

Spelthorne Borough Council  
**Green Belt Assessment (Stage 1)**  
Report: Methodology and  
Assessment

251368-4-05-04

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This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 251368

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**ARUP**



# Contents

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	Page
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Purpose of Assessment	1
1.3 Report Structure	1
<b>2 Spelthorne Green Belt</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 History of the Green Belt	2
2.2 Previous Green Belt Boundary Reviews	4
<b>3 Policy, Guidance and Context</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 National Context	6
3.2 Local Context	12
3.3 Relevant Guidance to Green Belt Assessment	14
3.4 Implications for the Assessment	18
<b>4 Methodology</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 Consultation	21
4.2 General Approach	21
4.3 Identification of Parcels for Assessment	21
4.4 Strategic Assessment	28
4.5 Local Assessment	28
4.6 Recommendations	44
<b>5 Key Findings</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1 Strategic Assessment	45
5.2 Local Assessment	46
5.3 Overall Summary	49
<b>6 Recommendations</b>	<b>60</b>
6.1 Summary	60
6.2 Weakly Performing Local Areas	60
6.3 Local Areas for Potential Sub-Division	71
<b>7 Conclusions</b>	<b>81</b>

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Glossary of Terms

## **Appendix B**

Local Area Assessment Pro-Forma

## **Appendix C**

Approaches to Green Belt in Neighbouring Authorities

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd (Arup) has been appointed by Spelthorne Borough Council to undertake a Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment to assess and confirm whether the Spelthorne Green Belt meets the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Study will form part of the Council's Local Plan evidence base and help in the preparation of the Local Plan review.

## 1.2 Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of the Green Belt Assessment is to provide evidence of how different areas perform against Green Belt purposes set out in national policy. This evidence will then be taken into account by Spelthorne Borough Council alongside other evidence in preparing its Local Plan.

The Green Belt Assessment provides an independent and objective appraisal of all existing Green Belt land in Spelthorne.

It should be noted that the Study, in itself, does not determine whether Green Belt should be released or explore the potential suitability of areas of Green Belt for development. The assessment provides evidence on the performance of the Green Belt in Spelthorne against the NPPF purposes and recommends areas that would warrant further consideration by the Council as part of the wider Local Plan process. This decision making process will balance a broader range of considerations explored in the wider Local Plan evidence base.

## 1.3 Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out the context at the national and local level;
- Chapter 3 provides the policy context at the national and local level, together with a summary of Green Belt Assessments undertaken by neighbouring authorities;
- Chapter 4 sets out the methodology for the Study;
- Chapter 5 sets out the key findings of the Study;
- Chapter 6 provides recommendations from the assessments;
- Chapter 7 sets out the conclusions of the Study;
- Annex Report 1 contains the Strategic Area assessment pro-formas;
- Annex Report 2 contains the Local Area assessment pro-formas.

## 2 Spelthorne Green Belt

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### 2.1 History of the Green Belt

The concept of the Green Belt dates back to the origins of the modern British planning system and is frequently credited as one of the most notable achievements in the planning system, halting the outward ‘sprawl’ of London into the countryside. In Spelthorne’s case the area saw significant growth between the 1920s and 1950s. Connections to central London via the Waterloo and Reading and Windsor lines brought increased residential development to the area. The character of Spelthorne further changed in the 1960s with the construction of the Staines-upon-Thames by-pass and the rapid expansion of Heathrow Airport immediately to the north.<sup>1</sup>

During the previous centuries, the area which now forms Spelthorne Borough Council consisted of the western portion of the ancient Middlesex ‘Hundred’ of Spelthorne, with Staines-upon-Thames forming the western limit of the City of London’s jurisdiction in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Stanwell Moor was enclosed to cultivate the land for orchards and market gardening, while Staines-upon-Thames became a centre for linoleum production, employing the majority of the local population up to the 1960s.

Particularly after the war, concerns grew about the rapid change of rural areas around London and the impact of urban sprawl. The Metropolitan Green Belt, first suggested by Raymond Unwin in 1933 as a *green girdle* which was embodied in the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938 and Sir Patrick Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan of 1944 (later established nationwide in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947), curtailed the further unchecked growth of London’s urban area. This original Green Belt was six to 10 miles wide and was subsequently deemed insufficient to restrict development in the widening commuter belt.

Spelthorne’s Green Belt was first formally applied in 1956 upon the adoption of the Middlesex County Plan, following the publication of government Circular 42/55 in 1955 which encouraged local authorities to establish their own Green Belts. The Circular set out three main functions of Green Belts:

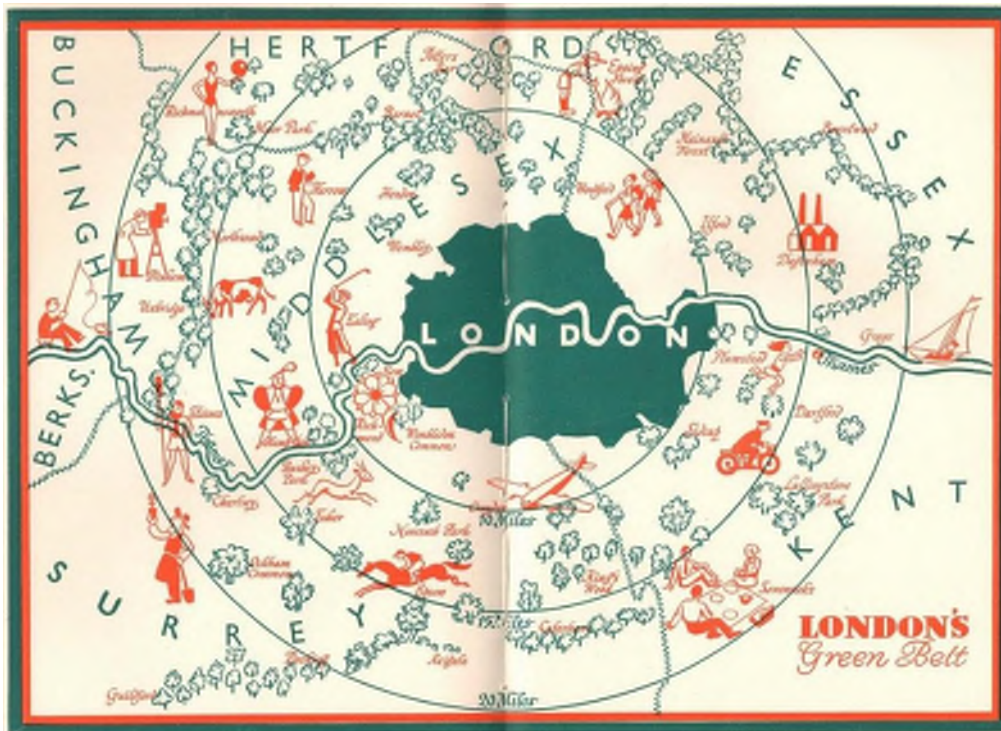
- To check the growth of a large built-up area;
- To prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into one another; and
- To preserve the special character of a town.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/2391/History-of-Spelthorne>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Figure 2.1 Extract from SPB Mais's book published in 1939 celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the London County Council



Circular 50/57, published in 1957, provided further clarification on Green Belts, distinguishing inner and outer Green Belt boundaries and establishing the importance of defined and detailed permanent Green Belt boundaries. The area of Middlesex now forming Spelthorne Borough was located on the inner edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt.<sup>3</sup>

In 1962 the Minister for Housing and Local Government published the advice booklet titled 'The Green Belts'. The booklet recorded that the last of the Home Counties development plans had been approved in 1959, enabling the completion of the Metropolitan Green Belt. An updated 'The Green Belts' booklet was published in 1988.

Middlesex County Council was abolished in 1965, with the former Urban District Council areas of Staines and Sunbury being added to the administrative County of Surrey. Staines and Sunbury subsequently merged in 1974 to form Spelthorne Borough.<sup>4</sup>

The First Review of the Middlesex County Plan was adopted in 1965 following which the Green Belt in Spelthorne was further embodied in the 1974 Staines and Sunbury Town Map, which formed part of the 1971 Surrey Development Plan. The Surrey Structure Plan 1978 clarified the extent of the Green Belt in Surrey and considered a Green Belt distance of approximately 19-24 km (12-15 miles) to be sufficient in containing the outward sprawl of London. The 1989 and 1994

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2230&p=0>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/heritage-culture-and-recreation/archives-and-history/surrey-history-centre/surrey-history-centre-help-for-researchers/archives-and-history-research-guides/the-administrative-boundaries-of-the-county-of-surrey>

Surrey Structure Plans changed little in terms of Green Belt policy.<sup>5</sup> These were eventually superseded by the statutory regional planning system that resulted in the creation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS).

Concurrently, at a national level, Circular 14/84 was published in 1984 and introduced two new Green Belt objectives: assisting in urban regeneration and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. In January 1988, the Government introduced a series of policy statements which were known as Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs). PPG2 on Green Belts was first published in 1988 and reiterated the advice contained in previous Green Belt Circulars.

Spelthorne, and the wider County of Surrey, were covered by the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) (2001) which reiterated the importance of the Metropolitan Green Belt in preventing sprawl from built-up areas. Policy E3 (Green Belts) stated that *'there is no regional case for reviewing Green Belt boundaries in light of this strategy'* and that local authorities should frame policies in accordance with advice in PPG2.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 replaced RPGs with RSSs. The South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East) (2009) stated that *'the existing broad extent of Green Belts in the region is appropriate and will be retained and supported and the opportunity should be taken to improve their land-use management and access as part of initiatives to improve the rural urban fringe'*.

The Policy went on to state that selective Green Belt reviews may be required *'in the Metropolitan Green Belt to the north east of Guildford, and possibly to the south of Woking'* and *'smaller scale local reviews are likely to be required in other locations, including around Redhill-Reigate'* however Spelthorne is not mentioned as a suitable location for a review. Shortly after the commencement of the Coalition Government administration in 2010, then Secretary of State Eric Pickles announced the government's intention to abolish regional government, and the EERSS was subsequently revoked through a statutory instrument in January 2013.

During the same period, in 2012, the RPGs and PPGs were replaced by the NPPF which reiterated that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt was to prevent urban sprawl.

## 2.2 Previous Green Belt Boundary Reviews

It is understood that the Green Belt boundaries were reviewed as part of the preparation of the 1965 and 1974 Town Plans. Spelthorne also produced Green Belt Boundary Reviews to inform the Borough's 1991 and 2001 Local Plans. Minor boundary amendments were made to resolve cartographic anomalies and inconsistencies, also reflect Green Belt releases made since the approval of the 1956, 1965 and 1971 Staines and Sudbury Town Maps and remove sites that no longer performed a Green Belt function.

The Green Belt was last examined in the preparation of the 2001 Local Plan, which aimed to identify Green Belt land that performed poorly against Green Belt purposes and Green Belt boundary inconsistencies however the 2001 Spelthorne Local Plan concluded that the only changes to the Green Belt should reflect Green Belt '*releases since the approval of the Staines and Sunbury Town Map resulting mainly from planning appeal decisions, and to remove sites which clearly did not perform a Green Belt function*'. The 12 sites in which Green Belt boundaries are deleted or amended are detailed in Appendix 2 of the 2001 Local Plan. There has been no significant change to the extent of the Spelthorne Green Belt since 1956.

## 3 Policy, Guidance and Context

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### 3.1 National Context

At the national level, the NPPF, national Planning Practice Guidance and ministerial letters provide policy and guidance context for the role and function of the Green Belt. The following sections summarise the current position.

#### 3.1.1 National Policy

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Central to the NPPF is the '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*' which for plan-making means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet development needs and should meet objectively assessed needs unless specific policies of the NPPF (such as Green Belt policy) indicate that development should be restricted.

Protection of Green Belt around urban areas is a core planning principle of the NPPF. Policy for protecting Green Belt land is set out in section 9 of the Framework which emphasises the importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts.

Circular 42/55 released by Government in 1955 highlighted the importance of checking unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas and of safeguarding countryside from encroachment. It set out three main functions of the Green Belt which are now upheld in the NPPF:

- To check the growth of a large built-up area;
- To prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into one another; and
- To preserve the special character of a town.

The NPPF advocates openness and permanence as essential characteristics of the Green Belt stating that '*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open*' (paragraph 79). The NPPF details five purposes of the 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; and*
5. '*To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*'. (paragraph 80)

For ease of reference in this Assessment, these purposes are referred to as NPPF Purposes 1 to 5, with the assigned number corresponding to the order in which the purposes appear in the NPPF, as above.

In addition to the purposes of the Green Belt, the NPPF advocates enhancement to existing Green Belts. Paragraph 81 states that *‘local planning authorities are required to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt’* once Green Belt boundaries have been defined including looking for opportunities to:

- *‘Provide access;*
- *Provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation;*
- *Retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or*
- *Improve damaged and derelict land’.*

Paragraph 83 states that *‘local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans’* and that *‘once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan’*. Importantly, the NPPF acknowledges the permanence of Green Belt boundaries to endure beyond the plan period (paragraph 83). The need to promote sustainable patterns of development when assessing the Green Belt boundaries is also acknowledged (paragraph 84).

The NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary review with sustainable patterns of development (paragraph 84). Local planning authorities are encouraged to *‘consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary’*.

Paragraph 85 states that *‘when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:*

- *Ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- *Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- *Where necessary, identify in their plan areas of “safeguarded land” between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- *Make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;*
- *Satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and*
- *Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.’*

### 3.1.2 National Guidance

The national Planning Practice Guidance is intended to provide up-to-date accessible and useful guidance on the requirements of the planning system. The Guidance was updated in October 2014, reiterating the importance of the Green Belt and acknowledging that Green Belt may restrain the ability to meet housing need. The following paragraphs are relevant to Green Belt Assessment:

- **Paragraph 044 Do housing and economic needs override constraints on the use of land, such as Green Belt?** – ‘The NPPF should be read as a whole: need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan. The Framework is clear that local planning authorities should, through their Local Plans, meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted’ (as it is with land designated as Green Belt). ‘The Framework makes clear that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.’
- **Paragraph 045 Do local planning authorities have to meet in full housing needs identified in needs assessments?** – ‘Assessing need is just the first stage in developing a local plan. Once need has been assessed, the local planning authority should prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period, and in so doing take account of any constraints such as Green Belt, which indicate that development should be restricted and which may restrain the availability of an authority to meet its need.’

The national Planning Practice Guidance does not provide any specific guidance on conducting a Green Belt Assessment *per se*.

### 3.1.3 Ministerial Statements

Letters from ministers of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) or local government officers or general statements by ministers have clarified or re-affirmed aspects of Green Belt policy. During his time as Planning Minister, Nick Boles issues a series of Ministerial Statements on the Green Belt which, in general, continued to emphasise the protection of the Green Belt.

Perhaps the most significant statement came in March 2014 when correspondence between Nick Boles and PINS reaffirmed the importance and permanence of the Green Belt and that Green Belt may only be altered in ‘exceptional circumstances’ through the preparation or review of local plans<sup>6</sup>. The correspondence recognised the special role of the Green Belt in the framing of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which sets out that local authorities should meet

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/292648/Scan-to-Me\\_from\\_ela-mfd-f6-zc1.link.local\\_2014-03-03\\_180547.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292648/Scan-to-Me_from_ela-mfd-f6-zc1.link.local_2014-03-03_180547.pdf)

objectively assessed needs unless specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted, with the Green Belt identified as one such policy.

The position was reaffirmed in October 2014 when the national Planning Practice Guidance was amended (see section 3.1.2).

### 3.1.4 Legal Cases – ‘Very Special Circumstances’ and ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

The NPPF sets out that ‘*very special circumstances*’ relates to the consideration of planning applications in the context of the existing Green Belt. Paragraph 87 states that ‘*As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*’. Paragraph 88 goes on to state that ‘*When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations*’. Paragraph 89 identifies those types of development within the Green Belt which may be considered as acceptable in the context of ‘*very special circumstances*’:

- ‘*Buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- ‘*Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- ‘*The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- ‘*The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- ‘*Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or*
- ‘*Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development*’.

Paragraph 90 expands on the above list by identifying other forms of development that are also appropriate provided they ‘*preserve the openness of Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt*’ namely:

- ‘*Mineral extraction;*
- ‘*Engineering operations;*

- *Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
- *The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and*
- *Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order’.*

As set out in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.3, ‘exceptional circumstances’ relates to forward planning for Local Plans in the context of Green Belt boundaries. There is no definition of ‘exceptional circumstances’ provided in the NPPF. There is limited case history relating to decisions about the setting or change of Green Belt boundaries in local plans and the definition of ‘exceptional circumstances’. However, there are two recent relevant examples of note.

The first is the Solihull Local Plan (Solihull Metropolitan District Council). In this case, a developer’s sites in Tidbury Green were placed into the Green Belt by the Solihull Local Plan (SLP) adopted in December 2013. The developer challenged the SLP on three grounds: (i) that it was not supported by an objectively assessed figure for housing need; (ii) the Council had failed in its duty to cooperate; and (iii) the Council adopted a plan without regard to the proper test for revising Green Belt boundaries. The claim succeeded at the High Court.

Solihull appealed against the decision, but the appeal was dismissed by the Court of Appeal. The Court held that the Inspector in Solihull had failed to identify a figure for the objective assessment of housing need as a separate and prior exercise, and that was an error in law. In addition, the Judge dismissed the Inspector’s reasons for returning the developer’s sites to the Green Belt, saying that:

*‘The fact that a particular site within a council’s area happens not to be suitable for housing development cannot be said without more to constitute an exceptional circumstance, justifying an alteration of the Green Belt by the allocation to it of the site in question’.*

More recently, in the case of Calverton Parish Council v Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe Borough Council and Gedling Borough Council, this position was upheld. In this case, the Parish Council applied to the High Court to quash parts of the Aligned Code Strategies of the three authorities, arguing that: (i) it had failed to consider whether housing numbers should be reduced to prevent the release of Green Belt land; and (ii) it had failed to apply national policy in considering its release. However, the claim was rejected.

In Paragraph 42 of the decision, referring to the earlier Solihull decision, the Judge stated:

*‘In the case where the issue is the converse, i.e. subtraction, the fact that Green Belt reasons may continue to exist cannot preclude the existence countervailing exceptional circumstance – otherwise, it would be close to impossible to revise the boundary. These circumstances, if found to exist, must be logically capable of trumping the purposes of the Green Belt; but whether they should not in any given*

*case depend on the correct identification of circumstances said to be exceptional, and the strength of the Green Belt purposes’.*

While supporting the earlier Solihull case, the judgement also confirms that ‘exceptional circumstances’ may override the purposes set out in the NPPF, depending on the strength of these purposes. In determining what is exceptional, an authority should balance:

- The ‘acuteness/intensity of the housing need’;
- The ‘constraints on the supply/availability of land... suitable for development’;
- The ‘difficulties in achieving sustainability without impinging upon the green belt’;
- The ‘nature and extent of the harm to this green belt’; and
- However far the impacts on green belt purposes could be reduced.

In his decision, the Judge believed the Inspector had taken a ‘*sensible and appropriate*’ approach to judging the weight of exceptional circumstances versus the strength of the Green Belt purposes by weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of different alternative options for meeting housing need, including those which would not have involved Green Belt adjustments.

The need for a robust Green Belt Assessment is thus a necessity in order to identify the relative strength of Green Belt sites, so as to provide a robust basis for the Local Plan.

### 3.1.5 Housing White Paper

The Government published its Housing White Paper *Fixing our Broken Housing Market* in February 2017. The Paper sets out how the Government intends to boost housing supply and, over the long term, create a more efficient housing market.

Overall, the paper proposes no fundamental change to the concept of Green Belt, stressing the Government’s commitment to maintaining its strong protections. However, it proposes changes to amend national policy to stress that Green Belt boundaries should only be amended when all other reasonable options have been examined fully by local authorities, including:

- *making effective use of suitable brownfield sites and the opportunities offered by estate regeneration;*
- *the potential offered by land which is currently underused, including surplus public sector land where appropriate;*
- *optimising the proposed density of development; and*
- *exploring whether other authorities can help to meet some of the identified development requirement.*

The White Paper suggests that, when Green Belt boundaries are reviewed, local authorities should prioritise the release of previously developed land or areas around transport hubs over other Green Belt.

Additionally, it is proposed that there will be a reframing of national policy to highlight the need for compensatory local plan policies to offset loss of Green Belt (for example, compensatory improvements to environmental quality or accessibility).

While the proposals in the White Paper are noted, it is judged that the focus of this Study on the performance of the Green Belt against the NPPF purposes remains the most appropriate and proportionate given the strategic, district-wide focus of this Study. The proposed amendments in relation to Green Belt being a ‘last resort’ evidently have implications for the mechanisms by which local authorities might demonstrate exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release, (albeit echoing recent legal and examination precedent). Meanwhile, experience suggests that considerations such as proximity to transport hubs or the presence of previously developed land may be more appropriate to a more granular-scale Green Belt assessment, or a ‘Stage 2’ Green Belt assessment, which would begin to weigh up Green Belt performance against other factors related to the suitability of land for development.

It is also important to note that the White Paper is currently (as of June 2017) subject to public consultation, therefore proposals may be subject to change prior to being enshrined in policy.

## 3.2 Local Context

Spelthorne is currently in the process of preparing the Spelthorne Local Plan 2013-2033 and accompanying Policies Map, which is currently expected to be adopted in 2020.

Planning policy for Spelthorne currently consists of the NPPF, the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) (2009), Allocations DPD (2009), Adopted Proposals Map (2009), the Local Plan 2001 (saved policies), and the Surrey Minerals Plan Core Strategy (2011), Surrey Minerals Plan Primary Aggregates DPD (2011), Surrey Waste Plan 2008, and Surrey Aggregates Recycling Joint DPD (2013) prepared by Surrey County Council.

### 3.2.1 Core Strategy and Policies DPD (2009)

The purpose and requirements of the Metropolitan Green Belt are stated in the Core Strategy and Policies DPD (2009) as follows:

*‘Land outside the urban area covers about 65% of the Borough and is designated as Green Belt. It is part of the Metropolitan Green Belt surrounding London and has an important strategic role in containing the outward spread of the capital and providing a belt of open land for air and exercise. Locally the Green Belt serves not only to contribute to the wider strategic function but also separates existing settlements within the Green Belt maintaining their distinct physical identity and character.’*

Strategic Policy SP1 (Location of Development) states that the extent of the existing urban area will be maintained and provision for all new development will be made within it.

Policy HO6 (Sites for Gypsies and Travellers) states that the Council will only permit the development of new or extended sites for Gypsies or Travellers in the Green Belt where it is demonstrated that very special circumstances exist.

Policy HO7 (Sites for Travelling Showpeople) states that the Council will safeguard existing sites for travelling showpeople from alternative uses and will permit additional sites where a need is identified provided the development is not in the Green Belt.

Policy EN2 (Replacement and Extension of Dwellings in the Green Belt including Plotland Areas) states that the Council will only permit the rebuilding or extension of dwellings in the Green Belt where the proposal:

- Does not significantly change the scale of the original building, regardless of the size of the plot;
- Does not detract from the character of the area; and
- Complies with Policy EN1 on the design of new development.

### **3.2.2 Allocations DPD (2009)**

Allocation A11 (Land to the West of Edward Way, Ashford (P/019/O)) consists of a one hectare site in the Green Belt fronting the A30 with residential development along its eastern boundary. The site is allocated for open space provision with a possible children's play area.

### **3.2.3 Spelthorne Borough Local Plan 2001 Saved Policies and Proposals (Updated 2009)**

Policy GB1 (Green Belt) states that the Green Belt shown in the Proposals Map will be permanent and within it development will not be permitted that would conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt and detract from its openness. The policy lists the following exceptional uses for which development may be appropriate in the Green Belt:

- a) Agriculture and forestry;
- b) Essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it;
- c) Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- d) Appropriate re-use of buildings;
- e) Appropriate engineering and other operations.

## 3.3 Relevant Guidance to Green Belt Assessment

### 3.3.1 PAS Guidance

The most relevant non-policy guidance in relation to Green Belt Assessment is that published by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) in 2015<sup>7</sup> in the context of the need to accommodate strategic housing (and employment) requirements. The guidance highlights that *‘the purpose of a review is for the identification of the most appropriate land to be used for development, through the local plan. Always being mindful of all the other planning matters to be taken into account and most importantly, as part of an overall spatial strategy’*.

Emphasis is placed on the need for assessment against the five purposes of the Green Belt in the first instance. The guidance acknowledges that there are planning considerations, such as landscape quality, which cannot be a reason to designate an area as Green Belt, but that could be a planning consideration when seeking suitable locations for development.

The guidance outlines considerations to be given in relation to the five purposes:

- **Purpose 1 – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas:** consider the meaning of sprawl compared to 1930s definition, and whether positively planned development through a local plan with good masterplanning would be defined as sprawl.
- **Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:** the purpose does not strictly suggest maintaining the separation of small settlements near to towns. The approach will be different for each case. The identity of a settlement would not be determined solely by the distance to another settlement; the character of the place and of the land in between must be taken into account. A ‘scale rule’ approach should be avoided. Landscape character assessment is a useful analytical tool for this type of assessment.
- **Purpose 3 – to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:** seemingly, all Green Belt does this so distinguishing between the contributions of different areas to this purpose is difficult. The recommended approach is to look at the difference between land under the influence of the urban area and open countryside, and to favour open countryside when determining the land that should be attempted to be kept open, accounting for edges and boundaries.
- **Purpose 4 – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns:** it is accepted that in practice this purpose relates to very few settlements as a result of the envelopment of historic town centres by development.
- **Purpose 5 – to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land:** the amount of potentially developable land within urban areas must have already been factored in before Green Belt land

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<http://www.pas.gov.uk/documents/332612/1099321/Planning+on+the+doorstep+green+issues+Mar+15/7bdeb666-8058-49b2-a614-2a3cc993a204>

is identified. All Green Belt would achieve this purpose to the same extent, if it does achieve the purpose, and the value of land parcels is unlikely to be distinguishable on the basis of this purpose.

The PAS guidance additionally recognises the relevance of Duty to Cooperate, as set out in the Localism Act 2011, and soundness tests of the NPPF to Green Belt assessment. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to ‘*work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans*’ (paragraph 179). Additionally the level of housing that a local authority is required to plan for is also determined by whether there is an ‘*unmet requirement*’ from a neighbouring authority (paragraph 182).

The guidance recognises that Green Belt is a strategic policy and hence a strategic issue in terms of Duty to Cooperate. Areas of Green Belt should therefore be assessed collectively by local authorities. This is important particularly for areas of Green Belt land that fall into different administrative areas, and the significance attached to that land.

### 3.3.2 Neighbouring Local Authorities Experience

Local planning authorities now hold the responsibility for strategic planning following the revocation of regional strategies in the Localism Act 2011. The national Planning Practice Guidance outlines the duty to cooperate as:

*‘...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 and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.’*

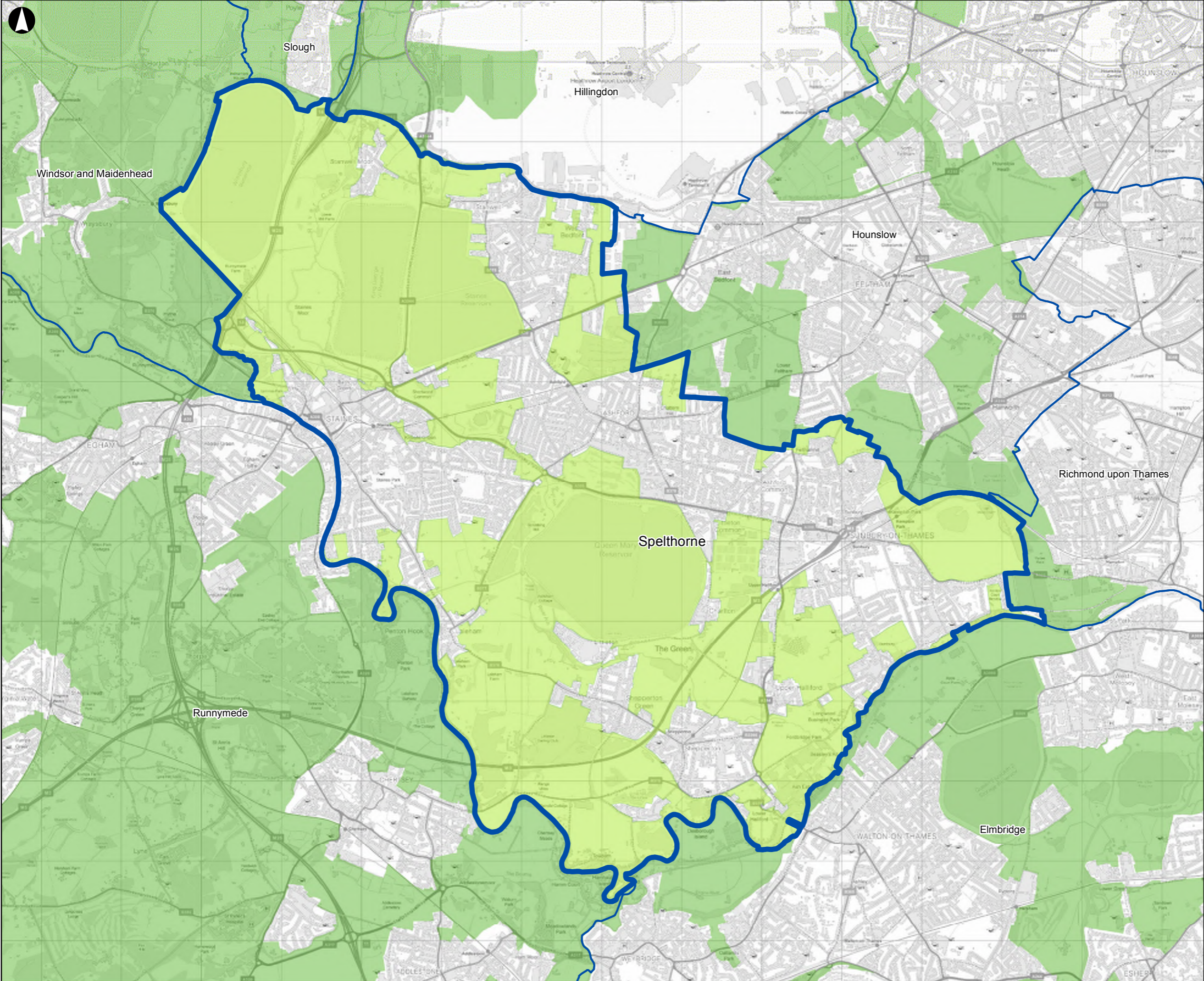
The Assessment covers the areas of the Green Belt within the administrative boundary of Spelthorne Borough Council, as well as areas in neighbouring authorities where there is no defensible boundary feature which aligns with the borough boundary. However it is important to note that the assessment does not directly influence the approaches to Green Belt in neighbouring authorities and no recommendations are ultimately made beyond the boundaries of Spelthorne.

Understanding how each of the neighbouring local authorities are approaching Green Belt issues is pertinent. Where Green Belt Reviews have been completed, understanding the methodology employed is important to ensure a level of consistency where possible. Additionally, it is helpful to understand how neighbouring authorities have divided their Green Belt for assessment so that ‘parcels’ may be aligned where possible. It is notable that Green Belt in adjoining districts (Map 3.1) may achieve the purpose of checking unrestricted sprawl from urban areas and settlements both within and outside Spelthorne.

The approaches taken to Green Belt Assessments in neighbouring authorities are summarised below in Table 3.1 and described in further detail in Appendix C.

Table 3.1 Green Belt Assessments in Neighbouring Authorities

Local Authority	Green Belt Assessment	Date Completed
<b>Elmbridge</b>	Green Belt Boundary Review	2016
	Review of Absolute Constraints affecting parcels identified through the Green Belt Boundary Review	2016
<b>London Borough of Hillingdon</b>	Green Belt and Major Developed Sites Assessment: Review of limited sites identified by officers and through UDP consultation	2006
<b>London Borough of Hounslow</b>	Stage 1: Assessment of Green Belt general areas against NPPF purposes followed by a landscape appraisal.	2015
<b>Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead</b>	Green Belt Boundary Study: Assessment of strength of boundaries and potential for open land at the edge of settlements to be designated as Green Belt.	2009
	Green Belt Purpose Analysis: Assessment of 500 x 500 sq m. parcels of Green Belt against the NPPF purposes.	2013
	Edge of Settlement Analysis: Assessment of edge of settlement areas against constraints and local considerations.	2014
<b>London Borough of Richmond upon Thames</b>	No Green Belt assessment to-date	N/A
<b>Runnymede</b>	Assessment of Green Belt in two phases comprising assessment of (i) general areas against NPPF purposes and (ii) absolute/non-absolute constraints to development.	2014
	Runnymede 2035 Green Belt Village Review	2016
<b>Slough</b>	No Green Belt assessment to-date	N/A



**Legend**

Spelthorne Green Belt

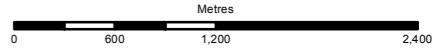
Neighbouring Green Belt

Spelthorne Borough Boundary

Neighbouring District Boundary

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Job Title

**Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment**

**Map 3.1 Spelthorne and Neighbouring Authorities' Green Belt**

Scale at A3		<b>1:45,000</b>
Job No	Drawing Status	
<b>251368-00</b>	<b>Issue</b>	
Drawing No	Issue	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>P1</b>	

### 3.3.3 Other Local Authority Experience

A brief examination of a selection of Green Belt Assessments carried out elsewhere in the country revealed the following key lessons in terms of methodology:

- A two stage process has typically been used to firstly identify those Green Belt areas least sensitive to change and where development would be least damaging in principle, before moving onto a second stage to consider technical site constraints.
- For the purposes of the assessment, authorities have primarily divided the Green Belt into land parcels for assessment using durable, significant and strong physical boundaries which are clearly defined in the methodology, though some have used grid squares of a defined size to identify the land parcels for assessment.
- Only those purposes deemed relevant to the local context have been used in assessments rather than necessarily using all five, while in some instances authorities have combined multiple purposes within their assessments.
- In terms of interpreting the national purposes, definition of terms (both within the purposes themselves and criteria applied) is of key importance to a successful and transparent assessment.
- Assessment criteria used to assess individual purposes have been tailored to local circumstances.
- Qualitative approaches are primarily used in assessments, although some authorities have used more quantitative measures. The approach to scoring in assessments varies from simplistic traffic light systems to more complex approaches to scoring.

## 3.4 Implications for the Assessment

National policy, as set out in the NPPF, emphasises the importance and permanence of Green Belt. The NPPF sets out clearly the five purposes that the Green Belt is intended to serve, highlights that the Local Plan process offers the only opportunity for the Green Belt boundaries to be assessed and stresses that boundaries should be defined using permanent and recognisable physical features. Neither the NPPF, nor the supporting national Planning Practice Guidance, provide guidance on how to conduct a Green Belt Assessment per se. The implied emphasis is thus on each authority to develop a methodology which is appropriate to the local context.

Crucial to the development of such a methodology is the establishment of satisfactory definitions for the key terms used in the NPPF purposes (yet not explicitly defined) – different interpretations of such terms would significantly alter how the Assessment is carried out. For example, while a number of Green Belt Reviews do not articulate clearly how terms have been defined, the Green Belt Boundary Review for Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield provided definitions based on a combination of legitimate sources (for example, the Oxford

English Dictionary) as well as the known aspirations sought through national and local policy.

Some key definitions which should be considered for this methodology include:

- Large built-up areas* (Purpose 1): This originally referred to London for Metropolitan Green Belt, but the scope of how this is interpreted has shifted over time to include other large settlements within the wider Green Belt area. The Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield review applied the term to London, Luton/Dunstable and Stevenage. The Central Bedfordshire Green Belt Assessment applied the definition more broadly, considering any area deemed ‘urban’. When defining this term, the methodology for Spelthorne needs to be developed to consider the settlement structure across the Borough and adjoining districts.
- Sprawl* (Purpose 1): The definition of this term varies significantly. The PAS Guidance queries whether development that is masterplanned and promoted positively through a development plan would constitute sprawl, but this does not provide a specific and measurable definition which could be applied in a Green Belt assessment. For example, in Runnymede, the threat of coalescence between many smaller settlements led to the Green Belt review considering all settlements equally, including those ‘washed over’ in the Green Belt. By contrast, the joint Dacorum/St Albans/Welwyn Green Belt study utilised an additional ‘local’ purpose (*‘To broadly maintain the existing settlement pattern’*). Given sprawl is a multi-faceted concept, it would seem prudent to consider both of these spheres in the definition developed for this Study.
- Neighbouring towns* (Purpose 2): The interpretation of ‘towns’ varies across previous Green Belt assessments. While it tends to be aligned to the defined settlement hierarchy, as set out in the relevant development plan, some authorities have chosen to apply a more local purpose. For example, in Runnymede, the threat of coalescence between many smaller settlements led to the Green Belt Review considering all settlements equally, including those ‘washed over’ in the Green Belt. By contrast, the joint Dacorum/St Albans/Welwyn Green Belt study utilised an additional ‘local’ purpose (*‘To broadly maintain the existing settlement pattern’*). In defining the ‘towns’ for assessment in Spelthorne, the methodology should take into account the particular role that the Green Belt plays in the local context. Given that the Green Belt boundaries are, for the most part, closely abutting the edge of settlements in Spelthorne, it might be most appropriate to consider all non-Green Belt areas as the ‘towns’ to be considered in the assessment.
- Countryside* (Purpose 3): The Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield review adopted a ‘functional’ rather than a ‘political economy’ definition of this term, centred on pastoral and primary land uses, while others adopted broader definitions which took countryside to mean any open land. Evidently, this interpretation is not appropriate in areas which are entirely semi-urban, where Green Belt may have been applied to areas which are open but not genuinely of a ‘countryside’ character. Given the contrast between urban and rural areas in and around Surrey, in a similar fashion to areas of

Buckinghamshire or Hertfordshire, a similar ‘functional’ definition may be the most appropriate.

- *Historic Towns* (Purpose 4): Whilst many towns in the Metropolitan Green Belt have a long history in terms of their foundation, or even retain historic architectural features or layouts in their cores, in most cases their historic centres have been enveloped by modern development. In some cases, this might result in a limited relationship between the Green Belt and the historic areas of settlements. The West Midlands Joint Green Belt Review defined its historic towns by identifying settlements with conservation areas in their centres and considering the inter-visibility between these and the Green Belt. Others have utilised wider policy instruments to identify relevant settlements. For example, the Epping Forest Stage 1 Green Belt Review drew on a county-wide SPG, Essex Historic Towns, which clearly defined the district's historic towns. Any relevant policy or evidence should be drawn upon in order to define the relevant settlements for this assessment in the Spelthorne context.

In addition to other Green Belt assessments, the PAS guidance on Green Belt Assessment is particularly helpful in setting out key parameters to consider when developing a Green Belt Assessment methodology. The key points to note are:

- A Green Belt Assessment is not an assessment of landscape quality, though elements of landscape assessment assist in assessing the Green Belt (for example, in identifying potential new boundaries or differentiating between areas of unspoilt countryside or semi-rural areas).
- The label ‘historic towns’ applies to a select number of settlements and it is therefore accepted that the Purpose 4 assessment will only be relevant in very few instances. It is considered that Purpose 4 is however relevant to the Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment due to the existing relationship between historic towns and Green Belt in Spelthorne in particular locations.
- Purpose 5 is not helpful in terms of assessing relative value of land parcels and is therefore not relevant to the Spelthorne Green Belt Boundary Assessment; and
- Green Belt is a strategic issue and should be considered collaboratively with neighbouring authorities under Duty to Cooperate, thus emphasising the importance of ongoing consultation with neighbouring stakeholders.

## 4 Methodology

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### 4.1 Consultation

Since the introduction of the Localism Act (2011), local authorities hold the responsibility for strategic planning and a clear duty to cooperate on strategic issues, such as Green Belt. The potential release of any Green Belt land within Spelthorne may also impact on the role of the Green Belt in adjoining authority areas as part of the wider London Green Belt (however, recommendations will only apply to Spelthorne and not to neighbouring authorities). As a result it is important to engage with neighbouring authorities on the methodology for the Green Belt Assessment.

Duty to Cooperate engagement has been undertaken with neighbouring authorities to discuss the methodology and to seek a level of consistency with neighbouring Green Belt studies where possible. Additionally, the methodology was published on the Council's website and subject to public consultation prior to the commencement of the Assessment described below.

### 4.2 General Approach

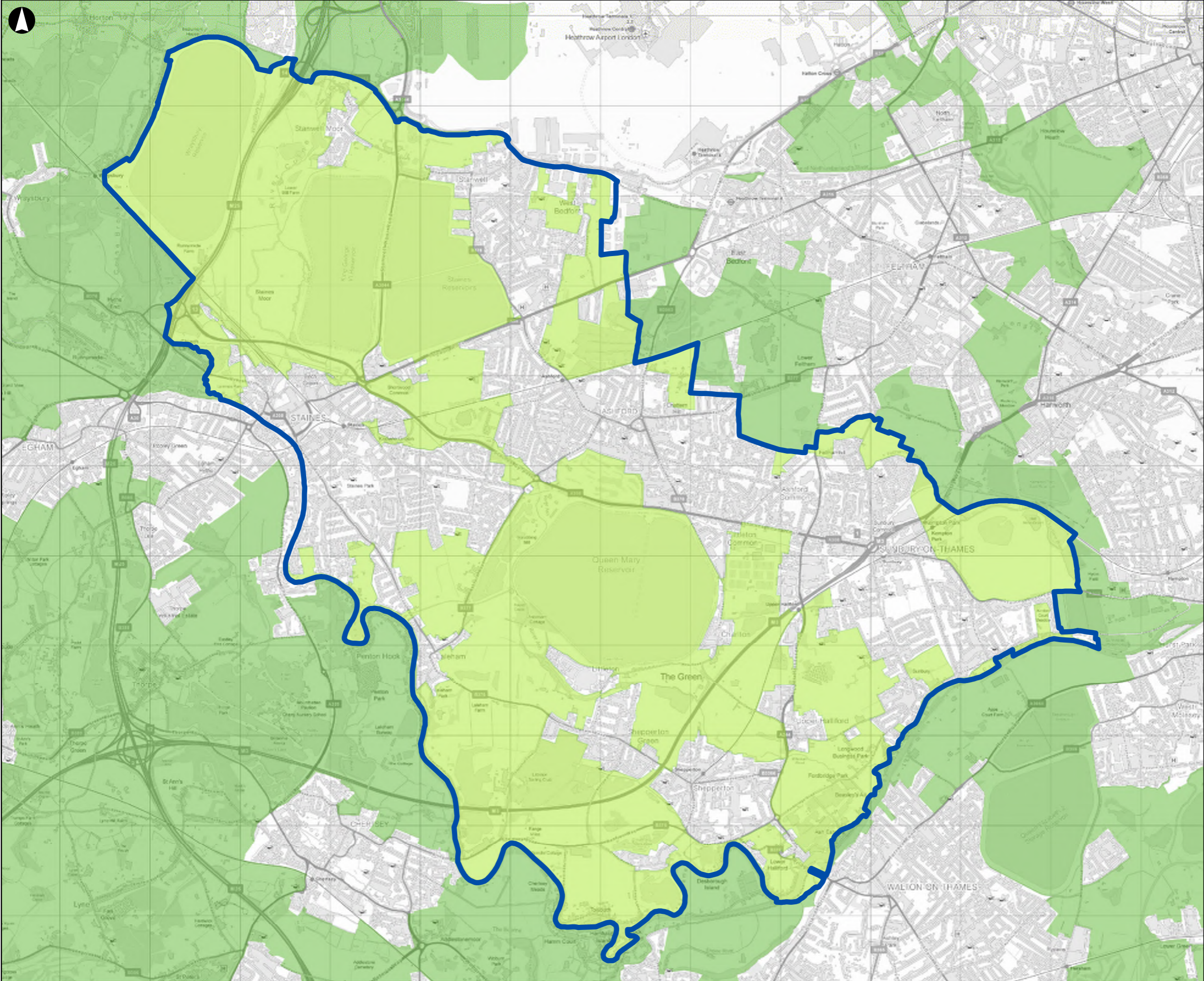
The scope for the Study is to consider all Green Belt land as defined in the current adopted Spelthorne Local Plan (Map 4.1). The Green Belt in Spelthorne was largely imposed around existing built development, resulting in irregular and jagged edges; as a result it was judged relevant to consider the performance of Green Belt at two different scales:

- **Strategic Assessment** – focusing on the primary purposes of wider functional areas of Green Belt in the Borough and their role within the wider sub-regional context of the Metropolitan Green Belt;
- **Local Assessment** – which considered whether smaller areas fulfil the Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF.

### 4.3 Identification of Parcels for Assessment

Based on the general approach to the Study, two tiers of land parcel were identified:

- **Strategic Green Belt Areas (Strategic Areas)** – Broad areas for the Strategic Assessment, identified largely through commonalities in landscape character and natural constraints or barriers that distinguish between different parts of the Green Belt, and functional connections with the wider Metropolitan Green Belt. Further details on the identification of the Strategic Areas is provided in section 4.3.1.
- **Local Green Belt Areas (Local Areas)** – More granular parcels for the Local Green Belt Assessment. Further details on the identification of the Local Areas is provided in section 4.3.2.



**Legend**

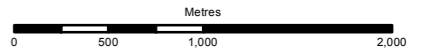
Spelthorne Green Belt

Neighbouring Green Belt

Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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Map 4.1 Spelthorne Green Belt

Scale at A3  
**1:40,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
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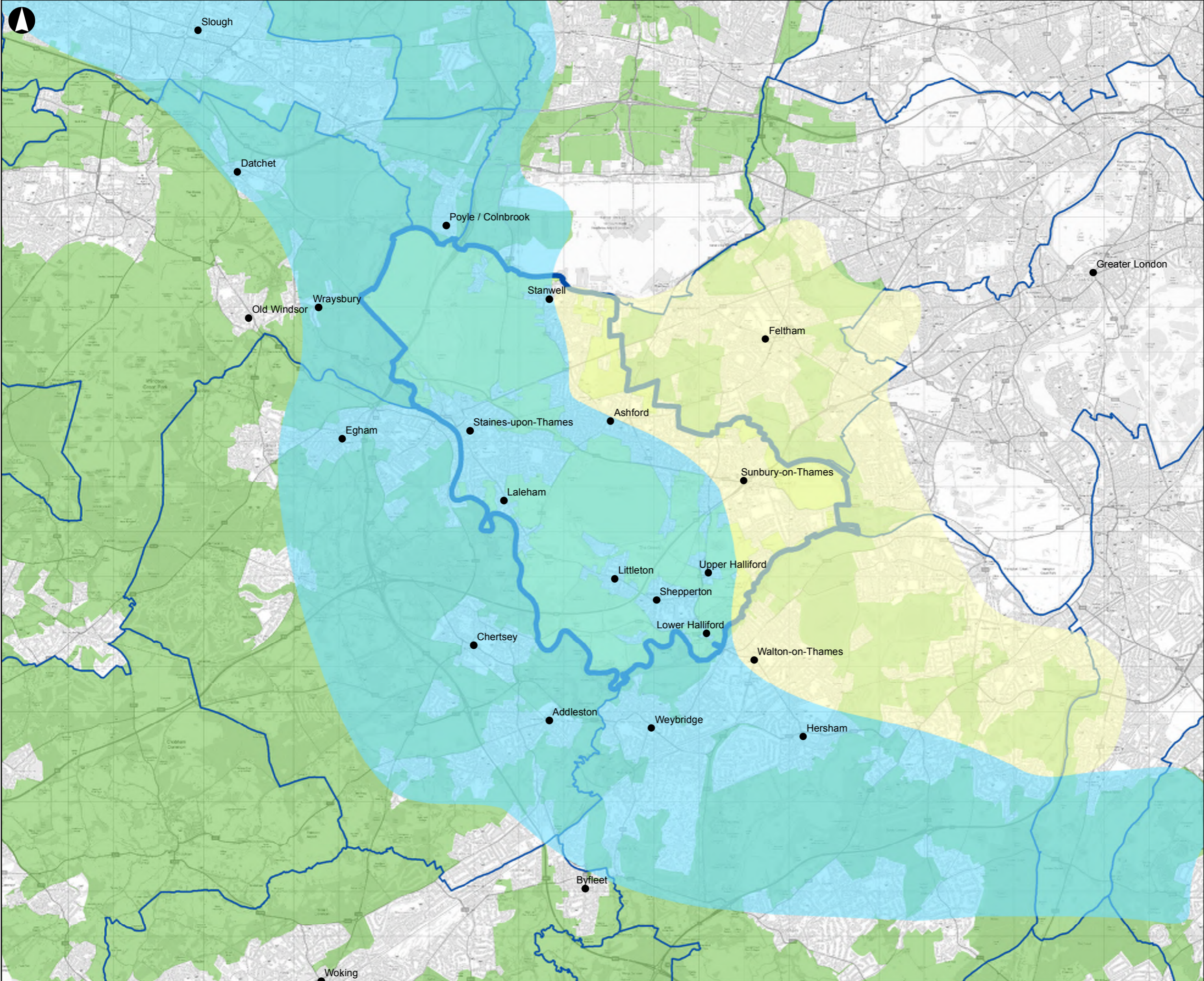
### 4.3.1 Strategic Areas

Green Belt designation extends over 65% of the Borough, though it is noted that its form reflects the transition between the Surrey countryside and London to the north and east.

The Strategic Areas were identified based on: discussions with Council officers; desk-based research on the function of different Green Belt areas and the existing settlement morphology; a review of approaches in neighbouring local authority areas; and the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment Study.

Two potential Strategic Areas were identified for consideration. These are consistent with the areas adopted by the adjoining Elmbridge Borough Council for its Green Belt Assessment (see Map 4.1A):

- **Strategic Area A** – a north-eastern band of Green Belt at the very edge of London which separates the London fringe settlements (e.g. Bedfont, Feltham, Sunbury-on-Thames, and Hampton) from settlements to the south-west. This Strategic Area is limited in width and more fragmented within London. Incorporating the northern reaches of the Thames River and Lower Mole River Floodplains, the Strategic Area is degraded in places and includes a series of large elevated reservoirs and other industrial uses such as treatment works at Walton and Esher, and the Sunbury Lock gas works.
- **Strategic Area B** – a band of Green Belt maintaining separation between a number of settlements including Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell, Staines-upon-Thames / Shepperton / Walton-on-Thames, and Chertsey, Addlestone, and Egham. This forms part of a wider band of Green Belt extending northwards into LB Hillingdon, Slough and South Bucks, and westwards into Elmbridge, preventing the outward sprawl of London into open countryside. Similarly to Strategic Area A, this scale of Green Belt within this band is often limited in width. It encompasses the floodplains of the rivers Ash, Colne, Wraysbury, Wey and Thames, as well as a network of large reservoirs. Functions within this Strategic Area vary significantly, including areas of open pastoral and arable fields as well as golf courses, nurseries, recreation uses and horse paddocks. Distant views are often contained by surrounding settlements and large infrastructure, including a series of major roads and railway lines which punctuate the area.

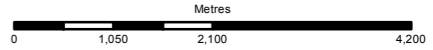


Legend

- Settlements
- Strategic Area 'A'
- Strategic Area 'B'
- Spelthorne Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- Spelthorne Borough Boundary
- Neighbouring District Boundary

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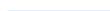
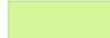
Job Title  
**Spelthorne Green Belt  
Assessment Stage 1**

**Map 4.1A Strategic  
Green Belt Areas**

Scale at A3  
**1:80,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>	Issue <b>P2</b>
Drawing No <b>4.1A</b>		

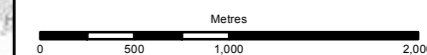


 Motorway  
 A Road  
 B Road  
 Railway Line  
 River  
 Lake / Reservoir  
 Spelthorne Green Belt  
 Neighbouring Green Belt  
 Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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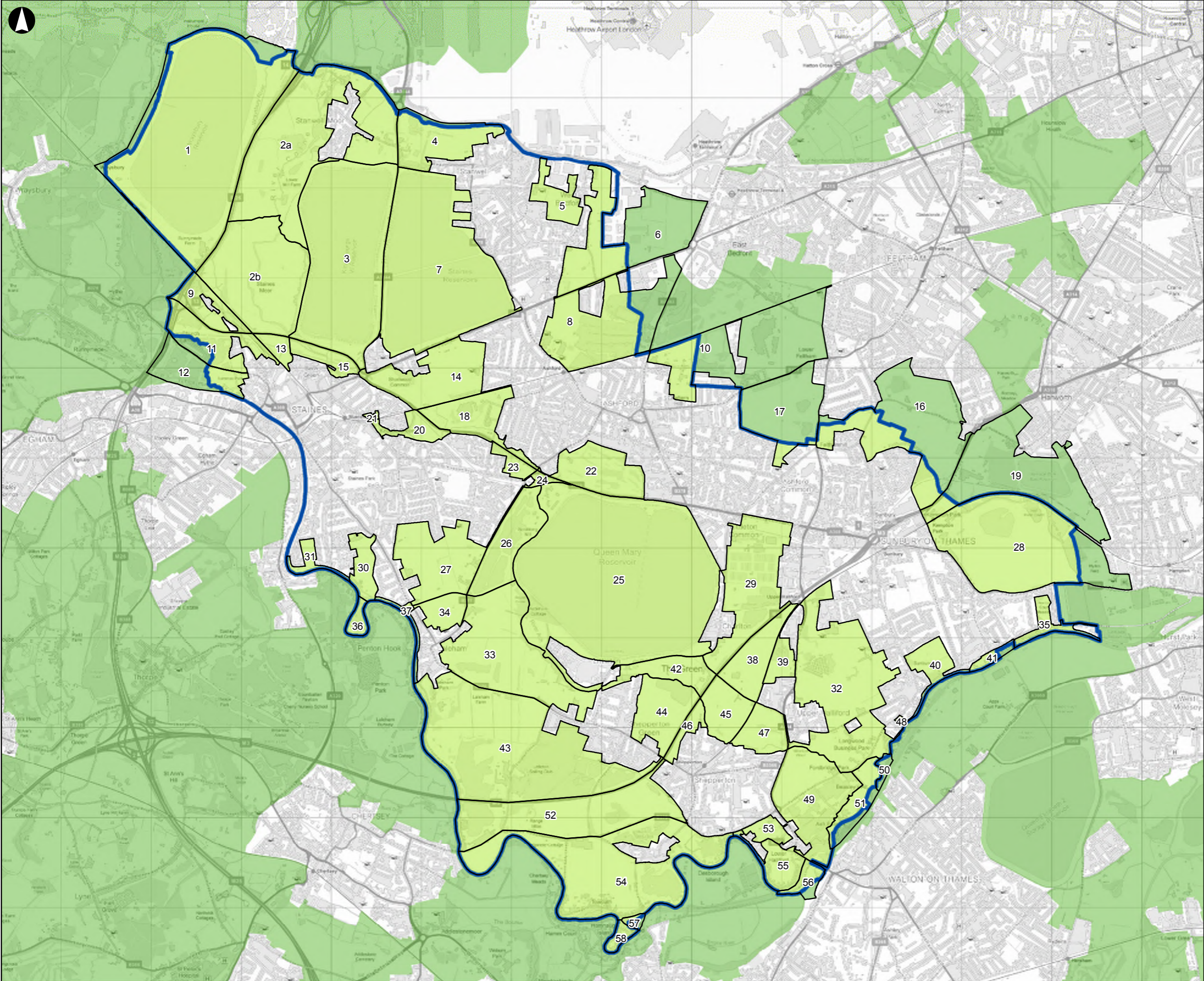
### Map 4.2 Defining Features for Local Areas

Scale at A3

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Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
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Drawing No	Issue
<b>4.2</b>	<b>P1</b>

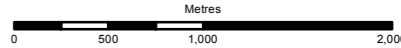


Legend

- Local Area
- Spelthorne Borough Boundary
- Spelthorne Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt

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**Map 4.3. Local Areas**

Scale at A3  
**1:40,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>
Drawing No <b>4.3</b>		

### 4.3.2 Local Areas

It is recognised that Green Belt extends across borough boundaries and as such is often perceived as a much larger area. However, any potential alterations to the Green Belt must be based on a new permanent and defensible boundary; thus, permanent man-made and natural features were selected as the basis of criteria for the identification of the Local Areas. In particular, the boundaries of the Local Areas were based on the following features (Map 4.2):

- Motorways;
- A and B Roads;
- Railway lines; and
- Rivers, brooks, and reservoirs.

Given the urban and rural conditions found in Spelthorne, from the semi-urban fringes of Staines-upon-Thames, Ashford, Sunbury-on-Thames and Stanwell to the more open land in the north-west and south-west of the borough, a flexible approach to the identification of Local Areas was pursued. This was achieved through consideration of Local Area boundaries during the site visits, in particular in and around inset settlements, using additional durable boundary features if required, such as:

- Unclassified public roads and private roads;
- Smaller water features, including streams, canals and other watercourses;
- Prominent physical features (e.g. reservoir embankments);
- Existing development with strongly established and regular boundaries;
- Protected woodland and hedgerows.

This process of Local Area boundary refinement took account of the local context and involved an element of professional judgement.

In some cases, where boundary features were located close together, for example where roads, rivers, and/or railway lines which run parallel to each other, these features were taken together to form one boundary rather than separately which would lead to small slithers of Green Belt land which would not form logical Local Areas for assessment.

In cases where a wide boundary feature (e.g. rivers and motorways) forms the Local Area boundary, the boundary of the Local Area was taken to be the centre line of these boundary features. The centre line of natural features often aligns with the Borough boundary (e.g. the River Thames which often acts as the boundary between Spelthorne and Runnymede and between Spelthorne and Elmbridge).

In cases where the Spelthorne Borough boundaries do not coincide with permanent and durable boundary features, Local Areas overlap with Green Belt in neighbouring authority areas to align with the nearest durable feature. This

approach ensured a consistent approach to the assessment of Green Belt throughout Spelthorne and took into account the strategic, cross-boundary nature of the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, it is important to note that this assessment does not directly influence the approaches to Green Belt in neighbouring authorities and no recommendations are ultimately be made beyond the boundaries of Spelthorne.

The Local Areas that were used for the Assessment are provided in Map 4.3.

## 4.4 Strategic Assessment

The Strategic Green Belt Assessment focused on two aspects of the Spelthorne Green Belt:

- The role of Spelthorne Green Belt within the wider sub-regional context of the Metropolitan Green Belt; and
- The different functional areas of Green Belt within the Borough (as identified in section 4.3.1).

This task provided a critical context-setting role in the Green Belt Assessment, identifying the functional role of Spelthorne's Green Belt in relation to the wider Metropolitan Green Belt.

Having identified broad strategic areas for high-level consideration, a desk-based assessment was undertaken to identify the different functional roles of the Green Belt across the Borough, including physical constraints or barriers that distinguish between the different areas, and how these link to the wider Green Belt within neighbouring authorities. These Strategic Green Belt Areas subsequently provided the context for the Local Assessment.

## 4.5 Local Assessment

Each of the Local Areas was assessed against the purposes of Green Belt, as set out in the NPPF. No national guidance exists which establishes exactly how such an assessment should be undertaken. The PAS guidance, recent examples and previous experience reiterates the need to respect local circumstances and the unique characteristics that affect the way that the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt are appraised.

The purpose of the assessment was to establish any differentiation in terms of how the Local Areas in the existing Green Belt function and fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt.

For each purpose, one or more criteria were developed using both qualitative and quantitative measures. A score out of five was attributed for each criterion (Figure 4.1). If a Local Area was considered to have no contribution to a specific purpose, in addition to the detailed analysis undertaken, a statement was added to the pro-forma to this effect and no score was attributed.

It is important to note that each of the NPPF purposes is considered equally significant, thus no weighting or aggregation of scores across the purposes has

been undertaken. As such, a composite judgement was necessary to determine whether, overall, Green Belt Local Areas are meeting Green Belt purposes strongly or weakly. The assessment also considered, if appropriate, whether there were any smaller scale sub-areas within Local Areas which might be less sensitive and thus able to accommodate change. In these cases, a further assessment will consider the potential for Green Belt boundaries to be adjusted without significantly reducing ability to meet NPPF purposes. A Local Area fulfilling the criteria relatively weakly, weakly or very weakly (1 or 2) across all purposes was deemed weaker Green Belt. These recommendations will be taken forward to inform any decisions taken on amending the Green Belt boundaries following further assessment work (outside the scope of this Assessment).

Figure 4.1 Criterion Scores

Overall Strength of Green Belt Local Area against Criterion	Score	Equivalent Wording
	0	Does not meet Criterion
	1	Meets Criterion Weakly or Very Weakly
	2	Meets Criterion Relatively Weakly
	3	Meets Criterion
	4	Meets Criterion Relatively Strongly
	5	Meets Criterion Strongly or Very Strongly

The following sections examine the definition of each of the five purposes of the Green Belt in relation to local objectives and role of the Green Belt in terms of achieving its purpose locally; and set out the criteria and associated scoring applied.

#### 4.5.1 Purpose 1

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

The original strategic purpose of the Green Belt was to check the sprawl of London. However, as discussed in section 3.4, it is recognised that the wider Green Belt also plays a role in preventing the unrestricted growth of other large settlements.

This assessment therefore considered the role of the Green Belt Parcels in preventing the sprawl of London, but also in restricting the sprawl of large built-up areas across the Borough and within adjacent neighbouring local authorities.

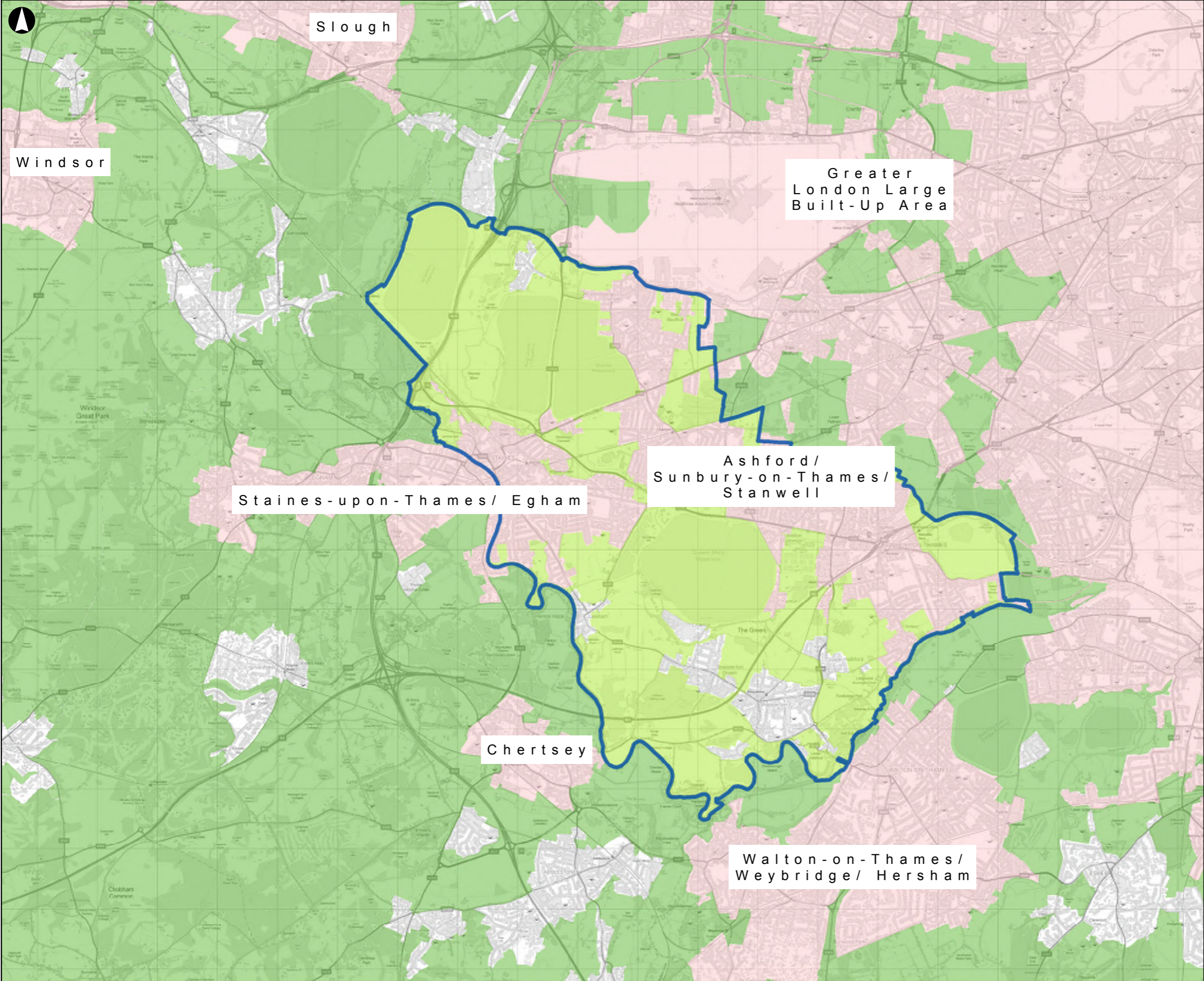
It is noted that the Spelthorne Core Strategy and Policies DPD (2009) identifies a hierarchy of town centres in Chapter 8. Ashford and Sunbury Cross are identified as Tier 2 ‘Local Centres’; however, functionally they form one continuous built-up area together with Stanwell, and were therefore considered as a single large built-up area. Staines-upon-Thames was treated as a large built-up area, consistent with its status as a Tier 1 (Secondary Regional Centre) settlement. Additionally, Heathrow Airport was considered as part of the Greater London large built-up area (Figure 4.2; Map 4.4).

Figure 4.2 Large Built-Up Areas to be considered in the Purpose 1 Assessment

Spelthorne	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Staines-upon-Thames / Egham (Runnymede) Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell <sup>8</sup>	Greater London large built-up area (including Heathrow Airport) (LB Hillingdon, LB Hounslow, LB Richmond upon Thames) <sup>9</sup> Walton-on-Thames / Weybridge / Hersham (Elmbridge) Chertsey (Runnymede) Windsor (RB Windsor and Maidenhead) Slough (Slough)

<sup>8</sup> Including the residential area comprising Edward Way, Orchard Way and Desford Way, located to the south of the A30 (London Road).

<sup>9</sup> Encompassing Molesey, Dittons (Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood, and Weston Green), Hampton, Hanworth, Feltham and Bedfont.

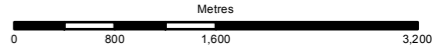


**Legend**

- Large Built-Up Area
- Spelthorne Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
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**Map 4.4. Large Built-Up Areas  
Considered in Purpose 1 Assessment**

Scale at A3	<b>1:60,000</b>
Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
Drawing No <b>4.4</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>

Although ‘*sprawl*’ is a multi-faceted concept and thus has a variety of different definitions, this Assessment has adopted a simple definition, considering sprawl as ‘*the outward spread of a large built-up area at its periphery in a sporadic, dispersed and irregular way*’. In order to appraise the extent to which the Green Belt keeps this in check, it was necessary to consider:

- Whether the Green Belt Local Area falls at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up area(s);
- The degree to which the Green Belt Local Area is contained by built-form, and the nature of this physical containment, as well as the linkage to the wider Green Belt; and
- The extent to which the edge of the built-up area has a strongly defined or regular boundary.

There were two stages in this assessment:

#### **Assessment 1(a)**

Firstly, a Local Area must be at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up area(s) in order to prevent development which would constitute sprawl. This criterion must therefore be met for Purpose 1 to be fulfilled and was applied on the basis that the Local Area is either at the edge or not at the edge of a distinct large built-up area. A Local Area which is not at the edge of a distinct large built-up area in this initial assessment received a score of 0. In cases where Local Areas were separated from large built-up areas by very small areas of Green Belt, a score of 0 was awarded for consistency but the particular circumstances around this were noted in the pro-forma. Where a Local Area plays a wider strategic role in preventing sprawl but is not at the edge of a large built-up area, this is also acknowledged in the pro-forma.

#### **Assessment 1(b)**

As stated at Assessment 1(a), Green Belt should function to protect open land at the edge of large built-up area(s) (Figure 4.2). However, the extent to which a Local Area prevents sprawl is dependent on its relationship with the respective built-up area(s).

Assessment 1(b) initially focused on the degree to which the Green Belt abuts or is contained by the built-up area(s), the nature of this relationship and links to the wider Green Belt. The following criteria were used for assessment:

- A Local Area predominantly surrounded or enclosed by two or more distinct areas of built form and that also retains a strong link to the wider Green Belt would play a particularly important role in preventing sprawl. For the purposes of this Assessment, this was referred to as ‘*contiguous*’ and the Local Area received an initial score of 5.
- A Local Area displaying a low level of containment by a large built-up area, such as if it was simply abutting a large built-up area, may prevent sprawl but to a lesser extent. This assessment referred to these areas as ‘*connected*’ with a large built-up area, and the Local Area received an initial score of 3.

- A Local Area almost entirely contained or surrounded by built development which forms part of a single built-up area and has very limited connections to the wider Green Belt, would only prevent sprawl to a limited extent (rather, potential development would likely be classified as infill), and is referred to in the Assessment as ‘*enclosed*’ by a single built-up area. Such Local Areas received an initial score of 1.

This initial Assessment was refined and supplemented by additional analysis on the role of Green Belt in preventing sprawl which would not otherwise be restricted by another barrier. The NPPF states that Local Authorities should ‘*define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent*’ (paragraph 85). Where boundary features were identified at the edge of large built-up areas, Local Areas were assessed based on the following definitions:

- Where the built-form edge was ‘Regular’, comprising well defined or rectilinear built-form edges or where large built-up areas are bounded by more durable features that are likely to be permanent, it was judged that the Green Belt plays a lesser role in preventing sprawl, and as such no ‘+’ is assigned. Examples of such features include:
  - Infrastructure: motorway; public and man-made road; railway line; river.
  - Landform: stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical feature (e.g. reservoir embankment); protected/strongly established woodland/hedge/tree line; existing development with strongly established and regular boundaries.
- Where the built-form edge was ‘Irregular’, comprising ill-defined or softer edges or where large built-up areas are bounded by less durable, ‘softer’ features, a ‘+’ was assigned in recognition of the role of the Green Belt in preventing sprawl in the absence of an alternative barrier. Examples of such features include:
  - Infrastructure: private/unmade road; bridleway/footpath; power line.
  - Natural: field boundary/weak tree line.

## Purpose 1 Assessment Criteria

The criteria that were used to assess the Local Areas against Purpose 1 are set out in Figure 4.3. Ordnance Survey base maps and aerial photography, together with observations during the site visits, were used to undertake this assessment.

Figure 4.3 Purpose 1 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria	Score
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	(a) Local Area is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas	NOT AT EDGE: Green Belt Local Area meets Purpose 1.  AT EDGE: Green Belt Local Area does not meet Purpose 1 and will score 0 for Criteria (b).
	(b) Prevents the outwards sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary.	5+: Green Belt Local Area is contiguous with two or more large built-up areas which are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
		5: Green Belt Local Area is contiguous with two or more large built-up areas which are predominantly bordered by prominent and permanent boundary features.
		3+: Green Belt Local Area is connected to one or more large built-up area(s) which is/are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
		3: Green Belt Local Area is connected to one or more large built-up area(s) which is/are predominantly bordered by prominent and permanent boundary features.
		1+: Green Belt Local Area is enclosed by one large built-up area which is predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
		1: Green Belt Local Area is enclosed by one large built-up area which is predominantly bordered by prominent and permanent boundary features.
Score	xx/5	

## 4.5.2 Purpose 2

***Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.***

In addition to the clear function of this purpose in preventing towns from merging and therefore protecting existing gaps between towns, it also forms the basis for maintaining the existing settlement pattern. National policy provides no guidance over what might constitute ‘towns’ and whether this purpose should also take into consideration the gaps between smaller settlements.

Given the non-constrained nature of development in Spelthorne, the Assessment of Local Areas considered gaps between all non-Green Belt settlements. Non-Green Belt settlements in Spelthorne were identified through the appropriate local development plans and in discussion with the Council. Settlements in neighbouring local authority areas adjacent to areas of Green Belt in Spelthorne were identified using adopted Local Plans (Figure 4.4; Map 4.5).

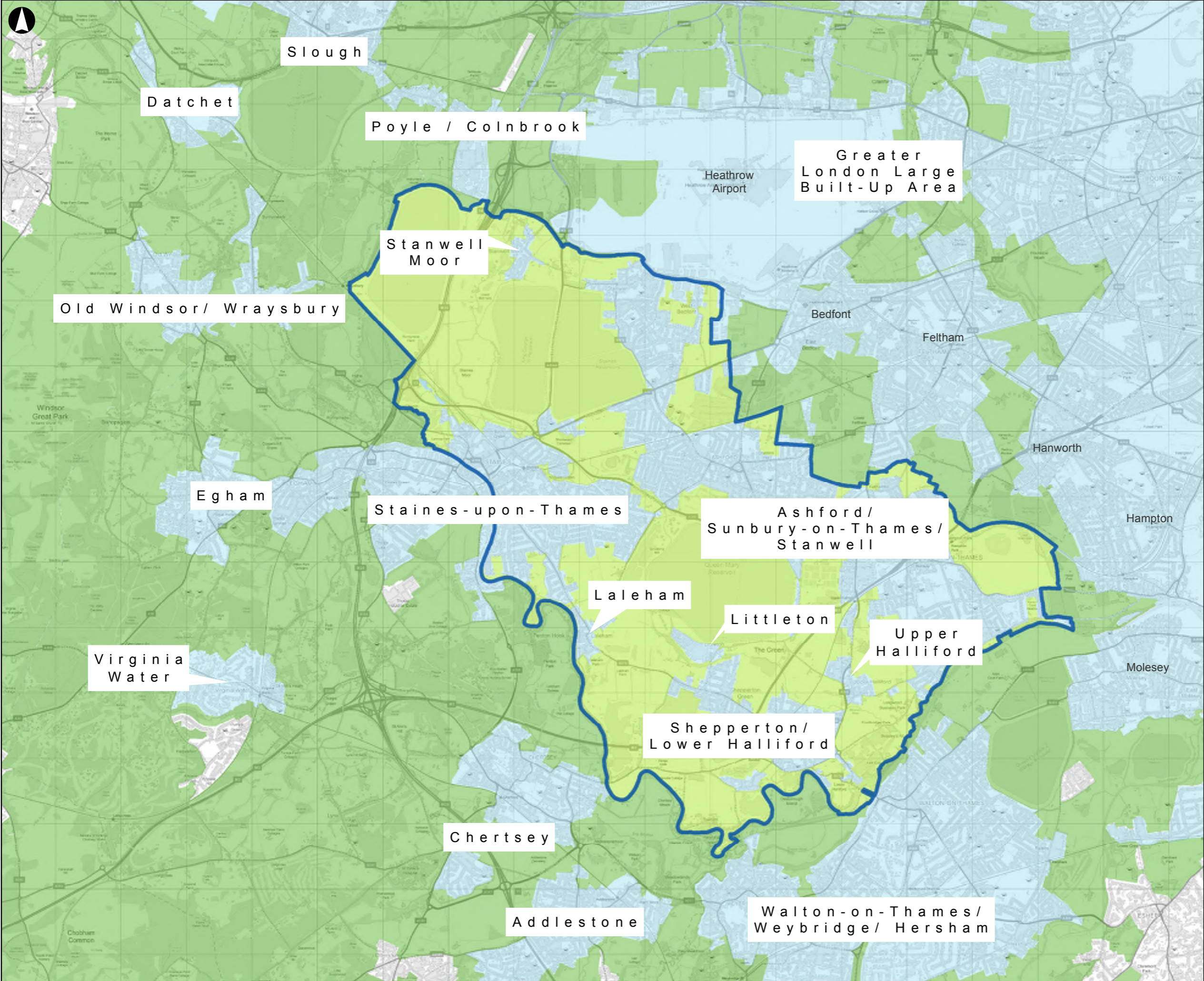
Figure 4.4 Settlements considered in Purpose 2 Assessment

Spelthorne	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Staines-upon-Thames	Walton-on-Thames / Weybridge / Hersham (Elmbridge)
Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell <sup>10</sup>	Greater London (LB Hillingdon, LB Hounslow, LB Richmond upon Thames and Elmbridge) <sup>12</sup>
Shepperton / Lower Halliford	Addlestone (Runnymede)
Upper Halliford <sup>11</sup>	Chertsey (Runnymede)
Laleham	Egham (Runnymede)
Littleton	Poyle / Colnbrook (Slough)
	Slough (Slough)
	Datchet (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)
	Old Windsor / Wraysbury (RB Windsor and Maidenhead)

<sup>10</sup> Including the residential area comprising Edward Way, Orchard Way and Desford Way, located to the south of the A30 (London Road).

<sup>11</sup> Including the residential area at Tadmor Close, located to the south of Halliford Road.

<sup>12</sup> Encompassing Molesey, Dittons (Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood, and Weston Green), Hampton, Hanworth, Feltham and Bedfont.

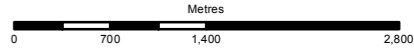


Legend

- Settlement
- Spelthorne Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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Job Title  
**Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment**

Map 4.5. Settlements Considered  
in Purpose 2 Assessment

Scale at A3  
**1:55,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
Drawing No <b>4.5</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>

The extent to which an area of Green Belt protects a gap was assessed using the following definitions:

- ‘Essential gaps’, where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between settlements. Such Local Areas would receive a score of 5.
- ‘Wider gaps’, which may be less important for preventing coalescence. Such Local Areas would receive a score of 3.
- ‘Less essential gaps’, where development is likely to be possible without any risk of coalescence between settlements. Such Local Areas would receive a score of 1.

The extent to which Green Belt protects a gap between settlements was not measured by set distances between settlements, but rather the extent to which the gap prevents coalescence. A number of factors were taken into consideration, including distance, natural or man-made barriers, and topography. A Local Area which does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernable contribution to separation received a score of 0.

## Purpose 2 Assessment Criteria

The criteria to be used to assess the Local Areas against Purpose 2 are set out below.

Figure 4.5 Purpose 2 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criterion	Scores
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	5: An ‘essential gap’ between non-Green Belt settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
		3: A ‘wider gap’ between non-Green Belt settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.
		1: A ‘less essential gap’ between non-Green Belt settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging between settlements.
		0: Local Area does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernable contribution to separation.
	Score	xx/5

### 4.5.3 Purpose 3

***Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.***

This purpose seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, or a gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change. The assessment considered openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as 'countryside', thus resisting encroachment from development. Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development rather than from a landscape character perspective, where openness might be characterised through topography and presence or otherwise of woodland and hedgerow cover.

Historic open land uses associated with the urban fringe and urban characteristics as well as the countryside exist in the Spelthorne Green Belt and include but are not limited to golf courses, sports clubs, reservoirs, an aggregate processing plant, a prison, public utilities, motorways and their intersections, business parks and areas of residential development. Some of these semi-urban uses have an impact on the 'openness' of the Green Belt.

### Purpose 3 Assessment Criteria

The criteria used to assess the Local Areas against Purpose 3 are set out below. Ordnance Survey base maps and aerial photography were reviewed in order to undertake the openness assessment.

The extent to which Green Belt protects the openness of the countryside was assessed in terms of policy openness, rather than visual openness; for example, Green Belt which is not visually open (e.g. wooded areas) but is free from development scored highly in terms of openness, while areas of Green Belt with long views but which contain built form (e.g. hardstanding) received a lower score in terms of openness.

The percentage of built form within a Local Area was calculated using GIS tools based on the land area of features that are classified as manmade (constructed) within the Ordnance Survey MasterMap data, excluding roads and railway lines. The data includes buildings, some surfaced areas such as car parks, infrastructure such as sewerage treatment works, glasshouses and other miscellaneous structures.

It is noted that there is a significant amount of temporary development within Spelthorne; for example minerals sites where planning consent is on a temporary basis and where conditions of the consent require restoration at the end of activities. Where these sites were identified, commentary was added in the pro-forma.

The score attributed to a Local Area was initially determined on the basis of the percentage of built form. Scores were then considered further in light of qualitative assessments of character, undertaken through site visits and revised as appropriate. This assessment considered, in particular, the extent to which a Local Area might be reasonably identified as ‘countryside’ / ‘rural’ (in line with the NPPF). In order to differentiate between areas, broad categorisation was developed encompassing assessments of land use (including agricultural use), morphology, context, scale and links to the wider Green Belt:

- ‘*Strong unspoilt rural character*’ is defined as land with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland / scrubland and open fields.
- ‘*Largely rural character*’ is defined as land with a general absence of built development, largely characterised by rural land uses and landscapes but with some other sporadic developments and low density man-made structures, including ‘plotland’ development.
- ‘*Semi urban character*’ is defined as land which begins on the edge of the fully built-up area and contains a mix of urban and rural land uses before giving way to the wider countryside. Land uses might include publicly accessible natural green spaces and green corridors, country parks and local nature reserves, small-scale food production (e.g. market gardens) and waste management facilities, interspersed with built development more generally associated with urban areas (e.g. residential or commercial).

- ‘*Urban character*’ is defined as land which is predominantly characterised by urban land uses, including physical developments such as residential or commercial, or urban managed parks.

Figure 4.6 Purpose 3 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criterion	Score
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.	5: Contains less than 3% built form and possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		3: Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character.
		2: Contains less than 15% built form and/or possesses a semi-urban character.
		1: Contains more than 15% built form and/or possesses an urban character.
		0: Contains more than 20% built form and possesses an urban character.
Score		xx/5

#### 4.5.4 Purpose 4

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

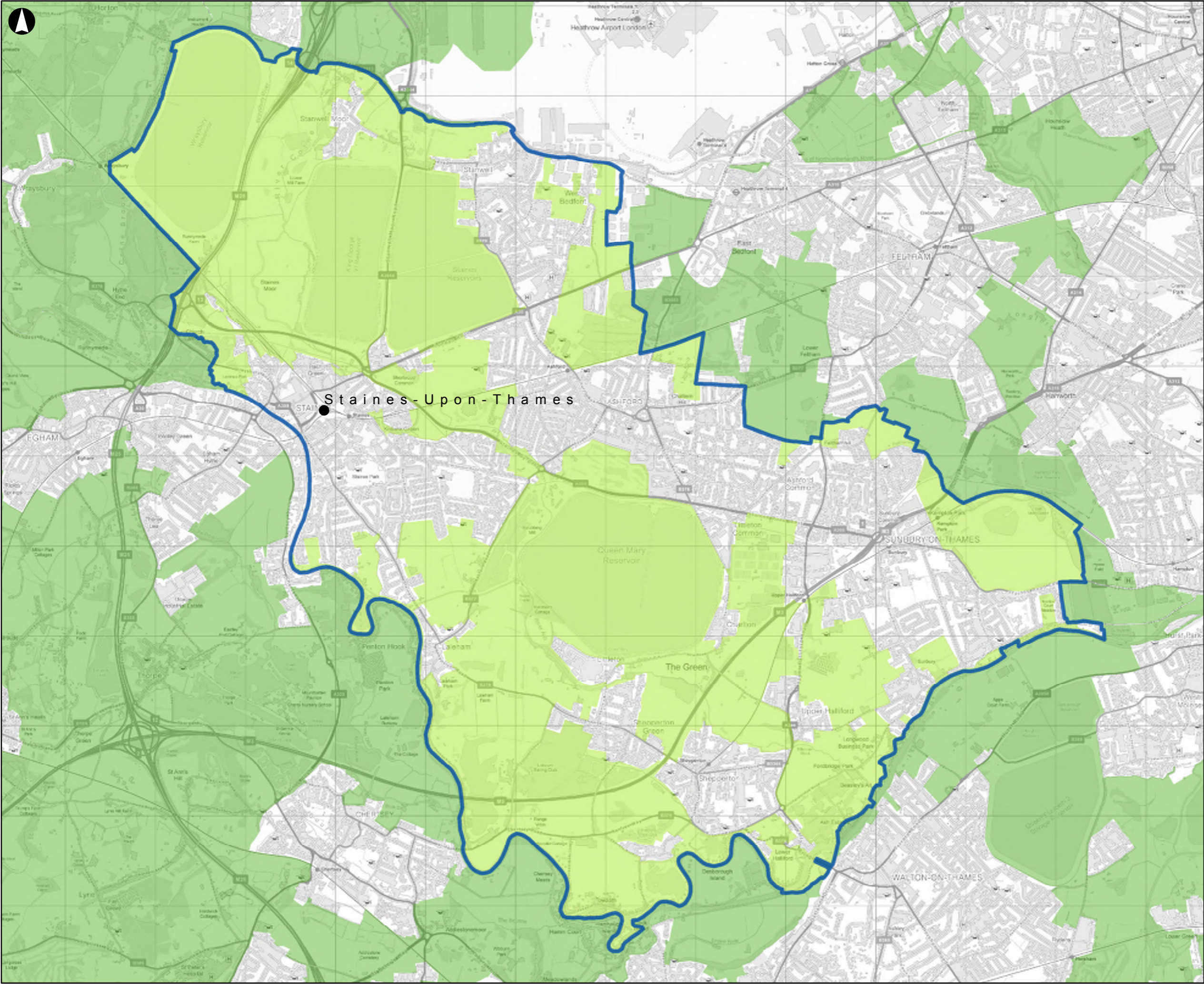
This purpose serves to protect the setting of historic towns by retaining the surrounding open land or by retaining the landscape context for historic centres. As outlined in the advice note published by PAS<sup>13</sup>, the assessment of this purpose relates to very few settlements in practice, due largely to the pattern of modern development that often envelops historic towns today.

In developing the methodology for this purpose, it was noted that a Green Belt Assessment prepared by another local authority identified traits of the surrounding countryside which contributed to a city's special character and historic setting.<sup>14</sup> The relationship between the fringes of settlements and the surrounding Green Belts was therefore a key factor in considering the contribution of a Local Area to this Purpose.

This methodology has identified the area in Staines-upon-Thames defined in the Staines Conservation Area Preservation and Enhancement Proposals (1991) as the sole geographical area of potential relevance to this assessment. The north-western part of the Conservation Area is within the Green Belt which appears to have contributed to retaining the open character of this area (Figure 4.7; Map 4.6).

<sup>13</sup> Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, PAS, 2015

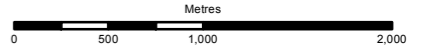
<sup>14</sup> Informal Green Belt Assessment, Oxford City Council, 2014



- Legend**
- Settlement
  - Spelthorne Green Belt
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Job Title  
**Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment**

**Map 4.6. Historic Areas Considered in Purpose 4 Assessment**

Scale at A3  
**1:40,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
Drawing No <b>4.6</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>

Figure 4.7 Historic Towns Considered in Purpose 4 Assessment

Spelthorne	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Staines-upon-Thames	N/A

## Purpose 4 Assessment Criteria

Two aspects are of particular importance with regard to assessment of Green Belt Parcels against Purpose 4:

- The role of the Parcel in providing immediate context for the historic town (along the boundary between the settlement and the Green Belt); and
- Contribution to views or vistas between the historic town and the surrounding countryside, looking both inwards and outwards where public viewpoints exist.

The relative importance of particular landforms or landscape features to the setting and special character of a historic town were adjudged using the relevant Conservation Area Appraisals. Potential vistas were identified using Ordnance Survey contour maps and sense checked on site visits.

Figure 4.8 Purpose 4 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criterion	Score
<b>To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</b>	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for a historic town, including views and vistas between the town and the surrounding countryside.	5: Green Belt Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic town by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, and protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
		3: Green Belt Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic town by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, or protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
		1: Green Belt Parcel makes limited contribution to the broader setting of a historic town by providing a

Purpose	Criterion	Score
		countryside setting for a historic core which is inward facing, and has a weak relationship with the surrounding countryside.
		0: Green Belt Parcel does not abut an identified historic town core.
	<b>Score</b>	<b>xx/5</b>

#### 4.5.5 Purpose 5

***Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.***

Purpose 5 focuses on assisting urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. As outlined in Section 3, the advice note issued by PAS suggests that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. Therefore, assessment of Green Belt against this purpose will not enable a distinction between Local Areas as all Green Belt achieves the purpose to the same extent.

During engagement with the Council, it was confirmed that there were no planned urban regeneration schemes that are being inhibited by Green Belt designations.

Purpose 5 was therefore not considered as part of this Study.

#### 4.5.6 Pro-Forma

A pro-forma was prepared to capture the assessments against each criterion for the Local Areas. An example can be found in Appendix B.

### 4.6 Recommendations

Following completion of the Green Belt Local Area assessments, the criterion scores for Purposes 1-4 were collated and tabulated across all of the Local Areas, to highlight those areas meeting the purposes to a lesser or greater extent (see section 5).

Weaker performing Local Areas, as well as any identified smaller scale sub-areas within these, have been identified and listed with a view to possible further detailed assessment beyond this Assessment (see section 6).

## 5 Key Findings

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### 5.1 Strategic Assessment

This section summarises the key findings from the assessment of the Green Belt Strategic Areas against NPPF purposes.

The Strategic Green Assessment focused on two aspects of the Spelthorne Green Belt:

- The role of Spelthorne Green Belt within the wider sub-regional context of the Metropolitan Green Belt; and
- The different functional areas of Green Belt within the Borough (as identified in section 4.3.1).

The Strategic Assessments focused on two broad sub-regional networks. Detailed pro-formas setting out the assessments for Strategic Areas A and B can be found in Annex Report 1.

#### 5.1.1 Strategic Area A

At the strategic level, Strategic Area A plays an important role in meeting the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy to prevent urban sprawl, in this case the sprawl of London, by keeping land permanently open. Assessment of Strategic Area A against the relevant NPPF purposes is as follows:

- **Purpose 1** – Meets the Purpose very strongly by acting as an important barrier to potential sprawl from the Greater London built-up area (including Feltham and Hampton) and a number of built-up areas within Surrey (Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell).
- **Purpose 2** – Meets the Purpose very strongly by establishing important gaps between Greater London and a number of Surrey towns.
- **Purpose 3** – Meets the Purpose weakly due to the fragmented nature of the Green Belt and the prevalence of man-made/utilities uses.

#### 5.1.2 Strategic Area B

At the strategic level, Strategic Area B plays an important role in meeting the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy to prevent urban sprawl, in this case the sprawl of settlements in Surrey, by keeping land permanently open. Assessment of the Strategic Area against relevant NPPF purposes is as follows:

- **Purpose 1** – Meets the Purpose strongly by acting as an important barrier to potential sprawl from large built-up areas such as Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames and Staines-upon-Thames / Egham.
- **Purpose 2** – Meets the Purpose strongly by establishing important gaps between a number of Surrey towns, preventing these from merging into one another.

- **Purpose 3** – Meets the Purpose moderately (there is some variation across the Strategic Area) by preventing encroachment into some open areas of more unspoilt countryside.

## 5.2 Local Assessment

This section summarises the key findings from the assessment of the Green Belt Local Areas against the NPPF purposes.

In accordance with the approach set out in section 4.3.2, 59 Local Areas were identified for assessment (see Map 4.3). Table 5.1 sets out the scores for each Local Area against NPPF Purposes 1-4, with the purpose scoring illustrated spatially in Maps 5.1 – 5.4 and overall scores in Map 5.5.

Detailed pro-formas setting out the assessments for each Local Area can be found in Annex Report 2.

### 5.2.1 Purpose 1 Assessment

19 of the 59 Local Areas (32%) do not lie at the edge of an identified large built-up area and thus do not directly prevent sprawl. These Local Areas therefore fail to meet Purpose 1. While some of these Local Areas abut the edges of settlements, they play no role in preventing the sprawl of ‘large built-up areas’ (in reference to the specific policy set out in NPPF Paragraph 80, and defined for the purposes of this assessment in Figure 4.2 of this Report). The majority of these Local Areas are concentrated in the less urbanised north-western and southern extremities of the Borough. In a number of instances, only small areas of Green Belt separate Local Areas from large built-up areas. These cases have been noted qualitatively in the pro-formas in Annex Report 2.

While it is judged that these areas do not directly prevent the outward sprawl of large built-up areas, they may form part of wider ‘bands’ of Green Belt that, at a strategic level, function to limit sprawl (see Section 5.1).

40 of the 59 Local Areas (68%) lie at the edge of an identified large built-up area. This reflects the significant influence of the Borough’s large built-up areas over the remaining countryside. These often have complex settlement patterns and/or morphologies, which reflect previously uncontrolled development that was halted upon the adoption of the first Green Belt boundaries in the 1950s.

Of the 40 Local Areas lying at the edge of an identified large built-up area, 9 meet Purpose 1 weakly, scoring 1 or 1+. This represents 15% of the Local Areas. These Local Areas are ‘enclosed’ within the extent of a single large built-up area and thus do little to prevent their outward sprawl. These are distributed widely across the Borough, around the fringes of several large built-up areas, and largely reflect historic patterns of sprawl arising in this part of Middlesex in the post-war period, severing open areas from the wider countryside as well as areas that were not developed at the time, often as a result of wider constraints (for example, registered common land in the case of Local Areas 20 and 21).

18 Local Areas (31%) are ‘connected’ to large built-up areas, scoring 3 or 3+. Given Spelthorne’s particularly urban context, it is perhaps unsurprising that such a substantial proportion of its Green Belt meets this purpose. Of these 18 Local Areas, 10 (56%) score 3+ and therefore play a heightened role in preventing sprawl by providing a barrier where the boundary between the Green Belt and the large built-up area is not robust, durable or readily recognisable.

13 Local Areas (22%) are ‘contiguous’ with at least two distinct large built-up areas. This is a notably high proportion, reflecting the particularly significant role of the Green Belt in Spelthorne in preventing the outward sprawl of both London and large built-up areas in adjacent Surrey districts and boroughs including Runnymede and Elmbridge.

### 5.2.2 Purpose 2 Assessment

10 of 59 Local Areas (17%) do not provide any gap, or form an insignificant part of the gap, between Purpose 2 settlements. These Local Areas therefore fail to meet Purpose 2 and score 0. While some of the Local Areas are completely enclosed by settlements (Local Area 5), many of the Local Areas that fail to meet this Purpose are nearly enclosed by settlements with a durable road boundary where the Local Area adjoins the wider Green Belt (Local Areas 21 and 22). In some instances the Local Area is nearly enclosed by a settlement with the River Thames forming a durable boundary (Local Areas 30, 31, 40, 48 and 53) while Local Areas 41, 57 and 58 are islands within the River Thames where there is no risk of coalescence.

9 of 59 Local Areas (15%) are part of the less essential gap between two or more Purpose 2 settlements. Local Areas which meet Purpose 2 only weakly include those that are a very small part of a gap between settlements where infrastructure provides an additional barrier to separation (Local Areas 9, 11 and 12) or natural features such as lakes provide an additional barrier to separation (Local Areas 13 and 15) or where the Local Area is surrounded by development with a durable infrastructure boundary (Local Area 20) or natural boundary (the River Thames) between the Local Area and one or more other settlements or where the Local Area is a River Thames island forming a small part of the gap between two settlements (Local Area 36).

15 of 59 Local Areas (25%) form part of the wider gap between two or more Purpose 2 settlements. The majority of Local Areas scoring 3 for Purpose 2 are located in the west and south of Spelthorne, reflecting the larger Local Area sizes in these parts of the Borough and the more open stretches of Green Belt between settlements.

25 of 59 Local Areas (42%) score 5 against Purpose 2 and form all or a significant part of the essential gap between settlements. The majority of Local Areas that form an essential gap between Purpose 2 settlements are located in the north and east of Spelthorne. This reflects the critical role of the Green Belt in separating the contiguous band of settlements across the central portion of Spelthorne from Greater London (including Heathrow Airport) to the north-east in this location.

### 5.2.3 Purpose 3 Assessment

One of the 59 Local Areas (Local Area 48) scores 0 in terms of openness, containing more than 20% built-form and having an urban character overall.

16 of 59 Local Areas (27%) are semi-urban in character, scoring 2 in terms of Purpose 3. Local Areas that are considered to be semi-urban in terms of openness are largely located in the centre and north of the Borough, and are largely small Local Areas within or immediately adjacent to larger settlements. In such instances the Local Areas are almost entirely surrounded by settlements (or completely surrounded in the case of Local Area 5) and have urbanising land uses and a higher percentage of built form. Many of the Local Areas scoring 2 in terms of openness form the entire gap between Staines-upon-Thames and Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell (Local Areas 18, 23 and 24) and the gap between Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and Greater London (Local Areas 10 and 19).

The majority of Local Areas, 33 out of 59 (56%) have a largely rural character. Local Areas scoring 3 in terms of Purpose 3 are relatively evenly distributed throughout the Borough, with slightly higher concentrations in the south and west. The majority of these Local Areas are large in scale and largely free from built form, typified by agricultural land uses, wooded areas and larger areas of parkland. Three of the Local Areas are reservoirs including two in the west of west of the Borough (Local Areas 1 and 3) and one in the centre of the Borough (Local Area 25).

Five Local Areas (8%) are considered to have an unspoilt rural character in terms of openness. All four of the Local Areas scoring 4 are located in the south-west of the Borough. Local Areas 33 and 34 are located between Shepperton and Laleham, and are largely open with agricultural land uses and strong connections to the wider countryside. Local Area 52 is a stretch of land between Shepperton and the River Thames (adjacent to Chertsey) which is largely free from development and has varying topographies, scrubland, grassland and woodland. Local Area 36 is completely free of development and comprises a wooded island in a bend of the River Thames.

Local Area 2b is considered to have an unspoilt rural character and scores 5 in terms of Purpose 3. Local Area 2b is almost completely free from development and the majority of its area is Staines Moor, a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

### 5.2.4 Purpose 4 Assessment

Two Local Areas (3%) make a limited contribution to the broader setting of the historic area of Staines-upon-Thames (defined by the Staines Conservation Area) by providing a countryside setting for the inward facing historic core of this settlement. Local Area 11 provides limited views of the historic core from the Local Area, although the Local Area is largely a former gravel works. Local Area 12 offers visual connections between the Green Belt and historic core, although the Green Belt in this Local Area is recreational in character.

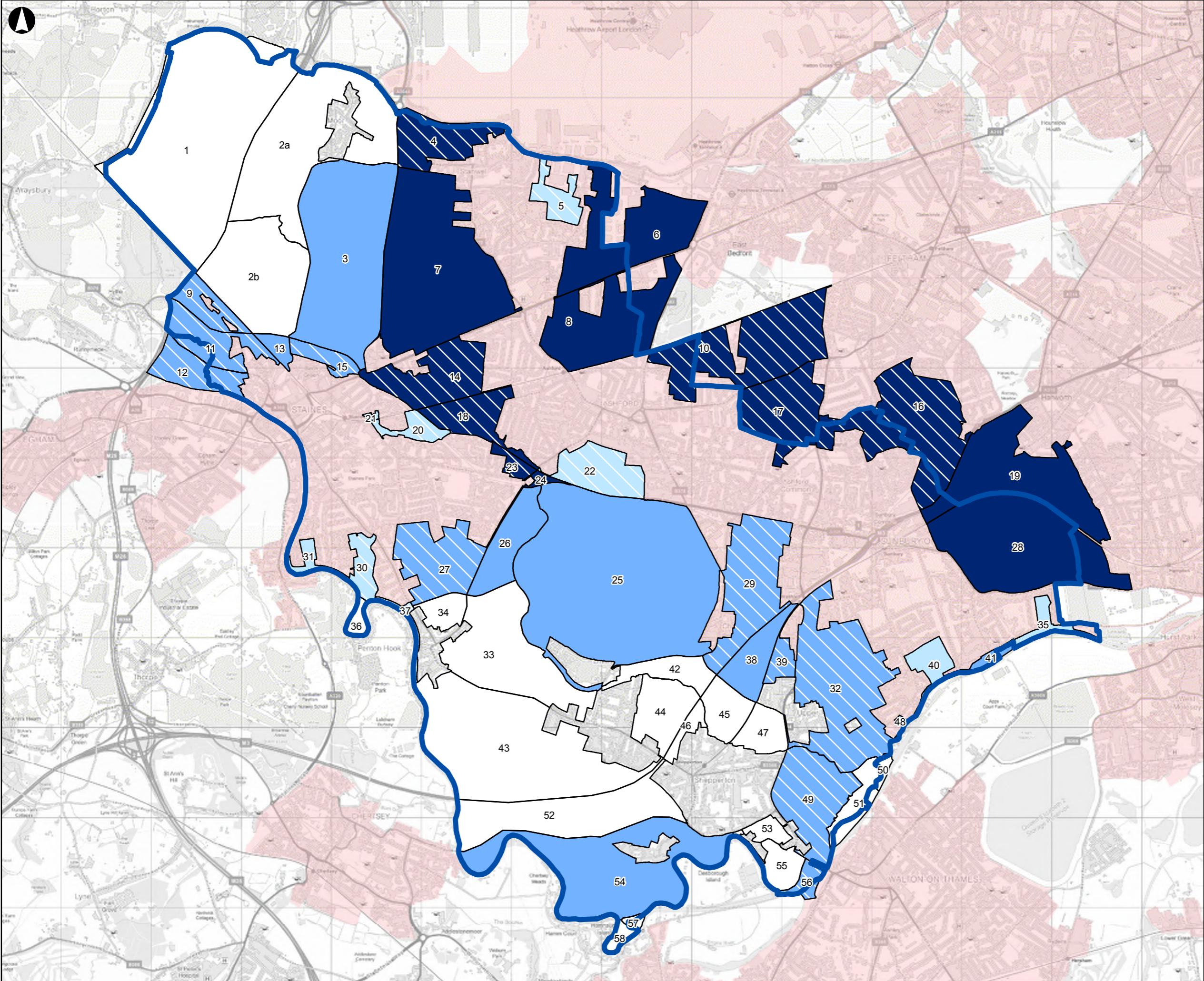
The remaining 57 Local Areas (97%) do not abut an identified historic core and do not meet Purpose 4, scoring 0.

### 5.3 Overall Summary

All of the Local Areas meet one or more of the NPPF purposes to varying degrees. The individual purpose scores with the Local Areas are set out in Table 5.1 and maps 5.1 – 5.4.

In order to summarise the outcomes from the assessment, the Local Areas have been categorised as follows (as shown in Map 5.5):

- 30 Local Areas are judged to be strongly scoring Green Belt, meeting at least one of the purposes strongly (4 or 5);
- 21 Local Areas are judged to be moderately scoring Green Belt, with a moderate score (3) against at least one purpose and failing to score strongly against any purpose (4 or 5);
- Eight Local Areas are judged to be weakly scoring Green Belt, failing to meet or weakly meeting all purposes (scoring 1 or 2).



**Legend**

**Purpose 1b Scores**

0

1

1+

3

3+

5

5+

Large Built-Up Area

Local Area

Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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P1	02-10-17	ER	CG	AB
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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd
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Metres

05001,0002,000

ARUP

13 Fitzroy Street  
London W1T 4BQ  
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Client

Spelthorne Borough Council

Job Title

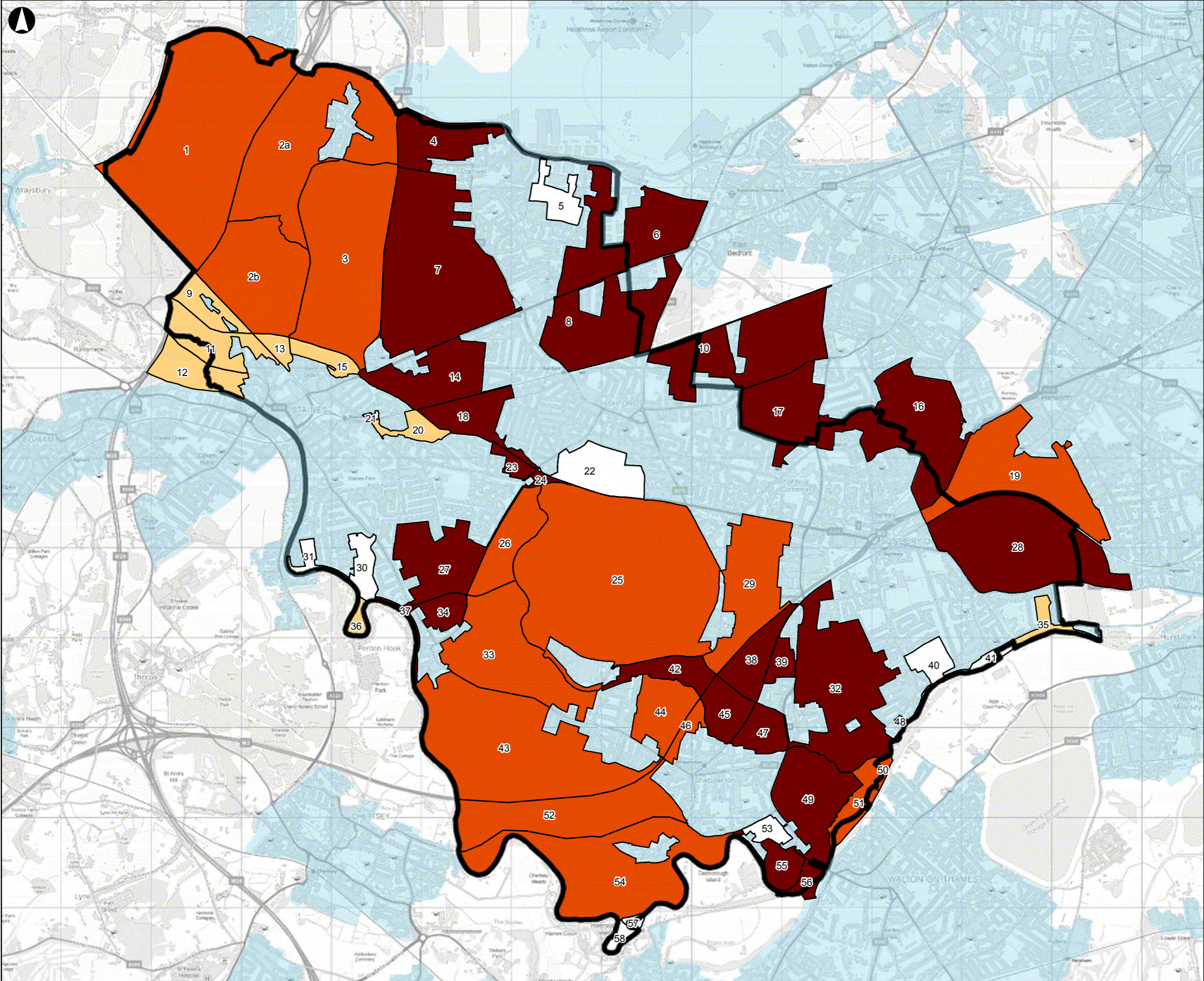
Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment

Map 5.1. Purpose 1 Assessment Scores

Scale at A3

1:40,000

Job No	Drawing Status
251368-00	Issue
Drawing No	Issue
5.1	P1



Legend

Purpose 2 Score

0

1

3

5

Settlement

Local Area

Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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P1	02-10-17	ER	CG	AB
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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd
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Metres

0

500

1,000

2,000

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Job Title  
**Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment**

Map 5.2. Purpose 2  
Assessment Scores

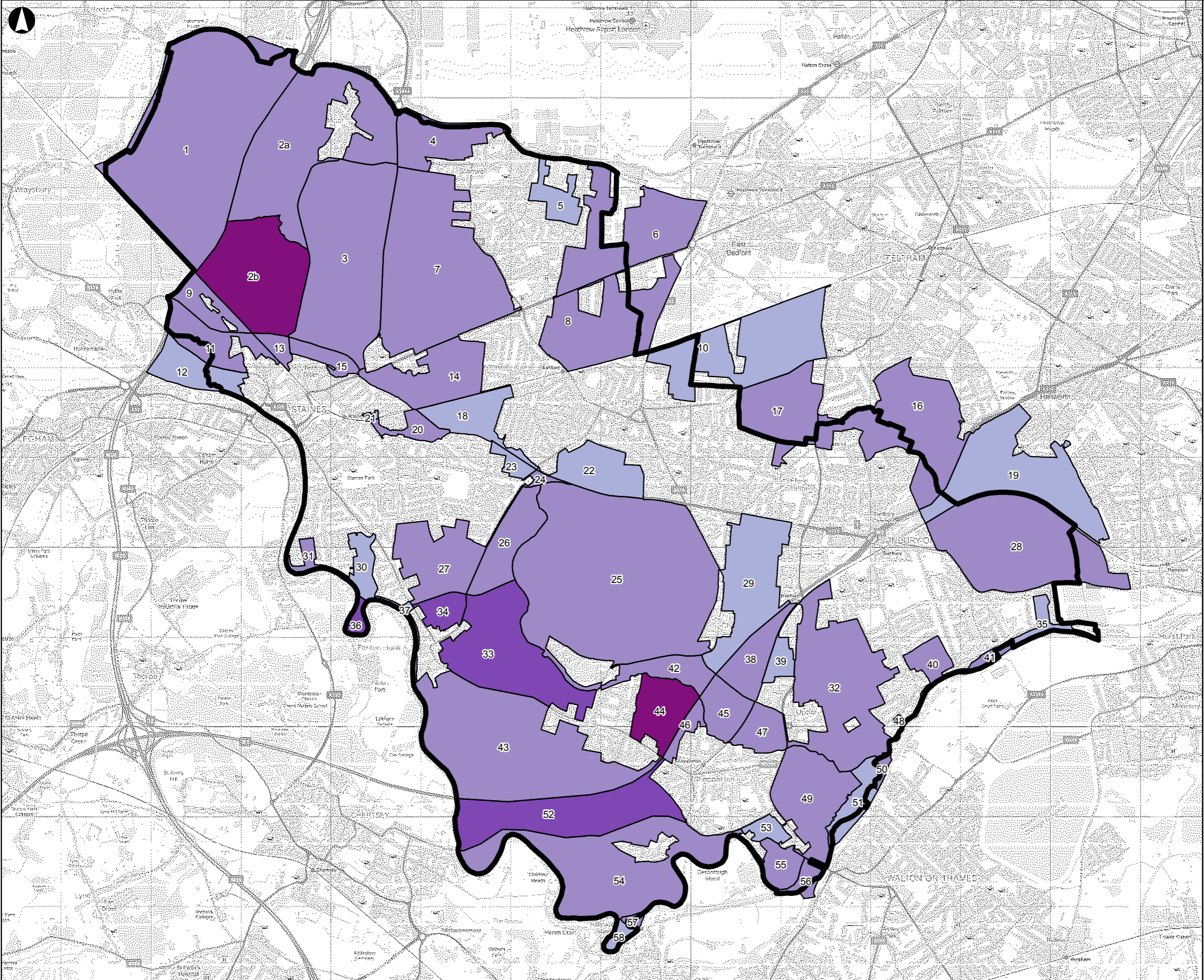
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**1:40,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
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Drawing No <b>5.2</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>
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MXD Location

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**Legend**

**Purpose 3 Score**

0

1

2

3

4

5

Green Belt Parcels

Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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P1	02-10-17	ER	CG	AB
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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd
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Metres

0

500

1,000

2,000

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**Spelthorne Borough Council**

Job Title

**Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment**

**Map 5.3. Purpose 3  
Assessment Scores**

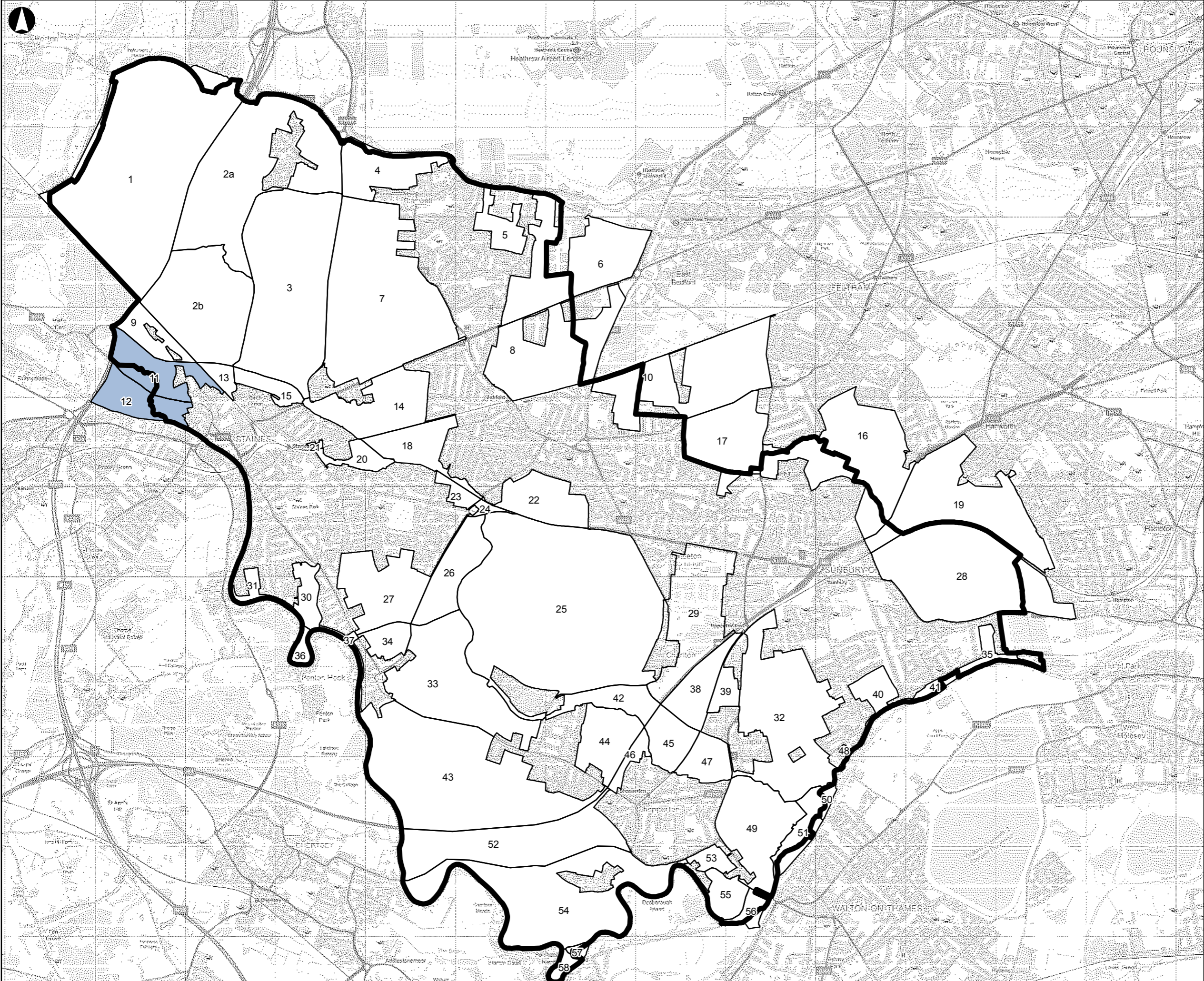
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**1:40,000**

Job No	Drawing Status
<b>251368-00</b>	<b>Issue</b>
Drawing No	Issue
<b>5.3</b>	<b>P1</b>

MXD Location

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Legend

Purpose 4 Scores

0

1

3

Local Area

Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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P1	02-10-17	ER	CG	AB
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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd
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Metres

05001,0002,000

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Client  
Spelthorne Borough Council

Job Title  
Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment

Map 5.4. Purpose 4  
Assessment Scores

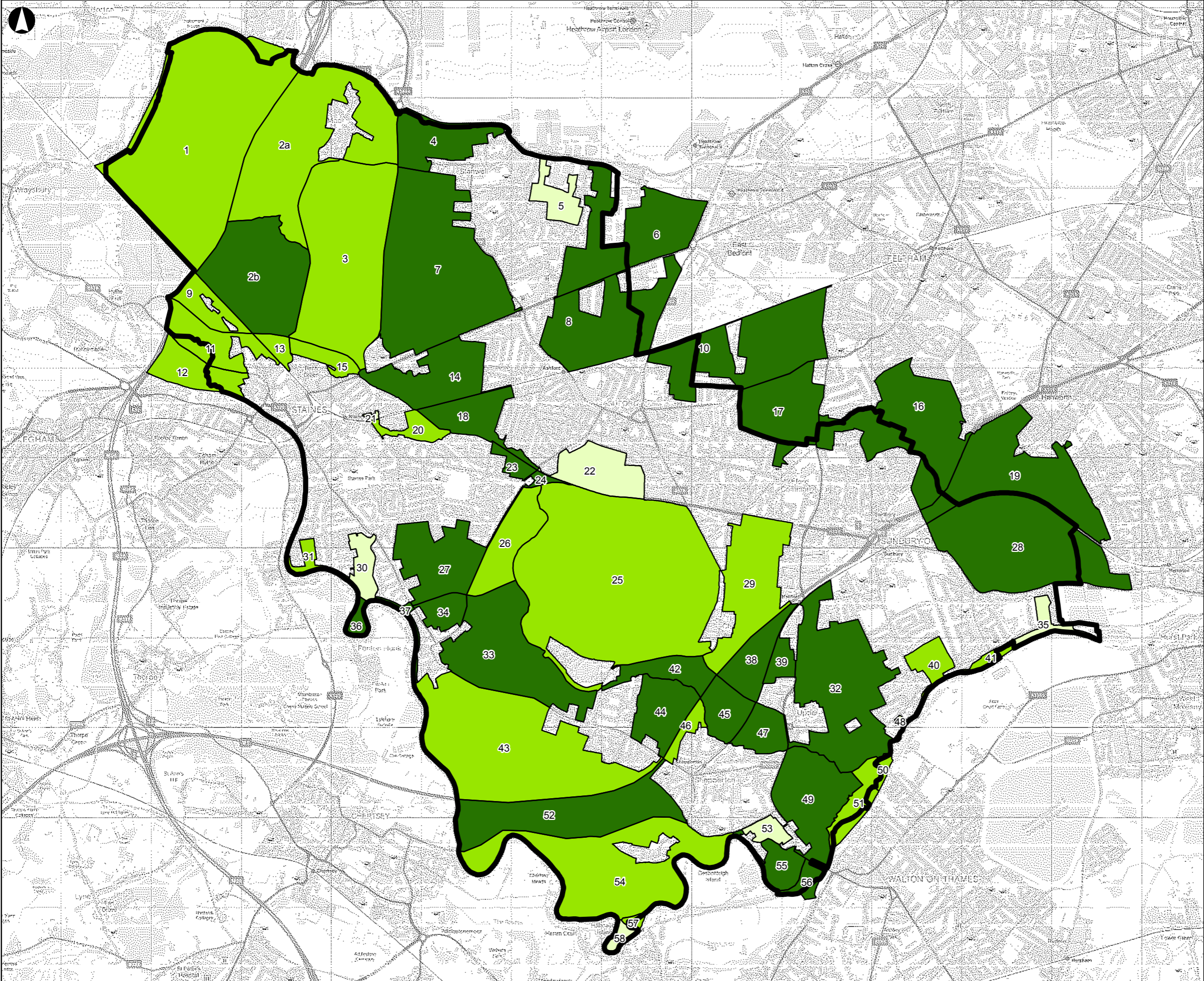
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Job No 251368-00	Drawing Status Issue
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Drawing No 5.4	Issue P1
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MXD Location

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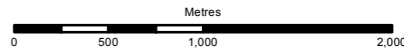
Legend

Overall Score

- Weak
- Moderate
- Strong
- Local Area
- Spelthorne Borough Boundary

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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd



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Client  
**Spelthorne Borough Council**

Job Title  
**Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment**

Map 5.5. Overall Assessment Scores

Scale at A3  
**1:40,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
Drawing No <b>5.5</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>

Table 5.1 Overall Summary Findings for NPPF Purposes Assessment

Local Area	Area (ha)	Strategic Area	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Local Area is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by built development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
1	307.9	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	3	0	Moderate
2a	174.5	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	3	0	Moderate
2b	113.1	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	5	0	Strong
3	192.6	B	AT EDGE	3	3	3	0	Moderate
4	48.0	B	AT EDGE	5+	5	3	0	Strong
5	20.5	A	AT EDGE	1+	0	2	0	Weak
6	100.9	A	AT EDGE	5	5	3	0	Strong
7	207.6	B	AT EDGE	5	5	3	0	Strong
8	98.6	A	AT EDGE	5	5	3	0	Strong
9	22.9	B	AT EDGE	3+	1	3	0	Moderate
10	118.2	A	AT EDGE	5+	5	2	0	Strong
11	39.0	B	AT EDGE	3+	1	3	1	Moderate

Local Area	Area (ha)	Strategic Area	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Local Area is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by built development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
12	34.4	B	AT EDGE	3+	1	2	1	Moderate
13	8.6	B	AT EDGE	3	1	3	0	Moderate
14	62.4	B	AT EDGE	5+	5	3	0	Strong
15	14.8	B	AT EDGE	3+	1	3	0	Moderate
16	123.2	A	AT EDGE	5+	5	3	0	Strong
17	65.0	A	AT EDGE	5+	5	3	0	Strong
18	37.4	B	AT EDGE	5+	5	2	0	Strong
19	116.2	A	AT EDGE	5	5	2	0	Strong
20	13.6	B	AT EDGE	1+	1	3	0	Moderate
21	1.1	B	AT EDGE	1	0	2	0	Weak
22	43.2	B	AT EDGE	1+	1	2	0	Weak
23	8.2	B	AT EDGE	5+	5	2	0	Strong
24	3.6	B	AT EDGE	5	5	3	0	Strong
25	362.9	B	AT EDGE	3	3	3	0	Moderate

Local Area	Area (ha)	Strategic Area	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Local Area is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by built development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
26	44.9	B	AT EDGE	3	3	3	0	Moderate
27	65.0	B	AT EDGE	3+	5	3	0	Strong
28	159.3	A	AT EDGE	5	5	3	0	Strong
29	85.3	B	AT EDGE	3+	3	2	0	Moderate
30	17.0	B	AT EDGE	1+	0	2	0	Weak
31	8.3	B	AT EDGE	1	0	3	0	Moderate
32	139.1	B	AT EDGE	3+	5	3	0	Strong
33	115.5	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	4	0	Strong
34	16.4	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	5	4	0	Strong
35	12.1	A	AT EDGE	1	1	2	0	Weak
36	6.7	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	1	4	0	Strong
37	5.4	B	AT EDGE	3	5	2	0	Strong
38	33.6	B	AT EDGE	3	5	3	0	Strong
39	12.2	B	AT EDGE	3+	5	2	0	Strong

Local Area	Area (ha)	Strategic Area	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Local Area is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by built development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
40	18.3	A	AT EDGE	1	0	3	0	Moderate
41	5.9	A	AT EDGE	3	0	3	0	Moderate
42	26.8	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	5	3	0	Strong
43	213.5	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	3	0	Moderate
44	41.3	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	5	0	Strong
45	27.5	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	5	3	0	Strong
46	9.6	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	3	0	Moderate
47	23.7	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	5	3	0	Strong
48	0.9	A	AT EDGE	1	0	0	0	Weak
49	72.5	B	AT EDGE	3+	5	3	0	Strong
50	3.9	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	3	0	Moderate
51	23.4	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	2	0	Moderate
52	104.3	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	3	4	0	Strong
53	9.9	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	0	2	0	Weak

Local Area	Area (ha)	Strategic Area	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
			Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
			(a) Local Area is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by built development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
54	159.5	B	AT EDGE	3	3	3	0	Moderate
55	20.9	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	5	3	0	Strong
56	10.1	B	AT EDGE	3+	5	3	0	Strong
57	2.9	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	0	3	0	Moderate
58	6.1	B	NOT AT EDGE	0	0	2	0	Weak

## 6 Recommendations

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### 6.1 Summary

Following the Strategic and Local Assessments, a series of recommendations have been identified which Spelthorne Borough Council may wish to take forward for further consideration in a second phase of more detailed assessment work..

While it is clear that the majority of the Green Belt in Spelthorne is performing an important role in terms of NPPF purposes, a number of weaker areas have been identified which may warrant further consideration. The areas for consideration are categorised as follows:

1. Local Areas scoring weakly against all NPPF purposes which could be considered further.
2. Moderate or strongly scoring Local Areas where there is a clear scope for sub-division to identify weakly performing sub-areas, including the presence of boundary features which have the potential to be permanent and recognisable, which could be afforded further consideration in accordance with the above provisions.

With regard to recommendation category 2, sub-areas recommended for further consideration are identified in line with the principles for identifying boundaries of Green Belt Local Areas. Potential boundaries of sub-areas for consideration follow man-made and natural features within existing Local Areas which, based on initial site visits and further desk-based work have the potential to be permanent. It is important to note that sub-area boundaries are advisory only at this stage, and would require further refinement through a more detailed appraisal. Sub-areas have been identified for further consideration based on their performance against NPPF purposes only, rather than their suitability for development or release in terms of sustainability, infrastructure and wider planning considerations, including their existing land use.

A summary of the key findings for each Local Area is provided in Table 5.1. The areas for consideration are shown in Map 6.1, with further detail being provided in sections 6.2 and 6.3 below. It is anticipated that weakly performing Local Areas and Local Area for potential sub-division will be considered further by Spelthorne Borough Council in terms of whether there are 'exceptional circumstances' for such amendments to the Green Belt.

Furthermore, these recommendations do not preclude Spelthorne Borough Council undertaking further assessment of areas of the Green Belt falling outside categories 1 and 2 above.

### 6.2 Weakly Performing Local Areas

The following Local Areas have been identified as weakly performing and warrant further consideration in future work to review Green Belt boundaries.

### 6.2.1 Local Area 58



Local Area 58 is located to the west of Walton-on-Thames / Weybridge / Hersham and is an island within the River Thames. It is noted that this Local Area performs weakly overall. It is not at the edge of a large built-up area (Purpose 1) and does not make any contribution to preventing the coalescence of settlements (Purpose 2). The Local Area is semi-urban overall being a populated island in the River Thames with residential plotland development throughout. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

However, while the Local Area performs weakly in isolation, its role as part of the wider Strategic Area B should also be noted. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and maintain important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. Much of the Local Area, as well as the surrounding Green Belt, has already been subject to 'plotland' residential development. Perceptually, this could be viewed as the historic sprawl of Weybridge. It is judged that recommending this area for further consideration would undermine the role of the wider strategic Green Belt in preventing the further outward sprawl of Weybridge by creating a 'hole' in a broader band of strategically important Green Belt. Furthermore, it would

undermine the ability of the Green Belt to maintain the overall scale of the gap between Weybridge and Shepperton to the north.

**Summary:** Local Area 58 fails to meet or weakly meets all Green Belt Purposes. However, as a result of its role as part of a wider band of strategically important Green Belt (Strategic Area B), and Local Area should not be considered further.

### 6.2.2 AC-1 (Local Area 5)



AC-1 (Local Area 5) is located within Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and Greater London and fails to meet, or weakly meets, Purposes 1, 2, 3 and 4. The entire Local Area is surrounded by built form, reducing its significance in preventing sprawl or the coalescence of settlements. In addition, its countryside character is reduced by its largely recreational uses and development visible on all boundaries. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area A, the primary roles of which are to prevent the sprawl of Greater London and maintain important gaps between Greater London and towns in Surrey. However, the Local Area is physically severed from the wider Green Belt, enveloped by development entirely within

Stanwell, and is therefore judged as playing no role at the strategic level or in maintaining the overall integrity of the Green Belt.

**Summary:** AC-1 (Local Area 5) fails to meet, or weakly meets, all Green Belt Purposes and the entire Local Area could be considered further.

### 6.2.3 AC-2 (Local Area 22)



AC-2 (Local Area 22) consists of Robert Watson Ashford Manor Golf Club and is located immediately south of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell. It is enclosed by Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and so has a limited role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1). The Local Area plays a limited role in preventing coalescence of settlements (Purpose 2). Being a golf course surrounded by built form, and being largely disconnected from the wider Green Belt, the Local Area scores poorly in terms of Purpose 3. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and maintain important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. The A308, which lies to the south of the Local Area, limits both the visual and physical connection of this area to the wider Green Belt, while the built-area of

Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell wraps around to the north, east and west. It therefore plays little role with respect to these broader strategic functions and its potential loss would not undermine the integrity of the wider Green Belt.

**Summary:** AC-2 (Local Area 22) fails to meet or weakly meets all Green Belt Purposes and the entire Local Area could be considered further.

#### 6.2.4 AC-4 (Local Area 30)



AC-4 (Local Area 30) is located in the south-west of Staines-upon-Thames on the north bank of the River Thames. Local Area 30 is enclosed by Staines-upon-Thames and plays a very limited role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1) or the coalescence of settlements (Purpose 2). The Local Area consists of sports playing fields and agricultural land uses however development is visible on all sides (including along the Thames to the south) so the Local Area scores weakly in terms of Purpose 3. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and maintain important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. The Local Area is visually disconnected from the wider Green Belt, with the existing

settlement form of Staines-upon-Thames wrapping around to the west, north and east. As such, it plays little role in preventing the outward sprawl of the large built-up area, and makes no contribution to the broader, strategic gaps between Staines-upon-Thames and surrounding settlements.

As a result of the complex Green Belt boundaries, in particular around the River Thames and the Borough boundary, the whole of the Local Area has been identified, acknowledging that further consideration would need to be given to the extent of any amendments to the Green Belt in order to avoid the creation of anomalies. This was also judged to be logical given the identification of adjacent Local Area 31 (AC-5) as an area for further consideration.

**Summary:** AC-4 (Local Area 30) fails to meet or weakly meets all Green Belt Purposes and the entire Local Area could be considered further, along with neighbouring AC-5 (Local Area 31) to avoid the creation of anomalies in the Green Belt boundaries.

### 6.2.5 AC-5 (Local Area 31)



AC-5 (Local Area 31) is located on the south-western extent of Staines-upon-Thames. While it is acknowledged that the Local Area performs moderately against the NPPF purposes overall, it is judged as playing a particularly limited role in maintaining the integrity of the wider strategic Green Belt and is closely

aligned with adjacent Local Area 30 (AC-4), which is also recommended for further consideration in its entirety (see section 6.2.4).

The majority of the Local Area, in particular the western / northern part, is surrounded by the built-area of Staines-upon-Thames / Egham (including areas on the west bank of the Thames in adjacent Runnymede). It therefore scores weakly against Purpose 1, as a result of its enclosure and limited role in preventing outward sprawl, and fails to meet Purpose 2. The Local Area does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

While the Local Area is judged as meeting Purpose 3 moderately, as a result of its relative lack of development and predominant functional land use (paddock fields), its small scale and relative separation from the wider Green Belt diminish this role. Furthermore, with respect to the key strategic roles of Strategic Area B (in which Local Area 31 lies), the Local Area plays a very limited role with regard to sprawl and is not part of any strategic gap between settlements.

As a result of the complex Green Belt boundaries, in particular around the River Thames and the Borough boundary, the whole of the Local Area has been identified, acknowledging that further consideration would need to be given to the extent of any amendments to the Green Belt in order to avoid the creation of anomalies. This was also judged to be logical given the identification of adjacent Local Area 30 (AC-4) as an area for further consideration.

**Summary:** AC-5 (Local Area 31) meets the purposes moderately, but plays a limited role with respect to restricting sprawl and preventing settlements from merging, the primary role of the wider Green Belt at the strategic scale (Strategic Area B). It has been recommended in its entirety to align with AC-4 (Local Area 30) and avoid the creation of anomalies in the Green Belt boundaries.

## 6.2.6 AC-6 (Local Area 35)



AC-6 (Local Area 35) is located south-east of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell. It is predominantly enclosed by Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell with the River Thames to the south and plays a very limited role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1) and preventing the coalescence of settlements (Purpose 2). The Local Area is semi-urban overall, consisting of sports fields and development is visible on all sides. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area A, the primary roles of which are to prevent the sprawl of Greater London and maintain important gaps between Greater London and towns in Surrey. Kenton Court Meadow, which forms much of the Local Area, is a small, relatively isolated area of Green Belt that is surrounded by built-form on four sides (including 'washed over' riverside dwellings on Lower Hampton Road to the south). While there is a clear imperative for preventing the further fragmentation of the Green Belt in Strategic Area A, a critical band of Green Belt separating Greater London from surrounding Surrey towns, the Local Area does not in effect form part of this band as a result of the existing settlement morphology.

As a result of the complex Green Belt boundaries, in particular around the River Thames and the Borough boundary, the whole of the Local Area has been

identified, acknowledging that further consideration would need to be given to the extent of any amendments to the Green Belt in order to avoid the creation of anomalies.

**Summary:** AC-6 (Local Area 35) fails to meet or weakly meets all Green Belt Purposes and the entire Local Area could be considered further.

### 6.2.7 AC-8 (Local Area 53)



AC-8 (Local Area 53) is set within Shepperton / Lower Halliford but does not abut a large built-up area (Purpose 1). As a result of the configuration of surrounding development in Shepperton / Lower Halliford, the Local Area does not contribute to preventing coalescence (Purpose 2). The Local Area is semi-urban (Purpose 3) and comprises both residential properties and recreational buildings and playing fields. It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and maintain important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. The Local Area does not meet Purpose 1, and while it falls on the edge of the gap between Shepperton / Halliford and Walton-on-Thames which, at the strategic

scale, has suffered historic fragmentation, it plays a limited role with respect of its overall integrity. This is as a result of the settlement form of Lower Halliford, which wraps around this area to the north, east, west, and partially to the south. As a result, this area is not perceived as part of the overall gap between these settlements.

**Summary:** AC-8 (Local Area 53) fails to meet or weakly meets all Green Belt Purposes and the entire Local Area could be considered further.

### 6.2.8 AC-9 (Local Area 21)



AC-9 (Local Area 21) is largely surrounded by Staines-upon-Thames, with the Waterloo to Windsor Railway Line forming the southern boundary. It fails to meet, or meets weakly, Purposes 1, 2, 3 and 4. The Local Area is considered to be enclosed by Staines-upon-Thames meaning it plays a limited role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1) and plays no role in preventing coalescence of settlements (Purpose 2). The Local Area is common land but urbanising influences and infrastructure are visible on all sides which substantially reduces its openness (Purpose 3). It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up

areas beyond the edge of London (including Staines-upon-Thames / Egham) and establish important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. The Local Area makes little contribution to these strategic-level roles; it is very small in scale, and lies within the built-up area of Staines-upon-Thames (as opposed to at its outer edge). It therefore plays no role in preventing outward sprawl (as it would, in effect, be 'infill') or preventing the coalescence of settlements.

**Summary:** AC-9 (Local Area 21) fails to meet or weakly meets all Green Belt Purposes and the entire Local Area could be considered further.

### 6.2.9 AC-14 (Local Area 48)



AC-14 (Local Area 48) is located south-west of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and is predominantly enclosed by the Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell large built-up area with the River Thames forming its south-western boundary. The Local Area plays a very limited role in preventing sprawl (Purpose 1) and plays no role in preventing coalescence of settlements. The Local Area is surrounded by development and consists of a car park and playground in the west, resulting in an urban character overall (Purpose 3). It does not abut an identified historic core, thus fails to meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area A, the primary roles of which are to prevent the sprawl of Greater London and maintain important gaps between

Greater London and towns in Surrey. The built-area of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell wraps around the Local Area to the north-east, north-west and south-west, which has a sense of detachment from the wider Green Belt to the south-east as a result of its small scale, functional land use (urban park) and surrounding urbanising influences. This area, perceptually, does not function as part of the wider Green Belt and does not contribute to these strategic roles.

**Summary:** AC-14 (Local Area 48) fails to meet or weakly meets all Green Belt Purposes and the entire Local Area could be considered further.

## 6.3 Local Areas for Potential Sub-Division

The following Local Areas should be considered for sub-division into smaller areas that warrant further consideration in future work.

### 6.3.1 AC-3 (within Local Area 29)



Local Area 29 meets Purpose 1 moderately, being largely enclosed but connected overall to the large built-up area of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and having weak boundaries overall. It also performs moderately in terms of preventing the coalescence of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell with

Upper Halliford and Shepperton. It is semi-urban overall, with recreation grounds in south and Ashford Common Water Treatment Works in the north.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and maintain important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. It is judged that the southern part of the Local Area forms part of a broader band of Green Belt that prevents the merging of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell with Upper Halliford and Shepperton to the south. This gap is small in scale, with its openness impinged by various piecemeal developments which perceptually create a sense that there is little separating the settlements.

However, the northern part of the Local Area (identified as AC-3) contains significant built form comprising a water treatment works and playing fields, and is physically and visually separated from the broader Strategic Area by dense tree buffers and man-made reservoirs (Purpose 3). This area is largely enclosed within the built-up area of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and therefore plays no role in preventing sprawl from this large built-up area (Purpose 1) and plays little role in preventing settlements from merging (Purpose 2). The area is not connected to a historic core (Purpose 4). It makes little contribution to the overall strategic integrity of the Green Belt.

**Summary:** While the Local Area as a whole plays a moderate role in preventing sprawl and coalescence, the northern part makes a limited contribution being largely enclosed by built form of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames and Stanwell and having a defined boundary. It also makes a limited contribution to openness due to the presence of the water treatment works. This part of the Local Area (AC-3) may make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes if considered alone.

### 6.3.2 AC-7 (within Local Area 46)



Local Area 46 does not meet Purpose 1 or Purpose 4. The Local Area performs moderately in terms of Purpose 2 as it forms part of the wider gap between Shepperton / Lower Halliford and Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell. It also performs moderately in terms of Purpose 3 and is largely rural overall despite strong visual connections with surrounding settlements.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and establish important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. The far north-eastern part of the Local Area forms part of a broader band of Green Belt that prevents the merging of Shepperton, and Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and Upper Halliford to the north. This gap is small in scale, with its openness impinged by various piecemeal developments which, perceptually, create a sense that there is little separating the settlements.

However, the area of the Local Area to the west of Old Charlton Road (identified as AC-7) is physically and visually severed from the broader Strategic Area. The existing, visually prominent edge of Shepperton and the M3 immediately to the west reduce the sense of connection to the wider Green Belt (Purpose 1), and given the existing settlement morphology the sub-area plays no role in

maintaining the integrity of these gaps (Purpose 2). The sub-area is likely to score poorly against Purpose 3 given its sense of enclosure and some existing built form, and is not connected to a historic core (Purpose 4).

**Summary:** While the Local Area performs moderately in terms of preventing coalescence and encroachment, the area west of Old Charlton Road is relatively contained and would perform less strongly overall. It would not make a contribution to preventing coalescence. As it is small in scale and severed from the wider countryside with visual connections to surrounding settlements, this part of the Local Area (AC-7) may score less strongly in terms of preventing encroachment.

### 6.3.3 AC-10 (within Local Area 2a)



Local Area 2a does not meet Purposes 1 or 4 and meets Purposes 2 and 3 moderately. It forms part of the wider gap between Staines-upon-Thames and Stanwell Moor and Stanwell Moor and Poyle / Colnbrook. The Local Area is largely rural with a mix of land uses, including a fishing lake from a restored mineral working site. Urbanising influences including Heathrow Airport are visible from the Local Area.

While the Local Area as a whole plays a role in preventing coalescence between Staines-upon-Thames, Stanwell Moor and Poyle / Colnbrook, the area south-east

of Stanwell Moor bounded by a steep embankment is severed from the wider Green Belt.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and establish important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. The gap between Stanwell Moor and Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames is recognised as being small in scale and vulnerable to change, and the wider Strategic Area plays an important role in maintaining the extent of this separation. However, a small sub-area in the east of the Local Area (identified as AC-10) immediately adjacent to Stanwell Moor, is in-effect a small standalone area of land that is physically separated from the wider Green Belt. The area is heavily influenced by the urban fringe of Stanwell Moor and contains significant built form (Purpose 3). The area is largely enclosed by Stanwell Moor (Purpose 1) and plays little or no role in maintaining this gap at the strategic scale (Purpose 2). The area is not connected to a historic core (Purpose 4).

**Summary:** Local Area 2a performs moderately against Green Belt Purposes, but there is scope for sub-division. The area south-east of Stanwell Moor (AC-10), which may score more weakly overall, could be considered further.

### 6.3.4 AC-11 (within Local Area 18)



Local Area 18 meets Purpose 3 weakly (being semi-urban overall) and does not meet Purpose 4. It performs very well in terms of Purpose 1, being contiguous with the large built-up areas of Staines-upon-Thames and Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell with weak boundaries overall and forms the essential gap between the two large built-up areas.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and maintain important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. While the overall Local Area plays a fundamental role as part of the wider swathe of Green Belt that strategically prevents the outward sprawl of both Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames and Staines-upon-Thames, as well as the merging of these settlements, an area in the north-east of the Local Area (AC-11) plays a lesser role as a result of its very small scale and enclosure within the existing built-area of Ashford. With development wrapping around the area to the north, east and south, this area makes very little contribution to preventing sprawl (Purpose 1) or the coalescence of these settlements (Purpose 2), and does little to maintain the strategic integrity of the Green Belt.

**Summary:** While the Local Area as a whole plays a strong role in preventing sprawl and coalescence of settlements, there is scope for sub-division. The north-east corner is contained from the wider Green Belt and consists of playing fields and associated recreational buildings. Considered alone, the sub-area (AC-11) may make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes.

### 6.3.5 AC-12 (within Local Area 27)



Local Area 27 meets Purpose 1 moderately, being connected with the large built-up area of Staines-upon-Thames with weak boundary features overall. It performs strongly in terms of Purpose 2, forming the essential gap between Staines-upon-Thames and Laleham. The Local Area also scores moderately against Purpose 3 and is largely rural overall, despite development being visible at its boundaries. The Local Area does not meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area is part of Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and establish important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. The Strategic Area assessment concluded that amendments to boundaries should be considered carefully in the context of particularly narrow gaps between settlements, but it is not felt that the identified Area for Further Consideration

(AC-12) plays a critical role in relation to the gap between Staines-upon-Thames and Laleham to the south (Purpose 2), as a result of the existing settlement morphology which encloses the area in three directions, as well as the visual separation of this area from the broader gap to the south (Purpose 1).

**Summary:** While the Local Area as a whole plays a strong role in preventing coalescence, a moderate role in preventing sprawl and is largely rural overall, there is scope for sub-division. Two fields in the north-east corner are bounded by planted features to the south and follow the line of the settlement boundary. This part of the Local Area (AC-12) is enclosed and semi-urban in character and may make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes if considered alone.

### 6.3.6 AC-13 (within Local Area 32)



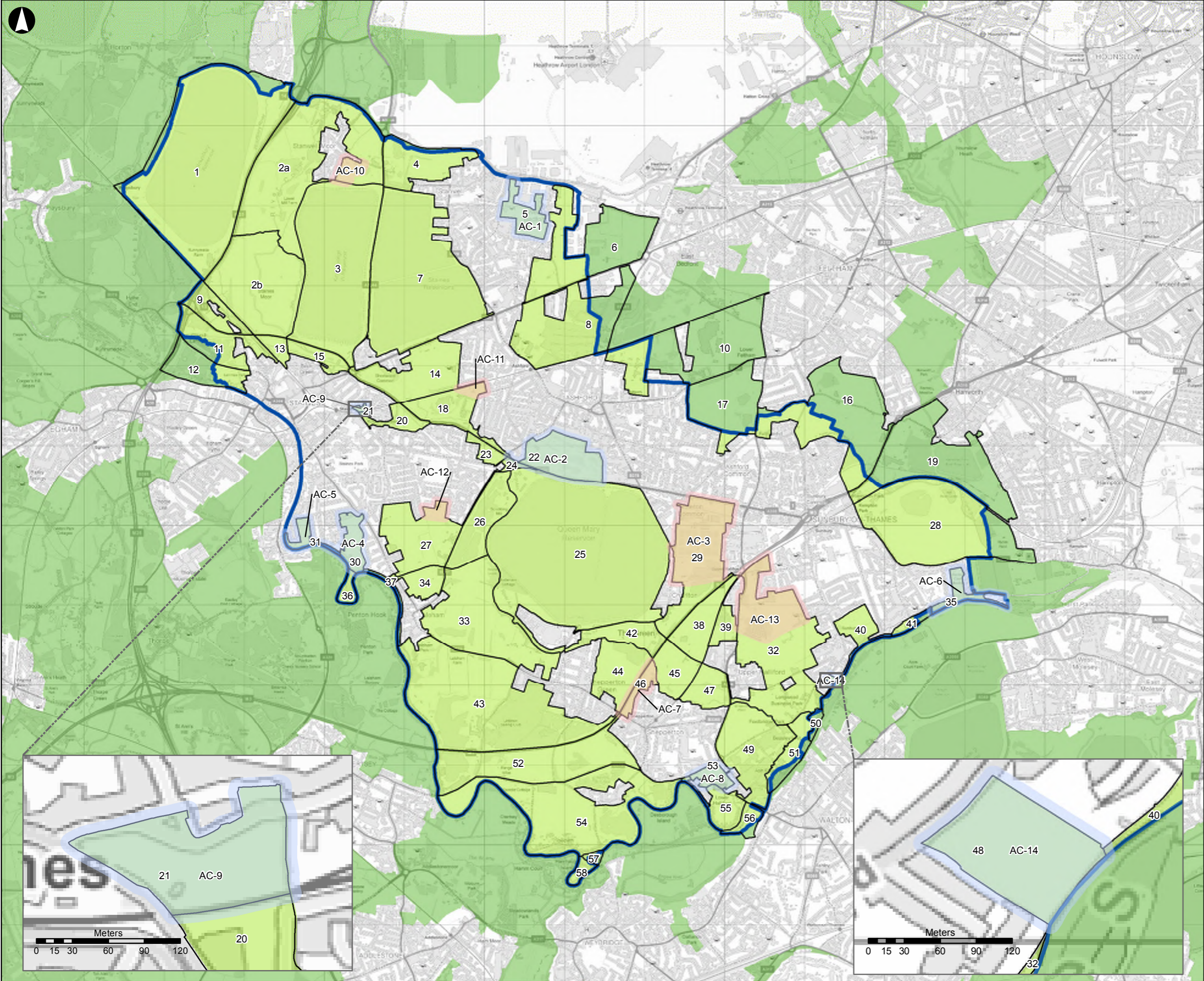
Local Area 32 meets Purpose 1 moderately, preventing the outward sprawl of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and having generally weak boundaries to the large built-up area. The Local Area performs strongly against Purpose 2, forming the majority of the essential gap between Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell and Upper Halliford. It is largely rural in character (Purpose 3) with a mix of land uses throughout. The Local Area does not meet Purpose 4.

The Local Area falls within Strategic Area B. The key roles of this area at the strategic level are to provide a barrier to the potential sprawl of large built-up

areas beyond the edge of London (including Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames) and establish important gaps between a number of Surrey towns. It is noted that, looking across the entirety of Local Area 32, there are a number of contrasts, both in terms of the role of the Green Belt and, in a wider sense, its character. While the southern part of the Local Area is critical in maintaining the gap between Upper Halliford and Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell, and also forms a wider swathe of more open countryside, the northern area (identified as AC-13) is judged to be less critical to the overall integrity of the Green Belt.

The Strategic Assessment noted that areas of Green Belt that already contain developments, or that are heavily influenced by surrounding urban development, may be less sensitive to change in Green Belt terms. AC-13 is judged to be heavily influenced by the surrounding large built-up area of Ashford / Stanwell / Sunbury-on-Thames and contain existing built form (Purpose 3). The area is surrounded by built form, which envelops the area to the north, east and west and as a result of the irregular patterns of development on the south side of Sunbury, it is judged that this area would not constitute an outward sprawl of the large built-up area, which already extends a substantial distance to the south (Purpose 1). The sub-area would not fundamentally undermine the integrity of any key gaps between settlements at the strategic level (Purpose 2) and is not connected to a historic core (Purpose 4).

**Summary:** While the Local Area performs strongly overall in terms of preventing the coalescence of settlements, the area north of Croysdale Avenue, Stirling Avenue and Park Avenue is less important in preventing sprawl, coalescence and encroachment. It is very contained with the southern edge broadly aligned with the settlement boundary of Ashford / Sunbury-on-Thames / Stanwell. This part of the Local Area (AC-13) may make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes if considered alone.



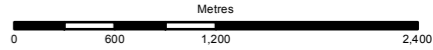
**Legend**

**Area for Consideration**

- Local Area for Potential Sub-Division
- Weakly Performing Local Area
- Local Area
- Spelthorne Borough Boundary
- Spelthorne Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt

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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd



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Client  
**Spelthorne Borough Council**

Job Title  
**Spelthorne Green Belt Assessment**

**Map 6.1. Areas for Consideration**

Scale at A3  
**1:45,000**

Job No <b>251368-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>Issue</b>
Drawing No <b>6.1</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>

## 7 Conclusions

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This Assessment has examined the performance of the Green Belt in and around Spelthorne against the Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF. The Assessment has considered two broad Strategic Areas and 59 Green Belt Local Areas, bounded by readily recognisable, durable physical features.

The Green Belt in Spelthorne was first formally applied in 1956 upon the adoption of the Middlesex County Plan, following the publication of government Circular 42/55 in 1955. There has been no significant change to the extent of the Spelthorne Green Belt since the Adoption of the Middlesex County Plan with only small releases through the approval of the 1956, 1965 and 1971 Staines and Sunbury Town Maps to remove sites that no longer performed a Green Belt function. The Spelthorne Green Belt plays an important role in preventing the outward spread of Greater London, and the coalescence of Spelthorne's settlements with one another, Greater London and settlements in neighbouring districts and boroughs.

Although the Green Belt is not designated on the basis of environmental quality, within Spelthorne the Green Belt largely prevents the coalescence of Spelthorne's larger settlements and Greater London. Conversely, it is likely that Spelthorne will come under increasing pressure to accommodate the demand of housing growth and neighbouring authorities' objectively assessed needs (including London).

Two broad Strategic Areas, extending beyond the boundaries of Spelthorne, were assessed at a high level against the fundamental aim of the Green Belt and the NPPF purposes to identify the role of the Spelthorne Green Belt within the wider sub-regional context, and the different functional areas of Green Belt within the Borough:

- Strategic Area A plays an important role in meeting the fundamental aim of the Green Belt through preventing the sprawl of London by keeping land permanently open, and meets Purpose 1 very strongly, Purpose 2 very strongly, and Purpose 3 weakly.
- Strategic Area B plays an important role in meeting the fundamental aim of the Green Belt through preventing sprawl from settlements in Surrey by keeping land permanently open, and meets Purpose 1 strongly, Purpose 2 strongly, and Purpose 3 moderately.

The 59 Local Areas were assessed against four of the five NPPF Purposes which were deemed relevant to the Spelthorne context. The degree to which different parts of the Green Belt contribute to the individual purposes varies across the Borough. The overall findings were as follows:

- 30 Green Belt Local Areas are judged to be strongly scoring Green Belt, meeting at least one of the purposes strongly;
- 21 Green Belt Local Areas are judged to be moderately scoring Green Belt, with a moderate score against at least one of the Purposes and failing to score strongly against any purpose;

- Eight Green Belt Local Areas are judged to be weakly scoring Green Belt, failing to meet or weakly meeting all purposes.

While it is clear that the majority of the Green Belt in Spelthorne is performing an important role in terms of NPPF Purposes, a number of areas have been identified which may warrant further consideration by Spelthorne Borough Council as part of the wider Local Plan process:

1. Local Areas scoring weakly against all NPPF purposes which could be considered further.
2. Medium or strongly scoring Local Areas where there is clear scope for sub-division to identify weakly performing sub-areas, including the presence of boundary features which have the potential to be permanent and recognisable, which could be considered further.

Sub-areas have been identified for further consideration based on their likely performance against NPPF purposes only, rather than their suitability in terms of sustainability, infrastructure and wider planning considerations. These recommendations do not preclude Spelthorne Borough Council undertaking further assessment of areas of the Green Belt falling outside of categories 1 and 2 above.

The areas for consideration are distributed throughout Spelthorne, but generally consist of distinct areas of Green Belt which are small in scale, possessing semi-urban characteristics and located adjacent to or enclosed within urban areas, thus performing little or no role in preventing the outward sprawl of large built-up areas, the coalescence of settlements, encroachment into the countryside, or protection for the setting of historic towns. Collectively, the indicative areas for consideration represent approximately 249 hectares of Green Belt land, which equates to 7.5% of the total area of Green Belt in Spelthorne.

It is important to note that the recommendations set out in this report will not automatically lead to the release of land from the Green Belt. Ensuring maximum protection for the Green Belt, in line with national policy, should continue to be a core planning principle in the formulation of Local Plan policy. The areas identified through this Assessment as warranting further consideration will need to be subject to a more detailed assessment as part of the wider Local Plan process, to determine the appropriateness, suitability and feasibility of adjustments to the Green Belt boundary. The Green Belt Assessment will ultimately sit as part of a suite of evidence which will be used to inform future plan making.

The Council will need to carefully consider whether, in accordance with the NPPF, there are any 'exceptional circumstances' that justify the Green Belt boundary in Spelthorne to be altered. At that time, the Council will need to consider the Green Belt boundary having regard to its intended permanence in the long term, so that any proposed boundaries are capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

## Appendix A

### Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Connected	Displaying a low level of containment rather than simply adjoining an area.
Contiguous	Predominantly surrounded by built form (from at least two large built-up areas) but also retaining a strong link to the wider Green Belt.
Duty to Cooperate	A legislative requirement in the Localism Act 2011 which places a duty on local planning authorities and county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
Enclosed	Almost entirely contained or surrounded by built development.
Encroachment	A gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change.
Essential Gap	A gap between settlements where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Irregular	In relation to the assessment against Purpose 1, 'irregular' boundaries are those comprising ill-defined or softer edges to where large built-up areas are bounded by less durable, 'softer' features. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infrastructure: private/unmade road; bridleway/footpath; power line.</li> <li>- Natural: field boundary/weak tree line.</li> </ul>
Large Built-Up Area	Areas defined to correspond to the major settlements identified in the respective Local Plans in Hertsmere and neighbouring local authorities that border the Hertsmere Green Belt, and used in the NPPF Purpose 1 assessment.
Largely Rural Character	Land with a general absence of built development, largely characterised by rural land uses and landscapes with some other sporadic developments and man-made structures.
Less Essential Gap	A gap between settlements where development is likely to be possible without any risk of coalescence between them.
Neighbouring Town	Refers to settlements within Hertsmere, as well as settlements in neighbouring authorities immediately adjacent to Hertsmere's Green Belt, for the assessment against NPPF Purpose 2.
Open Land	Open land refers to land that is lacking in built development.
Openness	Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development.
Regular	In relation to the assessment against Purpose 1, 'regular' boundaries are those comprising well defined or rectilinear built-form edges or where the large built-up areas are bounded by more durable features that are likely to be permanent. Examples included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infrastructure: motorway; public and man-made road; railway line; river.</li> <li>- Landform: stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical feature (e.g. reservoir embankment); protected/strongly established woodland/hedge/tree line; existing development with strongly established and regular boundaries.</li> </ul>

Semi-Urban Character	Land which begins on the edge of the fully built up area and contains a mix of urban and rural land uses before giving way to the wider countryside. Land uses might include publicly accessible natural green spaces and green corridors, country parks and local nature reserves, small-scale food production (e.g. market gardens) and waste management facilities, interspersed with built development more generally associated with urban areas (e.g. residential or commercial).
Sprawl	The outward spread of a large built-up area at its periphery in a sporadic, dispersed or irregular way.
Strong Unspoilt Rural Character	Land with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland/scrubland and open fields.
Urban Character	Land which is predominantly characterised by urban land uses, including physical developments such as residential or commercial, or urban managed parks.
Wider Gap	A gap between settlements where limited development may be possible without coalescence between them.

## Appendix B

### Local Area Assessment Pro- Forma

Green Belt Parcel		Small Scale Location Plan
Area (ha)		
Local Authority		
Strategic Area		
Location Plan		
Description		

<b>Purpose 1 Assessment</b>			
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Score</b>
(1) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas.		
	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary.		
<b>Purpose 1: Total Score</b>			/5
<b>Purpose 2 Assessment</b>			
(2) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.		
<b>Purpose 2: Total Score</b>			/5
<b>Purpose 3 Assessment</b>			
(3) Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.		
<b>Purpose 3: Total Score</b>			/5
<b>Purpose 4 Assessment</b>			
(4) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.		
<b>Purpose 4: Total Score</b>			/5

Site Photos	
	Photograph 1
	Photograph 1 (Description):
	Photograph 2:
	Photograph 2 (Description):
	Photograph 3:
	Photograph 3 (Description):

## Appendix C

### Approaches to Green Belt in Neighbouring Authorities

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
<b>Elmbridge Borough Council</b>	Elmbridge's Local Plan consists of the Core Strategy 2011 and Development Management Plan 2015. The Council is currently reviewing the Local Plan evidence base to prepare a new Local Plan. It was expected that an updated Local Development Scheme would be published in Autumn 2015 however this is still awaiting publication.	<p>Approximately 57% of Elmbridge is designated Green Belt. The Core Strategy 2011 states that "Elmbridge is embedded in the London Green Belt and is under a national obligation to protect and maintain it."</p> <p>Core Strategy Policy CS1 (Spatial Strategy) states new development will be directed towards previously developed land within existing built-up areas to protect the Borough's green infrastructure network.</p> <p>Policy CS14 (Green Infrastructure) states that the Council will protect, manage and enhance the Borough's green infrastructure, pursuing new provision and improvements to existing facilities in order to increase their capacity, including in the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Green Belt Boundary Review (2016)</p> <p>Review of Absolute Constraints (2016)</p>	<p>The Green Belt Boundary Review (GBBR) was undertaken in two tiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad areas for a Strategic Green Belt Assessment were identified through commonalities in landscape character, boundary features and functional connections to the wider Metropolitan Green Belt.</li> <li>More granular parcels were identified for the Local Green Belt Area Assessment against NPPF Purposes.</li> </ul> <p>The GBBR concluded that, overall, the Elmbridge Green Belt is performing well in terms of NPPF Green Belt purposes however it was recommended the following for Local Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those which perform weakly could be considered against constraints to development and whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist to justify alterations to the Green Belt boundary;</li> <li>Moderately or strongly performing Local Areas could be considered for sub-division to identify weakly performing sub-areas;</li> <li>Consider amending the Green Belt boundary to include non-Green Belt areas which could be considered for inclusion in the Green Belt;</li> <li>Anomalous boundaries could be amended to ensure consistency and permanence of Green Belt boundaries.</li> </ul> <p>A Review of Absolute Constraints subsequently considered all parcels of land identified through the GBBR against a series of 'absolute' constraints.</p>
<b>London Borough of Hillingdon</b>	Hillingdon's Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies was adopted in November 2012. It is estimated that the Local Plan	The borough has 4,970 hectares of Green Belt. The Hillingdon Local Plan (2012) states that the main purpose of Hillingdon's Green Belt is to keep land	The Green Belt and Major Developed	The review was undertaken pre-NPPF publication; although Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) set out the same Green Belt purposes contained in the NPPF.

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
	Part 2 Site Allocations and Designations and Development Management Policies are to be submitted for examination in Autumn 2016.	<p>open and free from development, to maintain the character and identity of individual settlements and to make a clear distinction between rural and urban environments.</p> <p>The Green Belt Study (2006) is being reviewed and recommendations for minor adjustments to address boundary anomalies to the Green Belt are being considered. However the Council does not consider that major adjustments to Green Belt boundaries are necessary to accommodate growth over the plan period. Minor adjustments to the Green Belt boundary are being undertaken as part of the Local Plan Part 2. The review in the context of potential to release land for schools and minerals extraction if required.</p>	Sites Assessment (2006)	<p>The assessment did not review all land designated as Green Belt in the borough. It assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sites examined during the previous UDP Review;</li> <li>Submissions received in response to an initial UDP consultation in 2001 and submissions received since that time;</li> <li>Sites identified in the Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains Assessment 2005; and</li> <li>Sites identified by officers which could benefit from Green Belt designation and sites in the Green Belt which do not meet the purposes of the Green Belt.</li> </ul> <p>The assessment used PPG2 to identify indicators for Green Belt boundary alteration, deletion or inclusion using the purposes of Green Belt as outlined in PPG2 and the inclusion of specific guiding indicators for each purpose of PPG2.</p>
<b>London Borough of Hounslow</b>	Hounslow's Local Plan was adopted in September 2015 by the Borough Council.	<p>The borough has 1,231 hectares of Green Belt. The Hounslow Local Plan (2015) states that the main purpose of the Green Belt is to prevent sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It goes on to state that the Green Belt assists in safeguarding the countryside, preserving green infrastructure and biodiversity, and supporting urban regeneration by encouraging the re-use of existing urban land.</p> <p>Local Plan Policy GB1 (Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land) states that the borough will "Protect and enhance Green</p>	London Borough of Hounslow Green Belt Review (2015)	<p>Green Belt review formed part of the evidence base for the West of Borough Plan. The review was undertaken in two phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 1A assessed strategic land parcels against the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the NPPF to identify the relative performance of Green Belt 'General Areas'.</li> <li>Phase 1B appraised the Green Belt in terms of Landscape Quality and Context. The General Areas and their performance against NPPF purposes were then subject to a Landscape Appraisal to identify sites suitable for release from or inclusion within the Green Belt.</li> </ul>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
		Belt... to maintain its openness, quality and permanence”.		28 General Areas were assessed against NPPF Green Belt Purposes 1-3 with all meeting one or more of the Purposes to varying degrees. Two General Areas scored particularly weakly across all purposes.
<b>Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead</b>	<p>The current Local Plan is the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (2003) – Saved Policies.</p> <p>The adopted Plan is to be replaced by a new Borough Local Plan with the Submission Draft DPD currently at consultation prior to submission for examination in September 2016.</p>	Outside the larger settlements, the whole of the Borough is designated Metropolitan Green Belt. Within the Borough a number of settlements are excluded from the Green Belt and identified in the Replacement Structure Plan. Within the Green Belt there are a number of smaller settlements which may have the ability to absorb limited levels of residential development without harming the overall character of the Green Belt.	Green Belt Boundary Study (March 2009)	<p>A review of Green Belt boundaries around the Borough’s excluded settlements to rectify any inconsistencies and to assess areas with potential land to be included within the Green Belt was carried out. In assessing land around the excluded settlements, two principles were followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundaries should follow a permanent physical feature on the ground that creates a logical, strong and defensible boundary.</li> <li>• Open space at the edge of a settlement should generally be incorporated into the Green Belt.</li> </ul> <p>25 additional locations (equivalent to 55ha) were recommended for inclusion in the Green Belt.</p> <p>The study was conducted pre-NPPF publication; although Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) set out the same Green Belt purposes the same as NPPF.</p>
			Green Belt Purpose Analysis (November 2013)	<p>Analysed the contribution made by land against the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The whole of the Borough with the exception of the larger settlements is covered by the Green Belt designation. The Green Belt was divided into 500m x 500m land parcels.</p> <p>Each land parcel was assessed against a series of criteria for each of the purposes and scores between 0 and 5 assigned.</p> <p>In summary the criteria used for each purpose were:</p> <p>(1) Distance from excluded settlement; and contribution to preventing ribbon development.</p> <p>(2) Distance between excluded settlements.</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
			Edge of Settlement Analysis (January 2014)	<p>(3) Nature conservation value; River Thames corridor; presence of trees and woodland; agricultural land classification; and landscape quality.</p> <p>(4) Setting of Windsor Castle and Eton College; and presence of historic assets.</p> <p>(5) Contribution to urban regeneration; and distance to rejuvenation opportunities.</p> <p>The review concluded that all land in the adopted Green Belt achieves at least 3 of the 5 Green Belt purposes, thus there was no case for altering the boundary unless exceptional circumstances were demonstrated through Local Plan process.</p> <p>Analysed potential for development of Green Belt land adjoining the Borough's settlements as analysis of housing demand and supply indicated a shortfall within the Borough over the Local Plan period. A three stage approach used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage 1: Land assessed against strategic constraints (environmental, infrastructure, ownership, settlement gap, heritage assets). Unsuitable land was not considered further.</li> <li>• Stage 2: Assessed remaining sites against a range of objective and qualitative criteria (contribution to gaps between settlements and defensibility of boundaries, countryside character and topography of land, agricultural land classification Grades 1 and 2, local nature designations and Ancient Woodland, heritage assets and their setting, pollution and minerals safeguarding zones), with pass / fail / part-pass conclusion.</li> <li>• Stage 3: Assessed against detailed criteria (Green Belt and countryside setting, settlement and townscape character, historic environment, biodiversity, flood risk,</li> </ul>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
				<p>other environmental considerations, resources, infrastructure, highways and accessibility, sustainability and availability).</p> <p>Twenty-three areas were identified as potential sites for release from the Green Belt.</p>
			Preferred Options Consultation (January 2014)	The Preferred Options Consultation, considered both the additional land to be designated Green Belt and the 23 potential sites in the Green Belt located on the edge of settlements for release for development.
			Report to Cabinet (February 2015)	<p>Following the preferred options consultation of the Borough Local Plan, it was resolved unanimously at a meeting of the authority's Cabinet in February 2015 that 21 of the 23 sites identified in the Edge of Settlement Analysis will not be considered further for release.</p> <p>Two sites will be taken out of the Green Belt.</p>
<b>London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames</b>	The Council is preparing the final version of the Local Plan for Publication consultation to take place from around mid-December 2016 onwards, and it is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted by Spring 2018. As part of the partial review of the Core Strategy and Development Management Plan, the Council is not intending to undertake a review of its Green Belt.	The adopted Core Strategy (2009) states that as the Council can achieve its strategic dwelling target and other land use needs without the loss of protected open land. It is not envisaged that significant changes will be brought forward through the site allocations DPD, and there may be scope for including some additional areas for further protection.	N/A	N/A
<b>Runnymede Borough Council</b>	The Council's Local Plan was adopted in 2001. A new Local Plan is in preparation with	Approximately 79% of Runnymede is designated Green Belt. The Local Plan Saved Policies state that with some limited	Runnymede Borough Council Green Belt Review 2014	Phase 1 involved the identification of parcels based on the following features: M3 and M25 motorways;

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	<p>policies guiding development in Runnymede up to 2035. The Council recently completed Regulation 18 Consultation.</p>	<p>exceptions, there will be a “strong presumption against development” within the Green Belt, or that would conflict with its purposes or adversely affect its open character.</p> <p>The Council previously submitted a Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) for examination in January 2014. The intention was that the LPCS would form one of a suite of documents to replace the saved policies from the 2001 Local Plan. Following a preliminary hearing in April 2014, the Planning Inspector recommended that the Council should withdraw the LPCS, questioning the lack of up to date evidence and a need to fulfil Duty to Cooperate in a more collaborative and robust way, in particular to consider meeting the shortfall within an appropriately defined housing market area.</p> <p>The Inspector in his recommendation stated that a Green Belt review and an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) together with any other existing evidence “will enable the Council to produce an up-to- date plan for the Borough, within a relatively short timescale, based on robust and justified information”.</p>	<p>Runnymede 2035 Green Belt Boundary</p>	<p>A and B roads; Railway lines; River Thames; River Wey.</p> <p>The assessment of the areas identified in Phase 1 were then scored against the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt with a score of 1 to 5.</p> <p>In Phase 2, all parcels were then assessed against potential constraints. This stage then recommended which land parcels could potentially be released based on both whether they met the NPPF purposes and their strategic fit within the existing settlement hierarchy.</p> <p>The review was a detailed technical assessment of the whole extent of the Green Belt boundary to consider and, if necessary, make minor amendments to the boundary line.</p>

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			Technical Review Methodology	The outcome formed part of the evidence base in the preparation of the Runnymede Local Plan.
			Runnymede 2035 Green Belt Village Review (February 2016)	Assessment of whether built development outside the designated settlements should remain within ('washed over') or be excluded from the Green Belt. The review concluded that the village of Thorpe should be excluded from the Green Belt.
<b>Slough Borough Council</b>	Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2026 was adopted in December 2008.	<p>Slough is surrounded by Green Belt land although the only substantial area of Green Belt land in the Borough is located south of the M4 and east of Langley in the Colnbrook and Poyle area.</p> <p>One of the Borough's strategic objectives is to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development and seek, wherever practically possible, to increase the size and quality of Green Belt land in the Borough.</p> <p>Core Policy 2 on the Green Belt and Open Spaces states that Wexham Park Hospital and Slough Sewage Works will continue to be designated as Major Existing Developed Sites in the Green Belt, but the Metropolitan Green Belt will be maintained. Development will not be permitted unless essential to the location and opportunities will be taken to enhance the quality and size of the Green Belt.</p>	No existing or planned Green Belt Assessment.	N/A