

The Buckinghamshire Authorities
**Buckinghamshire Green Belt
Assessment**

**Report: Methodology and
Assessment of General Areas**

242378-4-05

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This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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Notes

For the purposes of this Study, **The Buckinghamshire Authorities** refers, throughout, to:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Chiltern District Council
- South Bucks District Council
- Wycombe District Council

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Arup has been appointed by The Buckinghamshire Authorities (Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council, Wycombe District Council, and Buckinghamshire County Council) to undertake a Green Belt Assessment to form part of a shared evidence base for forthcoming local plans in each of the four Buckinghamshire districts and the Buckinghamshire Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

1.1.2 In broad terms, the Green Belt Assessment will be undertaken in two phases:

- Part 1, the focus of this report, will assess strategic land parcels, ‘General Areas’, against the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This assessment will identify the relative performance of the General Areas against the NPPF defined purposes of the Green Belt;
- Part 2 would ultimately be carried out by the local authorities themselves or would be subject of a separate procurement exercise (or exercises) by the Buckinghamshire Authorities. Arup has been commissioned to carry out Part 1 only and Part 2 does not form part of the current Study.

1.1.3 This report sets out the methodology and findings for Part 1 of the Green Belt Assessment (the ‘Study’).

1.2 Purpose of Study

1.2.1 The purpose of a Green Belt Assessment is to provide evidence of how different areas perform against the Green Belt purposes set out in national policy; planning authorities may then take this into account alongside other evidence in making decisions about possible changes to Green Belt boundaries. A boundary revision can take the form of an expansion or a contraction. However, equally a Green Belt Assessment may conclude that no changes are appropriate.

1.2.2 The Green Belt Assessment provides an independent and objective appraisal of all the existing Green Belt land as well as non-Green Belt land within Buckinghamshire. This report has been undertaken in accordance with the Study brief, which is clear in its aspirations to:

- Draw on best practice in Green Belt assessments in order to establish a robust methodology for assessing the Green Belt in Buckinghamshire against the five purposes of the Green Belt established in the NPPF;
- Identify and delineate logical and justified parcels of Green Belt land for assessment, review each land parcel against the five Green Belt purposes, evaluate and score the individual land parcels and

present clear, comprehensive and fully justified conclusions on the performance of each land parcel;

- Consider whether land not currently within the Green Belt fulfils Green Belt purposes, specifically around major settlements at the outer edges of the Green Belt.

1.3 Report Structure

1.3.1 Following this introduction, this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides the policy context at the national and local level, together with a summary of Green Belt Assessments undertaken by neighbouring authorities.
- Chapter 3 sets out the context for this Study, including the history of the Green Belt as a whole and specifically within Buckinghamshire.
- Chapter 4 sets out the methodology for the Study.
- Chapter 5 sets out the key findings of the Study.
- Chapter 6 provides recommendations for further work.
- Chapter 7 sets out the conclusions of the Study.
- Annex Report 1 (parts A – G) contains the Green Belt General Area Assessment pro-formas.

2 Policy, Guidance and Experience

2.1 National Context

2.1.1 At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012), national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and ministerial letters provide the policy and guidance context for the role and function of the Green Belt. The following section summarises the current position.

National Policy

2.1.2 The NPPF (2012) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Central to the NPPF is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which for plan-making means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet development needs and should meet objectively assessed needs unless specific policies of the NPPF (such as Green Belt policy) indicate that development should be restricted.

2.1.3 Protection of the Green Belts around urban areas is a core planning principle of the NPPF. Policy for protecting Green Belt land is set out in section 9 of the Framework which emphasises the great importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts.

2.1.4 Circular 42/55 released by government in 1955 highlighted the importance of checking unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas and of safeguarding countryside from encroachment. It set out three main functions of the Green Belt which are now upheld in the NPPF:

- To check the growth of a large built-up area;
- To prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into one another; and
- To preserve the special character of a town.

2.1.5 The NPPF advocates openness and permanence as essential characteristics of the Green Belt stating that '*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open*' (paragraph 79). The NPPF details five purposes of the Green Belt:

- '*To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- '*To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- '*To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- '*To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- '*To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*'. (paragraph 80)

- 2.1.6** For ease of reference in this review, these purposes are referred to as NPPF Purposes 1 to 5, with the assigned number corresponding to the order in which the purposes appear in the NPPF.
- 2.1.7** In addition to the purposes of the Green Belt, the NPPF advocates enhancement to existing Green Belts. Paragraph 81 states that *'local planning authorities are required to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt'* once Green Belt boundaries have been defined including looking for opportunities to:
- *'Provide access;*
 - *Provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation;*
 - *Retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity;*
or
 - *Improve damaged and derelict land'.*
- 2.1.8** Paragraph 83 states that *'local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans'* and that *'once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan'*. Importantly, the NPPF acknowledges the permanence of Green Belt boundaries and the need for Green Belt boundaries to endure beyond the plan period (paragraph 83). The need to promote sustainable patterns of development when reviewing the Green Belt boundaries is also acknowledged (paragraph 84).
- 2.1.9** The NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development (paragraph 84). Local planning authorities are encouraged to *'consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary'*.
- 2.1.10** Paragraph 85 states that *'when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:*
- *Ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
 - *Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
 - *Where necessary, identify in their plans areas of "safeguarded land" between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
 - *Make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;*

- *Satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and*
- *Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*

National Guidance

2.1.11 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is intended to provide up-to-date, accessible and useful guidance on the requirements of the planning system. The national PPG was updated in October 2014, reiterating the importance of the Green Belt and acknowledging that Green Belt may affect the ability of an area to meet housing need. The following paragraphs are relevant to Green Belt Assessment:

- **Paragraph 044 Do housing and economic needs override constraints on the use of land, such as Green Belt?** – *'The NPPF should be read as a whole: need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan. The Framework is clear that local planning authorities should, through their Local Plans, meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted' (as it is with land designated as Green Belt). 'The Framework makes clear that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.'*
- **Paragraph 045 Do local planning authorities have to meet in full housing needs identified in needs assessments?** – *'Assessing need is just the first stage in developing a local plan. Once need has been assessed, the local planning authority should prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period, and in so doing take account of any constraints such as Green Belt, which indicate that development should be restricted and which may limit the ability of an authority to meet its need.'*

2.1.12 However, the national PPG does not provide any specific guidance on conducting a Green Belt Assessment per se.

Ministerial Statements

2.1.13 Letters from CLG ministers to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) or local government officers or general statements by ministers have clarified or re-affirmed aspects of Green Belt policy. During his time as Planning Minister, Nick Boles issued a series of Ministerial Statements on the Green Belt which, in general, continued to emphasise the protection of the Green Belt.

2.1.14 Perhaps the most significant statement came in March 2014; correspondence between Nick Boles and PINS reaffirmed the

importance and permanence of the Green Belt, that Green Belt may only be altered in ‘exceptional circumstances’ by local planning authorities through the preparation or review of their local plans, as well as the Green Belt’s special role in framing the presumption in favour of sustainable development and when local authorities seek to meet objectively assessed development needs.

- 2.1.15** This position was reaffirmed in October 2014 when the national Planning Practice Guidance was amended (see *National Guidance*).

Local Plan cases

- 2.1.16** There is limited case history relating to decisions about the setting or change of Green Belt boundaries in local plans. However, one recent relevant example is that of the Solihull Local Plan (Solihull Metropolitan District Council). In this case, a developer’s sites in Tidbury Green were placed into the Green Belt by the Solihull Local Plan (SLP) adopted in December 2013. They challenged the SLP on three grounds: (i) that it was not supported by an objectively assessed figure for housing need, (ii) the Council has failed in its duty to cooperate, and (iii) the Council adopted a plan without regard to the proper test for revising Green Belt boundaries. The Claim succeeded at the High Court.

- 2.1.17** Solihull appealed against the decision, but the appeal was dismissed by the Court of Appeal. The Court held that the Inspector and Solihull had failed to identify a figure for the objective assessment of housing need as a separate and prior exercise, and that was an error of law. In addition, the Judge dismissed the Inspector’s reasons for returning the developer’s sites to the Green Belt, saying that:

‘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’.

2.2 Local Context

- 2.2.1** At the local level, the adopted and, where applicable, emerging local development plans for the Buckinghamshire Authorities provide the relevant policy context for Green Belt.

Aylesbury Vale District

- 2.2.2** The Vale of Aylesbury Plan was withdrawn in February 2014 on the advice of an independent planning inspector and work has commenced on a new plan. The current Aylesbury Vale Development Plan consists of the saved policies of the adopted Local Plan (2004), and Buckinghamshire County Council Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

- 2.2.3** The Local Development Scheme (December 2014) sets out the timetable for the production of the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, with Issues and Options consultation undertaken between October and December 2015 and Draft Plan consultation anticipated

to be undertaken between April and May 2016. Following publication in September 2016 and submission in January or February 2017, subject to examination by an independent inspector, it is expected that the plan will be adopted in mid-2017.

Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (2004) (saved policies)

2.2.4 The purpose of the District's Green Belt is stated in the Local Plan as the following:

'To restrain the outward sprawl of London, to prevent communities within it from merging into one another, to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, to preserve the special character of towns within the Green Belt and to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land' . (Paragraph 10.14)

2.2.5 Policy RA.6 on control of development within the Metropolitan Green Belt states that there is a presumption against new building within the Metropolitan Green Belt except for the purposes of agriculture or forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport or recreation, cemeteries or other land uses which preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

2.2.6 Policy RA. 17 on replacement dwellings in the Metropolitan Green Belt states that dwellings must not be significantly larger in area or volume and which do not have a greater effect on the openness of the Green Belt than existing buildings.

2.2.7 Policy RA.18 affirms that extensions and alterations to dwellings in the Green Belt must not be out of proportion or character with the original dwelling and must not materially reduce the openness of the Green Belt.

Chiltern District

2.2.8 The Development Plan for Chiltern District consists of the adopted Core Strategy (2011), the saved policies of the adopted Local Plan (1997), and the Buckinghamshire County Council Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document.

2.2.9 Chiltern District Council is preparing a new Local Plan jointly with South Bucks District Council. The Local Plan will cover the period 2014 to 2036. An Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation commenced on 19th January 2016, followed by a Preferred Options consultation in October/November 2016. Pre-submission consultation will commence March/April 2017, with submission to the Secretary of State in September 2017. Subject to Examination by an independent Inspector in December 2017, it is proposed that the Plan will be adopted in June 2018.

Adopted Core Strategy (2011)

2.2.10 Policy CS1 identifies the spatial strategy for Chiltern District which aims to protect the Chilterns AONB and Green Belt by focusing new development between 2006 and 2026 on land within existing settlements not covered by those designations, with some limited

redevelopment and infilling planned for identified developed sites in the Green Belt.

2.2.11 The Core Strategy contains four policies relating to development of identified sites within the Green Belt:

- CS7 identifies two Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt where housing development proposals will be considered providing there is no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. These two sites are:
 - Land at Amersham and Wycombe College Site, Lycrome Road, Chesham; and
 - Land at Newland Park, Chalfont Common.
- CS13 identifies land at the National Society of Epilepsy as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt where development proposals will be considered providing there is no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
- CS17 identifies land at Chalfont Grove as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt where development proposals for employment uses will be considered providing there is no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
- CS23 requires the Delivery DPD¹ to review:
 - Whether any settlements within the Green Belt should be removed from the Green Belt;
 - The boundaries of the identified settlements and rows of dwellings within the Green Belt which would remain in the Green Belt;
 - The policy applicable to the settlements and rows of dwellings which remain in the Green Belt which will supersede local plan policies GB4 and GB5.

Local Plan Saved Policies (1997)

2.2.12 Policy GB1 identifies the Green Belt boundaries within Chiltern District and sets overarching guidance to policies in place to protect the Green Belt with detailed policy contained in the following Local Plan policies.

2.2.13 Policy GB2 sets out the Council's approach to development in general in the Green Belt, reiterating the general presumption against development in the Green Belt, although some exceptions are identified.

2.2.14 Policies GB4 and GB5 identify particular localities where limited infill development is acceptable. These areas relate to a range of individual buildings identified in Policy GB4 and within the following areas identified in Policy GB5:

¹ The Delivery DPD was withdrawn on 6th January 2015 and the requirements of Policy CS23 will be taken forward in the new local plan.

- Nashleigh Hill / Lycrome Road (Chesham);
- Botley;
- Ley Hill;
- South Heath;
- Hyde Heath;
- Little Kingshill;
- Winchmore Hill; and
- Jordans.

2.2.15 A range of policies set out detailed guidance for limited residential, ancillary, agricultural, and employment development within the Green Belt: GB6 – GB8, GB10 – GB13, GB15 – GB17, GB20, GB22A – GB24, GB27, and GB29.

2.2.16 Policy GB30, which applies to all of the above policies states that where development within the Green Belt (but not covered by other landscape protection designations) is considered to be acceptable, it will be permitted if it would be well integrated into its rural setting and so conserved the scenic beauty and amenity of the landscape in the locality of the development. Development should also, where possible, provide for the improvement of degraded landscape within the application site.

South Bucks District

2.2.17 South Bucks' adopted Development Plan comprises the 2011 Core Strategy, saved policies from the 1999 Local Plan as well as the Proposals Map and the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

2.2.18 South Bucks District Council is preparing a new Local Plan jointly with Chiltern District Council. The Local Plan will cover the period 2014 to 2036. An Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation commenced on 19th January 2016, followed by a Preferred Options consultation in October/November 2016. Pre-submission consultation will commence March/April 2017, with submission to the Secretary of State in September 2017. Subject to Examination by an independent Inspector in December 2017, it is proposed that the Plan will be adopted in June 2018.

Adopted Core Strategy (2011)

2.2.19 The Spatial Strategy aims to protect the Green Belt by '*Focussing new development on previously developed land within existing settlements*'.

2.2.20 The Council affirms that there are no proposals to amend the Green Belt boundary with the evidence base demonstrating that development can be accommodated on previously developed land without the need to release Green Belt land.

2.2.21 The Core Strategy includes the following Settlement Hierarchy:

Role	Settlements
Principal Settlements	Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham.
Secondary Settlements	Denham Green, Iver Heath, Stoke Poges, Iver Village, and Farnham Common.
Tertiary Settlements	New Denham & Willowbank, Farnham Royal, Denham (South of Village), and Richings Park.
Rural Settlements	Denham Village, Dorney Reach, Dorney Village, Fulmer, George Green, Hedgerley Hill, Higher Denham, Taplow Riverside, Taplow Village, Tatling End, Wexham (Church Lane/Wexham Park Lane), Wexham Street, Wood Lane Close (Iver).

2.2.22 Policies CP14-CP16 relate that any development proposals should ‘*result in no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt*’ in the following Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt:

- Wilton Park, Beaconsfield (a Development Brief SPD for the site was adopted by Cabinet on 31st March 2015).
- Mill Lane, Taplow (a Development Brief SPD was adopted by Cabinet on 16th July 2013).
- South of Iver (latterly known as Court Lane, Iver).

2.2.23 The prepared SPDs for the Wilton Park and Mill Lane sites both uphold the principles for the Future of Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt previously advocated in national PPS 2.

2.2.24 Policy CP17 states that the Council may designate additional Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt in subsequent Development Plan Documents.

South Bucks District Local Plan (1999) (saved policies)

2.2.25 Policy GB1 states that within the Green Belt:

‘Planning permission will not be granted for development other than for the change of use of existing buildings or land or the construction of new buildings or extensions to existing buildings’.

2.2.26 Policy GB2 permits the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt, provided that the openness of the Green Belt is not prejudiced.

2.2.27 Policy GB3 permits the one for one replacement of existing dwellings and limited infilling, provided that it is not to the detriment of the overarching aims and purposes of the Green Belt in the following settlements:

- Denham (south of old village);
- Dorney Reach;
- George Green;
- Hedgerley Hill;

- Higher Denham;
- Taplow Riverside;
- Tatling End;
- Wexham (Church Lane / Wexham Park Lane);
- Wexham Street; and
- Wood Lane Close (Iver).

2.2.28 Policies GB4 and GB5 relate to employment generating and commercial development within the Green Belt. New employment sites will only be permitted where the proposal involves the re-use of buildings within the Green Belt. Limited infilling, extensions and proposals for a change in use of buildings will be permitted in settlements identified in GB3 subject to conditions.

2.2.29 Policies GB7 and GB9 permit the removal of an agricultural or forestry workers' occupancy condition from a dwelling and diversifying the use of land or buildings on an agricultural holding within the Green Belt subject to conditions.

2.2.30 Policies GB10 and GB11 permit extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and the rebuilding of existing habitable dwellings within the Green Belt subject to conditions.

2.2.31 Policy GB13 states that extensions of residential curtilages within the Green Belt will not normally be permitted unless the proposal would be entirely contained within the boundary of a settlement listed in Policy GB3.

Wycombe

2.2.32 Wycombe's current adopted Development Plan encompasses the 2008 Adopted Core Strategy and saved policies from the 2004 Local Plan, as amended in July 2013, as well as the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document and Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan. The former two of these documents provide current Green Belt policy for the district.

2.2.33 Wycombe District Council issued a Local Development Scheme in March 2015. This is set to be updated with a new LDS in March 2016, to reflect the latest timetable and the need to meet the Government's 2017 deadline for producing a Local Plan. Following an Issues and Options consultation which took place between February and April 2014, it is the Council's intention to produce an Area Action Plan for Princes Risborough (the Princes Risborough Town Plan (PRTP)) followed by a main Local Plan for the whole district.

2.2.34 It is intended that the PRTP will be subject to draft plan consultation in February-March 2016, published in June 2016 and adopted in April 2017. For the main Local Plan, it is intended that this will be subject to draft plan consultation in June-August 2016, published in January 2017 and adopted in December 2017.

Adopted Core Strategy (2008)

2.2.35 Policy CS 9 of the Wycombe CS affirms that the Green Belt will be ‘*protected from inappropriate development, as defined by Government Policy*’. The Council recognises that Green Belt boundaries will only be amended in exceptional circumstances.

2.2.36 The policy added two sites to the Green Belt – Grange and Widmer Farms, High Wycombe and Lane End Road, High Wycombe. These sites had both been areas of safeguarded land in the previous plan, but both lie within the Chilterns AONB which restricts their ability to deliver major development under national policy. A further site is identified for removal from the Green Belt – Adams Park. The Council states that the ‘*substantial stadium has removed the essential Green Belt characteristic of openness*’ and thus its continued inclusion would be a major anomaly.

2.2.37 Policy CS 8 of the Core Strategy identifies five sites as Reserve Locations for Future Development which are identified to meet future development needs:

- Abbey Barn North, High Wycombe;
- Abbey Barn South, High Wycombe;
- Gomm Valley, High Wycombe;
- Slate Meadow, Bourne End; and
- Terriers Farm, High Wycombe.

2.2.38 At its meeting on Monday 17th November 2014, Wycombe District Council’s Cabinet voted to release these sites for development. These are the remaining former areas of safeguarded land which are also identified in Policy GB1 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2004). This policy also states that, until the sites are allocated or the plan is altered there will be ‘*a presumption against any forms of development which would prejudice the future comprehensive development of these areas*’.

Local Plan Saved Policies (2004)

2.2.39 Policy GB2 establishes a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, thus confirming that there is little scope for new building in the Green Belt. Aside from cases with special circumstances, the following land uses may be appropriate:

- Agriculture or forestry;
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation;
- In exceptional circumstances, limited affordable housing for local community needs in accordance with Policy H14;
- Cemeteries;
- Development consistent with Policies GB4 to GB10 of this Local Plan; or

- Park and Ride schemes meeting the tests set out in PPG2 (as revised in March 2001).

2.2.40 It is affirmed that, in all cases, development remains subject to other appropriate policies in the LP and *‘must retain the open character and rural amenities of the Green Belt and respect its rural amenities’*.

2.2.41 Policy GB4 relates to the ‘Built-up areas within the Green Belt’ identified on the Proposals Map, which comprise the substantially built-up cores of a series of ‘washed over’ settlements:

- Beacons Bottom / Studley Green;
- Bledlow Ridge;
- Bovingdon Green;
- Claymoor / Clayhill;
- Cryers Hill;
- Hughenden Valley;
- Lacey Green / Loosley Row;
- Piddington;
- Speen; and
- West Wycombe.

2.2.42 The Policy states that permission may only be given for appropriate Green Belt development, changes of use which would not impact adversely on the openness or rural amenities of the Green Belt, very limited infilling², extensions to dwellings (in accordance with Policy H17) and replacement of dwellings (in accordance with other Plan policies).

2.2.43 Policies GB5 and GB6 set out detailed policies on extensions to and replacement of existing dwellings within the Green Belt while Policy GB7 affirms the Council’s position on detached outbuildings such as garages, swimming pools, tennis court fences and stables, which will not be permitted if considered *‘an intrusion into the open character or rural amenities of the area’* or if *‘disproportionate to the size of the original dwelling’*.

2.2.44 The Council identifies a series of ‘Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt’ in Policy GB9. These sites may be subject to infilling, complete or partial redevelopment, but only when the proposed development:

- Has no greater impact on the openness and rural amenity of the Green Belt than the existing development;
- Respects the character and scale of the existing development, where this is to be retained in whole or in part;
- Does not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and

² Defined as *‘Building on undeveloped land within the built-up area and represents the closing of an existing small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage’*.

- In the case of infill proposals, does not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

2.2.45 A series of additional, detailed requirements are also established for comprehensive redevelopment.

2.2.46 The 11 sites identified as Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt are:

- Molins, Saunderton;
- Janssen - Cilag, Saunderton;
- Wycliffe Centre, Horsleys Green;
- RAF High Wycombe, Walter's Ash;
- Little Marlow Sewage Works;
- Wycombe Air Park;
- Wycombe West School, Downley;
- Uplands Conference Centre, Four Ashes;
- Pipers Corner School, Great Kingshill;
- Binders Yard, Cryers Hill; and
- Amersham & Wycombe College, Flackwell Heath.

2.2.47 Policy GB10 is specific to Wycombe Air Park, identified in Policy GB9 as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt. Its primary objective is to prevent any development not *'closely related to the use of the Air Park for a civil aerodrome for the private or club flying of light aircraft or gliders'*. Businesses who wish to develop their premises must *'demonstrate that they must of necessity be located at the Air Park'* and, as such, if this can be demonstrated permission may be *'subject to a condition restricting the use of the land or buildings'* to such occupiers.

Buckinghamshire County Council

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document

2.2.48 Strategic Objective 9 on the protection of the Green Belt and AONB states that throughout the plan period to 2026, and beyond, the Council will: *'Protect the Green Belt from inappropriate minerals and waste development'*.

2.2.49 Policy CS20 on the Green Belt, permits proposals for minerals extraction within the Green Belt subject to the development complying with other policies set out in the Core Strategy and relevant saved Minerals and Waste Local Plan policies or any relevant replacement Minerals Local Plan policies. Regarding waste management, Policy CS20 states that Waste Management Facilities will only be permitted within the Green Belt where it can be demonstrated that no suitable alternative sites are available beyond the Green Belt. Additionally, very special circumstances must exist to necessitate the siting of such facilities in the Green Belt.

- 2.2.50** However, Policy CS20 identifies two waste sites that have been allocated on Green Belt land at High Heaven, High Wycombe and London Road, Amersham. This is to ensure the delivery of the county's waste strategy as detailed in policy CS12.
- 2.2.51** Policy CS12 sets out the following essential infrastructure to support the Strategic Waste Complex at the Calvert Landfill Site:
1. *'A new access road linking the site to the A41.*
 2. *Sites for linked waste transfer stations in the Green Belt at the London Road Depot in Amersham and High Heavens Waste Complex in High Wycombe'.*
- 2.2.52** Policy CS13 on Contingency states that if a Strategic Waste Complex is not operational at the Calvert Landfill Site by 2015, then a planning application for appropriate strategic capacity will be considered at an alternative site against the following Assessment Level 1 criteria:
- a. *a site suitable for a Strategic Waste Complex located beyond the Green Belt and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; or where this is not possible;*
 - b. *a site suitable for a waste energy recovery facility only, beyond the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; or where this is not possible;*
 - c. *a site suitable for an energy recovery facility within the Green Belt providing very special circumstances are demonstrated'.*
- 2.2.53** Policy CS22 on Design and Climate Change states that where built waste developments are proposed, the following criteria is relevant:
- '...sensitivity in the massing and scale of buildings and structures to the surrounding environment, particularly in respect of locations within or adjoining settlements or designated areas including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt'.*

2.3 Other Context

Planning Advisory Service Guidance (2014)

- 2.3.1** The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) published guidance for Green Belt Assessment in January 2014 in the context of the need to accommodate strategic housing (and employment) requirements. The guidance highlights that *'the purpose of a review is for the identification of the most appropriate land to be used for development, through the local plan. Always being mindful of all of the other planning matters to be taken into account and most importantly, as part of an overall spatial strategy'.*
- 2.3.2** Emphasis is placed on the need for assessment against the five purposes of the Green Belt in the first instance. The guidance acknowledges that there are planning considerations, such as landscape quality, which cannot be a reason to designate an area as

Green Belt, but that could be a planning consideration when seeking suitable locations for development.

2.3.3

The guidance outlines considerations to be made in relation to the five purposes as set out below:

- **Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas** – consider the meaning of sprawl compared to 1930s definition, and whether positively planned development through a local plan with good masterplanning would be defined as sprawl.
- **Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another** – the purpose does not strictly suggest maintaining the separation of small settlements near to towns. The approach will be different for each case. The identity of a settlement would not be determined solely by the distance to another settlement; the character of the place and of the land in between must be taken into account. A ‘scale rule’ approach should be avoided. Landscape character assessment is a useful analytical tool for this type of assessment.
- **Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment** – seemingly, all Green Belt does this so distinguishing between the contributions of different areas to this purpose is difficult. The recommended approach is to look at the difference between land under the influence of the urban area and open countryside, and to favour open countryside when determining the land that should be attempted to be kept open, accounting for edges and boundaries.
- **Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns** – it is accepted that in practice this purpose relates to very few settlements as a result of the envelopment of historic town centres by development.
- **Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land** – the amount of potentially developable land within urban areas must have already been factored in before Green Belt land is identified. All Green Belt would achieve this purpose to the same extent, if it does achieve the purpose, and the value of land parcels is unlikely to be distinguishable on the basis of this purpose.

2.3.4

The PAS guidance additionally recognises the relevance of the Duty to Cooperate, as set out in the Localism Act 2011, and soundness tests of the NPPF to Green Belt consideration. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to ‘*work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans*’ (paragraph 179). Additionally the level of housing that a local authority is required to plan for is also determined by whether there is an ‘unmet requirement’ from a neighbouring authority (paragraph 182).

2.3.5

The guidance recognises that Green Belt is a strategic policy and hence a strategic issue in terms of the Duty to Cooperate. Areas of

Green Belt should therefore be assessed collectively by local authorities. This is important particularly for areas of Green Belt land that fall into different administrative areas, and the significance attached to that land.

2.4 Green Belt Review Experience

Neighbouring Authorities' Experience

2.4.1 Local planning authorities now hold the responsibility for strategic planning following the revocation of regional strategies as created in the Localism Act 2011. The PPG outlines the duty to cooperate as:

'...a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.'

2.4.2 Green Belt policy is a strategic policy, which must therefore be considered collectively by local authorities, particularly where Green Belt surrounding an urban area falls into different administrative boundaries.

2.4.3 This Study covers only the areas of the Green Belt falling within the administrative boundaries of Aylesbury Vale District, Chiltern District, South Bucks District and Wycombe District. However, the draft methodology was shared with the neighbouring and wider partner authorities on 27th March 2015.³ A workshop was subsequently held on 1st April 2015 and was attended by a number of neighbouring and partner authorities (see 2.4.7 for a more detailed account of discussions at the workshop).

2.4.4 It is important to understand how each of the neighbouring local authorities are approaching Green Belt issues and the methodology employed in any Green Belt Assessments they have undertaken. Green Belt in adjoining districts (Map 2.1 on p.21) may achieve the purpose of checking unrestricted sprawl from the urban areas both within and outside Buckinghamshire. It may also play a role in protecting strategic gaps between urban areas and settlements both within and outside Buckinghamshire. The potential release of any Green Belt land within or outside Buckinghamshire may impact on settlement patterns and the role of the Green Belt within the wider area. Close liaison with neighbouring authorities is important to

³ The draft methodology was shared with the following authorities / stakeholders: Bracknell Forest Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; Cherwell District Council; Dacorum Borough Council; Greater London Authority; Hertfordshire County Council; London Borough of Hillingdon; Milton Keynes Council; Northampton Borough Council; Northamptonshire County Council; Oxfordshire County Council; Reading Borough Council; Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead; Slough Borough Council; South Northamptonshire Council; South Oxfordshire District Council; Three Rivers District Council; Watford Borough Council; West Berkshire Council; West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit; Wokingham Borough Council; Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP; South East Midlands LEP; Chilterns AONB. Comments were sought via both a Stakeholder Workshop on April 1st 2015 (see paragraph 2.4.7 for a list of attendees) and via email.

understand the role of the Green Belt and the impacts of release at a strategic level.

2.4.5 The approaches taken in neighbouring authorities with Green Belt have been summarised overleaf based on a review of material available on the authorities' websites (Table 2.1).⁴ This table was shared with the authorities concerned for validation, verification of accuracy and to check the degree to which it matched current thinking within said authorities.

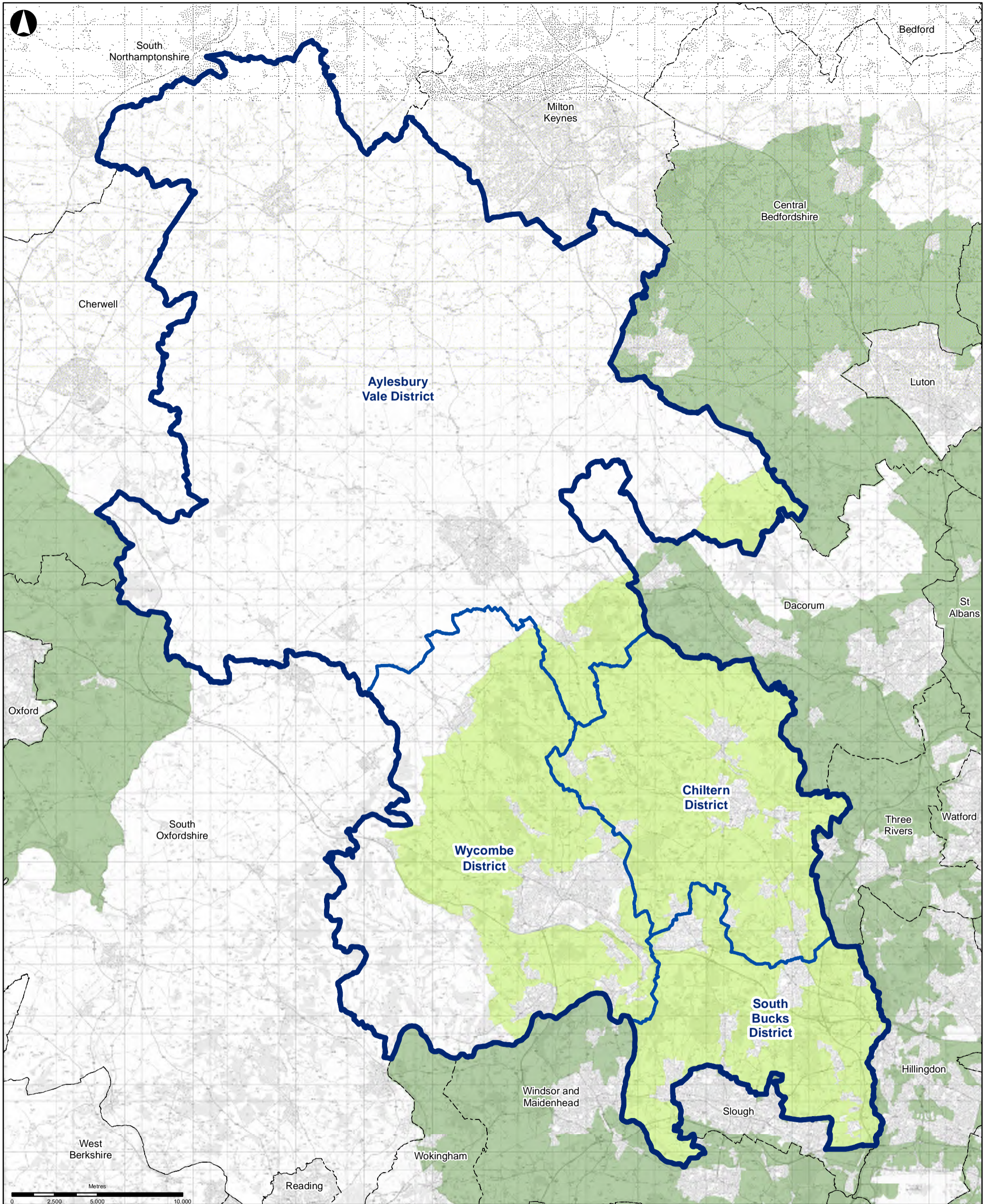
2.4.6 The position as of 1st April 2015 was, in summary:

- Neighbouring authorities Green Belt Assessments identified land parcels of strategic importance in reference to both the National Planning Policy Framework Green Belt policy and local Green Belt planning policy.
- For Central Bedfordshire the next step was to split assessment into two parts:
 - Part 1 of the assessment was a high level assessment that split the Green Belt into parcels that were assessed against Green Belt policy purposes. A traffic light system denoted the contribution (or value) of each parcel against national and local Green Belt policies (red=significant contribution; amber=moderate contribution and green=limited contribution).
 - Part 2 utilised the parcels that were considered to contribute little to the purpose of the Green Belt. Sites were selected from those brought forward as part of the wider Strategic Site Selection process. Sites from the Council's call for sites had to meet a minimum threshold (= $<$ 500 dwellings/20ha for housing, and = $<$ 10 ha for employment sites). This was to ensure proven intent to develop these sites if released from the Green Belt. As with the Part 1 Assessment the 5 purposes of Green Belt as identified within the NPPF formed the basis of the assessment. Consideration of these led to the establishment of criteria against which potential sites were assessed.
- The Dacorum Green Belt Assessment first split all study area land in the District into parcels (including Green Belt and non-Green Belt):
 - Each parcel was then assessed against assessment criteria. The criteria primarily related to the first four national Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF. In addition, careful consideration of local objectives and the role of the Green Belt within the Hertfordshire context justify the assessment of a local purpose which relates to maintaining the existing settlement pattern. Land considered to contribute least to Green Belt policy objectives was recommended for further detailed assessment and has been classified as strategic land or small-scale sub-areas of parcels.

⁴ Information correct at 1st April 2015.

- A three colour coding classification system has been used to summarise the assessment against each purpose (significant / partial / limited contribution). For each purpose, supporting text explains how the classification has been arrived at. Green Belt parcel assessment sheets summarise the principal functions of the parcel and next steps for land which is identified as contributing least towards Green Belt purposes.
- The strategic parcel plan boundaries generally follow well-defined physical features and the outer boundary generally follows the client authority's administrative boundaries. All parcels have been assessed against the first four NPPF purposes and one local purpose (the fifth NPPF purpose to assist regeneration has not been considered).
- The London Borough of Hillingdon Green Belt Assessment differed from other neighbouring authorities as the review was conducted pre-NPPF:
 - The assessment reviewed sites examined in the previous UDP review; submissions received in response to an initial UDP consultation in 2001; sites identified in the 2005 Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains Assessment 2005 and sites identified by officers that could benefit from Green Belt designation as well as sites within the Green Belt that do not meet the purposes of the Green Belt.
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has conducted three Green Belt Assessments and has recently finalised a Local Plan preferred options consultation:
 - The March 2009 Green Belt Boundary Study considered parcels that followed a permanent physical feature and concluded that open space at the edge of a settlement should be incorporated into the Green Belt.
 - The November 2013 Green Belt Purpose Analysis considered 500m x 500m parcels against NPPF Green Belt purposes, concluding that all land met at least 3 of 5 Green Belt purposes.
 - The January 2014 Edge of Settlement Analysis considered (in three parts) sites against strategic constraints, a range of objective and qualitative criteria and finally detailed criteria, concluding that 23 sites could potentially be released from the Green Belt.
 - Following the preferred options consultation of the Borough Local Plan, it was resolved unanimously at a meeting of the authority's Cabinet in February 2015 that 21 of the 23 sites identified in the Edge of Settlement Analysis will not be considered further for release.
- Although no comprehensive Green Belt Reviews have been completed in the adjoining Oxfordshire authorities to date, Oxford City Council undertook an informal assessment of the potential to accommodate urban extensions in Oxford's Green Belt in May

2014, which involved a high level assessment of strategic areas against the NPPF purposes. A comprehensive Green Belt Review was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council in April 2015.



Legend

- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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P1	14-01-16	CG	ML	AB
Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd

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Client
The Buckinghamshire Authorities

Job Title
Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

Map 2.1 Buckinghamshire and Neighbouring Authority Green Belt

Scale at A3
1:210,000

Job No
242368-00

Drawing Status
Issue

Drawing No
2.1

Issue
P1

Table 2.1: Green Belt Approaches in Neighbouring Authorities

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
Central Bedfordshire	<p>Central Bedfordshire's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies document was adopted on 19 November 2009.</p> <p>The Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy (to replace the Core Strategy) was submitted in October 2014. In February 2015, the Inspector recommended non-adoption of the Plan due to a failure to comply with the Duty to Cooperate. The Council is currently seeking Judicial Review of this decision.</p>	<p>At present, around 40% of Central Bedfordshire is designated as Green Belt, a total area of around 28,214 hectares. Central Bedfordshire's Core Strategy (2009) strategic objective 2 states that the existing Green Belt will be maintained to contain outward growth of key settlements and retain the separate character and identity of towns and villages within it. The villages of Ampthill and Flitwick are of particular proximity.</p>	<p>Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy: Green Belt Technical Paper (October 2014)</p>	<p>The methodology was to identify the best locations to develop in the Green Belt if there is no option but to allow development on the Green Belt – particularly to facilitate the provision of housing land in southern Central Bedfordshire.</p> <p>Part 1 of the assessment takes the form of a high level / strategic assessment. The Central Bedfordshire Green Belt has been divided into parcels based on Parish areas. Each parcel was then assessed against Central Bedfordshire's five Green Belt purposes.</p> <p>Part 2 reviews boundaries in relation to specific sites and locations only. This assessment was undertaken as part of the wider Strategic Site Assessment Process.</p> <p>In total 21 sites were assessed (16 of which are located in southern Central Bedfordshire). The Council concluded that increasing housing supply and employment land, addressing the imbalance in distribution between north and south Central Bedfordshire, the benefits of large scale growth in southern Central Bedfordshire are exceptional circumstances that justify the release of Green Belt land in southern Central Bedfordshire.</p>
Cherwell	<p>Cherwell's Local Plan (1996) saved policies continue to inform Green Belt policy in the District.</p> <p>Parts 1 and 2 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2006-2031 were submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2014; proposed modifications submitted in October 2014 and Hearing</p>	<p>The Oxford Green Belt restrains development around the City of Oxford to protect its character and setting. The outer boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt were approved in 1975 and the inner boundaries within Cherwell have been carried forward since the Central Oxfordshire Local Plan of 1992.</p> <p>The emerging Cherwell Local Plan 2006-2031 Policy ESD 14 states that residential development will be</p>	<p>A modification to Cherwell's Local Plan in August 2014 referred to the need for a small scale local review of the Green Belt to accommodate identified employment needs and, potentially, meet local housing needs in Kidlington.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County</p>	<p>Review not yet conducted.</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
	sessions held in December 2014.	assessed in accordance with policies Villages 1 and Villages 3. All other development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with government guidance contained within the NPPF. Development within the Green Belt will only be permitted if it maintains the Green Belt’s openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt.	Council commissioned a review of the Oxford Green Belt in April 2015.	
Dacorum	Dacorum’s Core Strategy 2006-2031 was adopted on 25 September 2013.	60% of the Borough’s rural area and just over half of the Borough as a whole falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. To the north of Markyate the Green Belt joins the South Bedfordshire Green Belt. Policy CS5 on the Green Belt aims to protect the openness and character of the Green Belt, local distinctiveness and the physical separation of settlements. Policy CS6 on Selected Small Villages in the Green Belt permits limited development in the villages of Chipperfield, Flamstead, Potten End and Wigginton.	Green Belt Assessment Purposes Assessment (2013)	<p>The first part of the assessment divides the whole study area into strategic parcels. The criteria for the parcel plan primarily relates to the first four national Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; 2) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; 3) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and 4) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. <p>In addition, local objectives concerned with the role of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The second part of the assessment is the purposes assessment which was undertaken in two stages: A desktop review and on-site inspection. From this start point, the assessment identifies areas of land which contribute least to Green Belt purposes. The identification of these areas also relies heavily on consideration of local factors such as urban form, landscape characteristics and urbanising influences.</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
				<p>66 strategic parcels were identified, aligned largely to natural or physical features, where possible.</p> <p>The study concluded by stating that the Green Belt within the study area generally contributed to the four purposes. There were indications, however, that some boundary adjustments could be made without compromising the achievement of the overall purposes of the Green Belt. Indeed, potential adjustments could work to clarify and strengthen the Green Belt boundary in terms of its significance as a key policy tool.</p> <p>In outlining where potential adjustments could be made, a number of Strategic Sub Areas and Small-scale Sub Areas were found to contribute least to the four Green Belt purposes and were identified for further assessment.</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
London Borough of Hillingdon	Hillingdon's Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies was adopted in November 2012. The Local Plan Part 2 is at proposed submission consultation stage and includes Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and Designations and Policies Map.	The borough has 4,970 hectares of Green Belt. The Hillingdon Local Plan (2012) states that the main purpose of Hillingdon's Green Belt is to keep land open and free from development, to maintain the character and identity of individual settlements and to make a clear distinction between rural and urban environments. The Green Belt Study (2006) is being reviewed and recommendations for minor adjustments to address boundary anomalies to the Green Belt are being considered. However the Council does not consider that major adjustments to Green Belt boundaries are necessary to accommodate growth over the plan period. Minor adjustments to the Green Belt boundary will be undertaken as part of the Local Plan Part 2. The review in the context of potential to release land for schools and minerals extraction if required.	The Green Belt and Major Developed Sites Assessment (2006)	<p>Conducted pre NPPF publication; although Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) set out the same Green Belt purposes contained in the NPPF.</p> <p>The assessment did not review all land designated as Green Belt in the borough. It assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites examined during the previous UPD Review; - Submissions received in response to an initial UDP consultation in 2001 and submissions received since that time; - Sites identified in the Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains Assessment 2005; and - Sites identified by officers which could benefit from Green Belt designation and sites in the Green Belt which do not meet the purposes of the Green Belt. <p>The assessment used PPG2 to identify indicators for Green Belt boundary alteration, deletion or inclusion using the purposes of Green Belt as outlined in PPG2 and the inclusion of specific guiding indicators for each purpose of PPG2.</p>
Milton Keynes	Milton Keynes Core Strategy was adopted on 10 July 2013.	There is no designated Green Belt in Milton Keynes although it is in close proximity to the Metropolitan Green Belt.	N/A	N/A
Oxfordshire County	Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996) – Saved Policies. This adopted plan is to be replaced by a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan for Oxfordshire, which will provide	The Oxford Green Belt covers an area of approximately 66,800 hectares (about 13% of the County), and includes land within Oxford City and the districts of Cherwell, South	Oxfordshire County Council commissioned an assessment of the Oxford Green Belt in April 2015.	N/A

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
	<p>up to date minerals and waste planning policies and proposals for the period to 2031.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy took place in early 2014. The Site Allocations Document will be prepared following adoption of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and West Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Saved policy W7 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996) states that development in the Green Belt should not injure the visual amenities of the Green Belt or conflict with its purposes because of inappropriate siting, scale or design.</p>		
Slough	<p>Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2026 was adopted in December 2008</p>	<p>Slough is surrounded by Green Belt land although the only substantial area of Green Belt land in the Borough is located south of the M4 and east of Langley in the Colnbrooke and Poyle area.</p> <p>One of the Borough’s strategic objectives is to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development and seek, wherever practically possible, to increase the size and quality of Green Belt land in the Borough.</p> <p>Core Policy 2 on the Green Belt and Open Spaces states that Wexham Park Hospital and Slough Sewage Works will continue to be designated as Major Existing Developed Sites in the Green Belt, but the Metropolitan Green Belt will be maintained. Development will not be permitted unless essential to the location and opportunities will be taken to enhance the quality and size of the Green Belt.</p>	<p>No existing or planned Green Belt Assessment.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
South Northamptonshire	West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) was adopted on 15 December 2014.	There is no designated Green Belt in South Northamptonshire although it is situated between the Metropolitan Green Belt and the West Midlands Green Belt.	N/A	N/A
South Oxfordshire	South Oxfordshire Core Strategy was adopted in December 2012.	The Oxford Green Belt covers the north-western portion of South Oxfordshire. Policy CSEN2 on the Green Belt states that the special character and landscape setting of Oxford will be protected by the Oxford Green Belt. Additional purposes include checking the growth of Oxford, preventing ribbon development / urban sprawl, preventing the merging of settlements, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and assisting in urban regeneration by recycling existing brownfield land. Policy CSR1 allows limited new housing development through infilling in Green Belt villages – planning permission will not be granted for development that is contrary to the NPPF.	Policy CSEN2 of the Green Belt at Berinsfield (a planned post-war village built on the site of a Second World War airbase) justifies review of the Green Belt at this location for the following reasons: - Areas of Berinsfield are in need of regeneration and Green Belt policy is inhibiting this. - Some further land may be needed around Berinsfield to improve the mix of housing and to provide further opportunities for employment and service provision. Berinsfield is a local service centre and some further development would be consistent with the overall strategy. Oxfordshire County Council commissioned a	N/A

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
			review of the Oxford Green Belt in April 2015.	
Three Rivers	Three Rivers Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011.	<p>The Green Belt occupies 77% of the Three Rivers district. The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The District’s Core Strategy Strategic Objective 1 states that development must recognise and safeguard its distinctive character. Although the plan recognises that changes to the Green Belt boundary may be necessary over the plan period, changes that result in the loss of more than 1% of the Green Belt will not be permitted.</p> <p>Core Strategy Policy states that the general extent of Metropolitan Green Belt in Three Rivers District will be maintained with minor revisions through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document around main urban areas accommodating development needs.</p>	The Core Strategy does not indicate a need for a full review of the Green Belt. It does however set out that detailed changes to the established boundary may be made through the Site Allocations document to accommodate growth. Green Belt designation was removed in favour of housing and employment allocations for several sites in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted November 2014).	N/A
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	<p>The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (2003) – Saved Policies. This adopted plan is to be replaced by a Borough Local Plan, which underwent Preferred Options Consultation in January 2014.</p>	Outside the larger settlements, the whole of the Royal Borough is designated Metropolitan Green Belt. Within the Borough a number of settlements are excluded from the Green Belt and identified in the Replacement Structure Plan. Within the Green Belt there are a number of smaller settlements which may have the ability to absorb strictly limited	Green Belt Boundary Study (March 2009)	<p>A review of Green Belt boundaries around the Borough’s excluded settlements to rectify any inconsistencies and to assess areas with potential land to be included within the Green Belt was carried out. In assessing land around the excluded settlements, two principles were followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boundaries should follow a permanent physical feature on the ground that creates a logical, strong and defensible boundary. - Open space at the edge of a settlement should generally be incorporated into the Green Belt.

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
		<p>amounts of residential development without harming the overall character of the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Green Belt Purpose Analysis (November 2013)</p>	<p>25 additional locations (equivalent to 55ha) were recommended for inclusion in the Green Belt.</p> <p>NB Conducted pre NPPF publication; although Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) set out the same Green Belt purposes the same as NPPF.</p> <p>Analysed the contribution made by land against the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The whole of the Borough with the exception of the larger settlements is covered by the Green Belt designation. The Green Belt was divided into 500m x 500m land parcels. Each land parcel was assessed against a series of criteria for each of the purposes and scores between 0 and 5 assigned. In summary the criteria used for each purpose were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) Distance from excluded settlement; and contribution to preventing ribbon development. - (2) Distance between excluded settlements. - (3) Nature conservation value; River Thames corridor; presence of trees and woodland; agricultural land classification; and landscape quality. - (4) Setting of Windsor Castle and Eton College; and presence of historic assets. - (5) Contribution to urban regeneration; and distance to rejuvenation opportunities. <p>The review concluded that all land in the adopted Green Belt achieves at least 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes, thus there was no case for altering the boundary unless exceptional circumstances were demonstrated through Local Plan process.</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
			Edge of Settlement Analysis (January 2014)	<p>Analysed potential for development of Green Belt land adjoining the Borough’s settlements as analysis of housing demand and supply indicated a shortfall within the Borough over the Local Plan period. A three stage approach used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 1: Land assessed against strategic constraints (environmental, infrastructure, ownership, settlement gap, heritage assets). Unsuitable land was not considered further. - Stage 2: Assessed remaining sites against a range of objective and qualitative criteria (contribution to gaps between settlements and defensibility of boundaries, countryside character and topography of land, agricultural land classification Grades 1 and 2, local nature designations and Ancient Woodland, heritage assets and their setting, pollution and minerals safeguarding zones), with pass / fail / part-pass conclusion. - Stage 3: Assessed against detailed criteria (Green Belt and countryside setting, settlement and townscape character, historic environment, biodiversity, flood risk, other environmental considerations, resources, infrastructure, highways and accessibility, sustainability and availability). <p>Twenty-three areas were identified as potential sites for release from the Green Belt.</p>
			Preferred Options Consultation (January 2014)	<p>The Preferred Options Consultation, considered both the additional land to be designated Green Belt and the 23 potential sites in the Green Belt located on the edge of settlements for release for development.</p>
			Report to Cabinet (February 2015)	<p>Following the preferred options consultation of the Borough Local Plan, it was resolved unanimously at a meeting of the authority’s Cabinet in February 2015 that 21 of the 23 sites identified in the Edge of Settlement Analysis will not be considered further for release.</p> <p>Two sites will be taken out of the Green Belt.</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
Wokingham	Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy was adopted in January 2010.	The Metropolitan Green Belt in the Borough comprises land north and east of Twyford but excluding Wargrave. The Council does not consider that exceptional circumstances exist to warrant changes to the Green Belt during the Plan period and considers all development needs for the Borough as capable of being accommodated elsewhere.	No existing or planned Green Belt Assessment.	The technical report behind this decision will be published as part of a 2nd preferred options consultation later in 2015. N/A

Stakeholder Workshop

2.4.7 As highlighted previously, the Duty to Cooperate emphasises the importance of close liaison with neighbouring authorities; in the case of this Study, it was important to understand the role of the Green Belt at a more strategic level and the potential broader implications of the assessment. Following the sharing of the methodology with neighbouring and wider partner authorities, a stakeholder workshop was held on 1st April 2015 where a series of points in relation to the proposed methodology were discussed.⁵ The comments received were used to further refine the emerging methodology.

2.4.8 A summary of key points raised and discussed is as follows:

- The justification as to which land should be considered during the assessment, particularly with respect to those non-Green Belt areas in close proximity to settlements on the furthest fringes of the Green Belt (for example, Princes Risborough and Wendover) where Green Belt does not currently envelop the whole settlement. It was agreed that the methodology should provide sufficient flexibility to allow for the identification of such land during the assessment stage.
- The definition of ‘large built-up areas’ for the Purpose 1 assessment, which in turn has implications for how the Green Belt is assessed in Buckinghamshire. It was observed that this definition can vary significantly between different methodologies: for example, the Green Belt Review undertaken by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead took this to mean all non-Green Belt areas. However, it was noted that, in some parts of the country, the tier one settlements proposed as the ‘large built-up areas’ in Buckinghamshire would not be considered as such, and that the methodology should respond to local context and aim to maintain the local settlement pattern through prevention of sprawl.
- Whether or not the assessment should focus solely on the strength of existing boundaries or potential boundary features if land were to be released from the Green Belt.
- The potential crossover between Purposes 1 and 2 in terms of how the relationship between the Green Belt and a built-up area is assessed.
- The subjectivity of the term ‘valued’ in describing gaps between settlements for the Purpose 2 assessment and the need to link terminology more directly to the wording set out in national policy.

⁵ In addition to the Buckinghamshire Authorities, the following were in attendance at the Stakeholder Workshop on 1st April: Bracknell Forest Council; Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley LEP; Central Bedfordshire Council; London Borough of Hillingdon; Milton Keynes Council; Oxfordshire County Council; Slough Borough Council; Three Rivers District Council; Watford Borough Council; and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

- Whether the methodology should in some way recognise future major infrastructure projects such as HS2 in any assessment of openness for Purpose 3.
- The potential to encompass a broad evidence base, including Townscape Character Assessment, Conservation Area Assessment and Neighbourhood Plans, as part of the Purpose 4 assessment.
- The definition of towns versus settlements in establishing the ‘historic towns’ for assessment under Purpose 4.
- The possible need to assess historic parks and gardens through Purpose 4.
- In considering Purpose 5 set out in the NPPF, identification of parcels of Green Belt adjacent to urban development sites which may be a hindrance to regeneration and a possible need to clarify through the methodology how these were treated.

Wider Experience

2.4.9 A brief examination of a selection of Green Belt Assessments carried out elsewhere in the country revealed the following key lessons in terms of methodology:

- A variety of approaches have been taken in assessing the functionality of Green Belt against the NPPF purposes. This partially reflects that each study has been undertaken in response to a specific brief and is tailored to the special local characteristics of the area in question.
- A two stage process has typically been used to firstly identify those Green Belt areas least sensitive to change and where development would be least damaging in principle, before moving onto a second stage to consider technical site constraints.
- For the purposes of assessment, authorities have primarily divided the Green Belt into strategic land parcels for assessment using durable, significant and strong physical boundaries which are clearly defined in the methodology, though some have used grid squares of a defined size to identify the land parcels for assessment.
- Only those purposes deemed relevant to the local context have been used in reviews rather than necessarily using all five, while in some instances authorities have combined multiple purposes within their assessments.
- In terms of interpreting the national purposes, definition of terms, (both within the purposes themselves and criteria applied), is of key importance to a successful and transparent assessment.
- Assessment criteria used to assess individual purposes have been tailored to local circumstances; and in some instances authorities have added additional purposes to be assessed to reflect local priorities.
- Qualitative approaches are primarily used in assessments; although some authorities have used more quantitative measures. The

approach to scoring in assessments varies from simplistic traffic light systems to more complex approaches to scoring.

2.5 Implications for the Study

2.5.1

National policy, as set out in the NPPF, emphasises the importance and permanence of Green Belt. The NPPF sets out clearly the five purposes that the Green Belt is intended to serve, highlights that the Local Plan process offers the only opportunity for the Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed and stresses that boundaries should be defined using permanent and recognisable physical features. Neither the NPPF, nor the supporting national PPG, provide guidance on how to conduct a Green Belt Assessment per se. The implied emphasis is thus on each authority to develop a methodology which is appropriate to the local context.

2.5.2

Crucial to the development of such a methodology is the establishment of satisfactory definitions for the key terms used in the NPPF purposes (yet not explicitly defined); different interpretations of such terms would significantly alter how the assessment is carried out. While a number of Green Belt assessments do not articulate clearly how terms have been defined, the Green Belt Review for Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield (Table 2.1) provided definitions based on a combination of legitimate sources (for example, the Oxford English Dictionary) as well as the known aspirations sought through national and local policy.

2.5.3

Some key definitions which were considered for this methodology include:

- *Large built-up areas* (Purpose 1): This originally referred to London for the Metropolitan Green Belt, but the scope of how this is interpreted has shifted over time to include other large settlements within the wider Green Belt area. The Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield review applied the term to London, Luton / Dunstable and Stevenage, though it is not immediately clear how this choice was reached. The Central Bedfordshire Green Belt Assessment applied the definition more broadly, considering any area deemed 'urban'. When defining this term, the methodology for Buckinghamshire should consider the settlement structure across the county, which consists of a series of small-medium sized towns as well as built-up areas where multiple settlements have coalesced, sometimes spanning district boundaries.
- *Neighbouring towns* (Purpose 2): Similarly, the interpretation of 'towns' varies across previous Green Belt assessment. While it tends to be aligned to the defined settlement hierarchy, as set out in the relevant district development plan, some authorities have chosen to apply a more local purpose. For example, in Runnymede, the threat of coalescence between many smaller settlements led to the Green Belt Review considering all settlements equally, including those 'washed over' in the Green Belt. A hybrid approach may be appropriate in Buckinghamshire

given the particular value afforded to the area's historic settlement pattern.

- *Countryside* (Purpose 3): The Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield Review adopted a 'functional' as opposed to 'political economy' definition of this term, centred on pastoral and primary land uses, while others adopted broader definitions which took countryside to mean any open land. Evidently, this interpretation is not appropriate in semi-urban areas where Green Belt may have been applied to areas which are open but not genuinely of a 'countryside' character. Given the significant contrast between urban and rural areas in and around Buckinghamshire, in a similar fashion to areas of Hertfordshire or Surrey, a similar 'functional' definition may be the most appropriate.

2.5.4

In addition to other Green Belt assessments, the PAS guidance on Green Belt Assessments issued in 2014 is particularly helpful in setting out key parameters to consider when developing a Green Belt Assessment methodology. The key points to note are:

- A Green Belt Assessment is not an assessment of landscape quality, though elements of landscape assessment assist in assessing the Green Belt (for example, in identifying potential new boundaries or differentiating between areas of unspoilt countryside or semi-rural areas);
- The label 'historic towns' applies to a select number of settlements and it is therefore accepted that the Purpose 4 assessment will only be relevant in very few instances; in the case of Buckinghamshire, the methodology must take into account the nature of its settlements, which may have historic areas on the settlement fringes;
- Purpose 5 is not helpful in terms of assessing relative value of land parcels; and
- Green Belt is a strategic issue and should be considered collaboratively with neighbours under Duty to Cooperate, thus supporting the approach of the combined Buckinghamshire Authorities and emphasising the importance of ongoing consultation with neighbouring stakeholders.

2.5.5

Given it is recognised that Purpose 4 may be applicable in the Buckinghamshire context and that relatively few Green Belt Assessments have considered it, further analysis is required. Some assessments have focused on the presence of historical assets in the Green Belt (for example, listed buildings); however given that national policy is quite specific on the protection of 'historic towns', this approach does not seem satisfactory. Furthermore, such assets are protected through other designations. Other assessments have looked at settlements with conservation areas on the edge of the Green Belt, though again this approach seems rather simplistic.

2.5.6

The most important factor to consider for Purpose 4 is the interaction between the Green Belt and the most historic parts of the towns. As indicated in the PAS guidance, this is unlikely to apply to many places

given that most historic towns have been enveloped by modern development. Perhaps the two most significant contributors to a historic town's special character is the unique historic setting provided by the countryside around it and the vistas to landmarks within the town, and outwards into the countryside. These two factors were taken into account in the methodology.

2.5.7

While in a broad sense there is little precedent for the assessment of the Green Belt for Purpose 5, there may be justification (based on discussions at the stakeholder workshop) to examine in finer detail any areas of Green Belt which might be impeding regeneration by preventing development in an adjoining urban area where development is promoted through the relevant local development plans.

3 Buckinghamshire Green Belt Context

3.1 History of the Green Belt

Origins of Green Belt Policy

- 3.1.1** The concept of Green Belt dates back to the origins of the modern British planning system. Coined as a response to the impact of urban sprawl and the rapid change of rural areas around London, Green Belt policy is frequently cited as one of the planning system's most notable achievements.
- 3.1.2** During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the rapid expansion of the railways suddenly brought once remote settlements within commuting distance of central London. The coining of the phrase *Metro-Land* in 1915 by the Metropolitan Railway Company and the subsequent waves of publicity containing evocative imagery of the historic villages and countryside of Buckinghamshire and other *Home Counties* transformed previously isolated, rural areas into desirable locations for commuters, significantly increasing demand for housing.
- 3.1.3** During the post-war period, the urban area of London doubled in size and other settlements in the commuter belt, both villages and towns, also witnessed rapid growth. To name just two examples, the small village of Great Kingshill in Wycombe District grew from 80 dwellings in 1897 to 200 by 1954, driven by the arrival of the Metropolitan and Great Western Railways at Great Missenden and High Wycombe, an increase of 150%⁶. During a similar period (1901-1951), Amersham in Chiltern District was transformed from a 'backwater' with a population of 3,200 to a thriving town with 10,900⁷.
- 3.1.4** Initially, the Metropolitan Green Belt, first suggested by Raymond Unwin in 1933 as a *green girdle* and defined by Patrick Abercrombie in the Greater London Plan of 1944 (later established in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947), was designed to curtail the further unchecked growth of London's urban area, but was only 6 to 10 miles wide and was not able to restrict development in the wider commuter belt.

Early Green Belt in Buckinghamshire

- 3.1.5** The Green Belt in Buckinghamshire was designated in 1954 through the Buckinghamshire County Development Plan. Following this, Circular 42/55, released by government in 1955, encouraged local authorities to establish their own Green Belts, a policy widely adopted by counties around London. The Green Belt was subsequently extended westwards in an amendment to the County Development Plan in 1958. The boundary stretched only as far north and west as

⁶ Great Kingshill Village History, Great Kingshill Residents' Association, 2014 (<http://www.great-kingshill.co.uk/index.php/local-information/village-history>)

⁷ A Potted History of Amersham, Amersham – News, Views and Information, Undated (<http://www.amersham.org.uk/amintro.htm>)

Slough, Beaconsfield and Chesham and did not cover any areas in the present Aylesbury Vale District or Wycombe District.

- 3.1.6** Following the confirmation of the Chilterns AONB by the Secretary of State in 1965, the Green Belt was reviewed and expanded significantly through the adoption of the Buckinghamshire County Development Plan in 1972. The boundary was reaffirmed and extended further to encompass the southernmost parts of the present Aylesbury Vale District in the 1979 Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan. The northern boundaries of the Green Belt were defined broadly in line with the Chiltern escarpment, excluding the settlements of Wendover and Princes Risborough.

Post-1974 Green Belt

- 3.1.7** Following local government reform in 1974, the four present-day Buckinghamshire districts were formed. While approaches to Green Belt varied slightly between the authorities in the subsequent years, the Green Belt boundaries established in the 1970s have broadly been maintained since.
- 3.1.8** The most significant changes were made in Wycombe District, where a number of areas at the edge of High Wycombe which were never formally designated Green Belt were designated ‘Areas of Special Restraint’ (ASR) in the late 1980s. Formally designated through the adoption of the High Wycombe Area Local Plan in 1989 (and consolidated in the district-wide Wycombe District Local Plan in 1995), a number of these areas were carried forward to the Wycombe District Local Plan in 2004 as ‘Areas of Safeguarded Land’. During the 1990s and 2000s, some of the former ASRs were subsequently re-designated as Green Belt.
- 3.1.9** In Chiltern District, a number of settlements excluded from the 1972 Green Belt were subsequently ‘washed over’ in the Chiltern Local Plan in 1993. In 2007, amendments to the district boundaries around Chorleywood resulted in the loss of some Green Belt land to the adjacent Three Rivers District.
- 3.1.10** The detailed Green Belt boundaries in South Bucks were adopted in the 1989 Local Plan and were subject to minor amendment in the 1999 Local Plan, which corrected boundary anomalies and removed an area of land at Pinewood Studios from the Green Belt.

3.2 Previous Green Belt Assessments

- 3.2.1** A brief examination of the respective districts’ Local Plan histories has identified the following previous Green Belt Assessments of interest to this Study.

Aylesbury Vale District

- 3.2.2** No district-wide Green Belt Assessments have recently been undertaken.

Chiltern District

- 3.2.3** No district-wide Green Belt Assessments have recently been undertaken. However, a study of Potential Minor Green Belt Alterations was published in March 2013.⁸ This study states that the adopted Core Strategy (adopted November 2011) explains that the Council did not consider it necessary to review the established (1997 Local Plan) Green Belt boundaries as a part of the Core Strategy because development needs to 2026 could be met from within existing areas excluded from the Green Belt and in the major developed sites within the Green Belt. The Core Strategy examination Inspector agreed that a fundamental review of the Green Belt boundary was not required. However, the Inspector identified some anomalies in the Green Belt boundary where, for example, it does not follow an existing feature, bisects a residential curtilage or development has taken place beyond the boundary.⁹
- 3.2.4** The Inspector did not direct alterations to address these anomalies, citing Government policy that exceptional circumstances are required for changing the boundary. The Inspector was also of the view that any Green Belt Assessment undertaken as part of the Delivery Development Plan Document (DDPD) should be identified in the Core Strategy. The only review requirements identified in the Core Strategy relate to rows of dwellings and settlements within the Green Belt as set out in Policy CS23.
- 3.2.5** Despite the fact that a review of the Green Belt boundaries other than set out in Policy CS23 was not required, in 2013 the Council undertook a study of potential minor Green Belt alterations to consider perceived anomalies / minor Green Belt alterations and to test each of these on a case by case basis to see if exceptional circumstances exist to merit a change to the Green Belt boundary as part of the DDPD.
- 3.2.6** A total of 35 sites were considered as part of the study, with the outcome being that there were no exceptional circumstance to merit any Green Belt alterations for these areas as part of the DDPD.

South Bucks District

- 3.2.7** No district-wide Green Belt Assessments have recently been undertaken. The adopted Core Strategy (2011) identified that no amendment to the Green Belt boundary was required to meet future development needs in the period to 2026.

Wycombe District

- 3.2.8** No district-wide Green Belt Assessments have recently been undertaken. However, it is noted that three minor adjustments to the Green Belt boundary were agreed through the adoption of the 2004 Local Plan and then through adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008.

⁸ <http://www.chiltern.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2917&p=0>

⁹ <http://www.chiltern.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1198&p=0>

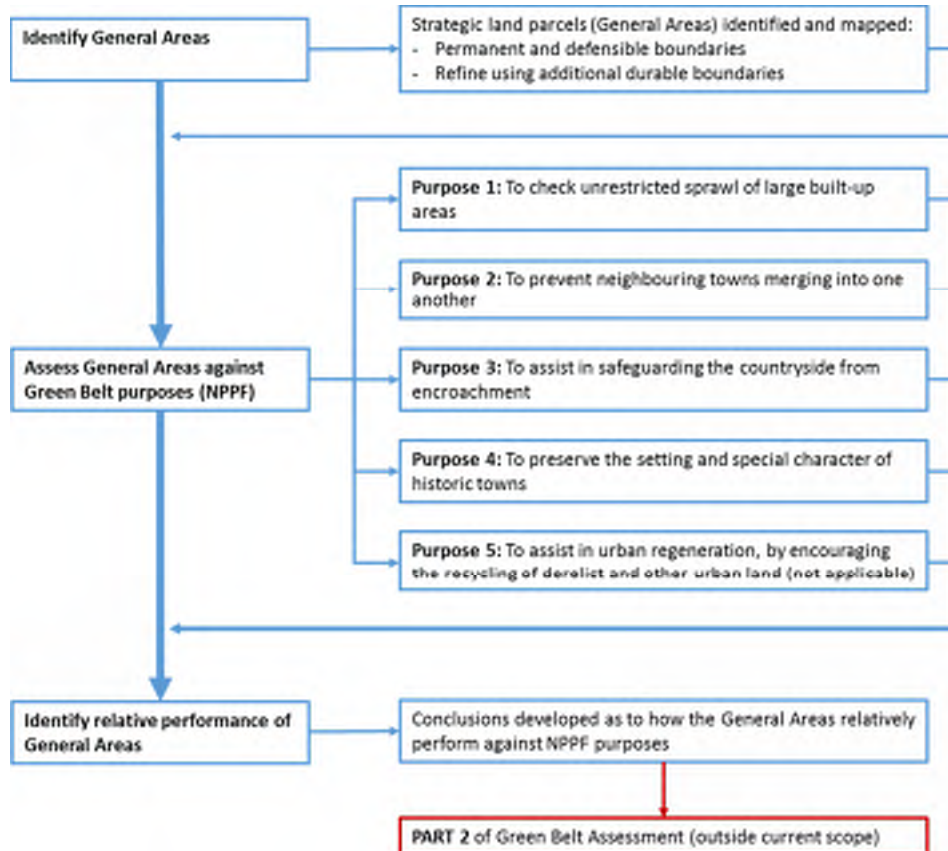
- 3.2.9** In 2004, a small parcel of land was removed from the Green Belt at Princes Risborough Upper School.
- 3.2.10** In 2008, two land parcels were added to the Green Belt:
- Grange and Widmer Farms, High Wycombe; and
 - Lane End Road, High Wycombe.
- 3.2.11** Both of these sites had effectively been safeguarded to meet possible longer term development needs in previous plans; however, both were within the Chilterns AONB, the statutory purpose of which is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and within which major development is only considered in exceptional circumstances. It was therefore determined that these land parcels could no longer be reserved as long-term future development and that, as they met one or more of the Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF, their inclusion within the Green Belt was justified.
- 3.2.12** The following site was removed from the Green Belt in 2008:
- Adams Park Stadium.

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following section sets out the methodology which was used to undertake the Green Belt Assessment in Buckinghamshire. An overview of the methodology is set out in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Methodology Overview



4.2 Methodology Changes

4.2.1 The methodology for the Green Belt Assessment was previously published on 11th August 2015. Subsequently, as the Study has emerged, some minor changes to this have been required. This section highlights a number of minor alterations made to the published methodology, all of which are integrated into the following sections of this report:

- Several non-Green Belt and Green Belt settlements, omitted erroneously from Maps 4.4a and 4.4b, have been added;
- Non-Green Belt settlements have now been listed out in their entirety in Table 4.2;

- Footnote 21, which described the assessment process for General Areas against Purpose 3, was amended to reflect a more balanced approach to quantitative and qualitative methods applied in practice during the assessments.

PART 1: Parcel Definition & NPPF Assessment

4.3 Identify General Areas

4.3.1 The scope for this review was to consider all Green Belt land, as defined in the current adopted local plans for the four Buckinghamshire districts (Map 4.1 on page 45), as well as non-Green Belt land that might be considered for inclusion in the Green Belt. The starting point for assessing land against the NPPF purposes was to identify strategic land parcels or ‘General Areas’ for appraisal.

Green Belt

4.3.2 The percentage of land designated as Green Belt varies significantly between the four districts, ranging from 88.4% of Chiltern to less than 10% of Aylesbury Vale. All of this land has been included in the assessment, including 16 Major Developed Sites (MDS) in the Green Belt identified in the respective District local plans by Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council respectively.¹⁰

4.3.3 Any potential alterations to the Green Belt must be based on a new permanent and defensible boundary; thus, permanent man-made and natural features were selected as the initial basis of criteria for the identification of the ‘General Areas’. In particular, the boundaries of the General Areas were based on the following features:

- Motorways;
- A and B Roads;
- Railway lines;
- River Chess;
- River Colne;
- River Misbourne;
- River Thames; and
- River Wye.

¹⁰ The 16 MDS are: Land at Amersham and Wycombe College (Chiltern); Newland Park, Chalfont Common (Chiltern); Wilton Park, Beaconsfield (South Bucks); Mill Lane, Taplow (South Bucks); Court Lane, Iver (South Bucks); Molins, Saunderton (Wycombe); Janssen - Cilag, Saunderton (Wycombe); Wycliffe Centre, Horsleys Green (Wycombe); RAF High Wycombe, Walter’s Ash (Wycombe); Little Marlow Sewage Works (Wycombe); Wycombe Air Park (Wycombe); Wycombe West School, Downley (Wycombe); Uplands Conference Centre, Four Ashes (Wycombe); Pipers Corner School, Great Kingshill (Wycombe); Binders Yard, Cryers Hill (Wycombe); Amersham & Wycombe College, Flackwell Heath (Wycombe).

These features are illustrated spatially in Map 4.2 on page 46.

4.3.4 Given the extremes of urban and rural found in Buckinghamshire, from the semi-urban fringes of Slough in the south of the county to the relatively unspoilt countryside in the Chilterns, a more flexible approach to the identification of General Areas for assessment was necessary, particularly in the environs of the major non-Green Belt settlements (see Table 4.2).

4.3.5 This was achieved through the further division of some General Areas in and around non-Green Belt settlements using additional durable boundary features such as:

- Unclassified public roads and private roads;
- Smaller water features, including streams, canals and other watercourses;
- Prominent physical features (e.g. ridgelines);
- Existing development with strongly established, regular or consistent boundaries;
- Protected woodland or hedgerows.

This process took into account local context and involved an element of professional judgement, and agreement was sought from members of the Steering Group with regard to all such changes to the original General Areas for assessment. In the rural areas, assessment was against the larger, ‘strategic’ General Areas.

4.3.6 In some cases, boundary features are located close together, for example where roads, rivers, and/or railway lines run closely parallel to each other. These features were taken together to form one boundary rather than separately which would lead to small slithers of Green Belt land which would not form logical General Areas for assessment.

4.3.7 It was agreed with the Buckinghamshire Authorities to consider the proposed A355 Relief Road at Wilton Park as appropriate during the assessment. The project has committed Government funding and planning permission for the first phase of the new road was granted in October 2014, which may have implications for the division of land around Beaconsfield into General Areas. It was also agreed not to consider HS2 during the creation of General Areas, given the on-going uncertainty over the exact route and supporting development at this stage.

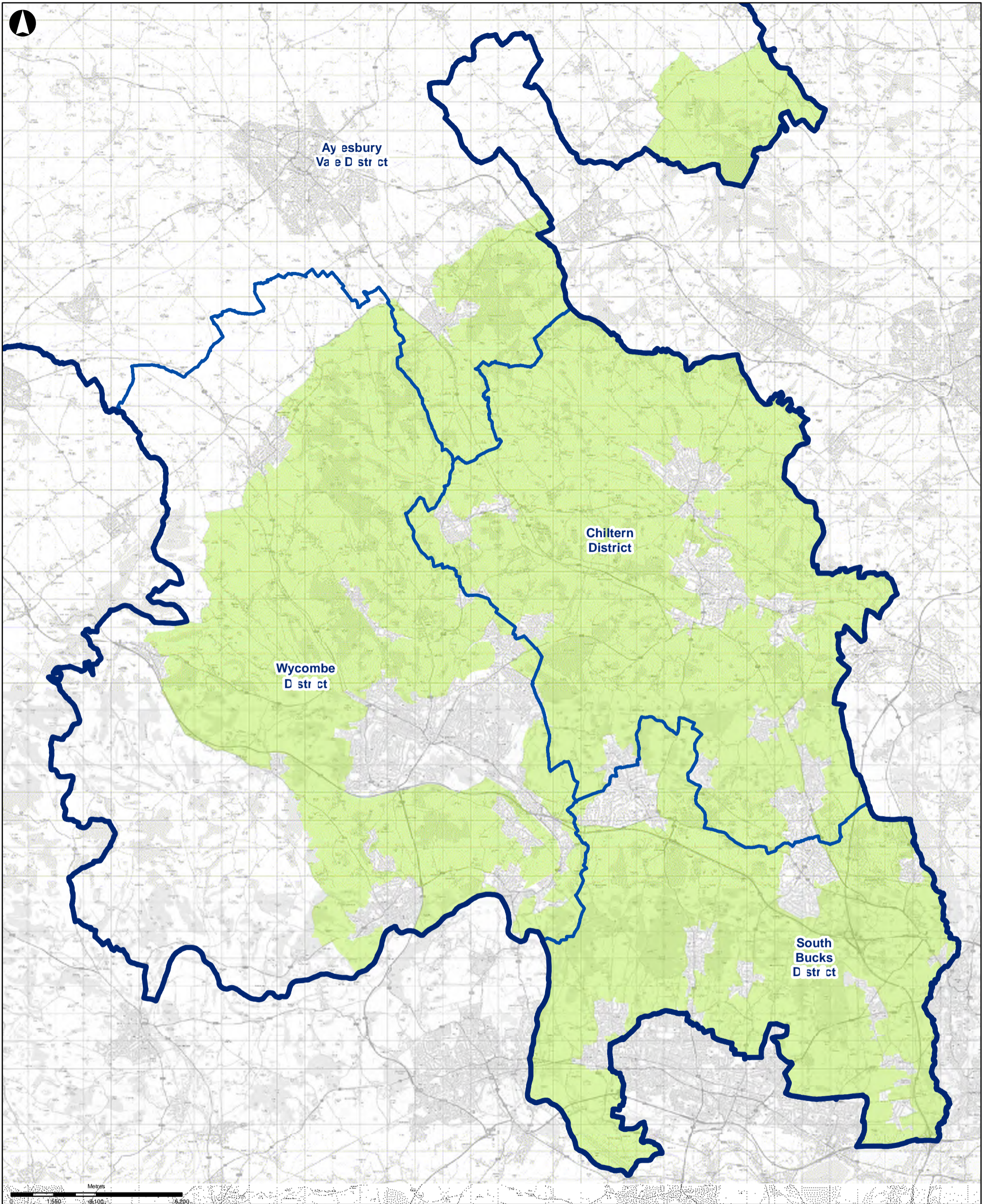
4.3.8 Following the described process of identification, modification and sub-division, the Green Belt General Areas utilised for the assessment are illustrated spatially in Maps 4.3a and 4.3b on pages 47-48.

Non-Green Belt

4.3.9 Based on previous experience of conducting Green Belt Assessments, the starting point for identifying non-Green Belt land was open land outside of the defined settlement limits set out in the four districts’ local plans, but not included in the Green Belt, as well as any previous

Green Belt work undertaken by the authorities to identify potential boundary revisions.

- 4.3.10** Based on research, combined with discussion with the Steering Group, it was felt that, in general, four sites previously reserved for housing on the edge of urban areas in Wycombe were consistent with this criteria and should be assessed against the Green Belt purposes.
- 4.3.11** Aside from this, existing Green Belt boundaries were deemed to be drawn sufficiently tightly to the built environment to negate any further investigation within existing settlement limits.
- 4.3.12** However, it was also noted through consultation with wider stakeholders and liaison with Wycombe District Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council that the furthest northern and western boundaries of the Green Belt, particularly around the settlements of Wendover, Monks Risborough / Princes Risborough, and Leighton Linlade (in Central Bedfordshire) may not adequately prevent sprawl and that non-Green Belt land beyond the Green Belt boundaries may have the potential to meet Green Belt purposes. The methodology provided a flexible approach to the identification of non-Green Belt land for assessment around the identified settlements.
- 4.3.13** The non-Green Belt General Areas utilised for the assessment are illustrated spatially in Maps 4.3a and 4.3b on pages 47-48.



Legend

- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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P1	14-01-16	CG	ML	KF
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Client
The Buckinghamshire Authorities

Job Title
Buckinghamshire Green Belt Review

Map 4.1 Buckinghamshire Green Belt

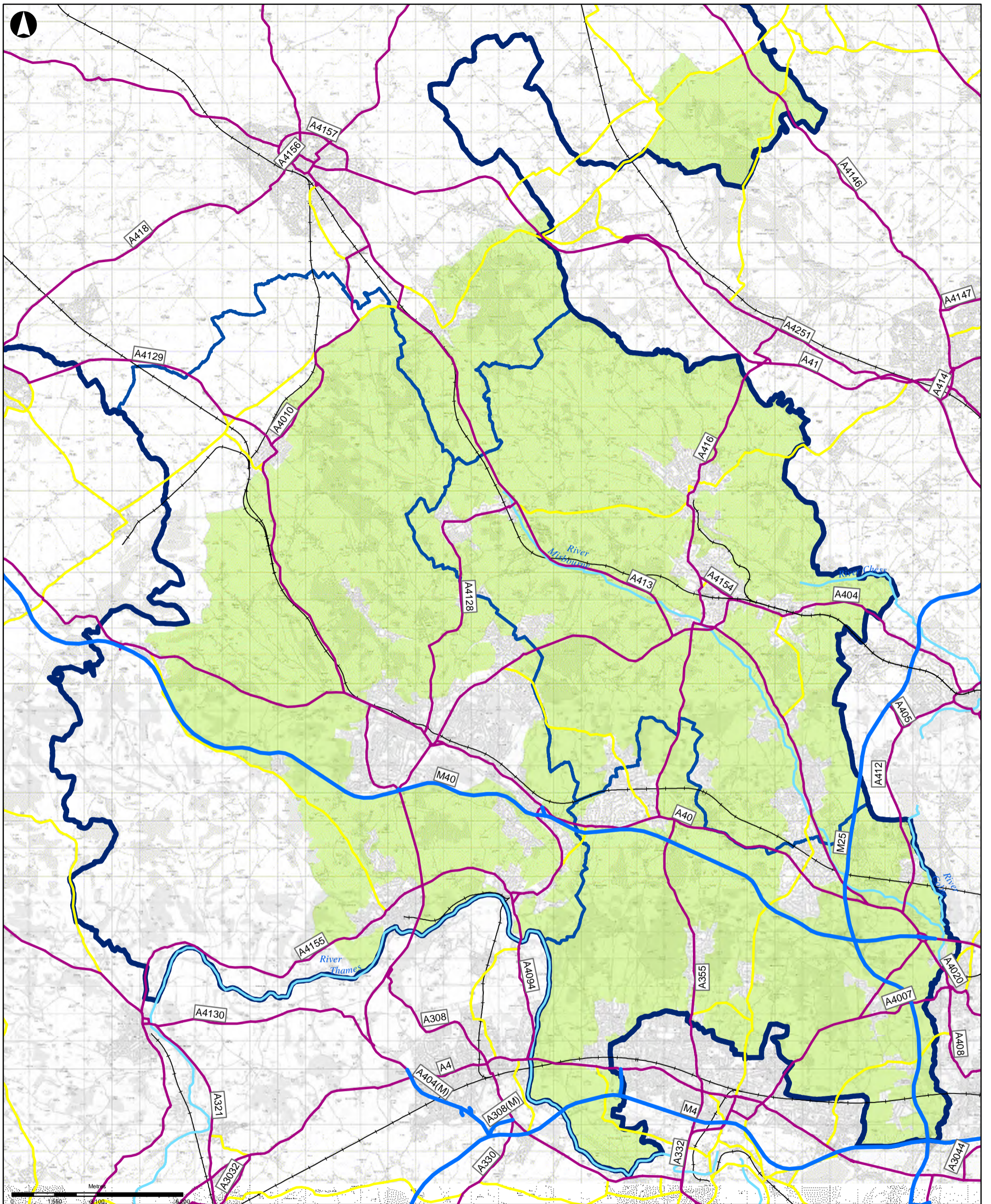
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



Drawing Status
Issue

Drawing No
4.1

Issue
P1



Legend

-  Motorway
-  A Road
-  B Road
-  River
-  Railway Line
-  Buckinghamshire Green Belt
-  Buckinghamshire District
-  Buckinghamshire County

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**Map 4.2 Defining Features
for General Areas**

Scale at A3

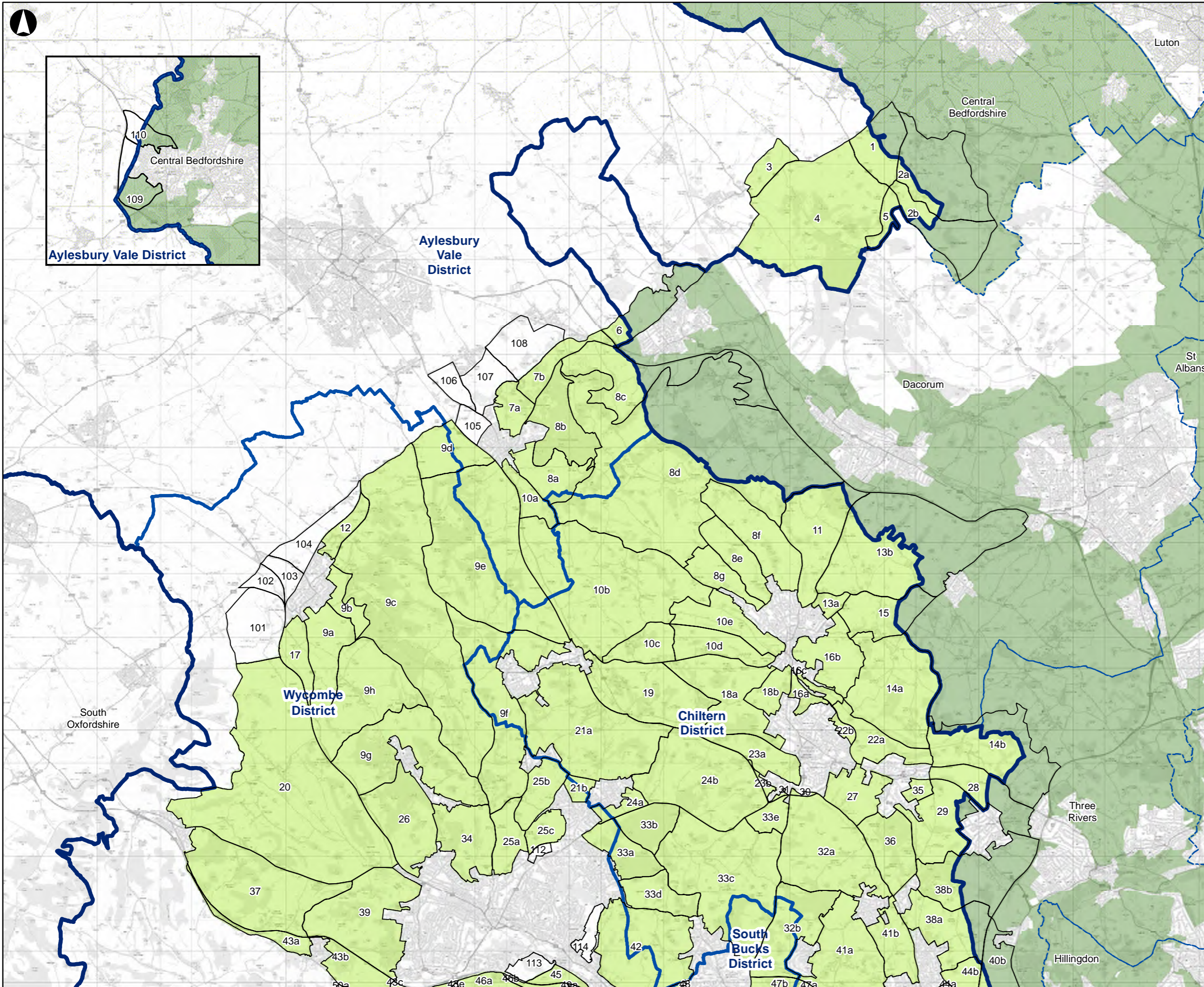
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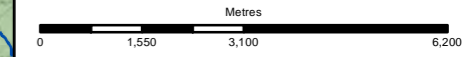


Legend

- General Areas
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County
- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt

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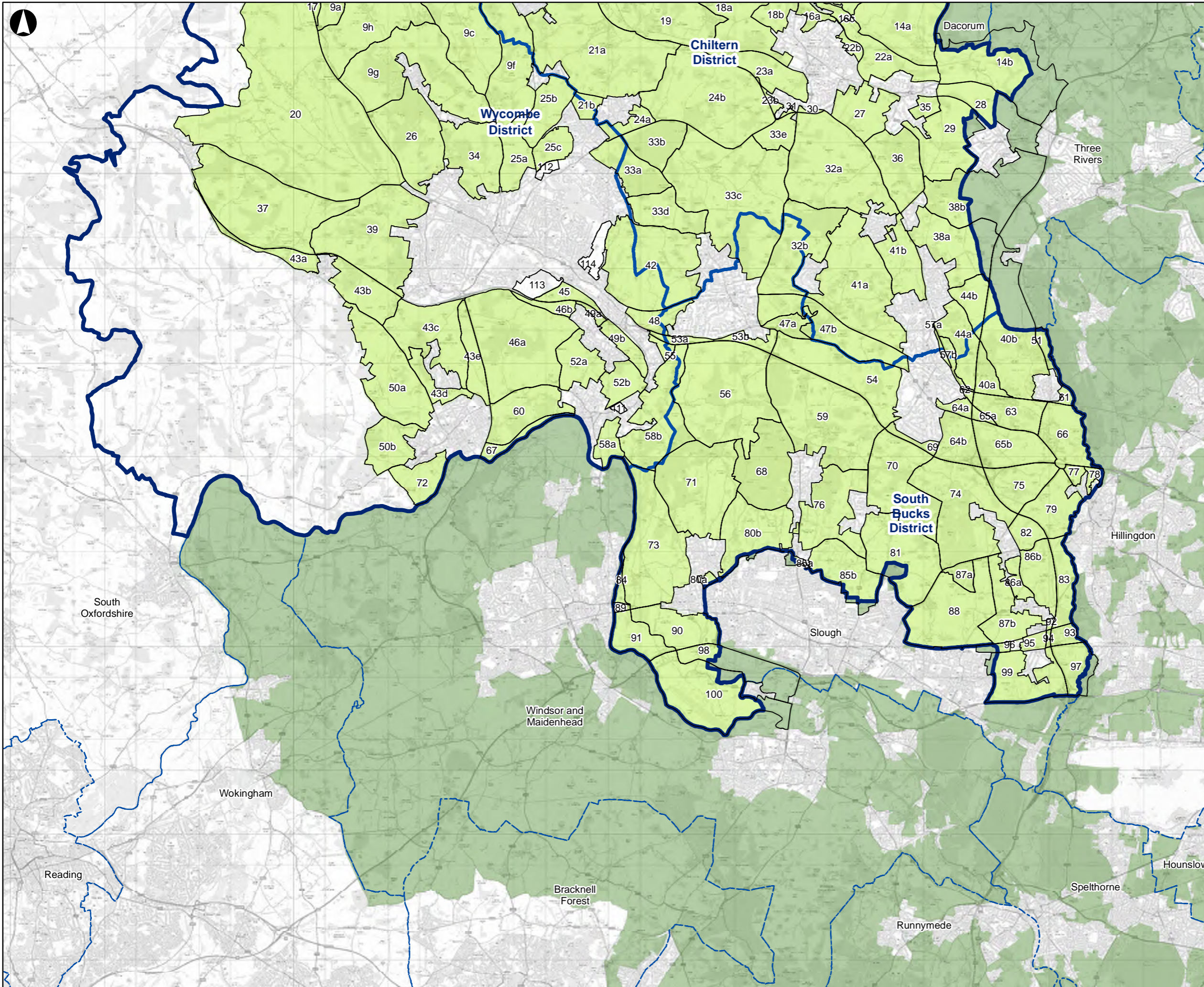
Client
The Buckinghamshire Authorities

Job Title
Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

Map 4.3a General Areas, North

Scale at A3
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Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
Drawing No 4.3a	Issue P1

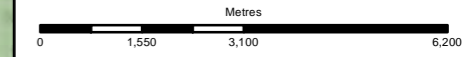


Legend

- General Areas
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County
- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt

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Map 4.3b General Areas, South

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
Drawing No 4.3b	Issue P1

4.4 Assess General Areas

4.4.1 Each of the General Areas were assessed against the NPPF purposes for Green Belt. There is no national guidance which establishes exactly how such an assessment should be undertaken. The PAS guidance, recent examples and previous experience reiterates the need to respect local circumstances and the unique characteristics that affect the way that the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt are appraised.

4.4.2 The purpose of the assessment was to establish any differentiation in terms of how the General Areas in the existing Green Belt function and fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt at a strategic level. For those General Areas outside of the current Green Belt the assessment considered how these strategic land parcels might fulfil the purpose if designated.

4.4.3 For each purpose, one or more criteria were developed using both qualitative and quantitative measures. A score out of five was attributed for each criterion (Figure 4.2), where 1 equals least fulfils criterion and 5 equals most fulfils criterion. If a General Area was considered to have no contribution to a specific purpose, a statement was added to the pro-forma to this effect and no score (a score of zero) was attributed.

4.4.4 It is important to note that each of the NPPF purposes is considered equally significant, thus no weighting or aggregation of scores across the purposes was undertaken. As such, a composite judgement was necessary to determine whether, overall, General Areas were meeting Green Belt purposes strongly or not. A rule of thumb was applied, whereby:

- any General Area scoring strongly (4 or 5) against the criteria for one or more NPPF purpose was judged to be meeting the purposes strongly overall and therefore deemed unsuitable for further consideration in Part 2 of the Green Belt Assessment, except where a possible sub-division was identified (see 4.4.5);
- a General Area fulfilling the criteria to a lesser extent (scores of 2 or below) across all purposes was deemed to be weaker Green Belt and was recommended for further consideration in Part 2.

4.4.5 Where General Areas were judged as meeting Green Belt purposes, or meeting purposes strongly, consideration was given to the identification of smaller sub-areas within General Areas which may have the potential to score differently to the General Areas as a whole and might be suitable for further consideration.

Figure 4.2: Criterion Scores

Overall Strength of General Area against criterion	Score	Equivalent Wording
	0	Does Not Meet Purpose
	1	Meets Purpose Weakly
	2	Meets Purpose Relatively Weakly
	3	Meets Purpose
	4	Meets Purpose Relatively Strongly
5	Meets Purpose Strongly	

4.4.6 The following sections examine the definition of each of the five purposes of the Green Belt in relation to local objectives and role of the Green Belt in terms of achieving its purpose locally; and set out the criteria and associated scoring applied. The criteria and scores were discussed and refined in collaboration with the Steering Group, as well as officers from neighbouring and partnering authorities following a workshop session on 1st April 2015.¹¹

Purpose 1 Assessment

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

4.4.7 The original strategic purpose of the Metropolitan Green Belt was to check the sprawl of London. However, given only a relatively small part of Buckinghamshire is directly adjacent to Greater London, this assessment instead considered the role of General Areas in restricting the sprawl of large built-up areas within the four Buckinghamshire districts and within neighbouring local authorities. These were defined to correspond to the Tier 1 settlements identified in the respective Local Plans for each local authority, both within and outside Buckinghamshire, to ensure a robust and evidence-based approach to the assessment (see Map 4.4; Table 4.1)¹².

4.4.8 Although ‘sprawl’ is a multi-faceted concept and thus has a variety of different definitions, this Study has adopted a simple definition, considering sprawl as ‘*the outward spread of a large built-up area at its periphery in an untidy or irregular way*’. In order to appraise the extent to which the Green Belt keeps this in check, it is necessary to consider:

- a) Whether a General Area falls at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas;
- b) The degree to which the General Area is contained by built-form, and the nature of this containment, as well as the linkage to the wider Green Belt, as well as the extent to which the edge of the

¹¹ The following local authorities / stakeholders were represented at the workshop on 1st April 2015: Bracknell Forest Council; Central Bedfordshire Council; London Borough of Hillingdon; Milton Keynes Council; Oxfordshire County Council; Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead; Slough Borough Council; Three Rivers District Council; Watford Borough Council; Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP.

¹² These were confirmed with officers from the respective neighbouring authorities at a workshop held on 1st April 2015.

built up area has a strongly defined, regular or consistent boundary.

Table 4.1: Large Built-Up Areas Considered in Purpose 1 Assessment

Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire and Neighbouring Local Authorities	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Amersham	Burnham / Slough (Slough) ¹³	Hemel Hempstead (Dacorum) ¹⁵
Beaconsfield / Knotty Green		
Chesham	Greater London (LB Hillingdon) / New Denham ¹⁴	Leighton Linlade (Central Bedfordshire)
Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter		Maidenhead (RB Windsor and Maidenhead) ¹⁶
High Wycombe (encompassing High Wycombe, Hazlemere, Tylers Green, Downley, Holmer Green, Loudwater, Widmer End, and Wooburn Green)		Rickmansworth (Three Rivers) ¹⁷
Marlow		Windsor (RB Windsor and Maidenhead) ¹⁸
Princes Risborough / Monks Risborough		
Wendover		

4.4.9 There are two stages in this assessment:

Assessment 1(a)

4.4.10 Firstly, a Green Belt land parcel must be at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas in order to prevent development which would constitute sprawl. This criterion must therefore be met for Purpose 1 to be fulfilled and was applied on a *Pass/Fail* basis.

¹³ For the purposes of the assessment, Burnham was treated as one large built-up area together with Slough, which lies outside of South Bucks District.

¹⁴ For the purposes of the assessment, this includes all constituent parts of the continuous built-up area of Greater London within Hillingdon (including (but not limited to) Uxbridge, Ickenham, Hillingdon, Hayes, West Drayton, Ruislip and Northwood) and South Bucks District (New Denham and Willowbank, which is referred to as 'New Denham' throughout the assessment proformas and mapping).

¹⁵ Hemel Hempstead is identified as the Main Centre in the settlement hierarchy of the Dacorum Core Strategy (2013).

¹⁶ Maidenhead is identified as a Town Centre in Hierarchy of Centres of the Borough Local Plan Preferred Options (2014).

¹⁷ Rickmansworth is identified as a Principal Town in the settlement hierarchy of the Three Rivers Core Strategy (2011)

¹⁸ Windsor is identified as a Town Centre in Hierarchy of Centres of the Borough Local Plan Preferred Options (2014).

Assessment 1(b)

4.4.11 As stated at Assessment 1(a), Green Belt should function to protect open land at the edge of large built-up areas (Table 4.1). However, the extent to which a General Area prevents sprawl is dependent on its relationship with the respective built-up areas.

4.4.12 Assessment 1(b) initially focused on the degree to which Green Belt abuts built-up areas, the nature of this relationship and links to the wider Green Belt. The following criteria were used for assessment:

- A General Area 'contiguous' with, in other words, predominantly surrounded or enclosed by two or more distinct areas of built form but that also retains a strong link to the wider Green Belt, would play a particularly important role in preventing sprawl.
- A General Area 'connected' with a large built-up area, or displaying a low level of containment and rather simply adjoining the urban area, may prevent sprawl but to a lesser extent.
- A General Area 'enclosed' by a single built-up area, in other words, almost entirely contained or surrounded by built development which forms part of a single built-up area and has limited connections to the wider Green Belt, would only prevent sprawl to a limited extent (rather, potential development would likely be classified as infill).

4.4.13 This initial assessment was supplemented by additional analysis on the role of Green Belt in preventing sprawl which would not otherwise be restricted by another barrier. The NPPF states that Local Authorities should '*define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent*' (paragraph 85). Boundary identification reflected this, based on the following definitions:

- Examples of durable features (likely to be permanent):
 - Infrastructure: motorway; public and made road; a railway line; river.
 - Landform: stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical feature (e.g. ridgeline); protected woodland / hedge; existing development with strongly established, regular or consistent boundaries.
- Examples of features lacking in durability (soft boundaries):
 - Infrastructure: private / unmade road; power line.
 - Natural: field boundary, tree line.

4.4.14 Where sprawl would not otherwise have been restricted by a durable boundary feature, the extent to which the existing built form had strongly established or recognisable boundaries was assessed, based on the following definitions:

- 'Regular' or 'consistent' built form comprised well-defined or rectilinear built form edges, which would restrict development in the Green Belt.

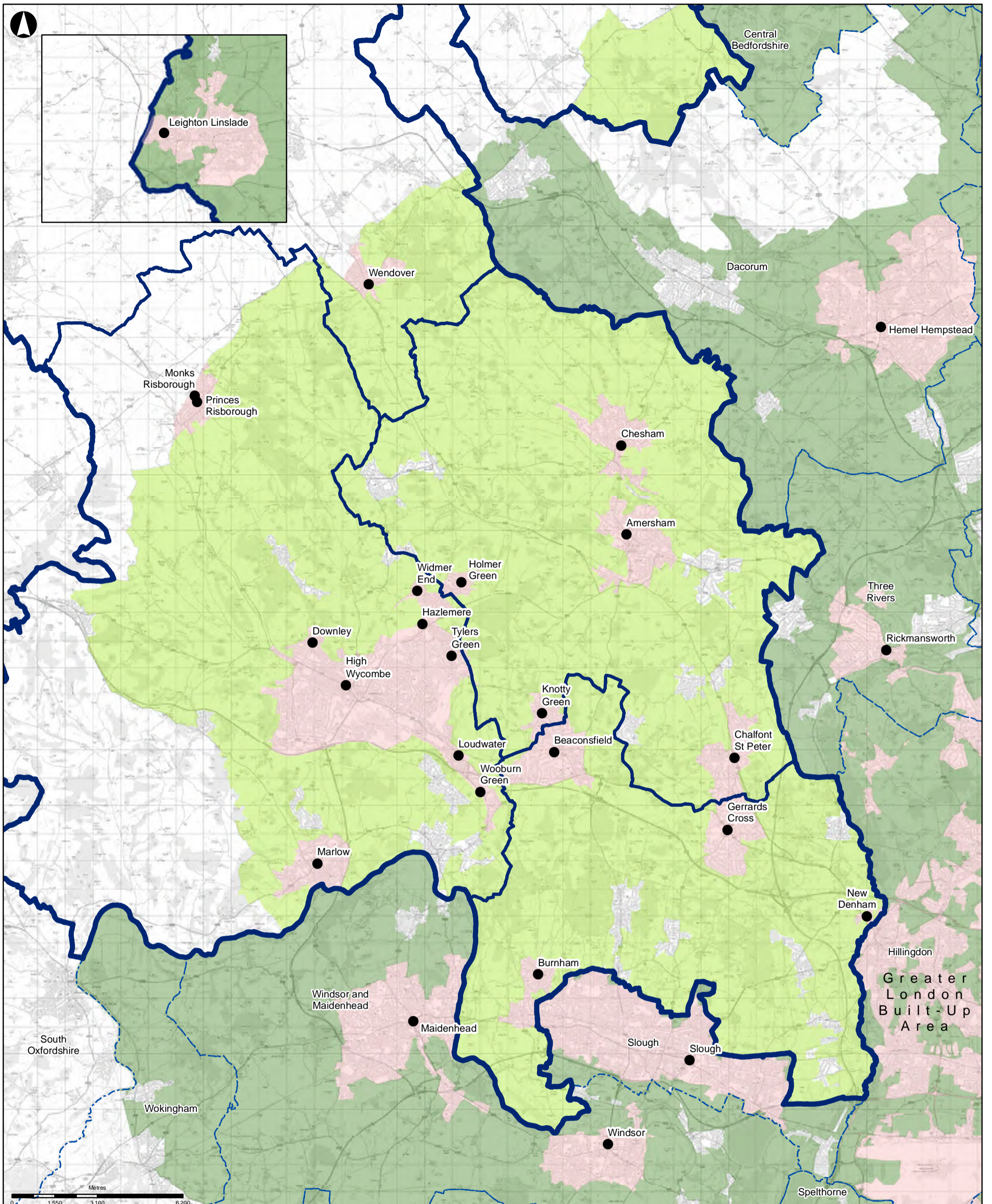
- ‘Irregular’ or ‘inconsistent’ built form comprised imprecise or ‘softer’ edges, which would not restrict growth within the Green Belt.

Purpose 1 Assessment Criteria

4.4.15 The criteria used to assess the General Areas against Purpose 1 are set out below. Ordnance Survey base maps and aerial photography were reviewed in order to undertake each of these assessments, sense-checked through site visits.

Purpose 1 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria	Scores
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas.	PASS: Land parcel meets Purpose 1. FAIL: Land parcel does not meet Purpose 1 and will score 0 for criteria (b).
	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary.	5+: Land parcel is contiguous with (a) large built-up area(s). The large built-up area(s) is/are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence. 5: Land parcel is contiguous with (a) large built-up area(s), though the large built-up area(s) is/are predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features. 3+: Land parcel is connected to one or more large built-up area(s). The large built-up area(s) is/are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence. 3: Land parcel is connected to one or more large built-up area(s), though the large built-up area(s) is/are predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features. 1+: Land parcel is enclosed by one distinct large built-up area. The large built-up area is predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence. 1. Land parcel is enclosed by one distinct large built-up area, though the large built-up areas is predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features.
	Criterion Score	xx/5



Legend

- Large Built-Up Area (or part of)
- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd

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Client
The Buckinghamshire Authorities

Job Title
Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

Map 4.4 Settlements Considered in Purpose 1 Assessment

Scale at A3

1:130,000

Job No
242368-00

Drawing Status
Issue

Drawing No
4.4

Issue
P1

Purpose 2 Assessment

Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

- 4.4.16** In addition to the clear function of this purpose in preventing towns from merging and therefore protecting existing gaps between towns, it also forms the basis for maintaining the existing settlement pattern. National policy provides no guidance over what might constitute ‘towns’ and whether this purpose should also take into consideration the gaps between smaller settlements. Historically, Buckinghamshire has been a predominantly rural area with a dispersed population across a number of distinct towns and smaller villages, which have retained their own distinctiveness, though there has been a degree of coalescence between settlements, particularly along major transport corridors and in the south of the county close to the larger towns of Slough and Maidenhead.
- 4.4.17** Given the dispersed settlement pattern, the assessment of General Areas primarily considered strategic gaps between all non-Green Belt settlements, but also included a more local interpretation of the purpose where instances of the Green Belt protecting gaps between smaller Green Belt settlements, regardless of size or function, were identified.
- 4.4.18** Both non-Green Belt and ‘washed over’ Green Belt settlements were identified through the appropriate local development plans and confirmed in consultation with the Steering Group, as follows:
- Aylesbury Vale District Council - Relevant non-Green Belt settlements and those identified in the Settlement Hierarchy (2012) published as evidence for the withdrawn Vale of Aylesbury Plan, as well as the more recent Draft Settlement Hierarchy (2015).
 - Chiltern District Council - All settlements listed in policy GB5 (Green Belt settlements) in adopted Local Plan (1997).
 - South Bucks District Council - All settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy in the adopted Core Strategy (2011).
 - Wycombe District Council - All non-Green Belt settlements and built-up areas identified in Policy GB4 (built-up areas within the Green Belt).
- 4.4.19** Settlements in neighbouring local authority areas adjacent to areas of Green Belt in Buckinghamshire were identified using adopted local development plans (Table 4.2; Maps 4.5A and 4.5B).¹⁹

¹⁹ These were confirmed with officers from the respective neighbouring authorities at a workshop held on 1st April 2015.

Table 4.2: Settlements Considered in Purpose 2 Assessment

Buckinghamshire	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Non-Green Belt Settlements	Non-Green Belt Settlements
Amersham	Berkamstead (Dacorum)
Ashton Clinton	Bovingdon (Dacorum)
Aylesbury	Chorleywood (Three Rivers)
Beaconsfield / Knotty Green	Cookham (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)
Bourne End / Wooburn	Cornbrook / Poyle (Slough)
Burnham / Slough ²⁰	Dunstable (Central Bedfordshire)
Chalfont St Giles	Eton Wick (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)
Chesham ²¹	Harefield (LB Hillingdon)
Denham Green	Ickenham (LB Hillingdon)
Farnham Royal / Farnham Common ²²	Leighton Linlade (Central Bedfordshire)
Flackwell Heath	Maidenhead (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)
Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter	Maple Cross (Three Rivers)
Great Kingshill	Ringshall
Great Missenden / Prestwood	South Harefield (LB Hillingdon)
High Wycombe (encompassing High	Tring (Three Rivers)
Wycombe, Hazlemere, Tylers Green, Downley,	Uxbridge (LB Hillingdon)
Holmer Green, Loudwater, Widmer End, and	West Drayton (LB Hillingdon)
Wooburn Green)	Wigginton (Three Rivers)
Holmer Green	Windsor (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)
Iver Heath ²³	
Iver Village ²⁴	
Ivinghoe	
Lane End	
Little Chalfont	
Longwick	
Marlow	
Marlow Bottom	
Princes Risborough / Monks Risborough	
Richings Park	
Seer Green	
Soulbury	
Stoke Poges	
Stokenchurch	

²⁰ Burnham is within South Bucks District but, for the purposes of the assessment, was treated as one settlement together with Slough.

²¹ Chesham includes the settlement of 'Nashleigh Hill / Lycrome Road (Chesham)', identified in Chesham Local Plan policy GB5, considered part of Chesham for the purposes of this assessment.

²² Farnham Royal and Farnham Common are identified as separate settlements in the South Bucks Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy but, for the purposes of this assessment, were treated as one settlement.

²³ 'Wood Lane Close (Iver)', identified in adopted Core Strategy settlement hierarchy, considered part of Iver Heath for the purposes of this assessment.

²⁴ Referred to as 'Iver' in assessment pro-formas and mapping.

Buckinghamshire	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Uxbridge (LB Hillingdon) / New Denham (South Bucks) ²⁵ Walter's Ash / Naphill Wendover Weston Turville Wing	
Green Belt Settlements Beacons Bottom / Studley Green Bledlow Ridge Botley Bovingdon Green Claymoor / Clayhill Cryers Hill Dagnall Denham ²⁶ Dorney Reach Dorney Village ²⁷ Fulmer George Green Halton Hedgerley Hill Higher Denham Hughenden Valley Hyde Heath Jordans Lacey Green / Loosley Road ²⁸ Ley Hill Little Kingshill Little Marlow Piddington South Heath Speen Taplow Riverside Taplow Village Tatling End West Wycombe Wexham (Church Lane / Wexham Park Lane) ²⁹	Green Belt Settlements Bisham (RB Windsor and Maidenhead) Flaunden (Dacorum) Holywell (Central Bedfordshire) Hurley (RB Windsor and Maidenhead) Kensworth (Central Bedfordshire) Sarratt (Three Rivers) Studham (Central Bedfordshire) Wiggington (Dacorum)

²⁵ New Denham is within South Bucks District but, for the purposes of the assessment, was treated as one settlement together with Uxbridge. 'New Denham' refers to the settlement of New Denham and Willowbank, identified in the South Bucks Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy.

²⁶ Comprises settlements identified as 'Denham (South of Village)' and 'Denham Village' in South Bucks Settlement Hierarchy.

²⁷ Referred to as 'Dorney' in assessment pro-formas and mapping.

²⁸ Identified as separate settlements in Wycombe Local Plan; however considered as one settlement for the purposes of the assessment.

²⁹ Referred to as 'Wexham' in assessment pro-formas and mapping.

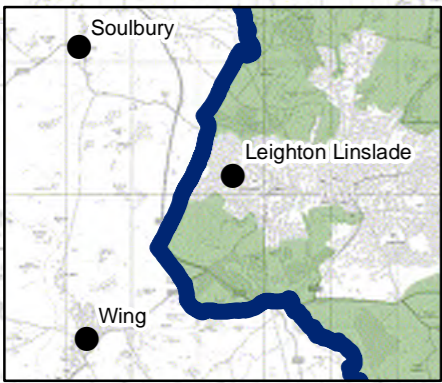
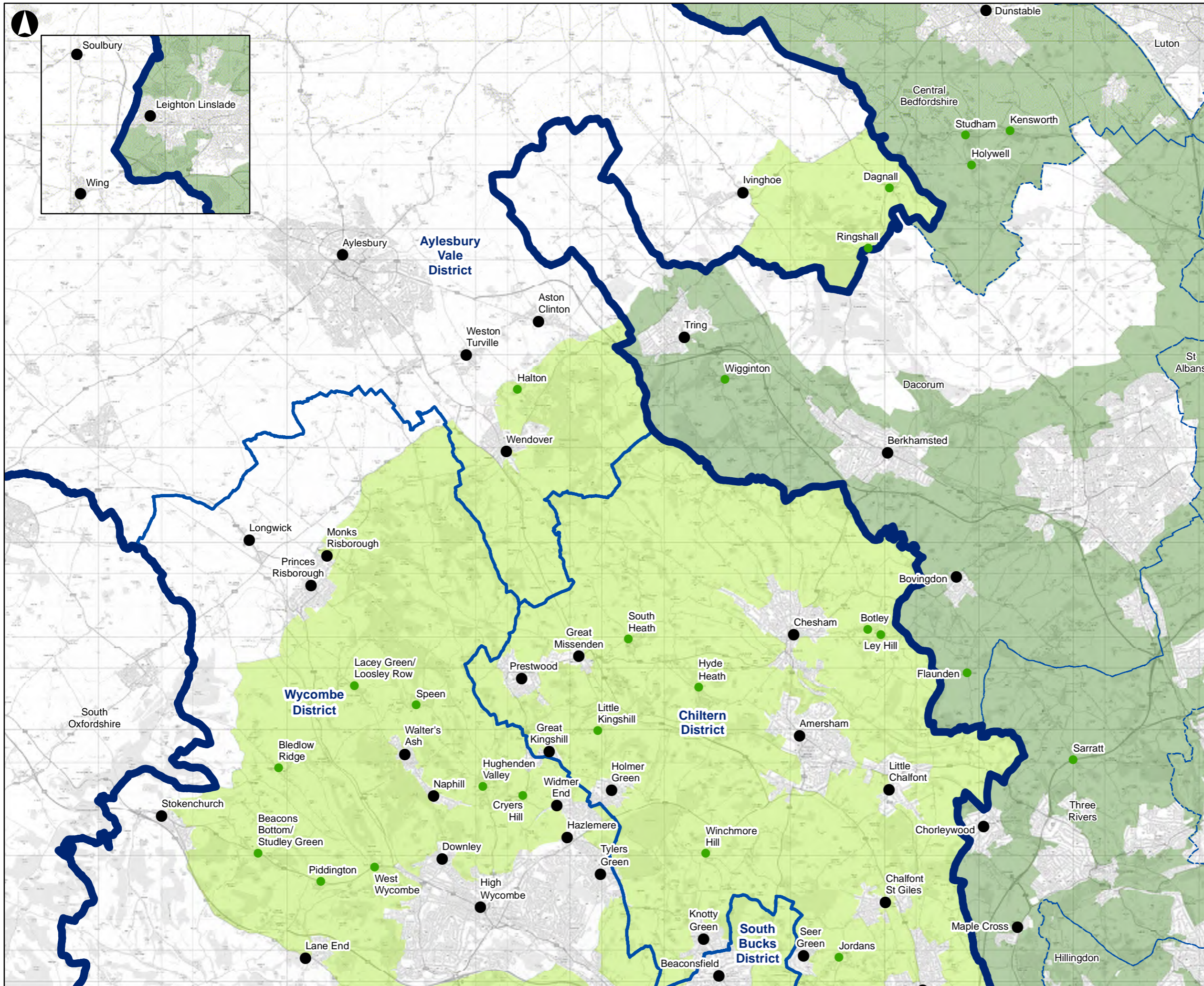
Buckinghamshire	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Wexham Street Winchmore Hill	

4.4.20 The extent to which an area of Green Belt protects a land gap was assessed using the following definitions:

- ‘Essential gaps’, where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between settlements.
- ‘Wider gaps’, where limited development may be possible without coalescence between settlements.
- ‘Less essential gaps’, where development is likely to be possible without any risk of coalescence between settlements.

Purpose 2 Assessment Criterion

Purpose	Criterion	Scores
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	<p>5: An ‘essential gap’ between non-Green Belt settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.</p> <p>3: A ‘wider gap’ between non-Green Belt settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging or protecting other gaps involving Green Belt settlements.</p> <p>1: A ‘less essential gap’ between non-Green Belt settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging between settlements or affect gaps between Green Belt and non-Green Belt settlements.</p> <p>0: Land parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernable contribution to separation.</p>
Total score		xx/5



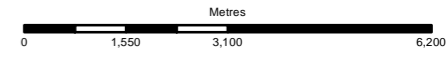
Legend

- Green Belt Settlement
- Non-Green Belt Settlement
- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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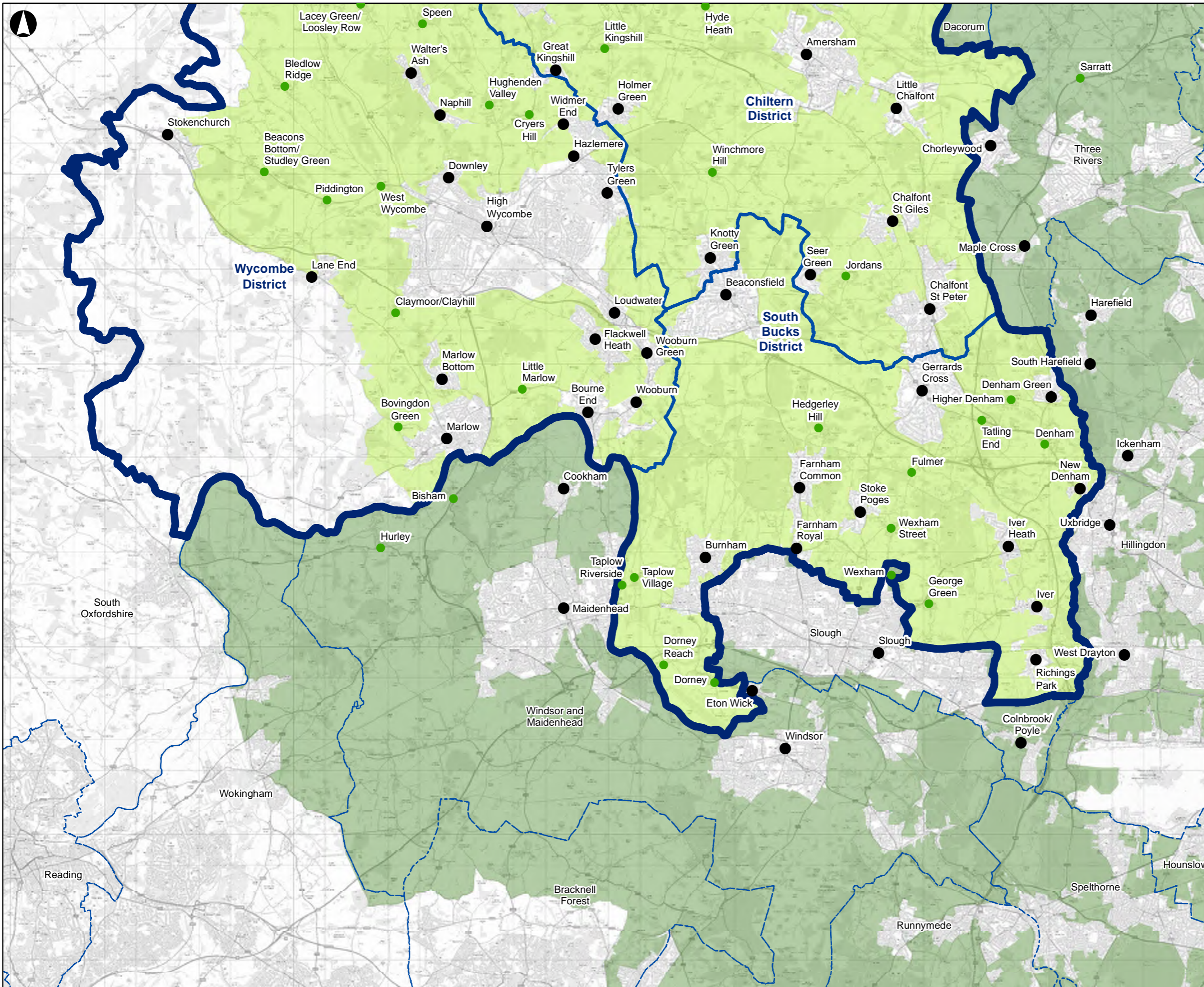
Job Title
Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

Map 4.5a Settlements Considered in Purpose 2 Assessment, North

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
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Drawing No 4.5a	Issue P1
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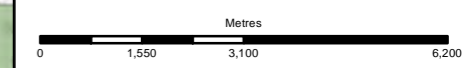
Legend

- Green Belt Settlement
- Non-Green Belt Settlement
- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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Client
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Job Title
Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

Map 4.5b Settlements Considered for Purpose 2 Assessment, South

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
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Drawing No 4.5b	Issue P1
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Purpose 3 Assessment

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 4.4.21** This purpose seeks to safeguard the countryside. The assessment considered openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as ‘countryside’, thus resisting encroachment from past development. Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development rather than from a landscape character perspective, where openness might be characterised through topography and presence or otherwise of woodland and hedgerow cover.
- 4.4.22** Historic open land uses associated with the urban fringe and urban characteristics as well as the countryside exist in the Buckinghamshire Green Belt and include, but are not limited to, mineral working and landfill, public utilities, motorways and their intersections, educational institutions, hotels and some small areas of residential development. Some of these semi-urban uses will have an impact on the ‘openness’ of the Green Belt as identified in the assessment.

Purpose 3 Assessment Criterion

- 4.4.23** The criterion used to assess the General Areas against Purpose 3 is set out below. Ordnance Survey base maps and aerial photography were reviewed in order to undertake the openness assessment.
- 4.4.24** The percentage of built form within a General Area was calculated using GIS tools based on the land area of features that are classified as manmade (constructed) within the Ordnance Survey MasterMap data, excluding roads and railway lines. The data includes buildings, surfaced areas such as car parks, infrastructure such as sewerage treatment works, glasshouses and other miscellaneous structures.
- 4.4.25** The score attributed to a General Area was initially determined on the basis of the percentage of built form. Scores were considered further in light of qualitative assessments of character, undertaken through site visits and revised as judged appropriate.³⁰ This assessment considered, in particular, the extent to which General Areas might be reasonably identified as ‘countryside’ (in line with the NPPF). In order to differentiate between different areas, broad categorisation was developed encompassing assessments of land use (including agricultural use), morphology, context, scale and links to the wider Green Belt:
- ‘Strong unspoilt rural character’ was defined as land with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland / scrubland and open fields.

³⁰ For example, General Areas with a relatively low level of built form (e.g. less than 10%) and a largely rural character would score 3; however a General Area with a relatively low level of built form (e.g. less than 10%) but with an urban character (such as formal open space designation covering the entire General Area) would score 1.

- ‘Largely rural open character’ was defined as land with a general absence of built development, largely characterised by rural land uses and landscapes but with some other sporadic developments and man-made structures.
- ‘Semi-urban character’ was defined as land which begins on the edge of the fully built up area and contains a mix of urban and rural land uses before giving way to the wider countryside. Land uses might include publicly accessible natural green spaces and green corridors, country parks and local nature reserves, small-scale food production (e.g. market gardens) and waste management facilities, interspersed with built development more generally associated with urban areas (e.g. residential or commercial).
- ‘Urban character’ was defined as land which is predominantly characterised by urban land uses, including physical developments such as residential or commercial, or urban managed parks.

Purpose 3 Assessment Criterion

Purpose	Criterion	Score
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.	5: Contains less than 5% built form and possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		4: Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		3: Contains between 10% and 20% built form and/or possesses a largely rural open character.
		2: Contains between 20% and 30% built form and/or possesses a semi-urban character.
		1: Contains less than 30% built form and/or possesses an urban character.
		0: Contains more than 30% built form and possesses an urban character.
Total score		xx/5

Purpose 4 Assessment

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

- 4.4.26** This purpose serves to protect the setting of historic settlements by retaining the surrounding open land or by retaining the landscape context for historic centres. As outlined in the advice note published

by PAS³¹, the assessment of this purpose relates to very few settlements in practice, due largely to the pattern of modern development that often envelopes historic towns today. Cambridge is a good example of a settlement where the setting of the historic centre is contextualised by rural features, where the views across the ‘backs’ retain a special status in planning terms. While individual historic assets are afforded protection through other legislative measures, there are examples of major settlements in Buckinghamshire and in neighbouring authority areas whose historic cores, as a whole, have not been completely enveloped by modern development, and where the countryside makes a strong contribution to the historic setting of the place.

4.4.27

In developing the methodology for this purpose, it was noted that a high level Green Belt Assessment prepared by Oxford City Council used landscape character assessment as a key source for identifying traits of the surrounding countryside which contributed to the city’s special character and historic setting.³² Indeed, landscape character is frequently utilised as a tool to enrich Green Belt assessments. This Study has utilised the Buckinghamshire Authorities’ Historic Towns Project assessment, supplemented as required by additional evidence such as Conservation Area Assessments and Townscape Character Studies, and also consulted directly with the Steering Group officers to identify areas of non-Green Belt settlements where the historic core directly abuts the Green Belt (Table 4.3, Map 4.6).³³ General Areas directly adjoining these historic cores were then subject to further assessment for Purpose 4, for which two aspects were of particular importance:

- The role of the General Area in providing immediate context for the historic settlement (along the boundary between the settlement and the Green Belt); and
- Contribution to views or vistas between the historic settlement and the surrounding countryside, looking both inwards and outwards where public viewpoints exist.

Table 4.3: Historic Settlement Cores Considered in Purpose 4 Assessment

Buckinghamshire	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Amersham	Eton (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)
Beaconsfield	Windsor (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)
Chalfont St Giles	
Chalfont St Peter	
Chesham	
Great Missenden	
Ivinghoe	
Marlow	

³¹ Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, PAS, 2014

³² Investigation into the potential to accommodate urban extensions in Oxford’s Green Belt: Informal Assessment, Oxford City Council, 2014

³³ From Markets to Metroland: The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Historic Towns Project, Buckinghamshire Authorities and Milton Keynes Council, 2014

Buckinghamshire	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Wendover	

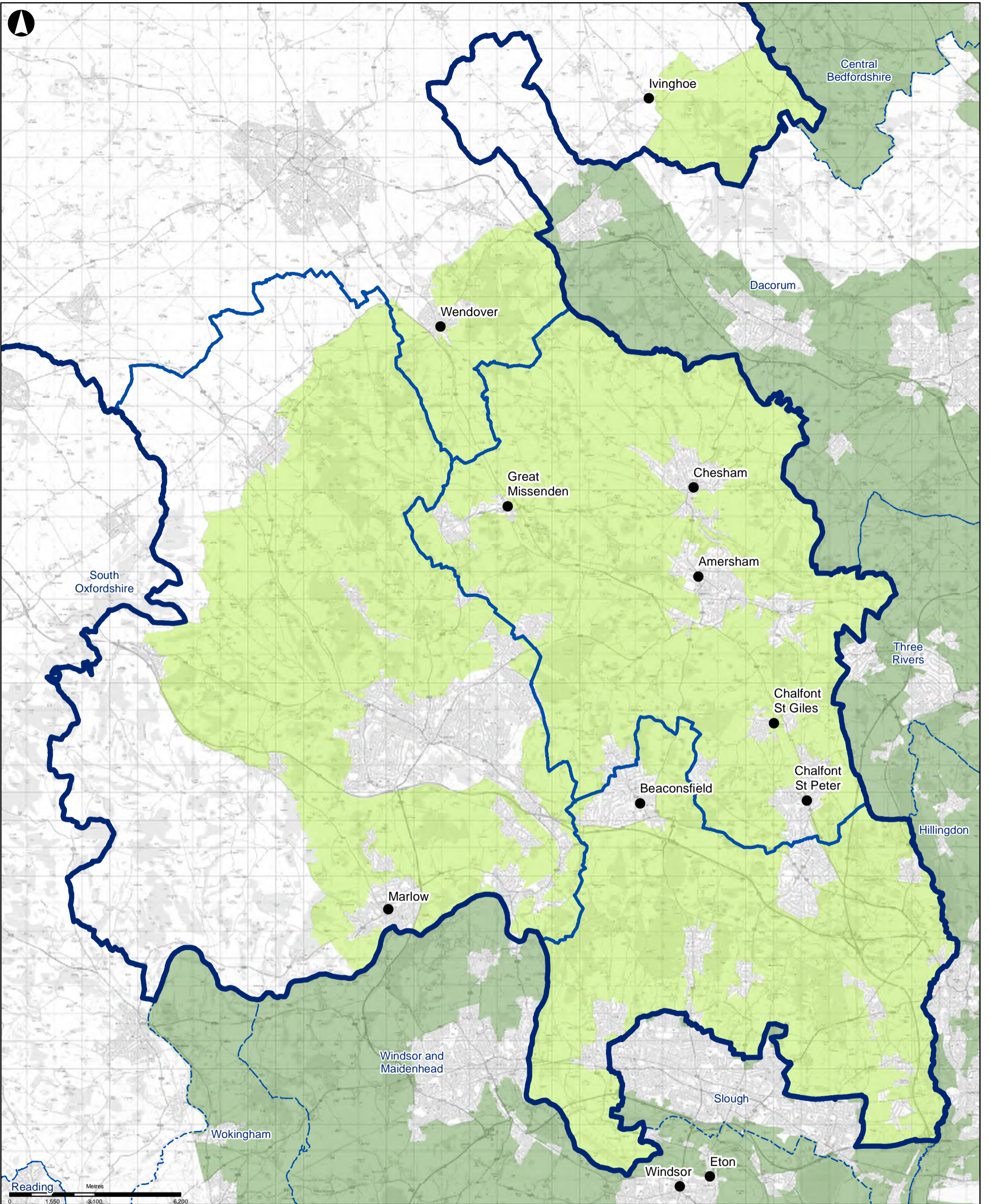
Purpose 4 Assessment Criterion

4.4.28 The relative importance of particular landforms or landscape features to the setting and special character of a historic town was adjudged using the Buckinghamshire Landscape Character Assessment, as well as Townscape Character Studies and Conservation Area Assessments (where applicable).³⁴ Potential vistas were identified using Ordnance Survey contour maps and sense checked on site visits.

Purpose 4 Assessment Criterion

Purpose	Criterion	Score
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.	5: Land parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, and protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
		3: Land parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, or protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
		1: Land parcel makes limited contribution to the broader setting of a historic town by providing a countryside setting for a historic core which is inward facing, and has a weak relationship with the surrounding countryside.
		0: Land parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Total score		xx/5

³⁴ Buckinghamshire Landscape Character Assessment, Buckinghamshire County Council, 2011



Legend

- Purpose 4 Settlement
- Buckinghamshire Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- - - Neighbouring District
- ▭ Buckinghamshire District
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Job Title

Buckinghamshire Green Belt Review

Map 4.6 Settlements
Containing Historic Cores
Directly Abutting Green Belt

Scale at A3

1:130,000

Job No	Drawing Status
242368-00	Issue
Drawing No	Issue
4.6	P1

Purpose 5 Assessment

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

4.4.29 Purpose 5 focuses on assisting urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. As outlined in Section 2, the advice note issued by PAS suggests that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. Therefore, assessment of Green Belt against this purpose will not enable a distinction between General Areas as all Green Belt achieves the purpose to the same extent.

4.4.30 Furthermore, during engagement with the Steering Group, we discussed whether any planned urban regeneration schemes were being inhibited by Green Belt designations, but no areas were identified by the Steering Group or stakeholders.

4.4.31 As a result, Purpose 5 was excluded from the assessment.

Pro Forma

4.4.32 A pro-forma was prepared to capture the assessments against each criterion for the General Areas. A copy can be found in Appendix B.

4.4.33 Selected completed pro-formas were shared with neighbouring authorities outside of Buckinghamshire for comment during November and December 2015. Comments were taken into account when finalising the report, where appropriate.

Recommendations

4.4.34 At this stage, the criterion scores for Purposes 1-4 were collated and tabulated across all of the General Areas, to highlight those areas meeting the purposes to a lesser or greater extent.

4.4.35 Recommendations were set out following the ‘rule of thumb’ (set out in paragraphs 4.4.4 – 4.4.5), whereby weaker performing General Areas and smaller sub-areas were identified and listed with a view to possible further detailed assessment in Part 2.

5 Key Findings

5.1 Green Belt General Areas

Purpose 1 Assessment

- 5.1.1** The overall findings of the Purpose 1 assessment are provided spatially in Maps 5.1a and 5.1b on pages 90-91.
- 5.1.2** 52 of the 157 Green Belt General Areas (33%) do not lie at the edge of an identified large built-up area and do not directly prevent sprawl, thus failing to meet Purpose 1. While some of these General Areas abut the edges of settlements, they play no role in preventing the sprawl of 'large built-up areas' (in reference to the specific policy set out in NPPF Paragraph 80, and defined for the purposes of this Assessment in Table 4.1 of this report).
- 5.1.3** Spatially, these General Areas tend to be concentrated in some of the most rural areas of the county. In broad terms, a swathe of General Areas which extend north-east/south-west between Chesham / High Wycombe and Princes Risborough / Wendover fail to meet this purpose. These areas are physically removed from the identified large built-up areas.
- 5.1.4** Another extensive cluster of General Areas which fail to meet this purpose is located in the east / south-east of the county between Rickmansworth / Greater London / Slough and Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter / Beaconsfield.
- 5.1.5** In a small number of instances only very small areas of Green Belt separate General Areas from large built-up areas for example in the case of General Area 70, which is separated from Beaconsfield to the north by a very narrow strip of Green Belt (General Area 69). These cases have been noted qualitatively in the pro-formas in Annex Report 1 (parts A – F).
- 5.1.6** 9 General Areas (6%) make only a limited contribution to this purpose, scoring 1 or 1+. Although these parcels directly adjoin the edge of single large built-up areas, they are 'enclosed' within their built form and thus do little to prevent sprawl. The majority of these General Areas are small in scale and often severed from the wider countryside as a result of modern infrastructure development which has effectively brought formerly rural land within the settlement footprint; for example, the M40 (General Area 45 at the edge of the High Wycombe large built-up area) and the A413 (General Areas 23b, 31 and 30 at the edge of Amersham). In other cases, this has arisen simply as a result of historic patterns of development around urban areas, which has left the Green Belt fragmented and piecemeal.
- 5.1.7** 92 General Areas, over half (59%), are 'connected' to a single large built-up area and score 3 or 3+. This substantial proportion reflects the dispersed pattern of urban areas across Buckinghamshire, as well as the close relationship between the county's Green Belt and neighbouring large built-up areas such as Slough, Maidenhead and

Greater London, and thus the important role which the Buckinghamshire Green Belt plays overall in preventing sprawl.

- 5.1.8** Of these 92, around half (47) score 3+ and therefore play a heightened role in preventing sprawl by providing a barrier where the boundary between the Green Belt and the large built-up area is not robust, durable or readily recognisable.
- 5.1.9** Four General Areas score 5+, therefore meeting Purpose 1 strongly. These clusters of parcels between Beaconsfield / Knotty Green and the High Wycombe large built-up area, and between Amersham and Chesham, play a particularly important role in preventing sprawl into open land by way of their containment by at least two, distinct large built-up areas. Furthermore, some or all of the boundaries between the Green Belt and these large built-up areas are not robust. In these locations, there is the risk of sprawl on multiple fronts and the Green Belt is fundamentally important for preventing the irregular, untidy outward growth of existing large built-up areas that would also undermine the settlement pattern.

Purpose 2 Assessment

- 5.1.10** The overall findings of the Purpose 2 assessment are provided spatially in Maps 5.2a and 5.2b on pages 92-93.
- 5.1.11** Just eight of the 157 General Areas (5%) fail to meet Purpose 2 and make no discernable contribution to the separation of settlements, generally as a result of their small scale and containment within the settlement footprint (General Areas 80a or 58a) or their weak linkage to the wider Green Belt (General Areas 23b, 30 or 31). Additionally, a number of General Areas in the west and north of the county which are at the edge Metropolitan Green Belt do not prevent coalescence between settlements (General Areas 1, 2b and 72).
- 5.1.12** 30 General Areas (19%) meet Purpose 2 only weakly. These parcels form part or the entirety of less essential gaps between non-Green Belt settlements, both in Buckinghamshire and in neighbouring local authority areas, and play little or no role in maintaining gaps between non-Green Belt and Green Belt settlements. These gaps tend to be physically large in scale (for example, in the case of General Area 9e which lies between Great Missenden and Wendover) or configured in such a way that makes them less important to preventing the coalescence of settlements.
- 5.1.13** Some General Areas scoring weakly against this purpose make a less essential contribution to a wider or essential gap as a result of their scale, shape or relationship with neighbouring settlements; for example, General Area 25c makes a lesser contribution to separation as a result of its severance from the wider Green Belt to the north and its partial containment by the built area of High Wycombe (Hazlemere and Widmer End).
- 5.1.14** Nearly half of General Areas, 70 out of 157 (45%), meet Purpose 2 with a score of 3. This substantial proportion reflects the county's dispersed settlement pattern and the important role which the Green

Belt plays in maintaining this. In particular, it is noted that across Buckinghamshire a sizeable number of General Areas meeting Purpose 2 play a key role in preventing the merging of ‘washed over’ Green Belt villages³⁵ with those larger settlements outside of the Green Belt. However, in the majority of cases, smaller ‘sub-areas’ within these General Areas are less important for preventing coalescence; these observations are noted qualitatively throughout the pro-formas in Annex Report 1 (parts A – F).

- 5.1.15** 49 General Areas (31%) meet Purpose 2 strongly (scoring 5) by forming the whole of, or a substantial part of, essential gaps between non-Green Belt settlements. These gaps tend to be of a small scale, such that they would be particularly sensitive to change; development could result in the physical coalescence of non-Green Belt settlements. Furthermore, in a number of cases, ribbon development or physical characteristics such as topography perceptually reduce the scale of gaps, thus further increasing the importance of the Green Belt in preventing coalescence.
- 5.1.16** The majority of General Areas meeting Purpose 2 strongly are clustered in the south and east of the county, reflecting the dense settlement pattern and strong influence of urban areas on the Green Belt in these areas.

Purpose 3 Assessment

- 5.1.17** The overall findings of the Purpose 3 assessment are provided spatially in Maps 5.3a and 5.3b on pages 94-95.
- 5.1.18** All of the 157 General Areas meet this purpose to a greater or lesser extent.
- 5.1.19** 16 out of the 157 General Areas (10%) meet Purpose 3 weakly, scoring 2. A further two General Areas (85a and 89) were deemed to meet the purpose very weakly, scoring 1. The majority of these 18 General Areas are located in the south or east of the county around the fringes of Greater London, Burnham / Slough, Amersham and Chesham, reflecting historic trends of urban encroachment in these areas which have led to the fragmentation of the countryside. These General Areas have an urban or semi-urban character with higher levels of built form, but continue maintain the openness of some areas of land.
- 5.1.20** 68 of 157 General Areas (43%) meet Purpose 3, scoring 3. These areas have been subjected to some development but still demonstrate a largely rural character, thus the Green Belt continues to prevent encroachment into the countryside.
- 5.1.21** 71 out of 157 General Areas (45%) meet Purpose 3 relatively strongly or strongly, scoring 4 or 5. The high proportion of General Areas which are judged to be important for preventing encroachment reflects the dramatic contrast within the county, which includes significant swathes of largely unspoilt countryside, much of which has been the

³⁵ Defined as Green Belt villages in the respective local development plans, where applicable.

subject to little or no physical development aside from small rural villages or agricultural structures. Particularly in the north and west of the county, urban settlements transition straight into open countryside, and the Green Belt plays an important role in ensuring this openness and the distinctive character of the countryside is maintained.

Purpose 4 Assessment

- 5.1.22** The overall findings of the Purpose 3 assessment are provided spatially in Maps 5.4a and 5.4b on pages 96-97.
- 5.1.23** While the Green Belt undoubtedly maintains the setting of a substantial number of historic Buckinghamshire settlements, national policy is specific in its reference to historic ‘towns’ for this assessment. The assessment focused on areas of Green Belt which directly abut the historic cores of those settlements identified through the Buckinghamshire Authorities’ Historic Towns Project (as set out in paragraph 4.4.27). As such, the majority of General Areas, 132 out of 157 (84%) do not meet Purpose 4.
- 5.1.24** 13 General Areas (8%) are deemed to make only a limited contribution to this purpose, meeting it weakly (scoring 1). These General Areas are deemed to contribute to the broad contextual setting of the identified historic settlements by maintaining open land or countryside, but have little direct visual interface with the historic core itself. This may be as a result of the historic core being inward facing (for example, the historic part of Wendover, which as a result of its configuration provides little visual interaction with General Area 8a) or as a result of physical features or natural characteristics which restrict the connection between the settlement and the countryside (such as General Area 33e, which is physically and visually separated from the historic core of Amersham by the A413).
- 5.1.25** 12 General Areas (8%) are judged to meet Purpose 3, scoring 3. These areas either provide immediate rural context for the historic settlement (such as General Area 53b, which maintains the historic southerly approach to Beaconsfield) or contribute to vistas between the historic core and the surrounding countryside (for example, General Area 32a, where there is visibility between Chalfont St Peter and the countryside and vice versa).
- 5.1.26** No General Areas are judged to meet this purpose strongly.

5.2 Non-Green Belt Areas

- 5.2.1** 14 non-Green Belt Areas, General Areas 101-114, were considered as part of the assessment. The detailed pro-formas for these assessments are located in Annex 1g. The areas encompassed:
- 8 General Areas at the northern extremity of the Buckinghamshire Green Belt, at the edges of Wendover and Princes Risborough / Monks Risborough (101-108);

- 2 General Areas at the edge of Leighton Linlade, directly abutting the western extremity of the Green Belt in Central Bedfordshire (109-110); and
- 4 General Areas at the edge of settlements in Wycombe district (former areas of safeguarded land, now reserve sites which have been released by the Council for development) (111-114).

5.2.2 All of these General Areas were found to meet Green Belt purposes to a greater or lesser extent.

5.2.3 If designated, 11 non-Green Belt General Areas would potentially prevent sprawl and meet Purpose 1, albeit two only weakly as a result of their containment within the footprint of the High Wycombe large built-up area (112 and 114).

5.2.4 All 14 non-Green Belt General Areas make some contribution to preventing the coalescence of settlements and thus would meet Purpose 2 if designated. In particular, the potential role of General Area 103 in preventing the coalescence of Princes Risborough / Monks Risborough and Longwick, as well as General Area 107 in restricting the merging of Wendover and Weston Turville, were noted. General Areas 109-112 and 114, in contrast, would only have scope to meet this purpose weakly.

5.2.5 All non-Green Belt General Areas meet Purpose 3, attaining a score of 3 or higher. Eight of the 14 General Areas (57%) have the potential to meet this purpose relatively strongly or strongly, scoring 4 or 5. This reflects the nature of many of the areas considered, several of which are covered by countryside designations in the relevant local development plans.

5.3 Overall Summary

5.3.1 All 171 General Areas (Green Belt and non-Green Belt) meet one or more of the NPPF purposes to varying degrees. The individual purpose scores for Green Belt General Areas are set out in Table 5.1, and non-Green Belt General Areas in Table 5.2, and illustrated graphically in Maps 5.1-5.4.

5.3.2 In order to summarise the outcomes from the assessment, the General Areas have been categorised as follows:

- 116 General Areas are judged to be strongly scoring Green Belt, meeting at least one of the purposes strongly (scoring 4 or 5);
- 53 General Areas are judged to be medium scoring Green Belt, scoring moderately (3) against at least one purpose and failing to score strongly against any purpose (4 or 5);
- 2 General Areas are judged to be weakly scoring Green Belt, failing to meet or weakly meeting all purposes (scoring 1 or 2).

5.3.3 The categorisation of General Areas is also set out in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 and in Maps 5.5A and 5.5B.

Table 5.1: Overall Summary of Findings for Purpose Assessment (Green Belt General Areas)

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
1	Aylesbury Vale / Central Bedfordshire	278.1	FAIL	0	0	5	0	Strong
2a	Aylesbury Vale / Central Bedfordshire	605.7	FAIL	0	1	3	0	Medium
2b	Aylesbury Vale / Central Bedfordshire	365.7	FAIL	0	0	3	0	Medium
3	Aylesbury Vale	127.4	FAIL	0	1	5	1	Strong
4	Aylesbury Vale	1390.2	FAIL	0	1	5	0	Strong
5	Aylesbury Vale	80.9	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
6	Aylesbury Vale / Dacorum	275.6	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
7a	Aylesbury Vale	145.3	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium
7b	Aylesbury Vale	168.0	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
8a	Aylesbury Vale / Chiltern	256.9	PASS	3	1	5	1	Strong
8b	Aylesbury Vale	368.1	PASS	3	3	3	0	Medium
8c	Aylesbury Vale / <i>Dacorum</i>	604.9	FAIL	0	5	5	0	Strong
8d	Aylesbury Vale / Chiltern / <i>Dacorum</i>	3186.8	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
8e	Chiltern	237.8	PASS	3+	1	4	0	Strong
8f	Chiltern	447.5	PASS	3+	1	3	0	Medium
8g	Chiltern	165.0	PASS	3+	1	3	0	Medium
9a	Wycombe	330.1	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
9b	Wycombe	123.1	PASS	3+	1	4	0	Strong
9c	Wycombe	2111.5	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong
9d	Aylesbury Vale / Wycombe	279.8	PASS	3	1	4	1	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
9e	Aylesbury Vale / Chiltern / Wycombe	1580.7	PASS	3	1	5	0	Strong
9f	Chiltern / Wycombe	879.3	FAIL	0	3	4	0	Strong
9g	Wycombe	768.8	FAIL	0	3	4	0	Strong
9h	Wycombe	669.3	FAIL	0	3	4	0	Strong
10a	Aylesbury Vale	125.7	PASS	3+	1	5	3	Strong
10b	Aylesbury Vale / Chiltern	1507.1	FAIL	0	3	5	1	Strong
10c	Chiltern	200.9	FAIL	0	3	3	1	Medium
10d	Chiltern	247.0	PASS	3+	3	5	3	Strong
10e	Chiltern	300.1	PASS	3+	1	3	3	Medium
11	Chiltern / Dacorum	516.7	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong
12	Wycombe	109.2	PASS	3+	1	2	0	Medium
13a	Chiltern	57.8	PASS	3	1	2	0	Medium

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
13b	Chiltern / <i>Dacorum</i>	1405.9	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong
14a	Chiltern	755.1	FAIL	0	1	5	0	Strong
14b	Chiltern / <i>Dacorum / Three Rivers</i>	695.2	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
15	Chiltern / <i>Dacorum</i>	313.2	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium
16a	Chiltern	59.5	PASS	3+	5	4	0	Strong
16b	Chiltern	310.3	PASS	3+	3	5	1	Strong
16c	Chiltern	42.1	PASS	1	5	2	0	Strong
17	Wycombe	159.6	PASS	3+	1	3	0	Medium
18a	Chiltern	514.9	PASS	3+	3	5	0	Strong
18b	Chiltern	126.9	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
19	Chiltern	624.6	FAIL	0	3	3	3	Medium
20	Wycombe	2455.1	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
21a	Chiltern	1025.1	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium
21b	Chiltern / Wycombe	58.9	PASS	1+	5	3	0	Strong
22a	Chiltern	229.4	PASS	3	5	5	0	Strong
22b	Chiltern	33.8	PASS	3+	1	5	0	Strong
23a	Chiltern	229.2	PASS	3	3	3	3	Medium
23b	Chiltern	17.5	PASS	1+	0	3	3	Medium
24a	Chiltern / Wycombe	78.5	PASS	3+	1	3	0	Medium
24b	Chiltern	838.7	PASS	3+	3	3	1	Medium
25a	Wycombe	180.3	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
25b	Wycombe	200.0	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
25c	Wycombe	112.5	PASS	1+	1	3	0	Medium
26	Wycombe	476.5	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
27	Chiltern	235.1	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
28	Chiltern / Three Rivers	289.0	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
29	Chiltern / Three Rivers	389.0	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium
30	Chiltern	9.8	PASS	1+	0	3	3	Medium
31	Chiltern	6.0	PASS	1+	0	2	3	Medium
32a	Chiltern	772.0	PASS	3	3	5	3	Strong
32b	Chiltern / South Bucks	433.1	PASS	3	5	4	0	Strong
33a	Chiltern / Wycombe	231.8	PASS	3	1	3	0	Medium
33b	Chiltern	203.5	FAIL	0	1	5	0	Strong
33c	Chiltern / South Bucks	1163.9	PASS	3	3	4	0	Strong
33d	Chiltern	220.1	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium
33e	Chiltern	104.7	PASS	3+	1	5	1	Strong
34	Wycombe	354.7	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
35	Chiltern	48.9	FAIL	0	1	3	0	Medium
36	Chiltern	308.0	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium
37	Wycombe	905.1	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
38a	Chiltern / Three Rivers	399.3	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
38b	Chiltern / Three Rivers	556.1	PASS	3	3	3	0	Medium
39	Wycombe	696.0	PASS	3+	3	5	0	Strong
40a	South Bucks	91.7	FAIL	0	3	4	0	Strong
40b	Chiltern / South Bucks / Three Rivers	619.7	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium
41a	Chiltern	699.5	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
41b	Chiltern	230.6	PASS	3+	5	3	3	Strong
42	Chiltern / Wycombe	729.4	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Strong
43a	Wycombe	91.1	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
43b	Wycombe	238.2	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
43c	Wycombe	403.4	PASS	3	5	4	0	Strong
43d	Wycombe	101.1	PASS	3+	5	4	0	Strong
43e	Wycombe	140.7	PASS	3	3	3	0	Medium
44a	Chiltern / South Bucks	229.0	PASS	3	3	3	1	Medium
44b	Chiltern / South Bucks	133.3	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong
45	Wycombe	70.2	PASS	1+	5	4	0	Strong
46a	Wycombe	799.3	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong
46b	Wycombe	56.4	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
47a	Chiltern / South Bucks	81.0	PASS	3	3	2	1	Medium
47b	Chiltern / South Bucks	384.0	PASS	3	3	4	1	Strong
48	South Bucks / Wycombe	102.0	PASS	3+	5	4	0	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
49a	Wycombe	22.1	FAIL	0	5	5	0	Strong
49b	Wycombe	90.9	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
50a	Wycombe	506.9	PASS	3+	1	4	0	Strong
50b	Wycombe	211.2	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
51	South Bucks / Three Rivers	44.7	FAIL	0	5	5	0	Strong
52a	Wycombe	185.3	FAIL	0	5	3	0	Strong
52b	Wycombe	136.3	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
53a	South Bucks / Wycombe	39.1	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
53b	South Bucks	58.5	PASS	3+	1	3	3	Medium
54	Chiltern / South Bucks	476.5	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium
55	South Bucks / Wycombe	27.9	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium
56	South Bucks	850.3	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
57a	Chiltern / South Bucks	8.3	PASS	1	1	3	1	Medium
57b	Chiltern / South Bucks	17.3	PASS	3	1	3	1	Medium
58a	Wycombe	91.8	FAIL	0	0	3	0	Medium
58b	South Bucks / Wycombe	447.3	PASS	3+	5	4	0	Strong
59	South Bucks	807.7	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
60	Wycombe	293.1	PASS	3	5	2	0	Strong
61	South Bucks	22.2	FAIL	0	5	3	0	Strong
62	South Bucks	5.5	PASS	3	3	4	0	Strong
63	South Bucks	195.6	FAIL	0	5	2	0	Strong
64a	South Bucks	42.8	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
64b	South Bucks	178.3	PASS	3	3	4	0	Strong
65a	South Bucks	23.8	FAIL	0	3	2	0	Medium
65b	South Bucks	269.5	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
66	South Bucks	245.9	FAIL	0	3	2	0	Medium
67	Wycombe	61.4	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
68	South Bucks	411.1	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
69	South Bucks	42.2	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
70	South Bucks	573.1	FAIL	0	5	4	0	Strong
71	South Bucks / Wycombe	620.8	PASS	3+	1	4	0	Strong
72	Wycombe	166.7	PASS	3+	0	4	3	Strong
73	South Bucks / Wycombe	643.2	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
74	South Bucks	538.0	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium
75	South Bucks	229.4	FAIL	0	3	4	0	Strong
76	South Bucks	387.0	FAIL	0	5	3	0	Strong
77	South Bucks	30.1	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium
78	South Bucks / LB Hillingdon	32.0	PASS	1	1	5	0	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
79	South Bucks / LB Hillingdon	229.9	PASS	3	3	3	0	Medium
80a	South Bucks / Slough	17.8	FAIL	0	0	2	0	Weak
80b	South Bucks / Slough	366.3	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
81	South Bucks / Slough	469.4	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
82	South Bucks	88.0	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
83	South Bucks	160.6	PASS	3	5	4	0	Strong
84	South Bucks	37.2	PASS	3	3	2	0	Medium
85a	South Bucks / Slough	19.7	PASS	3+	5	1	0	Strong
85b	South Bucks / Slough	289.3	PASS	3+	5	3	0	Strong
86a	South Bucks	60.8	FAIL	0	5	3	0	Strong
86b	South Bucks	193.9	FAIL	0	5	4	0	Strong

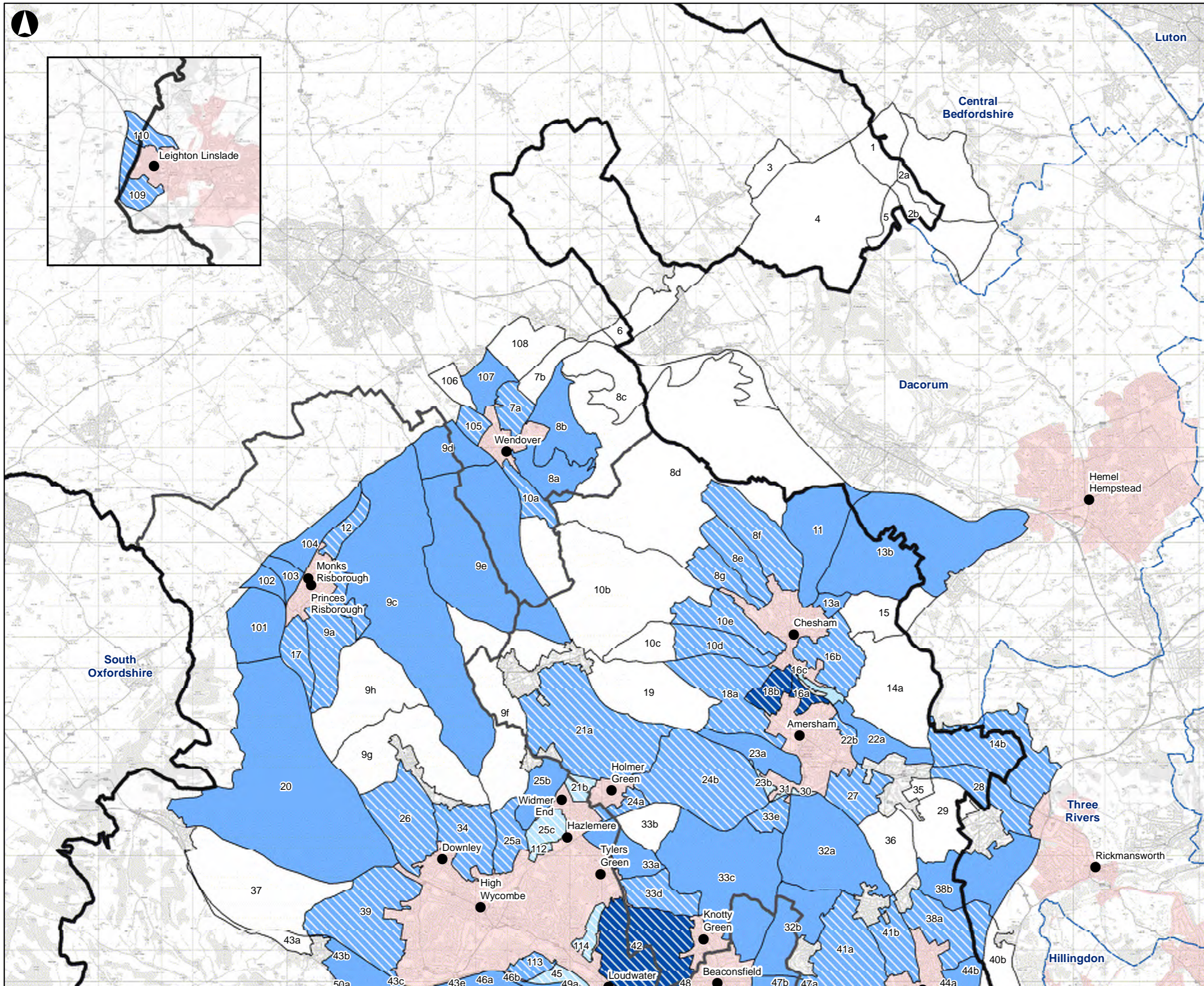
General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
87a	South Bucks	57.1	FAIL	0	3	5	0	Strong
87b	South Bucks	228.2	FAIL	0	5	3	0	Strong
88	South Bucks	534.8	PASS	3	3	4	0	Strong
89	South Bucks	12.4	PASS	3	3	1	0	Medium
90	South Bucks	242.0	PASS	3	3	4	0	Strong
91	South Bucks	174.4	PASS	3	3	5	0	Strong
92	South Bucks	6.2	FAIL	0	1	2	0	Weak
93	South Bucks	51.6	FAIL	0	5	2	0	Strong
94	South Bucks	7.9	FAIL	0	5	2	0	Strong
95	South Bucks	39.3	FAIL	0	5	2	0	Strong
96	South Bucks / Slough	30.0	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
97	South Bucks / LB Hillingdon	164.2	PASS	3	5	2	0	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments				Overall Summary	
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment		Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development		Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside
98	South Bucks / Slough / Windsor & Maidenhead	268.3	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
99	South Bucks / Slough	295.6	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
100	South Bucks / Slough	584.4	FAIL	0	5	3	0	Strong

Table 5.2: Overall Summary of Findings for Purpose Assessment (Non-Green Belt General Areas)

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
101	Wycombe	358.0	PASS	3	3	3	0	Medium
102	Wycombe	73.1	PASS	3	3	4	0	Strong
103	Wycombe	83.3	PASS	3	5	3	0	Strong
104	Wycombe	205.9	PASS	3	3	3	0	Medium
105	Aylesbury Vale	81.0	PASS	3+	3	3	0	Medium
106	Aylesbury Vale	96.6	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium
107	Aylesbury Vale	171.3	PASS	3	5	4	0	Strong
108	Aylesbury Vale	273.8	FAIL	0	3	3	0	Medium
109	Aylesbury Vale / Central Bedfordshire	155.6	PASS	3+	1	5	0	Strong
110	Aylesbury Vale / Central Bedfordshire	99.3	PASS	3+	1	5	0	Strong
111	Wycombe	10.3	FAIL	0	1	4	0	Strong

General Area	Local Authority	Area (ha)	Purpose Assessments					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development	Protects lane which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
112	Wycombe	23.4	PASS	1+	1	5	0	Strong
113	Wycombe	79.9	PASS	3+	3	4	0	Strong
114	Wycombe	73.7	PASS	1+	1	5	0	Strong



Legend

Purpose 1b Scores

- 0
- 1
- 1+
- 3
- 3+
- 5
- 5+

Large Built-Up Area (or part of)

General Areas

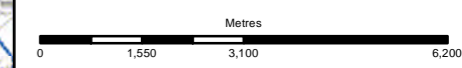
Neighbouring District

Buckinghamshire District

Buckinghamshire County

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Map 5.1a Purpose 1b Assessment Scores, North

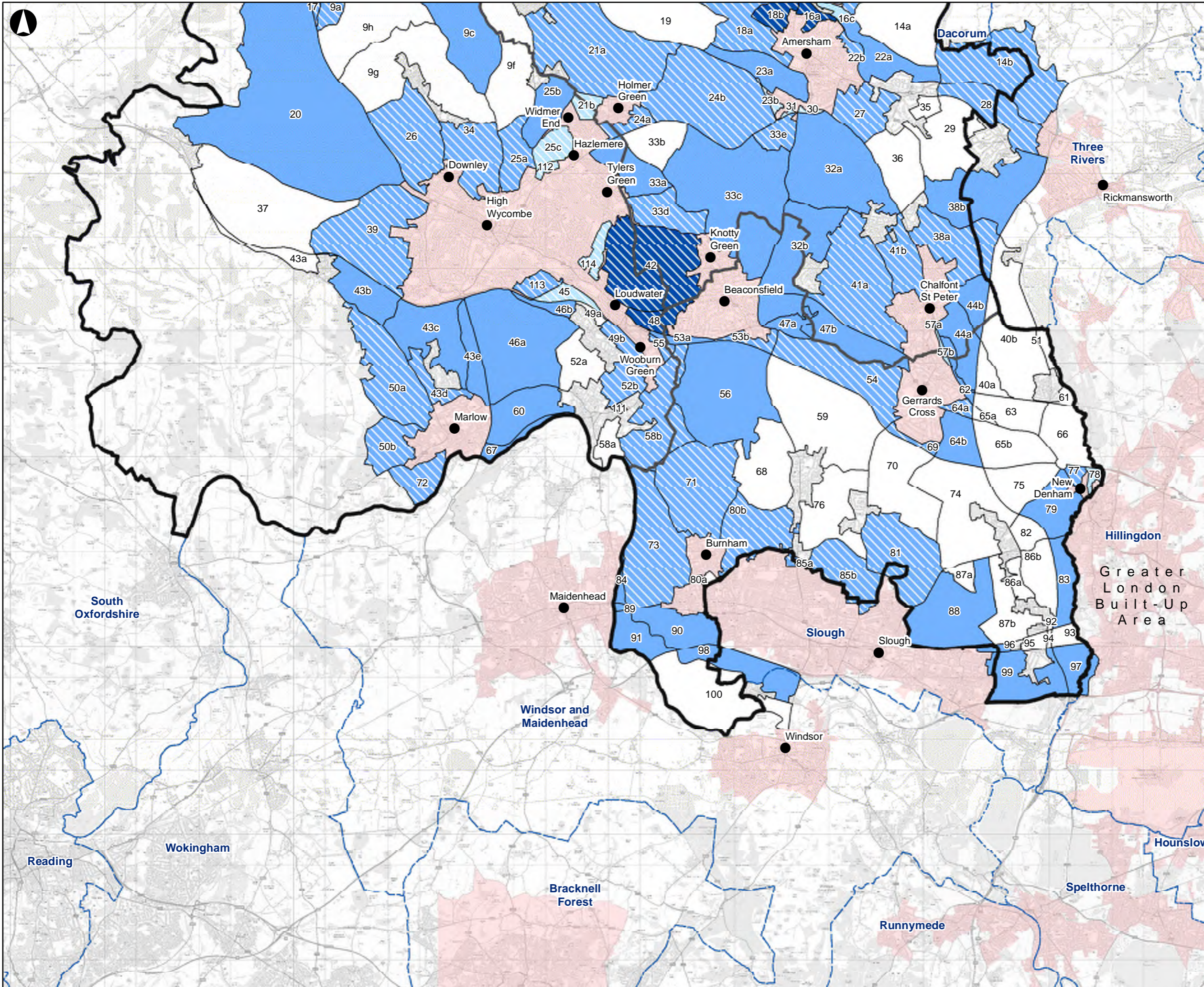
Scale at A3
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Job No
242368-00

Drawing Status
Issue

Drawing No
5.1a

Issue
P1



Legend

Purpose 1b Scores

- 0
- 1
- 1+
- 3
- 3+
- 5
- 5+

● Large Built-Up Area (or part of)

□ General Areas

□ Neighbouring District

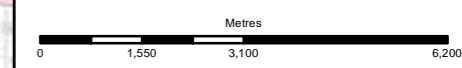
□ Buckinghamshire District

□ Buckinghamshire County

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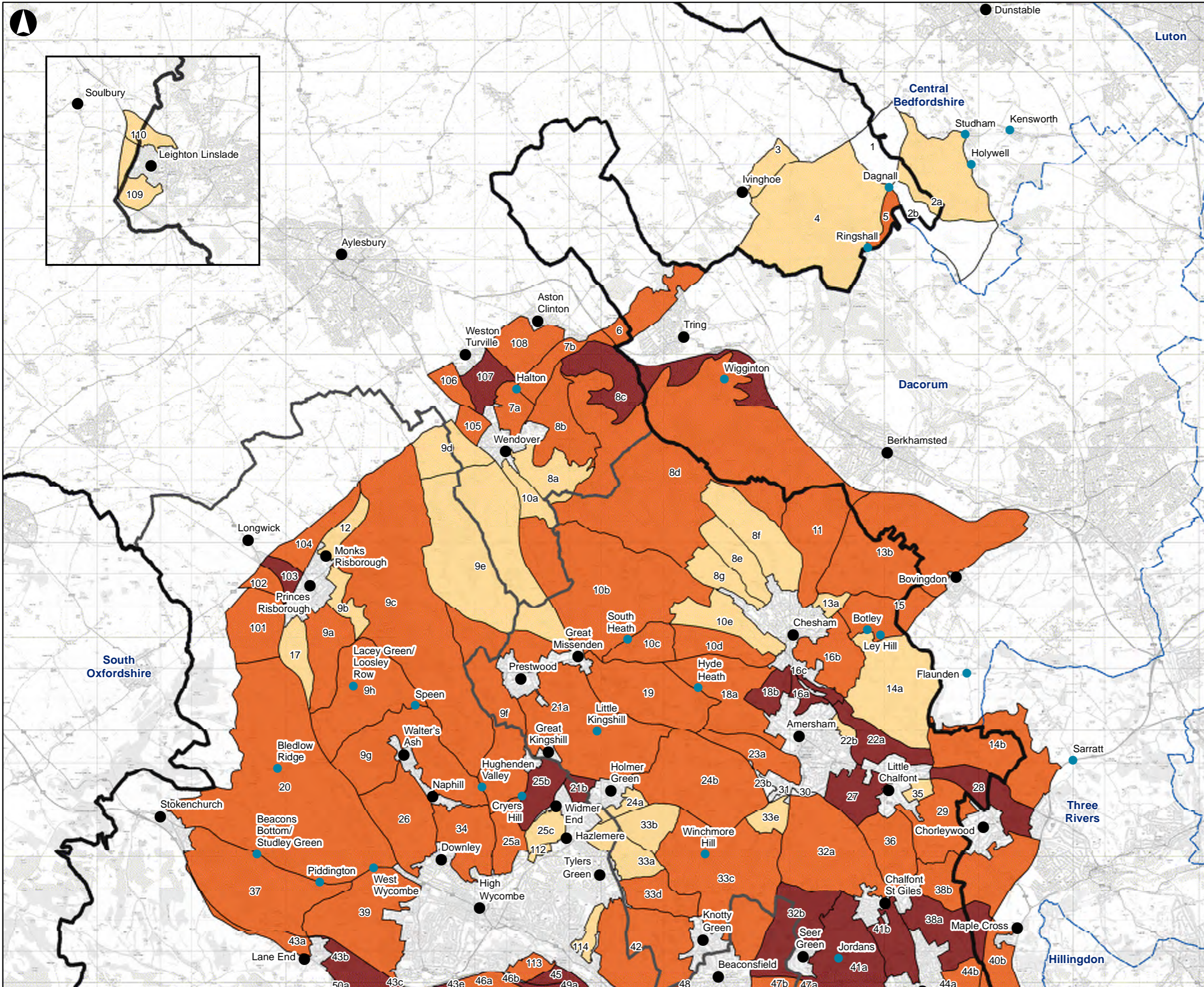
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Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

Map 5.1b Purpose 1b Assessment Scores, South

Scale at A3
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Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
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Drawing No 5.1b	Issue P1
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Legend

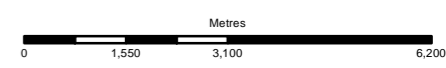
Purpose 2

- 0
- 1
- 3
- 5

- Green Belt Settlement
- Non-Green Belt Settlement
- General Areas
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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Map 5.2a Purpose 2 Assessment Scores, North

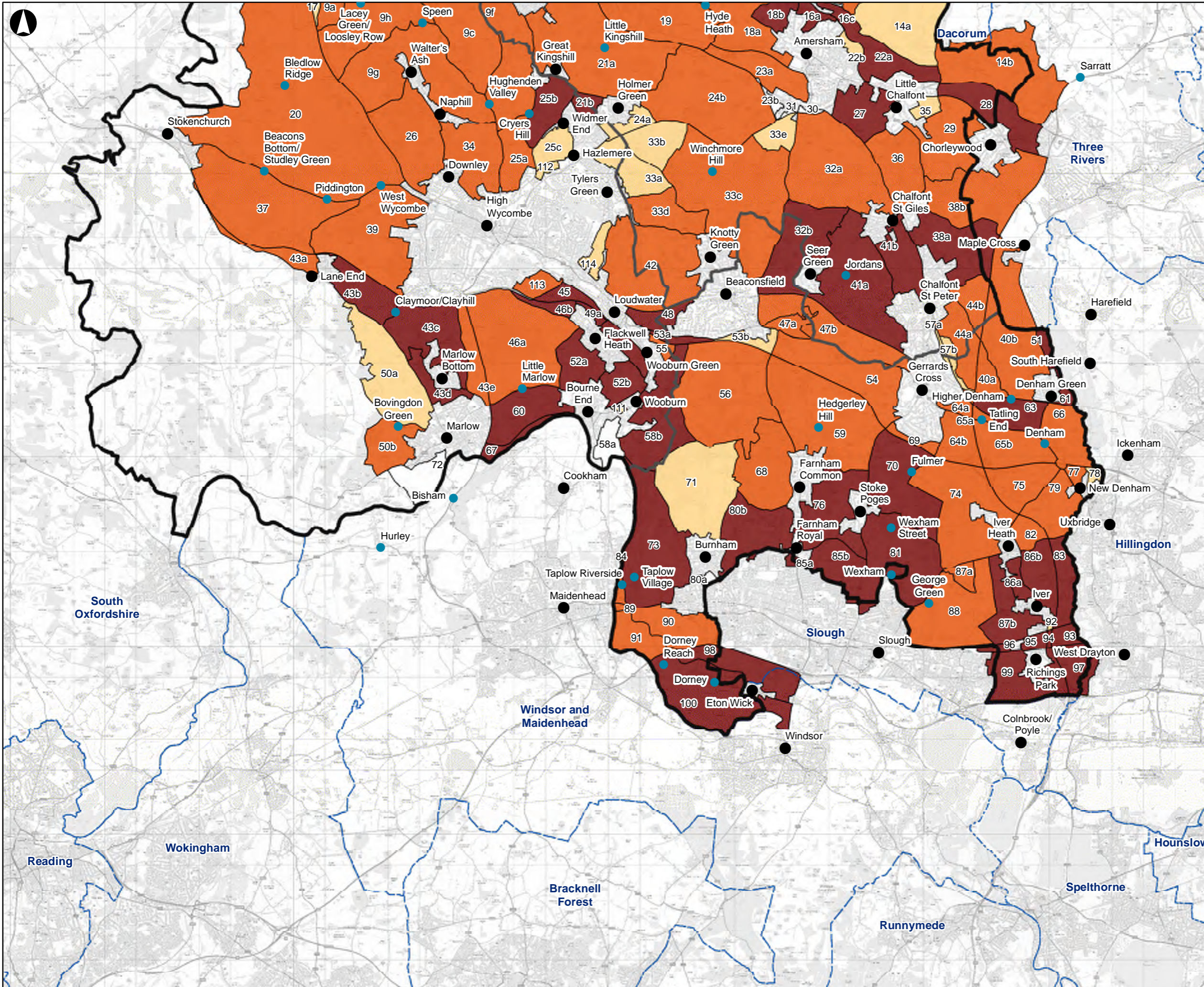
Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No
242368-00

Drawing Status
Issue

Drawing No
5.2a

Issue
P1



Legend

Purpose 2

- 0
- 1
- 3
- 5

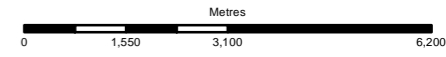
- Green Belt Settlement
- Non-Green Belt Settlement

- General Areas
- Neighbouring District
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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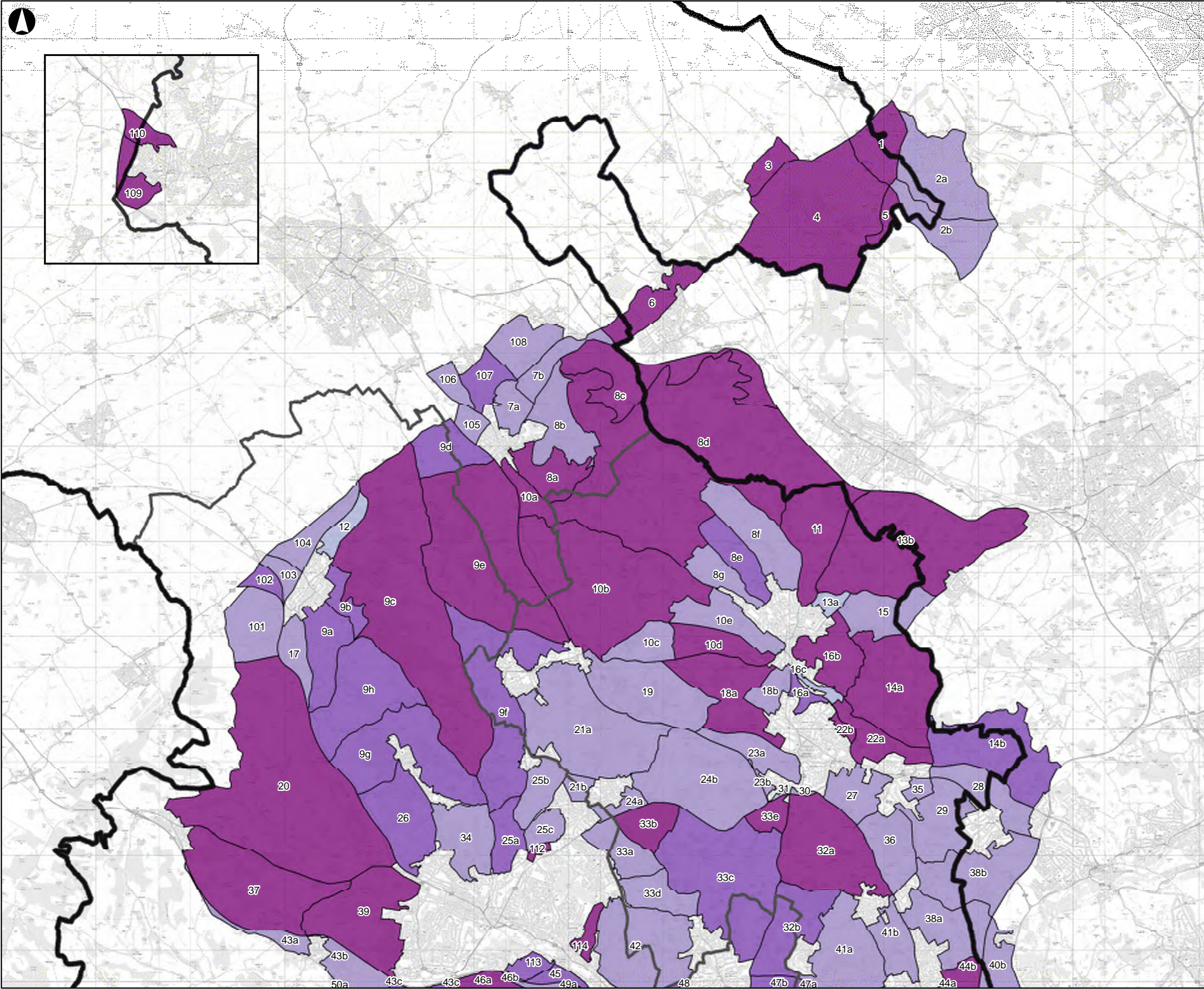
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Map 5.2b Purpose 2 Assessment Scores, South

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Legend

Purpose 3

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

General Areas

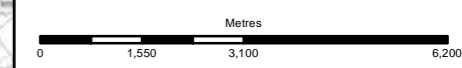
Buckinghamshire District

Buckinghamshire County

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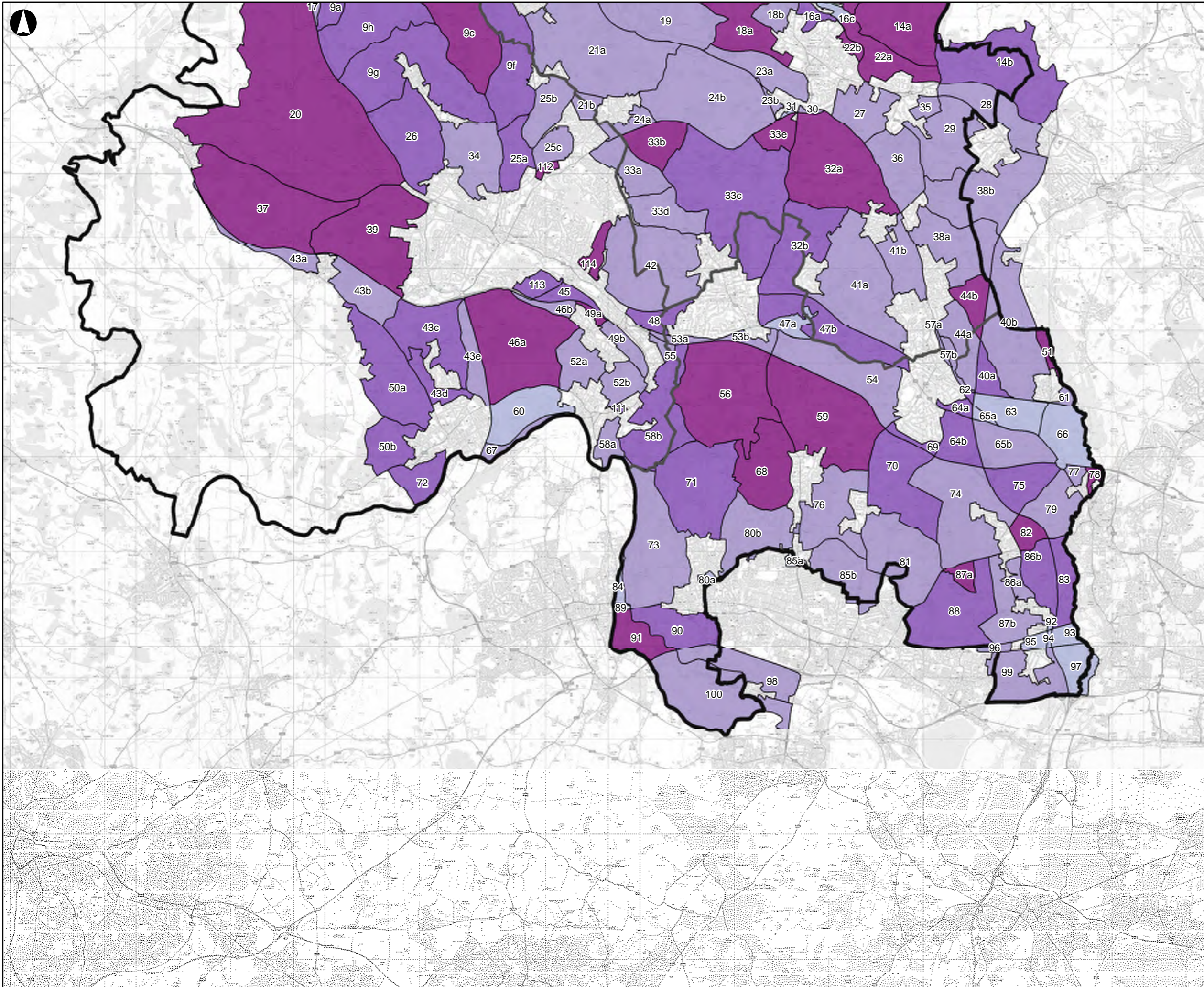
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Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

**Map 5.3a Purpose 3
Assessment Scores,
North**

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
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Drawing No 5.3a	Issue P1
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Legend

Purpose 3

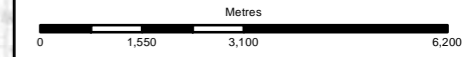
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

- General Areas
- Buckinghamshire District
- Buckinghamshire County

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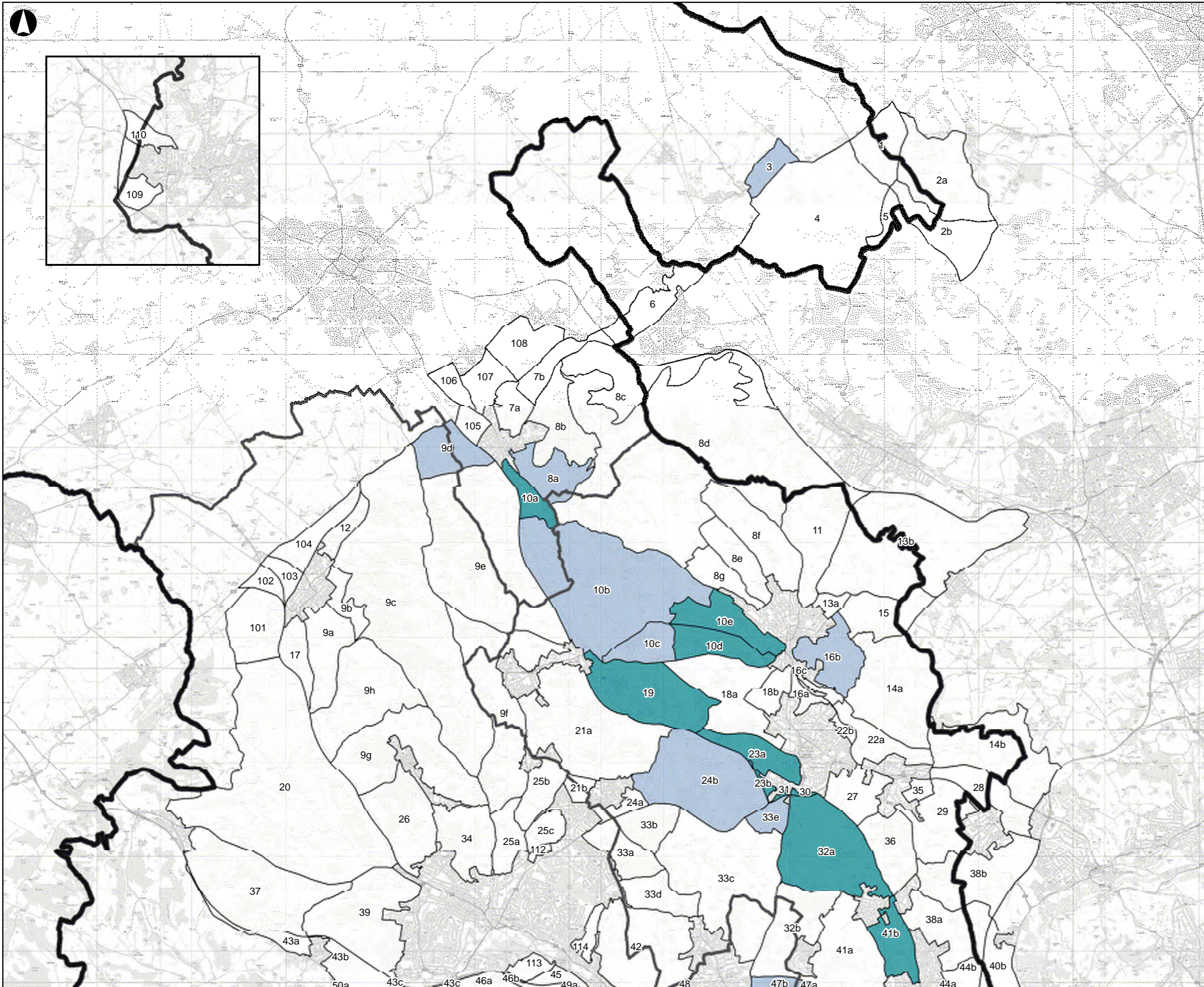
Job Title
Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment

Map 5.3b Purpose 3 Assessment Scores, South

Scale at A3
1:115,000

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Drawing No 5.3b	Issue P1
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Legend

Purpose 4

- 0
- 1
- 3

General Areas

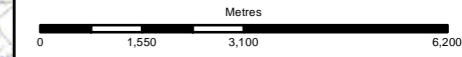
Buckinghamshire District

Buckinghamshire County

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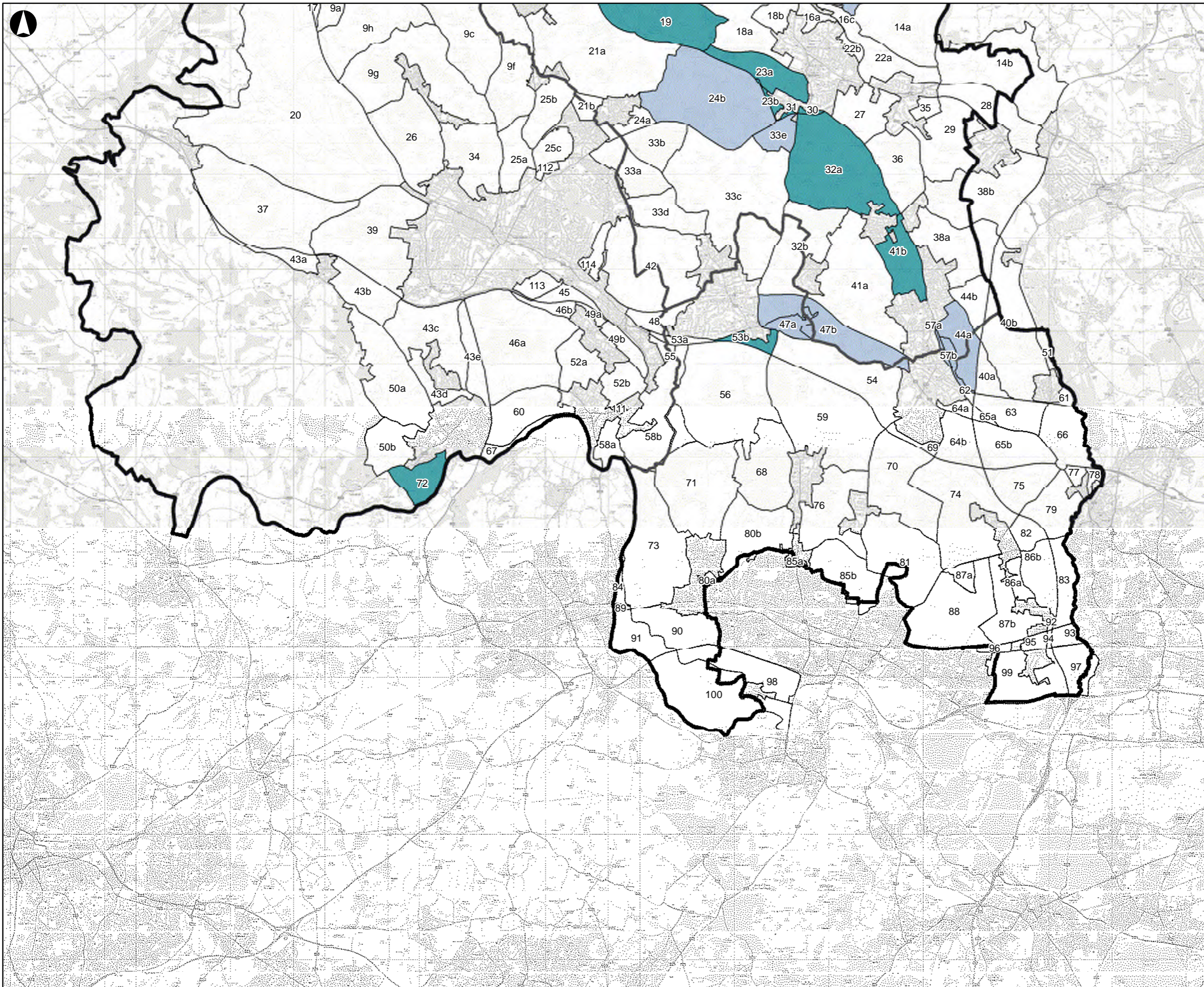
Job Title
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**Map 5.4a Purpose 4
Assessment Scores,
North**

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
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Drawing No 5.4a	Issue P1
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Legend

Purpose 4

- 0
- 1
- 3

General Areas

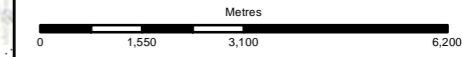
Buckinghamshire District

Buckinghamshire County

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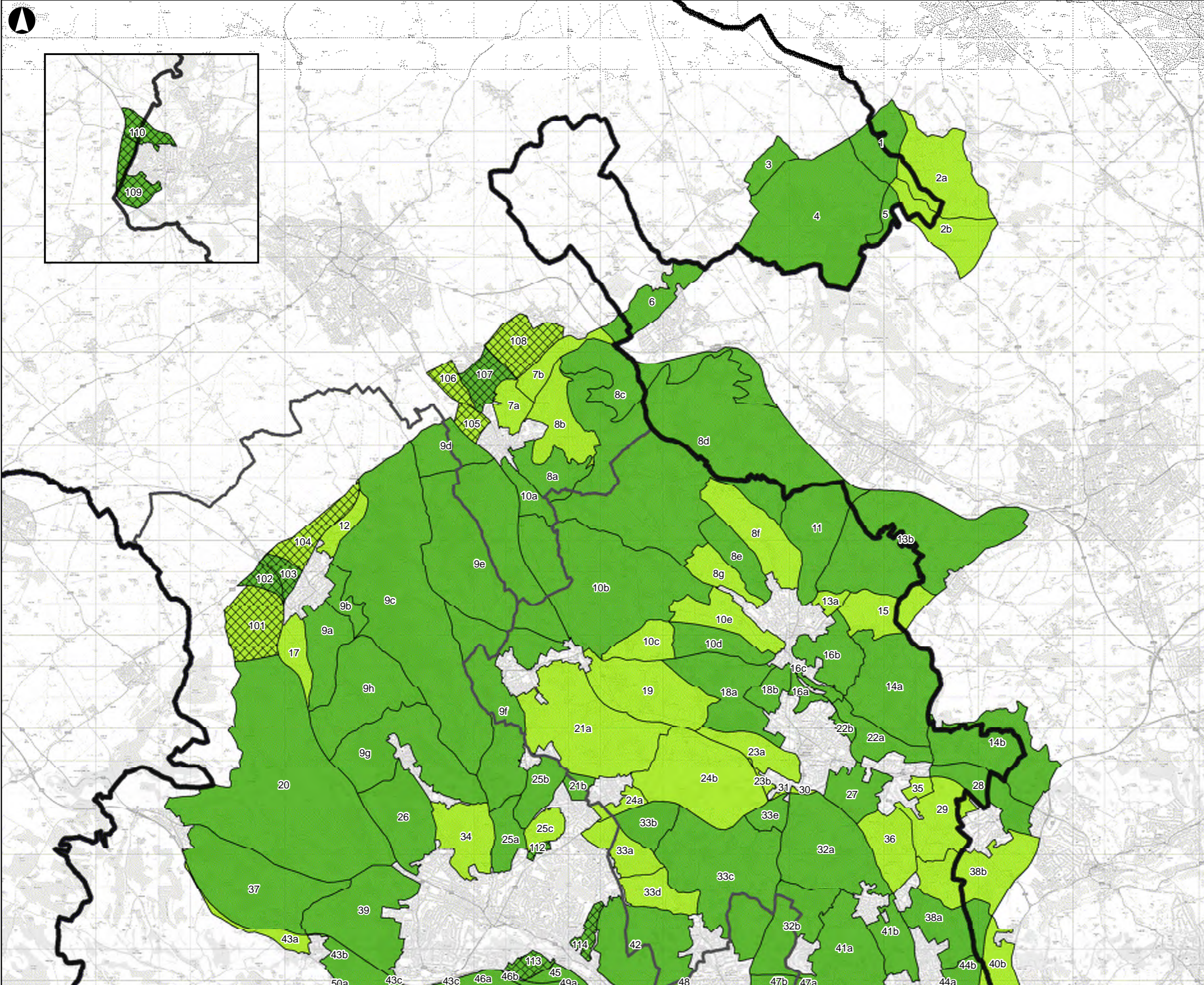
Job Title
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**Map 5.4b Purpose 4
Assessment Scores,
South**

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
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Drawing No 5.4b	Issue P1
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Legend

- Buckinghamshire County
- Buckinghamshire District

Overall

- Weak
- Medium
- Strong
- General Areas
- Non-Green Belt General Areas

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Metres
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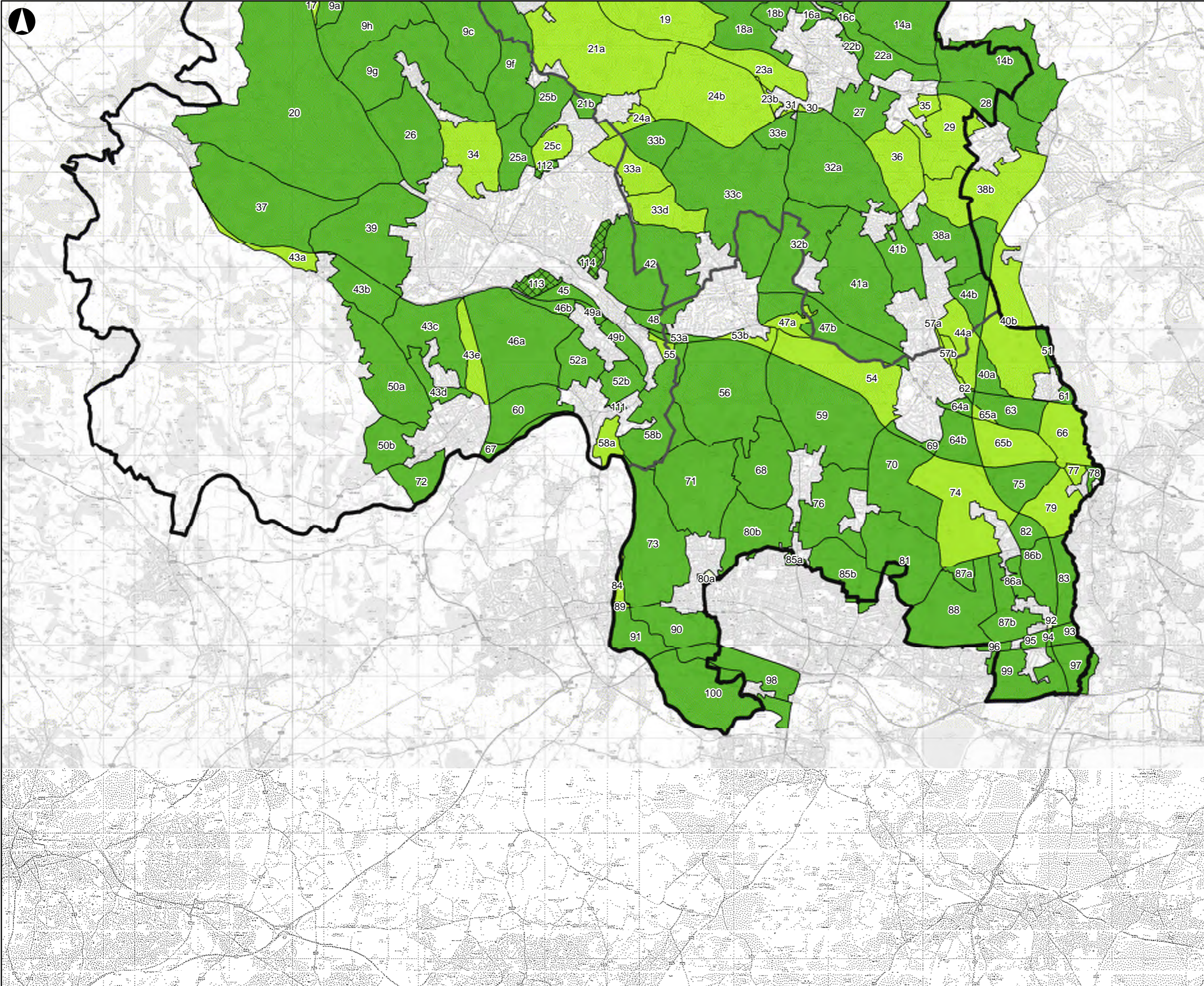
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Job Title
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Map 5.5a Overall Assessment Scores, North

Scale at A3
1:115,000

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Drawing No 5.5a	Issue P1



Legend

- Buckinghamshire County
- Buckinghamshire District

Overall

- Weak
- Medium
- Strong
- General Areas
- Non-Green Belt General Areas

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Metres

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Map 5.5b Overall Assessment Scores, South

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
Drawing No 5.5b	Issue P1

6 Recommendations

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 Following the assessments of the General Areas against the NPPF purposes, a series of recommendations have been identified which the Buckinghamshire Authorities may wish to take forward in Part 2, including consideration of whether ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist to justify any alterations to the Green Belt boundary.

6.1.2 While it is clear that the majority of the Buckinghamshire Green Belt is performing an important role in terms of the NPPF purposes, a number of more weakly performing areas have been identified which may warrant further consideration. The areas for further consideration can broadly be categorised as follows:

1. General Areas which score weakly overall against the NPPF purposes (e.g. attain low scores across all criteria) and could be considered further by the respective Councils as part of their Part 2 work.
2. Whole General Areas or clusters of General Areas which, although medium or strongly scoring against the NPPF purposes, have particular characteristics or synergies with neighbouring weaker General Areas, which might lend themselves to further consideration in Part 2. These specific characteristics are set out clearly for each recommended area.
3. Medium or strongly scoring General Areas where there is clear scope for sub-division to identify weakly performing ‘sub-areas’, including the presence of boundary features which have the potential to be permanent and recognisable; these areas could be afforded further consideration in accordance with the above provisions.
4. Non-Green Belt General Areas which could be considered for inclusion in the Green Belt. This would also have to include the consideration of whether ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist to justify any alterations to the Green Belt boundary. In accordance with the NPPF, this would apply equally to any additions to the Green Belt as it would to any subtractions.

6.1.3 All Recommended Areas have been assigned a new ID number, dependant on whether whole General Areas or sub-areas have been identified.³⁶ A summary of all areas recommended for further consideration, including cross-references between original General Areas IDs and Recommended Area IDs, is provided in Table 6.1.

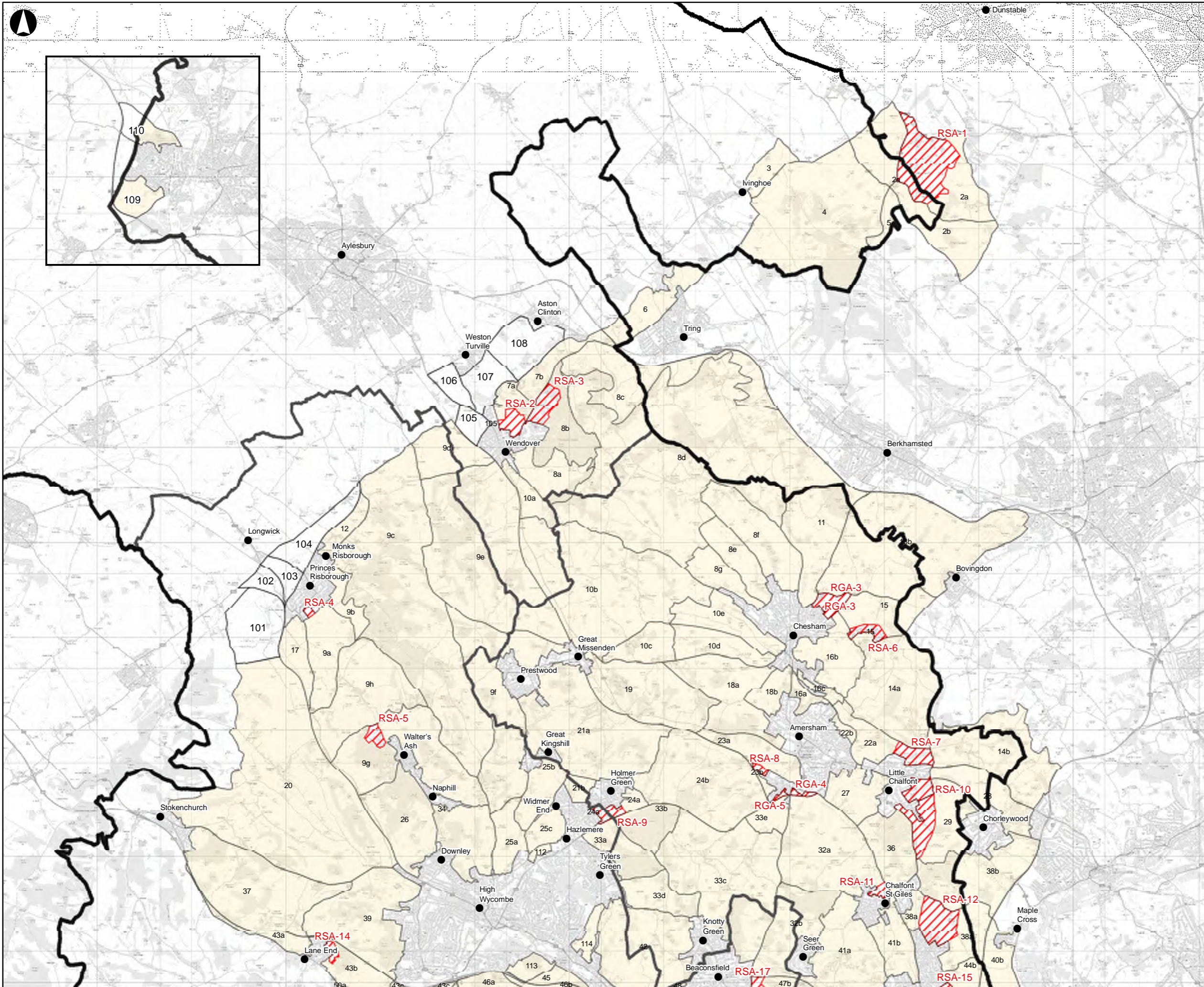
³⁶ RGA for whole General Areas recommended for further consideration, RSA for recommended sub-areas.

6.1.4 Recommendations in categories 1-3 are illustrated spatially for the whole of Buckinghamshire in Maps 6.1a and 6.1b, with more detailed maps provided for individual recommendations in Sections 6.2 – 6.4.

Table 6.1: Summary of Recommended Areas

General Area ID(s)	Recommendation Category	Recommended Area ID	Local Authority
80a	1	RGA-1	South Bucks
92	1	RGA-2	South Bucks
13a	2	RGA-3	Chiltern
30	2	RGA-4	Chiltern
31	2	RGA-5	Chiltern
57a	2	RGA-6	Chiltern / South Bucks
65a	2	RGA-7	South Bucks
84 & 89	2	RGA-8	South Bucks
2a	3	RSA-1	Aylesbury Vale / Central Bedfordshire
7a	3	RSA-2	Aylesbury Vale
8b	3	RSA-3	Aylesbury Vale
9a	3	RSA-4	Wycombe
9g	3	RSA-5	Wycombe
15	3	RSA-6	Chiltern
22a	3	RSA-7	Chiltern
23a	3	RSA-8	Chiltern
24a	3	RSA-9	Chiltern / Wycombe
29 & 35	3	RSA-10	Chiltern
32a	3	RSA-11	Chiltern
38a	3	RSA-12	Chiltern
40b	3	RSA-13	South Bucks
43b	3	RSA-14	Wycombe
44a	3	RSA-15	Chiltern
47a	3	RSA-16	South Bucks
47b	3	RSA-17	South Bucks
53b	3	RSA-18	South Bucks
58a	3	RSA-19 & RSA-20	Wycombe
60 & 67	3	RSA-21	Wycombe
66	3	RSA-22	South Bucks
74	3	RSA-23 & RSA-24	South Bucks
76 & 85b	3	RSA-25	South Bucks
76 & 80b	3	RSA-26	South Bucks
80b	3	RSA-27	South Bucks

86a	3	RSA-28	South Bucks
87b	3	RSA-29 & RSA-30	South Bucks
99	3	RSA-31	South Bucks

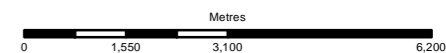


Legend

- Non-Greenbelt settlement
- Buckinghamshire County
- District Boundary
- General Areas
- ▨ Green Belt Areas for Consideration in Stage 2
- Areas Not for Consideration in Stage 2
- Areas Not for Consideration in Stage 2

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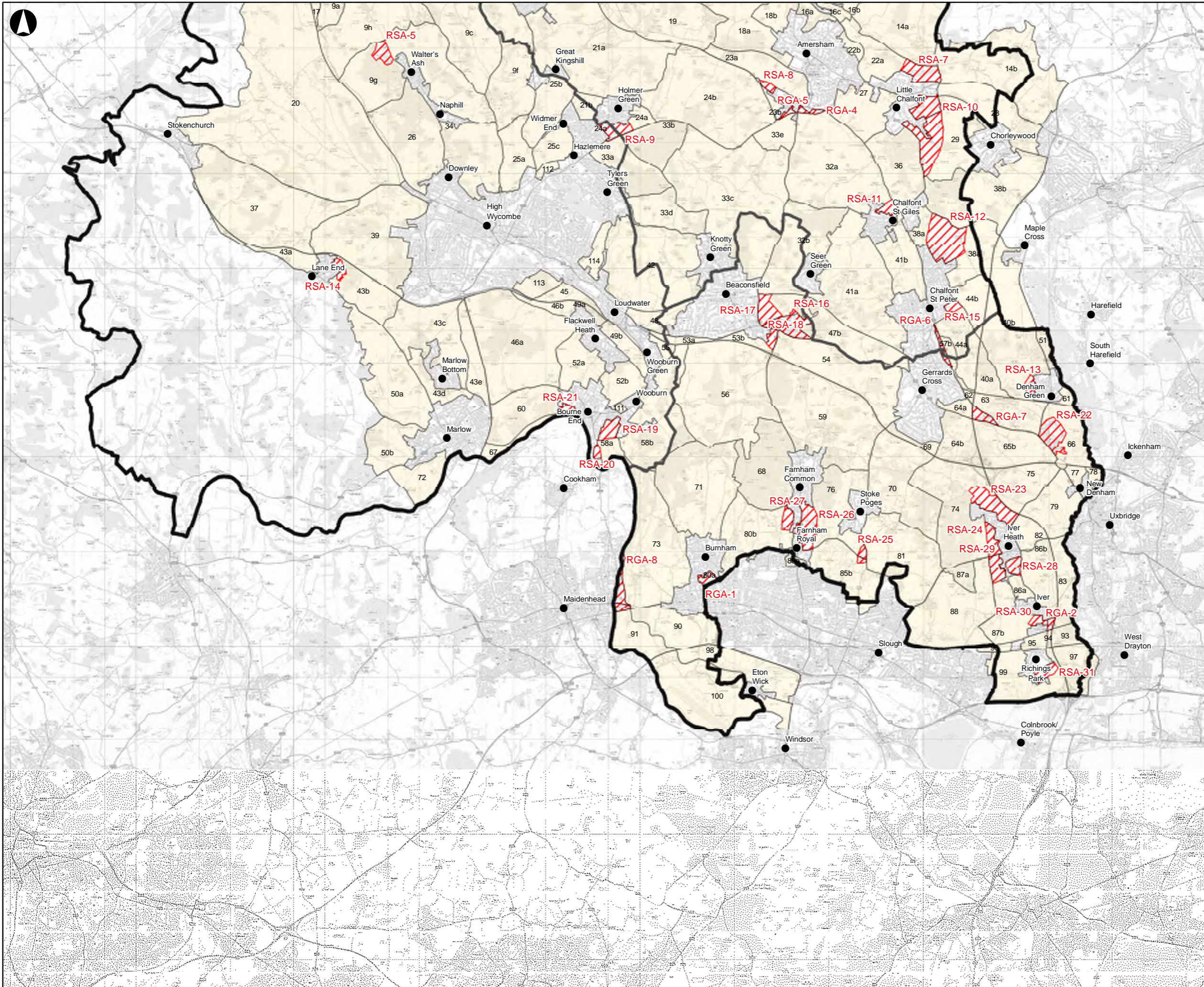
Client
The Buckinghamshire Authorities

Job Title
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Map 6.1a Areas for Further Consideration at Stage 2, North

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
Drawing No 6.1a	Issue P1



Legend

- Non-Greenbelt settlement
- Buckinghamshire County
- District Boundary
- General Areas
- ▨ Green Belt Areas for Consideration in Stage 2
- Areas Not for Consideration in Stage 2

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Map 6.1b Areas for Further Consideration at Stage 2, South

Scale at A3
1:115,000

Job No 242368-00	Drawing Status Issue
Drawing No 6.1b	Issue P1

Figure 6.1: Legend for Recommended Area Maps in Sections 6.2-6.4



6.2 Weakly Performing General Areas for Further Consideration

RGA-1 (General Area 80a – Burnham)



6.2.1 RGA-1 (General Area 80a), located within Burnham, fails to meet Purposes 1 or 2, as it is fully enclosed within the built-up area of Burnham / Slough with no connection to the wider Green Belt. As

such, it neither prevents sprawl from an identified large built-up area nor coalescence between settlements. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus failing to meet Purpose 4. While the General Area maintains an open character, it is an urban park and has no relationship with the surrounding countryside and as such makes a relatively weak contribution to Purpose 3.

6.2.2 The General Area is isolated from the wider Green Belt and is judged as playing no role in maintaining its wider integrity.

Recommendation: RGA-1 performs weakly against the NPPF purposes and could be considered further.

RGA-2 (General Area 92 – South-east of Iver)



6.2.3 RGA-2 (General Area 92), located to the south-east of Iver, fails to meet Purpose 1 as it is not at the edge of an identified large built-up area. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus failing to meet Purpose 4. With regards to Purpose 2, the parcel makes a weak contribution to the gap between Iver and West Drayton (in the adjacent London Borough of Hillingdon); it is very small in scale, physically severed from the wider Green Belt to the east by the M25, and closely abutting the existing built-up area of Iver to the north-west

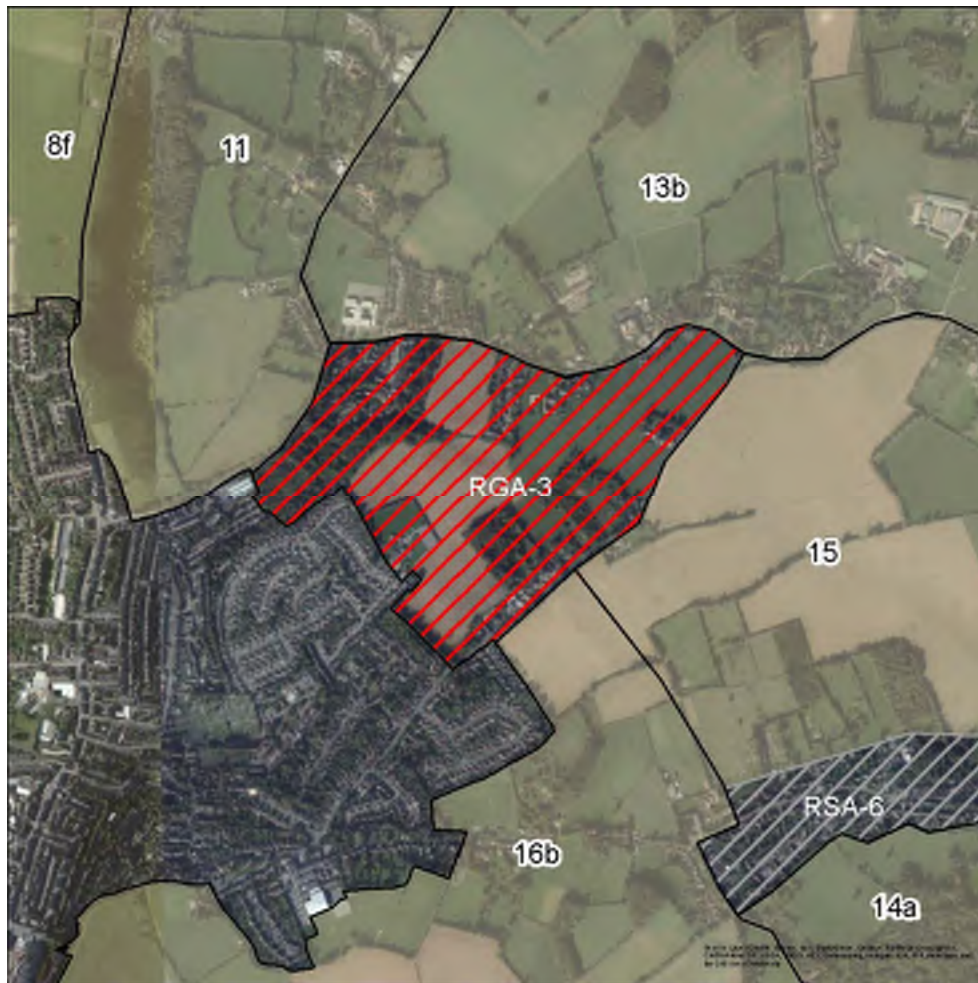
and south-west. These urbanising influences also reduce the contribution of the General Area to Purpose 3, weakening its relationship with the wider countryside.

6.2.4 While RGA-2 is identified as part of a wider swathe of Green Belt which prevents the outward sprawl of Greater London, relative severance substantially reduces its role in maintaining its wider integrity in a strategic sense.

Recommendation: RGA-2 performs weakly against the NPPF purposes and could be considered further.

6.3 Medium Performing General Areas for Further Consideration

RGA-3 (General Area 13a – east of Chesham)



6.3.1 RGA-3 (General Area 13a), located to the east of Chesham, attains a medium score against the NPPF purposes. Its primary contribution is to Purpose 1, by preventing the outward sprawl of Chesham into open land on its north-eastern edge. However, it is noted that the General Area is of a relatively small scale and, while strictly could be

considered an outward growth of the built area of Chesham, encompasses a sizeable cluster of residential development at its northern edge along Lycrome Road / Nashleigh Hill which, in functional terms (as well as in planning policy set out in the Chiltern Local Plan) is already associated with Chesham. Additionally, given the parcel is strongly bounded by the B4505 (Lye Green Road) to the east, the A416 (Nashleigh Hill) to the west and Lycrome Road to the north, its role in preventing sprawl is considered to be relatively weak. Furthermore, the self-containment of the General Area diminishes its role in preventing sprawl in the context of the wider strategic Green Belt.

6.3.2 Furthermore, the General Area makes only a weak contribution to Purposes 2 and 3; it forms only a very small part of the wider gap between Chesham and Bovington, whilst its mixture of land uses, configuration of built form (including the noted residential development) and sense of enclosure from the wider countryside, contribute to a semi-urban character.

6.3.3 It should also be noted that, at the local level, the parcel plays a role in protecting the gap between Chesham and Lye Green, identified as a Row of Dwellings in the Chiltern Local Plan, preventing their coalescence.

Recommendation: While RGA-3 meets the NPPF purposes, it is judged to play a lesser role in preventing the sprawl of Chesham (particularly in a strategic sense) and scores weakly against Purposes 2 and 3. It could be considered further in its entirety, though the role of the parcel in preventing coalescence between Chesham and Lye Green should be considered.

RGA-4 and RGA-5 (General Areas 30 and 31 - South of Amersham)



6.3.4 RGA-4 and RGA-5 (General Areas 30 and 31), although physically separate, share similar characteristics and a strong relationship with the built area of Amersham to the north. Neither parcel makes any contribution to preventing coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2), and both areas are very small in scale and physically severed from the wider countryside to the south by the A413, and thus effectively ‘enclosed’ within the settlement footprint of Amersham (Purpose 1); in particular, RGA-5 has particularly weak visual connections with the countryside to the south as result of strong planting buffers along the cutting formation for the A413. These small, irregularly shaped General Areas have a much stronger visual connection with the adjoining urban area of Amersham, thus diminishing their contribution to Purpose 3.

6.3.5 While both areas are deemed to meet Purpose 4, maintaining areas of open land in the immediate context of Amersham’s historic core, the contribution of these to the town’s unique setting or special character is less clear cut; indeed, in the case of RGA-4, the role is arguable given the level of ribbon development along A355, which diminishes

the openness and sense of rurality, whilst General Area 31 has no direct relationship with the historic High Street (though its role in the 19th century as an enclosure should be considered). Further work will be required to identify suitable further sub-division of these areas.

Recommendation: RGA-4 and RGA-5, to the south of Amersham, meet the NPPF purposes, but further consideration should be given to their potential sub-division, specifically in relation to maintaining the context of the historic core of Amersham.

RGA-6 (General Area 57a – east of Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter)



6.3.6 RGA-6 (General Area 57a) is located to the east of Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter. Whilst, overall, it is judged as attaining a medium score against the NPPF purposes, its primary contribution (with respect to the criteria-based assessment) is to prevent encroachment into open land (Purpose 3). It has a largely rural feel and is largely free of development. The General Area also contributes to Purposes 1, 2 and 4, albeit weakly.

6.3.7 However, as a result of its very small scale and its immediate urban context, its contribution to preventing encroachment in a more

strategic sense is relatively limited (Purpose 3). The General Area plays little role in maintaining the integrity of the wider countryside, and is effectively severed from the wider countryside by the A413 (Amersham Road), resulting in a closer link functionally with the adjacent urban area.

Recommendation: While RGA-6 meets the NPPF purposes, it is judged as playing a lesser role in the context of the wider Green Belt; it should be considered further in its entirety.

RGA-7 (General Area 65a – Tatling End)



6.3.8 RGA-7 (General Area 65a), located to the east of Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and containing Tatling End, attains a medium score against the NPPF purposes, particularly in terms of its contribution to preventing coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2). It also meets Purpose 3 (albeit weakly).

6.3.9 While the General Area makes some contribution to maintaining the scale of the broader gap between Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and Denham Green (as well as the Green Belt settlement of Denham), Tatling End (within the General Area) could be deemed detrimental to the integrity of the Green Belt at a more strategic level. It constitutes

an area of significant encroachment and has an inherently semi-urban character, while in itself does not contribute to the separation between the surrounding non-Green Belt settlements (Purpose 2). Its role as Green Belt should be considered further given that the semi-urban character of the parcel detracts from surrounding Green Belt parcels which are of a more open and rural character, and restrict development in open land which may lead to both the physical and perceptual coalescence of settlements in the wider Green Belt.

6.3.10 Further consideration of this parcel should take into account emerging recommendations for General Area 66 (RSA-21), which may further impact upon the contribution of RGA-7 to the NPPF purposes.

Recommendation: RGA-7 meets the NPPF purposes, but its ongoing designation as Green Belt would appear to undermine the integrity of the wider Green Belt in this area given its particularly semi-urban character and impact upon openness; the whole of the General Area (encompassing Tatling End) could be considered further.

RGA-8 (General Areas 84 and 89 – Taplow Riverside)



- 6.3.11** General Areas 84 and 89 (collectively identified as RGA-8), which contain the Green Belt settlement of Taplow Riverside, attain a medium score against the NPPF purposes, directly adjoining the large built-up area of Maidenhead and preventing its outward sprawl (Purpose 1), as well as maintaining the essential gap between Maidenhead and the Green Belt settlement of Taplow, which is of a narrow scale, and the wider gap to Burnham / Slough (Purpose 2). These General Areas also meet Purpose 3, albeit weakly (particularly in the case of General Area 89 which has a notably urban character and substantial built-form).
- 6.3.12** In the case of General Area 84, its character and composition (particularly the northern area) as well as an outstanding planning permission, may lead to the parcel playing a lesser role in terms of the strategic Green Belt going forward. Despite the relatively narrow gap between Maidenhead and Taplow, the General Area is of a small scale and surrounded by the River Thames, Jubilee River and Bath Road, which constitute durable and permanent boundaries and keep further sprawl in check (Purpose 1). General Area 89 immediately to the south has similar characteristics.
- 6.3.13** Both areas have a relatively high proportion of built form and tend to be generally inward looking, with a relatively weak relationship with the countryside further south, north and east. General Area 89 in particular has a very urban feel; the Green Belt settlement of Taplow Riverside, which lies within the General Area, has effectively coalesced with Maidenhead in the neighbouring borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and the settlements have a strong functional relationship.
- 6.3.14** General Area 84 contains the Mill Lane MDS and, in September 2015, planning permission was granted for the following: demolition of existing mill buildings, warehouses, associated structures and the former Skindles hotel; the construction of 141 dwellings, 40 senior living apartments and a restaurant; retention and refurbishment of historic buildings on site to provide 18 further dwellings; and other associated works. As a result of this permission, the relationship with Maidenhead to the west (in functional and visual terms) is likely to be strengthened, despite the River Thames acting as a physical barrier, and the site will likely play a lesser role in preventing sprawl going forward (Purpose 1), or in preventing the coalescence of Maidenhead and Taplow (Purpose 2).
- 6.3.15** The area of more open land to the east of the Jubilee River, which adjoins both General Areas, will continue to maintain a degree of separation.
- 6.3.16** Given anticipated changes to the character and makeup of the General Area 84 going forward, it is suggested that, together with the highly urbanised General Area 89 to the south, its ongoing designation as Green Belt is considered further (RGA-8).

Recommendation: General Areas 84 and 89 (RGA-8) meet the NPPF purposes, but as a result of their configuration, character and strong relationship with

Maidenhead to the west, combined with the works proposed under the outstanding planning permission in General Area 84, they may score weakly going forward and could be considered further.

6.4 Potential Sub-Areas for Further Consideration

RSA-1 (General Area 2a – Whipsnade)



6.4.1 As a whole, General Area 2a, located between Dunstable and Ivinghoe, attains a medium score against the NPPF Green Belt purposes. While it makes no contribution to preventing sprawl (Purpose 1), as it is not adjacent to an identified large built-up area, and makes a weak contribution to preventing coalescence between settlements (in relation to the Green Belt settlements of Dagnall, Holywell and Studham), collectively it maintains the openness and character of a largely rural area, thus preventing encroachment and fulfilling Purpose 3.

6.4.2 However, there is substantial contrast between the south-east and north-west of the General Area, RSA-1. The openness of RSA-1 is substantially diminished by built form around Whipsnade Zoo and Whipsnade Park Golf Course. These land uses diminish the rural feel

of the parcel and impinge upon the integrity of the wider Green Belt. As such, in isolation, this area may meet all purposes weakly.

Recommendation: General Area 2a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; the identified north-western area sub-area (RSA-1), which may score weakly, could be considered further.

RSA-2 (General Area 7a – north of Wendover)



6.4.3 As a whole, General Area 7a prevents the outward sprawl of the large built-up area of Wendover, along an edge which is weakly defined by softer natural features, thus meeting Purpose 1. It prevents the coalescence of Wendover and the Green Belt settlement of Halton (Purpose 2) and prevents encroachment into open land which is characterised by rural land uses (Purpose 3).

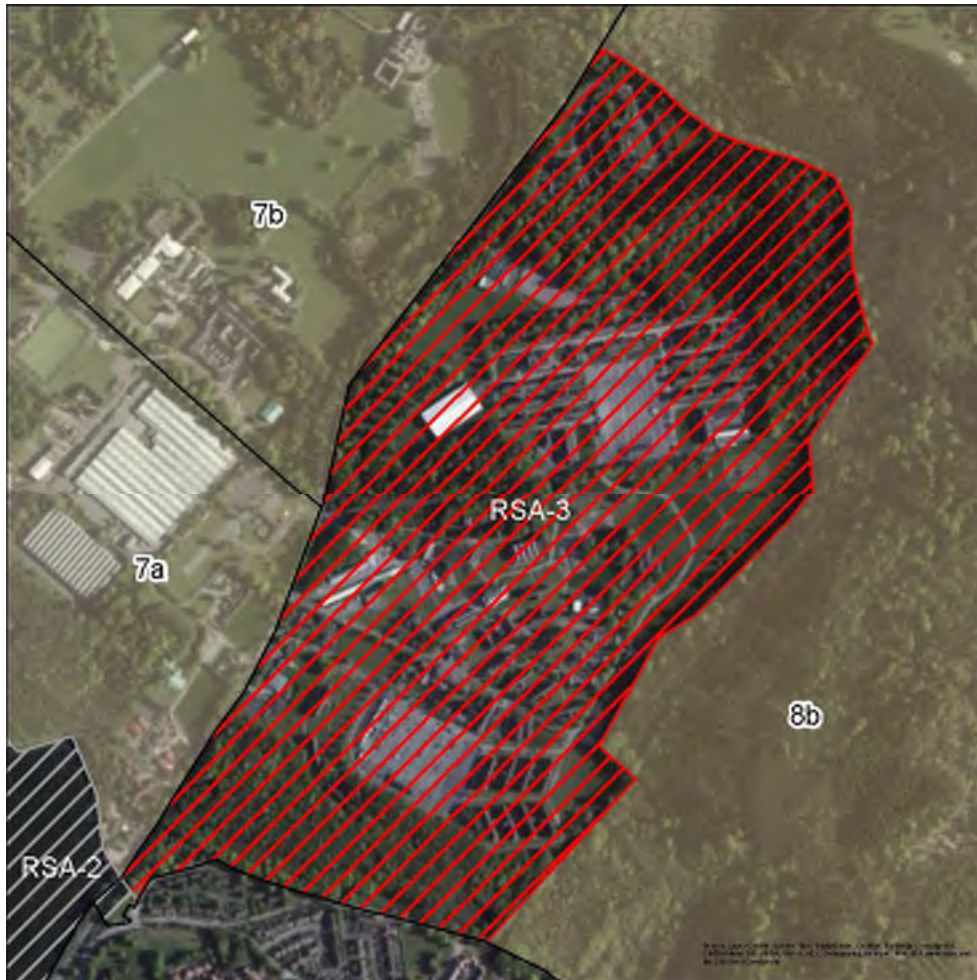
6.4.4 However, the southern part of the parcel, RSA-2, is likely to score weakly if considered separately. This area is deemed to be less important for preventing merging between Wendover and Halton (Purpose 2), or encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3), given it is disconnected from the countryside further north and effectively enveloped by built development to the east, south and west,

strengthening the visual and functional relationship of the area with Wendover.

6.4.5 RSA-2 is effectively within the settlement footprint of Wendover, thus may be considered as ‘enclosed’ within the large built-up area (as opposed to preventing outward sprawl), and durable boundary features in the form of the disused Grand Union Canal to the west, a disused railway line partially to the north and a dense planting buffer at the edge of Halton Camp to the north and east would ensure a logical, strongly defined area for further consideration.

Recommendation: General Area 7a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; the identified southern area (RSA-2), which may score weakly, could be considered further.

RSA-3 (General Area 8b – Halton Camp)



6.4.6 As a whole, General Area 8b, located north-east of Wendover, attains a medium score across three of the NPPF purposes. It fulfils Purpose 1, providing a barrier to the outward sprawl of the Wendover large built-up area, particularly to the south and east, and forms part of the gap between Wendover and Tring (Purpose 2) located to the north-east. The majority of the parcel is of an open and very rural character,

and Wendover Woods (which cover the majority of the parcel) contributes to a strong sense of remoteness. Despite the urban context; the Green Belt prevents the encroachment of urbanising influences into this area, thus meeting Purpose 3.

6.4.7 The identified sub-area in the west, RSA-3, has a contrasting character. It contains substantial built-form which diminishes the openness of the countryside, and is characterised by urban land uses, including various structures associated with the Halton Camp RAF Base such as barracks, offices and other ancillary structures. It is effectively urbanised and strongly linked with the urban form of Wendover to the south, thus making little contribution to Purpose 3 (as encroachment has already occurred).

6.4.8 While the role of RSA-3 in preventing the further perceptual coalescence of Wendover and Tring from ribbon development along the B4009 (Upper Icknield Way) is recognised, it is felt that a consolidation of the Green Belt in this location would better maintain the integrity of the wider Green Belt designation around Wendover and more appropriately reflect the status of this distinct land parcel.

Recommendation: General Area 8b meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; the identified area in the west (RSA-3), encompassing Halton Camp, may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-4 (General Area 9a – south of Princes Risborough)



6.4.9 As a whole, General Areas 9a, located to the south of Princes Risborough / Monks Risborough, meets Green Belt purposes strongly, preventing encroachment into a vast band of relatively unspoilt countryside which maintains a highly open character (Purpose 3). The General Area also prevents the outward sprawl of the Princes Risborough / Monks Risborough large built-up area along its southern fringe, thus meeting Purpose 1, and prevents the merging of Princes Risborough with the Green Belt settlement of Lacey Green / Loosley Row (Purpose 2); this gap is already perceptually reduced by ribbon development and the Green Belt prevents any further development in this axis.

6.4.10 A very small identified area in the north of the parcel, RSA-4, is effectively 'enclosed' within the built-up area of Princes Risborough and its linkage to the wider countryside is weakened as a result of Upper Icknield Way, which binds the area to the south; while this is an un-made road, it still physically severs the link between this area of land and the countryside beyond and could therefore check the outward spread of the Princes Risborough / Monks Risborough large built-up area, thus diminishing the role of the Green Belt here in

preventing sprawl (Purpose 1). This area makes no contribution to separation between settlements (physically and visually separated from the area of the parcel separating Princes Risborough from Lacey Green/Loosley Row) and would, if considered separately from the wider General Area, make a lesser contribution to Purpose 3 as a result of its sense of envelopment within the built-form of Princes Risborough (though the visual link with the countryside to the south as a result of the steeply sloping topography should be noted in any further consideration of this area).

Recommendation: General Area 9a meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; a small identified area in the north, to the north of Upper Icknield Way (RSA-4), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-5 (General Area 9g – Walters Ash RAF Air Command)



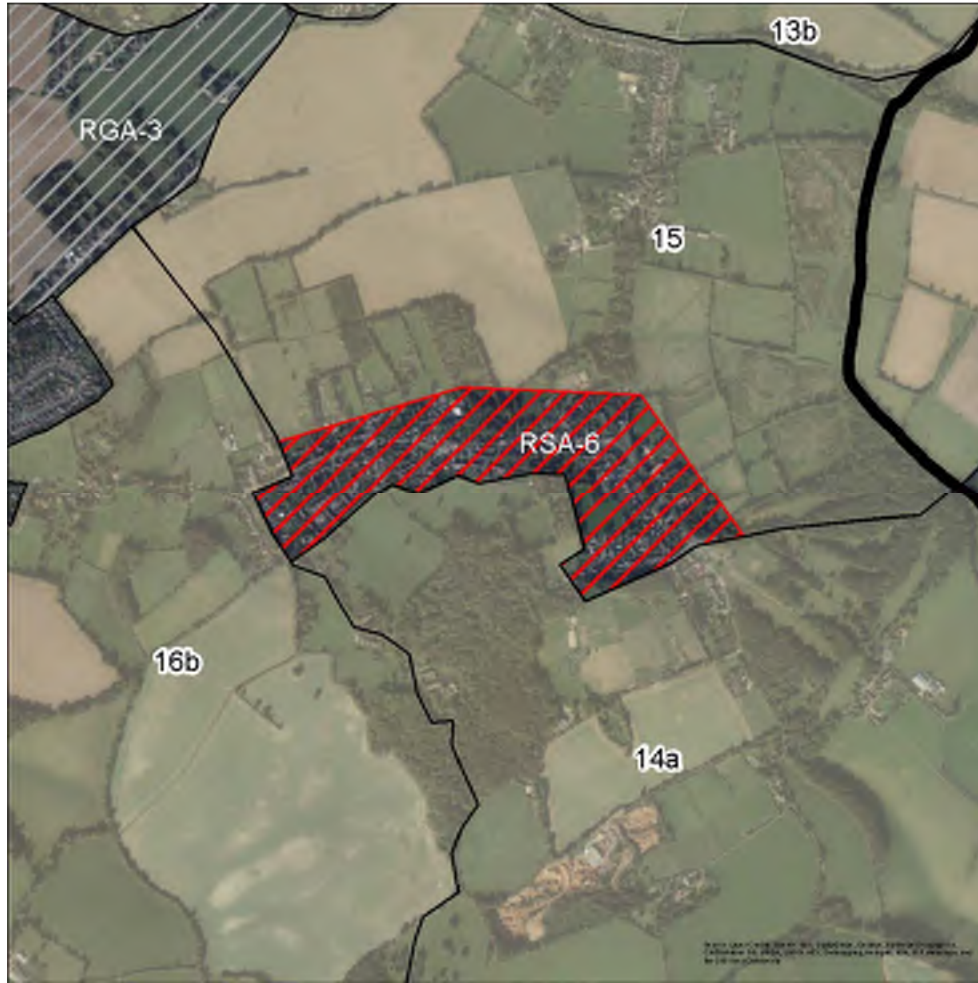
6.4.11 As a whole, General Area 9g meets the NPPF purposes strongly. While it makes no contribution to Purpose 1, as it is not located at the edge of an identified large built-up area, it does play a role in preventing the merging of Walters Ash / Naphill with a number of surrounding Green Belt settlements, specifically Lacey Green / Loosley Row to the north-west, Speen to the north-east and

Hughenden Valley to the south-east, thus meeting Purpose 2. The latter two of these gaps, respectively, are particularly sensitive to change due to the small scale of separation and their particularly open and unspoilt character. Indeed, as a whole, the General Area is adjudged to contribute strongly to preventing encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3) on account of its predominantly rural land uses (largely dense woodland and agricultural fields) and strong sense of openness.

6.4.12 However, the identified sub-area in the north-west, RSA-5, differs in character from the rest of the parcel. It is effectively urbanised, containing substantial built-form associated with the Walters Ash RAF Air Command, diminishing its openness and reducing its connection with the wider countryside (Purpose 3). Though part of the Green Belt, RSA-5 is visually and functionally linked to the settlement of Walters Ash / Naphill and, considered alone, makes little or no contribution to preventing coalescence between Walters Ash / Naphill and Lacey Green / Loosley Row (Purpose 2); furthermore, sizeable separation would still be maintained.

Recommendation: General Area 9g meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified sub-area in the north-west, encompassing the RAF Walters Ash Air Command station (RSA-5), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-6 (General Area 15 – Botley)

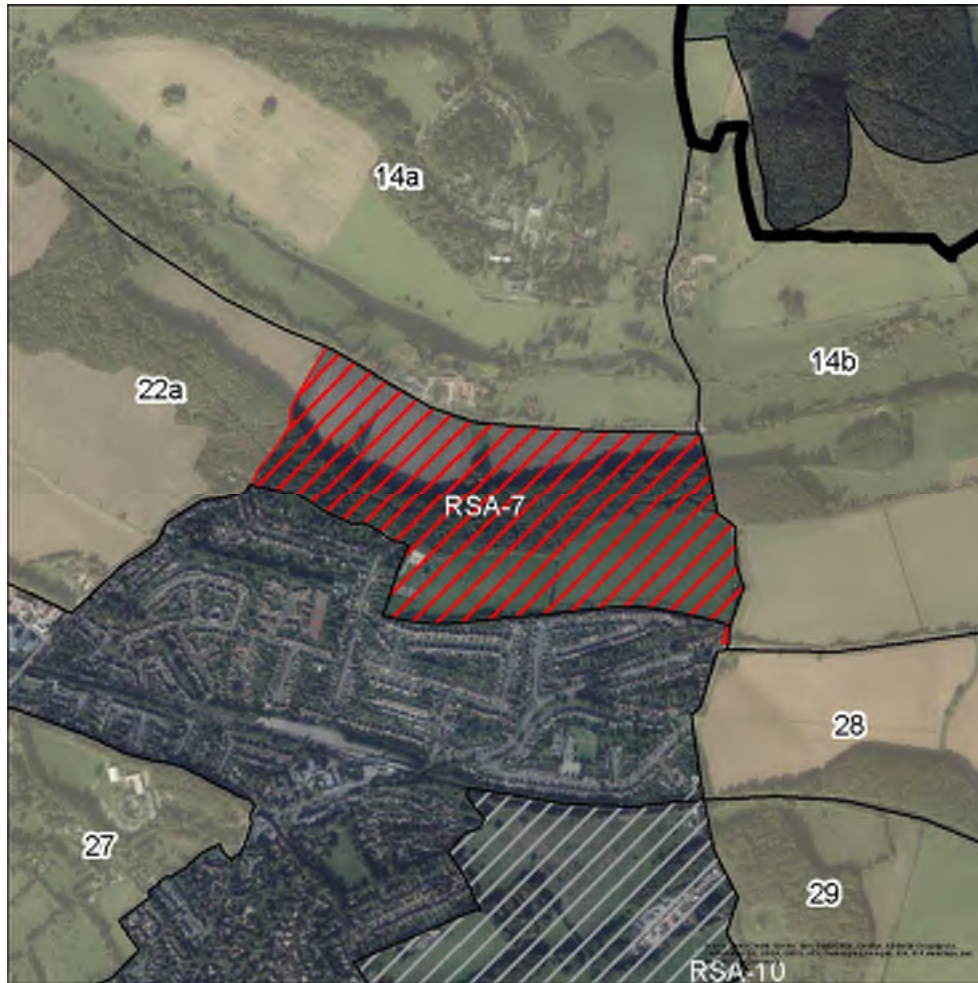


6.4.13 As a whole, General Area 15, located to the east of Chesham, achieves a medium score against the NPPF purposes. While it meets neither Purpose 1 nor Purpose 4, it partially maintains the scale of the gap between Chesham and Bovington in the adjacent borough of Dacorum, as well as its openness, preventing the coalescence of these settlements (Purpose 2), and prevents the encroachment of urbanising influences into unspoilt countryside of a generally open character, thus meeting Purpose 3.

6.4.14 However, the Green Belt village of Botley, located in the south/south-west of the General Area, has a particularly detrimental impact on the performance of this General Area against the NPPF purposes. The village, demarcated by RSA-6, has a particularly urban character, encompassing a substantial cluster of residential and other development which harms the openness of the Green Belt and its ability to meet Purpose 3 (given it has already suffered considerable encroachment). Furthermore, considered alone, RSA-6 is likely to perform weakly against Purpose 2.

Recommendation: General Area 15 meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south/south-west, encompassing the village of Botley (RSA-6), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-7 (General Area 22a – North of Little Chalfont)



6.4.15 As a whole, General Area 22a, located to the north of Little Chalfont, meets the NPPF purposes strongly, in particular the southern and western areas which: provide the only separation between Little Chalfont and Amersham (Purpose 2); maintain areas of largely unspoilt, open countryside (Purpose 3); and prevent the outward sprawl of the large built-up area of Amersham (Purpose 1). However, an identified sub-area in the east of the General Area (RSA-7) may perform weakly if considered separately.

6.4.16 The identified area to the east of Bell Lane, RSA-7, is not connected to a large built-up area, thus playing no role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1), nor does it make any contribution to preventing coalescence between Little Chalfont and Amersham (Purpose 2). While it has a high level of openness, contextually it has stronger visual links with Little Chalfont to the south than with the countryside to the north and east. Furthermore, part of this area is in use as

playing fields, thus giving it a more semi-urban feel and reducing its contribution to Purpose 3. The edge of West Wood, or Latimer Road to the north, could form an alternative defensible boundary for the Green Belt. It is felt that RSA-7 plays little role in the context of the wider strategic Green Belt.

Recommendation: General Area 22 meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified sub-area in the east, east of Bell Lane (RSA-7), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-8 (General Area 23a – West of Amersham)



6.4.17 As a whole, General Area 23a, located to the south-west of Amersham, meets all four NPPF purposes: preventing the outward sprawl of the Amersham large built-up area (Purpose 1); maintaining the general scale of the gap between Amersham and High Wycombe (Purpose 2); preventing encroachment into rural, open land (Purpose 3); and maintaining the unique setting of Old Amersham, particularly along its northern edge (Purpose 4).

6.4.18 However, a small identified sub-area in the south, RS-8, would potentially perform weakly if considered alone. This area to the south of School Lane is strongly bounded by High Street and School Lane,

and is of such a scale that it makes little contribution to preventing sprawl (Purpose 1) or coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2); the presence of playing fields, as well as development along Mill Lane immediately to the east gives the area a more urban fringe character (Purpose 3). While the historic core of Amersham is located to the east, it is deemed that this area of land makes little contribution to its immediate setting (Purpose 4), with the key relationship being to the land north of School Lane (which is much more prominent topographically).

Recommendation: General Area 23a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south, south of School Lane (RSA-8), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-9 (General Area 24a – South of Hazlemere / Holmer Green)



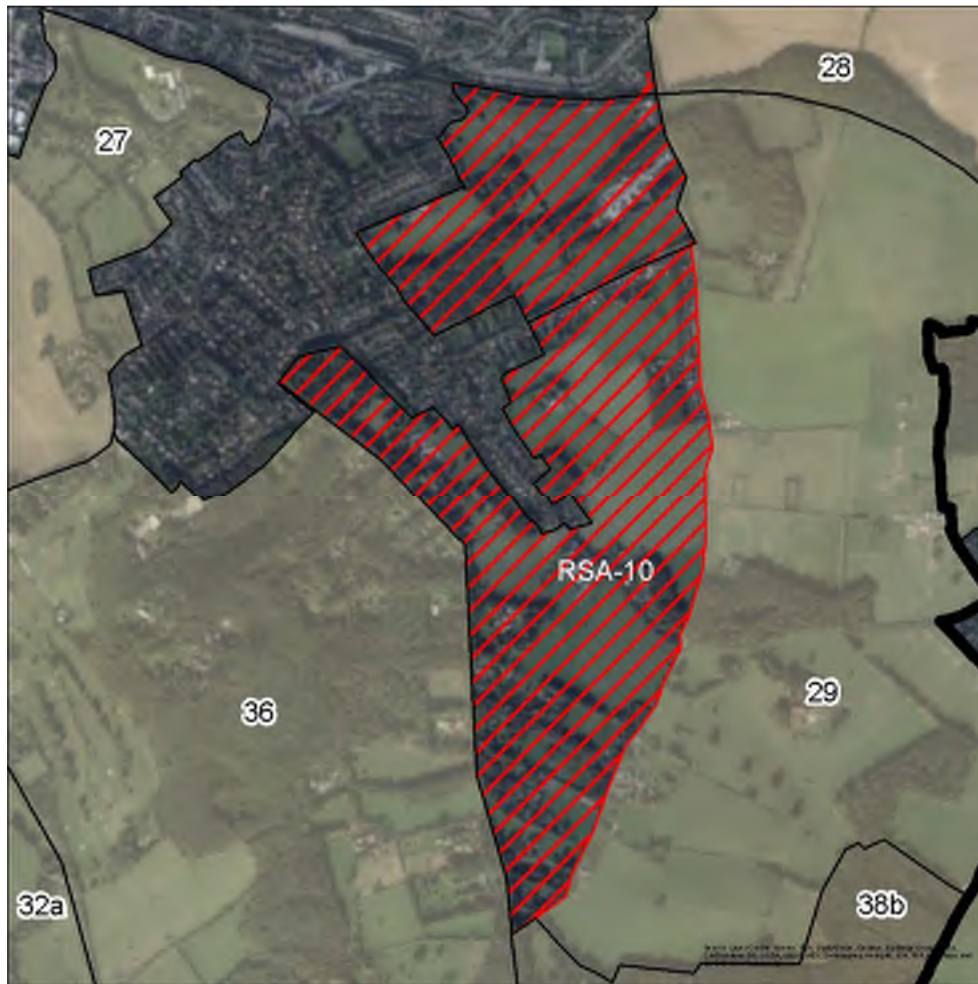
6.4.19 General Area 24a, located to the south of Holmer Green, attains a medium score against the NPPF purposes. While it makes only a weak contribution to Purpose 2, forming a very small part of the much larger gaps between High Wycombe, and Knotty Green / Beaconsfield and Amersham, it prevents the outward sprawl of High Wycombe

(Hazlemere / Holmer Green) into open land (Purpose 1) and maintains areas of open countryside around the settlement (Purpose 3).

6.4.20 The identified sub-area in the west, west of Earl Howe Road (RSA-9), is of a small scale and, considered alone, could be described as almost entirely enclosed within the built area of Hazlemere / Holmer Green, enveloped by built-form to the north, west and partially to the east. Furthermore, it is strongly bounded by defensible features (the A404 (Amersham Road) and Earl Howe Road) which would check the outward sprawl of the High Wycombe large built-up area, thus diminishing its role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1). While much of General Area 24a has a strong visual and functional connection with the wider countryside, RSA-9 is physically severed and has a strong sense of enclosure, while the edge of the urban area is visually more prominent. The rurality of this area has already been diminished, and the area has suffered some encroachment along the A404 (Amersham Road), thus may score weakly against Purpose 3.

Recommendation: General Area 24a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west, west of Earl Howe Road (RSA-9), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-10 (General Areas 29 and 35 – East of Little Chalfont)



- 6.4.21** As a whole, General Areas 29 and 35, located to the south-east of Little Chalfont, achieve medium scores against the NPPF purposes. While they meet neither Purpose 1 nor Purpose 4, they prevent development in areas of open land which retain a largely rural character, thus restricting encroachment (Purpose 3). While General Area 35 makes only a minor contribution to preventing coalescence of settlements, General Area 29 maintains the scale of the gaps between Little Chalfont and Chalfont St Giles to the south, as well as Chorleywood to the east in the neighbouring district of Three Rivers.
- 6.4.22** The identified sub-area RSA-10, which encompasses the western parts of General Areas 29 and 35, was noted during the assessment as being less integral to the wider Green Belt. General Area 35 is surrounded on three sides by built-form and is characterised by enclosed spaces, paddocks and a former golf course which diminish its rurality and its relationship with the wider countryside. Immediately to the south, the identified part of General Area 29 (west of Lodge Lane / Roughwood Lane) has a fragmented sense of openness, frequently punctuated by dispersed residential developments and often enclosed by ribbon development, weakening its relationship with the wider countryside.

6.4.23 While there is scope for general further consideration of this broad area collectively, this should take into account the need to maintain a strong area of separation between Little Chalfont and Chalfont St Giles.

Recommendation: General Areas 29 and 35 meet the NPPF purposes, but there is scope to collectively consider an identified broad area further, bounded by Lodge Lane, Roughwood Lane and the B442 (Nightingales Lane) and collectively identified as RSA-10; this area may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-11 (General Area 32a – North of Chalfont St Giles)

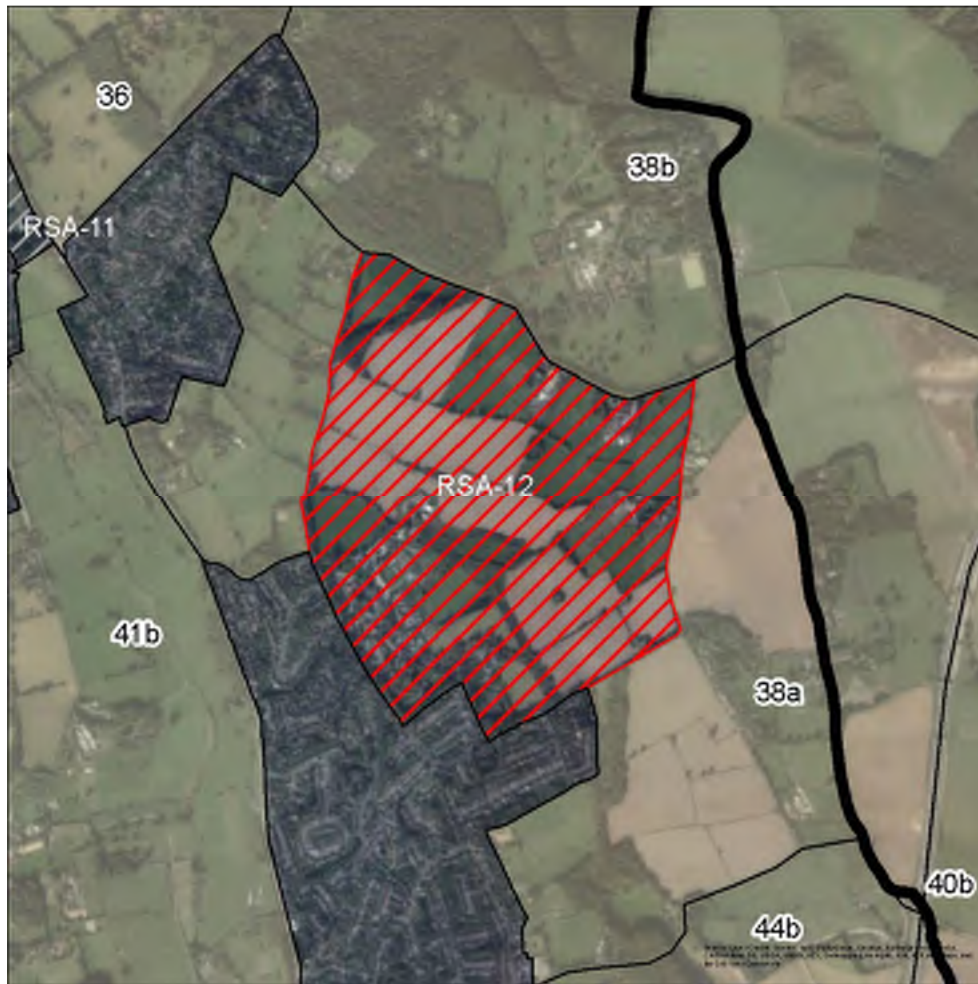


6.4.24 As a whole, General Area 32a, located between Chalfont St Giles and Amersham, is identified as strongly performing Green Belt, particularly with respect to its prevention of encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3). It protects open land which has a strong, unspoilt rural character, predominantly characterised by open agricultural fields and clusters of woodland. The northern part of the General Area prevents the outward sprawl of the large built-up area of Amersham into open land (Purpose 1), and maintains the scale of the gap between Amersham and Little Chalfont and Chalfont St Giles (Purpose 2). It also maintains the unique setting of two historic

settlements, in particular Amersham, where it protects swathes of open land which have a strong visual connection with the historic core (Purpose 4).

6.4.25 A sub-area area has been identified south of Mill Lane, RSA-11, which makes a lesser contribution to the NPPF purposes. In itself, RSA-11 would make no contribution to Purpose 1 as it is physically removed from the large built-up area of Amersham to the north, and given it is largely surrounded by the built area of Chalfont St Giles and for the most part visually and physically separated from the wider countryside, its role in relation to separation between settlements is very limited (Purpose 2). This relative sense of enclosure reduces its integration with the wider open countryside, and particularly the western half of the identified smaller area is punctuated by dwellings and visually linked with the urban form of Chalfont St Giles, thus reducing its role in preventing encroachment into the wider countryside (Purpose 3). While the General Area directly abuts the historic core of Chalfont St Giles, it is noted that it plays a lesser role in maintaining its immediate context given the lack of direct views between.

Recommendation: General Area 32a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified sub-area in the south, south of Mill Lane (RSA-11), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-12 (General Area 38a – North of Chalfont St Peter)

6.4.26 As a whole, General Area 38a, located to the north-east of Chalfont St Peter, is identified as strongly performing Green Belt, particularly in terms of maintaining the gap between Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and Chalfont St Giles, preventing the coalescence of these settlements (Purpose 2). The far north-west of the General Area is particularly important for this. Additionally, it meets Purpose 1, preventing the outward sprawl of the Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter large built-up area, and Purpose 3, restricting encroachment into areas of largely open, unspoilt countryside.

6.4.27 The National Society for Epilepsy site, in the north-west of the General Area, has a contrasting character to the wider parcel. It encompasses substantial built form within managed grounds, and as a result of planting buffers is visually separate from the wider countryside beyond. It therefore makes little contribution to Purpose 3 as it is already urbanised, whilst alone it effectively forms part of the built footprint of Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and does not prevent further sprawl (Purpose 1).

6.4.28 However, it is notable that the site is bounded by features which, for the purposes of Green Belt, do not have a strong sense of permanence. As such a wider area, RSA-12, has been recommended for further consideration which should be refined further to align with durable, permanent physical features. Consideration should also be paid to the acceptability of any loss of Green Belt which may compromise the gap between Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and Chalfont St Giles (though it is noted that a degree of separation would still be maintained if the recommendation were to be taken forward).

Recommendation: General Area 38a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north-west (RSA-12) may score weakly and could be considered further, though further refinement of this area should be carefully considered to prevent coalescence between settlements.

RSA-13 (General Area 40b – West of Denham Green)



6.4.29 General Area 40b, located between Denham Green and Maple Cross, attains a medium score against the NPPF purposes. While it meets neither Purpose 1 nor 4, it meets Purpose 2, forming parts of the gaps between Denham Green, and Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and Maple Cross in the adjacent district of Three Rivers, and Purpose 3,

preventing encroachment into some substantial areas of wooded and agricultural countryside.

6.4.30 A small identified sub-area in the south, RSA-13, may score weakly if considered separately. This area has suffered some encroachment, and encompasses dense woodland at the edge of Denham Green, punctuated further west by a number of residential properties in large grounds. These increase the area's sense of enclosure and isolation from the wider countryside, together with Tilehouse Lane which acts as a physical buffer, while the level of development and configuration of development is such that the area is more closely associated with the settlement edge than the wider Green Belt (Purpose 3). In a strategic sense, RSA-13 plays little role in maintaining the strategic integrity of the narrow gap between Denham Green and the Green Belt village of Higher Denham to the south-west and thus alone is unlikely to contribute to Purpose 2.

Recommendation: General Area 40b meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south, at the edge of Denham Green (RSA-13), may score weakly and could be considered further.

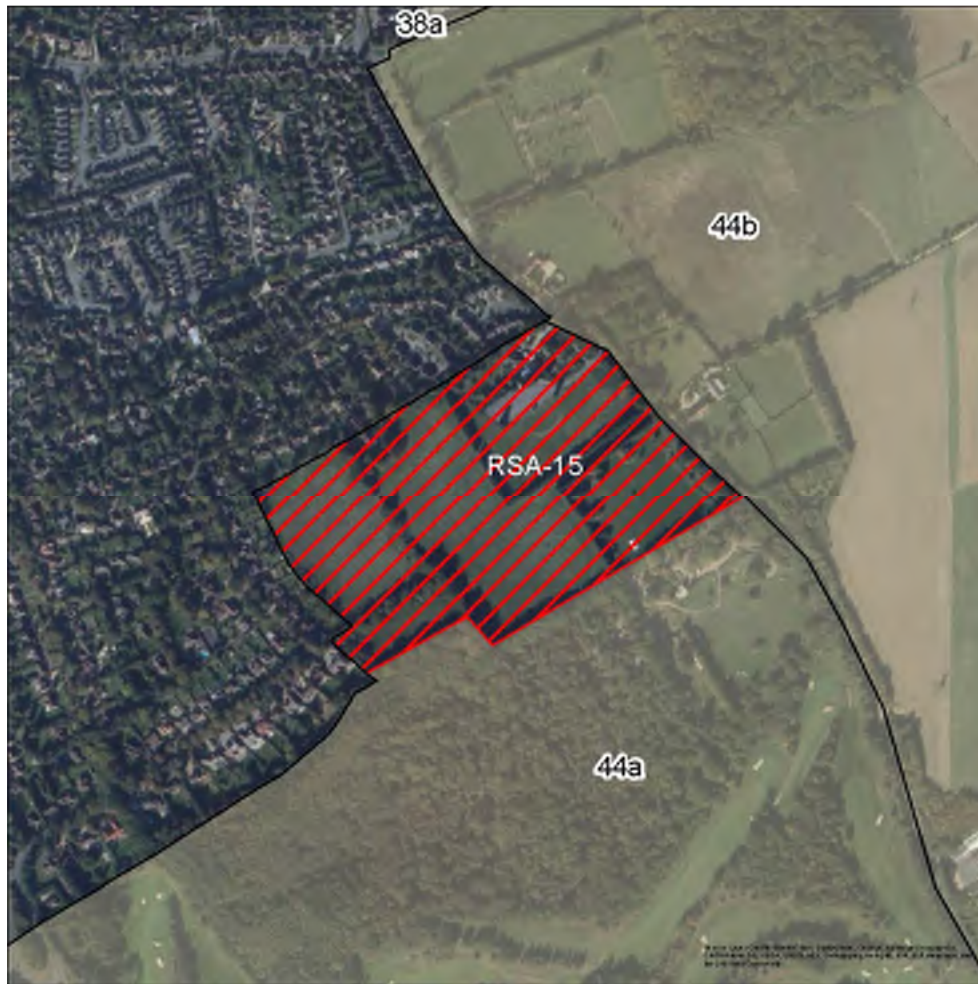
RSA-14 (General Area 43b – East of Lane End)



- 6.4.31** General Area 43b, located between Lane End and High Wycombe, is overall judged to meet the NPPF purposes strongly. The eastern part in particular plays an important role in maintaining the essential gap between High Wycombe and Lane End (Purpose 2) and also restricts the outward sprawl of High Wycombe (Purpose 1).
- 6.4.32** A small identified sub-area, RSA-14, may perform weakly against the NPPF purposes if considered separately. This area, west of Widdenton Park Wood and directly east of the settlement of Lane End and south of Park Lane, is more linked visually and in terms of character with the edge of Lane End than the countryside beyond. It does not adjoin a defined large built-up area and thus does not meet Purpose 1, and plays little role in preventing the coalescence of Lane End and High Wycombe as a result of its effective containment and separation from the wider swathe of countryside that separates the settlements (Purpose 2). While the character of RSA-14 is not inherently urban, it's somewhat degraded character, small scale and weak linkage with the wider countryside would result in a lesser contribution to Purpose 3.

Recommendation: General Area 43b meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west, at the edge of Lane End (RSA-14), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-15 (General Area 44a – South of Chalfont St Peter)



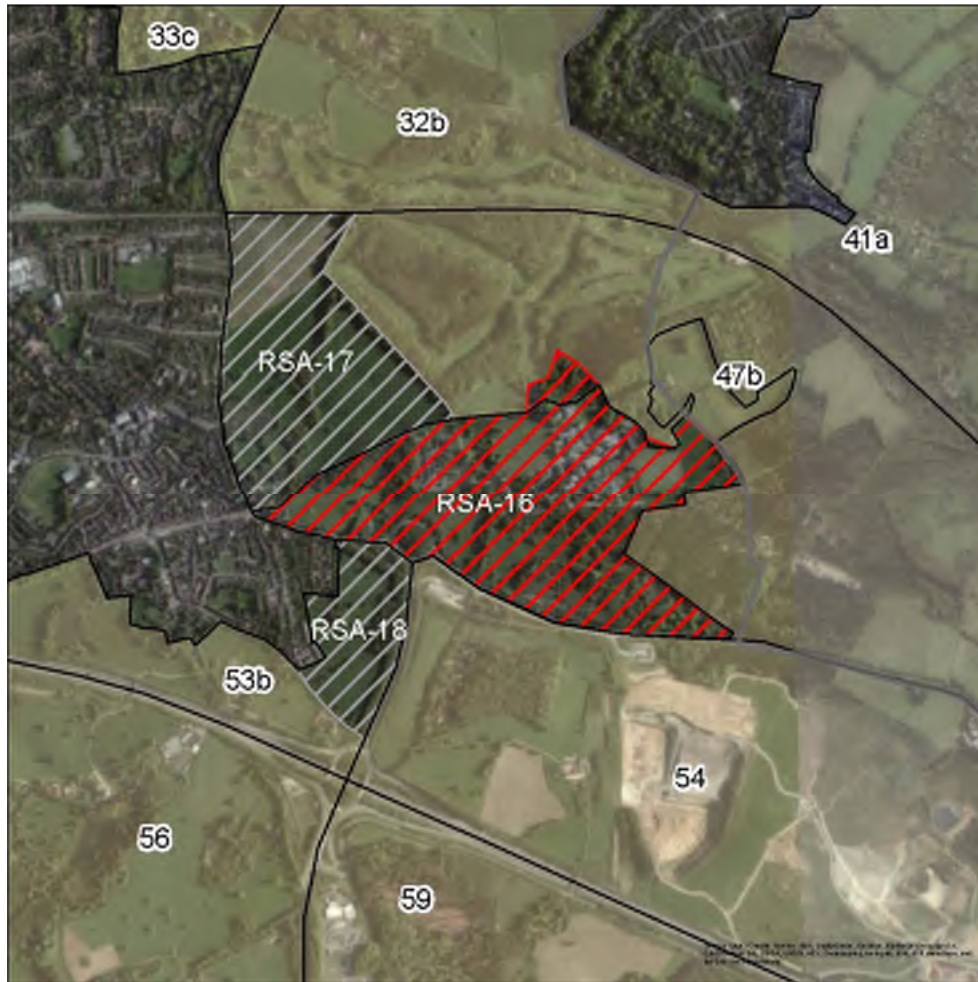
6.4.33 Overall, General Area 44a, located to the south and east of Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter, attains a medium score against the NPPF purposes, preventing the outward sprawl of the Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter large built-up area (Purpose 1), contributing to maintaining the gaps between Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and Maple Cross, and Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter and Denham Green (the southern part in the latter case) (Purpose 2), and restricting encroachment into a largely rural open area (Purpose 3). It also contributes to Purpose 4 (albeit weakly).

6.4.34 A very small sub-area in the north-east, RSA-15, is identified as potentially scoring weakly. This area is small in scale and would effectively form part of the settlement footprint of Chalfont St Peter, which encloses the area along its northern and western edges (Purpose 1), and thus also plays little role in preventing coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2). While RSA-15 is relatively open, it has a strong visual relationship with the Chalfont St Peter settlement edge and is relatively disconnected from the wider countryside, in terms of character, visual and physical connections; the edge of Hogtrough Wood is a significant buffer to the south and Denham Lane severs the

area from the countryside further east. Areas of hard standing diminish its rurality further (Purpose 3).

Recommendation: General Area 44a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north-east, north of Hogtrough Wood (RSA-15), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-16 (General Area 47a – East of Beaconsfield)



- 6.4.35** General Area 47a, located to the east of Beaconsfield, attains a medium score across the NPPF purposes, fulfilling Purpose 1 by preventing the outward sprawl of Beaconsfield, and Purpose 2 by restricting the coalescence of Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter (as well as the Green Belt settlement of Seer Green). It also meets Purposes 3 and 4, albeit weakly.
- 6.4.36** An identified sub-area incorporating the Wilton Park MDS and further land to the west and south, RSA-16, is judged as making little contribution to Green Belt purposes; if considered separately, it may score weakly. It constitutes an area of existing encroachment and has a semi-urban character (Purpose 3). While the east of the General Area, an undeveloped ‘break’ in the built-form, plays an important role in preventing coalescence between Beaconsfield and Seer Green,

the sub-area makes little contribution to this separation (Purpose 2). It is effectively urbanised and generally inward looking, with little connection to the wider countryside. Furthermore, given the Council's ambitions to replace many of the existing disused MOD buildings with new residential and employment development in line with the adopted Wilton Park SPD, the sub-area is likely to become more closely integrated with Beaconsfield to the west, thus playing an even lesser role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1). A proposed access road, enabling development for the wider site masterplan, will also affect the relationship between the parcel and the surrounding countryside.

6.4.37 Given anticipated changes to the character and make-up of the parcel going forward, the sub-area is recommended for further consideration in Part 2.

Recommendation: General Area 47a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified sub-area in the west, encompassing the Wilton Park MDS and further land to the west and south (RSA-16), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-17 (General Area 47b – East of Beaconsfield)



- 6.4.38** General Area 47b, located between Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter, is judged to meet the NPPF purposes strongly. It is noted as playing a particularly important role in preventing encroachment into the countryside, given its open and unspoilt rural character, thus meeting Purpose 3 strongly. It also meets Purpose 1, preventing the outward sprawl of both Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross / Chalfont St Peter, and Purpose 2 by maintaining the overall scale of the gap between these settlements.
- 6.4.39** During the assessment, consideration was given to sub-division of the General Area to look at smaller areas at the edges of Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross which may score weakly if considered in isolation. The east of the parcel adjacent to Gerrards Cross has a very open, rural character and strong links with the wider countryside, with no durable boundary features present which would check the outward sprawl of the large built-up area and allow for the definition of a robust Green Belt boundary; thus, it was determined that this area should be discounted from further consideration.
- 6.4.40** Although it has a rural feel, the western edge of the General Area adjacent to Beaconsfield (west of the Beaconsfield Golf Course, RSA-17) has a strong visual connection with the edge of Beaconsfield, as well as limited inter-visibility with the wider countryside, and a degree of envelopment created by urban form to the south (Wilton Park), west (the prominent settlement edge of Beaconsfield) and north (the railway line). It would likely make a lesser contribution to Purposes 1 and 3 as a result. A proposed relief road between the existing A355 and the Pyebush roundabout will dissect this part of the General Area, thus creating a more robustly defined sub-area which may score weakly if considered alone.

Recommendation: General Area 47a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west, west of the Beaconsfield Golf Club (RSA-17), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-18 (General Area 53b – South-east of Beaconsfield)



6.4.41 General Area 53b, located to the south-east of Beaconsfield, attains a medium score against the NPPF purposes, preventing the outward sprawl of Beaconsfield (Purpose 1) and restricting encroachment into areas of open land (Purpose 3). Additionally, the west and centre of the General Area play a particularly important role with regard to Purpose 4, preventing development on the historic southern approach to Beaconsfield.

6.4.42 The identified area in the east of the General Area, RSA-18 (north-east of Hedgerley Lane, west of A355, and south of A40), may score weakly if considered separately. RSA-18 is less consequential to the historic setting of Beaconsfield and is heavily contained within existing infrastructure, reducing its contribution to Purpose 3. This sub-area also makes a lesser contribution to preventing sprawl (Purpose 1), given the sub-area's small scale and strong sense of containment within durable physical features. When considering this area further, emerging recommendations for General Area 47a to the north (RSA-16) should also be taken into account in parallel.

Recommendation: General Area 53b meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the east may (RSA-18) score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-19 & RSA-20 (General Area 58a – South/East of Bourne End / Wooburn)



- 6.4.43** Although General Area 58a, located to the south and east of Bourne End / Wooburn, is judged to attain a medium score against the NPPF purposes overall, it is notable that it only meets Purpose 3, restricting development in areas of largely rural, open land.
- 6.4.44** Two areas have been identified within the General Area which may perform weakly against Purpose 3: RSA-19 in the north (to the north of Hedsor Road); and RSA-20 in the south-west (to the west of Ferry Lane). These areas are effectively enclosed within the settlement footprint of Bourne End / Wooburn with little linkage to the wider countryside, and have a more semi-urban character, in contrast with the remainder of the parcel.
- 6.4.45** RSA-19 is almost completely enveloped by built form as a result of extensive ribbon development on Hedsor Road, which although washed over in the Green Belt, has an urban character and is

functionally linked to Bourne End / Wooburn. While the sub-area is largely open, the influence of built-form reduces its sense of rurality.

6.4.46 RSA-20 in the south-west of the General Area has a rural feel (related in terms of landscape typology with the wider Green Belt to the east), but is closely surrounded by residential development to the north, south and west and thus subject to urbanising influences. Furthermore, it is of a very small scale and plays little role in maintaining the integrity of the wider countryside.

Recommendation: General Area 58a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; two identified sub-areas, RSA-19 in the north and RSA-20 in the south-west, may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-21 (General Areas 60 and 67 – West of Bourne End / Wooburn)



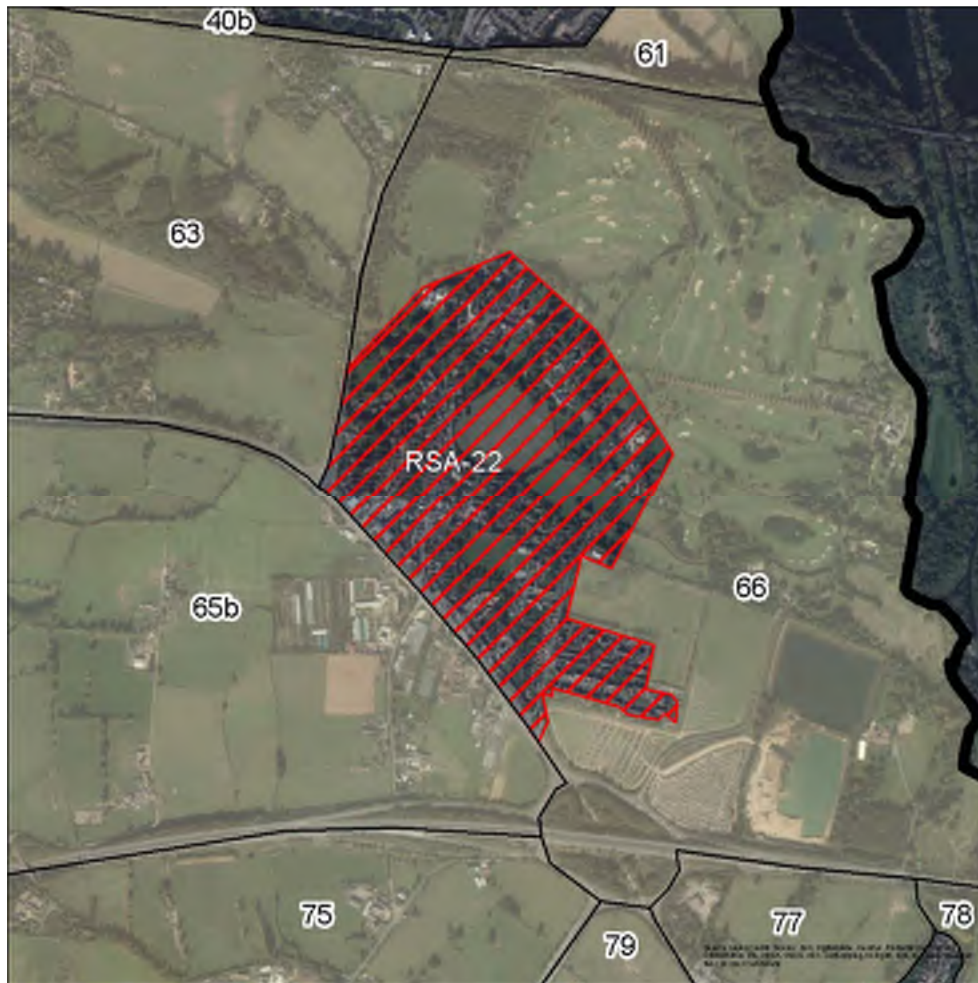
6.4.47 General Areas 60 and 67, located between Bourne End / Wooburn and Marlow, are identified as meeting the NPPF purposes strongly, specifically as a result of its role in preventing coalescence between Bourne End / Wooburn and Marlow (Purpose 2). The west of the General Areas also check the outward sprawl of the identified large

built-up area of Marlow (Purpose 1), and the General Areas as a whole meet Purpose 3.

6.4.48 An identified sub-area in the east of the General Areas, RSA-21, may meet the purposes weakly if considered separately. In contrast to the wider General Areas this sub-area, east of Coldmoorholme Lane / Upper Thames Way, is effectively enclosed within the settlement of Bourne End / Wooburn, enveloped by its urban form to the north and east, and makes little contribution to the gap with Marlow. It is judged that, if considered alone, RSA-21 would do little to maintain the scale of this gap as a result of its small scale and weak relationship with the wider countryside (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: General Areas 60 and 67 meet the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the east, at the edge of Bourne End / Wooburn (RSA-21) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-22 (General Area 66 – Denham)



6.4.49 As a whole, General Area 66, located to the south of Denham Green, meets the NPPF purposes, particularly with regard to Purpose 2,

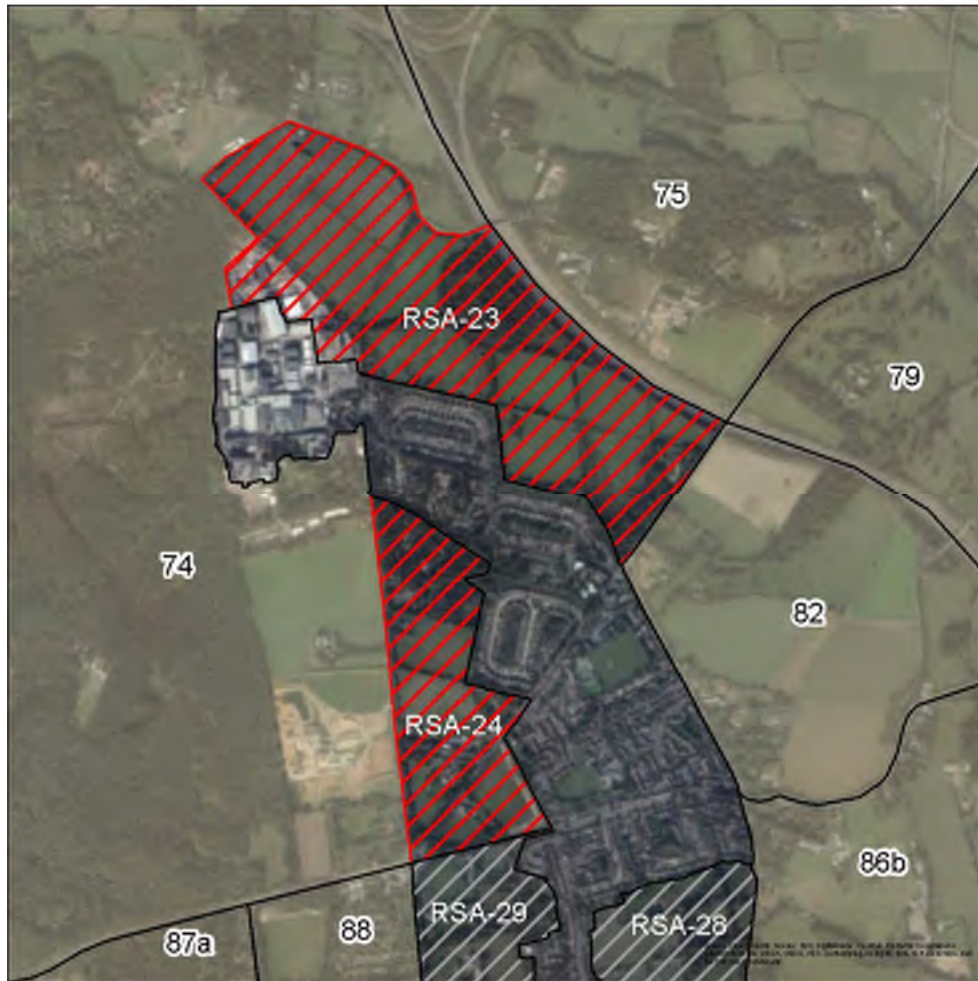
maintaining a series of narrow gaps between the Green Belt settlement of Denham³⁷ and surrounding settlements.

- 6.4.50** However, Denham itself (which accounts for much of the General Area) makes little contribution to Green Belt purposes and may score weakly if considered separately (RSA-22). It constitutes an area of significant encroachment and has a semi-urban character, while in itself does not contribute to the gaps to surrounding non-Green Belt settlements or prevent their merging. It is quite densely built up and has an inherently semi-urban character, with minimum integration into the wider countryside.
- 6.4.51** Ultimately, it is felt that it detracts from surrounding Green Belt which is of a more open, rural character and has strong connections with the wider network of countryside spaces. Its removal from the Green Belt may reinforce the permanence of surrounding Green Belt, which plays a crucial role in preventing the further perceptual and physical merging of settlements in this part of Buckinghamshire.
- 6.4.52** Further consideration of this parcel should take into account emerging recommendations on General Area 65a (RGA-7), which may further impact upon the contribution of General Area 66 to the NPPF purposes.

Recommendation: General Area 66 meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south-west, encompassing the Green Belt settlement of Denham (RSA-22), may score weakly and could be considered further.

³⁷ As identified in Table 4.2, Denham comprises settlements identified as 'Denham (South of Village)' and 'Denham Village' in South Bucks Settlement Hierarchy.

RSA-23 and RSA-24 (General Area 74 – North / West of Iver Heath)



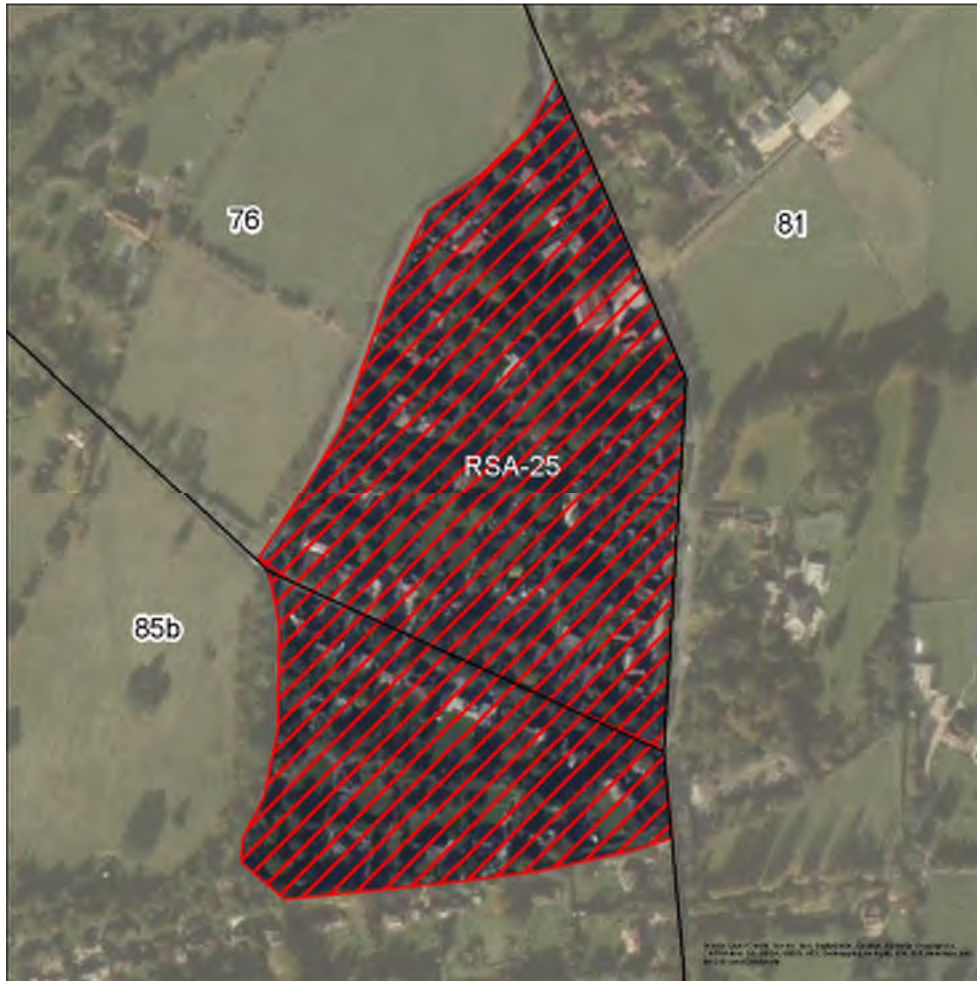
- 6.4.53** General Area 74, located to the north and west of Iver Heath, broadly meets the NPPF purposes but displays highly varying characteristics. The northern and particularly the western areas display highly rural characteristics, and the Green Belt here plays an important role in preventing encroachment of development into the countryside (Purpose 3); these areas also play a role in preventing coalescence between Iver Heath and both Gerrards Cross and Slough, as well maintaining the smaller gaps to Wexham Street and Fulmer. These areas should not be considered further, as they are deemed to be important to the strategic integrity of the Green Belt in the wider area.
- 6.4.54** Two areas have been identified which may score weakly against the NPPF purposes if considered separately. These sub-areas comprise: the substantial area of land with planning permission for Pinewood Studios expansion (RSA-23); and a broad area comprising the area of land between Pinewood Road and Iver Heath / A412 and a small area of land between the A4007 and the A412 (RSA-24). In general, the eastern part of the General Area 74, particularly around Iver Heath and Pinewood, has suffered significant encroachment and

fragmentation. For example, the RSA-24 is enveloped by the settlement of Iver Heath to the north and east, whilst roads which are frequently lined with residential ribbon development create severance from the wider countryside. This contributes to a more urban fringe character and limits the contribution of the Green Belt to restricting encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3). This smaller sub-area may also be considered effectively as part of the settlement footprint of Iver Heath, and thus making little or no contribution to preventing coalescence with other settlements (Purpose 2).

6.4.55 Whilst RSA-24 undoubtedly constitutes an expansion of Iver Heath into areas which may once have been considered ‘countryside’, given the outstanding permission it would appear prudent to recommend this area for further consideration given it may score weakly once fully developed; further consideration could be given to establishing permanent, durable new boundaries for the Green Belt here.

Recommendation: General Area 74 meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; two identified areas, in the east around Iver Heath (RSA-23 and RSA-24), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-25 (General Areas 76 and 85b – Stoke Park)

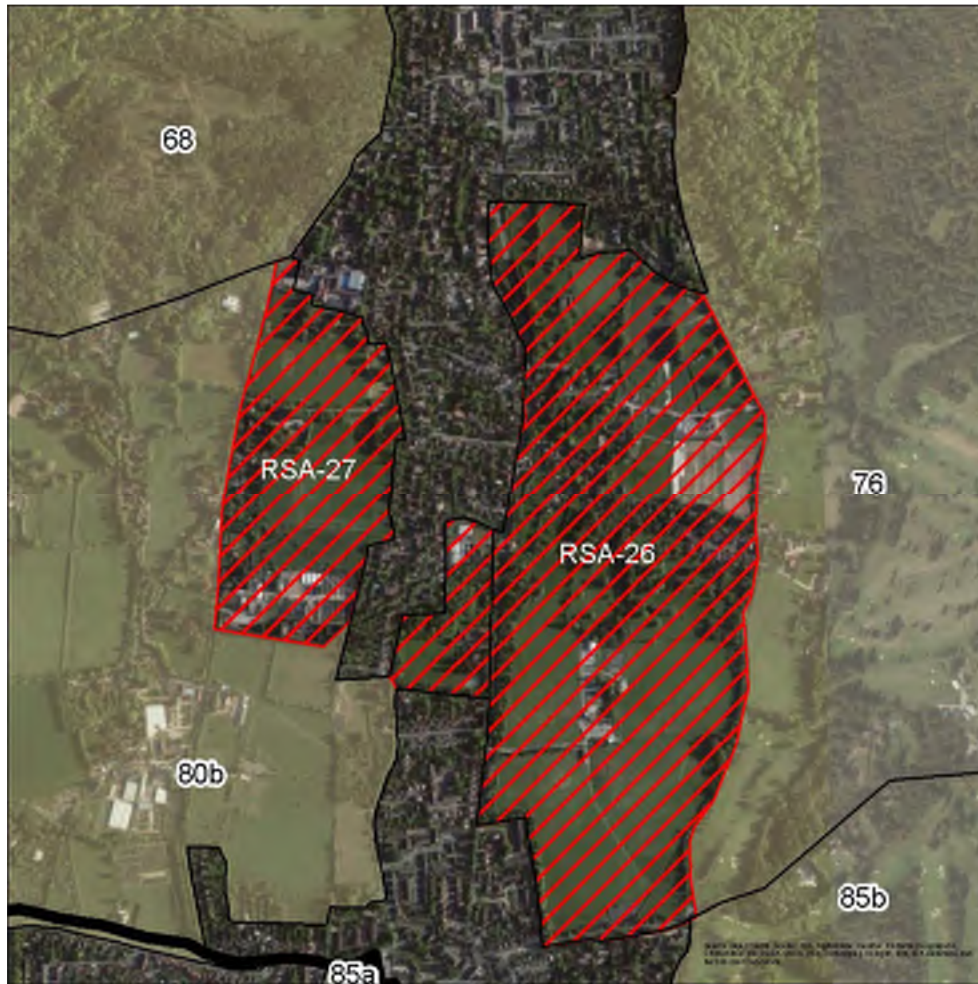


6.4.56 Collectively, General Areas 76 and 85b, located to the east of Farnham Royal / Farnham Common, play an important role in maintaining the strategic integrity of the Green Belt. This area of Green Belt, north of Slough, is punctuated by a number of settlements (some non-Green Belt and a number 'washed over'). As such, these General Areas both meet Purpose 2 strongly, maintain a series of narrow gaps and prevent coalescence between Farnham Royal / Farnham Common, Stoke Poges, and Burnham / Slough. They also prevent the further encroachment of urbanising features into the countryside (Purpose 3), while General Area 85b prevents the outward sprawl of the Burnham / Slough large built-up area.

6.4.57 A small identified sub-area around Stoke Park, RSA-25, encompassing parts of General Area 76 and 85b, is noted as being more densely developed and relatively self-contained, and separated from the wider countryside. The sub-area would likely contribute weakly to Purpose 2, as it effectively reduces the gap between Stoke Poges and Burnham / Slough in perceptual terms, as well as Purpose 3 on account of its semi-urban character and level of development, which also impinges on the openness of the wider Green Belt.

Recommendation: General Areas 76 and 85b meet the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; a small sub-area around Stoke Park (RSA-25) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-26 and RSA-27 (General Areas 76 and 80b – Farnham Royal / Farnham Common)



- 6.4.58** The strategic importance of General Area 76, located between Farnham Royal / Farnham Common and Stoke Pokes, for preventing the coalescence of settlements is noted previously. General Area 80b plays a similarly important role with respect to Purpose 2, maintaining separation between Farnham Royal / Farnham Common and Burnham / Slough, and also prevents the outward sprawl of the Burnham / Slough large built-up area (Purpose 1).
- 6.4.59** However, a wider area of Green Belt around Farnham Royal / Farnham Common may contribute weakly to the NPPF purposes. This constitutes two sub-areas: the western part of General Area 76 (west of Parsonage Lane) and the Dair School site in the extreme east of General Area 80b, RSA-26; and the north-eastern part of General Area 80b (east of Crown Lane), RSA-27.
- 6.4.60** Neither of these sub-areas directly abut Burnham / Slough, and thus do not prevent the outward sprawl of this large built-up area. These sub-areas have been subjected to substantial encroachment; particular concentrations of ribbon development were identified around Crown

Lane, which effectively reduces any sense of connectivity with the wider countryside, whilst the area to the west of General Area 76 (RSA-26) has a semi-urban feel, punctuated by small developments and areas of managed urban parkland, associated with Farnham Royal / Farnham Common. These areas therefore make a lesser contribution to Purpose 3. Furthermore, as they effectively form part of the wider settlement footprint, they make little contribution to preventing coalescence (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: General Areas 76 and 80b meet the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; two sub-areas around Farnham Royal / Farnham Common (RSA-26 and RSA-27) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-28 (General Area 86a – South-east of Iver Heath)



6.4.61 General Area 86a, located between Iver and Iver Heath, is adjudged to be strongly performing Green Belt, particularly in terms of Purpose 2, as it encompasses an important area of open land that prevents the coalescence of Iver with Iver Heath. Despite the close proximity of urban areas, it also maintains a notably rural feel (Purpose 3), albeit it

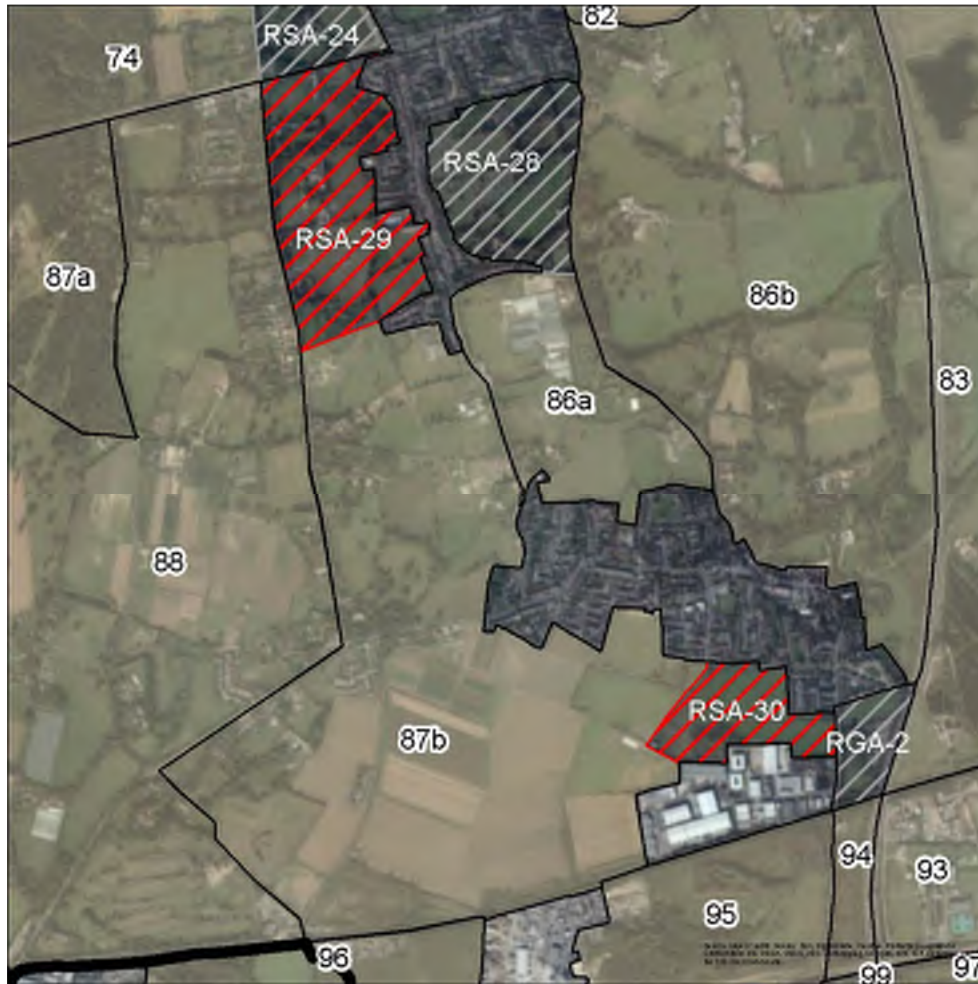
is frequently punctuated by small residential developments which diminish its relative openness locally.

6.4.62

A smaller sub-area in the far north-east of the General Area, north of Norwood Road (RSA-28), is judged to be less important for preventing the merging of these settlements. As a result of the urban form of Iver Heath, which almost completely wraps around the sub-area to the north, west and south, and the prevalence of ribbon development along Norwood Road, RSA-28 is physically separated from the Green Belt further south and does not form part of the gap between Iver Heath and Iver (Purpose 2). Although its character is noted as largely rural, its contribution to Purpose 3 is diminished by the close influence of built form, including some dispersed dwellings along Bangors Lane South, and its physical separation from the wider countryside as a result of the road (Purpose 3). It is also judged that RSA-28 makes only a minor contribution to the integrity of the wider strategic Green Belt.

Recommendation: General Area 86a meets the NPPF purposes, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north-east, RSA-28, may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-29 and RSA-30 (General Area 87b – West of Iver Heath and South of Iver)



- 6.4.63** General Area 87b, located to the west of Iver and Iver Heath, meets the NPPF purposes strongly, particularly with respect to Purpose 2; indeed, there are several particularly sensitive parts of the parcel which maintain separation between settlements, specifically the north-eastern edge which maintains the essential gap between Iver and Iver Heath, and the south-western part which prevents the erosion of the gap between Iver and Iver Heath, and Slough. The General Area prevents encroachment into some areas of open countryside (Purpose 3).
- 6.4.64** Two sub-areas, RSA-29 and RSA-30, are identified as potentially scoring weakly and make a lesser contribution in the context of the wider strategic Green Belt. These sub-areas are effectively enveloped by development and perform little function in Green Belt terms. In particular, land between the Ridgeway Trading Estate and Iver (RSA-30) does not prevent coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2), as these built areas are functionally and in policy terms both constituent parts of Iver, and has little linkage with the wider countryside and a strong inter-visibility with the surrounding urban form (Purpose 3).

An identified private road has the potential to be strengthened into a durable edge which could form the Green Belt boundary.

6.4.65 The north of the parcel between Wood Lane and Swallow Lane, RSA-29, similarly performs little role in terms of Purpose 2 and has a distinctly urban-fringe character, having already suffered encroachment.

Recommendation: General Area 87b meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; two identified areas, in the far north and south-east (RSA-29 and RSA-30 respectively), may score weakly and could be considered further.

RSA-31 (General Area 99 – Richings Park)



6.4.66 As a whole, General Area 99, located to the south, east and west of Richings Park, meets the NPPF purposes strongly, in particular with regard to Purpose 2 by maintaining the essential and narrow gap between Richings Park and Slough, as well as making a contribution at the more strategic level by preventing the merging of both of these settlements with West Drayton in the adjacent London Borough of Hillingdon. The General Area also restricts the outward sprawl of the

Burnham / Slough large built-up area (Purpose 1) and prevents encroachment into areas of open countryside (Purpose 3).

- 6.4.67** A small identified area in the eastern half of the General Area, RSA-31, bounded to the north by Richings Way, to the west by Old Slade Lane and partially to the south by The Poynings, is effectively enveloped within the non-Green Belt settlement of Richings Park and may, if considered alone, score weakly. In isolation, this sub-area makes little contribution to the separation of Richings Park from West Drayton to the east, or Slough to the west (Purpose 2); furthermore, it would not contribute to Purpose 1 and, as a result of its severance from the wider countryside and strong relationship with the settlement edge, has the potential to score weakly against Purpose 3.

Recommendation: General Area 99 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified sub-area in the east of the General Area, at the edge of Richings Park (RSA-31), may score weakly and could be considered further.

6.5 Non-Green Belt Areas

- 6.5.1** As noted in Section 5.2, all of the non-Green Belt areas considered as part of the Study meet the NPPF purposes to varying extents. The Buckinghamshire Authorities should consider, at a strategic level, the relative merits and drawbacks of extending the Green Belt in these areas, taking into account the use of other local designations in the relevant development plans and whether exceptional circumstances are present to justify adding them to the Green Belt.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1.1** This review has examined the performance of the Green Belt in and around Buckinghamshire against the Green Belt Purposes, as set out in the NPPF. The assessment has considered 157 Green Belt General Areas, bounded by readily recognisable, durable physical features, as well as 14 non-Green Belt General Areas, encompassing areas at the edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt and four former areas of safeguarded land in Wycombe District.
- 7.1.2** The Green Belt in Buckinghamshire has, since its original designation, played a crucial role in: preventing the outward sprawl of Greater London, as well as other large built-up areas throughout Buckinghamshire; maintaining the county's settlement pattern; ensuring the continued openness of the countryside; and protecting the unique rural context of the county's historic towns. It is striking that, many years after its original designation, the Green Belt continues to perform these roles so strongly.
- 7.1.3** While every General Area assessed was found to meet the NPPF purposes to some extent, a small number were found to perform weakly as Green Belt and have thus been recommended for further consideration by the Buckinghamshire Authorities. In addition, scope was identified to sub-divide General Areas to focus on sub-areas which are likely to perform weakly if considered separately, under the premise that suitable defensible boundary features can be identified to enclose such areas.
- 7.1.4** The areas recommended for further consideration are distributed throughout Buckinghamshire, but tend to be more concentrated in the south and east of the county. As a result of rapid urbanisation in the early-mid 20th Century, much of this area experienced substantial settlement growth and piecemeal development in rural areas at the edge of settlements, resulting in the fragmentation of the countryside to a greater degree than elsewhere in the Buckinghamshire Green Belt. This fragmentation has often resulted in the presence of small, isolated areas of Green Belt which tend to make little contribution to the integrity of the wider Metropolitan Green Belt and contribute weakly to the NPPF purposes.
- 7.1.5** Elsewhere, areas of land which have suffered more substantial encroachment or urbanisation, harming the overall integrity of the Green Belt, have also been identified.
- 7.1.6** In addition to identifying weakly performing Green Belt, this Study has also considered whether there is any land currently outside the Green Belt which meets Green Belt purposes. Assessment of these non-Green Belt General Areas against the NPPF purposes suggests that they all meet Green Belt purposes to a varying extent. This should be considered in the context of other local designations in the relevant development plans.
- 7.1.7** It is important to note that the recommendations set out in this report will not automatically lead to the release of land from the Green Belt

or the designation of new Green Belt. Ensuring maximum protection for the Green Belt, in line with national policy, should continue to be a core planning principle in the formulation of Local Plan policy.

- 7.1.8** The areas identified through this Study as warranting further consideration will need to be subject to more detailed assessment to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of any adjustments to the Green Belt boundary. Following this work, further decision making by the Buckinghamshire Authorities in updating relevant local development plans will determine which areas, if any, might be released from or added to the Green Belt.
- 7.1.9** The authorities will also need to carefully consider whether, in accordance with the NPPF, there are any ‘exceptional circumstances’ that justify the alteration of the Green Belt boundary through the preparation of new local plans. This will apply equally to any proposed additions or subtractions to land designated Green Belt. At that time, the authorities will need to consider the Green Belt boundary having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that any proposed boundaries are capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Connected	Displaying a low level of containment and rather simply adjoining the urban area.
Contiguous	Predominantly surrounded or enclosed by built form but also retaining a strong link to the wider Green Belt.
Unspoilt Countryside / rural area	Land with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland / scrubland and open fields.
Duty to Cooperate	A legislative requirement in the Localism Act 2011 which places a duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
Enclosed	Almost entirely contained or surrounded by built development.
Essential Gap	A gap between settlements where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
General Area	Green Belt land parcel defined by permanent and defensible boundaries.
Large Built up Area	Areas defined to correspond to the major settlements identified in the respective Local Plans for each local authority, both within and outside Buckinghamshire, and used in the NPPF Purpose 1 assessment.
Largely rural area	Land with a general absence of built development, largely characterised by rural land uses and landscapes but with some other sporadic developments and man-made structures.
Wider Gap	A gap between settlements where limited development may be possible without coalescence between them.
Less Essential Gap	A gap between settlements where development is likely to be possible without any risk of coalescence between them.
Neighbouring Town	Refers to settlements within Buckinghamshire, as well as settlements in neighbouring authorities immediately adjacent to Buckinghamshire's boundaries, for the assessment against NPPF Purpose 2.
Open land	Open land refers to land that is lacking in built development.
Openness	Openness refers to the visible openness of the Green Belt in terms of the absence of built development and a topography which supports long sightlines and vistas.
Semi-urban area	Land which begins on the edge of the fully built up area and contains a mix of urban and rural land uses before giving way to the wider countryside. Land uses might include publicly accessible natural green spaces and green corridors, country parks and local nature reserves, small-scale food production (e.g. market gardens) and waste management facilities, interspersed with built development more generally associated with urban areas (e.g. residential or commercial).

Term	Definition
Sprawl	The outward spread of a large built-up area at its periphery in an untidy or irregular way.
Steering Group	Client Steering Group for the Study comprising planning officers from: Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council, Wycombe District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council.
Study	Part 1 of the Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment
Urban area	Land which is predominantly characterised by urban land uses, including physical developments such as residential or commercial, or urban managed parks.

Appendix B

Sample Pro-Forma

General Area			
Area (ha)			
Local Authority			
Location Plan			
Description			
Purpose	Criteria	Assessment	Score
(1) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas.		PASS/ FAIL
	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary.		
Purpose 1: Total Score			X/5

(2) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.		
Purpose 2: Total Score			X/5
(3) Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.		
Purpose 3: Total Score			X/5
(4) To preserved the setting and special character of historic towns	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.		
Purpose 4: Total Score			X/5