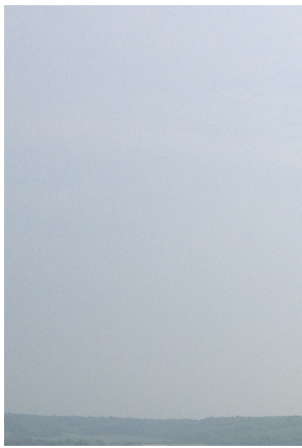


GREEN BELT REVIEW PURPOSES ASSESSMENT
 (Prepared for Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council)

Annex 1 – Parcel Assessment Sheets for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

November 2013



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Introduction

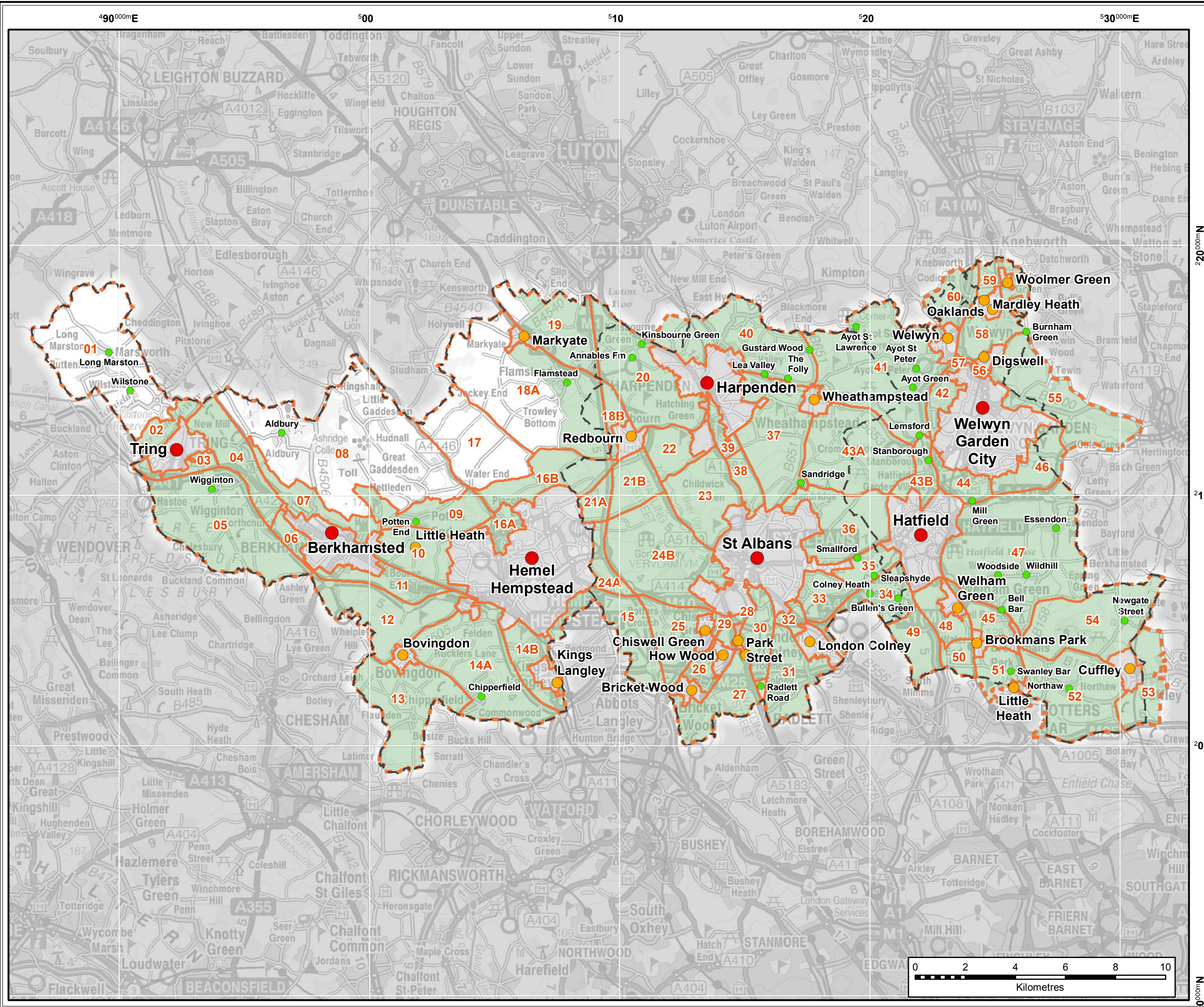
This document forms an Annex to the Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment undertaken on behalf of on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

The parcel assessment sheets in this annex relate to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council only.

The maps overleaf show the strategic parcel boundaries. Figure 8.1 (taken from the Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment Final Report) shows areas of land which contribute least towards Green Belt purposes. These have been identified under 'Next Steps' in the relevant Parcel Assessment Sheets, and classified as Strategic Sub Areas and Small Scale Sub Areas in the Final Report.

The Final Report also contains more detailed information on methodology and environmental and historic features mapping.

File Name: Strategic Parcel Plan_20131025



- Key:**
- District Borough Boundary
 - Land Parcel Boundary
 - Study Area Outer Boundary
 - Green Belt
- Settlement**
- 1st Tier
 - 2nd Tier
 - 3rd Tier



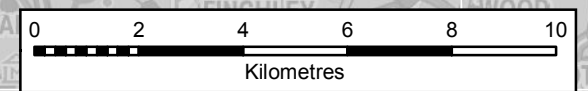
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 Units: Meter

REVISION: G

Green Belt Review for St Albans, Dacorum and Welwyn Hatfield

Strategic Parcel Plan

| | |
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| CONTENT | DRAWN |
| London.Gov Ordnance Survey | KW |
| CHECKED | DATE |
| RB | 30/11/2013 |



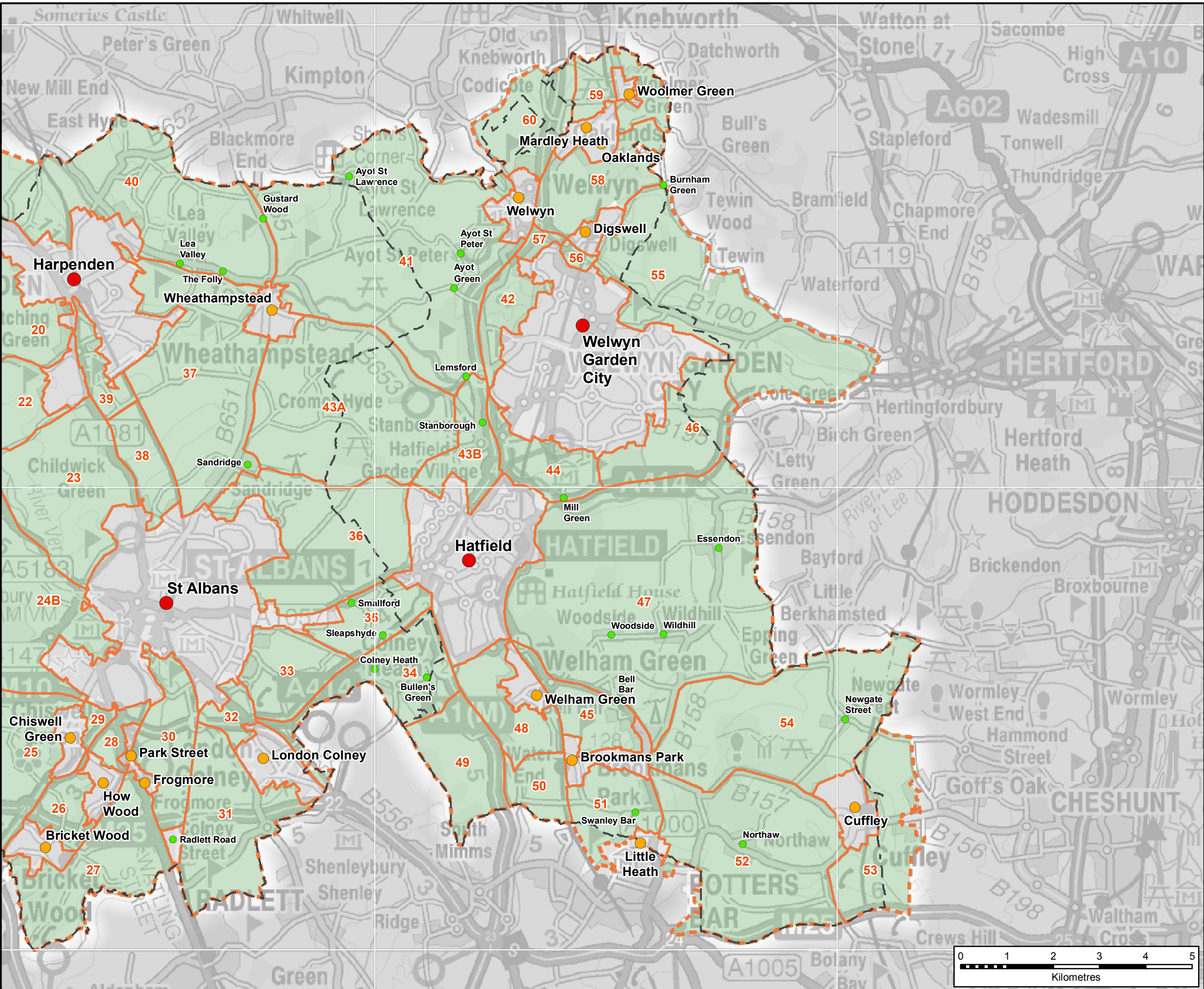
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- Key:**
- District Borough Boundary
 - Land Parcel Boundary
 - Study Area Outer Boundary
 - Green Belt
- Settlement**
- 1st Tier
 - 2nd Tier
 - 3rd Tier



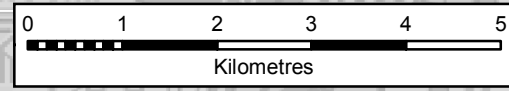
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**Green Belt Review for
 St Albans, Dacorum and
 Welwyn Hatfield**

**Strategic Parcel Plan
 Welwyn Hatfield**

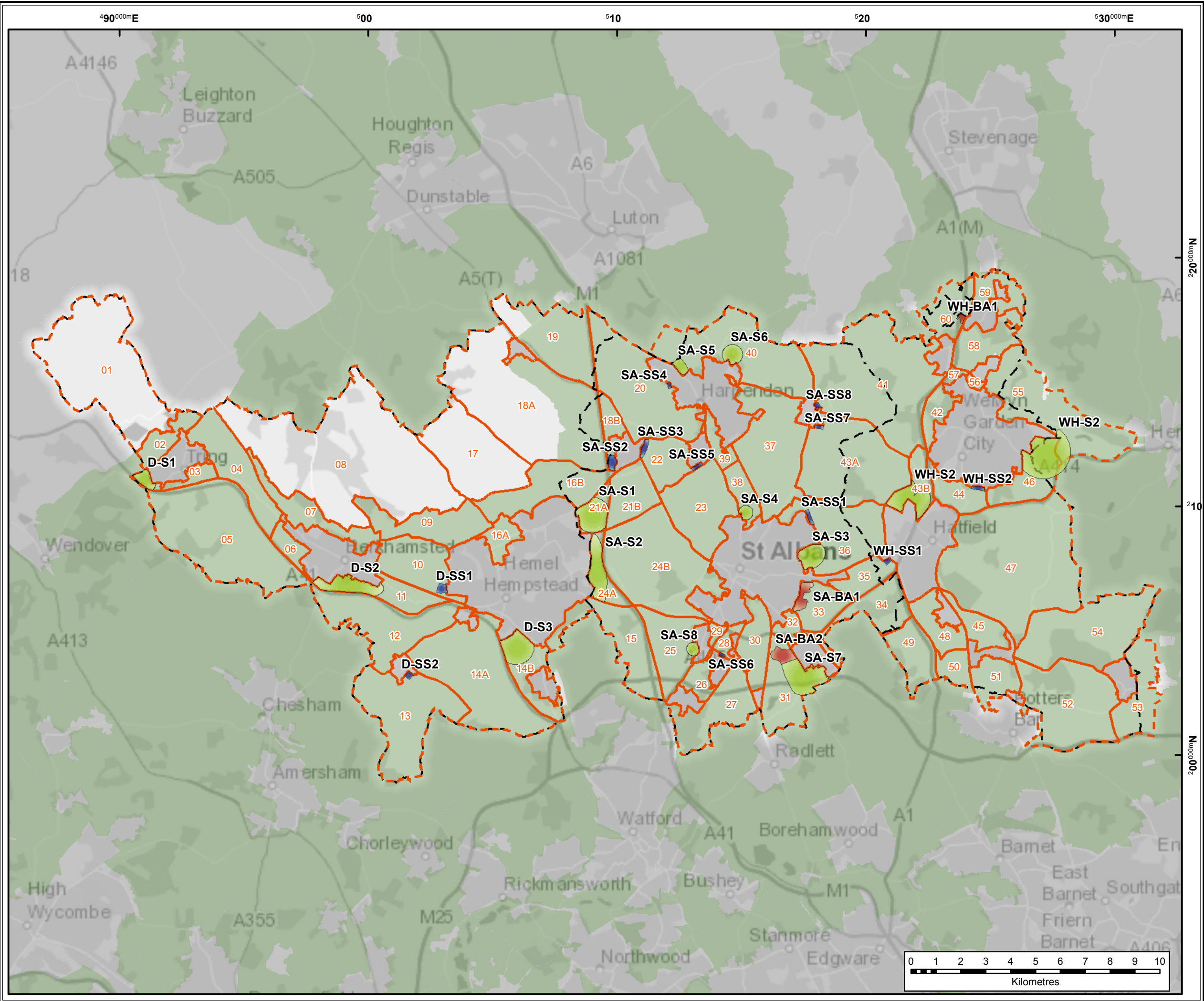
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| CHECKED | DATE |
| RB | 30/11/2013 |



File Name: Strategic Parcel Plan - WelwynHatfield 20131025
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Copyright SKM Enviros
Name: Figure8.1_Least Contribution to GB



- Key:**
- Boundary Adjustment
 - Small Scale Sub-Area
 - Strategic Sub-Area
 - Study Area Outer Boundary
 - District Borough Boundary
 - Land Parcel Boundary
 - Green Belt



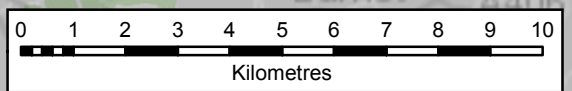
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REVISION: H

Green Belt Review for St Albans, Dacorum and Welwyn Hatfield

FIGURE 8.1.
Land Contributing Least Towards Green Belt Purposes

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| SCALE | PROJECT CODE |
| 1:145,000 @ A3 | JE30761 |
| CONTENT | DRAWN |
| London.Gov Ordnance Survey | KW |
| CHECKED | DATE |
| RB | 2/12/2013 |



The Assessment Criteria for the Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment is set out below. The full methodology is set out in Chapter 5 of the Final Report.

| NATIONAL PURPOSES | |
|--|--|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | |
| 1) | Does the parcel act, in itself, as an effective barrier to prevent sprawl from large built-up areas outside of the study area specifically London, Luton & Dunstable and Stevenage? |
| 2) | Does the parcel contribute, as part of a wider network of parcels, to a strategic barrier that prevents the sprawl of these areas? |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | |
| 3) | Does the parcel provide, or form part of, a gap or space between existing 1 st tier settlements (neighbouring towns)? |
| 4) | What is the distance of the gap between the settlements? |
| 5) | Is there evidence of ribbon development on major route corridors? |
| 6) | What is the visual perception of the gap between settlements from major route corridors? |
| 7) | Would a reduction in the gap compromise the separation of settlements in physical terms? |
| 8) | Would a reduction in the gap compromise the separation of settlements and the overall openness of the parcel in terms of visual perception? |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | |
| 9) | What countryside / rural characteristics exist within the parcel including agricultural or forestry land uses and how is this recognised in established national and local landscape designations? |
| 10) | Has there already been any significant encroachment by built development or other urbanising elements? (Specify the level (%) of built development in the parcel) |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | |
| 11) | What settlements or places with historic features exist within the parcel? |
| 12) | What is the relationship and connection (in the form of character, views and visual perception) between the parcel and historic feature? |
| 13) | Does the parcel provide an open setting or a buffer against encroachment by development around settlements or places with historic features? |
| HERTFORDSHIRE PURPOSE | |
| Maintaining existing settlement pattern | |
| 14) | Does the parcel provide, or form part of, a gap or space between existing 1 st tier settlements (neighbouring towns)? |
| 15) | What is the distance of the gap between the settlements? |
| 16) | Is there evidence of ribbon development on major route corridors? |
| 17) | What is the visual perception of the gap between settlements from major route corridors? |
| 18) | Would a reduction in the gap compromise the separation of settlements in physical terms? |
| 19) | Would a reduction in the gap compromise the separation of settlements and the overall openness of the parcel in terms of visual perception? |
| Presentation of Contribution to Green Belt Purposes | |
| Significant contribution to GB purpose | |
| Partial contribution to GB purpose | |
| Limited or no contribution to GB purpose | |

GB34 –Green Belt Land between Hatfield and London Colney

Description The parcel is located to the southwest of Hatfield and the northeast of London Colney. The boundary to the north follows the North Orbital A414 to the south follows Coursers Road. It is 419 ha in size and comprises the broad and shallow basin of the meandering upper River Colne.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland and heathland. It includes significant areas of water in lakes created by sand and gravel working and some blocks of woodland.

Colney Heath and Bullens End narrow local gap



View to north shows strong rural and open characteristics



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gap between Hatfield and London Colney). Partial contribution towards preventing merging (of St Albans and Hatfield) and preserving the setting of London Colney, Sleepshyde and Tyttenhanger Park. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB34 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|---------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED / NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. However it contributes with GB33, 35 and 36 towards the strategic gap between St Albans and Hatfield. As a whole, the gap contains some built development and ribbon development associated to 3 rd tier settlements in the Green Belt. Overall, any minor reduction in the gap would be unlikely compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical or visual terms, or overall visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics, especially to the south, in medium sized arable fields with hedgerow boundaries, sheep pasture and substantial riverine wetland habitats along the Colne, and areas of heath and semi natural grassland which are locally important at Colney Heath. Tyttenhanger Park and Hall is located to the south. There is evidence of linear built development in the north part of the parcel which contains Colney Heath and Bullens Green. The A1(M) is also a major urban influence which is audibly intrusive. Levels of openness are generally high especially to the south due to an absence of built development. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel adjoins London Colney and Sleafshyde conservation areas however visual connection or views are limited by local routes and wooded areas. Tyttenhanger Park the setting of the Hall is encircled by sand and gravel working and mounds of overburden and spoil, with associated conveyor belts and plant at present but future restoration should remedy this impact in countryside character.. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| <p>The parcel provides a range of gaps. It provides the primary local gap between Hatfield (1st) and London Colney (2nd) and contributes with parcels GB33 to GB36 and GB43B to the overall gap with St Albans. The gap is large at 4.3km but contains ribbon development at Colney Heath (3rd) and Bullens End (3rd). The gap to the south to Colney Heath is 2.6km and well maintained (relatively free of development) however the gap to the north is more built up and narrower at 1.7km.</p> <p>Therefore any reduction in the gaps would compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms to the north, and local levels of visual openness. A minor reduction to the south would lead to a less significant impact.</p> | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

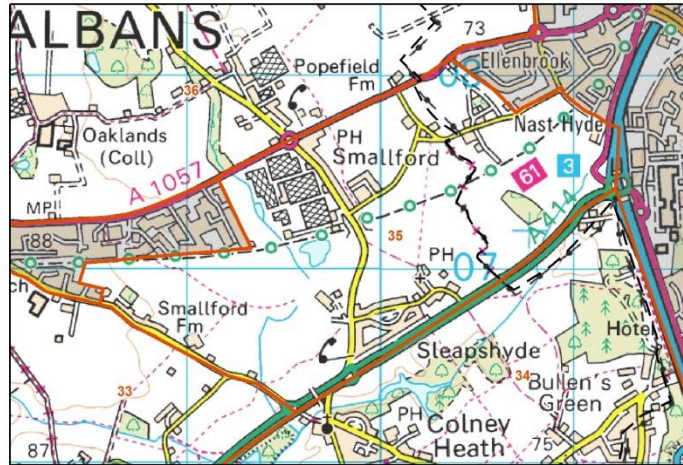
Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 1.0%. Some ribbon development has taken place especially around villages to the north and east of the parcel.

Visual Openness The parcel is generally open to the north and more enclosed to the south where it is more wooded although there are some extensive panoramas over arable fields towards the Shenley ridge to the south.

Countryside Character Riverine character with many sites subject to past gravel working now restored to pasture, lakes or water meadow along the Colne. Well wooded to the south.

GB35 –Green Belt Land between St Albans and Hatfield (Smallford)

Description The parcel is located to the east of St Albans and the west of Hatfield. The boundary to the south follows the North Orbital A414 to the north follows the Hatfield Road. It is 250 ha in size and forms a virtually flat clay plain.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland and grass land, plus industrial, commercial and recreational activities.

Smallford, ribbon development in the Green Belt extending from St Albans



Land along Ellenbrook Lane displaying greater sense of enclosure and urban influence



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards preventing merging (of St Albans and Hatfield) and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gaps between St Albans and Hatfield with Smallford and Sleepshyde). Partial contribution towards preserving the setting of Sleepshyde. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB35 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|---|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides a strategic gap to separate St Albans and Hatfield. The gap is 1.2km and has been subject to ribbon development extending from St Albans along the Hatfield Road including the village of Smallford and associated development including industrial and commercial activities and housing in the Green Belt. There is also ribbon development in the form of large housing along Colney Heath Lane extending southeast from St Albans, and along Wilkins Green Lane close to Ellenbrook to the west of Hatfield. Any small scale reduction in the gap would be unlikely to further compromise the separation of settlements in physical or visual terms however it would negatively impact on overall visual openness. This is because there is already relatively significant ribbon development along the Hatfield Road and therefore the perception of the gap is limited. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel displays mix of strong urban and rural and countryside characteristics due to significant encroachment. It contains medium scale arable fields with hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees, as well as areas of heath, semi natural grassland and ponds at Smallford gravel pits. However there is significant built development at Smallford, Sleepshyde and the edge of St Albans and Hatfield resulting on encroachment into open countryside. Therefore settlement boundaries display strong urban fringe characteristics. In particular, Hatfield urban edge, especially along Ellenbrook Lane and close to Great Nast Hyde House, exhibits a greater sense of localised landscape enclosure as a result of the influence of existing residential edges and development and activities in the Green Belt. Therefore levels of visual openness are mixed throughout the site due to contrasting characteristics. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel contains Sleepshyde Conservation Area. The Green Belt acts as an immediate open and rural historic setting, providing views to and from the countryside. Due to scale of the feature this is noted as a partial contribution. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides primary local gaps between St Albans and Hatfield with Smallford (3 rd) and Sleepshyde (3 rd). Both gaps are approximately 1.2km and 0.5km respectively. The gap to St Albans is especially narrow and there is limited perception of the gap and openness from the main routes due to scattered and ribbon development. Any reduction in gaps, especially to the west, would further compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, or overall visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is high at 1.1%. There is evidence of ribbon development along the A1057 Hatfield Road at Smallford, including nursery buildings as well as commercial and industrial development.

Visual Openness There is a network of hedges, field trees and tree belts to the urban areas that visually contain the largely arable character.

Countryside Character A medium scale landscape contained by adjacent urban areas and transport routes.

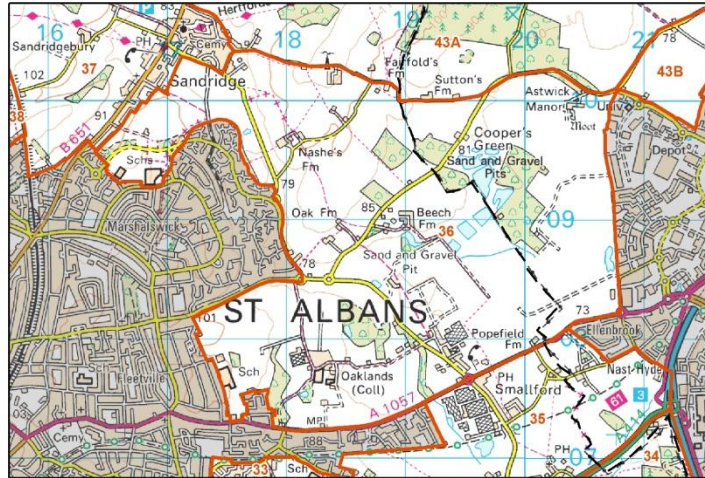
GB35 – Next Steps

Land west of Hatfield to south of Wilkins Green Lane urban edge and west of Ellenbrook Lane is recommended for further assessment as a small scale sub-area (WH-SS1). The southern extent of the sub-area runs to the cyclepath to the south of the existing play area at Ellenbrook Lane. Assessed in isolation this very small area of land makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl, preventing merging, preserving setting or maintaining local gaps.

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GB36 –Green Belt Land between St Albans and Hatfield (North)

Description The parcel is located to the east of St Albans and the west of Hatfield. The boundary to the south follows the Hatfield Road / St Albans Road West and to the north aligns with Woodcock Hill / Coopers Green Lane to Sandridge. It is 864 ha in size and forms an extensive flat clay plain, more undulating to the north.



Land use Predominately arable farmland, plus Watling Chase Community Forest, Ellenbrook Park, Hatfield Aerodrome, Oaklands College / educational campus, Home Office centre, sports centre and playing fields.

Land at House Lane displays urban influence and greater sense of enclosure



View to south from Woodcock Hill shows strong rural and open characteristics



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards preventing merging (of St Albans and Hatfield), safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between St Albans and Sandridge). Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB36 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|---|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides the strategic gap to separate St Albans and Hatfield. The gap is 1.2km. It is large and generally well maintained (relatively free of development), in comparison to GB35. However it is subject to development at Oaklands College and ribbon development at Smallford. There is a strong visual perception of the Green Belt from the Hatfield Road. Any reduction in the gap, assuming it is located away from Smallford, would be unlikely to further compromise the separation of settlements in physical or visual terms, or overall levels of visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in large scale arable fields with hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees and is interspersed by woodland blocks with areas of ancient woodland to the north. There is a parkland landscape at Oaklands College with substantial areas of playing fields. There is evidence of urban features, especially at the former Hatfield aerodrome which is partially redeveloped with a new business park including visually dominant buildings. To the west there is a mix of urban fringe development as Oaklands College has recently been subject to expansion, representing further development in the Green Belt. The west part of the parcel, which contains development in the Green Belt, is enclosed by the St Albans settlement boundary on three edges. It therefore exhibits strongest levels of urban influence and represents a more enclosed area of land especially along Sandpit Lane and House Lane. Therefore levels of visual openness vary throughout the parcel but are high in general. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes with GB37 to the primary local gap to separate St Albans and Sandridge (3 rd). This gap is narrow at 0.4km and ribbon development is evident between the settlements along St Albans Road, at Sandridge, and therefore there is limited perception of the Green Belt. Any reduction in the gap would be likely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, or local levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.7%. There is evidence of ribbon development on the A1057 Hatfield Road at Smallford with commercial buildings, nurseries and the large development at the Oaklands campus.

Visual Openness There is a network of hedges, field trees and tree belts that visually contain the largely arable character. Around the Oaklands and Hatfield aerodrome sites views are more open.

Countryside Character The parcel is unified by the level topography yet has a diverse mix and incoherent

pattern of uses with the semi urban campus developments dominating.

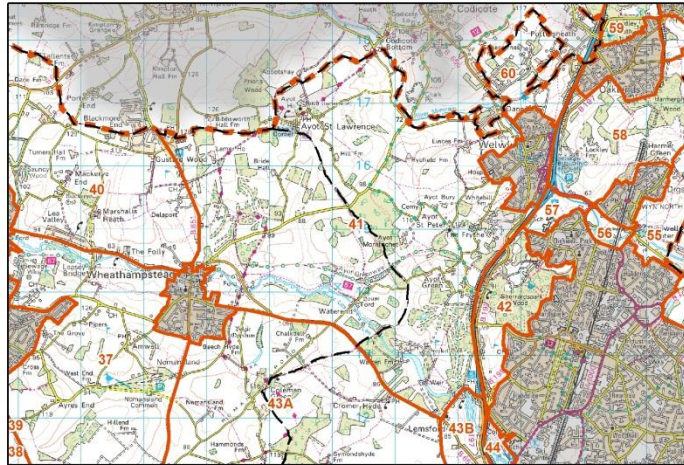
GB36 – Next Steps

Area enclosed by residential development at east St Albans along Sandpit Lane is recommended for further assessment as a strategic sub-area (SA-S3). In light of the functions of the strategic parcel, the sub-area includes a number of built uses and urbanising influences. It is a relatively open landscape. On land to the east of St Albans which penetrates into the settlement, urban influences are particularly strong and there is significant built development within the Green Belt at Oaklands College, which has recently expanded. The land along Sandpit Lane is enclosed by three urban edges and this limits the contribution of this local area to the wider Green Belt and its important role in separating settlements. A reduction in the size of the strategic parcel at the sub-area location would have a limited impact on the overall role of the Green Belt and the physical separation of settlements. It would not reduce the existing minimum distance of the gap between St Albans and Hatfield which is 1.4km. This land makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl, preserving setting or maintaining the existing settlement pattern.

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GB41 –Green Belt Land West of Welwyn

Description The parcel is located to the west of Welwyn and extends to Wheathampstead and Gustard Wood to the west. The north boundary follows the edge of the study area and the south boundary aligns with Marford Road (B653). It is 1,905 ha in size and forms an undulating chalk plateau either side of the enclosed narrow river Lea valley and river Mimram.



Land use Mix of arable farmland and woodland, plus estate parkland, The Frythe (MDS) and Brocket Park Golf Course.

View to northeast from Whitehill towards Welwyn shows open setting and strong rural character



View from Brocket View at Wheathampstead displays urban fringe characteristics and enclosure



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside, preserving the setting of Wheathampstead, Gustard Wood, Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot Green and Waterend, and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gaps between Welwyn Garden City to Welwyn, Ayot St Peter, Ayot Green and Lemsford. Partial contribution towards checking sprawl. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 purposes.

| GB41 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel is located south of Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage and forms a connection with a wider network of parcels to the northwest to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. However it forms part of a network with GB37, GB40, GB42 & GB43 to provide strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Harpenden. The A1(M) is relatively well screened but allows some views to, and perception, of the gap. Any reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in open arable farmland punctuated by some small blocks of mixed woodland. The large fields are generally bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. There is a high percentage of woodland including ancient woodland. The river Lea valley has a riparian habitat and frequent water meadows follow the water course. There is limited evidence of built development apart for 3 rd tier settlements, and there is no significant encroachment. The main urban influence (on the east part of the parcel only) is the A1(M) which is relatively well concealed but audibly intrusive. Some land displays urban fringe characteristics such as along the east edge of Wheathampstead. Levels of visual openness are high in general mainly due to an absence of built development. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contains a range of conservation areas at Wheathampstead, Gustard Wood, Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot Green and Waterend. It also adjoins Welwyn Conservation Area and contains Brocket Park and Ayot House HPGs. The Green Belt acts as an immediate open and rural and pastoral setting, providing views to and from the countryside, and especially along the River Lea in relation to Wheathampstead. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides a series of gaps between 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd tier settlements. Most significantly, it separates Welwyn Garden City (1 st) beyond the A1(M), to Welwyn (2 nd), Ayot St Peter (3 rd) Ayot Green (3 rd) and Lemsford (3 rd). These primary local gaps are narrow and therefore any small scale reduction would be likely to significantly compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, and the overall level of visual openness. The parcel also provides the secondary local gap between Wheathampstead (2 nd) and Welwyn (2 nd). The large gap is 4.5km and relatively well maintained (relatively free of development) and therefore any reduction (in the east only) would be unlikely to compromise the separation of settlements and overall visual openness. In general there is limited evidence of ribbon development, and the perception of open countryside is strong from routes within the parcel. | | |

Level of Openness and Countryside Character

Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.3%. There is little evidence of built development within the parcel.

Visual Openness The rolling landform and open fields allow for long distance views from many locations, including the estate parkland of Brocket Park, giving the parcel an open visual character. The Lea Valley is more enclosed with a higher percentage of tree cover.

Countryside Character The parcel comprises well established traditional open rolling farmland with the River Lea Valley displaying a contrasting enclosed sylvan riverine character. The small winding country lanes and lack of large scale settlements gives the parcel a quiet rural character.

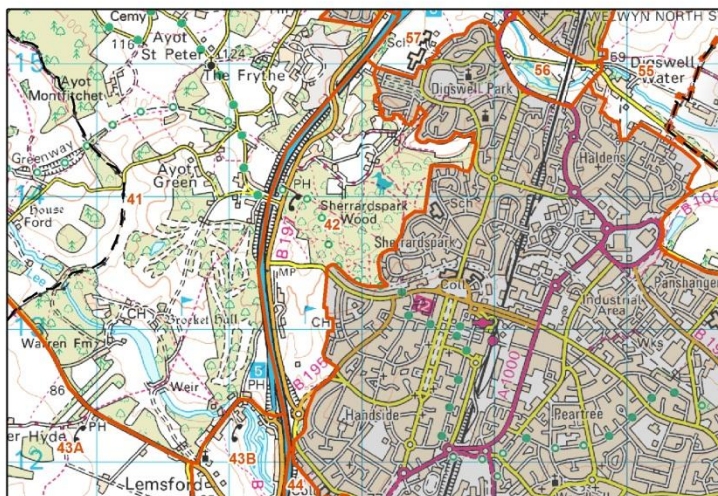
GB41 – Next Steps

Land east of Wheathampstead (GB41) to east of Brocket View is recommended for further assessment as a small scale sub-area (SA-SS8). Assessed in isolation this very small sub-area land makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl, preventing merging, preserving setting or maintaining local gaps.

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GB42 –Green Belt Land West of Welwyn Garden City

Description The parcel is located to the west of Welwyn Garden City and extends to align with the A1(M). The boundary to the north aligns with Crossway. It is narrow and is 189ha in size and forms a gently undulating plateau along the edge of Welwyn Garden City.



Land use Predominantly woodland including Sherrardspark Wood, Digswell Park plus reservoirs (covered), Welwyn Garden City Golf Course, playing fields and nursery.

Sherrardswood Wood



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards preserving the setting of Welwyn Garden City and Brocket Park, and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gaps between Welwyn Garden City and Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot St Peter, Ayot Green and Lemsford. Partial contribution towards safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 purposes.

| GB42 – Purposes Assessment | Contribution |
|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. However it forms part of a network of parcels (with GB37, GB40, GB41 & GB43) which provide a strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Harpenden. The A1(M) is relatively well screened but allows some views to, and perception, of the gap. Any scale reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements. | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in dominant mature woodland with Sherrardspark Wood covering much of the area. To the south there is a golf course surrounded by a few arable and pasture fields. Boundaries are generally hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees. There is limited evidence of built development however urban influences are strong as narrow parcel is tightly enclosed by the concealed but audibly intrusive A1(M) and urban edge of Welwyn Garden City. This creates a semi-urban fringe environment. Levels of visual openness are variable due to a strong sense of enclosure as the parcel displays a mix of urban and rural characteristics. | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel adjoins Welwyn Garden City conservation area and Bocket Park HPG. The Green Belt acts as an immediate open and rural historic setting, providing views to and from the countryside. | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes with GB41 the primary local gaps between Welwyn Garden City and a number of 3 rd tier settlements including Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot St Peter, Ayot Green and Lemsford. The narrow gaps range from 0.4 km to 1.6 km and contain the A1(M) however this route is well concealed and but offers some views onto the Green Belt. There is limited evidence of ribbon development. Therefore, any reduction in the gaps would be likely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, and the overall level of visual openness. | |

Level of openness and countryside character

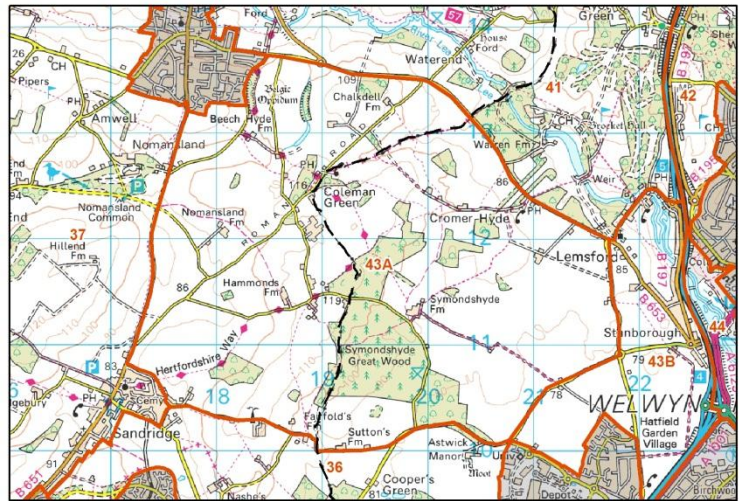
Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.5%. The busy A1(M) runs along the western boundary and is audibly intrusive. There is also housing along Rectory Road.

Visual Openness The parcel has an enclosed landscape due to the screening effects of the frequent wooded areas and high hedgerows.

Countryside Character The parcel is sandwiched between the built form of Welwyn Garden City and the busy A1(M) and is split north – south between deciduous woodland and the manicured fairways and greens of Welwyn Garden City Golf Club.

GB43A –Green Belt Land between Wheathampstead and Hatfield

Description The parcel is located to the southeast of Wheathampstead and extends to the northwest tip of Hatfield. It extends to Sandridge to the southwest and follows the Woodcock Hill to the south. It is 1,232ha in size and forms a large scale undulating chalk plateau.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland and woodland.

View to north from Coopers Green Lane, from northwest tip of Hatfield displays strong open and rural characteristics



View to south of Wheathampstead from Hill Dyke Road displays a greater sense of enclosure



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between St Albans and Wheathampstead). Partial contribution towards preventing merging (of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield with Harpenden). Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 purposes.

| GB43A – Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not directly separate 1 st tier settlements. However, it forms a large section of a network of parcels (with GB37, GB40, GB41, GB42 & GB43B) which provide the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield with Harpenden. Any scale of reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in large scale arable fields bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. There is a high percentage of woodland with a large area of ancient woodland at Symondshyde Great Wood. There is very limited evidence of built development and no significant encroachment. However the south edge of Wheathampstead exhibits a greater sense of enclosure and urban influence. Levels of visual openness are very high in general mainly due to an absence of built development. It displays a very different character to GB43B which contains more urban fringe features. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel adjoins Sandridge Conservation Area and Brocket Park HPG, whereby part of the park enters the parcel. The Green Belt acts as an immediate open and rural historic setting, providing views to and from the countryside. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes with GB43B to the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City (1 st) and Wheathampstead (3 rd). The gap is 4.5km and is large and well maintained (relatively free of development) with no evidence or ribbon development. Due to the scale and nature of the gap, any reduction would be unlikely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical or visual terms, or the overall level of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.2%. There is very limited evidence of built development within the parcel.

Visual Openness Rolling landform / open fields allow long distance views but wooded areas are more enclosed.

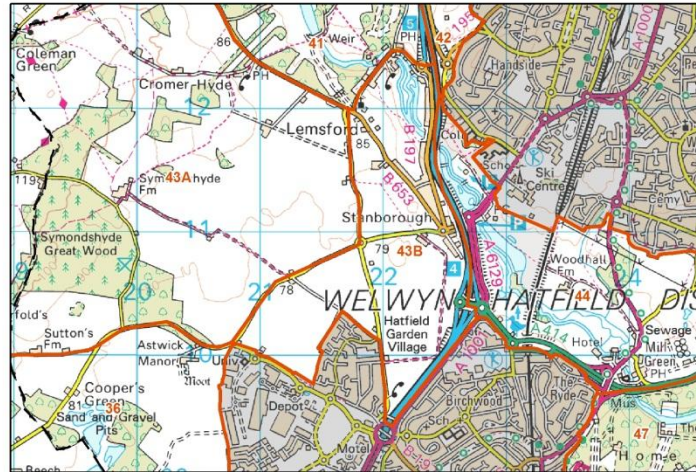
Countryside Character The parcel comprises a patchwork of traditional open rolling farmland with woodland. Small winding country lanes give the parcel a quiet rural character.

GB43A – Next Steps

Land south of Wheathampstead to south of Hill Dyke Road and enclosed by Dyke Lane to the east and settlement edge to the west, is recommended for further assessment as a small scale sub-area (SA-SS7). The southern extent runs level to Beech Crescent. Assessed in isolation this very small area of land makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl, preventing merging, preserving setting or maintaining local gaps.

GB43B –Green Belt Land at Hatfield Garden Village

Description The parcel is located to the northwest of Hatfield around Hatfield Garden Village and extends to the north to Lemsford. It is bordered to the east by the A1(M) and to the west it follows Coopers Green Lane. It is 255 ha in size and covers a flat chalk plateau which falls to the valley of the River Lea to the east.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland, plus allotments.

View to east from Green Lanes



View to northeast from Hatfield Avenue displays urban influence and greater sense of enclosure



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards preventing merging (of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield with Harpenden) and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gaps between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield with Stanborough). Partial contribution towards safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 purposes.

| GB43B – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel does not directly separate 1 st tier settlements. However, it makes a significant contribution (with GB37, GB40, GB41, GB42 & GB43A) to a strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield with Harpenden. The strategic gap between Hatfield and Welwyn Hatfield is 1.5 km at its narrowest. It includes built development at Stanborough and the A6129. Any small scale reduction in the gap would be unlikely to comprise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, or overall visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays a mix of countryside and urban fringe characteristics. It contains arable fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees and the River Lea is lined by riparian habitats with trees and water meadow pasture. There is evidence of urban features as the main urban influences are the A1(M) which is concealed by audibly intrusive. There is also built development at Lemsford and Stanborough, whereby ribbon development runs along the B653 and Great North Road (B197). The Green Belt penetrates the northwest settlement edge of Hatfield, especially around Hatfield Garden Village and therefore displays strongest urban influences. Combined with a smaller field patterns and landscape features there is a greater sense of localised landscape enclosure compared with GB43A. Levels of visual openness are varied throughout the parcel. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel adjoins Brocket Park HPG. However due to planting the Green Belt provides limited views and historic setting. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides primary local gaps between Welwyn Garden City (1 st) and Hatfield (1 st) and with Stanborough (3 rd). The gaps are 1.0km and 0.4m respectively. Gaps are relatively narrow and subject to strong urban influence due to the A1(M). Ribbon development also exists along the B197. Therefore any small scale reduction from Hatfield would be likely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, and local levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.8%. There is built development at Stanborough and Lemsford. The parcel is also impacted by the A1(M).

Visual Openness Plateau areas to the west are relatively hidden due to the hedged field boundaries. The A1(M) is generally screened by roadside vegetation but sections built on embankment are visible locally.

Countryside Character The landscape of large arable fields is influenced by the A1(M) corridor and the neighbouring large scale commercial buildings of northern Hatfield add an urban dimension.

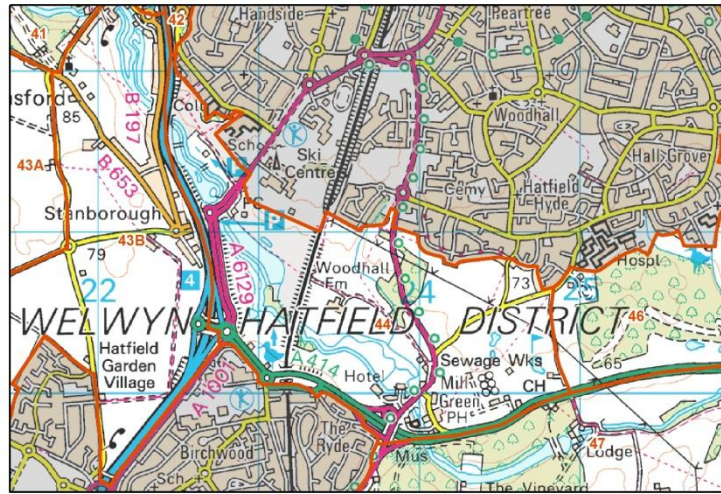
GB43B – Next Steps

Land at Hatfield Garden Village enclosed by north Hatfield, Coopers Green Lane (to the west) and A1(M) is recommended for further assessment as a strategic sub-area (WH-S1). In light of the functions of the strategic parcel, the sub-area identified as around Hatfield Garden Village and south of Coopers Green Lane penetrates the angular north edge of Hatfield. This creates increased localised levels of enclosure and containment. In addition, surrounding commercial and industrial development, residential area and the A1(M) represent strong urban influences on the sub-area. The location of the northern boundary to the sub-area requires careful consideration as the gap between Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City is narrow at 1km. However it is considered that a reduction in the size of the parcel will not significantly compromise the overall functions of the Green Belt, or separation of existing settlements. Given existing strong physical features bordering the sub-area it is partly screened from the surrounding countryside. Assessed in isolation this land contributes least towards Green Belt purposes. This land makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl or preserving setting.

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GB44 –Green Belt Land between Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City

Description The parcel is located between Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. The boundary to the west aligns with the A1(M) and to the east follows Gypsy Lane. The small parcel is 257 ha in size and forms the flat valley floor of the river Lea.



Land use Mix of farmland, plus Stanborough Park including boating lake and sailing lake, Mill Green Museum and Mill, Mill Green Wastewater Treatment Works, golf course, caravan site and hotel.

Lake at Stanborough Park, an example of recreational activities in the Green Belt



Elliot Close, to the south of Welwyn Garden City, displays urban influence and greater sense of enclosure



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards preventing merging (of Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City) and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Welwyn Garden City and Stanborough). Partial contribution towards safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB44 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides a strategic gap to separate Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. The gap is 1.0km. It is narrow and well maintained (relatively free of development). There is evidence of development at Mill Green, however the urban edge to the south is considered to be stronger than to the north. There is visual perception of the gap from the railway line and A6129 however not from the A1(M). Any minor reduction in the gap would be unlikely to comprise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, or the level of overall visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays a mix of countryside and urban fringe characteristics. It contains both pastoral and arable farmland in medium sized fields enclosed by hedgerows and tree belts. There is also recreational parkland with former mineral extraction sites restored to fishing lakes at Stanborough Park. Derelict meadows are a feature of the area, with scrub and trees giving it a well vegetated appearance. There is strong evidence of urban influences, especially main roads including the A1(M), A1000, A414 and A6129 and railway line which provide views on to the Green Belt and are audibly intrusive. There is also built development around Mill Green which is very close to the Hatfield edge. There are examples of land to the south of Welwyn Garden City which exhibit a greater sense of localised landscape enclosure and urban influence at Elliot Close and Ascots Lane. Levels of visual openness are varied throughout the parcel due to a contrasting mix of rural and urban fringe characteristics. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides the primary local gap to separate Welwyn Garden City and Stanborough (3 rd). The gap is 0.4km. It is narrow and contains Stanborough Park and the A1(M) which is well concealed by landscape features and planting. It also separates Hatfield and Mill Green (3 rd). This very narrow gap is 0.5km. Therefore, any reduction in gaps would be likely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, and local levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.3%. The parcel contains golf courses, sports grounds, a sewage works and the busy route corridors of the A1(M), A6129, A1000 and A414 are located within the parcel.

Visual Openness Within the parcel views are enclosed by trees within the river valley and by local hedgerows and tree belts. Views are possible directly into the parcel from road corridors where they pass on embankment.

Countryside Character The parcel comprises pastoral farmland and riverine parkland within a flat valley landform which is edged by built form and bordered by busy roads and is bisected by a railway, all of which add urban influences.

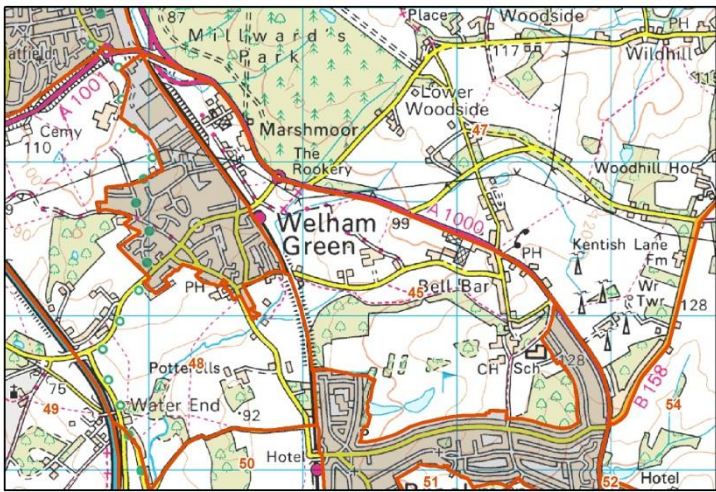
GB44 – Next Steps

Land south of Welwyn Garden City is recommended for further assessment as a small scale sub-area (WH-SS2). The sub-area is located to the south of Golden Dell, enclosed by Ascots Lane to the south and settlement edge to the east. The west boundary has the potential to extend beyond Hollybush Lane. Assessed in isolation this very small area land makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl, preventing merging, preserving setting or maintaining local gaps.

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GB45 –Green Belt Land North of Brookmans Park

Description The parcel is located to the north of Brookmans Park and extends to the south eastern corner of Hatfield and aligns with the east edge of Welham Green. The boundary to the north is contiguous with the Great North Road (A1000). It is 239 ha in size and forms part of the gently undulating South Hertfordshire plateau.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland, plus Brookmans Park Golf Course, nurseries, education, caravan park / mobile home park and kennels.

Bulls Lane at Welham End



Narrow gap to Bell Bar



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Welham Green and Brookmans Park). Partial contribution towards preventing merging (of Hatfield and Potters Bar) and safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 1 of the 5 purposes.

| GB45 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements, however it contributes (with GB48, 49 & 50) to the strategic gap between Hatfield and Potters Bar. This gap is 5km in total and contains Welham Green and Brookmans Park. Therefore any small scale reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical and visual terms but would have a greater impact on 2 nd tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays a mix of countryside and urban fringe characteristics. It contains open arable farmland punctuated by frequent small blocks of mixed woodland, including ancient woodland. A large percentage of the parcel is covered by Brookmans Park Golf Course which is interspersed with belts of mature trees. There is evidence of urban features / built development mainly at Bell Bar and the caravan sites and travelling show-people's site to the east of Welham Green between the railway line and Great North Road. Therefore there has been limited encroachment. The mix of activities, in addition to major route corridors, provides urban fringe characteristics. Routes are well concealed but audibly intrusive. Levels of visual openness are varied throughout the parcel. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel adjoins Hatfield Park HPG. However the connection is dissected by the Great North Road and therefore preservation of setting is limited. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes to the secondary local gap between Welham Green (2 nd) and Brookmans Park (2 nd). The gap is 0.6km. It is narrow, and aided by the railway line, but well-maintained by landscape features. There is evidence of ribbon development at Bell Bar to the northeast of Brookmans Park and the west side of the A1000 Great North Road at Marshmoor. There is limited visual perception of the Green Belt at these narrow gaps north east of Brookmans Park from the Great North Road. Any reduction would be likely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, and local levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

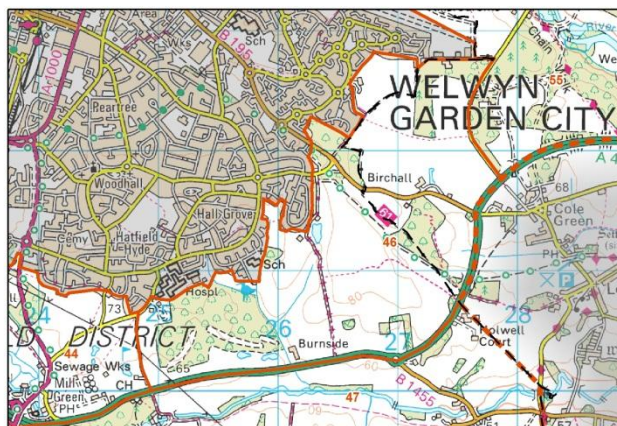
Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.9%. A cluster of small fields to the north of Bulls Lane have been developed with smallholdings and nurseries. Ribbon residential development is also present within the parcel.

Visual Openness Roadside hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree belts enclose the parcel and restrict views.

Countryside Character Arable farmland is located adjacent to semi-rural influences such as the golf course.

GB46 – Green Belt Land to Southeast of Welwyn Garden City

Description The parcel is Green Belt land located to the southeast of Welwyn Garden City and runs into East Hertfordshire. The boundary to the south aligns with the Hertford Road (A414) and to the northeast with Panshanger Lane. It wraps around the edge of Welwyn Garden City and is 440 ha in size. It forms an undulating chalk plateau which rises to either side of the enclosed narrow valley of the river Lea.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland, plus The Commons, caravan park, golf course, waste and recycling facilities, aquatic centre and garden centre.

View towards concealed A414 from Moneyhole Lane



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside. Partial contribution towards preventing merging and maintaining the existing settlement pattern. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 1 of the 5 purposes.

| GB46 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. However it contributes with GB55 to provide the strategic gap to Hertford. This gap is large, well maintained (relatively free of development) and the Green Belt is visible from the A414. Due to the scale of the gap, any reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of settlement in physical or visual terms, or the level of overall visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in large scale arable fields with hedgerow boundaries and significant number of deciduous woodlands, including ancient woodland, and tree belts with areas of recreation and small pasture, especially close to Welwyn Garden City. Part of The Commons is a local nature reserve and there is an extensive mineral extraction site at Holwell Hyde has been restored to pasture, arable and a fishing lake. There is limited built development or encroachment however the parcel exhibits strong urban fringe characteristics especially along the settlement edge which penetrates by the Green Belt which contains a mix of uses and is enclosed by the concealed but audibly intrusive A414. Some areas of the parcel provide a greater sense of localised landscape enclosure and stronger urban influence especially to the southeast of Welwyn Garden City. Levels of visual openness are variable but generally high. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel adjoins Hatfield Park HPG and Panshanger HPG. However the connection is dissected by Panshanger Lane and therefore preservation of setting is limited. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel contributes to providing the primary local gap to Cole Green (in to the south of the study area) beyond the A414. This gap is 1.6 km and is free from development. Any minor reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical or visual terms, or the level of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.1%. Built development within the parcel comprises a caravan park, sports and recreation grounds, and various waste management facilities and aggregates extraction at Birchall Lane.

Visual Openness The southern edge of Welwyn Garden City is well screened by vegetation and the relatively flat landform and high percentage of woodland prevents long distance views from many areas.

Countryside Character An urban fringe belt around the eastern flanks of Welwyn Garden City with a diverse range of land uses. The wooded Commons, recreation grounds and mineral extraction on Birchall Lane give an urban fringe influence with the area to the east more rural with arable cultivation and blocks of woodland.

GB46 – Next Steps

Land southeast of Welwyn Garden City (also located in GB55) enclosed by the A414 is recommended for further assessment as a strategic sub-area (WH-S2). In light of the functions of the strategic parcel, the sub-area identified on land southeast of Welwyn Garden City enclosed by the A414 contains grassland and is partly used for pastoral agriculture. The settlement edge runs along the western edge and the A414 wraps around the southern and eastern extent of the site and these strong physical features act as urban influences on the site. Woodland to the north and southwest offers the potential to help integrate the area with surroundings. Assessed in isolation the parcel contributes least towards Green Belt purposes. The land does not significantly contribute towards preventing merging given the scale of the gap of 2.7km between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford. It makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl, preserving setting or maintaining the existing settlement pattern. It is noted that this strategic sub-area area of search crosses into East Hertfordshire therefore discussions with the adjoining planning authority area required. This is the only cross-boundary issue in relation to a strategic sub-area identified in the study.

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GB47 – Green Belt Land East of Hatfield

Description The parcel is located to the east of Hatfield and extends to WHBC administrative boundary. The boundary to the north aligns with the Hertford Road (A414) and to the south the Great North Road (A1000) and Kentish Lane / Woodfield Lane. It contains Hatfield Park providing setting to Hatfield House. It is large at 2,322 ha and forms a clay plateau which falls to the river Lea valley in the north with gently undulating slopes and intermittent stream valleys.



Land use Mix of activities including estate parkland at Hatfield House, plus Brookmans Park Transmitting Station, farmland.

Hatfield House setting



View to Historic Park and Garden shows woodland within strong open and rural setting



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside, preserving the setting of Hatfield Park and Hatfield House, and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gap between Essendon, Woodside, Wildhill and Bell Bar. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 purposes.

| GB47 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics as Hatfield House Historic Park & Garden is an extensive area of parkland with large woodland blocks and pockets of farmland with parkland trees. It is characterised by the extensive range of formal planting and landscape features and the land is also used for mixed forestry plantations and dairy farming. In the east part of the parcel there are large scale arable fields with a transition to smaller scale fields in the south, divided by hedgerows and wooded belts. There is also a golf course on former parkland at Bedwell Park. There is limited evidence of urban features and built development apart from at 3 rd tier settlements and Brookmans Park Transmitting Station. There is no encroachment and the east edge of Hatfield acts as a strong barrier. Levels of visual openness are very high mainly due to an absence of built development. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contains Hatfield Park HPG and Hatfield House, as well as Essendon conservation area. The Green Belt provides an immediate historic and open setting with views to and from the countryside. Hatfield House is one of the finest historic buildings in England and is located on the western boundary of both the parcel and the HPG. The house is the focal point of the Park with designed views running from it. Peripheral estate architecture enforces the parkland character and defines its strong boundary. Two main axis cut the Park into four large compartments and landscape features such as the walled vineyard bridging the river Lea and the formal gardens around the house are nationally important. Large areas of forestry plantations conceal some of the historic parkland trees. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides a number of secondary local gaps between a range of 3 rd tier settlements including Essendon, Woodside, Wildhill and Bell Bar. Gaps are well maintained (relatively free of development) and range from 2.8km to 1.0km, the narrowest between Woodside and Wildhill. There is no significant ribbon development. Any reduction in gaps would be unlikely to compromise separation of settlements, apart from between Woodside and Wildhill, and localised levels of openness. There are also primary local gaps being all 3 rd tier settlements and Hatfield. There is no risk of merging due to Hatfield Park HPG. | | |

Level of Openness and Countryside Character

Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.4%. Some semi-rural influences with the golf course at Bedwell Park but generally little development.

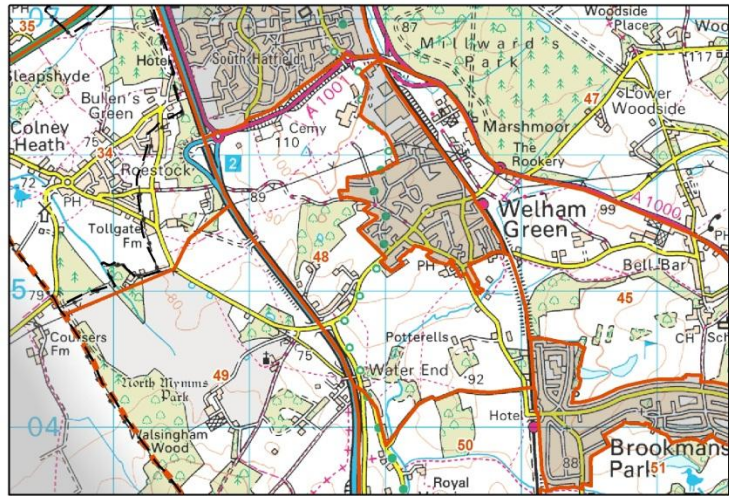
Visual Openness Public views into Hatfield Park are limited by strong boundaries and dense woodland blocks. Internally, long vistas are framed by double avenues and woodland rides. Farmland with parkland trees provides picturesque views across the estate from within. The extensive forestry plantations create a coniferous skyline which is locally prominent.

Countryside Character It is a tranquil area, apart from occasional noise from the A414, arable farmland on shallow slopes is a fairly typical feature of the county. Generally unsettled, with isolated farms and tiny hamlets within hidden valleys.

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GB48 –Green Belt Land between Hatfield and Welham Green

Description This small parcel is located to the south of Hatfield and aligns with the west edge of Welham Green to Warrengate Road / Bradmore Lane to the south and A1(M) to the E. It is 287 ha in size and forms a gently undulating plateau which falls gradually to the valley of the Mimms Hall Brook.



Land use Predominantly agricultural activities. Farms, arable and pastoral farmland, , recreation ground, playing fields, medical centre, kennels, Former Central Resources Library (MDS) and Welwyn Hatfield District Lawn Cemetery and park and ride.

View to south from Dixons Hill Road shows strong open and rural characteristics



View to north from Dellsome Lane



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Hatfield and Welham Green). Partial contribution towards preventing merging and safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 purposes.

| GB48 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | Contribution |
|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes (with GB45, 49 & 50) to the strategic gap between Hatfield and Potters Bar. This gap is 5km in total and contains Welham Green and Brookmans Park. Therefore any reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical and visual terms but would have a greater impact on 2 nd tier settlements. | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays a mix of urban and rural characteristics. It contains arable farmland with medium scale fields bound by hedgerows, and small fields of pasture with fenced boundaries at settlement edges. There is an area of ancient woodland at Bush Wood to the west of Welham Green and a number of small ponds on the higher ground associated with farms and woodlands. A riparian treed landscape with water pasture surrounds Water End, which includes an SSSI, and the Mimms Hall Brook. There is evidence of built development at the former Central Resources Library, along Dixons Hill Road extending from Welham Green and at Warrengate Lane. The main urban influences are the A1(M), Great North Road and railway line which are visible and audibly intrusive. There are also large scale industrial units along Travellers Lane. Levels of visual openness are high in general. | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | PARTIAL |
| The northern part of the parcel provides historic setting of Old Hatfield Conservation Area and the Hatfield Park Historic Park and Garden. There is clear inter-visibility from the Green Belt. | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides the primary local gap between Hatfield (1 st) and Welham Green (2 nd). This gap is narrowest by the railway line and widens to the west. The gap is narrowest at less than 0.2km. It contains the Southway, which separates Welham Green industrial units from Hatfield. There is limited perception of the gap from the Southway due to high planting. The parcel also provides the secondary local gap to separate Welham Green (2 nd) and Brookmans Park (2 nd) with GB45. This gap is narrow at 0.6km. Any reduction in the gaps would be likely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, and local levels of visual openness. | |

Level of openness and countryside character

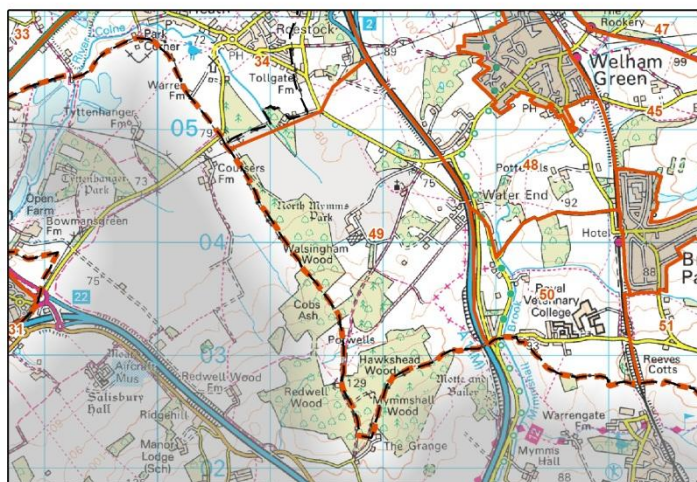
Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.7%. There is some ribbon residential development at Welham Green and surrounding the borders of the major routes to the north and east of the parcel.

Visual Openness The extent of built development within and on the perimeter of the area is generally well concealed by hedgerows and roadside vegetation.

Countryside Character The area is confined to the west, north and west by major transport corridors of the A1(M), the A1001 and the railway line respectively. These combined with the settlement at Welham Green give the parcel an urban edge rather than a rural character.

GB49 –Green Belt Land to South of Hatfield

Description The parcel is located to the south of Hatfield, beyond the southwest tip of the settlement. It aligns A1(M) to the east, and broadly follows the edge of the study area to the south. It is 373 ha in size and the northern area is gently undulating with the slopes rising to the pronounced end of the Shenley ridge with a number of secondary valleys.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland, plus forestry and reservoir (covered).

View to south from Tolgate Road shows strong countryside characteristics



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside. Partial contribution towards preventing merging (providing the gap between Hatfield and Potters Bar). Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 1 of the 5 purposes.

| GB49 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes (with GB45, 48 & 50) to the strategic gap between Hatfield and Potters Bar. This gap is 5km in total and contains Welham Green and Brookmans Park. Therefore any reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical and visual terms but would have a greater impact on 2 nd tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in a patchwork of large scale arable fields with hedgerow boundaries, grazed estate parkland with mature trees and deciduous woodland with substantial areas of ancient woodland. The parcel exhibits strong historic continuity, combining parkland on the lower slopes with extensive woodlands on the upper slopes and crown of a pronounced ridge. There is very limited evidence of urban features / built development and no encroachment. Levels of visual openness are very high across the parcel due to an absence of built development. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not separate 2 nd or 3 rd tier settlements. | | |

Level of Openness and Countryside Character

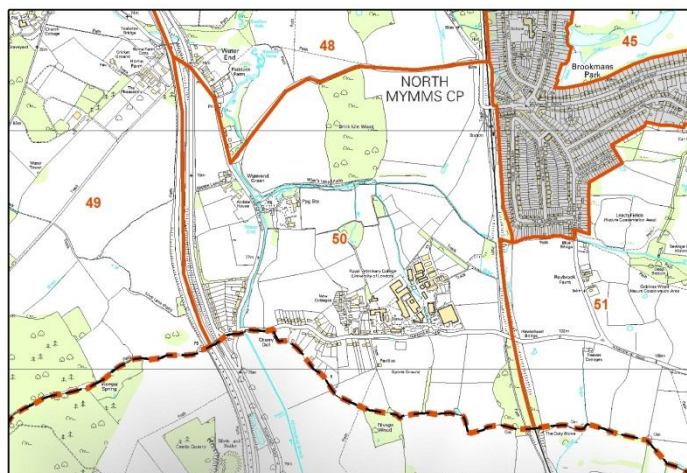
Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.2%. the busy M25 and A1(M) are close to the edge of the parcel

Visual Openness The parcel is generally open although more enclosed to the south due to woodland and there are some extensive panoramas over arable fields towards Shenley ridge.

Countryside Character The estate farmland is surrounded by arable fields and interspersed by extensive woodland to give a rural character to the parkland.

GB50 –Green Belt Land to West of Brookmans Park

Description The parcel is located to the west of Brookmans Park and extends to run alongside the northwest edge of Potters Bar. To the east it follows the A1(M) to the edge of the study area to the south. It is 169ha in size and forms a gently undulating plateau which falls gradually to the valley of the Mimmshall Brook to the north and west.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland, plus educational campus, hotel, King George V Recreation Ground, Royal Veterinary College (MDS), Lady Elizabeth Byney Playing Field and Waste services and recycling centre.

View to south from Bradmore Lane towards Veterinary College



View to west from Brookmans Park railway station



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Brookmans Park and Potters Bar). Partial contribution towards preventing merging and safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 1 of the 5 purposes.

| GB50 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|---|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements; however it contributes (with GB45, 48 & 49) to the strategic gap between Hatfield and Potters Bar. This gap is 5km in total and contains Welham Green and Brookmans Park. Therefore any reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical and visual terms but would have a greater impact on 2 nd tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays a mix of urban and rural characteristics. It contains arable farmland with medium scale fields bound by hedgerows, and smaller fields of pasture with fenced boundaries near settlements and surrounding the Veterinary College. There are pockets of woodland belts with a small area of ancient woodland. There is evidence of urban features and built development in the mix of uses in the Green Belt including the Royal Veterinary College (MDS), which has a local visual impact. The other main urban influence is the A1(M) which is well concealed but audibly intrusive. There is evidence of ribbon development in the form of large housing extending along Hawkhead Lane (to the west from the Royal Veterinary College) and Warrengate Lane and Swanland Road (close to the motorway). This represents encroachment. Levels of visual openness are generally high but variable due to the mix of built development, and countryside characteristics dominate. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides the primary local gap to separate Brookmans Park and Potters Bar. The gap is 1.2km. It adjoins the railway line however landscape features and planting conceal this route. Given development in the Green Belt at the Veterinary College, any reduction to the gap would be likely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, and overall visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is very high at 1.7%. There is considerable development surrounding Hawkshead Lane including the Veterinary College (MDS) and ribbon residential development and development at Swanley Bar.

Visual Openness The extent of built development within the area is generally well concealed by high hedgerows and roadside vegetation.

Countryside Character The area is confined to the west and east by major transport corridors of the A1(M) and the railway line. These combined with residential ribbon development give the parcel a semi urban quality.

GB51 –Green Belt Land between Brookmans Park and Little Heath

Description The parcel is located between Brookmans Park and Little Heath (adjoining Potters Bar). The boundary to the west follows the railway line and to the east aligns with the Great North Road (A1000). The southern edge crosses into Hertsmere. It is 287 ha in size and comprises a clay plateau with ridgelines forming a series of parallel dips and slopes with a central ridge.



Land use: Predominantly parkland, plus farmland, Boltons Park Farm (Royal Veterinary College) campus and Gobions open space.

View from Hawshead Road showing open gap between Little Heath / Potters Bar and Brookmans Park



View to southwest edge of Brookmans Park



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside, preserving setting and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Brookmans Park and Little Heath / Potters Bar). Partial contribution towards preventing merging. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB51 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|---|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes (with GB45, 48 & 50) to the strategic gap between Hatfield and Potters Bar. This gap contains settlements of Welham Green and Brookmans Park. Given the scale of the gap, any small scale reduction would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical. It would be likely to have a greater impact on 2 nd tier settlements and local levels of visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in parkland to the north of Potters Bar and at Gobions Park HPG which provides a historical framework for a variety of recreational pursuits including a golf course which acts as a buffer to the south. There are also medium sized arable fields bounded by hedgerows without tree lines and some irregularly shaped fenced pasture fields surrounding the second Royal Veterinary College building (the main college campus is located in GB50). There is built development at Swanley Bar and surrounding ribbon development which extends from Little Heath. Levels of visual openness are high in general. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | SIGNIFICANT |
| Parcel contains Gobions Open Space HPG. The Green Belt acts as an immediate open and rural historic setting, providing views to and from the countryside. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides the local gap to separates Brookmans Park (2 nd) and Little Heath (2 nd) which is part of Potters Bar. The gap is 1.2 km and contains Swanley Bar (3 rd) wherefrom ribbon development extends to the south to Little Heath. This gap is very narrow at less than 0.2 km. Any small scale reduction in gaps would be unlikely to comprise the physical separation of the settlements, but would reduce localised levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of Openness and Countryside Character

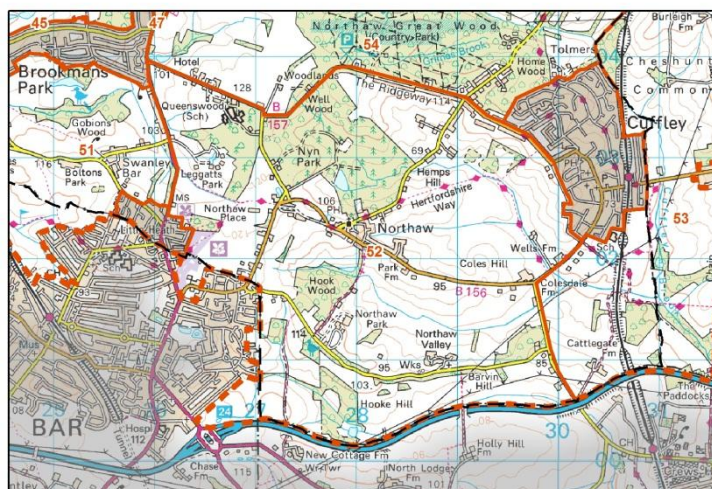
Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.7%. A golf course at Potters Bar and some limited built development at the Royal Veterinary College.

Visual Openness Hawkshead Road follows the top of the ridge separating Potters Bar and Brookmans Park. This landform limits views between the settlements and provides a rural visual barrier, whilst long distance views are obtained to the north and south. The woodland to the south of Brookmans Park restricts views to the edge of the settlement. In the valleys and woodlands the landscape is more enclosed.

Countryside Character A rather fragmented landscape with a strong semi urban influence from the estate parklands and golf courses. The area has a more rural character along Hawkshead Road, where it is relatively open with long views.

GB52 –Green Belt Land West of Cuffley

Description The parcel is located to the west of Cuffley and extends to the east edge of Potters Bar and the Great North Road (A1000). The boundary to the north aligns with The Ridgeway (B157) and to the south with the M25 along the edge of the study area. The west edge crosses into Hertsmere. It is 1,154 ha in size and forms part of the undulating clay with flints plateau defined by slopes and narrow ridgelines which create a series of parallel dips and valley bowls.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland and estate parkland, plus Northaw Park, Great Northaw Wood (SSSI in north only) and Queenswood School (MDS).

View to west from Cuffley showing wide open local gap



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards checking sprawl from London, safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gaps between Brooklands Park, Little Heath / Potters Bar and Cuffley). Partial contribution towards preserving setting. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB52 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|---|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel is located to the north of London. It forms a strong connection with a wider network of parcels to the south to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in arable land whereby the field pattern becomes more organic further north and west as fields are smaller, associated with the historic parkland and settlement boundaries. The smaller, often linear fields are used for horse grazing and are bound by a mixture of ancient relic hedgerows and post-and-wire fences. Estate parkland is found at Nyn Park and mature plantation and ancient woodland is scattered across the parcel. Well Wood, adjoining the Great Wood (GB54) is a designated SSSI. There is evidence of scattered ribbon development in the form of large single dwellings, principally along The Ridgeway (B157) extending from the northwest edge of Cuffley, and along Vineyards Road to Northaw and Coopers Lane extending from northeast edge of Potters Bar. The main urban influence is the M25, which is concealed by planting but audibly intrusive. Levels of visual openness are generally high with long views over the parcel evident especially from Cuffley. However a greater sense of localised landscape enclosure from boundary planting and buffering and residential edges is evident along the east edge of Potters Bar. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel contains Northaw Conservation Area. The Green Belt acts as an immediate open and rural historic setting, providing views to and from the countryside. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes with GB54 provides a local gap to separates Brooklands Park (2 nd) and Little Heath (3 rd) / Potters Bar with Cuffley (2 nd). The gap is 3.6 km. It contains Northaw from which ribbon development extends but is generally free from development. Therefore any small scale reduction in the gap (away from the north of Potters Bar and north Cuffley) would be unlikely to compromise the physical separation of settlements however local levels of visual openness would be reduced. The Green Belt is partly visible from the M25 however settlements are well concealed by planting. | | |

Level of Openness and Countryside Character

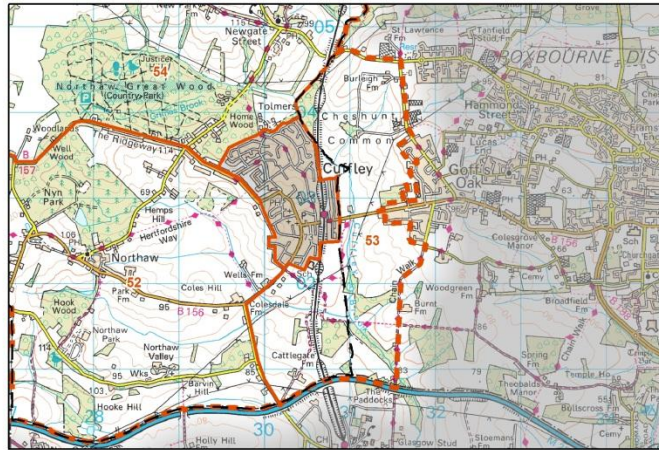
Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.7%. Built development is generally confined to linear strips of large individual houses such as at the Ridgeway.

Visual Openness Within estate parkland fenced boundaries, large blocks of woodland and high hedgerows create a strong sense of enclosure. From more agricultural locations and elevated areas such as the western edge of Cuffley views are panoramic and open.

Countryside Character A tranquil area, apart from the boundary with the M25 to the south, with sloping arable farmland and wooded estate parkland common. An enclosed character due to the bowl landform, and generally sparsely inhabited although ribbon development has spread along the Ridgeway from Cuffley.

GB53 –Green Belt Land South of Cuffley

Description The parcel is located to the south and east of Cuffley and extends along the M25 and then follows the southeast edge of the study area. The east edge of the parcel crosses into Broxbourne. It is 475 ha in size and form the deep valley of Cuffley Brook which flows north-south through the parcel.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland, Cuffley Football Club.

Local gap between Goffs Oak and Cuffley (in the distance)



View to the concealed M25 from south from Cattlegate Road, south of Cuffley



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards checking sprawl from London, safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB53 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel is located to the north of London. It forms a strong connection with a wider network of parcels to the south to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in arable farmland, with blocks of woodland to the south. Also, large open fields with limited boundaries are located on former common land and linear tree belts follow the course of the Cuffley Brook. There is limited built development however the main urban influences are the well concealed M25 and railway line which are audibly intrusive. The valley setting enables strong visibility of Cuffley and Goff's Oak (located in Broxbourne) to the east of the parcel boundary. The Cuffley settlement edges acts as a strong barrier to encroachment. Levels of visual openness are generally high across the parcel, especially on higher slopes. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes to the provision of the local gap from separates Cuffley (2 nd) to Goffs Oak (located on Broxbourne to the east of the study area). At its narrowest the gap is 0.5 km and it follows Cuffley Brook and is well maintained (relatively free of development). The parcel also provides a gap to built development at Crews Hill beyond the M25 to the south. There is perception of the Green Belt from Cuffley Hill (B156). Any small scale reduction in the gap could compromise the physical separation of settlements, and local levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

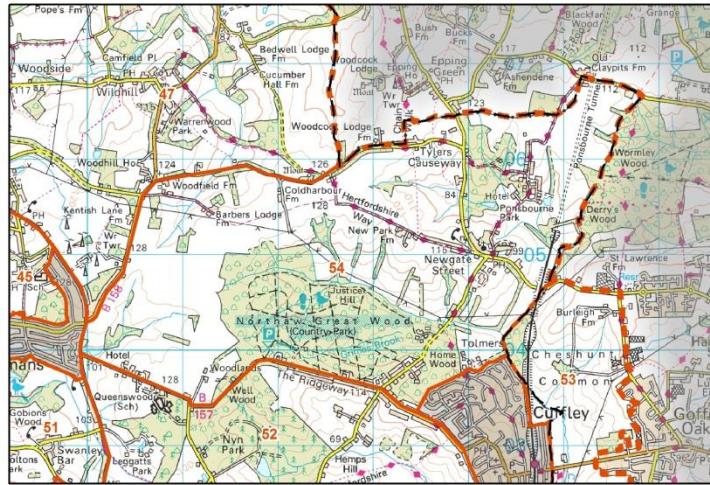
Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.3%. There is limited agricultural related development and a primary school close to the railway line to the south of Cuffley.

Visual Openness To the south there are open arable fields with some blocks of woodland which rise up to the railway line. Therefore views are variable across the parcel and are often limited by roadside vegetation and tree belts.

Countryside Character Views to the urban edges and the presence of the railway in the valley and the M25 on the southern boundary represent urban influences. There is open arable farmland over the valley which clearly divides settlements and local topography is made more obvious by the arable monoculture which reinforces the simplicity of the valley landform.

GB54 –Green Belt Land North of Cuffley

Description The parcel is located to the north of Cuffley and extends to the WHBC administrative boundary. The boundary to the northeast follows Kentish Lane (B158) / Woodfield Lane / Tylers Causeway. It is 1,155 ha in size and forms a gently undulating plateau rising to ridges in various locations.



Land use Northaw Great Wood (SSSI) and arable farmland.

View to east, shows strong countryside characteristics



View to southwest to Northaw Great Wood



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern between Brookmans Park and Cuffley. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB54 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in the extensive Northaw Great Wood (SSSI) and large scale ancient woodland, which is a strong feature of the parcel. It is surrounded by arable slopes of medium sized fields with dense hedgerows to the west and parkland pasture and arable farmland with linked woodland to the northeast. There is very limited built development apart from Newgate Street which is subject to limited ribbon development to the west and south. There is also scattered ribbon development along the north edge of the parcel along Tylers Causeway. There is no evidence of significant encroachment. Levels of visual openness are generally high. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes with GB52 provides a local gap to separates Brookmans Park (2 nd) and Cuffley (2 nd). The gap is 3.5km and is well maintained (relatively free of development) by Northaw Great Wood however it contains limited ribbon development to the east close to Cuffley. Newgate Street (3 rd) is also located 0.9km to the north of Cuffley (3 rd). Any small to medium scale reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the physical separation of settlements, or the local levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

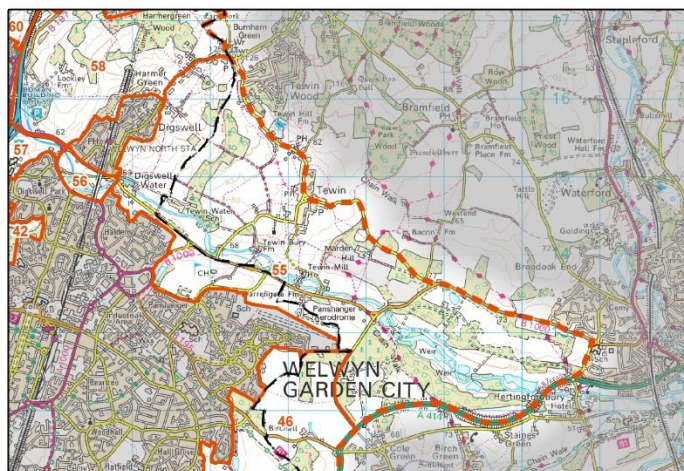
Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.5%. Built development is generally confined to linear strips of large single dwellings such as at Ridgeway and Newgate Street.

Visual Openness The extent of built development within the parcel is generally well concealed by high hedgerows and roadside vegetation. Within the parcel, woodland views are very limited but in more open locations they are frequently long distance.

Countryside Character A tranquil area with little settlement. Generally a rural character although busy roads on the boundaries add to a feeling of urban pressure.

GB55 –Green Belt Land Northeast of Welwyn Garden City

Description The parcel is located along the northeast edge of Welwyn Garden City and extends to the edge of Herford along Thieves Lane to the west, Tewin to the north and the A414 to the south. The east edge of the parcel crosses into East Hertfordshire. It is 1,108 ha in size and runs along part of the River Mimram valley which adjoins floodplain and series of minor parallel dry tributary valleys with undulating slopes.



Land use Mix of arable and pasture farmland, plus Panshanger aerodrome and recreational activities including Welwyn Garden City Football Ground and Panshanger Golf Course.

View to Tewin, showing open valley setting



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside, preserving the setting of Welwyn Garden City and Tewin Water, and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Welwyn Garden City and Digswell). Partial contribution towards preventing merging. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB55 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|---|--|---------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITDE / NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel contributes to providing the strategic gap to separate Welwyn Garden City and Hertford (in East Hertfordshire to the east of the study area). The gap is 3.3km and is well maintained (relatively free of development) by the River Mimram valley. There is strong visibility of the gap from the B1000. Any scale reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical or visual terms or overall visual openness, but might impact on the gap between 1 st and 2 nd tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in a mix of pasture and wetland vegetation in the River Mimram floodplain (including two SSSIs adjoin the edge of the parcel) and arable fields and broadleaf woodland on valley slopes. The area adjoining Digswell is a south facing strongly undulating slope consisting of mixed arable farmland and woodland, with south facing views over the Mimram to Welwyn Garden City. Black Fan Valley and Panshanger and Tewin Water HPGs are also an important feature of the parcel. There is very limited built development and limited ribbon development at the edge of Digswell. The north edge of Welwyn Garden City provides a strong barrier to encroachment and is well concealed by heavy planting. Levels of visual openness are generally high mainly due to an absence of built development and the valley landscape providing long views. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contains Tewin Water HPG and adjoins Panshanger HPG. The Green Belt acts as an immediate open and rural historic setting to Welwyn Garden City by providing views to and from the countryside. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes, with GB56, to a local gap to separate Welwyn Garden City (1 st) with Digswell (2 nd). This very narrow gap is 0.1km. The parcel also provides local gaps from Burham Green (3 rd) to both Digswell (2 nd) and Welwyn Garden City which are 0.8km and 2.2km respectively. Gaps contain built development along Hamer Green Lane / New Road and therefore there is limited visibility of the Green Belt. Any reduction in the gaps (especially in respect of Digswell) would comprise the separation of settlement in physical and visual terms, and local levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is low at 0.4%. There is limited built development at the edge of Digswell in Old Forge Close close to the Hertford Road.

Visual Openness Within the parcel there are views to the the east and north across the River Mimram Valley..

Countryside Character The parcel is well connected to the surrounding countryside. There are few roads within the area within the very contained landscape.

GB55 – Next Steps

Land east of Welwyn Garden City (also located in GB46) enclosed by the A414 is recommended for further assessment as a strategic sub-area (WH-S2). In light of the functions of the strategic parcel, the sub-area identified on land southeast of Welwyn Garden City enclosed by the A414 contains grassland and is partly used for pastoral agriculture. The settlement edge runs along the western edge and the A414 wraps around the southern and eastern extent of the site and these strong physical features act as urban influences on the site. Woodland to the north and southwest offers the potential to help integrate the area with surroundings. Assessed in isolation the parcel contributes least towards Green Belt purposes. The land does not significantly contribute towards preventing merging given the scale of the gap of 2.7km between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford. It makes a limited or no contribution towards checking sprawl, preserving setting or maintaining the existing settlement pattern. It is noted that this strategic sub-area area of search crosses into East Hertfordshire therefore discussions with the adjoining planning authority area required. This is the only cross-boundary issue in relation to a strategic sub-area identified in the study.

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GB56 –Green Belt Land between Welwyn Garden City and Digswell

Description The parcel is located between Welwyn Garden City and Digswell. It is 28 ha in size and forms part of the River Mimram valley and its floodplain.



Land use Predominantly pasture and wetland vegetation, including Digswell Lake Nature Reserve.

View to east towards railway viaduct from Digswell Park Road



View to north from Digswell Park Road shows woodland



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards preserving the setting of Welwyn Garden City and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Welwyn Garden City and Digswell). Partial contribution towards preventing merging and safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB56 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes with GB57, 58, 59 & 60 to provide the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. This gap contains settlements of Welwyn, Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Woolmer Green. Given the scale of the gap, any small scale reduction would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical terms, and significantly reduce levels of visual openness across the parcel. It would however be likely to compromise the separation of 1 st and 2 nd tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays a mix of strong urban and rural characteristics as it is very small and predominantly enclosed by the urban edges of Welwyn Garden City and Digswell. Other urban influences include the railway, in the form of a large brick viaduct, and the A1000 and B1000 which are visible from the Green Belt and are audibly intrusive. The parcel represents a pocket of countryside comprising a mix of pasture and wetland vegetation in the floodplain and broadleaf woodland on the valley slopes, including a nature reserve which restricts visibility of Welwyn Garden City. It provides a verdant pastoral landscape with riverine vegetation and a hidden rural character despite being located so close to the urban fringe. Levels of visual openness are high in general but vary throughout the parcel. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides green setting to Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Views to the small patch of Green Belt are provided from the top of Digswell Road which extends from the town centre. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides the important local gap to separates Welwyn Garden City (1 st) and Digswell (2 nd). The very narrow gap is 0.1km. It is well maintained (relatively free of development) and visible from the A1000 and B1000. Any scale of reduction in the gap would compromise the physical separation of settlements, or overall visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

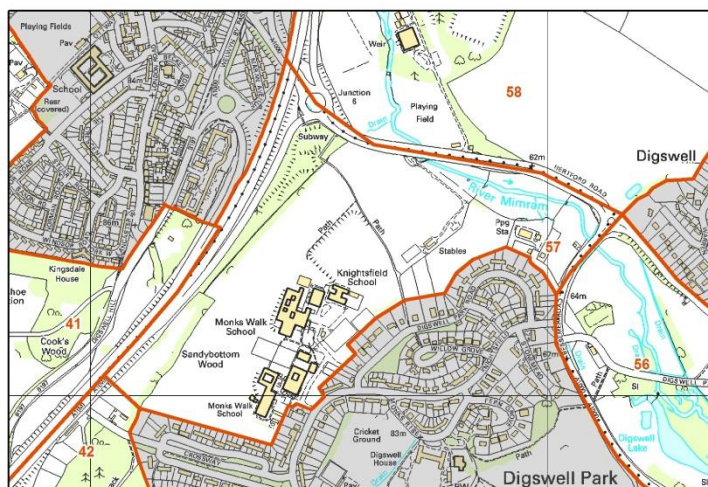
Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.2%. There is little built development within the parcel.

Visual Openness Within the parcel the landscape is open with linear views along the river corridor. The surrounding areas of built development are well shielded from each other visually by vegetation.

Countryside Character The rural and relative remote character of the parcel is interrupted by a lack of tranquillity due to ever-present traffic and train over the railway viaduct. The scale of the landscape elements is small to medium and it has a very contained, coherent character.

GB57 –Green Belt Land between Welwyn Garden City and Welwyn

Description The parcel Green Belt Land to between Welwyn Garden City and Welwyn. It is 38 ha in size and forms part of the floodplain of the river Mimram valley.



Land use Predominantly pasture and wetland vegetation, plus Monks Walk School (MDS).

View to southwest from Herford Road shows countryside characteristics and landscape buffer to Welwyn Garden City which conceals the settlement



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Welwyn Garden City and Welwyn). Partial contribution towards preventing merging. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB57 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|---|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes with GB56, 58, 59 & 60 to provide the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. This gap contains settlements of Welwyn, Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Woolmer Green. Given the scale of the gap, any small scale reduction would be unlikely to compromise the significantly reduce levels of visual openness across the parcel. It would be likely to compromise the separation of 1 st to 2 nd tier settlements. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays a mix of urban and rural and countryside characteristics as it is very small but is visually connected to the countryside to the north. It contains a mosaic of pasture with wetland vegetation surrounding the river and some playing fields. Key urban influences include the A1(M) and A1000. A woodland belt screens the A1(M) which is built on embankment, however both are audibly intrusive. There is limited built development apart from Monks Walk School which represents encroachment into the Green Belt. In spite of the urban fringe location the parcel displays mainly countryside characteristics and levels of visual openness are high in general. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides the important local gap to separates Welwyn Garden City (1 st) and Welwyn (3 rd). The narrow gap is 0.4km. It contains a school and the A1(M), from which there is mixed visibility of the Green Belt. Any scale of reduction in the gap would compromise the physical separation of settlements, or overall visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

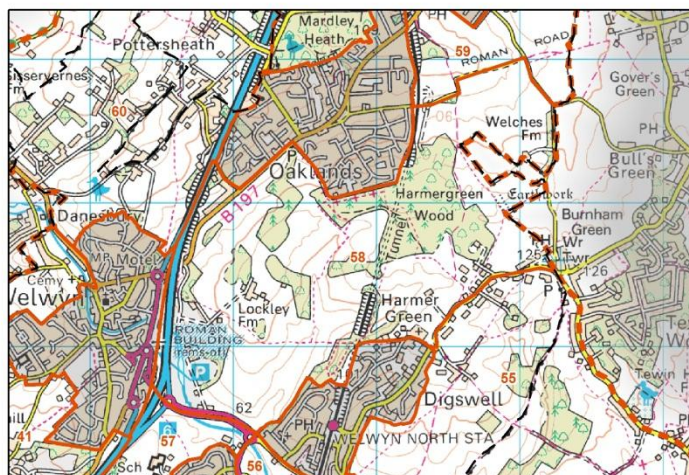
Existence of built development The level of built development is very high at 2.5%, however this is partly due to the small scale of the parcel, there is built development at Monks Walk School (MDS) and at the A1(M) and A1000 routes.

Visual Openness Within the parcel the landscape is open with views across the Mimram valley. The A1(M) is well shielded and concealed by planting.

Countryside Character The scale of the landscape elements is small to medium and due to the physical routes across the parcel, giving a semi-urban character. It is not tranquil, with constant distant noise from road traffic.

GB58 –Green Belt Land to South of Oaklands

Description The parcel is located to the south of Oaklands and sits between Welwyn and Digswell. It is 383 ha in size and forms a south facing undulating spur which rises from the Mimram valley on the south eastern edge of the parcel.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland.

View to south from south of Oaklands shows strong open and rural characteristics



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gaps between Welwyn, Digswell and Oaklands). Partial contribution towards preventing merging. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB58 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes with GB56, 57, 59 & 60 to provide the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. This gap contains settlements of Welwyn, Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Woolmer Green. Given the scale of the gap, any scale reduction would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical terms. It would however significantly impact on the physical separation of 2 nd tier settlements and local levels of visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in a strong pattern of mixed large sized arable fields and mature oak woodland including large pockets of ancient woodland, with some parkland features around Lockleys Farm. Some pasture land is located close to settlement edges. There is very limited evidence of built development and encroachment, apart from limited ribbon development along Hamer Green Lane extending north from Digswell. The main urban influences are the A1(M) and railway line, which are audibly intrusive and well concealed by planting but offer some views to the Green Belt especially due to the raised nature of the parcel. This ensures the Green Belt is more remote from development and retains a degree of tranquillity. Overall visual levels of openness are high in general, especially due to the elevated nature of the parcel. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel is west of Welwyn Conservation Area, however due to landscape buffering along the settlement edge and A1(M), the visual connection between the historic place and Green Belt is limited. It also contains two SAMs. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel provides local gaps to separate 2 nd tier settlements of Welwyn, Digswell and Oaklands from each other as well as contributing to the important local gap (with GB57) to Welwyn Garden City and local gap to Burnham Green (3 rd). Focusing on local gaps between the 2 nd tier settlements only, the narrowest gap is from Welwyn to Oaklands at 1.2km. It contains the A1(M) and B197. The gaps between Digswell to Welwyn and Oaklands are 0.8km and 1.1km respectively and are well maintained (relatively free of development). Overall any small scale reduction in gaps could compromise the physical separation of settlements, and reduce local levels of visual openness. | | |
| Level of openness and countryside character | | |
| Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.3%. Some residential ribbon development around Digswell. It is likely that there has been some loss of parkland around Lockleys to arable cultivation but relic hedgerow oaks remain. | | |
| Visual Openness In more elevated and open locations views are frequently long distance but lower down they are limited by landform and vegetation. | | |
| Countryside Character A large scale area of rolling arable land interspersed with frequent woodland, some of which is ancient woodland. Although it is located between and close to three settlements the long distance views obtained from elevated areas and the landform impart an isolated character. | | |

GB59 –Green Belt Land to North of Oaklands surrounding Woolmer Green

Description The parcel is located to north of Oaklands and Mardley Heath and surrounds Woolmer Green, It is 234 ha in size and forms an undulating southwest facing slope with a few local variations.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland.

Gap between Woolmer Green and Oaklands showing open view to east



Southwest of Woolmer Green



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards checking sprawl from Stevenage, safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Mardley Heath / Oaklands and Woolmer Green). Partial contribution towards preventing merging. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB59 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel is located to the south Stevenage. It forms a strong connection with a wider network of parcels to the north to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes with GB56, 57, 58 & 60 to provide the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. This gap contains settlements of Welwyn, Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Woolmer Green. Given the scale of the gap, any small scale reduction would be unlikely to compromise the physical separation of 1 st tier settlements. It would be likely to have a greater impact on 2 nd tier settlements and local levels of visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics in large sized open arable farmland with absent field boundaries due to a lack of hedges. There are also some small pockets of ancient woodland and a local nature reserve to the north of Mardley Heath / Oaklands. There is limited evidence of built development. Oaklands / Mardley Wood provides strong settlement boundaries whereas the Woolmer Green edge exhibits greater levels of localised enclosure as a result of the shape of the settlement boundary especially to the east and southeast. The main urban influence is the A1(M) which is concealed by planting but is audibly intrusive, as well as the B197 and railway line. Overall levels of visual openness are very high due to an absence of development, and connection to the wider countryside to the north and slopes provide longer distance views. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFICANT |
| The parcel contributes to the important local gap to separate Mardley Heath / Oaklands (2 nd) and Woolmer Green (2 nd) from Knebworth and Datchworth, and beyond to Stevenage (in North Hertfordshire to the north of the study area). The gap to Knebworth is narrowest from Woolmer Green at 0.6 km. The parcel also provides a very narrow local gap to separate Mardley Heath / Oaklands (2 nd) and Woolmer Green (2 nd). It is 0.1km and contains the railway line and there is only perception of the Green Belt to the east from the connecting London Road (B197). Any small scale reduction in the gaps could comprise the physical separation of settlements and reduce visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

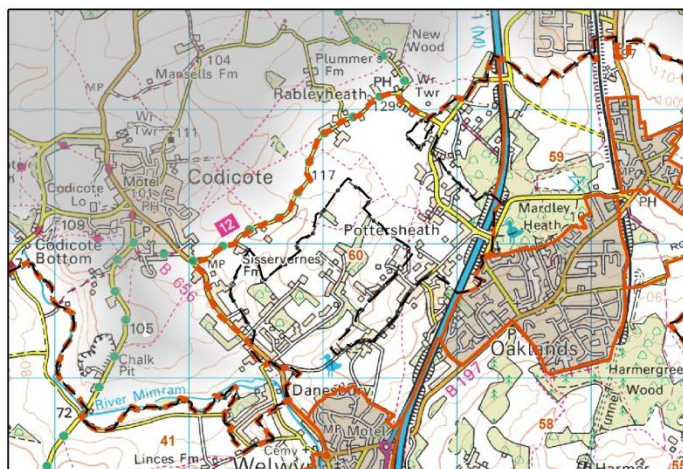
Existence of built development The level of built development is very low at 0.2%. Little new built development although residential development has an indistinct edge at Woolmer Green. The A1(M) corridor is screened by woodland but although it is not visible, there is a permanent noise impact.

Visual Openness This is generally an open parcel with extensive views towards Stevenage from some locations.

Countryside Character The area is rural but Woolmer Green contains 20th century settlement and the parcel exhibits a conflict between the old and new.

GB60 –Green Belt Land to North of Welwyn

Description The parcel is located to the north of Welwyn. It broadly follows the outer edge of the study area and crosses into North Hertfordshire. It is 337 ha in size and comprises undulating slopes with localised deep depressions formed by dry valleys.



Land use Predominantly arable farmland.

View to south from north of the parcel showing countryside characteristics



View to north from Rollswood Road displaying greater sense of enclosure



Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing the gap between Welwyn and Mardley Heath / Oaklands). Partial contribution towards checking sprawl from London, preventing merging and safeguarding the countryside. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 1 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

| GB60 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment | | Contribution |
|--|--|----------------------|
| To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel is located to the south Stevenage. It forms a connection with a wider network of parcels to the north to restrict sprawl. | | |
| To prevent neighbouring towns from merging | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 st tier settlements however it contributes with GB56, 57, 58 & 59 to provide the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. This gap contains settlements of Welwyn, Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Woolmer Green. Given the scale of the gap, any minor reduction would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1 st tier settlements in physical or visual terms. It would be likely to have a greater impact on the separation of 2 nd tier settlements and levels of visual openness. | | |
| To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment | | PARTIAL |
| The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics however it has been subject to a relatively large proportion of built development. The south is primarily residential with large single dwellings often built in relic parkland fracturing the pattern of small pastoral fields and wooded belts, including ancient woodland. To the north there are medium scale arable fields with wooded belts on former heathland. There is evidence of built development through widespread scattered residential ribbon development. Encroachment is visible along The Avenue, which extends from Oaklands where there is little distinction between Green Belt and non-Green Belt land. Danesbury Park Road, Pottersheath Road and Codicote Road are also subject to ribbon development. Another key urban influence is the A1(M), which is audibly intrusive and from which there are strong views of the Green Belt including the wider countryside to the north. Levels of visual openness are varied with a greater sense of enclosure to the south and longer views to the north due to an absence of development. | | |
| To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns | | LIMITED OR NO |
| The parcel does not provide setting for any historic places. | | |
| To maintain existing settlement pattern | | SIGNIFIACNT |
| The parcel contributes with GB58 to the local gap between Welwyn (2 nd) and Oaklands and Mardley Heath (2 nd). This gap is 0.6km. It also provides gaps to Codicote (in North Hertfordshire to the north of the study area). All gaps contain ribbon development. Any minor reduction in gaps would be unlikely to compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms, but could impact on overall levels of visual openness. | | |

Level of openness and countryside character

Existence of built development The level of built development is very high at 1.3%. There is a widespread residential ribbon development giving a more developed and urban character in the south of the parcel.

Visual Openness There is a more enclosed character to the south with more open views across arable fields and hill sides to the north.

Countryside Character To the north the parcel is more rural but to the south frequent residential development and recreational activities provide a semi urban quality.

GB60 – Next Steps

Development at The Avenue to west of A1(M) adjoining west of Oaklands village is recommended for further assessment as potential boundary adjustment (WH-BA1). Green Belt land has been subject to substantial development and as a result this land no longer contributes towards the 5 Green Belt purposes.

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