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# Purbeck District Green Belt Review

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## Final Report



## June 2006

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the detailed boundaries of the South East Dorset Green Belt, contained with Purbeck. Particular attention will be made to the urban fringes of the main settlements within and / or surrounding the Green belt as well as the outer boundaries.
- 1.2 It is important to consider the detailed extent of the Green Belt at the outset to inform the preparation of documents to be contained within the Local Development Framework (LDF). However, any actual changes to the existing boundaries will need to be sought through the Site Specific Allocations Document.

# 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The South East Dorset Green Belt was established by the South East Dorset Structure Plan (1980), which determined its general extent. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt in Purbeck, including the boundaries around Green Belt settlements, were largely defined in the North East Purbeck Local Plan which was adopted in 1994.<sup>1</sup> The outer boundary was drawn up to the edge of the Local Plan area<sup>2</sup> which followed parish boundaries, and was in places poorly defined on the ground.

Figure 1: Purbeck Green Belt



- 2.2 The District Council recognised that a more logical outer boundary could be defined if the boundary was drawn further west, beyond the limit of the plan area. However,

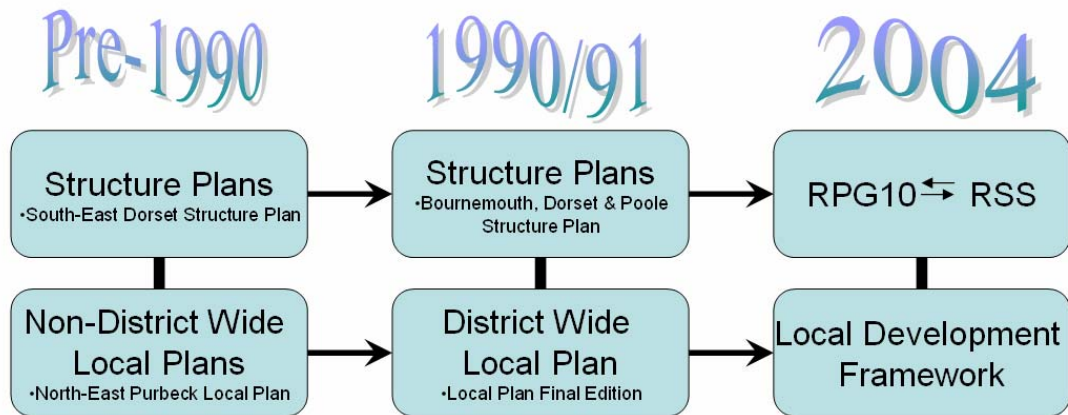
<sup>1</sup> Proposals Map, North East Purbeck Local Plan: Deposit Plan, Purbeck District Council, 1991 as amended by the List of Agreed Modifications, 1994 and adopted

<sup>2</sup> para. 3.10, *op. cit*

this was not possible at that time as the South Dorset Structure Plan did not include the provision of Green Belt policies.

- 2.3 In his report into objections to the North East Purbeck Local Plan the Inspector noted the District Council's intention to extend the Green Belt stating that *"some of the western part of the District beyond the North East Purbeck Local Plan area is to be considered for Green Belt designation at a later stage in the local plan programme"*<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.4 This further designation was undertaken through the Local Plan review which commenced in 1997, and culminated in the Local Plan Final Edition (November 2004), which was enabled through the creation of a Dorset-wide Structure Plan (2001). However, this Local Plan was never adopted owing to issues of conformity with the adopted Structure Plan (2001) created by the removal of a strategic housing allocation from Holton Heath through the Inspector's Report into the Local Plan. The boundaries of the Green Belt shown in the Local Plan Final Edition (November 2004) are essentially being used as a starting point for this review, including the proposed extension. The 'Final Edition' is used as a significant material consideration in the determination of planning applications and has been through most of the statutory process. The 'Final Edition' is the only plan to provide an expression of the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt at a district level.
- 2.5 This review will serve to assess whether the detailed boundaries of the South East Dorset Green Belt and its proposed extension (as recommended through the Local Plan Final Edition November 2004) serve as a pragmatic means of definition in meeting the five purposes outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2): Green Belts. This review will also provide an overview of the role(s) of the Green Belt in Purbeck.

**Figure 2: Green Belt Policy**



- 2.6 The succession of documents containing Green Belt policy, illustrated above, and their interactions are explained further in Section 2.

<sup>3</sup> para. 3.15, North East Purbeck Local Plan: Report into Objections Made to the Plan, 1993, DoE

### 3 CURRENT GREEN BELT POLICY

#### **National**

- 3.1 PPG2 states that *'the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. Green Belts can shape patterns of urban development at a sub-regional and regional scale, and help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans. They help to protect the countryside, be it in agricultural, forestry or other use and can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development.'*<sup>4</sup>
- 3.2 PPG2 identifies the 5 key purposes of Green Belts as the following:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and,
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.3 Once identified, PPG2 provides guidance on the intended objectives of Green Belts, stating that they have a positive role to play in fulfilling the following:
- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
  - to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
  - to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
  - to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
  - to secure nature conservation interest; and,
  - to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.
- 3.4 Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally. Detailed boundaries should not be altered or development allowed merely because the land has become derelict.
- 3.5 Wherever practicable a Green Belt should be several miles wide, so as to ensure an appreciable open zone all round the built-up area concerned. Boundaries should be clearly defined, using readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, belts of trees or woodland edges where possible.
- 3.6 The role of regional and strategic planning guidance is to set the framework for Green Belt policy and settlement policy, including the direction of long-term development. Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, it is then the role of local development plans to identify the detailed boundaries.
- 3.7 In practice, it is the Development Control process which implements Green Belt policy. *'Green Belt policies in development plans should ensure that any planning applications for inappropriate development would not be in accord with the plan'*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> PPG2, Para 1.4

<sup>5</sup> PPG2, Para 3.3

## **Regional**

### **- RPG10**

- 3.8 Regional Planning Guidance 10 (RPG10) assumes the role of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West of England. It is currently under review and will be superseded by the South West of England Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 3.9 RPG10 contains one policy (SS4) relating to the three green belts (West of England, South East Dorset, and Cheltenham and Gloucester) within the region; this policy is set out below:

#### **Policy SS 4: Green Belt**

**Green Belts in the region should continue to fulfil the purposes set out in PPG2. As a key element of the future planning of the region, local authorities when preparing their development plans should:**

- critically review the Green Belt to examine whether boundary alterations are needed to allow for long term sustainable development needs;**
- remove land from the Green Belt for development if, on balance, this would provide the most sustainable solution for accommodating future development requirements;**
- include additional land within the Green Belt where clearly necessary for the purposes set out in PPG2.**

### **- RSS: Reviewing the Green Belt**

- 3.10 RPG10 identified the need to review the three green belts in the region as proposals for development of the associated urban areas were taking shape. This review, within the context of identifying the most sustainable long term development options and preventing growth from leaping the green belt, have been carried out at a sub-regional level by the 4/4 authorities as part of the technical work to inform the emerging RSS. In the case of South East Dorset the 4/4 authorities are Dorset County Council, Bournemouth Borough Council, and Borough of Poole.
- 3.11 These technical studies have advised on the extent to which the current green belt meets the criteria in PPG2. Further more, in the context of a need for longer term development beyond existing built up areas, there are exceptional circumstances to justify alternatives to the general extent of the green belt to deliver the most sustainable, longer term, development options. As well as identifying areas which could be removed from green belt without weakening the prime purpose of preventing urban sprawl, other places where green belt could be extended have been highlighted. Overall, this will lead to a small net increase in green belt in the region.
- 3.12 The South East Dorset Green Belt has not been recommended for extension through the work by the JSA, and the area of Green Belt contained within Purbeck has not been subject to any proposed removal<sup>6</sup>. These recommendations by the JSA have been incorporated into the RSS submission Document (June 2006).

#### **Development Policy A (extract)**

**3.3.5 The general extent of the green belt is revised in Policies SR3, SR11 and**

<sup>6</sup> South East Dorset Green Belt – Review, 4/4 Authorities

**SR27 (Section 4), based on review of the role and purpose of the green belt using PPG2 criteria to accommodate the urban extensions required for the West of England, Cheltenham/Gloucester and South East Dorset. Extensions to the green belt are also identified in Policies SR3 and SR11 around the West of England and Cheltenham/Gloucester. The detailed green belt boundaries of the area reviewed will be defined by Unitary and District Authorities in their LDDs, taking account of these changes.**

### **Policy SR27**

**Around the built up areas of Bournemouth (including contiguous built up areas within East Dorset and Purbeck), Poole and Christchurch, the inner boundary of the green belt shall generally follow the limits of existing development or that already committed. The general extent of the South East Dorset green belt is maintained subject to changes in boundaries that will be defined in LDDs to:**

- accommodate the urban extensions required for the longer term development of South East Dorset at locations identified in Policy SR28, with the revised inner boundary coterminous with the outer edge of the urban extensions; and**
- exclude land at Bournemouth International Airport (subject to further technical work being undertaken).**

N.B. Policies SR3 (Bristol), and SR11 (Gloucester and Cheltenham) mentioned in the extract from Development Policy A relate to green belts other than that of South East Dorset.

3.13 No locations in Purbeck are currently identified or proposed in Policy SR28.

### ***Sub-Regional***

3.14 The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (2001) established the broad context for new development and the conservation of the environment in the County to the year 2011.

3.15 The structure plan also set the broad extent of the Green Belt, which is supported by settlement policies ('E' & 'F'). These policies give reference to the "built-up areas of South East Dorset"; referring not only to Bournemouth, Poole conurbation and the relevant towns listed in Settlement Policy C (including Wareham, Swanage, Sandford / Holton Heath), but also to other developed parts of the conurbation where development was permitted by the South East Dorset Structure Plan.

3.16 The Structure Plan (2001) states that; the South East Dorset Green Belt has helped to retain the physical identity of the smaller settlements, by restricting the outward sprawl of the built-up area. It has also safeguarded the countryside from encroachment, and preserved the settings and special characters of the historic towns of Christchurch, Wareham and Wimborne Minster<sup>7</sup>.

3.17 The relevant (to Purbeck) policy extracts relating to Green Belt are provided below:

### **Settlement Policy E**

**Development in South East Dorset will be contained within the built-up areas by the South East Dorset Green Belt. The purpose of the Green Belt is to protect the separate physical identity of individual settlements in the area by maintaining wedges**

<sup>7</sup> BDP Structure Plan, 2001



and corridors of open land between them and to maintain an area of open land around the conurbation. Within the Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development.

#### **Settlement Policy F**

The inner boundary of the Green Belt will generally follow the edge of the main urban area as extended by the development proposed in the development plan. The general course of the outer boundary will be some eight to thirteen kilometres beyond this inner boundary. Existing urban areas and development proposed in this plan will be excluded from the Green Belt.

3.18 The 'gap' in the Green Belt at Holton Heath relates to the proposed development highlighted in Settlement Policy F

#### **Local**

##### ***- North East Purbeck Local Plan***

3.19 The North East Purbeck Local Plan (1994) introduced policies to define the precise boundaries of the Green Belt coverage in Purbeck. Policies from this plan relating to development in the Green Belt have been identified below:

#### **Policy CC3**

**Any development in the Green Belt will normally only be permitted if it is in accordance with policies G1, CC2A and satisfies all of the following criteria;**

- (i) it retains the predominantly open nature of the land and does not involve the construction of large conspicuous buildings or unscreened car parking areas;**
- (ii) it does not involve the loss of any significant tree cover;**
- (iii) it is enclosed by tree boundaries which will prevent or substantially deter trespass onto neighbouring farmland, commercial woodland, sites of ecological importance or residential areas;**

**It does not endanger the viability of a farm holding or involve the loss of commercial woodland;**

**It does not, except in the case of allotments, include the best and most versatile agricultural land unless there is no other suitable site in the area for the particular purpose.**

#### **Policy CC4**

**In considering development proposals in the Green Belt for outdoor sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds or other uses appropriate to the rural area (including recreation and tourism related development) the District Council will take into account the likely effects of the proposal on other countryside interests including farming, forestry, mineral extraction and the conservation of areas of scientific, historical, archaeological or landscape value.**

##### ***- Purbeck District Local Plan Final Edition***

3.20 Government guidance advises that "where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless ... exceptional circumstances exist which necessitate such revision," and "where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not been defined, it is necessary to establish boundaries that will



endure."<sup>8</sup> The emergence of the Dorset County Structure Plan, which enabled a more western outer boundary to be defined, was deemed by the Council to be an exceptional circumstance which justified a revision to the outer boundary, following "readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, belts of trees or woodland edges," in line with Government advice,<sup>9</sup> is more logical.

- 3.21 The Council therefore extended the outer boundary of the Green Belt through the production of the Local Plan Final Edition (2004) to follow the readily recognisable features of the A31, the Bere Stream and the River Piddle. This boundary is located within thirteen kilometres of the inner boundary, and therefore was consistent with the general extent of the Green Belt.<sup>10</sup>
- 3.22 The proposed extension to the Green Belt has the effect of bringing the whole of the main block of Wareham Forest (north of the River Piddle and south of the A31) within the Green Belt. This area of undeveloped countryside is largely used for forestry, much under the management of the Forestry Commission. It contains many sites of wildlife interest and is used by local people for informal recreation. It has some potential for further informal countryside recreation because of its proximity to the Bournemouth and Poole conurbation. This has been recognised through recent initiatives such as the Wareham Forest Way.<sup>11</sup> The provision of opportunities for access to open countryside for urban populations, the retention of land in forestry use and securing nature conservation interest are listed by the Government as important objectives for the use of land within Green Belts.<sup>12</sup>

#### **POLICY CA 7A: EXTENSION TO SOUTH EAST DORSET GREEN BELT**

**The South East Dorset Green Belt is extended westwards, as indicated on the Proposals Map, to follow the boundaries of the A31, Bere Stream and River Piddle.**

- 3.23 The Local Plan seeks to protect the South East Dorset Green Belt from inappropriate development. New buildings will not be permitted unless they are for a very limited number of purposes, such as agriculture, forestry or other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt, such as cemeteries, outdoor sport or outdoor recreation. Residential development will be restricted to the replacement, alteration and extension of existing dwellings subject to strict control over the impact of the proposals on the Green Belt.

#### **POLICY CA 8: SOUTH EAST DORSET GREEN BELT**

**Within the South East Dorset Green Belt, as defined on the Proposals Map, planning permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings for purposes other than agriculture and forestry, cemeteries, essential small scale facilities for outdoor sport or recreation, the replacement, limited extension or alteration of existing dwellings, or other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.**

<sup>8</sup> para.s 2.7 - 2.8 PPG 2: Green Belts, 1995, DoE

<sup>9</sup> para. 2.9, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Settlement Policy D, The Deposit Structure Plan (CSP 21), 1996, Dorset County Council

<sup>11</sup> The Wareham Forest Way is a waymarked footpath between Wareham and Sturminster Marshall. At Sturminster Marshall the path joins the Stour Valley Way which also links into other strategic footpaths around the Bournemouth and Poole conurbation

<sup>12</sup> para 1.6, PPG 2: Green Belts, 1995, DoE

**In the case of replacement dwellings the new dwelling should not be materially larger than the building it replaces and any extensions or alterations to existing dwellings should not be disproportionate over and above the size of the original dwelling. Engineering and other operations and material changes to the use of land will only be permitted if they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and are compatible with the purposes of including land within Green Belts.**

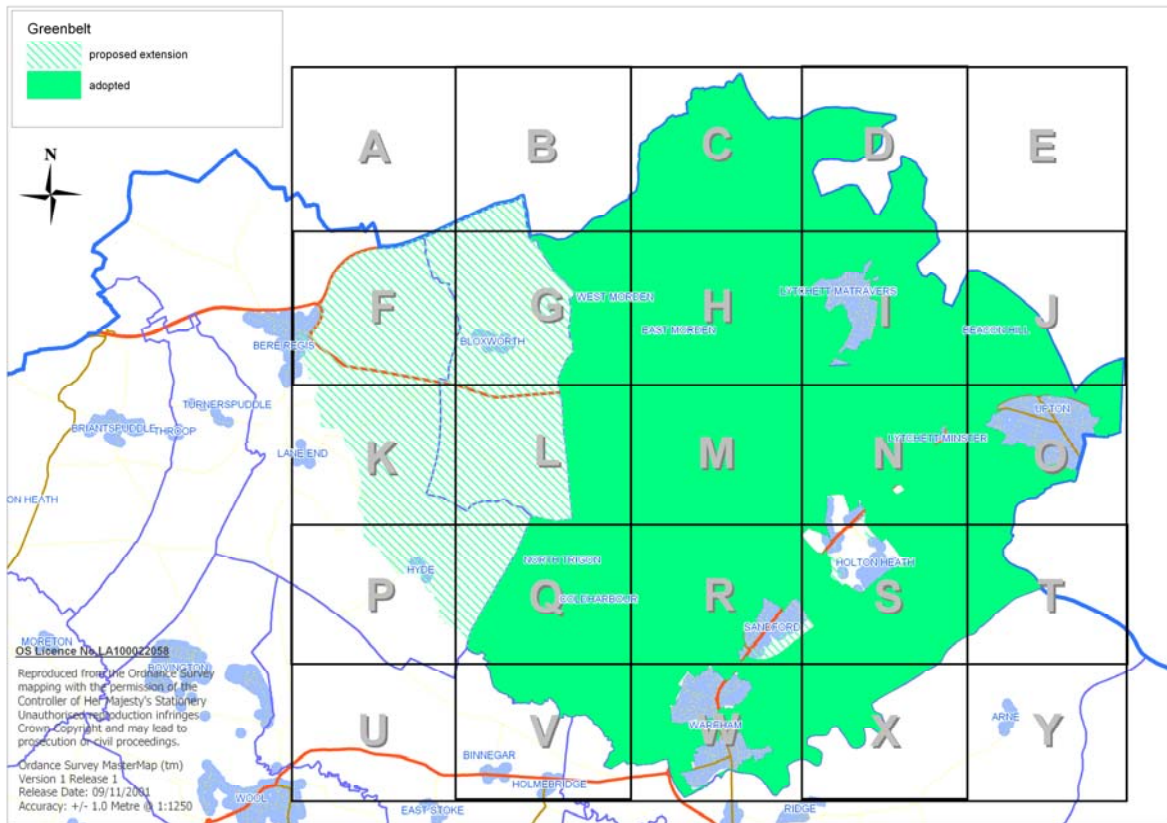
**The reuse of buildings in the Green Belt will be permitted provided that:**

- the new use, any ancillary uses, extensions, alterations or associated uses of land surrounding the building do not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within Green Belts;**
- the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and**
- the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings and respect local building styles and materials.**

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 This review has incorporated the conclusions of the work undertaken by the 4/4 authorities (Appendix 2) to inform the new Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West. This sub-regional review of the South East Dorset Green Belt serves to reinforce the general extent of Green Belt covering Purbeck. Therefore the purpose of this review will be to build upon the broader study undertaken by the sub-region and assess the Green Belt in Purbeck against the 5 purposes set out in PPG2. This local review will be undertaken in a greater level of detail around the urban fringes of the main settlements and the outer boundaries of the Green Belt, and will assess whether the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt in Purbeck are appropriate.
- 4.2 The main settlements within the Green Belt, identified in this review, are listed below:
- Upton;
  - Wareham;
  - Lytchett Matravers;
  - Lytchett Minster;
  - Sandford; and,
  - Holton Heath
- 4.3 The use of aerial photography, together with the analysis of photographs taken from site visits have assisted in determining the appropriateness of the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt.
- 4.4 In order to focus this review around the main settlements identified above, a grid has been laid out to cover the Green Belt and its proposed extension, with those squares containing the above listed settlements the subject of a more intense review. The grid will artificially divide the Green Belt up into sub-sections, as illustrated below in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Green Belt Grid**



4.5 The assessment of these sub-sections of Green Belt (the individual squares containing all /or parts of the main settlements) will be undertaken using a ‘traffic light’ appraisal system. Each ‘sub-section’ of Green Belt will be assessed against the purposes set out in PPG2 i.e. (i) ‘Green’: meets the purposes, (ii) ‘Amber’: partly meets the purposes, or (iii) ‘Red’: does not meet the purposes. Figure 4 below illustrates this appraisal system.

**Figure 4: Traffic Light Appraisal System**

<b>Fully fulfils the purpose</b>	<b>Partly fulfils the purpose</b>	<b>Does not fulfil the purpose</b>
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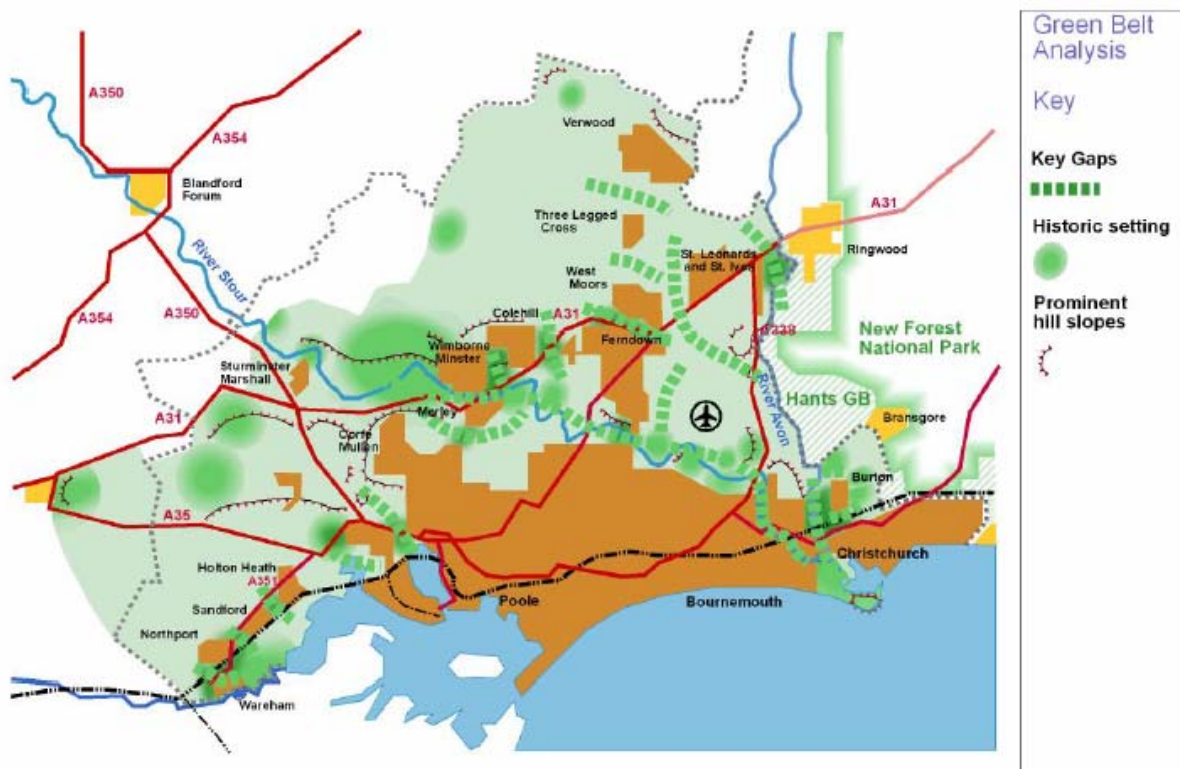
4.6 It should be noted that sites designated as green belt are not required to meet all 5 purposes as set out in PPG2, although some do. In fact, it is possible that an area meeting only one of the said purposes may be suitable for designation.

4.7 This assessment will be supported by a broad analysis of how the Green Belt meets the objectives identified in PPG2, acknowledging that whilst green belt designations are not dependant upon meeting the individual objectives outlined, they have an obvious potential once designated to fulfil such objectives.

## 5 SOUTH EAST DORSET SUB-REGIONAL GREEN BELT REVIEW

- 5.1 The conclusions from the sub-regional review of the South East Dorset Green Belt identify that the Green Belt compliments the urban areas, separating the individual settlements from one another, as well as forming the setting of some of the area's historic towns and villages<sup>13</sup>. The concluding report identified no areas of Green Belt which failed to meet one or more of the purposes for the inclusion of land within the Green Belt, or which do not meet one or more of the objectives for use of Green Belt land<sup>14</sup>.
- 5.2 However, the review states that although these 'tests' of Green Belt have been met, it does not necessarily preclude the loss of any Green Belt areas to development, but underlines that where this is done it should be with a full appreciation of the impacts, and that these impacts need to be balanced against the advantages accruing from the development proposals<sup>15</sup>.

**Figure 5: Traffic Light Appraisal System**



Source: Technical Report: Development Options Report (25 November 2005) (Draft)

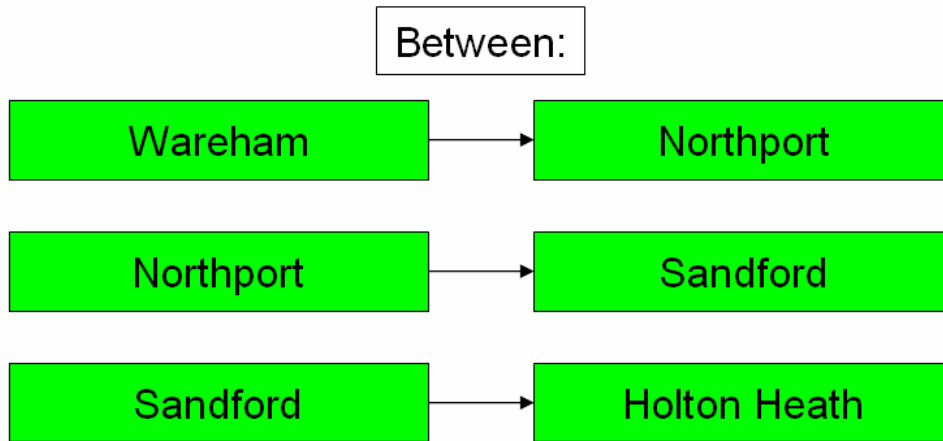
- 5.3 The review concludes that there are 'key strategic gaps' within the Green Belt i.e. those parts which are particularly narrow and sensitive to erosion. It is felt that the loss of open land from the Green Belt in these areas might have a disproportionately great effect<sup>16</sup>. The following 'key strategic gaps' have been identified within Purbeck:

<sup>13</sup> JSA South East Dorset Green Belt Review

<sup>14</sup> JSA South East Dorset Green Belt Review

<sup>15</sup> JSA South East Dorset Green Belt Review

<sup>16</sup> JSA South East Dorset Green Belt Review



## 6 HOW DOES THE GREEN BELT MEET THE 5 PURPOSES?

6.1 The 5 purposes of Green Belt, prescribed through PPG2, are outlined in Paragraph 3.2 of this report. The table below provides a broad analysis of how each 'sub-section' of Green Belt meets the purposes. Appendix 3 contains a brief justification for the appraisal verdict given below:

*Figure 6: Green Belt Appraisal*

Settlement	Lytchett Matravers	Holton Heath / Lytchett Minster / Upton	Upton	Sandford	Holton Heath	Wareham
Sub-section	I	N	O	R	S	W
PPG2 Purpose						
Check unrestrained sprawl	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Green
Assist in urban regeneration / recycling of derelict land	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green

## **7 THE USE OF LAND**

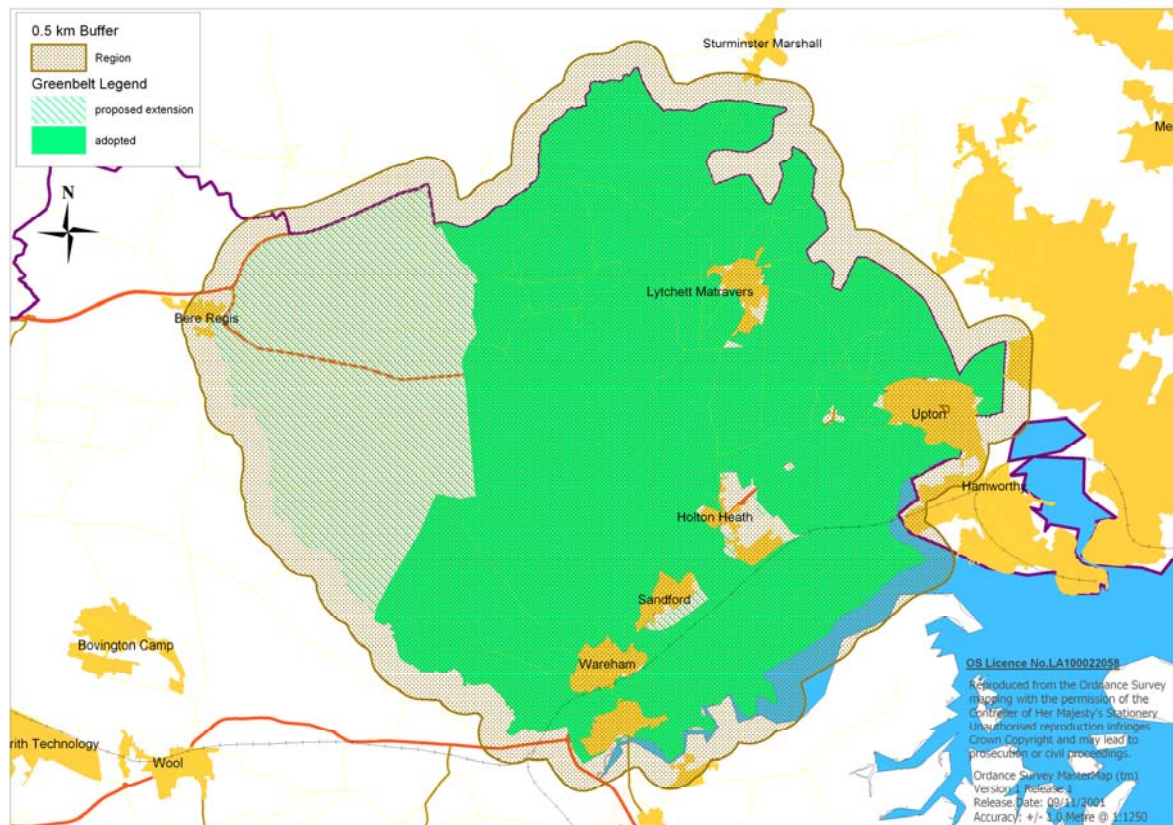
- 7.1 PPG2 identifies 5 broad objectives for land use within a Green Belt. Whilst the designation of Green Belt is not made on an areas ability to fulfil these objectives, there are nevertheless tangible links between them. A brief analysis of how land contained within the Purbeck Green Belt meets these objectives is discussed below.

### **Access to the open countryside**

- 7.2 Purbeck is widely, though unofficially, heralded as the 'playground' for residents of the conurbation, providing for much of the recreational demand of the South East Dorset sub-region. The sub-regional review promotes urban accessibility of the Green Belt within a distance of 0.5km.
- 7.3 When assessed at a District scale, it is clear that the current extent of the Green Belt enables access to the open countryside for the urban population of all of the main settlements (contained within / surrounded by the Green Belt in Purbeck), with the exception of a small area of central Upton which falls beyond the 0.5km radius of the Green Belt boundary.
- 7.4 Figure 7 illustrates the extent to which the Green Belt contained within Purbeck is accessible to urban areas beyond the District boundary. In particular, areas of Hamworthy, Sturminster Marshall, and Poole fall within a 500m radius of Purbeck's Green Belt, which represents a sizeable increase in population (above that of the District) which are potentially reliant on access to the Purbeck Green Belt for recreation.
- 7.5 This stands up well to English Nature's target of a 300m distance from home to an accessible natural greenspace, and, with levels of urban infill likely to increase inline with current policy to build at higher densities and develop on brownfield land ahead of greenfield, the importance of being able to access the countryside is likely to increase.



**Figure 7: Urban Access to the Green Belt**



**Retain attractive landscapes near to where people live**

- 7.6 The area of Purbeck covered by the Green Belt contains two conservation area villages (Lytchett Minster, and Morden) and one conservation area town (Wareham), as well as being directly abutted by the Bere Regis Conservation Area to the West. The area South of the settlements of Northport, Sandford, and Holton Heath is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and constitutes part of the Dorset AONB.
- 7.7 The sub-regional Green Belt Review identified the views southwards from Lytchett Matravers towards Wareham and the Isle of Purbeck as a being a ‘defining view’, which is recognition for its particular landscape quality. In these areas the Green Belt is deemed to play an important role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns and villages, as well as retaining the natural open nature of the landscape itself.

**Improve damaged or derelict land**

- 7.8 Contained within the area of Purbeck designated as Green Belt, the Local Plan Final Edition identifies a substantial area for heathland re-creation. This policy is designed to aid the delivery of the Government’s Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan, which proposes the re-establishment of 6,000ha of heathland nationwide<sup>17</sup>. Purbeck contains by far the largest proportion of lowland heathland in Dorset<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> PDLF Final Edition November 2004  
<sup>18</sup> PDLF Final Edition November 2004



- 7.9 Although the amelioration of fragmented areas of heathland is not the purpose of the Green Belt, there is significant synergy between the policies.

### **Secure nature conservation interests**

- 7.10 Within Purbeck many areas of the Green Belt are classified as being of high nature conservation interest, reflected through the designation of Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive, Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive or Ramsar sites, or a combination of these<sup>19</sup>. Also present within the Green Belt in Purbeck are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), and Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological sites (RIGs).
- 7.11 These designations have a certain synergy with the Green Belt, and are mutually beneficial to one another. Development in close proximity to these sites would also be likely to have a damaging impact, and would be prohibited by the Habitat regulations. Development on the Green Belt nature conservation sites will depend on the proximity, scale, and type of development proposed. Housing is potentially particularly damaging, and larger housing sites would have an impact over greater distances<sup>20</sup>.

### **Retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses**

- 7.12 An area of land under the management of the Forestry Commission is contained within the District's Green Belt designation. The Commission are responsible for the parts of the forest used to grow timber (Corsican, Scots and Bishop Pine). This form of planned and managed forestry provides sustainable, environmentally sound and profitable land use<sup>21</sup>. The Green Belt is an important policy tool which affords an additional degree of cover from development pressures which are otherwise liable to impact upon these and other similar types of land uses such as agriculture, and assists in ensuring that they remain viable in the future.

## **8 DETAILED BOUNDARIES**

- 8.1 As identified through the sub-regional review, the general extent of the Green Belt has been declared as meeting the purposes set out in PPG2 i.e. fit for purpose. Within Purbeck, the sub-regional review made no strategic scale amendments to the Green Belt, however, the analyses of aerial photographs together with the photographic records obtained from site visits have led to a recommendation to review some of the detailed boundaries further through the site specific allocations work.
- 8.2 All of the detailed boundaries looked at through this review broadly fulfil at least one of the purposes identified in PPG2. However, some detailed boundaries have been recommended for further review. Such areas have been identified because they either; (i) are sites on the periphery which are currently omitted, but which may serve to reinforce the role and function of the Green Belt, or (ii) are sites currently contained within the Green Belt on the fringes of urban areas which perhaps do not meet the purposes set out in PPG2.

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<sup>19</sup> JSA South East Dorset Green Belt Review

<sup>20</sup> JSA South East Dorset Green Belt Review

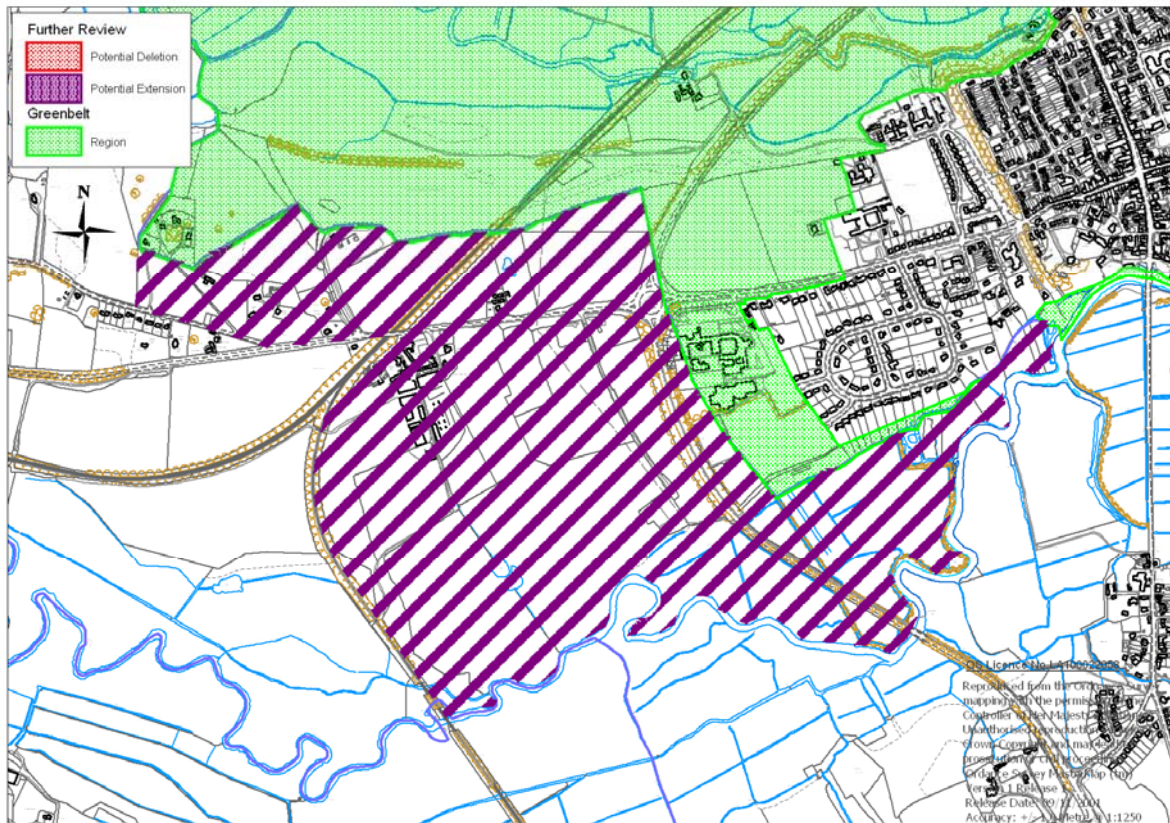
<sup>21</sup> Wareham Forest Sika Trail, Forestry Commission

- 8.3 The following locations have been identified for further review:
- Worgret Manor
  - Holton Heath (land north of the A351)
  - Sandford (land south of the A351)
  - Purbeck School

### Worgret Manor

8.4 The current south-western extent of the Green Belt follows the administrative boundary of the Wareham Town Parish, which is not easily identifiable on the ground i.e. using physical 'landlines'. Whilst the bypass might present a more obvious boundary to the north, the width of the Green Belt between the urban area of Wareham and that of Northport is already narrow and has been identified as a key gap through the sub-regional review. The purposes and objectives of the Green Belt may be better enforced if this boundary were to be extended along the Frome to the Railway tracks to the West, encompassing Worgret. Appendix 4 provides further detail on how this potential extension may meet the purposes set out in PPG2.

**Figure 8: Potential Green Belt Extension, Worgret**

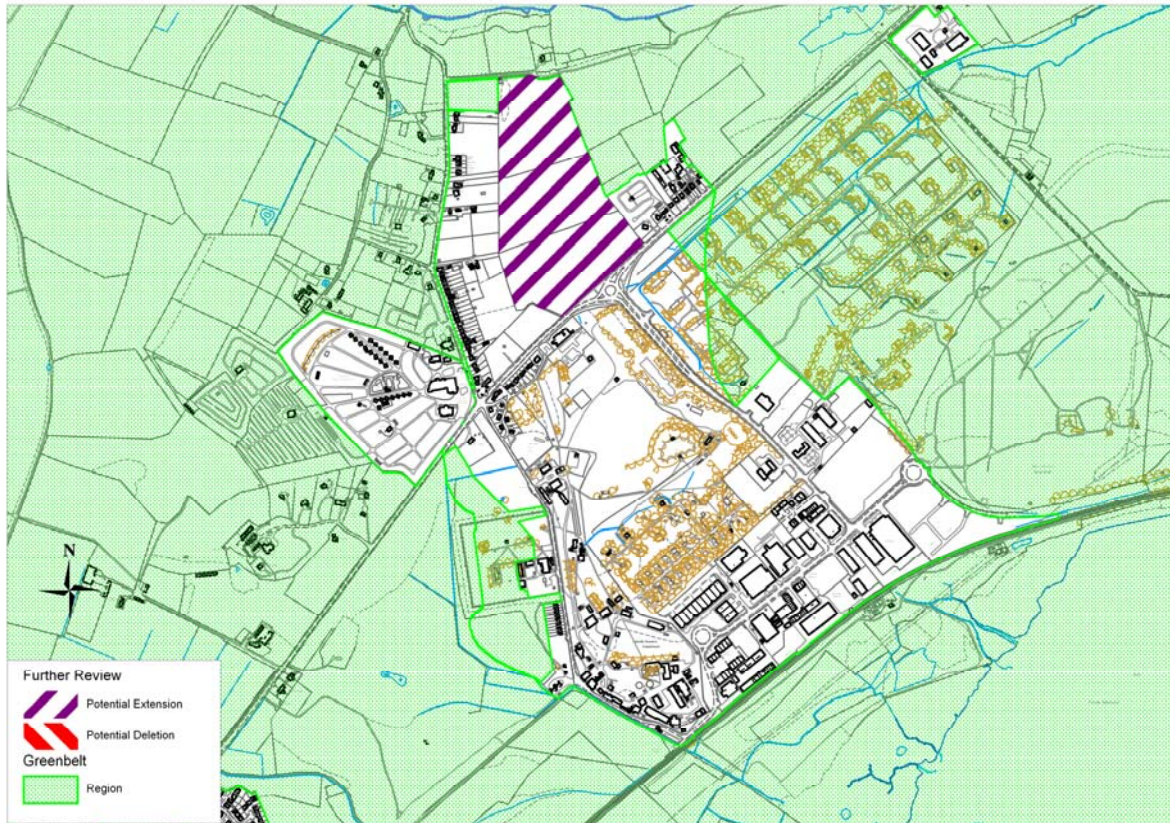


### Holton Heath

8.5 The site identified below, to the North of the A351, is not currently designated as Green Belt owing to a previous strategic housing allocation in Holton Heath which was removed by the Inspector through the Local Plan Inquiry. The enactment of the Habitats Directive renders this location unsuitable for additional residential development, which together with the open character of the land north of the A351, may assist in preventing further encroachment into the countryside and reinforce the role of the Green Belt.



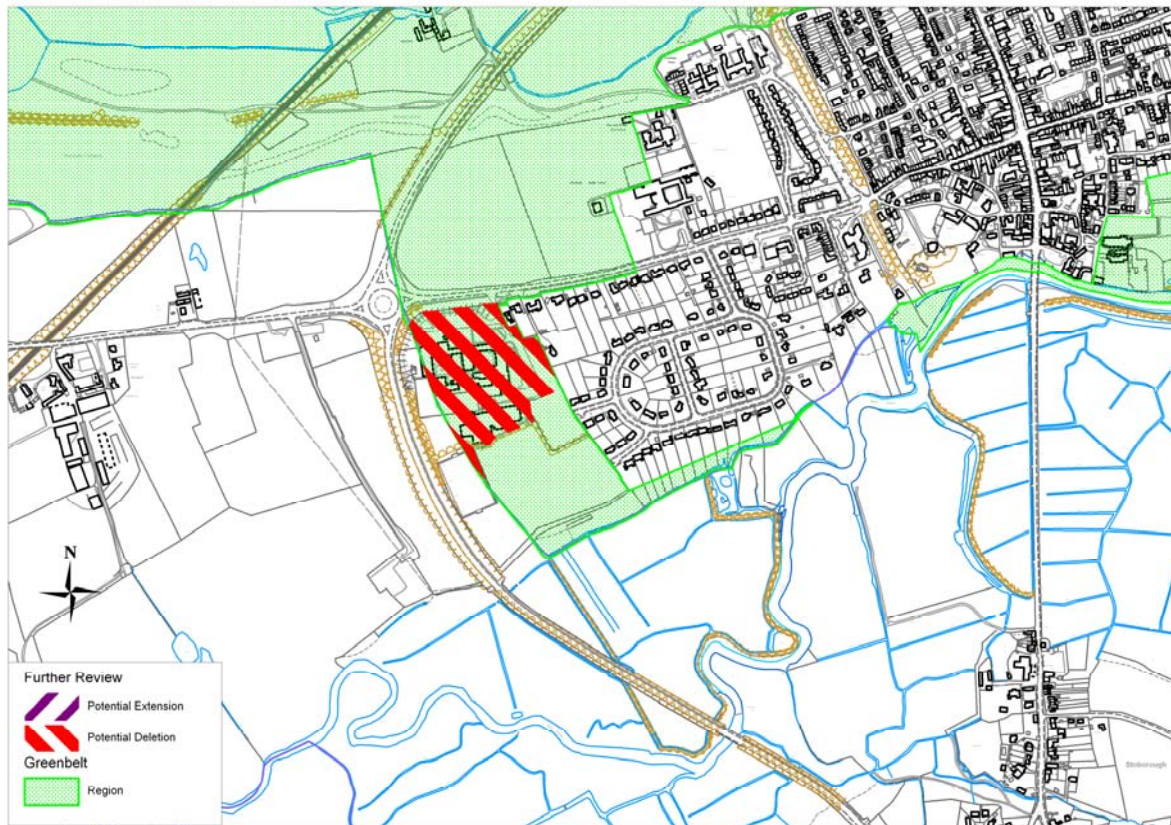
**Figure 9: Potential Green Belt Extension, Holton Heath**



### **Purbeck School**

8.6 At present, the Purbeck School and associated Sports Centre are ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt. This was most probably the case as an attempt to reinforce the role of the Green Belt through what is a very narrow section bounding the western extent of Wareham. Should the potential extension of the Green Belt identified in this review (Figure 8) be pursued through the site specific allocations, then it may be suitable to remove the School and Sports Centre from the Green Belt, given the bulk, mass, and scale of development on the site together with the current mix of uses.

Figure 10: Potential Green Belt Deletion, Purbeck School

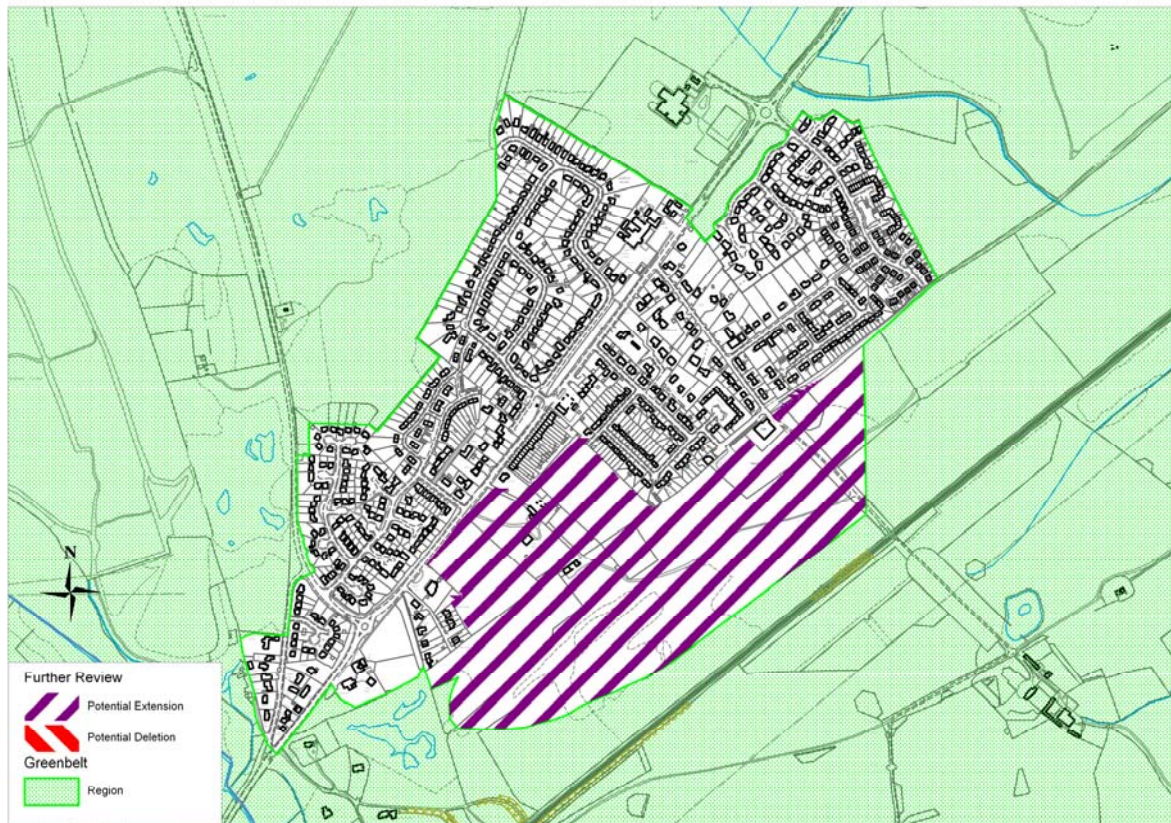


## Sandford

- 8.7 The area to the south of Sandford, not covered by the Green Belt, was originally earmarked for a potential A351 relief road and associated development. However, this scheme was removed by the Inspector together with the Holton Heath housing allocation through the Inquiry into the Local Plan, and does not feature in the Purbeck Transportation Strategy (which looked at alleviating traffic from the A351).
- 8.8 The boundary of the Green Belt was drawn to fit with the 'sweep' of the new relief road, and is therefore not easily established on the ground. The open character of the land which joins the upper boundary of both the Dorset AONB and the World Heritage Coast is continuous as you travel south from the settlement boundary of Sandford, and may therefore provide a more suitable boundary for the Green Belt.



Figure 11: Potential Green Belt Extension, Sandford



## 9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Green Belt within Purbeck compliments the urban areas providing open countryside between the main settlements in the North of the District, and forming the historic setting of 3 Conservation Area Villages and one Conservation Area Town. The general extent of this Green Belt has been assessed as being 'fit for purpose' through the work of the Joint Strategic Authorities. Therefore, those villages that are currently 'washed over' by the Green Belt are not recommended for any further review, as their removal from the designation may serve to weaken the policy. These villages are recommended for continued inclusion in the Green Belt to ensure the general extent is retained in the future.
- 9.2 The Green Belt boundaries surrounding the urban fringes of Upton and Lytchett Matravers appear to have been drawn to logical edges (when viewed on site, and with aerial photography), with only minor re-alignments highlighted to ensure the boundary is consistent and identifiable on the ground (all proposed amendments are illustrated in Appendix 5). However, the Green Belt boundaries abutting the settlements of Wareham, Sandford, and Holton Heath appear to be less clearly defined on the ground.
- 9.3 Section 8 has identified some areas for further investigation, either where an extension to the existing Green Belt could potentially strengthen the policy, or where an area currently contained within the Green Belt perhaps no longer meets the purposes set out in PPG2. In the main these proposed areas for further review have been created by a change in planning policy, particularly in relation to proposed development near international areas of nature conservation. The recommendations for further review in Section 8 would need to be pursued through the site specific

allocation document and would only constitute minor amendments to the detailed boundaries i.e. not altering the general extent of the Green Belt.

## APPENDIX 1: SOUTH EAST DORSET STRATEGIC GREEN BELT REVIEW

### First Detailed proposals

[The Section 4/4 (strategic planning) authorities, advising on sub-regional policies, and the Joint Study Area Steering Groups prepared statements of their strategies as contributions to the preparation of the RSS. The Section 4/4 statements are referred to as the First Detailed Proposals.]

- 1 The three JSAs with Green Belts submitted their First Detailed Proposals in August and September, 2005. These documents, in connection with technical evidence supplied by the Joint Study Area Steering Groups, help to set the context for the review of the Green Belts and led the Regional Assembly, with the support of GOSW, to require a consistency of approach in the review of the Green Belts.
- 2 The broad strategies contained within the First Detailed Proposals documents are summarised below:

### South East Dorset JSA

- o South East Dorset JSA acknowledged the relationship between pressures from new development and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.
- o Five locations were identified for urban extensions of modest size that would entail development within the Green Belt.
- o A total of 30,900 dwellings to be constructed in the wider study area of South East Dorset with over 90% built within existing urban areas between 2006 and 2026.

### South East Dorset JSA Document Review:

- o South East Dorset Strategy (November 2005)
- o First Detailed Proposals (November 2005)
- o Strategic Review of Green Belt (2005)
- o Technical Report: Development Options Report (25 November 2005) (Draft)
- o Technical Report: Testing of Growth Options
- o Western Sector Feasibility Study, Dorset (Volumes 1 – 3) (Atkins, January 2005)
- o First Detailed Proposals Strategy Document (September 2005)
- o Areas of Great Landscape Value, East Dorset District Council (June 1997)
- o Extracts from Replacement Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Deposit Structure Plan (July 2004)

### Locations for potential review/release

- 3 The South East Dorset JSA provide conclusions as to which parts of the Green Belt could be released without compromising the purposes of the Green Belt. The impacts of releasing these areas are specified. Maps delineating these areas as drawn by the JSA are reproduced as Appendix 5. The extent of areas that could not be released and those areas less sensitive to release need to be more clearly defined.

### Scoring

- 4 The South East Dorset JSA provide comprehensive assessments of impacts of releasing areas of land, but only in respect of environmental and other sustainability objectives.



**South East Dorset Green Belt Review**

5 Extract from Technical Report: Development Options Report (25 November 2005) (Draft)



### Future Of Major Developed Sites In The Green Belt

- 1 **C1** Green Belts contain some major developed sites such as factories, collieries, power stations, water and sewage treatment works, military establishments, civil airfields, hospitals, and research and education establishments. These substantial sites may be in continuing use or be redundant. They often pre-date the town and country planning system and the Green Belt designation.
- 2 **C2** These sites remain subject to development control policies for Green Belts, and the Green Belt notation should be carried across them. If a major developed site is specifically identified for the purposes of this Annex in an adopted local plan or UDP, infilling or redevelopment which meets the criteria in paragraph C3 or C4 is not inappropriate development. In this context, infilling means the filling of small gaps between built development.

#### *Infilling*

- 3 **C3** Limited infilling at major developed sites in continuing use may help to secure jobs and prosperity without further prejudicing the Green Belt. Where this is so, local planning authorities may in their development plans identify the site, defining the boundary of the present extent of development and setting out a policy for limited infilling for the continuing use within this boundary. Such infilling should:
  - (a) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt (paragraph 1.5) than the existing development;
  - (b) not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
  - (c) not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

#### *Redevelopment*

- 4 **C4** Whether they are redundant or in continuing use, the complete or partial redevelopment of major developed sites may offer the opportunity for environmental improvement without adding to their impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it. Where this is the case, local planning authorities may in their development plans identify the site, setting out a policy for its future redevelopment. They should consider preparing a site brief. Redevelopment should :
  - (a) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
  - (b) contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts (paragraph 1.6 - see also paragraph 3.13);
  - (c) not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
  - (d) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings (unless this would achieve a reduction in height which would benefit visual amenity).
- 5 **C5** The relevant area for the purposes of (d) is the aggregate ground floor area of the existing buildings (the "footprint"), **excluding** temporary buildings, open spaces with direct external access between wings of a building, and areas of hardstanding.
- 6 **C6** The character and dispersal of proposed redevelopment will need to be considered as well as its footprint. For example many houses may together have a much smaller footprint than a few large buildings, but may be unacceptable because their dispersal over a large part of the site and enclosed gardens may have an adverse impact on the character of the Green Belt compared with the current

development. The location of the new buildings should be decided having regard to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts, the main features of the landscape, and the need to integrate the new development with its surroundings. For instance it may be more appropriate to site new development closer to existing buildings.

- 7 **C7** The site should be considered as a whole, whether or not all the buildings are to be redeveloped. The test of area in paragraph C5 relates to the redevelopment of the entire site; any proposals for **partial** redevelopment should be put forward in the context of comprehensive, long-term plans for the site as a whole.
- 8 **C8** Proposals should be considered in the light of all material considerations, including for example visual amenity (see paragraph 3.15 of this PPG) and the traffic and travel implications of redevelopment (see PPG13).
- 9 **C9** Where buildings are demolished rather than being left in a semi-derelict state pending decisions about their redevelopment, it will be necessary to keep suitable records for the purposes of paragraph C5. These should be agreed between the local planning authority and the landowner.
- 10 **C10** In granting any planning permission local authorities may wish to consider whether to impose conditions to ensure that buildings which are not to be retained permanently are demolished as new buildings are erected, thus keeping the total developed area under control.

#### ***Architectural and historic interest***

- 11 **C11** Suitable re-use is to be preferred to redevelopment where the buildings are of architectural or historic interest. Any proposals for altering or demolishing listed buildings or which affect their settings should be considered in the light of the advice in PPG15, ***Planning and the Historic Environment***.
- 12 **C12** Local planning authorities should have regard to the desirability of preserving gardens and grounds of special historic interest. The English Heritage register of historic gardens lists sites of particular importance (see PPG15).

#### ***Public expenditure***

- 13 **C13** Redevelopment should not normally require additional expenditure by the public sector on the provision of infrastructure, nor should it overload local facilities such as schools and health care facilities. Local planning authorities should take account of any additional infrastructure requirements (eg roads) which may have significant adverse effects on the Green Belt. Adequate financial provision should where necessary be made for the future maintenance of landscaped areas (taking account of advice in DoE Circular 16/91, ***Planning Obligations***).

#### ***Redundant hospitals***

- 14 **C14** The special position of redundant hospitals in Green Belts was recognised in DoE Circular 12/91 and earlier advice. That Circular is cancelled by this PPG; hospitals are covered by this Annex. As a transitional measure, pending the next local plan or UDP review, the redevelopment of redundant hospital sites which are not identified in development plans but meet the criteria in paragraph C4 above is not inappropriate development.

#### ***Higher and further education establishments***

- 15 **C15** Previous policy allowed "institutions standing in extensive grounds" to undertake new development, because such institutions pre-dated Green Belt policy. It was unclear how much new development was permitted. More recently this provision has

been used to press for wholly new development on a scale that is inappropriate in the Green Belt. This revision of PPG2 makes it clear that development by institutions is subject to the same controls as other development in the Green Belt.

- 16 **C16** It is however Government policy to encourage more people to undertake higher and further education (HFE). There has been a large increase in student numbers and further increases can be expected. The lack of a reasonable alternative site outside the Green Belt (whether within the urban area or elsewhere) for the proposed expansion of an HFE establishment located in or adjacent to the Green Belt should be taken into account in preparing or reviewing a development plan. Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances, after consideration of development opportunities within urban areas. Local planning authorities will wish to take an early opportunity to consult HFE establishments in or adjacent to the Green Belt about their development intentions. Plan preparation procedures provide opportunities for full public consultation on proposals to alter boundaries. Guidance on the timing of plan reviews is given in PPG12.
- 17 **C17** Meanwhile, pending the next local plan or UDP review, the infilling or (partial or complete) redevelopment of HFE establishments on major sites in the Green Belt, which are not identified in development plans but otherwise meet the criteria in paragraph C3 or C4 of this Annex, is not inappropriate development. HFE establishments' means: universities, colleges, schools and institutes of higher education; and establishments funded by the Further Education Funding Council for England, including colleges of further education, VI form colleges, and agricultural and horticultural colleges.

## APPENDIX 3: GREEN BELT APPRAISAL JUSTIFICATION

### Holton Heath

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- 1 The Green Belt serves to prevent the outlying settlement of Sandford merging with Holton Heath, which in-turn has safeguarded the countryside from encroachment. Whilst the boundary of the Green Belt is not drawn tightly around the Holton Heath Trading Estate, it has nevertheless assisted in promoting the redevelopment of existing employment sites to accommodate business needs as opposed to developing on 'greenfield' sites.

### Lytchett Matravers

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- 2 Lytchett Matravers is a 'satellite' settlement from the Conurbation, and is surrounded by Green Belt. This designation has prevented the settlement from merging with Lytchett Minster and encroaching further into the countryside. There are some isolated examples of brownfield redevelopment, but this is mainly 'backland' development i.e. development in residential back gardens, as opposed to regeneration projects per se.

### Lytchett Minster

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- 3 The village centre is omitted from the Green Belt designation, but coalescence with the settlements of Upton and Lytchett Matravers has been prevented. The Green Belt has assisted in preserving the historic setting and special character of the Lytchett Minster conservation area, and prevented encroachment into the countryside.

### Sandford

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- 4 The Green Belt surrounding Sandford has prevented a continuous 'ribbon' development arising between Northport and Holton Heath (incorporating Sandford). This has assisted in retaining the open nature of the surrounding countryside and, to a certain extent, checks the level high growth evident from the development of large-scale housing developments planned in the late 1970's early 1980's.

### Upton

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- 5 Clear evidence from the aerial photography that the Green Belt has assisted in checking unrestrained sprawl from the Conurbation, which has in-turn prevented the coalescence of Upton and Lytchett Minster. In this location, the Green Belt has assisted in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (urban area contained by the Upton bypass) and has prompted the recycling of previously developed land – evidenced through the rate of infill and sub-division.

## Wareham

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
--------	---------	--------------------------	------------------	--------------------

- 6 It is considered that Wareham meets all of the purposes for designating Green Belt; checking the unrestrained sprawl of previous developments outside of the Wareham Walls which has assisted in preventing Wareham merging with Northport and Stoborough. This has safeguarded the surrounding countryside from encroachment and preserved the historic setting and character of the town. There is also some clear evidence, within 'the Walls' of urban regeneration and redevelopment, particularly to the east of North Street.

N.B. Refer to Para 4.5 (Figure 4) for Key.

**APPENDIX 4: APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED ADDITONS TO THE GREEN BELT**

**Worgret**

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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- 1 The current outer boundary of the Green Belt, to the south and southwest of Wareham, is very narrow and the potential extension identified would assist in resisting further encroachment into the countryside which historically has witnessed development beyond the historic Wareham Walls. The nature of the surrounding land is consistent with the open countryside currently contained within the Green Belt and would serve to further reinforce the purpose of the Green Belt around Wareham.

**Holton Heath**

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
--------	---------	--------------------------	------------------	--------------------

- 2 Since the withdrawal of the strategic housing allocation at Holton Heath, for which the boundaries of the Green Belt were amended, there has never been a re-drawing of the boundary. The area identified for a potential extension of the Green Belt is open in nature and undistinguishable in nature from the adjacent land contained within the Green Belt. Such an extension would assist in ensuring no further encroachment into the open countryside.

**Sandford**

Sprawl	Merging	Countryside Encroachment	Historic Setting	Urban Regeneration
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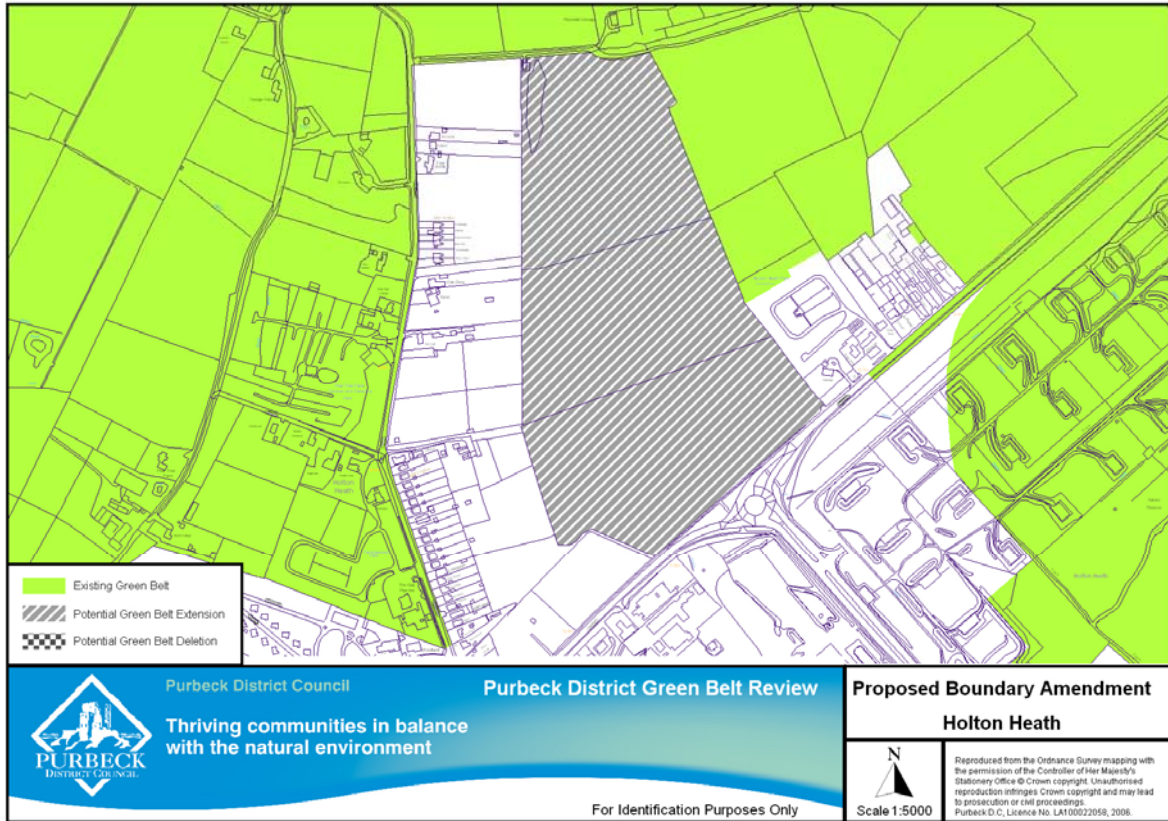
- 3 As discussed in Section 8, the Green Belt boundary in Sandford was drawn to the route of the proposed Sandford bypass. This has never materialised due to the nature conservation interests present. The potential extension identified would reinforce the southerly boundary of the Green Belt and assist in preventing encroachment into the open countryside, possibly assisting in preventing the settlements of Sandford and Northport from merging.

N.B. Refer to Para 4.5 (Figure 4) for Key.

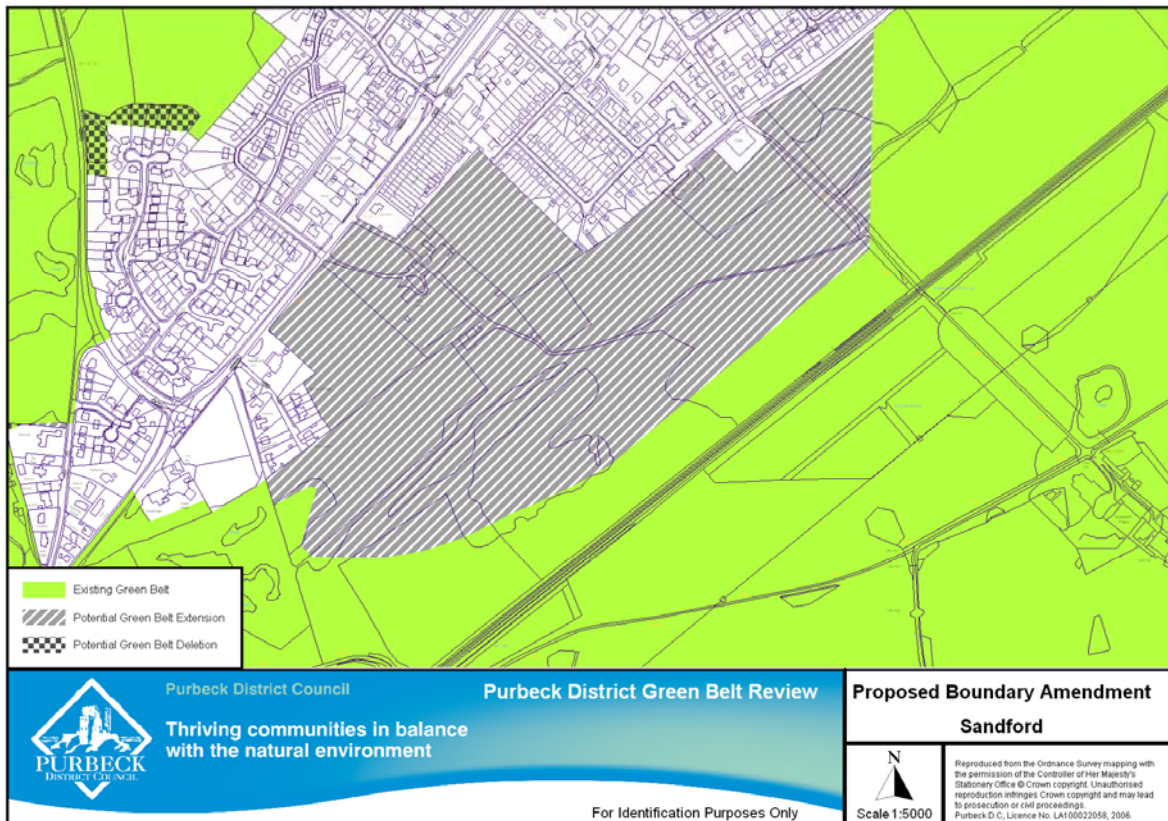


## APPENDIX 5: PROPOSED GREEN BELT AMENDMENTS

### Holton Heath

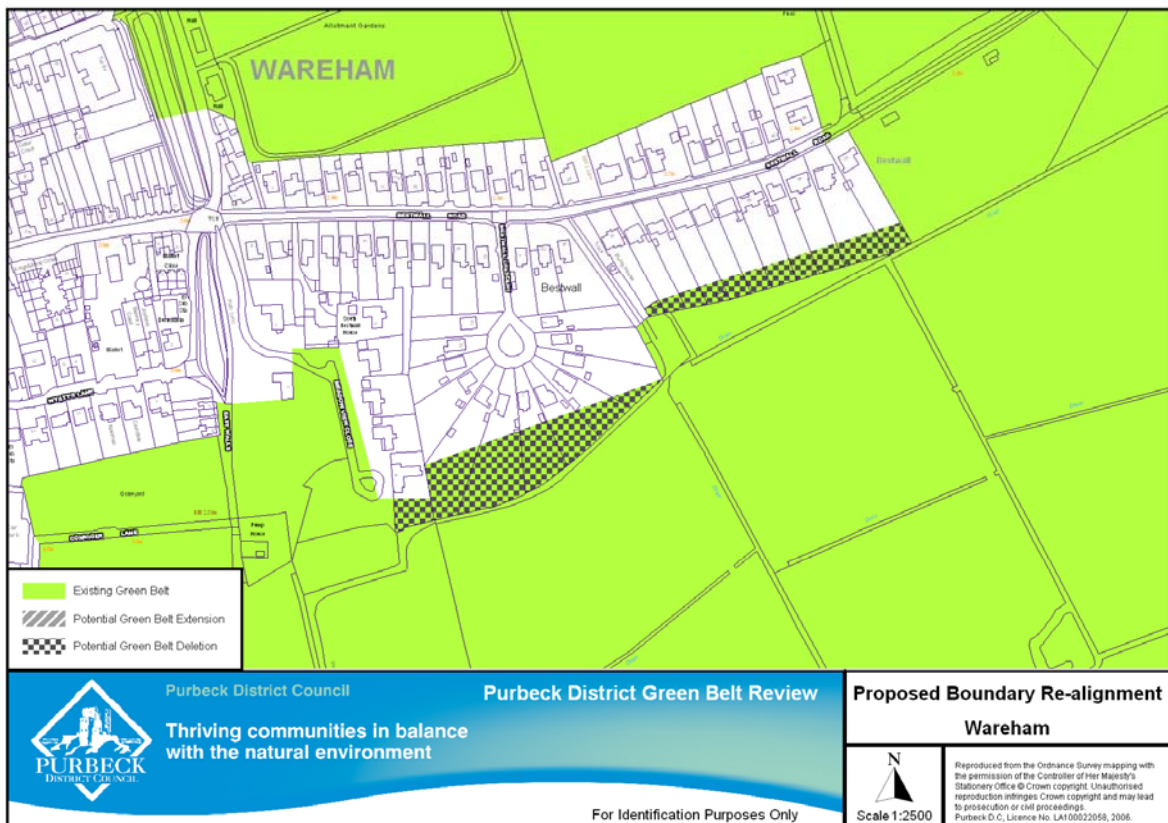
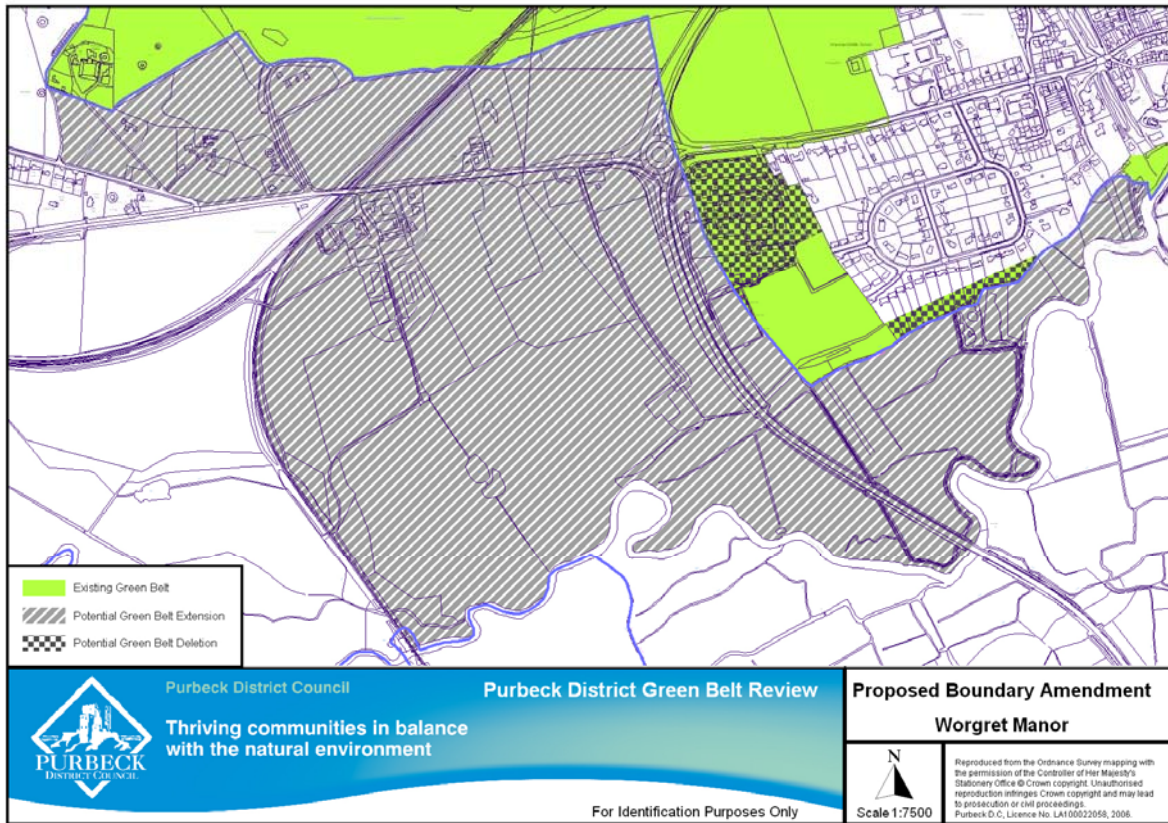


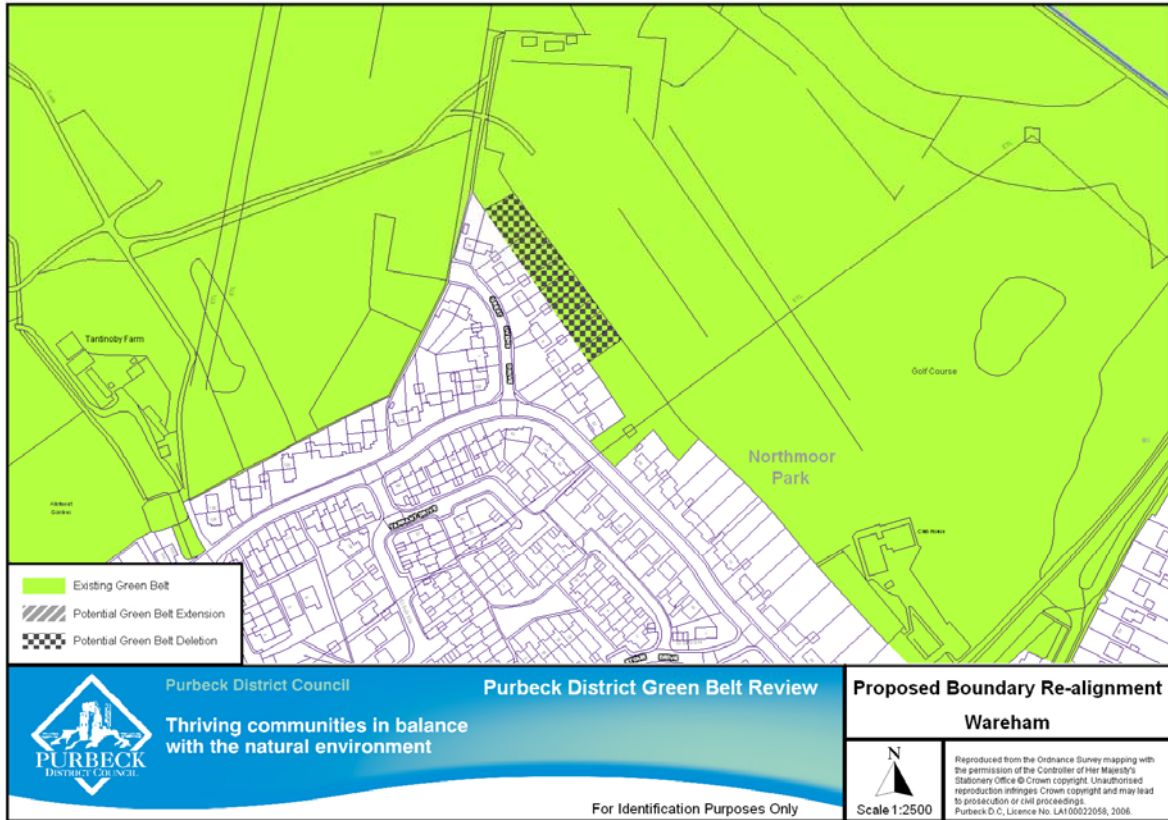
### Sandford



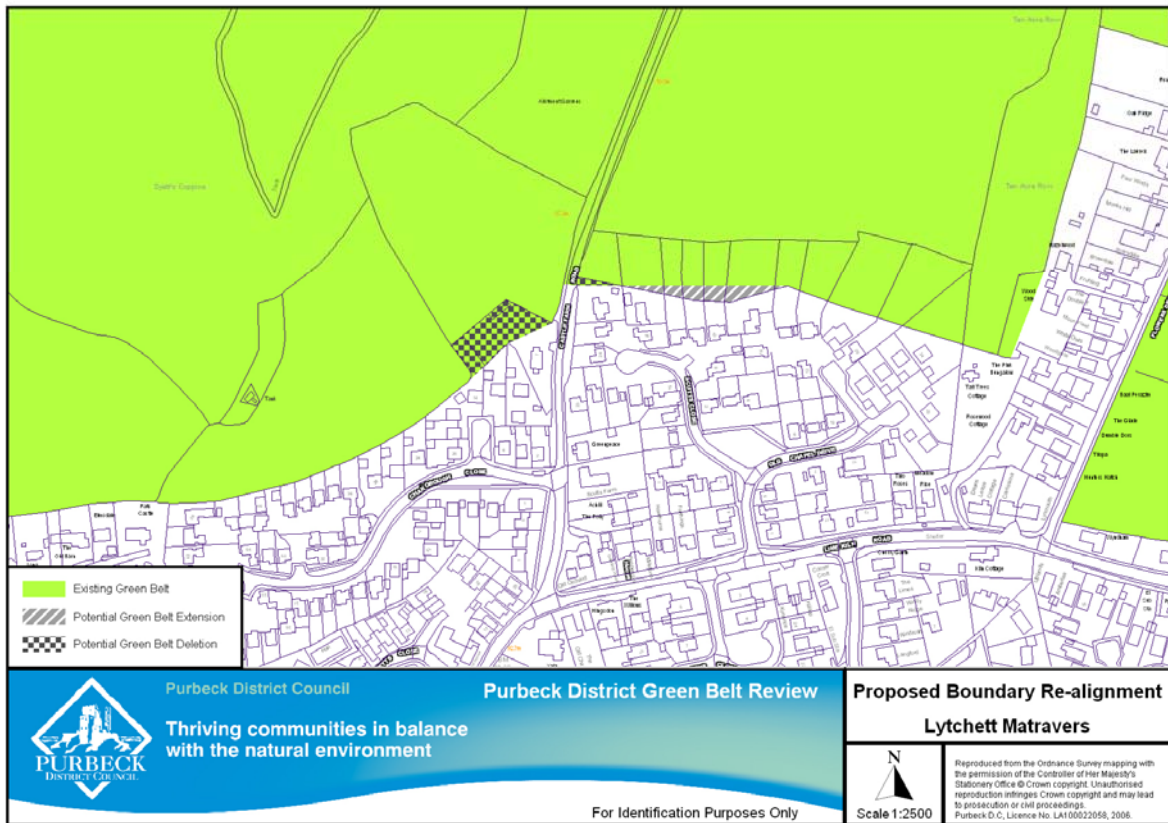


# Wareham

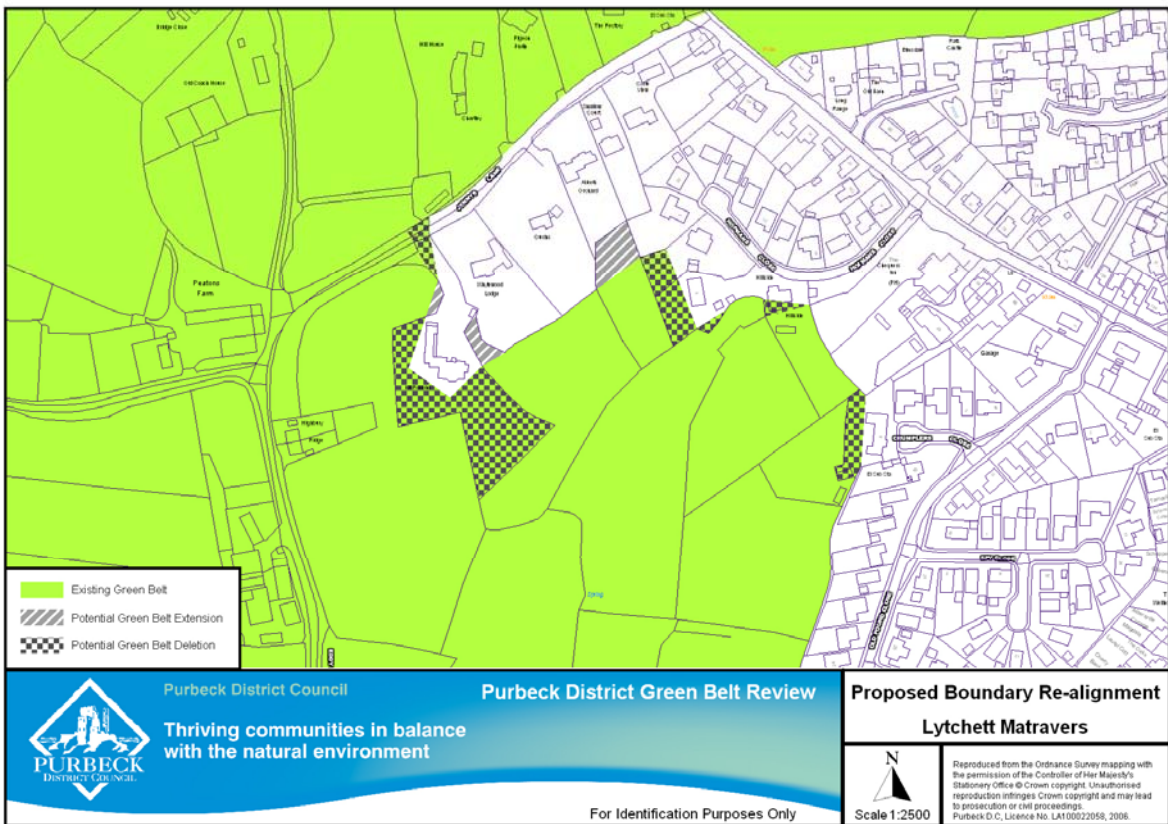
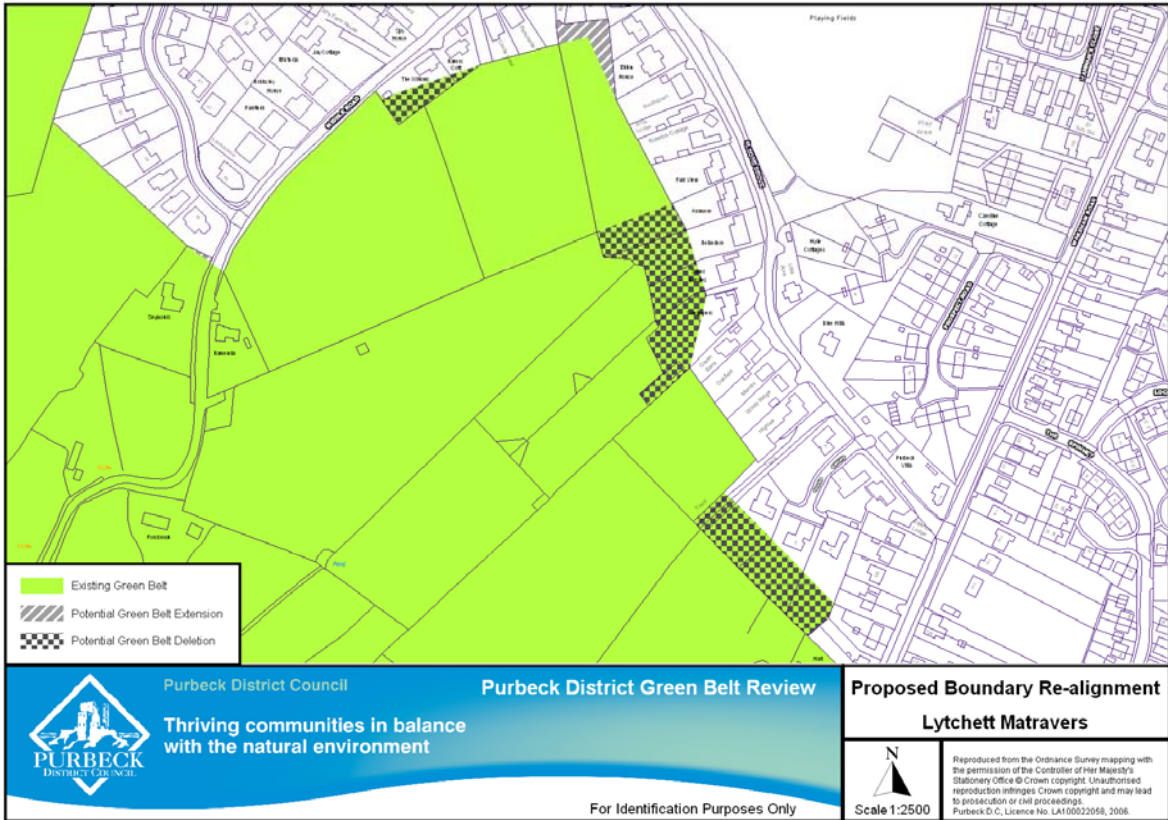


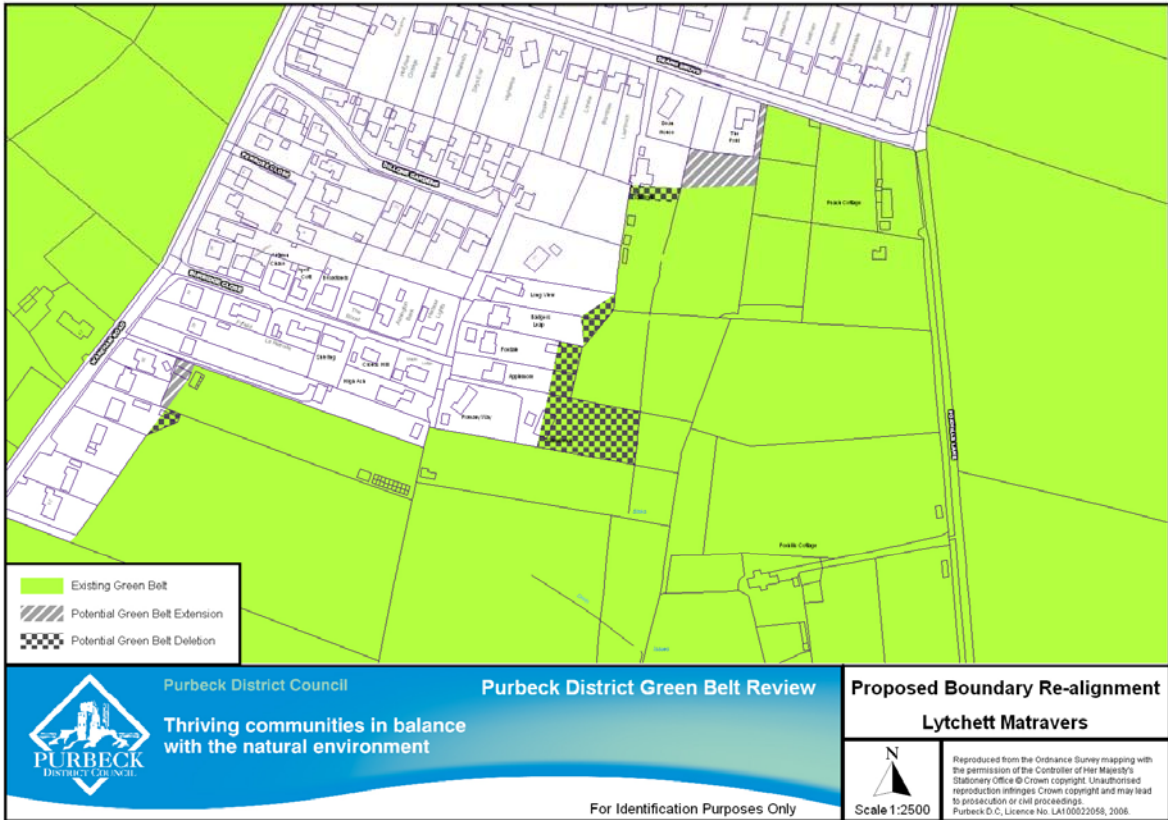


Lytchett Matravers

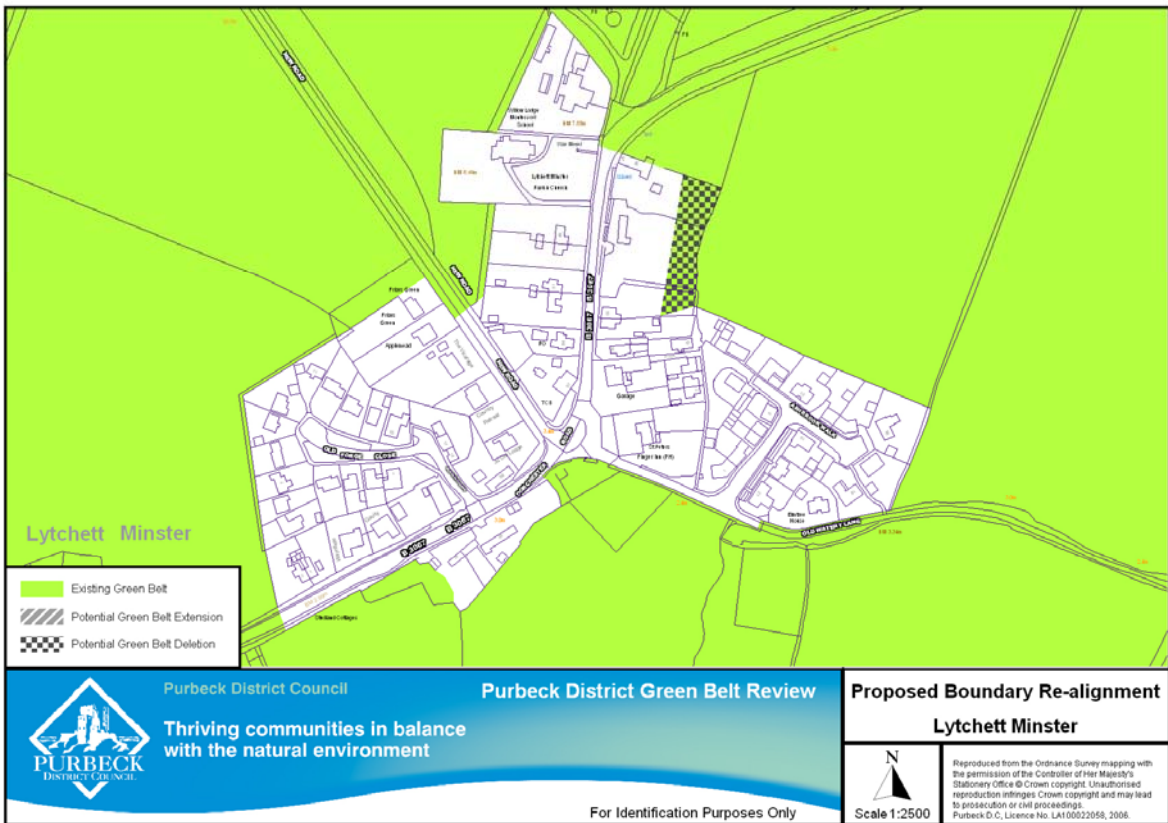








Lytchett Minster





Upton

