

Green Belt Technical Note for:

**LAND OFF KENILWORTH ROAD, BALSALL
COMMON, SOLIHULL**

For the Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation of
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) Local Plan
Review

Generator (Balsall Common) Limited

March 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

Section 1 of this report sets out the qualifications and experience of Mark Flatman, the writer of this Belt Technical Note. Section 2 of this report reviews the current process in relation to Green Belt land, forming part of the Council's evidence base in the preparation of a new Local Plan. Section 3 of this report assesses the Site at Balsall Common currently being promoted for residential development ('the Site') which involves assessing the parcel against the five purposes of the Green Belt outlined in the NPPF.

1.1 Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1.1 My name is Mark Flatman. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect and a Director of Liz Lake Associates, (LLA), Chartered Landscape Architects and Urban Designers. I have a degree and a Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Greenwich University and I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). I have held the role as Head of Landscape Planning across the Practice since joining Liz Lake Associates in 2012.
- 1.1.2 I have worked in professional practice since 1996. During this time, I have prepared landscape proposals for a range of projects including private landowners, historic landscapes, and educational, commercial and residential developments in town and rural settings.
- 1.1.3 I have prepared Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) to accompany planning applications for a range of projects including residential, leisure and recreation, commercial, minerals and waste, agriculture, energy and recycling as well as enabling development. I have also prepared the landscape and visual assessments required for the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) of highway and transport infrastructure projects, minerals and waste development, as well as residential and commercial development.

- 1.1.4 I have acted on behalf of a number of Local Authority clients, including Chelmsford City Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, South Norfolk District Council, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. I also act for Linton Parish Council (within South Cambridgeshire) on several schemes within their parish and have presented reports, as well as evidence at Public Inquiry.
- 1.1.5 At Hatfield I was involved in assisting Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council with landscape and visual evidence in relation to the effects associated with a proposed large-scale waste and recycling facility (RERF) at New Barnfield. The Council became a Rule 6 party at a call-in Inquiry and successfully challenged the County Council's siting of a new facility in the Green Belt in Hertfordshire, where I presented evidence as the Council's landscape witness. The Inspectors decision to refuse planning permission was confirmed by the Secretary of State.
- 1.1.6 I have recently been involved with a Green Belt study in Amber Valley District Council, providing landscape and visual baseline studies to inform a district wide assessment of land which will form part of the Council's evidence base for their Local Plan.
- 1.1.7 I am or have recently been involved in various stages of Examinations in Public (EiPs) in relation to land and the Green Belt in Wycombe District, Epping Forest District and Welwyn Hatfield Borough, which has involved using the Liz Lake methodology, analysis to interrogate various stages of Green Belt analysis undertaken by the Council's.
- 1.1.8 Liz Lake Associates is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 30 years' experience of master planning, landscape planning, landscape architecture, urban design, heritage and environmental impact assessment. The company is a registered practice of the Landscape Institute.
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2. PLANNING AND GREEN BELT CONTEXT

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF2)

2.1.1 The NPPF was updated in July 2018 (now commonly referred to as NPPF2), and again in February 2019, and seeks continued protection of Green Belts and states that ‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.’¹

2.1.2 The NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes.²

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

2.1.3 The NPPF states:

*“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”*³

Similarly, *“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans”.*⁴

¹ NPPF2 (July 2018) Para 133, p.40

² NPPF2 (July 2018) Para 134, p.40

³ NPPF2 (July 2018) Para 143, p.40

⁴ NPPF2 (July 2018) Para 143, p.40

2.1.4

The NPPF at paragraph 139 confirms the approach Local Authorities should take when addressing Green Belt boundaries, in stating that, when doing so, local authorities should:

- *“Ensure consistency with the development plan’s strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development*
- *Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open*
- *Where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- *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 an update to a plan which proposes the development;*
- *Be able to demonstrate 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”.*

2.1.5

The NPPF encourages Local Authorities to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, by providing opportunities for access, outdoor sport and recreation, enhancing landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity or improving damaged and derelict land. These land uses have been interpreted as exhibiting open characteristics which are an essential component of the Green Belt.

2.1.6

The Site falls within the administrative area for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, whose website states:

“The current local plan, the ‘Solihull Local Plan’, was adopted in December 2013 and covers the period 2011 to 2028. Since the Local Plan was adopted, a legal challenge has resulted in the overall housing requirement being deleted and remitted back to the Council for reconsideration.

In addition, the government's plans for high speed rail have passed through Parliament and Royal Assent has now been granted for Phase One of the route. Contracts to deliver the scheme are being put in place and the route is expected to open by 2026. The first station outside of London is to be built in Solihull on land next to the M42 and opposite the NEC. The Interchange station will be constructed on land that it is currently within the Green Belt. To ensure that a proper planning framework is in place that addresses these issues, the Council is undertaking a Local Plan Review (LPR)”.

2.1.7 Earlier work carried out by the Council (including the SHELAA) recognises the likely need for release of Green Belt land:

“It is worth noting that the vast majority of sites that have been put forward as part of this process relate to sites located in the Green Belt. For instance, the analysis undertaken for the 2016 SHELAA indicated that 96.5% of the ‘theoretical capacity’ identified in the study would be in the Green Belt”⁵.

2.1.8 In order to meet its unmet need, which the Council acknowledges cannot be delivered on brownfield land alone and therefore:

“The Council believes that exceptional circumstances exist for some land to be released from the Green Belt to accommodate the Borough’s own needs and a contribution to the unmet needs arising from the wider HMA. This is on the basis that there are significant unmet needs that cannot be accommodated without using land in the Green Belt”⁶.

“The extent of land to be released from the Green Belt should also be seen in the context of ensuring that it would not have an undue adverse impact as a whole on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.....”⁷.

⁵ Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation, para 63, page 15 (reference to earlier SHELAA work)

⁶ Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation, para 373, page 65

⁷ Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation, para 374, page 65

- 2.1.9 The Council has undertaken a Strategic Green Belt Assessment, to assess the performance of land in the Green Belt:
- “The Council has undertaken a study to determine how well the different parts of the Green Belt perform against the first four purposes of including land in the Green Belt. In overall terms, this assessment identified that most of the Borough’s Green Belt performs very well against these purposes, although there are some small areas that do not perform well. And this is reflected in the site selection methodology described earlier”⁸.*
- 2.1.10 The Council’s approach to selection of sites in the Green Belt (setting aside brownfield land) appears to rule out allocating a set amount of housing to a particular area and instead seeks to identify the performance of a site by:
- “Firstly, determine where in the site hierarchy that the site falls within. This seeks to provide a balance and favours brownfield sites, accessible sites and sites which only impact on lower performing Green Belt to determine a sites potential. This approach reflects the advice in paragraph 138 of the NPPF2”⁹.*
- 2.1.11 The Council’s conclusions having carried out its assessment (and drawing on a GL Hearn strategic assessment for the Housing Market Area) is that:
- “It is clear from these assessments that the Borough’s Green Belt performs both strategic purposes (e.g. containing sprawl and maintaining separation between the Birmingham/Solihull urban area and the city of Coventry) and more local purposes (e.g. marinating separation between the rural settlements in the Blythe area)”¹⁰.*
- 2.1.12 Relevant Green Belt policy from the adopted Local Plan (2013) includes, as follows:

⁸ Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation, para 360, page 63

⁹ Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation, para 68, page 16

¹⁰ Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation, para 362, page 63

P17 Countryside and Green Belt¹¹:

“.....Development involving farm-based diversification will normally be permitted in order to support farm enterprises and the management of land, providing it is in an appropriate location, of a scale appropriate to its location, and does not harm the Green Belt, conservation or enhancement policies. The Council will not permit inappropriate development in the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances. In addition to the national policy, the following provisions shall apply to development in the Borough’s Green Belt.....”.

“.....The small settlements of Hampton-in-Arden, Hockley Heath, Meriden and Catherine de Barnes are inset in the Green Belt and are not therefore subject to Green Belt policy. Nevertheless, the Council, in considering applications for development in these settlements, will take into account the importance of their rural setting and of their attributes, such as historic buildings, open space, density of development, landscape and townscape that contribute towards their special character. Immediately beyond the inset boundary, strict Green Belt policies will apply”.

2.1.13 The Council commissioned Atkins to identify Strategic Green Belt parcels and the assessment of those parcels against the purposes of the Green Belt, forming the Council’s Green Belt evidence base, published July 2016. At this strategic level, the assessment identifies a very wide area around Balsall Common, including the Site, which forms part of Broad Area 02 as well as a more Refined Parcel RP58, both larger scale parcels. It should be noted that Balsall Common is an inset settlement surrounded by the Green Belt.

2.1.14 Therefore, it seems appropriate as part of this Technical Note to review the Site in relation to its performance in the Green Belt and the five purposes, as well as considering if the release of land would significantly affect Green Belt openness,

¹¹ Adopted Core Strategy and PMD (as amended), Adopted January 2015, para 3.44, page 24

sprawl or lead to coalescence at a local level when a smaller scale parcel (the Site) is considered alone.

2.2 Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (Atkins), July 2016

2.2.1 The core purpose of the Green Belt Assessment stated in the scope section p.1 was, *“to assess the extent to which the land currently designated as Green Belt within SMBC fulfils the essential characteristics and purposes of Green Belt land.....”*¹²,

and to provide part of the emerging evidence base for the preparation of the Local Plan Review in the knowledge that the Council will need to release land from the Green Belt to meet unmet housing need. It is also acknowledged that the work will form the basis or more detailed assessment of Green Belt land within Solihull¹³.

2.2.2 The Council’s consultants have assessed four of the Green Belt purposes at this strategic stage. The assessment excludes, *“to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling or derelict land”* - the assessment notes that all Green Belt land makes an equal contribution to this purpose and adds no value to the assessment.

2.2.3 The size of the strategic Broad Areas and Refined Parcels are recognised as providing an assessment that is not consistent with the land parcel currently being promoted, which is considerably smaller than the assessed Broad Areas and Refined Parcels in which it sits and therefore has the potential to make a very different contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. It is therefore acknowledged that an assessment of the land parcel being promoted should be undertaken to identify any differences between the Council’s large-scale Broad Area 02, the Refined Parcel 58 and the Site. This assessment is undertaken below.

¹² Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment, Atkins P.1 “assessment scope”.

¹³ Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment, Atkins P.2 “this assessment”

2.2.4 Each Broad Area/ Refined Parcel was assigned a score according to the performance, as follows,

0 = Refined Parcel/ Broad Area does not perform against the purpose

1 = Refined Parcel/ Broad Area is lower performing against the purpose

2 = Refined Parcel/ Broad Area is more moderately performing against the purpose

3 = Refined Parcel/ Broad Area is higher performing against the purpose

2.2.5 The results of the Council's assessment of Broad Area 02 are reproduced below for ease of reference¹⁴:

Strategic Green Belt Assessment Results for Broad Area 02:

GB Purpose	SMBC's Assessment of Strategic Parcel	SMBCs Importance to Green Belt	LLA Comments as a comparison, and relative to the smaller parcel of land being promoted for release from the Green Belt
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	<i>"Broad Area BA02 is more moderately performing against purpose 1. The area boundary is not easily identifiable but can be identified as the B4101 which forms the northern boundary of the area. Furthermore, when considered alongside 'Broad Area 4' of the 'Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Green Belt Study' the Broad Area plays a pivotal role in checking urban sprawl of Solihull to the north and Warwick and Kenilworth to the south-east".</i>	<i>2 - Broad Area boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present</i>	By comparison this much smaller parcel does not form part of and is wholly distinct from 'large built up areas' (by definition); neither does it sit immediately adjacent to a large built up area, and therefore would not lead to any outward sprawl from Solihull or Warwick and Kenilworth's urban areas. It is noted that RP59, RP60 and RP61 all scored 1 (lower performing) for this purpose and yet lie collectively as a group in the same location as RP58 which scored 3.

¹⁴ SMBC Strategic Green Belt Assessment, Broad Areas, Appendix H: Broad Areas Database

			In addition, the existing settlement of Balsall Common lies directly in between large built up area and the parcel.
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	<i>"BA02 is lower performing against purpose 2. The area is between the smaller urban areas of Dorridge and Knowle to the west and Balsall Common to the east. The area does not represent a strategic gap and therefore performs less well against the second purpose of Green Belt."</i>	1 - Broad Area is between smaller urban areas but does not represent a strategic gap and is not between major urban areas	Agree – no towns would merge as a result. It is also noted that except for RP59 (which scored 1), RP60 and RP61 all scored 2 (more moderately performing) for this purpose and yet lie collectively as a group in the same location as RP58, which also scored 2.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<i>"Broad Areas, by their nature, are all considered to perform highly against the third purpose of Green Belt and therefore all areas would score 3 - Area is higher performing"</i> .	3 - Area is higher performing	The Council makes a very broad-brush assumption but does not consider the variable nature and extent of existing and built development (encroachment) within the area formed by the straggling settlement or development, which may have compromised the openness of the wider parcel. The land forms an area of infill development, which is contained on 3 sides by development - between existing parts of a built area along Kenilworth Road together with existing housing and a Care Home development on the other boundaries. Whilst there is one remaining undeveloped boundary, the undulating landform provides some physical and visual containment from the wider area - containment can be further reinforced by supplementing the existing well-

			<p>established, permanent and robust edge of planting.</p> <p>It is also noted that except for RP59 (which scored 3), RP60 and RP61 all scored 2 (more moderately performing) for this purpose and yet lie collectively as a group next to RP58, which scored 3.</p>
<p>To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</p>	<p><i>"Broad Area BA02 contains Temple Balsall Conservation Area. There are clear views of Saint Mary's C of E Church and Saint Mary the Virgin Church".</i></p>	<p>3 - Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core</p>	<p>In the first instance, Temple Balsall is wrongly classified as being a historic town; however, it is a small hamlet. In the Council's settlement hierarchy, since:</p> <p><i>"...The remainder of the sub-area is distinctly rural with a series of remote historic villages, hamlets, scattered farmsteads and cottages. The historic settlements of Berkswell, Barston and Temple Balsall are of medieval or earlier origin and Walsal End has houses dating from the 17th Century"¹⁵.</i></p> <p><i>"The Arden landscape, historic villages, hamlets, farmsteads, country and lesser houses and the distinct medieval core of historic rural settlements including Berkswell, Barston, Temple Balsall, Meriden Hill, Walsal End, Hampton-in-Arden, Bickenhill and Knowle"¹⁶.</i></p>

¹⁵ Solihull Local Plan, Shaping a Sustainable Future, Dec 2013; page 17, Rural Area sub areas.

¹⁶ Solihull Local Plan, Shaping a Sustainable Future, Dec 2013; page 127, part iii of Policy P16.

			<p>Existing development at the outer edge of the village of Balsall Common (eg the Barchester – Harper Fields Care Home and associated housing) already lie in between the site and the settlement of Temple Balsall in any event.</p> <p>There is no inter-visibility between the village settlements at present due to topography and vegetation and the site is located to the east side of the existing care home.</p> <p>It is also noted that RP59, RP60 and RP61 all scored 0 (lower performing) for this purpose and all lie “not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town = 0”. This is the same score as given to RP58.</p>
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2.2.6 It is also important to consider the assessment of Refined Parcel RP58, the results provided by the Council, as follows¹⁷:

GB Purpose	SMBC’s Assessment of Refined Parcel RP58	SMBCs Importance to Green Belt	LLA Comments as a comparison, and relative to the smaller parcel of land being promoted for release from the Green Belt
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	<i>“Established field patterns and mature hedgerows/tree lines form a strong durable boundary to the rear of residential properties along Alder Lane to the north and the southern boundary. The A452 forms a durable and clear eastern boundary.”.</i>	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present.	<p>It has already been established that the Site would not lead to any outward sprawl from Solihull or Warwick and Kenilworth’s urban areas.</p> <p>At a site level the land would also not lead to any sprawl of a built-up area, since the site is surrounded by existing development on 3 sides, it would not extend built development into the</p>

¹⁷ SMBC Strategic Green Belt Assessment Appendix I: Refined Parcels Database

			<p>open countryside. The Refined Parcel itself contains significant built development already, which has not been recognised by the Council, including Care Home and significant amounts of residential development.</p> <p>It is noted that RP59, RP60 and RP61 all scored 1 (lower performing) for this purpose and yet lie collectively as a group in the same location as RP58 which by comparison scored 3.</p> <p>For RP59: "Limited residential development is already present along Frog Lane and Holly Lane that is detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common"</p> <p>For RP60: "Two dwellings are present within Refined Parcel RP60 which are detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common"</p> <p>For RP61: "Residential development is detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common along Fernhill Lane".</p> <p>Whilst the Refined Parcel 58 contains a significant amount of built development close to the promotion site, the land being promoted would not represent sprawl.</p>
<p>To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another</p>	<p><i>"Refined Parcel RP58 forms part of an approximate 4.5-kilometre gap between Balsall Common and Kenilworth to the south east".</i></p>	<p><i>2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within.... [sic]</i></p>	<p>The Council's assessment is incorrect. Existing built development already extends further along Kenilworth Road on the east side of the road and this forms the outer edge of the settlement pattern. Accordingly, development of the site being promoted would not affect the</p>

			<p>gap identified and the release of land would fall within the existing gap and not reduce it as the settlement already extends further than the proposed allocation.</p>
<p>To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p><i>"Refined Parcel RP58 is adjoined by countryside to the east, south and west, and is made up of agricultural fields. No development is present".</i></p>	<p><i>3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development</i></p>	<p>The Council makes a very broad-brush assumption but does not consider the variable nature and extent of existing and built development (encroachment) within the area formed by the straggling settlement or development, which has compromised the openness of the wider parcel. The land is not characterised by open countryside to the degree it once was; the land now forms an area of infill development, which is contained on 3 sides by development - between existing parts of a built area along Kenilworth Road together with existing housing and a Care Home development on the other boundaries. Whilst there is one remaining undeveloped boundary, the undulating landform provides some physical and visual containment from the wider area - containment can be further reinforced by supplementing the existing well-established, permanent and robust edge of planting.</p> <p>It is also noted that except for RP59 (which scored 3), RP60 and RP61 all scored 2 (more moderately performing) for this purpose and yet lie collectively as a group next to RP58, which scored 3.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council's assessment for RP61 states:</p>

			<p><i>"..is adjoined by development of Balsall Common to the north-east. The area is made up of agricultural fields and open to the south, west and east. Only limited development is present".</i></p> <p>Therefore, it would not be right if the Council considered a Parcel which is open on 3 sides should score higher than an infill Site which is surrounded by development on 3 sides (and has only 1 open boundary).</p>
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<i>"Refined Parcel RP58 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town".</i>	<i>0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town</i>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>It is also noted that RP59, RP60 and RP61 all scored 0 (lower performing) for this purpose and all lie "not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town = 0". This is the same score as given to RP58.</p>

- 2.2.7 By its own admission, the Atkins assessment provided a very strategic level evaluation and looks at very large-scale parcels where different parcels of land have very different contributions and will meet, or not, the Purposes of the Green belt in different ways.
- 2.2.8 Whilst the Atkins assessment considers some Refined Parcels, these are smaller sub areas associated with each Broad Area, it clearly does not assess all land around the defined settlements or smaller scale parcels, some of which would be highly suitable for release from the Green Belt depending on how they are assessed in relation to the main parcel in which they fall.
- 2.2.9 It is evident that at this point in time that the more detailed work envisaged has not been undertaken and the Council cannot at this stage be clear as to the performance of even smaller sub parcel(s) of land (such as the one being promoted at Balsall Common) that;

- Contribute less to the Purposes of Green Belt
- Would cause less harm to the openness of the green belt (if released)
- Would provide opportunities to reinforce the boundary features of the Site and maintain strong and permanent defensible Green Belt boundaries.
- Can be designed in a way, such as to preserve the character of the village, and provide new community uses and village facilities.

2.3

Parcel P1: Promotion Land at Balsall Common

2.3.1

The parcel of land assessed in this Green Belt Review, Land at Balsall Common lies close to the busy Kenilworth Road infrastructure following its eastern edge. The Site is well contained both physically and visually, with strong defensible boundaries limiting the possibility of further development potential.

2.3.2

This land parcel (the Site) is comparatively much smaller than the larger areas Broad Area 02 Assessment and the Refined Parcel RP58. Since the Assessment methodology did not allow for the assessment of smaller sub parcels falling within the larger strategic cell, therefore the next section of this report will reassess the parcel of land at Balsall Common against the NPPF Green Belt purposes, so that the contribution it makes to the Green Belt, together with potential impacts of development of the parcel on the Green Belt can be properly considered.

3. ASSESSMENT OF GREEN BELT FUNCTIONS

3.1 Analysis

3.1.1 In accordance with the Liz Lake Associates Existing Green Belt Functions Assessment Methodology an analysis of the land has been made to determine which purposes of the Green Belt functions are being met and to what extent the parcel contributes.

3.2 Parcel 1: Land at Balsall Common

3.2.1 Assessment of Parcel 1 with regard to the five Green Belt functions follows:

Limited/no contribution to Green Belt	Partial Contribution to Green Belt	Contributes fully to identified purposes of Green Belt
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Table 1: Parcel Assessment

Purpose	Assessment	Conclusion	
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel lies immediately adjacent to the village but not a large built up area. In this instance, the parcel is a small-scale sub parcel and is well related to adjacent development and built area, which are obvious physical features in the locality. The small parcel is well contained and would not extend built form from the urban area into the wider countryside.</p> <p>The parcel is well contained due to strong defensible physical features on the boundaries, which is supported by additional layers of features beyond the boundaries to the south, the immediately surrounding parcels of agricultural land with hedgerows, and the exposed residential settlement edge which all form a significant barrier to limit the extent of sprawl.</p> <p>Although it is not physically contained by urban development on all sides, the parcel does not form the most southerly extent of built land east, south or west – the built area already extends wider in all directions (and the land forms part of an infill development).</p>	A Limited or No Contribution to the purpose.	

Purpose	Assessment	Conclusion	
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The parcel does not prevent town settlements from merging or coalescing with each other.	Makes a <u>Limited or No Contribution</u> to the Purpose.	
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Assessment of Green Belt purpose is considered under four categories:</p> <p><u>Boundary strength:</u> The parcel has a combination of one or more strong defensible boundary features which are intact, well developed and durable, in the form of built development that wrap around 3 sides and provide containment, both physically and visually. The remaining boundary is hedged and can be strengthened.</p> <p><u>Development coverage:</u> The field parcel is not developed and remains physically open and in agricultural use. The visual openness of the parcel is heavily influenced by built development as it is enclosed on 3 sides by housing. There is some containment to the south provided by the landform topography.</p> <p><u>Land Use:</u> The land comprises a series of agricultural grass fields surrounded by development on 3 sides, which define its containment from wider land areas and a degree of separation from the wider landscape.</p> <p><u>Development Pre-Green Belt designation:</u> The parcel has remained largely undeveloped, including post green belt designation.</p>	<p>The parcel makes a <u>Limited or No Contribution</u> to the purpose.</p> <p>Development of the parcel beyond the current development status (boundaries, coverage, land use and designation) by its very nature would lead to a degree of encroachment and a loss of physical openness into the countryside; however, the effects on visual openness would be very limited, due to its existing contained nature on all boundaries which can be further reinforced by supplementing the existing well established permanent and robust edge of planting.</p>	
To preserve the setting and special character of historic town	The parcel plays no part in preserving the setting or special character of a historic town.	Makes <u>No Contribution</u> to the Purpose.	

Purpose	Assessment	Conclusion	
To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and urban land	Not applicable.	Not applicable	

3.3

Overall Assessment

3.3.1

Because Atkins examined large strategic cells (Broad Areas) of land against the five purposes of the Green Belt as specified in the NPPF, we have looked specifically at this land parcel to establish to what extent it fulfils these purposes. Table 2 illustrates the outcome graphically. Where the parcel is deemed to fulfil or Contribute fully to the identified Purposes of the Green Belt, the box is coloured dark green, where the parcel fails to fulfil or has Limited or No Contribution to Green Belt purpose a light green colour has been assigned. Mid green represents a Partial Contribution.

Limited/no contribution to Green Belt	Partial Contribution to Green Belt	Contributes fully to identified purposes of Green Belt
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Table 2: Green Belt Assessment Summary

<i>Purpose of the Green Belt</i>	Parcel
To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*	Not Assessed

* **Note:** By its very nature, the development of a greenfield site is not assessed, : protection is restrictive and directs development towards brownfield land.

Overall performance of the parcel to fulfil the functions of the Green Belt	
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- 3.3.2 The assessment of the parcel of land under consideration to fulfil the functions of the Green Belt has established the Parcel does not currently fulfil the functions of Green Belt adequately but has also been assessed to Partially Contribute to only one of the functions of the NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt.
- 3.3.3 Overall it is considered, there would only be a slight adverse effect on the openness and qualities of a limited part of the Green Belt, if the site was removed from the Green Belt and development of the land being promoted were to be taken forward in isolation. It should be recognised that all greenfield land would be likely to partially meet or fully meet the same assessment criteria when applied to openness, subject to variations in the assessment. In short, it is unlikely that any greenfield site could be assessed to make less than a Partial Contribution to this Purpose. This is particularly relevant within the context of a Local Plan through which some greenfield land will have to be allocated for development.
- 3.3.4 The analysis has been used to consider to what degree the release of land for development of the parcel in the Green Belt would have on the functions of the Green Belt and concludes this would be limited in extent and scale. The analysis also concludes that the contribution that the wider parcel makes to the Green Belt would be preserved.
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