



POLICEMAN'S LANE: LANDSCAPE AND GREEN BELT STUDY

for

Wyatt Homes

by

Hankinson Duckett Associates

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Appendix 3 – HDA Green Belt Methodology

Photographs

Photographs from June 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instructions

- 1.1.1 Hankinson Duckett Associates has been instructed by Wyatt Homes to carry out an initial Landscape and Green Belt Study of the site at Policeman's Lane, Upton (illustrated on Plans HDA 1 and 2). The study considers the landscape and visual context of the site and more specifically assesses the contribution the site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt which washes over the land surrounding the settlement edge of Upton (Plan HDA 2). The study breaks the site down into two parcels. The western parcel lies to the south of the allocated land currently under construction (Frenches Green) and the eastern parcel lies to the east of Watery lane, to the west of the SANG allocation.

2 THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

2.1 Settlement Pattern

- 2.1.1 Upton is the second largest settlement in Purbeck District and lies adjacent to Poole. The town is contained to the north and west by the A35 dual carriageway, by the wetlands of Lytchett Bay to the south and Holes Bay to the east, which both connect to Poole Harbour. The settlement extends south-east to the Poole suburbs of Hamworthy and Turlin Moor. The settlement is situated within the low lying landscape associated with the northern shore of Poole Harbour, located to the south and south-east. Upton Heath lies to the north-east, beyond the A35 and the village of Lytchett Minster lies approximately 200m to the west of the site at its nearest point.
- 2.1.2 Settlement in Upton originated as small groups of dwellings located primarily along Dorchester Road (OS map 1902). The town expanded significantly after the war and the majority of housing within the town is late 20th century (Upton Townscape Character Appraisal - Ref 1). The A35 dual carriageway was built in the 1970's and effectively encloses the settlement to the north and west, separating Upton from the heathland to the north and the rural agricultural landscape to the west.
- 2.1.3 To the south, Upton extends up to the edges of the wetlands and saltmarsh surrounding Poole Harbour, which provide a soft edge to the settlement. Upton Country Park lies to the east of the town. The eastern edge to the settlement is well wooded, which provides containment to the industrial edge of the town.
- 2.1.4 Lytchett Minster is a historic village to the west of Upton. The central core of the village and the land surrounding Lytchett Manor (now a school and caravan park) lie within Lytchett Minster Conservation Area (Plan HDA1). The village extends east, to the north of Dorchester Road and west to Old Watery Lane. The Conservation Area '*contains a variation on the classic composition of great house, park and village*' (Lytchett Minster

Conservation Area Appraisal – Ref 2). The landscape setting to the Conservation Area is described as:

'The broader landscape setting comprises farmland and forestry. The plantations to the north and north west of Conservation Area retain an estate managed character and provide a barrier which closes views in these directions... ..To the south and south east the A35 compromises the broader setting of the Conservation Area though a strip of agricultural land provides a narrow buffer across which there are limited views. Further to the south east, Lytchett Bay, visible from the manor house, forms the western extent of Poole Harbour.' (Ref 2, para 3.1)

2.1.5 Much of the land to the south and east of Lytchett Minster, between the village and the A35 dual carriageway, lies within floodplain. The floodplain extends south and east, along the southern edge of Upton. The site does not lie within floodplain.

2.1.6 A number of other designations cover the land surrounding Upton. The Upton Heath, to the north of the town, and Poole Harbour to the south, are subject to multiple ecological designations and are protected at an international level. The countryside surrounding the built-up area, is Green Belt and is extensively used for recreation, particularly to the north, with a well-used network of footpaths and bridleways, including the Poole Harbour Trail, which follows Watery Lane and Slough Lane, adjacent to the site. Upton contains a number of listed buildings, but no Conservation Area. The nearest listed building to the site (outside of the Lytchett Minster Conservation Area) is Old Quoins Cottage, located approximately 250m to the south-east of the eastern site boundary.

2.2 Landscape Character

2.2.1 **National Character:** The site falls within National Character Area 135: The Dorset Heaths. Lying centrally in the south of England and reaching the sea at and between Poole and Christchurch harbours, this area is framed by the heathland of the New Forest National Character Area to the east, and to the south, west and north by the calcareous hills and downs of the South Purbeck character area and the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase.

2.2.2 **Regional and Local Character:** The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 3) identified 22 character areas across the County. The site and its immediate environs are located within the Landscape character type: Valley Pasture. More recent and detailed assessment of the landscape surrounding the site has been undertaken in the Purbeck Draft Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance (2008 – Ref 4). The site lies within Landscape Character Area (LCA) Sherford Valley Pasture, within the Valley Pasture Character Type. The character area extends east to Slough Lane and

west to include the land surrounding Lytchett Minster (plan HDA 3). Beyond the character area to the south is the Upton Bay Marsh character area.

2.2.3 The character assessment describes the key characteristics of the Sherford Valley Pasture as:

- *'A flat intensively farmed landscape.*
- *Well wooded river corridor with some significant mature trees.*
- *An inaccessible perception especially along the river corridor.*
- *Lytchett Minster is the main settlement with some characteristic parkland/estate features.*
- *Narrow hedge lined lanes.*
- *The group of buildings at the Sherford River crossing in Organford are key features.*
- *Farmer Palmers is a distinctive recreational feature.*
- *The A35 is a major visual and physical feature of influence.'*

2.2.4 The character area is associated with the low lying landscape surrounding the Sherford River and other streams draining south into the bay. Belts of woodland line the river, otherwise woodland cover is sparse. Lytchett Minster is the key settlement within the character area and contains notable parkland features including, buildings, tree avenues and specimen trees. The A35 *'Creates a visual and physical impact across the whole area.'*

2.2.5 The character assessment has also considered the condition of the landscape. Positive landscape elements include the woodland lining the river corridor, parkland features and intact hedgerows with hedgerow trees lining rural lanes within the area. The hedgerows within fields have been described as 'in decline'. The assessment identifies negative influences on landscape condition as including:

'urban impacts caused by the road network, some poor edges to settlements and 'horsiculture' detract from quality and create fragmentation'.

The overall landscape condition for the character area was judged to be 'Poor to Moderate'.

2.2.6 The character assessment put forward a series of landscape management and development objectives for the character area. Objectives that are relevant to the potential development of the site include:

- *'Carry out Village Design Statement for Lytchett Minster (to include the Lees Estate)*
- *Manage 'horsiculture' and conserve and enhance natural and built environment features.*

- *Encourage/promote tree, hedge and woodland management.*
- *Enhance the local distinctiveness of the two road/river crossings via a highway improvement scheme.*
- *Undertake whole river valley enhancement scheme to include improved access to river corridor, improved recreational opportunities and to increase overall landscape and biodiversity interest.'*

3 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITE

3.1 Landscape analysis

Western Parcel

3.1.1 The western parcel lies adjacent to the southern boundary of the Frenches Green development at Policeman's Lane and is included within the construction site, for use as topsoil storage and for the construction of a pumping station within the southern corner of the site. As a result, the parcel is surrounded by hoarding, contains heaps of topsoil and comprises a disturbed landscape. As part of the extension to the north, bunding and acoustic fencing is being installed along the north-western boundary of the development and western parcel, adjacent to the A35.

3.1.2 The parcel is contained by development to the north, by the A35 and early mature boundary trees to the west, and by the mature vegetation running down both sides of Watery Lane to the east. The vegetation lining Watery Lane includes mature mixed native hedgerows, approximately 4m high and mature oak trees, between 15 and 20m high. These features, in combination with the stream to the east of Watery Lane are key landscape features within the local landscape. Watery Lane is a public right of way and is well used by local residents.

3.1.3 The character of the parcel is influenced by its disturbed land use and its proximity to the A35 dual carriageway. The parcel is separated from the wider landscape by the A35 and the strong tree belt to the east.

Eastern Parcel

3.1.4 The eastern parcel site is located to the south-east of the western parcel site, to the south-east of Watery Lane. The parcel consists of a small, triangular field in pasture, bound to the north-west by the tree belt and stream lining Watery Lane, to the south by the hedgerow and mature oak trees lining Slough Lane and to the north-east by a mature mixed native hedgerow, approximately 4m high, with occasional hedgerow trees.

3.1.5 The parcel is enclosed and rural in character, with a ditch and wet flush running south through the site to the southern boundary. A power line runs north-south within the

parcel, adjacent to the western site boundary. A SANG allocation, relating to the Frenches Green development, extends into the eastern side of the site. The boundary to the SANG is currently not defined on the ground by any physical features but will be demarcated by a post and rail fence.

3.2 Visual analysis

Western Parcel

- 3.2.1 The western parcel is generally well contained from the wider landscape, particularly from rural viewpoints to the east. The existing settlement of Upton blocks all views of the parcel from the north-east. The development currently under construction to the north of the parcel will have views of the site when complete.
- 3.2.2 There are currently views into the parcel from the A35, Old Watery Lane and Dorchester Road to the west. Views from the A35 are transient in nature and consist of partial views of the topsoil storage heaps within the parcel, broken up by the vegetation lining the road. Views will be further reduced when the acoustic fencing and mounding works are complete. Watery Lane is located to the immediate east of the parcel and is enclosed to either side by mature hedgerows and trees. In summer there are only occasional glimpses of the parcel through gaps in the vegetation. The visibility of the parcel is likely to increase in winter when vegetation is out of leaf. At the southern end of Watery Lane, the south-eastern boundary vegetation of the western parcel has been removed, to allow for the installation of a pumping station, affording open views of the parcel from this small section of Watery Lane. The parcel is seen in the context of the A35 and the new development to the immediate north of the site.
- 3.2.3 There are no views of the parcel from Slough Lane, a public right of way, which joins Watery Lane to the south of the parcel and extends east, eventually looping back to the north to the settlement edge of Upton. Footpath users on Watery Lane and Slough Lane experience a high level of enclosure along the whole route, which is contained by trees and hedgerows. Field gates form the only breaks in the vegetation.
- 3.2.4 Dorchester Road lies to the north-west of the parcel and connects Lytchett Minster to Upton via a bridge over the A35. The hedgerows lining the road, screen the majority of views of the parcel. The field gate opposite South Lytchett Manor Caravan Park affords views across intervening fields, where the A35 and boundary vegetation of the western parcel can be seen in the mid-ground of the view, along with the development to the north of the site. The land within the western parcel can be glimpsed through gaps in the vegetation. Similar views can be seen from the bridge crossing the A35 and one other field gate on the Dorchester Road. These views will diminish with the implementation of the bunding, fencing and additional boundary planting.

3.2.5 Lytchett Minster lies to the west of the western parcel, beyond the A35. The western-most properties of Ashbrook Walk have glimpses of the site boundary vegetation and parcel to the east. These views are filtered by the mature trees that line the edge of the settlement and by the vegetated south-western boundary of the western parcel. There are no other views of the parcel from Lytchett Minster. Old Watery Lane runs south-east from Lytchett Minster towards the site. Hedgerows line the lane, however these are low and gappy, enabling open views across the adjacent field towards the A35 and the western site boundary. The western parcel can be glimpsed beyond the boundary vegetation and is framed by the mature trees lining Watery Lane, which form the backdrop to the view. Views of the parcel from Lytchett Minster and Old Watery Lane are likely to increase in winter when vegetation is not in leaf, however the bunding, fencing and additional boundary planting proposed along the western boundary as part of the Frenches Green works, will reduce the visibility of the parcel from this location.

Eastern Parcel

3.2.6 There is currently limited visibility into the eastern parcel, however housing development located within the parcel is likely to be visible at construction over the existing eastern hedgerow boundary, from the allotments to the north-east, gaps in the vegetation along Slough Lane (usually field gates) to the south-east and east and occasional glimpses from properties to the north and east. Views would consist of glimpses and partial views of the housing seen over the existing boundary hedgerow. These views will be restricted by intervening trees and hedgerows and would generally be seen in the context of the existing hard settlement edge of Upton, to the north-east of the site.

3.2.7 There are occasional glimpsed views into the parcel from Watery Lane to the immediate west of the site. Views consist of occasional glimpses through gaps in the dense tree belt on the western boundary. These views are likely to increase in winter when vegetation is not in leaf.

3.2.8 There are open views of the parcel from the small section of the SANG that lies within the site. Views from the remainder of the SANG are filtered by the hedgerow field boundary to the north-east of the parcel.

3.2.9 There are no views of the eastern parcel from the A35, Dorchester Road or Lytchett Minster, due to intervening vegetation and the tree belt lining Watery Lane. There are, and would continue to be, no views of the site (east or west) from viewpoints beyond Slough Lane to the south and east, beyond Watery Lane to the west (eastern parcel only) and beyond the SANG land to the north (of both parcels).

4 GREEN BELT POLICY & REVIEW

4.1 National Green Belt Policy

4.1.1 The study area (as shown on plan HDA 1) is washed over by Green Belt. *'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.'* (Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework – Ref 5). Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out policies for 'Protecting Green Belt Land'.

4.1.2 Paragraph 80 lists the five purposes of the Green Belt. These are:

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

4.1.3 Paragraph 81 goes on to state that:

'Once Green Belts have been defined, 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.'

4.1.4 Paragraph 83 states that:

'Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.'

4.1.5 Paragraph 84, states that:

'When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.'

4.1.6 Paragraphs 83 and 84 set the context for Green Belt review. National guidance has prompted a requirement within many districts for a Green Belt review / study to inform the Local Plan and assist with the Local Plan evidence base for the provision of new areas of sustainable development.

4.1.7 Paragraphs 87 and 88 of the NPPF consider the protection of the Green Belt through local planning policy. Inappropriate development within the Green Belt *'should not be approved except in very special circumstances...*

'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'

4.1.8 In order for a site to be removed from Green Belt, a new Green Belt boundary would need to be defined. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF sets out the parameters for setting new Green Belt boundaries:

'When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:

- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;*
- satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and*
- define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*

4.2 Purbeck Green Belt Policy

4.2.1 Green Belt policy for Purbeck is covered within the spatial policies in chapter 7 of the Local Plan Part 1 (Ref 6): Spatial Distribution of Development. The site lies within North East Purbeck, which is covered by Policy NE. The policy sets out the preferred distribution for North East Purbeck, with a focus on development at Upton and Lytchett Matravers. The last paragraph of the policy covers Green Belt and states that:

'The extent of the South East Dorset Green Belt in Purbeck will be maintained subject to the following alterations:

- Redefining the western boundary of the Green Belt to provide a more robust and justifiable boundary*
- To accommodate the settlement extensions at Policeman's Lane, Upton and Huntick Road, Lytchett Matravers*
- Minor boundary re-alignment to coincide with OS Base map.*

The extent of the revised South East Dorset Green Belt boundary is set out on the Key Diagram and Changes to the Proposals Maps within Appendix 4.'

4.3 **Purbeck Green Belt Review**

- 4.3.1 Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 established the current extent of the Green Belt within Purbeck District. Modifications to the Green Belt resulting from the adopted Local Plan Part 1 are set out in the Purbeck Green Belt Review 2012. The Local Plan is currently under partial review, in order to provide scope for additional development within the district. It has been recognised that some of the most sustainable locations for new housing are currently within Green Belt. In order to inform potential new housing allocations Purbeck District Council has undertaken a Green Belt Review Update (Ref 7), to consider potential additional site allocations. Appendix 2 contains extracts of the report that are relevant to the site.
- 4.3.2 The purpose of the East Dorset Green Belt has been identified as to prevent the coalescence of settlement that would result from uncontrolled westward expansion of Bournemouth and Poole. In order to test the contributions of sites to the functions of the Green Belt, the Green Belt Review has identified key settlements as being: Upton, Wareham, Lytchett Matravers and Lytchett Minster. The study includes a traffic light appraisal system for each sites contribution to each of the Green Belt purposes, followed by explanatory text and a judgement on whether or not the site would be suitable or unsuitable for removal from the Green Belt.
- 4.3.3 Only the western parcel has been assessed within the Green Belt Review. The western parcel was judged to contribute to Purposes 1 (checking sprawl) and 2 (preventing merging) of the Green Belt, as the parcel contributes to the physical separation between Upton and Lytchett Minster. The review states that:
'Development here would cause a south-westerly sprawl of the town (Upton) towards Lytchett Minster, more than halving the gap between Upton and Lytchett Minster to around 230m. Whilst the presence of the bypass would offer a small degree of containment, it is undeniable that development in this direction would cause a sprawling and merging effect.'
- 4.3.4 The review has also assessed that the parcel contributes to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt (safeguarding the countryside), but does not contribute to purposes 4 and 5. The review assesses that:
'Development here would be neutral in terms of impacts on Lytchett Minster Conservation Area, as it would not extend towards it and would be contained by the bypass. Therefore, the effect on the historic setting of Lytchett Minster would be minimal.'
- 4.3.5 The conclusion of the report is that the western parcel would '*ordinarily be unsuitable*' for removal from the Green Belt, but goes on to add that this is a sustainable location for

development, than that there '*could be justifiable circumstances*' for the council to release the site from the Green Belt.

5 GREEN BELT ANALYSIS OF THE SITE

5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 The methodology for this Green Belt assessment is set out in detail within Appendix 3 of this report and utilises the advice set out within the NPPF and PPG, in addition to advice provided by the Planning Officers Society ('We need to talk about the Green Belt', March 2015, Ref 8) and the Planning Advisory Service ('Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt', Feb 2015, Ref 9).

5.1.2 The aim of this study is to determine what contribution the site makes to the aims, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt and whether the exclusion of the site for development would harm the Green Belt as a whole. The study provides analysis and evidence on how the site contributes to the Green Belt by testing it against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. The aim, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt are set out within paragraphs 79 and 80 of the NPPF (Ref 5). The assessment principles used to analyse the contribution of the site to the purposes of the Green Belt is set out within Appendix 3.

5.1.3 In general Green Belt studies have the following common elements:

- Land is divided into parcels for assessment purposes. In this instance the site defines the parcel;
- The definition of assessment criteria is structured around the five Green Belt purposes as set out in the NPPF;
- 'Large built-up areas', 'towns' and 'historic towns' are defined and,
- Ratings and supporting text are provided for each of the five purposes, with no weighting applied to any of the defined purposes.

5.1.4 Three of the purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF refer to particular types of settlement. Purpose 1 relates to large built-up areas, Purpose 2 refers to neighbouring towns and Purpose 4 considers historic towns. The latitude with which these settlement types are defined can have a significant influence on the outcome of a Green Belt assessment. Purbeck District Council have defined their settlement hierarchy in the Local Plan Part 1 which forms the basis for the definitions of settlement and form part of this Green Belt assessment.

5.1.5 Countryside, as referred to in purpose 3, is typically by default the area that does not fall within defined settlements outside of, or inset into, the Green Belt. The degree to which

an area can be considered countryside forms part of the assessment itself rather than requiring definition.

- 5.1.6 For the purposes of this preliminary assessment settlement is defined as follows:
- With regards to Purpose 1: The Bournemouth-Poole conurbation and Upton constitute large built-up areas;
 - With regards to Purpose 2: Towns – Main Settlements as defined in Local Plan Part 1, Policy NE: North East Purbeck as Upton and Lytchett Matravers.
 - With regards to Purpose 4: Historic towns, are absent from the study area, however the Conservation Area of Lytchett Minster is consistently referred to within previous Green Belt assessments for this area and has been included within this assessment for consistency.
 - Washed-over settlements – include properties on Poole Road to the east of Lytchett Matravers and the villages of Organford and Beacon Hill, which form part of the countryside.

5.1.7 In order to provide an assessment of the contribution the site makes to the aims and purposes of the Green Belt, the site has been tested against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt as set out within paragraph 80 of the NPPF. For each purpose the study has considered the parameters for assessment, along with a judgement as to the contribution that the site makes towards that purpose. The site's overall contribution to each purpose will be defined on a five point scale ranging from Very High to Very Low / None.

5.2 Assessment of the site against the purposes of the Green Belt Western Parcel

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

The parcel lies adjacent to the 'large built-up area' of Upton. Development within the western parcel would be consistent of the existing settlement pattern of development to the south and east of the A35. The development would be contained by the enhanced A35 boundary bunding, fencing and planting to the west and by the mature tree belts lining Watery Lane to the west. The development of the parcel would extend the settlement edge of Upton to the south-west, however the extent to which the settlement edge can expand is limited by permanent and identifiable features (the A35) and development restrictions including nature designations and floodplain.

Contribution to Purpose 1: MEDIUM

5.2.2 Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The parcel does not extend beyond the existing settlement edge in the direction of one of the towns defined within in Local Plan Part 1, Policy NE: North East Purbeck (Upton and Lytchett Matravers). The parcel therefore has a very limited contribution towards the

separation of neighbouring towns. The village of Lytchett Minster does lie in close proximity to the parcel and the parcel does make a limited contribution to the physical separation between Upton and Lytchett Minster. However, the critical separation between Lytchett Minster and Upton are the fields to the east and south of the village and the A35, the road being a permanent and robust separating feature. Much of the land to the east and south of the village falls within floodplain and would therefore not be suitable for development. The fields adjacent to Lytchett Minster also form part of the village setting, whereas the parcel contributes little to the setting of the village. The setting to the west of Upton is very limited and heavily influenced by the dual carriageway.

Contribution to Purpose 2: VERY LOW / NONE with regard to neighbouring towns. MEDIUM if the separation between Upton and the adjacent village of Lytchett Minster is taken into consideration.

5.2.3 Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The parcel is well related to the existing development edge to the north and is annexed from the rural landscape to the west by the A35 and from the landscape to the east and south by the mature tree belts and hedgerows lining Watery Lane. Development of the western parcel would not adversely affect the character of the surrounding landscape in the long term.

Contribution to Purpose 3: LOW

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

The parcel forms part of the wider setting to the Lytchett Minster Conservation Area but has no direct physical / visual or historic relationship with heritage assets within the village or wider Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal for Lytchett Minster describes the setting to the Conservation Area and states that '*To the south and south east the A35 compromises the broader setting of the Conservation Area*'. Development within the parcel would not adversely affect the appreciation or special character of Lytchett Minster Conservation Area. The Green Belt Review confirms the assessment findings; '*Development here would be neutral in terms of impacts on Lytchett Minster Conservation Area, as it would not extend towards it and would be contained by the bypass. Therefore, the effect on the historic setting of Lytchett Minster would be minimal.*'

Contribution to Purpose 4: LOW

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

Most Green Belt studies do not assess parcels of land against Purpose 5 or they rate them equally, on the grounds that it is difficult to assess the contribution of one site against another. For the purposes of this study no rating is applied to Purpose 5 in line

with advice provided by the Planning Officers Society, which suggests that little can be distinguished by the application of Purpose 5.

'... It must be the case that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already be factored in before identifying Green Belt land. If Green Belt achieves this purpose, all Green Belt does to the same extent and hence the value of the various land parcels is unlikely to be distinguished by the application of this purpose.'

Eastern Parcel (Assumes that the western parcel is developed first)

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

The parcel lies adjacent to the 'large built-up area' of Upton. Development within the eastern parcel would be consistent with the existing settlement pattern and would round off the site, connecting it to the SANG land to the south-east. The development would be contained by development within the western parcel to the west and by the mature hedgerow on the eastern site boundary. This feature would need to be strengthened as part of the development proposals within this parcel. The small amount of development proposed within the eastern parcel would extend the settlement edge slightly to the south, however this slight expansion would be limited by identifiable and permanent features.

Contribution to Purpose 1: MEDIUM

5.2.7 Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Development of the eastern parcel would not noticeably change the separation between Upton and any adjacent settlement.

Contribution to Purpose 2: VERY LOW / NONE

5.2.8 Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The eastern parcel is separated from the western parcel by the tree belt lining Watery Lane and is physically separated from development to the north. The hedgerow to the east of the parcel provides a degree of separation between the site and the fields to the east. This separation would increase if additional planting were proposed along this boundary. The fields to the east are in themselves separated from the wider landscape by the dense tree belts and hedgerows lining Slough Lane. The parcel is small and only part of the site is proposed for development, so the amount of countryside safeguarded by the parcel is limited. The adjacent SANG land, to the immediate east of the site (within the same field), is protected, in perpetuity, as open space and from the prospect of future development, it would also define the extent to which development could encroach into the countryside to the south of Upton.

Contribution to Purpose 3: MEDIUM

5.2.9 Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
The parcel has no relationship with the Conservation Area of Lytchett Minster.
Contribution to Purpose 4: VERY LOW / NONE

5.2.10 Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
For the purposes of this study no rating is applied to Purpose 5 (see paragraph 5.2.5).

6 CONCLUSIONS

Green Belt

6.1 The Purbeck Green Belt Review Update has assessed the western parcel of the site as contributing to three of the purposes of the Green Belt, but that the site is in a sustainable location for development and as such, still merits consideration for allocation.

6.2 The findings of this assessment conclude that the western parcel has a lower contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt than recorded within the Purbeck Green Belt Review Update. The land critical to the purposes of the Green Belt, in relation to the containment of Upton and its separation with the surrounding towns and small settlements, is the open landscape adjacent to Poole Harbour to the south and south-east of the site and the rural landscape to the north and west of the A35, in relation to Upton Heath and Lytchett Minster. The land between Lytchett Minster and the A35 forms the critical separation between Lytchett Minster and Upton. Much of this land falls within floodplain and would therefore not be suitable for development. The parcel does not form a critical part in any of the identified gaps/ separation between settlements.

6.3 The A35 is a permanent feature within the local landscape, which contains the settlement of Upton to the north and east of the site and forms a robust edge to development and a firm boundary to the Green Belt. The presence of the dual carriageway, and its attendant bunding and acoustic fencing, as a separating feature limits the contribution that the western parcel makes to the separation between Upton and Lytchett Minster. In contrast the land between Lytchett Minster and the A35, forms part of the setting and the critical separation between the two settlements.

6.4 The character of the western parcel has changed as a result of the Frenches Green development to the immediate north. The parcel does not contribute to the character of the wider landscape. The parcel is highly contained from the wider rural landscape and potential changes within the parcel would not harm the landscape of the wider area. These factors have reduced the contribution that this parcel makes towards purpose 3 of the Green Belt (encroachment into the countryside).

6.5 Whilst the western parcel does contribute to some of the purposes of the Green Belt (1 and 2), the removal of the parcel from the Green Belt would not harm the integrity of the Green Belt designation out with the site boundary. The A35 dual carriageway and the tree belts lining Watery Lane separate the parcel from the wider rural landscape to the west, south and east, and could provide a strong Green Belt boundary and a robust edge to future development to the west and north-east.

6.6 The eastern parcel has been assessed as having a Medium contribution to the prevention of urban sprawl (Purpose 1), a Very Low / No contribution to the separation between settlement (Purpose 2), a Medium contribution towards protecting the countryside from encroachment (Purpose 3) and a Very Low / No contribution towards the preservation of the setting of historic towns (Purpose 4).

6.7 The eastern parcel is well contained from the wider rural landscape. The proposed Green Belt boundary could follow the parcel's eastern boundary hedgerow, an identifiable physical feature and there is the opportunity to strengthen this boundary as part of the development. The robustness of the proposed boundary is reinforced by the SANG allocation to the east, which is protected in perpetuity as open space, the floodplain to the south, which constrains development and the additional constraint of the 400m Heathland buffer to the SPA to the east. The proposed development area is well contained within the parcel and the parcel could be removed from the Green Belt without harm to the integrity of the wider Green Belt designation.

Landscape and visual

6.8 The western parcel is located adjacent to the southern edge of the Frenches Green development area and is currently heavily influenced by the ongoing construction work within Frenches Green. The parcel is separated from the wider landscape by the A35 dual carriageway (along with the additional bunding and fencing to be installed along the western boundary) and the strong tree belt to the east. Development within the parcel would be perceived as an extension to the existing housing under construction in Frenches Green. The development would only be visible in glimpses from Watery Lane to the east and in views from Dorchester Road and Old Watery Lane, to the west, which currently have views of the Frenches Green housing. Views from both the east and west have the potential to be mitigated for, as part of the development proposals. The parcel would form a sustainable extension to the Frenches Green development.

6.9 Development of the eastern parcel would maximise the development potential of the land to the north of the SANG and would enhance the connectivity between the Frenches Green housing, western parcel and the SANG, to the east. The eastern parcel is more

rural in character and currently has a stronger connection to the rural landscape to the east. The eastern boundary hedgerow does however provide some separation from the wider rural landscape and this could be enhanced with the introduction of new structural planting. This parcel is separated from the Frenches Green and western parcel by the tree belts lining Watery Lane and contains the eastern edge of the SANG. Low levels of development within the parcel have the potential to link the housing in the earlier phases to the SANG land and improve pedestrian links into the SANG. Housing in the eastern parcel could provide a transition to the rural landscape to the east and would introduce a level of surveillance into the SANG area, which is currently very enclosed.

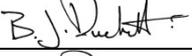
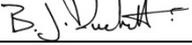
- 6.10 The eastern parcel is well contained and views of the parcel are only available through field gates on Slough Lane and as occasional glimpses from Watery Lane, both of which are immediately adjacent to the site boundary. Views of the parcel from the east would increase with the construction of housing within the parcel, which would be visible over the eastern boundary hedgerow. These views could be mitigated through additional planting at the eastern site boundary.

REFERENCES

- 1 - Matrix Partnership for Purbeck District Council (September 2012); *'Purbeck District Townscape Character Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document, Upton'*
- 2 - Purbeck District Council (September 2008), *'Lytchett Minster Conservation Area Appraisal Document'*
- 3 - Dorset County Council (<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/393007/The-Dorset-landscape>), *'The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment'*
- 4 - Purbeck District Council (2008), *'Draft Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance (Non-AONB Areas)'*
- 5 - Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012), *'National Planning Policy Framework'*
- 6 - Purbeck District Council (November 2012), *'Planning Purbeck's Future, Purbeck Local Plan Part 1'*
- 7 - Purbeck District Council (June 2016), *'Reviewing the Plan for Purbeck's Future, Purbeck Local Plan Partial Review, Green Belt Review Update'*
- 8 - Planning Officers Society (March 2015), *'We need to talk about the Green Belt'*
- 9 - Planning Advisory Service (February 2015), *'Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt'*

HDA Document Control and Quality Assurance Record

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	Personnel	Position
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Appendix 1 – Draft Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance for Purbeck (Non-AONB)

PURBECK



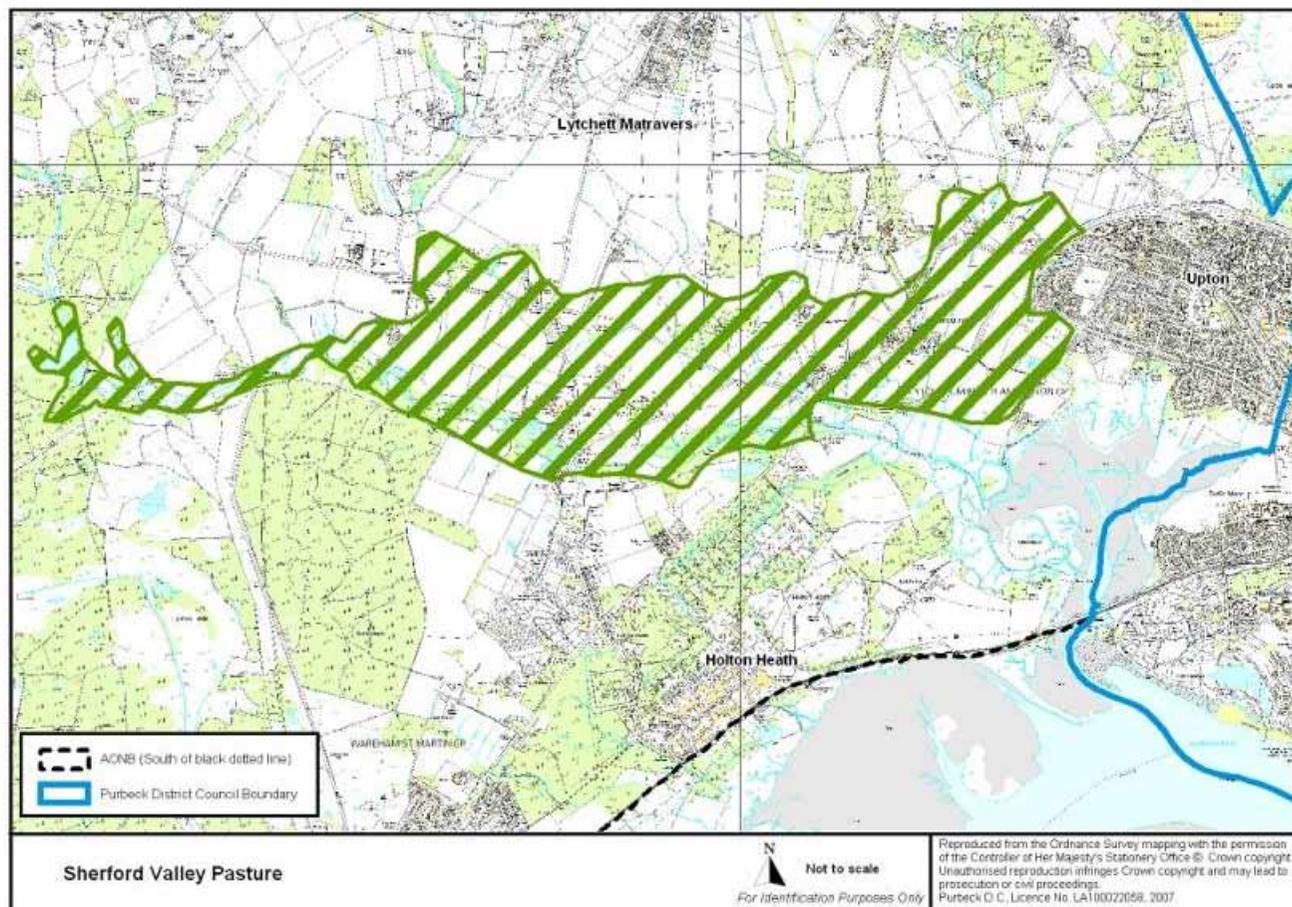
Conserving Purbeck's Character



Thriving communities in balance with the natural environment

13. Sherford Valley Pasture

Key settlements: Upton, Lytchett Minster



Key characteristics

- A flat intensively farmed landscape.
- Well wooded river corridor with some significant mature trees.
- An inaccessible perception especially along the river corridor.
- Lytchett Minster is the main settlement with some characteristic parkland/estate features.
- Narrow hedge lined lanes.
- The group of buildings at the Sherford River crossing in Organford are key features.
- Farmer Palmers is a distinctive recreational feature.
- The A35 is a major visual and physical feature of influence.

Landscape Character

A largely flat intensively farmed landscape associated with the alluvial soils of the Sherford River valley and the other small streams draining into Upton Bay. It slopes gently north towards Lytchett Matravers and is bound on the south by the low lying heathland character area. There is a distinctive corridor of trees and woodland along the river with some important mature trees. A large section of this stream side woodland is designated as SNCI. There are few other woods apart from a few geometric blocks not associated with the stream. Arable fields are cropped right up to the edge of these woods. The far western side of the area is framed by conifer plantation within which are small lakes which form the source of the Sherford River and are designated SNCIs. The narrow lanes are lined with hedgerows of mixed quality and height.

Lytchett Minster is the main settlement which dominates the eastern side of the area and has some important parkland/estate features such as individual trees, avenues and buildings. The group of buildings at the Sherford River crossing in Organford are also of importance as some of the few locally distinctive rural buildings of merit in the area. The A35

creates a visual and physical impact across the whole area. There are few rights of way which exacerbate feelings of inaccessibility, especially along the river corridor.

Landscape Condition

The relatively intact corridor of woodland and trees associated with the river valley contributes to the integrity of this area despite the apparent lack of management. Elsewhere agricultural hedgerows are declining and are fragmented due to lack of appropriate management. Hedgerows and trees along rural lanes, however, appear to be in better condition. The importance of estate features such as avenue trees and woodland blocks contribute to the cultural condition of the landscape. The urban impacts caused by the road network, some poor edges to settlements and 'horsiculture' detract from quality and create fragmentation.

Condition: Poor to Moderate.

Landscape Management and Development Objectives

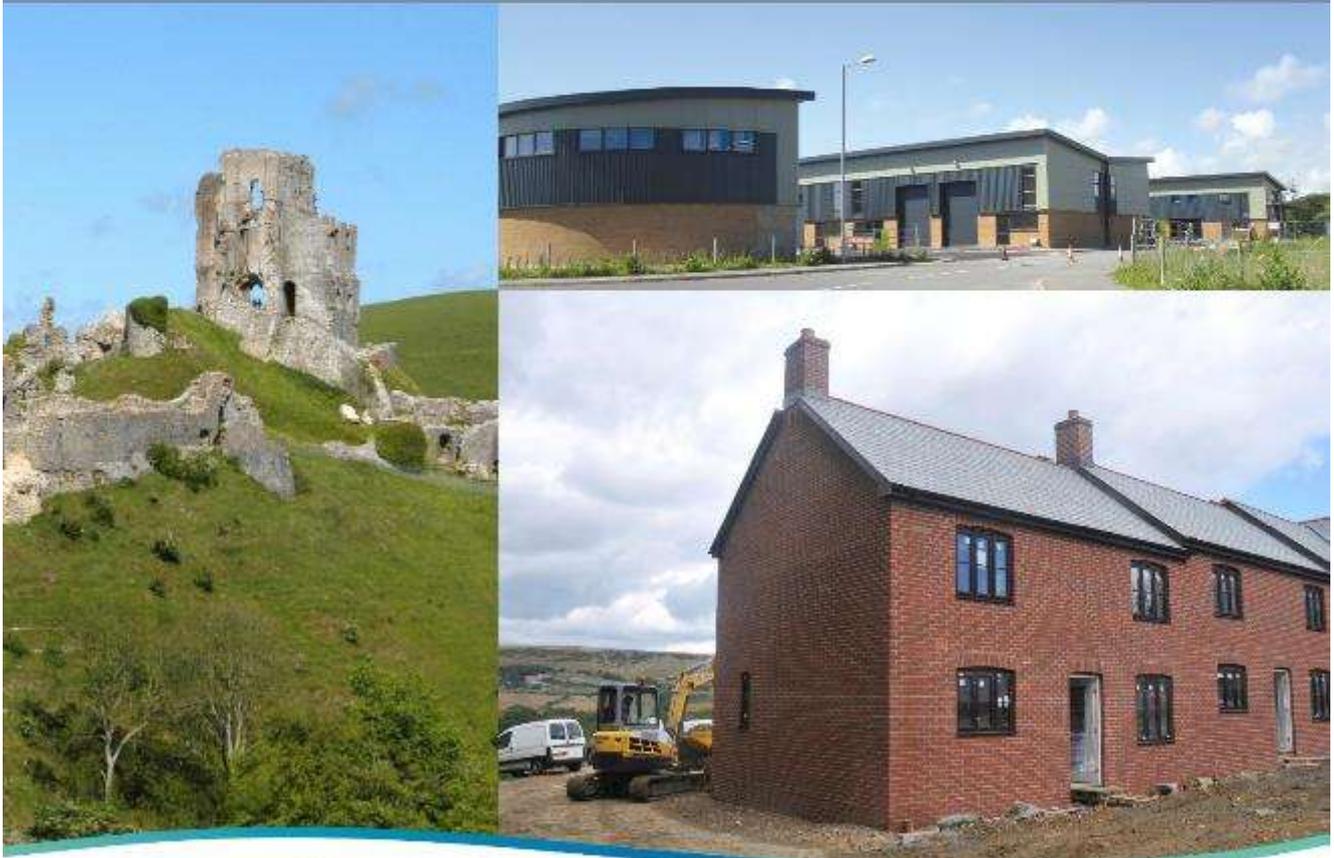
- Carry out Village Design Statement for Lytchett Minister (to include the Lees Estate)
- Manage 'horsiculture' and conserve and enhance natural and built environment features.
- Encourage/promote tree, hedge and woodland management.
- Enhance the local distinctiveness of the two road/river crossings via a highway improvement scheme.
- Undertake whole river valley enhancement scheme to include improved access to river corridor, improved recreational opportunities and to increase overall landscape and biodiversity interest.



Appendix 2 – Extracts from Purbeck Green Belt Review Update, June 2016

Reviewing the Plan for Purbeck's future

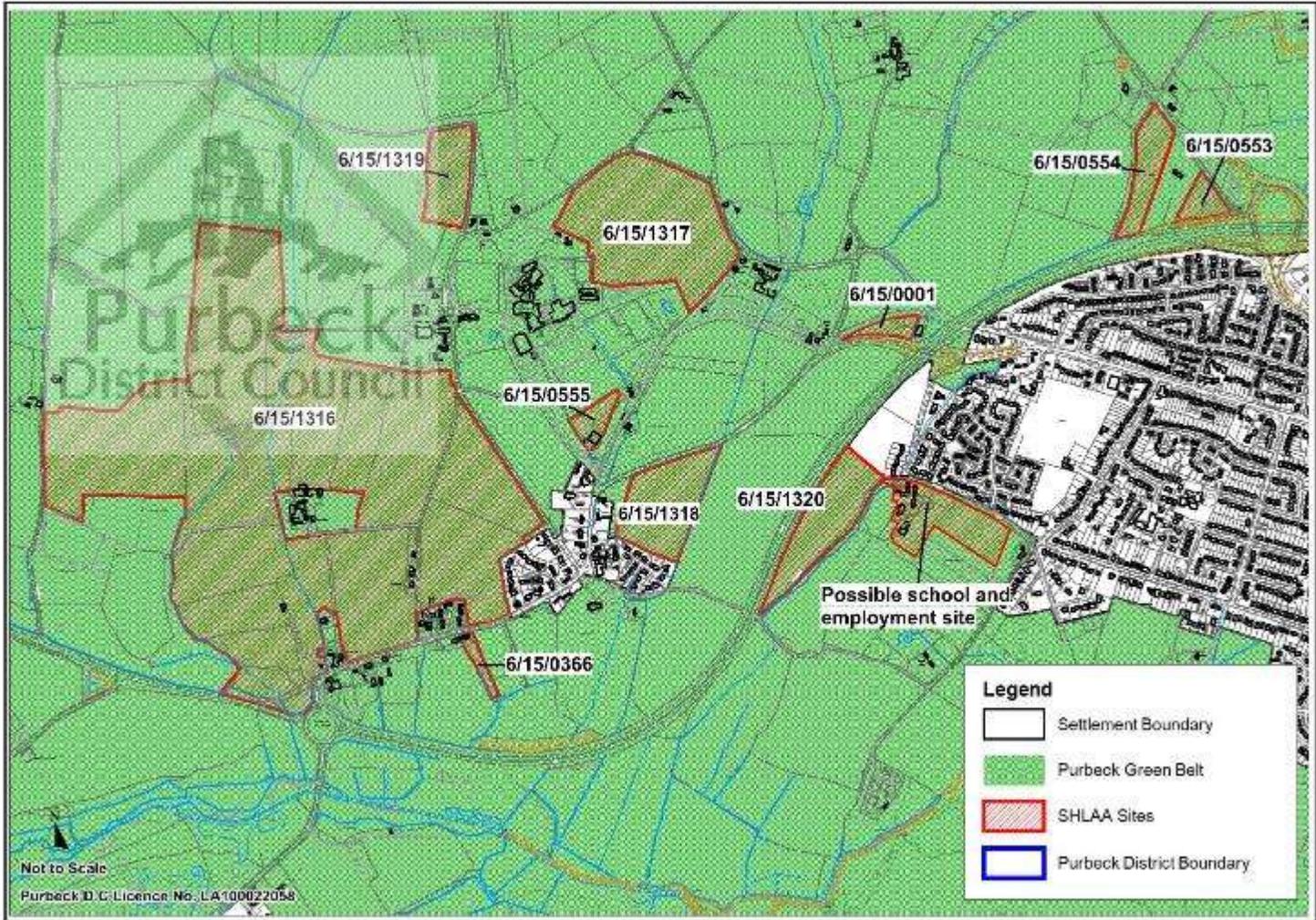
Purbeck Local Plan Partial Review
Green Belt Review Update, June 2016



Thriving communities in balance
with the natural environment

Lytchett Minster and Upton

Map 4: promoted land in Lytchett Minster and Upton



- v. Urban regeneration: there is little derelict or other previously developed land available in the Upton/Lytchett Minster and Lytchett Matravers area to allow regeneration, although there are limited opportunities for infill development that are likely to come forward in the current plan period, as identified in the Council's Character Area Potential study. However, this infill development may not satisfy all potential housing needs and so settlement extensions may be required to increase the supply of housing. Notwithstanding this, the Council should prioritise alternative sites to this one, owing to the significant harm that development of this land would cause to the purpose of the Green Belt.
95. Conclusion: partly suitable. There could be scope for some development to the rear of properties at Ashbrook Walk and Dorchester Road, provided development would not close the gap between Lytchett Minster and Upton.

Land at Lytchett Minster 6/15/0555)

96. Development here would not extend Lytchett Minster towards Upton or Lytchett Matravers and would involve the development of some previously developed land, which already has a built presence.
97. In terms of meeting the 5 criteria in the NPPF:

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- i. Sprawl: although, heading north out of Lytchett Minster, the presence of dense trees gives a countryside feel, the land already has buildings on it and has an existing built presence. Therefore, it would be difficult to argue that the land currently serves a purpose for preventing sprawl.
 - ii. Merging: whilst this part of the green belt is sensitive, development here would not extend Lytchett Minster towards Lytchett Matravers or Upton. Therefore, development would not cause a merging effect.
 - iii. Countryside encroachment: despite the countryside feel to the land, as the sites contain previously developed land, it would be difficult to argue that its development could cause encroachment into the countryside.
 - iv. Historic setting: development would be within the Lytchett Minster conservation area. However, as it contains previously developed land, its redevelopment would not harm the open character of the rest of the conservation area.
 - v. Urban regeneration: development would encourage the use of previously developed land.
98. Conclusion: suitable. However, in practice, this land is somewhat detached from the northern end of the village and might make an illogical addition. Therefore, it should not be taken further.

Land to the south of Policeman's Lane (6/15/1320)

99. One of the key functions of the green belt is to prevent the coalescence of settlements. This is a key consideration in this area because Lytchett Minster

lies to the immediate west of Upton – around 490m to the nearest points – separated by green belt, including the bypass. The SWRA green belt review assessed west of Upton as having the most sensitivity to change of all the green belt in Purbeck. Development here would cause a south-westerly sprawl of the town towards Lytchett Minster, more than halving the gap between Upton and Lytchett Minster to around 230m. Whilst the presence of the bypass would offer a small degree of containment, it is undeniable that development in this direction would create a sprawling and merging effect. This would be contrary to the purposes of the green belt.

100. In terms of meeting the 5 criteria in the NPPF:

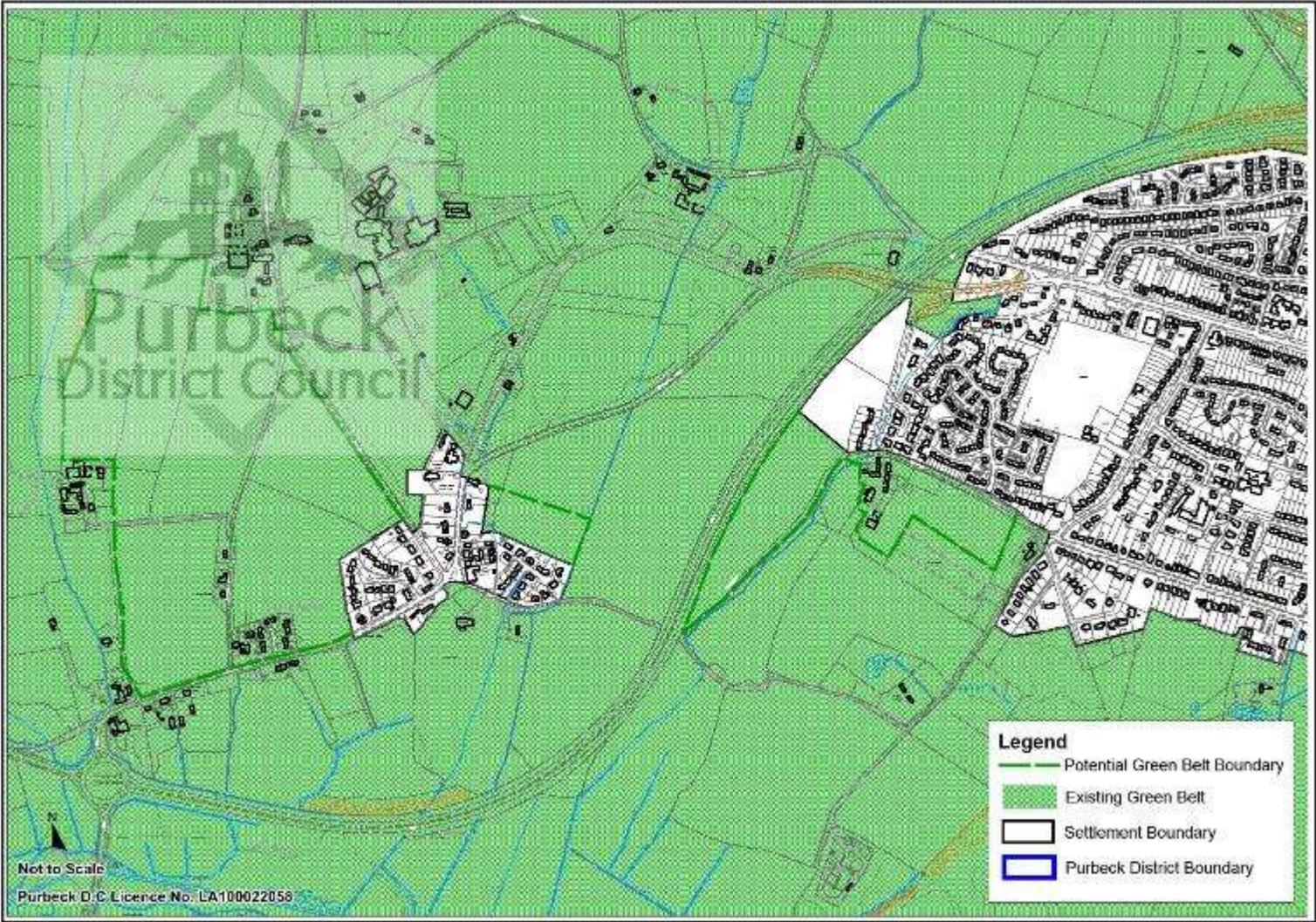
Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- i. Sprawl: whilst the bypass would offer some degree of containment and prevent a complete coalescence, development here would more than halve the gap between Upton and Lytchett Minster. This would cause a harmful sprawling effect.
- ii. Merging: the green belt in this location performs a function of preventing the coalescence of Upton and Lytchett Minster. By more than halving the gap between the two settlements to just 230m, development would create a merging effect, despite the presence of the bypass.
- iii. Countryside encroachment: there is a degree of containment, thanks to the bypass and the hedging along it. However, this would be a highly visible development that would not relate very well to the built form of Upton. Therefore, it would encroach on the countryside.
- iv. Historic setting: development here would be neutral in terms of impacts on Lytchett Minster conservation area, as it would not extend towards it and be contained by the bypass. Therefore, the effect on the historic setting of Lytchett Minster would be minimal.
- v. Urban regeneration: there is little derelict or other previously developed land available in Upton to allow regeneration, although there are limited opportunities for infill development that are likely to come forward in the current plan period, as identified in the Council’s Character Area Potential study. However, this infill development may not satisfy all potential housing needs and so settlement extensions may be required to increase the supply of housing.

101. Conclusion: ordinarily unsuitable. However, development here could have sustainability benefits, given its proximity to the conurbation. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF allows councils to consider the sustainability credentials of releasing land in the green belt and there could be justifiable circumstances for the Council to do so in this instance.

Land to the south of Watery Lane (possible school and employment)

Map 5: potential boundary adjustments in Lytchett Minster and Upton



Appendix 3 – HDA Green Belt Methodology

HDA GREEN BELT METHODOLOGY

Methodology for Green Belt Assessment to analyse the effects of removal of areas proposed for development on the Green Belt, in support of the Local Plan process.

1.1 Guidance

- 1.1.1 National Planning Policy within the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework – Ref 1) and PPG (Planning Practice Guidance) documents provides clear advice on protecting Green Belt land. There is a widely recognised need for further development within the country as set out in paragraph 14 of the NPPF:

'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development,'

The second bullet of the same paragraph goes on to state that *'Local plans should meet objectively assessed needs... unless... specific policies within this Framework indicate development should be restricted'*. Footnote 9 provides examples of policies where development should be restricted. Green Belt is one of the examples given.

- 1.1.2 Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out policies for 'Protecting Green Belt Land'. Paragraphs 79 and 80 set out the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, the essential characteristics of the Green Belt and the five purposes of the Green Belt. Paragraph 83 states that:

'Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.'

This is followed by paragraph 84, which states that:

'When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.'

- 1.1.3 Paragraphs 83 and 84 set the precedent that, if exceptional circumstances can be met, in order to provide sustainable development, there is scope to alter Green Belt boundaries through the local plan process. Paragraph 85 sets out guidance for the definition of new Green Belt boundaries. The policies set out within these three paragraphs has prompted a requirement within many districts for a Green Belt review / study to inform the local plan and assist with the Local Plan evidence base for the provision of new areas of sustainable development. This is particularly pertinent for Local Authorities who have a large housing shortfall as a result of objectively assessed housing need.

1.1.4 At the present time there is no definitive guidance on how to undertake a Green Belt review / study. There are also two types of study that could be appropriate in the decision making and evidence base required by the local authority.

1. A Green Belt review of a whole District / Borough in order to ascertain any differences in areas of the Green Belt with regard to their performance against the aims, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt. This is to assist Local Authorities in decision making, when considering a baseline for the location of sustainable development.
2. Once the criteria for proving that the 'exceptional circumstances' for new development within the Green Belt have been met, a second type of study may be appropriate to test the potential impacts of removing a specific site / sites from the Green Belt.

1.1.5 This methodology is specifically tailored towards the second type of study. The methodology utilises the advice set out within the NPPF and PPG, in addition to documentation produced by the Planning Officers Society (We need to talk about the Green Belt, March 2015 – Ref 2) and the Planning Advisory Service (Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, Feb 2015 – Ref 3).

1.1.6 The aim of this study is to determine what contribution the site(s) make(s) to the aims, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt and whether the exclusion of this land would harm the Green Belt as a whole. As part of the study a proposal would be set out for a revised Green Belt Boundary, along with justification to support the choice of boundary.

1.2 Process

1.2.1 The process proposed for carrying out the study would be as follows:

1. Desk Study
2. Field Survey
3. Analysis of previous studies / Green Belt reviews undertaken (if applicable)
4. Assessment of the Site(s) contribution to the Green Belt
5. Proposal(s) for a new Green Belt boundary
6. Contribution of the site to the special circumstances for removal from the Green Belt
7. Conclusions

1.3 Desk study

1.3.1 A desk-study is undertaken to establish:

- The existing extent of the Green Belt and its reason for designation.

- Current planning policy context including national policy and current local policy.
- Identification of other documents of relevance including existing Green Belt reviews / studies
- The physical components of the local landscape and settlement pattern, with relation to the purposes of the Green Belt and the future identification of a suitable Green Belt boundary (if appropriate).

1.4 Field survey

1.4.1 A field survey of the site and surroundings was carried out in June and July 2017. The field survey serves to understand the immediate setting of the proposed development, including the local settlement pattern, proximity of adjacent settlement, any existing development within the site, existing land uses and vegetation structure.

1.4.2 The site visits were undertaken from publically accessible viewpoints around the site such as roads and public rights of way. A working photographic record of the visit was also made.

1.5 Analysis of previous studies / Green Belt reviews undertaken

1.5.1 In order to form a baseline for the site's contribution to Green Belt, any existing Green Belt reviews and relevant studies are analysed. A commentary is provided on what extent the site contributes to the performance of parcels / areas identified by previous assessment work. Areas of common ground / conflict are discussed and related back to relevant policy guidance. In many cases the change in scale between the site(s) and the parcels used within previous Green Belt reviews / studies, particularly in the case of reviews covering a whole district / Borough or Green Belt, can lead to differences in performance in Green Belt terms.

1.6 Assessment of the Site(s) contribution to the Green Belt

1.6.1 The aim of this is to provide analysis and evidence on how the site(s) contribute to the aims and essential characteristics of the Green Belt by testing it against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. The aim, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt are set out within paragraphs 79 and 80 of the NPPF (Ref 1). These paragraphs are listed below:

'79. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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.

80. Green Belt serves five purposes:

- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*

- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'*

1.6.2 Keeping land permanently open is a fundamental objective of Green Belt. Openness in the Green Belt has not been defined within the NPPF, however subsequent case law has provided definitions that have been used for the purposes of this methodology. In a judgement by Mr Justice Dove in the case of *R (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority) v Epping Forest DC* (2016 – Ref 4), openness (in Green Belt terms) is defined as:

“...the state of being free from built development, the absence of buildings – as distinct from the absence of visual impact” [7]

1.6.3 In addition to the above, a judgement by Mr Justice Green in the case of *Timmins/Lynn v Gedling BC* (2014 – Ref 5) included the following:

“...measures taken to limit the intrusiveness of the development whilst not affecting the assessment of openness may nonetheless be relevant to the “very special circumstance” weighing exercising. Hence openness and visual impact are different concepts; yet they can nonetheless relate to each other. The distinction is subtle but important.” [73]

1.6.4 The visibility of a site may not be used explicitly as part of the judgement of contribution that a site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt. However it can be take into consideration when assessing the factors contributing to the ‘special circumstances’ for removal of a site from the Green Belt. Special circumstances are considered within section 6 of the report and discussed within paragraph 1.8 of this methodology.

1.6.5 The following describes our assessment principles for each of the 5 purposes:

1.6.6 Purpose 1: ‘to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas’

HDA assessment criteria:

- Define large built up areas. This may vary with each district / borough and will use Local Authority definitions of large settlements within their catchment as a basis for definition. The settlement(s) for which the Green Belt has been designated would automatically be included as a large built up area.
- Define sprawl: to spread out in an untidy, irregular way.
- The assessment would make a judgement as to how much the site(s) would potentially contribute to purpose 1.

The judgement will be described within the main body of the text and will be defined on a five point scale ranging from Very High to Very Low / None. Judgements would be based on:

- Proximity to existing settlement – the closer to settlement the site is, the higher contribution the site would have.
- Relationship of the site to existing settlement pattern – if the site protrudes further than the existing settlement edge, it would have a higher contribution than if the site is partially enclosed by development.
- Relationship of the site to the wider landscape – if a physical barrier e.g a road, river or protected features lies between the site and the wider Green Belt, that would in itself prevent future settlement expansion, the site would have a lower contribution than if the site had the potential to expand further into the Green Belt in the future.

Very High = The site is adjacent to the large built up area, but it's location is inconsistent with the existing settlement pattern and would form a substantial intrusion into the wider Green Belt, beyond any identifiable limiting feature / potential Green Belt boundary.

High = The site is adjacent to the large built up area, in a location that is partially consistent with the existing settlement pattern and would form an intrusion into the wider Green Belt.

Medium = The site is adjacent to the large built up area, in a location which is consistent with the existing settlement pattern and future development could be contained by an identifiable limiting feature / potential Green Belt boundary.

Low = The site is surrounded by the large urban settlement on three sides and development of the site would not exceed the existing settlement edge

Very Low / None = The site is surrounded by the large urban settlement on three sides and is contained on the fourth side by a physical barrier to development **or** the site is not associated with a large urban settlement.

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

HDA assessment criteria:

- Define the scale of settlement that would constitute a 'neighbouring town'. This may vary with each district / borough and will use Local Authority publications as a basis for definition.
- Define merging: to combine or join together.

- The assessment would make a judgement as to how much the site(s) would potentially contribute to purpose 2.

The judgement will be described within the main body of the text and will be defined on a five point scale ranging from Very High to Very Low / None. Judgements would be based on:

- Location – the more the site contributes to the total area of land lying between two settlements, the higher contribution the site would have.
- Distance between adjacent towns – If two towns are close together, a site located between the two towns has a higher contribution to this purpose than a site that lies between two distant towns.
- Relationship between towns and the site – The relationship between two towns is visual and perceptual as well as physical distance. If the development of a site would perceptibly extend a development, for example in a location where it would be seen from another town, which currently has no views of adjacent settlement, the contribution of the site would be higher than if the site was consistent with the settlement pattern and well contained from an adjoining town.
- Size of site – The larger the site, the more it would contribute to the separation between two towns.

Very High = The site is the only parcel of land which separates two neighbouring towns / forms a significant contribution to the perceived separation between two towns. Development of the site has the potential to cause towns to merge.

High = The site forms a significant contribution to the perceived separation between two towns and / or provides the critical separation between a town and a smaller settlement. Development of the site has the potential to cause a town to merge with a smaller settlement.

Medium = The site is located between two towns or settlements. Development of the site would not significantly change the separation between settlements **or** would not reduce the distance between two towns more than an existing edge of settlement.

Low = Development of the site would not noticeably change the separation between settlement **or** development of the site would not reduce the distance between any settlement more than the existing edges of settlement(s).

Very Low / None = Development of the site would not perceptibly change the spatial relationship between two towns or between a town and another settlement.

1.6.8

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

HDA assessment criteria:

- Define safeguarding: to provide protection
- Define encroachment: for development to spread into undeveloped land within the countryside.
- While it is acknowledged that the Green Belt definition of openness has no relationship to the character or quality of a landscape, the reference to countryside within this purpose of the Green Belt requires some judgement to be made about the rurality of a site in landscape terms. In addition the question of intervisibility would have an effect on the character and appearance of the countryside surrounding the site.
- The assessment would make a judgement as to how much the site(s) would potentially contribute to purpose 3.

The judgement will be described within the main body of the text and will be defined on a five point scale ranging from Very High to Very Low / None. Judgements would be based on:

- Location – a green field site in the middle of the countryside with no relationship to existing development would have a higher contribution to this purpose than a site enclosed by settlement or by building on previously developed land.
- Rurality of the site – A rural site that is consistent with local landscape character and is open to the wider landscape would have a higher contribution to the safeguarding of the countryside than a degraded site with urban influence.
- Relationship of the site to the wider landscape – if the site is physically and visually separated from the wider rural Green Belt, by a defined barrier, that would in itself prevent future encroachment of built development expansion, the site would have a lower contribution to safeguarding the countryside.
- Size of site – The larger the green field site, the more it would contribute to the safeguarding of the countryside.

Very High = The site is a large isolated and undeveloped green field site, located within the countryside, with no relationship to existing settlement and strong links to the wider rural landscape.

High = The site is an isolated and undeveloped green field site, located within the countryside, with a limited relationship to existing settlement and strong links to the wider rural landscape **or** the site is extremely large and would affect a large portion of the existing rural landscape.

Medium = The site is an undeveloped green field site, located adjacent to settlement with fewer than two edges that are open to the wider countryside **or** the site is

degraded with a number of urban influences, but is visible from the surrounding countryside.

Low = The site is well related to the existing development edge and is physically separated from the rural landscape beyond **or** the site is degraded with a number of urban influences and has little influence on the character of the surrounding countryside.

Very Low / None = The site is brownfield or previously developed land and / or is cut off from the rural landscape by existing settlement e.g a site within a village that is washed over by Green Belt.

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

HDA assessment criteria:

- Define the historic towns that are to be considered
- Make a judgement on what contributes to the setting and special character of each historic town, using published reports on heritage assets within a town e.g. conservation area appraisals.
- The assessment would make a judgement as to how much the site(s) would potentially contribute to purpose 4.

The judgement will be described within the main body of the text and will be defined on a five point scale ranging from Very High to Very Low / None. Judgements would be based on:

- Location – a site containing important views of heritage assets would have a higher contribution to this purpose than a site which has no visual or spatial relationship with the heritage assets within a historic town.
- Relationship of the site to the historic town – If the site has historic links to the town or it would have a higher contribution.
- Type of development proposed within the site – proposed development that is consistent with the existing setting to a historic town would have a lower contribution to this purpose than a development that is incongruous or out of keeping with the existing setting.

Very High = The site has a well documented physical / visual or historic relationship with the historic town and contributes to the significance of heritage assets within the town.

High = The site has a discernible physical / visual or historic relationship with the historic town or the type of development proposed is inconsistent with the existing setting to a historic town.

Medium = The site has some contribution to the setting and / special character of a historic town. Development within the site would be consistent with the existing setting.

Low = The site forms part of the wider setting to the town but has no direct physical / visual or historic relationship with heritage assets within the town.

Very Low / None = The site has no relationship with a historic town.

1.6.10 Purpose 5: 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land'

The Planning Advisory Service, in their article 'Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt' (Ref 3) has advised that when considering Purpose 5

'it must be the case that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. If Green Belt achieves this purpose, then all Green Belt does so to the same extent and hence the value of various land parcels is unlikely to be distinguished by the application of this purpose.'

On this basis no assessment is made of the performance of the site(s) performance against Purpose 5. Mention will be made, however if the development of a site would support urban regeneration opportunities (if known).

1.7 Proposals for a new Green Belt boundary

1.7.1 In order for a site to be removed from Green Belt, a new Green Belt boundary would need to be defined. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF sets out the parameters for setting new Green Belt boundaries:

'When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:

- *ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- *not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- *where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- *make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;*

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

1.8 Contribution of the site to the special circumstances for removal from the Green Belt

1.8.1 As set out in paragraph 1.6.4 the landscape visibility of a site and the landscape character or quality of a site are not used explicitly as part of the judgement of contribution that a site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt, however they may contribute to the assessment of the 'special circumstances' required for removal of a site from the Green Belt.

1.8.2 The 'special circumstances' for removal of a site from the Green Belt are an assessment of a combination of the need for a particular type of development, at a particular location within the Green Belt, together with the suitability of a site for development. It is accepted practice that the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed development are contributing factors to the assessment of a sites suitability for development and therefore may contribute towards the 'special circumstances' for removal of a site from the Green Belt.

1.8.3 With regard to visibility, the visual containment of a site and the potential to mitigate the visual effects of a proposed development are considerations when assessing the integrity of the wider Green Belt. A site that is well contained is more likely to maintain the integrity of the wider Green Belt than an open and exposed site.

1.8.4 With regard to the landscape character and quality of the site, landscape capacity assessment is an indicator of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development without adverse impacts on the wider landscape. Such an assessment forms part of the overall assessment of the suitability for a site's inclusion or removal from the Green Belt.

1.9 Conclusions

1.9.1 The final part of the report would draw together all the judgements of the sites contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, in conjunction with any supporting evidence for the special circumstances for the removal of the site from the Green Belt, whether a strong new Green Belt Boundary is present and what overall effects the development of the site would have on the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. A conclusion would be drawn as to whether the site is suitable for removal from the Green Belt, providing 'special circumstances' for removal can be justified.

REFERENCES

- Ref 1 - Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012), '*National Planning Policy Framework*'
- Ref 2 - Planning Officers Society (March 2015), '*We need to talk about the Green Belt*'
- Ref 3 - Planning Advisory Service (Feb 2015), '*Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt*'
- Ref 4 - Judgement by Mr Justice Dove in the case of '*R (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority) v Epping Forest DC*' (2016)
- Ref 5 - Judgement by Mr Justice Green in the case of '*Timmins/Lymn v Gedling BC*' (2014)