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Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by LUC

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Client: Manchester City Council, on behalf of Bolton MBC, Bury MBC, Manchester City Council, Oldham MBC, Rochdale MBC, Salford CC, Stockport MBC, Tameside MBC, Trafford MBC and Wigan MBC

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1 Introduction

Study objectives and scope

1.1 LUC was commissioned on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester Authorities[1] by Manchester City Council to undertake an assessment of the Green Belt within Greater Manchester. The Study was overseen by a Steering Group comprising officers of the respective authorities.

1.2 The overall aim of the Study was to assess the extent to which the land within the Greater Manchester Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts, 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.

1.3 The NPPF attaches great importance to Green Belts and stresses that their essential characteristics are 'openness and permanence'. It also advises that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a local plan.

1.4 The broad extent of the Green Belt in Greater Manchester was established in the 1981 Greater Manchester Structure Plan and detailed boundaries were introduced in the Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan which was adopted in 1984. A full assessment of the Green Belt boundaries in Greater Manchester has not been undertaken since the original boundaries were adopted in 1984, although there have been alterations through individual Local Authority development plans where exceptional circumstances have required amendments, or where additional land was added to the Green Belt through Local Plans in the 1980's and 1990's.

1.5 The aim of this Green Belt Assessment is therefore to provide the Greater Manchester Authorities with an objective, evidence-based and independent assessment of how Manchester's Green Belt contributes to the five purposes of Green Belt, as set out in national policy. It also examines the case for including within the Green Belt potential additional areas of land that currently lie outside it. **The Study does not advise on the suitability or potential of land in Great Manchester for development. It also does not consider whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist or make any recommendations relating to the alteration or review of Green Belt boundaries.**

1.6 There is an important difference between a Green Belt Assessment, which assesses the relative performance of the Green Belt, and a Green Belt Review, which looks at the need for areas to be removed or added to the Green Belt (for example to accommodate development). A Green Belt Review requires judgements to be made about the amount and location of land that should be added to or removed from the Green Belt, and is informed by a Green Belt Assessment as well as other planning issues. This Study is the former - a Green Belt 'Assessment'.

[1] Bolton MBC, Bury MBC, Manchester City Council, Oldham MBC, Rochdale MBC, Salford CC, Stockport MBC, Tameside MBC, Trafford MBC and Wigan MBC.

1.7 The outputs of the study, alongside other assessments will form a component of the evidence base informing the preparation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF). This is a joint plan to manage the supply of land for housing and employment across Greater Manchester that will ensure that appropriate land is available to deliver development requirements up to 2035. In due course, the GMSF will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 20 of the 2004 Act. The soundness of the GMSF will depend upon whether it is "*justified*" as "*the most appropriate strategy, when compared against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence".*

1.8 The GMSF will focus primarily on:

- how much land is required for growth and where;
- the infrastructure requirements to deliver that growth; and
- what to protect – the environmental capacity of Greater Manchester to accommodate development in the most sustainable manner.

1.9 This Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment will be an important part of the GMSF evidence base, providing evidence to support the identification of Green Belt boundaries that are capable of enduring beyond the Plan period in line with National Policy.

Consultation

1.10 As with other elements of work involved in the preparation of the GMSF, a key element of this Study is stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders include the ten Greater Manchester authorities and their neighbouring authorities. A clear record of stakeholder engagement is necessary to demonstrate that the requirements of the duty to co-operate have been met, as described in Section 110 of the Localism Act (2011). The duty:

- Relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas.
- Requires that councils and public bodies *'engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis'* to develop strategic policies to address such issues.
- Requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.

1.11 Paragraph 156 of the NPPF sets out the strategic issues where co-operation might be appropriate, and includes a number of cross boundary issues that are closely linked to Green Belt (such as the provision of homes and jobs etc.).

1.12 Consultation with the neighbouring Duty to Co-operate authorities was undertaken on the methodology used for the Green Belt Assessment and the draft report. Comments raised were reviewed and following discussion with the steering group, amendments were made (where appropriate) to the method and assessment of the Green Belt parcels.

Report structure

1.13 This chapter has introduced the Greater Manchester Green Belt assessment and described the background to and scope of the project. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the context to the Study, in terms of planning policy and the evolution and character of the Greater Manchester Green Belt.
- **Chapter 3** describes the Study methodology, including the criteria used to assess the Green Belt against the NPPF purposes.
- **Chapter 4** reports the findings of the Study.
- **Chapter 5** sets out the conclusions of the study and recommended next steps.

2 Context

2.1 This chapter sets out the context for the study in terms of National Green Belt policy and practice guidance which has shaped the approach to the assessment. A summary is also provided of the evolution of the Greater Manchester Green Belt, its overall character and the existing local planning policy context.

National Green Belt policy

2.2 The principle of maintaining a ring of open country around cities can be traced back to the 16th century when Elizabeth I forbade any building on new sites within three miles of the city gates of London. This was motivated by public health reasons, to prevent the spread of the plague, and to ensure a constant supply of food for the metropolis.

2.3 The importance of these considerations was later recognised by Ebenezer Howard, a pioneer of British town planning, in his book of 1898 Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform in which he referred to '*an attractive setting within the town could develop and which would maintain, close at hand, the fresh delights of the countryside - field, hedgerow and woodland*'.

2.4 The only mechanism available at the time to realise this vision, however, was the acquisition of land by public authorities. In 1935 the London County Council Regional Planning Committee therefore put forward a scheme '*to provide a reserve supply of public open spaces and of recreational areas and to establish a Green Belt or girdle of open space lands, not necessarily continuous, but as readily accessible from the completely urbanised area of London as practicable*'. This arrangement was formalised by the 1938 Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act.

2.5 In 1955, Government Circular 42/55 codified Green Belt provisions and extended the principle beyond London. This was replaced by Planning Policy Guidance 2 in 1988 and in 2012, the Government replaced PPG2 with paragraphs 79–92 of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This has since been supplemented by relevant National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

2.6 Paragraph 79 of 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'. This is elaborated in NPPF paragraph 80, which states that Green Belts should serve five purposes, as set out below. The NPPF does not infer that any differential weighting should be applied to the five purposes.

The purposes of Green Belt

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

2.7 The NPPF emphasises in paragraph 83 that local planning authorities should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. It goes on to state that '*once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period*'.

2.8 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF suggests that Local Planning Authorities may wish to identify areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt to accommodate long-term development needs well beyond the plan period. New boundaries must have regard for the permanence of the designation by redefining boundaries which endure beyond the Local Plan period. New boundaries should be defined clearly, using readily recognisable, permanent physical features.

2.9 Paragraph 82 of the NPPF indicates that, if proposing a new Green Belt, local planning authorities should:

- demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;
- set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;
- show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;
- demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with Local Plans for adjoining areas; and
- show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.

2.10 Current guidance therefore makes it clear that the Green Belt is a strategic planning tool designed primarily to prevent the spread of development and the coalescence of urban areas. To this end, land should be designated because of its position, rather than its landscape quality or recreational use. However, the NPPF states that "*local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land*" (Paragraph 81).

Greater Manchester local planning policy

The Authorities' Local Plans

2.11 **Table 2.1** provides a summary of the current status of the Local Plans within the ten Greater Manchester Authorities, including reference to policies of relevance to the Green Belt.

Table 2.1: Summary of the Greater Manchester Authorities' Local Plans – Green Belt Context

Local Plans and Strategies
Bolton MBC
Bolton's Core Strategy Development Plan Document, which will be used to decide on planning application in Bolton up to the year 2027, was adopted in March 2011. The Spatial View for Bolton states that new development will be concentrated mostly in the existing urban area of the Borough and that the existing Green Belt boundary will remain unchanged, except in the south-eastern part of the Borough where a Green Belt boundary adjustment may be made to provide for Bolton's employment land requirements. *Policies relating to Green Belt:* The need to protect or maintain the existing Green Belt boundaries in the Borough is supported through Polices RA1 (Inner Bolton), RA3 (Breightmet), OA1 Horwich and Blackrod), OA3 (Westhoughton), OA5 (North Bolton), and OA6 (Little Lever and Kearsley). Policy OA4 (West Bolton) supports the maintenance of current Green Belt boundaries in West Bolton apart from around Cutacre, where a boundary adjustment to allow economic development is to be considered. Bolton's Allocations Plan sets out how the Core Strategy will be implemented and contains a number of policies to support this implementation. The Allocations Plan was adopted in December 2014. It proposes the deletion of some Green Belt land around Cutacre to allow for employment development in line with the Core Strategy and also the addition of a smaller area of land within Bolton to be added to the Green Belt. Policy CG7AP of the Allocations Plan provides the Council's stance on Green Belt land, preventing development in these areas which "does not maintain the openness of land or which conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt" with a limited number of exceptions. Limited infilling is to be permitted in villages at Hart Common and Scot Lane End.
Bury MBC
The Council is currently at an early stage in developing the Bury Local Plan which, once adopted, will replace the current adopted Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The current Bury UDP was adopted by the Council in August 1997 and acts as a guide for the future development or protection of land. All policies of the UDP have been saved apart from Policy OL7/1 (which expired in September 2007) and the Council has undertaken an assessment to determine consistency between the policies within the UDP and those set out in the NPPF. *Policies relating to Green Belt:* The UDP contains as one of its objectives in term to open the maintenance of a Green Belt which will be sustainable during and beyond the Plan period. This will allow for a limited amount of infill development within Green Belt boundaries. The policy has designated the boundaries of the Green Belt which are mainly concurrent with the Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan with a small number of

Local Plans and Strategies
modifications. The Council's assessment of the UDP's Green Belt policy concluded that the protection afforded to the Green Belt was largely in line with the NPPF's thrust; however when proposals for new development at Green Belt locations are considered the NPPF's definition of what should be considered as exceptions to inappropriate development should take precedence.
Manchester City
Manchester City's Core Strategy Development Plan Document, which describes the vision of Manchester from 2012 up to 2027 and outlines the planning policies which will be used to deliver that vision, was adopted in July 2012. *Policies relating to Green Belt:* Policy EN13 of the Manchester City Core Strategy addresses Green Belt provision in the Council area. No amendments to the Green Belt boundary are effected through the Core Strategy with the exception of the amendment in the vicinity of Manchester Airport, in accordance with Policy MA1. Policy MA1 supports the growth of the airport up to 2030 and areas needed for airport development (which involves the expansion of the developed airport area) have been excluded from the Green Belt.
Oldham MBC
Oldham MBC has produced the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document setting out the long-term vision and objectives for the Borough as well as providing policies to manage development in the Borough. The Joint DPD was adopted in November 2011 and provides development strategy up to 2026. The Joint DPD states that the focus for new homes, shops, jobs, education and leisure will be within sustainable and accessible locations towards the existing built-up areas of the Borough and that the current boundaries of the Green Belt are to be maintained. *Policies relating to Green Belt:* Policy 22 provides details about how the Council will manage Green Belt boundaries within Oldham. It clarifies that the main purpose of the Green Belt is to keep land permanently open. The policy also states that current Green Belt boundaries within Oldham are to be maintained and that development within the Green Belt is to be permitted provided that it does not conflict with national policies on Green Belt. The Borough has a small amount of safeguarded land called 'Land Reserved for Future Development' which protects land for future development needs. UDP (2006) Policy OE1.8 'Major Developed Site in the Green Belt' is currently saved and is to be assessed in the Site Allocations DPD. The policy allocates the Robert Fletcher (Greenfield) Ltd. site on the Proposals Map as a major developed site within the Green Belt. Redevelopment proposal are to be permitted at this location provided that a number of criteria are met.

Local Plans and Strategies

Rochdale MBC

The Rochdale Core Strategy, which would set out a long-term spatial vision, objectives and the planning and development strategy for the Borough up to 2026, was submitted for examination in October 2013. The examination was suspended in order that the Council might carry out an update of its Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) before re-opening in June 2015. As per the Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy, towards the south of the Borough in the Manchester fringe investment, development and improvements are to be focussed in:

- Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton town centres;
- economic growth corridors / areas;
- regeneration areas; and
- key corridors and gateways.

In the Pennine fringe, in the north of the Borough investment, development and improvements are to be focussed in:

- Littleborough town centre;
- Pennine gateways, river and canal corridors and reservoirs;
- key development sites; and
- the Pennine fringe visitor and rural economy.

Policies relating to Green Belt:

Policy G4 of the Core Strategy seeks to manage the Green Belt in the Borough to ensure that it continues its role in separating towns, preventing development from unnecessarily encroaching into the countryside, and directing appropriate development into the urban areas of Rochdale to assist regeneration. The policy highlights two areas of Green Belt in the north and south of the Borough where keys role for the designation have been identified. In the south the urban fringe countryside prevents neighbouring towns from merging and in the north the Pennine rural fringe prevents encroachment into the countryside. Development for the most part is to be limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by national planning policies at Green Belt locations. Existing major developed sites in the Green Belt will be encourage to continue operation and limited infilling and redevelopment will be permitted where it does not harm the Green Belt. Green Belt boundaries are expected to endure to the end of the Core Strategy period as there is no evidence currently that development needs will require the release of Green Belt land although a future review of the Green Belt may be necessary if long term needs cannot be met elsewhere.

Local Plans and Strategies

Salford City

Salford City Local Plan will set policies to guide development in the city up to 2036. The Plan is still in its early stage of preparation and until such a time as it is adopted, development in Salford will be guided by the city's Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The UDP was adopted in June 2006 and a number of policies have been saved by the Secretary of State beyond the original expiry date of June 2009.

Policies relating to Green Belt:

Policy EN1, which is one of policies that was saved from the UDP, addresses development which will affect the Green Belt designation in Salford. Inappropriate development is not to be permitted within the Green Belt other than in very special circumstances. The policy recognises that the most important attribute of the Green Belt is its openness and as such any development in these areas should only be permitted if this existing characteristic is maintained. The policy also maintains the existing boundaries of the Green Belt and on consideration of the development needs of Salford no development sites have been designated within these boundaries.

Stockport MBC

The Stockport Core Strategy DPD was adopted in March 2011 and sets out how the Council will meet future strategic development needs including housing, employment, retail, education and healthcare between 2011 and 2026. The Strategy in the document states that development should be focussed principally within Stockport Central Area, within other regeneration priority areas and at sites where specific regeneration needs have been identified and to lesser extend areas surrounding the Town, District and Large Local Centres, as well as in other locations that are genuinely sustainably accessible within the urban area.

Policies relating to Green Belt:

Over 46% of the Borough is designated as Green Belt, with those areas mainly located towards the eastern part of the Borough. The Core Strategy lists as one of its objectives the safeguarding of the permanence of the Borough's Green Belt.

Policy CS4 states that Green Belt sites will be allocated for housing in the Allocations DPD if this is necessary to meet the Borough's local needs. Alterations to the Green Belt boundary are only to be made when they can be justified by exceptional circumstances. Small infill sites within the Green Belt are not to be used for housing given their negligible contribution to housing in the Borough and the harmful cumulative impact such development might have on the openness of the Green Belt.

The Core Strategy identified the existing BAE Systems operations at Woodford all of which is within the Green Belt as having the potential to finish operations in 2012. Future use or redevelopment of Woodford Aerodrome should be considered only within the limits permitted by current Green Belt policy for this site.

Local Plans and Strategies

Tameside MBC

Production of the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD for Tameside was suspended in 2014 upon commencement of the GMSF as Joint Plan. Tameside have published an up-to-date Local Development Scheme that sets out a revised timetable for production of the Local Plan.

The policies of the Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP) have been saved beyond their expiry date of 27th September 2007. As such the Council will continue to apply relevant policies from the UDP to guide local development until such a time as they have been replaced by policies in the Borough's emerging Development Plan Documents.

Policies relating to Green Belt:

The majority of the countryside and open land in Tameside is within the Greater Manchester Green Belt. Policy OL1 seeks to protect the Green Belt in Tameside from inappropriate development and from the construction of new buildings which are for purposes that incompatible which the Green Belt designation. The boundaries of the Green Belt are to be unchanged from the previous Tameside UDP. The UDP (Policy OL2) requires that existing buildings in the Green Belt are re-used, converted or extended in a manner that is sympathetic of the original character of the building and does not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Policy OL3 does, however, allow for limited amount of infilling to occur at major development sites which have been identified within the Green Belt.

Trafford MBC

The Core Strategy sets out Trafford Council's spatial policy framework for delivering the development and change needed to realise the Council's vision for the Borough up to 2026. The focus for economic and housing growth as defined by the Core Strategy is to be within the urban area, primarily in the north east of the Borough and the principal town centre (Altrincham). The following five Strategic Locations are identified as areas for change:

- Pomona Island (SL1)
- Trafford Wharfside (SL2)
- Lancashire County Cricket Club Quarter (SL3)
- Trafford Centre Rectangle (SL4)
- Carrington (SL5)

The areas which have been identified for change as noted above are to be developed as strategic locations accommodating approximately 4,710 new homes. The South City Region (including the Sale, Altrincham, Hale and Bowdon areas) will provide land to allow for the development of 5,650 new homes and the remaining 1,850 will be developed at other Trafford Park/ North Trafford area sites.

Local Plans and Strategies
To allow for an appropriate level of employment provision in the Borough, Policy W1 identifies that a supply of 190ha of land will be required. This is mainly to be provided at Carrington (75ha) and Trafford Park Core (55ha), with more limited provisions to be made at Trafford Centre Rectangle (15ha), Pomona Island (10ha), Trafford Wharfside (10ha), Broadheath (10ha), other town centres (5ha) and elsewhere (10ha) from 2008/9 to 2025/6. *Policies relating to Green Belt:* The spatial profile of Trafford contained in the Core Strategy identifies that two fifths of Trafford is countryside with much of this area being protected from development by Green Belt. The Vision for the borough states that the historic, built and natural environment of Trafford will continue to be "preserved, protected and enhanced". Policy R3 of the Core Strategy provides support for the development of Stretford Meadows, a 50ha former landfill site within the Green Belt, as a woodland/meadow recreation area to help to enhance the Green Infrastructure of Greater Manchester. Policy R4 seeks to "protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development". The policy also requires that development within Green Belt areas will only be permitted where it is for one of the appropriate purposes specified in national guidance and where it does not threaten the primary purposes of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.
Wigan MBC
The spatial vision for Wigan MBC up to 2026 is set out in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy which was adopted in September 2013. Objective BEL1 of the Core Strategy relates to the improvement of the countryside and the increasing value of this countryside as green infrastructure such as protecting the Green Belt. Policy SP1 seeks to direct the majority of development (at least 80%) in the borough towards its east-west core at the towns of Wigan, Ince, Hindley, Platt Bridge, Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley, Astley and Ashton-in-Makerfield. The Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan will contain detailed policies in line with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy and is currently being prepared by the Council. It was consulted upon up to December 2015. *Policies relating to Green Belt:* The Green Belt in the borough is addressed in Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy which states that "there will be no alterations to [its] boundaries". Development within the Green Belt is to be in line with national planning policy. It is identified through this policy that infill development will continue to be permitted within the settlement boundaries of the Green Belt settlements of Haigh and Bickershaw. Policy GB3 of the emerging Allocations and Development Management Local Plan allows for this type of infill development at these locations as well as at Bolton Road, Aspull and also permits the redevelopment of previously developed land at all three locations. There are significant areas of safeguarded land for potential future development between the urban area and the Green Belt, including to the south of Hindley, to the east of both Atherton and Standish and to the north of the East Lancashire Road. Where appropriate sites are to be allocated for development at these locations.

Green Belt guidance and case law

2.12 Neither the NPPF nor National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on how to undertake Green Belt reviews. A recent Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Advice Note[2] and another produced by the Planning Officers Society[3] provide useful discussion of some of the key issues associated with assessing Green Belt.

2.13 The PAS Guidance[2] considers the way in which the five purpose of Green Belt should be addressed, as follows:

- ***Purpose 1: To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of large built up areas*** – this should consider the meaning of the term 'sprawl' and how this has changed from the 1930s when Green Belt was conceived. •
- ***Purpose 2: To Prevent Neighbouring Towns from merging into one another*** - assessment of this purpose will be different in each case and a 'scale rule' approach should be avoided. The identity of a settlement is not determined just by the distance to another settlement; instead the character of the place and the land between settlements must be acknowledged. Landscape Character Assessment is therefore a useful analytical tool to use in undertaking this purpose.
- ***Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment*** - the most useful approach for this purpose is to look at the difference between the urban fringe and open countryside. As all Green Belt has a role in achieving this purpose, it is difficult to apply this purpose and distinguish the contribution of different areas.
- ***Purpose 4: Preserving the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns*** – this applies to very few places within the country and very few settlements in practice. In most towns, there are already more recent development between the historic core and the countryside.
- ***Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*** – the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. The value of various land parcels is unlikely to be distinguished by the application of this purpose.

2.14 It also states that the assessment of the performance of Green Belt should be restricted to the Green Belt purposes and not consider other planning considerations, such as landscape, which should be considered in their own right as part of the appraisal and identification of sustainable patterns of development.

2.15 The Planning Advisory Service also update their 'Plan Making Question and Answer' advice with regard to the assessment of Green Belt within Local Plans[4]. The service advises that Green Belt Reviews should be considered in the context of its strategic role. This indicates that Green Belts should not necessarily be just reviewed for each authority, and could include a joint methodology. Ideally, the Green Belt study should be comprehensive and strategic.

2.16 The Planning Officers Society guidance[3] states:

- As per Paragraph 79 of the NPPF "*the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence".* Although Green Belts will contain land which is of high quality in terms of valued landscapes its purpose is not to protect such features but to keep land within that designation permanently open. The guidance identifies that openness within the Green Belt should not be confused with landscape character of that area.
- Parcels of land around the inner edge of the Green Belt should be identified and delineated for assessment. To the greatest extent possible, each should have clearly defined boundaries using recognisable features.

[2] Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, Peter Brett for Planning Advisory Service (February 2015).
[3] Approach to Review of the Green Belt, Planning Officers Society (March 2015).
[4] http://www.pas.gov.uk/pm-q-a-green-belt#Q: When should you carry out a Green Belt review?

- Any review of the Green Belt should be taken in line with the aims of the NPPF with specific emphasis on the delivery of sustainable development and supportive infrastructure. Any land which is removed from the Green Belt for development will be in locations in which the case for sustainable development outweighs the assessment of this land in terms of the five Green Belt purposes. Sustainability of these areas will need to be addressed in terms of social (e.g. local open space provisions), economic (e.g. transport capacity) and environmental (e.g. impacts on biodiversity and efficient land use) considerations. From the consideration of these elements a new Green Belt area will emerge and this may require expansions of the original established boundaries of the designation to compensation for any development sites which are released.

2.17 It is also considered appropriate that relevant Inspector's reports (from the Independent Examination of Local Plans) and case law should be used to inform the approach used to approach a Green Belt Review or Assessment. For example, Inspectors have commented that:

- Green Belt studies should be *"fair, comprehensive and consistent with the Core Strategy's aim of directing development to the most sustainable locations".* Green Belt reviews should be 'comprehensive' rather than 'selective'.[5]
- Green Belt studies should make clear *"how the assessment of 'importance to Green Belt' has been derived"* from assessments against the individual purposes of Green Belt.[6] Such assessments against the purpose should form the basis of any justification for releasing land from the Green Belt.[7]
- In reviewing land against the purposes, Green Belt studies should consider the reasons for a Green Belt's designation as they are related to the purposes.[8]
- Green Belt studies should *"take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, as required by paragraph 85 of the NPPF* [even if] *such an exercise would be carried out through the SEA/SA process."*[9]

2.18 Meanwhile, case law confirms that Green Belt alterations require 'exceptional circumstances' to be demonstrated by the local planning authority, although whether they have been is a matter of planning judgement[10].

2.19 The relevant legal principles established in IM Properties Development Ltd v Lichfield DC [2015] EWHC 2077, are also relevant where Cranston J said:

> *"In Gallagher Homes Ltd v Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council [2014] JPL 1117, para 125, Hickinbottom J helpfully gathered together a number of the relevant principles regarding the Green Belt. Firstly, the test for redefining a Green Belt boundary has not been changed by the NPPF. Secondly, the mere process of preparing a new local plan is not in itself to be regarded as an exceptional circumstance justifying an alternative to a Green Belt boundary. Thirdly, the test for redefinition of a Green Belt under the NPPF remains what it was previously: exceptional circumstances are required which necessitate a revision of the boundary. That is a simple composite test because, for this purpose, circumstances are not exceptional unless they necessitate a revision of a boundary. Fourthly, whilst each case is fact-sensitive and the question of whether circumstances are exceptional for these purposes requires an exercise of planning judgment, what is capable of amounting to exceptional circumstances is a matter of law, and a plan- maker may err in law if it fails to adopt a lawful approach to exceptional circumstances. Fifthly, once a Green Belt has been established and approved, it requires more than general planning concepts to justify an alteration. Hickinbottom J's fifth point was endorsed on appeal: the Gallagher Homes case [2015] JPL 713, paras 33 and 36."*

[5] Inspector's report (A Thickett) to Leeds City Council (September 2014).
[6] Inspectors' Letter (L Graham) to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils (May 2015).
[7] Inspector's interim findings (H Stephens) to Durham City Council (November 2014).
[8] Inspector's interim findings (H Stephens) to Durham City Council (November 2014).
[9] Inspectors' Letter (L Graham) to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils (May 2015).
[10] *Gallagher Estates Ltd v Solihull MBC* [2014] EWHC 1283 (Admin) (30 April 2014) aka *Gallagher*.

The Greater Manchester Green Belt

Origins and evolution of the Greater Manchester Green Belt

2.20 In 1955 the Government established (though Circular 42/55) the first clear policy on the need for Green Belts in areas outside of London, including the Greater Manchester area. From this original Governmental statement, there was uncertainty over the exact extent of the areas to be defined as Green Belt within areas such as Greater Manchester. This was due to the rapid economic expansion and rapid rate of house building which was seen in the 1960's[11]. Population projections for the end of the century during the 1960's were not realised given the later dramatic drop in birth rates and outward migration in the Greater Manchester area. Continued requirements for large tracts of building land, which were unquantifiable given the uncertainty of future growth levels, meant the size of areas to be included in the Green Belt were not clear.

2.21 Further difficulty deciding on an appropriate approach for the Green Belt arose with the evolution of the planning system in England towards the new Development Plan system under the Planning Acts of 1947 and 1962, as well as the re-organisation of local government. This latter change resulted in the creation of the Greater Manchester Council (GMC) and 10 metropolitan district councils in the north west in 1974[12].

2.22 A 'patchwork-quilt' of Green Belt policies were inherited by the new authorities; for example the stretch of Green Belt which is in the vicinity of Manchester Airport had been established as part of an amendment to the Cheshire County Development Plan[13] which considered the Green Belt in the north of the County. As such there was a need to rationalise and bring about consistency in the approach to Green Belt.

2.23 The broad extent of the Green Belt in Greater Manchester appeared in draft in the 1978 Greater Manchester Structure Plan which was approved by the Secretary of State in 1981. Detailed boundaries were introduced in the Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan adopted in 1984 in the form of the Proposals Map. Since that time and following the GMC's abolition in 1986[14] these boundaries have been carried forward and in some cases, amended through individual Local Plans, Unitary Development Plans and then Core Strategies for each of the ten GM districts.

2.24 One of the aims which emerged in the preparation of the GM Structure Plan was the regeneration of the older urban parts of the conurbation at Manchester and Salford in particular[15]. This was in addition to the more 'traditional' Green Belt roles of separating urban areas from each other and preventing further suburbanisation of countryside surrounding these areas. The primary purposes of the Greater Manchester Green Belt, were set out in Policy OL1 of The Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan Written Statement and were in line with policy at a national level[16]:

- To check further growth of a built-up area.
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging
- To preserve the special character of a town.

2.25 The purposes were in support of the four main themes of the 1981 GM Structure Plan[17]:

- An emphasis upon urban concentration.
- An attempt to redirect development more towards the central core of the conurbation.
- The maintenance of the regional centre, a theme which is linked to the regeneration of Manchester's and Salford's inner areas.
- Resource conservation and amenity.

[11] Entec for the Manchester Airport Group (2010) Local Development Framework Evidence Base.
[12] Local Government Act 1972.
[13] Entec for the Manchester Airport Group (2010) Local Development Framework Evidence Base.
[14] Local Government Act 1985.
[15] Bury Council (2013) Bury Local Plan Environment Topic Paper.
[16] Former Ministry of Housing and Local Government (1955) Circular 42/55.
[17] GMC (1981) Greater Manchester Structure Plan: Approved Written Statement.

2.26 The Inspector's report on the Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan clarifies that the Green Belt is one of the policies which can play a major contribution towards implementing these four themes. The Inspector identified that it would appropriate to adopt an approach which established a buffer of open land between the inner edge of the Green Belt and the built up area in some areas. In other areas, it would be appropriate to draw boundaries which were tightly defined around existing edges of built up areas, particularly to prevent the merging of established settlements as supported by the advice of "The Green Belts" booklet. It was hoped that this approach would act as a severe restraint development, thereby redirecting development towards more urban areas and serving the theme of urban concentration. In these situations the Inspector concluded that the land must fulfil one or more of the three identified primary purposes of Green Belt[18].

2.27 The 1981 GM Structure Plan, 1984 GM Green Belt Local Plan and the reviewed and superseded 1986 version of the GM Structure Plan specifically through Policy OL1 identified "general areas" within the Green Belt as follows:

1 Between Wigan, Horwich, the northern GM boundary and Westhoughton but excluding Blackrod and Haigh/Aspull.

2 Between Wigan and Standish and extending to the northern and western GM boundaries.

3 Part of the Douglas Valley north west of Wigan and land to the west and south west of Wigan to the GM boundary and Ashton-in-Makerfield.

4 Between Hindley and Westhoughton and Bolton extending to the east of the A579.

5 Separating Leigh from Atherton and Tyldesley.

6 South of Ince-in-Makerfield and Hindley and west of Leigh extending to the GM boundary and excluding Abram, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Golborne.

7 South of the East Lancashire Road (A580) and west of the A575. M62 north west of Irlam to the GM boundary.

8 Between Atherton, Tyldesley and Little Hulton.

9 Between Bolton and Horwich and extending north of Horwich, Bolton and Egerton to the GM boundary.

10 Between Bolton and Bury from the GM boundary to Little Lever and Radcliffe in the south incorporating the settlements of Ainsworth and Hawkshaw;

11 The Irwell Valley between Bury, Ramsbottom and the GM boundary.

12 Part of the Roch valley between Bury and Rochdale and north west and north of Rochdale.

13 The Croal-Irwell valleys between Darcy Lever, Blackrod Bridge and Rainsough.

14 Between Bolton and Salford at Linnyshaw and Clifton Moss.

15 Between Heywood, Rochdale, Shaw, Royton, Chadderton and Middleton, including Heaton Park and generally following the line of the M60/M62.

16 North and east of Rochdale, Milnrow and Shaw but excluding Wardle Village and settlements in the valley of the River Roch.

17 Between Oldham and the Peak Park boundary excluding the villages of Denshaw, Diggle, Delph, Dobcross, Grasscroft, Uppermill and Greenfield..

18 Between Oldham and Ashton-Under-Lyne, including the Medlock Valley to Clayton bridge and Ashton Moss and extending to the east of the Ashton over Hartshead Green and Luzley.

19 Between Mossley, Stalybridge and Motram, towards the Peak district National Park and GM boundary but excluding Hollingworth village.

20 In the Harrop Edge / Higher Matley area north of the M67/A57.

[18] GMC (1982) The Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan Report of the Inspector.

21 Between Broadbottom, Hyde, Bredbury, Romily, Marple and Marple Bridge to the east of the GM boundary including the Etherow and Goyt Valleys, Werneth Low and Mellor Moor.

22 The Tame Valley south of Dukinfield and the Goyt Valley the other open land between Bredbury, Romily, Stockport, Hazel Grove, Marple and High Lane.

23 Land between Hazel Grove, Bramhall and Cheadle and the southern GM boundary incorporating the settlement of Woodford and former Airfield.

24 To the south of Manchester, Hale and Bowdon to the Bollin Valley and the GM southern boundary.

25 Between Bowdon, Broadheath, Sale, Carrington, Partington the ship Canal and the GM southern boundary and incorporating the villages of Dunham town, Dunham Woodhouse and Warburton.

26 Along the Mersey Valley from its junction with the Ship Canal to Cheadle Heath.

2.28 A full assessment of the Green Belt areas in Greater Manchester has not been undertaken since the original designation was adopted in 1984. Alterations to the Green Belt have however occurred through individual Local Authority development plans where:

- exceptional circumstances have required amendments[19] (such as the requirement to accommodate the expansion of Manchester Airport);
- additional land has been added to the Green Belt through Local Plans in the 1980's (which was envisaged in the 1984 Plan).

2.29 These general areas of the Green Belt described above were not mapped in the Structure Plan or subsequently. They have however been mapped for the purpose of this study to inform a Strategic Assessment of the Greater Manchester Green Belt (see **Figure 3.1** and **Appendix 4.1**). Further information on the assessment of these Strategic Green Belt Areas (SGBAs) for this study is provided in **Chapters 3** and **4** and **Appendix 4.1** of this report.

Alterations to the Greater Manchester Green Belt

2.30 As envisaged in the original Structure Plan in 1984, various amendments have been made to the Greater Manchester Green Belt since the Structure Plan was adopted via the Local Plans. These are set out in **Table 2.2** below. The additional Green Belt areas that have been added have been treated equally with those areas identified in the original Structure Plan.

Table 2.2: Alterations to the Greater Manchester Green Belt

Authority	Changes made to Green Belt since Structure Plan (adopted in 1984)
Bolton	The 1987 South West Fringe Local Plan added to the Green Belt land to the southwest of Bolton. This had been envisaged in the Structure Plan. The 2014 Allocations Plan de-designated some existing Green Belt, and identified new Green Belt, in the area of Logistics North, to the south of M61 junction 4.
Bury	Following the adoption of the 1984 GM Green Belt Structure Plan, five additional local areas of Green Belt were brought forward in Bury under four Local Plans: • Land at Elton Vale, east of Dow Lane and west of Elton Vale Road (West Bury Local Plan, Adopted March 1984). • Land to north and east of Outwood (Outwood Local Plan, Adopted April 1984). • Land to east of Walshaw (Tottington Local Plan, Adopted January 1985).

[19] RTPI (2015) Green Belt briefing.

Authority	Changes made to Green Belt since Structure Plan (adopted in 1984)
	• Land between Unsworth and Whitefield and the M66 and M62 motorways (Unsworth Local Plan, Adopted March 1987). • Land largely covered by Bury Golf Course, including land to the north of Hollins Lane separating Hollins from Sunny Bank and Unsworth (Unsworth Local Plan).
Manchester City	One area has been removed from the Green Belt boundary in Manchester at Manchester Airport. This followed the publication of the Air Transport White paper which identified Manchester Airport as one of the national airports suitable for expansion to 2030. As part of the preparation of the Core Strategy the majority of the Manchester Airport Operational Area was removed from the Green Belt in 2012 when the Manchester Core Strategy was adopted.
Oldham	Between the 1984 Structure Plan and the adoption of the Oldham UDP in 2006, there were three large additions to the Green Belt and three further smaller additions, as follows: • Land at Shaw / Royton - around Royton and Crompton golf course / Luzley Brook. • Land at Shaw Side / River Beal valley. • Land north of Coal Pit Lane / Werneth golf club. • There were also some smaller additions around Chadderton Fold - along the railway line and E. of Haigh Lane; Green Belt around Woodhouses also seems to have been increased. • There was also some loss of Green Belt at Springhead / Thornley Lane. Additionally, borough boundary amendments meant some changes in Saddleworth. The Green Belt in the current adopted Local Plan Proposals Map has not changed since 2006.
Rochdale	The 1984 Green Belt in the Heywood area was extended by the Heywood Local Plan (adopted September 1986). This relates generally to land that now forms part of the GM Green Belt around various edges of the town.
Salford	No significant changes to the Green Belt have taken place.
Stockport	No significant changes to the Green Belt have taken place.
Tameside	The main changes in Tameside include: • Area at the western edge of Littlemoss, Droyslden and Area at Limehurst Farm, Ashton-under-Lyne (added by Tameside MBCs alteration of the GM Green Belt Local Plan, Adopted in November 1989). • Release of land on part of Ashton Moss – approximately 35 hectares – for the purpose of a strategic high quality industrial estate (Adopted 1996 UDP Policy ASH5). • Mossley Cemetery added to the Green Belt (Adopted 1996 UDP Policy MOS16). • Former railway sidings on south side of Godley Junction, near Brookfold, added to the Green Belt (Adopted 1996 UDP Policy HYD25).

Authority	Changes made to Green Belt since Structure Plan (adopted in 1984)
Trafford	There have been two main changes to the Green Belt in Trafford Borough through the plan-making process: • Land west of Clay Lane known as the Timperley Wedge was added to the Green Belt in the Timperley Brook Local Plan in 1987. • At Davenport Green 36.4 hectares of land was taken out of the Green Belt in the 1996 UDP for specific development of a strategic high amenity employment site. The 1996 UDP also made several very minor additions to the Green Belt in terms of rationalising the boundary.
Wigan	No significant changes to the Green Belt have taken place.

The current extent of the Greater Manchester Green Belt

2.31 **Table 2.3** below shows the approximate distribution of Green Belt within the 10 Greater Manchester authorities. The current extent of the Greater Manchester Green Belt is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

Table 2.3: Indicative extent of Green Belt by Greater Manchester Authority[20]

Local Authority	Green Belt extent (sq km) (indicative)
Bolton MBC	72.3
Bury MBC	59.2
Manchester City	12.8
Oldham MBC	62.5
Rochdale MBC	99.3
Salford City	33.7
Stockport MBC	58.6
Tameside MBC	50.6
Trafford MBC	39.9
Wigan MBC	106.5
TOTAL	**595.4**

[20] Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015. *Local authority Green Belt statistics for England: 2014 to 2015*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-green-belt-statistics-for-england-2014-to-2015 [Accessed 20th June 2016].

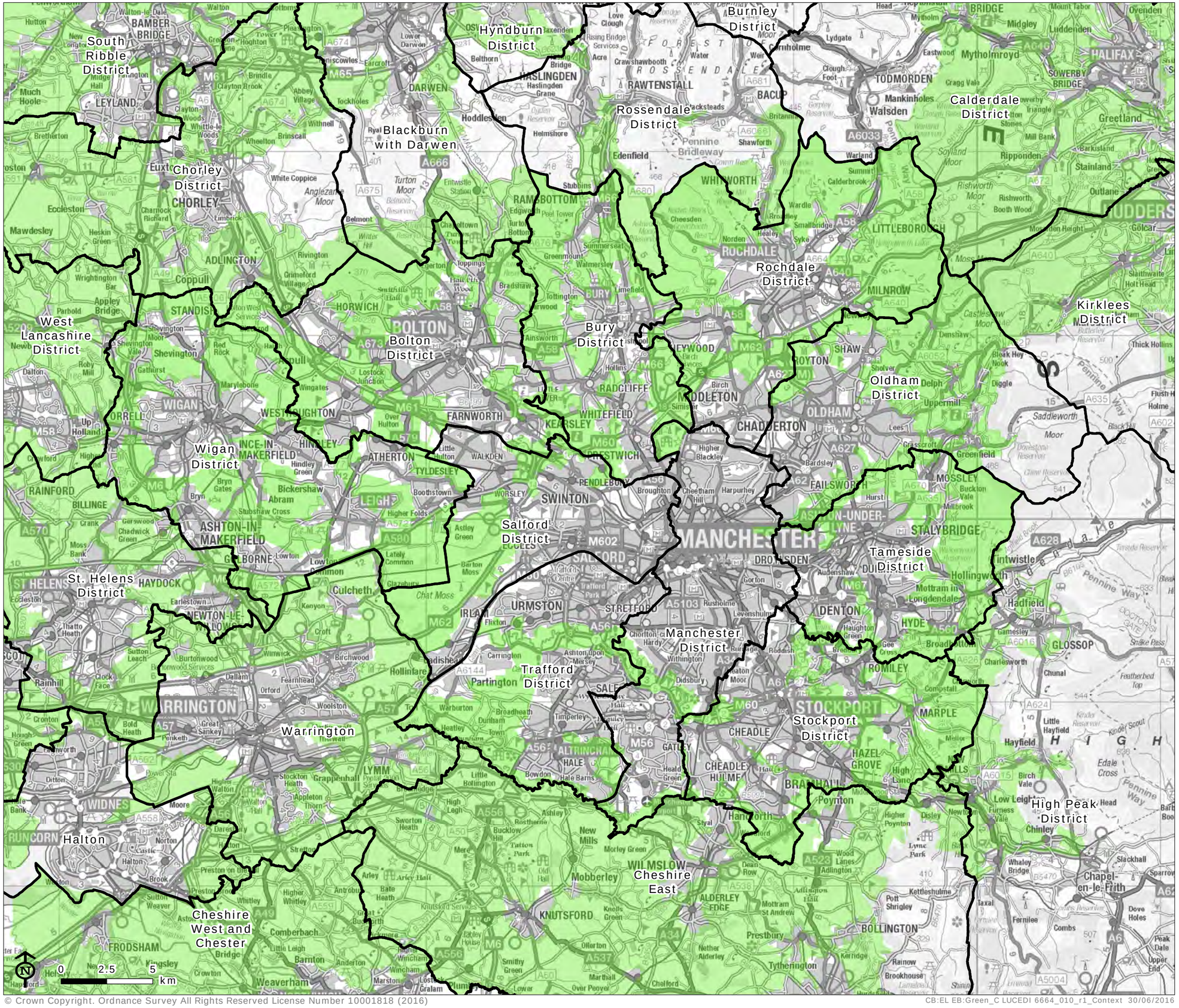
Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment

Figure 2.1: Greater Manchester Green Belt

Local Authority boundary

Green Belt

Map Scale @ A3: 1:200,000



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CB:EL EB:Green_C LUCEDI 6664_010_r1_Context 30/06/2016

Source: Greater Manchester LAs, LUC, DCLG

The character of the Greater Manchester Green Belt

2.32 The following section provides a summary of the character of the Great Manchester Green Belt. The approach to the assessment of Green Belt parcels, has in accordance with good practice not had regard to environmental, policy or land-use constraints and designations that may exist within Great Manchester, such as landscape areas, SSSIs, and floodplains etc. The following section is included to provide background contextual information alone.

2.33 According to the Green Belt statistics published by the Department of Communities and Local Government[21], in 2014/15 the Greater Manchester 10-authority area contained around 59,540 hectares of Green Belt land. Approximately 46.7% of the total land area of the authorities was designated as Green Belt, and this land represented 3.6% of the total Green Belt land in England.

2.34 The extent of the Green Belt within the Greater Manchester area is currently defined by the Local Plans of the respective authorities. The Green Belt within Greater Manchester forms part of the larger Green Belt designation within the North of England. As well as the urban areas in Greater Manchester, this area of Green Belt also surrounds the Potteries conurbations taking in land in Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire. The Green Belt extends towards the Pennines into Harrogate at its most northerly point. In the east the Green Belt's boundaries extend into Selby and Doncaster and to the south as far as North East Derbyshire, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester. The Green Belt in the North West of England extends to the western coast at the Irish Sea and into Wirral, Sefton and West Lancashire.

2.35 The form of Manchester Green Belt is made up of disconnected parcels, wide open areas, and corridors extending along river corridors. It is not a uniform belt of Green Belt around Greater Manchester as is the case with some Green Belts such as Oxford.

Landscape

2.36 Greater Manchester has a diverse landscape. The Green Belt in Greater Manchester lies within National Character Areas (NCAs) 36: Southern Pennines, 51: Dark Peak, 54: Manchester Pennine Fringe, 55: Manchester Conurbation, 56: Lancashire Coal Measures, 60: Mersey Valley and 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain[22].

2.37 To the north of Bolton, Bury and Rochdale within NCA 36 sweeping moorlands are formed within part of the Pennine ridge of hills. Here pastures are enclosed mostly by drystone walls and the narrow valleys contain gritstone settlements. To the south of NCA 36 Manchester Pennine Fringe (NCA 54) is a transitional zone between open moorlands of the Southern Pennines and the Dark Peak which extends (NCA 51) to the east. This area takes in industrial settlements as such Bury, Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham, Dukinfield and Glossop and is characterised by the deeply incised, steep valleys which are present as the landform transitions from moorland to urban area.

2.38 In the west of the Great Manchester area, the Lancashire Coal Measures (NCA 56) lie around the settlement of Wigan. The area contains a series of gentle hills and valleys and amongst these a scattering of urban centres, active mineral sites and derelict or reclaimed workings are set within areas of farmland. The area to the south east of the city of Salford, NCA 60: Mersey Valley is focussed on the flat, low-lying river valley of the River Mersey. This is an area in which the farmland is predominantly arable and in close proximity to the Manchester conurbations to the east. The Manchester Ship Canal links the estuary of the Mersey to development in the centre of Manchester with multiple major roads, railways, canals and transmission lines also being present in the area. These allow for large scale industrial infrastructure along much of the length of these infrastructure corridors.

[21] Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015. *Local authority Green Belt statistics for England: 2014 to 2015*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-green-belt-statistics-for-england-2014-to-2015 [Accessed 20th June 2016].
[22] Natural England at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/587130

2.39 NCA 55: Manchester Conurbation takes in much of the central and southern portions of Greater Manchester. The area is characterised by dense urban and industrial development with supporting development provided. Development is located within networks of green infrastructure and in places settlements (including the larger settlements of Manchester, Sale, Salford and Stockport) have grown together to form the Manchester conurbation. The conurbation is centred on low hills and the area is crossed by a number of rivers and canals.

Biodiversity designations

2.40 There is approximately 781ha of ancient woodland within Greater Manchester[23] although this estimation includes only woodlands over 2ha in area. Most of these areas of ancient woodland are located within the Green Belt. Lowland broadleaved woodland is present within all districts of Greater Manchester with this resource being more widely present within Stockport and Tameside. Within Greater Manchester as a whole, smaller woodlands which are isolated from each other are present to a greater degree than the notable networks of woodlands along certain river corridors in Stockport and Bury.

2.41 There are a number of SSSI designations within the Green Belt in Greater Manchester. To the north east a large area the South Pennine Moors SSSI and some of the Rochdale Canal SSSI fall within the Green Belt. In the east of Greater Manchester parts of the Dark Peak, Ladcastle and Den Quarries, Hudderfield Narrow Canal and Hollinwood Branch Canal SSSIs all fall within the Green Belt. The southern areas of the Green Belt contain large portions of SSSIs which have been designated at Compstall Nature Reserve, Matley Moor Meadows, Cotteril Clough, Dunham Park and Brookheys Covert. The SSSIs of Astley and Bedford Mosses, Abram Flashes, Bryn Marsh and Ince Moss, Highfield Moss are located within the western portion of the Greater Manchester Green Belt. Towards the northern part of the Greater Manchester Green Belt, SSSIs have been designated at Gale Clough and Shooterslee Wood, Nob End and Ashclough.

2.42 Sites of European importance within Greater Manchester are limited mainly towards its north eastern portion where the upland dry heath at the southern end of the Pennine range passes within the area to the east of Oldham. Here parts of the South Pennine Moors Phase 1 and South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPAs and the South Pennine Moors SAC are within the boundaries of Greater Manchester. Much of the southern portions of these designations which are within Greater Manchester also lie within the Peak District National Park. Additional SACs within Greater Manchester include stretches of the Rochdale Canal within Rochdale and Failsworth, Manchester and also the Manchester Mosses SAC to the south east of Leigh.

2.43 Greater Manchester has a total of 68 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)[24] spread throughout the ten Local Authority areas. Many of the designations within the area reflect the areas industrial history with disused railways (e.g. Healey Dell LNR, Rochdale), canals (e.g. Hollinwood Branch Canal LNR, Tameside) and reclaimed areas following mining and other industrial processes (e.g. The Wigan Flashes, Wigan and Ousel Nest Quarry, Bolton. These are now recognised as important spaces for local habitats. There are over 500 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) which are known as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) in Greater Manchester.

Historic environment

2.44 There are a large number of Listed Buildings in the Greater Manchester Area, most of which are located in the more developed settlements and thus outside of the Green Belt particularly towards the centre of the Manchester conurbation. Manchester alone has 835 listed buildings and related assets.[25] However, there are still extensive numbers within the Green Belt.

2.45 Many of Greater Manchester's Scheduled Monuments are located within or partially within the Green Belt. There are 31 Scheduled Monuments within the Green Belt including Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear which is located in Wigan as well as Oldknow's limekilns, Strines Road in Stockport both of which have been placed on the Heritage at Risk Register.

[23] Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2009), Greater Manchester Habitat Action Plan.
[24] Natural England at: http://www.lnr.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/lnr/lnr_results.asp?N=&C=18&Submit=Search
[25] Manchester City Council (2015), Heritage Asset Strategy.

2.46 The designation of Conservation Areas within Greater Manchester is the responsibility of the local planning authorities. There are 243 Conservation Areas within Greater Manchester. Most of these lie outside of the Green Belt. However, the Green Belt can play a key role in terms of preserving the setting and special character of these areas and historic settlements more generally. This is picked up in the study in the assessment of Purpose 4.

Hydrology

2.47 The Green Belt in Greater Manchester is served by a network of watercourses including the Rivers Tame, Mersey and Irwell and their tributaries. Considering the rich industrial history of the area, unsurprisingly a number of canals also run through Greater Manchester. The most significant of these routes which run through the Green Belt are the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, Bridgewater Canal, Manchester Ship Canal, Rochdale Canal, Ashton/Huddersfield Narrow Canal and Peak Forest Canal. In terms of flooding, the most significant areas at high risk of flooding (flood zone 3) within the Green Belt are along the stretch of the River Mersey which flows between Stretford and Sale alongside the M60. Much of the southern stretch of the River Irwell on the approach to the city of Manchester is located within flood zone 2 or food zone 3 and as is the point of confluence with the River Roch[26].

Access

2.48 Within the Green Belt significant routes include the M6, M56, M58, M62, M60, M61, M66 and M67 motorways, a network of supporting A-roads (including the East Lancashire Road which is a dual carriageway and is present through much of the western portion of the Green Belt) and a number of B-roads and more minor routes. Most of the motorways feed into the M60 Manchester Ring Motorway which extends around the centrals portion of the Manchester conurbation. In contrast to this, the M6 serves the western part of the Green Belt running north to south and the M58 connects to this route from the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton further to the west.

2.49 The Green Belt is well served by the Public Rights of Way network which includes the National Trail the Pennine Bridleway to the east in the foothills of the Pennine range and the Trans Pennine Coast to Coast Trail. A number of routes designated as part of the National Cycle Network extend from the larger settlements within Greater Manchester and pass into the Green Belt.

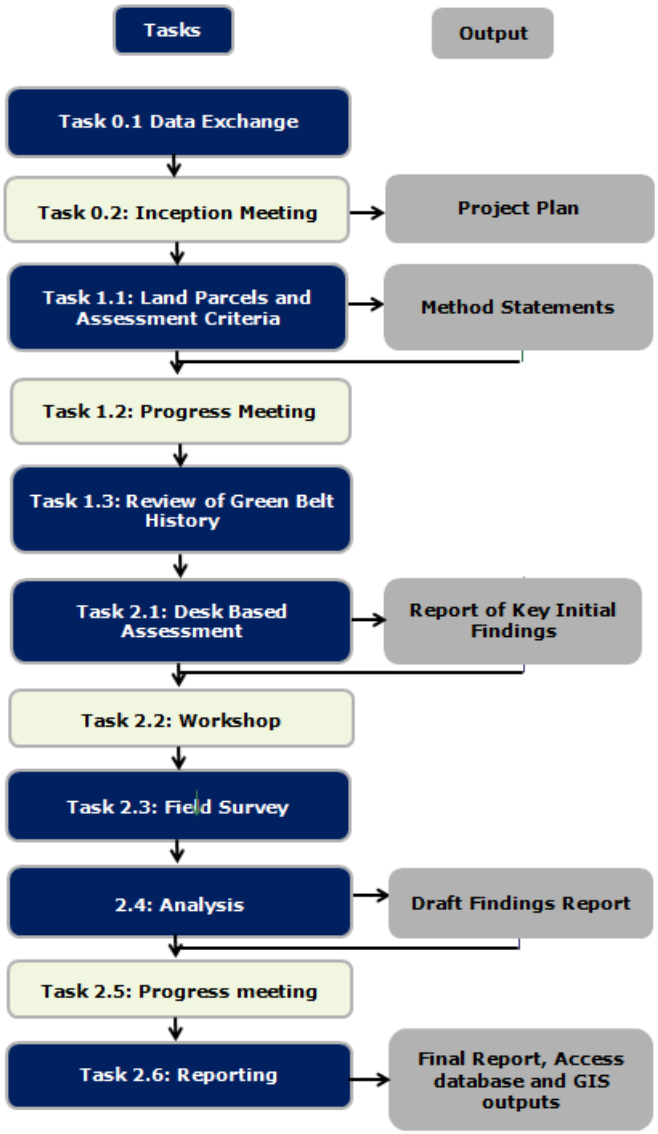
[26] Environment Agency (2013), Flood Map for Planning.

3 Methodology

3.1 As described in the previous chapter, there is no definitive national guidance on how to undertake Green Belt studies. Documents prepared by the Planning Officers Society (POS)[27] and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS)[28] provide a useful discussion of some of the key issues associated with assessing Green Belt and reviewing/revising Green Belt boundaries. The key points from these documents and from Inspectors' decisions were reflected in the methodology employed for this assessment.

3.2 **Figure 3.1** below provides a summary of the overall method of approach, which is described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Figure 3.1: Methodological Flow Diagram



[27] Approach to Review of the Green Belt, Planning Officers Society.
[28] Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, Planning Advisor Service (2015).

3.3 This Study was divided into two key stages – the first part involved developing and consulting on the methodology to be employed in the Study and the second involved identifying and assessing the land parcels.

Part 1: Developing the methodology

Parcel definition

3.4 Given the overall size of the Green Belt, it was necessary to divide it into appropriate parcels for assessment. The Inspector's Report to Leeds City Council noted that "Green Belt reviews should be 'comprehensive' rather than 'selective'." All of the Greater Manchester Green Belt has therefore been divided into parcels.

3.5 The NPPF also states that when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should "define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent."

3.6 The aim was to define parcels that contain land of the same or very similar land use or character, bounded by recognisable features including:

- Natural features; for example, substantial watercourses and water bodies.
- Man-made features; for example, motorways, A and B roads and railway lines.

3.7 Less prominent features such as walls, woodland, hedgerows, tree lines, streams and ditches may also be considered to be recognisable but less permanent boundaries. Where no other suitable boundary exists, these were used to define the land parcel boundaries.

3.8 The parcel boundaries were defined using GIS maps (based on Ordnance Survey and Mastermap mapping) and aerial images. The parcels were marked up in GIS and agreed with the Steering Group. The land parcels that were identified for each authority area are shown in **Figures 4.1-4.50.** For ease of reference the parcel numbers run in order from north to south. Please note that some numbers may not run consecutively as some parcels were merged as part of the assessment process.

3.9 Given the requirement in the brief to include areas adjoining the Green Belt boundary, each of the authorities was asked to identify any additional parcels for assessment beyond the outer Green Belt boundary and, where appropriate, within 'white land' between the inner boundary and existing development. These are marked separately on the land parcel maps in **Figures 4.1-4.50.** This allowed the assessment to identify areas of land which might justify inclusion within the Green Belt.

3.10 Two types of land parcel were identified:

a) **Areas adjacent to built up areas.** These comprise relatively small parcels of land adjacent to built up areas. Identifying land parcels at the edge of the Green Belt is important as it is these areas which are most likely to be considered for either inclusion or removal from the Green Belt. It also provides a means of identifying the differing characteristics and performance of the Green Belt along the urban edge.

b) **Broad areas of Green Belt that may be more remote from large built up areas and main settlements.** These broad areas of Green Belt represent the main 'body' of the Green Belt, rather than land at the edges of the Green Belt.

3.11 No standard maximum and minimum sizes for the land parcels were set - as outlined above, they were defined according to recognisable boundaries. If, as part of the detailed assessment process, it is observed that a parcel of land has very distinct attributes within different sections of the parcel, the parcel was divided to reflect this.

3.12 Where an extensive area of existing built up development was identified within the Green Belt, this does not form a Green Belt assessment parcel but is identified on the maps as a settlement area. Areas forming extensive motorway corridors within the Green Belt have also not been parcelled up but are identified separately on the maps.

3.13 An Access database was set up in which the results and notes from the subsequent assessment were recorded. The database was linked to the GIS mapping of the parcels to ensure that records of the assessment for each parcel were readily accessible at each stage of the project and to support future updates.

Definition of Strategic Green Belt Areas

3.14 Recognising the importance of adequately capturing the strategic as well as the parcel specific role of areas of Green Belt in meeting the purposes defined in NPPF, the work included the definition and assessment of 'Strategic Green Belt Areas' (SGBAs). The starting point for this strategic assessment was the 26 'General Areas' listed in the 1981 Greater Manchester Structure Plan (listed at paragraph 2.27 above). These were mapped, following the more detailed parcel boundaries (above) and are shown in **Figure 3.1.**

Assessment criteria

3.15 A key part of the method involved the development of an assessment framework based on the five purposes of Green Belts set out in the NPPF. A draft set of assessment criteria was drawn-up based on LUC's extensive experience of undertaking Green Belt assessments and reviews, information collated on the context and background of the Manchester Green Belt (see **Chapter 2**) and good practice elsewhere.

3.16 Through discussion with the Steering Group, the criteria were refined to ensure that the judgements reflected the context and priorities for Manchester, whilst remaining true to the five purposes of the Green Belt. Green Belt studies should be clear "*how the assessment of 'importance to Green Belt' has been derived*" from assessments against the individual purposes of Green Belt.[29] **Table 3.1** summarises the final criteria used to assess the relative performance of the Green Belt parcels (including the Broad Areas) and Strategic Green Belt Areas and the ratings applied to each criterion. This is followed by a description of the rationale for the assessment criteria adopted.

3.17 For Green Belt Purposes 1-4, **Table 3.1** sets out:

a) The NPPF Green Belt **Purpose.**

b) The **key issue**(s) considered.

c) The assessment **criteria** used.

d) The **ratings** that were applied to each criterion, as follows.

Parcel Ratings

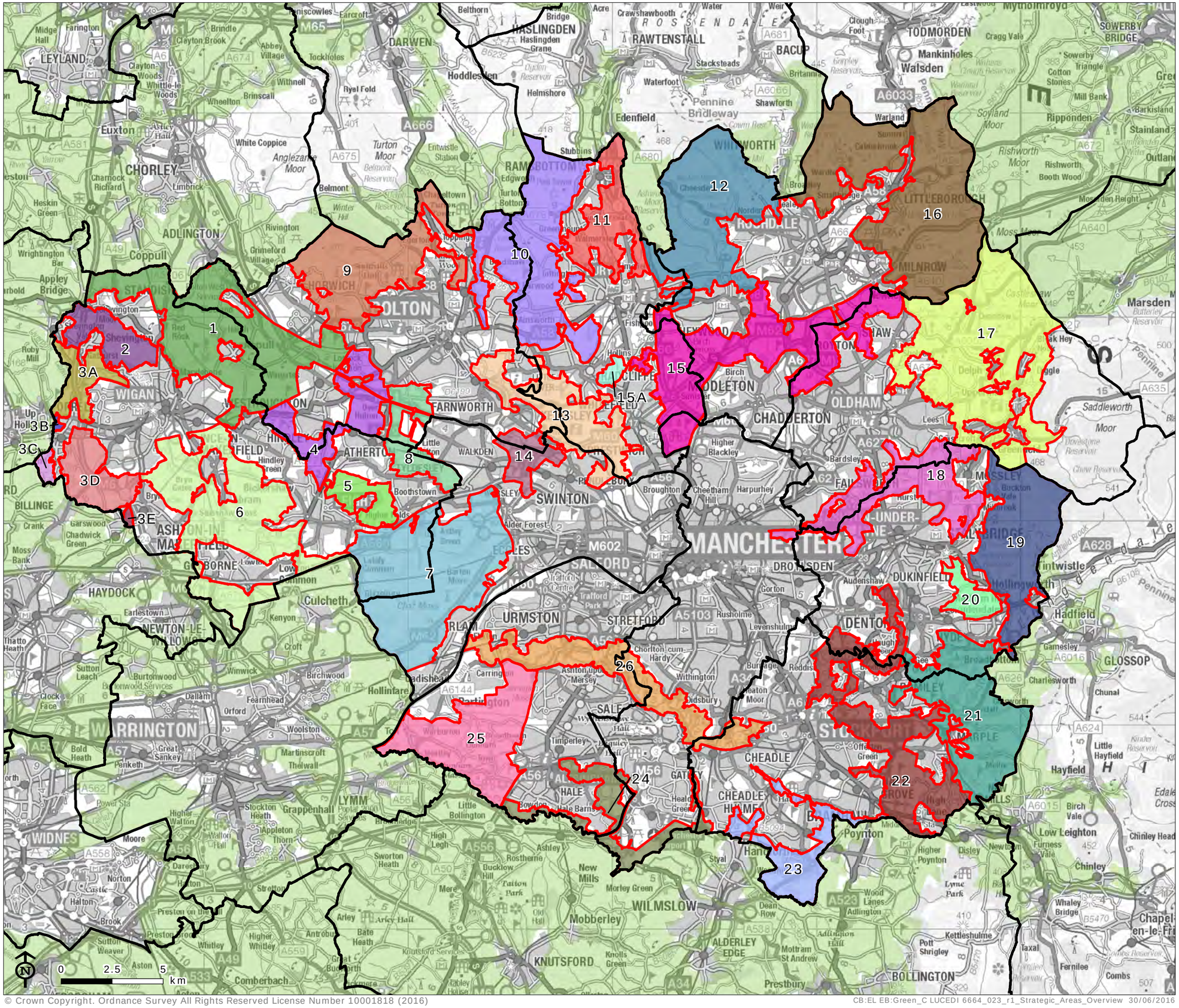
Strong	Parcel performs strongly against this Purpose.
Moderate	Parcel performs moderately well.
Weak	Parcel performs poorly.
No Contribution	Parcel makes no contribution.
Not Applicable	It is not applicable to make an assessment. (This is particularly relevant to P1a and 1b and whether the parcel is adjacent to the large built up area or not)

e) **General comments** on the assessment method. This provides further detail about how each criterion / rating was interpreted. This helped ensure consistency was achieved throughout the assessment of the land parcels.

[29] Inspectors' Letter (L Graham) to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils (May 2015).

Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment

Figure 3.1: Location of Strategic Areas



Local authority boundary

Green Belt beyond Greater Manchester

1
2
3A
3B
3C
3D
3E
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10
11
12
13
14
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15A
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24
25
26

Map Scale @ A3: 1:180,000

LUC

GREATER MANCHESTER GMCA COMBINED AUTHORITY

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CB:EL EB:Green_C LUCEDI 6664_023_r1_Strategic_Areas_Overview 30/06/2016

Source: Greater Manchester LAs, LUC

3.18 The Table also includes a summary of the approach used in relation to Purpose 5. Purpose 5 focuses on assisting urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. This study does not include a parcel by parcel assessment of Purpose 5, as it was agreed with the Steering Group that it is not possible to distinguish the extent to which each Green Belt parcels delivers against this purpose. Discussions with the project Steering Group did not identify any evidence available that would enable such an assessment to be undertaken. Further commentary on the consideration of Purpose 5 is included in paragraphs 3.57-3.62 of this report.

3.19 The same assessment criteria principles were used for the assessment of the Strategic Green Belt Areas (SGBAs). However due to the scale of the assessment, it was necessary to identify sub-categories to further distinguish between the performance of the strategic areas. The ratings used for the Strategic Area analysis were as follows:

Strategic Green Belt area ratings

Strong	SGBA performs strong against this Purpose.
Moderate-Strong	SGBA perform moderately strong
Moderate	SGBA performs moderately well.
Weak-Moderate	SGBA performs weak-moderate
Weak	SGBA performs poorly.
No Contribution	SGBA makes no contribution.

3.20 The assessment of SGBAs focused on their strategic role in relation to each Green Belt purpose. This means that, while the assessment results reflect the scores for constituent parcels, they do not represent a simple averaging of parcel scores.

3.21 As each of the five purposes set out in the NPPF is considered to be equally important, no weighting or aggregation of scores across the purposes was undertaken.

Table 3.1: Assessment criteria

a) NPPF Green Belt Purposes		b) Issue(s) for consideration		c) Criteria	d) Ratings		e) Comments on assessment
1	**To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.**	**a**	Protection of open land from urban sprawl.	Does the parcel exhibit evidence of **existing** urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness?	**Strong**	Adjacent to large built-up area and land parcel contains no or very limited urban sprawl and has a strong sense of openness.	Urban sprawl is the spread of urban areas into the neighbouring countryside. Parcels which have already been compromised by urban sprawl, as a result of urbanising influences, will generally play a weaker role than those where the Green Belt is more open in character. It is however noted that in some cases parcels which have been compromised by sprawl may play a stronger role in the sense of ensuring that no further spread or urbanising influence into the countryside takes place. Development means any built structure or land use that does not keep land open. This does not include pylons as these are features of both rural and urban environments or other forms of 'appropriate development' within the Green Belt which keep the land open.
					Moderate	Adjacent to large built-up area and land parcel contains limited urban sprawl and has a relatively strong sense of openness.	
					Weak	Adjacent to large built-up area and land parcel already contains urban sprawl compromising the sense of openness.	
					No Contribution	Adjacent to large built-up area but land parcel makes no contribution to preventing urban sprawl.	
					Not Applicable	Parcel does not lie adjacent to large built up area.	

a) NPPF Green Belt Purposes		b) Issue(s) for consideration		c) Criteria	d) Ratings		e) Comments on assessment
1		b		Does the parcel protect open land from the **potential** for urban sprawl to occur?	**Strong**	Adjacent to large built-up area and land parcel has a high potential for urban sprawl to occur.	The features that that are considered relevant to the assessment of **potential** include: **Significant and durable boundary features -** Readily recognisable and permanent features are used to define the borders of Green Belt parcels. The presence of features which contain development and prevent urban sprawl can, in certain limited locations, reduce the potential role of a Green Belt parcel in performing this purpose. The significance of a boundary in preventing urban sprawl is judged based on its relative proximity to the existing urban edge of a settlement and its nature. Only motorways, dual carriageways, railway lines and rivers which have not been breached within the relevant land parcel, or close by, are considered to constitute a very significant and durable boundary that will prevent urban sprawl. **The nature of the settlement form -** An urban edge that is uneven, rather than 'rounded off', is more vulnerable to urban sprawl. **Presence of roads** – the presence of roads (apart from motorways and dual carriageways) allows for greater opportunities for urban sprawl to occur, because of the potential for ribbon development and the wider access they provide. Where such roads exist, the Green Belt is considered to play a strong role in preventing urban sprawl. These roads are distinct from those considered as boundary features as they will not form part of the existing settlement edge. **Potential for sprawl beyond the parcel boundary** – in some cases a parcel may be at risk from development within the parcel itself but there is little or no potential for sprawl to occur beyond the parcel– therefore the overall extent of the potential for urban sprawl is limited. Where this is relevant this is taken into account. (e.g. where a parcel is surrounded by existing built development on all sides, or is bounded by existing urban development and a strong a durable barrier preventing sprawl occurring beyond the parcel). Professional judgement is applied to reach an overall rating when taking account of the above considerations.
					Moderate	Adjacent to large built-up area and land parcel has moderate potential for urban sprawl to occur.	
					Weak	Adjacent to large built-up area and land parcel has low potential for urban sprawl to occur.	
					No Contribution	Land parcel is not adjacent to urban area and therefore makes no contribution to preventing urban sprawl.	
					Not Applicable	Parcel does not lie adjacent to large built up area.	

a) NPPF Green Belt Purposes	b) Issue(s) for consideration	c) Criteria	d) Ratings		e) Comments on assessment
2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Reduction in visual or physical gaps between settlements.	Does the parcel prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between neighbouring settlements?	**Strong**	The parcel plays an essential role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would cause visual or physical coalescence or substantially reduce the gap.	This purpose seeks to prevent settlements from merging to form larger settlements. The PAS guidance states that distance alone should not be used to assess the extent to which the Green Belt prevents neighbouring towns from merging into one another. Two key elements are therefore used – the extent of a) the visual and b) the physical gap. This may also include consideration of perceptual issues.
			Moderate	The parcel plays some role in preventing the reduction of the visual or physical distances between settlements. Loss of openness would, or would be perceived as, reducing gap between settlements.	
			Weak	The parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing gap between settlements.	
			No Contribution	Land parcel makes no contribution to preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements.	
			Not Applicable	It is not applicable to make an assessment.	

a) NPPF Green Belt Purposes	b) Issue(s) for consideration	c) Criteria	d) Ratings		e) Comments on assessment
3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Significance of existing urbanising influences and sense of openness.[30]	Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?	**Strong**	The land parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has no or very little urbanising development, and is open.	Encroachment from urbanising influences is the intrusion / gradual advance of buildings and urbanised land beyond an acceptable or established limit. Urbanising influences include any features that compromise 'openness', such as roads lined with street lighting and pavements, large areas of hard standing, floodlit sports fields, roads etc. They do not include development which is commonly found within the countryside, e.g. agricultural or forestry related development, isolated dwellings, historic schools and churches or other forms of 'appropriate development' within the Green Belt which keep the land open. Countryside is land/scenery which is rural in character, i.e. a relatively open natural, semi-natural or farmed landscape.
			Moderate	The land parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is relatively open.	
			Weak	Land parcel does not contain the characteristics and/or is not connected to land with the characteristics of countryside, or contains urbanising development that compromises openness.	
			No Contribution	Parcel makes no contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	
			Not Applicable	It is not applicable to make an assessment.	

[30] The significance of existing urbanising influences has a direct influence over the relative openness of Green Belt parcels. We have therefore used the presence of urbanising influences as a proxy for assessing the degree of openness within the parcel.

a) NPPF Green Belt Purposes	b) Issue(s) for consideration	c) Criteria	d) Ratings		e) Comments on assessment
4 **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.**	Significance of historical and/or visual setting to the historic town.	Does the parcel contribute to the setting and 'special character' of a historic town (s)?	**Strong**	The parcel plays a major role in the setting and or special character of historic towns in terms of its physical extent and degree of visibility and/or its significant contribution to special character.	Topographic mapping, Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) analysis and site visits was used to inform judgements regarding intervisibility between the historic towns and their open surroundings. Conservation Area Appraisals and the Greater Manchester Historic Landscape Characterisation Project were used to define the historic settlements that were considered in the assessment.
			Moderate	The parcel plays a moderate role in the setting of historic towns in terms of its physical extent and degree of visibility and/or its contribution to special character.	
			Weak	The parcel plays a minor role as it lacks any direct visual relationship with historic towns, and is not visible in the context of views to it. It does however contribute in some way to the wider setting	
			No Contribution	Parcel makes no contribution – i.e. does not form part of the setting or contribute to the special character of historic towns.	
			Not Applicable	It is not applicable to make an assessment.	
5 **To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.**	Green Belt has the potential to make a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the land available for development and encouraging developers to seek out and recycle derelict / urban sites. It is difficult to distinguish the extent to which each Green Belt parcels delivers against this purpose and therefore this study does not undertake a parcel by parcel assessment of the contribution made in relation to Purpose 5.				

3.22 A summary of some of the key issues relating to the application of the criteria is set out below:

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

3.23 It is possible to argue that all Green Belt prevents the unrestricted sprawl of large built up urban areas, because that is its principal purpose as a strategic planning designation. However, the Study required one area (or parcel) to be distinguished from another in terms of the extent to which they perform this purpose. This required a detailed, site specific assessment against this strategic purpose.

Manchester's 'Large Built Up' Area

3.24 There is no definition provided in the NPPF or a standard definition for a 'large built up area.' The Office for National Statistics defines a 'large' built up area as a settlement with between 0.5-1 million people. All ten local authorities have their own settlement hierarchies, each with their own definition of settlements. It was therefore necessary to decide on what constitutes the 'large built up area' for the purposes of the study.

3.25 In reaching this decision, it was noted that the original purpose of the Manchester Green Belt was partly to prevent the sprawl of Manchester into the surrounding countryside. While Manchester is made up of a number of settlements, some of considerable size, each often with their own distinct sense of identity, there is a visible continuous urban mass that stretches across all of the authority areas. It was therefore concluded that all settlements within this main urban area should be included in the assessment of Purpose 1a and 1b as they fall under the definition of the 'large built up area'. It was agreed with the Steering Group that the settlements set out in **Table 3.2** are not included in the 'large built up area' as they are separated from the main contiguous 'large built up area' by Green Belt:

Table 3.2: Summary of settlements not included in the large built up area

Authority Area	Settlements not included in 'Large built up area'
Bolton	Hunger hill Chew Moor Bottom o'th Moor Blackrod
Bury	*None*
Manchester	*None*
Oldham	Denshaw Diggle Upper Mill Dobcross Delph Grasscroft, Greenfield Woodhouses
Rochdale	Wardle
Salford	*None*
Stockport	High Lane Marple Marple Bridge
Tameside	Hollingworth Heyrod
Trafford	*None*
Wigan	Aspull Appley Bridge Shevington Bamfurlong & Bryn Gate

Definition of 'Sprawl'

3.26 There is no clear definition of what constitutes urban sprawl. The PAS guidance[31] states in relation to Purpose 1:

> *"The terminology of 'sprawl' comes from the 1930s when Green Belt was conceived. Has this term changed in meaning since then? For example, is development that is planned positively through a local plan, and well designed with good masterplanning, sprawl?"*

3.27 The guidance emphasises the variable nature of the term 'sprawl' and questions whether positively planned development constitutes 'sprawl'. The RTPI Research Briefing No. 9 (2015) on Urban Form and Sustainability is also not definitive on the meaning of sprawl:

> *"As an urban form, sprawl has been described as the opposite of the desirable compact city, with high density, centralised development and a mixture of functions. However, what is considered to be sprawl ranges along a continuum of more compact to completely dispersed development. A variety of urban forms have been covered by the term 'urban sprawl', ranging from contiguous suburban growth, linear patterns of strip development, leapfrog and scattered development."*

3.28 For the purpose of this Study, urban sprawl is defined according the Oxford Dictionary as *"spreading out of built form over a large area in an untidy or irregular way".*

3.29 Given this definition, land immediately adjacent to the large built up area is likely to contribute to this purpose, as it provides the boundary and zone of constraint to urban expansion. Nevertheless it should be recognised that sprawl as described can be equally damaging to the overall integrity of the Green Belt, wherever it may arise.

Definition of methods for assessing the role of the Green Belt in maintaining openness around the 'large built-up area'

3.30 Criterion 1a considers whether land has **already been affected** by sprawl and whether it retains an open character. Parcels which have already been compromised by urban sprawl as a result of urbanising influences may be considered to make a weaker contribution to purpose 1 than those parcels where the Green Belt is more open in character. It is important to note that a high rating against criterion 1a does not necessarily imply that Green Belt is performing a more valuable role. The remaining open land in a parcel significantly affected by sprawl could be considered more valuable in preventing further incursions, or less valuable because it has already been compromised.

3.31 Equally important in assessing the role of Green Belt in checking unrestricted sprawl is the extent to which the land parcel has the **potential** for urban sprawl to occur in the future. Criterion 1b considers the role of the following in affecting the potential for urban sprawl to occur in the absence of a Green Belt designation:

- **The strength of boundary features** – i.e. where there is a very strong and defensible boundary – such as a motorway which may prevent urban sprawl from occurring.
- **The nature of the settlement form** - i.e. an urban edge that is uneven, rather than 'rounded off', is more vulnerable to urban sprawl. This vulnerability is evidenced by the number of the developer proposals to 'round off' and 'fill gaps', even though this may not be desirable from a wider planning perspective (e.g. green wedge/ fingers into the urban area can be desirable from a green infrastructure viewpoint), or to create a 'better edge' to the urban area.
- **The presence of roads** – i.e. roads allow for greater opportunities for urban sprawl to occur, because of the potential for ribbon development and the wider access they provide. Motorways and dual carriageways are not usually relevant in these terms. These roads considered under this criterion are also distinct from those identified as boundary features as they will not form part of the existing settlement edge.

[31] Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, Planning Advisor Service (2015).

- **Potential for sprawl to occur beyond the parcel boundary** – in some cases a parcel may be at risk from development within the parcel itself but there is little or no potential for sprawl to occur beyond the parcel– therefore the overall extent of the potential for urban sprawl is limited. Where this is relevant this is taken into account. (e.g. where a parcel is surrounded by existing built development on all sides, or is bounded by existing urban development and a strong a durable barrier preventing sprawl occurring beyond the parcel).

Definition of boundary features considered able to check the sprawl of the 'large built-up area'

3.32 While all boundary features can play some role in preventing urban sprawl, only motorways, dual carriageways, railway tracks and rivers adjacent to the existing urban edge, which have not been breached by the large built-up area within the immediate vicinity of a parcel and are therefore demonstrably strong and defensible, are considered to be significant in relation to Purpose 1.

3.33 Other boundaries, such as streams, and lesser roads are not for the purposes of this Study considered to be strong enough to prevent urban sprawl. However, such boundary features may form an important part of the landscape and/or pose a physical barrier to unplanned sprawl, albeit one that can more easily be breached. Floodplains are a major factor in restricting development; however the presence of environmental constraints such SSSIs and floodplains is not being considered. That is a matter for subsequent analysis beyond the remit of this Study.

Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another

3.34 As set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF, Purpose 2 aims to 'prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another'. For the purpose of this assessment, it was concluded that the 'neighbouring towns' should include all 'inset settlements' i.e. settlements that do not lie within the Green Belt in Greater Manchester. In addition to the settlements identified in Greater Manchester for assessment, the following settlements outside of the Greater Manchester Area were included in the assessment of Purpose 2:

- Walsden.
- Whitworth.
- Edenfield.
- Stubbins.
- Edgworth.
- Adlington.
- Appley Bridge (partly within Greater Manchester).
- Up Holland.
- Billinge.
- Ashton in Makerfield (almost wholly within Greater Manchester).
- Garswood and Downall Green.
- Newton Le Willows.
- Culcheth/ Twiss Green.
- Lymm/ Rushgreen/ Oughtrington.
- Handforth/Wilmslow.
- Poynton.
- Disley.
- New Mills.
- Hadfield/Brookfield/Tintwistle/ Woolley Bridge.
- Gamesley.
- Charlesworth.

- Hollins Green.
- Glazebury.

3.35 A parcel by parcel assessment was undertaken taking account (where relevant) of the following:

- The role the parcel plays in maintaining the separation of **physically separate settlements**. For example, in the context of Tameside, this would include Broadbottom, Mottram and Hollingworth, and potentially Mossley as they are freestanding.
- The role the parcel plays in preventing further coalescence of **settlements which have already merged**. For example, in Tameside, this would include Ashton-under-Lyne, Audenshaw, Denton, Dukinfield, Droylsden, Hyde (including Hattersley).

3.36 The detailed commentary also considers the role that the Green Belt plays in preventing the coalescence of 'washed over' settlements, as it is acknowledged by the Steering Group that the Green Belt does play a role in preventing the merging of these smaller settlements. The role the Green Belt plays in preventing the merger of these smaller settlements has **not**, however, contributed towards the ratings given in the assessment.

3.37 The assessment has not considered the role the parcel plays in preventing further coalescence of different parts (or suburbs) of the same settlement (e.g. between Hattersley and Hyde). A commentary has, been provided in the database noting where the Green Belt is playing a strong role in preventing the coalescence of different parts of the same settlement, however this has not contributed towards the rating given.

3.38 Rather than simply measuring the size of the gap between settlements, the assessment has considered both the physical and visual role that parcels of land play in preventing the merging of settlements. This accords with the PAS guidance which states that distance alone should not be used to assess the extent to which the Green Belt prevents neighbouring towns from merging into one another.

3.39 A parcel that represents all or most of the physical gap between towns will clearly play an important role in preventing coalescence, so parcel location and size are significant factors with regard to this purpose. However, the nature of the land between two towns - the role of landform and land cover in connecting or separating them visually or in terms of the character of their settings – and also the character of the settlements themselves will affect the extent to which the closing of a physical gap between them is perceived as reducing settlement separation.

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

3.40 For this purpose, the first consideration is whether the land can be described as countryside (i.e. a relatively open natural, semi-natural or farmed landscape), rather than urban land.

3.41 Urbanising influences are considered to include any features that compromise the open countryside character, such as roads lined with street lighting and pavements, large areas of hard standing, floodlit sports fields, roads etc. They do not include development which is commonly found within the countryside, e.g. agricultural or forestry related development, isolated dwellings, historic schools and churches. Electricity pylons are not considered to be urbanising features as they are present in both rural and urban settings.

3.42 The criterion differs from Criterion 1a as it focuses on the extent to which the open countryside characteristics of the Green Belt have been compromised by encroachment from urbanising influences, or the extent to which the parcel displays the characteristics of the countryside.

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

3.43 The NPPF describes the five purposes of the Green Belt, the fourth of which focuses on the role of the Green Belt in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Fundamentally, this Green Belt purpose concerns towns, the special architectural or historic character of which, is enhanced by the openness of the land surrounding the settlement.

3.44 To ensure that the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment took proper account of this purpose, it was therefore necessary to define what constitutes an historic town and to set out how the role of the Green Belt in preserving setting and special character can be assessed.

Definition of historic towns

3.45 Green Belt assessments have adopted a range of approaches to the definition of historic towns. These typically focus on the presence of designated Conservation Areas, but in some cases have considered whether settlements were recorded as far back as the Domesday Book (e.g. Cheshire East Green Belt Study).

3.46 In the case of Greater Manchester, it is important that the definition of 'historic' reflects the region's industrial heritage and the growth of towns during the industrial revolution. While some industrial sites (e.g. mills, town centres etc.) are subject to heritage designations, including Conservation Areas and listed building status, there is an argument for inclusion of the wider nineteenth century townscape, including residential areas which may be undesignated.

3.47 The Greater Manchester Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project defines a number of 'slices through time' which show the extent of the urban area at various points in time. This Study has used the 'slice' representing the extent of development at the start of the twentieth century as a way of defining the historic component of the built environment.

3.48 As a cross check, designated Conservation Areas have been included to ensure that they are fully reflected in the definition of historic towns and other settlements. The identified historic cores were mapped and circulated to the Steering Group for comment and amendment where necessary.

3.49 The historic settlements were identified by selecting Conservation Areas that encompass a block of residential settlement and which are located within one of the settlements assessed in Purpose 2. The area of each historic settlement was defined by expanding the corresponding Conservation Area to include any pre 20th century settlement identified in the HLC data. It should be noted that any relatively small Conservation Areas that are not surrounded by pre 20th settlement were not included, nor were Conservations Areas which were comprises of only historic industrial development.

3.50 The Greater Manchester Historic Landscape Characterisation project does not extend beyond Manchester, so for historic settlements beyond the Greater Manchester border, the assessment considered the presence of Conservation Areas within the settlements listed in paragraph 3.34.

Assessing the role of Green Belt in preserving setting and special character

3.51 To inform understanding of the role that Green Belt provides in preserving the setting of historic towns, intervisibility analysis was undertaken as part of the desk based assessment of land parcels. In essence, this identified the extent to which each Green Belt parcel is visually connected with one or more historic town or settlement.

3.52 The process by which this analysis took place is as follows:

- A digital ground model of the study area was constructed using OS digital contour data;
- The footprint of pre 20th century (or comparable time slice) urban areas and current conservation areas was overlaid;
- A notional building height of 10m was applied to these areas (it was not possible to model specific buildings or structures such as chimneys);
- Digital analysis was used to identify which Green Belt parcels are intervisible with these urban areas within a radius of 5km.

3.53 This is a theoretical analysis based on standard building height and 'bare ground topography' (i.e. not taking account of the screening effect of intervening structures or land cover such as trees and woodland). It does, however, provide a tool to inform the desk-based analysis and information which was then tested during field survey work.

3.54 The desk analysis identified those land parcels which could have the potential to form an important part of the setting of an historic settlement, considering the extent of intervisibility and the distance at which it occurs.

3.55 The field survey then explored this on the ground, considering in particular:

- the strength of the visual relationship (e.g. the influence of screening or intervening features / development, the presence of key views and vistas);
- the balance between historic and more recent development;
- the prominence of key historic features such as mill buildings, chimneys, churches etc.;
- the presence of any obvious functional relationships between the historic town and the Green Belt parcel (e.g. canals, current or disused railway lines); and
- where appropriate, views out from settlements as well as views of urban areas from the Green Belt.

3.56 This process informed the preparation of a commentary on the role of the open character of given land parcel in contributing to the setting of the historic town and in reflecting and preserving its special character.

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

3.57 Supporting urban regeneration has been a longstanding objective of Green Belt in the UK. By preventing development within areas designated as Green Belt, the aim is to steer development to urban locations. A constrained land supply should also help make the recycling of derelict and other urban land more viable.

3.58 Measuring accurately the extent to which individual parcels contribute to this process of recycling of derelict and other urban land is problematic. While it would be possible to undertake a spatial analysis of the supply brownfield land relative Green Belt parcels (at conurbation, authority, settlement, Housing Market Area or Strategic Green Belt Areas scales), there are significant concerns about the validity of any judgements based on the results:

- It is not possible to identify and measure a causal link between the policy restraint in a particular Green Belt parcel and the recycling of urban land elsewhere, in part reflecting the complexity of the development process, the locational requirements of different types of development and variations in the property market over time.
- The scale and complexity of Greater Manchester's urban form and Green Belt, and the relationship with neighbouring urban areas mean that spatial analysis based on the supply of brownfield land relative to the locations of individual Green Belt parcels would either be overly simplistic or would be based on significant assumptions such as to place the results in significant doubt.
- While brownfield land does provide one measure of the supply of land for recycling, it does not take account of regeneration initiatives based on redevelopment or re-use of existing buildings and enhancement of existing urban areas.

3.59 Similar issues have influenced Green Belt assessments elsewhere. Many do not assess individual parcels against purpose 5, and either do not rate them or rate them all equally, on the grounds that it is difficult to support arguments that one parcel of land makes a higher contribution to encouraging re-use of urban land than another. Where local authorities have detailed information on the extent of such sites, an argument could be made that Green Belt parcels around a settlement with a smaller area of unused urban land contribute more than parcels around a settlement with less 'pressure' on surrounding Green Belt, but it is very debatable as to whether development pressures operate at such a localised level.

3.60 This Study therefore acknowledges that Purpose 5 is important and should be afforded equal weight with Purposes 1-4 but that is not possible to assess the performance of Purpose 5 on a parcel-by-parcel assessment.

3.61 In summary, it was concluded that there is no reliable means of assessing the contribution of the Green Belt to Purpose 5 at the scale of individual parcels or wider areas of Green Belt, as defined in the 1981 Greater Manchester Green Belt. While it could be argued that a spatial analysis of brown field land supply would allow some differentiation between parcels across the study area, the complexity of the analysis and the assumptions that would be required make such an analysis neither a practical (in terms of the extensive resources required to this) or effective means of assessing contribution to this purpose. Given the risk of introducing spurious or unreliable information to the assessment, it was agreed with the Steering Group that parcels would not be assessed against Purpose 5.

3.62 In addition to the five purposes of Green Belt, the NPPF also refers to two 'essential characteristics': openness and permanence. Comments on each of these are made in the paragraphs below as they are applicable to all the assessment criteria.

Openness

3.63 Openness in a Green Belt sense relates to lack of built development more than visual openness, although the two often go hand in hand. The key distinction is that where vegetation provides visual enclosure this does not reduce Green Belt openness, even though it might in practice mean that development would have less visual impact.

3.64 Openness as a characteristic can be considered in terms of the scale and density of development. The extent and form of existing development affects the degree to which a parcel can be considered to be part of the countryside rather than an extension of the urban/settled area, or a built-up area in its own right.

Permanence

3.65 The concept of permanence is a planning consideration rather than a physical one, but it is recognised that there are benefits in using features which are clearly defined and which also play a physical and/or visual role in separating town and countryside to act as Green Belt boundaries.

Part 2: Identification and assessment of land parcels

Desk based assessment

3.66 Having defined the criteria and method by which parcels would be defined, the next task was to identify and carry out a preliminary desk-based evaluation of the Green Belt and adjacent areas. This provided emerging findings which were later tested and refined during the field survey stage of the Study. In practice some criteria could be fully assessed at this stage while others needed to be partly considered in the field. The same assessment approach was applied to parcels both in and adjacent to the Green Belt. A parallel assessment was undertaken for Strategic Green Belt Areas.

3.67 Each land parcel was assessed using OS maps, aerial images, Google Street View and relevant GIS data to gain an initial understanding of how each parcel performs against the Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF. The presence of key constraints widely acknowledged as 'showstoppers' to development, such as Flood Zone 3b, SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens was acknowledged and mapped; however these designations only informed parcel boundaries and not the assessment scores against the Purposes.

3.68 The results of the assessment were entered into the Access database and commentary included on the reasoning behind each judgement. This was linked to GIS shape files, providing a digital baseline for checking, supplementing and refining in the field.

Field survey

3.69 Following a workshop meeting with the Steering Group, each parcel was visited to check and verify the judgements and conclusions reached in the desk-based assessment, to carry out the assessment for criteria which could not be included within the desk based exercise and to check and verify the boundaries of the land parcels where necessary. The site visits were used to collect geo-referenced photographs illustrating the overall character and appearance of the Green Belt parcel in question, together with any key issues such as strength of boundaries, land uses or visual prominence of adjoining settlements.

3.70 In order to ensure that the assessment is robust and will withstand scrutiny, **all** of the proposed Green Belt parcels were visited.

3.71 The information obtained during the site visits was input directly into the Access database with clear commentary provided on the judgements reached.

Analysis

3.72 The assessment findings were analysed to draw out key findings. The NPPF does not require all the purposes of Green Belt to be met simultaneously. Indeed, parcels of land can make a significant contribution to the Green Belt purposes without performing all of the purposes of Green Belt at the same time. Therefore, each parcel's score against each of the Green Belt purposes was carefully recorded so that the contribution of all parcels against all purposes can be examined. Scores were rigorously cross-checked and reviewed to ensure consistency, clarity and transparency in all judgements.

3.73 The findings of the assessment are contained within **Chapter 4** and **Figures 4.1-4.50** and **Appendices 2-11.**

Consultation

3.74 As outlined in **Chapter 1**, the duty to co-operate was created in the Localism Act 2011, and amends the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, County Councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. The duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree. But local planning authorities are required to make every effort to secure the necessary co-operation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination.

3.75 The Duty to Co-operate partners for the Greater Manchester Green Belt study include:

- Blackburn and Darwen
- Calderdale
- Cheshire East
- Chorley
- High Peak
- Peak District National Park
- Kirklees
- Rossendale
- St Helens
- Warrington
- West Lancashire

3.76 A copy of the draft methodology was sent to the Duty to Cooperate partners for comment in March 2016 and on the draft report in May 2016. Comments received were discussed with the Steering Group and incorporated as appropriate.

4 Findings

Presentation of findings

4.1 The main aim of the Study was to provide a robust, transparent and clear understanding of how the land in the Greater Manchester Green Belt performs against the purposes of the Green Belt. A total of 26 Strategic Green Belt Areas, 23 broad areas and 608 parcels of Green Belt land were defined in the Study area.

4.2 Due to the wide scope of the study and the large number of land parcels assessed, the findings are presented in this chapter by authority area. For each authority there is a summary table presenting the findings for each broad area and land parcel within the Green Belt and a second table relating to the land parcels assessed outside of the Green Belt (where relevant). Not all authorities requested the assessment of parcels that do not lie within the Green Belt. There is also a summary of the findings by Green Belt purposes (for each parcel and the Strategic Green Belt Area in which it is located). Full results from the assessment of Strategic Green Belt Areas are contained in **Appendix 4.1**.

4.3 A series of maps present the overall results of the assessment for the broad areas and smaller parcels for each of the assessed Green Belt purposes (i.e. Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4) - see **Figures 4.1-4.50** throughout this chapter.

4.4 **Appendices 2** and **11** contain all the assessment sheets for the broad areas and parcels for each authority area. The assessment sheets contain the detailed judgements behind the ratings against each Green Belt purpose including any variations in the performance within a land parcel. **It is essential that the detailed commentaries on the parcels (as set out in Appendices 2 and 11) are read alongside Figures 4.1-4.50 and the summary tables in this chapter.**

4.5 The information in these Figures and Appendices essentially fulfils the Study's overall aim. However, the Steering Group requested that the findings should be brought together in some way so that it is possible to see how parcels rate against each purpose. The findings are presented in **Tables 4.1-4.37** throughout this chapter. The tables also include assessment findings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas in which the smaller parcels and broad areas are located. This ensures that the strategic, as well as parcel specific role of the Green Belt can be considered.

4.6 The tables in this chapter do not present an aggregation of the parcels' and broad areas' ratings against all the purposes and no weighting was applied to the purposes. As noted earlier, the NPPF does not require all the purposes of Green Belt to be met simultaneously and a Strong rating against any Green Belt purpose could be sufficient, on its own, to indicate an important contribution. Equally, even if an area of Green Belt scores strongly against one or more purposes, the NPPF does not suggest that a review of its boundaries would not be appropriate, if 'exceptional circumstances' are demonstrated.

4.7 **Table 4.1** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Bolton. **Tables 4.2 and 4.3** present the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Bolton, both within and outside of the Green Belt. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.1-4.5** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessments for Bolton is provided in **Appendix 4.2.**

Table 4.1: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Bolton

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
1	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
4	Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
8	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
9	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Strong	Strong
10	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong
13	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
14	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong	Weak	No contribution

Table 4.2: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Bolton

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BT_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	10
BT_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	9
BT_BA3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT01	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	9
BT02	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT03	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	10
BT04	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT05	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	9
BT06	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	10
BT07	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	10
BT08	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT09	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	9
BT10	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT11	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	10
BT12	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT13	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	9
BT14	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Strong	9

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BT15	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	9
BT16	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	1
BT17	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT18	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT19	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	10
BT20	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT21	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	10
BT22	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT23	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT24	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	9
BT25	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	1
BT26	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	1
BT27	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT28	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	9
BT29	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	1
BT30	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	1
BT31	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	1
BT32	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	1
BT33	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	13
BT34	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	4
BT35	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	4
BT36	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	1
BT37	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	13
BT38	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	4
BT39	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Weak	4
BT40	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	1
BT41	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	13
BT42	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	13
BT43	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	4
BT44	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	4
BT45	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	13
BT46	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	4
BT47	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	8
BT48	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	4
BT49	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	13
BT50	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	13
BT51	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	8
BT52	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	4
BT53	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	13

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BT55	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	4
BT56	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	8
BT57	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Weak	8
BT58	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	4
BT59	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	8
BT60	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	13
BT61	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	14
BT62	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	14
BT63	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	14
BT65	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	4
BT66	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	4
BT67	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	4
BT68	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	14
BT69	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	4
BT70	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	Strong	No Contribution	10
BU_BA3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	13
BU36	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	13

Table 4.3: Assessment ratings for parcel outside of the Green Belt in Bolton

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating
BT54	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution

Summary of findings

4.8 **Table 4.4** below summarises the assessment findings for Bolton MBC, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.4: Summary of Assessment Findings for Bolton

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Green Belt parcels along the urban edge generally play the strongest role in preventing further urban sprawl. Parcels making up corridors of open land between urban areas were judged to play a strong or moderate role in relation to this aim. Parcels around the edges of smaller, freestanding settlements such as Blackrod were assessed as playing a weak role in relation to this purpose.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Almost all of the Green Belt in Bolton plays a strong role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging with one another. This reflects the pattern of settlement growth which has resulted in a number of corridors and fingers of open land separating parts of Bolton and surrounding settlements such as Horwich, Westhaughton, Little Hulton and towns in neighbouring council areas. The principal exceptions are parcels and broad areas lying to the north and north west t of Bolton which general make a moderate, weak or no contribution to this purpose.

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Much of Bolton's Green Belt plays an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Areas which perform most strongly in relation to this purpose include the Pennine fringes to the north west and north east of Bolton, and much of the area between Bolton and Westhaughton. Most other areas of Green Belt, including parcels between Bolton and Wigan, and forming wedges of open land extending into Bolton itself, play a moderate role in relation to this purpose.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Green Belt parcels to the north east and north west of Bolton play a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of towns. The rising ground of the Pennine Fringes provides the backdrop to much of northern Bolton. Parcels closer to the urban edge generally play a moderate or weaker role, particularly to the south and south east of Bolton, including around Westhaughton.

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

4.9 **Table 4.5** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Bury. **Table 4.6** presents the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Bury within the Green Belt. No non-Green Belt parcels were identified for assessment within Bury. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.6-4.10** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessments for Bury is provided in **Appendix 4.3.**

Table 4.5 Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Bury

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
10	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong
11	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate-Strong	Moderate
12	Moderate	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Strong
13	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
15	Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate

Table 4.6: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Bury

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BT_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	10
BU_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Strong	11
BU_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU_BA3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	13
BT49	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	13
BU01	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	11
BU02	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong	11
BU03	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	Weak	Weak	11
BU04	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	10
BU05	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Moderate	11
BU06	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong	11
BU07	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	10
BU09	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Strong	11
BU11	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Weak	11
BU12	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak	10
BU13	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	11
BU15	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	10
BU16	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	11

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BU17	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	11
BU18	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	11
BU19	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	11
BU20	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	10
BU21	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	12
BU22	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	10
BU23	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	12
BU24	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Weak	10
BU25	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	10
BU26	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	No Contribution	No Contribution	10
BU27	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	No Contribution	No Contribution	10
BU28	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU29	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	10
BU30	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	10
BU31	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	10
BU32	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU33	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU34	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	15A
BU35	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU36	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	13
BU37	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15A
BU38	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	15A
BU39	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU41	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	13
BU42	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	13
BU43	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	13
BU45	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU46	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	13
BU47	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	15
BU48	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	13
BU50	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Strong	13
MA1	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	15
RD_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	12
RD50	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15

Summary of findings

4.10 **Table 4.7** below summarises the assessment findings for Bury, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.7: Summary of Assessment Findings for Bury

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Green Belt parcels between Bury and Ramsbottom to the north, Bolton to the west and Radcliffe to the south play the strongest role in preventing further urban sprawl. Further south, along the edges of Radcliffe, Prestwich, Whitefield, along the Roch valley and east of the M66, parcels make a moderate- strong contribution to this purpose.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Significant parts of the Green Belt in Bury play a strong role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging with one another. This reflects the pattern of settlement growth which has resulted in a number of corridors and fingers of open land separating parts of Bury and surrounding settlements such as Ramsbottom, Radcliffe and Whitefield and towns in neighbouring council areas. There are also parcels to the north-west and south of Bury which make a moderate contribution to this purpose in recognition of the large degree of coalescence that has taken place between settlements to the extent that these are largely surrounded by existing development. They play a role in maintaining separation of parts of the same urban area, or towns that have already started to merge. A series of smaller parcels play a weak role in preventing town merging (e.g. to the north east of Bury), reflecting their size and the presence of other 'barrier' features such as motorway corridors which play a role in maintaining the separation of settlements.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Large parts of Bury's Green Belt play an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Areas which perform most strongly in relation to this purpose include the Pennine fringes to the north of Bury and around Ramsbottom, and parts of the Irwell valley to the north and south of Radcliffe. Most other areas of Green Belt, including parcels between Bury and Bolton, Bury and Middleton and forming wedges of open land extending into Bury itself, play a moderate role in relation to this purpose.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Green Belt parcels to the north west of Bury, east of Ramsbottom and west of Prestwich play a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of these historic settlements. The rising ground of the Pennine Fringes provides the backdrop to much of this part of the conurbation. A group of parcels extending from Prestolee south east and taking in part of the Irwell Valley play a moderate to strong role. Most other parcels, including many closer to the urban edge generally play a weaker role when assessed against this purpose.

Manchester City Council

4.11 **Table 4.8** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Manchester City. **Table 4.9** presents the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Manchester, within the Green Belt. No non-Green Belt parcels were identified for assessment within Manchester City. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.11-4.15** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessments for Manchester City is provided in **Appendix 4.4.**

Table 4.8: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Manchester

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
15	Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
18	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate-Strong
24	Strong	Moderate	Weak-Moderate	Weak
26	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak-Moderate

Table 4.9: Assessment ratings for smaller parcels within the Green Belt in Manchester City

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
MA01	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	15
MA02	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	18
MA03	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	26
MA04	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
MA05	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
MA06	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	26
MA07	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	26
MA08	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	26
MA09	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	26
MA10	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Moderate	26
MA11	Weak	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	No Contribution	26
MA13	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	24
MA14	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	24
MA15	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	24
MA16	No contribution	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	Weak	24
MA17	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
SP27	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Weak	26
TF31	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF32	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26

Summary of findings

4.12 **Table 4.10** below summarises the assessment findings for Manchester City, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.10: Summary of Assessment Findings for Manchester

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Parcels making up the open corridor of land along the River Mersey and along the southern edge of the conurbation play a strong role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Parcels along the Mersey corridor generally play a strong role in preventing Chorlton cum Hardy and Didsbury in the north from merging with Wythenshawe to the south. Parcels along the council boundary to the south play a weak role in separating Wythenshawe and Hale Barns from settlements such as Wilmslow, beyond the Greater Manchester Boundary. This reflects the strong physical barrier created by Manchester Airport.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Parcels along the Mersey corridor, to the north of the M60 corridor play a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Smaller parcels, between the M60 and the urban edge to the south play a weaker role, reflecting the proximity of the motorway and its junctions. The parcel comprising Manchester airport runway makes no contribution to this purpose. Other areas on the southern edge of the conurbation make a moderate contribution to this aim.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	A number or the parcels making up the open corridor of land along the River Mersey play a moderate role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. These include areas of Green Belt south west of Chorlton cum Hardy and Didsbury. Other parcels making up this corridor, and lying along the southern edge of the conurbation in the vicinity of Manchester Airport have little or no role in relation to this purpose.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

4.13 **Table 4.11** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Oldham. **Tables 4.12 and 4.13** present the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Oldham, both within and outside of the Green Belt. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.16-4.20** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.5.**

Table 4.11: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Oldham

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
15	Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
16	Moderate	Weak-Moderate	Strong	Strong
17	Moderate	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Strong
18	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate-Strong

Table 4.12: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Oldham

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
OH01	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	17
OH03	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	15
OH05	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	17
OH06	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	18
OH07	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	17
OH08	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	17
OH09	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	17
OH10	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	15
OH11	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	17
OH12	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	15
OH13	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	15
OH14	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	17
OH15	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	17
OH16	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	17
OH17	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	17
OH18	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	17
OH19	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	17
OH20	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	17
OH21	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	17
OH22	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	17

Parcel Reference	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
OH23	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	17
OH24	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	17
OH25	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	17
OH26	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	17
OH27	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	15
OH28	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Strong	17
OH29	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Strong	17
OH30	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	17
OH31	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	Weak	No Contribution	15
OH32	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	17
OH33	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Strong	17
OH34	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	15
OH35	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	17
OH36	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	17
OH37	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Weak	Strong	17
OH38	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	17
OH39	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	17
OH41	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	17
OH43	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	18
OH44	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	18
OH45	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	18
OH46	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	18
OH47	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	18
OH48	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	18
OH49	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	18
OH50	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	17
RD_BA3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	17
RD44	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	16
RD53	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	15
RD67	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	15
TS_BA1	Not applicable	Not applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	19
TS01a	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	18
TS01b	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	17
TS02	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	19
TS04	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	18
TS05	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	18
TS17	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	18

Table 4.13: Assessment ratings for parcels outside of the Green Belt in Oldham

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating
OH02	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Moderate	Strong
OH04	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Moderate	Strong
OH40	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	Weak
OH42	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Weak

Summary of findings

4.14 **Table 4.14** below summarises the assessment findings for Oldham, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.14: Summary of Assessment Findings for Oldham

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Parcels close to the urban edge along the north, east and south sides of Oldham consistently play a strong role in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of large urban areas. Parcels surrounding the villages of Denshaw, Delph, Dobcross, Diggle and Uppermill were judged as making no contribution to this purpose.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	A significant number of Green Belt parcels in Oldham play a strong role in preventing towns from merging into one another. These include parcels forming the narrow corridor of open land between Oldham and Rochdale around Royton, the Medlock valley between Oldham and Ashton under Lyne and, further east, parcels lying between the villages of Delph, Dobcross, Diggle and Uppermill. Parcels which play a lesser role in separating settlements are judged to play a moderate role in relation to this purpose.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Much of Oldham's Green Belt plays an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Areas which perform most strongly in relation to this purpose include the Pennine fringes to the east of Oldham, and parts of the corridors between Oldham and Rochdale to the north, and Oldham and Ashton under Lyne to the south (along the Medlock valley). A few remaining areas of Green Belt, including parcels within these latter corridors play a moderate role in relation to this purpose.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Green Belt parcels to the east of Bury and surrounding the villages of Denshaw, Delph, Dobcross, Diggle and Uppermill, play a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of these historic settlements. The rising ground of the Pennine Fringes provides the backdrop to much of this part of the conurbation. Parcels making up the sections of the open corridors between Oldham and Rochdale to the north, and Oldham and Ashton under Lyne to the south (along the Medlock valley) generally play a lesser role, though a number have been assessed as playing a strong role (e.g. to the north of Shaw, east of the B6194 Lees New Road and around Woodhouses).

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

4.15 **Table 4.15** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Rochdale. **Tables 4.16 and 4.17** present the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Rochdale, both within and outside of the Green Belt. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.21-4.25** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.6.**

Table 4.15: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Rochdale

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
12	Moderate	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Strong
15	Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
16	Moderate	Weak-Moderate	Strong	Strong

Table 4.16: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Rochdale

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BU_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
BU21	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	12
BU23	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	12
BU28	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
OH03	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	15
OH13	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	15
RD_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	16
RD_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	12
RD_BA3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	16
RD01	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Strong	16
RD02	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate	16
RD03	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate	16
RD04	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	16
RD06	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	15
RD07	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	15
RD09	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate	15
RD11	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	16
RD12	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Moderate	16
RD13	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	16
RD14	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	16
RD15	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	16
RD16	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	16

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
RD17	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	16
RD18	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	16
RD19	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Weak	16
RD20	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Strong	16
RD21	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	12
RD22	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	12
RD23	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	16
RD24	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	12
RD27	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	16
RD28	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	12
RD30	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	16
RD31	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak	12
RD32	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	No Contribution	12
RD33	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	12
RD34	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	No contribution	16
RD36	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	12
RD37	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	16
RD38	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak	12
RD39	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	16
RD40	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Weak	16
RD41	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	16
RD42	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	12
RD43	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
RD44	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	12
RD45	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	16
RD46	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	12
RD47	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	12
RD49	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	12
RD50	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
RD52	Weak	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	No Contribution	12
RD53	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	15
RD54	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	15
RD56	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	15
RD57	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	15
RD58	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	15
RD59	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	15
RD60	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	15
RD61	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	16
RD62	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	15

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
RD64	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	15
RD65	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	15
RD67	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	15
RD68	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	No Contribution	15

Table 4.17: Assessment ratings for parcels outside of the Green Belt in Rochdale

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating
RD05	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate
RD08	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Weak
RD10	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate
RD25	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution
RD26	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak
RD29	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	No Contribution
RD35	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak
RD48	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution
RD51	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution
RD55	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution
RD63	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak
RD66	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	No Contribution
RD69	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution

Summary of findings

4.16 **Table 4.18** below summarises the assessment findings for Rochdale, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.18: Summary of Assessment Findings for Rochdale

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Green Belt parcels close to the urban edge of Rochdale and Heywood play a strong or moderate role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Significant parts of the Green Belt in Rochdale play a strong role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. This includes parcels which separate Rochdale from Oldham and Middleton to the south and Heywood, Bury and Whitefield to the west. To the north, broad areas of Green Belt play an important role in maintaining the separation of Rochdale from Pennine settlements such as Ramsbottom and Whitworth.

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Large parts of Rochdale's Green Belt play an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Areas which perform most strongly in relation to this purpose include the Pennine fringes to the north west, north and north east of Rochdale and parts of the corridor separating the town from Oldham to the south. Remaining areas of Green Belt between Heywood and Middleton and on the south eastern fringes Rochdale play a moderate role in relation to this purpose.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Green Belt parcels to the north west, north east and east of Rochdale play a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of these historic settlements. The rising ground of the Pennine Fringes provides the backdrop to much of this part of the conurbation. Parcels closer to the urban edge generally play a lesser role in relation to this purpose, particularly to the south west of Rochdale and around Heywood many of which were judged to make 'no contribution'. To the south east of Rochdale, a series of parcels separating the town from Royton and Shaw play a moderate to strong role.

Salford City Council

4.17 **Table 4.19** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Salford. **Tables 4.20 and 4.21** present the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Salford, both within and outside of the Green Belt. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.26-4.30** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.7.**

Table 4.19: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Salford

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
7	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate-Strong	Weak
8	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
13	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
14	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong	Weak	No contribution

Table 4.20: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Salford

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BT59	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	8
BT60	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	13
BT68	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	14
SA_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	7
SA_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	7
SA04	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	13
SA06	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	14
SA07	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	13
SA09	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	14
SA10	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	14
SA12	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	13
SA14	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	14
SA15	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	13
SA16	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	14
SA18	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	14
SA20	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	7
SA23	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	7
SA25	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	7
SA26	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	7
SA27	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	7

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
SA29	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	7
SA30	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	7
SA32	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	7
SA33	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	7
SA34	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	7
WG101	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	7

Table 4.21: Assessment ratings for parcels outside of the Green Belt in Salford

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating
SA01	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution
SA02	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution
SA03	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Weak	No Contribution
SA05	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution
SA08	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution
SA11	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution
SA13	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution
SA17	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Weak
SA19	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Strong
SA22	Moderate	Moderate	No contribution	Moderate	Strong
SA24	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Moderate
SA31	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution

Summary of findings

4.18 **Table 4.22** summarises the assessment findings for Salford, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.22: Summary of Assessment Findings for Salford

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The Green Belt in Salford plays an important role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. Parcels playing the strongest role include those lying close to the existing urban edge where a lack of strong boundaries mean there is a risk of sprawl occurring. Larger areas, further from the urban edge play a lesser role.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Those areas of Green Belt forming narrow corridors of undeveloped land between existing settlements play the strongest role in preventing towns from coalescing. Examples include land at Worsley, Linnyshaw, and north of Pendlebury. The Broad Areas however plays a clear strategic role in preventing the merging of Greater Manchester with Warrington.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Within Salford, a large swathe of land bounded by Leigh, Astley and Worsley in the north, Eccles in the east and Irlam to the south was assessed as making a strong contribution to this purpose. Areas close to the urban edge, and those affected by road infrastructure were generally assessed as making a moderate contribution.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Parcels lying between Boothstown and Worsley make a moderate to strong role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Other parcels were judged to play no role in relation to this purpose.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

4.19 **Table 4.23** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Stockport. **Table 4.24** presents the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Stockport. No non-Green Belt parcels were identified for assessment. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.31-4.35** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.8.**

Table 4.23: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Stockport

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
21	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
22	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak-Moderate
23	Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
26	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak-Moderate

Table 4.24: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Stockport

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
MA08	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	26
MA10	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Moderate	26
MA12	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	26
MA14	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	23
MA16	No contribution	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	Weak	23
SP_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	21
SP_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Moderate	22
SP_BA3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	23
SP01	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP02	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	22
SP03	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP04	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP05	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP06	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP07	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	21
SP08	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	22
SP09	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	21
SP10	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP11	Weak	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	No Contribution	22

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
SP12	Weak	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	No Contribution	22
SP13	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP14	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP15	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	21
SP16	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	21
SP17	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP18	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP19	Moderate	Moderate	No contribution	Moderate	Weak	21
SP20	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP21	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	22
SP22	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP23	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	21
SP24	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Moderate	21
SP25	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	22
SP26	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	22
SP27	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Weak	26
SP28	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	22
SP29	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	26
SP30	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	21
SP31	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	22
SP32	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Moderate	21
SP33	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP34	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
SP35	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP36	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	22
SP37	Weak	Weak	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP38	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	21
SP39	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	26
SP40	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP41	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP42	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Moderate	21
SP43	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	26
SP44	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP45	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP46	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	21
SP47	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Strong	21
SP48	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	21
SP49	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	22
SP50	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
SP51	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP52	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	22
SP53	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP54	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Weak	22
SP55	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	Weak	22
SP56	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	23
SP57	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	22
SP58	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	Weak	22
SP59	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP60	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	21
SP61	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP62	Weak	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP63	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	23
SP64	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	23
SP65	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP66	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP67	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	23
SP68	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	23
SP69	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	23
SP70	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP71	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	24
SP72	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	23
SP73	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	22
SP74	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	23
SP75	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	23
SP76	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak	23
SP77	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	22
SP78	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	21
SP79	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	26
TS60	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	21
TS61	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	21

Summary of findings

4.20 **Table 4.25** below summarises the assessment findings for Stockport, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.25: Summary of Assessment Findings for Stockport

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Most parcels close to the urban edge and forming corridors along the Goyt and Tame valleys, along the narrow corridor of open land at Cheadle Hulme and lying between Cheadle and Heaton Mersey play a strong or moderate role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The Green Belt plays a key role in preventing settlements in Stockport from merging, or settlements which have already merged from coalescing further. Parcels which perform strongly include those along the Goyt and Tame valleys, between High Lane, Marple and Hazelgrove, along the narrow corridor of open land at Cheadle Hulme and parcels between Cheadle and Heaton Mersey. Areas of open country in the east play a moderate role, while smaller parcels, close to urban edge, tend to play a moderate or weak role. At a strategic level, the Green Belt maintains separation from settlements beyond the Greater Manchester boundary, including New Mills.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Much of the eastern part of the Green Belt in Stockport has been assessed as playing a strong role in relation to this purpose. These areas include the open countryside to the east of Romiley and Marple/Marple Bridge, the land to the north and west of High Lane, and much of the Goyt Valley to the east of Stockport. Parcels in the Tame Valley north east of Stockport, lying along the southern edge of the conurbation, forming the narrow corridor of open land at Cheadle Hulme and located closest to the edge of urban areas tend to make a moderate and in some cases, weak, contribution to this purpose.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Green Belt parcels to the east of Marple and Marple Bridge play a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of these historic settlements. The rising ground of the Pennine Fringes provides the backdrop to much of this part of the conurbation. A narrow finger of Green Belt at Cheadle Hulme also pays a strong role. The Green Belt between Marple and High Lane plays a moderate role. Most other parcels, including those closer to the urban edge, lying within the Goyt, Tame and Mersey valleys and running along the southern edge of the conurbation, play a weaker role or were judged to make 'no contribution' to this purpose.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

4.21 **Table 4.26** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Tameside. **Tables 4.27 and 4.28** present the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Tameside, both within and outside of the Green Belt. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.36-4.40** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.9.**

Table 4.26: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Tameside

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
18	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate-Strong
19	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
20	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Strong
21	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
22	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak-Moderate

Table 4.27: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Tameside

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
OH44	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	18
OH46	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	18
OH49	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	18
OH50	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	18
SP_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Strong	18
SP02	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	21
SP09	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	21
TS_BA1	Not applicable	Not applicable	Weak	Strong	Strong	19
TS02	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	19
TS04	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	18
TS05	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	18
TS07	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	18
TS11	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	18
TS13	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Strong	19
TS16	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	18
TS17	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	18
TS18	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	18
TS1a	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	18

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
TS1b	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	18
TS20	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	18
TS21	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	19
TS22	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	18
TS23	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	18
TS24	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Moderate	18
TS25	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	18
TS26	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	18
TS27	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	18
TS29	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	19
TS30	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	18
TS32	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	19
TS33	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	20
TS35	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	19
TS36	Weak	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	No Contribution	22
TS37	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	19
TS38	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Weak	Weak	19
TS39	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	19
TS40	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
TS41	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	20
TS42	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
TS44	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	19
TS47	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	20
TS48	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Moderate	19
TS49	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	22
TS50	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
TS54	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	19
TS56	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22
TS57	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	22
TS58	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	21
TS60	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	22
TS61	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	22
TS62	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	21
TS63	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	22
TS65	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Moderate	21
TS66	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	22

Table 4.28: Assessment ratings for parcels outside of the Green Belt in Tameside

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating
TS03	Weak	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	Moderate
TS06	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
TS08	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Weak	Weak
TS09	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Weak
TS10	No contribution	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	Weak
TS12	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Strong
TS14	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Strong
TS15	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak
TS19	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
TS28	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Strong
TS31	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Strong
TS34	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution
TS43	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution
TS46	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Weak
TS51	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak
TS52	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Weak	No Contribution
TS53	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak
TS55	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution
TS59	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution
TS64	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak
TS67	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	No Contribution

Summary of findings

4.22 **Table 4.29** below summarises the assessment findings for Tameside, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.29: Summary of Assessment Findings for Tameside

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Most parcels close to the urban edge and forming corridors between Oldham and Ashton under Lyne, north west and south west of Stalybridge and the Tame valley south of Denton play a strong or moderate role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The Green Belt in Tameside plays an important role in preventing neighbouring settlements from merging into one another. Areas playing a particularly strong role in relation to this purpose include the open corridor between Ashton under Lyne and Oldham, the narrow Tame Valley to the south and east of Denton, parcels surrounding Mossley, the areas to the north west and south east of Mottram in Longdendale. The Green Belt also maintains open land between Broadbottom, Gamesley and Charlesworth beyond the Greater Manchester boundary.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Green Belt in Tameside makes an important contribution to this purpose. Areas assessed as playing the strongest role include the open countryside to the east of Stalybridge, the open corridor between Ashton under Lyne and Oldham, areas to the north west and south east of Mottram in Longdendale and the area to the east of Denton. Many of these areas remain largely unspoiled by urbanising influences, displaying an intact rural character. Narrower corridors of Green Belt, for example along the Tame valley, make a moderate or weak contribution to this purpose, reflecting the influence of neighbouring urban areas.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Much of the Green Belt to the east of Ashton under Lyne, Stalybridge and Hyde makes a strong contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. This includes the eastern part of the corridor between Ashton under Lyne and Oldham, between Stalybridge and Hyde and south east of Hyde. Further east, the rising ground of the Pennine Fringes provides the backdrop to much of this part of the conurbation. Other parcels, including those north and east of Ashton under Lyne and those forming the valley of the River Tame south and east of Haughton Green play a weaker role or were judged to make 'no contribution' to this purpose.

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council

4.23 **Table 4.30** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Trafford. **Tables 4.31 and 4.32** present the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Trafford, both within and outside of the Green Belt. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.41-4.45** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.10.**

Table 4.30: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Trafford

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
24	Strong	Moderate	Weak-Moderate	Weak
25	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
26	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak-Moderate

Table 4.31: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Trafford

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
MA13	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	24
MA03	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	26
TF_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Moderate	25
TF01	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	26
TF02	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	26
TF03	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	25
TF04	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	25
TF05	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	24
TF06	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	24
TF07	Weak	Weak	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	24
TF08	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	24
TF09	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	26
TF10	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	26
TF11	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF12	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	26
TF13	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF14	Strong	Weak	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF15	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	26
TF16	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF17	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF18	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
TF19	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF20	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	26
TF21	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF22	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	26
TF23	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF24	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	25
TF26	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	25
TF27	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	25
TF29	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF31	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF33	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF34	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF35	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	25
TF38	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	25
TF39	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	25
TF40	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	25
TF41	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	25
TF42	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	26
TF43	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	24
TF44	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	24
TF45	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	24
TF46	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Moderate	25
TF47	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	24
TF48	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	24
TF49	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	25
TF50	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Moderate	24
TF51	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Moderate	24
TF52	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak	26
TF53	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Moderate	24
TF54	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	24
TF55	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	No Contribution	24

Table 4.32: Assessment ratings for parcels outside of the Green Belt in Trafford

Parcel ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating
TF25	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	Weak	No Contribution
TF28	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution
TF30	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution
TF36	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution
TF37	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	No Contribution

Summary of findings

4.24 **Table 4.33** below summarises the assessment findings for Trafford, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.33: Summary of Assessment Findings for Trafford

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Most parcels close to the urban edge and forming corridors along the Mersey Valley and the Timperley Brook east of Altrincham play a strong or moderate role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. The corridor of land which opens up from Carrington to Dunham Massey plays a weaker role in relation to this purpose.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The Green Belt in Trafford plays a significant role in preventing neighbouring towns from coalescing. This is particularly evident along the Mersey valley, along the Timperley Brook to the east of Altrincham and within the broad tract of countryside bounded by the River Bollin in the south. A number of smaller parcels, close to the urban edge, play a moderate or weak role in relation to this purpose.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Green Belt in Trafford makes an important contribution to this purpose. Areas assessed as playing the strongest role include the corridor of land which opens up from west of Sale in the north to form a broad tract of countryside bounded by the River Bollin in the south. Parcels within the Mersey valley and along the Timperley Brook to the east of Altrincham make a moderate contribution to this purpose.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The extensive area of Green Belt between Partington and Altrincham and taking in Dunham Massey plays a moderate role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Parcels close to Altrincham generally play a weaker role, with those within the Mersey valley and close to Partington generally make no contribution to this purpose.

Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

4.25 **Table 4.34** presents the assessment ratings for the Strategic Green Belt Areas that lie entirely or partly within Wigan. **Tables 4.35 and 4.36** present the assessment ratings for the land parcels in Wigan, both within and outside of the Green Belt. The assessment findings are mapped in **Figures 4.46-4.50** for Purposes 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Detailed commentary on the parcel assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.11.**

Table 4.34: Assessment ratings for Strategic Green Belt Areas in Wigan

Strategic Green Belt Area	Strategic Green Belt Area assessment ratings			
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4
1	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
2	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak-Moderate
3	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak
4	Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate
5	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak
6	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak
7	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Moderate-Strong	Weak
8	Moderate-Strong	Strong	Weak-Moderate	Weak-Moderate

Table 4.35: Assessment ratings for parcels within the Green Belt in Wigan

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
BT_BA3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	1
BT52	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	4
BT59	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	8
BT65	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	4
BT67	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	4
SA_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	7
SA_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	7
SA27	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	26
WG_BA1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	1
WG_BA2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Weak	2
WG_BA4	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Weak	6
WG_BA5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Moderate	Weak	3D
WG_BA6	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	6
WG_BA7	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Moderate	6
WG01	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	No contribution	1
WG02	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Strong	Moderate	1

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
WG03	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak	1
WG04	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Strong	1
WG05	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	1
WG06	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No Contribution	Strong	No contribution	3D
WG07	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	3D
WG08	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	8
WG10	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	1
WG12	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Weak	Weak	2
WG13	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	2
WG14	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Moderate	2
WG15	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	Weak	1
WG16	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	2
WG17	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Weak	1
WG18	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	2
WG19	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	1
WG20	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Weak	2
WG21	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Moderate	1
WG22	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	1
WG23	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	No Contribution	3A
WG24	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	3A
WG25	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Weak	3A
WG26	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	2
WG27	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	2
WG28	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	2
WG29	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	2
WG30	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	3A
WG31	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Weak	2
WG32	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Strong	Weak	3A
WG33	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	Weak	3A
WG34	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Strong	Strong	Weak	1
WG35	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	1
WG36	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	3A
WG37	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	1
WG38	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Moderate	1
WG39	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	3A
WG40	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	No contribution	3A
WG41	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	1
WG42	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	3A
WG43	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak	3A

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
WG44	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	3A
WG45	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	1
WG46	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	1
WG47	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	3A
WG48	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	1
WG49	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	1
WG50	Weak	Weak	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	1
WG51	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	3B
WG52	Strong	Weak	Strong	Moderate	No contribution	3B
WG53	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak	No contribution	4
WG54	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	3D
WG55	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	4
WG56	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Weak	3D
WG57	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	6
WG58	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	3D
WG59	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	No contribution	2
WG60	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	3D
WG61	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Weak	6
WG62	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	3D
WG63	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No contribution	4
WG64	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	3D
WG65	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak	6
WG66	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	3C
WG67	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	6
WG68	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	4
WG69	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak	2
WG70	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	No contribution	8
WG71	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	6
WG72	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak	3C
WG73	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	4
WG74	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	6
WG75	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	3D
WG76	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	6
WG77	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	5
WG78	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Moderate	3D
WG79	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	2
WG80	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	3C
WG81	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Weak	6
WG82	Weak	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	No contribution	5

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
WG83	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Weak	No Contribution	6
WG84	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	5
WG85	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak	6
WG86	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	Moderate	6
WG87	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	6
WG88	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	5
WG89	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	3D
WG90	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	5
WG91	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	6
WG92	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	6
WG93	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	6
WG94	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	6
WG95	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	3D
WG96	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	6
WG97	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Weak	5
WG98	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	No Contribution	1
WG99	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	1
WG100	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	6
WG101	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	No Contribution	7
WG102	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	3E
WG103	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	6
WG104	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Weak	3E
WG105	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	7
WG106	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	7
WG107	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	7
WG108	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	6
WG109	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	Weak	6
WG110	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	6
WG111	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	7
WG112	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	6
WG113	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	6
WG114	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	No contribution	6
WG115	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	6
WG116	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak	No Contribution	6
WG117	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	6
WG118	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	6
WG119	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	6
WG120	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Strong	6
WG121	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	6

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating	Strategic GB Area
WG122	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Moderate	Strong	6
WG123	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	Weak	6
WG124	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	6
WG125	Moderate	Strong	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	6
WG126	Strong	Strong	No Contribution	Moderate	No Contribution	6
WG127	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Moderate	No Contribution	6
WG128	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Strong	Weak	3C

Table 4.36: Assessment ratings for parcels outside of the Green Belt in Wigan

Parcel Ref	Purpose 1a Rating	Purpose 1b Rating	Purpose 2 Rating	Purpose 3 Rating	Purpose 4 Rating
WG09	Strong	Moderate	No Contribution	Moderate	Weak
WG11	Moderate	Weak	No Contribution	Moderate	Moderate

Summary of findings

4.26 **Table 4.37** below summarises the assessment findings for Wigan, drawing attention to the spatial pattern of the performance of the parcels against the Green Belt purposes.

Table 4.37: Summary of Assessment Findings for Wigan

Green Belt Purposes		Summary of Findings
1	To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Most parcels close to the urban edge and forming corridors between settlements (e.g. between Wigan and Hindley, Atherton and Leigh, and Tyldesley and Little Hutton) plays a strong or moderate role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The proximity of settlements and relatively narrow areas of open land between them means that most parts of the Green Belt in Wigan were assessed as playing a strong role in relation to this purpose. The principal exception to this is the larger area of open countryside to the south east of Leigh which play a moderate role.
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Green Belt plays an important role in safeguarding the countryside in Wigan. Those areas which were assessed as supporting this purpose most strongly include parcels around Standish to the north of Wigan, to the south east of Wigan around Platt Bridge and to the south east of Leigh. Most other parcels play a moderate role.
4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The Green Belt between Wigan, Ashton in Makerfield, Golborne and Leigh generally plays a weak role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The main exceptions are parcels between Ashton in Makerfield and Golborne, between Wigan and Hindley and close to Standish, together with the area north east of Wigan, extending around Aspull as far as the council boundary near Blackrod, all of which make a moderate contribution to this purpose.

Interpretation and use of the study findings

4.27 The application of the agreed methodology results in a helpful and informative overview of the performance of the Greater Manchester Green Belt on a parcel by parcel or Strategic area basis, against the purposes defined in the NPPF. Variations in performance against particular criteria within individual parcels are noted in the assessment text (**Appendices 2-11**). This cannot be reflected in a single parcel rating, and will need to be considered when interpreting the study findings. The parcel boundaries used in this study are not intended to reflect potential development areas and the study cannot be used as a means of allocating development land. There are a number of considerations (alongside the Green Belt) that need to be taken into account in deciding on where new development should be allocated.

4.28 There are also 'bigger picture' considerations that the methodology does not address, such as how to review Green Belt boundaries (to accommodate development) whilst minimising harm to the Green Belt as a whole. Options may include Green Belt release at the edge of the 'large built up area', or at the edge of surrounding towns, or indeed within the broad areas. The evaluation of options for development will be a key matter for consideration in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, drawing on the findings of this study alongside other considerations (such as infrastructure, environmental sensitivity) and related studies. Further discussion on the next steps that will be needed to develop robust policies for the Greater Manchester Green Belt is provided in **Chapter 5.**

5 Conclusions and Next Steps

Conclusions

5.1 The results of the study reported here represent a baseline assessment of the extent to which parcels of land making up the Greater Manchester Green Belt meet the GB objectives of NPPF. The complex urban form of Greater Manchester, resulting from the historic development and growth of a series of industrial towns, means that the Green Belt plays a particularly important role in restricting unplanned development.

5.2 The Green Belt also helps to ensure that cities, towns and smaller settlements retain their identity by preventing further coalescence. In places, narrow corridors of open land play a critical role in separating one town from the next.

5.3 The Green Belt is important in maintaining the openness of the countryside around and within the conurbation. While some areas have been affected by urban uses, large swathes retain a sense of openness, providing an important landscape, recreational, ecological resource, supporting functions such as food production and sustainable flood management.

5.4 The Green Belt plays an important role in protecting the setting and character of many towns across Greater Manchester. While not always recognised as being of historic importance, the towns and cities that grew during the industrial revolution represent an important era in British history. Many towns continued to grow through the 20th and 21st centuries, but in many places the Green Belt plays an important role in helping to protecting the setting of the historic cores.

5.5 The assessment did not consider the role of individual parcels in supporting policies of urban regeneration. This reflects the difficulty in establishing a causal link between restraint in one location and the re-use of brownfield and other urban land in another. This is particularly the case within as complex a conurbation as Greater Manchester and within the context of Green Belt which extends well beyond the boundaries of Greater Manchester. It was concluded that any detailed analysis of the relationship between the role of individual parcels and the delivery of regeneration would be:

- Complex, requiring significant resource inputs given the size and complexity of the Greater Manchester conurbation;
- Partial, based on supply of brown field land and omitting other areas of land suitable for regeneration; and
- Based on extensive assumptions regarding the nature of the development process and the locational requirements of different types of development.

5.6 As such, the results of such analysis would not be reliable and would risk introducing erroneous information into the assessment process.

5.7 It is, however, important that the role of Green Belt in supporting regeneration, particularly through the recycling of land, is considered appropriately in developing a long term spatial plan for the conurbation and, along with other relevant issues, is factored into the development and appraisal of policy options. This is explored in more detail below.

5.8 As previous sections have noted, the results of this assessment provide baseline evidence which will help inform the future Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. Additional work by the Greater Manchester Authorities is required to identify any potential changes in Green Belt. This final section of the report outlines the next steps that will be needed to develop robust policies for the Greater Manchester Green Belt. It also considers the potential to promote positive use of the Green Belt as part of a wider strategy to encourage economic growth and regeneration.

Next Steps

Informing the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

5.9 The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) will provide the context within which any review of the existing Green Belt will take place – including any proposals to release land from the Green Belt, or add new areas of land to it. The GMSF will provide a framework within which to manage the supply of land across the conurbation to deliver growth over a 20 year timeframe, helping to ensure that Greater Manchester is able to meet current and emerging demand for land to support housing and employment growth, in line with the Greater Manchester Strategy.

5.10 The results of the Greater Manchester Green Belt assessment will be key evidence to inform the GMSF. In developing the Green Belt component of the spatial strategy, it will, however, be necessary to take account of other factors including:

- the projected long term requirements for employment and housing land, taking account of the supply of brownfield land across the conurbation (meeting the requirements of the fifth purpose defined for Green Belts in NPPF), and the outcome of the call for sites, where this demonstrates exceptional circumstances, such as unmet housing or employment land needs, that cannot be met elsewhere; and
- consideration of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, taking into account a range of local, regional and national issues such as economic growth, health and wellbeing, accessibility and biodiversity, cultural heritage and climate change resilience, as well as an assessment against Green Belt purposes.

5.11 Consideration of these issues will help determine whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist to justify releases of land from the Green Belt. It should be noted that the relatively poor performance of land against Green Belt purposes is not, of itself, an exceptional circumstance that would justify release of such land from the Green Belt. There must be a demonstrable requirement to accommodate development which could not be met elsewhere.

5.12 The outcome of this review process could include the following:

- reconfirmation of existing areas of Green Belt;
- recommendations for inclusion of previously undesignated land as Green Belt;
- recommendations for the inclusion of existing safeguarded land into the Green Belt;
- recommendations for the release of existing areas of Green Belt for shorter term development; and
- recommendations for the release of existing areas of Green Belt and their inclusion as 'safeguarded land' to allow for longer term development. This is land taken out of the Green Belt in this plan period for potential development in the next plan period and protected from development proposals arising in the meantime by policies with similar force to Green Belt.

5.13 In identifying potential Green Belt releases to accommodate development, it will also be necessary to consider:

- the supply of brownfield land across the conurbation as a whole and in relation to different areas of Green Belt to ensure that policy balances the use of Green Belt to stimulate the re-use of land with the need to provide an adequate supply of land for key development types;
- whether releasing land from the Green Belt will adversely affect the ability of adjacent areas to meet the Green Belt objectives defined in NPPF. For example, the release and development of a large area of Green Belt, separated from the existing urban area, could have significant effects on the role of surrounding areas in protecting against sprawl or maintaining the separation of existing urban areas.
  It is therefore recommended that the evaluation of spatial options includes targeted reassessment of parcels surrounding any Green Belt releases to inform judgements about the impact on the ability of the wider area to meet NPPF Green Belt purposes;

- whether potential harm to adjoining areas of Green Belt can be addressed successfully by influencing, for example, the type, layout, massing, materials and landscaping of development. In some cases, good design and an effective master planning process can help mitigate impacts on Green Belt purposes, for example by reducing visual or perceptual coalescence, preventing a sense of urban sprawl or tying development into the landscape of the wider countryside. It can also reduce wider environmental effects associated with development.
  It is therefore recommended that the evaluation of spatial options includes consideration of the potential for good design to protect the role of the wider Green Belt.

Planning for positive use of land in the Green Belt

5.14 Although the positive use of Green Belt land is not directly related to the purposes of Green Belt, the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to secure positive use of land in Green Belts, once defined.

5.15 The Study did not include a detailed assessment of existing positive uses of land in the Green Belt. However, the Greater Manchester Green Belt does include significant areas of productive agricultural land, many Country Parks and other green spaces, and a large number of sports pitches and golf courses. The Green Belt also includes areas of moorland, woodland and the floodplains of a number of rivers. Despite this, there remains considerable scope to enhance the positive use of the Green Belt- particularly in terms of providing for informal recreation close to the conurbation.

It is recommended that, as part of the implementation of the GMSF the Greater Manchester Authorities should develop a strategy to secure greater positive use of the Green Belt with the aim of enhancing the environmental and social benefits derived from this important area of open land, helping underpin the region's ambitious plans for economic growth and regeneration.

APPENDIX 4.1: Strategic Green Belt Area Assessment

APPENDIX 4.2: Bolton Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.3: Bury Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.4: Manchester City Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.5: Oldham Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.6: Rochdale Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.7: Salford Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.8: Stockport Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.9: Tameside Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.10: Trafford Detailed Assessments

APPENDIX 4.11: Wigan Detailed Assessments