Tandridge Local Plan
Green Belt Assessment
Methodology

June 2015
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Appendix 1 – Map of Assessment Parcels
1.0 Introduction and Policy Context

1.1 The purpose of a Green Belt Assessment (GBA) is to assess how effectively the Green Belt in Tandridge serves the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

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

1.2 The NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (paragraph 79).

1.3 This methodology sets out the approach the Council will use to identify how, and the extent to which, these purposes are being served across the District.

1.4 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that “…when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development”, this is not a document that will draw up or review Green Belt boundaries, that is the role of the Local Plan.

1.5 It is also important to note that the GBA is not a means of assessing the suitability of land for development and will not make recommendations if and where the Green Belt boundary should be altered. The purpose of the Green Belt Assessment is to understand the land designated as Green Belt and ensure it is robust and defensible for the future.

1.6 The GBA is just one part of the wider evidence base which will inform the Local Plan. The GBA will sit alongside a variety of other evidence based studies which, together, will ensure that the most appropriate Local Plan is prepared and that environmental, economic and social elements have been taken into account to be in conformity with the NPPF.

Extent of the Green Belt Assessment

1.7 For clarification, the extent of this study is limited to the administrative boundaries of Tandridge District. Whilst it is acknowledged that Green Belt is not constrained by the borders of Local Authority areas; to conduct a Green Belt Assessment is a decision for each Local Authority to take.

1.8 To date, no formal guidance has been prepared to direct Green Belt Assessments. However, there are examples of Green Belt Assessments across Surrey, and the Country. Each Assessment has used a slightly different methodology to reflect the intended purpose of the Local Authorities’ GBA. Tandridge District Council have
drawn from the lessons learnt of these methodologies to ensure the Council’s GBA is fit for its intended purpose, as set out in paragraph 1.5 of this paper.

1.9 In preparing this methodology, the Council have engaged with Local Authorities and stakeholders. Any comments where relevant have helped to shape this document. The Council have a legal requirement to work with our neighbouring authorities and relevant stakeholders as part of the Duty to Cooperate. The Council will ensure that this is done at appropriate points throughout the plan making process.

**The Green Belt Assessment Evidence Base**

1.10 Once completed, the Council will carry out a peer review of the assessment and obtain an independent view on the final document. This independence could be obtained from other Local Authorities or by commissioning a representative from a national planning body such as the Planning Officers Society, to act as a ‘critical friend’.

1.11 The Green Belt Assessment will be presented as a report to the Planning Policy Committee as a piece of evidence in the plan-making process. The report will not form policy nor be able to amend the boundaries of the existing Green Belt in any way. This can only be done through the Local Plan.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

1.12 The input from key stakeholders was sought in the preparation of this document and comments, where relevant, have helped to shape this document. Engagement took place during June 2015 and those invited to get involved included:

- Parish councils,
- elected members,
- residents associations
- community groups, and
- development professionals.

1.13 Comments received through this engagement and the Council’s response can be found on the Council’s website either as an appendix to the Planning Policy Committee 25th June 2015 or within the Planning Policy area.
2.0 The Green Belt over time

2.1 Tandridge District has the highest percentage of Green Belt in the country (94%) and can attest to the fact that Green Belt policy has been successful at enabling the District to fend off extensive development and to retain the rural nature that makes Tandridge so appealing not just to residents and visitors, but to those wishing to live and work here.

2.2 For the Council to consider the Green Belt in its current context, it is essential to have regard to its inception and the reasons for its designation. Recognition must be given to any notable change since the introduction of the Green Belt up to the present day to ensure that the Green Belt is appropriately defined as a defensible boundary going forward and in accordance with paragraph 83 of the NPPF, to endure permanence beyond the plan period.

2.3 The end of the plan period for the emerging Local Plan will be 2033, almost a century after Green Belts were first conceived and the GBA assesses how the concept of the Green Belt has changed over this extensive period of time.

National

2.4 Before the premise of Green Belt, homes and other development were constructed in the countryside and urban areas. The prospect of Green Belt was then first considered in a political forum in 1935 by London County Council, with the view that the Green Belt would provide suitable recreational space for London and was often referred to as a ‘Green Girdle’.

2.6 This later led on to the initiation of the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act in 1938, which introduced the powers for Local Authorities to purchase land which would form the Green Belt, thereby protecting land from development primarily because it was in public ownership. However, it was not until after World War II, which saw landscapes in London and the South East shift dramatically, that the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 was introduced. This Act enabled Local Authorities to include Green Belt areas in their development plans, with the boundaries at this time, predominantly being guided by landownership.

2.7 In 1955, twenty years after the concept of Green Belt was first discussed politically, Ministerial Circular 42/55\(^1\) introduced the concept of Green Belt purposes and the importance of defining clear boundaries. Three purposes were originally identified. These three purposes were:

a) To check the growth of a large built up area;

b) To prevent neighbouring towns form merging into one another;

c) To preserve the special character of a town.

2.8 It was through the introduction of these purposes that the concept of the Green Belt further changed, altering from an recreational expanse serving London communities, to an area that served to prevent development.

2.9 Since these early years of inception the emphasis on protection and the concept of the Green Belt has remained relatively consistent, and the wording from the Circular 42/55 was a feature of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 2: Green Belts; which was originally published in 1988. This PPG also reflected DOE Circular 14/84 and endorsed a further two ‘purposes’ to the original three. These two new purposes focussed of preventing London from encroaching into the Countryside and helping to serve urban regeneration. PPG2 remained in place, despite updated iterations, until 2012.

2.10 In 2012, the Coalition Government introduced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF consolidated over 1,000 pages of national planning policy documents to a 49 page document. Even though PPG2 was consolidated, the five purposes of the Green Belt remained as did the importance of its openness and permanence. These purposes are:

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

2.11 The NPPF also states that in developing Local Plans “…authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term…” (paragraph 83). To date, however, no assessment of the entire Green Belt in Tandridge has taken place.

2.12 It is these purposes that define what a Green Belt should be and only by understanding how the Green Belt in Tandridge currently functions against these purposes and the other elements of the NPPF will the Council be able to withstand the scrutiny and challenge brought about by the Local Plan process and planning applications.

2.13 However, despite the purposes, Green Belt policy is not a ‘policy blanket’ that can claim to have left the District unchanged in the intervening years since it was introduced. Policy has always allowed and continues to allow for infilling within the Green Belt, the reuse of previously developed land and for certain types of usage such as cemeteries and land for recreation to continue to come forward. For the most part, many of the allowable uses within the Green Belt are sympathetic in nature, such as equine paddocks and agricultural facilities. However, there are other uses that over time may have enabled potential change to occur and it is only through proper assessment can we consider the impact of this.
The Metropolitan Green Belt which covers much of Surrey County had its boundary established and adopted through the 1958 Surrey Development Plan. The purpose of the boundary was to create a "...metropolitan Green Belt, which encircles the built-up area of Metropolitan Surrey is to provide a stretch of mainly open country as near as possible to London, to act as a barrier against further outward spread of building development and to provide an area in which people now living in the overcrowded districts can find recreation and enjoyment" (Part 2, Paragraph 10).

The boundary for the Green Belt remained the same until strategic planning powers were devolved to the Local Authorities and the remit of boundary amendments became part of the Local Planning process. For Tandridge, this meant that no amendments took place until 1986, in the South of the Downs Local Plan which brought about the insetting of Lingfield and Smallfield and minor amendments to Oxted, Limpsfield and Hurst Green. Both Old Oxted and Limpsfield Chart, which had formerly been excluded from the Green Belt regained their Green Belt status.

Since that time, only minor amendments to the larger settlements of the district have been made through the planning process, namely through the North of the Downs Local Plan in 1992 which proposed ‘reserve land’ for future development at Caterham and Whyteleafe and then further minor amendments to the key urban settlements in Tandridge District Local Plan in 2001. No changes to Green Belt boundaries have taken place since.

Despite such a limited number of actual boundary amendments since 1958, the District and its communities have, by the nature of passing time, experienced much change, from things including new and growing infrastructure provisions in response to modern lifestyles, increased car usage, changing farming practices, minerals extraction, as well as demographic changes such as increasing and changing population profiles. To make an assumption that the current Green Belt continues to function effectively in all cases, and that is has not undergone any notable change since it was implemented, is not considered reasonable in the face of all the time that has passed.

Development pressures are not just a challenge for Tandridge District, but for all Local Authorities across Surrey and beyond. The constraints of the Green Belt are experienced by the majority of Surrey authorities and our neighbours in Kent, Sussex and London. Under the powers of the Duty to Cooperate, instances may arise where authorities, including Tandridge, are asked to accommodate the unmet growth from elsewhere. In these instances it is crucial for each authority to be able to utilise a complete and robust evidence base to guide engagement and respond appropriately. The GBA will be just one part of the evidence that can bolster the Council’s position and its response to any such requests.
3.0 Methodology

3.1 There is no national guidance on how to conduct a Green Belt Assessment, as such there is minimal best practice guidance to inform the process. However, what is important is that any assessment carried out must have regard to and be consistent with the policies in the NPPF whilst considering how the Green Belt is relevant to Tandridge.

3.2 This section sets out the approach for carrying out the GBA. This will involve a 3 stage process outlined below; followed by a detailed description of what is involved in each step. Consideration of other policy is not included in the processes for this methodology.

Stage 1: Defining the Assessment Area

Stage 2: Assessment process: How does each parcel perform against the purposes of the Green Belt and what is the relationship between settlements and the Green Belt?

Stage 3: Conclusions

See flow chart at Figure 1 for further clarity.

3.3 As mentioned in paragraph 2.8, Paragraph 80, of the National Planning Policy Framework stipulates that the Green Belt should serve the following five purposes:

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

3.4 Given that these purposes are set at a national level and apply to all areas of Green Belt in the Country, there is no requirement for Green Belt to serve all of the five purposes, and local interpretation and consideration of how these purposes apply at a local level is essential.
Figure 1: Green Belt Assessment Methodology

Stage 1: Defining the Assessment Area

Divide all Green Belt land into parcels using roads, railways, or other physical features

Site Assessments

Using key questions as a guide, determine which of the Green Belt purposes are applicable to each parcel and how effectively each of the purposes are served.

Stage 2: Assessment process

Consider the context of settlements and assess their relationship with the Green Belt.

Recognise any areas that may require further and more detailed assessment should it be necessary.

Stage 3: Conclusions

Make an overall conclusion as to how the parcel serves the wider Green Belt function. This will be presented using a colour coded map to accord with the outcome of the assessment.
Stage 1 - Defining the Assessment Area

3.5 Of the 24,800ha of land that forms Tandridge District, 23,300ha (94%) is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The GBA will assess the entirety of the existing Green Belt and to make the process more manageable the study area will be divided up into assessment parcels. This also enables the Council to consider the Green Belt in more detail, thus allowing for a more robust and accurate assessment process.

Strategic Assessment Area – Metropolitan Green Belt

3.6 The Metropolitan Green Belt has a primary function to deal with the growth of London. Therefore as a first stage an overarching strategic consideration of the metropolitan Green Belt will be considered in terms of how the Green Belt within Tandridge contributes to this will take place. The consideration of this element will be mapped and explained in the final GBA report.

Local Assessment Area – Tandridge District

3.7 At a more district specific level, the District has been divided into parcels. Defining the boundary of each land parcel effectively is an important part of the process. If the parcels are too large it becomes difficult to assess the qualities and characteristics of different sub areas, thus impacting upon the understanding of how it performs against the national purposes. Conversely, if the parcels are drawn too small then assessing their wider significance becomes difficult.

3.8 The assessment process is Green Belt specific, therefore any areas of the District which are not designated as Green Belt, including inset villages and sites, will not be considered through the GBA. However, any villages and/or areas which retain Green Belt status will be included in the process. Further consideration of how settlements will be assessed is set out in paragraph 3.12, below and in Chapter 4.

3.9 Whilst there may be an argument for only assessing specific areas of the Green Belt and excluding others, eliminating parcels of land from the assessment process on the grounds of constraints such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, etc. is to be avoided. These considerations are unrelated to Green Belt purposes and would not benefit the process or demonstrate an objective assessment of the Green Belt. Therefore all Green Belt land in Tandridge will be assessed in order to determine how it currently functions and how effectively it serves the national purposes without regard to other constraints, policies or development needs. The GBA is just one part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of the Local Plan and will be considered alongside of a variety of other studies including those which look at the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, sustainability and an array of other designations and topics.

3.10 The NPPF and in particular paragraph 85, is clear that redefining Green Belt boundaries can only take place through the Local Plan process. Whilst the GBA will not draw any conclusions regarding the Green Belt boundary, the logic of the NPPF has been taken on board to assist in defining the study parcels for the assessment process. As such, the Council have used “…physical features that are readily
recognisable and likely to be permanent,” as a guide for defining study parcels and have primarily used the hierarchy of considerations set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Study Area Boundary</th>
<th>The administrative boundaries of the District will be used to demonstrate the wider study area.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tandridge District Boundary</td>
<td>Railway lines and A-Roads flow across the District and form clear physical boundaries which are readily available to assist in guiding study area definition in the first instance. Both of these physical boundaries are clearly demarcated and due to the difficulties of moving either of these, have an assurance of permanence. Where A-Roads and railway lines run in parallel, the railway line will be used².</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority features</th>
<th>Railway lines and A-Roads flow across the District and form clear physical boundaries which are readily available to assist in guiding study area definition in the first instance. Both of these physical boundaries are clearly demarcated and due to the difficulties of moving either of these, have an assurance of permanence. Where A-Roads and railway lines run in parallel, the railway line will be used².</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Railway lines and A-Roads</td>
<td>Following the application of the priority features and where study parcels are still impractically manageable, or where priority features would not allow for meaningful assessment, secondary features will be used to further divide parcels. B-Class roads are extensive within the District, significantly more so than railways and A-Roads. Therefore, they further provide a robust physical boundary upon which to define study parcels. For completeness, and where possible, the entirety of a settlement was included within the same study parcel. However, in some cases, it was not possible to do so, and as such an additional layer of study for settlements in accordance with the information set out in Chapter 4 will take place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Secondary features</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tertiary features</th>
<th>Should it be necessary to further divide study parcels, and where a secondary feature is not available, it may be necessary to use other physical elements as a guide. This could include public rights of way, treelines, topographical ridgelines etc. Should it be necessary to use these, this will be justified and set out in the GBA final report.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any other notable physical feature</td>
<td>Should it be necessary to further divide study parcels, and where a secondary feature is not available, it may be necessary to use other physical elements as a guide. This could include public rights of way, treelines, topographical ridgelines etc. Should it be necessary to use these, this will be justified and set out in the GBA final report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Whilst the Council recognise that in some instances, the railway is either sub-level, in tunnels, or above ground on viaducts, it was felt that they were significant enough of a feature to allow different parcels to be separated for assessment purposes.
3.11 The nature of Tandridge District is predominantly rural and the built environment is vastly outweighed by Countryside. With this in mind, the Council, when determining parcels, has taken a pragmatic approach and not sub-divided study parcels, where it is clearly not necessary to do so, or where no other appropriate alternative exists.

3.12 Tandridge District has a variety of settlements across the area and it is important that these are given due consideration in their own right. However, in some cases, it was not possible to identify parcel boundaries which fully encapsulated entire settlements, whilst also ensuring the parcel was an appropriate size for assessment. As such, an additional layer of study areas has been applied and the boundaries for those settlements defined in the Green Belt\(^3\) will be used to ensure that these settlements are suitably considered as a whole.

3.13 The assessment parcels map is provided at Appendix 1.

**How will Green Belt Areas in surrounding Local Authority Areas be assessed?**

3.14 The Council will not assess any Green Belt land outside of its administrative boundaries. Whilst it is acknowledged that Green Belt is not constrained by administrative boundaries it is for other Local Authorities to decide if and how they carry out a GBA.

3.15 At most, where a study parcel abuts the District boundary, officers may, whilst on site, use vantage points from other areas, to consider the parcel in the wider context, if applicable.

**How will site visits be conducted?**

3.16 Site visits will be the most important element of GBA and are central to the process; as such, all parcels across the study area will undergo a physical site visit. Each parcel will be visited by two members of Council staff, at least one of which will always be a member of the Council’s Planning Policy team. This ‘buddy system’ ensures that discussion about how purposes apply and the assessment process, can take place on site so as to arrive at a balanced view.

3.17 Whilst some of the assessment process can be carried out at stopping points, by car, it will more than often be necessary to carry out assessments on foot, so as to penetrate the areas of the parcels which cannot be accessed by a vehicle. Traversing the areas on foot will allow assessing officers to obtain views from a variety of positions, both within and on the edge of a parcel and enable multiple photo opportunities to record the process and identify key features which will impact upon the assessment findings. Public rights of way and other available accesses will be utilised to navigate parcels in the first instance. Only where it is deemed unavoidable will the Council seek access to areas from private landowners.

\(^3\) As set out in the Local Plan Part 2 – Detailed Polices (2014)
Stage 2 - Assessment process: How does each parcel perform against the purposes of the Green Belt?

3.18 In order to determine how the Green Belt in Tandridge performs against the purposes set out in the NPPF the assessment process will be carried out as follows:

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

3.19 Urban sprawl can be defined as the advancement of ad hoc, sporadic and unplanned development beyond the clear physical boundary of a developed settlement. If there is a clearly defined physical boundary line between the built form of the urban area and the countryside then this would suggest that any development has more than likely been planned and that the Green Belt has been effective in guiding and restricting it. If that line has been blurred by ad hoc infilling or patchy development and a clear boundary no longer exists that parcel may be less effective at restricting urban sprawl.

3.20 This will be predominantly applicable where Green Belt land lies close to the periphery of the built environment within and adjacent to the District. Large built up areas for Tandridge are primarily defined as those which are inset from the Green Belt and would arguably apply to the main settlements of Oxted and Caterham etc. However, due to the dispersed nature of settlements throughout the District, a local application of this purpose is more appropriate and may also apply to those settlements with defined boundaries and those which have an identifiable built nature, such as Godstone, Bletchingley, Nutfield and Dormansland etc.

3.21 The following questions will be used to assist in the assessment process:

- What are the characteristics of development, if any? i.e. is the development which exists; planned, ad-hoc or sporadic?
  - Has this changed significantly since the Green Belt was first designated?
- Is any area of the parcel physically connected to a built up area/settlement?
- Is there a strong, defensible boundary between the existing built up area and the Green Belt, for example: main roads, built form, watercourses, etc.? Or is there another notable feature which is more effective in preventing urban sprawl i.e. a hilltop or ridgeline, or drainage ditch, etc.?

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns / settlements merging into one another

3.22 This purpose will apply where neighbouring towns or settlements could merge if the land between them did not remain in the Green Belt. This will also have consideration to the areas of Green Belt which sit between settlements within and outside of the District where applicable i.e. East Grinstead, New Addington and Biggin Hill etc. For the purpose of the GBA, the locations listed in Chapter 4 will be considered in the context of this purpose.

3.23 It is important to note that this purpose focusses on towns and settlements and does not make an allowance for sub-areas and neighbourhoods within the settlements, such as a cluster of roads, or a particular development. Sub-areas and locally recognised
neighbourhoods are usually already conjoined to the wider settlement and function within the scope of the wider settlement.

3.24 The now revoked Planning Practice Guidance 2: Green Belts, suggested that Green Belts should be several miles wide to allow for a notable distance surrounding built up areas. However, this was not carried forward into the NPPF or PPG and the guidance as to what constitutes a suitable gap between settlements no longer exists. Furthermore, the distance between settlements may be significantly less in some cases than in others yet still serve a vital role in preventing the merging of areas. As such, the Council will not consider a specific distance to be the threshold, but instead consider the role played by the land that sits between settlements. The potential coalescence of towns or settlements may be visual and/or physical and could depend upon factors such as tree cover or topography and both site visits and desktop study will be necessary to assess this.

3.25 Where towns or settlements are at risk of merging without the land between them remaining in the Green Belt then these areas of countryside will demonstrate a much more significant ability to meet this purpose and be fundamental to preventing coalescence.

3.26 The following questions will be used to assist in the assessment process:

- What settlements/towns are within the parcel?
- Would the reduction in the gap notably compromise the separation of settlements and the overall openness of the parcel visually or physically?
- Does this parcel, either in part or in its entirety, act as a buffer to the merging/coalescence of 2 or more settlements?
- Can you see any neighbouring settlement ‘on the ground’? If not, what prevents this? i.e. too far away, visual obstruction from topography, buildings or woodlands, etc.?

**Purpose 3 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**

3.27 All of the countryside in the District is designated as Green Belt, but not all of the Green Belt in Tandridge is countryside as it includes areas of industrial development and a variety of more rural settlements. For the purposes of the GBA, the countryside can be defined as land which is not inset from the Green Belt, a defined village in the Green Belt or an industrial area as set out in the Council's most up to date Economic Needs Assessment. Furthermore, encroachment can be defined as an area of Green Belt where development exists but which is not connected to a larger built up area. Therefore, with these definitions in mind, purpose 3 is likely to apply to all land parcels but may do so to varying degrees and it is this that will being assessed, further highlighting why it is important for the Council to consider the entirety of the Green Belt.

3.28 In order to assess how effectively a parcel serves this purpose, a judgment must be made on whether land preserves the countryside or whether it has been infringed upon by ‘unsympathetic’ development types. It should, however, be noted that landscape quality is not a consideration in Green Belt terms.
3.29 The assessment for this purpose is reliant on the context of the area and where Green Belt land contains development or visual and/or physical obstructions, the extent to how it meets this purpose may be diluted somewhat. However, it may also be that where buildings do exist in the area, some buildings (such as those used for agriculture, equine activities or forestry) would not be considered inappropriate development and therefore may not be considered out of place and in fact could be a character feature of that area. Perception is also an important factor here and certain topographies and natural screening such as woodlands and hedgerows may provide a sense of being in the countryside, despite the area being adjacent to a built up area.

3.30 With these characteristics in mind a judgement must be made as to whether the parcel is helping to safeguard the wider countryside from encroachment.

3.31 The following questions will be used to assist in the assessment process:

- What are the characteristics and features of the area?
- What type of development exists within the area? For example: agricultural buildings, industrial uses, etc.
- Does the parcel contain countryside?
- What is the size and scale of the development and/or visual obstructions within the parcel? i.e. woodlands, topography etc.

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

3.32 Whilst Purpose 4 is unlikely to apply to Tandridge on the same scale as some historic towns such as Oxford or York the District does have areas with special historic character and it is important that these continue to be valued in the local area and should be protected. This primarily relates to areas which are designated as a Conservation Area. Consideration was given to isolated Listed Buildings and their relevance under this purpose, however, were discounted due to the fact that the purpose relates to historic towns with a larger built form than individual structures.

3.33 Often, the setting of a conservation area plays a key role in contributing to the success of historic areas and the Green Belt may have a direct role in supporting and enhancing these characteristics. For this reason the assessment of Purpose 4, will be done with this in mind and apply consideration of the local context, taking into account Conservation Area Appraisals, relevant sections of village design statements and neighbourhood plans, where applicable.

3.34 The following questions will be used to assist in the assessment process:

- Are there any designated historic conservation areas within or visible from the parcel?
- How would you describe the view from, within, into and out of the conservation area?
- How does the parcel complement the setting of the conservation area?

Purpose 5 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
3.35 By its nature and designation, all Green Belt should contribute to the recycling of derelict and urban land as it is generally a prohibitive designation where development is rarely acceptable. However, in reality it is very difficult to consistently assess how Green Belt designation is directly responsible for brownfield development. This is because an assumption is being made about the viability and developability of brownfield sites, when in reality a site may not have come forward, irrespective of whether an alternative site was available and other barriers to development may exist such as land price or contamination.

3.36 For this reason, purpose 5 has always proved to be difficult to assess for particular areas, and can only be effectively considered on a case by case basis if and where a site is being considered for development. Therefore the GBA will not assess parcels against Purpose 5 as part of the Green Belt Assessment process. Such assessment will only be considered if and when necessary through the formal Local Plan process.
4.0 Assessing villages and settlements in the Green Belt

4.1 As mentioned in Chapter 3, it was not always possible to encapsulate entire settlements within assessment parcels and additional study areas have been identified to compensate for this and ensure that settlements, as a whole, are considered. For the GBA process, a combination of current settlement policy and knowledge of parishes has been used to determine the list of locations that are considered to be individual settlements:

Defined Villages in the Green Belt:
- Bletchingley;
- Blindley Heath;
- Dormansland;
- Felbridge;
- Godstone;
- Old Oxted;
- South Godstone;
- South Nutfield; and
- Tatsfield.

Other Green Belt Settlements
- Domewood;
- Dormans Park;
- Horne;
- Limpsfield Chart;
- Nutfield;
- Tandridge;

Settlements that are inset from the Green Belt:
- Caterham (Caterham Valley, Caterham-on-the-Hill);
- Whyteleafe;
- Warlingham;
- Oxted;
- Hurst Green;
- Limpsfield
- Woldingham;
- Lingfield;
- Smallfield;

4.2 The GBA process is focused on assessing the function of the Green Belt, therefore, it is integral that those settlements which remain in the Green Belt are considered fully, both in their own right and as part of the wider parcel assessments. Whereas, those areas of the district which are not designated as Green Belt, including inset villages, will only be considered in the context of their relationship to the Green Belt.
4.3 The assessment of how purposes apply to existing settlements is, likely to require a slightly different approach, given that they, by their nature, have a built form. The NPPF (Paragraph 86), states that:

“If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.”

4.4 However, it is not the role of the GBA to make any assumptions about future development, or potential insetting of settlements. Instead the GBA is to assess the role of the Green Belt as it currently stands, and identify how effectively it serves the purposes as set out in the NPPF. Only through the formal Local Plan process, can the prospects of insetting and future development be considered.

4.5 As such, the consideration of villages will focus on the how the character and form of the village contributes to the openness of the Green Belt, the role of the Green Belt in determining the setting of the village and any historic characteristics that it may have. Factors which will be observed for assessment purposes include:

- Density of buildings in the village
- Built form of the village
- Contribution to the openness of surrounding Green Belt when considering local context.
- Are there any other mechanisms which apply in the area, which protect the character i.e. conservation area, etc.?

4.6 Once again, in the case of settlements that do not have a Green Belt designation, these factors are unlikely to be as extensively considered.
5.0  **Stage 3 - Conclusions**

5.1 Determining whether or not a parcel is effective at serving a purpose or purposes is arguably a subjective task. The NPPF does not say that land within the Green Belt needs to serve all 5 purposes to be effective and the aim is to assess and demonstrate how each parcel of land performs against the purposes that are relevant. There is also no guidance as to whether any of the Green Belt purposes carry more weight than the others. Therefore, the purpose of the GBA is not to determine whether parcels of land are more important to preserve than others or if one purpose carries greater weight than another. However, as an assessment process and technical document, conclusions regarding the overall assessment of a parcel will be drawn and detailed on a parcel by parcel description in the final report. The outputs of the final report will be presented in two key ways:

- Output 1 – Parcel and settlement analysis; and
- Output 2 – Illustrative maps

**Output 1 – Parcel & Settlement Analysis**

5.2 A detailed description and analysis of the study parcel and/or settlement area, accompanied by on site photos and maps, will form the final report. This analysis will include both contextual and technical information as well as a breakdown of each purpose and how it applies. The relationships between settlements and the Green Belt will also be considered and set out in the report.

5.3 Due to the size of the parcels and the varied characteristics of each one, it is likely that an overall conclusion of a parcel cannot be consistently reached and that sub areas and locations within the parcel may be found to clearly deviate from how the parcel functions overall. It would not be a robust approach to conclude that a whole parcel functions the same way where the assessment clearly indicates otherwise. Therefore, any notable deviations from how the wider parcel performs will be set out and could identify where further research may be needed, beyond the GBA, should it be necessary.

**Output 2 – Illustrative maps**

5.4 For illustrative purposes and to assist in presenting an overview of the more detailed analysis set out in Output 1, six maps will be produced.

- Study Area Map (see Appendix 1) - will set out the defined parcels to show only the parcel boundaries and to depict the study area.
- 4 x Purposes Maps - will depict how the parcels have been found to serve each of the four purposes being assessed⁴.
- Collaborative Map - will present an overall conclusion and identify areas which may need further and more detailed assessment, should it be necessary.

5.5 Whilst other Green Belt studies elsewhere have used a “scoring” system, the Council have chosen not to take this approach given that the purpose of this assessment is not

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⁴ As detailed in this methodology, purpose five will not be included as part of this process.
to determine which parcels of land have "collected" the most purposes. It is about assessing how effective a parcel of land is at serving the Green Belt purposes that are applicable to it. Therefore a colour coded approach is deemed more appropriate in presenting the findings of the GBA, and the aim of it, which is to carry out an up to date assessment of the Green Belt and its efficiency in serving the purposes that define the designation.

5.6 As such, in the case of the four 'purposes' maps, each parcel will be assigned a variation of the colour green to represent how effectively it serves that specific purpose. The colour coding relates accordingly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark Green</td>
<td>The parcel demonstrably serves the purpose in a clear and obvious way and to a greater extent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Green</td>
<td>The parcels certainly serves the purpose, but to a lesser extent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light green</td>
<td>The parcel serves the purpose to little or no extent, or is not applicable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7 Using GIS, the 'collaborative map' will be prepared by combining all four of the 'purposes' maps and 'layering up' the shades of green which have been attributed to them based on the assessment process. It is envisaged that by layering up the shades of green from across the four 'purposes' maps, the green shading will be more variable. For example, a parcel that has achieved a 'dark green' in all stages will remain so, however, those parcels where a different shade of green has been attributed, will result in lighter shade overall, therefore, resulting in a map which combines the findings of the overall process.

5.8 In addition to the variable shading on the collaborative map, areas which were identified through the detailed analysis stages as clearly deviating from the wider conclusions of a parcel will be highlighted as areas where further and more detailed assessment could be carried out. These deviations may occur where clusters of development have taken place within a much wider, more open area of land, or where defined development boundaries on the edge of a settlement do not exist, yet the remainder of the parcel contains little or no development etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Areas within defined parcels where there is a clear deviation from the overall assessment of the wider parcel i.e. an area which serves the purposes less obviously/effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Areas within defined parcels where there is a clear deviation from the overall assessment of the wider parcel i.e. an area which serves the purposes more obviously/effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9 In these cases, the colour purple and blue will be used and an indicative area highlighted on the map. Highlighting an area in this way does not identify it as
somewhere where the Green Belt is weak or strong, and as such should be amended, but is an area where further and more detailed research would be of benefit. It is also a robust approach which demonstrates that nuances within wider parcels have been acknowledged.

5.10 The GBA should be recognised as an information collecting exercise to determine the extent to which Green Belt land in Tandridge serves the purposes in the NPPF and to ensure that the Council can demonstrate an up to date assessment of the designated land in the District. The GBA is just one piece of the wider evidence base which will be used to inform the Local Plan.

5.11 **The GBA will not represent planning policy nor make any recommendations for boundary amendment or settlement insetting.**
Appendix 1 Map of Assessment Parcels