South Staffordshire Partial Green Belt Review
Method Statement

Prepared for South Staffordshire District Council by LUC

November 2016
### Project Title: South Staffordshire Partial Green Belt Review

**Client:** South Staffordshire District Council

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South Staffordshire Partial Green Belt Review
Method Statement

Prepared for South Staffordshire District Council by LUC

November 2016
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1 Introduction

1.1 The report was originally completed in January 2014. The report was subsequently updated with clarifications in September 2016 in response to representations received by the Council with regards to the South Staffordshire Site Allocations Document (SAD) Preferred Options Consultation. The original study methodology and outputs remain unchanged and represent a point in time in the preparation of South Staffordshire District Council’s Local Plan and its associated evidence base.

Purpose of this Report

1.2 LUC was commissioned to carry out a partial review of the Green Belt around 15 of the 16 Main and Local Service Villages and the four free standing Strategic Employment Sites in South Staffordshire. Parcels of land around the villages and employment sites are assessed at a scale appropriate to the strategic nature of the Green Belt designation, and proportionate for drawing out the broad variations in the contribution of land to the Green Belt purposes. This report displays and describes these broad variations with a view to identifying the most appropriate directions for growth in Green Belt terms over the current and next Plan periods.

1.3 The review assesses parcels of land against the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Parcels of land that contain SSSI, ancient woodland, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens or where a significant proportion of the parcel falls within flood zone 3b were not considered, as they are separate and important constraints on development.

1.4 The Study is one part of the South Staffordshire District Council evidence base which underpins the Local Plan and informs the decision making and appraisal process of planning a sustainable pattern of development over the next Plan period and beyond. Other, non-Green Belt issues will also inform the allocation of development sites. These include landscape character and wider sustainability issues.

1.5 The Core Strategy stipulates that new settlement boundaries should be clearly defined using ‘readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, belts of trees or wood edges where possible’. Such recognisable features were used to define appropriate parcels of Green Belt land on the edge of the built environment for review in this study.

1.6 This partial review of the Green Belt in South Staffordshire is a strategic study. It is not the purpose of the review to define new site allocations or new settlement boundaries. Potential site allocations can only be defined following consideration of other planning factors.

Background

1.7 South Staffordshire is located on the north western edge of the West Midlands conurbation. It is a rural district covering an area of 40,400 hectares and housing a population of approximately 108,000. There are 27 parishes with a collection of diverse settlements, ranging from small hamlets to large villages. Each has its own distinctive character set in attractive countryside. There is no single dominant settlement in South Staffordshire, rather it is a ‘community of communities’.

1.8 South Staffordshire District Council formally adopted its Core Strategy1 on December 11th 2012. The Core Strategy sets out the vision and spatial strategy for the District up to 2028. Core Policy 6 outlines the District’s minimum housing delivery over the plan period up to 2028 (3,850

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between 2006 – 2028), ensuring a sufficient supply of deliverable/developable land is available to deliver 175 new homes each year. In addition to housing development, Core Policy 7 allows for ‘modest extensions’ to the four free standing strategic employment sites in South Staffordshire (i54, Hilton Cross, ROF Featherstone and Four Ashes) where supported by robust evidence and a reasoned justification is provided to support their expansion.

1.9 Core Policy 1 outlines the Spatial Strategy for South Staffordshire. The policy earmarks the Main Service Villages of Bilbrook, Brewood, Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Penkridge, Perton and Wombourne as the main centres for housing growth, employment development and service provision. The smaller Local Service Villages of Coven, Essington2, Featherstone, Huntington, Pattingham, Swindon and Wheaton Aston are also earmarked for more limited development.

1.10 The policy acknowledges that ‘some land will need to be released from the Green Belt and Open Countryside in some locations at the Main and Local Service Villages to deliver the proposed development strategy and enable the sustainable growth of these villages’. This acknowledgement has been made due to the lack of potential development sites within or around villages allocated for growth, that fall under the first three categories of the Council’s sequential approach (See Core Strategy Para. 6.20), these being:

• Firstly, within the current development boundaries of the Main and Local Service Villages;
• Secondly, within land outside the Green Belt but designated as Safeguarded Land or land located in the Open Countryside; and
• Thirdly, previously developed land (brownfield land) outside but adjacent to the current development boundaries of the Main and Local Service Villages.

1.11 Site areas are informed by each village’s housing allocation set out in the adopted Core Strategy and the safeguarded land requirement to identify an additional 10 years supply of housing land to meet longer term development needs.

Report Structure

1.12 The Report comprises three further sections:

1. **Context** – including a planning policy context, the history and geography of South Staffordshire’s Green Belt and a summary of the findings of a study into other Green Belt Review methodologies.

2. **Method** – clearly describing the process undertaken to collect, analyse and report the review’s findings.

3. **Results** – summary descriptions of the reasoning behind each parcel’s judgements around each settlement. The results are accompanied by colour-coded GIS maps in Appendix 2.

1.13 The appendices contain the review criteria and maps.

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2 Essington has not been included in this Green Belt Review due to the fact that the village contains a considerable amount of land safeguarded in Core Strategy policy GB2 that could more than accommodate both Essington’s allocation and its 10 year safeguarded land requirement (2028-2038).
2  Context

2.1 This section considers the key planning policy documents and the role of the West Midlands Green Belt. It also summarises the findings of a review of good practice in existing Green Belt Review methodologies. This information was used to define the method outlined in Section 4.

Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

2.2 Government policy is clear on the importance of securing the long term permanence and openness of Green Belts. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) takes forward the previous national Green Belt policy set out in PPG2, stating that the Green Belt should serve the following five purposes (paragraph 80):

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

2.3 It states that existing Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and as part of the preparation or review of a Local Plan. New boundaries must have regard for the permanence of the designation by redefining boundaries which endure beyond the Local Plan period.

2.4 Similarly, paragraph 82 states that new Green Belt should only be established in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear need for the Green Belt, the normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate, the implications for the sustainable development would be acceptable meeting the other strategic objectives of the NPPF and the new Belt is consistent with neighbouring authorities.

2.5 When defining new boundaries, the Framework requires local planning authorities to identify areas of ‘safeguarded land’ between the urban area and the Green Belt to accommodate long-term development needs well beyond the plan period. New boundaries should be defined clearly, using readily recognisable, permanent physical features.

2.6 Paragraphs 89 and 90 outline a number of exceptions to restricting new development in the Green Belt, a number of which are relevant to this partial review:

- limited infilling in villages and affordable housing for local community needs;
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of brownfield land; and
- development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order.

Duty to Cooperate

2.7 The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. Section 110 of the Localism Act inserts a new section 33A into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Act introduced a ‘Duty to Cooperate’ that requires Local Authorities to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies – Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, Civil Aviation Authority, Highways Authority etc. – in preparing their development plan documents. In addition, authorities should also have regard to Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships in their area.
2.8 Relevant planning policy issues to be considered under the 'Duty to Cooperate' are also explained in National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 178-181 and 156). Cooperation should be a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation and should consider cross boundary issues such as:

- homes and jobs needed in a geographical area;
- infrastructure projects;
- retail, leisure and other commercial developments;
- social infrastructure; and
- landscape and the natural and historic environment.

2.9 All are linked to Green Belt. Therefore, the Council has a duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities in the review of its Green Belt.

**South Staffordshire District Council Core Strategy**

2.10 South Staffordshire’s Core Strategy supports the national approach to Green Belt. Its overall vision seeks to maintain and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the District, including the natural and historic environment and the character of the wider rural landscape. Achieving sustainable development through the allocation of additional housing and employment development (where justified) is a key challenge for the District. Protecting the Green Belt and Open Countryside, maintaining local distinctiveness, character and quality of countryside and villages, retaining and reinforcing the current pattern of villages across South Staffordshire, in particular the protection and retention of important strategic gaps between existing settlements are strategic priorities in the District.

2.11 Such priorities are further developed in the Visions for Localities in the Core Strategy, all of which state a wish to see “development in the Green Belt and Open Countryside managed to maintain the separation and distinctiveness of villages, with protection for the environment...”

2.12 Other key issues that apply to all localities within the District include: the need to maintain local services; rural accessibility; the ageing population; affordable housing; and the local impacts of climate change. These illustrate the need to address all aspects of sustainable development through the identification of sites for development, and will come in to play when interpreting the findings of the Green Belt Review as part of the appraisal and decision-making work on the forthcoming Site Allocations Document.

2.13 South Staffordshire is a predominantly rural district and an attractive area to live, with significant pressure for housing development and in-migration from areas outside the District boundary, from areas in which many residents work. Coupled with the requirement to meet the local housing needs, including for affordable housing, within the District, and insufficient sites within existing built up areas or settlement boundaries, this leads to inevitable pressure to identify land for release from the Green Belt. While this can result in significant local opposition, partly as a result of the success of Green Belt policy over the years, a review can offer opportunities to accommodate development which will help to support local services, provide affordable homes for local people, and potentially improve accessibility; key issues which are identified in the Core Strategy as being important to the District.

2.14 This technical study will assist in ensuring the best sites are identified for future development and that options for a revised Green Belt boundary are identified which will be defensible and long lasting; one of the characteristics of Green Belts being their relative permanence. While the study identifies the relative performance of parcels against Green Belt purposes, it does not recommend which parcels should be released from the Green Belt. Furthermore, where sites have been identified as playing an important Green Belt function, this is not necessarily an indication that the land is not suitable for development, and such areas may be subject to further consideration.
West Midlands Metropolitan Green Belt

2.15 Local authorities in the West Midlands first put forward proposals for a West Midlands Metropolitan Green Belt in 1955\(^3\). The Green Belt was not formally approved by the Secretary of State until 1975. Today the Green Belt covers over 900 square miles, surrounding the Black Country, Coventry, Birmingham and Solihull.

2.16 The Green Belt has remained relatively successful in checking the sprawl of Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry, preventing the merging of settlements and encroachment into the surrounding countryside, helping to preserve the setting and special character of the constellation of satellite settlements that inhabit it. At a strategic level, the Green Belt, tightly drawn around settlements, has helped to encourage regeneration by directing development to brownfield sites within the major urban areas. However, some pockets at the urban fringe have been compromised and degraded by infrastructure projects such as roads and power lines, and other urban intrusions\(^4\).

2.17 A study by David Tyldesley and Associates in 2009\(^5\) categorised areas of Green Belt as 'Urban Spaces', 'Rural Fringe' and 'Outer Green Belt' defined for their consistent blends of environmental, amenity and land use characteristics.

2.18 The study developed a vision for the West Midlands Green Belt, which states:

> 'By 2030 the West Midlands Green Belts will be positive contributors to quality of life and economic performance within the region.

*By providing accessible and high quality, multifunctional spaces which offer improved opportunity for informal recreation and sports activities within a setting of distinctive landscape character supporting a robust biodiversity resource, the Green Belts will become a positive environmental and recreational regional asset.*

*The open character of the Green Belts will be maintained and managed so as to allow natural processes to occur unhindered and deliver ecosystem goods and services, helping combat the causes and consequences of climate change. Agriculture and forestry will remain predominant land uses, supplying high quality and healthy produce close to major populations. Where openness can be maintained, renewable energy generation will be a sustainable product of the Green Belts.*

*The Green Belts will present attractive and distinctive settings for the major urban areas, reinforcing regional identity whilst maintaining their primary functions.*'

South Staffordshire’s Green Belt

2.19 With around 80% of the District designated as Green Belt, South Staffordshire has been relatively successful at preventing the outward spread of the larger urban conurbations. The District's larger settlements, such as Codsall and Wombourne, as well as the smaller villages that pre-date the Green Belt, such as Pattingham, Featherstone and Coven, are generally compact and separate, which is a testament to the success of the Green Belt in the District.

2.20 With 20% of the District’s land not designated as Green Belt, the District is at risk from development ‘leapfrogging’ to sites immediately beyond the Green Belt boundary. This can result in unsustainable patterns of housing, public services or employment land. Parts of the settlements of Penkridge and Wheaton Aston lie just outside the northern boundary of the Green Belt, which makes them vulnerable to development pressures.

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\(^3\) What Price West Midlands Green belt, Campaign to protect Rural England: west Midlands, June 2007.


Green Belt Review Methodologies

2.21 Elements of good practice were identified in a study of Green Belt Reviews in England. This desk-based study considered the methods of Green Belt Reviews in Kirklees\textsuperscript{6}, Harlow\textsuperscript{7}, Mole Valley\textsuperscript{8} and Tewksbury, Gloucester and Cheltenham\textsuperscript{9}. All the methods assessed land parcels against the five purposes of Green Belt outlined in national planning policy.

2.22 In general, we found that simpler methodologies that avoid complex matrices make the necessary value judgements on Green Belt more understandable. They also afford a degree of flexibility that is useful when assessing more complex Green Belt parcels influenced by multiple factors.

2.23 One review discounted the assessment of the purpose relating to the setting and special character of historic towns on the grounds that there were no areas of historic significance in the study area. The historic setting and special character of South Staffordshire’s settlements will dictate the relevance of this purpose to the review. Two reviews discounted purpose ‘to assist in urban regeneration’, based on the very need for a review. Again, the abundance or lack of brownfield land will influence the importance of this purpose in influencing the relative contribution of different parcels of Green Belt.

2.24 Some methods go beyond assessing the five purposes of Green Belt and consider the relative value of parcels of land as ecological and landscape assets. Whilst it is important to consider the lasting legacy of Green Belt as countryside providing such ecosystem services they should not be determining factors in evaluating the relative value of such land as Green Belt. Green Belt is not a designation designed to protect nature and landscape character or the benefits they provide. Considering these factors in combination with the five purposes of Green Belt adds a degree of complexity to the review that can confuse judgements on the relative importance of individual purposes. No purpose is considered more important in the NPPF; a parcel performing just one of the five purposes well, fully justifies its designation as Green Belt. The same method should be used to assess the value of additions to the Green Belt.

2.25 One review quotes the NPPF requirement for local planning authorities to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of Green Belt land following designation. Landscape character and other ecosystem services should be considered after the Green Belt review, combining its conclusions with other planning issues both to justify its redefinition and make it sustainable.

2.26 One review considered the development potential of the parcels found to perform the Green Belt purposes the least well. Like other methods, the consideration of the development potential of Green Belt land incorporates elements of decision-making that go beyond the remit of the review and require the interpretation of other planning considerations, such as landscape character and ecological value.

\textsuperscript{6} Kirklees Green Belt Review, Planning Policy Group, Kirklees Metropolitan Council, November 2011
\textsuperscript{7} Chapter 7: ‘Criteria for Green Belt Review’ of Generating and Appraising Spatial Options for the Harlow Area, Scott Wilson, January 2010
\textsuperscript{8} Green Belt Boundary Review Consultation Document, Mole Valley District Council, February 2013
\textsuperscript{9} Tewksbury Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Cheltenham Borough Council Joint Core Strategy Green Belt Assessment, AMEC Ltd, September 2011.
3 Method

3.1 The partial Green Belt review method is outlined below. The method was informed by the context outlined in Section 2, including the Green Belt Review methodology study, and the outcomes of a consultation with the District’s neighbouring Local Authorities, as part of the Council’s ‘Duty to Cooperate’ on strategic issues such as the Green Belt.

Task 1: Method Statement Consultation under Duty to Cooperate

3.2 A draft method statement for the partial Green Belt Review in South Staffordshire was sent to the following adjoining County Councils, Unitary Authorities and District and Borough Councils:

- Staffordshire County Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Shropshire Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Wolverhampton City Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Stafford Borough Council
- Wyre Forest District Council
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Cannock Chase District Council

3.3 The method statement contained the proposed method for carrying out the Partial Green Belt Review and an outline of the proposed structure and content of project outputs.

3.4 Responses were received from two Councils and incorporated into the final methodology.

Task 2: Constraints Mapping and Green Belt Parcel Identification

3.5 In order to examine Green Belt land adjacent to the settlements identified for development in the Core Strategy (Core Policy 6), we conducted a constraints mapping exercise to define parcels of Green Belt for detailed assessment against the five Green Belt purposes.

3.6 Early identification of these constraints reduced the area of search within the Green Belt. For the purposes of this study these constraints included:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Scheduled Monuments
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Areas at high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3b)

3.7 Following the constraints mapping, parcels of Green Belt land were defined using OS maps and aerial images to identify clear, robust boundaries, such as roads, railways, watercourses, hedges and tree-lines surrounding areas of the same or similar land use or character. Major roads, such as motorways and A-roads were considered defensible boundaries beyond which any development would be isolated from existing settlements. Parcels were not therefore defined beyond major
roads bordering settlements. Woodland was considered a robust boundary not a defensible boundary, i.e. woodland has been used to help define the edge of parcels but woodland adjoining the existing settlement edge has not been considered so defensible as to not be assessed against the Green Belt purposes.

3.8 The area of the parcels around settlements was guided by the housing requirement of each settlement up to 2028 as set out in Core Policy 6, plus possible safeguarded land requirements, as provided by SSDC. The overall extent of the area of search was also guided by an appropriate housing density consistent with the District’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which assumes an average density of 25 dwellings per hectare. A blue box representing the approximate total area of allocated and safeguarded land required around each settlement is located in the top left hand corner of each settlement map. These blue boxes provide a rough visual representation of the area of land required. However, in isolation, they have no bearing on the findings of the study. Larger (rather than smaller) parcels were generally sought for efficiency.

3.9 With the exception of Essington, the land around all of the Main and Local Service Villages in South Staffordshire was assessed. Essington was not included due to the fact that the village contains a considerable amount of land first identified as safeguarded from the 1996 Local Plan that could more than accommodate both Essington’s allocation and its 10 year safeguarded land requirement.

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<th>Possible Safeguarded Land requirements</th>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wombourne</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>280</td>
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3.10 The area of parcels around the strategic employment sites was defined based on the area of the current strategic employment site, i.e. appropriate parcels thought to be ‘modest extensions’ of each site were defined.

3.11 The local circumstances around each parcel and settlement – land use, form and character – are considered. The assessment commentaries in the appendices and the summaries below provide a more detailed account of the contributory factors influencing the overall judgements.

3.12 The review considered all the Green Belt land adjacent to the village boundaries, in every direction, with the exception of land affected by the constraints outlined above. Villages not surrounded by Green Belt, namely Penkridge and Wheaton Aston, were also considered. In the case of Wheaton Aston, a full review of individual Green Belt parcels was deemed to be unnecessary due to the presence of significant amounts of non-Green Belt land around the settlement and the presence of a major river and floodplain to the south of the settlement acting as a defensible boundary for the existing Green Belt. Furthermore, an assessment of the non-Green Belt land around the settlement was found not to be required due to the presence of a major waterway to the north and east, and a SSSI to the north and west, both of which act as a suitable defensible boundary to the village, protecting the wider countryside from encroachment. In the case of Penkridge, a full review of parcels within and outside the Green Belt was carried out. The two non-Green Belt parcels to the north of the village were assessed in the same way as all those within the Green Belt to determine how they would perform against the Green Belt purposes compared with those parcels already in the Green Belt.

Task 3: Assessing Green Belt Parcels – Defining Proposed Criteria

Approach

3.13 Once the parcels of land had been identified, they were tested against the five purposes of Green Belts outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 80:

1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.14 The review did not take account of landscape quality or the sensitivity of landscapes around settlements to accommodate development because these issues are not relevant to a Green Belt review. This is not to say that they may not be part of a separate study in the future. However, ‘the countryside’ is explicitly referenced in Purpose 3 of the Green Belt and we were also mindful of the Government’s desire for the ‘positive use of land in the Green Belt’. It is clear that the West Midlands Green Belt is widely regarded as playing a role in countryside protection for the benefit of the West Midlands population. We therefore considered the existing positive uses of the Green Belt, such as formal and informal recreation facilities like footpaths and bridleways, in relation to Purpose 3.

Assessment Criteria

3.15 Appendix 1 outlines the criteria used in assessing the performance of each parcel of land against the purposes of Green Belt.

Non-Green Belt areas

3.16 The same criteria were used to assess two parcels north of Penkridge which lie outside the Green Belt for comparative purposes. This approach ensures compliance with Paragraph 84 of the NPPF, which requires local planning authorities to take into account the need to promote sustainable patterns of development when reviewing Green Belt boundaries.
Testing and Validation

3.17 Each parcel was assessed remotely in the first instance using the constraints and asset maps in the appendices, OS maps and aerial images to determine how the parcel performed against the five purposes, both individually and collectively. An interim report containing all the overall judgements was prepared for the Council to review. Parcel judgements deemed to be complex and in need of more detailed review were earmarked for site visits. The judgements were then tested on site before the final judgements were made.

Task 4: Judgements for each Parcel

3.18 A judgement was made as to how each parcel scores against each criterion in relation to the purposes and relative to other parcels. We have tested an approach whereby if a parcel scores three (+++ against any single criterion it was deemed to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt.

3.19 The results are presented graphically in the maps in the appendices (using three shades of green), indicating for each parcel whether it:
- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

3.20 In making the overall judgement, we took account of the individual scores against each purpose. If a parcel scores highly against a single purpose, it automatically falls into the dark green category, making a considerable contribution to the Green Belt purposes. However, for parcels where this is not the case, we have taken account of parcel performance against the full range of purposes.

Judgement Exceptions

3.21 During the assessment, a number of specific scenarios required more complex judgements. This resulted in the creation of two exceptions to the general rules employed in the wider open countryside where the judgements are more clear-cut, i.e. where there are fewer contributory factors compromising the purposes of Green Belt.

1. Encroachment of the countryside, e.g. significant ‘urbanising influences’, such as large concentrations of buildings and other forms of urbanised land, like brownfield land, can have a ‘sprawling’ and or ‘merging’ effect on a ‘settlement’ or ‘settlements’ compromising a parcel’s value as a inhibiting or separating feature that prevents sprawl and or merging. Where significant encroachment has already taken place within a parcel separating close (<500m) settlements, less value shall be placed on their close proximity (+++ to ++).

2. Where a significant boundary, such as a raised motorway or railway line inhibits merging and restricts views from neighbouring settlements, the significance of a neighbouring settlement’s close proximity (i.e. <500m away) to a parcel, and thus the parcel’s value in preventing merging, will be diminished from +++ to ++.

Parcel Ranking

3.22 In addition to giving each parcel an overall judgement on its contribution to the Green Belt purposes, we ranked parcels around the same settlement/strategic employment site based on their relative suitability for release from the Green Belt. This secondary ranking considers the performance of each parcel against all of the purposes of Green Belt to give a finer indication of their value. The ranking is particularly useful around those settlements judged to be surrounded by parcels making a considerable contribution to the Green Belt purposes, because whilst the parcels may meet the purposes sufficiently enough to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt, the number of contributions per parcel could vary significantly. Parcels which perform the purposes of Green Belt less well are ranked (A). The remaining parcels are ranked in descending order with the last letters of the alphabet saved for the parcel(s) which perform the
purposes of Green Belt the best, i.e. make a considerable contribution to the greatest number of Green Belt purposes.

3.23 In ranking parcels, parcels’ scores were a useful mechanism for drawing out broad variations in contribution at a strategic level. In addition, the significance of parcels’ contributions to individual purposes was also considered, i.e. parcels which made an exceptionally significant contribution to an individual purpose could be ranked above parcels which made a significant contribution to multiple purposes. This approach is considered to be consistent with the NPPF which does not require all the purposes to be met simultaneously.

Definitions

3.24 The following definitions were used alongside the assessment criteria to assess the parcels against the purposes of Green Belts:

- Ribbon development – linear development along route ways, such roads, canals and railways.
- Settlement – a village or strategic employment site as defined in Core Policy 1 of the South Staffordshire Local Plan, including Main Service Villages, Local Service Villages, Small Service Villages and Other Villages and Hamlets.
- Sprawl - the irregular or straggling expansion of an urban or industrial area, spreading out over a large area in an untidy and irregular way.
- Separation – open countryside between two detached settlements.
- Merging – the joining or blurring of boundaries between two settlements.
- Encroachment from urbanising influences – intrusion, gradual advance of buildings and urbanised land beyond an acceptable or established limit.
- Features of historic significance – Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Areas.

3.25 The following physical boundaries were considered to be relatively permanent and recognisable as robust Green Belt parcel boundaries:

- Significant natural features – watercourses, waterbodies and floodplains, high ground, woodland and tree belts. Hedgerows and tree lines are considered to be recognisable and robust but less permanent boundaries; streams and ditches are considered to be both recognisable and permanent but less significant boundaries than those above.
- Significant man-made features – motorways, A and B roads and railway lines, established infrastructure and utilities, such as sewage treatment works and electricity pylons.

3.26 The first judgements were conducted remotely using a suite of OS maps, South Staffordshire’s own policy and proposal maps, GIS digital mapping software, and aerial imagery. Detailed notes on the judgements for each parcel were recorded in assessment sheets. Due to the large number of parcels an interim report was prepared summarising all the judgements for each parcel in each settlement. The interim report was accompanied by maps illustrating the defined parcels, the key environmental and cultural assets and considerations around each settlement and the overall assessed value of each parcel based on their individual performance against the five purposes of Green Belt.

3.27 A teleconference was then held with the Council to discuss the contents of the report and lay the ground work for isolating specific parcels, settlements and strategic employment sites that required further review and site visits.
4 Results

4.1 This section sets out the overall findings. It summarises for each settlement and strategic employment site the principal factors influencing the overall judgements on the performance of each parcel. The results are accompanied by maps for each settlement showing the defined parcels and their overall contribution to the Green Belt purposes. The maps contain the constraints, defensible boundaries and robust boundaries used to define the parcels and other key designations used to assess the parcels against the five purposes of Green Belt. The numbers and letters contained within each parcel correspond to their parcel number and ranking, respectively.

Overall Findings

4.2 In summary, 89 parcels were assessed around 14\textsuperscript{10} settlements and four strategic employment sites. Of the 89 parcels assessed, 61\% were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt, i.e. they fully performed one or more of the five purposes of Green Belt. 30\% of the parcels were deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt, i.e. they contributed to more than one of the Green Belt purposes. 9\% of the parcels were deemed to make a more limited contribution to the purpose of Green Belt, i.e. these parcels’ value in delivering the Green Belt purposes is deemed to have been compromised or limited by localised factors.

Figure 4-1 Summary of Overall Judgements

\textsuperscript{10} Wheaton Aston was reviewed at the environmental constraints and parcel identification stage but it was decided that a full Green belt Review was not required. Therefore, only 14 of the originally planned 15 settlements were assessed.
Two settlements, Perton and Huntington, are surrounded by parcels of Green Belt which all make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Over 80% of Brewood, Codsall, Pattingham and Wombourne’s parcels make a considerable contribution. Over 65% of Bilbrook, Hilton Cross and Swindon’s parcels make a considerable contribution. Three settlements/strategic employment sites have no parcels which make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt – ROF Featherstone ES, i54 ES and Cheslyn Hay. Only six settlements/strategic employment sites have parcels which make a more limited contribution to the purposes of Green Belt – ROF Featherstone (67%), Coven, Cheslyn Hay and Great Wyrley (33%), Four Ashes ES (25%) and Kinver (29%).

Findings for each Settlement

Bilbrook

Three parcels were identified to the east of Bilbrook. Parcels 1 and 3 were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcel 1 is very open with no encroachment. Furthermore, it is raised with views towards Wolverhampton in the east. Portions of the land within parcel 3 lie less than 500m from Wolverhampton boundary at its southern edge, thereby providing an important separating function. However, the presence of a waterway and some significant pockets of woodland between the settlements inhibit the encroachment of some of the countryside between the two settlements. The fields bordering the settlement edge make less of a contribution, being over 500m from Wolverhampton and less open having been compromised by residential dwellings on the settlement edge. The narrower the gap, the greater the contribution of the fields to the purposes; however, based on the current width of the gap all the land between the settlements is considered to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt purposes. Parcel 2 was deemed to make a contribution to the Green Belt. The sewage works at the parcel’s eastern edge provides a significant barrier to the eastern encroachment of the countryside towards the Balliol Business Park and Wolverhampton. It is also important to note that the majority of the parcel is designated public open space.

Brewood

Seven parcels were identified around the settlement of Brewood. Six parcels were found to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt. Parcels 4, 5 and 6 border the village’s Conservation Area which contains dozens of listed buildings. Parcel 3 sits on a slope overlooking the village and its Conservation Area. Therefore, parcel 3 also contributes to preserving the village’s setting and special character. With the exception of parcel 4 which is bordered by a canal and the floodplain of a small waterway, there are no significant boundaries comprehensively protecting the countryside from encroachment. However, the floodplain of the River Penk borders the north eastern edge of parcel 2 and the Shropshire Union Canal borders the western edge of parcel 6, both of which provide some protection from encroachment.

Cheslyn Hay

Three parcels were identified to the west of Cheslyn Hay. None of the parcels were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcels 1 and 3 were deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.

Parcels 1 and 2 are enclosed by urban development to the south, east and north. This development has an urbanising influence on the countryside within the parcels and break down their connection with the wider countryside, compromising openness. While parcel 1 is within 500m of the neighbouring settlement of Cannock, it was deemed to be an exception to the general criteria in that the M6 Toll and the woodland to the north of the parcel provide a sufficient
boundary to prevent coalescence. The significant distance and boundaries between parcel 3 to the west and the settlement of Shareshill and the existing encroachment within the parcel were found to reduce its value as Green Belt.

**Codsall**

4.9 Six parcels were identified around Codsall. Only one of the six parcels was deemed to make less than a considerable contribution to the Green Belt.

4.10 Parcel 1 to the north wraps around a Conservation Area on high ground. The land within the parcel slopes down from the urban edge towards the floodplain which forms the north edge of the parcel, offering intermittent open views of the wider countryside to the north, north west and north east. Parcel 2 to the west does not adjoin the Conservation Area; however, it extends beyond the limits of the floodplain bordering parcel 1 along a thin strip of residential development, making it more open. Furthermore, there are also no significant boundaries between parcel 2 and the neighbouring settlement of Codsall Wood less than 1km to the north. Around half of parcel 3 sits within a Conservation Area between Codsall and the village of Oaken less than 500m to the south west. The Conservation Area between Codsall and Oaken also borders parcel 4’s northern edge. The centre of parcel 4 contains a couple of listed buildings. Therefore, parcels 1, 3 and 4 contribute to preserving the historic setting and special character of Codsall.

4.11 Parcel 6 to the south of the settlement is very open due to a slope exposing the parcel to south and east with excellent views to Wolverhampton and the surrounding countryside. Scattered pockets of tree and small floodplain separate settlement from Wolverhampton <500m to east and <1km to south.

4.12 Parcel 5 to the south of the settlement is the only parcel around Codsall deemed to make less than a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. The parcel was deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt due to the presence of the garden centre on its southern border which has an urbanising influence on the countryside within the southern half of the parcel. Furthermore, the parcel is somewhat sheltered from the open countryside by the slight gradient of the land which slopes towards the settlement boundary. Furthermore, a number of pockets of trees restrict views of the wider countryside to the south and west.

**Coven**

4.13 Three parcels were identified around the village of Coven. The land to the west of the settlement was not considered because of the natural boundary provided by the river and floodplain; and the land to the east of the A449 was not considered as the road acts as a robust boundary.

4.14 Parcel 2 to the east of the village was deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcel 2 contains open fields containing no significant development; however, the parcel is surrounded by the urban edge of Coven and a major road to the east. This somewhat screens the countryside within the parcel, reducing the sense of openness to the wider countryside. Furthermore, a number of listed buildings are in close proximity to the edge of parcel. However, encroachment of the wider countryside is inhibited by the presence of the A449 to the east and the settlement to the north, south and west.

4.15 Parcel 3 to the south of the village contains a small patchwork fields which have been partially encroached by a small pocket of farm buildings; however, the buildings do little to compromise the sense of openness within the parcel. Sprawl of the village would be curbed beyond the parcel by the floodplain to the west and south and the A449 to the east.

4.16 Parcel 1 to the north of the village was deemed to make a more limited contribution the purposes of Green Belt due to the significant boundaries to the north – a waterway with floodplain and large bands of woodland containing a SSSI and Historic Landscape Area – preventing encroachment and merging to the north with Four Ashes Strategic Employment Site. Furthermore, the parcel has been somewhat encroached upon by the farm to west and the school and static home park within the easternmost part of the parcel.
**Featherstone**

4.17 Seven parcels were identified around the settlement of Featherstone. Parcels 1, 3, 6 and 7 were deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcel 7 to the south of the settlement was deemed to be an exception to the general criteria in so far as the M54 borders the southern boundary of the parcel acting as a significant boundary between Featherstone and Hilton Cross ES and diminishing the significance of the two settlements’ close proximity, i.e. there are limited views to and from Hilton Cross from parcel 7 and Featherstone due to the raised M54 separating the two. While the parcel is free from encroachment, the undeveloped land within the parcel is sandwiched between the raised motorway to the south and the urban edge of Featherstone to the north, making it relatively enclosed from the wider countryside. Parcel 6, although less than 500m away from the strategic employment site of ROF Featherstone to the west was also deemed to be an exception to the general criteria due to the fact that the land between the two ‘settlements’ had been sufficiently encroached by hardstanding and the remnants of former structures as to reduce the openness of the Green Belt. Parcel 3 was considered not to make a considerable contribution because of the woodland and waterbody to the north east, which would prevent further encroachment of the countryside and merging with Shareshill to the north.

4.18 Parcel 1 is an open field containing no built development which constitutes encroachment; however, the parcel sits on the gentle lower slopes of the hill to the east and is bordered by the M54 at its southern boundary, a farm at its south eastern corner, residential development to north and west and woodland to east, making it relatively enclosed from the wider countryside. All these features act as barriers to the encroachment of the outlying countryside. South of the woodland, the parcel is relatively exposed to the east.

4.19 Parcels 2, 4 and 5 to the north of the settlement were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt, playing important separating roles. Parcel 4 protects the countryside between Featherstone and the village of Shareshill to the north and parcel 5 protects the countryside between Featherstone and ROF Featherstone, the small hamlet of Brinsford and the prison to the west. Parcel 2 is in close proximity to the settlement of Shareshill to the north and contains no built development which constitutes encroachment.

**Great Wyrley**

4.20 Three parcels were identified – two to the east and one to the south of Great Wyrley.

4.21 Parcel 1 to the east was deemed to make a more limited contribution to the Green Belt. Parcel 1 enjoys over 2km of space between it and the neighbouring settlement of Norton Canes to the east. In addition the wooded floodplain of Wash Brook, the Hatherton Canal and the M6 Toll all contribute to preventing the settlements from merging and protecting the countryside from encroachment.

4.22 Parcel 2 was deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt due to the fact that it protects open land to the south east from encroachment. While the parcel contains a farm and some ribbon development along Jacobs Hall Lane, the urbanising influence of this development is significantly mitigated by the openness of the countryside within the parcel and its strong relationship with the wider countryside. Furthermore, there are no significant boundaries between the settlement and the village of Newtown and Walsall beyond.

4.23 Parcel 3 is deemed to make a contribution to the Green Belt purposes. While the parcel contains regular open fields with views of the surrounding countryside, the parcel also contains some ribbon development along the A34, the small hamlet of Upper Landywood which has merged with the urban edge of Great Wyrley and Landywood Primary School. These relatively significant pockets of development combined with the urban edge of Great Wyrley bordering the northern, eastern and western edges of the northern half of the parcel compromise the openness of and urbanise the countryside within their immediate vicinity.

**Huntington**

4.24 All six parcels identified around the settlement of Huntington were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt purposes. Parcels 1 to the east, 2 to the north and 6 to the south east were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt...
due to the fact they provide separation from Cannock to the east. In addition, parcels 1 and 2 contain open fields crisscrossed with footpaths, and parcel 6 is entirely designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.25 Parcel 3 to the west was deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt due to it being comprised of largely flat, open fields, gardens and playing fields containing no built development. The small industrial estate at the southern border of the parcel has some urbanising influence of the southern edge; however, it does not sever the parcel’s relationship with the wider open countryside to the west.

4.26 Parcels 4 and 5 were also deemed to make a considerable contribution. Both occupy high ground with open views of the wider countryside to the west. There are, however, sheltered pockets within the parcels which sit behind higher ground in the western parts. These areas do not enjoy open views of the wider countryside and are therefore considered to be less open. Both parcels are heavily wooded.

**Kinver**

4.27 Seven parcels were identified around the settlement of Kinver. Four parcels - parcels 1 to the north, 3 and 6 to the south and 7 to the east were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt. Parcel 1 to the north contains regular open fields and plays an important role in protecting the outlying countryside from encroachment. Parcel 3 is adjacent to a SSSI protected by a thick band of woodland. Parcel 3 sits within the village’s Conservation Area and contains the village’s listed church, thereby helping to preserve the village’s setting and special character. Furthermore the parcel is in an elevated position over the village with extensive views. Parcel 6 contains open fields which border the village’s Conservation Area. The open fields are flanked by pockets of woodland; however, the fields sit on higher ground with open views of the wider countryside to the east. The parcel contains one residential development which in isolation is not considered to compromise openness. Furthermore, there are few significant boundaries to the south which would prevent the unchecked sprawling of the settlement and thus the encroachment of the surrounding countryside. Similarly, parcel 7 contains regular open fields with no significant boundaries to the east and south of the parcel that would prevent further sprawling and encroachment.

4.28 Parcel 4 to the north west of the settlement was deemed to make a contribution the purposes of Green Belt. Woodland borders the parcel’s southern edge; however the parcel is relatively exposed to the west making the countryside beyond vulnerable to encroachment. The woodland within parcel 4 protects the parcel’s southern edge and encloses the open fields in the north eastern corner of the parcel. These fields are bordered by residential development to the north and east.

4.29 Parcels 2 and 5 were deemed to make a more limited contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcel 2, which is largely the site of a school, is enclosed by significant boundaries that prevent the encroachment of the countryside and the long term sprawling of Kinver. Parcel 5 is largely surrounded by woodland which acts as a barrier to encroachment of the countryside. Furthermore, there are no settlements nearby.

**Pattingham**

4.30 Six parcels were identified around the settlement of Pattingham. All but one of the parcels was deemed to make a considerable contribution the purposes of Green Belt. Parcels 1 and 2 to the north and 6 to the west all border the village’s Conservation Area which contains a number of listed buildings, thereby helping to preserve the setting and special character of the village. Furthermore, they comprise open countryside, with very limited encroachment.

4.31 Parcel 3 to the east and parcels 4 and 5 to the south also contain large, open fields. Parcels 4 and 5 to the south are the further away from the village’s Conservation Area and contain buildings which constitute encroachment. Overall, Parcel 5 is considered to make less of a contribution to the Green Belt purposes (Contribution overall) due to the large residential property and farm buildings within the centre of the parcel which compromise the openness of the countryside within their immediate vicinity, particularly in the rectangular field to the north which is bordered by the urban edge of Pattingham on three sides.
Penkridge

4.32 Seven parcels were identified around the fringe of Penkridge. Five of the parcels (1-5) are within the Green Belt and two (6 and 7) outside. Green Belt parcel 5 to the south west of the settlement was deemed to make a considerable contribution the purposes of Green Belt, largely due to its openness. Parcel 5 contains open fields and is exposed to the south, putting the countryside to the south and south west at risk from encroachment.

4.33 Parcels 1 to the north, 2 and 3 to the south and 4 to the west were deemed to make a contribution to the Green Belt. Parcels 1, 2 and 3 contain relatively open fields but are somewhat encroached upon, parcel 1 by school buildings, and parcels 2 and 3 by residential and agricultural development. Parcel 1 also contains by the canal and the M6 to the west and the River Penk to the west. In parcel 2 the channel and floodplain of a tributary of the River Penk skirt the western and southern boundaries of the parcel and the M6 to the east protect the outlying countryside and the neighbouring settlements over 2km to the south. A Scheduled Monument abuts Parcel 3’s southern boundary; however, the monument’s contribution to the setting of the historic town is minimal given the fact that it is obscured from view by woodland. Parcel 4 is quite close to the village’s Conservation Area and a number of its listed buildings. However, it contains some residential and agricultural development north of Buncham Lane. In addition, there are no nearby neighbouring settlements and the woodland and the River Penk to the west prevent significant sprawling and encroachment of the countryside.

4.34 Due to the fact that the settlement lies at the edge of South Staffordshire’s Green Belt, the land outside the Green Belt was assessed against the purposes to determine how it would perform as Green Belt, relative to the assessed parcels within the Green Belt for comparison purposes. Parcel 6 would be deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt, principally due to the railway acting as a robust boundary between the existing settlement and the parcel. In addition, the parcel contains an open patchwork of fields and no significant boundaries preventing encroachment of the wider countryside in the long term. Finally, the parcel is also in reasonably close proximity to the Penkridge Conservation Area. Parcel 7 would be considered to make a contribution to the Green Belt. The parcel is somewhat enclosed to the west by the railway line and some wooded field boundaries. However, there are no significant boundaries preventing encroachment of the countryside to the north and the parcel is still relatively open with limited encroachment from buildings.

Perton

4.35 Six parcels were identified around the settlement of Perton. All the parcels were deemed to make a considerable contribution the purposes of Green Belt. Parcels 1 and 2 to the east and parcel 5 to the south make a considerable contribution predominantly due to their openness and proximity to Wolverhampton, playing an important role in separating the two settlements. These parcels make a significant contribution to a number of the Green Belt purposes.

4.36 Parcel 6 to the north west was deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt due to the presence of woodland along the settlement edge within the parcel having an isolating effect on the countryside within it, which contributes to its openness. While parcel 6 has significantly fewer +++ ratings, it is the significance of the contribution of parcel 6 to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (purpose 3) that marks it out.

4.37 Parcels 3 and 4 to the west of Perton, despite making a considerable contribution to the Green Belt purposes, were considered to perform the purposes of Green Belt slightly less well. Both parcels are very open and free from encroachment. However, the golf course to the south and the woodland to the north provide potential barriers to urban sprawl.

Swindon

4.38 Six parcels were identified around the settlement of Swindon. Parcels 3, 4 and 5 and 6 were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.

4.39 Parcel 3 to the east is largely open, with no significant boundaries preventing further encroachment of the band of countryside to the east between the hamlet of Himley and Swindon and the countryside to the north between Wombourne and Swindon. Similarly parcel 4 to the north of the settlement contains no encroaching features and is largely open with no significant
boundaries between Swindon and Wombourne 500m to north. Parcel 5 to the north west of the settlement is less than 500m to the south of Wombourne and is preventing further ribbon development along the canal towards Wombourne. The land is also relatively open with some residential development along Church Road. Parcel 6 to the west contains a patchwork of very open fields with a Scheduled Monument (albeit a submerged one) very close to the parcel’s western border.

4.40 Parcels 1 and 2 were deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Both are less than 1km away from the edge of Dudley. However, there are a number of significant boundaries between the two settlements that would prevent long term merging – the canal, floodplain and woodland. In addition, sprawl to the east of parcel 2 is also inhibited by the presence of a small water way and three water bodies close to its border.

Wheaton Aston

4.41 Wheaton Aston was not named in the original brief for the partial Green Belt review. However, like Penkridge, its location on the edge of the Green Belt was thought to be enough to merit a closer inspection of the Green Belt and non-Green Belt land around it.

4.42 The presence of significant amounts of non-Green Belt land around the settlement and the presence of a major river and floodplain to the south of the settlement acting as a defensible boundary for the existing Green Belt meant that a full review of the Green Belt parcels within close proximity to the settlement was not required.

4.43 The assessment of the non-Green Belt within the immediate vicinity of the site was found not to be required due to the presence of a major waterway to the north and east of the settlement, and a SSSI to the north and west, acting as a suitable defensible boundary to sprawl from the village as it expands, protecting the wider countryside from encroachment.

Wombourne

4.44 Seven parcels were identified around the settlement of Wombourne. Six of the parcels were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt purposes. One parcel, Parcel 3, was deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcel 3 to the east is sandwiched between the village’s Conservation Area to the west and a Registered Park and Garden, Conservation Area and Historic Landscape Area to the east. However, the parcel sits on raised ground which slopes away from the settlement towards the RPG and HLA, shielding views from the Conservation Area. The parcel is relatively modest in size, with limited opportunity for expansion and therefore the encroachment of the countryside.

4.45 To the north, parcel 1’s north eastern edge is in close proximity to the southern edge of the village of Lower Penn to the north. Furthermore, it retains its historic field patterns and connects to three footpaths. The presence of significant and constraining boundaries preventing encroachment to the east and west make modest release of Green Belt to the south of the parcel more feasible. However, there are no significant boundaries to the north protecting the countryside from encroachment and, in the long term, merging with the settlement of Lower Penn and Wolverhampton to the north. Parcel 2 to the north east plays an important role in that it prevents ribbon development along the A449 towards Wolverhampton, preventing coalescence. Furthermore, the parcel borders the village’s Conservation Area at its south eastern corner with views down the river valley towards a HLA to the east.

4.46 Parcels 4 and 5 to the south play important roles in preventing the encroachment of the countryside and therefore coalescence between Wombourne and the neighbouring villages of Himley and Swindon, both of which are less than 500m to the south. The narrower the gap, the greater the contribution of the open fields between the settlements in maintaining separation.

4.47 Parcel 6 to the west is very open with exceptional views to the west, north and south. The floodplain to the west prevents merging with the neighbouring village of Trysull less than 1km to the north, and the adjacent village’s Conservation Area increases the value of the parcel in protecting the views to and from the adjacent village. The topography of the land at the southern end of the parcel to the north of Poolhouse Road and west of Clap Gate Road slopes down and flattens off towards the south western tip of the parcel. The south western tip of this area is bordered to the north by Smestow Bridge Industrial Estate, to the south by Wombourne and...
contains a row of a dozen dwellings. The buildings compromise the openness of the Green Belt within this relatively enclosed portion of the parcel. To the west of the dwellings, the land slopes upwards towards Clap Gate Road offering open views of the countryside to the west. This portion of the parcel contains a small rectangular industrial area which compromises the openness of the Green Belt within its immediate vicinity; however, the open views of the countryside to the west mitigate this influence.

4.48 Parcel 7 to the north west is a relatively small parcel enclosed by the topography of a small valley. However, it is in close proximity to the historic Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal and easily visible from the higher ground which surrounds it. Furthermore, two listed buildings sit on the edge of the southern boundary of the parcel.

Findings for each Strategic Employment Site

**Four Ashes**

4.49 Four parcels were identified around Four Ashes Strategic Employment Site. Parcel 4 was deemed to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt due to its openness maintaining the views of the landscape to the west.

4.50 Parcels 3 to the north and 2 to the east were deemed to make a contribution to Green Belt. Parcel 3 is very open; however it is relatively self-contained with a large wood to the south and waterway bordering its northern edge, both of which would prevent further sprawl and encroachment of the countryside. Parcel 2 is also somewhat enclosed by the large wood to the north and the employment site to the south. It is exposed to the east with no significant boundaries protecting the countryside from encroachment and the potential for coalescence with the village of Calf Heath less than 1km away to the east.

4.51 Parcel 1 to the south east was deemed to make a more limited contribution to the Green Belt due to the significant boundaries on all sides of the parcel preventing long term encroachment and merging – the canal to the north, the sewage works to the east and a floodplain to the south.

**Hilton Cross**

4.52 Three parcels were identified around Hilton Cross Strategic Employment Site. Parcels 1 and 2 to the west and south respectively were deemed to make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt due to their close proximity to the edge of Wolverhampton and the openness of the land within and around them. Parcel 3, although not directly adjacent to the employment site boundary, does border developed land adjoining the strategic employment site and was therefore assessed. Parcel 3 was deemed to make a contribution to Green Belt. The parcel contains a sand and gravel pit, which is sandwiched between high ground to the east and the employment site to the west. While there are no significant areas of built development within the parcel which constitute encroachment, the land within the parcel is relatively self-contained with limited views of the wider countryside.

**i54**

4.53 Two parcels were identified to the west of i54 Strategic Employment Site. The land to the south and east sit within urban Wolverhampton; the northern boundary of the site is lined by the significant man-made boundary of the M54.

4.54 Both parcels 1 and 2 were deemed to make a contribution to Green Belt due to their role of the parcels in preventing the urban sprawl of Wolverhampton; however, the significant boundaries at their borders reduce their value.

**ROF Featherstone**

4.55 Three parcels were identified around the ROF Featherstone Strategic Employment Site. Parcel 2 to the east was deemed to be an exception to the general criteria used in the assessment in that the significance of the short distance between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement of Featherstone was deemed to have been compromised by the existing merging effects of the
industrial and brownfield encroachment between Featherstone and ROF Featherstone. The parcel was deemed to make a contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.

4.56 Parcels 1 and 3 to the west were found to make a more limited contribution to Green Belt. Parcel 1 is surrounded by significant boundaries: the railway line to the west is raised; also the waterway to west; and the major roads to north west. Furthermore, it provides a more limited role in maintaining separation between the Strategic Employment Site and the village of Coven to the north due to the presence of urbanising development to the west and north, namely the prison and a hamlet. Parcel 4 to the south west is also bordered by the raised railway line and, in addition, the M54. It was deemed to be an exception to the general criteria used in the assessment in that the M54 was deemed to be such a significant separating boundary as to reduce the significance of the distance between Wolverhampton and the Strategic Employment Site.¹¹

¹¹ See the Judgement exceptions outlined above.
## Appendix 1 - Review Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPPF Green Belt Purposes</th>
<th>Issues for consideration</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.</td>
<td>Location in relation to the West Midlands urban area (Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall and Cannock).</td>
<td>Is the parcel abutting the boundary of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall or Cannock?</td>
<td>If yes, +++</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If no, +</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ribbon development.</td>
<td>Does the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development?</td>
<td>If strong role (i.e. it lies either side of a road corridor), ++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If no role, +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.</td>
<td>Distance between parcel and the nearest neighbouring settlement(s).</td>
<td>What is the distance to the nearest neighbouring settlement?</td>
<td>If abuts boundary or &lt;500m, +++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If between 500m and 2km from boundary, ++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If more than 2km, +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location of the parcel.</td>
<td>Does the parcel play a major role in maintaining separation? (This will partly be a function of the size of the parcel).</td>
<td>Major, ++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minor +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type and location of physical boundaries bordering/separating parcels: motorways, railways, rivers or woods.</td>
<td>Are there natural or man-made features that could prevent settlements from merging with one another? (These could be outside the parcel itself).</td>
<td>If there is no significant boundary between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, +++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPPF Green Belt Purposes</td>
<td>Issues for consideration</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. | Significance of existing urbanising influences.\(^{12}\) 
Openness. | Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of built development within the parcel? | If no encroachment, +++ 
If limited encroachment, ++ 
If already encroached upon, + |
|  | Significance and permanence of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment. | Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel itself). | If no significant/less significant boundary between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, ++ 
If significant boundary(s) between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, + |
|  | Countryside access / recreation. | Is there evidence of positive use of the countryside in this location (e.g. footpaths, bridleways, formal or informal sport and recreation)? (Accessible countryside on the doorstep.) | If yes and abutting the settlement, ++ 
If yes but not abutting the settlement, or no + |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. | Contribution of parcel to setting and special character of settlement. | Are there features of historic significance in the parcel or visible from the parcel? | If yes and in/abutting the parcel, +++ 
If yes and not abutting the parcel, ++ 
If no, + |
| To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. | The need to incentivise development within settlements. | Does the settlement contain significant areas of brownfield land? (Only applies to one settlement) | If yes, ++ 
If no, + |

\(^{12}\) The significance of existing urbanising influences has a direct influence over the relative openness of green belt parcels. We have therefore used the presence of urbanising influences as a proxy for assessing the degree of openness within the parcel.
Appendix 2 - Maps
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Cheslyn Hay

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: “Parcels ranked ‘A’ make the least contribution to the Green Belt and ‘E’ the most, for this settlement

Footpath
Bridleway
BOAT
Railways
Roads
Rivers/Canals and Lakes
AONB
Conservation Areas
Ramsar
Special Areas of Conservation
Special Protection Areas
National Nature Reserves
Local Nature Reserves
Scheduled Monuments
SSSIs
Ancient Woodland
Flood Zone 3b
Registered Parks and Gardens
Listed Buildings
 Hatherton Canal Protection Line
GB2 - Safeguarding Land
EQ4 - Historic Landscape Areas
HWB1 - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation
OC1 - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Cheslyn Hay

Relative Rankings A-E: Parcels ranked ‘A’ make the least contribution to the Green Belt and ‘E’ the most, for this settlement.
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Coven

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
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Relative Rankings A-E - Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement

Footpath
Bridleway
BOAT
Railways
Roads
Rivers/Canals and Lakes
AONB
Conservation Areas
Ramsar
Special Areas of Conservation
Special Protection Areas
National Nature Reserves
Local Nature Reserves
Scheduled Monuments
SSSIs
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Flood Zone 3b
Registered Parks and Gardens
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HWB1 - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation
OC1 - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Relative Rankings A-E: Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement.
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Employment Site - ROF Featherstone

1. 1KM Buffer
2. Settlement Boundary
3. South Staffordshire District Boundary
4. Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels

- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

Footpath
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OCI - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Employment Site - ROF Featherstone

- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"
Employment Site - Four Ashes

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Relative Rankings A-E - Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement

Footpath
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Conservation Areas
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Special Areas of Conservation
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Hatherton Canal Protection Line
GB2 - Safeguarding Land
EQ4 - Historic Landscape Areas
HWBL - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation
OC1 - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Relative Rankings A-E - Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement.
Employment Site - Hilton Cross

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
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 Relative Rankings A-E: "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

Footpath
Bridleway
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HWB1 - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation
OC1 - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Featherstone

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Relative Rankings A-E - "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

Footpath
Bridleway
BOAT
Railways
Roads
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Conservation Areas
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National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Relative Rankings A-E - Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement.
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Great Wryley

- 1KM Buffer
- Settlement Boundary
- South Staffordshire District Boundary
- Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels

- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- BOAT
- Railways
- Roads
- Rivers/Canals and Lakes
- AONB
- Conservation Areas
- Ramsar
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- National Nature Reserves
- Local Nature Reserves
- Scheduled Monuments
- SSSIs
- Ancient Woodland
- Flood Zone 3b
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Listed Buildings
- Hatherton Canal Protection Line
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- EQ4 - Historic Landscape Areas
- HWB1 - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation
- OC1 - Open Countryside
- National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
- Green Belt

Great Wryley

Relative Rankings A-E: Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement.
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Huntington

- Settlement Boundary
- South Staffordshire District Boundary
- Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels

- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: ‘A’ make the least contribution to the Green Belt and ‘E’ the most, for this settlement

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Railways
- Roads
- Rivers/Canals and Lakes
- AONB
- Conservation Areas
- Ramsar
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- National Nature Reserves
- Local Nature Reserves
- Scheduled Monuments
- SSSIs
- Ancient Woodland
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- Registered Parks and Gardens
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- Hatherton Canal Protection Line
- GB2 - Safeguarding Land
- EQ4 - Historic Landscape Areas
- HWBL - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation
- OC1 - Open Countryside
- National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
- Green Belt

Source: OS, English Heritage, Natural England, South Staffordshire District Council

RCS LUC-5782-01_003_A3_Colour_Maps 24/08/2016
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Kinver

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

Footpath
Bridleway
BOAT
Railways
Roads
Rivers/Canals and Lakes
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HWBL - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation
OC1 - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Source: OS, English Heritage, Natural England, South Staffordshire District Council

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South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Pattingham

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Relative Rankings A-E - "Parcels ranked 'X' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

Footpath
Bridleway
BOAT
Railways
Roads
Rivers/Canals and Lakes
AONB
Conservation Areas
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OC1 - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Source: OS, English Heritage, Natural England, South Staffordshire District Council

Relative Rankings A-E: Parcels ranked 'X' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement.
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Swindon

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: “Parcels ranked ‘A’ make the least contribution to the Green Belt and ‘E’ the most, for this settlement”

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Green Belt

Source: OS, English Heritage, Natural England, South Staffordshire District Council
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Wheaton Aston

1km Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

Footpath
Bridgeway
Boat
Railways
Roads
Rivers/Canals and Lakes
AONB
Conservation Areas
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HC1 - Open Countryside
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Relative Rankings A-E: Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement.
South Staffordshire Green Belt Review

Wombourne

1KM Buffer
Settlement Boundary
South Staffordshire District Boundary
Total area of housing, both in policy CP6 and the safeguarded land requirement

Green Belt Parcels
- Makes a considerable contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- Makes a more limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Relative Rankings A-E: "Parcels ranked 'A' make the least contribution to the Green Belt and 'E' the most, for this settlement"

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National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 2012
Green Belt

Source: OD, English Heritage, Natural England, South Staffordshire District Council

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