Kennington, a very large mobile home park to the south of Kennington and housing along Sugworth Lane. In addition, in the south western corner of the parcel is a small business estate. With the exception of the large isolated dwellings, they are significant urbanising influences on the countryside within the Green Belt. Aside from the business estate in the south western corner of the parcel, they all are surrounded by dense woodland, so their influence on the wider Green Belt is significantly less than it would be if they were in open countryside.

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

- Parcel is largely occupied by ancient woodland, on lower slopes of Corallian Ridge. Residential closes set within woodland towards the southern end have little effect on broader role of this area as part of the wooded backdrop to views westwards from Oxford and towards Oxford from the hills to the east. The woods are also important in screening the A34. The lower, eastern side of the parcel is less important in terms of setting.

# Parcel OX3





## Parcel OX3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	N/C	Medium	Medium

#### Purpose 1 – To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford. The parcel is predominantly made-up of large regular shaped agricultural fields, many of which are in the floodplain of the River Cherwell and one of its tributaries. The land is relatively flat and open. There are several dwellings scattered throughout the parcel, although they are all isolated and often associated with farms. The Northern By-pass Road (A40) forms the southern boundary of the parcel and constitutes a strong boundary between the parcel and the inset area. Tree cover along this boundary features screens the parcel from some of the urban area. Access to Mill Lane from the A40 breaches it, reducing its role to a limited extent, but restricts access and egress to one direction. There are good views of the surrounding countryside.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the north of Oxford and borders the Northern Bypass Road. The parcel has a strong sense of openness but is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. This land parcel does form part of the gap between Oxford and Elsfield but Elsfield is not considered as a settlement under Purpose 2 as part of this assessment.

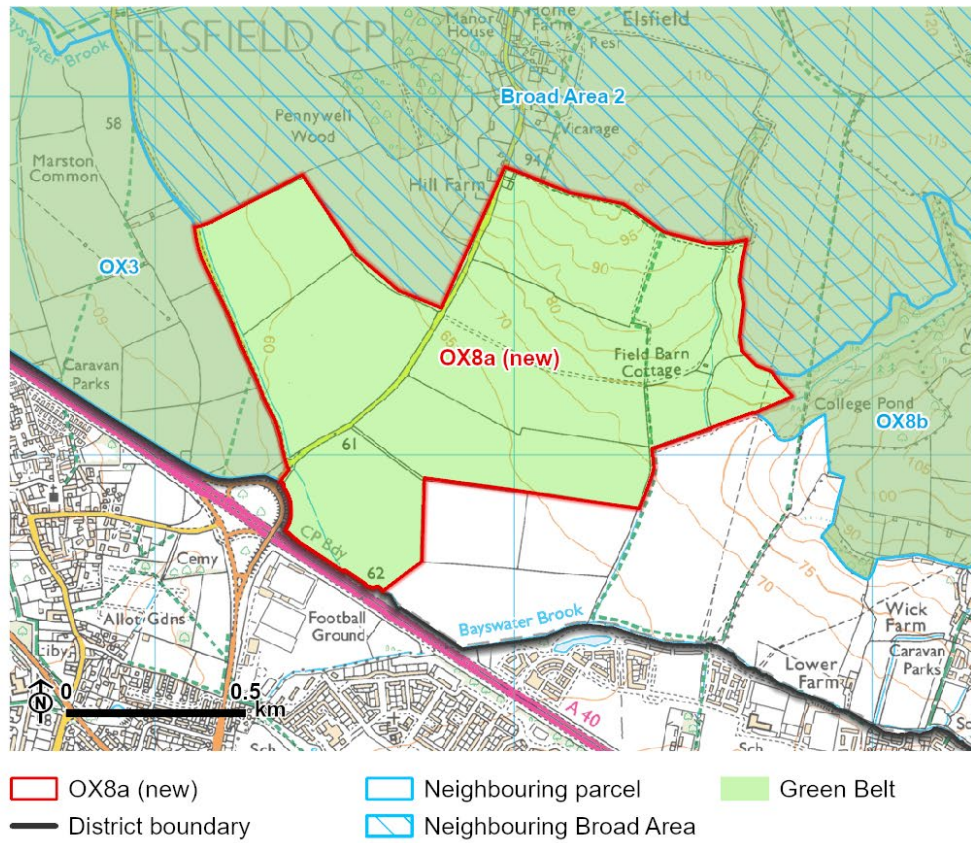
**Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of large regular shaped agricultural fields, flat and very open with excellent views of the countryside to the north and east. The A40 and associated tree cover screen some part of the parcel from urbanising influence within the large built-up area. However, the amount and character of development within the parcel, and the proximity of the A40 are considered to constitute a minor urbanising influence on countryside character within the parcel, affecting the central and western parts of the parcel. Towards the eastern side of the parcel, and away from the A40, there is reduced urbanising influence, but a strategic allocation (Land north of Bayswater Brook – SLP050) is visible to the southeast.

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

- Historically an outlying edge of Marston, this area was separated from the village core by the A40 by-pass. The A40 has been breached in places, with a strategic allocation also now lying to the southeast (Land north of Bayswater Brook – SLP050). However, the A40 still forms a significant barrier to development on the north eastern side of Oxford, so any loss of openness beyond it would have an impact on the City's rural setting. The continuation of the open Cherwell river valley beneath the A40 and into the heart of Oxford makes a 'high' contribution to Oxford's special character, and loss of openness on the western side of parcel would compromise that continuity. This would be evident in some views from high ground. The contribution of other parts of the parcel to historic setting are limited by the fact that there is no intervisibility with central Oxford along the valley floor terrain, due to intervening vegetation, so a 'medium' rating would apply to the majority of the parcel.

# Parcel OX8a



## Parcel OX8a

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	N/C	High	High

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford. The parcel is predominantly made-up of agricultural fields, some of which, along the southwestern edges of the parcel are in the floodplain of the Bayswater Brook. The land within the parcel is open and rises steeply in the north and east of the parcel, which means it shares good views of the surrounding countryside. The only built development within the parcel is some agricultural buildings and a residential dwelling at the southern end of Elsfield. Sparsely treed field boundaries provide a relatively modest boundary from the strategic allocation that lies to the southeast (Land north of Bayswater Brook – SLP050), although emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that this boundary will be reinforced with planting, parkland and retained farmland.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the north of Barton, adjacent to Bayswater Brook. The parcel has a strong sense of openness but is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. This land parcel does form part of the gap between Oxford and Stanton St John, Elsfield and Beckley but these settlements are not considered under Purpose 2 as part of this assessment.

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

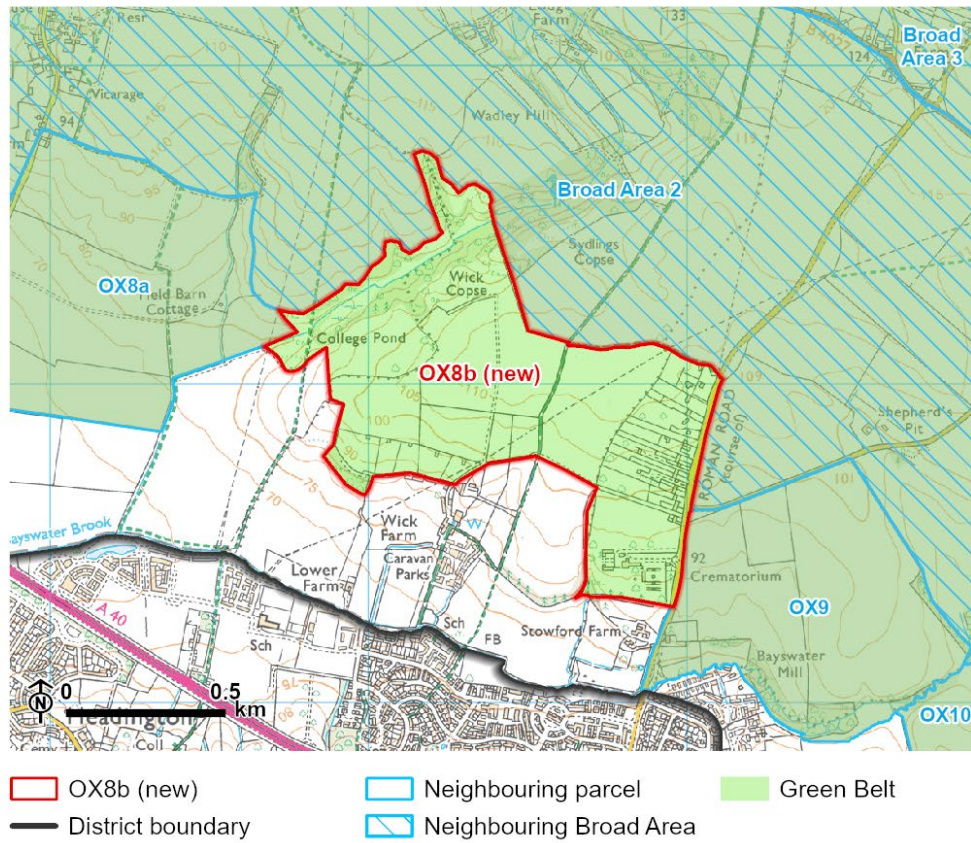
- The land within the parcel is for the most part open and rural in character, and rises to the northeast to provide good views of the City (dominated by Headington and Barton), from which a sense of separation is created by the elevation of the terrain, and surrounding countryside. Apart from views of the city to the south, including the strategic allocation to the southeast (Land north of Bayswater Brook – SLP050), there is little urbanising influence within the parcel. Emerging indicative concept plan work suggests it is expected that the strategic site allocation adjacent to Oxford to the south will be separated from the wider countryside by planting, parkland and retained farmland.

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

- The land within the parcel is open and rural in character, and rises steeply in the north and east. It forms an integral part of the Elsfield view cone which provides good views of the City (dominated by Headington and Barton), from which a sense of separation is created by the elevation of the terrain, and surrounding countryside.



## Parcel OX8b



## Parcel OX8b

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	N/C	High	High

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford. The majority of the parcel is made-up of agricultural fields but there is some tree cover that is designated as Sidling's Copse and College Pond SSSI in the north of the parcel, as well as some tree cover in the east. The land within the parcel is largely open and rises steeply to the north, which means it shares good views of the surrounding countryside. There is some development in the eastern half of the parcel, including a caravan park adjacent to Wick Farm, the residential developments along Bayswater Road and adjacent to Stowe Farm, and buildings associated with the Oxford Crematorium. Sparsely treed field boundaries to the south of the parcel provide a relatively modest boundary from the strategic allocation that lies adjacent (Land north of Bayswater Brook – SLP050), although emerging indicative concept plan work suggests it is expected that this boundary will be reinforced with planting, parkland and retained farmland. The steep slope within the parcel also contributes to a degree of distinction from the new urban edge.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the north of Barton. The parcel has a strong sense of openness but is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. This land parcel does form part of the gap

between Oxford and Stanton St John, Elsfield and Beckley but these settlements are not considered under Purpose 2 as part of this assessment.

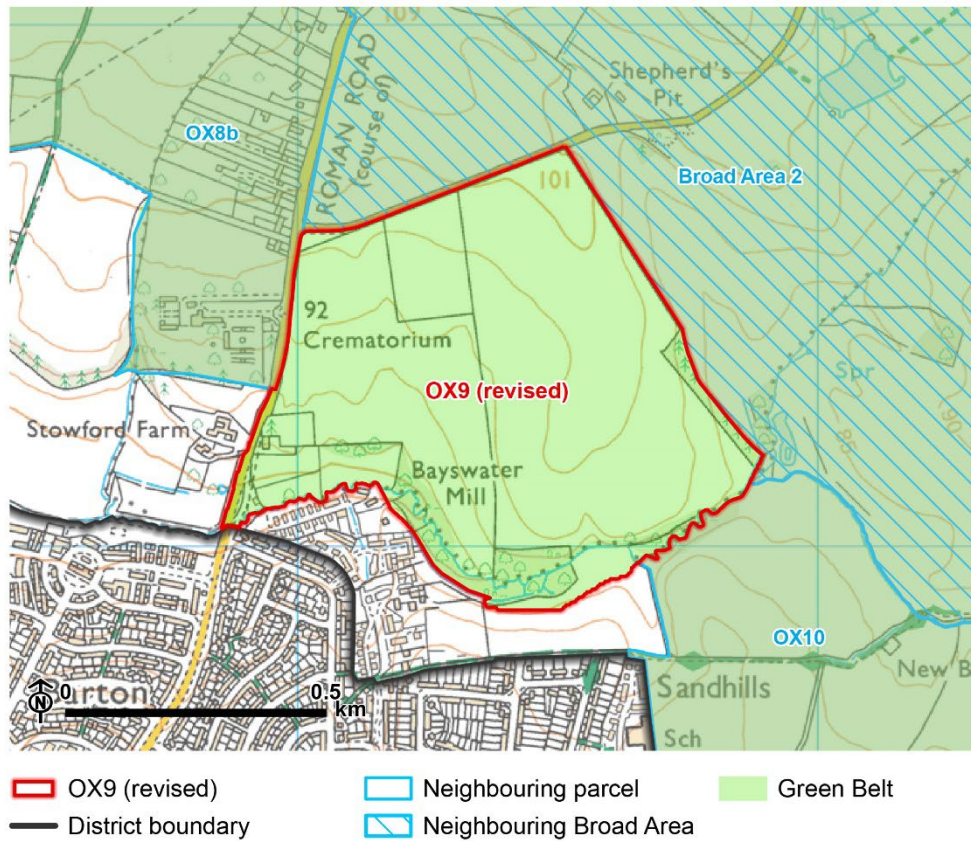
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The land within the parcel is largely open and rural in character, and rises steeply in the north to provide good views of the City (dominated by Headington and Barton), from which a sense of separation is created by the elevation of the terrain, and surrounding countryside. There are views of the city and the adjacent strategic allocation to the south (Land north of Bayswater Brook – SLP050), and there is some limited residential development and a crematorium in the east of the parcel, but these are considered to have a minor urbanising influence. Emerging indicative concept plan work suggests it is expected that the boundary between the parcel and the adjacent strategic site allocation next to Oxford will be reinforced with planting, parkland and retained farmland.

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

- The land within the parcel is largely open and rural in character, and rises steeply in the north to provide good views of the City (dominated by Headington and Barton), from which a sense of separation is created by the elevation of the terrain, and surrounding countryside. The urbanising influences within the parcel are concentrated principally at its eastern end and their overall influence on countryside character within the Green Belt is considered to be limited.

## Parcel OX9



## Parcel OX9

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	N/C	High	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford. The parcel is predominantly made-up of two large regular shaped agricultural fields and it is considered open. The one dwelling in the parcel is not considered to have a significant impact on openness. Bayswater Brook, which has a dense associated tree belt, forms the southern boundary of the parcel and represents a relatively strong boundary between the parcel and the inset area. However, a strategic allocation to the west (Land north of Bayswater Brook) has breached the brook boundary feature at the urban edge and partially contains the parcel from the west. The urbanising influence of this containment is limited to an extent by mature tree cover along Bayswater Road. The land within the parcel is open and rises to the north from Bayswater Brook. There are good views of the surrounding countryside to the south east and east.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the north of Barton, adjacent to Bayswater Road on the western boundary. The parcel has a strong sense of openness but is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. The land parcel does form part of the visible open gap between Oxford and Stanton St John but this settlement is not considered in this study under Purpose 2.



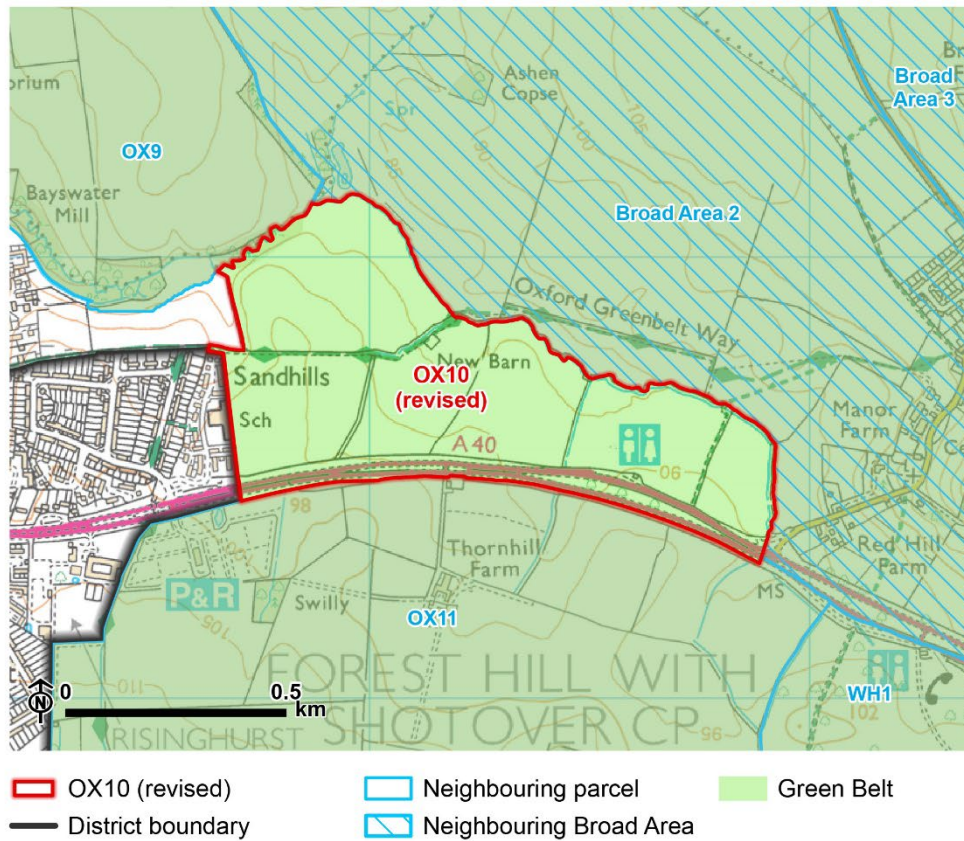
**Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of two large regular shaped agricultural fields. The land within the parcel is open and rises to the north from Bayswater Brook. There are good views of the surrounding countryside to the south and east. There is just one isolated dwelling in the parcel, which is not considered to be an urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt. Tree cover along Bayswater Brook to the south and tree cover along Bayswater Road provide screening from the urban area to the south and the Bayswater Brook allocation to the west respectively.

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

- Sloping arable fields to the north of Bayswater Brook, a watercourse with strong streamside vegetation which forms a distinctive boundary feature at the bottom of a valley. Looking south from the northern edge of the parcel the urban area at the parcel's southern edge is well screened and the hills to the east of Oxford (notably Shotover Hill) form a backdrop, giving this area a very rural character despite its proximity to the city's eastern suburbs. The strategic allocation that now lies to the west of the parcel is likely to be well screened by tree cover that lies to the west of the parcel once built out. The rural character and distinctive hill and valley topography of the area around the head of the Bayswater Brook make it an important element in Oxford's setting, screened from views from the city centre but visible as part of the City's containing ring of hills in views from high ground to the west and visible from higher ground around Shotover, Forest Hill and to the north.

# Parcel OX10



## Parcel OX10

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Medium	High	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford. The parcel sits in between London Road (A40) and Bayswater Brook. Bayswater Brook forms the northern boundary of the parcel and London Road (A40) forms the southern boundary. Both are perpendicular to the existing urban edge of Oxford. With the exception of an area of hardstanding used as a playground in the west of the parcel, there is no notable built development within the parcel and therefore it is considered open. The parcel is predominantly made-up of large regular shaped agricultural fields. The land within the parcel shares good views with the surrounding countryside and tree cover combined with a marked west-facing slope to the west screens the majority of the urban edge, including a strategic allocation (Land north of Bayswater Brook – SLP050), from the parcel.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel has a strong sense of openness and whilst it is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose the A40 provides a rapid means of movement between Oxford and Wheatley. Therefore, whilst there is no visual link between Wheatley and this parcel it is still considered to make some contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.
- This land parcel forms a large part of the gap between Oxford and Forest Hill. This settlement is not considered under Purpose 2 for this study, but

its elevated position and relationship with the ridge to the north and hills to the south west of Wheatley, linking through to Shotover, makes it distinctly separate from the urban area.

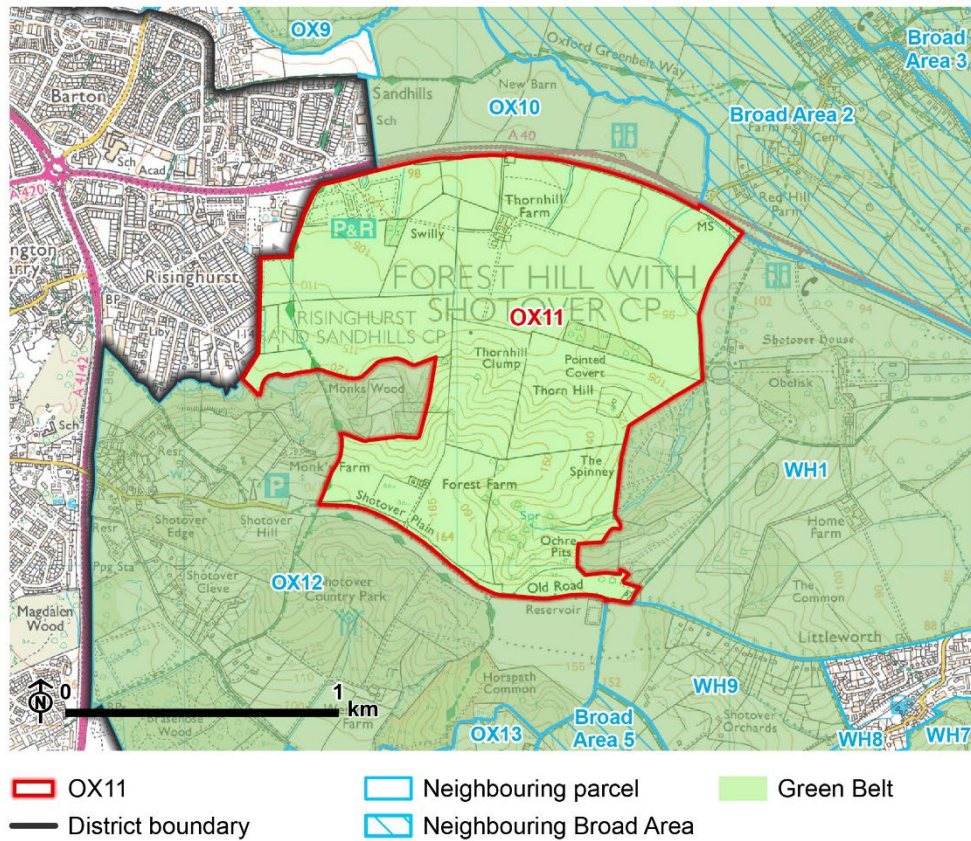
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of large regular shaped agricultural fields between London Road (A40) to the south and Bayswater Brook to the north. With the exception of an area of hardstanding used as a playground in the west of the parcel, there are no significant urbanising influences on the countryside. The land within the parcel is open with good views of the surrounding countryside, and the urban edge and A40 are largely screened from view.

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

- Undulating, gently sloping arable land on southern slope of a tributary of Bayswater Brook. The landform, with views across the valley to wooded high ground around Beckley to north, and steeper slopes up to Shotover Hill to the south and Forest Hill to the east, exposes this area to view and makes it important as a rural edge to Oxford, even though there is no intervisibility with the city's historic centre. The continuity of landscape character to the north, south and east of the parcel, and the proximity of the A40, adds to this area's significance.

# Parcel OX11





## Parcel OX11

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1a	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Medium	High	High

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford, and is bordered by the A40 to the north, which emanates out from the urban edge. The land within the parcel is largely made up of regular agricultural fields, two farms and woodland, and rises southward up the slopes of Shotover Hill. With the exception of the floodlit Park and Ride facility in the north western corner of the parcel, which is fairly well screened, the parcel is considered free from notable urbanising influences. Linear tree cover at the urban edge to the west provides a degree of separation from the urban area.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The northern boundary of the parcel is adjacent to the A40 while the western boundary is adjacent to Risinghurst, a suburb of Oxford. The urban area to the west is generally well screened by tree cover. The parcel has a strong sense of openness and flat topography to the northern area of the parcel with the parcel rising in elevation towards its southern area. Littleworth, a ribbon development which has extended west from Wheatley onto higher ground along Old Road, is in relatively close proximity to the south eastern part of the parcel, but topography and intervening vegetation limit any views other than in the far south east corner, and the absence of a vehicular through-route also has an impact on sense of proximity. Although there is a greater distance between the parcel and the core of Wheatley, and a different landscape setting with the

latter lying in a valley on the western side of the ridge that links Forest Hill and Red Hill to Thorn Hill and Shotover, the A40 provides a rapid means of movement between the two. Therefore, whilst there is no visual link, this parcel it is still considered to make some contribution to preventing the erosion of the physical gap between settlements.

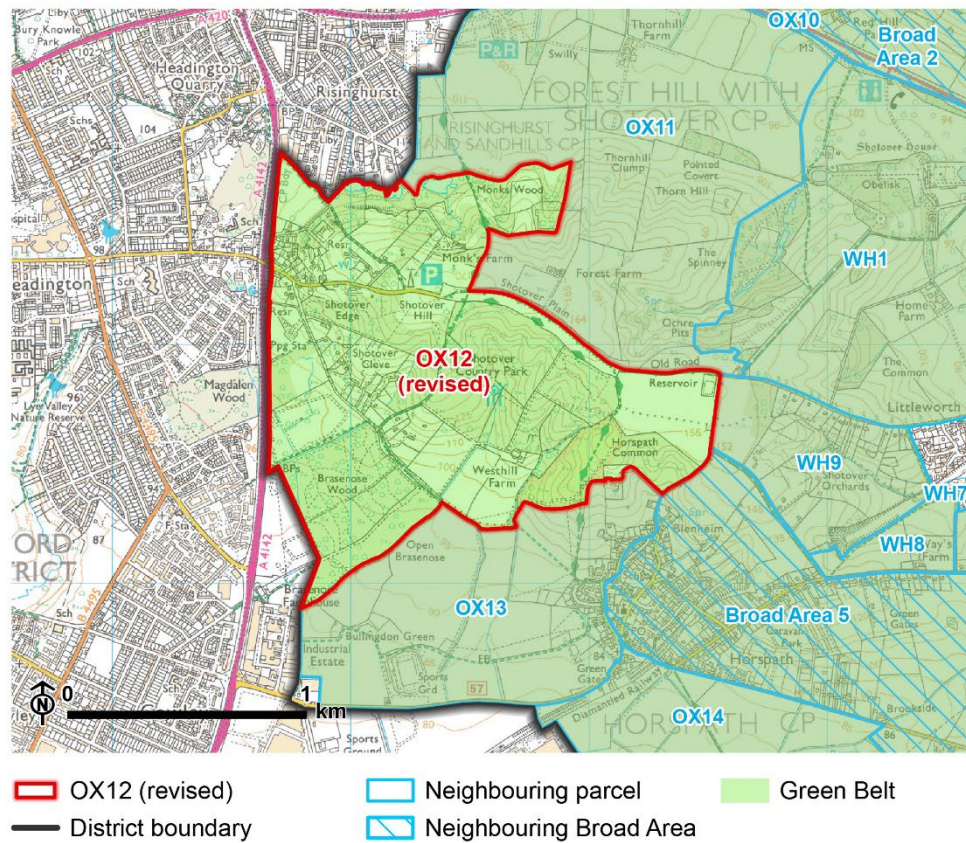
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- With the exception of the floodlit Park and Ride facility in the north eastern corner of the parcel, the parcel contains no urbanising influences. The Park and Ride facility is bordered by vegetation, helping to mitigate its urbanising influence on the countryside within the wider Green Belt. The urban area to the west is fairly well screened by tree cover. The land within the parcel is largely made up of regular agricultural fields, two farms and woodland. The land rises to Thorn Hill in the centre of the parcel, and then up to Shotover Hill near the southern border of the parcel. From the slopes and summit of the hill there are excellent views of the surrounding countryside, particularly to the north and north east, adding to the sense of rurality despite proximity to the A40 and the urban edge.

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

- There is no intervisibility with central Oxford but the parcel is adjacent to the Thornhill Park and Ride on the eastern edge of the city. Shotover Hill is a significant local landmark, abutting 20th Oxford to the west but open and rural to the east, with long views. The old London to Oxford Road, marking the southern boundary of the parcel, formerly ran over the top of the hill, and the A40, the modern approach from London, runs along the northern edge. The hill marks a clear edge to the city, and the northern slopes, visible from high ground to the north and east and in glimpsed views from the A40, form part of it. The lower slopes of the parcel are less significant than the higher ground to the south.

# Parcel OX12



## Parcel OX12

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Low	High	High

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford. The majority of the parcel contains woodland associated with the Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill SSSI. The northern half contains the small hamlet of Shotover Cleve on the upper southern slope of the Hill. The density of development increases to the north west of the hamlet into the north western corner of the parcel. The development along Shotover Kilns Road represents the only significant urbanising influence within the parcel. However, this development does not have a significant impact on openness in the overall parcel. All built development within this parcel is set in well-wooded surroundings and, therefore, has a limited urbanising influence within the parcel. The A4142 (Eastern By-pass Road) and associated tree cover is a significant boundary feature between the parcel and the inset urban area, minimising any visual relationship between the two. The wooded slopes within the parcel also create significant distinction from the urban area.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The western boundary of the parcel borders the A4142 which is adjacent to the eastern suburbs of Oxford, including Slade Park, Wood Farm and Lye Valley. However, the adjacent development is well screened by tree cover. The parcel is large, with high ground providing some long views but also extensive woodlands in which views are limited. Due to close proximity at its eastern end to Littleworth, which is considered as part of

Wheatley, the parcel plays some role in preventing the erosion of the physical gap between the two settlements, but the lack of a through-route along Old Road limits connectivity. In practice the wooded nature of this parcels limits potential for any significant increase in development that might affect the relationship between Wheatley and Oxford.

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

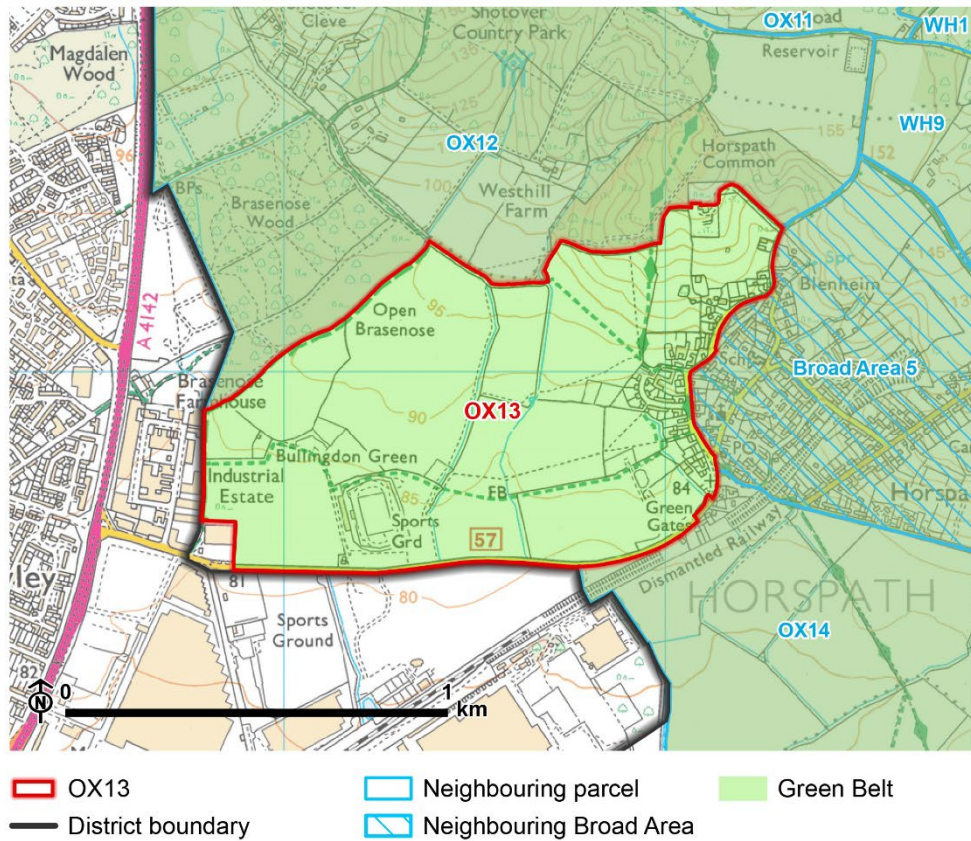
- The majority of the parcel contains woodland associated with the Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill SSSI. The southern half of the parcel is largely undeveloped. The northern half contains the small hamlet of Shotover Cleve on the upper southern slope of the hill. The density of development increases to the north west of the hamlet in the north western corner of the parcel and the development along Shotover Kilns Road represents the only significant urbanising influences within the parcel. However, these influences are surrounded by woodland and, therefore, have a limited influence on the wider Green Belt. The urban area of Oxford to the west is generally well screened. Breaks in the woodland enjoy excellent views of the surrounding countryside and also the industrial edge of Oxford at Cowley, but elevation gives a sense of rural separation.

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

- The parcel consists of the wooded crest, western and southern slopes of Shotover Hill, a significant local landmark, abutting 20th Oxford to the west but open and rural to the east. Part of a royal forest in medieval times, the hilltop provides long vistas (although not towards central Oxford, due to screening from woodland) and forms an important green backdrop in views from and across the city.



# Parcel OX13



## Parcel OX13

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	High	Medium	Low

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Cowley, which forms part of the large built-up area of Oxford. The majority of the parcel is comprised of agricultural fields. There are some pockets of development within the parcel, including an athletics track that is floodlit in the western corner of the parcel and a significant portion of the village of Horspath on the eastern boundary of the parcel. This development impacts openness locally, but the parcel is mostly open. Loss of openness in the parcel would merge the village of Horspath into the large built up area. Large industrial buildings contain the parcel from the west and south and the parcel is contained to the east by Horspath. However, Oxford Road creates some distinction from the urban area to the south and sparse tree cover creates a degree of distinction from the industrial buildings to the west.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel lies to the east of the A4142 and the Oxford suburb of Cowley and to the west of Horspath. Apart from an athletics track and some residential development associated with Horspath in the east, the parcel is formed out of open, agricultural fields. Large industrial buildings to the west and south have an urbanising influence on land in the parcel, although mature hedgerows along Oxford Road provide some screening. Horspath lies between Oxford and the nearest settlement considered under Purpose 2 for this study, Wheatley (including Littleworth), but a loss of openness between Oxford and Horspath would push the urban edge out

significantly. Horspath in turn has ribbon development along Gidley Way which leaves little physical distance to Littleworth. This would represent a sizeable reduction in the overall settlement gap between Oxford and Wheatley. Whilst most of Horspath is separated from Littleworth by intervening high ground, development along Gidley Way crosses over the southern side of the hill and so has intervisibility with Littleworth.

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

- Considered overall, the outdoor sports facilities, street lighting and pavement on Oxford/Horspath Road constitute limited urbanising development. The east of the parcel contains part of the village of Horspath, which impacts openness at a local scale, but the majority of the parcel is formed of agricultural fields. The higher, northern part of the parcel, with extensive southerly views and backing onto the Shotover Country Park, has a greater degree of separation from the urban area and would score 'high' in terms of countryside character. Mature hedgerows and tree cover along Oxford Road to the south provide some screening from the adjacent urban area, but the large industrial buildings are visible from within the parcel.

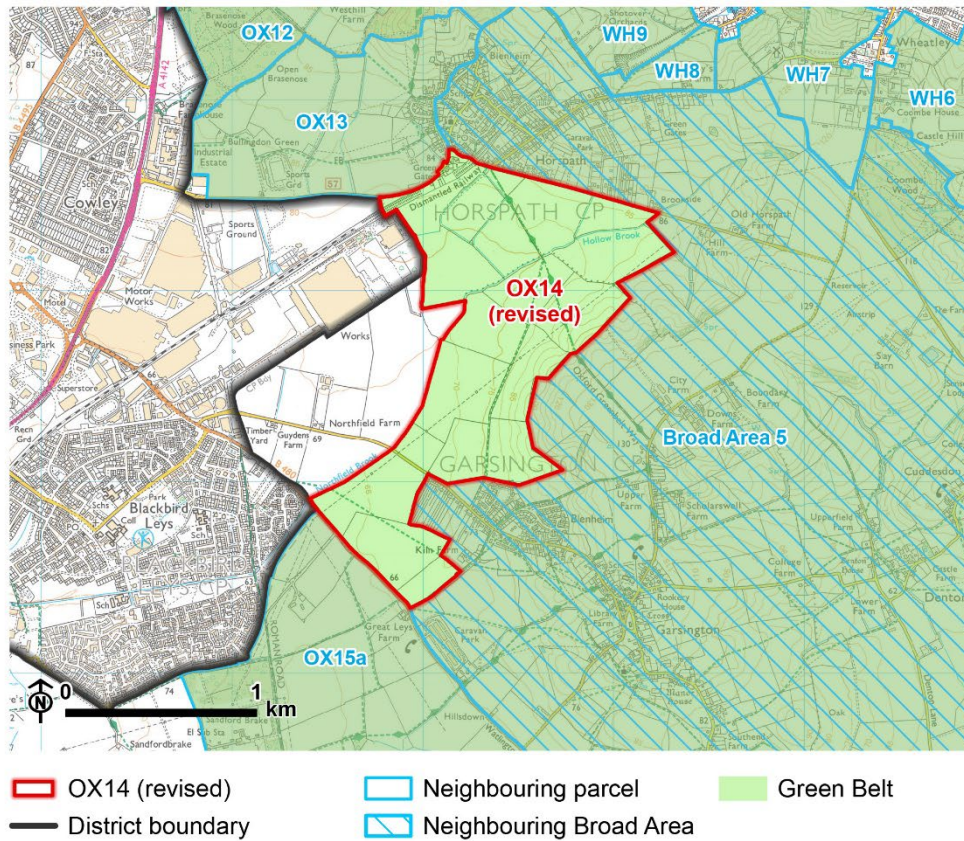
### **Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

- The lower, southern slopes of Shotover Hill are abutted by development to the south and south-west (the motor works and industrial units at Cowley) and the east (Horspath), and include a sports pitch, but well-treed field boundaries, including along the north edge of the mini plant to the south, and the wooded heights of Shotover Hill, give the eastern part of the parcel a rural character. Approaching from the east (Cuddesdon Road) the area is screened from view by Horspath, and urban-edge influences in Cowley are evident across the open landscape. There is no intervisibility with Oxford's historic core. The upper slopes can be considered more sensitive in relation to Shotover Hill's role as a marker of the eastern extent of Oxford, and in views from the high ground - e.g. Horspath Common - but visibility of the lower area from the surrounding landscape

## **Appendix A** Parcel OX13

is limited to locations in which the urban edge at Cowley is a dominant element of the landscape, detracting from Oxford's special character. The lower area represents the majority of the parcel.

# Parcel OX14





# Parcel OX14

## Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Medium	High	Medium

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to County Trading Estate, which forms part of the large built-up area of Oxford. It is comprised of agricultural fields and only contains a few dwellings associated with Horspath in the north. Land in the parcel is therefore considered to be open. A strategic allocation (Land at Northfield – SLP049) lies to the west of the parcel, but emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that the eastern half of the allocation will be retained as green infrastructure, which will help to screen the urbanising influence of the strategic site allocation within the parcel. Tree cover along Northfield Brook also provides some screening. Land in the east of the parcel begins to slope upwards and it shares good views with the surrounding countryside. The parcel lies adjacent to the villages of Horspath and Blenheim, but they are rural in nature and do not have a significant urbanising influence within the parcel.

### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the east and southeast of County Trading Estate in Oxford. The parcel borders Northfield Brook on its western boundary where a strategic allocation (Land at Northfield – SLP049) lies beyond. Emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that the eastern half will be retained as green infrastructure, which will reduce urbanising influence on the parcel. The parcel has a sense of openness throughout and begins to slope upwards in the east. The Littleworth area of Wheatley is relatively close to the northeast of the parcel. Due to the open character of the

parcel, views of the suburbs of Oxford and of Littleworth are available from within the parcel, and the parcel can be clearly viewed from surrounding high ground - e.g. at Garsington. The parcel therefore plays some role in preventing the erosion of the physical and visual gap between the two settlements, but more so in the north than the south, where reduction or loss of the gap between Oxford and Garsington is not addressed under Purpose 2 for this study.

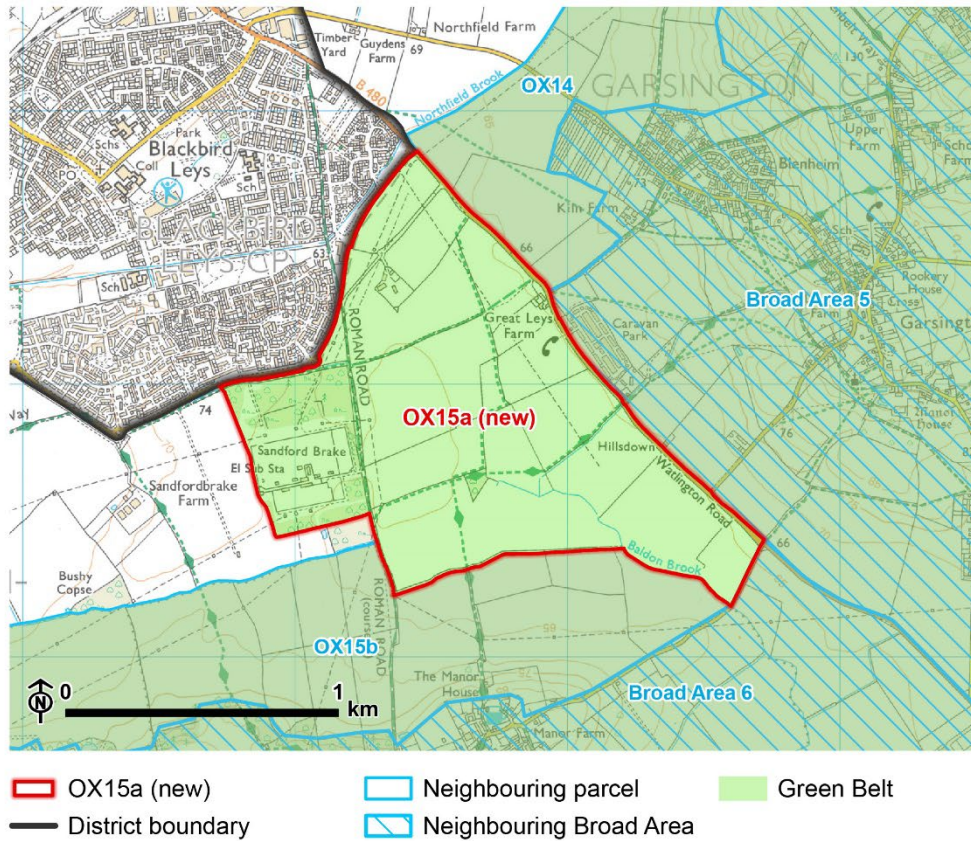
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is made-up of large, open agricultural fields with views of the immediate countryside around the parcel and the surrounding countryside in the east of the parcel where land is elevated. Development within the parcel includes a small portion of the village of Horspath at the northern tip of the parcel. This development is not considered to be significant urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt. Emerging indicative concept plan work for the strategic allocation (Land at Northfield – SLP049) that lies to the west of the parcel suggests the eastern half of the allocation will be retained for green infrastructure and tree cover along Northfield Brook provides some screening.

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

- The parcel is comprised of arable land alongside Northfield Brook. The character of this area is influenced by the adjacent County Trading Estate, and it there is only some intervisibility with those parts of Oxford which contribute to the City's special character. The area is, however, very visible from higher ground to the south east, e.g. around Garsington, in the context of the hills which frame the City. Seen in this context, the parcel provides separation between the urban edge at Northfield Brook and in particular the settlement of Blenheim at the northern end of Garsington.

# Parcel OX15a



## Parcel OX15a

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Low	High	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford and is predominantly comprised of open, agricultural fields. Sandford Brake substation is located in the west the parcel, but is well screened, which limits any urbanising influence it has. The parcel is adjacent to a strategic allocation (Land south of Grenoble Road – SLP051) that forms an extension to the existing urban edge along Grenoble Road. The tree cover around Sandford Brake substation screens the Green Belt within the parcel from this strategic allocation and the existing urban edge west of Blackberry Lane. The parcel shares good views with the surrounding countryside to the south and east. Grenoble Road in combination with Northfield Brook maintain distinction from the visible urban edge of Oxford at the northern edge of the parcel.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is located to the south of Grenoble Road and the southern suburbs of Oxford. The parcel is relatively flat in topography. Tree cover largely screens the adjacent urban area. The parcel forms the gap between Oxford and Toot Baldon but this settlement is not considered under Purpose 2 for this study.

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

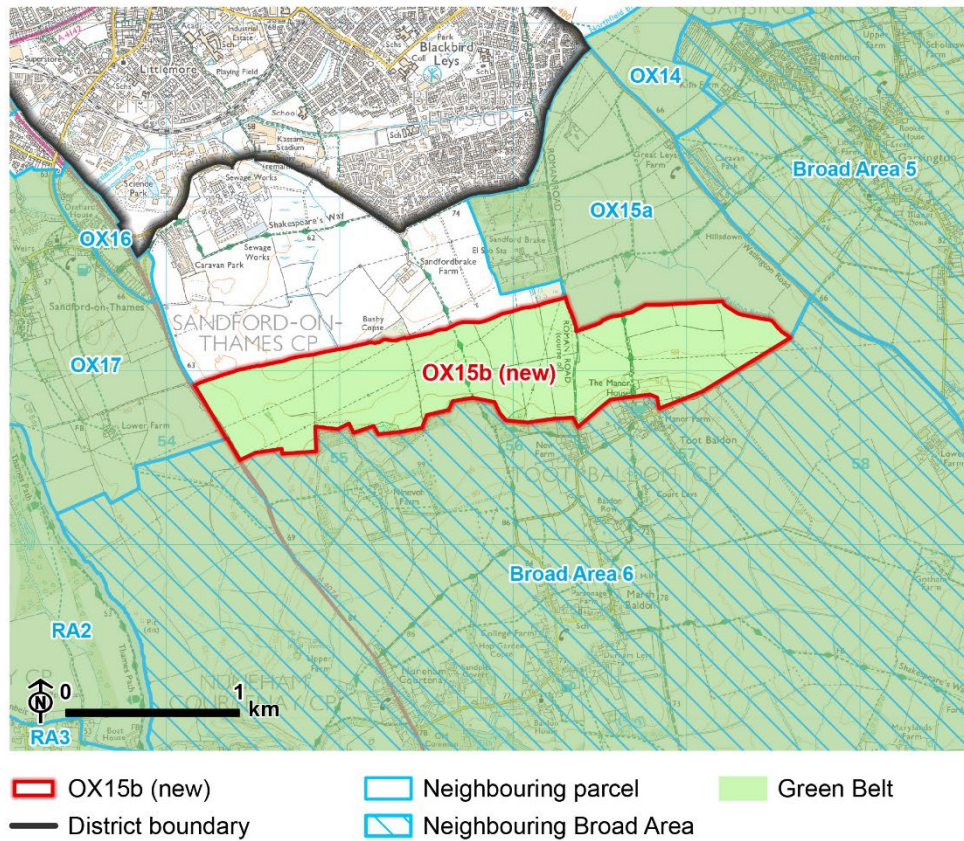
- Sandford Brake substation lies within the parcel but is well screened by strong trees lines and woodland blocks. The majority of the parcel is comprised of open agricultural fields with views to the wider countryside, including the hills to the east around Horspath and Garsington. Pylons converging on the substation add to urban-edge character, but there is sufficient undeveloped farmland and a relationship with the surrounding countryside to consider the parcel relatively open and rural. The urbanising influence of adjacent strategic allocation (Land south of Grenoble Road – SLP051), that forms an extension to the existing urban edge along Grenoble Road, is likely to be limited by existing tree cover and planned green infrastructure in the south eastern corner of the strategic site allocation. Grenoble Road in combination with Northfield Brook maintain distinction from the visible urban edge of Oxford at the northern edge of the parcel.

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

- There is no visual relationship with historic areas of Oxford. Tree cover screens some views of the urban edge, but the transmission lines gathering at the Sandford Brake Substation are very evident. In views from higher ground to the south, e.g. Toot Baldon, the parcel is more visible but so is the existing urban area. There is a greater ('medium') setting significance associated with the southern parts of the parcel that are more prominent as a rural foreground landscape in views from the ridge to the south, the B480 to the east and the A4074 to the west, and also with the eastern end of the parcel (which forms part of a clear rural gap between Blackbird Leys and Blenheim/Garsington in views from Shotover Hill). This is also prominent open space in views towards historic Oxford from the northern edge of Toot Baldon.



# Parcel OX15b



# Parcel OX15b

## Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	Low	High	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford and is comprised of agricultural fields that lie north of the village of Toot Baldon. The western half of the parcel has been permitted for use as a solar farm. Although this use will affect openness within the parcel, its significance is considered to be limited given the relatively temporary nature of the permission. There are a few residential dwellings in the south east of the parcel, but they do not have a significant impact on openness. The parcel is adjacent to a strategic allocation (Land south of Grenoble Road – SLP051) that forms an extension to the existing urban edge along Grenoble Road. Currently, a line of tree cover separates the parcel from this strategic allocation and emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that this boundary will be enhanced as part of development. The parcel shares good views with the surrounding countryside to the south east and west over the River Thames.

### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the south of the southern suburbs of Oxford, but tree cover along its northern boundary provides screening. The land within the parcel rises up to the south to Toot Baldon, but this settlement is not considered under Purpose 2 for this study. The southeast corner of the parcel is in relatively close proximity to Radley, but the Thames Valley, whilst allowing some intervisibility, represents in landscape terms a

separating feature which limits the extent to which there would be any sense of potential merger between the two areas.

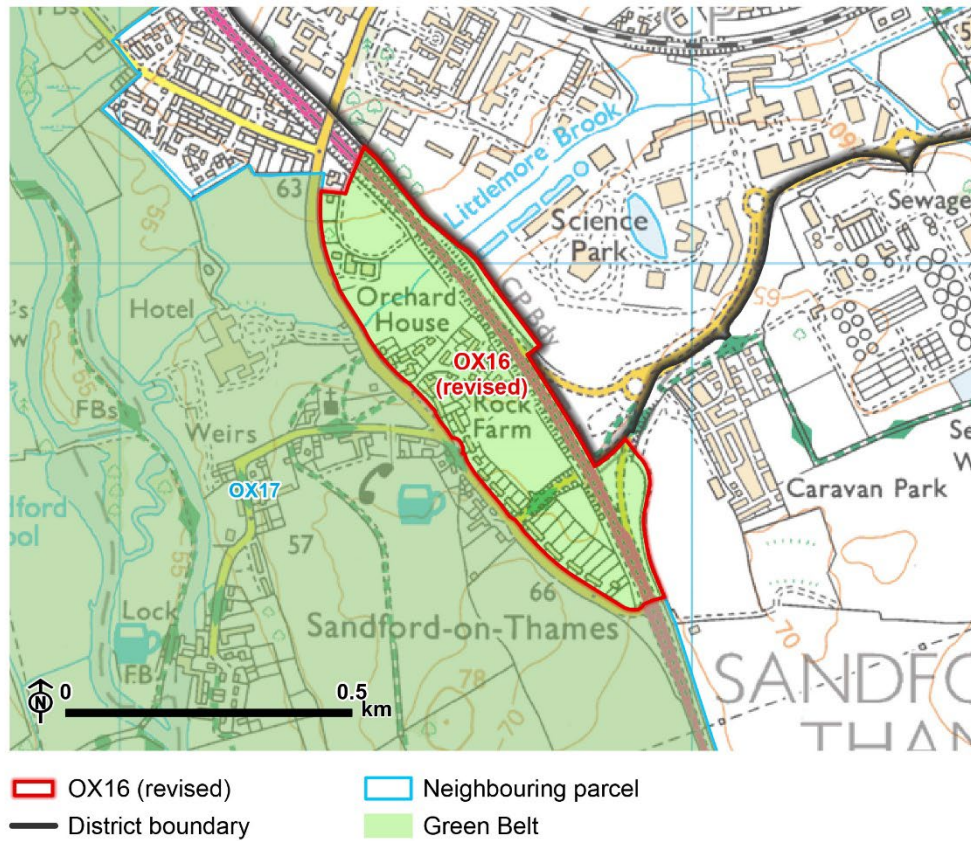
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The majority of the parcel is comprised of open agricultural fields with views to the wider countryside, including the hills to the east around Horspath and Garsington. The western half of the parcel has been permitted for use as a solar farm. Although this use will affect openness within the parcel, its significance is considered to be limited given the relatively temporary nature of the permission. Part of the village of Toot Baldon lies in the south east of the parcel, but it does not have a significant impact on openness. The urbanising influence of adjacent strategic allocation (Land south of Grenoble Road – SLP051), that forms an extension to the existing urban edge along Grenoble Road, is likely to be limited by existing tree cover and emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that this boundary will be enhanced with additional green infrastructure, although the urban area is still likely to be visible from the high ground within and beyond the southern parts of the parcel albeit at some distance.

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

- There is no visual relationship with historic areas of Oxford. Tree cover screens some views of the urban edge, but the transmission lines gathering at the Sandford Brake Substation are very evident. In views from higher ground in the south of the parcel and beyond at Toot Baldon, the parcel is more visible but so is the existing urban area. There is a greater ('medium') setting significance associated with the southern parts of the parcel that are more prominent as a rural foreground landscape in views from the ridge and the A4074 to the west. This is also prominent open space in views towards historic Oxford from the northern edge of Toot Baldon.

## Parcel OX16



## Parcel OX16

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
Medium	N/C	Medium	Low

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

- The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford. The parcel contains a significant proportion of the village of Sandford-on-Thames as well as some southern sprawl of Oxford along the eastern side of Sandford Road at the northern end of the parcel. This development leaves only relatively small areas undeveloped and open but importantly prevents the assimilation of the village into the urban area of Oxford. The A4074 dual-carriageway forms a strong boundary maintaining distinction between the parcel and the urban area of Oxford, including the strategic allocation (Land south of Grenoble Road – SLP051) directly to the south east, but is has already been partially breached by the sprawl along Heyford Hill Lane to the north. Sandford Road/Henley Road, which is lined with residential development, contains the parcel and limits views of the surrounding countryside.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The open area of the parcel around Littlemore Brook also plays a key role in preventing the merging of Sandford with the modern urbanising development to the north of the brook (e.g. Vale House), and to a lesser extent in preventing merger with the edge of Oxford to the west, where the presence of the dual-carriageway and associated screening planting limits intervisibility. However, Sandford is not considered as a settlement under Purpose 2 for this study. The remaining open areas in the parcel do not play a significant role in separating any other settlements from Oxford.



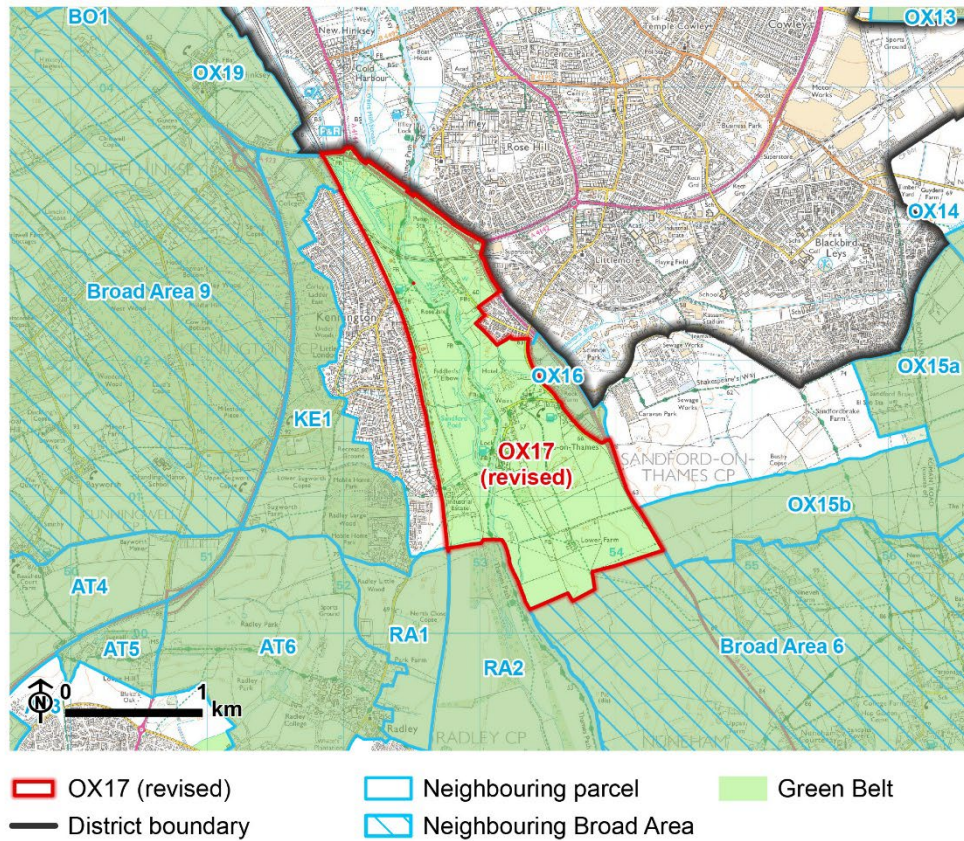
**Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The village of Sandford does retain something of a rural character, and the remaining open areas contribute to this, but the less developed character of the western side of the road is also important in this respect, and lacks the containment created by the A4074 to the east. There is therefore some sense of openness, despite the extent of development.

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

- This small parcel is already largely developed, leaving only small, isolated areas of open space between Sandford Road and the A4074 which are well screened from the latter by trees. It has no visual relationship with historic parts of Oxford and there are no significant views from the south, with land sloping downhill south to north and Sandford Hill screening views along the valley from Nuneham Park, or from the Thames. However, the rural character that the parcel maintained, despite its proximity to the City, does make a contribution to Oxford's special character.

# Parcel OX17



# Parcel OX17

## Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
Medium	High	Medium	High

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to the large built-up area as it sits within the Thames valley in between Kennington to the west and Oxford to the east. The land within the parcel is largely open and predominantly low lying pastureland and woodland, largely in the floodplain of the River Thames. The eastern part contains some development, including a pumping station in the north of the parcel. The south of the parcel contains a large hotel and the village of Sandford-on-Thames. This development impacts openness locally, but not at a strategic scale within the parcel. With the exception of the higher ground south of Sandford-on-Thames in the south of the parcel, tree cover and urban areas to the east, west and south restrict the vast majority of views of countryside to those within the parcel. A railway line and tree cover which form the majority of the western edge of the parcel at Kennington, and the eastern edge of the parcel is bounded by dual-carriageway, both of which represent strong boundaries that maintain distinction from the large built-up area. The River Thames runs north-south through the centre and large parts of the north and east of the parcel contain tree cover, creating significant land cover distinction from the urban area. The majority of the parcel lies in a relatively contained area between Kennington and Oxford, which limits the extent to which development within the parcel would be perceived as sprawl. However, the higher ground south Sandford-on-Thames and immediately beyond past Lower Farm Lane is considered to make a High contribution to preventing the sprawl of Oxford directly to the west of the A4074.

### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is adjacent to both the western limits of Oxford on the eastern boundary of the parcel, and Kennington which is adjacent to the western boundary. The parcel is situated on an area of land that is low lying, flat and open due to its association with the floodplain of the River Thames and its tributaries. The parcel is also well screened in areas by vegetation, including hedgerows and trees, which create visual separation between the neighbouring settlements. The parcel therefore plays an essential role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between the settlements, as any encroachment by either settlement would clearly result in closing the gap. The parcel also plays a key role in preventing the merging of Sandford-on-Thames and Oxford/Kennington, although the former is not considered as a settlement under Purpose 2 for this study.

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

- The parcel sits within the Thames valley and is made-up of predominately low lying pastureland and woodland in the floodplain of the River Thames. The eastern part of the parcel contains some development, including a pumping station in the north of the parcel. There is a large hotel in the south of the parcel and the village of Sandford-on-Thames. Whilst the western part is open and has no built development, the riverside pylon line and proximity of major road and rail links have some adverse effect on rural character. The parcel lies in a relatively contained area between Kennington and the A4074 at the southwest of Oxford, but it is connected to the wider countryside in the south. The railway line and associated tree cover to the west screens the parcel from Kennington to an extent.

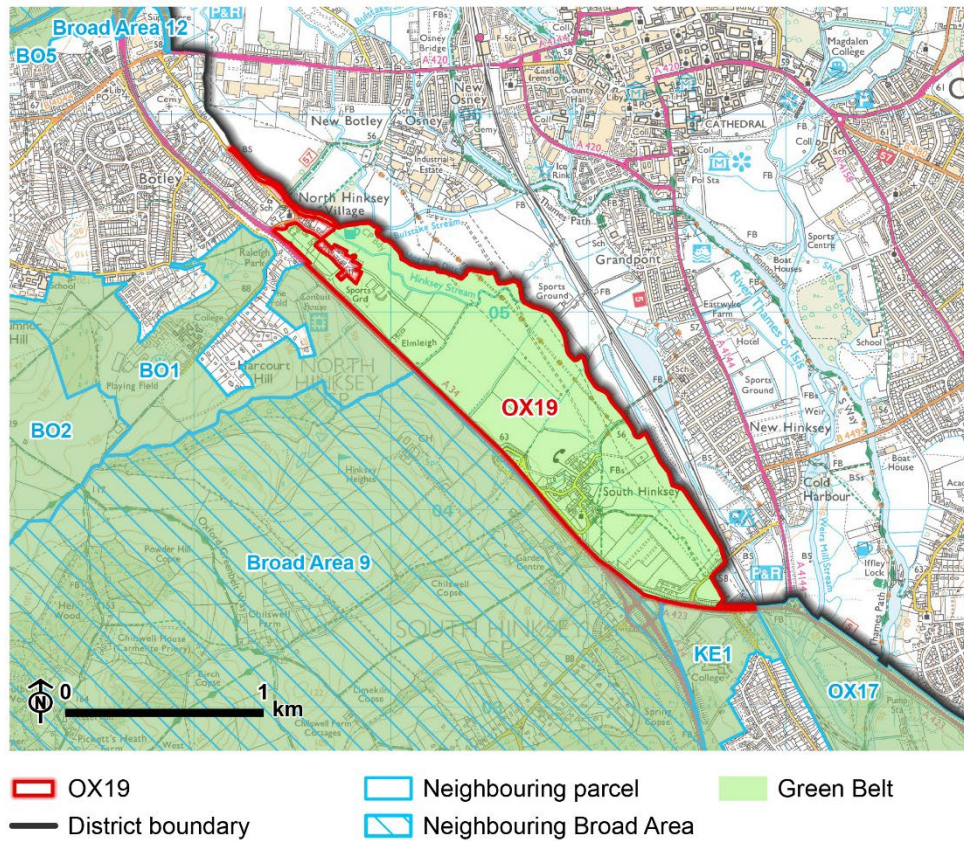
### **Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

- The parcel contains the Thames floodplain meadows. The continuity of character provided by the undeveloped river valley as it penetrates into the heart of Oxford is a key characteristic of the city's special character, experienced by those approaching the city by boat or by the Thames Path,

so this parcel plays an important role in that despite a lack of visual connection with the central area. In this area the parcel separates the main body of the City from Kennington, preserving open floodplains and forming a green wedge that continue into the centre of Oxford.



# Parcel OX19



## Parcel OX19

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	High	Medium	High

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

- The parcel, adjacent to the large built-up area of Oxford, is predominantly made-up of flat, open and irregular shaped fields associated with the floodplain of the River Thames and its tributaries. It contains a number of urbanising influences within the parcel, namely pylons, floodlit outdoor sports pitches, the village of South Hinksey and some mobile home development on Red Bridge Hollow, but the majority of the parcel is open. Views over the surrounding countryside are limited by the presence of the A34 Southern Bypass Road and associated tree cover, but the railway line, and to a lesser extent the streams flowing into the River Thames are significant boundaries maintaining distinction with the existing urban edge of Oxford, and the floodplain maintains a strong sense of openness to the north of the parcel.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is in extremely close proximity to both the western limits of Oxford on the eastern boundary of the parcel, and Botley which is located to the northwest of the parcel. The southern boundary of the parcel is also in close proximity to Kennington. The parcel is situated on an area of land that is low lying, flat and open due to its association with the floodplain of the River Thames and its tributaries. The parcel is also well screened in areas by roadside vegetation, including hedgerows and trees, which create visual separation between the neighbouring settlements. The

parcel therefore plays an essential role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between the settlements.

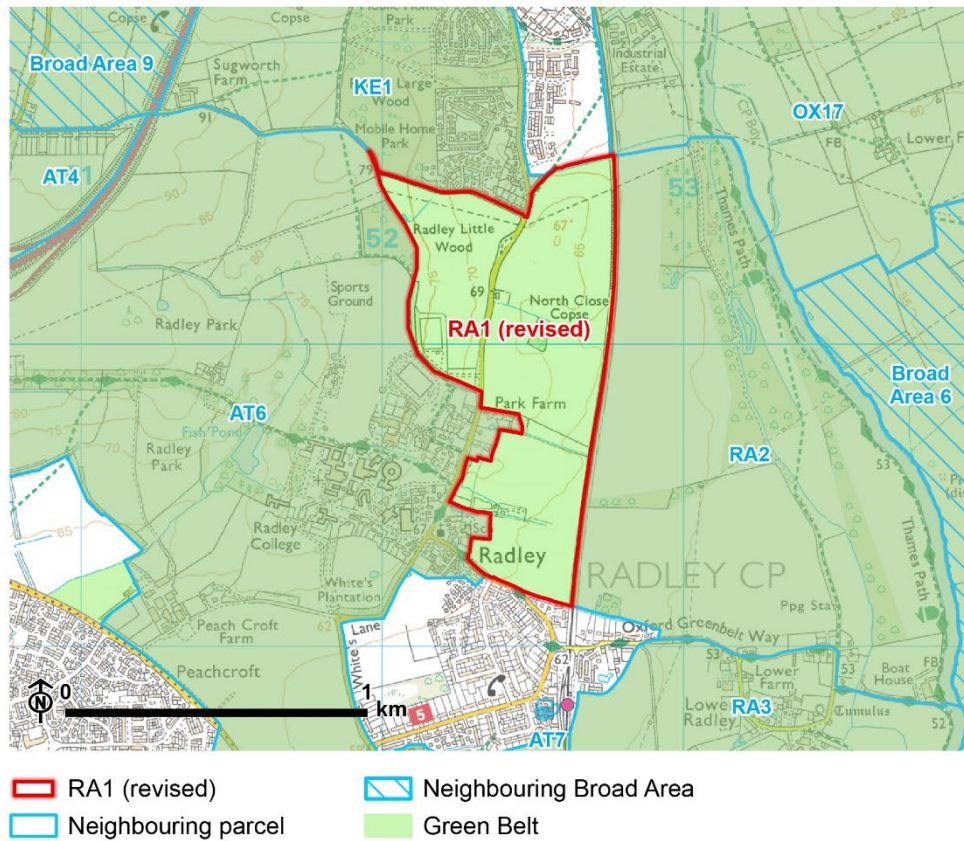
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of flat, open and irregular shaped fields associated with the floodplain of the River Thames and its tributaries. The northern half of the parcel represents a thin strip of Green Belt land in between Oxford and Botely/North Hinksey village with pylons running through it, and the industrial estates at New Osney exert an urbanising influence. The fringes of the parcel contains outdoor sports pitches, some of which are floodlit. The southern third of the parcel contains some mobile home development on Red Bridge Hollow, but the village of South Hinksey is rural in character, despite the proximity of the A34. Whilst the northern end of the parcel would rate as 'low' in isolation, the consistent open, pastoral character of the floodplain grasslands reduces urbanising influence across the rest of the parcel.

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

- The spires of Oxford are in clear view from parts of this open, streamside meadowland, which also forms an important foreground setting to the City in views from high ground to the west. Whilst it lacks the linear riverside access of the Thames and Cherwell, and has more of an urban-edge character associated with overhead lines, the A34 and industrial development at Osney and New Botley, this area is nonetheless important as a green lung penetrating close to the city centre. It is crossed by several important rights of way leading out towards Boars Hill and Cumnor. Historically the streams passing through this area were important boundary features, separating Berkshire and Oxfordshire and, further back in time, the Saxon kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex, so their retention in an open landscape can be considered to contribute to historic character.

# Parcel RA1





# Parcel RA1

## Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	High	High	Medium

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

- The release of strategic housing allocation CP4 (South Kennington) extends the southern edge of Kennington to the northern edge of the parcel. Although the southern edge of this strategic site allocation is well screened, the parcel sits in between the southern urban edge of Kennington, part of the large built-up area of Oxford, and the northern edge of Radley, connected via the railway line the runs between them and alongside the parcel. The settlements are separated from each other by large, arable fields, but major development in the parcel would potentially result in a significant reduction in the gap and/or constitute further southward sprawl of the large built-up area along the railway line.

### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The northern and southern boundaries of the parcel are positioned between Radley to the south and Kennington to the north, with the eastern boundary adjacent to the railway line that runs between Radley and Oxford, and the western boundary adjacent to Kennington Road. The settlements are separated from each other by large, arable fields. Major development in the parcel would potentially result in a significant reduction in the gap, but it is noted that hedgerows with trees prevent any direct intervisibility, and there is some distance between the settlements, so there is scope for some loss of openness without a resultant substantial reduction in the gap.



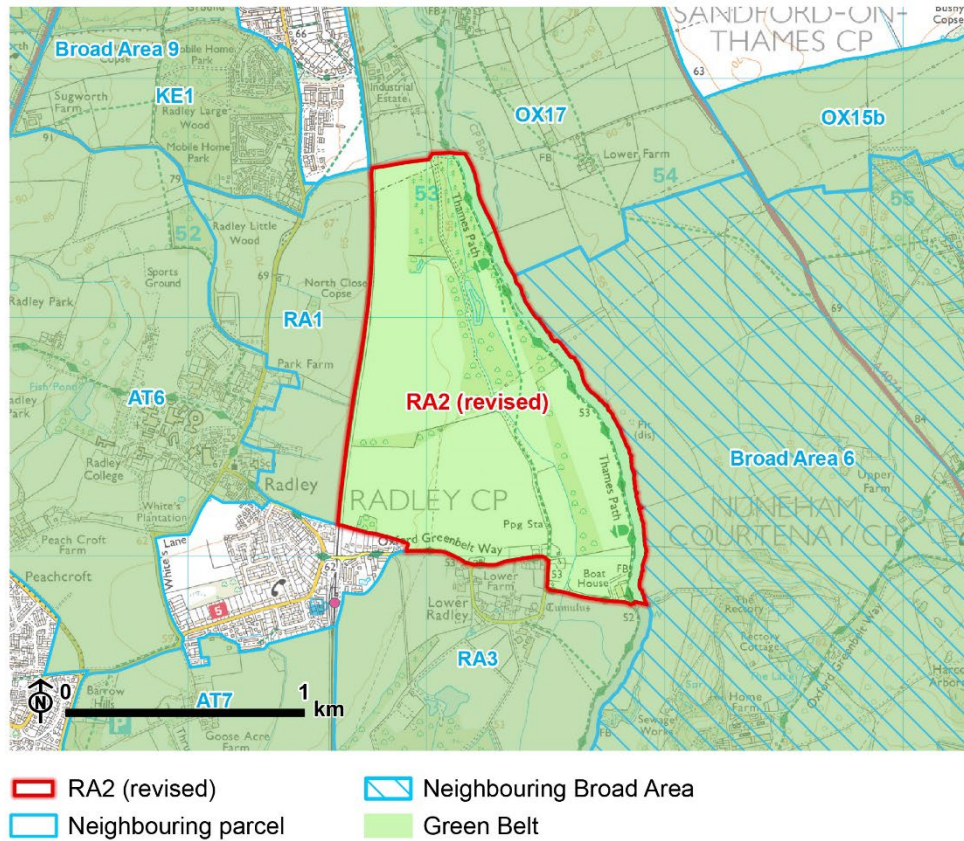
**Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel contains very large, open, arable fields, with a copse in the centre and a single residential building on the western edge (Kennington Road). This is an open, rural landscape with open views to the east in particular. The southern edge of the strategic site allocation abuts the northern end of the parcel is well screened. Adjacent development at the parcel's southern end only influences the southern field.

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

- This arable farmland on lower slopes above the Thames river terrace marks a distinct change in terrain from the wooded landscape at southern end of Kennington. There is no visibility from City centre towers, and limited views from the Thames Valley, but the open, arable slopes are exposed to view from higher ground to east. Whilst less visible than the higher, wooded ground to the north and south-east, this parcel forms a rural link that joins these areas, thus forming part of the ring of countryside that surrounds Oxford.

# Parcel RA2



## Parcel RA2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
High	High	High	High

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

- The release of strategic housing allocation CP4 (South Kennington) extends the southern edge of Kennington to the northern edge of the parcel. Although the southern edge of this strategic site allocation is well screened, the parcel sits in between the southern urban edge of Kennington, part of the large built-up area of Oxford, and the northern edge of Radley, connected via the railway line the runs between them and alongside the parcel. The settlements are separated from each other by large, arable fields, but major development in the parcel would potentially result in a significant reduction in the gap and/or constitute further southward sprawl of the large built-up area along the railway line.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is adjacent to Radley in the south and Kennington in the north. Relatively flat and open topography occupies the space between the settlements, and major development in the parcel would potentially result in a significant reduction in the gap. It is noted, however, that vegetation restricts direct intervisibility and the distance between the two settlements means that a degree of loss of openness could occur without resulting in a substantial reduction in the settlement gap.

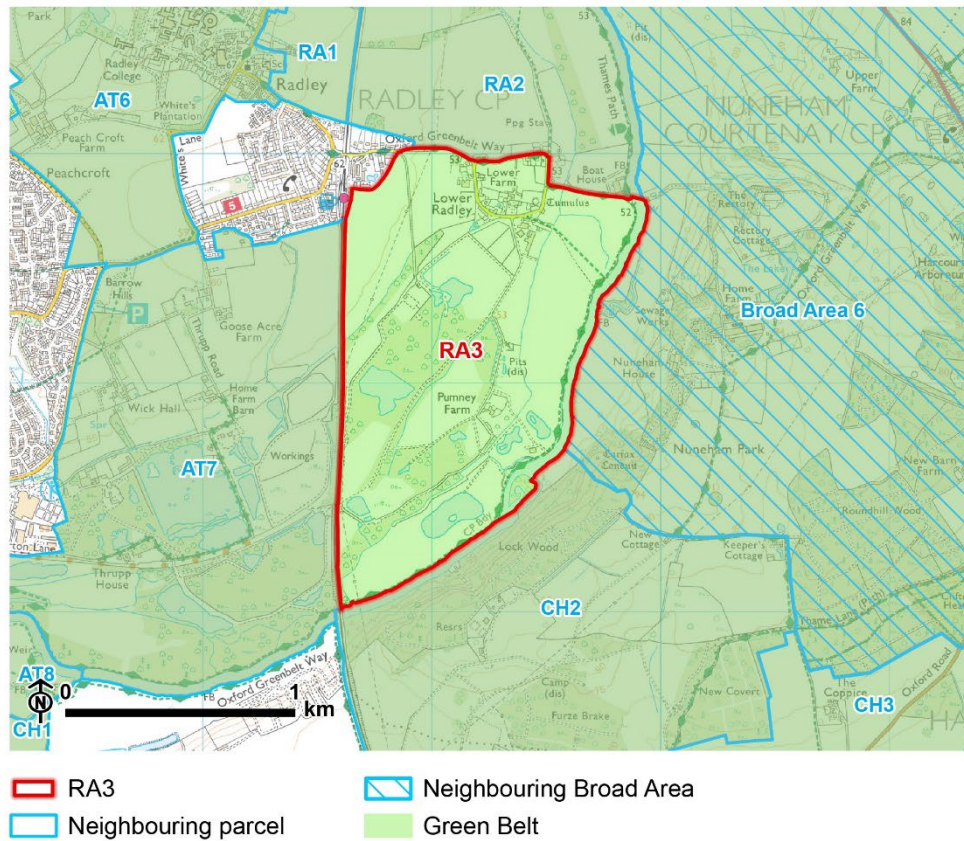
#### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel sits between a railway line which runs along the western edge of the parcel and the River Thames which flows along the eastern edge of the parcel. Much of the parcel falls within the River's floodplain and is therefore relatively flat. Roughly half of the parcel is wooded; the other half contains large irregular-shaped agricultural fields with good views of countryside immediately to the east. The southern edge of the parcel contains some detached dwellings within the small hamlet of Lower Radley. These dwellings are rural in character and are not considered to be urbanising influences on the countryside. Pylons run through the parcel. Sandford Lane Industrial Estate is located at its northern tip of the parcel. In combination with the pylons, the estate's large buildings and areas of hardstanding have an urbanising influence on the countryside within the northernmost part of the Green Belt parcel, but the majority of the parcel can be considered to have an open, rural character, with very little urbanising development. Tree cover at the northern and southern end of the parcel screens the parcel from the adjacent inset areas.

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

- River terrace farmlands dropping down to the Thames. This forms an important corridor of open valley which continues north into the heart of Oxford, one of the 'green lungs' which form an essential element of the city's special character. There are long views along this river corridor from the Nuneham Park area. The parcel is split east-west by tree lines and woodland blocks, with the lower, western half contributing more in terms of its proximity to the river and visibility from the Thames Path than the eastern half (which makes a 'medium' contribution).

# Parcel RA3





## Parcel RA3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Medium

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

- The parcel abuts Radley which is not considered to be a large built up area, i.e. Oxford. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The north-western boundary of the parcel is adjacent to Radley, with the western boundary adjacent to the railway line that runs to Radley and the south-eastern boundary adjacent to the River Thames. The parcel has a strong sense of openness and is a flat area of land. The parcel is subject to a degree of urbanising influence by Radley in the northwest and Lower Radley in the north, but this development is rural in nature. The parcel forms a significant portion of the settlement gap between Radley and the now inset Culham Science Centre and the associated adjacent strategic site allocation (SLP045 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), which together represent a new neighbouring town in the Green Belt. Loss of openness within the parcel would weaken the perceived separation between these inset settlements, but the River Thames, including the higher ground along its southern bank associated with Lock Wood, acts as a significant separating feature. Furthermore, the emerging indicative concept plan for the land adjacent to Culham Science Centre retains a significant area of open countryside to the north up to the River Thames, north west and west of the developed area, maintaining visual separation.

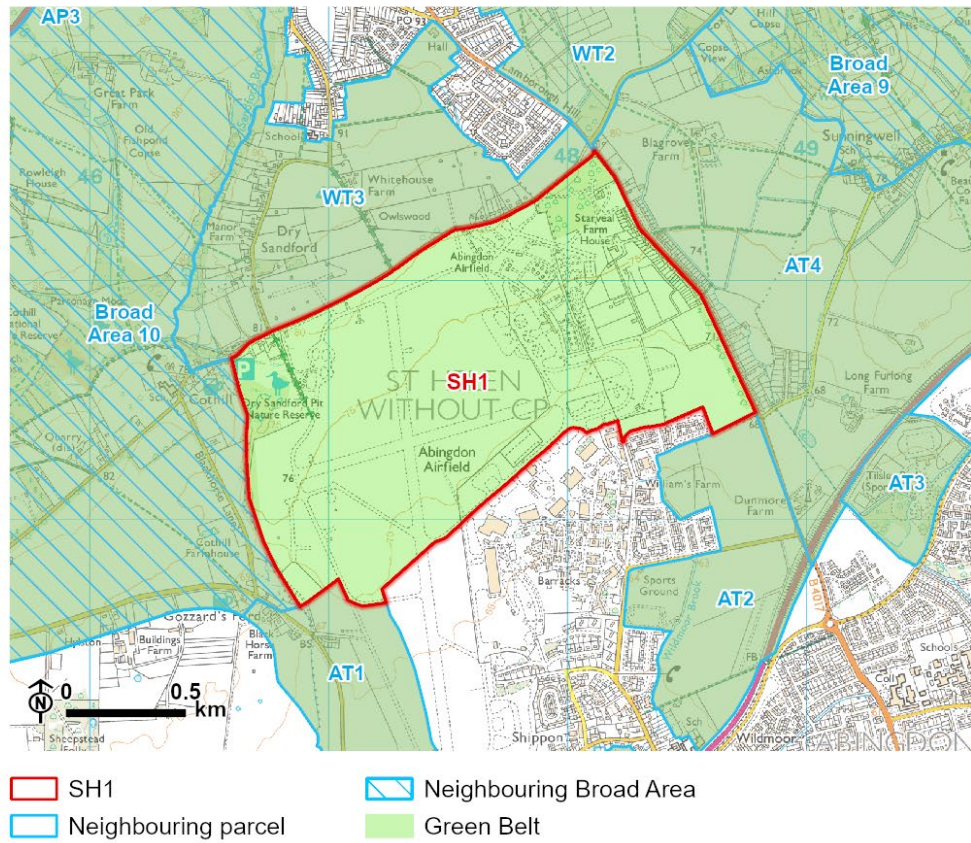
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel sits between a railway line which runs along the western edge of the parcel and the River Thames which flows along the eastern and southern edges of the parcel. Much of the parcel falls within the River's floodplain and is therefore relatively flat with some large areas of standing water associated with historic gravel extraction within the parcel. Most of the parcel is made-up of large irregular-shaped agricultural fields and scrubland lined by trees. Through the gaps in the tree cover it is possible to see views of the surrounding countryside along the River Thames. Pylons run through the north western corner of the parcel. At the northern end of the parcel, the parcel contains the majority of the small hamlet of Lower Radley. This small hamlet is very rural in character, containing Lower Farm and several large detached dwellings. The small hamlet is not considered to be an urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt parcel. In addition, there is a small area of previously developed land in the centre of the parcel and some large isolated dwellings in the south of the parcel close to the River Thames; however, these features are not considered to have an urbanising influence. The north west fields in the parcel are subject to a degree of urbanising influence from east Radley.

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

- Mixture of arable and scrub/secondary woodland and lakes associated with former gravel workings, on riverside lowlands. Formal linear tree planting (poplars) around large arable field on eastern side of parcel draw the eye in views. There is no intervisibility with central Oxford, but undeveloped river corridors which extend into the heart of the city are a key element in Oxford's special character. Land further west, closer to Radley and Lower Radley, contributes less in this respect.

# Parcel SH1



## Parcel SH1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	High	High	N/C

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

- The parcel lies adjacent to the northern side of Shippon, north west of Abingdon-on-Thames. Neither settlement is considered to be a large built-up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is situated to the north west of the inset Abingdon-on-Thames and Shippon. The B4017 connects Abingdon-on-Thames to Wootton to the north at the parcel's eastern edge and Sandford Brook lies to the west. The parcel is largely comprised of open land associated with Abingdon-on-Thames Airfield, as well as some agricultural land in the east. There are some residential dwellings in the east of the parcel, but they do not have a significant impact on openness. Emerging indicative concept plan work for the strategic allocation to the south west suggests that the settlement boundary will be reinforced, reducing the existing urbanising influence from Shippon. The neighbouring inset settlement of Wootton lies relatively close to the northern border of this parcel over Honeybottom Lane. Loss of openness in this parcel would leave a very narrow gap between Shippon and Wootton, almost creating an unbroken line of development between the inset settlements. Furthermore, linear development at Whitecross on the B4017 increases the fragility of this settlement gap and the extent to which the parcel is maintaining separation.

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

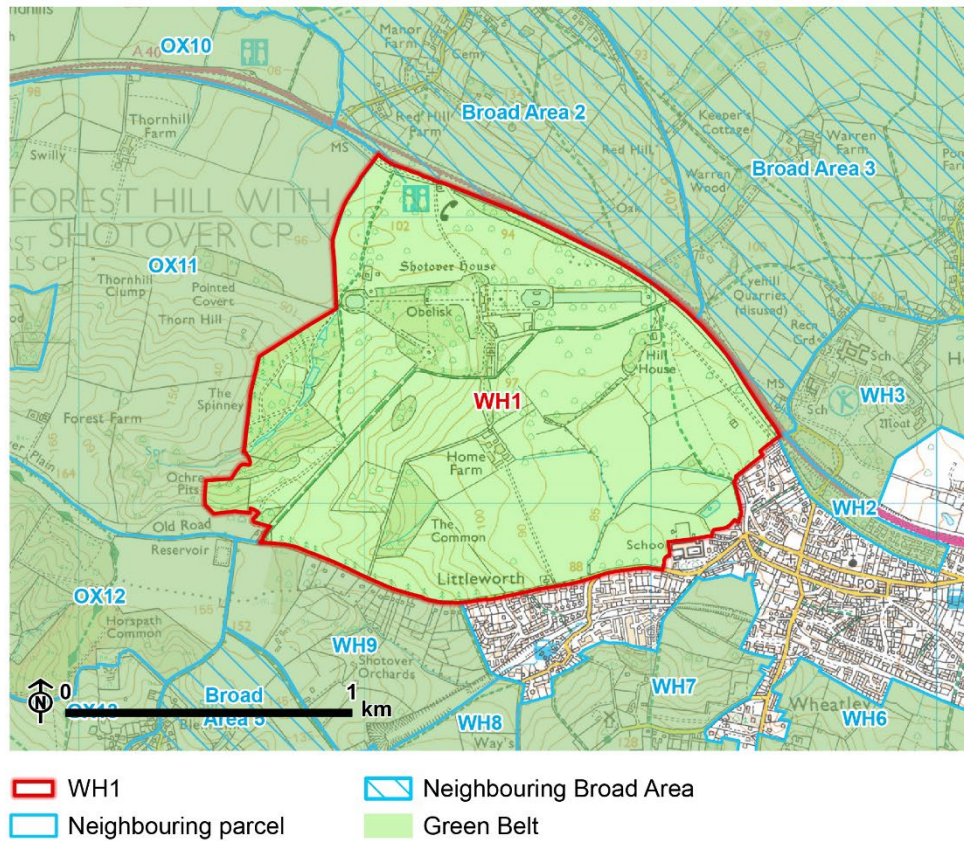
- The parcel is predominantly comprised of grassland associated with Abingdon-on-Thames Airfield, but there is some agricultural land in the east of the parcel, and some woodland associated with Dry Sandford Pit SSSI in the northwest. Land in the parcel is open and shares views over the countryside to the west over Sandford Brook and the higher ground to the east over the B4017. Large warehouses associated with Abingdon-on-Thames Airfield abut the south of the parcel. The redevelopment of Dalton Barracks as an urban expansion of Shippon has recently seen the release of Green Belt land to the west into the Airfield, extending the length of the northern urban edge of Shippon and the Barracks towards Wooton. However, emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that the boundary between the allocation and the parcel will be enhanced with mature planting and green infrastructure, reducing the existing urbanising influence of the Barracks towards Wooton and to the west of Shippon. The ribbon development along the B4107 (Whitecross) to the west has some urbanising influence at the eastern edge of the parcel, but being only one dwelling deep, is not considered to be a significant urbanising influence.

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

- The parcel is located between Shippon and Wootton and does not share intervisibility with Oxford. As such, it makes little contribution to the rural character of Oxford's wider setting, being related for closely to Shippon.



# Parcel WH1



## Parcel WH1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The northern boundary of the parcel is adjacent to the A40 while the eastern boundary is adjacent to Wheatley. The parcel has a strong sense of openness and flat topography to the northern area of the parcel with the parcel rising in elevation towards the southwest. Sandhills, a suburb of Oxford, is in relatively close proximity to the western boundary of the parcel; however due to the intervening vegetation and woodlands in the open areas and topography, views between the Oxford suburb and Wheatley are limited. Due to the close proximity between the settlements and the A40 connection between the two the parcel plays some role in preventing the merging of the two settlements, as any encroachment by either settlement would result in loss of openness and reduction of the settlement gap.

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

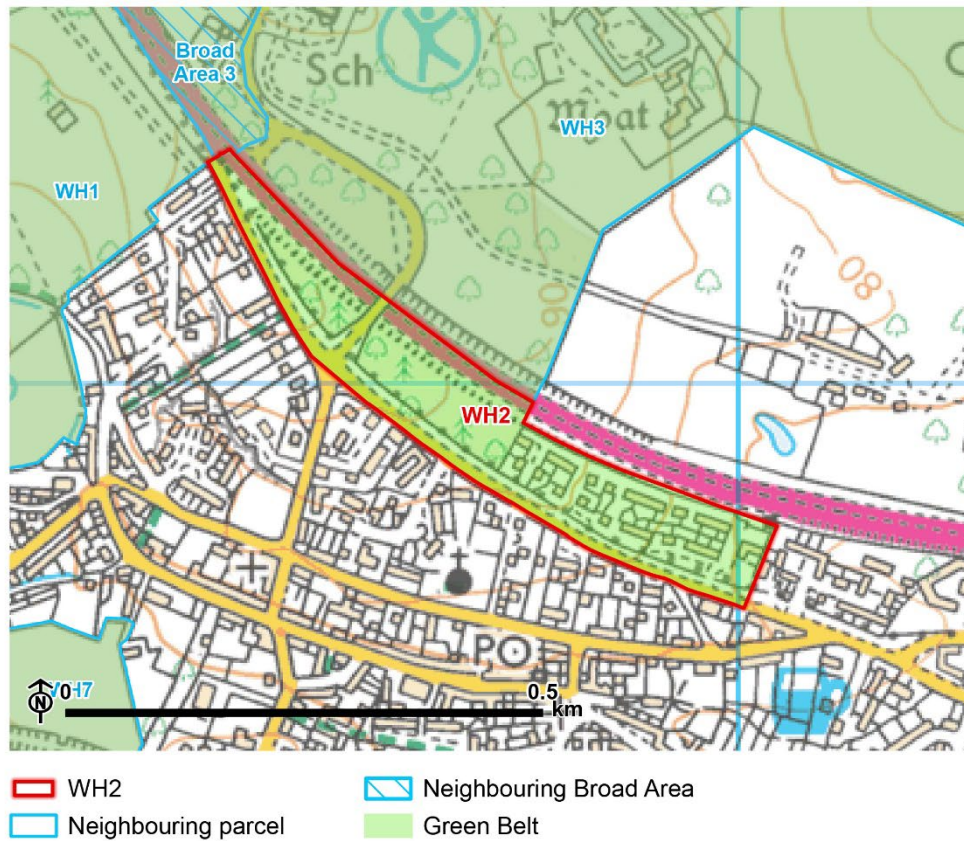
- The north western half of the parcel is made-up of the Grade I listed Shotover Registered Park and Garden containing large areas of woodland

and landscaped parkland. The majority of the south eastern half of the parcel is made up of large irregular-shaped agricultural fields. The land within the parcel slopes up to its highest point in the south western corner of the parcel. Therefore, there are open views of the surrounding countryside, particularly to the east and north east. A park sits in the southern half of the parcel and the historic buildings of the Registered Park and Garden sit in the northern half of the parcel. Neither development is considered to be urbanising influences on the countryside characteristics of the land within the parcel. Development within Wheatley is generally well screened from the parcel by tree cover.

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

- The parcel is largely occupied by the Grade I listed parkland and gardens of Shotover House, together with arable farmland to the south, set on the eastern slopes of Shotover Hill. Shotover Hill forms a distinctive and historically important rural setting to Oxford, and WH1, whilst lacking intervisibility with the City, contributes to this setting as it is perceived from settlements to the east (Wheatley, Holton, Littleworth). The tree-enclosed fields in the lower, south-eastern corner of the parcel, adjacent to Wheatley C of E Primary School and Littleworth, are less important in this respect.

## Parcel WH2



## Parcel WH2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- This small parcel is located between Wheatley and the A40 and is surrounded by other parcels. The parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.

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

- The parcel represents a very thin strip of woodland and scrubland at its western end and residential development at the eastern end in between the urban edge of Wheatley and the A40 dual-carriageway (A40). It is somewhat disconnected from the wider countryside by the A40, and influenced by the busy road to the north and urbanising development to the south. The land does slope upwards to the west opening-up views of the wider countryside to the east. The Land at Wheatley Campus, Oxford Brookes University immediately to the north east has recently been released as a strategic northern extension to Wheatley, containing the

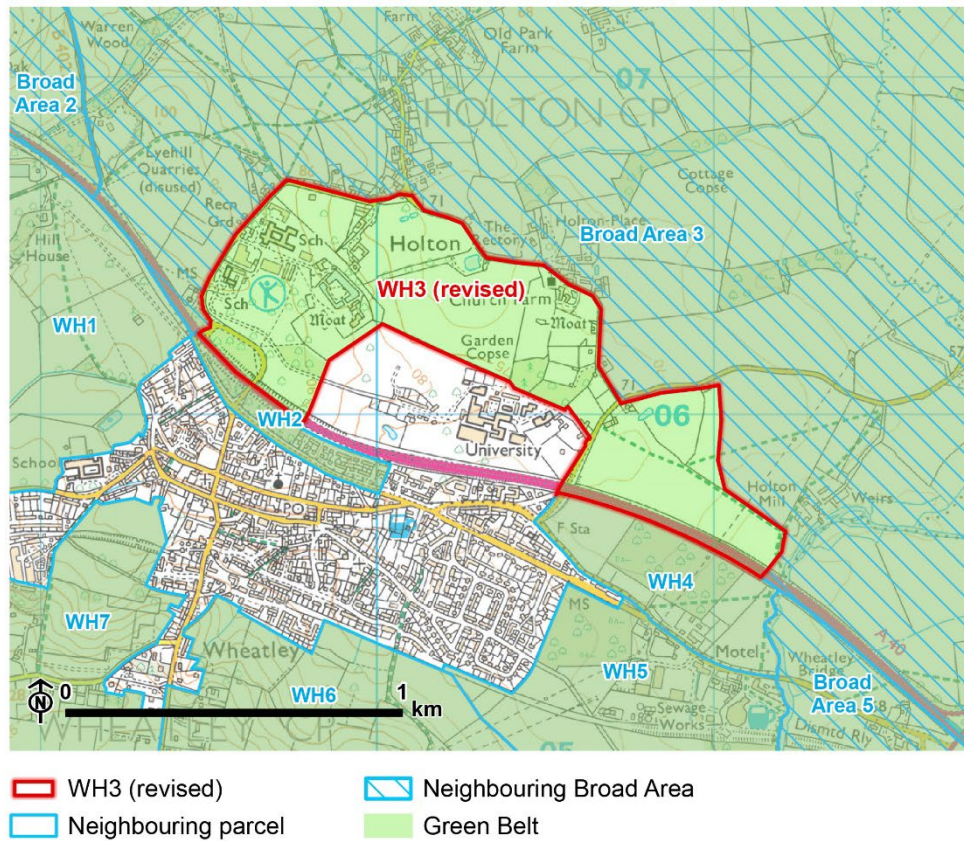


already developed southeastern third of the parcel and exerting an urbanising influence on the open areas from the north. The woodland within the parcel screens the majority of these urbanising influences.

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

- A narrow strip of largely wooded ground along the southern edge of the A40 (presumably planted, and perhaps reshaped, as part of the road's construction). The northern edge of Wheatley already lies adjacent to the A40 to the east of this parcel, but is well screened by roadside trees, so the parcel, whilst forming a buffer between parts of Wheatley and the main road, doesn't contribute to the rural character of Oxford's wider setting.

# Parcel WH3



## Parcel WH3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel is located to the north of Wheatley and the A40 and includes parts of Holton and Wheatley Park School. The parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. The land parcel acts to prevent Wheatley and Holton merging, but Holton is not considered under Purpose 2 for this study.

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

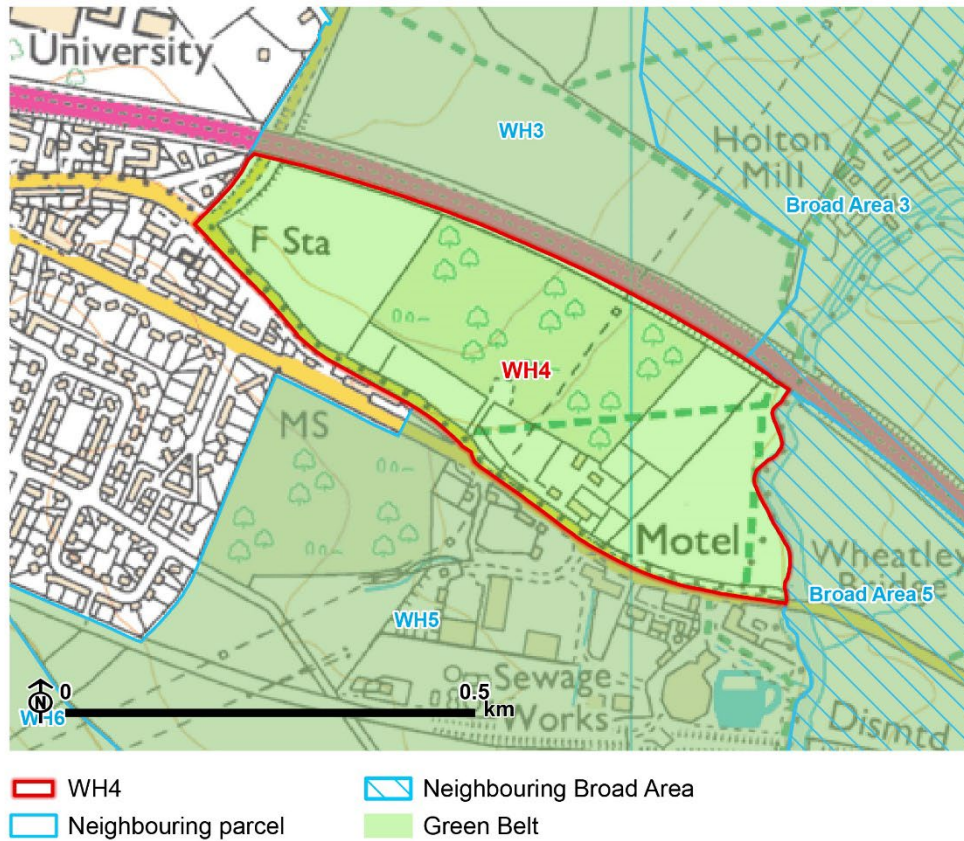
- The parcel contains Wheatley Park School and some floodlit sports pitches which has compromised the openness of the Green Belt in the northwest of the parcel. However, remaining land in the east of the parcel is formed out of agricultural fields and tree cover that provide a rural setting to the southeast of Holton. A large, open area at the centre of the parcel is the moated Holton House site (a scheduled ancient monument). The land slopes upwards to the west opening-up views of the wider

countryside to the east. The western parts of the parcel make a 'low' contribution to openness but the village area is considered to have the characteristics of countryside and therefore to score 'high'. The Land at Wheatley Campus, Oxford Brookes University immediately to the south has recently been released as a strategic northern extension to Wheatley. It contains the already developed Wheatley Campus of Oxford Brookes University, which exerts an urbanising influence on the open areas from the south and west of the parcel's inner boundary, although the mature treelined boundaries, including Holton Road screen some urbanising influences.

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

- Sloping downhill eastwards away from Oxford, there is limited visibility of the parcel in the wider landscape, with large woodland blocks to the north and the low-lying landscape of the River Thame and its tributaries to the east. From higher ground to the west, the area is seen as already developed to a degree, and in close proximity to Wheatley and Holton.

## Parcel WH4





## Parcel WH4

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the east of Wheatley and the south of the A40. The parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.

#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

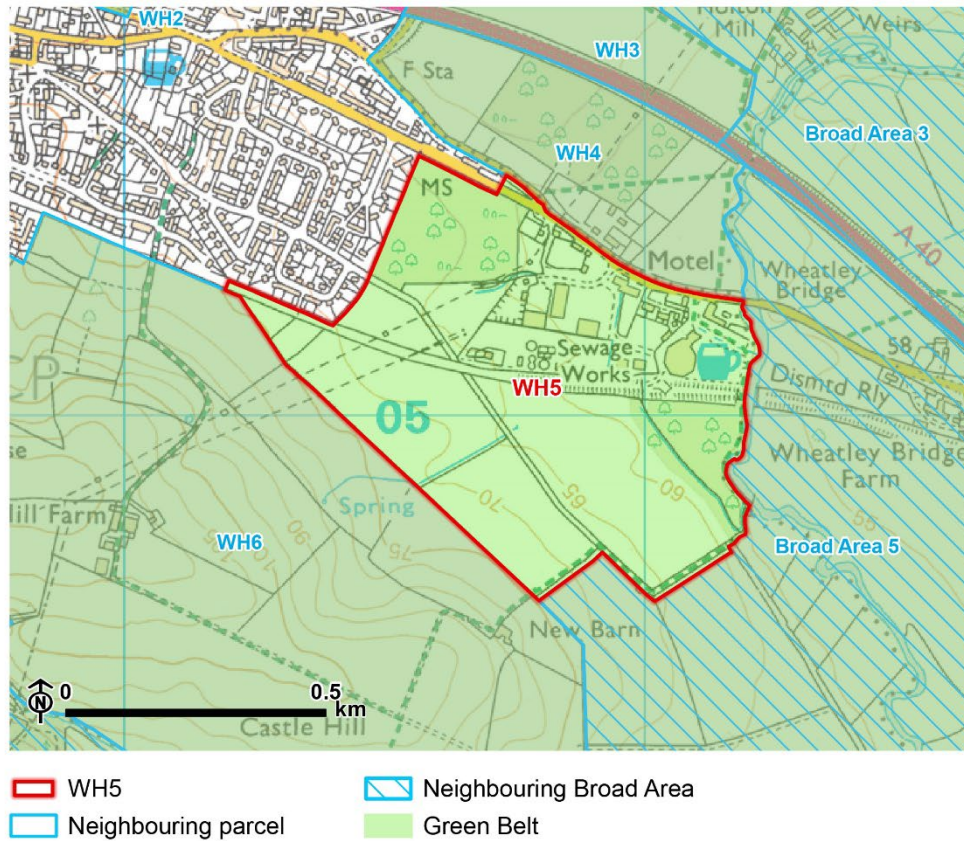
- The parcel sits on relatively flat open land adjacent to the River Thame which flows along the eastern edge of the parcel. Power lines run overhead through the centre of the parcel. There is an area of hardstanding along London Road in the centre of the parcel where Wheatley Farm Shop is located. The buildings are not considered to have a significant urbanising influence in their own right; however, considered in conjunction with intrusion from the A40 and the influence of adjacent development (the Oxford Aquatics building and the large area of developed uses across the road) there is considered to be some sense of

encroachment on the countryside. The south western portion of the parcel is relatively contained by the A40 and inset development, but tree cover along Old London Road provides some screening.

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

- There is no intervisibility with Oxford and no sense of this area to the east of Wheatley forming part of Oxford's setting. There is a sharp change from rural to urban fringe on crossing the River Thame, with a Travelodge, Harvester, petrol garage and superstore to the south of the road, opposite the parcel, all detracting from historic character.

## Parcel WH5



## Parcel WH5

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purpose

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	N/C	Medium	N/C

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the south east of Wheatley. The parcel is not in close proximity to any other settlements considered against this purpose. Therefore, the parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.

#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

- The parcel sits on relatively flat open land adjacent to the River Thame which flows along the eastern edge of the parcel. The land slopes up to the south western side of the parcel. Tree cover and vegetation provides some screening from Wheatley to the west. Power lines run overhead through the parcel. The north eastern third of the parcel has been wholly developed. This area of the parcel contains the London Road Industrial Estate, including a supermarket, open-air depot, large warehouse and a sewage treatment works. These developments represent a significant urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt parcel. From the open fields within make up the rest of the parcel it is possible to see

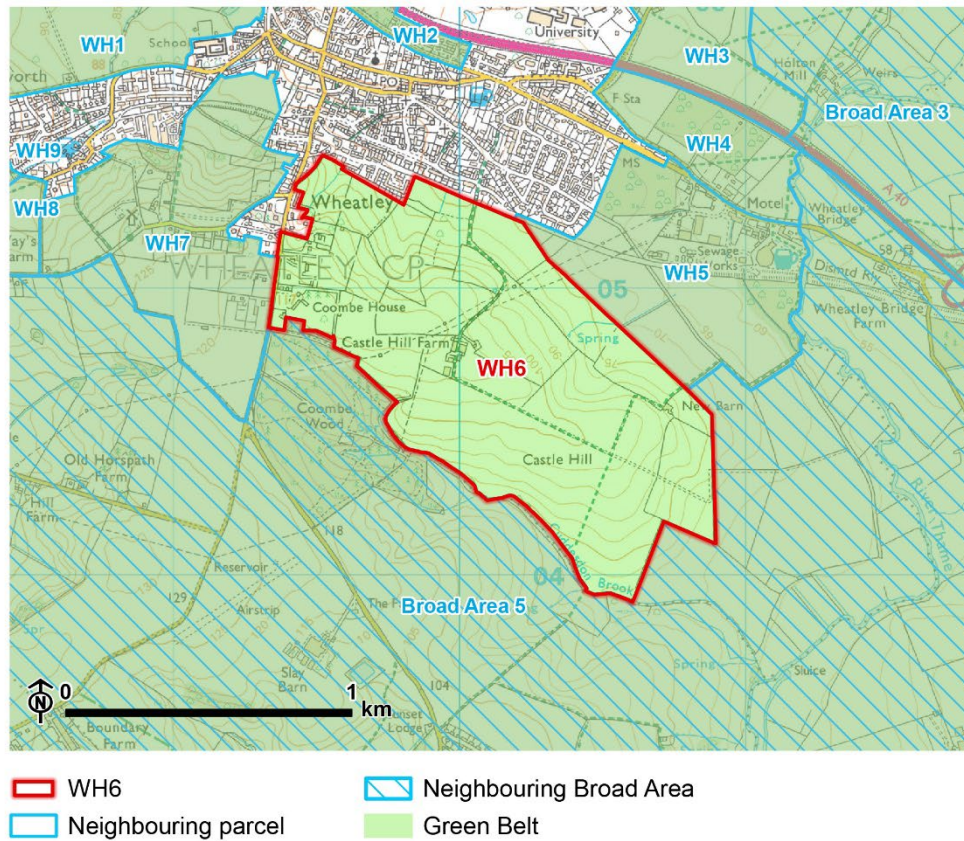
out to the wider countryside surrounding the parcel, with long ranging views to east. A distinction can be made between the area to the south of the dismantled railway line, which retains a reasonably strong sense of openness and scores 'medium', and the largely developed area to the north, which scores 'low' in this respect.

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

- Neither the developed area nor the small fields that separate it from the residential area of Wheatley play any role in Oxford's historic setting. Arable farmland to the south of the former railway line is more distinctly separate from Wheatley and rural in character, but is too isolated from Oxford, and principal routes to it, to be considered to make any contribution to its setting.



# Parcel WH6



## Parcel WH6

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	Low

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The northern boundary of the parcel borders the southern boundary of Wheatley and the parcel has a strong sense of openness. The northern fields of the parcel are subject to a degree of urbanising influence from Wheatley, but tree cover screens the urban area to the west. While the eastern limits of the parcel are not in close proximity of any other settlements considered under this purpose, the western area of the parcel is at the edge of a notable gap between Wheatley and Oxford to the west, connected via Gidley Way/Windmill Lane.

#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

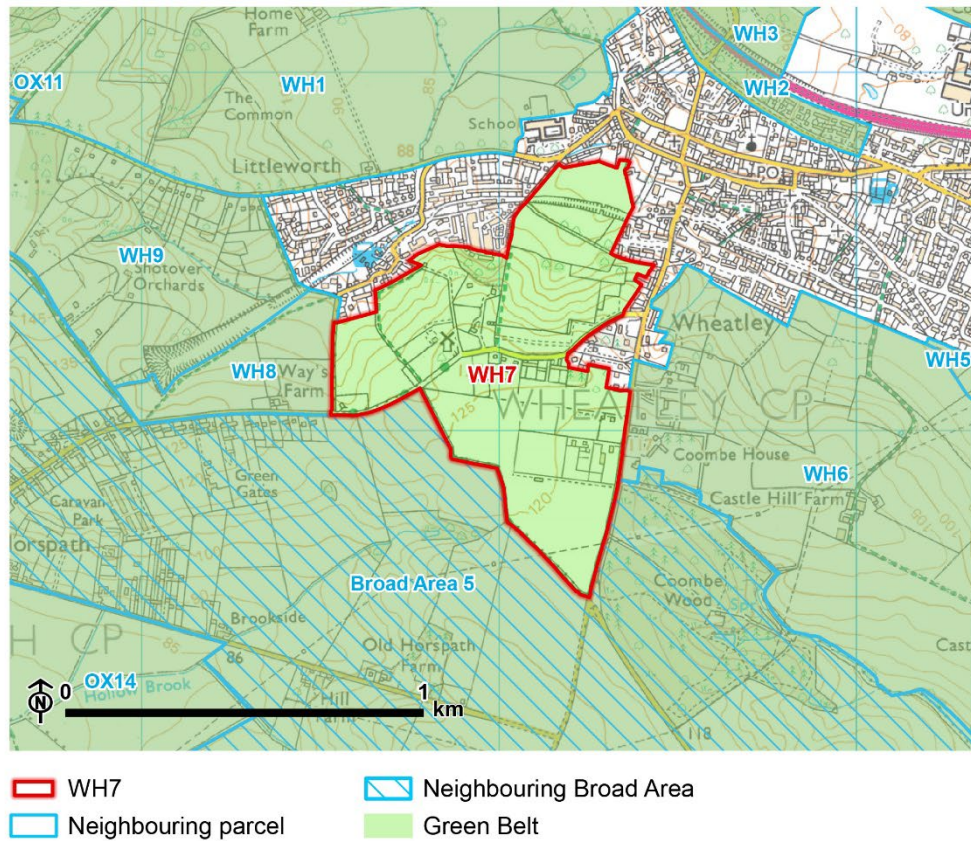
- The parcel contains the summit of Castle Hill, as well as portions of its steep northern, eastern and southern slopes. Therefore, the parcel has excellent views of the surrounding countryside. The northern fields of the parcel are subject to a degree of urbanising influence from development along Beech Road and Kelham Hall Drive, but tree cover screens development along Ladder Hill to the west. Pylons run through the centre

of the parcel. The majority of the parcel is made-up of large open irregular-shaped agricultural fields. The only significant concentration of buildings within the parcel is located along the eastern edge along Ladder Hill Road. The majority of the buildings are large detached dwellings set back from the road, such as the historic Coombe House, and are not considered to be urbanising influences. Amongst the dwellings are some moderate urbanising influences such as a small office block administering courier services and some larger modern maisonette dwellings in the north western corner of the parcel. Most of the development along this western edge of the parcel is screened by mature trees and has relatively little influence over the vast majority of the countryside within the Green Belt parcel. Therefore, the integrity and openness of the countryside within the parcel is considered to be uncompromised.

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

- Rising up westwards to a wooded hill top, this open, arable land is more exposed to view than the lower ground closer to the River Thame. The upper slopes, backed by Coombe Wood, are prominent on the horizon in views westwards towards Oxford (although there is no visibility of the city), so a contribution is made to the wider rural character of the city's setting.

# Parcel WH7



## Parcel WH7

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The northern boundary of the parcel borders the southern boundary of Wheatley. The parcel is relatively open and increases in elevation towards Littleworth. Tree cover around the edge of the parcel creates visual separation from the urban area of Wheatley. There is relatively close proximity with only small gaps between Cowley and Horspath and between Horspath and Littleworth. While visibility between the non-Green Belt area of Littleworth and Oxford is screened by high ground between Littleworth and Horspath, the Oxford suburbs are intervisible with the southern part of the parcel, and the relationship between these settlements is evident in views from higher ground to the south towards Garsington. Any perceived spilling out of Wheatley/Littleworth towards Oxford would be a significant change so the openness of the southern end of the parcel makes a 'high' contribution to preventing this, but the remainder of the parcel, accounting for the majority of the area makes a 'medium' contribution.



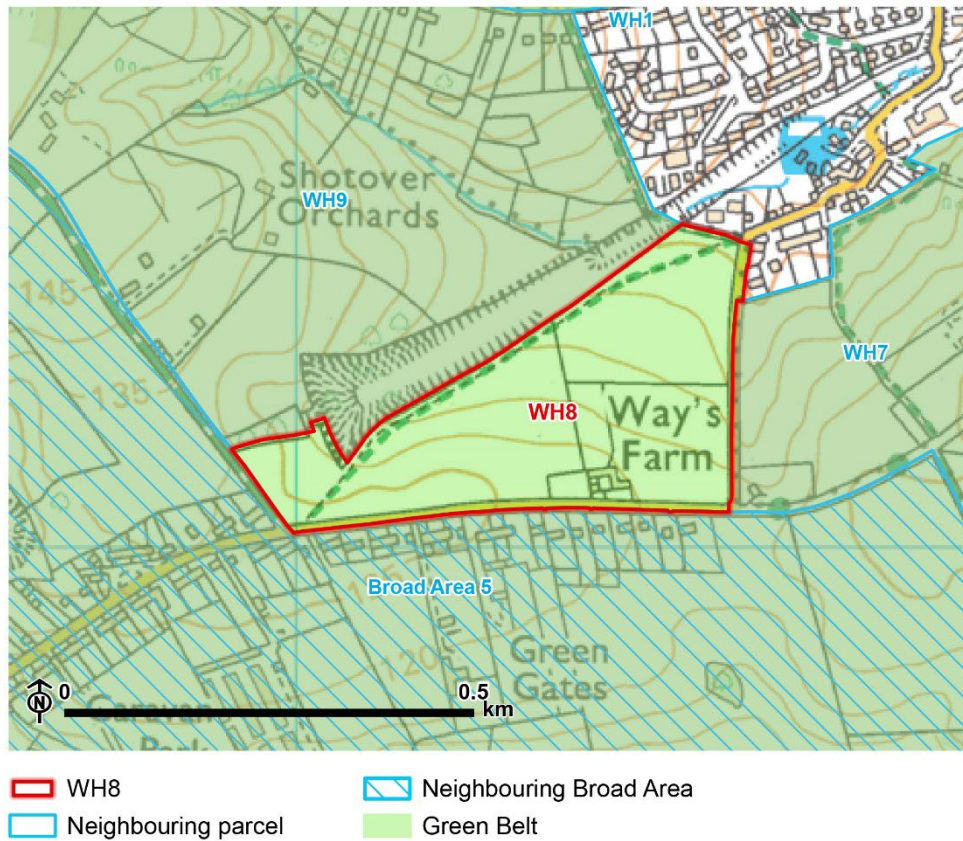
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- Tree cover at the inset edge of Wheatley screens the parcel from development within the settlement. The parcel contains the summit of Castle Hill, as well as portions of its steep northern, western and southern slopes. Therefore, the parcel has excellent views of the surrounding countryside. Pylons run through the southern tip of the parcel. The southern half of the parcel is largely free from woodland, containing open regular-shaped agricultural fields, whereas the northern half contains significantly more woodland as the land slopes down towards Wheatley. One of the larger pockets of woodland at the northern border of the parcel is designated as the Littleworth Brick Pit SSSI. There are some large developments within the parcel along the western side of Ladder Hill Road, for example the Mill View Plant Centre, at the parcel's eastern edge and through the centre of the parcel along Windmill Lane. The relatively small detached dwellings along Windmill Lane overlook an allotment and have excellent views of the wider countryside beyond. All the developments are rural in character and are considered to have a limited urbanising influence on the countryside within the parcel.

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

- The parcel, which is well treed but also has a ribbon of housing along Windmill Lane, occupies a prominent hilltop to the south of Wheatley and Littleworth, providing long vistas. Whilst there is no intervisibility with central Oxford there are views to and from the eastern edge of the city, in the vicinity of Blackbird Leys. The parcel contributes to the rural character of the enclosing high ground, an important aspect of Oxford's setting, although the fact that houses are visible in the vicinity in views out from the urban edge reduces its importance a little. The north-facing slope of the parcel is less significant in terms of Oxford's setting.

## Parcel WH8



## Parcel WH8

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	High	Low

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The northern boundary of the parcel borders the southwest boundary of Wheatley, while the southern boundary of the parcel borders Gidley Way. Tree cover screens the parcel from development within Wheatley. The parcel is relatively small but open, with intervisibility from one end to the other due to its sloping terrain, and is in relatively close proximity to the eastern limits of the suburbs of Oxford. The parcel plays an important role in preventing the merger Littleworth and Horspath, and whilst the latter isn't considered as a settlement under Purpose 2 its joining to Littleworth would have a significant knock-on effect on the perceived separation between Oxford and Wheatley. It would not, however, affect the visual gap from Oxford.

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

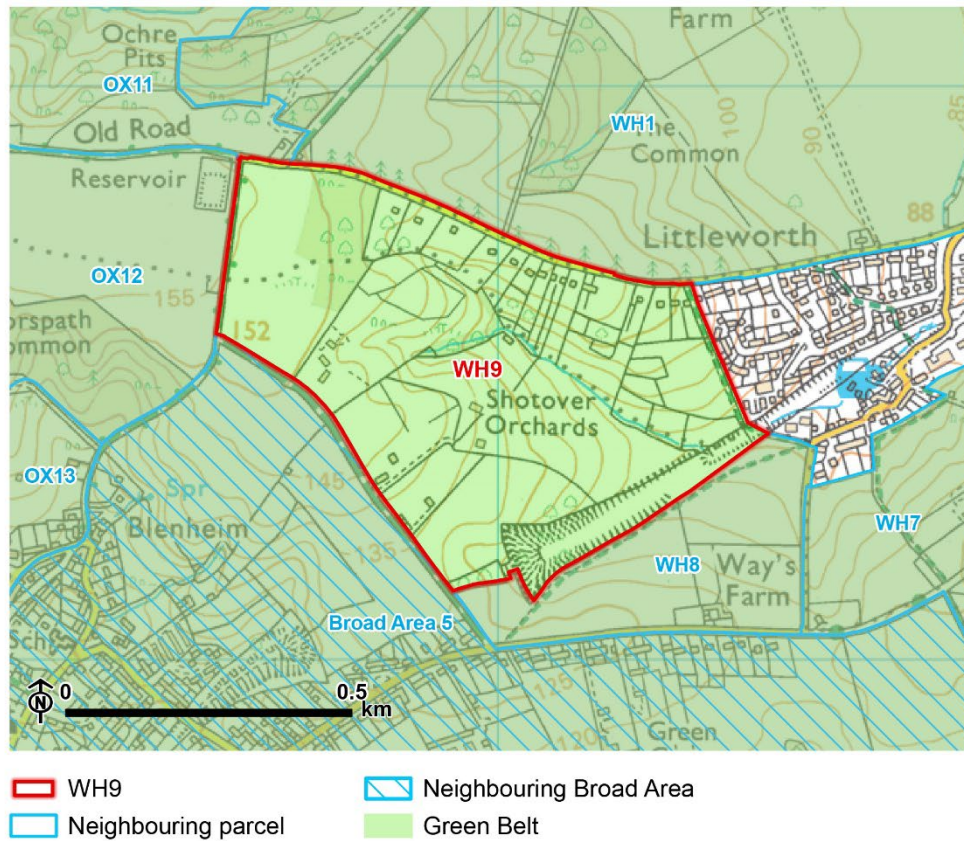
- The narrow, triangular parcel containing two open, irregularly-shaped fields sits on the northern slope of the ridge which separates Horspath to the south from Littleworth to the north. The parcel shares a short frontage

with the settlement of Wheatley to the north, which is well screened by tree cover. The open fields have views of the wider countryside to the north of the parcel. Way's Farm sits at the southern edge of the parcel and represents the only built development within it. The farm is not considered to be an urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt.

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

- A small parcel of farmland on high sloping ground oriented away from Oxford but with very long vistas north-east towards hills in the vicinity of Brill from its southern edge on Gidley Way. It could therefore be considered to make a minor contribution to the perception of Oxford being in a very rural setting, although visibility of Wheatley and Littleworth in views from the east might diminish this.

## Parcel WH9





## Parcel WH9

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	High	Medium	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wheatley which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The parcel has a sense of openness with the eastern boundary of the parcel bordering Wheatley, where a woodland block provides visual separation from the settlement. The topography rises towards the southwest of the parcel, partially screening views to the west towards the suburbs of Oxford such as Slade Park, Wood Farm and Lye Valley. The western boundary of the parcel is in relatively close proximity to these suburbs of Oxford, and as high ground which rises above Horspath it is visible from Oxford. Loss of openness between Horspath and Littleworth would therefore have a significant impact on perceived openness between Oxford and Wheatley, even though Horspath is not considered under Purpose 2 for this study. Due to the elevation of this parcel, it is considered to make a 'high' contribution in respect of this Green Belt purpose.

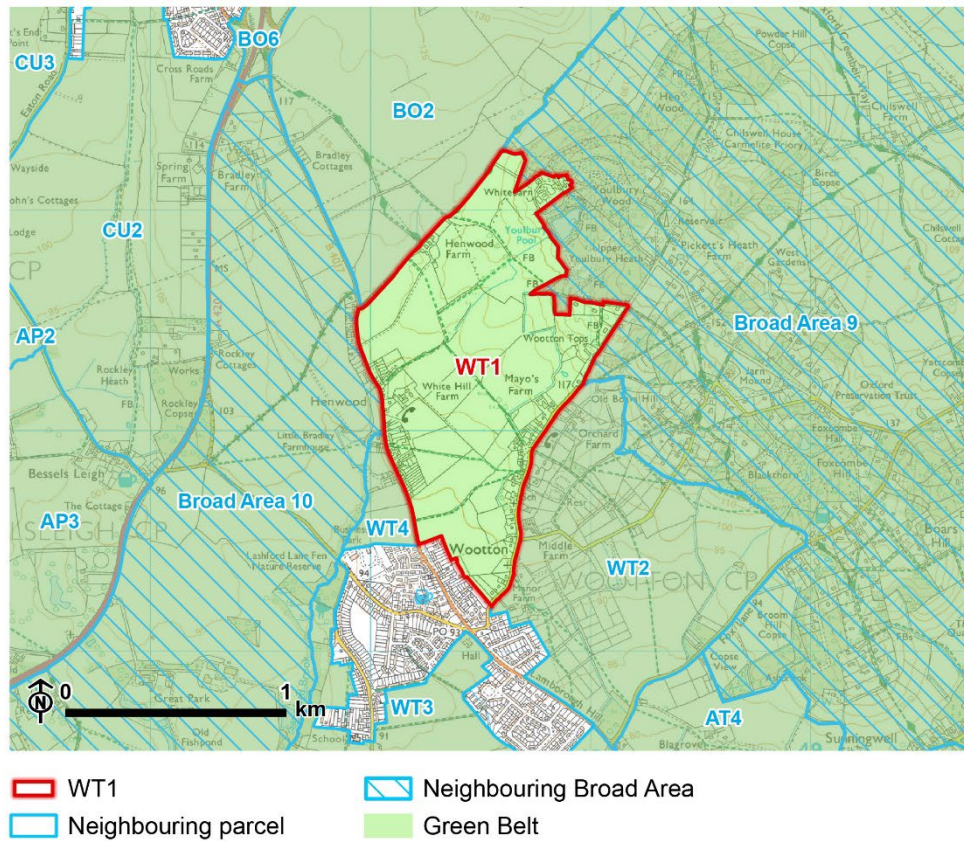
#### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel straddles a small valley formed by a small stream that runs in to Littleworth to the east. A woodland block screens the parcel from Wheatley to the east. The land rises steeply on both sides of the valley, flattening out on the western side of the parcel where there are excellent views of the wider countryside to the north and east. The north western corner and the lower slopes of the small valley are wooded; the rest of the parcel contains small irregular-shaped fields, the majority of which are lined by trees. There are several agricultural buildings along the track that forms the southern boundary of the parcel, including a stables and piggery. Along the southern side of Old Road which forms the northern edge of the parcel, the parcel contains a number of detached residential dwellings which, although set in well treed surrounds, constitute ribbon development from the village of Littleworth to the east and therefore have some urbanising influence.

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

- Steep ground on the upper, eastern slope of Shotover Hill. Well treed, with some agricultural use and large houses along the northern edge of the parcel. The undeveloped slopes of Shotover Hill are visually prominent in the context of Oxford's rural setting, so although there is no intervisibility with Oxford there is a contribution to the rural character of the hills that bound much of the city.

# Parcel WT1



## Parcel WT1

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Medium	Medium	Medium

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

- The parcel abuts Wootton which is not considered to be a large built up area, i.e. Oxford. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The southern boundary of the parcel borders Wootton, the western boundary borders the Cumnor Road, and the eastern boundary borders Sandy Lane. The parcel is an area of open undulating land. There is little visual separation between the parcel and the settlement to the south. The northern boundary of the parcel is located in close proximity to Botley; however the elevated topography to the north screens views between Botley and Wootton. Due to the close proximity between the settlements, the parcel plays some role in preventing the merging of the settlements, as any encroachment by either settlement would result in reducing the gap. The linear development along the Cumnor Road at Henwood could easily be consumed by an enlarged Wootton.

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

- The parcel sits between two roads emanating from the centre of the village of Wootton to the south – Cumnor Road which forms the western edge of the parcel and Sandy Lane the eastern edge. These roads have been

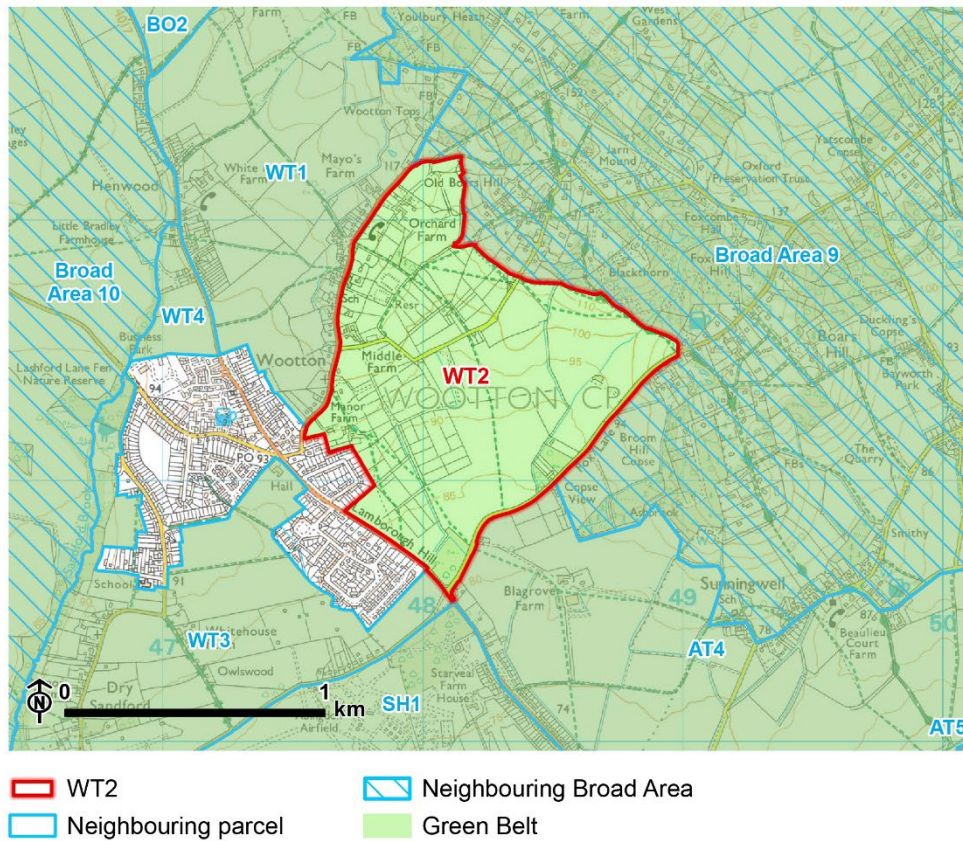
subjected to a significant amount of ribbon development a large proportion of which falls within the eastern and western (Henwood village) edges of the parcel. There is little visual separation between the south of the parcel and development within Wootton to the south. The centre of the parcel is free from development and is made up of large open agricultural fields with good views of the countryside within the parcel and to the south west. Youlbury Wood forms the north eastern edge of the parcel. Henwood Farm and the large isolated dwelling of Whitebarn represent the only development in the north of the parcel, but neither is considered to have an urbanising influences. Much of the ribbon development along the eastern and western edges of the parcel is rural in character, including farms and large detached dwellings; however its scale and density in the southern half of the parcel does have an urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt parcel.

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

- Separated from Oxford by the wooded Youlbury/Boars Hill ridge, the elevated, gently sloping arable farmland in this parcel nonetheless performs a role in defining the rural character of Oxford's broader setting by providing a setting to the wooded ridge, in particular from the Cumnor Road and the settlements along it (Cumnor, Henwood and Wootton), which are connected to the city by a number of rights of way that cross the parcel. Gaps in the roadside housing allow views up to the wooded ridge.



# Parcel WT2



## Parcel WT2

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	Medium

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wootton which is not considered to be a large built up area, i.e. Oxford. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel lies to the east of Wootton, with the southern boundary of the parcel adjacent to Fox Lane. The B4017 provides some boundary from Wootton to the southwest, but the westernmost fields in the parcel are subject to some urbanising influence from the adjacent settlement. The parcel has a sense of openness throughout. The parcel is relatively distant from Abingdon-on-Thames to the southeast and therefore plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between Wootton and Abingdon-on-Thames.

#### Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

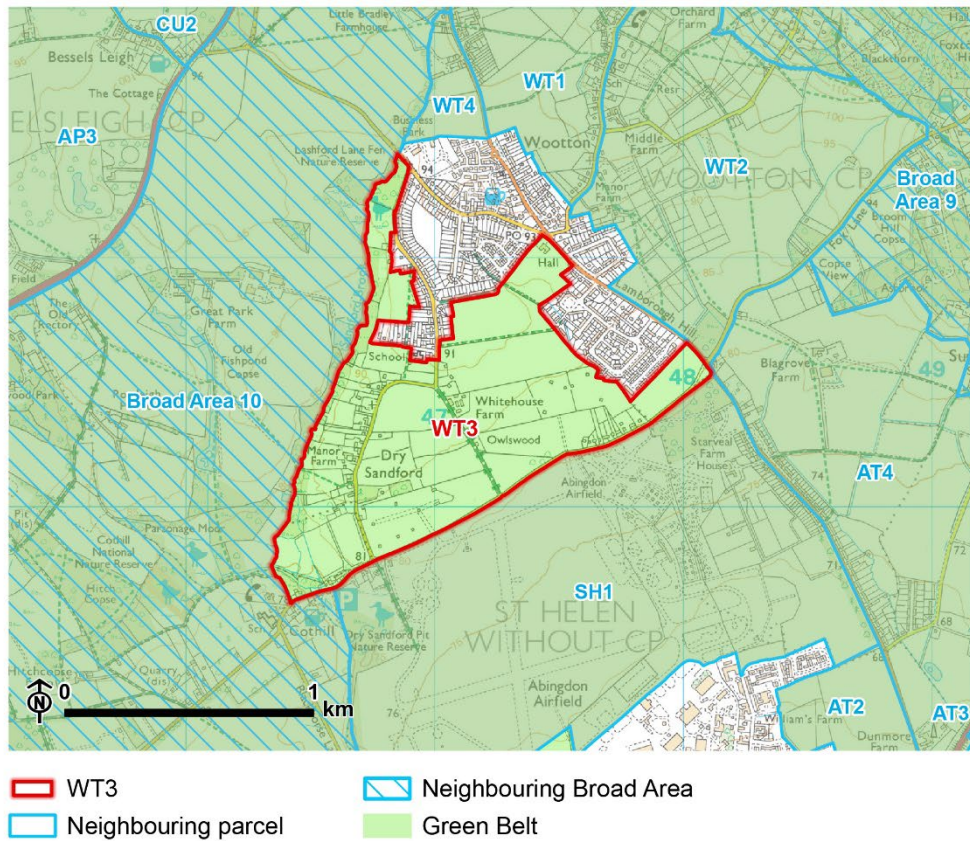
- The parcel sits on the south facing slope of Boars Hill which is located to the north of the parcel. From the open agricultural fields which cover the majority of the parcel there are excellent views of the countryside to the south and south west of the parcel. The westernmost fields in the parcel are subject to a degree of urbanising influence from Wootton. There are a number of farms and two underground reservoirs within the parcel. A

large isolated dwelling sits on the edge of Wooton in the south of the parcel. Sandy Lane which forms the western edge of the parcel has been subjected to a significant amount of ribbon development some of which falls within the western edge of the parcel. All the ribbon development along the western edge of the parcel is rural in character, including a farm, village school and detached dwellings; these developments are not considered to have an urbanising influence on the countryside within the Green Belt parcel. The ribbon development along the southern side of Lamborough Hill, with associated street lighting and pavement, does have an urbanising influence on the southern part of the parcel, which would score 'medium' if considered in isolation.

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

- Separated from Oxford by the wooded Boars Hill ridge, the elevated, gently sloping arable farmland in this parcel nonetheless performs a role in defining the rural character of Oxford's broader setting by providing an open foreground to views of the wooded ridge, in particular from the B4017 and the village of Wootton, which is connected to the city by a number of rights of way that cross the parcel. Gaps in the roadside housing allow views up to the wooded ridge. The parcel is visible in views from many locations in the low-lying Vale to the south, and as far as the hills south of Didcot.

# Parcel WT3



## Parcel WT3

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	N/C

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wootton which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- The parcel is located to the south and west of Wootton. The western boundary of the parcel is adjacent to Sandford Brook and the southern boundary is adjacent to Honeybottom Lane. The parcel has a strong sense of openness and is relatively flat. The western boundary is in relatively close proximity to Appleton; however due to the topography and vegetation between the settlements, views are screened. The southern boundary of the parcel is not much closer to Abingdon-on-Thames than the current settlement edge at the north eastern corner of the parcel. Although development along the Wootton Road is more likely to be perceived as narrowing the gap, the presence of Abingdon-on-Thames Airfield and Shippon merged with Abingdon-on-Thames to the south does limit rural character in this direction so the parcel makes some contribution. The redevelopment of Dalton Barracks as an urban expansion of Shippon has recently seen the release of Green Belt land to the west into the Airfield, extending the length of the northern urban edge of Shippon and the Barracks towards Wootton. However, emerging indicative concept plan work suggests that the boundary between the allocation and Wootton will be enhanced with mature planting and green



infrastructure, reducing the existing influence of the Barracks towards Wootton and to the west of Shippon. The parcel plays a key role in preventing the merging of Wootton and Dry Sandford but Dry Sandford is not considered as a settlement under Purpose 2 for this study.

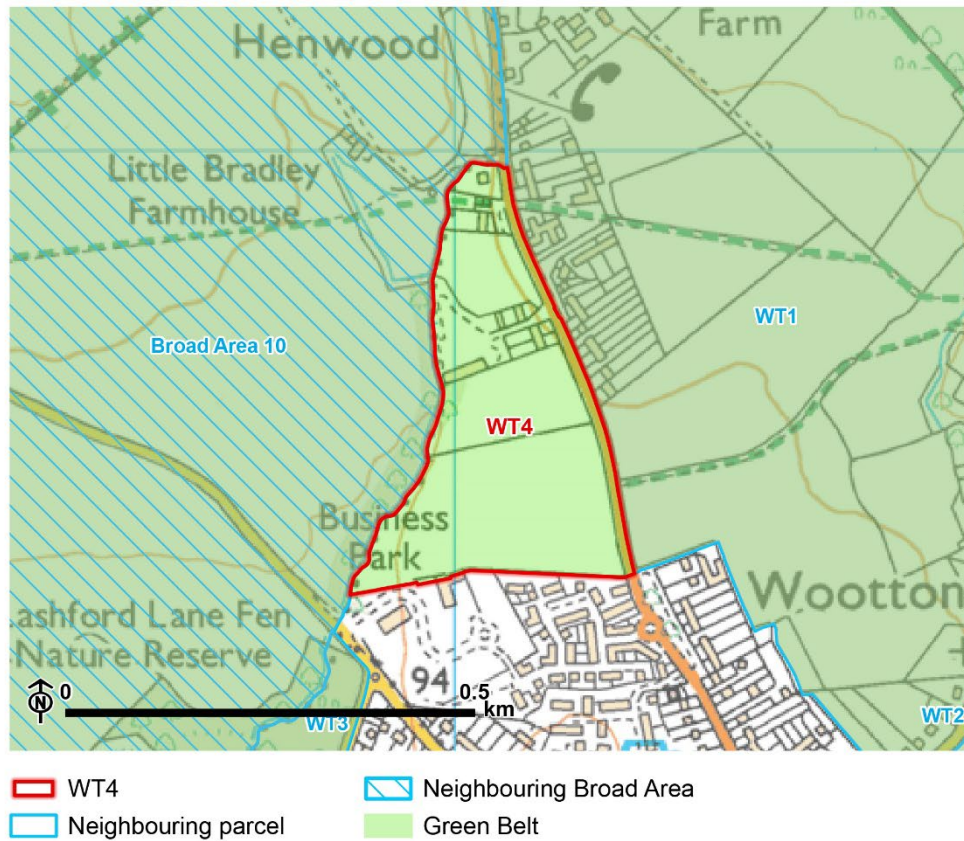
### **Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment**

- The parcel is predominantly made-up of linear agricultural fields lined by trees. The northern fields within the parcel are contained by Wootton to an extent. In between the gaps in the woodland there are views of the countryside to the south and east of the parcel. There is a greater concentration of woodland along the western edge of the parcel which follows Sanford Brook. The wooded floodplain of this watercourse is also designated as the Cothill Fen SAC and SSSI. Wootton Hall and associated outdoor sports pitches (some of which are flood lit) are located in the northern tip of the parcel, where adjacent bungalows on Landsdowne Road and Lashford Lane also affect rural character. A farm sits in the centre of the parcel. The small hamlet of Dry Sandford lies in the western half of the parcel along Church Lane. The village is very rural in character containing a church (St Helens Church) and a number of large detached dwellings. Similarly, along Honeybottom Lane in the eastern corner of the parcel is a line of dwellings. The northern part of the parcel would rate 'medium' in isolation, but the majority of the parcel rates as 'high'.

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

- Very gently sloping farmland, with treed field boundaries. Its location relative to Wootton, Abingdon Airfield and Dry Sandford means that it is somewhat detached from the landscape that forms Oxford's more immediate setting.

## Parcel WT4



## Parcel WT4

### Contribution to the Green Belt Purposes

Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
N/C	Low	High	Low

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

- The parcel is adjacent to Wootton which is not considered to be a large built up area. Therefore, the parcel is not considered to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

#### **Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

- The small parcel is located to the north of Wootton and is adjacent to Cumnor Road. The parcel is an area of open land and is well screened on its boundaries by roadside vegetation and extensive field boundaries. The parcel is relatively distant from all settlements included under this purpose but it makes some contribution to the gap between Wootton and Cumnor by contributing to the gap between Wootton and Henwood (which in itself is not considered as a settlement under Purpose 2 for this study).

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

- The parcel represents a triangular strip of land in between Cumnor Road on the eastern edge of the parcel and Sandford Brook on the western edge. Woodland follows the brook on the western side of the parcel and the settlement is screened by tree cover to the south. The majority of the parcel is made up of three small fields. There are limited views out to the wider countryside from the fields. There are two developments within the parcel which have an urbanising influence on this area of countryside: an

area of hard standing containing large vehicle shed sits in the centre of the parcel, and a small residential cul-de-sac is located at the northern tip of the parcel. The extent to which these features represent an urbanising influence is limited by strong hedgerows within the parcel, and they have little impact on the majority of the parcel to the south.

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

- Several small fields, dwellings and a storage area in an enclosed setting between Sandford Brook and the B4017. This small parcel is not very prominent in wider views - a strong roadside treeline screens views from higher ground to the east - but presents an undeveloped front that can be considered to make a minor contribution to Oxford's rural setting by providing undeveloped space between Henwood and Wootton.

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- 2 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance (Green Belt guidance last updated in July 2019). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- 3 LUC, Oxford Green Belt Study (published October 2015). Available at: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/OxfordGreenBeltStudySummary.pdf>
- 4 LUC, Oxford Green Belt Study (published October 2015). Available at: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/OxfordGreenBeltStudySummary.pdf>
- 5 This is in line the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority v Epping Forest DC and Valley Grown Nurseries Ltd (2016), which found that glasshouse development in the Green Belt is appropriate since it is a 'building for agriculture' deemed an appropriate Green Belt land use in the NPPF and therefore not capable of generating harm to the Green Belt designation. Further details available at: <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EB614-Approved-Judgment-Lee-Valley-Regional-Park-Authority-v-Epping-Forest-District-Council-Royal-Courts-of-Justice-June-2019.pdf>
- 6 Two important Planning Appeal judgements (Heath & Hampstead Society v Camden LBC & Vlachos (2008) and Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & East Dorset District Council (2016)) define openness as having both a spatial aspect and a visual aspect. However, in February 2020 the Supreme Court overturned the Court of Appeal Ruling on the case of Sam Smith v North Yorkshire County Council and Darrington Quarries Ltd (2018), and in doing so asserted that openness does not imply freedom from all forms of potential



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- development and that visual impact is not an obligatory consideration when assessing Green Belt openness. Further details available at: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/CD5.5%20Turner%20v%20SSCLG%202016%20EWCA%20Civ%20466.pdf>
- 7** LUC, Green Belt Assessment of Strategic Sites in South Oxfordshire (published December 2018). Available at: [https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=1670533779&CODE=120D6FB08E4B931987BD6B4D2EC84C82](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=1670533779&CODE=120D6FB08E4B931987BD6B4D2EC84C82)
  - 8** South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council's Green Belt Topic Paper (April 2020), Available at: [https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=1210355416&CODE=A386714FCCC46F62219CC73BE954EFD9](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=1210355416&CODE=A386714FCCC46F62219CC73BE954EFD9)
  - 9** Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Examination Library. Available at: [https://data.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=FolderView&ID=910605701&CODE=7CAF110B631BCF98EDAD994696E9106B&NAME=Local%20Plan%202031%20Part%201%20Examination%20Library&REF=VALE\\_2031&REFERER\\_URL\\_IN=&SOVA\\_IN=VALE#exactline](https://data.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=FolderView&ID=910605701&CODE=7CAF110B631BCF98EDAD994696E9106B&NAME=Local%20Plan%202031%20Part%201%20Examination%20Library&REF=VALE_2031&REFERER_URL_IN=&SOVA_IN=VALE#exactline)
  - 10** This is set out in case law where the Court of Appeal addressed the proper interpretation of Green Belt policy in *R (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority) v Epping Forest DC* [2016] EWCA Civ 404.
  - 11** Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2016, updated 2021) Planning practice guidance [pdf]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
  - 12** South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (2020). Available at: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/local-plan-2035/adopted-local-plan-2035/>
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<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/local-plan-2031/>
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- 16** Further details available at: <https://vlex.co.uk/vid/copas-and-another-v-793349749>
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