

## **Appendix A.1: Extracts from Published Landscape Character Assessments**





## Summary

Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to abut the Severn and Avon Vales. To the north and north-east it drops down to the open landscape of the Mease/Sence Lowlands. The eastern part of the NCA abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south. This NCA has higher ground to the west, the Clent and Lickey Hills and to the east, the Nuneaton ridge. The landscape of the lower lying central area is gently rolling with small fragmented semi natural and ancient woodlands. Mature oaks set in hedgerows, distinctive field boundaries, historic parklands and narrow river corridors are key features, all on the doorstep of a heavily urbanised area. Land use throughout the area is mainly, residential, agricultural and industrial including coal mining which is still active in the north east of the NCA. Numerous transport corridors; road, rail, air and canal run through the area. There is likely to be increased development and greater pressure upon the existing infrastructure, particularly around Birmingham, Coventry and the main towns. This pressure could lead to the creation of a new Green Infrastructure linking the urban areas out into the more rural areas. This NCA is among the most geologically diverse. This has had a strong impact on the landscape's character and development and is further reflected in the range of locally and nationally important geological assets across the NCA. There are also many local biodiversity assets and strong cultural links with William Shakespeare and his 'Forest of Arden'.

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO1:** Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas whilst balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.
- **SEO2:** Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change.
- **SEO3:** Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history.
- **SEO4:** Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell reservoirs, to increase resource protection eg. soil erosion, soil quality and water quality.

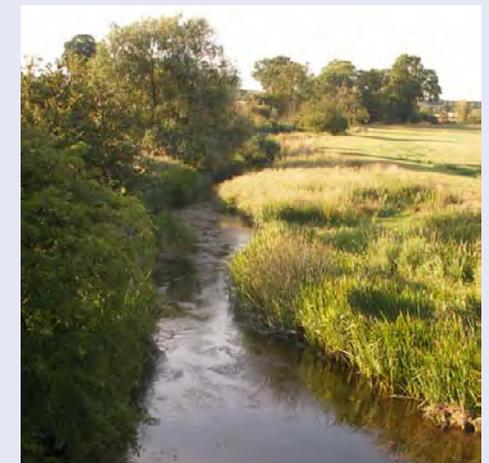
Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

## Key characteristics

- Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.
- Geologically diverse with rocks ranging from the Precambrian to the Jurassic and overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits.
- Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.
- Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows; the River Blythe SSSI lying between the cities of Coventry and Birmingham is a good example of this.
- Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands. Village greens/commons have a strong association with remnant lowland heath. Fragmented heathland persists on poorer soils in central and northern areas.
- Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates, eg. Packington Hall and Stoneleigh Park.
- Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation whilst some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.
- North eastern industrial area based around former Warwickshire coalfield, with distinctive colliery settlements. North western area dominated by urban development and associated urban edge landscapes such as managed green space, eg. allotments, gardens, parks, golf courses (rough areas) and public open spaces; playing fields, churchyards, cemeteries and institutional grounds (schools, hospitals etc).
- Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that sit within the landscape of this NCA.
- Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', featured in 'As You Like It', is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture.



Demonstrating the undulating landscape between Coventry and Birmingham - looking west along A45, near to Meriden.



An example of the meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows typical of the Arden landscape.

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

**SEO 1 - Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heathlands, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas whilst balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.**

**For example by:**

- Managing small woodlands, semi-natural woodland and ancient woodland to maintain pockets of tranquillity and enhance biodiversity value and where appropriate re-plant new locally characteristic woodlands for wood fuel/biomass, Managing and maintaining the existing resource of 'big historic trees' in urban areas and support schemes to expand urban tree planting to support urban biodiversity and increase sense of place and history.
- Managing hedgerows in traditional local style to enhance landscape character and improve biodiversity value, Improving existing fragmented heathlands in Southern Arden and Arden Parklands.

**SEO 2 - Create new networks of woodlands, heathlands and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change.**

**For example by:**

- Expansion of urban tree planting to support urban biodiversity, landscape character and sense of place and history, Targeting expansion of woodland for the benefit of biodiversity and landscape, particularly where it can link isolated woodland blocks and increase habitat connectivity,
- Ensuring that the right type of tree is planted in the right location to maximise the benefits for water quality, climate regulation, erosion control, tranquillity and sense of place, Planting new hedgerows, especially in the north-eastern part of the NCA, using species of local provenance, planting standard hedgerow trees primarily oak, to maintain the distinctive character of the area. Maintain associated grassland buffer strips and improve habitat connectivity, particularly where this can assist in regulating soil erosion,
- Planning and creating new and improved links between urban areas, green belt and the wider countryside or major open spaces within and/or near the conurbation especially in and around Birmingham, Coventry and north Solihull,
- Enhance urban areas and fringes through sympathetic building and landscape design, Creation of new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access especially around old mining and quarry sites in the central and north east areas of the NCA, Maintaining and improving the existing rights of way network such as the Heart of England Way, cycle routes and access land, Improving links to or within the wider network of canal towpaths such as the Grand Union and Avon canal walks and cycle routes.

## **SEO 3 - Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history**

### **For example by:**

- Conserving, enhancing and making accessible the network of geological sites, ensuring the importance of the man-made sites such as disused quarries, road, rail and canal cuttings, Widening the understanding of the role of geodiversity in the NCA, in particular, its connection with biodiversity, landscape character, industrial and cultural heritage,
- Conserving and enhancing archaeological features such as moated sites and archaeology associated with the manufacturing and mining industries particularly in relation to the Warwickshire coalfield and the canal network; promote access and awareness,
- Protecting and managing historic wood pasture, parklands and urban parks to conserve significant historic landscapes and important features and habitats such as veteran and urban trees and the associated invertebrate populations, Conserving historic farmsteads, the buildings and their surrounding landscapes particularly where new uses are being considered,
- Capitalise on the links made in literature to the Arden landscape, eg. Shakespeare using it as a tool to promote the conservation and enhancement of the landscape described.

## **SEO 4 - Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell reservoirs to increase resource protection, eg. soil erosion, soil quality and water quality.**

### **For example by:**

- Managing and restoring habitats including floodplain grazing marsh associated with river valleys, particularly the Tame, Blyth and Arrow,
- Reducing sources of diffuse pollution into rivers, particularly in catchments of Trent, Tame and Blythe and standing open water habitats such as Bittell Reservoirs,
- At old mine and quarry sites continue to develop the growing nature conservation and recreational resource of value, eg. Hartshill and Alvecote wetlands.

## Landscape opportunities

- Conserve, enhance and restore the area's ancient landscape pattern of field boundaries, historic (including farm) buildings, moated sites, parkland and pasture and reinforce its well wooded character.
- Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden.
- Manage and restore hedgerows especially in the north-eastern part of the area (enclosure patterns) and restore parkland, ancient trees and stream side trees plus manage and replace in-field trees and hedgerow trees.
- Maintain and restore areas of heathland particularly in southern Arden, Arden Parklands and Birmingham Hills, lowland meadows and pastures and floodplain grazing marshes.
- Manage arable cultivation to encourage rare arable plants and range-restricted farmland birds and mammals, following appropriate management options under Entry Level Stewardship.
- Restore habitats associated with river valleys particularly the Blythe and Tame.
- Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access on former mining sites and close to urban populations in the West Midlands Green Belt.

## Photo credits

Front cover: Dandy's Farm across cornfield to colliery among trees, the north eastern industrial landscape can be quite rural in character, with pockets of farmland often surrounded by urban development © Rob Cousins/Natural England

Page 3: © Philip Halling

Page 4: A45, near to Meriden © Michael Westley, Meandering clay river valleys © John Evans

Page 5: modern towns and cities in Arden still retain a historic core © Isobel Brooks, Enjoywarwickshire.com, Meandering clay river valleys © neil at Geograph.org.uk.

Page 6: Hedgerow oaks © Robin Stott, Arden's parklands are studded with ancient oaks © David Stowell

Page 7: Kenilworth Castle © Jim Lawrie, Enjoywarwickshire.com, Over Hedge and Cornfield © Mick Malpass, Canal network © E Gammie

Page 9: © Robin Stott

Page 15: © Geoff Gartside



**Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.**

Catalogue Code: NE337

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information: 0845 600 3078 or email [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

**[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)**

This note/report/publication is published by Natural England under the Open Government Licence for public sector information. You are encouraged to use, and reuse, information subject to certain conditions.

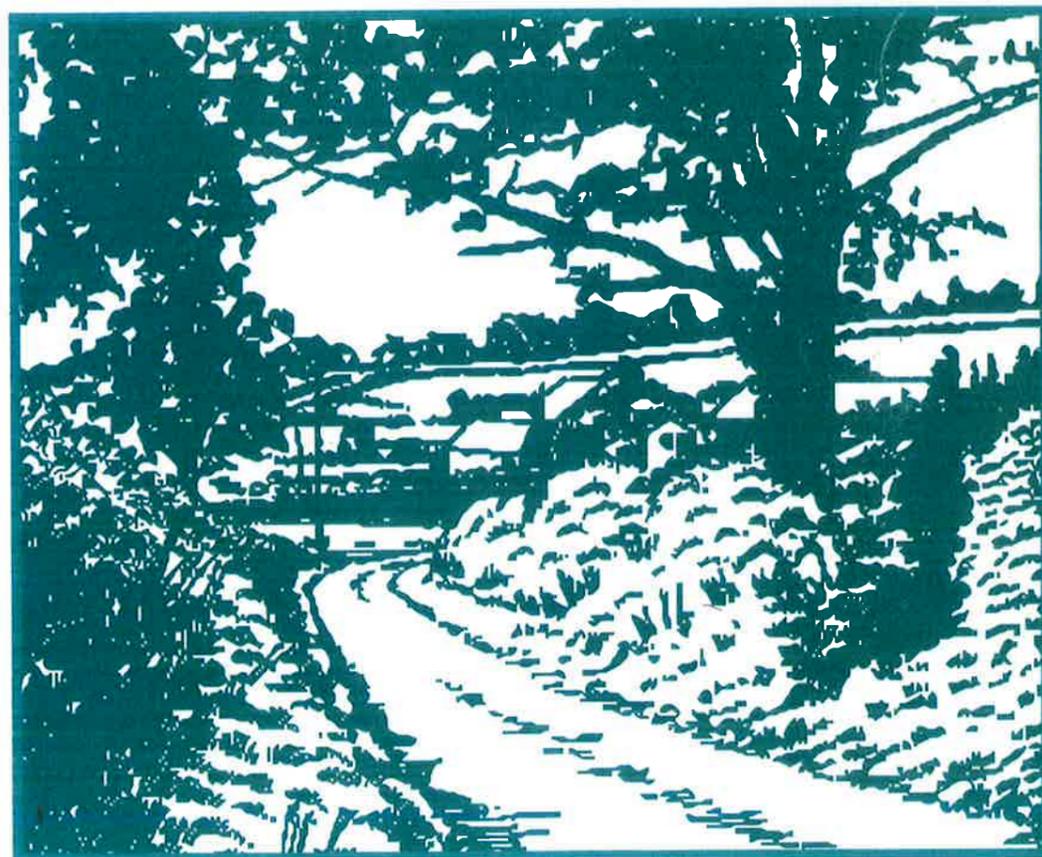
For details of the licence visit [www.naturalengland.org.uk/copyright](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/copyright)

Natural England images are only available for non commercial purposes. If any other information such as maps or data cannot be used commercially this will be made clear within the note/report/publication.

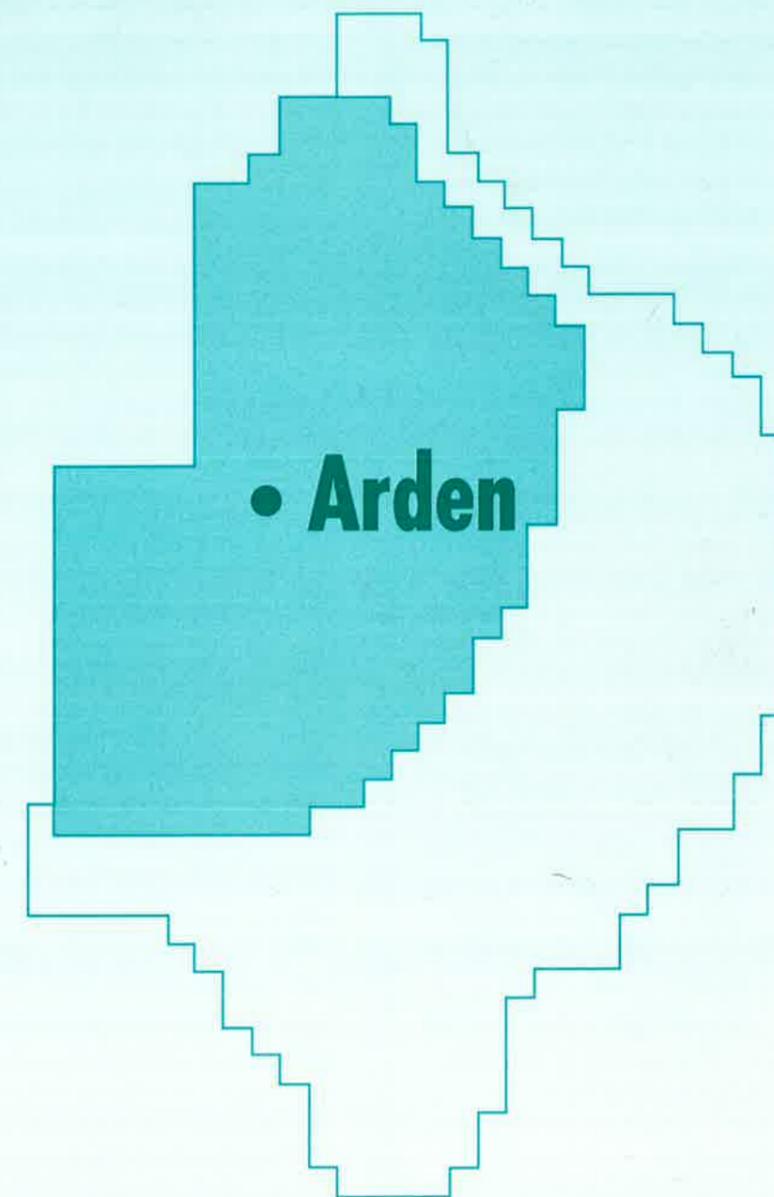
© **Natural England 2012**

# Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines

## • Arden



# Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines



Published by Warwickshire County Council Planning & Transport Department  
P.O. Box 43, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4SX Tel: 0926 410410 – November 1993

This booklet is one of a series of three covering the whole of Warwickshire

Landscape guidelines are also available for:

Avon Valley – Feldon – Cotswolds Dunsmore – High Cross Plateau – Mease Lowlands

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT  
PART ONE

## Part one Landscape assessment

### Arden

**Introduction** The region known as Arden is an area of former wood pasture and ancient farmlands lying on the eastern side of the Birmingham plateau. Traditionally regarded as the land between the river Tame and the river Avon in Warwickshire, Arden type landscapes also extend into north Worcestershire.

Although there are few dramatic physical features, the Arden countryside has an intimate, historic character with a strong sense of unity. Brick and timber are the chief building materials throughout the area and the many farmsteads and hamlets blend subtly with their surroundings. This is Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', historically a region of woodlands and 'waste' which remains today one of the more wooded parts of the Midlands.

**Physical influences** The name Arden is derived from the old British word 'Ardu' meaning 'high land'. This relates primarily to the northern and central parts of the region which lie across the main Severn-Trent watershed on the eastern side of the Birmingham plateau. In the wider context of the West Midlands, the Birmingham plateau consists of two uplifted units of older Palaeozoic strata – the South Staffordshire and East Warwickshire plateaus – separated by an area of Triassic rocks covered for the most part by glacial drift. This central plateau is lower lying than the adjoining Palaeozoic areas and in Warwickshire it is largely underlain by Mercia mudstones with a covering of glacial sands and gravels or boulder clay. This gives the plateau a flat to gently rolling character, finely cut by the River Blythe and its tributary streams which flow northwards to join the Tame at Hams Hall. The Blythe is a slow-moving meandering river with countless minor tributary streams trickling in from every side. Many of these tributary valleys

are badly drained and occupied by sluggish, braided streams. Indeed, some of the place names, such as Fen End, Sedgemoor and Bradnock's Marsh, suggest that the area retained its marshy character until comparatively recent times. The Tame valley is wider than that of the Blythe and has a much more developed floodplain with at least two associated gravel terraces.

The East Warwickshire plateau is a dissected upland plateau closely associated with a spindle-shaped horst of Carboniferous and older rocks, which rise to just over 180 metres near Corley. The major part of the plateau is occupied by the Upper Coal Measures, consisting mainly of red marls and sandstones and characterised by red, free draining soils. These are fringed on the north and north-east by the Middle (Productive) Coal Measures with which the Warwickshire coalfield is associated. A narrow band of Cambrian and pre-Cambrian rocks also outcrop along the north-eastern edge of the plateau, between Atherstone and Nuneaton. These older rocks, mainly consisting of hard diorite and quartzite, are faulted against the adjoining Triassic mudstones and present a steep scarp slope towards the Mease Lowlands to the north-east. The Carboniferous rocks are also cut off on the west by a major boundary fault which forms a pronounced edge to the plateau along the Blythe and Tame valleys. South and eastwards, where glacial drift deposits flatten the landform, the plateau slopes gradually into the valleys of the Avon and the Sowe.

To the south of the main Severn-Trent watershed lie the river basins of the Arrow and the Alne which drain southwards into the Avon valley below Alcester. This area, underlain mainly by Mercia mudstones, has a varied undulating topography characterised by outcrops of Arden sandstone which form a series of prominent escarpments. Steep slopes are also found along the Lias escarpment to

## Arden

the east of Haselor, while a series of narrow parallel ridges of glacial origin are a feature of the area between Wootten Wawen and Snitterfield. To the west along the county boundary is the Ridgeway, a flat-topped ridge also of glacial origin which once marked the watershed of the old Avon-Soar river system. The tributaries of the Arrow and the Alne, in contrast to those of the Blythe, are frequently swift flowing and often enclosed in steep sided valleys. Narrow alluvial floodplains are associated with the lower parts of both rivers while terrace deposits occur only along the Arrow, where they form areas of flatter land adjoining the river corridor.

**Human influences** The historical development of Arden is a major factor influencing the character of the present day landscape. In a region with few dramatic physical features it is these subtle human influences, developed over many centuries, which have created the man-made landscapes and special features which clearly distinguish Arden from other areas of the county.

Agriculturally Arden may have originally served as an area of seasonal pasture for the more intensively developed Feldon estates to the south. However, permanent pastoral settlements were established at an early date. The resulting clearances were farmed as small hedged enclosures or 'closes' which created a characteristic pattern of small irregular fields. These were particularly representative of the areas between Tanworth and Rowington and from Allesley to Fillongley.

In contrast open field agriculture was only represented to any degree in the Blythe valley, the lower Arrow and Alne valleys and the areas around Bearley and Norton Lindsey. Generally this was closely associated with nucleated villages. Piecemeal enclosure began relatively early in the southern part of the region with most fields being enclosed before the 18th

century. Here the rolling topography and gradual enclosure produced a characteristic pattern of medium sized fields. In the Blythe valley full enclosure was not completed until the 19th century resulting in a more regular pattern of larger fields. Elsewhere enclosure into large semi-regular fields is a feature of former deerparks. Examples are the Warwick and Kenilworth Castle parklands, which were enclosed between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Extensive woodland cover remained until the Norman Conquest, with the most heavily wooded manors recorded in the Domesday Survey. This registered over 50 square miles of woodland and wood pasture. Subsequently much woodland was cleared and enclosed for arable and stock. Between the 12th and 14th centuries, numerous manorial deer parks were created which probably helped conserve woodland cover. Most have left little impression upon the modern landscape, though good examples survive at Packington and Stoneleigh. Parks continued to be enclosed from the 15th century onwards and it is these, for example Merevale, Arbury and Berkswell, which are most prominent today.

As late as 1540 Leland wrote that ".....the ground in Arden is much enclosyd, plentiful of gres and woode". However, by 1822 C & J Greenwoods' one inch County map showed only small remnants of woodland. Little further shrinkage occurred during the 19th Century as maps show only slightly more woodland than is found today. Minor additions resulted from the Enclosure movement of this period with the planting of many small woods and coverts. These are uniform in size and shape and lack the irregular sinuous boundaries and woodbanks of ancient woods. Often they are named as 'coverts', 'gorses' or 'spinneys'.

Commons were a feature of areas of remnant woodland and many were wooded until

## Arden

relatively recent times. A typical wood pasture common was grassland or heather with thickly scattered trees and bushes. Other commons represented areas of heathland on poorer soils and the numerous 'Heath' names indicate those cleared of woodland at a relatively early date. Commons did not disappear completely until the last stages of enclosure in the early 19th century. The largest occurred at Sambourne and Shrewley, the latter extending nearly 10 miles from Rowington to Balsall Common. Commons have left little impression upon the present landscape, except that they can often be identified as areas with a geometric pattern of fields and lanes within a surrounding irregular or semi-regular pattern.

Commons attracted settlement by landless labourers and poorer sections of the community. These formed the basis of many Arden hamlets, especially those known as 'End' or 'Green'. An allied settlement type is the wayside cottage established on a roadside verge and taking in a long linear garden.

The dispersed settlement pattern more generally found in Arden was closely related to agricultural development. The typical expression of woodland assarting and heathland enclosure was a pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets. This dispersed pattern is reflected in a maze of narrow lanes, trackways and footpaths which grew up to serve outlying farms and hamlets. A land-owning peasantry gave rise to a wealthy class of yeoman farmers by the late medieval period. As a result many substantial brick and timber farmhouses were built in the 16th and 17th centuries, often on earlier moated sites.

A more recent and very distinct settlement type is associated with the pit villages of the coal mining industry. Extensive coal exploitation began in north Warwickshire in the 19th century, shortly after the start of the Industrial Revolution. This has had a

profound effect on the landscape of this part of Warwickshire. Mining villages contain much early 20th century terraced housing, often situated on hill tops and with a very distinctive 'northern' character. Some of these were new villages built to house mining families, while others were older villages relocated as a colliery expanded.

The presence of coalmines attracted secondary industry which relied on coal for power. Hams Hall power station was built to produce electricity directly from coal. Other industrial plants sprung up to convert coal to coke and other products. Railways and roads were also built to transport the coal to other areas of the country. The effects of the mines therefore spread far beyond the colliery gates, and have made the north eastern part of Arden, between Tamworth and Nuneaton, an industrial landscape unlike any other in the county.

**Ecological influences** The natural vegetation of Arden is thought to have consisted of dense broadleaved woodland, dominated by oak on the light sandy soils and lime on the heavier clays and loams. Woodland clearance, from earliest times, resulted in the development of grassland and wood pasture over much of the area with heathland on the poorer, leached soils. Marshland occurred in low lying areas along rivers and streams. All of these habitats have been greatly influenced by land-use history and no large areas have survived. The sites of greatest ecological interest today are those that retain remnants of these ancient vegetation types. They reflect the underlying geology and soils and make an important contribution to landscape character. Some, particularly woodlands, also form prominent visual features.

**ancient woodland** Scattered blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland occur throughout Arden but are most common in the parishes of

## Arden

Tanworth and Bentley where Clowes Wood and Bentley Park Wood are fine examples. Although none retain the climax species composition of the original wildwood, some on the sandy soils on the North Warwickshire plateau can still be classified as oak dominated woodlands. The rest are now best described, as a result of frequent disturbance by man, as oak-birch woodlands. On the clay loams of central and southern Arden there are only one or two small areas left of lime dominated woodland, since lime was managed 'out' of woodlands in favour of the more useful oak. These woodlands are now typically oak-ash or oak-birch, though in places small-leaved lime is still a significant component, reflecting the woodlands' ancient origin.

Many woods, although on the ancient woodlands register, have been substantially replanted in modern times and are reduced in their conservation value. However, their rich ground flora and fauna built up over centuries is often still present, particularly along rides and around the edge of the woodland. This makes them superior wildlife sites to more recent plantation woodlands, and high priorities for conversion back to a semi-natural species mix. Ancient woodbanks, not found in recent woodland, add additional historical interest to many ancient woodlands.

**heathland** Heathland and commons, now rare and greatly diminished in area, were historically associated with wood pasture and waste. Yarningale Common, Kenilworth Common, Baddesley and Grendon Commons are the most significant areas now remaining. Elsewhere fragments of heathy grassland survive at Packington, Earlswood and along some roadside and railway banks. Although all three heather species exist, true heathland in Arden is characterised by ling heather with bilberry, purple moor-grass, heath bedstraw and wavy hair-grass. Where management has

ceased, gorse, bracken and silver birch start to colonise. Bracken is perhaps the most obvious 'heathy' indicator and is a common feature of many woods and roadside verges, especially in the central and northern parts of the region.

**hedgerows** Ancient, mixed hedgerows, often more than two metres wide, are a special feature of Arden, and some may represent remnants of the original wildwood as it was cleared and converted into small hedged fields by assarting. The hedges were assimilated from shrubs found along the previous woodland edge, or from the seed bank in the soil, and the species mix therefore reflects that from the woodland itself. A wide variety of woody species are typically present, often dominated by hazel, but with dogwood, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn and holly also common. Holly is associated particularly with the lighter soils of the East Warwickshire plateau. Where hedge banks complement ancient hedges, these often support a diverse flora with many woodland plant species.

**unimproved grassland** Permanent grassland is still in feature of the more pastoral Arden landscapes, and where this remains unimproved it can be rich in flowering plant species. Many sites which existed up to the second world war have now been destroyed or damaged as a result of agricultural intensification, but many areas remain, particularly on marginal land. The best remaining sites are found on steep hillsides as rough, often scrub grassland; on high canal and roadside embankments; on disused railway cuttings; or as isolated groups of hedged fields.

**field ponds** Field ponds, often fringed by scrub and trees, are found throughout Arden and are associated with its history of stock-rearing. Where they are managed to avoid silting up and overshadowing by surrounding

## Arden

scrub vegetation, they can be valuable wildlife habitats. Although many ponds have been lost as a result of agricultural intensification and neglect they are still an important feature of the region, and are particularly abundant in Fillongley and Meriden parishes.

**river wetlands** Historically river floodplains were managed as wet meadowland. These were floristically very rich and of great nature conservation value. The Alne river and the Blythe (the latter a Site of Special Scientific Interest) remain relatively unspoilt, retaining a good variety of marginal vegetation, wet grassland, riverside trees and scrub. Some areas of particular interest include the marsh, reedbed and floodland on the Arrow at Alcester; the wet meadows at Kinwarton and Haselor; the osiers at Pettiford on the Alne and the water meadows along the Blythe at Hampton in Arden.

### Visual character of the landscape

Arden is characterised by a wide range of historical and ecological features, which create a landscape of intimacy and a strong 'sense of place'. Most significantly it remains a wooded landscape with mature hedgerow oaks, ancient woodlands and historic parklands. The association with former common and heath

imparts a strong sense of unity and is reflected in the widespread occurrence of heathy vegetation, particularly roadside bracken. A number of remnant commons still survive but most of the larger areas have been enclosed and are today characterised by a geometric pattern of roads and small fields. The landscape retains many ancient features, in particular a pattern of irregular fields defined by thick hedgerows; a network of narrow, winding and often sunken lanes and trackways; a dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets; and a wealth of antiquities including castles, fishponds and moated sites. These features are woven within a farmed landscape which in places still retains a strong rural character.

The above features define Arden as a broad landscape region. Within this area seven distinct types of landscape can be identified, each of which is characterised by a particular aspect of the wider regional character:

- Ancient Arden
- Arden pastures
- Industrial Arden
- Arden parklands
- Wooded estatelands
- Arden river valleys
- River valley wetlands



wayside cottages

## Arden

**Ancient Arden** This is the most extensive Arden landscape and forms the core of ancient countryside in Warwickshire. It is located in two main areas: the northern section covers the eastern half of the North Warwickshire plateau, while the southern section forms the undulating countryside between Hatton and Redditch. It is a small scale, intricate landscape with many low rounded hills, steep scarps and small incised valleys. Landform is rarely dominant but in places it is emphasised by hilltop woodlands and wooded scarps. Within the area landform relates intimately with tree cover and field pattern to form a strong sense of enclosure. Views are restricted by thick roadside hedgerows and are often short, overlooking two or three fields to a wooded skyline. Occasional distant views are afforded from hilltops and ridgelines revealing a varied, wooded topography.

The farmed landscape is characterised by a well defined small to medium sized irregular field pattern, complemented by an irregular pattern of narrow lanes. Most lanes and trackways are tightly defined by thick hedgerows often on hedgebanks. Pockets of permanent pasture are closely associated with small scale field patterns around hamlets and lanes. These form the treasured, undisturbed Arden landscapes where a combination of ancient hedgerows, unimproved pasture and grazing animals creates a strong sense of place and a peaceful reminder of times past. The intimacy of the landscape is often reinforced by the presence of sunken trackways and old field ponds which provide the finishing touches to tranquil, typically English rural scenes.

Throughout much of the area the landscape has a well wooded character formed by a mixture of woodlands, hedgerow trees, small parks and strongly wooded streamlines. Woodlands are particularly prominent on higher ground on the North Warwickshire plateau between

Meriden and New Arley. The majority of woodlands are less than 5 hectares in size, although several such as Close Wood and Birchley Hays Wood just north east of Meriden are considerably larger. Most are oak dominated, but a substantial proportion particularly of larger woods have been replanted with mixed broadleaved and coniferous species. The irregular shape of most woodlands reflects the large number that have ancient origins. Hedgerow trees are mainly associated with pastoral landscapes, such as those found around Tanworth-in-Arden. Free standing field trees and groups of trees around field ponds are also locally important. Elsewhere trees are more scattered, but in combination with thick hedgerows they often maintain a semblance of wooded character.

An integral element of the landscape is the dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and farmsteads. Many historic brick and timber farmhouses and parish churches are particularly prominent. Modern houses are found on the edges of most hamlets and along roadsides, but in north and south Arden these do not markedly detract from traditional settlement character. In central Arden however, in the parishes of Allesley, Berkswell, Corley and Meriden, urban influences give a suburban feel to the landscape.



## Arden



### Ancient Arden

#### Overall character and qualities

An small scale farmed landscape with a varied, undulating topography, characterised by an irregular pattern of fields and narrow, winding lanes.

#### Characteristic features

- A varied undulating topography.
- A network of winding lanes and trackways often confined by tall hedgebanks.
- An ancient irregular pattern of small to medium sized fields.
- Hedgerow and roadside oaks.
- Field ponds associated with permanent pasture.
- Many place names ending in Green or End.

## Part two Strategies and guidelines

**Introduction** Part two of this report examines recent changes which have affected the landscape in Arden and the current issues which are likely to influence change in the future. From this a series of management strategies set out the direction which is required in order to maintain and enhance regional character and local distinctiveness. These strategies are supported by a comprehensive set of landscape guidelines which provide detailed advice for farmers, foresters, developers and highway engineers. Responsibility is also placed on planners to encourage higher standards, using persuasion, planning conditions or enforcement as necessary. The same principles apply to other organisations who play a part in managing the landscape.

The guidelines show how landscape character should be conserved, restored or enhanced. They have been grouped into five topics reflecting the user groups at which they are aimed. Each topic is depicted by a stylised symbol:

- settlement & buildings 
- highways 
- land management 
- field boundaries 
- trees & woodlands 

Nature conservation is treated as an integral component within each of these topics. The guidelines are presented in the form of a short statement, supported by a summary outlining the issue in question

and the reasons why a particular course of action has been recommended.

The guidelines should be used in conjunction with the fold out map accompanying this booklet. This shows the location of the seven landscape types identified within Arden. The map also highlights areas within each landscape type where the structure and character of the landscape are in decline. These areas, termed 'enhancement zones', are indicated by hatching on the map. They represent priority areas where resources for landscape and habitat restoration should be targeted.

### Landscape change and current trends

There have been dramatic changes to the Warwickshire landscape in the last half-century as a result of agricultural intensification, urban expansion and the suburbanisation of the countryside. The impact of these changes has been compounded by neglect and natural disasters, in particular Dutch elm disease, which has highlighted the environmental decline of the countryside. The result has been a gradual erosion of local character and sense of place.

**agricultural intensification** Major agricultural changes have taken place since the 1940s with an increase in arable land at the expense of permanent pasture. This has been most marked on the North Warwickshire plateau where in 1946 approximately 75% of the farmland was pastoral with dairying as the major land use. By the late 1980s this had declined to approximately 30% of the farmed area. Though not as marked, similar trends can be seen elsewhere in Arden, while on the

## Landscape change and current trends

plateau area to the south of Birmingham many smallholdings are now farmed part-time or given over to pony paddocks.

In parallel there have been changes in grassland character with the making of silage rather than hay. This has resulted in many traditional pastures being reseeded or improved by chemicals and herbicides, which has greatly diminished their floristic interest. There are now very few grasslands which retain their original nature conservation interest.

The intensification of agriculture has in places resulted in the wholesale removal of hedgerows and trees creating open fragmented landscapes. This has been particularly marked in the north of the region where the historic pattern of small irregular fields has been completely swept away in some areas. The features that remain often appear out of scale with their surroundings. In particular isolated field trees and remnant gappy hedgerows reinforce the impression of a landscape in decline.

Land drainage has severely affected the character of many river landscapes. This has resulted in a loss of wetland habitats and the conversion of former flood meadows to arable production. Wetland habitats have also been cleared during river channel management. The River Arrow in particular has lost much of its marginal vegetation and associated wet grassland, and is only slowly recovering. Similarly, with the demise of working mills many mill leats and islands have been lost.

Although further agricultural expansion is now less likely, declining incomes and continued uncertainty in the short term may result in intensification of production on existing land. This could lead to continued 'improvement' of older grasslands and further loss of hedgerows.

In the longer term new incentives may encourage more environmentally sensitive

farming, with perhaps a return to more traditional mixed farming regimes. Priority areas for returning to pasture might include Ancient Arden landscapes, river floodplains and areas of former park and heath. Surplus arable land could also be targeted for other uses such as new woodlands.

**trees and woodlands** Since the 1950's 16% of ancient woodland sites have been partly cleared, largely for agriculture but also for urban development and mineral extraction. In addition there has been a distinct change in woodland character with 42% of ancient sites replanted with a mixture of native and exotic species. Most notably there has been a demise in oak as the final timber crop. Many small planting schemes have also favoured quick growing non-indigenous species, often to provide cover for game or shelter around buildings.

Although a dominant element in the landscape, many small woods have been neglected, resulting in unmanaged, even-aged stands. Likewise hedgerow oaks and parkland trees are for the most part mature and in many places there are few young trees coming on to replace them. Excessive trimming of hedges exacerbates this problem by suppressing the natural regeneration of hedgerow trees. Without urgent action there is likely to be a continued decline in the wooded character of the landscape.

In the future it is likely that there will be continued incentives for landowners to plant trees through government planting schemes. Provided that new planting complements existing landscape character and avoids damaging historical or ecological features, it should be encouraged. To maintain the essence of Arden, however, oak must remain the dominant tree species.

## Landscape change and current trends

**pressures for new development** Urban expansion has been a major influence affecting the Arden landscape and in places both the ancient settlement pattern and rural character have been eroded. Some hamlets have expanded into larger residential centres, ribbon development has taken place along the Coventry urban fringe and new houses have been built throughout the area, with many conversions of redundant farm buildings. These influences are having a subtle cumulative impact on the landscape by bringing social change and a new appearance of affluence.

Urban influences are especially dominant in central Arden between Birmingham and Coventry and they have imprinted a suburban character on the landscape. To help control their expansion most of Arden was designated as Green Belt after approval of the original County Structure Plan in 1973. In the future however, Arden will continue to be a popular place in which to live and work and if rural integrity is to be retained, it will be important to restrict the spread of suburban influences. This is particularly the case in south Arden following the opening of the M40 motorway.

Locally mineral extraction has also had an impact on the landscape with coal mining on the North Warwickshire plateau and sand and gravel workings in central Arden. Though only having a limited lifespan these workings are often visibly intrusive.

**highway improvements** Road construction has had a major impact on the Arden landscape. New roads, particularly motorways (M6, M45, M40, A45), cut through existing landscape patterns. In places this has led to field rationalisation along the road corridor resulting in a loss of hedgerows and trees which makes the road more visible and intrusive. Traffic movement and noise has

had a particularly deleterious effect on many formerly peaceful rural landscapes.

Improvements to existing roads can also effect landscape character as road widening and realignment have resulted in the removal of hedgerows, ancient hedgerows and fords.

## General development guidelines

One of the key determinants of landscape character is whether built development intrudes on the landscape or integrates with it. With the diverse means available, through planning policy and related planning and highways legislation, a significant influence can be exercised in mitigating any adverse effects of development and in harnessing its many potentially enhancing effects. The general development guidelines set out below are designed to achieve those ends. These guidelines should be regarded as a good practice guide to be applied to all new development wherever it may occur. More specific design guidance to conserve and strengthen local settlement character can be found within the strategy and overall guidelines section.



Due to its ancient landscape character Arden retains a wealth of antiquities and historic buildings. Many of these are scheduled as ancient monuments or listed buildings, but there are many others unprotected by official designations. These features provide strong social and cultural links with the past and add considerably to landscape detail at a local level. They are also part of our heritage and it is important to conserve all sites of archaeological and historical significance.

- **Conserve all sites of archaeological and historical importance**



The suburbanising influences associated with new development are an increasing pressure on the traditional character of settlements, and are having a subtle, cumulative impact. Examples include the external modernisation of buildings, the erection of illuminated and corporate plastic roadside signs, the replacement of roadside hedges with quick growing ornamental screens, the increased use of security fencing, and even standardised landscaping schemes. Standardised planning and highway design criteria also often necessitate the replacement or modernisation of existing features and tend to result in rather bland and characterless developments. Much more discretion is needed when applying design standards in rural landscapes. In particular, original features such as walls, roadside hedges and mature trees should be retained, moved or replaced. Where this is not possible consideration should be given to moving or replacing such features.

- **Conserve the character of rural settlements by retaining existing features and local patterns in all development schemes**



The interface between new development and the surrounding landscape can often appear sharp and stark. Tree planting within and around new development is one of the best ways to soften hard edges. Integration can best be achieved by allowing established trees to run into a development site and designing new planting to break up their densely built appearance. At least 10% of the site should be allocated for tree and woodland planting and resources should be provided for the ongoing management of these features. Opportunities should also be sought, perhaps through planning gain, for offsite woodland planting to help link the development into the wider landscape pattern. The aim should not necessarily be to hide buildings, but rather to integrate them into the landscape, using locally occurring native species. Ornamental species planted as quick growing screens, particularly 'leylandii', should be avoided.

- **Soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development**

## General development guidelines



Traditional farm buildings constructed from local materials often have a distinctive regional identity. This identity is being eroded by the construction of modern farm buildings, which often look out of place and visually intrusive. Many new buildings are necessarily large, particularly the roof areas which can be a dominant feature. Siting and design are therefore very important and no amount of 'landscaping' will conceal a building that is fundamentally badly designed. Big buildings can sit well in an open landscape if they are well sited in relation to other features such as landform and tree cover. Use of shadows, different textures and careful selection of building materials can add interest and break up the mass of a large building. Similarly, the choice of colours should complement those in existing buildings and in the surrounding landscape. Darker, matt colours are generally less obtrusive than light, shiny colours. The surroundings of new buildings are also very important but often given inadequate consideration. Locally occurring trees should be used in a positive way to strengthen the overall farm landscape, rather than as an afterthought in an attempt to hide an ugly building.



The construction of new roads and the widening or re-alignment of existing roads can have a major impact on the character of the landscape. The visual impact can often be considerably reduced through careful route selection and it is important that landscape considerations are thoroughly assessed at the inception of all such schemes. No amount of landscaping will ameliorate the impact of a badly chosen route. A landscape assessment should be undertaken prior to carrying out improvements to existing roads as well as for new ones.



Country roads are an important component of the rural landscape. Improvements to meet modern highway standards can have a detrimental impact on the character of the roadside environment by introducing suburban influences into the rural landscape. Of particular concern are treatments such as concrete kerbing, galvanised railings, new or replacement street lighting and standardised road signs. These features, which are often visually intrusive, are also alien in a rural setting, and should be used only where absolutely necessary. Opportunities should also be sought for using more traditional materials such as stone setts for kerbing, or reverting to the use of locally distinctive road signs.

- **New agricultural buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to blend with the surrounding farmed landscape**

- **Landscape assessment should be a major consideration at the inception of all road schemes**

- **Conserve rural character by limiting standardised treatments during highway improvement schemes**

## General development guidelines



A characteristic feature of Arden is its irregular road network which reflects the ancient landscape pattern. Features are many and varied, including thick roadside hedgerows, narrow sunken lanes and trackways, irregularly shaped verges, hedgebanks, fords and mature roadside oaks. Wherever possible these features should be retained. When improvements need to be made they should reflect the irregular landscape pattern, trying to avoid straight lines and looking to replace historic features. Guidance should be sought to enable a preliminary landscape assessment to identify key features that should be retained, moved or reinstated.



Landscaping along new roads can greatly improve the immediate highway environment, but is often insufficient to maintain the integrity of the adjoining landscape. Greater attention should be given to landscape enhancement within a wide road corridor, perhaps up to a half kilometre either side of the carriageway. Sufficient space should be allowed to enable embankments and cuttings to be shaped to reflect the surrounding landform. Geometric slope profiles should be avoided. Within the wider corridor priority should be given to linking highway landscaping into the surrounding landscape pattern. Local authorities could play an active role here by coordinating and promoting landscape initiatives.



Arden has a variety of mineral deposits which have been worked for many years. These include coal, hard rock aggregate and sand and gravel for the construction industry. Restoration proposals accompanying mineral applications often show little appreciation of how an extraction site relates to the wider landscape, which can result in landscaping schemes that do not reflect this wider context. Detailed landscaping schemes should be based upon an assessment of landscape character. Such an assessment should be submitted with the planning application, to inform a decision as to whether reinstating the original landscape, or creating a new landscape is most appropriate. Consideration must also be given to the long term management of new landscape features.

- **Protect and conserve the irregular pattern and characteristic features of roads and lanes**

- **Highway landscaping should be strongly linked to the surrounding landscape pattern**

- **Restoration proposals for mineral workings should be based upon an assessment of landscape character**

## Arden

The overall strategy and guidelines for Arden set out below provide the framework for conserving and enhancing the character and unity of the region. The seven landscape types which make up the region, however, have their own distinctive characteristics and for each of these there is a separate strategy and set of management guidelines. These are specific to the individual landscape types, but should be read in conjunction with the overall strategy and guidelines for the region.

Internationally, Arden is famous for its historical and cultural associations as being 'Shakespeare's Arden'. The wooded character of the landscape also has direct historical links with the ancient Forest of Arden. It is the most densely wooded part of Warwickshire (8%), which is well above the county average (3%). Of particular significance is the high proportion of ancient woodland sites and the association with oak as the dominant tree species. Equally important are the many built and other historic features and antiquities which impart an 'ancient' landscape character. Together, these associations are an important part of our national heritage and they distinguish Arden from the later 'planned' countryside found elsewhere in Warwickshire.



In contrast to the rest of Warwickshire, Arden is characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets – the latter often no more than a loose cluster of wayside cottages. Ribbon development and more recent infill development have overwhelmed this historic pattern in many areas while barn conversions are eroding the rural character of undeveloped lanes. Where new housing is necessary in the countryside it should be located in loose clusters to form new hamlets. This would reflect the scale and pattern of existing settlement. Equally, it is important that new development should not be permitted along lanes that are presently undeveloped.



A characteristic feature of the Arden landscape is the wealth of brick built farmsteads and country houses which date from the 16th and 17th centuries. These give the area a strong and coherent building style which should be conserved. A trend in recent years has been the conversion of redundant barns into dwellings. This often results in modifications to the external appearance of a building. If the existing character is to be maintained consideration must be given to retaining traditional style and features. New housing should also harmonise with the vernacular style, with particular attention being given to scale, building materials and the incorporation of traditional features.

### Management strategy

- **Conserve the historic, well-wooded character of the region**

### Overall guidelines

- **Maintain the historic dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads**
- **Conserve the built character of Arden by ensuring that new development reflects the vernacular style**

## Arden



Mature oaks are a characteristic feature of the Arden landscape. Through their size and antiquity individual trees can contribute greatly to landscape character. They are also ecologically important as they support many species of insects and birds. Wherever possible these old trees should be retained as their heritage value far outweighs any economic value. Management agreements could be used to help preserve these trees for future generations.



Ancient woodland sites are those which have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600. Over 70% of the woodlands in Arden are of ancient origin. These sites represent the final core of woodlands which retain a link with the ancient Forest of Arden. Following losses this century there is now a presumption against further woodland clearance and conservation of all ancient woodlands must be given the highest priority. These sites usually have a very high nature conservation interest with a diverse flora and fauna. Oak is usually the dominant tree species but small leaved lime is also locally important. To maintain species diversity management should favour small scale felling coupes and natural regeneration. Where vigorous regrowth can be obtained through coppice and regeneration this would be a suitable management option.



Plantation ancient woodlands are those which have been replanted often with non-indigenous broadleaves or conifers. Though reduced in their interest these woods are frequently of much higher nature conservation value than recently established woodlands. Much of their ecological interest can be enhanced through sympathetic management. On sites where indigenous species survive, natural regeneration of native broadleaves should be encouraged. Only where species interest is greatly diminished should replanting be undertaken, favouring indigenous broadleaves where possible.



Small woodlands are a feature of many Arden farms. Historically they were managed for timber and firewood. A shift towards intensive agriculture, coupled with reduced farm labour and a demise in management practices such as coppicing, have resulted in many of these woods being left unmanaged. As landscape and wildlife features many are now in decline and in urgent need of management. Government incentives now favour the diversification of farm enterprises including the management of small woods for timber, fuel, game, wildlife, landscape and recreation. These woods would be suited to long rotation coppicing and should be targeted for management grants. Coppice management would be especially sensitive to both the landscape and nature conservation value of these sites.

- **Conserve the high heritage and ecological value of individual ancient oaks**

- **Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species**

- **Restocking of plantation ancient woods should favour native broadleaved species preferably through natural regeneration**

- **Promote long rotation coppicing as a management tool for neglected small woods**



There is considerable scope for enhancing regional character through new woodland planting. The location and scale of all new planting, however, must reflect the character and scale of the different landscapes in Arden. The size and shape of new woodlands should complement the surrounding landscape pattern. Small woods are likely to be most suitable where the field pattern is still intact, while large woods may be more appropriate where the structure of the landscape has become fragmented. All new planting should avoid sites of ecological or historical interest.



The use of appropriate species in well-designed mixes is an important factor to consider in determining how well new planting will fit into the landscape. Selection of species will need to reflect a wide range of considerations, including the balance to be struck between nature conservation, landscape enhancement, recreation and timber production. Most Arden woodlands are of ancient origin and are predominantly broadleaved in character. New planting should reflect this where possible, and where schemes include non-indigenous species, oak should be included in the mix and favoured as the final hardwood crop. Species selection for amenity woodland should favour locally occurring associations of native trees and shrubs, including small-leaved lime as a co-dominant species with oak.



Hedgerows are prominent landscape features and frequently define roads, bridleways, footpaths and parish boundaries. Lanes and trackways are emphasised in many places by double hedgerows. These are historic features in their own right and form important wildlife corridors within the overall field pattern. In open landscapes they are often the only remaining features and are valuable as a basis for rebuilding the structure of the landscape. It is important to avoid further fragmentation of the landscape through hedgerow removal, particularly those along highways and parish boundaries. Hedgerows along woodland edges are often associated with ancient banks and ditches, and even where a woodland has been cleared these features may still survive and should be conserved.



The general condition of hedgerows in Arden is very variable. Roadside hedges are usually well maintained, but many field hedgerows are closely trimmed or gappy, and would benefit from being managed more positively as landscape features. This would include allowing them to grow thicker and taller (up to two metres in height) and replanting those that are gappy. Existing incentives for replanting should be more actively promoted. Where possible management should avoid excessively tidy low cut hedges, and should favour trimming at three yearly intervals to improve wildlife interest. Consideration should be given to traditional hedgelaying, or coppicing where hedges have grown spindly or become gappy at the base.

- **The design of all new woodland planting should complement the shape and scale of the surrounding landscape pattern**

- **New woodland planting should be broadleaved in character and favour oak as the major tree species**

- **Avoid the removal of hedgerows, especially along footpaths, bridleways, parish boundaries and woodland edges**

- **Promote the management of hedgerows and landscape features**



Heathland was once a common feature of the Arden landscape but following losses to agriculture and urban development it is now rare and very restricted. Those sites where heather survives have particularly important nature conservation interest. Elsewhere remnant heathy vegetation remains a characteristic feature with bracken and gorse particularly common along roads and in ancient woods. In all cases open heathland is in decline due to encroachment of trees and lack of management. Priority should be given to removal of trees and the regeneration of heather and other heathland flora. This can be most effectively carried out through the reinstatement of grazing with cattle or sheep.



Heaths are now very restricted and rare, but many of the associated plant species still survive along roadside verges. Species such as bracken and gorse are especially evident and provide historic links with former commons and waste. They also create interest and diversity along the roadside environment. Management of existing verges should seek to maintain and enhance this diversity. In road improvement schemes opportunities may also arise for habitat creation. In such cases the exposed subsoil is ideal for establishing heathy vegetation, but topsoiling must be avoided. This approach would provide a more interesting alternative to amenity tree planting.



Increasing leisure time has resulted in greater demands for sport and recreational facilities in the countryside, especially around the fringes of the larger urban centres. This type of development should be avoided in most rural areas. In some, however, particularly the more wooded estate landscapes such as Arden parklands and Wooded estatelands, such facilities can be more readily assimilated into the landscape. Golf courses, for example, could be designed to take on the appearance of modern day parklands as they mature. The selection of appropriate tree species is an important consideration, and the planting of longer lived trees such as oak, lime and sweet chestnut should be favoured over quick growing or smaller amenity species. There should also be opportunities for creating new wildlife habitats including heathlands, meadowlands and wetlands.

- **Promote the regeneration and management of heathland flora on all remnant heathy areas**

- **Diversify roadside character through the creation and management of heathy vegetation on highway verges**

- **The design of recreational facilities, such as golf courses, should seek to reflect the character of existing landscape features**

## Ancient Arden

This landscape is especially significant as it is the only area of ancient countryside in Warwickshire. The irregular landscape pattern reflected in the shape of fields and the network of narrow winding lanes is the essential structural element. Maintaining this pattern is the key to conserving the ancient landscape character. The pastoral character of the landscape is also important. Though now fragmented, this creates visual unity where it survives and contributes to Ancient Arden's distinct sense of place.



Field pattern is defined by thick boundary hedgerows and these are a key feature of Ancient Arden. Most are of medieval age and are distinguished by their size, irregular pattern and diversity of hedgerow species. They form the essential fabric of the landscape and once lost this unique combination is very difficult to replace. It is important in landscape and historical terms to conserve what is left, and where hedgerows have been removed consideration should be given to replacement planting.



New hedgerow planting should be encouraged in those areas where field pattern has become fragmented. Where practical priority should be given to reinstating ancient hedgerow patterns. New planting should complement the irregular shapes of existing fields and a regular geometric pattern should be avoided. Hedges should be planted in double rows with a mixture of locally occurring species. Hedgerow trees should also be incorporated at irregular spacings, with oak as the dominant species.



Ancient Arden has traditionally been a pastoral landscape and still retains this character in many places. Some of the older pastures are floristically diverse and often they are associated with areas of more steeply undulating ground. These are Arden's landscape gems where a peaceful, undisturbed character creates a strong sense of place and link with the past. Many formerly pastoral landscapes have been converted to arable, however, resulting in a loss of landscape features and fragmentation of the ancient field pattern. Where opportunities arise restoration of pastoral character should be encouraged, especially where this is part of a scheme to restore the historic field pattern. It is likely that this would have to involve government incentives to encourage more environmentally sensitive farming.

### Management strategy

- **Conserve and restore the ancient irregular landscape pattern**

### Landscape guidelines

- **Conserve and restore the irregular pattern of ancient hedgerows**

- **New hedge planting should reflect the irregular field pattern and include only mixed native species**

- **Conserve pastoral character and identify opportunities for conversion of arable land back to permanent pasture**

## Ancient Arden



Field ponds are important features in pastoral landscapes where historically they were used for watering livestock. They remain common in most parishes. In arable areas their function is now redundant but fringing scrub and trees often form important landscape features. Retention of ponds should be a priority in pastoral areas where they have greater wildlife potential in association with permanent grassland. Many of these ponds are now badly silted and shaded and management is needed to improve their wildlife and landscape interest. Management allows ponds to be retained as landscape features as well as providing a valuable source of water for livestock. Allowing limited access to livestock also adds diversity to the wetland habitat.



Mature oaks are a characteristic feature of field and roadside hedgerows in Ancient Arden. These create variety and give filtered views through the landscape. Tree cover should be enhanced through the natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks. Most hedgerows have seedlings which at little cost can be selected and left to grow. Replanting need only be undertaken where few hedgerow trees remain and the seed source has diminished.



Woodland cover in Ancient Arden is varied and consists of both large and small woods. The shape of most woodlands is characterised by an irregular outline created by early woodland clearance. This ancient pattern is reflected in the layout of fields and lanes. New planting should complement this irregular pattern, avoiding geometric shapes and straight edges. Woodlands up to field size would be most appropriate, but where field pattern is fragmented larger areas of planting may be acceptable.



Although close to Birmingham and Coventry Ancient Arden retains a rural character throughout much of its area. This is being steadily eroded however, by the gradual change of agricultural land to other uses, such as sport and leisure facilities. Such changes are imprinting a suburban character on the landscape. In these ancient landscapes conservation of rural character should be given a high priority and all new development should be tightly restrained.

- **Retain and manage field ponds in areas of permanent pasture**

- **Encourage the natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks**

- **Enhance tree cover through small scale woodland planting**

- **Conserve rural character by restricting changes in the use of rural land**

# Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment

for

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council



December 2016



## Residential Development:

- 5.7. The Solihull Local Plan (2013) and Local Plan Review (2016) sets out the policies and proposals to enable the Borough to grow and develop.
- 5.8. There is considerable demand for housing in the Borough resulting in development pressure for new residential areas. The area has strong economic assets, strategic transport infrastructure and a high quality environment making the Borough a desirable place in which to live, work and invest. As a result, there is continued development pressure on in the Borough particularly within the M42 Corridor, the Solihull urban fringes, villages in rural areas and the Green Belt.
- 5.9. In rural areas mature oak trees add a distinct quality to the landscape character of the area where they often form tree-lined streets in the mature suburb areas. Large front gardens also contribute to the leafy and Arcadian nature of some of these areas.
- 5.10. Building styles are a contributing factor to the landscape character and local distinctiveness between areas with varied styles that often impact positively on overall character. In contrast, modern buildings in rural villages and open countryside can sometimes appear incongruous.

### Guidelines

- Housing location, design and layout should respect local character.
- New development should conserve and enhance local character in terms of its distinctiveness and streetscape quality to ensure the scale, massing, density, layout, materials and landscape of development respects the surrounding natural, built and historic environment.
- Development should aim to retain existing landscape features which help define the character of areas, such as hedgerows, hedgerow trees, parkland trees and field patterns.
- It is beneficial for landscape works for new development sites to be considered in the early stages of design, to help integrate the development with its setting.
- Buildings should be well sited in relation to other features including tree cover and landform.

- New development should integrate the natural environment through the provision of gardens, quality open space and green infrastructure.
- Villages and settlement in the Borough have a distinct identity as a result of their historic origins and setting.
- It is important to maintain the identity of existing settlement and to avoid breaching the well-defined settlement edges.
- Careful selection of building materials utilising different textures and colour can add interest and break up the mass of larger buildings.
- Where new buildings are required they should be located in association with existing farmsteads and settlement across the area and located so as not to require new access arrangements.

## Lighting:

- 5.11. Inappropriate lighting in the countryside can impact considerably on landscape character and experience of the landscape. Lighting in the countryside can be disruptive to residents and ecology. The NPPG includes guidance on light pollution and notes that artificial light has the potential to become what is termed 'light pollution' or 'obtrusive light' and not all modern lighting is suitable in all locations.

### Guidelines

- Lighting for new developments should be assessed and considered where appropriate particularly when submitting landscape proposals in support of planning applications.
- Areas of the countryside in the Borough that retain a dark sky from the impacts of light pollution should be protected.
- Limiting the hours lighting is used, the use of down lights and minimising output should be considered as part of the landscape scheme.
- Lighting schemes should be designed to the safe minimum requirements for the purposes of the development.
- Care should be taken when designing lighting schemes to ensure that appropriate products are chosen and that their location to reduce spill light and glare has been fully considered.

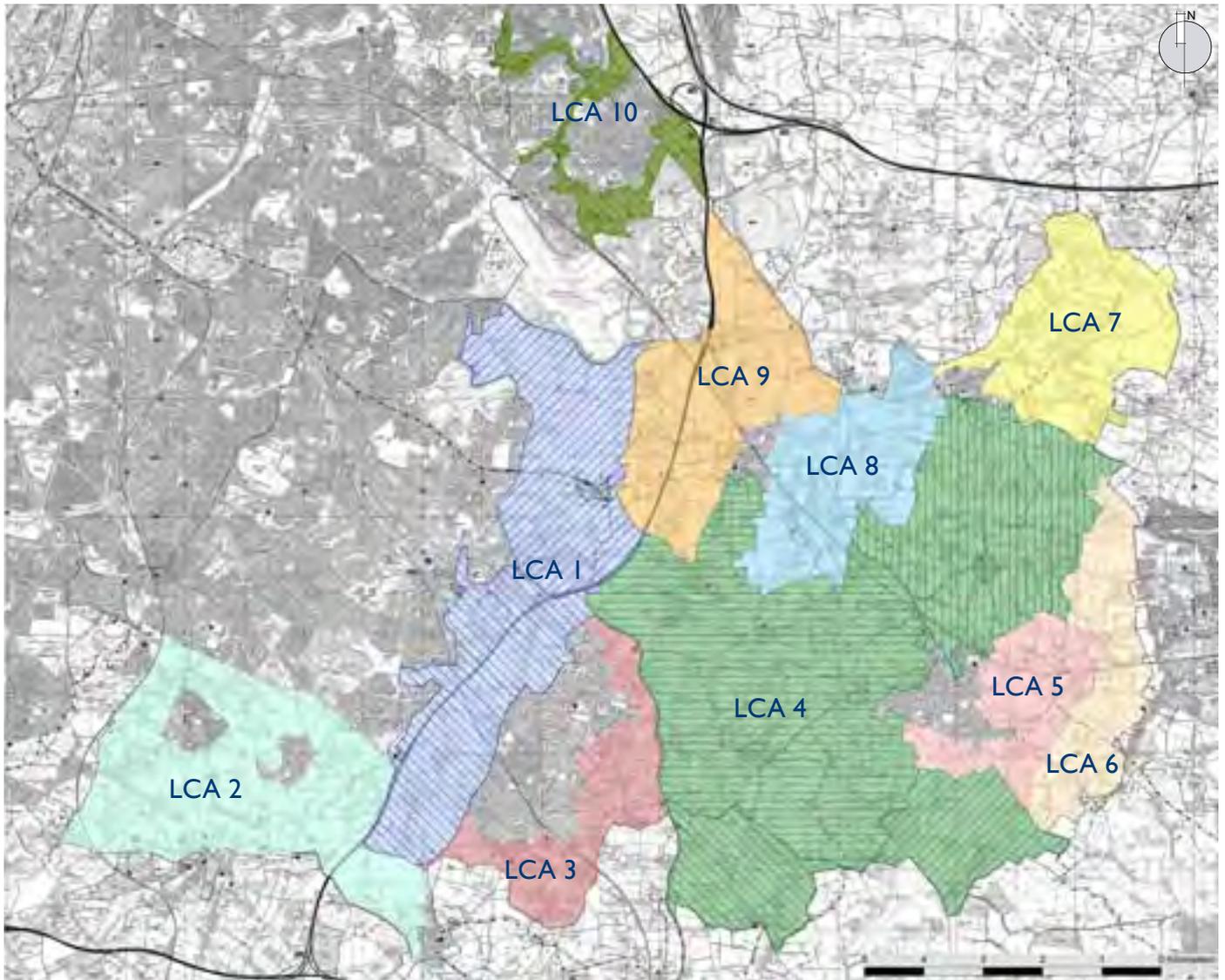
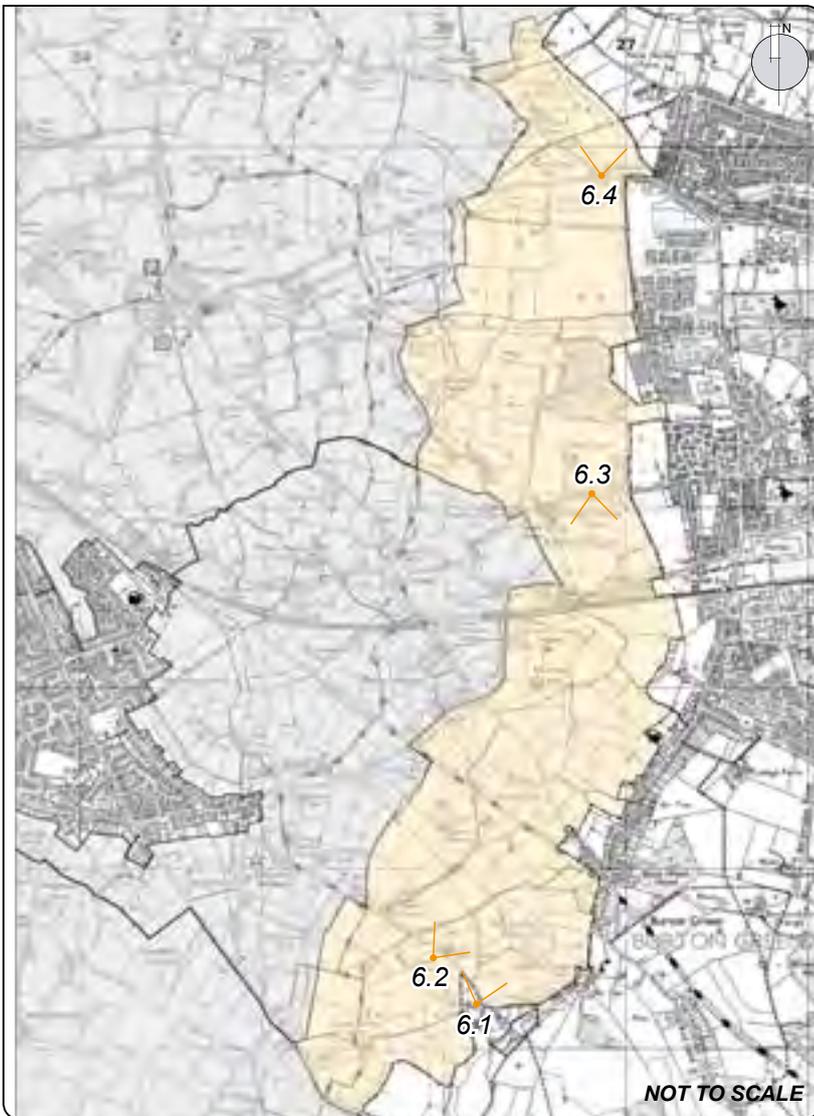


Figure 2: Solihull Borough Landscape Character Areas Map (Refer to Appendix D for a full-sized map.)



# LCA

## Eastern Fringe

# 6



**Photograph 6.1:**  
Undulating landform of agriculture, woodland/ plantation blocks and numerous arterial roads linking Solihull and Coventry which follow the landscape pattern.



**Photograph 6.2:**  
Medium to large sized arable fields interspersed with deciduous woodland and a strong contingent of mature trees within hedgerows. Electricity pylons and telegraph poles are prevalent.



**Photograph 6.3:**  
There is no main settlement within the area; settlement largely comprises converted farms and smaller ribbon developments such as along Duggins Lane.

### Description:

This undulating area lies at the easternmost extent of the Borough where it adjoins the city of Coventry. The LCA spans just over 5.5km<sup>2</sup>.

Although close to the urban edge, this character area retains a strong sense of rural identity that provides a countryside buffer between Balsall Common and Coventry. The LCA provides an attractive gateway to the countryside from the urban edge, which contains long distance trails, recreational cycle paths and a good footpath and bridleway network.

Fields are larger and more regular to the north of the area in contrast to the medium to small scale and irregular field pattern in the southern extent of the LCA. Fields are mostly bound by hedgerows of various condition, the southern area having a stronger hedgerow structure with oak and ash present within them. Hedgerows along roadsides are generally high trimmed with tall overhanging trees.

Small copses and the landform break down views across the area. Views of the urban edge towards Coventry are noticeable in certain locations but are generally medium distance.

Settlement is sparse and farmstead diversification is noticeable throughout the area. Linear settlements have developed along some arterial roads specifically at Duggins Lane and Benton Green Lane. The Berkswell substation within the central extent of the character area is a partial detractor and electricity pylons and overhead cables are a constant feature within the landscape.

### Key Characteristics:

#### Geology, soils and drainage:

The northern area consists of:

- Slowly permeable clayey soils with varying slightly impeded and impeded drainage.
- Warwickshire Group of Siltstone and Sandstone with Subordinate Mudstone solid geology.

The southern area consists of:

- Slowly permeable clayey soils, seasonally wet with impeded drainage.
- Triassic Rocks (undifferentiated) of Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone solid geology

#### Landform and Drainage Pattern:

- Undulating landform between 120m and 140m AOD.
- Agricultural field ditches form the main structure of the drainage pattern within this area which is supplemented with several pools, natural springs and a reservoir at Victoria Farm.

**Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife:**

- Mixed land use is dominant across the area with arable fields interspersed by deciduous woodland and coniferous plantations. This also includes vegetation on the golf course within the grounds of the Nailcote Hall Hotel.
- Medium to large sized fields with a distinct regular rectilinear pattern are a common feature to the north of Rough Close in contrast to the more irregular field pattern to the south of the LCA. Most of the fields are generally bound by hedgerows.
- Woodland cover is largely formed of plantation blocks and deciduous woodland that are scattered across the area. Rough Close in the north, is the largest of these which also includes a camping site.
- Strong tree cover prevails within this area including hedgerows, street trees and the occasional standalone trees within fields.
- The area includes three Local Wildlife Sites at Beanit Green Lane, Big Pours and Little Pours Woodland and Beanit Farm Hedge.

**Settlement, built environment and communications:**

- Areas of main settlement are barely noticeable within this character area. The LCA largely comprises converted farms and smaller ribbon development particularly along Duggins Lane and Benton Green Lane due to the close proximity of Coventry's western edge.
- There are three listed buildings in this LCA. Nailcote Hall is a Grade II listed late 16<sup>th</sup> century timber frame and red brick house, now a hotel and golf course.
- The Electrical sub-station is a prominent feature within the central extent of the area.
- Electricity pylons, telegraph poles and wires are the main vertical elements in the area. Other vertical elements include the water tower near Duggins Lane.
- The Birmingham to Coventry railway line and numerous arterial roads from Coventry to Solihull cross this LCA, however connectivity within the area remains poor as most of these roads runs east to west with limited connections north to south. The roads closely follow landscape pattern and are not at odds with the landscape.
- There are a number of footpaths and bridleways traversing the area, however most run east to west in contrast to the southern area where the routes criss-cross the landscape. Coventry Way and Millennium Way are two long distance trails that cross the area.
- Kenilworth Greenway, a cyclepath on the disused old railway line is a key recreational route across the area.

**Sensitivities and Pressures:**

- Neglect of woodland management would decrease the long-term sustainability of tree cover in this characteristically wooded area.
- Views of business parks and their associated facilities detract from the positive rural attributes of this area.
- Possible increased pressure for access to open countryside from the edge of Coventry and Balsall Common may impact upon the rural character of the area.
- Decline in frequency of hedgerow trees due to neglect and lack of replacement.
- The southern half of the area plays an important role in separating Balsall Common from Coventry and is sensitive to development which would result in coalescence.
- Pressure for new housing in the attractive countryside due to easy access to Coventry, increasing pressure on the arterial roads. Limited capacity of the area to accept development without impact upon character.
- Potential of farmstead sprawl with new large modern buildings that detract from the area.
- This area is a mineral safeguarded area for coal, which could have considerable impact upon landscape character.

**Photograph 6.4:**

*The management and replacement of hedgerow trees is important for the sustainability of the area's character.*

## Guidelines:

**Aim: To protect the landscape pattern characteristic of the area.**

- Encourage appropriate management to enhance hedgerow structure and the planting of individual trees along field boundaries particularly in and around Broad Lane. Tree planting, in the form of copses and clumps, in the vicinity of Coventry is important to mitigate large scale uses including sports and industrial facilities and to preserve the setting and rural aspect of the area.
- Resist loss of field boundaries to retain irregular field pattern to south and regular field pattern to the north of the area. Discourage amalgamation of fields and promote awareness of the Hedgerow Regulations. Refer to Habitat Biodiversity Audit for further detail.
- Promote proactive management of existing woodland in accordance with the Solihull Woodland Strategy.
- Encourage diversification of Local Wildlife Sites and other habitat conservation areas through appropriate management practices. Opportunities to improve existing habitats and create new ones should be sought.
- Identify appropriate access points to the countryside and ensure that new facilities, signs and paths are low-key and respect landscape character.
- Where new buildings are required they should be located in association with existing farmsteads and settlement across the area and located so as not to require new access arrangements.
- To promote understanding of the heritage features in the area and their contribution to landscape character.
- Resist any development that would risk the character of the wooded boundaries to the fields and their landscape value.

**Aim: To integrate the edge of Coventry and other large scale development in the landscape and reduce its visual impact.**

- Structure planting in and amongst any new development must be considered to break up the mass of building in the rural landscape with species of an appropriate scale.
- Consideration must be given to the space between buildings for robust structure planting opportunities to ensure the overall site is unified with its landscape setting.
- All new development proposals for large scale buildings require a landscape scheme as an integral part of a planning application to ensure the impact on landscape character is fully mitigated. Design at the urban edge requires high quality design and the use of appropriate materials, which are appropriate to local character and which maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of the area.
- New development should avoid large scale encroachment to respect the setting of Coventry and preserve the rural countryside within the area.

**Aim: To manage access for recreation at the urban edge:**

- Promote the enhancement of the footpath network and its contribution to landscape character and appreciation.
- Explore opportunities to improve public enjoyment of the area, through access agreements following appropriate routes, that would cause minimal disturbance.

## Overall Landscape Sensitivity:

### Landscape Character Sensitivity:

- The Landscape Character Sensitivity of this LCA is considered to be **High**.
- This is an attractive landscape with a strong 'sense of place', distinct landscape features including strong tree cover, characteristic field pattern, no main settlements, tranquil nature and general rural character. Overall the landscape is well- balanced and unified with elements in very good condition. There are a few detracting features including the electricity pylons and electricity sub-station.

### Visual Sensitivity:

- The Visual Sensitivity of this LCA is considered to be **Medium**.
- The general visibility in this LCA consists of medium distance views that are generally low level, fragmented and shallow with a horizontal orientation. Small copses and landform break down views across the area and strong tree cover forms the backdrop in many views across the area. Views of main settlements are not noticeable, however there is a strong relationship with Coventry's western edge in some places in contrast to the weaker areas where intervisibility is poor. Prevention of coalescence is important in this character area.

## Landscape Value:

- The value of this character area is considered to be **Medium**.
- The area is an attractive rural landscape and is a well preserved example of the Warwickshire countryside. It is locally distinctive in terms of being tranquil and rural whilst in close proximity to the urban edge of Coventry. This area provides good recreational value through its accessibility to the countryside provided by the network of Public Rights of Way including the long distance trails and cycleway.

## Landscape Capacity:

- Consistent with current guidance, it is not possible to establish a definitive baseline sensitivity to change without having details of a given development proposal. However, for the purpose of this report a general assessment of the LCA's capacity to accommodate change has been undertaken. This should be used as a guide only, and will need to be re-assessed once details of any proposed development and site location are known.
- This LCA being of **High** overall landscape sensitivity and **Medium** landscape value, suggests that the LCA would typically have an overall **Very Low** landscape capacity to accommodate new development.
- The LCA is an intrinsically rural landscape and serves as a gateway to the countryside from the city of Coventry. It is an important LCA due to its geographical positioning, providing a crucial buffer that acts in restricting the coalescence of Balsall Common and Coventry.
- Overall, this area would be able to accommodate very limited areas of new development, which would need to be of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and features of the area. Any new development should not result in the loss of the rural quality of the LCA and should avoid any opportunities for merger between the settlements.

**Table 23: Overall Sensitivity for LCA 6 – Eastern Fringe: High**

		Landscape Character Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	Medium	Low
	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
	Very Low	Low	Low	Low	Very Low/ Negligible

**Table 24: Landscape Capacity for LCA 6 – Eastern Fringe: Very Low**

		Overall Landscape Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Landscape Value	High	Very Low/ None	Very Low	Low	Medium
	Medium	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Very Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High

---

# Assessment of Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value

- A.17. Following the identification of the Landscape Character Areas and noting the description of existing elements, features, characteristics, character and quality within the study area, a further analysis of each LCA was undertaken to determine the following:
- Overall Landscape Sensitivity – derived from combining Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity;
  - Landscape Value – derived largely from designated landscape or features and local associations; and
  - Landscape Capacity – derived from combining the results of the Overall Landscape Sensitivity with the defined Landscape Value.

## Overall Landscape Sensitivity

- A.18. Overall Landscape Sensitivity is defined as the sensitivity of the landscape and does not take into account or represent any type of change that may be under consideration. Overall Landscape Sensitivity is made up of essentially two components:
- Landscape Character Sensitivity; and
  - Visual Sensitivity.

## Landscape Character Sensitivity

- A.19. Landscape Character Sensitivity is defined as the sensitivity of the landscape resource which includes individual elements/ features contributing to the character and the character as a whole. Landscape Character Sensitivity is judged on certain factors including:
- Natural Factors;
  - Cultural Factors;
  - Landscape Quality; and
  - Aesthetic Factors.
- A.20. Criteria used to assess the Landscape Character Sensitivity is set out in Table A.1.

**Table A. I: Landscape Character Sensitivity Criteria**

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Classification Criteria	
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attractive landscape with a sense of place and national/ regional recognition or strong local connection to place.</li> <li>• Distinctive structure, characteristic patterns, harmonious relationship between landform and land cover.</li> <li>• Unified landscape promotes social interaction with high levels of activity and few conflicts between traffic and pedestrian movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate land management with limited scope to improve and in very good landscape condition.</li> <li>• Evident use of good quality locally characteristic materials and detailing.</li> <li>• Distinct features worthy of conservation.</li> <li>• A few detracting features.</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical and unremarkable landscape, however with local connection to place.</li> <li>• Obvious structure, characteristic patterns, balanced combination of landform and land cover.</li> <li>• Opportunities for social interaction limited to specific 'community' locations leading to an interrupted landscape.</li> <li>• Traffic circulation often controls pedestrian movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope to improve land management.</li> <li>• Good landscape condition.</li> <li>• Some areas of local distinctiveness, elsewhere widespread use of standard materials and detailing.</li> <li>• Remnant distinctive features may no longer be in context.</li> <li>• Some detracting features.</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monotonous / uniform landscape in poor condition or decline with little or no obvious local connection to place.</li> <li>• Indistinct structure and characteristic patterns often masked by mixed land use creating an unbalanced relationship between landform and land cover.</li> <li>• Fragmented landscape with poor boundary definition and arbitrary 'disowned' space.</li> <li>• Development is often unsympathetic in scale.</li> <li>• Few opportunities for social interaction, unwelcoming or even threatening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport infrastructure may inhibit or severely constrain pedestrian movement.</li> <li>• Lack of management has resulted in degradation.</li> <li>• Fair landscape condition.</li> <li>• Derelict land requiring treatment.</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of materials, poorly located infrastructure or use of materials with a limited life span.</li> <li>• Several detracting features.</li> </ul>
Very Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broken and degraded landscape in poor condition with no sense of place.</li> <li>• Degraded structure/ characteristic patterns masked by mixed land use.</li> <li>• Unbalanced relationship between landform and land cover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of land management has resulted in degradation and in poor landscape condition.</li> <li>• Many detracting features.</li> </ul>

### Visual Sensitivity

A.21. Visual Sensitivity is the assessment of a combination of factors including the type and nature of the view, visibility, the number and nature of people (visual receptors) who may experience the landscape visually.

A.22. The classification criteria for Visual Sensitivity is set out in Table A.2:

**Table A.2: Visual Sensitivity Criteria**

Visual Sensitivity	Classification Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>Very strong</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Very important</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>Wide range of opportunities</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Long distance; Elevated/ high level/ panoramic (360 degrees); Wide (180 degrees); Deep; Downwards.</i></li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>Strong</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Important</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>Some opportunities</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Medium distance; Medium level; Framed (90 degrees); Contained (45 degrees); Shallow; Horizontal.</i></li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>Weak</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Minor role</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>Little opportunity</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Short distance; Low level; Fragmented; Upwards.</i></li> </ul>
Very Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>None</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Not important</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>No opportunity</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Limited or no view.</i></li> </ul>

### Overall Landscape Sensitivity

A.23. The two principal criteria, Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity, are combined and set out within Table A.3 which is used to establish the classification of the Overall Landscape Sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area.

**Table A.3: Overall Landscape Sensitivity Criteria**

		Landscape Character Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	Medium	Low
	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
	Very Low	Low	Low	Low	Very Low/ Negligible

## Landscape Value

A.24. The likely value of the character areas is based on which users may value the areas, and where relevant, any statutory, non-statutory or local plan designations.

A.25. Landscape value is associated with a recognisable and demonstrable use, and can relate not only to historic and cultural importance, but also social, recreational and community value. The presence of combinations of attributes along with scale of importance should be considered when ascribing the landscape value.

A.26. The factors and criteria influencing the value of the landscape are set out in Table A.4

**Table A.4: Landscape Value**

Landscape Value	Geographical Scale of Importance	Classification Criteria	Typical Example
High	National / Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape or element therein of distinctive value, rich cultural associations and a recognised high level of importance.</li> <li>Limited potential for substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Parks</li> <li>Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty</li> <li>Listed Buildings</li> <li>Scheduled Monuments</li> </ul>
Medium	Regional / District / Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locally distinctive landscape or element therein of moderately valued characteristics, or moderately valued components.</li> <li>Some potential for substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated areas by local authorities e.g. special landscape areas and Conservation Areas</li> <li>Undesignated but value expressed through historical or cultural associations or through demonstrable use.</li> </ul>
Low	District / Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape or element therein similar to many other areas with little remaining indication of local distinctiveness. Low importance and rarity.</li> <li>High potential for improvements/substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remnant landscape features may remain but are degraded or out of context. Potential for enhancement.</li> <li>Commercial, industrial or disused area providing little value to the community or residents</li> </ul>
Very Low	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape or element therein of very low importance, which may include damaged or derelict landscape.</li> <li>Would benefit from improvements/substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas identified for recovery, often vandalised and rarely used by the community.</li> </ul>

## Landscape Capacity

- A.27. Landscape Capacity is defined as the ability of a landscape to accommodate varying amounts of change or development of a specific type without changing or having significant effects on the overall character and visual amenity of the area. It is generally derived from combining the levels assigned to each area for Overall Landscape Sensitivity and for Landscape Value, with a consideration as to the type of development.
- A.28. The implication of the definition outlined above, and in line with current guidance, capacity studies must be site and development specific in order to be relevant and of use within development planning. The ability of the individual landscape character areas to accommodate change (sensitivity to change and landscape capacity) requires a more detailed assessment focused on site allocations and descriptions of expected development types.
- A.29. The distinct characteristics or features of an area can have a varying sensitivity to change. This will depend on the nature of the change proposed and in particular, how suitable or characteristic the proposed change is compared to the receiving landscape. This assessment therefore will only be able to suggest a general assessment of the 'Landscape Capacity' based on the matrix set out in Table A.5. This general scoring will need to be reviewed when details of specific development proposals are known for specific sites.

**Table A.5: Landscape Capacity Rating**

		Overall Landscape Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Landscape Value	High	Very Low/ None	Very Low	Low	Medium
	Medium	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Very Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High

## **Appendix A.1: Extracts from Published Green Belt Reviews**





# **Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment**

## **Assessment Report**

JULY 2016

# 03 | Assessment Methodology

In order to ensure a robust and consistent approach to the Assessment, the methodology has been informed by the key relevant requirements of the NPPF, whilst also having regard to the work undertaken within the draft 'Shared Principles for undertaking Green Belt Reviews across the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA). Although still in draft, these principles set out the joint approach of the GBHMA authorities to Green Belt reviews, and therefore provided a sound basis from which the methodology for this Assessment was developed.

An initial Draft Methodology Statement was issued for consultation to the GBHMA authorities in March 2016. The feedback received was taken into consideration and is reflected in the methodology which forms the basis of this Assessment.

## Defining Assessment Areas

In order to ensure the Assessment is reflective of the five purposes of Green Belt, as defined by the NPPF, and the varying character of the Green Belt in SMBC, two distinct categories of assessment area have been utilised:

- Refined Parcels; and
- Broad Areas

Refined Parcels of Green Belt land adjoining or adjacent to built-up areas, including inset villages were defined. Refined Parcels were also defined along the eastern borough boundary where the built-up area of Coventry adjoins. The wider rural areas were divided into Broad Areas which were defined as Green Belt land that is not located on the edge of, or adjacent to, large built up areas within SMBC or those within adjoining authorities, for example Coventry to the east.

The definition of Refined Parcels and Broad Areas reflects the varying character and role of Green Belt land across the borough. Green Belt land immediately adjoining the urban areas performs a different role to those areas of Green Belt within the more rural areas of the borough. Furthermore, the definition of assessment areas within these two categories enables a focused assessment of the performance of the Green Belt

The Refined Parcels and Broad Areas were delineated on OS Mastermap using strong permanent physical features which are easily identifiable, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 85 of the NPPF:

85. When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should...define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'

The physical features used in defining boundaries for the purposes of this Assessment included:

- Roads (motorways, A and B roads);
- Rail and other permanent infrastructure;
- Watercourses;
- Areas of woodland, established hedgerows and treelines; and
- Established field patterns.

The Green Belt land within the defined Broad Areas and Refined Parcels does not necessarily respect authority boundaries. For example, Broad Areas of Green Belt land in the south-west of the borough stretch beyond the authority boundary where it adjoins Stratford-on-Avon to the south and Bromsgrove to the west. Therefore, in order to ensure a cohesive approach to the definition of assessment areas, care has been taken to reflect Land Parcels or Broad Areas which have previously been identified within the adjoining authorities of Stratford-on-Avon, Coventry, Warwick and North Warwickshire in the 'Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Green Belt Study'. Land Parcels identified as part the Joint Green Belt Study straddle the borough boundary at its border with Coventry, therefore particular attention has been paid to the definition of assessment area boundaries in this area. Figure XX illustrates the interaction between adjoining authority studies.

## Assessment

As set out in **Section 1** this Assessment has been carried out using a 'policy off' approach. Consideration has not therefore been given to the Refined Parcel or Broad Area's role in the context of any other constraints, policies, strategies or its development potential. It is the role of future stages of Green Belt review to consider the wider constraints or

opportunities of land designated as Green Belt within SMBC using this Assessment as the basis.

Each Refined Parcel and Broad Area has been subject to an assessment against the first four purposes of Green Belt, all of which have equal weight, in line with the criteria set out in Table 1 below, and assigned a score for the extent to which it performs against each purpose.

- 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; and
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

Refined Parcels and Broad Areas were not assessed against the fifth purpose of Green Belt 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land'. By virtue of its designation, all Green Belt land makes an equal contribution to this purpose and therefore inclusion of this purpose would add no value to the Assessment.

The Assessment was carried out using the criteria set out in **Table 1** and the numerical scoring system identified below. Where applicable, each Refined Parcel and Broad Area was assigned a score of **0, 1, 2 or 3** for each of the first four purposes of Green Belt. Broad Areas were defined based on their countryside character and therefore perform highly against the third purpose of Green Belt ('Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'). Each Broad Area was assigned a score of 3 against the third purpose of Green Belt and this score checked during the initial desk based assessment and site visits.

<b>0</b>	Refined Parcel/Broad Area <b>does not</b> perform against the purpose;
<b>1</b>	Refined Parcel/Broad Area is <b>lower performing</b> against the purpose;
<b>2</b>	Refined Parcel/Broad Area is <b>more moderately</b> performing against the purpose;
<b>3</b>	Refined Parcel/Broad Area is <b>higher performing</b> against the purpose.

**Table 1 - Assessment Criteria**

Green Belt purpose	Broad Area Criteria and Scoring	Refined Parcel Criteria and Scoring	Considerations
<p>1. To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</p>	<p>Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel or Broad Area?</p> <p>Is other development detached from the existing large built-up area?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Broad Area or Refined Parcel is already developed and/or is within the urban area with no clear boundary = <b>0</b> Parcel or Area does not perform against the purpose</p> <p>Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary = <b>1</b> Parcel or Area is lower performing</p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present = <b>2</b> Parcel or Area is more moderately performing</p> <p>'Refined Parcel or Broad Area boundary is clearly identifiable/durable and there is no development present = <b>3</b> Parcel or Area is higher performing</p>		<p>Consideration should be given to how well contained the urban area is by the Refined Parcel or Broad Area. Ribbon and other development that is detached from the existing built up area is an indication that the Green Belt is lower performing.</p> <p>Durable permanent boundaries are considered to be motorways and A roads, other infrastructure, and permanent natural features such as watercourses etc. Less durable boundaries are considered to be established field boundaries, hedgerows and treelines. Whilst easily identifiable these features are less durable</p>
<p>2. To Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>Does the Broad Area represent a 'strategic gap' between major urban areas?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Broad Area does not represent a strategic gap and/or is not between major urban or smaller urban areas = <b>0</b> Area does not perform against the purpose</p> <p>Broad Area is between smaller urban areas but does not represent a strategic gap and is not between major urban areas. = <b>1</b> Area is lower performing</p> <p>Broad Area represents a strategic gap between major urban areas = <b>3</b> Area is higher performing</p>	<p>Does the Refined Parcel represent a 'gap' between urban areas?</p> <p>Is the Refined Parcel within an existing urban area?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns = <b>0</b> <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas = <b>1</b> <i>Parcel is lower performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas = <b>2</b> <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometres between urban areas = <b>3</b> <i>Parcel is higher performing</i></p>	<p>Strategic gaps are considered to be those areas that separate major urban areas/cities e.g. Birmingham and Coventry.</p> <p>Merging can reasonably be expected if a gap of less than 1 kilometre is identified. Refined Parcels representing gaps of less than 1 kilometre play an essential role in preventing the merging of urban areas.</p> <p>Refined Parcels which are entirely contained within the urban area are considered not to play a role in preventing neighbouring towns merging.</p>

Green Belt purpose	Broad Area Criteria and Scoring	Refined Parcel Criteria and Scoring	Considerations
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Broad Areas, by their nature, are considered to perform highly against the third purpose of Green Belt and therefore all areas are assigned a score of <b>3</b> <i>Area is higher performing</i>	<p>Is the Refined Parcel characterised by countryside?</p> <p>Does Refined Parcel adjoin areas of countryside?</p> <p>Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed = <b>0</b> <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present = <b>1</b> <i>Parcel is lower performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present = <b>2</b> <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development = <b>3</b> <i>Parcel is higher performing</i></p>	Countryside is considered to be land which is rural and open in nature including farmland. Associated agricultural buildings are not considered to be development for the purposes of assessing the encroachment of urban development.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>Is the Refined Parcel or Broad Area within or adjoining a Conservation Area within an historic town?</p> <p>Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the Refined Parcel or Broad Area?</p> <p>Does the Refined Parcel or Broad Area contribute to the setting of the historic town?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town = <b>0</b> <i>Parcel or Area does not perform against the purpose</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town but has no views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>1</b> <i>Parcel or Area is lower performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and/or has limited views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>2</b> <i>Parcel or Area is more moderately performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>3</b> <i>Parcel or Area is higher performing</i></p>	<p>Is the Refined Parcel or Broad Area within or adjoining a Conservation Area within an historic town?</p> <p>Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the Refined Parcel or Broad Area?</p> <p>Does the Refined Parcel or Broad Area contribute to the setting of the historic town?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town = <b>0</b> <i>Parcel or Area does not perform against the purpose</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town but has no views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>1</b> <i>Parcel or Area is lower performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and/or has limited views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>2</b> <i>Parcel or Area is more moderately performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>3</b> <i>Parcel or Area is higher performing</i></p>	An assessment of topography, intervening features and site visits have been used to assess the performance of the Refined Parcels and Broad Areas against this purpose.

## Refined Parcels

Refined Parcels were defined adjoining or adjacent to built-up areas, including inset villages and the area of Solihull along the eastern boundary of the borough where the built-up areas of Coventry adjoins. Table 3 below identifies the scoring of each Refined Parcel against the Green Belt purposes. The performance of the Refined Parcels is described in further detail below and scores for each included in Table 3 alongside a total and highest score. The inclusion of a total and highest score for each parcel has not been used to rank parcels, these have been included for illustrative purposes only.

### Purpose 1

Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 1 to 'Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas' are those parcels which adjoin strong defensible permanent boundaries. Such parcels include those adjoining the M6 and M42 motorways, the A45 and the railway line (RP04, RP15, RP16 and RP80) where the presence of permanent infrastructure supports the restriction of urban sprawl. Refined Parcels RP25 and RP82 also perform highly against purpose 1 as an integral part of the Meriden Gap.

Parcels which perform more moderately against purpose 1 include parcels which aren't immediately adjacent to the built up area of Solihull and stretch into the more rural areas where boundaries are weak and not easily identifiable e.g. parcels RP19 and RP46. However, these parcels do not contain urbanising or ribbon development and therefore continue to perform a role in preventing urban sprawl.

Refined Parcels which are lower performing against purpose 1 include parcels which are to the east of and immediately adjacent to the built up areas of Solihull. The boundaries of most of these parcels are weak and not easily identifiable where they meet the urban area and ribbon development is evident e.g. RP31 and RP32 between the built up area of Solihull and the M42 motorway. Some parcels which have clear and robust boundaries have also scored lower against purpose 1 due to the presence of ribbon or other development which is detached from the main urban area. These parcels include, for example, RP33 and RP34 where the M42 motorway and the A3400 form strong definitive boundaries but ribbon development is present along Lady Byron Lane.

Broad Area ID	Description	Purpose Scores					Highest Score
		1	2	3	4	Total	
BA01	Broad Area BA01 is located in the south-west corner of Solihull MBC adjoining Stratford-on-Avon DC to the south, Warwick to the south east and Bromsgrove to the west.	2	1	3	0	6	3 (Purpose 3)
BA02	Broad Area BA02 is located along the southern edge of Solihull MBC at its boundary with Stratford-on-Avon DC.	2	1	3	3	9	2 (Purpose 3 and 4)
BA03	Broad Area BA03 is located within the central portion of Solihull MBC between Birmingham and Solihull to the west and Coventry to the east.	3	3	3	3	12	3 (All)
BA04	Broad Area BA04 forms the eastern portion of Solihull MBC at its boundary with Coventry to the east and North Warwickshire BC to the north	3	3	3	3	12	3 (All)
BA05	Broad Area BA05 is located immediately to the east of the urban area of Solihull south of Birmingham International Airport.	3	3	3	2	11	3 (Purpose 1,2 and 3)

**Table 2 - Broad Area Scoring**

Refined Parcels which do not perform against purpose 1 include those parcels which are developed or entirely constrained by the urban area for example parcels RP11 and RP79 respectively. Parcel RP64 is entirely formed of Cheswick Green and is developed as is RP76 which is formed of land between Lowbrook Lane and Norton Lane in the south west of the borough at Tidbury Green.

### Purpose 2

Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 2 to 'Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another' are those parcels within the south west corner of the borough which form the gap separating the urban area of Solihull from the nearby settlements of Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath. For example, parcels RP62 and RP63 form a gap of less than 1 kilometre between the Monkspath area of Solihull and Cheswick Green to the south. Likewise, parcels RP65 and RP69 form a gap of less than 1 kilometre between the Shirley area of Solihull to the north and Dickens Heath to the south.

Parcels which are more moderately performing against purpose 2 include those which form a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas, particularly the areas of Green Belt land which separate the western edges of the built-up area of Solihull from Dorridge and Knowle to the east i.e. parcels RP32, RP33, RP43 and RP44. In addition, those parcels which adjoin the borough boundary with Coventry in the east perform moderately against purpose 2, forming a gap of approximately 3 kilometres between Coventry and Balsall Common.

Lower performing parcels include those areas of Green Belt land to the extreme south of the borough which form part of a gap of more than 5 kilometres between settlements. Refined parcels which immediately adjoin the A45 to the south are also lower performing against purpose 2 as they form part of the wider strategic Meriden Gap between Solihull and Coventry.

Refined parcels which do not perform against purpose 2 include those parcels which are entirely contained by the urban area and therefore do not form a gap.

These parcels include those within Kingshurst and Marston Green in the north of the borough and parcel RP64 which is entirely formed of Cheswick Green. Parcels RP01 – RP03 form part of Babbs Mill Park and Meriden Park which are surrounded by urban development and therefore do not perform against purpose 2.

### Purpose 3

Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 3 to 'Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment' are generally those contained areas of Green Belt land which adjoin the Broad Areas in the more rural parts of the borough away from the main built-up areas. Those parcels within the centre of the borough, detached from the main urban areas, which form part of the Meriden Gap perform highly i.e. parcels RP21, RP23 and RP80 which are characterised by countryside with no ribbon or other urbanising development present.

Parcels which are more moderately performing against purpose 3 are largely those which immediately adjoin the built up areas of Solihull, Dorridge, Knowle and Coventry. Although adjacent to urban areas, these parcels are mainly characterised by countryside and do not contain development.

Lower performing parcels include those which are within the urban areas or which contain ribbon or other urbanising development. These parcels include RP07 and RP10 in the north of the borough which are largely contained by the urban area but which are formed of agricultural land. Parcels which do not perform against the purpose are also largely contained within the north of the borough where they form Babbs Mill Park and areas of open space within the urban areas of Kingshurst and Marston Green.

### Purpose 4

Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 4 to 'Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns' are entirely contained in the central part of the borough where they adjoin the Hampton in Arden, Bickenhill and Knowle Conservation Areas. Parcels RP16 and RP17 provide clear views of Bickenhill Church whilst parcels RP20 and RP23 have clear views to and from the historic core of Hampton in Arden. Parcels RP37 and RP38 benefit from clear views of the Church of St John the Baptist and lie immediately adjacent to the Knowle Conservation Area.

Refined Parcel RP32 is the only parcel to perform more moderately against purpose 2. The parcel is immediately adjacent to the Solihull Conservation Area but benefits from only limited views. Likewise parcels RP18 and RP39 are adjacent to Hampton in Arden and Knowle Conservation Areas respectively but have no views of the historic core and therefore are considered as lower performing against the purpose.

Refined Parcel	Description	Purpose Scores					Highest Score
		1	2	3	4	Total	
RP69	Land north of Dickens Heath south of Shirley Heath	1	3	2	0	6	3 (Purpose 2)
RP70	Land north west of Dickens Heath	3	3	2	0	8	3 (Purpose 1 and 2)
RP71	Land between Tythe Barn lane and Birchy Leasowes Lane, west of Dickens Heath	3	2	2	0	7	3 (Purpose 1)
RP72	Land between Houndsfield Lane and Tilehouse Lane, east of railway line	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP73	Land between Old Dickens Heath Road and Tilehouse Lane	1	2	3	0	6	3 (Purpose 3)
RP74	Land north of Lowbrook Lane, west of Tilehouse Lane	1	2	0	0	3	2 (Purpose 2)
RP75	Land between Old Dickens Heath Road and Norton Lane	1	3	3	0	7	3 (Purpose 2 and 3)
RP76	Land between Lowbrook Lane and Norton Lane	0	0	0	0	0	0
RP77	Land between Norton Land and Braggs Farm Lane	1	2	3	0	6	3 (Purpose 3)
RP78	Land between Braggs Farm Lane and Dickens Heath	2	2	3	0	7	3 (Purpose 3)
RP79	Land between Cooks Lane and Chelmsley Road	0	0	0	0	0	0
RP80	Land to the north west of Hampton in Arden	3	2	3	0	8	3 (Purpose 1 and 3)
RP81	Land to the north of Back Lane	1	1	2	0	4	2 (Purpose 3)
RP82	Land between Back Lane to the north and Coventry Road to the south	3	1	3	0	7	3 (Purpose 1 and 3)
RP83	Land to the east of Benton Green Lane	1	2	2	0	5	2 (Purpose 2 and 3)

Refined Parcel	Description	Purpose Scores					Highest Score
		1	2	3	4	Total	
RP84	Land between B4101 Tanners Lane to the north and Duggins Lane to the south	1	2	2	0	5	2 (Purpose 2 and 3)
RP85	Land between Duggins Lane to the north and railway line to the south	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP86	Land to the east of Nailcote Lane, south of railway line	2	2	2	0	6	2 (Purpose 1, 2 and 3)
RP87	Land between M42 and Blythe Valley Business Park	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP88	Land to the west of Blyth Valley Business Park, east of Cheswick Green	2	3	2	0	7	3 (Purpose 2)
RP89	Land at Shirley Golf Course	2	3	2	0	7	3 (Purpose 2)

# Appendix | A

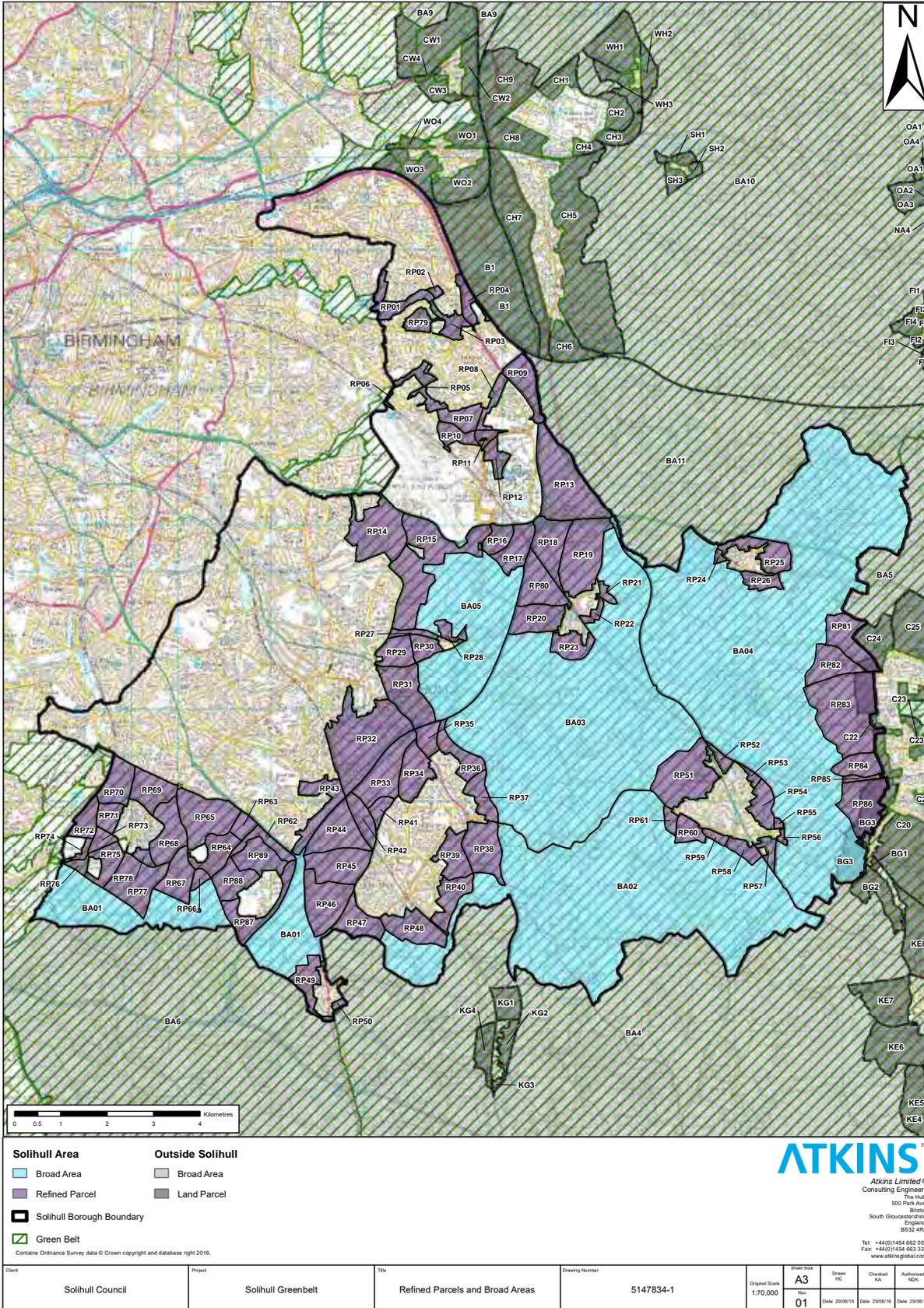
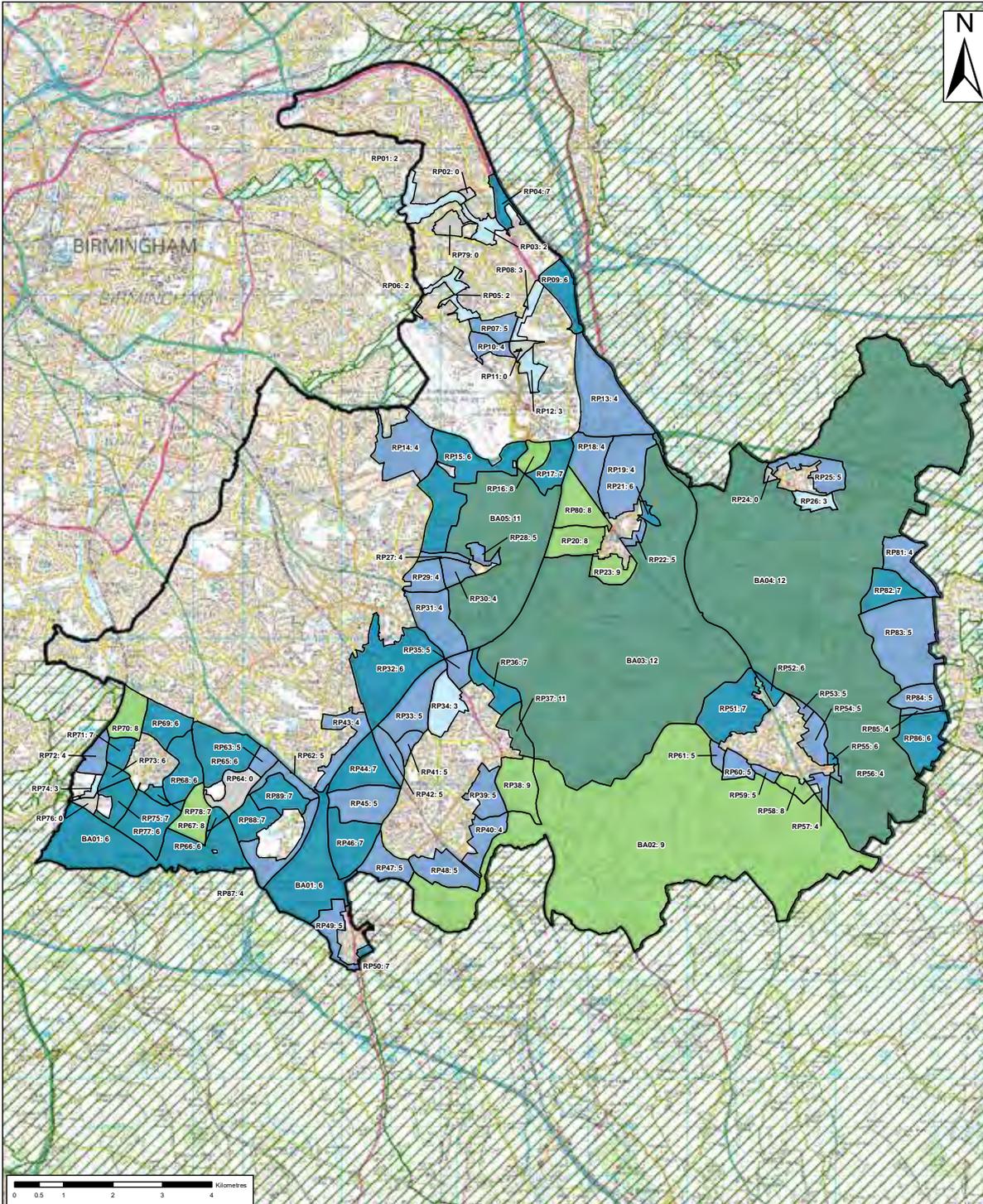


Figure 1

# Appendix | F



**Combined Score**  Solihull Borough Boundary  
 0  Green Belt  
 1 - 3  
 4 - 5  
 6 - 7  
 8 - 9  
 10 - 12

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2016

**ATKINS**

Atkins Limited ©  
 Consulting Engineers  
 The Hub,  
 500 Park Ave,  
 Bristol,  
 South Gloucestershire,  
 England,  
 BS32 4JZ  
 Tel: +44(0)1454 662 000  
 Fax: +44(0)1454 663 333  
 www.atkinsglobal.com

Client Solihull Council	Project Solihull Greenbelt	Title Refined Parcels and Broad Areas Combined Score	Drawing Number 5147834-2	Sheet Size A3 Original Scale 1:70,000	Drawn HC Rev 01	Checked JA Date 06/05/16	Authorised SJK Date 06/05/16
----------------------------	-------------------------------	---	-----------------------------	--	--------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Path: \\satakins.com\project\GBEM\WGE\Projects\Cities\20160155 Solihull Green Belt Study\7 WIPE\UD40\GIS\GIS\WP5147834-2\_SolihullParcels\_OverallScore.mxd

**Purpose 1: 'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'**

<b>Refined Parcel ID</b>	Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel? Is other development detached from the existing large built up areas? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or is within the urban area with no clear boundary ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel boundary is clearly identifiable/durable and there is no development present ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> )	<b>Score</b>	
	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>	
RP01	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP01 forms part of Babbs Mill Park (Local Nature Reserve) which also contains Babbs Mill Lake. By virtue of its designation as a LNR the parcel is undeveloped. The boundary is weak and not easily identifiable. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	2
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or it within the urban area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP02 boundary is not easily identifiable and contains the Pavilion Sports Club and allotments. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	0
RP03	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP03 boundary is weak at it's border with properties on Conway Road and Forth Drive. By virtue of its designation as Meriden Park and the presence of the River Cole the parcel is undeveloped. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	2
RP04	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP04 boundary is clear and robust (M6 motorway to the east, A452 Chester Road to the west and B4114 Birmingham Road to the north) and there is no development present	3
RP05	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP05 boundary is clear to the north at Moorend Avenue and to the south at Colehill Road but is less clear at its boundary with Sycamore Crescent, Wagstaff Way and Wavers Marston. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	2
RP06	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP06 northern boundary is weak but is more clear and robust at Alcott Wood	2
RP07	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP07 northern boundary is weak adjoining the rear of residential properties. Other boundaries are clear and more robust including Coleshill Heath Road and Bickenhill Road to the east and south.	2
RP08	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP08 boundary to the east is weak bordering Birmingham Business Park but is stronger at its boundary with Coleshill Heath Road. There is no development present within the Refined Parcel.	2
RP09	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP09 boundary is clearly identifiable and robust. The parcel is bounded by the M42 motorway to the east, the A452 Chester Road to the west and Coleshill Heath Road to the north. No development is present within the parcel.	3
RP10	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP10 boundaries are weak including where it adjoins Birmingham International Park and properties on Somerton Drive and Farndon Avenue. A small number of residential properties are also present within the Refined Parcel along Bickenhill Road.	1
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or it within the urban area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP11 is already developed and contains a large number of residential properties along Blackfirs Lane and Bickenhill Lane which are detached from the surrounding built-up areas.	0
RP12	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP12 boundaries are clear and durable by virtue of its woodland character.	3
RP13	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP13 boundaries are clearly identifiable as the A45 to the south, M42 to the west and A452 Chester Road to the east. The boundaries are robust and durable. However, there are some residential properties which are detached from the urban area.	1
RP14	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP14 boundaries are clear to the north at the A45 dual carriageway and to the east at Damson Parkway. Woodland forms the boundary in the north west corner and southern edge at Land Rover. However, the boundaries at the north west peninsula of the parcel are not clearly identifiable and are not robust with residential gardens forming the boundary. Development associated with Land Rover has also encroached.	1
RP15	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP15 boundaries are clearly identifiable as A45 Coventry Road to the north, Damson Parkway to the west and the Grand Union Canal to the south. The eastern edge of the parcel adjoins Broad Area BA05. No development is present within the parcel.	3
RP16	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP16 northern boundary is clearly identifiable as A45 Coventry Road to the north and is therefore durable. This parcel performs a role in preventing the sprawl of Birmingham International Airport from the north of the A45.	3

RP78	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	The boundaries of Refined Parcel RP78 are weak and not easily identified. The northern boundary is formed by gardens at the rear of residential properties and turning circles at the end of cul-de-sacs. Braggs Farm lane forms the southern boundary.	2
RP79	0 - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or is within the urban area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP79 is entirely contained by the urban area. In addition the parcel is already partially developed and contains CTC Kingshurst Academy and John Henry Newman Catholic College alongside North Solihull Sports Centre.	0
RP80	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	The boundaries of Refined Parcel RP80 are clear and robust - the railway line forms the northern boundary and the western boundary is formed by the M42 motorway. The parcel is also undeveloped.	3
RP81	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	The boundaries of Refined Parcel RP81 are relatively weak and are formed of established field patterns and hedgerows. Some limited residential development is also already present which is detached from the main built-up area.	1
RP82	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	The boundaries of Refined Parcel RP82 are relatively clear and are formed by Back Lane to the north and Coventry Road to the south. Field boundaries form the less durable western boundary, whilst the junction of Back Lane and Broad Lane forms the eastern point. No development is present.	3
RP83	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	The boundaries of Refined Parcel RP83 are relatively clear to the north west and south. The eastern boundary is less clear and is formed by residential properties within the Tile Hill area of Coventry. There is ribbon development present along Benton Green Lane which is detached from the main urban area.	1
RP84	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	The boundaries of Refined Parcel RP84 are clearly identifiable to the north and south where they are formed by the B4101 Tanners Lane and Duggins Lane. The less durable eastern boundary is formed by established field patterns where the authority boundaries of Coventry and Solihull meet. There is some limited residential development present within the parcel.	1
RP85	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Although its southern boundary is clearly identifiable and durable Refined Parcel RP85 is largely developed containing ribbon development alongside residential development at Lant Close.	1
RP86	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP86 boundaries are relatively clear and durable are formed by the railway line to the north, Nailcote Lane to the west and Hodgett's Lane to the south. The eastern boundary is less clear and is within the authority area of Coventry.	2
RP87	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP87 boundary to the east is formed by the M42 providing a clear and durable boundary. However it's northern and western boundaries are weaker being formed by established field patterns and smaller access roads. Development is also present at Kineton Lane which is detached from the main urban area.	1
RP88	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP88 boundaries to the south, east and north are fairly weak and are formed by established hedgerows and field patterns. The western boundary is more durable being formed by Creynolds Lane. No development is present.	2
RP89	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP89 boundaries are less durable being formed by hedgerows at the perimeter of the golf course.	2

**Purpose 2: 'to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another'**

Refined Parcel ID	Does the Refined Parcel represent a 'gap' between urban areas? Is the Refined Parcel within an existing urban area? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an existing urban area ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> )	Score	
	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>	
RP01	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP01 is entirely contained by the urban area and therefore does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP02 is within and is contained by the urban area to the north, east and south. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP03	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP03 is entirely contained by the urban area except at the narrow northern edge where it adjoins Refined Parcel RP01. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP04	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP04 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.5 kilometres between the main urban area of Solihull and Coleshill to the east.	2
RP05	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP05 is contained by the urban area. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP06	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP06 is contained by the urban area. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP07	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP07 represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between the northern suburbs of Solihull and the industrial areas to the south including Birmingham International Airport.	2
RP08	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP08 represents a gap between Birmingham Business Park to the east and the urban area of Chelmsley Wood to the west. The Parcel does not however, represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP09	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP09 forms part of Green Belt land between Solihull and Coventry to the east.	1
RP10	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP10 represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between the northern suburbs of Solihull and the industrial areas to the south including Birmingham International Airport.	2
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP11 is already developed and contains development which is detached from the urban areas - it therefore does not represent a gap.	0
RP12	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP12 is contained by urban development to the south and west, more limited development is also present to the north within Refined Parcel RP11 and to the east at land which forms part of the NEC.	0
RP13	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP13 forms part of Green Belt land between Solihull and Coventry to the east.	1
RP14	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP14 is contained on three sides by urban development (Land Rover to the south and residential areas of Elmdon to the north and west. However the parcel forms a very limited edge of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1
RP15	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP15 adjoins the built up areas of Elmdon Heath to the west and Birmingham International Airport to the north. However, the parcel forms part of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1
RP16	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP16 forms part of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1
RP17	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP17 forms part of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1

RP63	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP63 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between the Monkspath area of Solihull and Cheswick Green to the south	3
RP64	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between	Refined Parcel RP64 is formed of Cheswick Green and is developed - therefore this does not represent a gap	0
RP65	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP65 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between Shirley Heath area of Solihull and Cheswick Green	3
RP66	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP66 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.2 kilometres between Cheswick Green and Earlswood	2
RP67	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP67 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.2 kilometres between Cheswick Green and Earlswood. It also forms part of a gap between Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath.	2
RP68	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP68 forms a gap of approximately 1 kilometre between Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath	3
RP69	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP69 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between Dickens Heath and Shirley area of Solihull to the north.	3
RP70	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP70 forms a gap of approximately 1 kilometre between Major's Green and Dickens Heath	3
RP71	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP71 forms part of an approximate 1.7 kilometre gap between Dickens Heath and Trueman's Heath to the west	2
RP72	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP72 forms part of an approximate 1.7 kilometre gap between Dickens Heath and Trueman's Heath to the west and Grimes Hill to the south west.	2
RP73	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP73 forms gap of less than 1 kilometre between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath to the north.	2
RP74	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP74 forms gap of less than 1 kilometre between Tidbury Green and Grimes Hill to the west.	2
RP75	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP75 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath.	3
RP76	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between	Refined Parcel RP76 is entirely developed and therefore does not represent a gap.	0
RP77	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP77 forms a gap of approximately 1.5 kilometres between Dickens Heath and Earlswood to the south.	2
RP78	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP78 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.5 kilometres between Dickens Heath and Earlswood to the south.	2
RP79	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between	Refined Parcel RP79 is contained by the urban area and contains urbanising development. It does not therefore represent a gap.	0
RP80	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP80 forms part of an approximate 3.5 kilometre gap between Hampton in Arden and Solihull to the west.	2
RP81	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP81 forms part of the Meriden Gap separating Coventry to the east from Birmingham and Solihull to the west.	1
RP82	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP82 forms part of the Meriden Gap separating Coventry to the east from Birmingham and Solihull to the west. RP82 also forms part of an approximate 6 kilometre gap between Coventry and Hampton in Arden to the west.	1
RP83	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP83 forms part of an approximate 2.9 kilometre gap between the Tile Hill area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP84	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP84 forms part of an approximate 2.8 kilometre gap between the Tile Hill area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP85	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP85 forms part of an approximate 2.9 kilometre gap between the Tile Hill area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP86	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP86 forms part of an approximate 2.9 kilometre gap between the Burton Green area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP87	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP87 forms part of an approximate 1.6 kilometre gap between Dorridge to the east and Blythe Valley Business Park, although its role is limited due the permanent and durable M42 boundary in-between.	2

**Purpose 3: 'to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'**

<b>Refined Parcel ID</b>	Is the Refined Parcel characterised by countryside? Does Refined Parcel adjoin areas of countryside? Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> )	<b>Score</b>	
	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>	
RP01	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP01 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. This parcel contains Babbs Mill Park with Babbs Mill Lake and River Cole running through it.	0
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP02 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. This parcel contains football pitches and some development.	0
RP03	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP03 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. This parcel contains Meriden Park and River Cole running through it.	0
RP04	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP04 is adjoined by urban area and M6, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present. River Cole runs through.	2
RP05	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP05 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. It contains woodland patch and Hatchford Brook.	0
RP06	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP06 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. It contains green open space and Low Brook.	0
RP07	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP07 is partially adjoined by the urban area and has development present. It also contained football pitches and some agricultural land.	1
RP08	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP08 is entirely contained by the urban area. It contains agricultural land, trees and green spaces.	1
RP09	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP09 is adjoined by urban area and M42, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP10	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP10 is partially adjoined by the urban area and has development present. It also contains some green fields and patch of woodland.	1
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP11 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. The whole area has been developed.	0
RP12	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP12 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. There is woodland present on the parcel.	0
RP13	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP13 is adjoined by M42 and A452, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP14	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP14 is adjoined by urban to the west, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP15	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP15 is adjoined by urban development along south western border, however it is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP16	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP16 is partially adjoined by the Coventry Road and has development present.	1
RP17	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP17 is adjoined by Coventry Road and M42, however it is characterised by countryside and only limited development is present.	2
RP18	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP18 is adjoined by countryside but substantial part of the parcel has been developed.	1

RP83	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP83 is generally characterised by countryside and adjoins countryside to the north, west and south. However, RP83 contains some limited residential development and adjoins the built up area of Tile Hill to the east.	2
RP84	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP84 is generally characterised by countryside and adjoins countryside to the north, west and south. However, RP84 contains some limited residential development.	2
RP85	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP85 adjoins countryside to the north, west and south beyond the railway line. However, much of RP85 contains ribbon development alongside additional residential development at Lant Close.	1
RP86	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP86 is generally characterised by countryside and adjoins countryside to the south and west. Countryside is also present north of the railway line beyond the ribbon development present on Duggins Lane.	2
RP87	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP87 adjoins some limited areas of countryside between Blythe Valley Business Park and Cheswick Green. However, there is development present at Kineton Lane.	1
RP88	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP88 is generally characterised by countryside and adjoins countryside to the south west. More limited areas of countryside adjoin to the south east at RP87.	2
RP89	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP89 is generally characterised by countryside and adjoins limited areas of countryside to the south between Blythe Valley Business Park and Cheswick Green.	2

**Purpose 4: 'to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns'**

Refined Parcel ID	Is the Refined Parcel within or adjoining a Conservation Area within an historic town? Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the Refined Parcel? Does the Refined Parcel contribute to the setting of the historic town? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town but has no views of landmarks and/or the historic core ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and has limited views of landmarks and/or the historic core ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> ) <b>Rating:</b>	Score
	<b>Commentary:</b>	
RP01	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP03	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP04	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP05	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP06	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP07	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP08	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP09	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP10	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP12	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP13	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP14	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP15	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP16	3 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core	3
RP17	3 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core	3
RP18	1 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town but has no views of landmarks and/or the historic core	1
RP19	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0
RP20	3 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core	3
RP21	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town	0



# Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study

## Greater Birmingham & the Black Country

A Strategic Growth Study into the Greater Birmingham  
and Black Country Housing Market Area

February 2018

### Prepared by

GL Hearn  
280 High Holborn  
London WC1V 7EE

T +44 (0)20 7851 4900  
glhearn.com

Wood Plc  
Gables House  
Leamington Spa CV32 6JX

T +44(0)1926 439000  
woodplc.com

## 8 STRATEGIC GREEN BELT REVIEW

### Approach and Methodology

#### Background and Study Approach

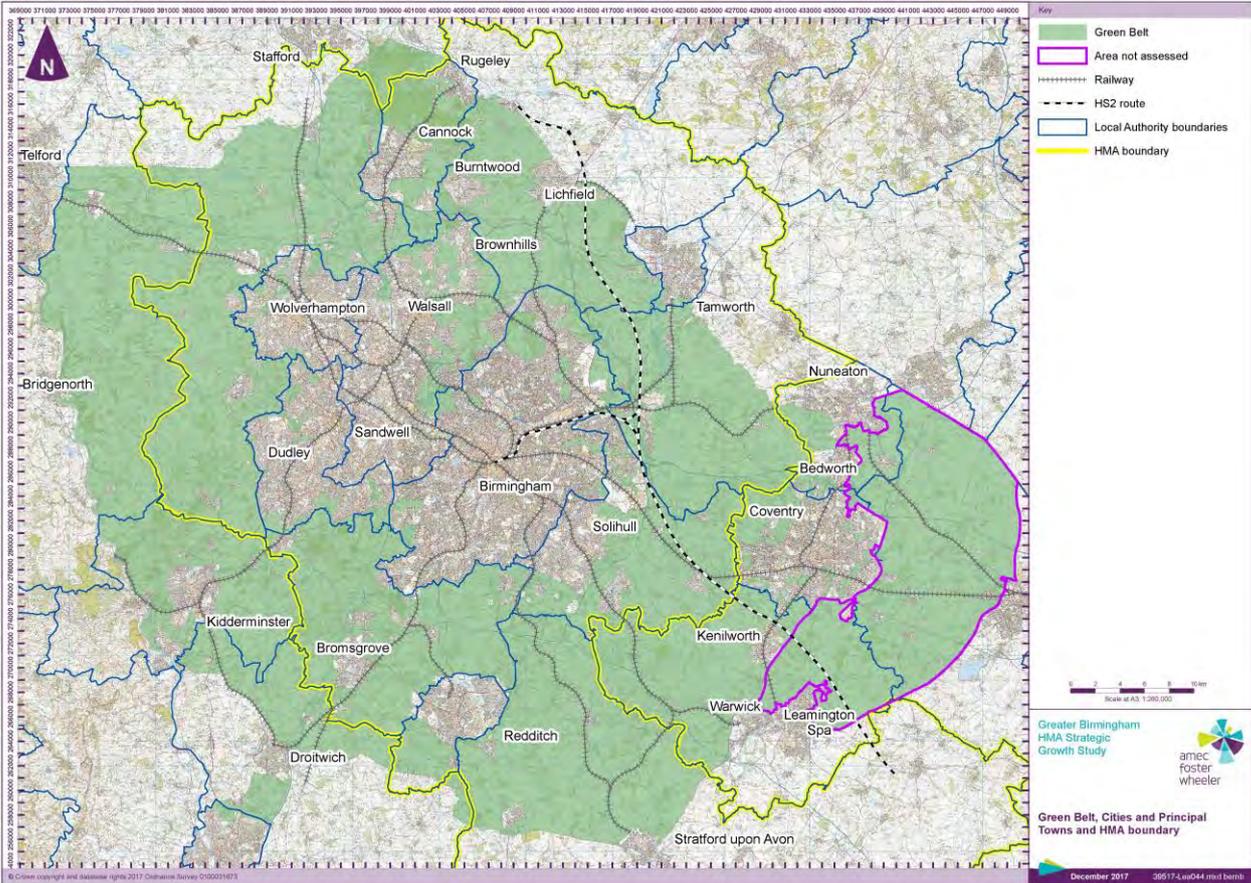
- 8.1 In the context of seeking to address the shortfall in housing need across the HMA, this section moves on to present a strategic review of the Green Belt.
- 8.2 A significant proportion of the land in the HMA Area outside the built-up areas is covered by Green Belt policy, requiring the demonstration of Exceptional Circumstances through Local Plan Review for any alterations to be made to its extent.
- 8.3 The West Midlands Green Belt was created following the publication of Circular 42/55 which invited local planning authorities to consider the establishment of Green Belts in their development plans. As in other parts of the country, the designation of Green Belt was a reaction to the urban sprawl along transport corridors along with growing car ownership increasing the accessibility of rural areas. Land had already been bought by local authorities on the edge of the major urban areas to prevent further outward sprawl, when, in the early 1960s there were proposals for a Green Belt around the Birmingham conurbation.
- 8.4 Green Belt proposals were put forward as amendments to development plans but remained formally unapproved until 1975, when the Secretary of State approved the West Midlands Green Belt, although a quarter remained 'interim' and was only introduced in later reviews of structure and local plans. The West Midlands Green Belt covers approximately 900 square miles and extends between 6 and 15 miles from the built edge of the conurbation, surrounding and abutting a number of towns and cities: Kidderminster, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Cannock, Coventry, Lichfield, Tamworth, Rugby, Stratford upon Avon, Warwick/Leamington, Bridgnorth and Telford (Figure 24). A large number of villages and suburbs of varying sizes have been excluded from the Green Belt.
- 8.5 The approach to the Study is a high-level one<sup>30</sup>, analysing the form and strategic function of the Green Belt against the purposes of Green Belt policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Para 80), namely:
- 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.

---

<sup>30</sup> See for example studies undertaken for Solihull, Stratford upon Avon, Warwick, North Warwickshire, Coventry, Tamworth, South Staffordshire, Lichfield and Cannock Chase.

8.6 The analysis is part of a wider process (see Methodology section below) to assist the HMA Authorities in determining where significant development could, in principle, be accommodated.

**Figure 24: The West Midlands Green Belt and the Greater Birmingham HMA Boundary**



**Green Belt Assessment Methodology**

**Definition of the Scale of Analysis and Green Belt Functions**

8.7 There is no prescribed methodology for the assessment of the form and function of Green Belts. However, practice has evolved which typically divides the Green Belt into parcels which are then described and their contribution to Green Belt function analysed against the purposes of Green Belt policy set out in the NPPF. In determining the fulfilment of Green Belt functions, some studies use a quantitative scoring and ranking approach, whilst others use a more qualitative approach to identify the relative contribution of Green Belt to its policy purposes. The latter is the approach followed in this study.

8.8 Using strong permanent boundaries which can be applied in a consistent fashion (Motorways/Trunk Roads, A-Roads and railways), some 120 parcels have defined across the Green Belt (Figure 25).

The alternative would be to seek strong boundaries from other physical features, but this approach invites inconsistent application and would, especially in the vicinity of urban areas, generate a large number of parcels which would make the analysis unwieldy. In addition, in the context of this study, this exercise could prompt speculation as to 'potential development parcels'. The parcels are used to help describe the character of the Green Belt, and are not used as the basis for assessing relative contribution to Green Belt purposes or used to determine development boundaries. Green Belt within the built-up area of the conurbation is labelled 'C' and has not been assessed as part of this study. This reflects their scale, complex local geography and roles as part of the Green Infrastructure of Birmingham and the Black Country (serving biodiversity and recreational functions) and the local separation of urban areas (Green Wedges).

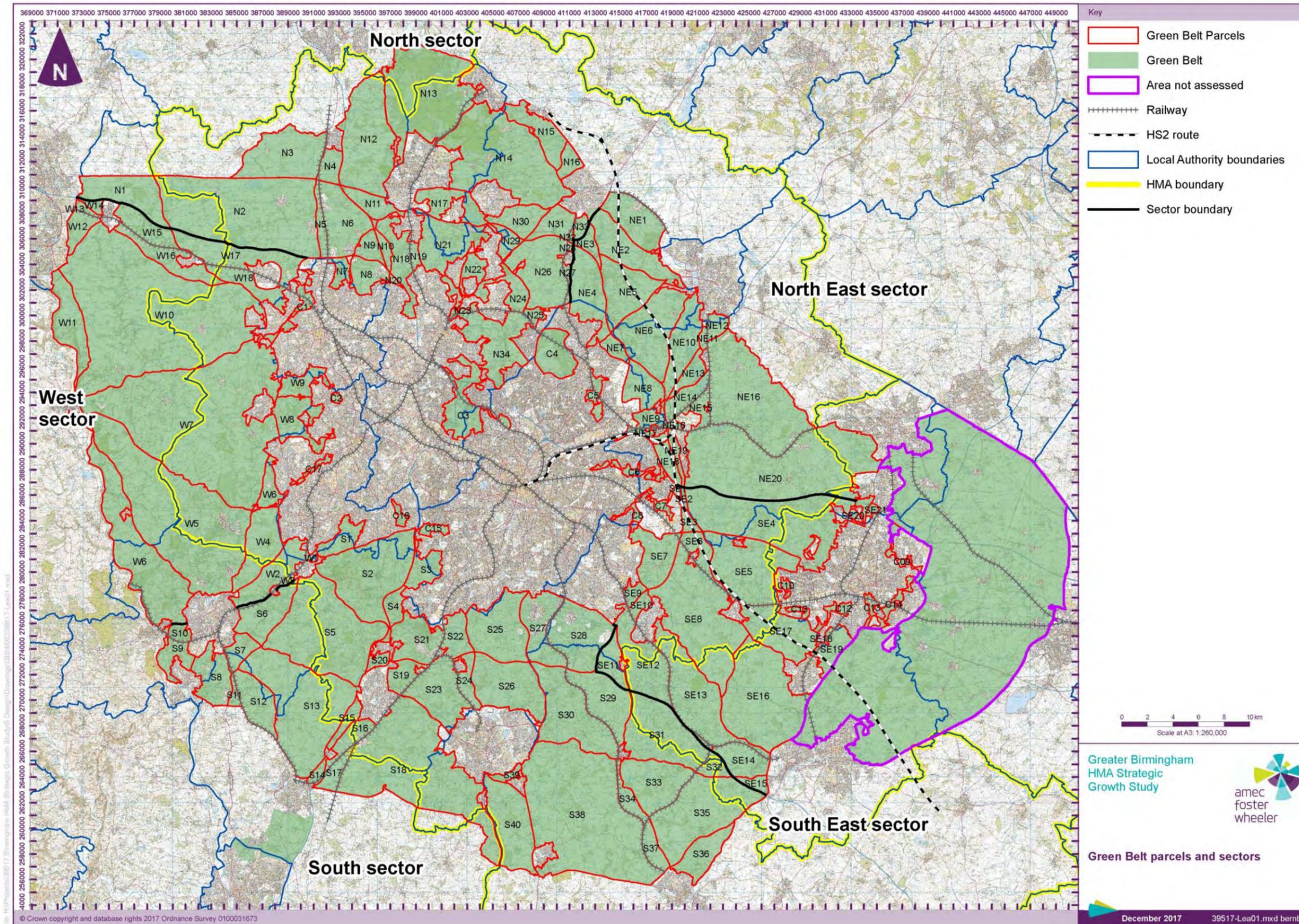
- 8.9 The administrative boundaries that define the HMA often do not coincide with the clear boundary features that have been used to define the parcels. Consequently, whilst land to the east of Coventry is excluded from the assessment, reflecting its location clearly outside the Greater Birmingham HMA, the Green Belt in other locations, whilst being outside the Greater Birmingham HMA, merits assessment because of its shared character and functional connection through transport corridors (notably: Codsall to Albrighton, Dudley/South Staffordshire/Wyre Forest; Bromsgrove to Droitwich; Birmingham to Coventry; Coventry/Bedworth/Nuneaton edges). To further aid analysis and reflect the geography of the conurbation and its rural context, five Sectors across the HMA (West, North, North East, South East, South) have been identified. These are used as the basis for the assessment of the character and function of the Green Belt.
- 8.10 A fundamental purpose of Green Belt policy is to maintain the openness (i.e. a general absence of built development) of land (NPPF para.79). It does this through providing a clear limit beyond which development should not advance (often where this has not been defined on the ground by a substantial physical feature of various kinds – roads, waterways etc); this is termed the 'containment of sprawl'. 'Sprawl' is often seen as ribbon development along transport corridors, but also in the piecemeal extension of urban areas into open countryside. Complementing the prevention of sprawl is the maintenance of the separation between built-up areas, maintaining their separate physical identity through the presence of undeveloped land of varying extents. Strategically (and against the purposes of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF), this refers to towns, but locally it can also be important in respect of settlements of varying sizes.
- 8.11 Green Belt policy is also applied to prevent the incremental erosion of open land by development which would result in an urbanised character, termed 'encroachment', and widely seen along fragmented urban edges which developed prior to Green Belt designation. In the absence of Green Belt policy this trend would continue. In addition, there are many areas adjacent to large urban areas where Green Belt policy prevents this pattern from starting, particularly in the light of their

high degree of accessibility by car, a role which can be highly localised and subtle. For the purposes of this study, such patterns have been sought to be identified at a strategic scale.

#### **Assessment of the Fulfilment of Green Belt Purposes**

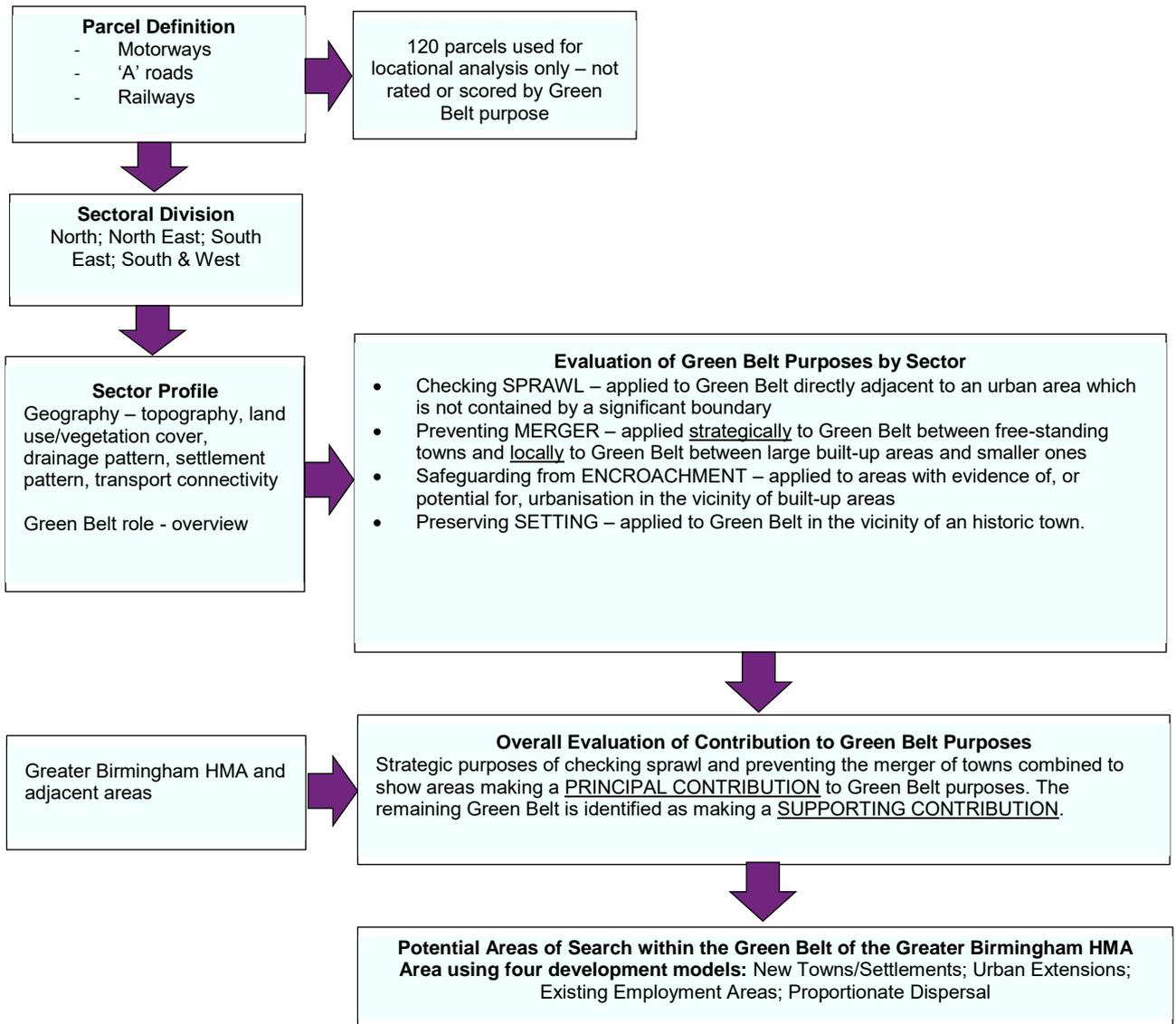
- 8.12 Professional judgement is used to identify spatially where four of the five Green Belt purposes are being fulfilled (excluding the 'assisting regeneration' purpose which is associated with the Green Belt as a whole) by inspection of Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photography. No site visits have been undertaken, reflecting the strategic nature of the study. Areas demonstrating the fulfilment of individual Green Belt purposes are mapped.

Figure 25: Green Belt Parcels and Sectors Identified for Analysis



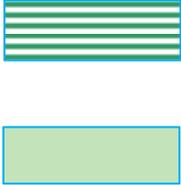
- 8.13 Whilst the assessment of the individual purposes of Green Belt policy demonstrates the various complex interrelationships between built-up areas of various scales and their wider context, determination of the strategic role of the Green Belt is required to help to identify where, in principle, development might be located without comprising that strategic role. As strategic policy tool, the West Midlands Green Belt was established to contain the pressures for sprawl of the conurbation into open countryside and maintain the separation between the conurbation and its surrounding towns (i.e. preventing the coalescence of built-up areas thereby maintaining their identity). Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and protection of the setting of historic towns are judged, for the purposes of this strategic study, to be more diffuse or localised in character. (Note: the NPPF does not make a distinction between the five purposes of Green Belt policy).
- 8.14 To assist with the judgement of where the strategic purposes of the Green Belt are being met, the mapping outputs of the individual purposes of *checking sprawl* and *preventing the merger of towns* (i.e. what can be regarded as the key functions of the West Midlands Green Belt) are combined to show areas making a **Principal Contribution**, with all other areas shown as making a **Supporting Contribution**. Areas making a Principal Contribution reflect the combination of two purposes of Preventing Sprawl and Maintaining Separation, and areas making a Supporting Contribution covering the remainder of the Green Belt which includes areas identified as specifically safeguarding the countryside from encroachment related to the edge of a built-up area, but also more generally though preventing incremental change in remoter areas, where development would damage their character. In this way, the strategic contribution of the Green Belt is discernible, in turn acting as a guide to determining where development is more likely to compromise its strategic function.
- 8.15 Figure 26 summarises the Green Belt Study method and Table 42 sets out the definitions, evaluation criteria and mapping symbols which have been used to identify where Green Belt purposes are being met.

**Figure 26: Green Belt Study Approach**



**Table 42: Definition of Terms, Assessment Criteria and Mapping Symbols**

NPPF Green Belt Purposes	Definition of Terms	Assessment Criteria and Mapping Symbols
<p><b>To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</b></p>	<p><b>Sprawl</b> – spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way (Oxford Dictionary online). This includes <b>ribbon development</b> which is development along a main road, especially one leading out of a town or village (Oxford Dictionary Online). This includes historical patterns of, or current pressures for, the spread of all forms of development along movement corridors, particularly major roads.</p>	<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b> - Green Belt prevents the extension of a built-up area into open land where development would not otherwise be restricted by the presence of a <u>permanent</u> boundary such as a road, railway or river. Whilst Green Belt policy prevents ‘leap-frogging’ of such containing features, these are taken as a clear limit of development where it would <u>in principle</u> be more challenging to argue they should be breached. It is accepted that locally there will be instances of where development from an uncontained edge could be rounded off to a more substantial feature, thereby contributing to good urban design.</p> <p><b>Symbols</b> – applied to Green Belt directly adjacent to an urban area where there is no significant boundary which clearly contains that development.</p> 
<p><b>To prevent neighbouring towns from merging</b></p>	<p><b>Merger/Coalescence</b> – the physical or visual linking of two settlements or areas of built form.</p>	<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b> - Green Belt prevents development which would result in the merger or erosion of a gap (physically or visually) between settlements.</p> <p><b>Symbols</b> – applied <b>STRATEGICALLY</b> to Green Belt lying between (free-standing) towns or the Birmingham conurbation and satellite towns, and also <b>LOCALLY</b> to Green Belt between large built-up areas and smaller ones.</p> 
<p><b>To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</b></p>	<p><b>Encroachment</b>– a gradual advance beyond usual or acceptable limits (Oxford Dictionary online).</p> <p><b>The countryside</b> – open land with an absence of built development and urbanising influences, and characterised by rural land uses including agriculture and forestry.</p> <p><b>Openness</b> – absence of built development or other urbanising elements (i.e. not openness in a landscape character sense which concerns topography and woodland / hedgerow cover).</p>	<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b> - Green Belt maintains the openness, or prevents the further erosion, of un-urbanised areas, particularly in relation to a settlement edge. The wider role of this purpose across the Green Belt as a whole is noted.</p> <p><b>Symbols</b> – applied in the vicinity of built-up areas where there is evidence of change or risk thereof, reflecting an area’s accessibility and vulnerability to incremental change.</p> 
<p><b>To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</b></p>	<p><b>Historic town</b> – settlement or place with historic features identified through conservation area or other historic designation(s). The historic towns identified for the purposes of this study are: Stratford upon Avon, Kenilworth, Lichfield, Rugeley, Penkridge, Bridgnorth and Bewdley.</p>	<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b> - Green Belt helps to preserve the setting and character of an historic town.</p> <p><b>Symbols</b> – applied to the broad vicinity of historic towns</p> 

	<p><b>Overall contribution to Green Belt purposes</b> – to determine where the Green Belt performs a strategic function. .</p>	<p><b>Symbols</b> – two-fold division of:</p> <p><b>PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTION</b> being areas meeting the purpose of checking unrestricted sprawl and/or the maintenance of strategic separation.</p> <p><b>SUPPORTING CONTRIBUTION</b> being all remaining areas.</p> 
--	--	---

### Development Models to be tested

- 8.16 The PBA Study<sup>31</sup> identified six types of development model as the basis for the spatial distribution of large-scale development. Table 43 defines the characteristics of these models which are used for testing where and how, in principle; growth might be accommodated, yielding broad areas of search which can be subjected to testing at the local level by spatial location and mix of model (Chapter 3). Other, more complex, combinations of spatial development model have been proposed<sup>32</sup>. However, for the needs of this study, using a smaller range of development types provides a more focused means of testing the principle of accommodating development in the Green Belt. The identification of areas where the development models could, in principle, be applied is not part of an exhaustive inventory of all potential locations.
- 8.17 Alongside this, councils within the HMA will need to progress work to identify small and medium-sized sites which can contribute to meeting the housing needs shortfall through the preparation of local plans. This process will include preparation of local Green Belt assessments considering the performance of sites against green belt purposes at a finer grain. Small and medium-sized development opportunities arising from this work will play an important contribution in meeting the housing needs shortfall, particularly in the short- and medium-term.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Brett Associates (2015) Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP/Black Country Local Authorities: Strategic Housing Needs Study Stage 3 Report

Note: the PBA Report used detailed intelligence from local authorities to determine, authority-by-authority, whether development of each type could be located in respect of quantity, feasibility and timing. The report notes overlap between the typologies, for example development along a public transport corridor can be an extension to an existing settlement; or if large enough when added to a small settlement, a new town might be created.

<sup>32</sup> See Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP (2013) The Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth – Consultation Draft Ten potential models were identified: 1. Urban Consolidation; 2. Enterprise Belt including the M42 Gateway; 3. New Towns / Settlements; 4. Extend Existing Major Urban Areas; 5. Dispersed Growth; 6. Corridors of Growth – Rail; 7. Corridors of Growth - M6 Toll; 8. Multi Centred Targeted Approach (small towns outlying Birmingham); 9. Dormitory Settlements; 10. Accommodating some of the GBSLEP's growth elsewhere.

**Table 43: Strategic Development Models**

Development Model	Characteristics to assist identification of possible locations
<b>Urban Intensification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within urban areas, brownfield sites (existing and windfall) and greenspaces (open space and back gardens) for developments which are likely to be of relatively high density compared to their surrounding context.</li> <li>• Of varying scale according to opportunities.</li> <li>• NOT USED IN THE GREEN BELT STUDY.</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Extensions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranging from 1,500 to 7,500 dwellings plus services and small-scale employment, added to an existing settlement/or suburban edge.</li> <li>• A degree of self-containment is aimed for, but recognising their dormitory function with use of nearby employment and service centres.</li> <li>• Planned on Garden Village principles.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Transport Corridors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rail corridors with or without an existing station.</li> <li>• Scale is likely to vary considerably according to the nature of the receiving environment.</li> <li>• USED AS PART OF THE CONSIDERATION OF URBAN EXTENTIONS/NEW SETTLEMENTS.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic employment areas with a key employer and/or clustering of employers</li> <li>• Housing of the range of urban extensions (1,500 to 7,500 dwellings).</li> <li>• Likely to be located adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, a Motorway junction.</li> <li>• NB: This model concerns existing strategic sites as a focus for additional housing development in the broad vicinity and does not consider potential for further employment provision. A detailed analysis of existing and potential strategic employment areas is presented in: Peter Brett Associates (September 2015) West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study</li> </ul>
<b>Proportionate Dispersal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller scale (500 to 2,500 dwellings) with development distributed throughout an area according to local assessments of capacity (particularly services) and available sites through the SHLAA process.</li> <li>• Likely to be part of the identification of sites through the Local Plan process (such as identified sites but not required for the current plan period).</li> <li>• Would complement small-scale allocations identified through local Green Belt Reviews.</li> </ul>
<b>New Towns/ Settlements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of a significant scale: 10,000 to 15,000 dwellings, plus services and employment.</li> <li>• Located on a public transport corridor, in practice a railway line, with or without an existing station.</li> <li>• Possibly incorporating an existing settlement, particularly where this is focused on a railway station.</li> <li>• Aspiration for self-containment, recognising that there will be some commuting to adjacent employment and service centres.</li> <li>• Planned on Garden Town/Village principles.</li> </ul>

## Assessment of Green Belt Character and Purposes

### Preface

- 8.18 Each of the five sectors (south, west, north, north east and south east) identified in Figure 25 above is described in terms of its broad geography (landscape and settlement pattern etc) and its Green Belt role, which has in turn drawn on the more detailed analysis of the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes by sector set out in Appendix B.

- 8.59 Local separation is apparent between Birmingham (Castle Bromwich/Kingshurst) and Coleshill, and between Tamworth and Kingsbury. Prevention of encroachment is concentrated on land between Sutton Coldfield and Lichfield and Tamworth and Coleshill. The course of the River Tame, its floodplain and extensive past gravel extraction plays a significant role in steering the direction of development pressure in the sector and consequently the role of the Green Belt in managing this.

## South East Sector – The M6 to the M40 including Coventry, Rugby and Leamington/Warwick (see Appendix B pp.29–33)

### **Geography**

#### ***Landscape Character, Topography, Land Use and Drainage Pattern***

- 8.60 The western and central parts of the south east sector lie within NCA 97 Arden. The sector has a complex geology that supports a varied topography. Whilst the area is dominated by rolling or gently undulating landform. The location of the Warwickshire coalfields to the west of Coventry supports a more elevated landform than the lower lying Knowle Basin located to the east of Birmingham.
- 8.61 Land use is predominantly rural farmland. Field patterns are diverse and range from small scale arable and pastoral fields to medium to large scale arable fields often associated with former estates. To the west, near the edges of the conurbation, there is a complex landscape of well-defined small fields, woods and pasture. This is a well treed landscape with frequent woodlands and tree belts, often associated with rising ground, estates and mature parkland.
- 8.62 The area has also undergone significant land use change associated with an extensive area of gravel and sand extraction associated with the Knowle Basin (near Little Packington and Meriden). Whilst mineral working continues within this area, a number of landscapes have been restored to agricultural or leisure uses such as golf courses (i.e. Stonebridge Golf Club, North Warwickshire Golf Club). There are also a number open spaces, sports/ playing field land uses located on the edge or within the vicinity of the conurbation itself i.e. Elmdon Nature Park, Hatchford Brook Golf Course, Copt Heath Golf Club and Widney Manor Golf Club.
- 8.63 The area contains a number of meandering river valleys. The River Blythe and the River Avon are the main watercourses in the area. The River Blythe is located centrally and runs between Solihull and Coleshill. The River Avon runs between Leamington Spa and Rugby within the eastern part of the area. There are a number of small rivers and streams. The sector contains sections of both the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal and the Grand Union Canal. There a large number of water bodies or pools associated with the Knowle Basin gravel and sand extraction area.

### ***Settlement pattern***

- 8.64 The area extends south-east from Solihull towards Stratford-on-Avon, Leamington Spa, Warwick and Rugby. The main settlements are Solihull (forming the south-eastern edge of the West Midlands conurbation), Leamington Spa, Coventry and Rugby. The next tier of settlement includes the town of Kenilworth and a small number of large villages such as Dorridge/ Knowle and Balsall Common.
- 8.65 Of note is a higher density of small scale settlements and ribbon development located to the east of Solihull associated with the Dorridge/Knowle area and between the edge of the West Midlands conurbation and the M42 near Catherine-de-Barnes and Bickenhill. Higher density and less distinct settlement pattern is also characteristic of the fringes of Coventry. Of note are the heavily incised edges of the settlement, the areas of Green Belt surrounded by urban development within the town itself, and large urban development associated with Coventry Airport (to the south west). In addition, the physical distinction between the settlements of Coventry and Bedworth has been severely eroded.
- 8.66 By contrast, the settlement pattern away from the conurbation and main settlements remains relatively dispersed, typified by small nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads. Smaller settlements of Balsall Common, Hampton in Arden and Meriden remain relatively distinct and well dispersed.

### ***Transport connectivity***

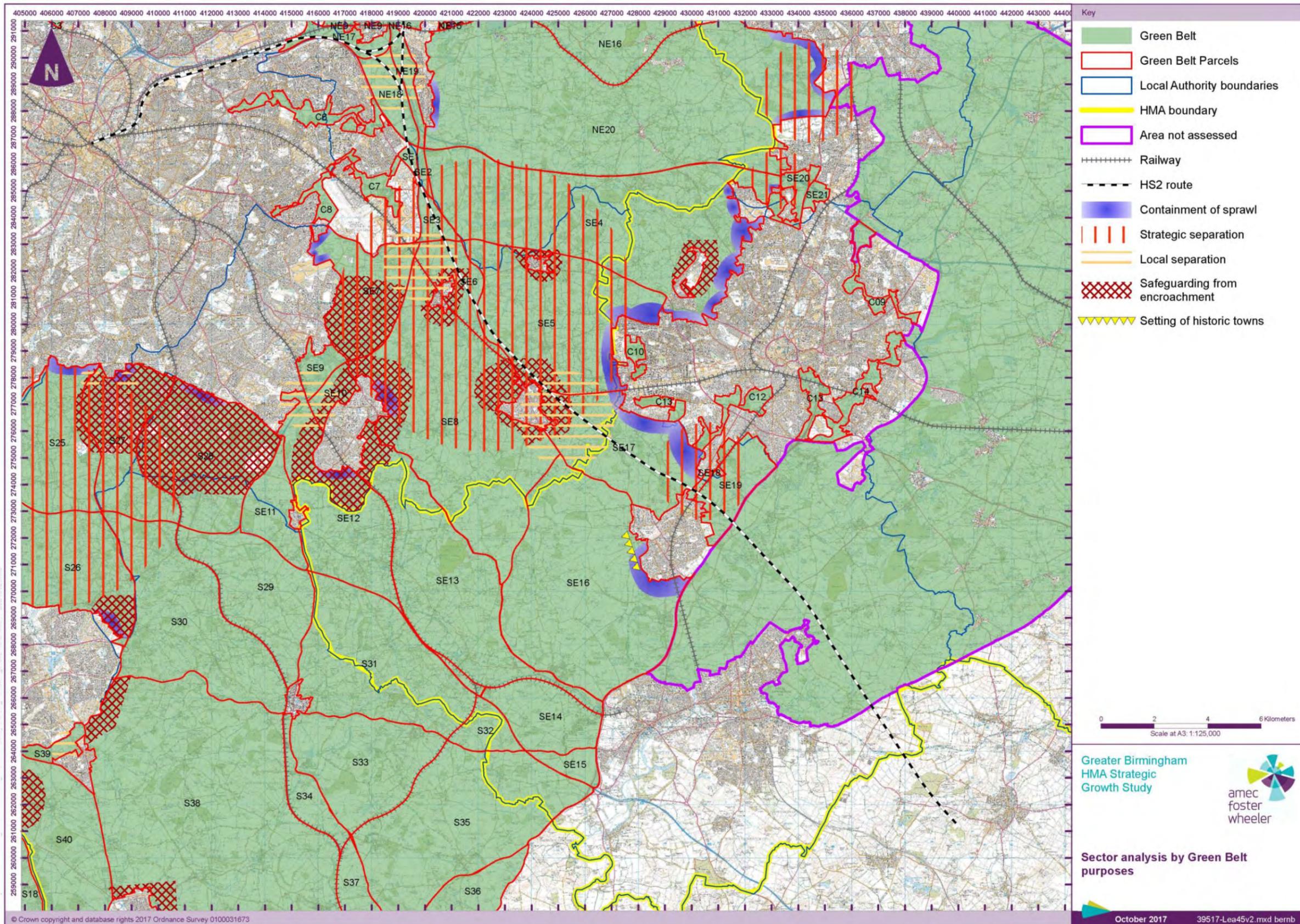
- 8.67 The M42 and M6 form major transport corridors within this sector. There are also a number of major and busy A roads serving the conurbation, including the A446, A41, A452, A45, A46, A423, etc. There are two railway lines linking the major settlements with the conurbation.
- 8.68 Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) are both located on the edge of Birmingham conurbation, off the A45 and M42. Coventry Airport is located to the south west of Coventry and is used by both private and commercial/ cargo operators.

### ***Green Belt Role***

- 8.69 The role of the Green Belt between Birmingham and Coventry is dominated by the strategic separation of the two urban areas, complemented by the containment of sprawl along the western edge of Coventry and Kenilworth in particular. The urban edge around the Birmingham conurbation appears to be better contained, but also is heavily influenced by the presence of the M42 corridor. More localised separation is apparent between Dorridge and Solihull, Birmingham (NEC/Airport) and Hampton in Arden, and between Coventry and Balsall Common.

8.70 Prevention of encroachment into open countryside, either through evidence of past change or potential for future change, is particularly apparent in the vicinity of Dorridge, Catherine-de-Barnes, Balsall Common, Hampton- in-Arden, Meriden and Allesley to the west of Coventry.

Figure 31: South East Sector – Meeting of Green Belt Purposes



## Analysis of Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

- 8.71 Figures 32-34 separate out the role of the Green Belt across the study area to illustrate the broad pattern of individual Green Belt roles identified in the Assessment. Figure 32 shows where the Green Belt serves to prevent the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; Figure 33 shows where the strategic separation of towns along with more localised separation; and Figure 34 shows where encroachment into open countryside is prevented and the setting of historic towns protected.
- 8.72 Figure 35 illustrates where the four Green Belt purposes are met across the study area. This does not imply that areas of Green Belt without a specific mapping symbol applied make no contribution to Green Belt purposes, rather that this role is more diffuse and/or localised.
- 8.73 Taking this approach a stage further, Figure 36 splits the four Green Belt purposes into two categories: **Principal Contribution** (which combines the purpose of preventing sprawl and maintaining strategic separation) and **Supporting Contribution** (which is all other areas of the Green Belt not identified as making a Principal Contribution). The pattern of Principal and Supporting Contributions shown in Figure 35 reflects both the relationship between the conurbation and its satellite settlements and the vulnerability of land at the edges of large built-up areas to sprawl where the containment of development by permanent boundaries is not always strong. The relationship between Principal and Supporting Contributions is subtle but important because the division between the two is not a clear line and there will be examples of local geography where Green Belt policy has acted strongly to steer development pressures.
- 8.74 Identification of Principal and Supporting Contributions in this way does not imply a differing value between areas of Green Belt *per se*, but rather that it is possible to identify where change (i.e. development) could in principle undermine the overall strategic role of the Green Belt as a planning policy tool applied to the West Midlands conurbation.
- 8.75 As with the identification of the fulfilment of individual Green Belt purposes, the summary of Principal and Supporting Contribution is intended to be an indication of the presence of strategic function in a particular locality, and not related to precise boundaries. This would be the role of local studies which make use of detailed fieldwork to support their analysis as part of the Local Plan making process.

Figure 32: Checking the Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas

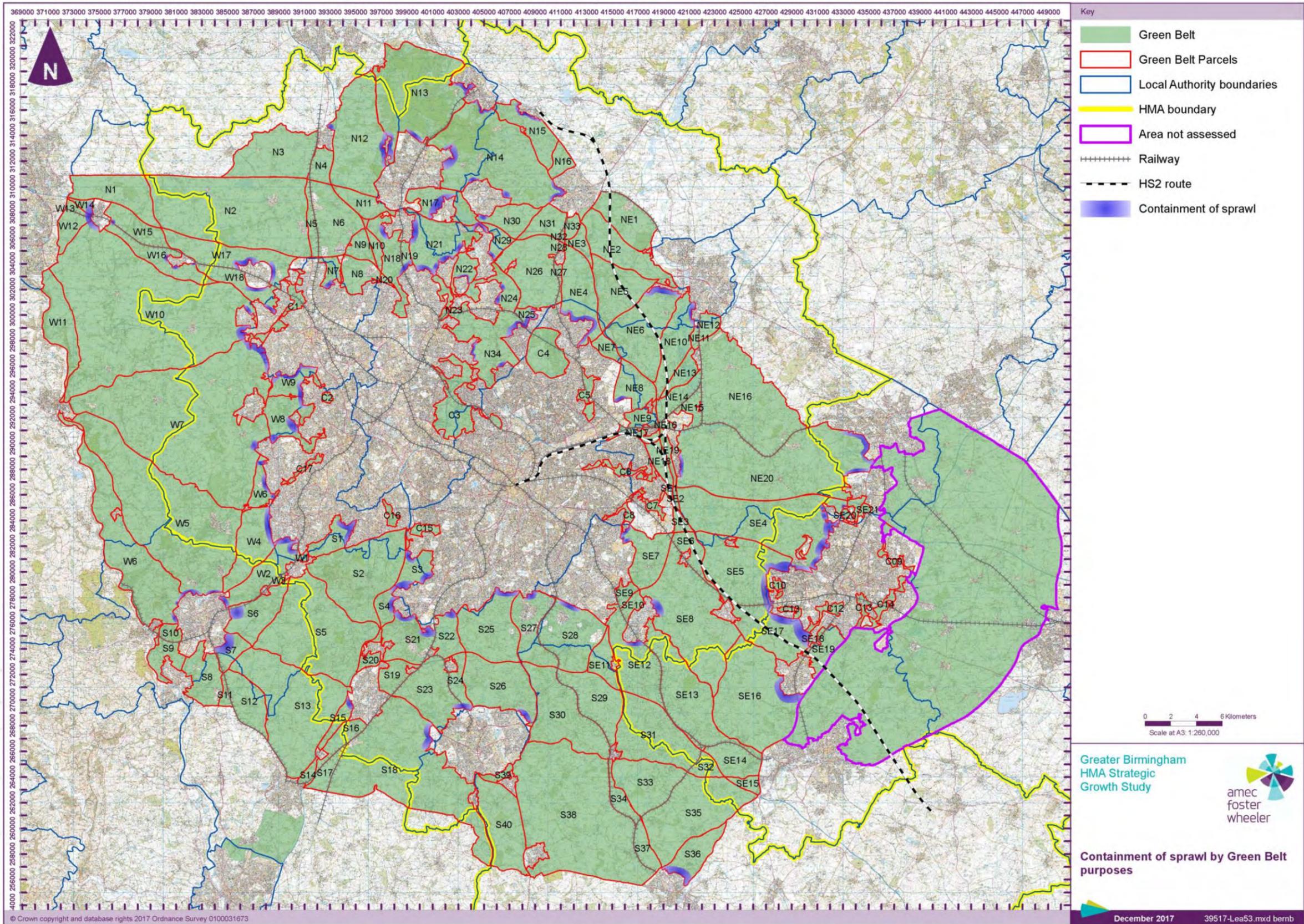


Figure 33: Preventing Towns from Merging

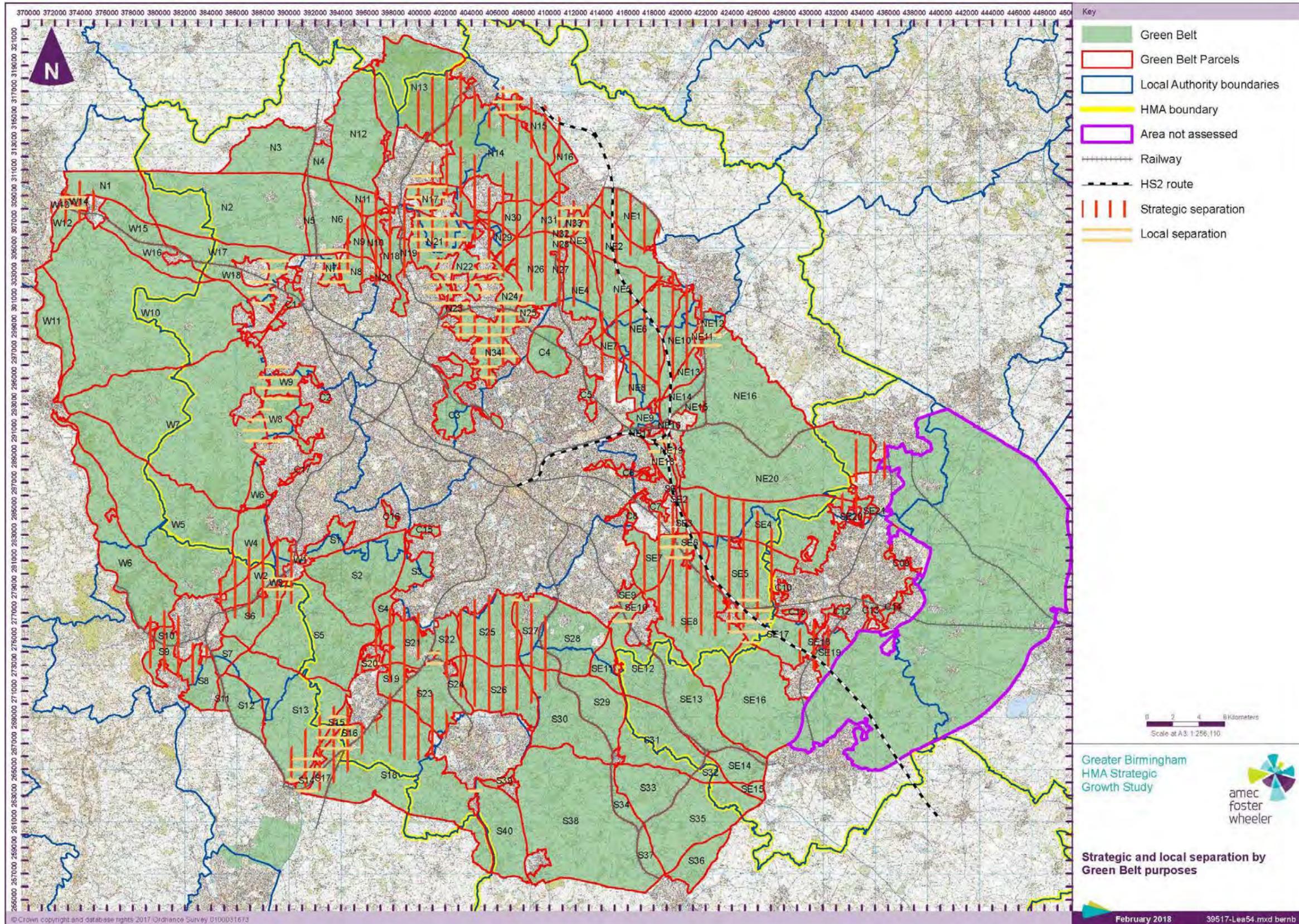


Figure 34: Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment and Protecting the Setting of Historic Towns

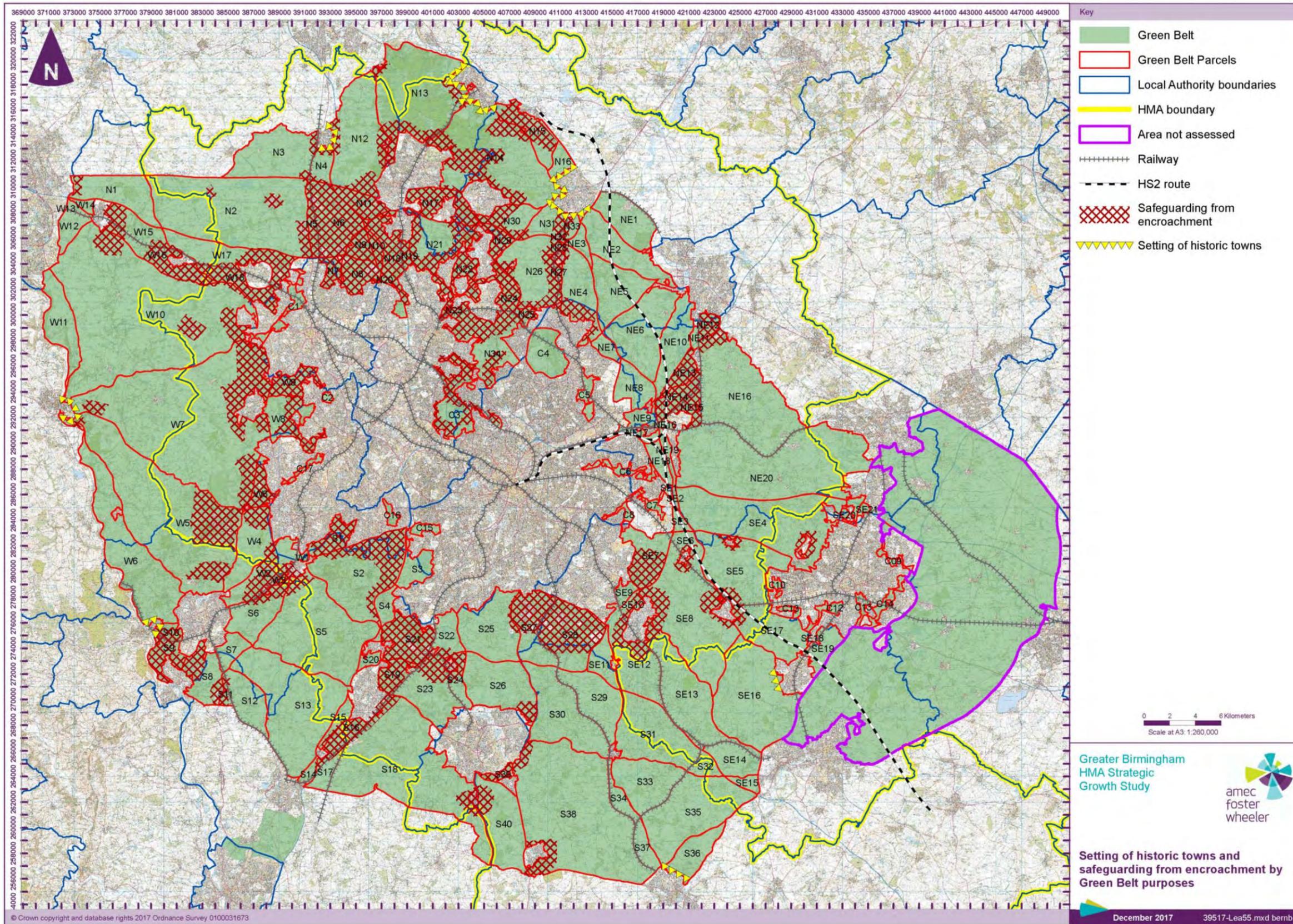


Figure 35: Contribution to Green Belt purposes (Study Area)

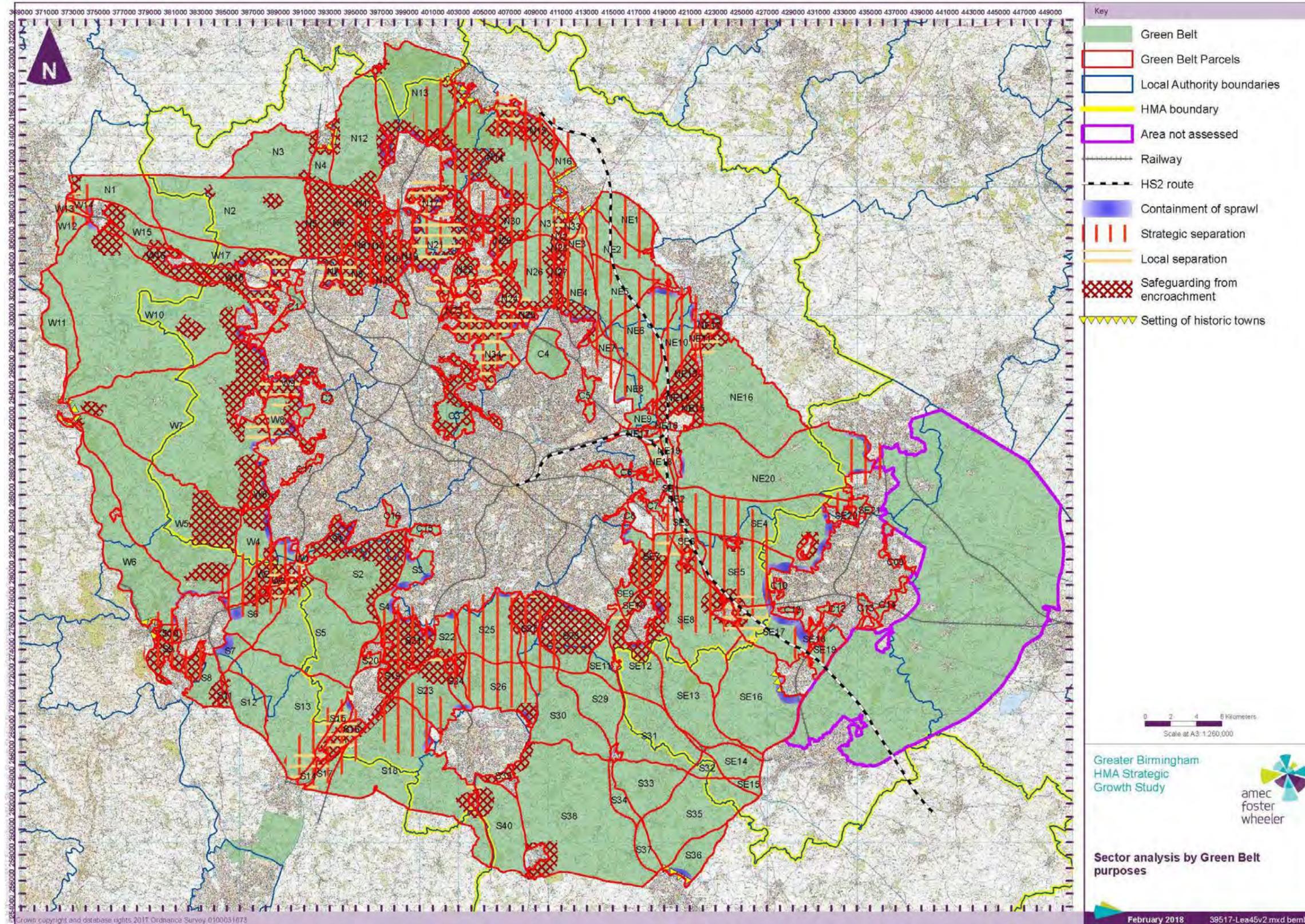
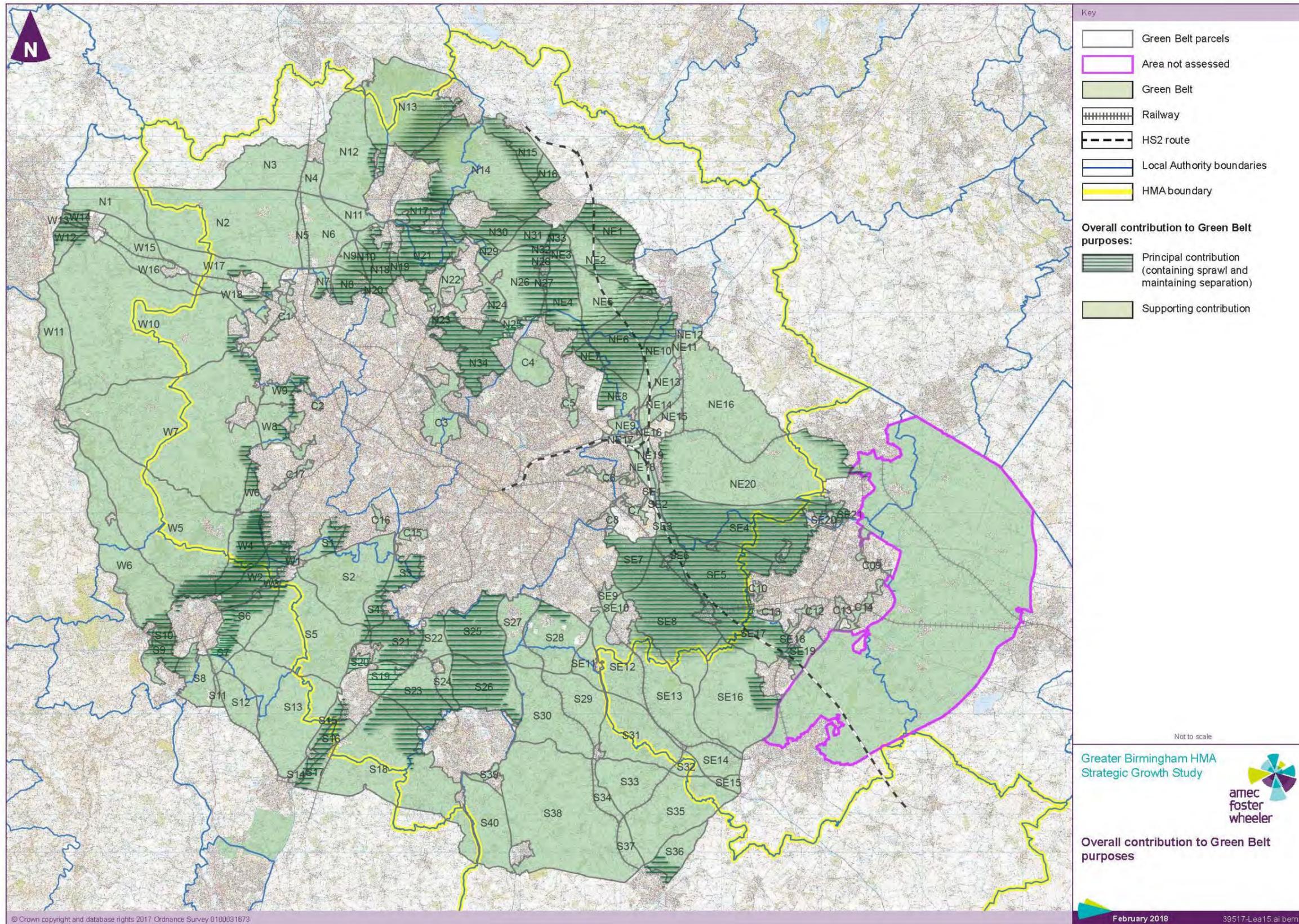


Figure 36: Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes by Principal and Supporting Contribution



## Identification of Areas of Search

### Order of Identification

- 8.76 This section moves on to consider potential areas within the Green Belt which might be suitable to receive development. It is part of a broader sequential approach to identifying areas of search as follows:
- The use of previously developed sites and buildings, and other suitable urban areas not protected for amenity or other purposes.
  - Sites outside the Green Belt.
  - Sites adjoining urban areas which are, or can be, well served by public transport.
  - Sites in locations not adjoining urban areas which are, or can be, well served by public transport, which in practice are rail corridors.

### Consideration of Green Belt Locations

- 8.77 The West Midlands Green Belt fulfils both strategic and more localised purposes. Strategically the Green Belt contains pressures for sprawl of the conurbation into surrounding countryside and maintains the separation between the conurbation and surrounding towns. More diffusely and often locally, the Green Belt contributes to protecting the countryside from encroachment and the separation of individual settlements from adjacent urban areas. This twofold division is recognised in the analysis of Green Belt judged to be making a Principal Contribution to Green Belt purposes (i.e. sprawl and strategic separation) and that judged to be making a Supporting Contribution (i.e. encroachment, local separation and the setting of historic towns).
- 8.78 Table 44 sets out the criteria for identifying Areas of Search using the six PBA development models. Whilst the avoidance of areas making a Principal Contribution to Green Belt purposes is a starting point, there are clear exceptions which can be reasonably applied. Notably these relate to the presence of a railway line or a key employment area, but also areas which because of the nature of existing development, local geography and locational guidance identified in the NPPF, can still be considered as potential Areas of Search. Their early exclusion could mean a significant missed opportunity for achieving a balanced planning outcome across the study area. As part of taking forward any of the proposed Areas of Search, additional detailed scrutiny of both the strategic and local effects on the role of the Green Belt would be required, as well as the application of sustainable development and landscape considerations.
- 8.79 This approach accords with guidance in the NPPF (para. 84) which states that: *“when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt*

boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt, or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.” The approach is also supported by the NPPF (para. 17) which notes that planning should: “actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable.”

8.80 Areas outside the HMA but covered by Green Belt have not been considered for Areas of Search. There could be areas adjacent to the HMA which would meet the locational criteria set out in Table 44 and thereby join the areas identified in this report for further consideration.

**Table 44: Strategic Development Models and their Application to Green Belt Areas**

Development Model	Application to Green Belt Areas
<b>Urban Intensification</b>	Not applied to the Green Belt within urban areas, given their size, complex local geography and roles as part of the Green Infrastructure of Birmingham and the Black Country (having biodiversity and recreational functions) and the local separation of urban areas (Green Wedges). In addition, some urban areas have significant local ground constraints such as contamination and/or subsidence.
<b>Urban Extensions</b>	Considered in areas adjacent to a contiguous urban area, with the presence of key infrastructure such as a main road (which could be the focus for public transport). In some cases this coincides with areas identified as making a Principal Contribution to Green Belt purposes. Whilst locations adjacent to existing urban areas are more likely to be served by public transport, it is accepted that significant local constraints could exist in respect of infrastructure capacity and land assembly.
<b>Public Transport Corridors</b>	Not considered as development areas in their own right, but as part of the location of New Towns/Settlements and Urban Extensions.
<b>Employment-Led Strategic Development</b>	Considered in localities with a current strategically significant employment focus (namely Solihull/NEC/Birmingham Airport, i54 (South Staffordshire) and Coleshill/Minworth). In some cases this coincides with areas identified as making a Principal Contribution to Green Belt purposes.
<b>Proportionate Dispersal</b>	Used as a complement to existing proposals and/or potential larger development where because of the character of the Green Belt and urban edge, larger development models are unlikely to be appropriate (for example areas poorly served by transport infrastructure). Whilst the Green Belt along many edges of large built-up areas has been identified as making a Principal Contribution to the strategic role of the Green Belt because of its role in containing sprawl, development would not necessarily compromise its wider strategic function.
<b>New Settlements</b>	Applied to rail corridors where there is sufficient land such that development would not result in the physical coalescence between the new settlement and an existing town. In some cases this coincides with areas identified as making a Principal Contribution to Green Belt purposes.

### **Areas of Search**

- 8.81 Applying the parameters set out in Table 43, Figure 37 illustrates a preliminary set of potential areas of search which have been identified for more detailed scrutiny. These areas of search are indicative and have been identified using both the analysis of Green Belt contribution (Figures 20 – 24 and Appendix B) and the inspection of constraints mapping, OS mapping and aerial photography. Paragraphs 8.82 – 8.108 detail each proposed Area of Search by development model. Where specific Areas of Search are to be further scrutinised, local Green Belt reviews (existing and proposed) will help to further refine the selection process<sup>33</sup>.
- 8.82 The output from this particular analysis is a range of areas of search and development types which, in combination with areas of search outside the Green Belt, can be used to help test scenarios for accommodating the overspill requirement. Various combinations of development types, sizes of development and areas of search could be identified in light of this analysis. Should Green Belt locations be identified as part of the scenario-testing process, then detailed scrutiny against local Green Belt Reviews would be required, as well as a separate exercise on the likely cumulative impact on the Green Belt.
- 8.83 As part of this exercise, no significant areas of previously developed land in the Green Belt were identified. Should any such sites come to light, these would present a clear opportunity for development, either in their own right or as the focus for a larger development.
- 8.84 Alongside this Study, more local Green Belt Assessments considering the performance against Green Belt purposes at a finer grain may identify small and medium-sized development sites.

---

<sup>33</sup> See for example studies undertaken for Solihull, Stratford upon Avon, Warwick, North Warwickshire, Coventry, Tamworth, South Staffordshire, Lichfield and Cannock Chase.

Figure 37: Potential Areas of Search by Development Model

