



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



Three Rivers District Council & Watford Borough Council

Green Belt Review

Strategic Analysis



August 2017

Amec Foster Wheeler Environment
& Infrastructure UK Limited

Report for

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Doc Ref. L39432

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Executive summary

Purpose of this report

This report has been produced for the purpose of setting out the results of a review of the Green Belt in Three Rivers District and Watford Borough. The objective is to test the Green Belt against the five purposes set for it in national policy and to determine the extent to which it is contributing to those purposes. **The report does not identify land for release or development.** Along with other studies, the report will be used as part of the evidence base in the production of the Councils' emerging Local Plans.

The study area

Figure 1 The Green Belt in Three Rivers and Watford Councils and its sub-regional context



Approach and outline methodology

The Green Belt Review is principally a strategic review of Green Belt purposes. It is complemented by an exploration of the character and role of villages within the Green Belt, drawing conclusions on the suitability for the continued and potential in-setting of villages within the Green Belt, as required by paragraph 86 of the NPPF. Further work could be undertaken to produce a more refined consideration of



the contribution to Green Belt purposes of more specific parcels of land (at the scale of individual fields) which sit within the strategic parcels.

Strategic Review of the Green Belt

The Green Belt in Three Rivers and Watford, which is part of the wider Metropolitan Green Belt to the north of London, exhibits a range of characteristics of strategic and more local significance. Strategically, the Green Belt maintains a degree of separation between the principal towns of the Council areas, Rickmansworth and Watford, as well as the surrounding towns and large urban areas of Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Radlett, Bushey, Pinner and Northwood. Equally sprawl into open countryside has also been largely contained. The Green Belt also performs a range of more local functions relating to prevention of widespread encroachment into open countryside from incremental development in what is a highly accessible area, and the protection of the identity of individual settlements, and to some degree suburbs.

The Green Belt within the two authorities can be broadly divided into five areas:

- ▶ Remoter open countryside to the west and north west of Rickmansworth and the M25. This is part of the wider Green Belt in Chiltern District and part is designated as AONB,
- ▶ Land to the north between Watford and Hemel Hempstead.
- ▶ Land to the east of Watford which is part of the wider Green Belt within Hertsmere District.
- ▶ Open countryside between Watford and Rickmansworth, south of the M25.
- ▶ Land to the south of Watford and Rickmansworth, part of the wider Green Belt within the London Boroughs of Hillingdon and Harrow.

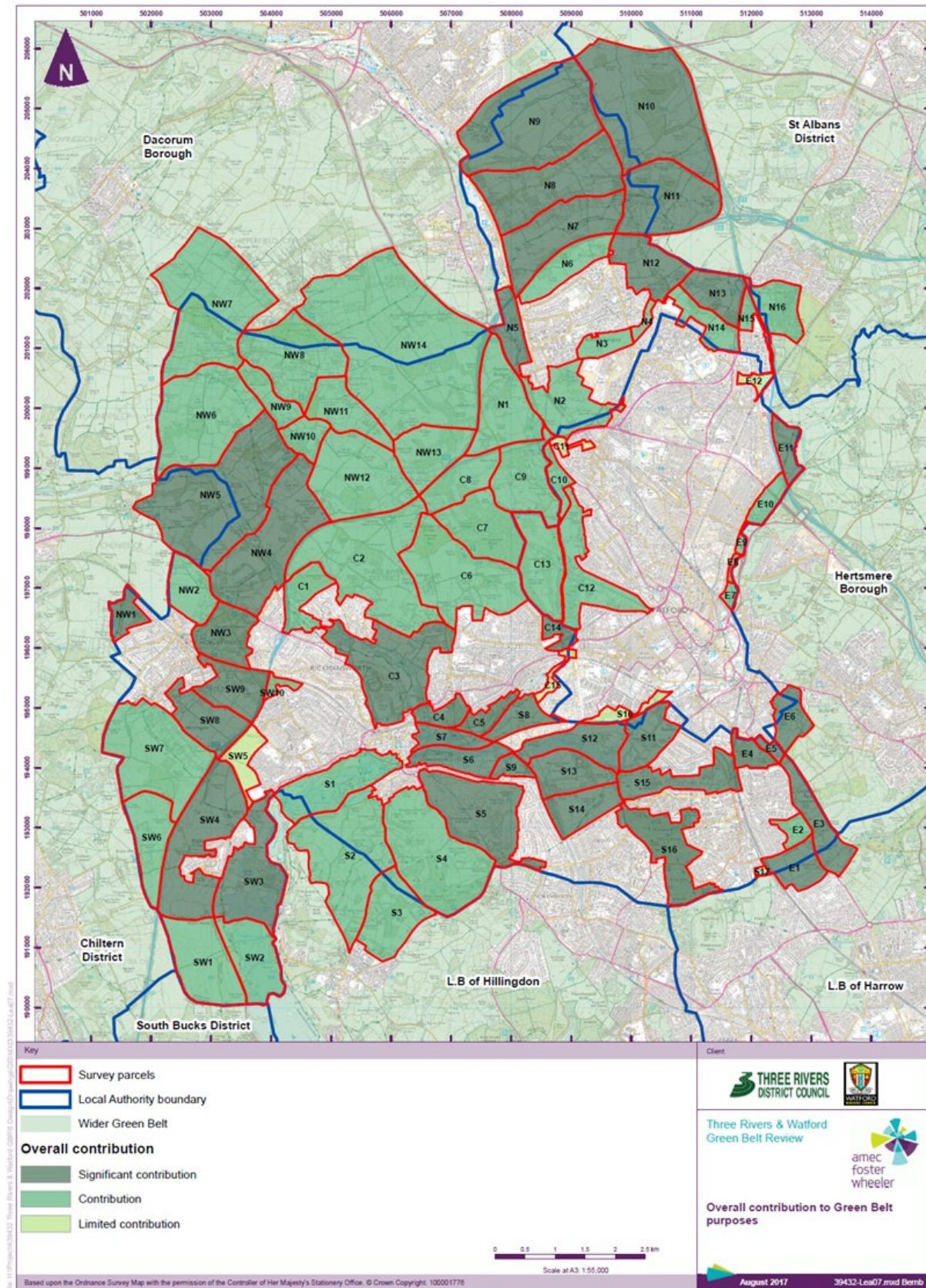
The results of the Strategic Review of Green Belt purposes is illustrated in Figure 2. This is a map of the overall contribution to Green Belt purposes which is a composite judgement derived from the detailed analysis of the contribution to the five Green Belt purposes which is set out in **Appendix B**.

None of the judgements on the relative contribution of the land Green Belt purposes are scored or weighted and the overall assessment reflects professional judgement on the contribution of the parcel to Green Belt purposes as a whole. Thus a Significant Contribution in respect of separation for example, and a Limited Contribution in all other respects, can lead to an overall Significant Contribution reflecting the parcel's prime purpose. Equally, contributions across a number of purposes may still only lead to a judgement of a Contribution overall.

The results of the Strategic Review of Green Belt purposes demonstrate that the Green Belt is overall and within specific parcels making a Contribution or Significant Contribution to Green Belt purposes as set out in the NPPF. Whilst there is inevitable variability amongst the degree of contributions to specific purposes, the broad purposes of the Green Belt are being fulfilled in respect of separating (and thereby maintaining the identity of) settlements (and suburbs) and protecting the wider countryside from sprawl.



Figure 2 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes



Analysis of Three Rivers District's Green Belt Villages

The rural hinterland of Three Rivers District contains a mix of settlement types, from small clusters of dwellings to more substantial villages. Some larger settlements (Chorleywood, Abbots Langley and Kings Langley) have been excluded from the Green Belt and three are 'washed over', as follows:

- Heronsgate
- Sarratt
- Bedmond

An analysis of settlements within the Green Belt is required by the NPPF to determine whether there remains a case for keeping them 'washed over' by the Green Belt, by virtue of their contribution to Green Belt purposes in respect of helping to maintain openness. It is also important to undertake this exercise as part of the broader review of Green Belt purposes, where the settlements can be put into their wider context.

Study Conclusions

1. Across the study area, the Green Belt fulfils its intended strategic purpose as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, with many instances of more than one purpose being fulfilled.

The assessment of the Green Belt in Three Rivers District and Watford Borough has identified that the vast majority of it fulfils its intended purposes, as specified in the NPPF, that is largely maintaining a sense of openness through permanence and consistency of development restraint. The Green Belt clearly functions as part of the wider Metropolitan Green Belt, contributing to the prevention of the sprawl of the London conurbation into more open countryside to the north, whilst also fulfilling a variety of important local roles. The Green Belt has changed in character since its designation, reflecting increases in accessibility, land use change and incremental development of various kinds, but its essential character of openness remains. Many parcels meet multiple purposes and in only four instances does land make a consistently Limited Contribution, both reflecting their particular geographies. There are a large number of parcels which for different reasons overall make a Significant Contribution to Green Belt purposes, reflecting roles of maintaining separation between towns, protecting the setting of towns and preventing sprawl and/or encroachment into open countryside. This creates a complex picture which demands that any proposals for the removal of Green Belt designation through the Local Plan process justified by Exceptional Circumstances, or development in the Green Belt justified through Very Special Circumstances, would need to take account of this strategic review.

2. Analysis of three villages currently 'washed over' by Green Belt found that there is a case for inseting in one of these

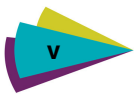
By virtue of size and density, it is concluded that Bedmond could be inset from the Green Belt, potentially providing a focus for modest development. Sarratt and Heronsgate should remain washed over because of their open character and strong relationship with the landscape in which they are located, although again modest development through infill would not necessarily damage their relationship with the Green Belt.

3. Opportunities for Positive Land Management

In some locations in proximity to the built-up area, the Green Belt could benefit from positive land management (in light of para 81 of the NPPF). This could help address some of the typical negative characteristics associated with the so-called 'urban fringe'. On a larger scale, the role of community forestry in particular and its natural fit with Green Belt is acknowledged in the NPPF (para 92). Where development takes place this can offer the opportunity for positive land management both as part of the development footprint and in the immediate environs.

4. Meeting Development Needs

Notwithstanding the conclusions reached on the overall integrity of the Green Belt across Three Rivers District and Watford Borough and the principles of permanence set out in the NPPF, there is



pressure for development to meet housing and employment needs. As part of the plan preparation process, the conclusions reached in respect of the strategic role of the Green Belt will need to be balanced against other factors which together could constitute arguments of 'Exceptional Circumstances' meriting the removal of the Green Belt designation from areas of land (which could comprise whole parcels or parts thereof) to allow for development.

In light of the above, a further study of areas which could merit release in light of development needs would need to be undertaken. Identification of an area as holding potential for release from the Green Belt does not imply that all the identified area should or could be developed. For example, Green Infrastructure could form significant parts of some areas, complementing and enhancing existing landscape and environmental features. In addition, as with any other potential development site, detailed work on site capacity, character, sustainability and viability would be required.





Contents

Executive Summary

The study area	i
Approach and outline methodology	i
Strategic Review of the Green Belt	ii
Analysis of Three Rivers District's Green Belt Villages	iv
Study Conclusions	iv

1.	Study Remit and Policy Context	1
1.1	Study Remit	1
1.2	The Study Area and its Relationship with the Metropolitan Green Belt	1
1.3	Designation of the Metropolitan Green Belt	2
1.4	Green Belt Reviews conducted by neighbouring authorities	3
2.	Approach and Methodology	5
2.1	Approach to the Review	5
2.2	Review Methodology	5
	Identification of Parcels for the Strategic Review	5
	Assessment of parcels against Green Belt purposes	8
2.3	Survey Proforma	9
2.4	Village definition within the Green Belt	10
2.5	Consultation and the Duty to Co-operate Statement	11
3.	Strategic Review of the Green Belt	21
3.1	The character of the Green Belt in Three Rivers District and Watford Borough	21
3.2	Review of Green Belt purposes	22
3.3	Overview	28
	Land Making a Significant Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	30
	Land Making a Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	30
	Land Making a Limited Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	30
3.4	Analysis by Green Belt Purpose	30
	Checking the sprawl of large built-up areas	30
	Preventing neighbouring towns from merging	32
	Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	33
	Preserving the setting and character of historic towns	34
	Assisting in urban regeneration	35
3.5	Positive Use of the Green Belt	36
4.	Consideration of villages within the Green Belt	37
4.1	Introduction and methodology	37
4.2	Settlement analysis	38
4.3	Conclusion	39
5.	Study Conclusions	41

5.1 Conclusions and Justification

41

Table 2.1	Definition of Terms to be Applied in the Review	8
Table 2.2	The Colouring Assessment for Individual Green Belt Purposes	9
Table 2.3	Parcel survey criteria	10
Table 2.4	Organisations Consulted on the Green Belt Review Methodology	12
Table 2.5	Responses to the Consultation on the Green Belt Review Methodology	12
Table 3.1	Assessment of Contribution to Green Belt Purposes (see Appendix B for detailed assessment by individual purpose)	24
Table 4.1	Settlements within the Green Belt: Character, Analysis and Recommendations	38
Figure 1	The Green Belt in Three Rivers and Watford Councils and its sub-regional context	i
Figure 2	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	iii
Figure 1.1	The Green Belt in Three Rivers District and Watford Borough and its relationship with the wider Metropolitan Green Belt	2
Figure 2.1	Green Belt Parcels for Survey	7
Figure 3.1	Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	23
Figure 3.2	Contribution to Checking the Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas	31
Figure 3.3	Contribution to Preventing Towns from Merging	32
Figure 3.4	Contribution to Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment	33
Figure 3.5	Contribution to Setting	34
Figure 3.6	Contribution to Urban Regeneration	35
Appendix A	Environmental Assets & Constraints	
Appendix B	Parcel Analysis	
Appendix C	Analysis of villages within the Green Belt	



1. Study Remit and Policy Context

1.1 Study Remit

1. This report has been produced for the purpose of setting out the results of a review of the Green Belt in Three Rivers District and Watford Borough. This is the first comprehensive review of the Green Belt undertaken for the Councils and the Review will form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plans in the determination of appropriate policies and proposals for development. The overall objective is to test the Green Belt against the five purposes set for it in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para 80) and to determine the extent to which it is contributing to those purposes which are:
 - ▶ To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
 - ▶ To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
 - ▶ To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
 - ▶ To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
 - ▶ To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
2. **The report does not identify land for release or development.** Along with other studies, the report will be used as part of the evidence base in the production of the Councils' emerging Local Plans.

1.2 The Study Area and its Relationship with the Metropolitan Green Belt

3. The study area for this review is the entire extent of the Green Belt within Three Rivers District and Watford Borough Councils.
4. Figure 1.1 illustrates the Green Belt within Three Rivers District and Watford Borough and its relationship with the wider Metropolitan Green Belt.

Figure 1.1 The Green Belt in Three Rivers District and Watford Borough and its relationship with the wider Metropolitan Green Belt



1.3 Designation of the Metropolitan Green Belt

5. The Metropolitan Green Belt was designated following the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 which allowed local authorities to include Green Belt proposals in their development plans. As in other parts of the country, the designation of Green Belt was a reaction in part to the urban sprawl along railway corridors and growing car ownership.
6. The Green Belt coverage for Hertfordshire is approximately 90,000ha out of a total area for the County of 164,300ha (approx. 55%). The London Metropolitan Green Belt has been progressively extended since a first phase of designation in 1954. Hertfordshire County Council initially designated the south of the county as Green Belt as part of the Hertfordshire County Development Plan published in 1951 and approved in 1958.
7. The Strategic Plan for the South East (1970) presented the regional arguments for Green Belt policy in particular how London's influence had extended since the Metropolitan Green Belt was first defined and how the resultant development pressures in Hertfordshire could only be met at the expense of Hertfordshire's environment unless positive policies were available to divert them to growth areas elsewhere. The Hertfordshire County Structure Plan in 1979 approved in principle the designation of a Green Belt as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt about 12-15 miles deep with limited extensions along the main radial transport corridors.
8. Green Belt within Three Rivers District and Watford Borough covers virtually all land which is not



defined as part of a contiguous built-up area. This includes examples of land caught between settlements which cannot be classed as open countryside but nevertheless remains open in the sense of being undeveloped.

9. There are two previously developed sites of relatively large scale currently within the Green Belt, at Leavesden and at Westwood Quarry, Fir Tree Hill.

1.4 Green Belt Reviews conducted by neighbouring authorities

10. Three Rivers and Watford Councils share boundaries with the following authorities:
 - Dacorum
 - St Albans
 - Hertsmere
 - Harrow
 - Hillingdon
 - South Bucks
 - Chiltern
11. Green Belt Reviews have been carried out by all the adjacent authorities with the exception of Harrow. Hillingdon has carried out a partial review (looking at specific sites) whilst joint Reviews have been carried out by Dacorum and St Albans, and Chiltern and South Bucks. Where appropriate, the outputs of these studies are referenced in the analysis of specific parcels and/or broad areas of Green Belt.



2. Approach and Methodology

2.1 Approach to the Review

1. This report is a strategic review of the extent to which the Green Belt within Three Rivers District and Watford Borough meets the purposes set by the NPPF, complemented by an exploration of the character and role of villages within the Green Belt, drawing conclusions on the suitability for the continued and potential in-setting of villages within the Green Belt, as required by paragraph 86 of the NPPF.
2. The Review is an objective study which considers the extent to which the land meets Green Belt purposes. As such the results provide a reference point for planning decisions relating to land allocations, and is one aspect of the evidence base used to make such decisions. The Review does not take account of any development proposals (strategic or otherwise) or sites being promoted through the plan-making process, although the results of the Review can be used as part of the evidence to appraise such sites, providing the context for specific site configurations which cannot be anticipated by this Review.
3. This strategic review is an initial assessment and further technical evidence (such as open space/recreation assessments and landscape studies) may be needed to support any recommendations for encouraging the positive use of Green Belt. Also the Councils will decide whether any sites/locations may be protected/promoted to encourage the beneficial use of this designation and whether specific policies/sites need to be included in the Local Plan. This will ensure compliance with the NPPF (Para 81).
4. The NPPF places emphasis on the importance of the permanence of the Green Belt and its defining boundaries. The evaluation of land against Green Belt purposes therefore needs to be related to clear and permanent features on the ground that enclose specific tracts of land. For this Review parcels, principally using the road network, have been defined at a strategic scale to give an overview of the contribution of the land to Green Belt purposes in the context of its role as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt. Should it be found necessary, further subdivision of these parcels can be undertaken to explore locally specific issues.
5. The assessment criteria are used to help guide the narrative which accompanies the judgement on the degree to which the parcels of land fulfil Green Belt purposes. They are not a metric by which the relative contribution of a parcel might be 'scored' and thus produce a ranking of relative contribution, but are used together to help guide professional judgement.

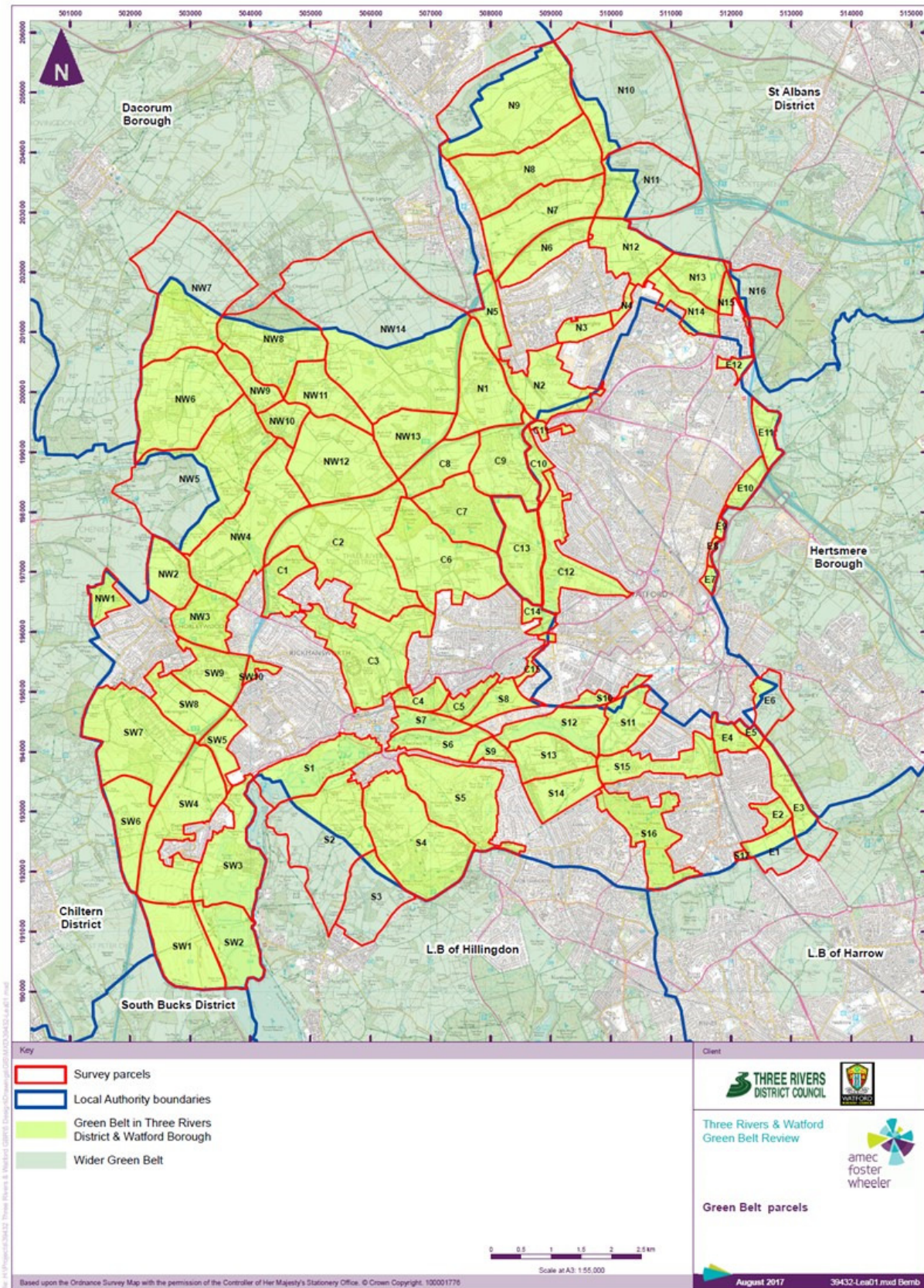
2.2 Review Methodology

Identification of Parcels for the Strategic Review

6. The Green Belt within Three Rivers District and Watford Borough has been divided into 83 parcels for survey. There is a need to define parcels at an appropriate scale so as not to produce potentially ambiguous or contradictory results, in so doing striking a balance between the number of parcels surveyed and the utility of the survey outputs; a small number of large parcels is as unhelpful as a large number of small parcels. In addition, conclusions drawn as part of the evaluation of the strategic contribution of the Green Belt will to some extent inevitably be different to conclusions reached on their localised purposes (for example in relation to specific settlements). Where necessary as part of more refined work, sub-parcels (for example down to the field scale) can be identified in order to help explore locally-specific issues and/or impacts.
7. Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photos were used in the first instance to identify strategic parcels for assessment, using well-defined physical features including:
 - ▶ Roads and rights of way of various scales, from rough tracks through to motorways;

- ▶ A building line that provides a straight logical line and clearly represents the edge of the urban area;
 - ▶ A river, stream, ridge, car park, playground or other physical feature (such as a woodland edge);
 - ▶ An ownership boundary marked by physical features such as a hedgerow or a fence line; and
 - ▶ In the absence of any physical features to follow on the ground to provide a straight line between two permanent physical features.
8. Figure 2.1 illustrates the 83 parcels used to guide the survey. To aid navigation, the 59 parcels are grouped geographically, typically using major roads to determine the subdivision, resulting in the following six groups:
- ▶ South West (parcels SW1 - SW10)
 - ▶ North West (parcels NW1 - NW14)
 - ▶ North (parcels N1 - N16)
 - ▶ Central (parcels C1 - C15)
 - ▶ East (parcels E1 - E12)
 - ▶ South (parcels S1 - S16)
9. Broadly, the parcels are of a finer grain towards the urban edges of Rickmansworth and Watford reflecting the geographies of these areas, having more and stronger boundaries in the vicinity of the towns. However, this is by no means always the case, where strong boundaries in the form of roads in particular do not exist, leading to some instances of relatively large parcels. A refined assessment where more detailed exploration of purposes is required could entail subdivision using field boundaries and other weaker features.

Figure 2.1 Green Belt Parcels for Survey



Assessment of parcels against Green Belt purposes

10. Each parcel was assessed for its contribution against the five Green Belt purposes as set out in national policy (NPPF para 80). The definitions set out in Table 2.1 guided the assessment, along with a detailed Assessment proforma set out in Section 2.4 below.

Table 2.1 Definition of Terms Applied in the Review

Green Belt Purpose	Definition of Terms applied in the Review
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>Sprawl – spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way (Oxford Dictionary online). This includes Ribbon development which is development along a main road, especially one leading out of a town or village (Oxford Dictionary Online). This includes historical patterns of, or current pressures for, the spread of all forms of development along movement corridors, particularly major roads.</p> <p>Large built-up areas – in the context of this study these are Rickmansworth, Chorleywood, Northwood (part), Croxley Green and Watford within the study authorities, but also Hemel Hempstead, Bushey and Northwood/Pinner.</p>
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	<p>Neighbouring towns – this relates to the strategic relationship between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, Watford and St Albans; Watford and Rickmansworth; Rickmansworth and Northwood; Watford and Northwood; Watford and Pinner; Watford and Bushey; and Watford and Radlett.</p> <p>Merger/Coalescence – the physical or visual linking of two settlements or areas of built form</p>
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Encroachment – a gradual advance beyond usual or acceptable limits (Oxford Dictionary online).</p> <p>The countryside – open land with an absence of built development and urbanising influences, and characterised by rural land uses including agriculture and forestry.</p> <p>Openness – absence of built development or other urbanising elements (i.e. not openness in a landscape character sense which concerns topography and woodland / hedgerow cover).</p>
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>Historic town – interpreted to be a settlement or place with historic features identified in local policy or through Conservation Area designation. Note, there are no historic towns within, or adjacent to, the study area. This purpose is therefore applied in a local context using Conservation Area designation as the reference point.</p>
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	<p>Where development in the open countryside is likely to render previously developed land a particular vicinity less attractive to develop.</p>

11. As part of the review of each identified parcel against the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, the assessment considers the following:
- ▶ Existing land use;
 - ▶ Proximity and relationship to the built-up area;
 - ▶ Degree of enclosure/openness;
 - ▶ Distance and visual connection to historic urban centres/key urban areas; and
 - ▶ Relationship to the countryside.
12. A straightforward colouring system (see Table 2.2) and accompanying commentary is used to set out the conclusions for each parcel and to produce maps which summarise the extent to which each parcel fulfils each Green Belt purpose and an overall assessment (a summary matrix and five accompanying maps). This provides a simple tabular and graphical presentation of the contribution to the purposes of the Green

Belt. None of the judgements on the relative contribution of the parcel to Green Belt purposes are scored or weighted and the overall assessment reflects professional judgement on the contribution of the parcel to Green Belt purposes as a whole. Thus a Significant Contribution in respect of separation for example, and a Limited Contribution in all other respects, can lead to an overall Significant Contribution reflecting the parcel's prime purpose. Equally, contributions across a number of purposes may still only lead to a judgement of a Contribution overall.

Table 2.2 The Colouring Assessment for Individual Green Belt Purposes

The parcel makes a **Significant Contribution** to a Green Belt purpose clearly and unambiguously against the assessment criterion.



The parcel makes a **Contribution** to a Green Belt purpose against the assessment criterion, although this is more diffuse in character or has been compromised by development.



The parcel makes a **Limited Contribution** to a Green Belt purpose because of either performing no clear role in a particular location or has been compromised by development.



2.3 Survey Proforma

13. Table 2.3 sets out the assessment criteria which were used to assess the contribution of the parcels to Green Belt purposes. The assessment criteria act as guide questions to help develop judgements on the relative contribution of the land to Green Belt purposes.
14. To set the context, the analysis for each parcel is prefaced by a snapshot of the Ordnance Survey map of the parcel, an aerial photograph, and a pen picture of the character of the parcel drawing on the following factors:
 - ▶ Topography
 - ▶ Field Pattern
 - ▶ Vegetation/Tree Cover
 - ▶ Land Use
 - ▶ Condition
 - ▶ Viewpoints

Table 2.3 Parcel survey criteria

Topic	Criteria
NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt	
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	Prevent the sprawl of a built-up area into open land where development would not otherwise be restricted by a permanent boundary. What is the role of the parcel in preventing the extension of an existing development into open land beyond established limits, in light of the presence of significant boundaries?
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Prevent development which would result in the merger or erosion of a gap (physically or visually) between settlements. What is the role of the parcel in preventing the merger of settlements which might occur through a reduction in the distance between them?
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protect the openness of the countryside and its perceived rurality. What is the role of the parcel in maintaining a sense of openness, particularly in light of proximity to a settlement edge?
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Preserve the setting and character of historic town. What is the role of the parcel in respect of the proximity to, and degree of intervisibility with, the core (such as a Conservation Area) of an historic town or settlement?
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Does the parcel act in concert with adjacent parcels to encourage urban regeneration, either generally or more specifically?
Overall Assessment of Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	In light of the assessment of individual purposes, what is the overall contribution of the parcel to the Green Belt, both individually and in a wider context?
Local Role of the Green Belt	
Preserving the setting and character of villages and other settlements	What is the relationship between a village or hamlet and the surrounding Green Belt?
Opportunities to Promote Positive Use of the Green Belt	
Current public access and opportunities to provide access/ recreation	What is the degree of existing public access and/or provision of recreational facilities?
Enhancing landscapes and visual amenity	Does the parcel form part of the setting of a sensitive landscape (historic or otherwise)?
Enhancing biodiversity	Are there any national or local biodiversity designations within the parcel?
Improving derelict and damaged land	Is there any derelict land in the parcel?

2.4 Village definition within the Green Belt

15. The rural hinterland of Three Rivers District contains a mix of settlement types, from small clusters of dwellings to more substantial villages. Some larger settlements (Chorleywood, Abbots Langley and Kings Langley) have been excluded from the Green Belt and three which are 'washed over', as follows:

- ▶ Heronsgate
- ▶ Sarratt
- ▶ Bedmond

16. An analysis of settlements within the Green Belt is required by the NPPF to determine whether there remains a case for keeping them 'washed over' by the Green Belt, by virtue of their contribution to Green Belt purposes in respect of helping to maintain openness. It is also important to undertake this exercise as part of the broader review of Green Belt purposes, where the settlements can be put into their wider context.
17. The NPPF at paragraph 86 requires that the status of villages currently washed over by Green Belt should be reviewed to determine whether this is still appropriate: *"If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt."* Equally, the boundary of those villages which are currently inset into the Green Belt warrants review. This requirement does not apply to the many hamlets and isolated groups of houses which characterise the Green Belt across Three Rivers District.
18. It is appropriate to undertake this exercise as part of the broader review of Green Belt purposes, where the settlement can be put into its wider context. Each village currently has an 'envelope' which is the principal extent of development in the village. Policy in the NPPF does not preclude the definition of a village envelope, even if a village remains washed over by the Green Belt, which would allow for limited infilling at the discretion of the Council, thereby complying with para 89(5) which allows for *"limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan."* In practice this helps to ensure that in appropriate cases villages will continue to be able to develop in a sensitive way. This will promote sustainable development that will help meet the needs of local communities through appropriate infill and/or meeting local needs, for example. The following criteria have been used to assess the character of the villages which have been scrutinized:
 - ▶ **General character** – location and overall setting, topography, settlement form, building type/age, overall sensitivity, sense of identity/unity/cohesion, key focal points, Conservation Area(s).
 - ▶ **Density and layout of buildings** – degree of spaciousness/enclosure, opportunities for infill within the existing village boundary.
 - ▶ **Presence and character of open space** – location and relationship with settlement.
 - ▶ **Interface with the surrounding landscape** – settlement depth, rear garden character, glimpsed/panoramic views to the wider landscape, connectivity with landscape context.

2.5 Consultation and the Duty to Co-operate Statement

19. In order to help promote good planning and fulfil the obligations of the Duty to Co-operate, interested parties were consulted on the study methodology prior to its commencement. Table 2.4 details the organisations who were consulted between 24th March 2017 and 21st April 2017.

Table 2.4 Organisations Consulted on the Green Belt Review Methodology

The Environment Agency	Hertfordshire Highways	Chiltern District Council
Historic England	Highways England	South Bucks District Council
Natural England	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	London Borough of Enfield
Greater London Authority	Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership	London Borough of Harrow
The Civil Aviation Authority	The Chilterns Conservation Board	High Wycombe District Council
The Homes and Community Agency	Colne Valley Park	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group	Dacorum Borough Council	London Borough of Hillingdon
NHS England	Hertsmere Borough Council	Bucks County Council
The Office of Rail and Road	St Albans District Council	Hertfordshire County Council (Property)
Transport for London	Welwyn Hatfield District Council	

20. Responses to the consultation and how these observations have been taken into account are set out in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Responses to the Consultation on the Green Belt Review Methodology

Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
The Environment Agency	Confirmation of no comments to make on the green belt methodology.	Noted
The Chilterns Conservation Board	<p>1. The Chilterns Conservation Board is grateful for the opportunity to submit comments on the Green Belt methodology.</p> <p>2. The study area contains parts of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Chilterns AONB is nationally protected as one of England's finest landscapes. Its status in planning is equal to that of a National Park (NPPF para 115). Currently the AONB is not mentioned at all in the Stage 1 Methodology.</p> <p>3. As well as a Green Belt Review, or as part of it, if you are considering allocations in or near the AONB (we strongly advise against), an assessment would be needed of the impacts on the AONB. Natural Beauty is not just about visual appearance, but also the AONBs flora, fauna, geological and physiographic features (CRoW Act 2000 sec 92 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/92). So the assessment would need to consider impacts on special qualities of the AONB¹, on chalk streams, wildlife, habitat fragmentation, air pollution, loss of tranquillity, cumulative impacts on the AONB etc.</p>	<p>Noted, but uncertain why the AONB should be singled out for particular treatment at this stage. All designations are picked up in the analysis. In any case, landscape matters are separate (although related) from Green Belt.</p> <p>Noted – a normal part of planning procedure.</p>

Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
	<p>4. By way of example, recently Dacorum Borough Council proposed an allocation in the AONB west of Tring, to which CCB objected at the Examination. The Planning Inspector concluded2: "I have reflected on what I heard at the hearing sessions where this site was discussed, as well as the submitted written evidence. On the basis of this verbal and written evidence I have serious concerns that the gypsy and traveller site element of site LA5 is unsound. This is because of the lack of a formal assessment by the Council to assess its likely impact on the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and in particular whether it would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB... In conclusion, for the Plan to be found sound the Council will need to, as a minimum, advance main modifications to remove reference to the provision of a gypsy and traveller site as part of LA5" (emphasis added). The proposed allocation in the AONB was subsequently deleted.</p> <p>5. The study methodology should be revised to: a. add reference to the Chilterns AONB. b. exclude from the assessment land outside the local authority's boundary which is in the Chilterns AONB (one parcel currently extends across the Chess Valley between Chenies and Sarratt) or explain the rationale for including it.</p> <p>c. add words in bold to the proforma "Enhancing landscapes and visual amenity - Does the parcel form part of the setting of a sensitive landscape (nationally designated AONB landscape, historic or otherwise)?"</p> <p>d. In the proforma under the sub-heading "Local Role of the Green Belt" Add a second row containing the words "Conserving and enhancing the AONB and its setting. Does the parcel form part of the AONB or its setting?"</p> <p>e. When considering inseting from the Green Belt the villages of Sarratt and Heronsgate which sit adjacent to and near the Chilterns AONB, consider the impact on the setting of the AONB. Add words in bold "Interface with the surrounding landscape – settlement depth, rear garden character, glimpsed/panoramic views to the wider landscape, connectivity with landscape context, proximity of AONB and effects on the AONB's special qualities and setting". Please see Chilterns Conservation Board's Position Statement on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB for further information.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Disagree – the presence and role of landscape designations is picked up in the proforma, including that relating to the analysis of potential village inseting.</p>
Dacorum Borough Council	<p>We have no specific comments on the defined land parcels which form part of the methodology. Although where these may have the same land coverage / overlap with our Green Belt studies, it would be preferable if the parcels were similarly defined and ideally have outcomes/conclusions or at least which align. We would wish to avoid our evidence bases unintentionally 'undermining one another'.</p> <p>We note that the definitions of large built up areas and neighbouring towns vary between our Stage 2 Green Belt review and your methodology, although this in itself does not cause undue concern.</p> <p>We have no comments to make on the assessment criteria proposed for settlements washed over by the Green Belt i.e. for Saratt, Heronsgate and Bedmond.</p> <p><u>Parcel Assessment Proforma</u></p> <p>We are slightly unclear how the 'Local Role of the Green Belt' and 'Opportunities to Promote Positive Use of the Green Belt' will feed into the assessment. This seems to broaden the typical coverage of a Green Belt Review into more Local Plan considerations. It would help if the methodology explained the role of these two additional 'topic' criterion and how they might affect any judgement in terms of the 5</p>	<p>Noted – study outputs will be compared.</p> <p>Noted – NPPF and Housing White Paper are clear in their emphasis on positive use of the Green Belt. Therefore it is appropriate that these matters are considered in the analysis.</p>

Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
	<p>purposes of Green Belt. Would these 'topics' then have a weighting attached to them? Our Green Belt Review considers the 5 purposes of Green Belt with landscape appraisal as appropriate.</p> <p>It is important that the methodology focuses on the contribution to the Green Belt purposes and not to stray into discussions at this early stage about Green Belt releases and development opportunities. The latter are policy considerations as part of the plan making process. Consideration could be given to the phraseology within figure 3 (The Colouring Assessment).</p> <p>Our Stage 1 and Stage 2 Green Belt Reviews can be found at: https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home%5Cplanning-development/planning-strategic-planning/new-single-local-plan/technical-work-for-the-early-partial-review This includes the methodology which we followed.</p>	<p>Noted, but the review is a technical analysis which makes no suggestions for release. It is a starting point for a potentially more detailed analysis.</p>
Welwyn Hatfield District Council	<p>Assessment of parcels against the Green Belt Purposes</p> <p>This section has included some text relating to land parcels that extend into the adjacent authority. However, it needs to provide clarity in relation to how the review will consider these parcels and the potential implications of these..</p> <p>Village Definition in the Green Belt</p> <p>This includes a criterion for assessing whether washed over villages should be removed from the Green Belt. But it could be enhanced by making it clear that the overall purpose of this is to assess whether the villages contribute towards the openness of the designation.</p> <p>Parcel Assessment Proforma</p> <p>We have noticed this includes a section that seeks to identify /assess potential locations for promoting the positive use of the Green Belt. This is not a reason for their designation as Green Belt.</p> <p>In addition, the methodology may need to include some supporting text, to clarify that this is an initial assessment and that further evidence (e.g. open space/ recreation assessments, landscape studies) may need to be collected to support any recommendations for encouraging the positive use of Green Belt. Also the Council will decide whether any sites/locations may be protected/promoted to encourage the beneficial use of this designation and what her specific policies/sites need to be included in their Local Plan (if necessary). This will ensure compliance with the NPPF (Para 81).</p> <p>Other Considerations</p> <p>You will be aware that a Joint Green Belt Review Purpose Assessment (2013) Stage 1 was prepared for the administrative areas of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Dacorum Borough Council and St Albans District Council. Also a Green Belt Review Stage 2 (2016) was completed for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, which focused on specific sites within this designation. Therefore, you may find it useful to examine these documents. This will ensure the methodology that is used for assessing land within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the findings of each of the assessments are consistent, across</p>	<p>The Report does this.</p> <p>The village assessment proforma does this.</p> <p>Noted – this will be included.</p> <p>The relevant studies will be referred to in the Report, although the methodologies and subtleties of findings may differ however.</p>

Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
	the wider areas. This may also help demonstrate compliance with the duty to cooperate in term of working positively with other stakeholders; to identify and address any cross boundary strategic issues.	
Chiltern District Council/South Bucks District Council	<p>It is unclear whether the Three Rivers/Watford methodology currently being consulted on relates to the entire Green Belt review process (as stated on Page 1 of the methodology enclosed with Claire May's covering letter dated 24 March 2017) or to Stage One only (as stated in the covering letter). This is an important distinction. Our comments set out below assume it is the latter; if this assumption is incorrect it would be helpful if you could please let us know as we may wish to offer further comments at this stage.</p> <p>Section 1 of the draft methodology identifies the parcels that will be assessed. We note that although a number of the parcels about Chiltern/South Bucks Districts, none of them straddle the administrative boundaries. The Arup study for Buckinghamshire also defined parcels (or General Areas) for assessment. A number of these crossed into Three Rivers (Numbers 14b, 28, 29, 38a, 38b, 40b). Three Rivers DC were consulted on the methodology and, at a later stage, relevant parcels and confirmed that they were content with the methodology being used. Although little detail about parcel definition is included in the draft Three Rivers/Watford methodology, it appears that a similar approach has been used as that for Buckinghamshire, i.e. permanent man-made and natural features. It is therefore unclear why none of the parcels on page 2 of the draft Three Rivers/Watford methodology straddle the administrative boundaries but instead seem to follow them (although we note that some of the parcels extend into other local authority areas). We suggest that any differences in approach from the Buckinghamshire methodology are clarified and fully explained in the Three Rivers/Watford methodology.</p> <p>We note the draft methodology refers to ecological importance as a factor that will help inform judgements made on the contribution to Green Belt purposes. We do not agree that this is a relevant factor in assessing Green Belt performance against the purposes of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF.</p> <p>Definition of 'Sprawl': We suggest that sprawl does not in a Green Belt context necessarily have to be spread out over a large area. Rather the reference should be to outward spread at the periphery of a large built-up area.</p>	<p>Noted. This study is Stage 1 only.</p> <p>The important matter of boundary consistency is noted. However, the following observations are made in respect of the agreement.</p> <p>The external boundaries for the following parcels are clear, and co-incident with Three Rivers District Boundary::</p> <p>SW1 – Old Shire Lane (part of Chiltern General Area 40b) SW6 - Old Shire Lane (part of Chiltern General Area 38a) SW7 – Shire Lane (unmade track) (part of Chiltern General Area 38b) NW1 – Farm Road and edge of Hillas Wood and Whitelands Wood (part of Chiltern General Area 29) NW2 – Green Street (part of Chiltern General Area 28) NW5 - Chenies/Chenies Hill (part of Chiltern General Area 14b) – note the Chiltern Study uses "the valley gradient to the north" to help define parcel 14b – this is inconsistent with other boundary definition. NW6 – external boundary is an unmade track, then road past Moonshine Farm, Newhouse Farm and Dale Farm to Holly Hedges Lane. NW7 – uses Flaunden Lane and Tower Hill in Dacorum District as external boundaries.</p> <p>NOTE – In addition to the uncertain northerly definition of parcel 14b, the logic of boundaries to Chiltern parcel 14a is not clear, using no clear feature at all (see for example Flaunden Hill to Maple Hill).</p> <p>Agreed – will remove.</p> <p>Agreed.</p>

Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
	Definition of 'Large Built-Up Areas': Please note that a number of the areas listed were not deemed to be 'large built-up areas' in the Buckinghamshire study and that a number were instead considered as part of the Purpose 2 assessment. Please see the Arup study for details.	Noted.
	Definition of 'Historic Towns': We agree that these settlements need to be confirmed.	Now defined to include Conservation Areas.
	Purpose 5: We suggest that this purpose is only assessed if planned regeneration schemes are being inhibited by Green Belt designations. This is because the amount of land within urban areas that could be redeveloped will already have been factored in before Green Belt land was identified; assessment of Green Belt against this purpose will not therefore enable a distinction between parcels as all Green Belt achieves the same purpose to the same extent.	Disagree – there is local evidence in Watford.
	Colouring Assessment: In order to ensure that the assessment is as objective and transparent as possible it would be helpful if the terms 'significant contribution', 'contribution' and 'limited contribution' could be defined along with scoring criteria. The assessment framework should also allow for the possibility that a parcel makes no contribution to Green Belt purpose(s). The reference should be to 'exceptional circumstances' rather than 'strong material planning considerations' (as set out in Section 4).	No scoring is used. 'Limited Contribution' can mean next to zero.
	Assessment Pro Forma Purpose 1: The first three bullet points are all posed as questions which would have yes/no answers. We suggest that it would be more appropriate if the questions were along the lines of 'To what extent ...?' We also question the inclusion of the reference to 'major transport corridors' in the analysis of large built-up areas. The final bullet point question appears to be more relevant to Green Belt Purpose 3.	Agreed.
	Assessment Pro Forma Purpose 2: We suggest that the significance of a gap is not just a function of its width – see Arup report for Buckinghamshire for a possible assessment framework. The final bullet point refers to the potential for development. This would appear to go beyond the stated scope of the Part One Assessment which is to assess the Green Belt against the purposes set out in the NPPF. The same point applies to the final bullet in relation to Purpose 3.	Agreed.
	Assessment Pro Forma Purpose 4: Bullet points 2 & 3 are all posed as questions which would have yes/no answers. We suggest that it would be more appropriate if the questions were phrased to explore the extent to which and/or how.	Agreed.
	Assessment Pro Forma Purpose 5: See above comment re. Parcel 5.	Noted.
		Overall Observation: Some of the analysis in the Chiltern/South Bucks does not inspire confidence. The following text is from parcel 38b 'Encroachment': <i>"The sense of openness is diminished by the topography of the land parcel which slopes up to the M25 and the presence of woodland which encloses the fields within the land parcel. The reduced sense of openness and presence of built form means that overall the land parcel has a largely rural character"</i> . Not only is the term openness is used



Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
		in a purely landscape sense (as opposed to the Green Belt sense of an absence of built development) but the concluding remark is illogical.
Highways England	<p>Highways England will be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the Strategic Road Network (SRN). In this case M1, M25, M40 and A1(M).</p> <p>Having examined the above documents, we do not offer any comments at this time. However, we look forward to working with you on your new Local Plan for the borough.</p>	Noted
Natural England	<p>Natural England has no comments to make on the proposed methodology as described in the report entitled Three Rivers and Watford Green Belt Review Consultation on Methodology (Amec Foster Wheeler, March 2017), including the identification of parcels for survey and the assessment of parcels against Green Belt purposes. We note that the Parcel Assessment Proforma section entitled Opportunities to Promote Positive Use of the Green Belt will take account of statutory and non-statutory designated sites, protected landscapes and their settings (e.g. Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and areas of public access. We expect that the local authorities will use this information to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, including the retention and enhancement of the protected landscape and its setting, visual amenity, biodiversity and will look for opportunities to provide access.</p>	Noted
Historic England	<p>Specific Advice on Common Themes</p> <p>Some common themes are clear from the advice we give in the East of England. A summary of some relevant topics follow:</p> <p>Terminology</p> <p>The historic environment is considered the most appropriate term to use as a topic heading as it encompasses all aspects of heritage, for example the tangible heritage assets and less tangible cultural heritage. Modern convention is to refer to scheduled monuments rather than scheduled ancient monuments, given that a wide range and age of monuments are scheduled.</p> <p>Definitions</p> <p>Historic England advocates a wide definition of the historic environment which includes not only those areas and buildings with statutory designated protection but also those which are locally valued and important, as well as the landscape and townscape components of the historic environment. The importance and extent of below ground archaeology is often unknown, although information in the Historic Environment Record (HER) will indicate areas of known interest, or high potential where further assessment is required before decisions or allocations are made.</p> <p>Green Belt</p> <p>One of the five purposes of the Green Belt is to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. Historic towns and former towns are situated across the region and should form a consideration in any review of Green Belt. Without an appreciation of the history of the region's historic settlements and their close relationship to their surrounding landscapes, it is not possible to properly ascribe a value to the openness of the Green Belt land around them. Consideration of the value of the Green Belt requires understanding the historic significance of this open landscape. Whilst Green Belt reviews</p>	<p>Report refers to this where appropriate.</p> <p>Report refers to this where appropriate.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
	<p>often divide the area into parcels of land to make the assessment exercise manageable, parcels should not be solely reviewed individually within their immediate context. It also is important to understand how collectively they achieve the strategic aims of the Green Belt.</p> <p>Conclusion In preparation of the forthcoming Green Belt Review, we encourage you to draw on the knowledge of local conservation officers, the county archaeologist and local heritage groups.</p>	
Buckinghamshire County Council	BCC value and respect the unique quality of the Buckinghamshire Green Belt and will continue to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The preservation and maintenance of the Green Belt is a strategic objective of the County Council. BCC would like to see the Green Belt protected in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant guidance notes. Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council have made it clear that the Green Belt Assessment work 'is to assess whether land designated Green Belt within the jurisdiction of the two Councils (Three Rivers District and Watford Borough) meets the purposes which are set out in the NPPF'. As such, BCC see no need to comment on the assessment at this stage.	Noted
St Albans District Council	<p>1. It is not entirely clear from your letter, but we assume the Review is being conducted jointly with Watford BC? If that is the case it would be useful if you could provide further information on the governance and decision making arrangements proposed. How will they link to the Local Plans that rely on this Green Belt Review and to any related wider Duty to Co-operate discussions?</p> <p>2. Given the work you have undertaken with other authorities to define a housing and functional economic market area and assess development needs for that whole area, it seems important to consider the implications for joint / co-ordinated Green Belt Review covering the same area. It would obviously be preferable if all the authorities involved were working to an agreed methodology. What are your thoughts on this? As with 1. above we are wondering what governance and decision making arrangements you are proposing to deal with Green Belt review outcomes for the market / joint working area overall?</p> <p>3. Does Herts Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP) have any role in 1 and 2 above?</p> <p>4. How do you propose to consider cross Greater London boundary Green Belt issues? We would be interested to know what Duty to Cooperate arrangements you will apply?</p> <p>5. For the benefit of any joint work on Green Belt Review we suggest your methodology should give careful consideration to the following points (all arose in respect of joint review previously undertaken by DBC / WHBC / SADC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to be clear about the interpretation of national terminology on large built up areas and neighbouring towns. Your definitions seem unclear, with settlements falling into both categories The consequent need for a strategic overview of how purposes can be conceived and applied (see Diagram in above joint review) 	<p>This will be clarified by the Councils.</p> <p>This will be clarified by the Councils.</p> <p>This will be clarified by the Councils.</p> <p>This will be clarified by the Councils.</p> <p>There is no standard definition of a 'large built-up area' and therefore open to local interpretation – which varies according to local geography.</p> <p>This is dependent on agreement of a joint methodology.</p>

Consultee	Comment	Response and how addressed in the Report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The related issue of the history of how Green Belt policy has been applied in Hertfordshire (and indeed the Metropolitan Green Belt as a whole) and its particular role at local level in maintaining the existing settlement pattern. The above joint review took the view that this is a legitimate local purpose closely related to the national purposes. Conceptually it is essential to allow the national purposes to be applied effectively Interpretation of the regeneration purpose. This is better seen as applicable in a general sense – i.e. restraint encouraging urban regeneration - and is not therefore helpful in differentiating relative value of parcels of Green Belt. Your suggested interpretation is seems dubious in that it introduces a new concept of 'likely to render previously developed land (in?) a particular vicinity less attractive to develop...' 	Agreed.
	You will recall that these issues were reported via Herts Planning Group (HPG) / HIPP procedures, but that no agreement was reached for the area beyond DBC / WHBC / SADC (copy report attached).	Agreed – definition amended to reflect the generalised relationship between Green Belts and regeneration.
	6. Several of the proposed parcels overlap our boundaries. We are unsure why this is the case? If you wish to look at these areas in a particular way some further explanation would be helpful. Certainly, whatever is intended, you should have reference to the conclusions of the joint review referred to above. For the northern area near the M1 / M25 junction there do not appear to be any significant issues to note for cross boundary consideration. However for the southern area around Bricket Wood, there are important certainly issues given the existence of the M1 and major built development (BRE site) in this area. The proposed SADC Strategic Local Plan (SLP) approach to the BRE site is also relevant.	Noted. The rationale for, and detail of, parcel definition is set out in the report. In the instances referred to, parcel definition reflects local geography and the use of appropriate substantial boundaries. Local authority boundaries in these instances do not follow any recognisable feature on the ground. The results of joint Green Belt review for Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn/Hatfield are taken into account in the analysis.



3. Strategic Review of the Green Belt

3.1 The character of the Green Belt in Three Rivers District and Watford Borough

1. The Green Belt within the study area is part of the London Metropolitan Green Belt. Its character reflects an area of transition from a more fragmented pattern between expanded suburbs of the outer London Boroughs to open countryside within Hertfordshire and neighbouring Buckinghamshire. This is an important distinction because it has a bearing on the form and function of the Green Belt as reflected in purposes identified in national policy.
2. Reflecting its location immediately to the north of London, the Green Belt exhibits a varied character, from fragmented urban fringe land on the edge of the built-up area, to wider open countryside with a relatively remote quality. Notwithstanding development scattered across the Green Belt (isolated and clusters of dwellings), its openness (that is the absence of built development) is largely retained.
3. Land use is diverse, comprising combinations of extensive arable land to the west and north, tracts of pasture interspersed throughout and typical urban fringe uses in the vicinity of the main urban areas (golf courses, utilities and horsiculture), with extensive recreational land associated with the valleys of the River Colne and River Gade, and the Grand Union Canal in particular, but also tracts of dense woodland such Whippendell Wood and Oxhey Woods. There are various areas of biodiversity important and the purposes of this Review, the environmental character in terms of assets and constraints across the two Councils is illustrated in **Appendix A**.
4. Woodland cover across the study area is highly variable, and where there is dense woodland, particularly so to the north west, this helps to visually absorb development by breaking long-distance views, containing built form and thereby helps to retain a strongly rural character and sense of openness. However, when viewed on plan (through an aerial photograph or map) in some localities there is clear incremental development which cumulatively influences the character of the Green Belt towards fragmented residential development. The condition of the landscape appears generally good, with a strong character, reflecting the general health of agricultural practices, although in the immediate urban fringe there is some evidence of the abandonment (or near-abandonment) of farming.
5. Reflecting the geography of Three Rivers District and Watford Borough, and for efficiency of analysis, the study area has been divided into six broad zones: North West, North, Central, South West, South and East, and survey parcels are labelled accordingly. The Green Belt is assessed on exactly the same basis using a consistent methodology throughout the study area.

North West: Land situated to the north west of the M25 which has a predominantly remote rural character, of medium and large scale arable and pasture with isolated farmsteads, hamlets and villages. The land is part of the wider open countryside shared with Chiltern District which extends into the Chilterns AONB. The topography reflects the plateau and valley character of the Chilterns, with extensive views along and across the valley of the River Chess, with more enclosed heavily wooded land on the plateau to the north of Sarratt.

North: Comprising land between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, which is predominantly a plateau landscape with large-scale open arable, medium scale pasture and woodland uses, giving a mixture of extensive and more enclosed views. In some areas the land has been encroached upon by built development, particularly to the north of the M25, which has weakened its relatively remote rural quality.

Central: Situated between the built edge of Watford and Rickmansworth south of the M25, the land has an open countryside quality, albeit of varied land use which reflects its accessible location. Topography is typically gently undulating, with middle and short-range views across arable land, pasture and golf courses, interrupted by extensive blocks of woodland and well-treed field boundaries. Built development is typically sparse and part of the farmed and recreational character of the land, reflecting a reasonably strong division between town and country in this area, albeit of a more urban fringe character to the east.

South West: Forming part of the westerly context for the Colne Valley, the land largely consists of large-scale arable fields on rising land from the valley floor, with extensive views eastwards and

southwards. On the plateau towards Chorleywood, land use is of a more enclosed character, reflecting pasture and woodland land uses. Notwithstanding the proximity of the land to the urban edge at Rickmansworth, and development in the vicinity of the River Colne, the land has a largely open rural character.

South: Much of this land is of a typical urban fringe character, situated between the built edge of Watford and Rickmansworth and the northern suburbs of London at Northwood. Land use is characteristically varied with extensive golf courses offering a semi-rural aspect, flood-plain pasture, mixed woodland and scrub. The pattern of the land is commensurately complex, with a variety of short, middle and longer-distance views within and across the parcels. Similarly, built development intrudes, both as part of the urban edge and within the parcels in the form of education facilities, for example.

East: Situated on the immediate fringes of the built extent of Watford, this land forms the transition between town and country, exhibiting many of the classic features of the urban fringe: partitioned by road corridors, diverse land uses (fragmented development, sport and recreation, allotments, pasture, scrub woodland and flood attenuation), and a strong sense of immediacy with the edge of adjacent built-up areas. This fringe land is broadly split into two: to the north the influence of the M1 and access roads is significant, containing the built edge of Watford, beyond which is open countryside to settlements within Hertsmere District. To the south is more open land with undulating topography but which exhibits urban fringe character and pressures such as fragmentation of land holdings and land use change.

6. Notwithstanding proximity to extensive built-up areas associated with the Watford and Rickmansworth and the north London suburbs, and the diversity of Green Belt character, a general sense of openness (that is the absence of built development) has been maintained. There is evidence of incremental change associated with the development of isolated dwellings, but more particularly in respect of changes in farming practices (notably land use change and hedgerow removal) which influences matters such as the visual connection between areas and hence the perception of openness. Nevertheless, in areas of open countryside, the condition of the landscape appears to be good, with a strong character, although in the immediate urban fringe there is some evidence of the abandonment or running down of farming enterprises.
7. Retention of the general sense of openness reflects (to a greater or lesser degree) the application of Green Belt policy which has prevented the occurrence of uncontained development, particularly in the vicinity of main roads. Nevertheless, incremental change has occurred, often associated with isolated dwellings (reflecting the nature of housing demands in some areas), but also where Green Belt designation has been removed.

3.2 Review of Green Belt purposes

2. The results of Strategic Review of Green Belt purposes is illustrated in Figure 3.1 and set out in Table 3.1. They demonstrate that the Green Belt is overall and within specific parcels making a Contribution or Significant Contribution to Green Belt purposes as set out in the NPPF. Whilst there is inevitable variability amongst the degree of contributions to specific purposes, only four parcels were identified as making a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes such they might be considered for removal from the Green Belt. In all four cases, the land appears to have become peripheral to the wider Green Belt or has been part of a blanket designation of undeveloped land. Whilst Green Belt designation may not be relevant, these could be protected from development for other reasons such as current use as recreational resources.
3. **Appendix B (B1 – B6)** sets out the detailed evaluation of each strategic parcel, along with maps illustrating the relative contribution of each parcel to the five Green Belt purposes as defined in the NPPF.

Figure 3.1 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

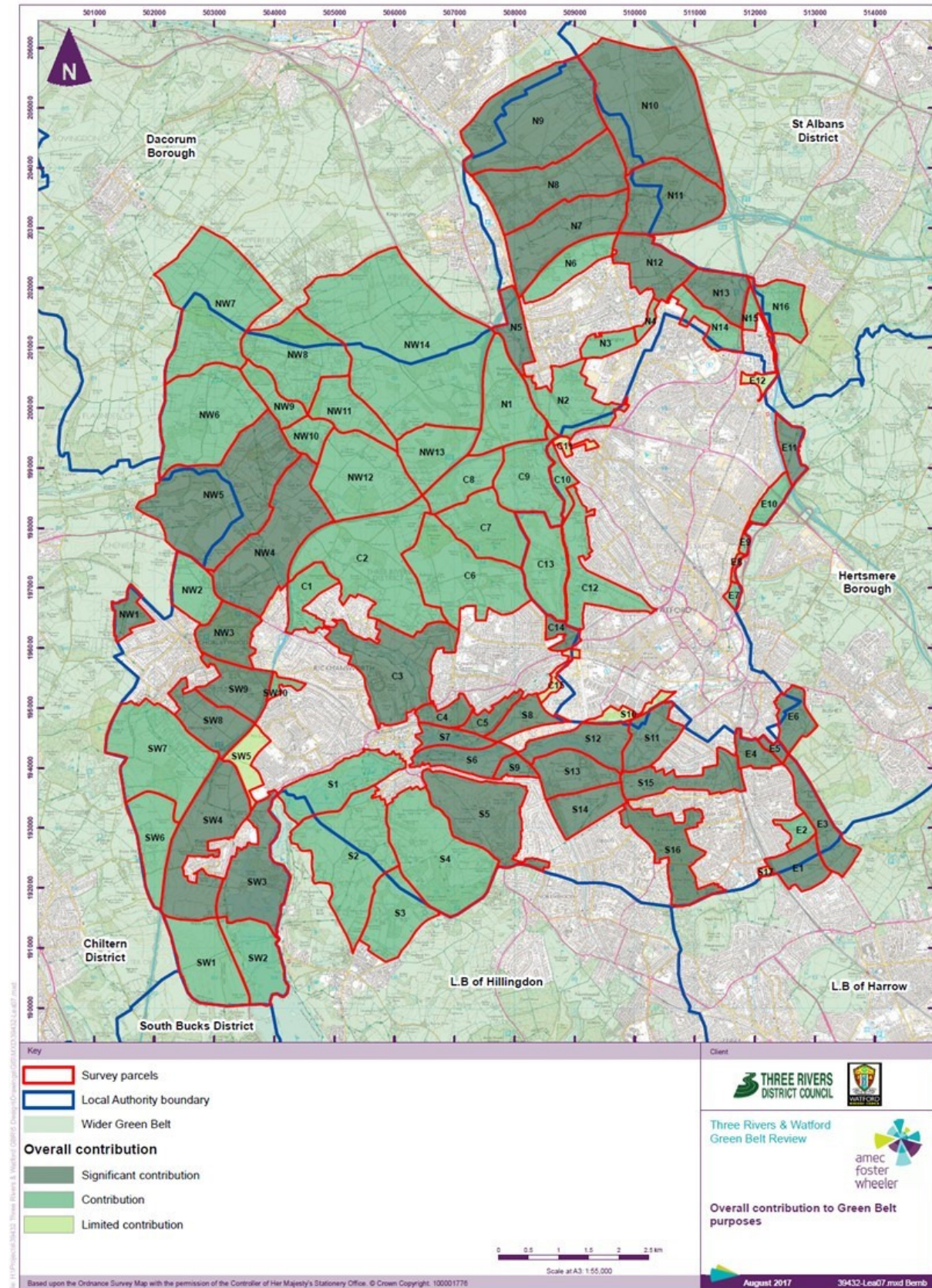


Table 3.1 Assessment of Contribution to Green Belt Purposes (see **Appendix B** for detailed assessment by individual purpose)

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
SW1	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	Open countryside which along with adjacent land to the east and west helps to maintain openness and the broad separation of settlements along the Colne Valley.
SW2	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of a swathe of land along the Colne Valley helping to maintain openness, notwithstanding evidence of localised sprawl (historic and modern) along the A412 Denham Way/Old Uxbridge Road.
SW3	SC	C	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of a swathe of land along the Colne Valley helping to maintain openness. Sprawl along the A412 Denham Way/Old Uxbridge Road is potentially an issue, particularly in the proximity of Maple Cross.
SW4	SC	C	C	LC	LC	SC	Overall the parcel contributes significantly to maintaining open land in this part of the Colne Valley (in combination with adjacent parcels) generally and preventing sprawl along the A412 Denham Way in particular.
SW5	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	The parcel has been severed from its wider countryside context by road development and whilst being open makes a Limited Contribution to the Green Belt as a whole in this location.
SW6	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	The parcel, in combination with related land to the west and north makes a Contribution to maintaining openness west of the M25 and south of Chorleywood.
SW7	C	C	C	C	LC	C	The parcel, in combination with related land to the west and south makes a Contribution to maintaining openness west of the M25 and south of Chorleywood, notwithstanding the presence of residential development at Heronsgate which is washed over by the Green Belt.
SW8	C	SC	SC	C	LC	SC	The parcel in combination with land to the north protects the openness of land between Chorleywood and the M25, and the local separation of Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
SW9	C	SC	SC	C	LC	SC	The parcel in combination with land to the south protects the openness of land between Chorleywood and the M25, and the local separation of Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
SW10	LC	C	LC	LC	LC	C	Despite severance from the wider Green Belt by the M25, the parcel contributes to the local separation of Rickmansworth and Chorleywood at this relatively narrow point.
NW1	SC	C	SC	C	LC	SC	Part of wider open countryside to the west of Chorleywood, the parcel contains the westerly edge of Chorleywood, prevents encroachment and separation of Chorleywood and Little Chalfont.
NW2	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Helps to contain the northerly extent of Chorleywood and complements land to the east which separates Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
NW3	C	SC	C	SC	LC	SC	In combination with land to the south, the parcel plays an important local role in separating Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
NW4	SC	LC	SC	C	LC	SC	Maintains open land in this location being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25, including development at Sarratt.
NW5	LC	LC	SC	C	LC	SC	Contributes to maintaining the openness of relatively accessible land which has been subject to encroachment to the south west of Sarratt, including the setting of the village.

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
NW6	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the countryside in this location through the prevention of encroachment, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW7	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the countryside in this location through the prevention of encroachment, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW8	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the countryside in this location through the prevention of encroachment, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW9	LC	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land through the prevention of encroachment in the vicinity of Sarratt and the broader setting of the village to the north east.
NW10	LC	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land through the prevention of encroachment in the vicinity of Sarratt and the broader setting of the village to the north east.
NW11	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in this location, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW12	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in the vicinity of Sarratt, also being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW13	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in this location, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW14	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in this location, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
C1	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to the containment of Rickmansworth as part of a broader arc of Green Belt north of Rickmansworth and south of the M25.
C2	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to the containment of Rickmansworth and encroachment into wider open countryside to the north.
C3	C	SC	SC	C	LC	SC	Forms the majority of the open land which separates Croxley Green and Rickmansworth, related to more open countryside to north.
C4	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of the open land which separates Croxley Green and Rickmansworth.
C5	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of the open land which separates Croxley Green and Northwood, and more locally Croxley Green and Watford (in its extension along Tolpits Lane).
C6	C	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Croxley Green and the M25, containing sprawl and helping to prevent broader encroachment.
C7	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Croxley Green/Watford and the M25, helping to prevent broader encroachment.
C8	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Croxley Green/Watford and the M25, helping to prevent broader encroachment.
C9	C	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Watford and the M25, helping to prevent broader encroachment and providing part of the local setting for Watford.
C10	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Part of the containment of the built edge of Watford and broader encroachment in this location. There is a sense of separation from the wider open countryside to the west.

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
C11	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	'Remnant' open land on the built edge of Watford which makes a Limited Contribution because of its size, fragmented character and high degree of containment.
C12	C	C	C	C	LC	C	Contains the built edge of Watford to the west, locally preventing merger with Croxley Green and providing part of the westerly setting for Watford.
C13	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Part of the open land between Watford and Croxley Green, and wider open countryside towards the M25, helping to prevent encroachment and locally providing part of the setting for Watford and Croxley Green.
C14	LC	C	C	C	LC	SC	Part of remaining open land between Watford and Croxley Green, locally providing a setting for these areas and also helping to prevent wider encroachment.
C15	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	Part of remnant open land between Watford and Croxley Green, but its contribution is significantly compromised by its size, the degree of urban intrusion and absence of strong connection with the wider Green Belt to the north or south.
N1	C	C	C	C	LC	C	Open countryside between Watford and the M25, helping to prevent sprawl, merger and encroachment.
N2	C	C	C	C	LC	C	Forms part of the land between Watford and Abbots Langley, albeit with openness compromised, preventing their merger, locally providing setting and helping to prevent wider encroachment.
N3	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of the remaining corridor between Abbots Langley and Watford, preventing the merger of built-up areas and locally providing part of their setting.
N4	LC	C	LC	SC	LC	C	Part of the remaining gap between Abbots Langley and Watford, preventing their merger
N5	SC	C	C	C	LC	SC	Forms the remaining open land between Abbots Langley and the M25, containing sprawl and preventing wider encroachment.
N6	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Contains the built edge of Abbots Langley, maintaining openness to the M25. Strategically part of open land between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, strategically preventing their merger, wider sprawl and encroachment.
N7	C	SC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, strategically preventing their merger, wider encroachment and localised sprawl.
N8	C	SC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, strategically preventing their merger but also wider encroachment and localised sprawl.
N9	SC	SC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead forming a significant part of the south easterly context to Hemel Hempstead, protecting open countryside from sprawl and encroachment and towns from merging.
N10	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, and between St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Watford, preventing their merger, sprawl into open countryside and broader encroachment.
N11	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, and between St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Watford, helping to prevent their merger and protecting their countryside from encroachment.
N12	SC	C	SC	C	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, and between St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Watford, contributing to the

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
							prevention of their merger, but also preventing sprawl and encroachment in this locality.
N13	C	C	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Bricket Wood, preventing sprawl and encroachment into open countryside to the north, as well as strategically preventing the merger of Watford and Bricket Wood.
N14	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Contains built development at Watford preventing sprawl, and locally the merger of Watford and Bricket Wood.
N15	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of the remaining open land between Watford and Bricket Wood, although the land is compromised by the intrusion of built development and its severance from the wider Green Belt.
N16	C	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of open land between Watford and Bricket Wood and the principal gap between the two.
E1	C	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of the open land separating Carpenders Park and Hatch End, helping to prevent their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
E2	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of open land to the east of Carpenders Park, albeit well contained by roads and the built edge of Carpenders Park.
E3	SC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of the wider open countryside between Carpenders Park and Bushey, helping to prevent their merger, sprawl and broader encroachment.
E4	LC	SC	LC	SC	LC	SC	Part of the land separating Watford and South Oxhey, helping to prevent their merger, also providing setting for these areas.
E5	C	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of the land separating Watford Heath and South Oxhey, preventing their merger, helping to prevent sprawl, encroachment and setting for these areas.
E6	SC	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of remaining open land separating Watford and Bushey, preventing their merger, sprawl and encroachment and providing setting for these areas.
E7	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Although well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E8	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Although well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E9	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Although well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E10	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, though well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E11	SC	LC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside to the east of the M25 and part of the wider gap between Watford and Radlett, helping to prevent their merger, and protecting against wider encroachment.
E12	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	'Remnant' open land within the built envelope of Watford which is separated from the wider Green Belt to the east.
S1	LC	C	C	C	LC	C	Part of wider open land to the south of Rickmansworth which contains Rickmansworth, locally provides part of the setting to the town and prevents encroachment into wider open countryside towards Harefield.

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
S2	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of the open countryside south of Rickmansworth, helping to prevent merger with Harefield and north London suburbs more generally, to the south and wider encroachment.
S3	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of the open countryside south of Rickmansworth, helping to prevent merger with Harefield and north London suburbs more generally, to the south and wider encroachment.
S4	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of the open countryside which broadly maintains the separation between Rickmansworth and Northwood and helps to prevent encroachment into the wider countryside.
S5	C	SC	SC	SC	LC	SC	Part of the open countryside which maintains the separation between Rickmansworth and Northwood, prevents sprawl from adjacent urban areas, helps to prevent encroachment into the countryside and locally provides the setting for the Moor Park Conservation Area.
S6	LC	SC	LC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford, Rickmansworth and north London suburbs at Northwood, preventing their merger.
S7	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Rickmansworth, preventing their merger.
S8	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Croxley Green, preventing their merger.
S9	LC	SC	LC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger.
S10	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	'Remnant' land on the southern fringe of Watford, with no clear Green Belt function.
S11	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and South Oxhey, preventing their merger and more widely of Watford and Northwood.
S12	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S13	C	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S14	C	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S15	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Forms the remaining open land between Watford (Oxhey) and South Oxhey, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S16	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between South Oxhey and Northwood, (the remainder in Harrow Borough the south), preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S17	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	The land is strongly enclosed with no clear connection with the wider Green Belt.

3.3 Overview

- The Green Belt across Three Rivers District and Watford Borough generally fulfils its role as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, maintaining a reasonable distinction between town and country, maintaining the separation of towns and their suburbs and protecting the open countryside from widespread incremental change. The land is part of a transition zone between the often fragmented Green Belt which separates the London suburbs and the more contiguous Green Belt which covers

the more open, relatively remote countryside of the Home Counties. The role of Green Belt is varied and in places multifaceted, reflecting a complex settlement pattern which has grown rapidly in the past fifty years.

5. In essence the Green Belt largely protects undeveloped land from unconstrained sprawl which might otherwise occur from the extensive built-up areas which characterise the study area, as well as maintaining the separation (both strategically and locally) of towns and suburbs within and adjacent to Three Rivers District and Watford Borough. More generally, the incremental change of open land through encroachment is limited, a matter of particular importance in the accessible countryside where urbanisation can rapidly alter its particular qualities. In common with other areas of the Metropolitan Green Belt (and indeed country-wide), the accessibility of rural and semi-rural areas through high levels of car ownership creates development pressure which is likely to be increasing. Many such areas are within ready commuting distance of service and employment centres, in this case Watford/Rickmansworth, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and central London.
6. More difficult to determine in this locality are the roles of the Green Belt in protecting the setting of historic towns (of which there are none) and regeneration. Locally however, there are important roles protecting the setting of Conservation Areas and potentially encouraging regeneration of specific parts of the larger built-up areas.
7. It is important to note that decisions on land for release can only be made once development requirements are known and once the rest of evidence base is complete which together help to inform strategy and policy. In this regard, a 'Limited Contribution' does not mean that land should be released from Green Belt or is suitable for development, or conversely that in the case of a 'Significant Contribution' that land should not be released from the Green Belt or is not suitable for development, either in whole or in part.
8. The following paragraphs summarise the broad form and function of the Green Belt across the study area.
9. *North West (parcels NW1 – NW14):* The principal function of the Green Belt in this area is to protect the openness of the countryside through the prevention of encroachment by incremental development. Settlement is sparse (concentrated around Sarratt) but also scattered dwellings throughout, but the land is relatively accessible and vulnerable to change which would cumulatively would alter its character. Land use is primarily extensive arable agriculture, but there are also significant areas of woodland. There is a strong degree of coherence to the landscape which generally retains a remote rural quality and is part of the wider land to the west and north. The character and condition of the Green Belt in this location is strong with little evidence of opportunities for enhancement.
10. *North (parcels N1 – N16):* The Green Belt to the north, north west and north east of Watford principally acts to maintain the strategic separation of the towns of Hemel Hempstead and Watford, locally maintaining the separate identity of Abbots Langley and Bricket Wood and generally checking the sprawl of Watford and Hemel Hempstead into open countryside. There has been growth in settlements in adjacent authorities (notably Kings Langley and Bricket Wood) which, along with road infrastructure developments, has created areas of very limited separation and fragmented Green Belt which sometimes has limited visual and physical connection with the wider countryside. The area includes the Leavesden Film Studios which is a major developed site in the Green Belt.
11. *Central (parcels C1 – C15):* The principal functions of the Green Belt lying between Watford and Rickmansworth south of the M25 are to prevent sprawl of these urban areas into open countryside and maintain its openness through resisting encroachment in the form of incremental change. To these ends, the Green Belt, in combination with other factors, has maintained the largely open character of the land, albeit of a diverse often urban fringe character with a strong sense of proximity to built-up areas.
12. *South West (parcels SW1 – SW10):* The Green Belt in this location conserves open countryside, along with containing sprawl along the A412, particularly in the vicinity of Maple Cross where there is evidence of incremental change. The land to the west of Maple Cross and south of Chorleywood is of a distinctively open character (part of the wider Green Belt to the west in Chiltern District) where a strong distinction between town and country has largely been maintained.
13. *South (parcels S1 – S16):* Green Belt to the south of Watford and Rickmansworth principally functions to prevent the merger of the towns with the suburbs of London immediately to the south. This reflects the area of transition between the relatively fragmented Green Belt associated with the London Boroughs and the more extensive open land of Districts to the north. Equally, the Green Belt to the south has other, often more localized, roles relating to containing potential sprawl into open land and more generalised encroachment in what is a highly accessible locality.

14. *East (parcels E1 – E12)*: Reflecting the complex geography of the eastern fringes of Watford, the function of the Green Belt varies considerably. Towards the southern suburbs between Oxhey, South Oxhey and Bushey, the Green contains potential sprawl into open countryside and maintains separation between settlements, whilst along the A4008 where the land is highly fragmented, the functions become more localised, providing a context for this part of the town. Generally, the land needs to be considered alongside that in Hertsmere District in respect of fulfilling a strategic Green Belt purposes, namely that of preventing sprawl through containment and separation of settlements.

Land Making a Significant Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

15. These parcels are principally located between and/or in the immediate vicinity of the principal settlements (and their suburbs) across the study area, reflecting the strategic purposes of preventing the sprawl of large built-up areas and the merger of towns (and other settlements).
16. Whilst configuration of the Green Belt is some places complex, which in turn reflects the blanket designation of undeveloped land, there are clearly contiguous areas of Green Belt, such as between Watford and Hemel Hempstead which maintain separation of the towns. The arc of Green Belt to the south of Watford also assumes particular significance in this role, as does land between Rickmansworth and Chorleywood more locally.
17. The limiting of sprawl from the edges of built-up areas (particularly along transport corridors, but also into open countryside) and prevention of the general encroachment of built development in open countryside through incremental change, also assumes particular significance in the study area, notably to the south west and north west of Rickmansworth.

Land Making a Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

18. These parcels comprise the second principal category, and relate largely to the open countryside beyond the main built-up areas where the key function of the Green Belt is to prevent encroachment by incremental development. These parcels straddle the M25 to the north west of Watford and Rickmansworth, but also extend southwards towards Harefield and north eastwards towards St Albans.
19. The relative accessibility of countryside within the service and employment catchment of main towns means inevitable development pressure. Where this occurs as piecemeal land release development cumulatively and progressively can create an urbanised feel, particularly in the vicinity of main roads and settlements. Whilst change can and does occur under Green Belt policy, it does so in a relatively controlled and consistent fashion. It is likely that this effect could not be achieved to the same degree or consistency through policies relating to development in the open countryside alone.

Land Making a Limited Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

20. The contribution of six parcels is considered to be relatively limited by virtue of their size and location which is strongly bounded. However, release from the Green Belt is not necessarily justified by virtue of their land use, for example as public open space of various kinds.

3.4 Analysis by Green Belt Purpose

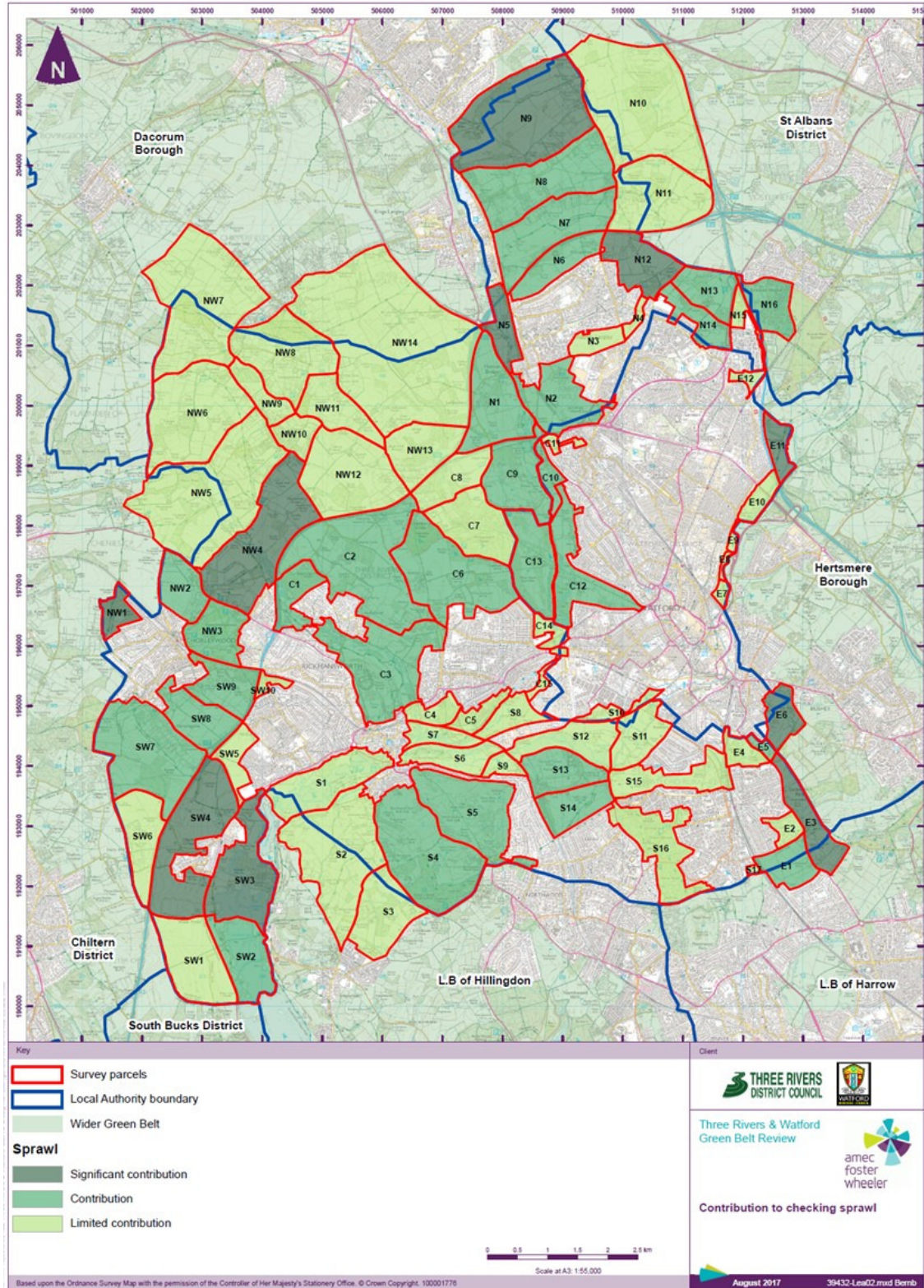
21. The following sections review the role of the Green Belt in respect of the five purposes identified in the NPPF. As noted in the methodology, there is consideration of both strategic and local matters in respect of contribution to Green Belt purposes, notably in respect of historic town, of which there are none in the study area, but there are a number of large Conservation Areas which have a local significance.

Checking the sprawl of large built-up areas

22. The containment of large built-up areas is one of principal functions of the Green Belt across the study area, strategically and locally. Notable are the management of the pressures for the spread of the north London suburbs and the containment of Rickmansworth and Watford within the context of the open countryside to the north and west. Equally, Hemel Hempstead is contained along its southern extent. The maintenance of relatively compact urban form is part of a wider strategic

pattern across the Metropolitan Green Belt to the north of London where the distinction between town and country has been maintained and forces for ribbon development along transport corridors in particular have been checked. Nevertheless, there are clearly pressure points with evidence of and potential incremental change, such as in the gap between Kings Langley and Abbots Langley, development in the vicinity of Maple Cross and along the eastern fringe of Watford.

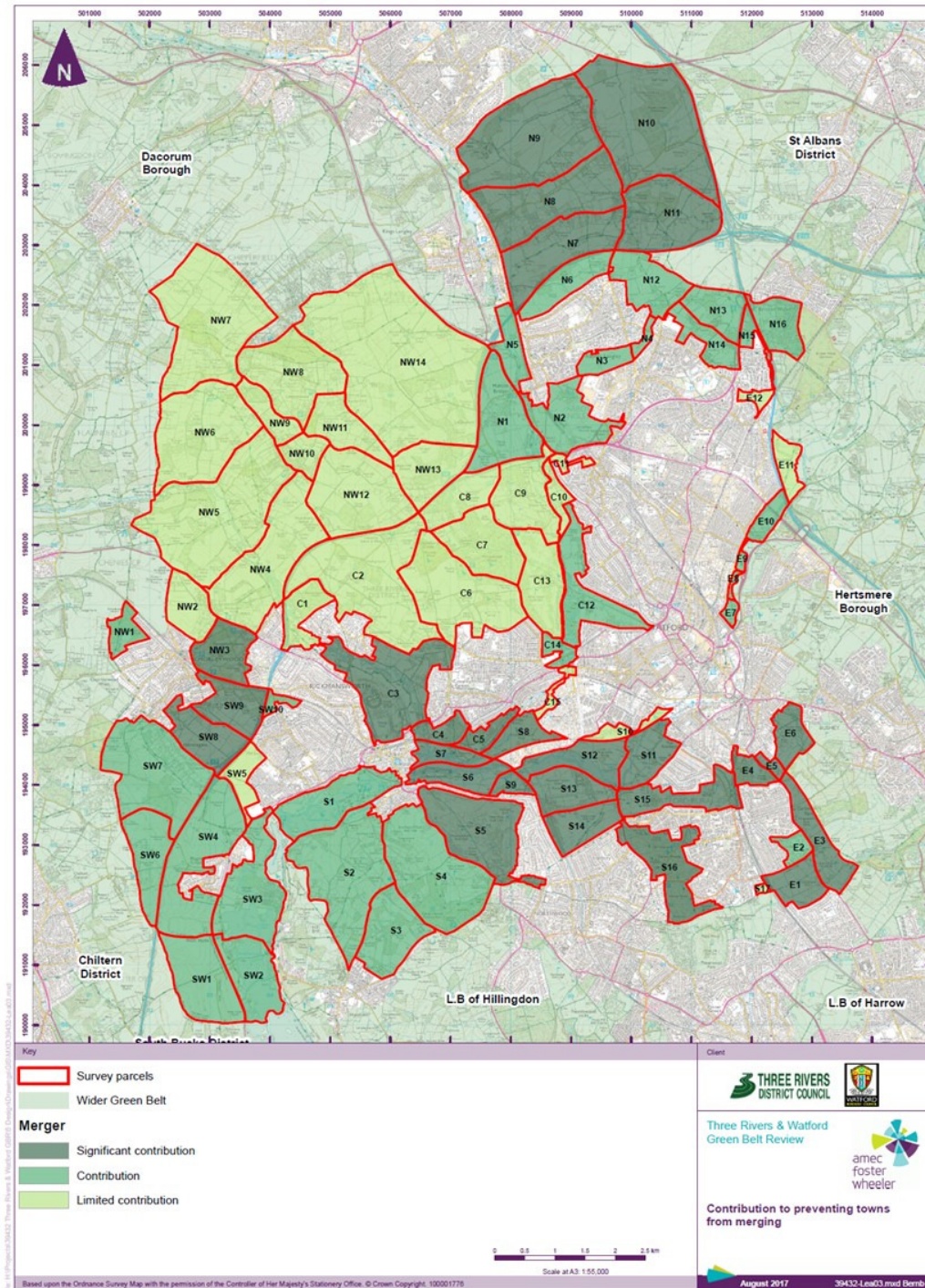
Figure 3.2 Contribution to Checking the Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas



Preventing neighbouring towns from merging

23. The strategic function of the Green Belt, along with preventing sprawl into open countryside, is significant within the study area, notably between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, Watford and Northwood, Watford and Rickmansworth, and also 'locally' between Watford and Bricket Wood, Croxley Green and Rickmansworth and Rickmansworth and Chorleywood. The separate identity of settlements, strategically and locally, has been maintained to greater or lesser degrees through the presence of Green Belt policy, although the pattern is a complex one which reflects the history and pressures for growth in the areas immediately to the north of London's outer suburbs. Likely merger between towns, suburbs and settlements has been prevented, whilst in some cases merger has occurred with 'remnant' Green Belt representing a token presence.

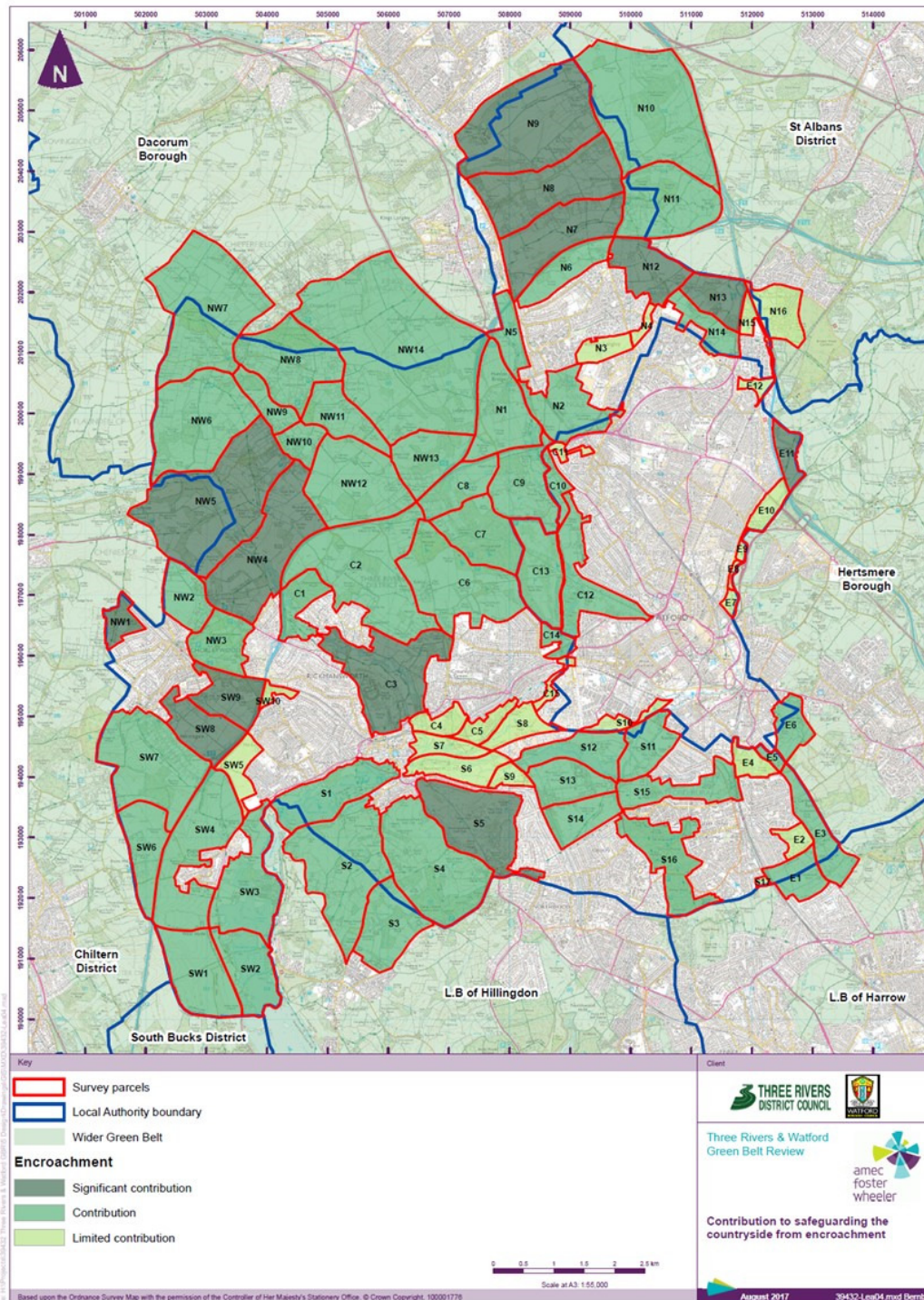
Figure 3.3 Contribution to Preventing Towns from Merging



Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

24. The Green Belt makes a widespread contribution to limiting development in the open countryside in a consistent fashion and in some cases a Significant Contribution where there is evidence of actual or potential pressure for change. This is a widely applicable role and reflect general pressures for change associated with accessibility of the countryside to nearby service and employment centres. There has clearly been development within the Green Belt since its designation in the form of individual dwellings and some larger developments, but in the absence of the policy the scale of change would be more significant, removing the open character of some areas particularly in the immediate vicinity of built-up areas.

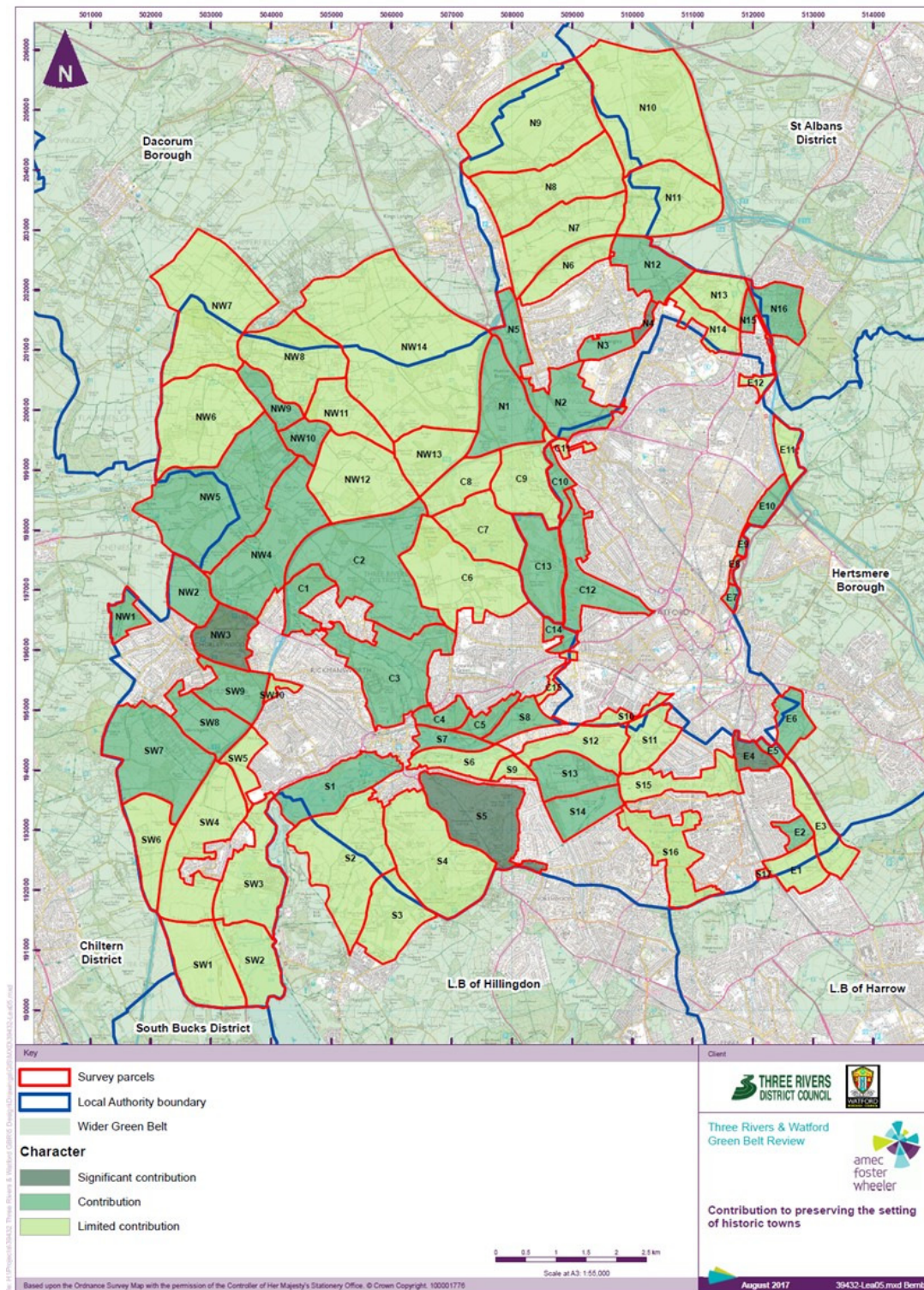
Figure 3.4 Contribution to Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment



Preserving the setting and character of historic towns

25. There are no historic towns *per se* in the study area. However, a useful proxy at a local level is the role of the Green Belt in relation to Conservation Areas of which there are a number of significant extent across the study area (see Appendix A), notably at Sarratt, Chorleywood Common, Heronsgate, Loudwater, Croxley Green and Northwood/Moor Park. Here the Green Belt contributes to maintaining their setting and character by protecting their countryside context and varying degrees of visual connection with open land.

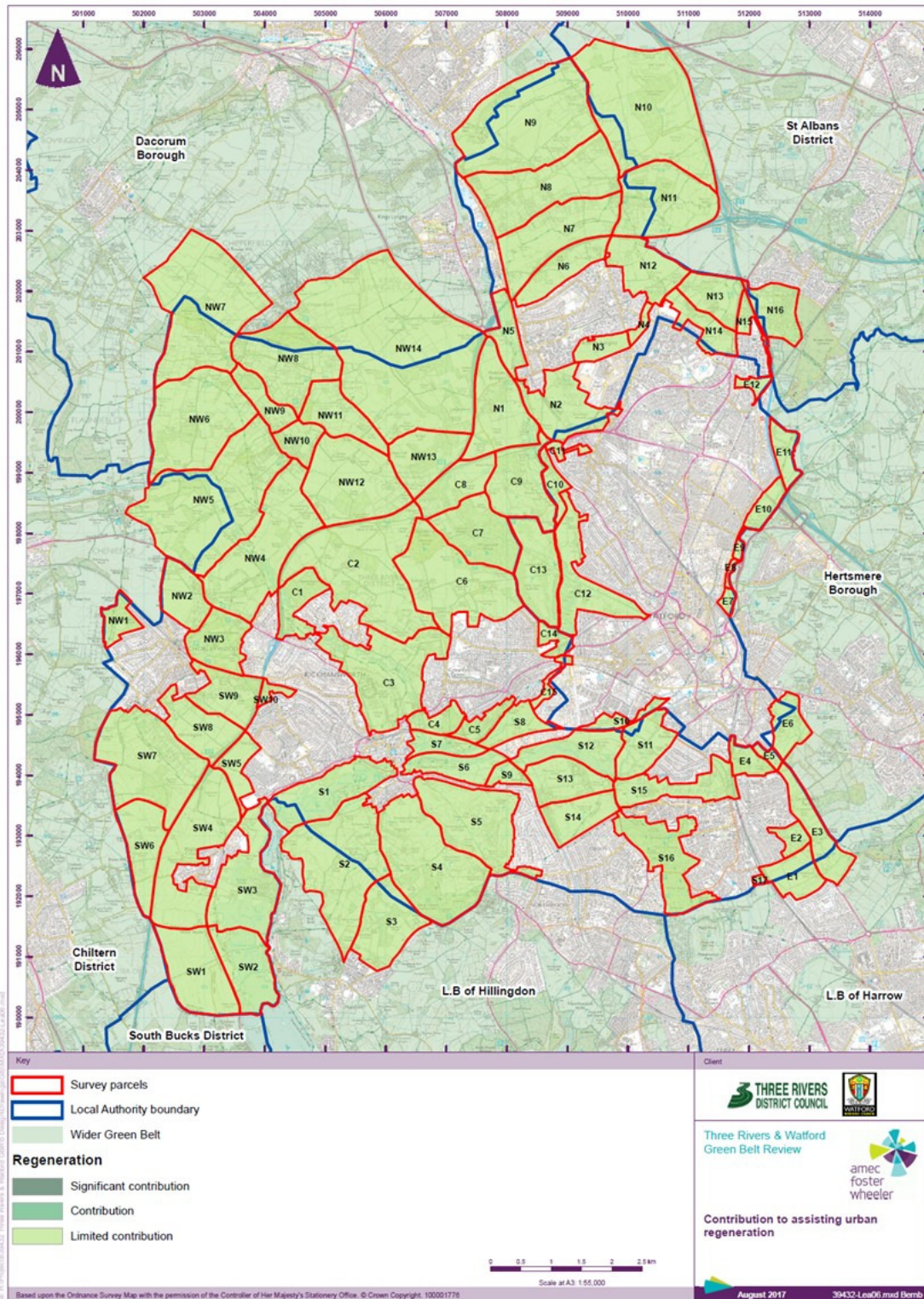
Figure 3.5 Contribution to Setting



Assisting in urban regeneration

26. The potential contribution to urban regeneration of the Green Belt is difficult to determine with any certainty. The general buoyancy of the land market means that there are no extensive areas of brownfield land awaiting regeneration onto which Green Belt designation could focus development activity, meaning that there can only be an assumed locally-focused contribution, and the contribution by parcel is limited (and generalised) across the two authorities (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 Contribution to Urban Regeneration



3.5 Positive Use of the Green Belt

27. Green Belts are not simply a restrictive policy tool, but hold the potential to enhance environmental quality. In this regard, the NPPF (para 81) identifies 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.”

28. As part of the Green Belt Review no parcels were identified as being so degraded as requiring specific intervention although there is evidence of some of the typical negative characteristics associated with the so-called ‘urban fringe’ which include:

- ▶ erosion of landscape structure through the removal and decay of field boundaries;
- ▶ unmanaged hedgerows leading to ‘gappy’ boundaries;
- ▶ unmanaged woodland resulting in poor structure and reduced opportunities for healthy succession;
- ▶ fragmentation of land holdings associated with sale and lease for horsiculture;
- ▶ changes in land management associated with land held for ‘hope value’ leading to scrub encroachment; and
- ▶ unsympathetic, hard urban edges associated with estate development which abuts open farmland.

29. By no means can all of the urban fringe thus be characterised, but combinations of these factors operate to lesser or greater degrees. These issues have long been nationally recognised and they are the subject of various interventions countrywide through initiatives such as community forestry. These can demonstrate that relatively modest interventions such as tree planting and access improvements can potentially make a significant difference to the quality of the landscape in these areas. On a larger scale, the role of community forestry in particular and its natural fit with Green Belt is acknowledged in the NPPF (para 92).

30. Direct intervention to strengthen the landscape character is typically reliant upon new development prompting opportunities to improve recreational opportunities, for example. The progressive erosion of landscape structure and wider changes in land use (for example to horsiculture) can greatly affect both the appearance of the Green Belt and the sense of openness that should characterise it. Whilst landscape quality is not a Green Belt criterion, as noted in the NPPF, identifying opportunities for enhancing landscape character of the Green Belt is important. Where development takes place consideration should be given to positive land management and/or enhancement of landscape structure, ranging from the provision of recreational and nature conservation opportunities as more comprehensive approaches through to Public Rights of Way enhancement and tree planting as part of selected intervention.

31. Where development takes place this can offer the opportunity for positive land management both as part of the development footprint and in the immediate environs. Thus it is reasonable to expect that any development on Green Belt land pays heed to its context and contributes to the character and quality of its setting. Particular attention needs to be paid to:

- ▶ Development densities, building heights and designs appropriate to the receiving environment;
- ▶ Sensitive edge treatment, avoiding visually harsh transitions between built development and the wider countryside; and
- ▶ Connecting to and enhancing existing Green Infrastructure and access opportunities.

4. Consideration of villages within the Green Belt

4.1 Introduction and methodology

1. This part of the Review considers the case for in-setting of the settlements within the Green Belt in Three Rivers District. This exercise is required by the NPPF to determine whether there remains a case for keeping villages washed over by the Green Belt, by virtue of their contribution to Green Belt purposes in respect of helping to maintain openness.
2. The NPPF at paragraph 86 requires that the status of villages currently washed over by Green Belt should be reviewed to determine whether this is still appropriate: *“If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.”*
3. The result of this policy direction is the potential creation of three types of settlement within the Green Belt:
 - ▶ **Inset Settlement** where the settlement is excluded from the Green Belt and Green Belt policies do not apply to development within the settlement.
 - ▶ **Washed-over Settlement** where Green Belt policies apply within them in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt. Similar exceptions to constraints on development apply as within the Green Belt as a whole, although limited infilling may be permitted within the built-up area, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including the settlement in Green Belt in the first place.
 - ▶ **Washed-over Settlement with an Infill Boundary** where settlements have an infill boundary drawn around their main built-up area where allowing limited development which would still be expected to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including the village in Green Belt in the first place.
4. The rural hinterland of Three Rivers District contains the large village of Chorleywood (of which Heronsgate is a significant built area), smaller villages of Sarratt and Bedmond and a range of hamlets and isolated dwellings. Green Belt designation effectively preserves this pattern of built form, and could constrain the ability to allow for development to support diverse and resilient communities. This consideration reflects policy guidance in the NPPF which states that:

84. ‘When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, Local Authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development’ as well as ‘the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt Boundary’.
5. The following are considered as part of this review:
 - ▶ Heronsgate
 - ▶ Sarratt
 - ▶ Bedmond
6. It is appropriate to undertake this exercise as part of the broader review of Green Belt purposes, where the settlement can be put into its wider context. Each village currently has an ‘envelope’ which is the principal extent of development in the village. Policy in the NPPF does not preclude the definition of a village envelope, even if a village remains washed over by the Green Belt, which would allow for limited infilling at the discretion of the Council, thereby complying with para 89(5) which allows for *“limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan.”* In practice this helps to ensure that the villages continue to be able to develop in a sensitive way. This will promote sustainable development that will help meet the needs of local communities through appropriate infill and/or meeting local needs, for example.

7. The three settlements have been reviewed against Green Belt purposes. **Appendix C** sets out the results of the survey, considering:
- ▶ **General character** – location and overall setting, topography, settlement form, building type/age, overall sensitivity, sense of identity/unity/cohesion, key focal points, Conservation Area(s).
 - ▶ **Density and layout of buildings** – degree of spaciousness/enclosure, opportunities for infill.
 - ▶ **Presence and character of open space** – location and relationship with settlement.
 - ▶ **Interface with the surrounding landscape** – settlement depth, rear garden character, glimpsed/panoramic views to the wider landscape, connectivity with landscape context.

4.2 Settlement analysis

Table 4.1 summarises the character of the three settlement, and an analysis of whether in-setting is appropriate.

Table 4.1 Settlements within the Green Belt: Character, Analysis and Recommendations

Settlement	Character and Relationship with the Green Belt	Analysis and Recommendation
Heronsgate	<p>A collection of dwellings set within large plots as an extension to Chorleywood to the north west. The settlement has historical significance as the first Charter Settlement in Great Britain. As such it has Conservation Area status to protect the character of the settlement, which includes the relationship between the dwellings and their landscape setting. Generally, there is a strong unity of character and high sensitivity to change.</p> <p>The connection between the settlement and the Green Belt which largely surrounds is variable, being strongest to the south west where the soft edges of the housing plots effectively merge into the wider open countryside, and more detached to the north east across Long Lane. The M25 severs the connection to the south east.</p>	<p>The settlement has a unique character (recognised by its Conservation Area status) and a generally strong relationship with the Green Belt within which it sits. The very low density character of the development means that whilst it represents built development, the openness of the Green Belt is largely maintained, with the settlement making a contribution to Green Belt character in this locality. Definition of a settlement boundary could prompt more dense development and hence erosion of the relationship between the settlement and its Green Belt setting and its broader landscape setting (the Chilterns AONB lying to the south west).</p> <p>DO NOT INSET</p>
Sarratt	<p>A street village built around an extended green which is the focus for a Conservation Area which protects its attractive spacious character and individual dwellings arranged around The Green.</p> <p>There are several modern extensions to the village, two of which are linear in character (extending south westwards) and one is more nucleated (to the north west). Together, these comprise a relatively large settlement, although there is a sense of spaciousness and hence connection with, and contribution to, the wider Green Belt.</p>	<p>The unique character of Sarratt along the village axis of The Green which has an open character and a high degree of permeability connecting to the wider Green Belt, means that inseting is inappropriate. Notwithstanding some somewhat incongruous additions to the built extent of the village any further increase in density would erode the sense of connection with, and contribution to, the wider Green Belt and its landscape setting (the Chilterns AONB lying to the south west).</p> <p>DO NOT INSET</p>
Bedmond	<p>A clustered village of highly varying character, centred on the junction of Toms Lane and High Street. Modern extensions have expanded the village to create a relatively dense form with often limited connection with the wider Green Belt in which it sits. Whilst the village is small, the sense of visual or physical connection with the Green Belt is only strongly apparent at its edges, some of which are affected by localised sprawl of permanent and semi-permanent development.</p>	<p>The relatively dense character of the village and its evolution through clusters of growth means that the relationship with and contribution to the surrounding Green Belt is relatively weak. Whilst the locality generally (sitting between Watford and Hemel Hempstead) is vulnerable to change through sporadic encroachment and localised sprawl along minor roads, the definition of a village envelope could help to better define the role and longer term character of the village.</p> <p>POTENTIAL FOR INSETTING</p>

4.3 Conclusion

The survey of the character of three settlements currently washed over by Green Belt confirms that in two cases (Heronsgate and Sarratt) the current approach is reasonable, reflecting the generally low density character, strong relationship with and contribution to the surrounding Green Belt (and landscape setting of the Chilterns ANOB to the south west) and the effect that infilling would have on the character of the Green Belt. There is thus no clear case for in-setting of Heronsgate or Sarratt and thereby creating a new development boundary within which in-fill development could occur. This accords with policy in the NPPF does not preclude the definition of a village envelope, even if a village remains washed over by the Green Belt, which would allow for limited infilling. By contrast, the compact form, density and variable relationship with the Green Belt of Bedmond prompts a case for exploring a village envelope and inseting, should a case for additional development in and around the village be identified.



5. Study Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions and Justification

1. Across the Council areas, the Green Belt fulfils its intended strategic purpose as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, with many instances of more than one purpose being met.

The assessment of the Green Belt in within Three Rivers District and Watford Borough has identified that the vast majority of it fulfils its intended purposes, as specified in the NPPF; that is largely maintaining a sense of openness through its permanence and the consistent application of development restraint. The Green Belt clearly functions as part of the wider Metropolitan Green Belt, contributing to the prevention of the sprawl of north London suburbs and the merger of these settlements with towns such as Watford and Rickmansworth, whilst also fulfilling local roles. The Green Belt has changed in character since its designation, reflecting increases in accessibility, land use change and incremental development of various kinds, but its essential character of openness remains. Many parcels meet multiple purposes and in only four instances is land judged to make a consistently Limited Contribution, reflecting their particular geographies. There are a large number of parcels which for different reasons overall make a Significant Contribution to Green Belt purposes, reflecting roles of maintaining separation between towns, preventing sprawl and/or encroachment into open countryside and protecting the setting of towns (locally interpreted as Conservation Areas). In the context of the need or proposals for growth, this creates a complex picture which demands that any proposals for the removal of Green Belt designation through the Local Plan process justified by Exceptional Circumstances, or development in the Green Belt justified through Very Special Circumstances, would need to take account of this strategic review.

2. The settlements of Sarratt and Heronsgate which are currently washed over by Green Belt should remain so, whilst there is a case for insetting the village of Bedmond which could allow for development to meet local needs.

The three settlements currently washed over by Green Belt are of a diverse character, with differing relationships with the Green Belt.

Sarratt is of a generally open character with a relatively strong visual connection with the Green Belt, and a character in the heart of the village adjacent to The Green (protected through Conservation Area status) which is akin to the hamlets and clusters of dwellings in the wider Green Belt in this location. Definition of a village boundary through insetting would potentially damage this relationship through allowing more dense development, adding to some already uncharacteristic extensions.

Héronsgate is of notably low density and blends into the surrounding Green Belt visually and physically, particularly on its southern edge where the extensive plots appear to be part of the wider countryside. Its character is protected through Conservation Area status with development tightly controlled and insetting (or extension of the settlement boundary from Chorleywood) would serve no purpose.

Bedmond is a relatively small village but of a generally compact form towards the centre limiting the immediate relationship with the surrounding Green Belt. Definition of a village boundary would create a clearer definition of the village whereby development in terms of more dense development or extension of the village footprint could be considered (should that be deemed appropriate).

3. Opportunities for Positive Land Management

In some locations in proximity to the built-up area, the Green Belt could benefit from positive land management (in light of para 81 of the NPPF). This could help address some of the typical negative characteristics associated with the so-called 'urban fringe' which include:

- ▶ erosion of landscape structure through the removal and decay of field boundaries;
- ▶ unmanaged hedgerows leading to 'gappy' boundaries;
- ▶ unmanaged woodland resulting in poor structure and reduced opportunities for healthy

- succession;
- ▶ fragmentation of land holdings associated with sale and lease for horticulture;
- ▶ changes in land management associated with land held for 'hope value' leading to scrub encroachment;
- ▶ unsympathetic, hard urban edges associated with estate development which abuts open farmland.

By no means can all of the urban fringe thus be characterised, but combinations of these factors operate to lesser or greater degrees. These issues have long been nationally recognised and they are the subject of various interventions country-wide through initiatives such as community forestry. These can demonstrate that relatively modest interventions such as tree planting and access improvements can potentially make a significant difference to the quality of the landscape in these areas. On a larger scale, the role of community forestry in particular and its natural fit with Green Belt is acknowledged in the NPPF (para 92). Where development takes place this can offer the opportunity for positive land management both as part of the development footprint and in the immediate environs. Particular attention needs to be paid to:

- ▶ Development densities, building heights and designs appropriate to the receiving environment;
- ▶ Sensitive edge treatment, avoiding visually harsh transitions between built development and the wider countryside; and
- ▶ Connecting to and enhancing existing Green Infrastructure and access opportunities.

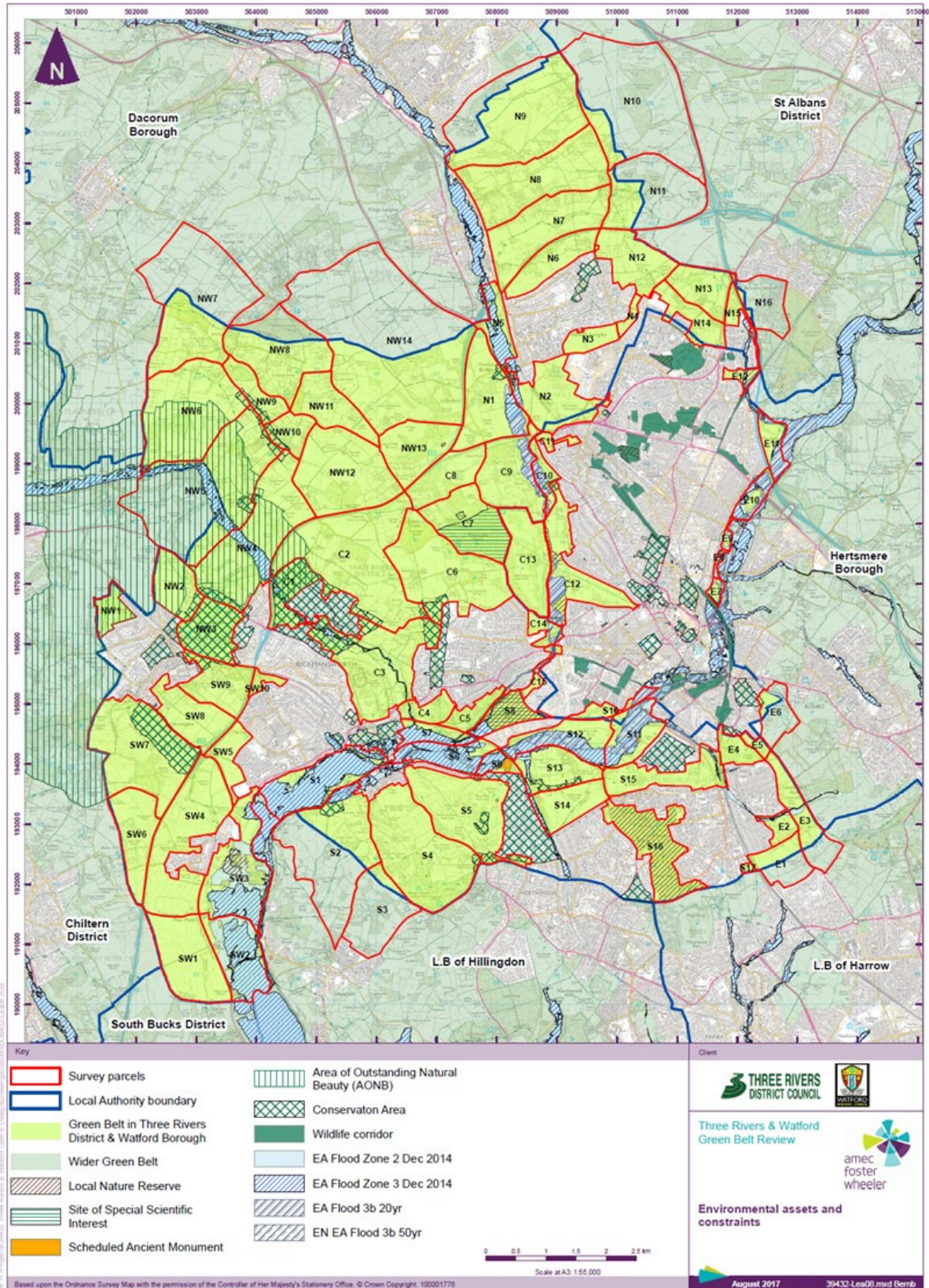
4. Meeting Development Needs

Notwithstanding the conclusions reached on the overall integrity of the Green Belt across Three Rivers District and Watford Borough and the principles of permanence set out in the NPPF, there is pressure for development to meet housing and employment needs. As part of the plan preparation process, the conclusions reached in respect of the strategic role of the Green Belt will need to be balanced against other factors which together could constitute arguments of 'Exceptional Circumstances' meriting the removal of the Green Belt designation from areas of land (which could comprise whole parcels or parts thereof) to allow for development. These arguments typically comprise:

- ▶ Housing need for the plan period and beyond;
- ▶ The identification of sites submitted through the SHLAA process;
- ▶ Sustainability Appraisal findings;
- ▶ Environmental and landscape constraints; and
- ▶ The wider development strategy of the District in respect of an appropriate distribution of growth.

In light of the above, a further study of areas which could merit release in light of development needs would need to be undertaken. As part of this identification of an area as holding potential for release from the Green Belt does not imply that all the identified area should or could be developed. For example, Green Infrastructure could form significant parts of some areas, complementing and enhancing existing landscape and environmental features. In addition, as with any other potential development site, detailed work on site capacity, character and viability would be required.

Appendix A Environmental Assets & Constraints





Appendix B

Parcel Analysis

This appendix sets out the analysis by parcel of their contribution to Green Belt purposes. To aid navigation and analysis, the 83 parcels are grouped geographically, typically using major roads to determine the subdivision, resulting in the following six groups:

- ▶ South West (parcels SW1 – SW10) – see Appendix B1
- ▶ North West (parcels NW1 – NW14) – see Appendix B2
- ▶ North (parcels N1 – N16) – see Appendix B3
- ▶ Central (parcels C1 – C15) – see Appendix B4
- ▶ South (parcels S1 – S16) – see Appendix B5
- ▶ East (parcels E1 – E12) – see Appendix B6

The analysis uses the template set out in the methodology to this study, scrutinising the contribution to each of five purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF, along with an assessment of the overall contribution of the parcel based on the previous judgements. The individual and overall judgements are drawn together and set out in the summary tabulation and mapping presented below.

To set the context, the analysis for each parcel is prefaced by a snapshot of the Ordnance Survey map of the parcel, an aerial photograph, and a pen picture of the character of the parcel drawing on the following factors:

- ▶ Topography
- ▶ Field Pattern
- ▶ Vegetation/Tree Cover
- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Condition
- ▶ Sensitivity
- ▶ Viewpoints

Map B1: Parcels for Survey

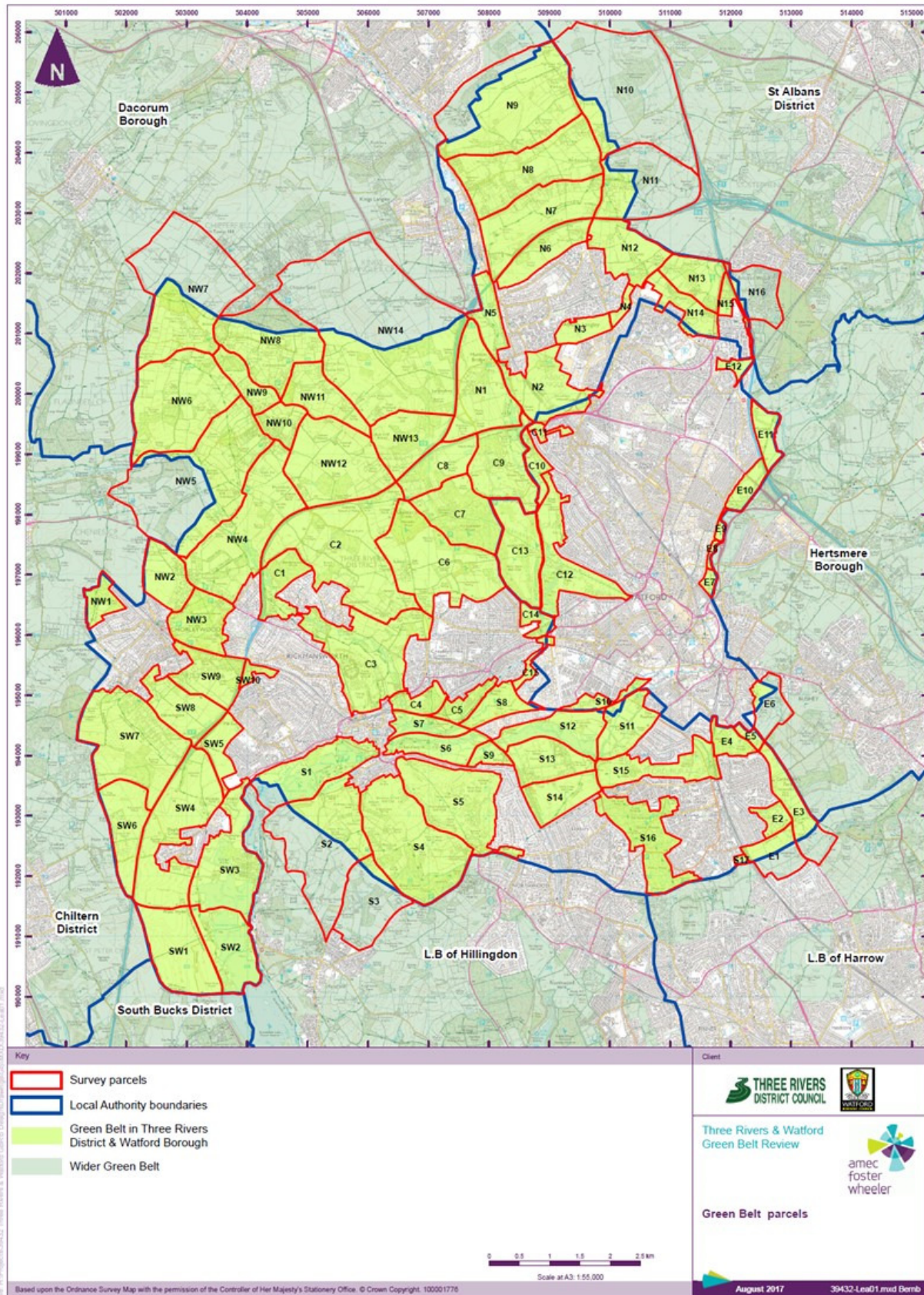


Table B1: Summary Analysis

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
SW1	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	Open countryside which along with adjacent land to the east and west helps to maintain openness and the broad separation of settlements along the Colne Valley.
SW2	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of a swathe of land along the Colne Valley helping to maintain openness, notwithstanding evidence of localised sprawl (historic and modern) along the A412 Denham Way/Old Uxbridge Road.
SW3	SC	C	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of a swathe of land along the Colne Valley helping to maintain openness. Sprawl along the A412 Denham Way/Old Uxbridge Road is potentially an issue, particularly in the proximity of Maple Cross.
SW4	SC	C	C	LC	LC	SC	Overall the parcel contributes significantly to maintaining open land in this part of the Colne Valley (in combination with adjacent parcels) generally and preventing sprawl along the A412 Denham Way in particular.
SW5	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	The parcel has been severed from its wider countryside context by road development and whilst being open makes a Limited Contribution to the Green Belt as a whole in this location.
SW6	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	The parcel, in combination with related land to the west and north makes a Contribution to maintaining openness west of the M25 and south of Chorleywood.
SW7	C	C	C	C	LC	C	The parcel, in combination with related land to the west and south makes a Contribution to maintaining openness west of the M25 and south of Chorleywood, notwithstanding the presence of residential development at Heronsgate which is washed over by the Green Belt.
SW8	C	SC	SC	C	LC	SC	The parcel in combination with land to the north protects the openness of land between Chorleywood and the M25, and the local separation of Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
SW9	C	SC	SC	C	LC	SC	The parcel in combination with land to the south protects the openness of land between Chorleywood and the M25, and the local separation of Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
SW10	LC	C	LC	LC	LC	C	Despite severance from the wider Green Belt by the M25, the parcel contributes to the local separation of Rickmansworth and Chorleywood at this relatively narrow point.
NW1	SC	C	SC	C	LC	SC	Part of wider open countryside to the west of Chorleywood, the parcel contains the westerly edge of Chorleywood, prevents encroachment and separation of Chorleywood and Little Chalfont.
NW2	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Helps to contain the northerly extent of Chorleywood and complements land to the east which separates Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
NW3	C	SC	C	SC	LC	SC	In combination with land to the south, the parcel plays an important local role in separating Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.
NW4	SC	LC	SC	C	LC	SC	Maintains open land in this location being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25, including development at Sarratt.
NW5	LC	LC	SC	C	LC	SC	Contributes to maintaining the openness of relatively accessible land which has been subject to encroachment to the south west of Sarratt, including the setting of the village.

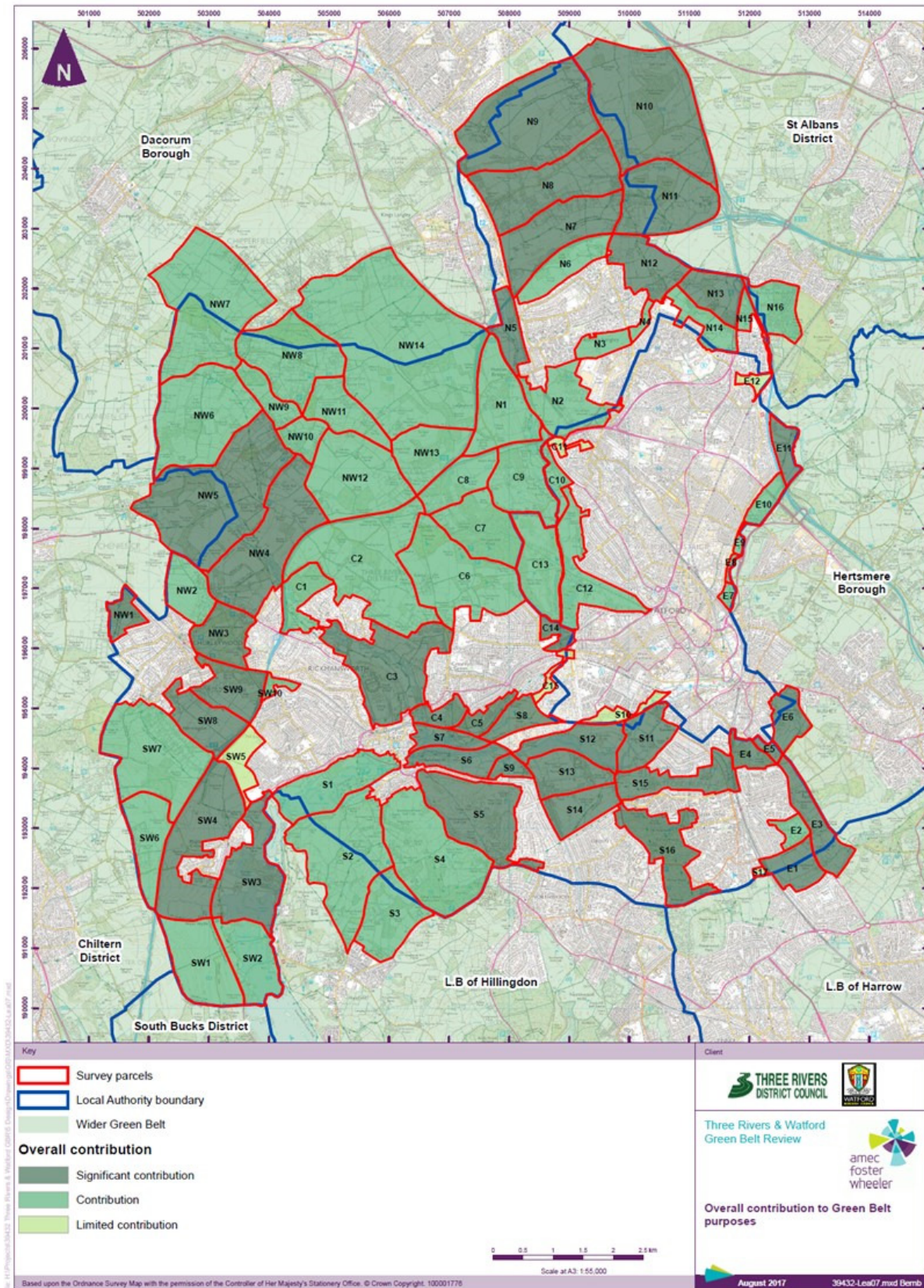
Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
NW6	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the countryside in this location through the prevention of encroachment, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW7	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the countryside in this location through the prevention of encroachment, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW8	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the countryside in this location through the prevention of encroachment, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW9	LC	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land through the prevention of encroachment in the vicinity of Sarratt and the broader setting of the village to the north east.
NW10	LC	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land through the prevention of encroachment in the vicinity of Sarratt and the broader setting of the village to the north east.
NW11	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in this location, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW12	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in the vicinity of Sarratt, also being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW13	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in this location, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
NW14	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Contributes to maintaining open land in this location, being part of relatively remote countryside to the north west of the M25.
C1	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to the containment of Rickmansworth as part of a broader arc of Green Belt north of Rickmansworth and south of the M25.
C2	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Contributes to the containment of Rickmansworth and encroachment into wider open countryside to the north.
C3	C	SC	SC	C	LC	SC	Forms the majority of the open land which separates Croxley Green and Rickmansworth, related to more open countryside to north.
C4	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of the open land which separates Croxley Green and Rickmansworth.
C5	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of the open land which separates Croxley Green and Northwood, and more locally Croxley Green and Watford (in its extension along Tolpits Lane).
C6	C	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Croxley Green and the M25, containing sprawl and helping to prevent broader encroachment.
C7	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Croxley Green/Watford and the M25, helping to prevent broader encroachment.
C8	LC	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Croxley Green/Watford and the M25, helping to prevent broader encroachment.
C9	C	LC	C	LC	LC	C	Part of open countryside between Watford and the M25, helping to prevent broader encroachment and providing part of the local setting for Watford.

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
C10	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Part of the containment of the built edge of Watford and broader encroachment in this location. There is a sense of separation from the wider open countryside to the west.
C11	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	'Remnant' open land on the built edge of Watford which makes a Limited Contribution because of its size, fragmented character and high degree of containment.
C12	C	C	C	C	LC	C	Contains the built edge of Watford to the west, locally preventing merger with Croxley Green and providing part of the westerly setting for Watford.
C13	C	LC	C	C	LC	C	Part of the open land between Watford and Croxley Green, and wider open countryside towards the M25, helping to prevent encroachment and locally providing part of the setting for Watford and Croxley Green.
C14	LC	C	C	C	LC	SC	Part of remaining open land between Watford and Croxley Green, locally providing a setting for these areas and also helping to prevent wider encroachment.
C15	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	Part of remnant open land between Watford and Croxley Green, but its contribution is significantly compromised by its size, the degree of urban intrusion and absence of strong connection with the wider Green Belt to the north or south.
N1	C	C	C	C	LC	C	Open countryside between Watford and the M25, helping to prevent sprawl, merger and encroachment.
N2	C	C	C	C	LC	C	Forms part of the land between Watford and Abbots Langley, albeit with openness compromised, preventing their merger, locally providing setting and helping to prevent wider encroachment.
N3	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of the remaining corridor between Abbots Langley and Watford, preventing the merger of built-up areas and locally providing part of their setting.
N4	LC	C	LC	SC	LC	C	Part of the remaining gap between Abbots Langley and Watford, preventing their merger
N5	SC	C	C	C	LC	SC	Forms the remaining open land between Abbots Langley and the M25, containing sprawl and preventing wider encroachment.
N6	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Contains the built edge of Abbots Langley, maintaining openness to the M25. Strategically part of open land between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, strategically preventing their merger, wider sprawl and encroachment.
N7	C	SC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, strategically preventing their merger, wider encroachment and localised sprawl.
N8	C	SC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, strategically preventing their merger but also wider encroachment and localised sprawl.
N9	SC	SC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead forming a significant part of the south easterly context to Hemel Hempstead, protecting open countryside from sprawl and encroachment and towns from merging.
N10	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, and between St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Watford, preventing their merger, sprawl into open countryside and broader encroachment.

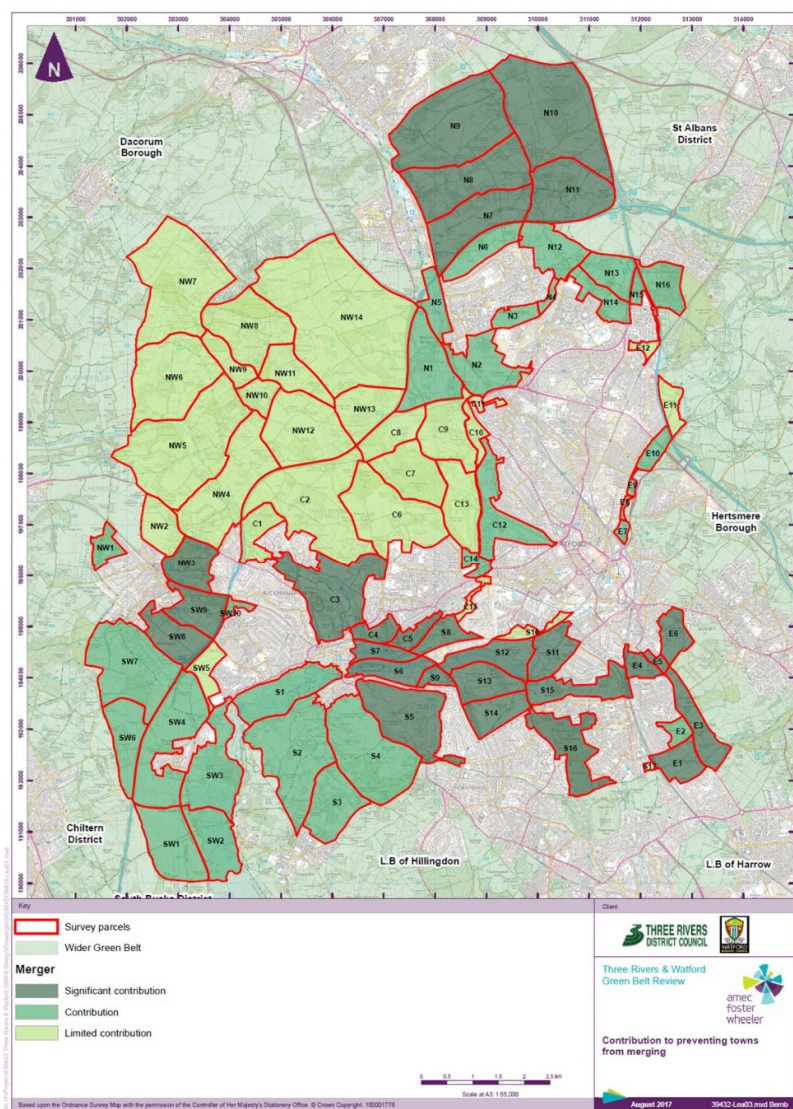
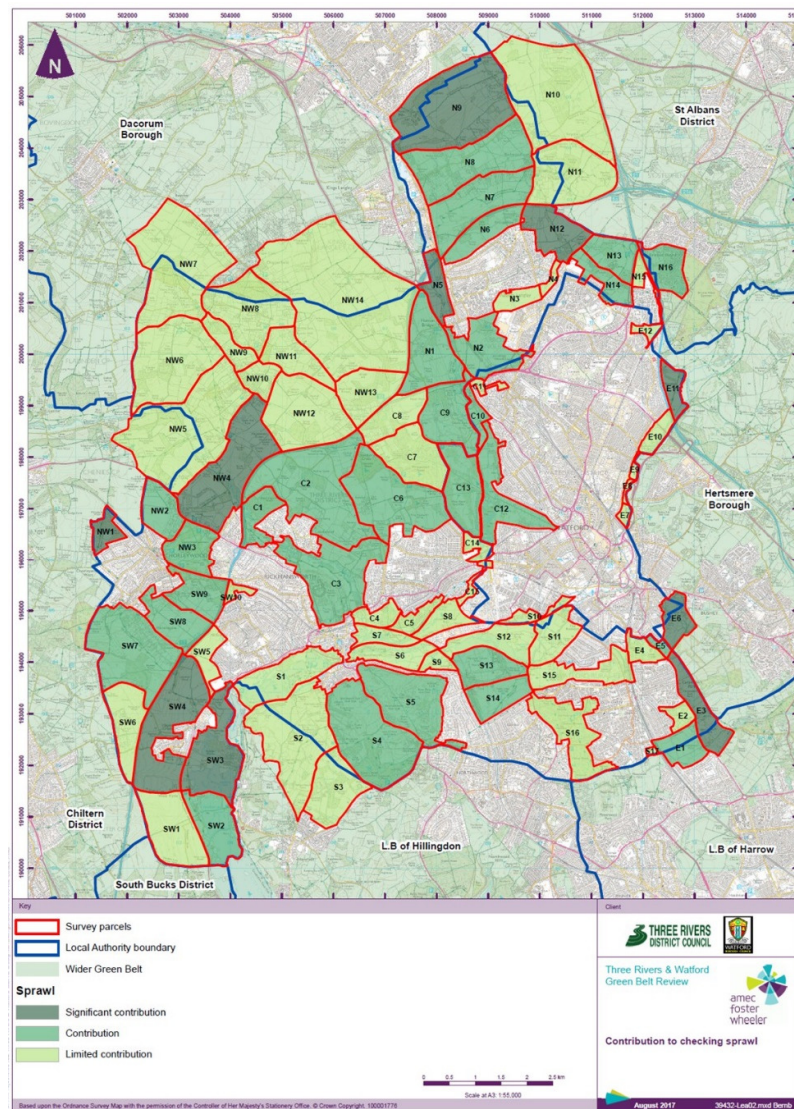
Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
N11	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, and between St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Watford, helping to prevent their merger and protecting their countryside from encroachment.
N12	SC	C	SC	C	LC	SC	Part of open countryside between Watford and Hemel Hempstead, and between St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Watford, contributing to the prevention of their merger, but also preventing sprawl and encroachment in this locality.
N13	C	C	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Bricket Wood, preventing sprawl and encroachment into open countryside to the north, as well as strategically preventing the merger of Watford and Bricket Wood.
N14	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Contains built development at Watford preventing sprawl, and locally the merger of Watford and Bricket Wood.
N15	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of the remaining open land between Watford and Bricket Wood, although the land is compromised by the intrusion of built development and its severance from the wider Green Belt.
N16	C	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of open land between Watford and Bricket Wood and the principal gap between the two.
E1	C	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of the open land separating Carpenders Park and Hatch End, helping to prevent their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
E2	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Part of open land to the east of Carpenders Park, albeit well contained by roads and the built edge of Carpenders Park.
E3	SC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of the wider open countryside between Carpenders Park and Bushey, helping to prevent their merger, sprawl and broader encroachment.
E4	LC	SC	LC	SC	LC	SC	Part of the land separating Watford and South Oxhey, helping to prevent their merger, also providing setting for these areas.
E5	C	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of the land separating Watford Heath and South Oxhey, preventing their merger, helping to prevent sprawl, encroachment and setting for these areas.
E6	SC	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of remaining open land separating Watford and Bushey, preventing their merger, sprawl and encroachment and providing setting for these areas.
E7	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Although well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E8	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Although well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E9	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	Although well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E10	LC	C	LC	C	LC	C	The land, though well contained and separated from the wider Green Belt to the east, nevertheless retains functions of maintaining a degree of separation between Watford and development to the east, and local setting.
E11	SC	LC	SC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open countryside to the east of the M25 and part of the wider gap between Watford and Radlett, helping to prevent their merger, and protecting against wider encroachment.

Parcel	Sprawl	Merger	Encroachment	Setting	Regeneration	Overall	
E12	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	'Remnant' open land within the built envelope of Watford which is separated from the wider Green Belt to the east.
S1	LC	C	C	C	LC	C	Part of wider open land to the south of Rickmansworth which contains Rickmansworth, locally provides part of the setting to the town and prevents encroachment into wider open countryside towards Harefield.
S2	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of the open countryside south of Rickmansworth, helping to prevent merger with Harefield and north London suburbs more generally, to the south and wider encroachment.
S3	LC	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of the open countryside south of Rickmansworth, helping to prevent merger with Harefield and north London suburbs more generally, to the south and wider encroachment.
S4	C	C	C	LC	LC	C	Part of the open countryside which broadly maintains the separation between Rickmansworth and Northwood and helps to prevent encroachment into the wider countryside.
S5	C	SC	SC	SC	LC	SC	Part of the open countryside which maintains the separation between Rickmansworth and Northwood, prevents sprawl from adjacent urban areas, helps to prevent encroachment into the countryside and locally provides the setting for the Moor Park Conservation Area.
S6	LC	SC	LC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford, Rickmansworth and north London suburbs at Northwood, preventing their merger.
S7	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Rickmansworth, preventing their merger.
S8	LC	SC	LC	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Croxley Green, preventing their merger.
S9	LC	SC	LC	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger.
S10	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	'Remnant' land on the southern fringe of Watford, with no clear Green Belt function.
S11	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and South Oxhey, preventing their merger and more widely of Watford and Northwood.
S12	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S13	C	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S14	C	SC	C	C	LC	SC	Part of open land between Watford and Northwood, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S15	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Forms the remaining open land between Watford (Oxhey) and South Oxhey, preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S16	LC	SC	C	LC	LC	SC	Part of open land between South Oxhey and Northwood, (the remainder in Harrow Borough the south), preventing their merger and broader encroachment in this location.
S17	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	LC	The land is strongly enclosed with no clear connection with the wider Green Belt.

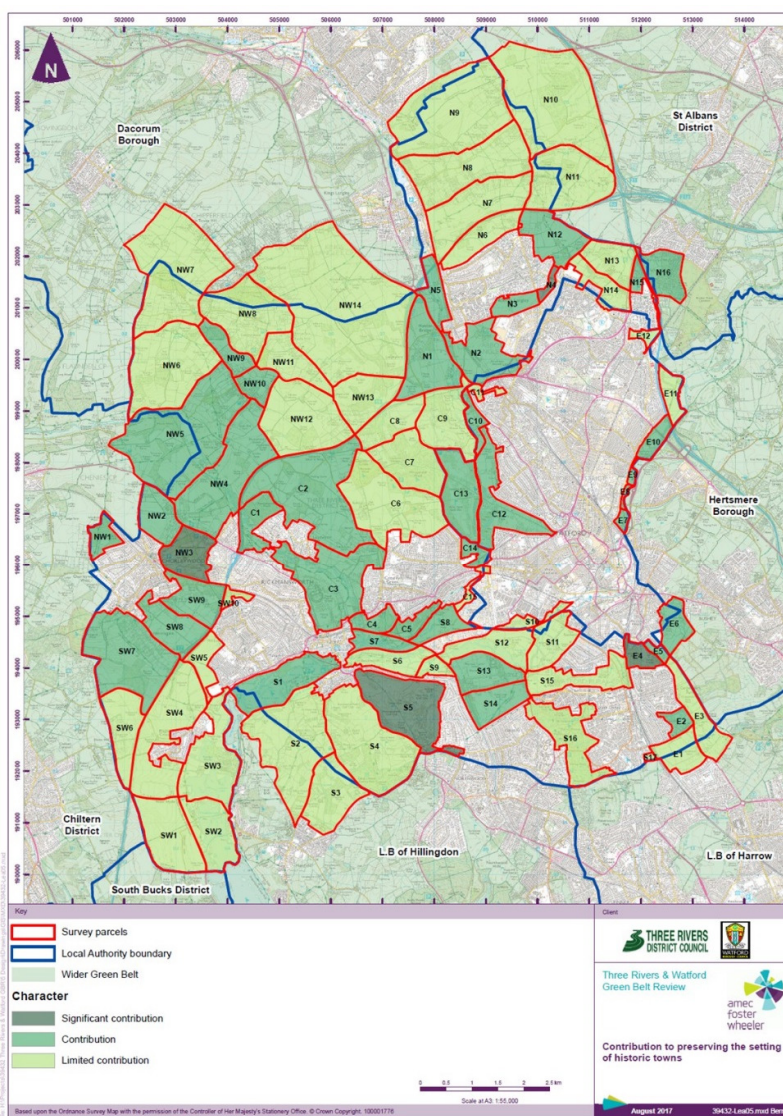
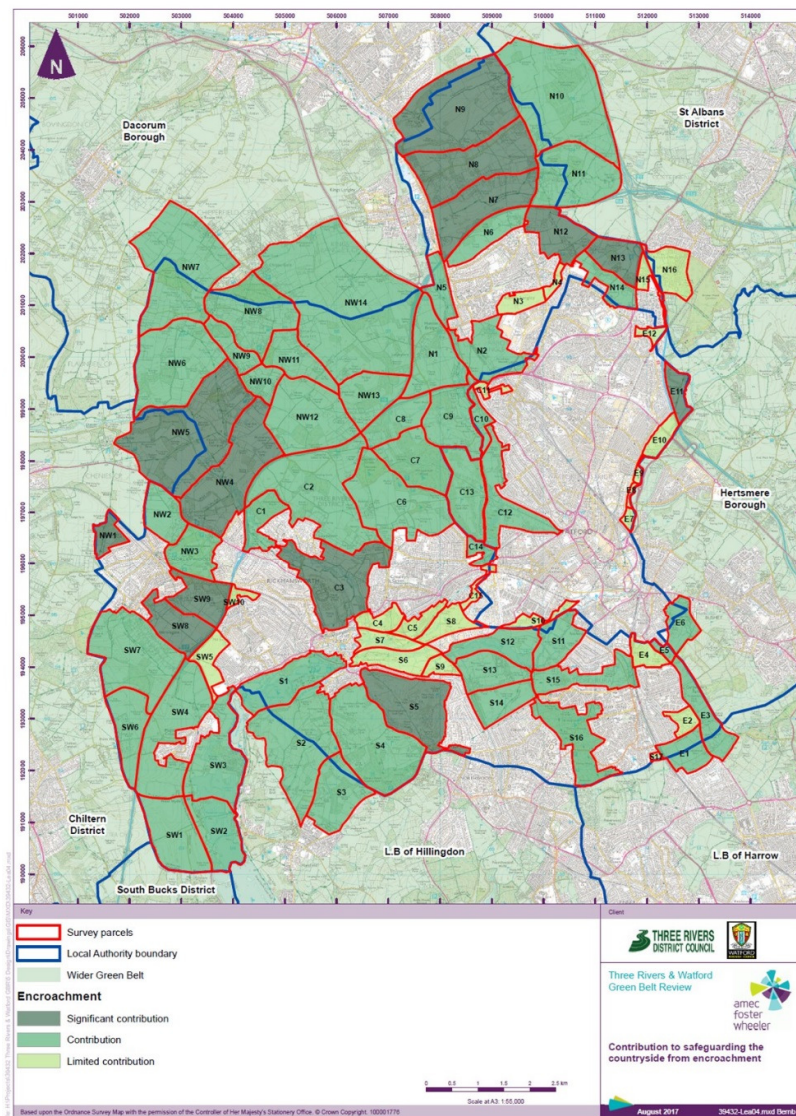
Map B2: Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes



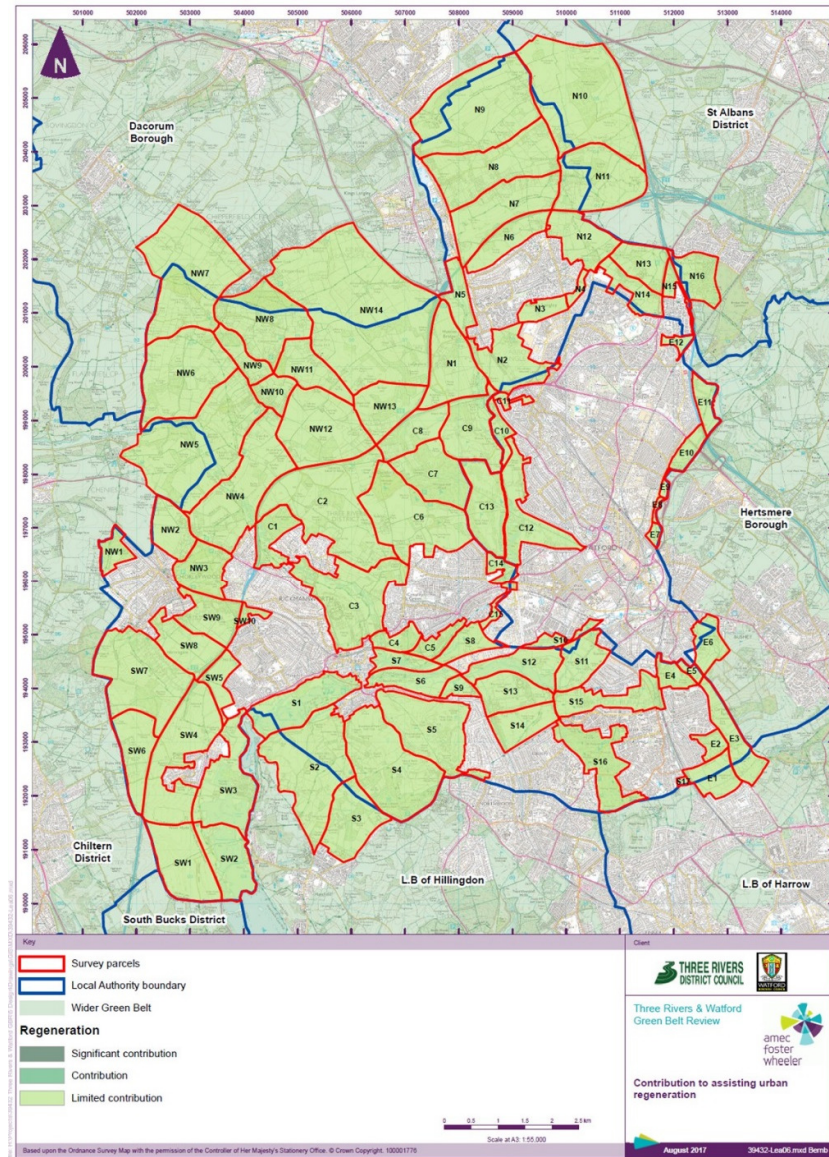
Map B3: Contribution to Preventing the Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas & Map B4: Contribution to Preventing the Merger of Towns



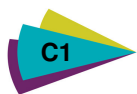
Map B5: Contribution to Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment & Map B6: Contribution to Preserving the Setting and Character of Historic Towns



Map B7: Contribution to Assisting Urban Regeneration







Appendix C

Analysis of villages within the Green Belt





