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Assessment of the Value of the Meaningful Gap and Potential Green Belt Alterations

Final Report
Prepared by LUC for North Warwickshire Borough Council
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1 Introduction

Introduction and purpose of the study

Meaningful Gap Assessment

- 1.1 North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) commissioned LUC to undertake an independent assessment of the land between Polesworth and Dordon and Tamworth, which is currently designated in local planning policy as a 'Meaningful Gap'. The purpose of the study was to determine whether each parcel fulfils the objectives of the Meaningful Gap designation, and whether they have the potential to serve the purposes of Green Belt, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. This study follows a wider review of the designated Green Belt in North Warwickshire¹. One of the key drivers for this study is the on-going development pressure on land in the Meaningful Gap, and NWBC's concern that the integrity of the gap between Tamworth and Polesworth and Dordon will be reduced through the cumulative impact of this urban growth.
- 1.2 As well as assessing parcels of land between Polesworth and Dordon and Tamworth (within the Meaningful Gap), the study considered an additional parcel of land to the south of the Meaningful Gap and directly adjoining the existing Green Belt, to determine whether they have the characteristics and meet the purposes of Green Belt. The parcels within the existing Meaningful Gap are shown in red in **Figure 1.1**, while the additional parcel is shown in purple. The Meaningful Gap policy is set out in **Box 1.1**, and the full results of the Meaningful Gap assessment are presented in **Chapter 3** and **Appendix 1**.

Box 1.1: Policy NW19: Polesworth and Dordon

The broad location of growth will be to the south and east of the settlements subject to there being no unacceptable environmental impacts from surface mining and that viable and practicable coal reserves are safeguarded.

Any development to the west of Polesworth & Dordon must respect the separate identities of Polesworth and Dordon and Tamworth and maintain a Meaningful Gap between them.

Broad Areas Assessment

- 1.3 In addition to the Meaningful Gap Assessment, a descriptive assessment was made of the broad areas of land between Wood End and Atherstone, and as far as Ansley in the south, to consider whether this area could also demonstrate Green Belt characteristics and purposes. These areas are indicated with blue hatching in **Figure 1.1**. The results of the Broad Areas assessment are presented in **Chapter 4** and **Appendix 2**.

Review of existing Green Belt boundaries

- 1.4 Additionally, a review of the existing Green Belt in the district was undertaken to check and amend any boundary anomalies and identify whether there are areas that should be included or excluded from the Green Belt. Anomalies may arise from urbanising development being located within the Green Belt (which is likely to warrant exclusion from the Green Belt), or incorrect drawing of the boundaries. The methodology for this part of the study is explained in paragraphs

¹Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Green Belt Study (April 2016). LUC. Accessible at: https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6176/coventry_and_warwickshire_joint_green_belt_study_stage_2_final_report.pdf

5.2 - 5.4 and the results of this review are presented in **Chapter 5** and **Appendix 3**. This part of the study was focused around the following five settlements:

- Piccadilly
- Wood End
- Kingsbury
- Shustoke
- Fillongley

Report structure

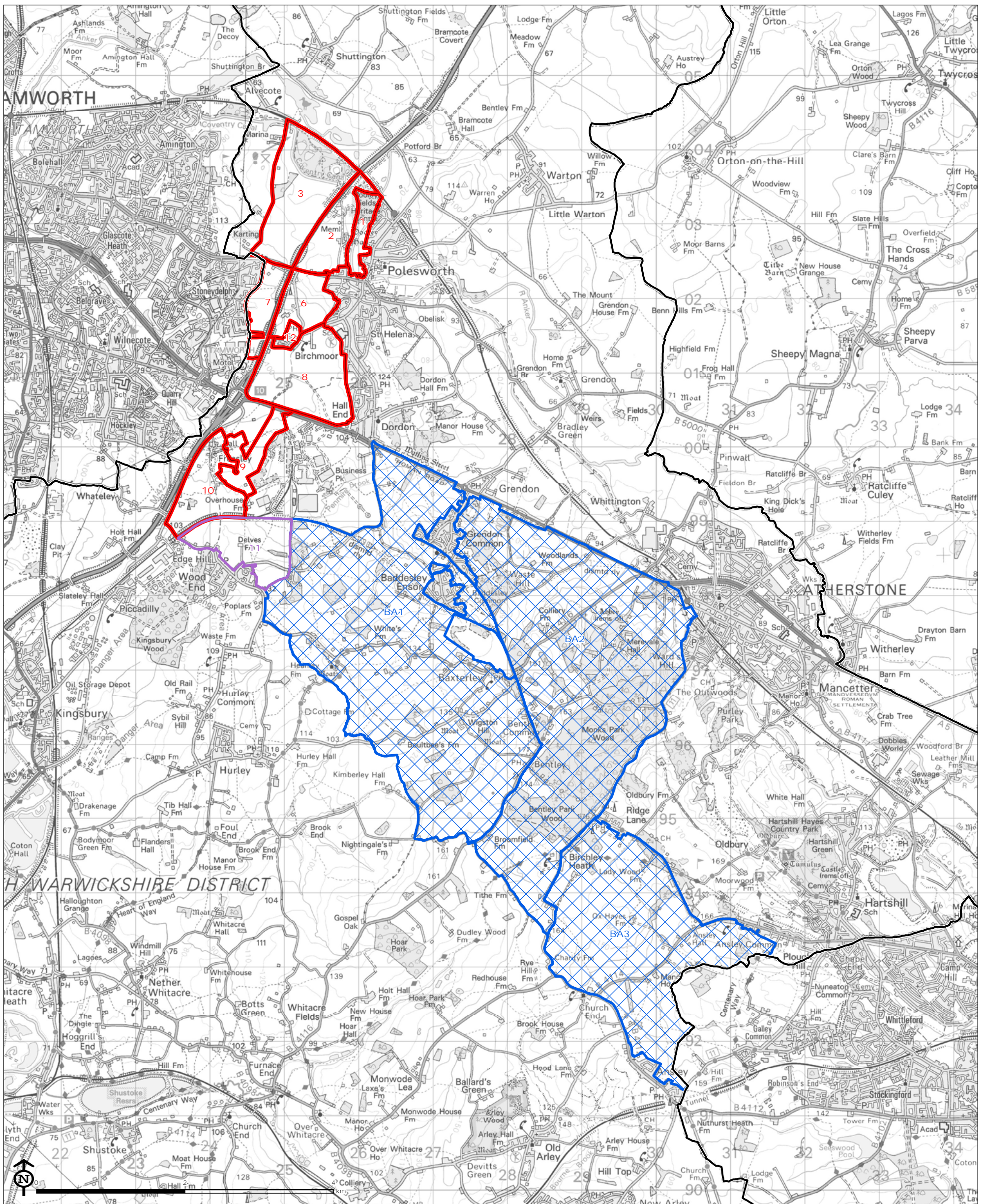
1.5 This report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** - Description of the overall context for the assessments
- **Chapter 3** – Methodology and findings of the Meaningful Gap Assessment
- **Chapter 4** – Methodology and findings of the Broad Areas Assessment
- **Chapter 5** – Existing Green Belt Boundary review
- **Chapter 6** - Overall conclusions and recommendations
- **Appendix 1** – Meaningful Gap Assessment full profiles
- **Appendix 2** – Broad Area Assessment full profiles
- **Appendix 3** – Existing Green Belt boundary review maps

Meeting the Duty to Cooperate

1.6 The Localism Act (2011) introduced a Duty to Cooperate, a legal test which must be considered by local authorities when gathering evidence on strategic cross-boundary issues to inform the preparation of their Local Plan. As stated in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), whilst the **Duty to Cooperate is not a duty to agree, the consultation** 'should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters'.

1.7 Some parcels of land considered by this study align with the boundary of Tamworth Borough Council, therefore consultation with this neighbouring local authority has been undertaken. Tamworth Borough Council was consulted on the method to be used for the study and the findings of the study. In addition, consideration has been given to the development plan proposals in Tamworth, in terms of how they will affect the openness of the parcels of land to be reviewed within this study.

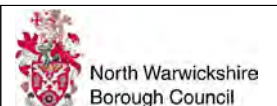


-  District boundary
-  Meaningful Gap
-  Broad area
-  Additional Parcel

North Warwickshire
Green Belt Study

Figure 1.1

Location of land parcels and
broad areas



Source: North Warwickshire Council, OS

Map Scale @ A3: 1:50,000

2 Context

The Meaningful Gap

- 2.1 In early 2015, NWBC completed a study² to assess and define a 'Meaningful Gap', designed to protect the integrity of Polesworth and Dordon and prevent coalescence with Tamworth, which lies to the west on the other side of the M42. The current extent of the Meaningful Gap is shown in **Figure 2.1**.
- 2.2 Areas designated as 'Meaningful' or 'Strategic' Gaps are concerned with preventing the coalescence of smaller settlements (villages and hamlets). In comparison, Green Belt seeks to prevent the coalescence of towns, and should serve five main purposes, as outlined in the **Box 2.1**. The NWBC report on Meaningful Gaps (August 2015) states that '*Gaps are spatial planning tools designed to shape the pattern of settlements*'. Gap policies do not have the aim of preserving the setting of historic towns or checking unrestricted sprawl in the same way that Green Belt does.
- 2.3 Gap policies tend to allow for small scale development which does not 'significantly diminish' the extent of the gap. A Green Belt designation would be stricter than this, and would not allow any inappropriate development within designated areas, as detailed in paragraphs 87-91 of the NPPF.
- 2.4 Tamworth Borough Council is resolved to allow development up to the Borough boundary, but as this will not provide sufficient new housing to achieve the requirements of their plan, they will need to consider growth beyond the Borough boundary. The issue of maintaining a gap to distinguish Polesworth and Dordon from each other, and from Tamworth is of great importance to the local community. The Meaningful Gap policy is currently defined in Policy NW19 'Polesworth and Dordon' of the Core Strategy, as set out in **Box 1.1**.

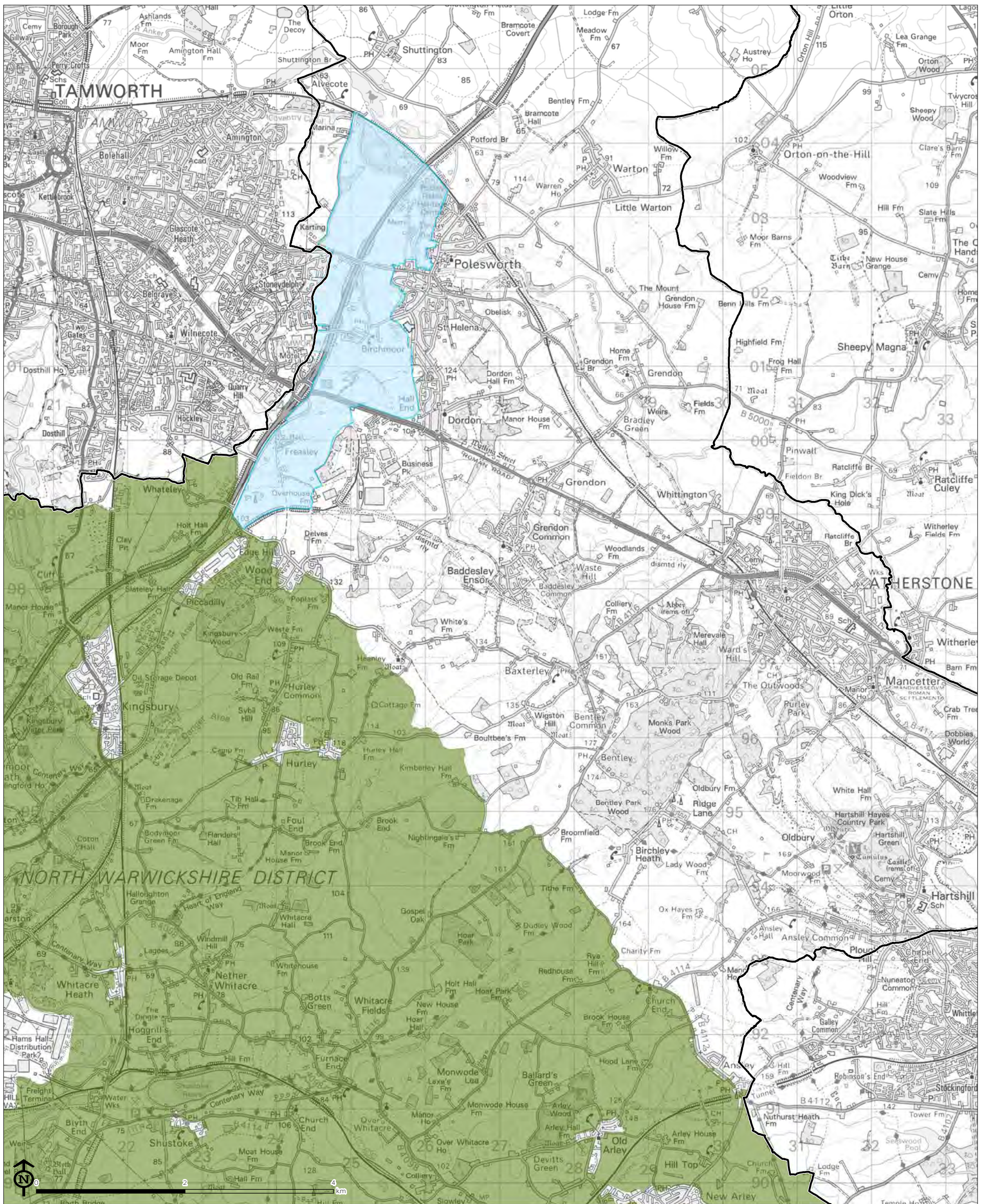
National Green Belt policy

- 2.5 The principles of the Green Belt were first defined in guidance published in 1955, although the concept was originally proposed by Ebenezer Howard in 1902. The principles have changed very little since the mid-20th Century, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) takes forward the previous national Green Belt policy set out in PPG2 (Green Belts).
- 2.6 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that 'the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence'. This is elaborated in NPPF paragraph 80, which states that Green Belts should serve five purposes, as set out in **Box 2.1**, below.

Box 2.1: Purposes of the Green Belt

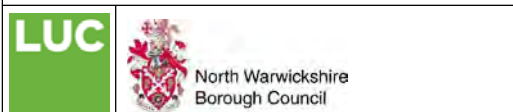
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging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

² Meaningful Gap Assessment (August 2015). North Warwickshire District Council. Accessible at: https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5681/meaningful_gap_assessment.pdf



North Warwickshire
Green Belt Study

Figure 2.1
Current extent of the Green
Belt and Meaningful Gap



Source: North Warwickshire Council, DCLG, OS

Map Scale @ A3: 1:50,000

- 2.7 The NPPF highlights in paragraph 83 that local planning authorities should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. It goes on to state that **'once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period'**.
- 2.8 **Paragraph 84 of the NPPF indicates 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'**.

Box 2.2: National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 82:

The general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established. New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions. If proposing a new Green Belt, local planning authorities should:

- **demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;**
- **set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;**
- **show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;**
- **demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with Local Plans for adjoining areas; and**
- **show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.**

- 2.9 Current guidance is clear that land should be designated as Green Belt because of its position, **rather than its landscape quality or recreational use. However, the NPPF states "local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land"** (Paragraph 81 of the NPPF).
- 2.10 These positive roles should be sought once the Green Belt is designated, and the lack of a positive role, or the poor condition of Green Belt land, does not necessarily undermine its fundamental role to prevent urban sprawl by being kept permanently open.

Approach to the review of the Meaningful Gap against Green Belt purposes and lessons from planning practice

- 2.11 Neither the NPPF nor the associated Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on how to undertake Green Belt reviews. A recent Planning Advisory Service Advice Note³ and one by the Planning Officers Society⁴ **provide useful discussion of some of the issues. LUC's approach draws on best practice across the country and our own extensive experience of undertaking Green Belt studies.**
- 2.12 LUC also keeps a close watch on relevant Examination Inspectors' reports and case law to inform and update our approach. For example, Inspectors have commented that:

³ Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, Peter Brett for Planning Advisory Service, 2015

⁴ Approach to Review of the Green Belt, Planning Officers Society.

- Green Belt studies should be *"fair, comprehensive and consistent with the Core Strategy's aim of directing development to the most sustainable locations"*. Green Belt reviews should be 'comprehensive' rather than 'selective'.⁵
- Green Belt studies should make clear *"how the assessment of 'importance to Green Belt' has been derived"* from assessments against the individual purposes of Green Belt.⁶ Such assessments against the purpose should form the basis of any justification for releasing land from the Green Belt.⁷
- In reviewing land against the purposes, Green Belt studies should consider the reasons for a Green Belt's designation as they are related to the purposes.⁸
- Green Belt studies should *"take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, as required by paragraph 85 of the NPPF [even if] such an exercise would be carried out through the SEA/SA process."*⁹
- Exceptional circumstances are required for any revision of the boundary, whether the proposal is to extend or diminish the Green Belt.¹⁰ The mere process of preparing a new local plan is not in itself to be regarded as an exceptional circumstance justifying an alternative to a Green Belt boundary.

2.13 Meanwhile, case law confirms that Green Belt alterations require 'exceptional circumstances' to be demonstrated by the local planning authority, in accordance with Paragraph 82 of the NPPF (See **Box 2.2**). Case law also confirms that decision makers should take into account the consequences for sustainable development of any review of Green Belt boundaries, including patterns of development and implications for additional travel.¹¹

West Midlands Green Belt context

- 2.14 The Green Belt within North Warwickshire is part of the larger West Midlands Green Belt. Although local authorities in the West Midlands first put forward proposals for a West Midlands Metropolitan Green Belt in 1955, it was not formally approved by the Secretary of State until 1975. Today the Green Belt covers almost 1,500 square kilometres, surrounding the Black Country, Coventry, Birmingham and Solihull. Generally, the West Midlands Green Belt has prevented the sprawl of Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry, the merging of surrounding towns and encroachment into the surrounding countryside. It has also helped to preserve the setting and special character of the main urban areas and smaller rural settlements. At a strategic level, the Green Belt, tightly drawn around settlements, has helped to encourage regeneration by directing development to brownfield sites within the major urban areas. However, some pockets at the urban fringe have been compromised and degraded by infrastructure projects such as roads and power lines, and other urban intrusions.
- 2.15 The current extent of the West Midlands Green Belt adjacent to the study area is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

North Warwickshire and Tamworth Policies

- 2.16 The North Warwickshire Core Strategy¹² (Adopted 9th October 2014) contains the following policies relating to the Green Belt and the Meaningful Gap:
- NW3: Green Belt – **"The maintenance of the Green Belt is seen as a vital component in protecting and enhancing the Borough as an area of pleasant countryside, especially by preventing the incursion of nearby urban areas."**

⁵ Inspector's report (A Thickett) to Leeds City Council (September 2014)

⁶ Inspectors' Letter (L Graham) to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils (May 2015)

⁷ Inspector's interim findings (H Stephens) to Durham City Council (November 2014)

⁸ Inspector's interim findings (H Stephens) to Durham City Council (November 2014)

⁹ Inspectors' Letter (L Graham) to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils (May 2015)

¹⁰ Hickinbottom J Gallagher Homes Ltd v Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (2014)

¹¹ *R(IM Properties) v Lichfield DC and others* [2014] EWHC 2440 (Admin) (18 July 2014) aka *IM Properties*

¹² https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/file/5892/core_strategy_adopted_2014

- NW19: Polesworth and Dordon – **“Any development to the west of Polesworth & Dordon must respect the separate identities of Polesworth and Dordon and Tamworth and maintain a Meaningful Gap between them.”**

North Warwickshire housing allocations

- 2.17 The total housing need for North Warwickshire over the plan period 2011-2031 equates to 4,240 dwellings. North Warwickshire has also agreed to accommodate 500 dwellings for Tamworth Borough Council in addition to this, totalling 4,740.
- 2.18 The two adjoining housing market areas (HMAs) of Coventry and Warwickshire and Greater Birmingham and Black Country also have a shortfall in the land supply required to deliver the relevant housing allocations. Discussions are on-going regarding the distribution of the shortfall, but the potential total figure over the plan period to 2031 could be up to 9,070 homes in North Warwickshire¹³ as shown in Table 3 of the draft Growth Options.
- 2.19 The Tamworth Local Plan¹⁴ was published in February 2016 and outlines a shortfall of 825 dwellings in Policy SS1. The affected local authorities of Tamworth, North Warwickshire and Lichfield are discussing where this unmet need is to be accommodated.
- 2.20 The Council has produced a number of documents indicating where this development could potentially be accommodated, including the draft Site Allocation Plan¹⁵ and the draft Growth Options.
- 2.21 Potential options include:
- Development in accordance with the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy as outlined in the Site Allocation Plan.
 - Development in and around the Main Settlements. This option includes Coleshill, the Green Belt Market Town.
 - Focus growth along the A5 Corridor.
 - Development around transport hubs.
 - New Settlement.
- 2.22 There are currently no site allocations for housing within the existing Meaningful Gap, although there are several within Parcel 11, on the northern edges of Wood End, just outside the Meaningful Gap. The housing site allocations for Polesworth and Dordon are located to the east and south of the settlements, outside the boundaries of the existing Meaningful Gap.

North Warwickshire Employment Land allocations

- 2.23 At the time of this report, the total local Employment Land requirement for the plan period is between 36 hectares and 100 hectares¹⁶ (depending on housing delivery scenarios which vary according to the amount of unmet need in the Birmingham HMA accommodated within North Warwickshire). Since the publication of the Core Strategy, North Warwickshire has also been requested (although a formal agreement has yet to be made) to provide employment land for neighbours Tamworth Borough Council (up to 14 hectares) and Coventry City Council (up to 29 hectares), as outlined in the Growth Options report.
- 2.24 Allocated sites adjacent to the existing Meaningful Gap include:
- Site DOR10 – Playing fields south of A5 Dordon
 - Site DOR11 – Land at Hall End Farm and North of Birch Coppice
 - Site DOR22 - Land west of Birch Coppice
 - Site DOR24 - Land east of Centurion Park Industrial Estate, Tamworth

¹³ https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6841/growth_options_paper_may_2016.pdf

¹⁴ http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/planning_docs/Local%20Plan%202006-2031%20FINAL%205.2.16.pdf

¹⁵ https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/file/5852/draft_pre-submission_site_allocations_consultation_document

¹⁶ An addendum to the Employment Land Review of North Warwickshire (2017). Accessible at: https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6839/employment_land_update_september_2017.pdf

Tamworth housing/employment allocations and locations

- 2.25 Tamworth has a shortfall of land available to provide both the housing and employment requirements over their plan period, and is collaborating with North Warwickshire Borough Council to help accommodate some of their need. There is likely to be continuing pressure on the Meaningful Gap due to this shortfall.
- 2.26 The former Tamworth Municipal Golf Course (to the west of the Meaningful Gap) is to be developed with 1,100 homes planned. This will also result in a narrowing of the distance between Tamworth and Polesworth, increasing the importance of the Meaningful Gap.
- 2.27 There is a Strategic Employment Area located to the west of the Meaningful Gap at Centurion Park. The M42 provides a permanent barrier between the Meaningful Gap area and this employment site.

3 Meaningful Gap Assessment

- 3.1 This chapter presents the methodology and results for the assessment of land within the Meaningful Gap against both the purposes of the existing Meaningful Gap policy and the five Green Belt purposes outlined in the NPPF.

Method

Define review parcels

- 3.2 The parcels of land assessed for the purposes of this study (See **Figure 1.1**) fall into the following categories:
- Parcels 1-10 were defined through the previous Meaningful Gap Assessment (2015). These were slightly amended to omit gaps between the parcels from the original study for the purposes of the Green Belt Assessment. Parcels 4 and 5 and the part of parcel 10 to the west of the M42 from the original study were not included in this evaluation, as the original Meaningful Gap Assessment did not designate these areas as Meaningful Gap. It should be noted that during this project, a planning appeal for outline planning permission of land for business/employment use (approx. 25.4 hectares in size) was approved¹⁷. The site of the appeal application is located in Parcel 9, and the boundaries of the parcel have been updated to exclude this area.
 - New parcels defined for the purposes of this study. Parcel 11 was defined following discussions with North Warwickshire Borough Council, due to its location between the existing Green Belt and Meaningful Gap areas, as it creates a continuous strip of land for consideration as a potential new area of Green Belt. Parcel 12 was defined for completeness as the settlement of Birchmoor was not included in any of the parcels in the original study, and the dense nature of the development has implications for the application of the Green Belt purposes to this area.
- 3.3 The key considerations when defining the additional parcels (and the broad areas, see paragraph 4.3) for the purpose of this study are as follows:
- The consistent nature of the parcel to enable the assessment to conclude on the potential of the whole parcel to meet the Green Belt purposes;
 - The definition of clear, robust boundaries to ensure that if designated as Green Belt, the boundary would be defensible.
- 3.4 The following physical features are considered defensible and relatively permanent and therefore potentially suitable for delineating Green Belt boundaries:
- Significant natural features – for example, substantial watercourses and water bodies;
 - Significant man-made features – for example, motorways, A and B roads and railway lines, and established infrastructure and utilities such as sewage treatment works.

Develop criteria

Meaningful Gap criteria

- 3.5 For the Meaningful Gap review, only the key purpose of the designation was assessed in this study (i.e. to prevent merging of settlements and maintain a meaningful gap between them). This was assessed by applying purpose 2 of the Green Belt criteria (shown in **Table 3.1**), which aligns with the primary purpose of the Meaningful Gap set out in Policy NW19, by examining at how land

¹⁷ Appeal decision (M Birkinshaw) 28 November 2016. Appeal reference: APP/R3705/W/15/3136495

parcels perform with regards to preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another. For the purpose of the assessment, the contribution of the parcels to separation has been considered in terms of both physical and perceived separation. Perceived separation refers to views into or across the parcel from the settlements and key viewpoints, acknowledging that some parcels have a more important role in the perceived separation of settlements, due to their topography or location.

- 3.6 This review examines the parcels as they appeared in the original Meaningful Gap study undertaken by the Council. As noted in paragraph 3.2, Parcel 9 has been amended to exclude the area granted outline planning permission in November 2016.

Green Belt assessment criteria

- 3.7 The revised Meaningful Gap parcels (1-10) and additional parcels (11 and 12) were assessed against the five Green Belt purposes as set out in **Box 2.1**. For consistency with the adjacent area, the criteria agreed for the purpose of the Joint Coventry and Warwickshire Green Belt Review is used as the basis for this study. The criteria for Purpose 2 were refined to recognise the contribution of parcels to the actual and perceived separation between settlements (Criterion 2b). **Table 3.1** below sets out all the criteria used to assess the parcels against each of the purposes and all the potential scores that can be assigned to each criterion, along with notes on how the judgements associated with each criterion were made.

Table 3.1: Green Belt Assessment criteria

NPPF Green Belt Purposes		Criteria	Score /Value	Assessment method notes
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	a	<p>Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?</p> <p>If strong role (parcel inhibiting development along two or more sides of a road corridor), 2</p> <p>If some role (parcel inhibiting development along one side of a road corridor), 1</p> <p>If no role (parcel not inhibiting development along a road corridor), 0</p>	<p>Ribbon development is linear development along any route ways where direct access from a development to the road would be possible.</p> <p>Sprawl is the spread of urban areas into the neighbouring countryside, i.e. the outward expansion of settlements into the neighbouring countryside.</p>
		b	<p>Is the parcel free from development?</p> <p>Does the parcel have a sense of openness?</p> <p>If land parcel contains no development and has a strong sense of openness, 2</p> <p>If land parcel contains limited development and has a relatively strong sense of openness, 1</p> <p>If land parcel already contains development compromising the sense of openness, 0</p>	<p>Development means any built structure.</p>
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	a	<p>Is the parcel located within an existing settlement?</p> <p>If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?</p> <p>If the parcel is within an existing settlement or more than 5 km away from a neighbouring settlement, 0</p> <p>If <1 km away from a neighbouring settlement, 2</p> <p>If between 1 km and 5 km away from a neighbouring settlement, 1</p>	<p>Merging is the joining or blurring of boundaries between two settlements.</p> <p>A straight line is measured at the narrowest point between settlements. The line must pass through the parcel being assessed.</p> <p>Note: This is the criterion applied to the Meaningful Gap assessment element of this study.</p>
		b	<p>What role does the</p>	<p>The parcel makes a strong</p> <p>A contribution to the sense of</p>

NPPF Green Belt Purposes	Criteria	Score /Value	Assessment method notes
	parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	<p>contribution to the sense of separation between settlements, 2</p> <p>The parcel makes a moderate contribution to the sense of separation between settlements, 1</p> <p>The parcel makes a weak/no contribution to the sense of separation between settlements, 0</p>	<p>separation is determined based on views into the parcel, and an assessment of whether built development within this parcel would result in a perceived merging of the settlements. The existence of landscape elements (such as ridges, hills or woodland) may provide a mitigating impact, and result in the parcel performing a less important role in the sense of separation.</p> <p>Note: This criterion is applied to the Meaningful Gap assessment element of this study.</p>
3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	<p>a Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside?</p> <p>Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?</p>	<p>If land parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has no urbanising development, and is open, 2</p> <p>If land parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is relatively open, 1</p> <p>If land parcel does not contain the characteristics and/or is not connected to land with the characteristics of countryside, or contains urbanising development that compromises openness, 0</p>	<p>Encroachment from urbanising influences is the intrusion / gradual advance of buildings and urbanised land beyond an acceptable or established limit.</p> <p>Urbanising influences include features such as roads lined with street lighting and pavements, large areas of hardstanding, floodlit sports fields, etc.</p> <p>Urbanising built development does not include development which is in keeping with the countryside, e.g. agricultural or forestry related development, isolated dwellings, historic schools and churches.</p> <p>Countryside is land/scenery which is rural in character, i.e. a relatively open natural, semi-natural or farmed landscape.</p>
	b Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment of the countryside within or beyond the parcel in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel).	<p>If no significant boundary, 2</p> <p>If less significant boundary, 1</p> <p>If significant boundary, 0</p>	<p>Readily recognisable and permanent features are used to define the borders of parcels. The presence of features which contain development and prevent encroachment can, in certain locations, diminish the role of a parcel in performing this purpose. The significance of a boundary in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment is judged based on its relative proximity to the existing urban edge of a settlement and its nature.</p> <p>Boundaries are assumed to play a stronger role (and the parcel, therefore, a weaker role) in inhibiting encroachment of the countryside when they are located relatively close to the existing urban edge of a settlement because if the parcel were released they</p>

NPPF Green Belt Purposes		Criteria	Score /Value	Assessment method notes
				<p>would represent a barrier to further encroachment of the wider countryside.</p> <p>Where boundaries border the existing urban edge of a settlement, any further expansion of the settlement would breach that boundary and it would play no further role in preventing encroachment of the wider countryside. In these cases, the parcel is judged to play a stronger role in preventing encroachment.</p> <p>Boundaries that are more permanent in nature or more difficult to cross are assumed to play a stronger role in inhibiting encroachment of the countryside. Examples include railway lines, rivers, and motorways/dual carriageways. Examples of boundary types that are assumed to play a weaker role include streams, canals, and topographic features, such as ridges.¹⁸</p> <p>Footpaths and minor roads play an even weaker role.</p>
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	<p>a</p> <p>Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town?</p> <p>Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core¹⁹ of an historic town?</p>	<p>If parcel is partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town and has good intervisibility with the historic core of the town, 4</p> <p>If parcel is partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town or has good intervisibility with the historic core of the town, 2</p> <p>If parcel has none of these features, 0</p>	<p>Site visits and topographic mapping are used to inform judgements as to whether land parcels have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town.</p>
5	To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	<p>a</p> <p>All parcels are considered to make an equally significant contribution to this purpose by restricting development and encouraging the reused of previously developed land and are each given a score of 4.</p>		

¹⁸ The relative permanence of a boundary, although relevant to the assessment of parcels of land against Purpose 3, is not, in itself, directly linked to the significance of its role in inhibiting encroachment of the countryside, e.g. streams, canals and topographic features are permanent but development can relatively easily be accessed from the corridor in which the feature lies.

Assess performance of the parcels against the Meaningful Gap and Green Belt criteria

- 3.8 Having developed and agreed the criteria, an assessment of all the parcels was undertaken by means of desk study and site visits to all the parcels. As noted above, for the Meaningful Gap review, only the key purpose of the designation was assessed (i.e. to prevent merging of settlements and maintain a meaningful gap between them). This was assessed by applying purpose 2 of the Green Belt criteria (shown in **Table 3.1**). **Table 3.2** below shows how the Meaningful Gap parcels perform with regard to providing separation between settlements and preventing the merging of nearby towns. The results of this assessment are mapped in **Figure 3.1**.
- 3.9 For the Green Belt assessment, the land was assessed against all five purposes of Green Belts. In order to avoid unintentional 'weighting' of any single purpose, the minimum and maximum scores for any purpose are the same (i.e. between zero and four for purposes 1–4²⁰). All parcels score four for purpose 5 (to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land). This is on the basis that all parcels of land within Green Belts make a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the land available for development and encouraging developers to seek out and recycle derelict / urban sites.
- 3.10 The assessment scores for each parcel against each of the Green Belt purposes are presented in **Table 3.3** with more detailed profiles explaining the reasoning behind the assessment provided in **Appendix 1**. A map showing the total score for each of the parcels is shown in **Figure 3.2**. The total score for the parcel is used to define its potential contribution to the Green Belt purposes:
1. Parcels that score 13 or more could make a considerable contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
 2. Parcels that score between 8 and 12 could make a contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
 3. Parcels that score between 4²¹ and 7 are unlikely to contribute significantly to the Green Belt purposes.

Findings of the Meaningful Gap Assessment

- 3.11 All the parcels currently designated as Meaningful Gap make a contribution to maintaining the separation between the settlements of Tamworth to the west and Polesworth/Dordon to the east. They also have an important role in maintaining the settlement identity of the smaller settlements of Freasley and Birchmoor which are within the boundaries of the Meaningful Gap and Wood End which lies to the south. The gap between the settlements is very narrow in places (less than one kilometre), with the Meaningful Gap forming an undeveloped buffer between the settlements. **Table 3.2** below shows how the Meaningful Gap parcels perform with regard to providing separation between settlements and preventing the merging of nearby towns. This information is also mapped in **Figure 3.1**.

²⁰ Purposes 1, 2 and 3 have two criteria; Purpose 4 has one criterion; all purposes (1-5) have the potential to score 4.

²¹ As all parcels score 4 for purpose 5, so this is the minimum score.

Table 3.2: Summary of performance of Meaningful Gap parcels in separating settlements

Parcel	Parcel score against the purpose of preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another
1	2
2	4
3	4
6	4
7	4
8	4
9	1
10	1

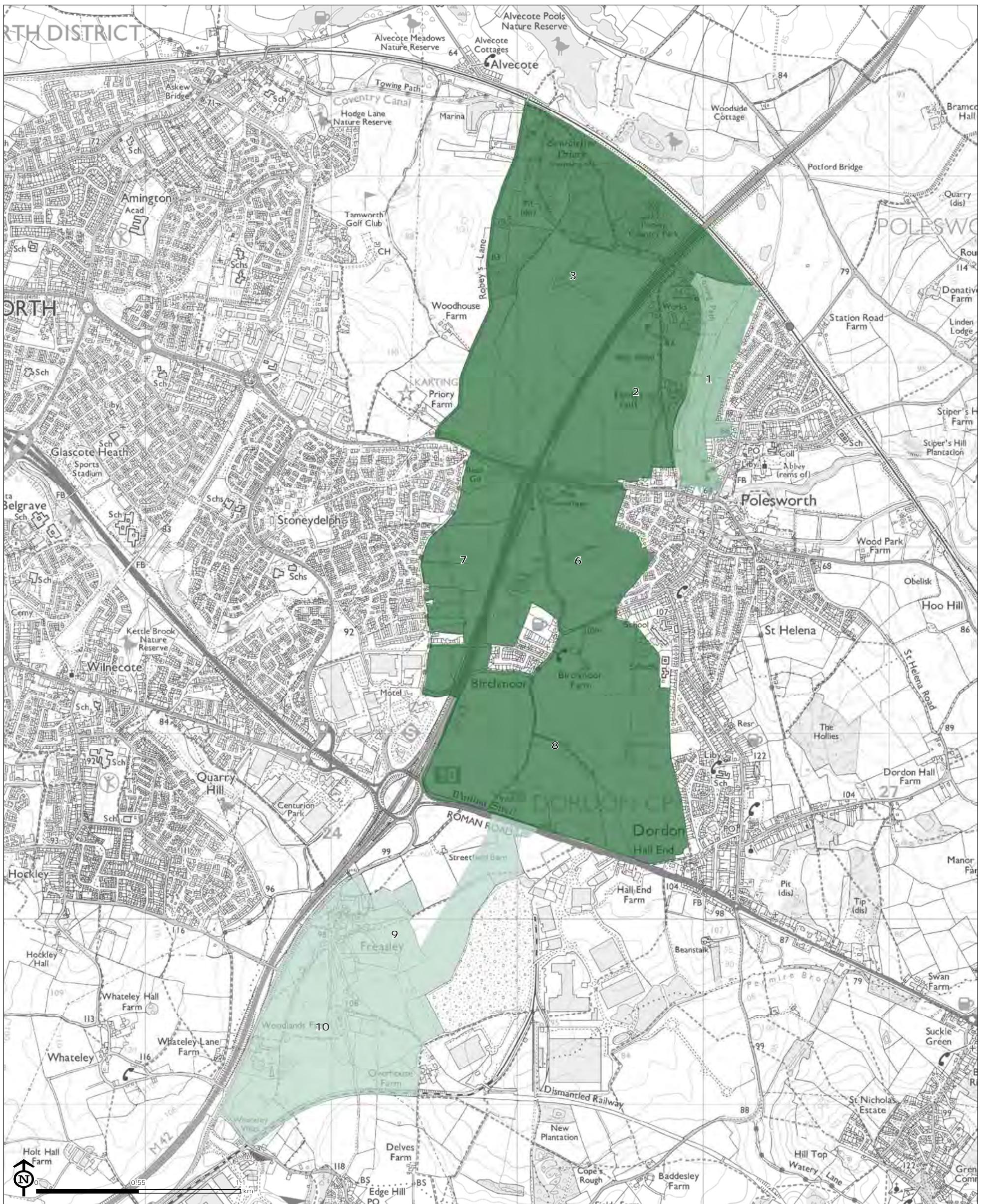
Note that Parcels 4 and 5 have been omitted as they were not designated as Meaningful Gap in the original study and Parcels 11 and 12 are new parcels designated for the purposes of this study

3.12 The following provides more detail on the performance of each of the Parcels within the Meaningful Gap.

- Parcel 1:** This parcel forms part of the gap between Tamworth and Polesworth, which is approximately 1.2 kilometres wide at this point. This parcel will be of increased value as part of the Meaningful Gap following the planned development of the former Tamworth Golf Course, which will narrow the gap further. The parcel makes a moderate contribution the sense of separation between settlements as it is closely associated with the edge of Polesworth and covers a relatively small area of land.
- Parcel 2:** There is approximately 800 metres between Polesworth and Tamworth across the southern part of the parcel, roughly following the line of the B5000. The parcel therefore has a strong role in separating the settlements and preventing their merging, as the gap here is very narrow. This parcel will be of increased value as part of the Meaningful Gap following the planned development of the former Tamworth Golf Course, which will narrow the gap between the northern part of Tamworth and Polesworth further.
- Parcel 3:** There are approximately 930 metres between Polesworth and Tamworth at the southern point of this parcel, roughly following the B5000. In the centre and north of the parcel the distance grows to approximately 2 kilometres. This parcel performs strongly as part of the Meaningful Gap as the gap between the settlements is very narrow (particularly in the south). This parcel will be of increased value as part of the Meaningful Gap following the planned development of the former Tamworth Golf Course, which will narrow the gap between the northern part of Tamworth and Polesworth further. The topography of this parcel is also important to the sense of separation between the settlements, as the sloping land currently prevents intervisibility between the two settlements.
- Parcel 6:** The parcel provides separation between Polesworth and Tamworth which are 870 metres apart across the northern part of the parcel. The gap between Polesworth and Birchmoor is approximately 330 metres at this point and thus this parcel performs very strongly as part of the Meaningful Gap by maintaining the sense of separation between the two major settlements and the smaller settlement of Birchmoor which are in very close proximity.
- Parcel 7:** The parcel provides separation between Tamworth and Polesworth which are approximately 830 metres apart across the north of the parcel. The gap between Tamworth and Polesworth is greater in the south of the parcel, although the distance between Tamworth and Birchmoor at this point is 150 metres. This parcel is a crucial part of the gap and performs very strongly as part of the Meaningful Gap by providing a buffer and sense of separation between the three separate settlements which are very close to each other.
- Parcel 8:** The parcel provides a gap of approximately 830 metres between Tamworth and Dordon across the northern part of the parcel. The gap between Birchmoor and Dordon is approximately 330 metres. This parcel performs very strongly as part of the Meaningful Gap

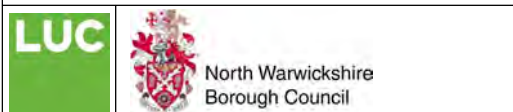
by providing a buffer and sense of separation between the three separate settlements which are very close to each other.

- **Parcel 9:** The parcel provides some separation between Tamworth and Dordon, which are approximately 1.7 kilometres apart in the northern portion of the parcel. The gap between settlements is wider in this part of the Meaningful Gap (when compared with the northern part of the Gap where the gap between settlements is narrower due to the presence of Birchmoor). Although the parcel provides some separation between Tamworth and Dordon, it does not play such a significant a role in this respect as the parcels to the north of the A5 (Parcels 6 and 8), since the dual carriageway forms a permanent barrier between the parcel and Dordon, and Dordon is located on higher ground, providing a further sense of separation. It is also noted that the employment development south of the A5 is of materially different character and appearance, and is therefore distinct from the residential development of Dordon.
- **Parcel 10:** This parcel plays an important role as part of the gap between Tamworth and Wood End, as well as the rural settlement of Freasley which is contained within this parcel. However, the parcel does not play as significant a role in separating Tamworth and Dordon as the parcels to the north of the A5 (Parcels 6 and 8), since the dual carriageway forms a permanent barrier between the parcel and Dordon, and Dordon is located on higher ground, providing a further sense of separation.

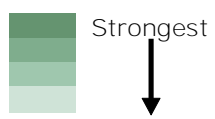


North Warwickshire
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Figure 3.1
Performance of each of the
Parcels within the Meaningful
Gap



Performance of each of the Parcels within the Meaningful Gap



Source: North Warwickshire Council, OS

Map Scale @ A3: 1:20,000

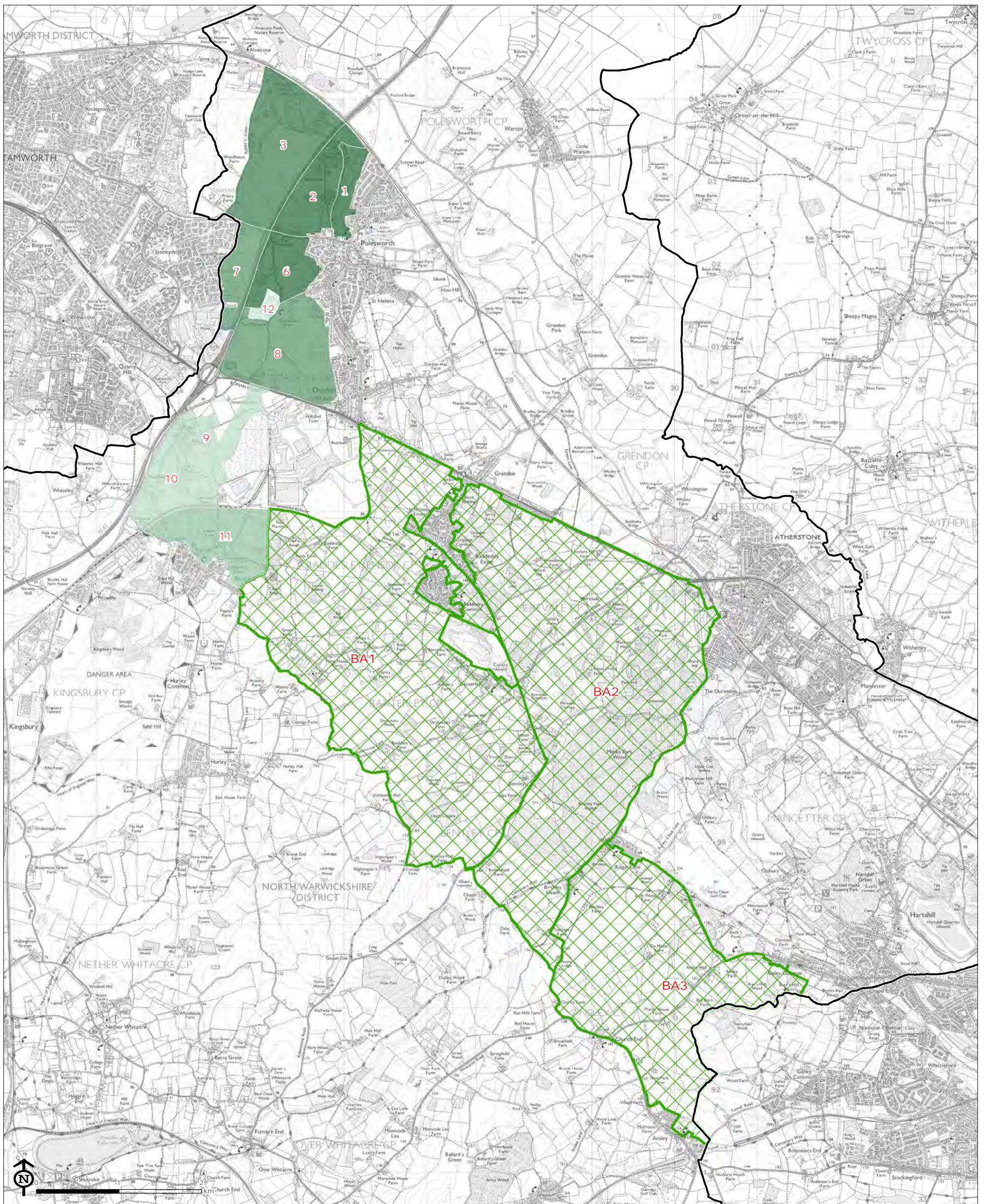
Review of parcels against the Green Belt purposes

- 3.13 Parcels in north of the study area (**Parcels 1, 2 and 3**) were all found to make a considerable contribution to Green Belt purposes, scoring 13 or higher. These parcels perform strongly against Green Belt purposes 1 and 2 (prevent the unrestricted sprawl of urban areas and prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another). The contribution that these parcels make to the wider setting of the historic core of Polesworth also increases their scores against the Green Belt purposes.
- 3.14 **Parcels 6 and 7** play a crucial role in separating Tamworth and Dordon, as the distance between the settlements is very narrow at this point (approximately 830 metres) and existing urban development at Birchmoor compromises the openness of the area and threatens to create a perception of merging the two settlements.
- 3.15 **Parcel 8** makes a relatively strong contribution to the Green Belt purposes due its large size (which spans the entire gap between Tamworth and Dordon at this point), the undeveloped and open character of the countryside and the role it plays in maintaining separation between settlements.
- 3.16 **Parcels 9, 10 and 11** form a valuable buffer between Tamworth, Dordon and Wood End and help to prevent the merging of these settlements in line with Green Belt purpose 2. Due to the existing development and planned expansion of Birch Coppice Business Park and the construction of new business/employment development to the east of Junction 10 (M42), development within these parcels has the potential to create a perception of continuous development between Tamworth, Dordon and Wood End. However, this perception could be reduced through appropriate design and landscaping. The spoil heap of the former Baddesley Colliery also forms a physical barrier between these parcels and Dordon. It is also noted that Dordon is located on higher ground and a sense of separation would be maintained by the open countryside north of the A5. These parcels do not make a contribution to the historic setting of any town.
- 3.17 **Parcel 12**, which covers the settlement of Birchmoor, does not contribute significantly to the Green Belt purposes; as such it could be 'inset' if this area was to be designated as Green Belt.
- 3.18 The component and overall scores of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes are set out in **Table 3.3** below. **Figure 3.2** displays these findings in map format.

Table 3.3: Summary of Green Belt Scores

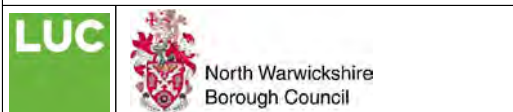
Parcel	Purpose 1 Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Purpose 5 Rating	Overall score
1	2	2	2	4	4	14
2	3	4	1	2	4	14
3	2	4	1	2	4	13
6	3	4	1	2	4	14
7	2	4	2	0	4	12
8	2	4	2	0	4	12
9	1	1	2	0	4	8
10	3	1	1	0	4	9
11	3	1	2	0	4	10
12	0	0	1	0	4	5

Note that Parcels 4 and 5 have been excluded from the study as they were not designated as Meaningful Gap in the original study



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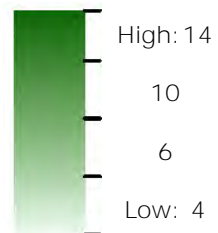
Figure 3.2
Overall Green Belt scores for
each parcel



□ District boundary

▨ Broad Area

Overall performance against green belt purposes



Source: North Warwickshire Council, OS

Map Scale @ A3: 1:45,000

Assessment conclusions

- 3.19 As outlined in the above section, there is some variation in the contribution that the parcels within the study area make towards Green Belt purposes. However, overall the parcels within the Meaningful Gap contribute well to its purposes, particularly with regard to maintaining settlement separation and identity.
- 3.20 Were this area not protected, development over time could potentially result in the merging of Tamworth with Polesworth/Dordon, Birchmoor and Freasley, which all vary in character. Since Tamworth does not have adequate land to meet the housing and employment needs over its plan period, neighbouring authorities are being requested to accommodate some of their need. As discussed in Chapter 2, North Warwickshire Borough Council has agreed to accommodate 500 homes for Tamworth. The geographical distribution of these homes is yet to be decided, however placing all of these homes in the North Warwickshire/Tamworth boundary area is likely to have a detrimental impact on the Meaningful Gap and not be in line with Policy NW19 of the Core Strategy.
- 3.21 The parcels between Tamworth and Polesworth (Parcels 1, 2 and 3) make a significant contribution to Green Belt Purposes 1 and 2 (prevent the unrestricted sprawl of urban areas and prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another). The distance between Tamworth and Polesworth is less than 1 kilometre at some points and the development of the former Tamworth Municipal Golf Course (to the west of the Meaningful Gap) will result in a narrowing of the distance between Tamworth and Polesworth.
- 3.22 The parcels between Tamworth and Dordon (Parcels 6, 7 and 8) also score highly against Green Belt Purposes 1 and 2, primarily because of the narrow gap between the settlements at this point, along with the fact that the relatively modern development at Birchmoor is nestled between the two settlements (compromising the openness of the area and increasing the importance of the remaining surrounding countryside).
- 3.23 Parcel 9 scores slightly lower than some of the other parcels in the study area, particularly against Green Belt Purpose 1. This is primarily because it is not directly adjacent to urban development and therefore would not prevent ribbon development along a road corridor and the gap between Tamworth and Dordon is relatively wide at this point.
- 3.24 The parcel covering the settlement of Birchmoor performs poorly (score: 5) against the Green Belt purposes and thus in the case that an extension to the Green Belt is proposed, this parcel (Parcel 12) should be excluded. This is in contrast to the settlement of Freasley (within Parcel 10) where development is sparse and does not adversely affect openness or the characteristics of the countryside referred to in Green Belt purpose 3, therefore **should be included ('washed over')** by any proposed future Green Belt extension.
- 3.25 All parcels (except Parcel 12) score positively with regard to Purpose 1 (restricting urban sprawl) and Purpose 2 (preventing the merging of settlements). Green Belt designation in these areas would be effective at maintaining the separation of Tamworth from Polesworth and Dordon, in line with the key purpose of the Meaningful Gap.
- 3.26 Many of the parcels score relatively low with regard to purpose 3 (protecting the countryside from encroachment), due to the presence of the M42, which provides a significant boundary feature that may prevent encroachment of development into the countryside from Tamworth over the long term. The HS2 safeguarded route follows a similar route to the M42 and would also act as a barrier feature. However, development of the countryside either side of the motorway may still be perceived as encroachment into the countryside. The application of the Green Belt criteria developed for the wider area have resulted in these lower scores, however the importance of these parcels must not be understated as a result of this. There is also the issue that development in Tamworth is already adjacent to the M42 in many places. If development were to encroach upon the countryside from the east (Polesworth/Dordon), this boundary would be less effective and there is still a risk of the settlements appearing to merge, should this land be extensively developed.
- 3.27 Parcels in the north of the study area score higher with regard to Green Belt purpose 4 as Polesworth has a Conservation Area and historic core. These parcels contribute to the wider historic setting of this area.
- 3.28 Further conclusions and subsequent recommendations arising from this assessment are presented in **Chapter 6**.

4 Broad Areas Assessment

- 4.1 This chapter presents the methodology and findings of the Broad Areas Assessment. Further conclusions and recommendations on the Broad Areas can be found in **Chapter 6**.

Definition of Broad Areas

- 4.2 The Broad Areas (BA1-3) were defined following discussions with North Warwickshire Borough Council, due to their proximity to the study area and the opportunity to undertake high level consideration of these areas in terms of their potential to serve Green Belt purposes. These areas are illustrated in blue hatching in **Figure 1.1**. The findings of the Broad Area Assessment are located at paragraph 4.6 below and **Appendix 2**.
- 4.3 Key considerations made when defining broad areas for this study are the same as those made for the Meaningful Gap:
- The consistent nature of the parcel to enable the assessment to conclude on the potential of the whole parcel to meet the Green Belt purposes;
 - The definition of clear, robust boundaries to ensure that if designated as green belt, the boundary would be defensible.
- 4.4 The following physical features are considered defensible and relatively permanent and therefore potentially suitable for delineating Green Belt boundaries:
- Significant natural features – for example, substantial watercourses and water bodies;
 - Significant man-made features – for example, motorways, A and B roads and railway lines, and established infrastructure and utilities such as sewage treatment works.
- 4.5 The Broad Areas (BA1-BA3) were reviewed against the purposes of Green Belt, but the criteria listed in **Table 3.1** have not been applied. Instead, a broader descriptive assessment is provided, outlining ways in which these larger, more strategic areas of land align with the purposes of the Green Belt, and resulting potential to be designated as such.

Findings of the Broad Area Assessment

- 4.6 The three Broad Areas were found to contribute well to the Green Belt purposes.

Broad Area 1

- 4.7 This Broad Area lies between Wood End (to the west), Baddesley Ensor (to the north east) and Dordon (to the north). The village of Baxterley lies within the Broad Area. The area contains numerous pockets of ancient woodland (many of which are also locally designated for their wildlife value) and a moated site to the east of Baxterley which is designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- 4.8 If recognised as Green Belt, Broad Area 1 would make a contribution to four out of the five purposes of the Green Belt:
- Preventing urban sprawl of Baddesley Ensor to the west.
 - Preventing the merging of Wood End, Baddesley Ensor and Baxterley over the long term, as there are no existing significant boundary features to prevent this.
 - Safeguarding the countryside, including several pockets of ancient woodland, some of which are locally designated for their wildlife value.

- Helping to encourage urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land within North Warwickshire.

Broad Area 2

- 4.9 This Broad Area lies between Baddesley Ensor and Grendon (to the north and west), Atherstone (to the east) and Ridge Lane and Birchley Heath (to the south). Within this Broad Area there are numerous areas of ancient woodland, including the Bentley Park Wood SSSI. The Broad Area also contains the Scheduled Monument of Merevale Abbey and the Grade II* Registered Parkland of Merevale Hall.
- 4.10 If recognised as Green Belt, Broad Area 2 would make a contribution to all five purposes of the Green Belt by:
- Checking the urban sprawl of the western part of Atherstone, as there are no existing boundaries to prevent this.
 - Preventing the merging of Baddesley Ensor/Grendon with Atherstone in the long term.
 - Safeguarding the countryside, including a number of ancient woodlands and Bentley Park Wood SSSI.
 - Preserving the rural setting of valued listed buildings including the Grade I listed Church of Our Lady in Merevale, the Grade II* Registered Parkland of Merevale Hall and the setting to Watling Street Bridge Conservation Area.
 - Helping to encourage urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land within North Warwickshire.

Broad Area 3

- 4.11 This Broad Area lies between Ansley (to the south), Church End (to the west), Birchley Heath and Ridge End (to the north) and Ansley Common (to the east).
- 4.12 The Broad Area contains areas of ancient woodland including part of the Bentley Park Wood SSSI in the north. It also contains several listed buildings including the Grade II listed Ansley Hall (which has been converted into residential flats).
- 4.13 If recognised as Green Belt, Broad Area 3 would make a contribution to four out of the five purposes of the Green Belt by:
- Preventing the merging of Ansley, Church End and Birchley Heath/Ridge End in the long term as there are no existing significant boundary features.
 - Protecting the countryside, including a number of ancient woodlands and Bentley Park Wood SSSI.
 - Preserving the rural setting of listed buildings including the Grade II* listed Church of St. Lawrence in Church End and the Grade II listed building of Ansley Hall.
 - Helping to encourage urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land within North Warwickshire.

5 Existing Green Belt Boundary Review

- 5.1 This chapter presents the context, methodology and findings of the review of existing Green Belt boundaries in North Warwickshire.

Context of existing Green Belt in North Warwickshire and review methodology

- 5.2 The existing Green Belt in North Warwickshire covers a total of 17,282 hectares or 60.8% of the Borough.
- 5.3 The purpose of the boundary review task was to examine whether these boundaries are still appropriate/fit for purpose. Green Belt boundaries may no longer be appropriate for a number of reasons:
- Incorrect drawing of boundaries when the Green Belt was digitised, resulting in the inappropriate omission or inclusion of some areas.
 - Inappropriate development that has occurred since the designation of the Green Belt, meaning the land is no longer open.
- 5.4 Using a desk based analysis of maps and aerial photography, areas recommended for either inclusion within the Green Belt or omission from the Green Belt. Maps showing the results of this exercise are presented in **Appendix 3**. This exercise was supplemented by site visits to ensure that these recommendations are accurate.

Recommendations of the Green Belt Boundary Review

- 5.5 The following provides a summary of the recommendations following the review of existing Green Belt around selected settlements within North Warwickshire.
- **Piccadilly (Area A)** – The review indicates that some removal from the Green Belt, alongside some additions to it are appropriate for the numerous parcels in this area to ensure that the Green Belt extent more accurately reflects the boundaries of the Kingsbury Link Industrial Estate.
 - **Wood End (Area B)** – This area is currently within the Green Belt and is recommended for exclusion from the Green Belt as the boundary presently cuts through the middle of the school building (which has been extended since the Green Belt boundaries were drawn). The recommended Green Belt boundaries follow the outline of the school site.
 - **Kingsbury (Area C)** – This area is not currently within the Green Belt and it is not recommended for inclusion within the Green Belt as this land is safeguarded for the construction of a new railway station in Policy LP26: Stations in the Draft Local Plan.
 - **Shustoke (Area D)** – This area is currently within the Green Belt and is recommended for exclusion from the Green Belt as it contains residential development along Croxall Drive and Wilkinson Way.
 - **Fillongley (Area E)** – This area is currently within the Green Belt and is recommended for exclusion from the Green Belt as it is mostly developed as a mixture of residential/farm buildings and commercial premises.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

- 6.1 This section draws together the findings of the Assessment of the Value of the Meaningful Gap (Section 3), and the Broad Area Assessment (Section 4) to provide recommendations on the future approach to policy and designation of this area of the Borough.
- 6.2 The Meaningful Gap Assessment profiles can be found at **Appendix 1**, the Broad Area Assessment profiles in **Appendix 2** and the maps showing the existing Green Belt review recommendations at **Appendix 3**.

Conclusions on the Meaningful Gap

- 6.3 As stated above, the study has indicated that all parcels within the Meaningful Gap contribute to the core purpose of maintaining a Meaningful Gap between Polesworth and Dordon and Tamworth, although following the outcome of the Planning Appeal at land south east of M42 Junction 10, those parcels north of the A5 (Watling Road) perform the core purpose more strongly than those to the south. To date, the Meaningful Gap policy has been successful in maintaining a Meaningful Gap between settlements, although some significant new developments have been permitted south of the A5. The findings of this study indicate that all parcels contribute to the gap, and that the recent appeal and loss of part of Parcel 9 does not undermine the overall integrity of the Meaningful Gap.

Recent case law regarding 'Gap' policies in England

- 6.4 A number of recent appeal cases relating to gap policies in England have been reviewed to inform the recommended approach in North Warwickshire. This review has indicated that the need to demonstrate a five year housing supply is critical to the weight allocated by the Inspector to the Gap policy.
- 6.5 A summary of the key issues informing the Inspector's decision on these cases is provided in **Table 6.1**, and a brief discussion of the most relevant appeals is provided below.

Table 6.1: Recent appeal outcomes regarding gap policies, and key issues

Appeal	Decision	Key issues mentioned in the Inspector's Report
Appeal 1 ²²	Granted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 year housing supply shortfall Limited landscape character harm
Appeal 2 ²³	Dismissed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 year housing supply shortfall Impact on landscape character Detract from separate communities Contrary to local policy on green gaps
Appeal 3 ²⁴	Dismissed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 year housing supply shortfall, but Council taking proactive approach to development e.g. Didcot Garden Town In setting of AONB Impact on landscape character Gap preserves settlement separation
Appeal 4 ²⁵	Granted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 year housing supply shortfall Moderate harm to landscape character Other features provide settlement separation other than gap Other land contributed to gap

6.6 The recent appeal case at Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire²⁶ demonstrates the importance of having a five year housing supply in order to defend gap policies. The Inspector ruled that the **'green gap' policy should be considered out of date as the Council could not demonstrate a five year housing supply**. This led to the development securing permission despite the Inspector confirming that it would undermine the visual and physical separation between villages, and the land being classified as best and most versatile agricultural land (BMVA).

6.7 Additional evidence from the examination of the Cheshire East Local Plan confirms that the Inspector considered that the local gap policy would be considered adequate in normal circumstances, and is being undermined by the lack of a five year supply of land for housing and employment within the Local Plan. This issue is of relevance to North Warwickshire.

6.8 This is further supported by another recent appeal ruling in favour of Tendring District Council, where an appeal was dismissed regarding development at land covered by a local gap between Clacton-on-Sea and Jaywick²⁷. **A key consideration in the Inspector's decision was that the Council could demonstrate something close to a five year housing land supply (calculated to be 4.84 years), and that this added weight to the gap policy covering the development site.**

Recommended approach to the Meaningful Gap

6.9 We recommend that the Meaningful Gap should be retained, and Policy NW19 itself should be reviewed and strengthened, taking account of the following:

- Strengthen the policy wording in response to the Inspector's comments on the appeal at land south east of M42 Junction 10, recognising that parcels north off the A5 provide a greater contribution to the first purpose of the policy (respect the separate identities of Polesworth

²² Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/16/3164657: To the west of the Cemetery, Land North of The Causeway, Bassingbourn Cambridgeshire

²³ Appeal C Ref: APP/P1560/W/16/3156452: Land north of Rush Green Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 7BQ

²⁴ Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/16/3153639: Land east of New Road, East Hagbourne

²⁵ Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/15/3130829: Land West of Park Lane, Charvil, Reading RG10 9TS.

²⁶ Appeal reference: APP/W0530/W/16/3164657

²⁷ Appeal reference: APP/P1560/W/16/3145531

and Dordon and Tamworth), whilst all parcels can contribute to the second purpose (to maintain a meaningful gap between them).

- Add reference in the policy wording to the importance of both physical and perceived²⁸ separation of the towns, in order to strengthen the policy in cases where a proposed development only affects a small part of the Gap, but one which may be critical to the **perception of Tamworth, Poleworth and Dordon's separate identities**.
- Change title to 'Strategic Gap' or 'Local Gap' so that its status is clearer to prospective applicants and the public. In addition, any amendments to the associated Local Plan policy should be informed by the case law associated with other appeal cases within other strategic gaps in England, to ensure that the lessons from other local authorities inform this new policy.
- Adopt the Local Plan Site Allocations, ensuring an adequate supply of employment and housing land to help justify the gap policy.

6.10 The advantages and disadvantages of this approach are set out below:

Advantages

- The Gap continues to be protected by local policy.
- NWBC has some control over the type of development and land use change which is suitable within the Gap, including positive recreational uses.
- Greater clarity is provided to developers, in terms of the type of development considered appropriate within the Gap.
- NWBC avoids a time-consuming and potentially unsuccessful attempt to secure the designation of new Green Belt.

Disadvantages

- There is some risk associated with the locally defined policy protecting the Gap, in contrast with the firmer protection that Green Belt designation provides.
- NWBC may also encounter more appeals on refused applications within the Gap, as developers seek to test and challenge the Gap policy.

Potential to designate new Green Belt land

6.11 As set out in the NPPF (paragraph 82), the amendment of Green Belt boundaries requires that **'exceptional circumstances' are met. Historically, the release of land from the Green Belt has been a more common occurrence than the designation of new Green Belt.**

Demonstrating exceptional circumstances

- 6.12 Paragraph 82 of the NPPF states that 'The general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established. New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions'.
- 6.13 Local authorities should demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist, and whether they do exist is a matter of planning judgement. The text below considers the circumstances within North Warwickshire against the NPPF's criteria for exceptional circumstances:
- **Demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate:** In this case, the normal policies would be the existing Meaningful Gap designation. Our assessment supports the initial assessment by NWBC, and indicates that all parcels contribute to maintaining a Meaningful Gap between the settlements, but acknowledging that those south of the A5 perform less strongly than those to the north.

²⁸ It is also important that these terms are defined. Physical separation is based on cartographic geometry, while perceived separation is based on how the gap is experienced by people from surrounding settlements, roads and public footpaths.

There is a risk that if the Meaningful Gap does not prove to be a robust tool in defending against similar development proposals, however, recent case law indicates that if a five year supply of land for housing and employment is demonstrated through the Local Plan, then the local policy should have sufficient weight.

- **Set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary:** Changes in circumstance since the designation of the Green Belt include the proposed urban extension between Tamworth and Polesworth and Dordon, the proposed HS2 corridor through the Meaningful Gap and Tamworth Council has resolving to permit development up to the Borough boundary. However, online research has revealed a lack of examples of local authorities proposing new Green Belt, except where the authority is also proposing the removal of land from the Green Belt. The example of Cheshire East is relevant to the situation in North Warwickshire, where new Green Belt was proposed to guard against growth at a town which has been a location for development and growth in the past in a similar way to Tamworth. In addition, the wording of the NPPF (paragraph 82) indicates that these new development proposals would not be considered to constitute 'exceptional circumstances' in line with the NPPF.
- **Show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development:** There are significant housing allocations which need to be delivered within the Borough. NWBC would need to demonstrate how these housing allocations can be accommodated within remaining land outside of the proposed Green Belt extension, and also demonstrate the capacity for housing land beyond this. On the other hand, it could be argued that an extension to the Green Belt through this area would help to create a sustainable pattern of development, whereby the compactness and separate identities of Tamworth, Polesworth and Dordon are maintained.
- **Demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with Local Plans for adjoining areas:** There are some indications that a stronger designation is appropriate here, including current and past development applications within the Meaningful Gap, and the narrow nature of the Gap, particularly at parcels 6 and 7, where clear visibility across the Gap already exists. Discussions with Tamworth Borough Council on its housing allocations and land supply would need to take place to demonstrate adherence with this criterion.
- **Show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework:** It is not clear exactly which objectives are referred to here. The overarching aim of the Framework is to achieve sustainable development. The positive uses of the Green Belt referred to in the Framework, which could be delivered within NWBC include provision of access, opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity and to improve damaged and derelict land.

Recent case law on designation of new Green Belt

- 6.14 A case law search did not reveal any relevant case law on the designation of significant areas of new Green Belt. The only examples found were those where removal of green belt was proposed alongside the designation of new Green Belt, as a form of mitigation or like for like replacement. However, the research has revealed a similar case in Cheshire East, where Cheshire East District Council initially proposed the designation of new Green Belt within their Local Plan. The Proposed Submission Local Plan was supported by an evidence document 'New Green Belt and Strategic Open Gaps Study', **demonstrating the case for designating new Green Belt between Nantwich and Crewe.**
- 6.15 The Inspector reviewing the Proposed Submission Local Plan commented that there was 'insufficient justification for establishing a new Green Belt in the south of the district'. **One of the reasons why the Inspector found insufficient justification in this case was that the Green Gap policy (which applied to part of the area proposed as new Green Belt) was adequate protection for the land, until the issue of the Council not being able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply became an issue in recent appeals.** Other issues that the Inspector noted, or relevance to North Warwickshire include:
- The evidence report reviews the options against the criteria but does not explicitly identify the exceptional circumstances needed to establish the new Green Belt;

- The lack of identification of detailed boundaries for the proposed new Green Belt (stating these will be defined through Site Allocations, so the Inspector is unable to comment on their appropriateness);
- **The area of proposed Green Belt extends 'much further than that currently covered by the Green Gaps policy, which may not be fully justified'** and includes areas which are already the subject of site allocations;
- Finally, there does not seem to be a major change in circumstances to justify establishing a new area of Green Belt, as the nearby towns were previously suitable locations for growth.

Overall recommendation

- 6.16 There are indications that the Meaningful Gap is vulnerable to development pressure, and this is likely to increase in light of the high levels of housing allocated to the area, NWBC's acceptance of housing allocations from Tamworth and appropriate share of housing allocations from the two Housing Market Areas. In addition, the planned urban extension to the east of Tamworth could further increase pressure on the Gap. However, it seems that the exceptional circumstances needed to justify designation of new Green Belt may not apply, and would need to be demonstrated more widely, with reference to other elements of the Local Plan, including the location of allocated sites, impact on sustainable development, plus any major infrastructure proposals (such as HS2) and their likely impacts.
- 6.17 As indicted by the evidence from Cheshire East, it may not be possible to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances for designating new areas of Green Belt, particularly the **'major changes which have made the adoptions of this exceptional measure necessary', or the 'necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with Local Plans for adjoining areas'**. The inspector's comments within the planning appeal at 'Land south east of the M42 Junction 10' indicate that some parcels of the Meaningful Gap do not play an important role in preventing 'neighbouring towns merging into one another', which is one of the key purposes of Green Belt. It is also unclear which **'major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary', as the NPPF wording on this indicates that the designation of new areas of green belt indicates that this tends to require the creation on a new town or settlement around which the new green belt would be designated.** This is not the case for the land within the Meaningful Gap.
- 6.18 The evidence from Cheshire East indicates that a local gap policy would be considered adequate defence against inappropriate development, if it were not undermined by the lack of an adopted Local Plan with a five year housing land supply. This precedent is applicable in North Warwickshire.
- 6.19 In light of the planning appeal at 'Land south of M42 Junction 10', the potential to apply Green Belt designation to some or all of the land covered by the Meaningful Gap policy is reduced. Assuming the land which was subject of the planning appeal is removed from Parcel 9, the land **within the Meaningful Gap is still 'contiguous' (adjoining) with the** existing Green Belt to the south. However, the area of land separating the settlements of Tamworth and the Birch Coppice area to the south of Dordon will be reduced to approximately 150m at its narrowest point. **As such, it may not be considered to be 'good' Green Belt, in terms of its performance of the five purposes.** Specifically, it would be hard to demonstrate that this piece of land would assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, or whether it could be considered to be have one of the **essential characteristics of Green Belt, which is 'openness'**.
- 6.20 **Finally, given the Inspector's comments on the recent appeal at 'Land south of M42 Junction 10',** it would not be recommended that any application was made to designate new areas of Green Belt, without an adopted Local Plan clearly demonstrating a five year land supply for housing and employment.
- 6.21 In light of the above, it is recommended that the Meaningful Gap is retained and renamed as a Strategic Gap, in line with similar designations across the country. The policy wording could also be strengthened, as suggested in paragraph 6.9. The study has also indicated that an attempt to designate new Green Belt here is unlikely to be successful, and therefore the three Broad Areas identified in Section 4 above should not be subject to any new planning designation, and should instead be protected by normal planning policies where appropriate.

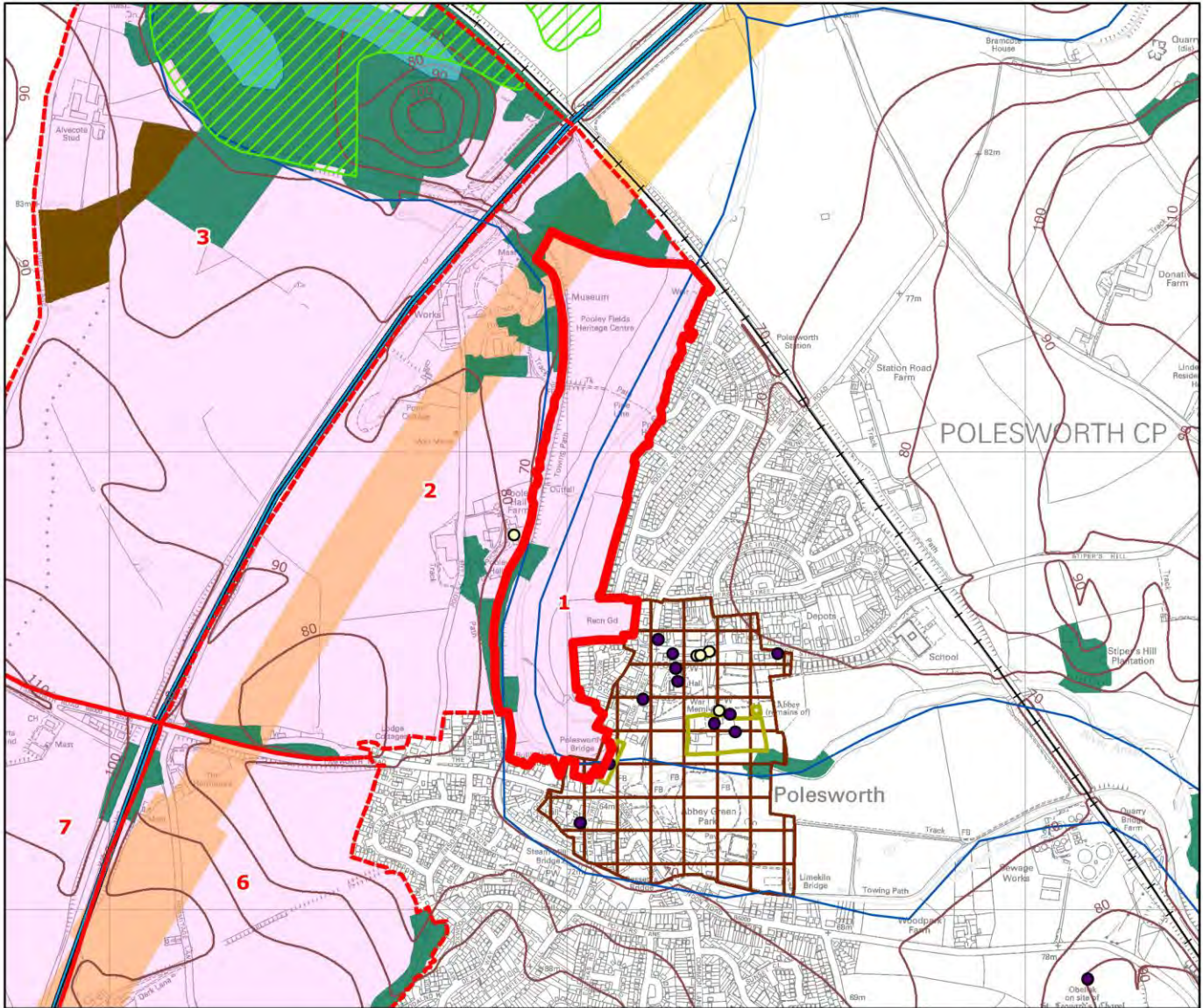
Appendix 1

Meaningful Gap Assessments

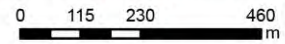
Land Parcel Ref: 1

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap



Parcel - 1



District Boundary	Primary Constraints	Other Information	Motorway
Land Parcel	SSSI	Grade II Listed Building	Railway Line
Meaningful Gap Area	Scheduled Monument	Grade II* Listed Building	Conservation Area
HS2 safeguarding area		River/Canal	Ancient Woodland Inventory
Contours (10m)		Lake	National Forest Inventory

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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 1

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	0	The parcel would not inhibit ribbon development along a road corridor as there is existing development along all adjacent roads which surround the parcel. No roads cross through this parcel.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	2	There is no existing development within the parcel and it has a strong sense of openness. The primary landcover is agricultural.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	1	The gap between Polesworth and Tamworth at this point is approximately 1.2 kilometres, meaning this parcel makes a contribution to the separation of the two settlements.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	1	This parcel is located directly adjacent to the west of Polesworth. There is no intervisibility between the settlements from the parcel, primarily due to the landform of the Meaningful Gap. Tamworth is located on higher ground where the land slopes up in Parcel 3, which contributes to the sense of separation between the settlements and slightly diminishes the role of this relatively small parcel. It is therefore concluded that this parcel makes a moderate contribution to the sense of separation between the settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	2	The parcel has a rural character with many naturalistic features and contains no urbanising influences.

Land Parcel Ref: 1

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment

Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)

Score

0

Comments

Coventry Canal forms the western boundary of the parcel and constitutes a significant boundary which could prevent further encroachment into the countryside if Polesworth were to expand westwards. The northern boundary of the parcel is a woodland edge, which forms a less significant boundary.

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

Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town

Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town?
Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?

Score

4

Comments

The parcel is adjacent to Polesworth Conservation Area, and has good visibility of the historic core of the town from Polesworth bridge and the canal towpath in the south of the parcel. Views include the Scheduled Monument of Polesworth Abbey.

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

Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements

All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.

Score

4

Score Summary

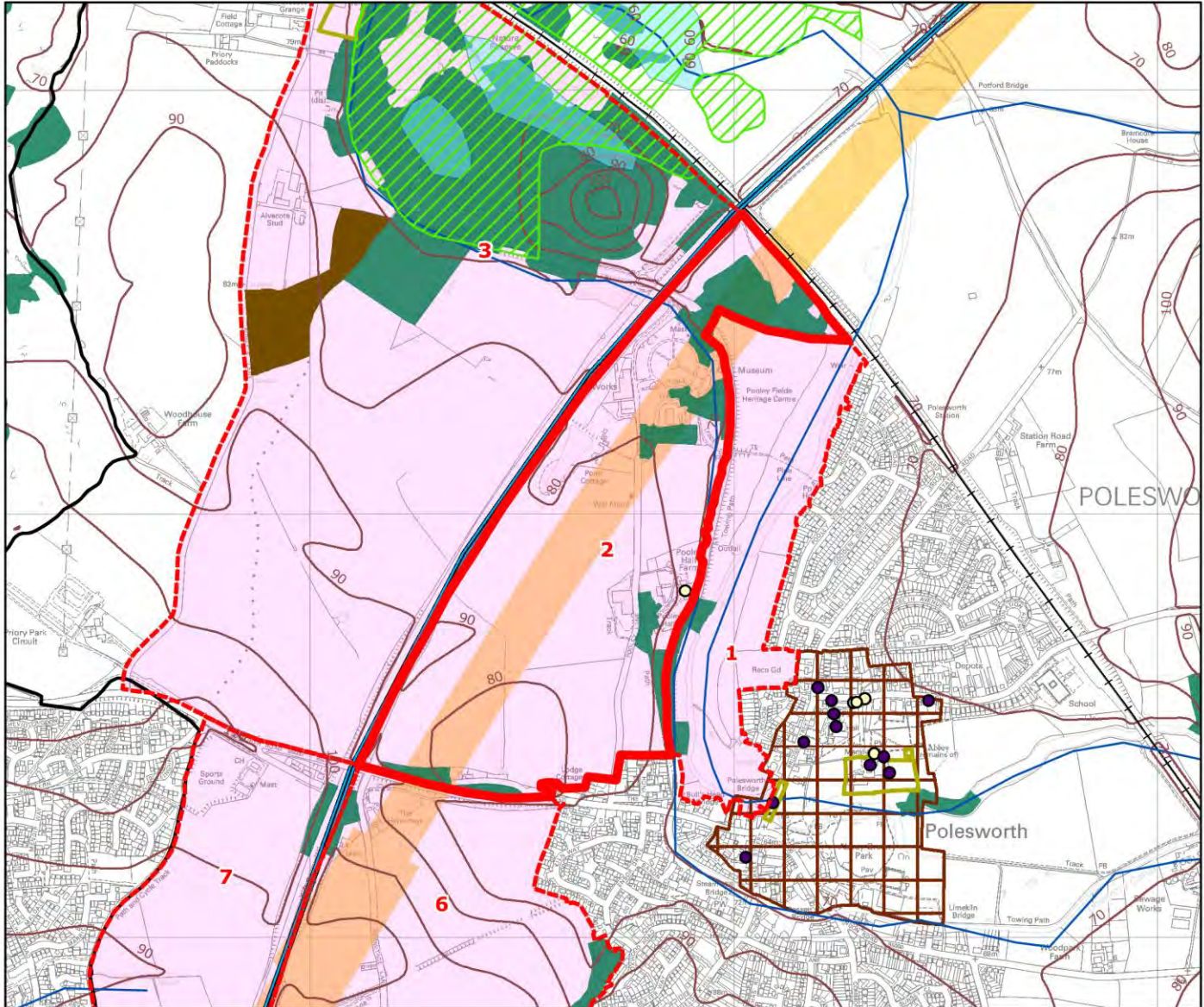
Purpose 1 Score: 2 /4
Purpose 2 Score: 2 /4
Purpose 3 Score: 2 /4
Purpose 4 Score: 4 /4
Purpose 5 Score: 4 /4

Total Score: 14 /20

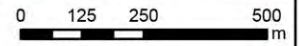
Land Parcel Ref: 2

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap



Parcel - 2



District Boundary	Primary Constraints	Other Information	Motorway
Land Parcel	SSSI	Grade II Listed Building	Railway Line
Meaningful Gap Area	Scheduled Monument	Grade II* Listed Building	Conservation Area
HS2 safeguarding area		River/Canal	Ancient Woodland Inventory
Contours (10m)		Lake	National Forest Inventory



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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 2

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
<p>Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?</p>	2	The parcel could inhibit development from Polesworth along both sides of Pooley Lane and along one side of Tamworth Road.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
<p>Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?</p>	1	There is some limited development in this parcel at Pooley Hall Farm and Pooley Fields Heritage Centre, but this is concentrated in the north and east of the parcel, with the rest of the parcel being relatively open and retaining a rural character.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
<p>Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?</p>	2	There are approximately 800 metres between Polesworth and Tamworth across the southern part of the parcel, roughly following the course of the B5000. Since the distance between the settlements is narrow at this point, the parcel therefore has a strong role in separating the settlements and preventing their merging.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
<p>What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?</p>	2	This parcel covers a large area between the northern parts of Tamworth and Polesworth. The parcel slopes from 65 metres AOD next to Coventry Canal to 93 metres AOD in the south west of the parcel. This parcel contributes strongly to the sense of perceived separation between the settlements. This is because the loss of this area of land as part of the gap would undermine the sense of separation between the settlements as the existing gap between them is narrow, particularly when along the B5000 (Tamworth Road), which forms the southern boundary of the parcel. This is the case despite the presence of the M42 motorway (which forms a permanent barrier feature between the two settlements), as loss of this parcel as open countryside would still risk the effective merging of these settlements and undermine their separate identities.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
<p>Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?</p>	1	The parcel predominantly has a rural character and is relatively open although areas of hard standing in the north of the parcel have a localised urbanising influence. These areas are well screened from the rest of the parcel and do not compromise the rural and open qualities of the rest of the area. The HS2 safeguarded route crosses through the centre of this parcel, although at the time of this assessment the exact proposals and design are unknown and it is not known whether urbanising influences will be introduced into the parcel as a result of this development.

Land Parcel Ref: 2

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

<p>Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment</p>	<p>Score</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Coventry Canal forms the eastern boundary of the parcel and is a significant boundary feature, as is the M42 which contains the parcel to the west. Both of these features could prevent encroachment of development over the long-term from either an easterly or westerly direction. The HS2 safeguarded route also crosses through the parcel from north-south and would form another major barrier feature. However, residential development of the countryside up to these boundaries is still likely to be perceived as encroachment of the countryside.</p>

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

<p>Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town</p>	<p>Score</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town? Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>There are views to the Scheduled Monument of Polesworth Abbey (which forms part of the historic centre of the town) from Pooley Lane.</p>

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

<p>Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements</p>	<p>Score</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.</p>	<p>4</p>	

Score Summary

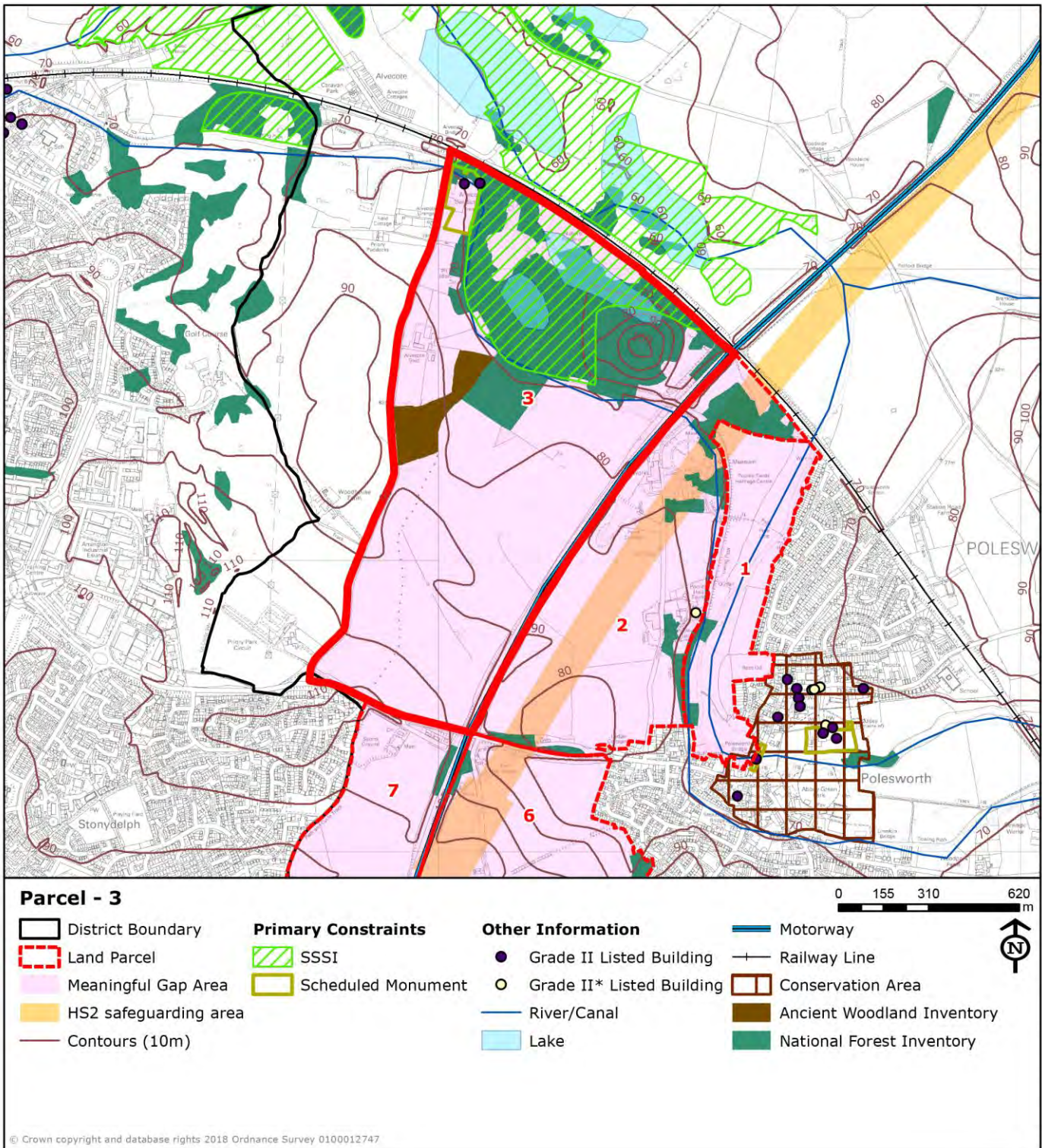
<p>Purpose 1 Score: 3 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 2 Score: 4 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 3 Score: 1 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 4 Score: 2 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 5 Score: 4 /4</p>		

Total Score: 14 /20

Land Parcel Ref: 3

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap



Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 3

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	1	The parcel could inhibit development from Tamworth along one side of Tamworth Road (to the south of the parcel) and along one side of Robey's Lane (to the west of the parcel).
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	1	There is a cluster of agricultural buildings at Alvecote Stud, in the west of the parcel off Robey's Lane. The rest of the parcel retains an open and rural character.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	2	There are approximately 930 metres between Polesworth and Tamworth at the southern point of this parcel, roughly following the B5000. In the centre and north of the parcel the distance grows to approximately 2 kilometres. The narrow distance between the settlements, particularly in the south of the parcel, increases the importance of this parcel in separating the two settlements.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	2	This parcel covers a large area between the northern parts of Tamworth and Polesworth. The land within this parcel slopes from 85 metres AOD (adjacent to the M42) to 105 metres AOD on the edge of Tamworth. Potential development within this parcel is likely to be visible from Polesworth due to the sloping topography and would subsequently reduce the sense of separation between the settlements. Despite the presence of the M42 (which forms a permanent barrier feature), it is concluded that this parcel makes a strong contribution to the sense of separation between the settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	1	The parcel has a rural, open character and contains no urbanising influences. The agricultural buildings do not compromise the openness of the parcel, although the floodlights of the equestrian arena introduce a localised urbanising influence.

Land Parcel Ref: 3

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment

Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)

Score

0

Comments

The M42 motorway forms the eastern boundary of the parcel and is a significant boundary feature. The railway line to the north is also a significant boundary. These features would help to prevent encroachment of development into the countryside over the long-term, although development up to this boundary feature would still result in a loss of countryside. The west and south of the parcel are contained by minor roads which are weaker boundary features.

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

Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town

Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town?
Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?

Score

2

Comments

The parcel is not adjacent to a Conservation Area however from higher ground there are views to the historic core of Polesworth including Polesworth Abbey.

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

Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements

All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.

Score

4

Score Summary

Purpose 1 Score: 2 /4
Purpose 2 Score: 4 /4
Purpose 3 Score: 1 /4
Purpose 4 Score: 2 /4
Purpose 5 Score: 4 /4

Total Score: 13 /20

Land Parcel Ref: 6

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	2	The parcel could inhibit linear development from Birchmoor and Polesworth along one side of Birchmoor Road and along both sides of Hermitage Lane.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	1	There are several isolated buildings within the parcel but overall the land retains a rural and open character. The HS2 safeguarded route crosses through the west of this parcel, although at the time of this assessment the exact proposals and design are unknown and it is not known whether this will have an impact on the sense of openness in the parcel.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	2	The parcel provides separation between Polesworth and Tamworth which are 870 metres apart across the northern part of the parcel. The gap between Polesworth and Birchmoor is approximately 330 metres at this point and thus the parcel is crucial to maintaining the sense of separation between the two major settlements and the smaller settlement of Birchmoor due to their close proximity.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	2	This parcel occupies a narrow part of the Meaningful Gap and slopes up from the western edge of Polesworth, rising to 109 metres AOD in the south of the parcel. The settlement of Birchmoor (Parcel 12) is located between the settlements, directly adjacent to this part of the Meaningful Gap. The presence of urban development at Birchmoor in the centre of the gap increases the contribution that the surrounding undeveloped areas (including Parcel 6) make to the sense of separation between the settlements. There is little intervisibility between Polesworth and Tamworth at present, however development on the higher ground within this parcel would be visible on the ridgeline, creating intervisibility between the settlements and reducing the sense of separation between them. Despite the presence of the M42 (which forms a permanent barrier feature), it is concluded that this parcel makes a strong contribution to the sense of separation between the settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	1	Birchmoor Road to the south of the parcel contains some urbanising features including pavements and street lighting along the road although overall the parcel retains rural characteristics and the impact of these features is localised to the immediate area. The HS2 safeguarded route crosses through the west of this parcel, although at the time of this assessment the exact proposals and design are unknown and it is not known whether urbanising influences will be introduced into the parcel as a result of this development.

Land Parcel Ref: 6

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

<p>Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment</p>	<p>Score</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>The parcel is contained to the west by the M42 motorway which is a significant boundary feature and would prevent development from Polesworth/Dordon merging with Tamworth. The HS2 safeguarded route also crosses through the parcel from north-south and would form another major barrier feature. However, development of the countryside either side of the M42 would still result in some encroachment of the countryside. Minor rural roads to the north and south act as boundary features although they are less significant than the motorway.</p>

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

<p>Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town</p>	<p>Score</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town? Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>The parcel is not adjacent to a Conservation Area however from Hermitage Lane in the north of the parcel there are views to Polesworth Abbey which forms part of the historic core of the town.</p>

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

<p>Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements</p>	<p>Score</p>	
<p>All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.</p>	<p>4</p>	

Score Summary

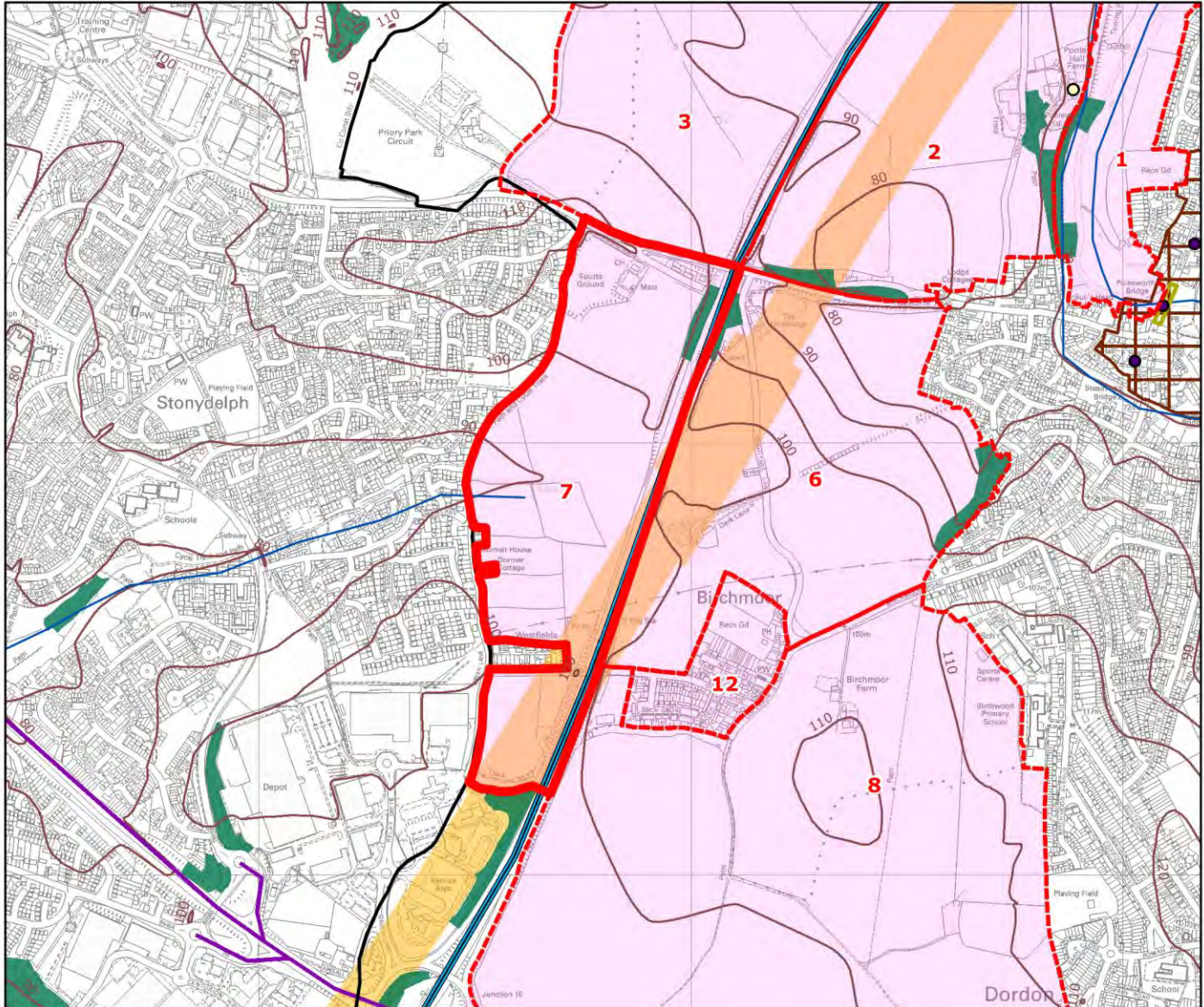
<p>Purpose 1 Score:</p>	<p>3 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 2 Score:</p>	<p>4 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 3 Score:</p>	<p>1 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 4 Score:</p>	<p>2 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 5 Score:</p>	<p>4 /4</p>	

Total Score: 14 /20

Land Parcel Ref: 7

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap



Parcel - 7

- District Boundary
- Land Parcel
- Meaningful Gap Area
- HS2 safeguarding area
- Contours (10m)

- Primary Constraints**
- Scheduled Monument

- Other Information**
- Grade II Listed Building
 - Grade II* Listed Building
 - River/Canal

- Motorway
- A-Road
- Conservation Area
- National Forest Inventory

0 120 240 480 m



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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 7

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	1	The parcel would inhibit ribbon development from Tamworth along one side of Tamworth Road in the very north of the parcel.
Criterion 1b - Openness Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	1	The parcel contains some limited development along Tamworth Road in the north of the parcel but otherwise the parcel retains a strong sense of openness. The HS2 safeguarded route crosses through the east of this parcel, although at the time of this assessment the exact proposals and design are unknown and it is not known whether this will have an impact on the sense of openness in the parcel.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	2	The parcel provides separation between Tamworth and Polesworth which are approximately 830 metres apart. The distance between Tamworth and Birchmoor at this point is 150 metres. This parcel forms a crucial part of the gap between these settlements.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	2	This parcel is strongly associated with the existing urban edge of Tamworth to the west and provides part of the gap (and sense of separation) between Tamworth and Polesworth/Dordon. The presence of urban development at Birchmoor further increases the contribution that this parcel makes to the sense of separation between settlements. There is intervisibility between Tamworth and Birchmoor (across the motorway). While the M42 forms a permanent boundary between Tamworth and Polesworth/Dordon, the existing gap is so narrow at this point that loss of this parcel as part of the gap would undermine the sense of separation between the settlements and their distinct identities. In conclusion, this parcel plays a strong contribution in the sense of perceived separation between the settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	2	The parcel is comprised of farmland with an open, rural character and contains no urbanising influences. The HS2 safeguarded route crosses through the east of this parcel, although at the time of this assessment the exact proposals and design are unknown and it is not known whether urbanising influences will be introduced into the parcel as a result of this development.

Land Parcel Ref: 7

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment	Score	Comments
Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)	0	The M42 forms a significant boundary to the east of the parcel, which would prevent the further merging of Tamworth with Polesworth/Dordon, however development up to this boundary would still result in encroachment of the countryside. The HS2 safeguarded route also crosses through the east of the parcel along the course of the M42, forming another major barrier feature. A more minor road forms the northern boundary. To the west and south there is existing development in Tamworth.

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

Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town	Score	Comments
Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town? Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?	0	The parcel is not adjacent to a Conservation Area nor does it have good levels of intervisibility with the historic core of the town.

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

Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements	Score	
All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.	4	

Score Summary

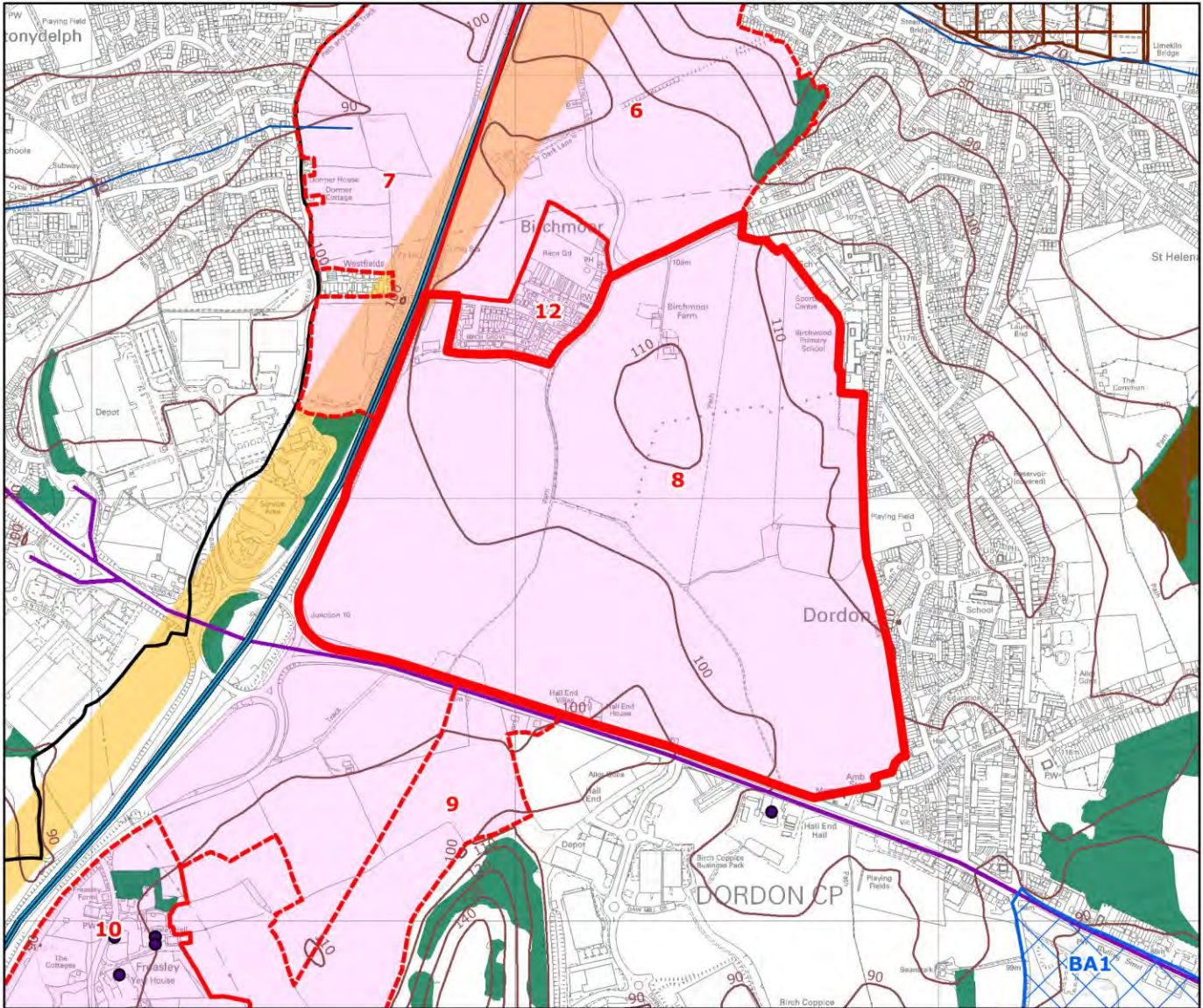
Purpose 1 Score:	2 /4		
Purpose 2 Score:	4 /4		
Purpose 3 Score:	2 /4		
Purpose 4 Score:	0 /4		
Purpose 5 Score:	4 /4		

Total Score: 12 /20

Land Parcel Ref: 8

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap



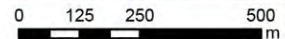
Parcel - 8

- District Boundary
- Land Parcel
- Broad Area
- Meaningful Gap Area
- HS2 safeguarding area
- Contours (10m)

Primary Constraints

Other Information

- Grade II Listed Building
- River/Canal
- Motorway
- A-Road
- Conservation Area
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- National Forest Inventory



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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 8

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	1	This parcel would inhibit ribbon development from Birchmoor or Polesworth along the southern side of Birchmoor Road/Cockspur Street.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	1	The parcel contains some limited agricultural development at Birchmoor Farm and several isolated dwellings in the very south of the parcel adjacent to the A5. The parcel retains a strong sense of openness.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	2	Tamworth and Dordon are approximately 830 metres apart across the northern part of the parcel. The distance between Birchmoor and Dordon is approximately 330 metres. This land parcel plays a strong role in separating the settlements.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	2	This parcel forms the entirety of the gap between Dordon and Tamworth and therefore provides a strong contribution to the actual and perceived separation between the settlements. The settlement of Birchmoor to the north means that the contribution of the undeveloped land to the perceived separation between the settlements is enhanced further. Were the land within this parcel to be developed, Tamworth and Polesworth/Dordon would effectively be merged. Although the M42 provides a permanent barrier feature between the settlements, the gap between the settlements would be undermined and development either side of the motorway is likely to appear to be contiguous.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	2	The parcel has a rural and open character and contains no urbanising influences. There is some street lighting and pavements along Birchmoor Road which forms the northern boundary of the parcel but these do not compromise the open and rural character of the area.

Land Parcel Ref: 8

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

<p>Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment</p>	<p>Score</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>The M42 forms a significant boundary to the west of the parcel, with a more minor road forming the northern boundary. The HS2 safeguarded route also crosses adjacent to the parcel along the course of the M42, forming another major barrier feature. However it should be noted that there is existing industrial development adjacent to the west of the M42, and should development from Dordon or Birchmoor expand to the west there may still be the appearance of the merging of settlements with Tamworth despite this boundary.</p>

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

<p>Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town</p>	<p>Score</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town? Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>The parcel is not adjacent to a Conservation Area nor does it have good levels of intervisibility with the historic core of the town.</p>

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

<p>Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements</p>	<p>Score</p>	
<p>All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.</p>	<p>4</p>	

Score Summary

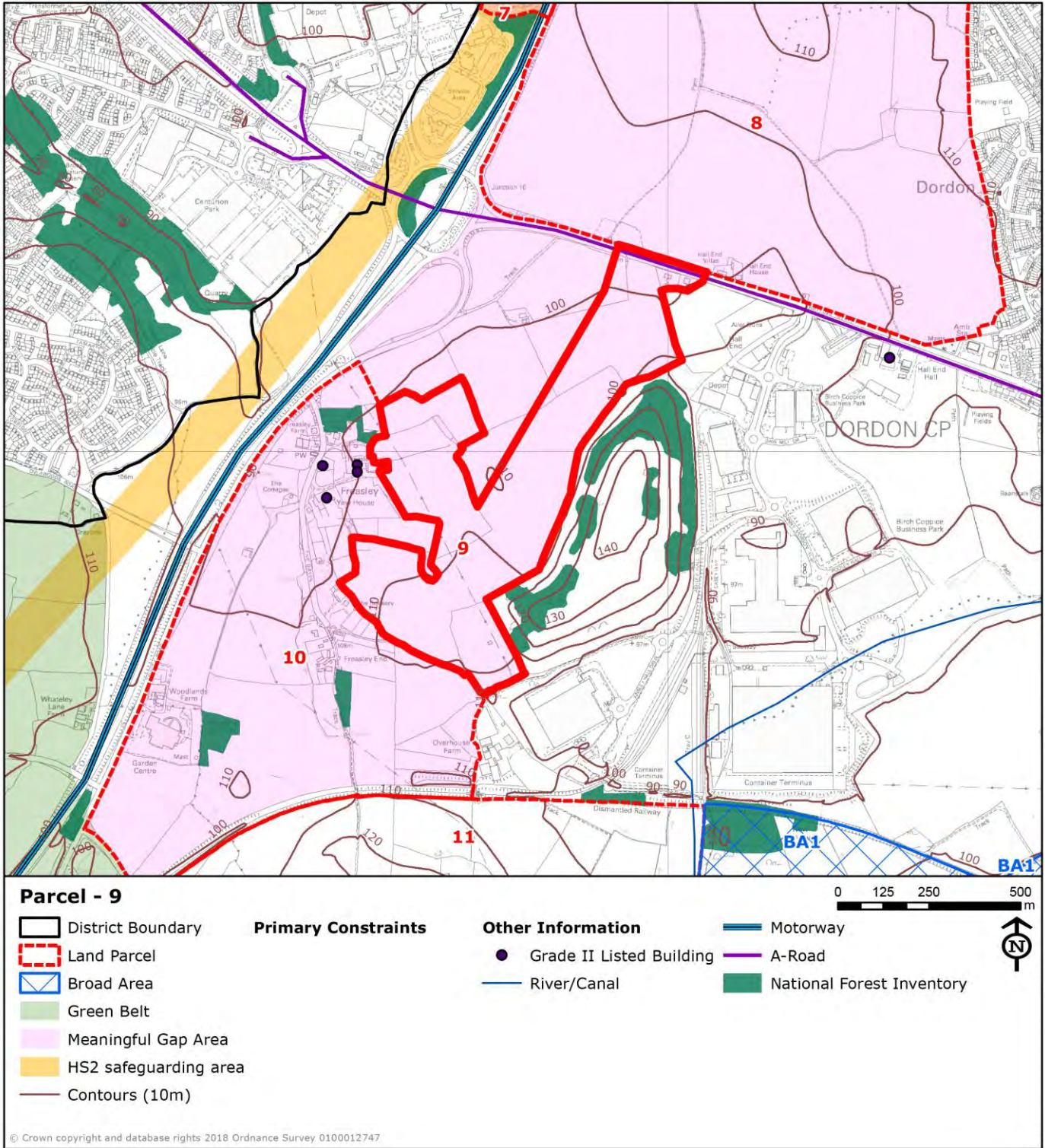
<p>Purpose 1 Score:</p>	<p>2 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 2 Score:</p>	<p>4 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 3 Score:</p>	<p>2 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 4 Score:</p>	<p>0 /4</p>	
<p>Purpose 5 Score:</p>	<p>4 /4</p>	

Total Score: 12 /20

Land Parcel Ref: 9

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap



Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 9

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	0	The parcel would not play a role in preventing ribbon development along a road corridor. The only roads within the parcel are the slip road of the motorway and the A5 dual carriageway.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	1	The parcel contains a couple of isolated houses in the far north eastern part of the parcel. The remainder of the parcel has a strong sense of openness.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	1	The parcel provides separation between Tamworth and Dordon, which are approximately 1.7 kilometres apart in the northern portion of the parcel. The industrial development of Birch Coppice Business Park is adjacent to the east of the parcel, and development of land within this parcel has the potential to create a visual perception of continuous development between Tamworth and Dordon. However, it is noted that there is a sense of separation between this parcel and Dordon due to the A5 providing a barrier and the difference in topography, with Dordon located on higher ground. The countryside to the north of the A5 (Parcel 8) has a more significant role in separating the two settlements and providing a rural setting to Dordon. Good design including appropriate landscaping buffers.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	0	This parcel occupies an area adjacent to Birch Coppice Business Park. The A5 (Watling Street) provides a physical barrier, diminishing the contribution that this parcel provides to the sense of separation between the settlements. Presence of spoil heap of the former Baddesley Colliery (rising to approx. 148 metres), which is now vegetated and wooded, also provides a physical barrier between the settlements at this point in the gap. In conclusion, the strong association of this parcel with the existing industrial/business development at Birch Coppice Business Park and the presence of physical barriers including the A5 and the spoil heap mean that this parcel makes little contribution to the sense of separation between the settlements of Tamworth and Polesworth/Dordon.

Land Parcel Ref: 9

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	2	The parcel has a rural character and contains no urbanising influences. There are some localised areas of street lighting and pavements along Trinity Road on the north western edge of the parcel but these do not compromise the rural character of the parcel.
Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)	0	The M42 forms a significant boundary to the east of the parcel, with the A5 dual carriageway forming the northern boundary. Despite this, if development we to encroach into this parcel from the east, there would be an effective appearance of merging with Tamworth due to the industrial development immediately to the west of the motorway.

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

Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town	Score	Comments
Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town? Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?	0	The parcel is not adjacent to a Conservation Area nor does it have good levels of intervisibility with the historic core of the town.

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

Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements	Score	
All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.	4	

Score Summary

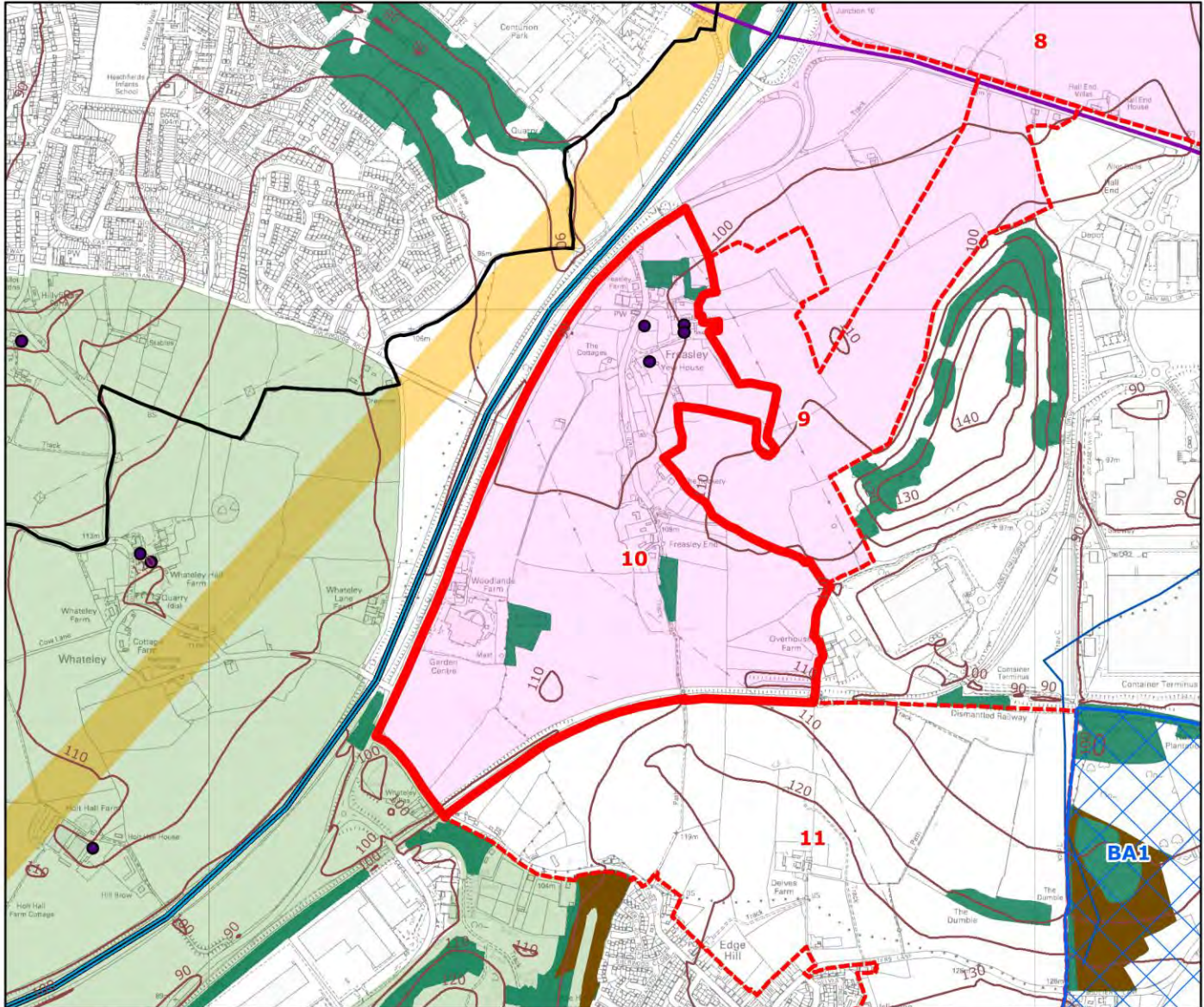
Purpose 1 Score:	1 /4	
Purpose 2 Score:	1 /4	
Purpose 3 Score:	2 /4	
Purpose 4 Score:	0 /4	
Purpose 5 Score:	4 /4	

Total Score: 8 /20

Land Parcel Ref: 10

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap



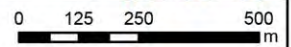
Parcel - 10

- District Boundary
- Land Parcel
- Broad Area
- Green Belt
- Meaningful Gap Area
- HS2 safeguarding area
- Contours (10m)

Primary Constraints

Other Information

- Grade II Listed Building
- River/Canal
- Motorway
- A-Road
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- National Forest Inventory



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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 10

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
<p>Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?</p>	2	The parcel could inhibit development along both sides of the Green which currently runs through the small settlement of Freasley, although there is already some existing development along the road so this role will be diminished somewhat.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
<p>Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?</p>	1	The parcel contains numerous houses within the settlement of Freasley and a large garden centre adjacent to the M42; however it also retains a rural character with a strong sense of openness.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
<p>Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?</p>	1	The parcel provides separation between Tamworth and Dordon, which are approximately 1.6 kilometres apart across the northern part of the parcel. The industrial development of Birch Coppice Business Park is adjacent to the east of the parcel, and development of land within this parcel has the potential create a visual perception of continuous development between Tamworth and Dordon. However, it is noted that there is a sense of separation between Birch Coppice Business Park and Dordon due to the A5 providing a barrier and the difference in topography, with Dordon located on higher ground. The countryside to the north of the A5 (Parcel 8) has a more significant role in separating the two settlements and providing a rural setting to Dordon.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
<p>What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?</p>	0	This parcel is located to the south of (rather than directly between) the settlements of Tamworth and Polesworth/Dordon. Birch Coppice Business Park occupies the area to the east of the parcel (south of Dordon) as does the spoil heap of the former Baddesley Colliery (rising to approx. 148 metres), which is now vegetated and wooded. In addition to the spoil heap, the A5 (Watling Street) provides a physical barrier between Tamworth and Dordon, diminishing the role that this parcel plays in the sense of separation between the settlements. This parcel also forms part of the gap between Wood End and Tamworth. The M42 forms a permanent barrier between the settlements and would help to maintain separation between them (should the open countryside to the west of the parcel remain undeveloped), reducing the importance of this parcel. Overall, this parcel is judged to make a weak contribution to the sense of separation between settlements.

Land Parcel Ref: 10

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences

Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside?
Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?

Score

1

Comments

The parcel has a rural character and contains little in the way of urbanising influences, aside from very occasional street lights along the Green. An exception is the large area of hard standing which serves as the car park for Planters Garden Centre, although this does not compromise the overall rural characteristics of the parcel.

Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment

Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)

Score

0

Comments

The M42 runs through the centre of the parcel which could form a significant boundary feature which could prevent the merging of Tamworth with settlements in North Warwickshire including Freasley and Wood End. Development up to this boundary feature would still result in some encroachment of the countryside.

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

Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town

Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town?
Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?

Score

0

Comments

The parcel is not adjacent to a Conservation Area nor does it have good levels of intervisibility with the historic core of the town.

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

Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements

All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.

Score

4

Score Summary

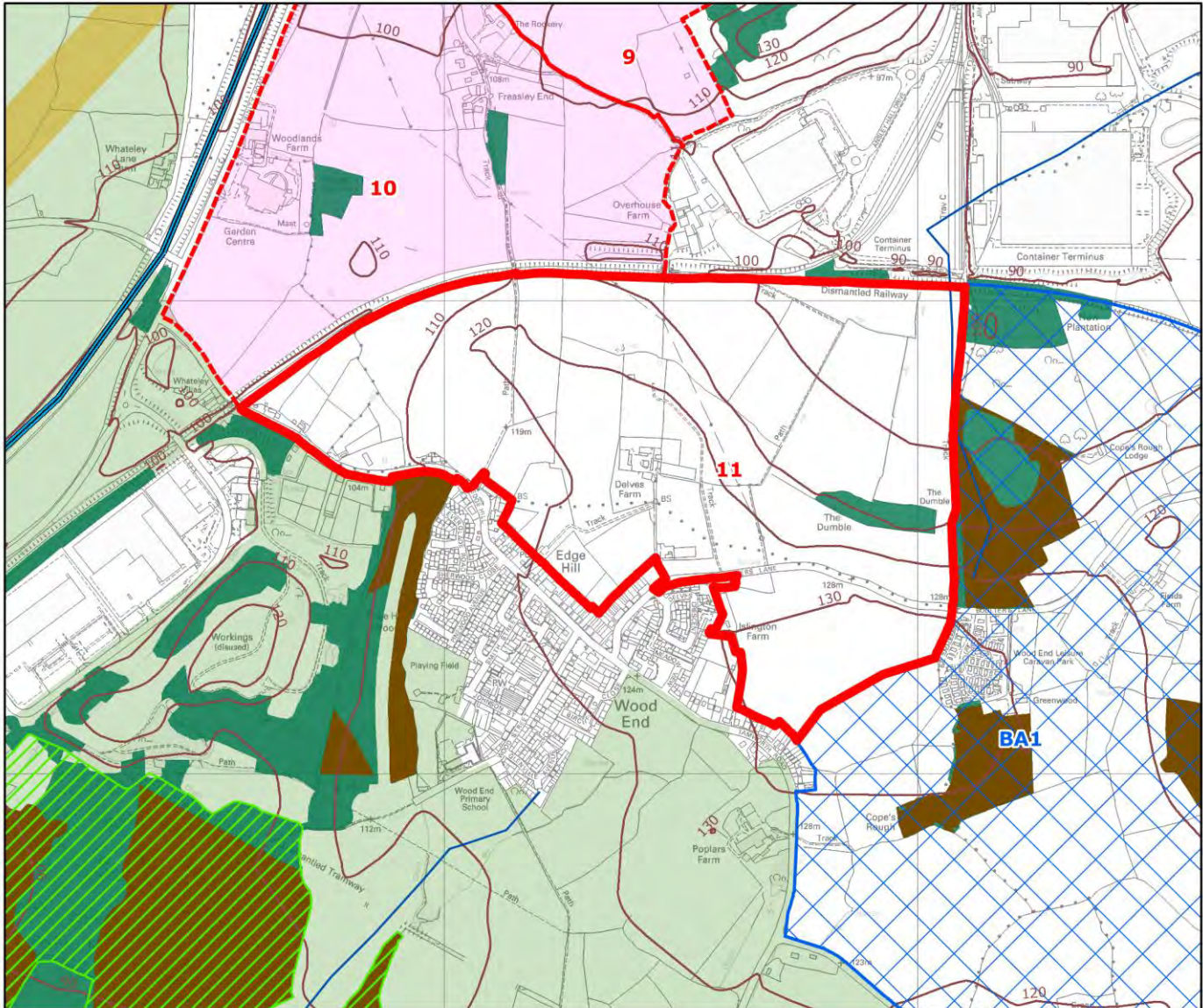
Purpose 1 Score: 3 /4
Purpose 2 Score: 1 /4
Purpose 3 Score: 1 /4
Purpose 4 Score: 0 /4
Purpose 5 Score: 4 /4

Total Score: 9 /20

Land Parcel Ref: 11

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Land Parcel



Parcel - 11

- District Boundary
- Land Parcel
- Broad Area
- Green Belt
- Meaningful Gap Area
- HS2 safeguarding area
- Contours (10m)

Primary Constraints

- SSSI

Other Information

- River/Canal
- Motorway
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- National Forest Inventory

0 112.5 225 450 m



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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 11

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Land Parcel

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	2	The parcel could inhibit ribbon development from Wood End along both sides of Boulters Lane.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	1	The parcel contains some limited agricultural development associated with Delves Farm in the centre of the area but is otherwise open.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	1	The parcel provides separation between Wood End and Tamworth, which are approximately 1.4 km apart, and Wood End and Dordon, which are approximately 2.1 km apart at this point. The industrial development with Birch Coppice Business Park is adjacent to the north-east of the parcel, and development of land within this parcel may create a visual perception of continuous development between Wood End and Dordon.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	0	This parcel is located to the south of (rather than directly between) the settlements of Tamworth and Polesworth/Dordon, adjacent to the settlement of Wood End. Birch Coppice Business Park occupies the area to the north-east of the parcel (south of Dordon) with the vegetated spoil heap of the former Baddesley Colliery (rising to approx. 148 metres) located to the north. The spoil heap and the A5 (Watling Street) provide physical barriers between Wood End and Dordon, diminishing the role that this parcel plays in the sense of separation between the settlements. This parcel also forms part of the gap between Wood End and Tamworth. The M42 forms a permanent barrier between the settlements and would help to maintain separation between them (should the open countryside to the west of the parcel remain undeveloped), reducing the importance of this parcel. Overall, this parcel is judged to make a weak contribution to the sense of separation between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	2	The parcel has a rural and open character and contains no urbanising influences.

Land Parcel Ref: 11

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Land Parcel

<p>Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment</p> <p>Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)</p>	<p>Score</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Comments</p> <p>The railway to the north of the parcel forms a significant boundary that could prevent the merging of Wood End with Tamworth in the long term. Development up to this boundary feature would still result in encroachment into the countryside. There are less significant boundaries to the east to prevent the merging of Wood End and Baddesley Ensor. These include blocks of woodland and a stream.</p>
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Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

<p>Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town</p> <p>Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town? Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?</p>	<p>Score</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Comments</p> <p>The parcel is not adjacent to a Conservation Area nor does it have good levels of intervisibility with the historic core of a town.</p>
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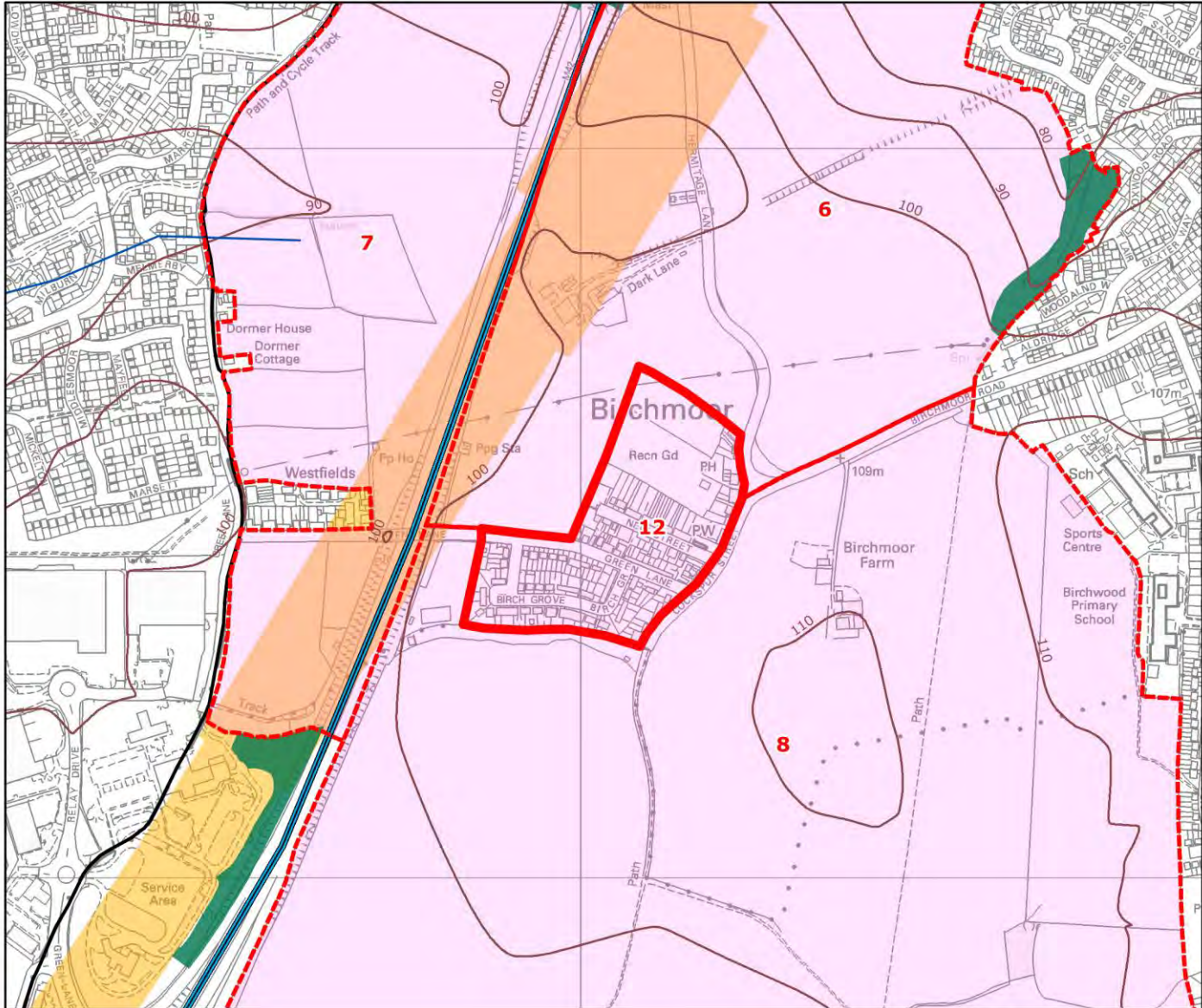
Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

<p>Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements</p> <p>All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.</p>	<p>Score</p> <p>4</p>	
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Score Summary

<p>Purpose 1 Score: 3 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 2 Score: 1 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 3 Score: 2 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 4 Score: 0 /4</p>		
<p>Purpose 5 Score: 4 /4</p>		

Total Score: 10 /20



Parcel - 12

- District Boundary
- Land Parcel
- Meaningful Gap Area
- HS2 safeguarding area
- Contours (10m)

Primary Constraints

- River/Canal

Other Information

- Motorway
- National Forest Inventory

0 70 140 280 m



Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: 12

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

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

Criterion 1a - Ribbon development	Score	Comments
Could the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the land within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	0	The majority of this parcel is already developed, therefore designating this parcel as Green Belt would not prevent ribbon development along a road corridor.
Criterion 1b - Openness	Score	Comments
Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	0	The openness within this parcel is compromised by existing dense residential development which covers a large proportion of this parcel. In the northern part of the parcel there is more openness with the land under use as a sports pitch and allotments.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Criterion 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements	Score	Comments
Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	0	The parcel covers the existing settlement of Birchmoor and therefore does not contribute to the gap between Birchmoor and its neighbouring settlements.
Criterion 2b - Role of the parcel in actual or perceived separation between settlements	Score	Comments
What role does the parcel play in the sense of actual or perceived separation between settlements?	0	As this parcel contains an area of existing development, it does not make a contribution to the sense of separation between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Criterion 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences	Score	Comments
Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	0	The parcel is mostly covered with existing dense modern residential development, with urban style streetscapes including street lighting and kerbs which do not relate well to the surrounding countryside.

Land Parcel Ref: 12

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Meaningful Gap

Criterion 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment

Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel)

Score

1

Comments

The M42 motorway lies 65 metres to the west of the parcel, and would act as a significant barrier to contain development from Tamworth in the long term. No such barrier exists to the east of the parcel.

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

Criterion 4a - Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town

Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town?
Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?

Score

0

Comments

The parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area and does not have any intervisibility with the historic core of a town.

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

Criterion 5a - The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements

All parcels make an equally significant contribution (+4) to this purpose.

Score

4

Score Summary

Purpose 1 Score: 0 /4
Purpose 2 Score: 0 /4
Purpose 3 Score: 1 /4
Purpose 4 Score: 0 /4
Purpose 5 Score: 4 /4

Total Score: 5 /20

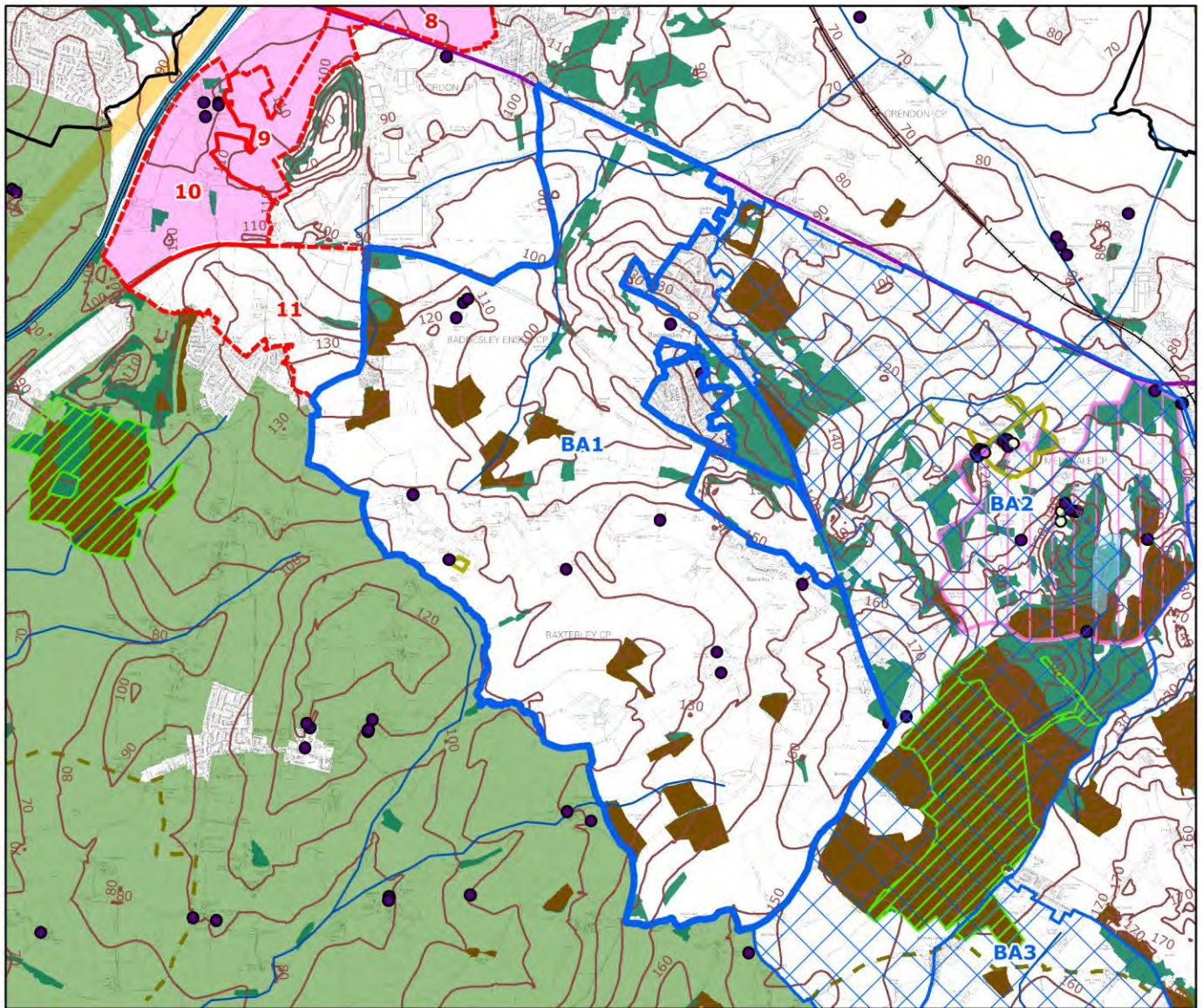
Appendix 2

Broad Area Assessments

Land Parcel Ref: BA1

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Broad Area



Parcel - BA1

- District Boundary
- Land Parcel
- Broad Area
- Green Belt
- Meaningful Gap Area
- HS2 safeguarding area
- Contours (10m)

Primary Constraints

- SSSI
- Scheduled Monument

Other Information

- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Promoted Footpath
- River/Canal
- Lake

- Motorway
- A-Road
- Railway Line
- Conservation Area
- Registered Park and Garden
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- National Forest Inventory

0 325 650 1,300 m



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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: BA1

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Broad Area

General Notes

Broad Area 1 lies between Wood End to the west, Baddesley Ensor to the north east and Dordon to the north. The village of Baxterley lies within the Broad Area. The area contains numerous pockets of ancient woodland (many of which are also locally designated for the wildlife value) and a moated site to the east of Baxterley which is designated as a Scheduled Monument.

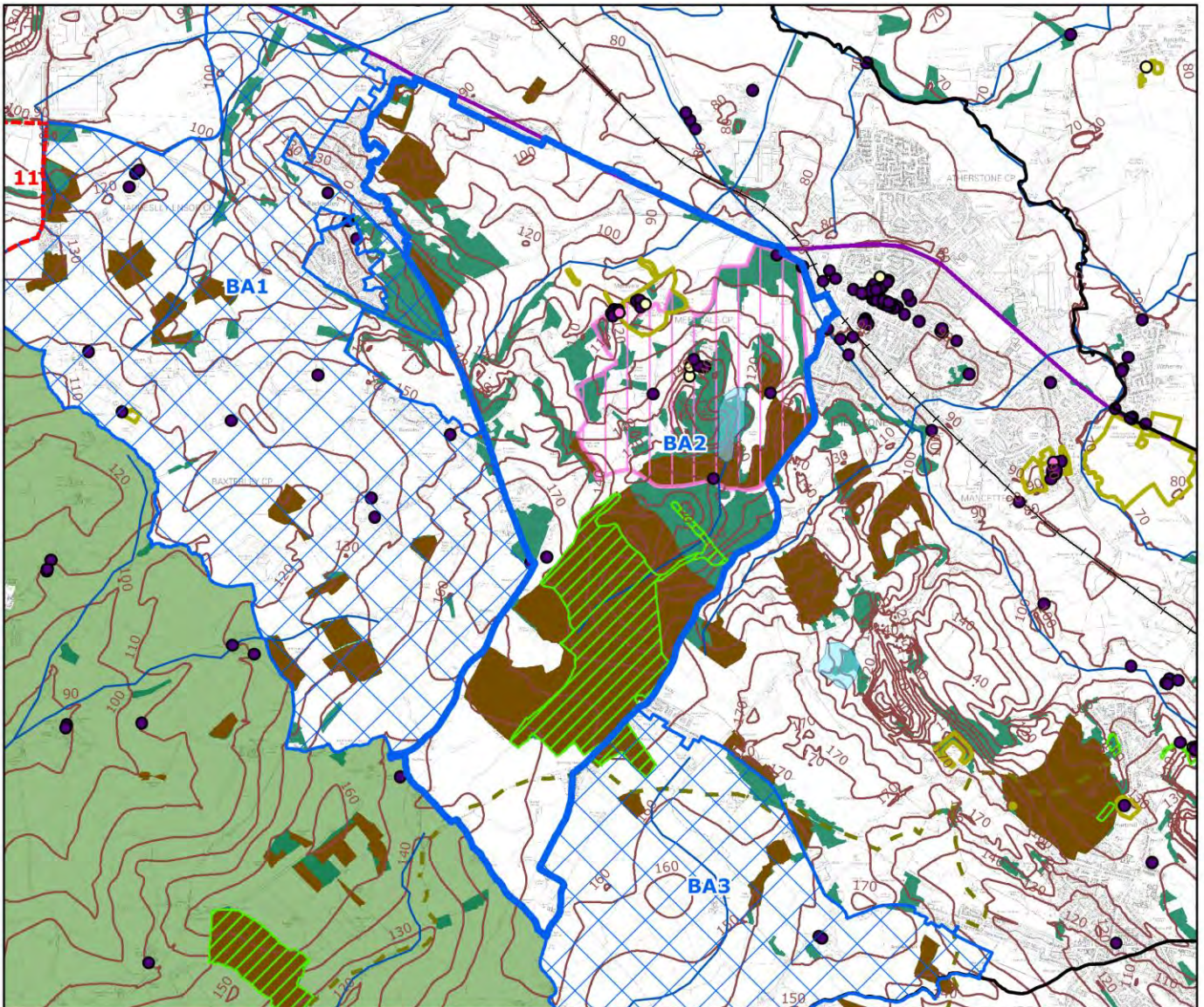
If recognised as Green Belt, Broad Area 1 would make a contribution to four out of the five purposes of the Green Belt:

- Preventing urban sprawl of Baddesley Ensor to the west.
- Preventing the merging of Wood End, Baddesley Ensor and Baxterley over the long term, as there are no existing significant boundary features to prevent this.
- Safeguarding the countryside, including several pockets of ancient woodland, some of which are locally designated for their wildlife value.
- Would help to encourage urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land within North Warwickshire.

Land Parcel Ref: BA2

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Broad Area



Parcel - BA2

- District Boundary
- Land Parcel
- Broad Area
- Green Belt
- Contours (10m)

- Primary Constraints**
- SSSI
 - Scheduled Monument

- Other Information**
- Grade I Listed Building
 - Grade II Listed Building
 - Grade II* Listed Building
 - Promoted Footpath
 - River/Canal
 - Lake
 - A-Road
 - Railway Line
 - Competition Area

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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: BA2

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Broad Area

General Notes

Broad Area 2 lies between Baddesley Ensor and Grendon to the north and west, Atherstone to the east and Ridge Lane and Birchley Heath to the south. Within this broad area there are numerous areas of ancient woodland, including the Bentley Park Wood SSSI. The broad area also contains the Scheduled Monument of Merevale Abbey and the Grade II* Registered Parkland of Merevale Hall.

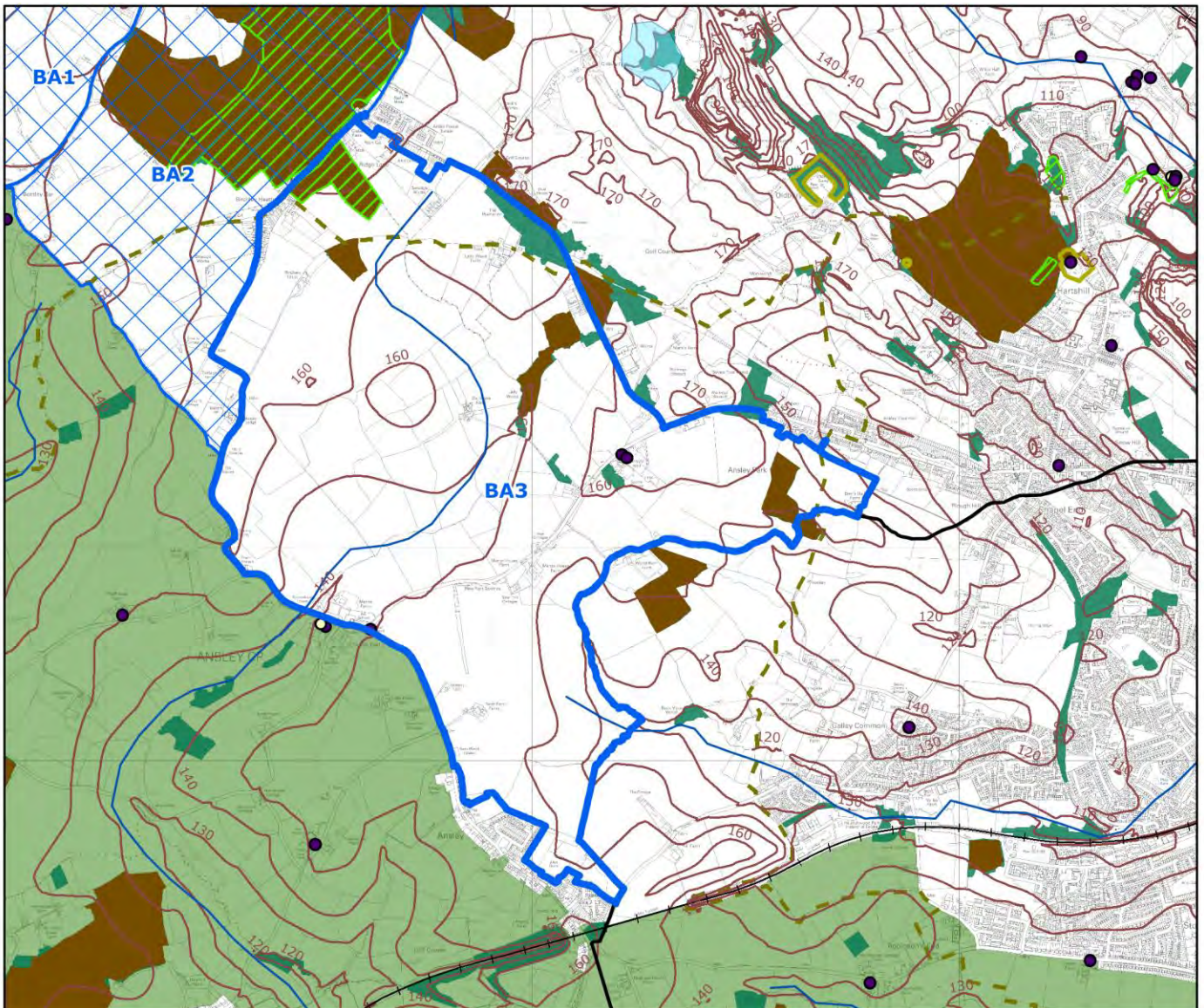
If recognised as Green Belt, Broad Area 2 would make a contribution to all five purposes of the Green Belt by:

- **C**hecking the urban sprawl of the western part of Atherstone, as there are no existing boundaries to prevent this.
- **P**reventing the merging of Baddesley Ensor/Grendon with Atherstone in the long term.
- **S**afeguarding the countryside, including a number of ancient woodlands and Bentley Park Wood SSSI.
- **P**reserving the rural setting of valued listed buildings including the Grade I listed Church of Our Lady in Merevale, the Grade II* Registered Parkland of Merevale Hall and the setting to Watling Street Bridge Conservation Area.
- **H**elping to encourage urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land within North Warwickshire

Land Parcel Ref: BA3

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Broad Area



0 250 500 1,000 m



Parcel - BA3

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| District Boundary | Primary Constraints | Other Information |
| Broad Area | SSSI | Grade I Listed Building |
| Green Belt | Scheduled Monument | Grade II Listed Building |
| Contours (10m) | | Grade II* Listed Building |
| | | Promoted Footpath |
| | | River/Canal |
| | | Lake |
| | | Railway Line |
| | | Conservation Area |
| | | Ancient Woodland/Treeستان |

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Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Other Authorities: N/A

Land Parcel Ref: BA3

Main Authority: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Parcel Type: Broad Area

General Notes

Broad Area 3 lies between Ansley to the south, Church End to the west, Birchley Heath and Ridge End to the north and Ansley Common to the east.

The Broad Area contains areas of ancient woodland including part of the Bentley Park Wood SSSI in the north. It also contains several listed buildings including the Grade II listed Ansley Hall (which has been converted into residential flats).

If recognised as Green Belt, Broad Area 3 would make a contribution to four out of the five purposes of the Green Belt by:

- Preventing the merging of Ansley, Church End and Birchley Heath/Ridge End in the long term as there are no existing significant boundary features.
- Protecting the countryside, including a number of ancient woodlands and Bentley Park Wood SSSI.
- Preserving the rural setting of listed buildings including the Grade II* listed Church of St. Lawrence in Church End and the Grade II listed building of Ansley Hall.
- Helping to encourage urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land within North Warwickshire.

Appendix 3




Existing Green Belt boundary review

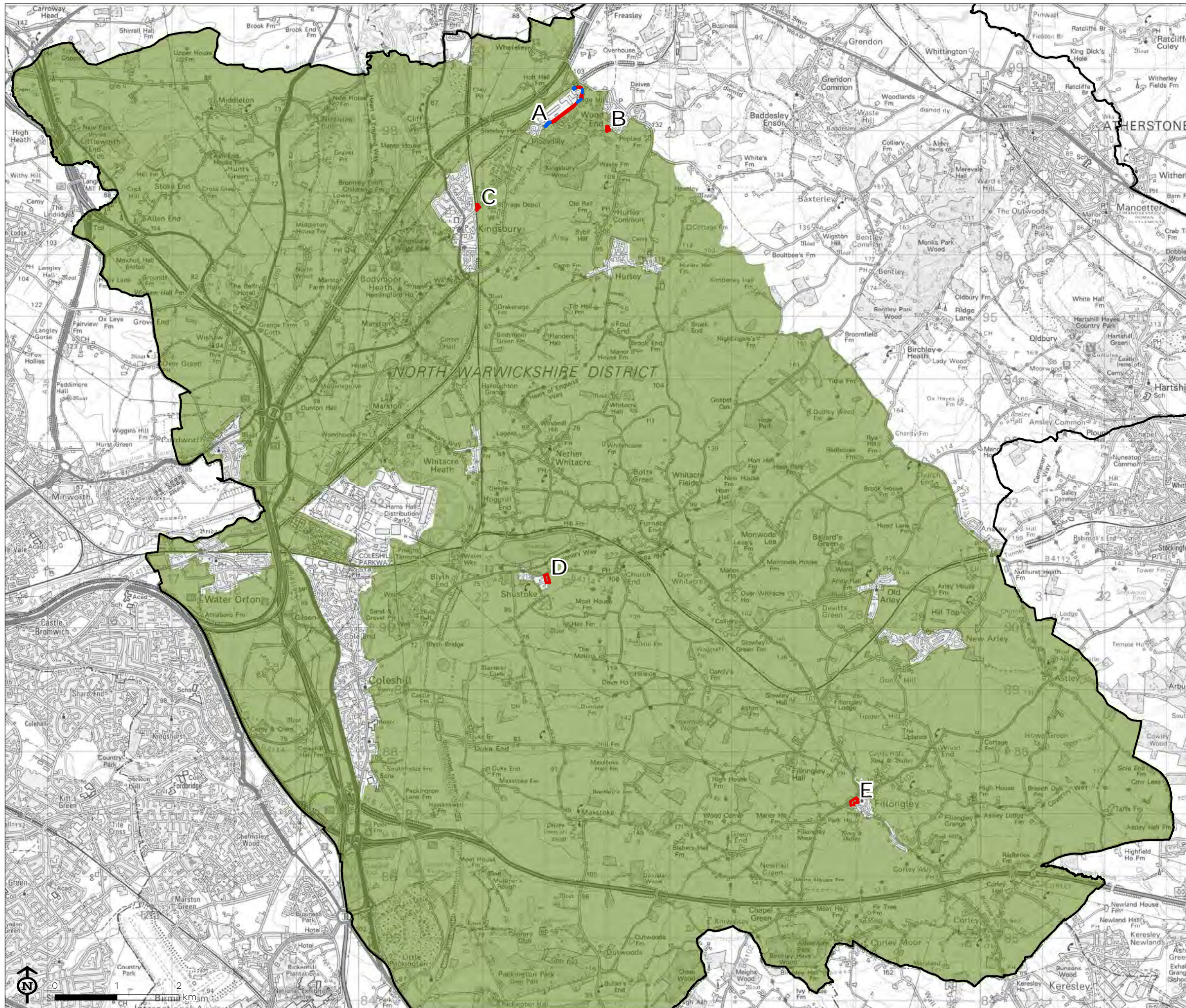
As set out in paragraph 5.4, the existing boundaries of the North Warwickshire Green Belt were reviewed using desk based study and site visits to see whether the existing boundaries are still appropriate. The results are presented in the following maps. Blue areas are areas currently excluded from the Green Belt which are recommended to be included, while red areas are currently within the Green Belt boundary and it is recommended that these are excluded. These results and the reasoning behind them are also summarised in paragraph 5.5.

North Warwickshire Green Belt Study

Figure A.1

Suggested Amendments

-  North Warwickshire Council
-  Suggest inclusion in Green Belt
-  Suggest exclusion from Green Belt







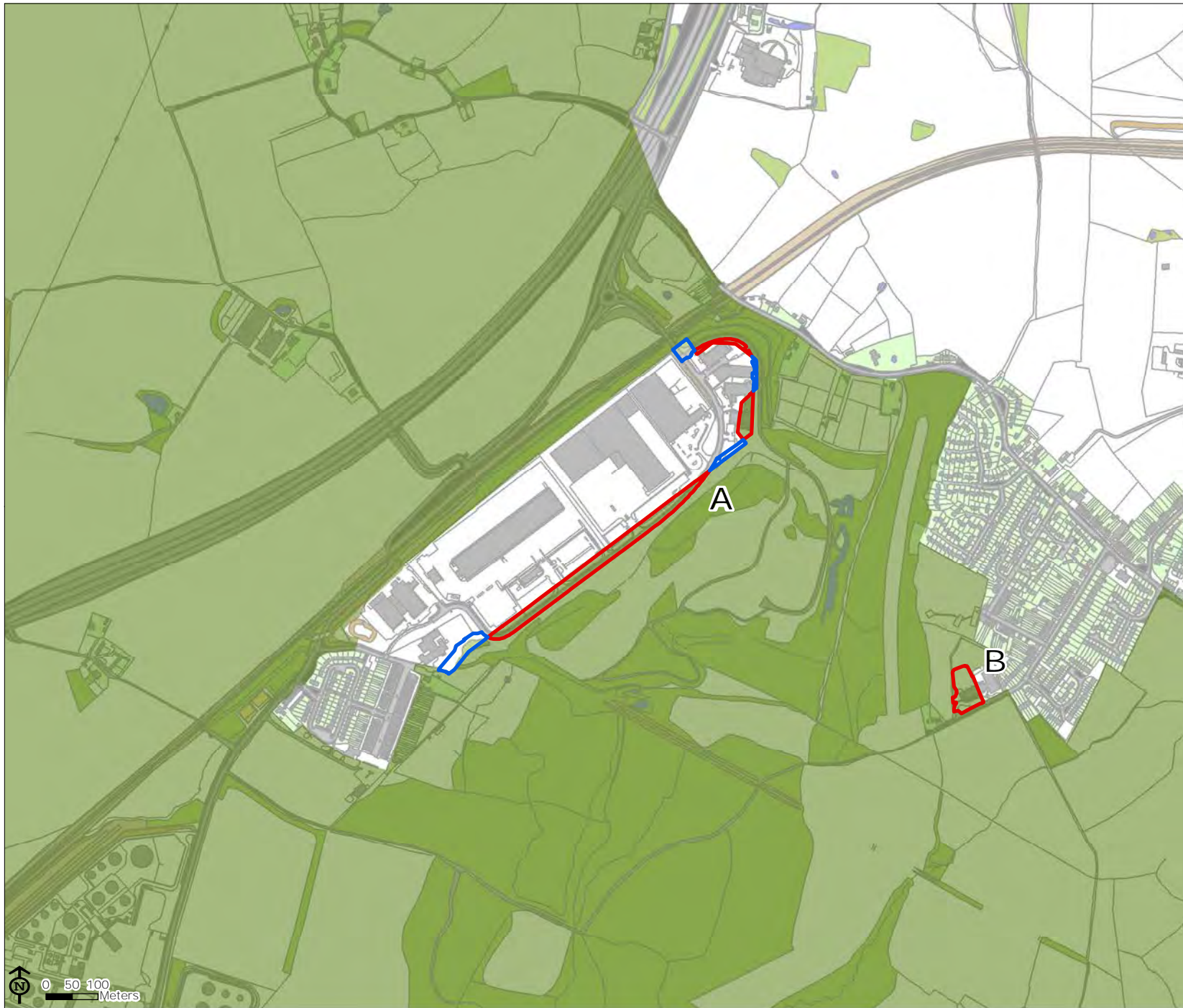
Map Scale @ A3: 1:60,000



Figure A.2

Suggested Amendments:
Piccadilly

-  District boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Suggest inclusion in Green Belt
-  Suggest exclusion from Green Belt




Map Scale @ A4: 1:10,440



Figure A.3

Suggested Amendments:
Wood End

-  District boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Suggest exclusion from Green Belt



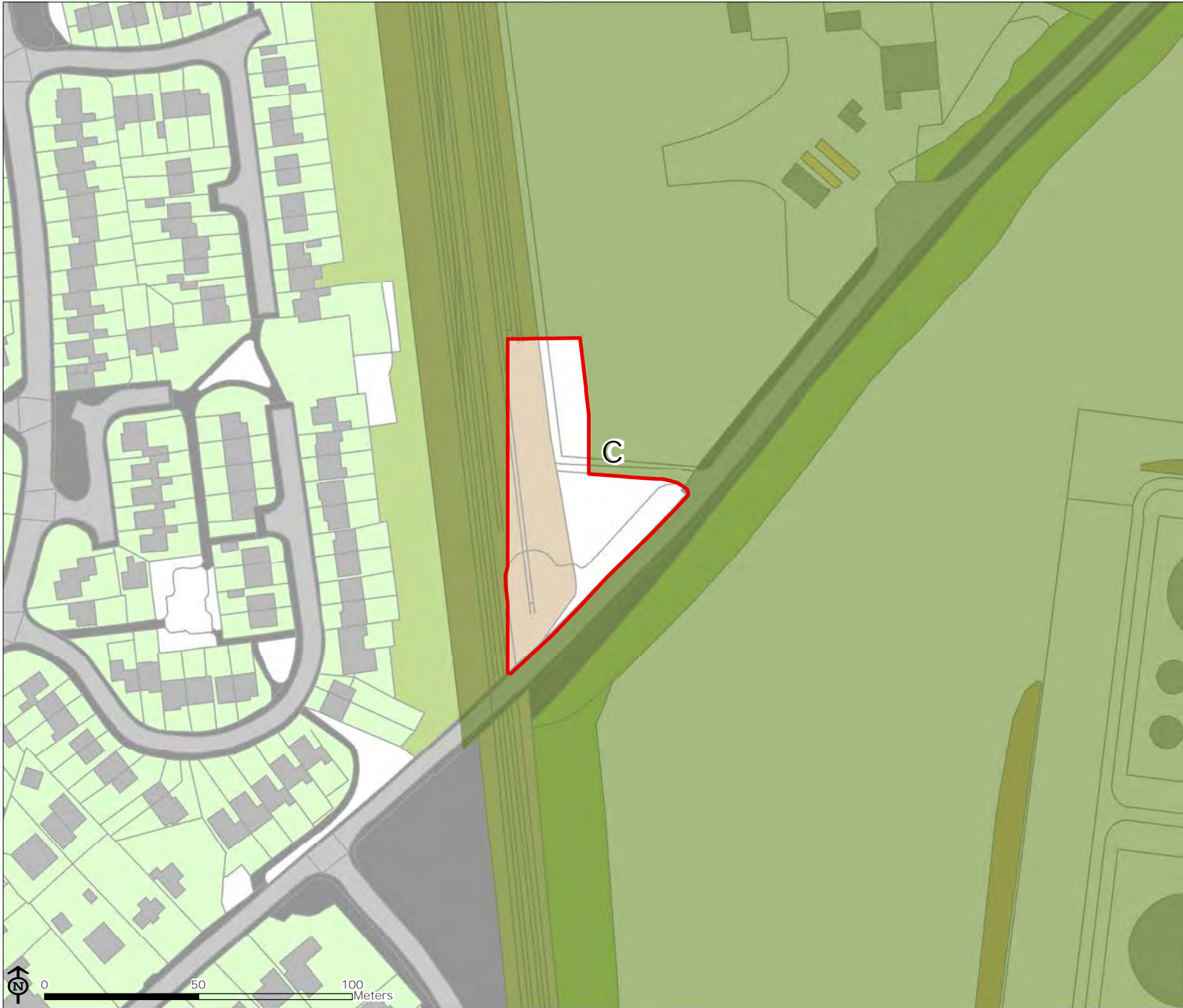
Map Scale @ A4: 1:1,480



Figure A.4

Suggested Amendments:
Kingsbury

-  District boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Suggest exclusion from Green Belt



Map Scale @ A4: 1:1,770

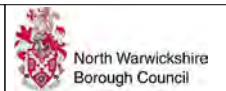


Figure A.5

Suggested Amendments:
Shustoke

-  District boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Suggest exclusion from Green Belt



Map Scale @ A4: 1:2,310

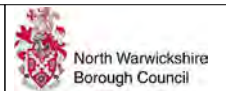



Figure A.6

Suggested Amendments:
Fillongley

-  District boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Suggest exclusion from Green Belt



Map Scale @ A4: 1:2,020

