

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Local Plan

Green Belt Study

September 2016

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1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1.1 The notion of 'Green Belts', areas of protected open land on the periphery of established settlements and villages, has its roots in the garden city movement and ultimately the containment of 'sprawl'. Alongside growing environmental concerns, Green Belt has become a well-known and significant land designation across the UK. What initially was conceived as a means of controlling the outward growth of London in particular, and championed strongly by Patrick Abercrombie in his Greater London Plan of 1944, slowly spread across other authority areas by means of provisions within the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, allowing development plans to incorporate Green Belt designations. Today, the Metropolitan Green Belt covers parts of 68no. different Districts or Boroughs (*Source: Green Belts in England – January 2010, Natural England and CPRE*).
- 1.1.2 In Tonbridge & Malling (TMBC), the Green Belt comprises part of the outer edge of the 'Metropolitan' Green Belt (MGB) which surrounds London. Nearly three quarters of the Borough (71%) lies within the Green Belt (*Source: DCLG Local Authority Green Belt Statistics for England – March 2014*), and over the years this policy has, alongside other policy concerns, formed a key consideration in the determination of planning applications and the formulation of planning policy.

History of the Green Belt in the Tonbridge and Malling Borough

- 1.1.3 When the MGB was first established in the 1950's it extended no further than 5-8 miles from the outer limits of London and included no part of what is now Tonbridge and Malling Borough. In the 1960's, Kent County Council in the Kent Development Plan Review proposed extending the MGB to include much of Tonbridge and Malling but this was not approved by Central Government. Instead, the corresponding area was defined as an area over which Green Belt policy would apply pending further studies. Those studies were taken forward by Kent County Council in preparing the first Kent Structure Plan which was approved in 1980. This indicated that the MGB would extend for some 15 miles from the outer edge of London and confirmed, for the first time, that much of Tonbridge and Malling was to be covered by the MGB. However, the outer boundary was only shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram and described in general terms as going to the west of West Malling and east of Watlingbury. It was not until the adoption in 1983 by the County Council of the Kent Countryside Plan that a clear outer boundary to the MGB was defined around the western edges of Snodland and West Malling, but this was only on an interim basis until such time as Local Plans were prepared by the Borough Council.

- 1.1.4 The inner boundaries of the MGB, around the settlements within it, were defined for the first time in a sequence of these Local Plans that were adopted during the 1980's and 1990's. The first plan to be prepared was the Borough Green and Platt Local Plan which was adopted in 1985. This established the MGB boundary around those two settlements. The Tonbridge and Hildenborough Local Plan, adopted in 1987, did the same thing for those two settlements and identified two areas of 'Safeguarded Land' (see definition under Section 2.1.8 of this document) on the edge of Tonbridge (Lower Haysden Lane and North of Dry Hill Park). The Tonbridge and Vicinity Local Plan, adopted in 1993, made no changes to the MGB boundary around Tonbridge and Hildenborough but for the first time defined the MGB boundaries around Hadlow and Golden Green including a small area of Safeguarded Land off Carpenters Lane, Hadlow.
- 1.1.5 The Medway Gap and Vicinity Local Plan, adopted in 1994, reviewed and refined the outer boundary of the MGB on a larger scale base map and specifically excluded Holborough Quarry and Ham Hill Sand Pits, Snodland from the MGB and slightly revised the boundary to the south of West Malling Airfield (now Kings Hill). It also defined, for the first time, the inner boundaries of the Green Belt around the villages that lay within its area of cover (Wateringbury, Mereworth, Birling and Ryarsh). The Council originally proposed that the built limits of Leybourne Grange Hospital should be excluded from the Green Belt but this was opposed by the Government Office and it remains washed over by Green Belt policy. The borough-wide mosaic of plans was completed by the adoption in 1994 of the Malling Rural Area Local Plan which incorporated without change the inner boundaries around Borough Green and Platt, and defined, for the first time, the inner boundaries around the other villages within its area of cover (Fairseat, Trottiscliffe, Wrotham, Addington, Wrotham Heath/Addington Clearway, Offham, Ightham, Crouch, Plaxtol, Dunks Green, East Peckham/Snoll Hatch/Hale Street and West Peckham). In so doing, it identified small areas of Safeguarded Land at Wrotham and Plaxtol.
- 1.1.6 The Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan, adopted in 1998, amalgamated the then existing Local Plans in the Borough and rolled their time horizon forward from 2001 to 2011. No significant changes were made to the MGB boundaries but the confines of the villages of Dunks Green, Fairseat and Snoll Hatch were reviewed and those settlements became washed over by the Green Belt. The Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted in 2007 rolled the Local Plan time horizon forward to 2021 and made only one significant change to the MGB boundary which was to exclude from it the area of Isles Quarry West at Borough Green.
- 1.1.7 The general extent of MGB has been established over much of Tonbridge and Malling Borough for 35 years with all of the detailed boundaries being broadly established by the mid- 1990s. Now is therefore the first time that the Green
-

Belt has been comprehensively reviewed in Tonbridge and Malling since it was first established. This is in line with Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2012.

- 1.1.8 The Green Belt is not a landscape designation, it is a functional designation. Green Belt designation does not infer quality of landscape or character. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open (paragraph 79 of the NPPF). Green Belt must meet the following criteria as set out within the NPPF:

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

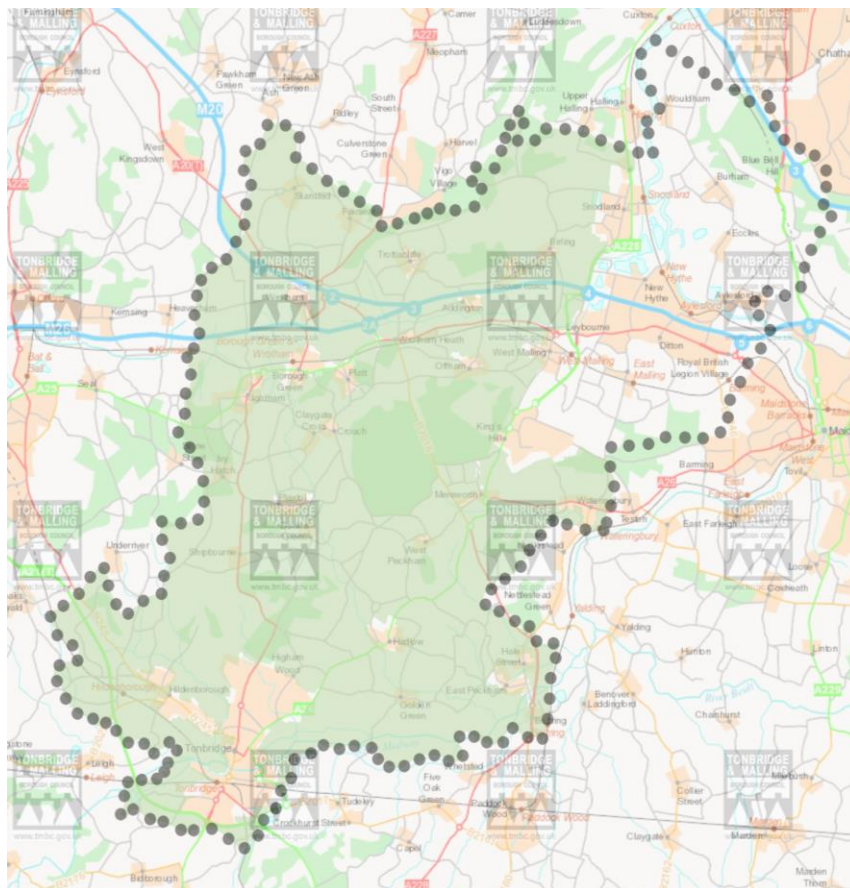
Structure of Green Belt Study

- 1.1.9 Given the extent of Green Belt coverage within the Borough, and without an up-to-date assessment of the designation, now is a prime opportunity to carry out a review.
- 1.1.10 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy.
- 1.1.11 This study therefore provides a functional assessment only of the Green Belt land designation within TMBC. As part of the preparation of the Local Plan and the collection of evidence, the study takes stock of the existing situation and tests current Green Belt land coverage against the criteria set out within the NPPF. Furthermore, the NPPF expects Local Authorities (LA's) to plan for objectively assessed needs (paragraph 14, NPPF) and within this context it is important to effectively review existing policies, constraints and opportunities. This study is a chance to test the purposes and integrity of the Green Belt designation in the borough and also provide a broad assessment of each area.
- 1.1.12 The original purpose of the Green Belt (as discussed in paragraph 1.1.3 of this document) was to prevent the sprawl of London into Kent; however, the Green Belt has evolved to play a role in relation to other settlements when considered at the local scale. To this end, the study takes the opportunity to study the borough as a whole, taking a hierarchical approach, given the criteria in respect of 'neighbouring towns' included within the NPPF, focussing

on the larger settlements (comprising the 'Urban Areas' and 'Rural Service Centres', as defined within the Core Strategy (2007), which itself is part of the Local Development Framework (LDF)). However, this study also takes the opportunity to appraise the 'Other Rural Settlements' in order to provide a comprehensive report, even though the criteria in respect of 'neighbouring towns' for example may not apply in its purest sense. Furthermore, smaller areas washed over by Green Belt, being Stansted, Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green, Shipbourne and Fairseat, are not appraised against the NPPF criteria but are subject to a brief appraisal in relation to other existing factors. This approach is further explained within the 'Methodology' section of this document and is considered to provide for a full and thorough study. It is not the purpose of this study to suggest amendments or changes to Green Belt boundaries in detail. This could occur as the Local Plan progresses.

- 1.1.13 The study also assesses the clarity of the current Green Belt boundaries (see page 19 for definition of boundaries used within this study) within the borough to ensure there is clear recognition, in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF. The study is overarching in nature which is considered proportionate to this stage of the preparation of the Local Plan, and the recommendations of central Government (paragraph 158, NPPF).

Figure 1 – Extent of (Metropolitan) Green Belt in TMBC (shown in green), Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 OS 100023300. Not to Scale (NTS)



Objectives

1.1.14 The key objectives of the study are:

- *To provide a record of the current Green Belt extent;*
- *To assess whether TMBC's Green Belt as currently defined fulfils the fundamental aim and purposes of Green Belt policy as set out within the NPPF;*
- *To assess whether TMBC's Green Belt as currently defined accords with NPPF paragraph 79, namely in terms of its openness;*
- *To assess whether boundaries are defined and recognisable.*

2. The Green Belt

National Context and Purposes

- 2.1.1 The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act enshrined the notion of the Green Belt and explicitly allowed the inclusion of such land within LA's new development plans. As time progressed, Green Belts were commonly used by LA's to contain sprawl around major urban areas, and also as a means of controlling the spread and coalescence of neighbouring towns.
- 2.1.2 According to a joint study by Natural England and the CPRE (*Green Belts in England – January 2010*), the total land area of all Green Belts in England is now estimated to be approximately 1.6 million hectares (13% of England's total land area). 39% of the Green Belt area is being maintained or enhanced in terms of landscape character, 18% is classed as neglected, and 37% 'diverging' (eroding or transforming to a new character).
- 2.1.3 Guidance on the Green Belt from the Government has evolved in the last few years, with often conflicting statements released. This study includes the latest position and most up to date guidance as far as possible, at the time of publication.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1.4 The NPPF confirms that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is confirmed to be to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Green Belt serves five purposes:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.1.5 Once Green Belts have been defined, LA's should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

- 2.1.6 The NPPF also states that LA's should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Green Belt boundaries should take into account the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should 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.
- 2.1.7 Boundaries should also be capable of enduring for the long term (paragraph 83, NPPF).
- 2.1.8 Paragraph 85 states that when defining boundaries, where necessary, LA's should identify in their plans 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. LA's should 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.

Planning Practice Guidance (as updated)

- 2.1.9 This guidance, which provides an overview on how to respond to the policies contained within the NPPF, takes a more overarching look at landscape.
- 2.1.10 In respect of Green Belt, the Government provided updated guidance on this designation on the 6th of October 2014. This states that LA's 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 taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. This includes Green Belt land. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.
- 2.1.11 In respect of agricultural land, the guidance states that LA's should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is particularly important in plan making when decisions are made on which land should be allocated for development.

Ministerial Statements, Inspectors Decisions, Press Releases, Letters and Speeches

- 2.1.12 Nick Boles, as then Planning Minister, issued a number of Ministerial Statements in 2012, all of which have reiterated national policy in respect of protection of the Green Belt and restriction of urban sprawl. The Government has also been clear of the need to significantly boost the supply of housing,

and as far as it is consistent with other policies, meet full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. There is a key focus on promoting sustainable patterns of development.

- 2.1.13 In September 2012, a statement confirmed that Councils can review local designations to promote growth, with encouragement given to Councils to use the flexibilities set out within the NPPF to tailor the extent of Green Belt land.
- 2.1.14 Nick Boles also confirmed on the 18th of September 2012 that boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, and through the Local Plan process, to include community consultation and examination by an independent Inspector.
- 2.1.15 In March 2014, Nick Boles reaffirmed the NPPF priorities, noting that unmet housing is unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt, which given previous assertions, could potentially cause some confusion.
- 2.1.16 In October 2014, Eric Pickles, then Communities Secretary (alongside Brandon Lewis, Housing and Planning Minister), released 2no. statements focussed on Green Belt land. In the first, issued to coincide with the updates to Planning Practice Guidance, the Government stated that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional cases, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.
- 2.1.17 The Government also stated that housing need – including for traveller sites – does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development. Eric Pickles said: “this Government has been very clear that when planning for new buildings, protecting our precious Green Belt must be paramount”.
- 2.1.18 On the 16th of October 2014, a further statement was released, with Eric Pickles stating that “I am crystal clear that the Green Belt must be protected from development, so it can continue to offer a strong defense against urban sprawl”.
- 2.1.19 Against this backdrop, recent Planning Inspector comment has often provided a different stance. The Inspectors report into the soundness of the Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy (June 2014) concluded that the need for housing, and the benefits of additional housing, are ‘exceptional circumstances’ to justify the removal of land from the Green Belt for some strategic development sites.
- 2.1.20 The DCLG has also published a Statistical Release (September 2016) in respect of the Green Belt in England. This confirms that there was a decrease of 1,020 hectares (less than 0.1%) in the area of Green Belt between 31 March 2015

and 31 March 2016. Green Belt was reduced in 8no. local authority areas through Local Plan adoption and land allocations.

Local Context and Purposes

2.1.21 The local policy context for the Green Belt currently consists of:

- Core Strategy, September 2007
- Managing Development and the Environment DPD, 2010
- Development Land Allocations DPD, 2008

Core Strategy

2.1.22 The Core Strategy confirms that the importance of Green Belts lies in preventing major expansion of settlements or their coalescence, and preventing development in the countryside that would affect its openness. A key feature of Green Belts is their permanence.

2.1.23 In determining planning applications, very special circumstances are required for any departure from Green Belt policy and in plan-making an exceptional justification is required for any change to existing Green Belt boundaries.

2.1.24 The boundaries of the Green Belt have been set in previous Local Plans as described in Section 1 of this document. The general extent of the Green Belt is illustrated on the Key Diagram contained within the Core Strategy.

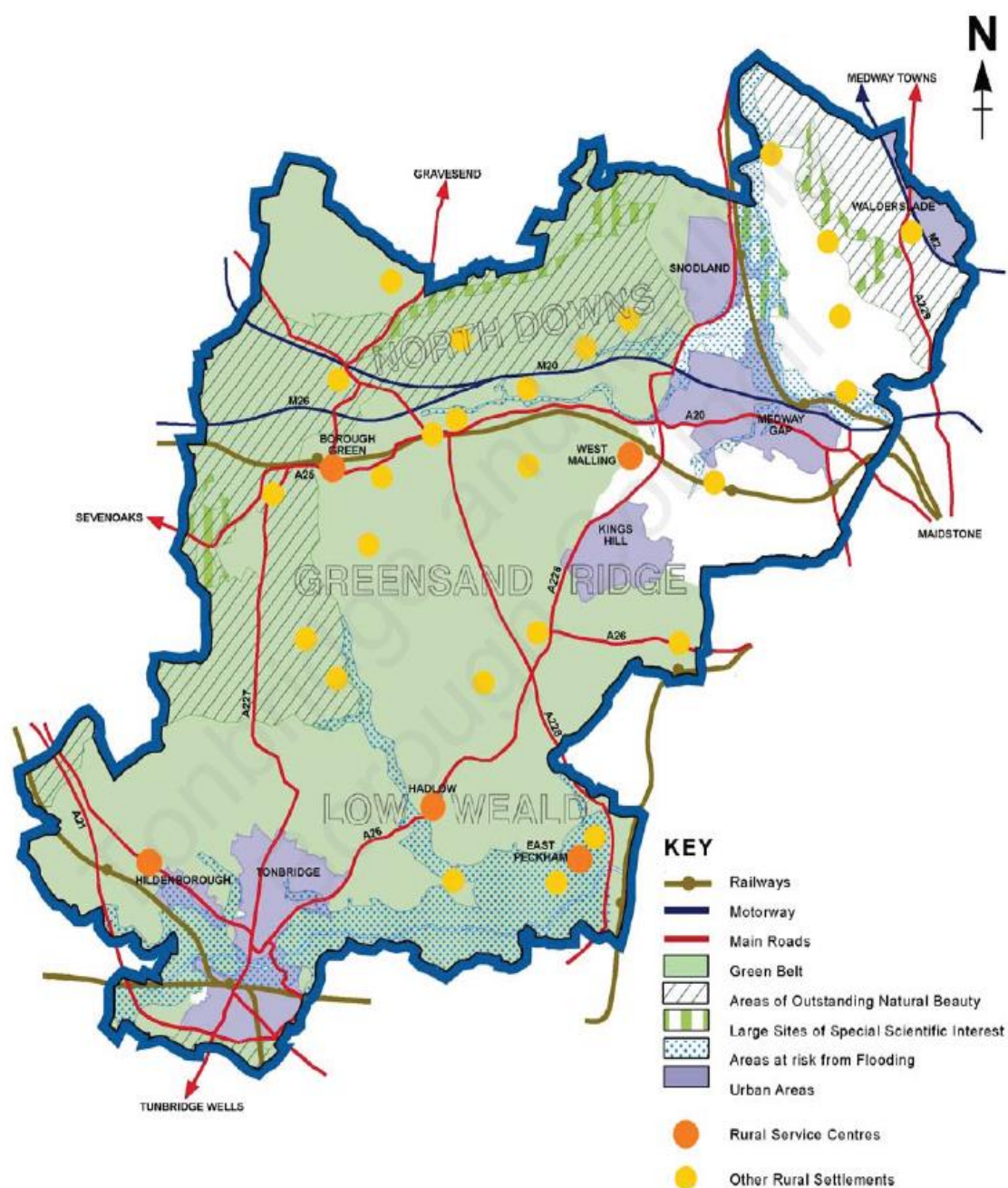
2.1.25 The current policies relevant to the Green Belt include Policy CP3 and Policy CP4.

Development Land Allocations DPD

2.1.26 The Development Land Allocations DPD identifies Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt (see definitions on page 19 of this document). On such sites, infilling or redevelopment may be appropriate, provided it does not give rise to specific harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

2.1.27 Policy M1 outlines the key criteria for each identified site.

Figure 2 – Key Diagram, taken from the adopted Core Strategy. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 OS 100023300. NTS



3. Methodology

Overview

- 3.1.1 The study assesses the current Green Belt designation against four of the five criteria set out within the NPPF. Assessment is not made against the fifth, ‘to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land’, as it is considered that this is an equal and inherent function across the whole designation particularly within the borough of Tonbridge and Malling. Furthermore, such a criterion is intrinsically influenced by a myriad of other, often far-reaching factors, making accurate assessment difficult. Assessment is also made against the criteria described in paragraph 79 of the NPPF, namely the function of keeping land permanently open, as well as the clarity of current boundaries and their definition and recognition.
- 3.1.2 The study focuses on the Urban Areas and Rural Service Centres that are partially or fully within a Green Belt designation, or directly abutting it, and are as outlined within the Council’s Core Strategy. The study then moves on to consider Other Rural Settlements, before providing a brief overview of those smaller settlements washed over by Green Belt, being Stansted, Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green, Shipbourne and Fairseat.

Table 1 – Study Areas

<u>Urban Areas</u>	<u>Rural Service Centres</u>	<u>Other Rural Settlements</u>	<u>Smaller areas washed over by Green Belt*</u>
Tonbridge + Hilden Park Kings Hill Leybourne Snodland	Borough Green East Peckham (<i>including Hale Street</i>) Hadlow Hildenborough West Malling	Wateringbury Birling Ryarsh Mereworth Offham West Peckham Trottiscliffe Wrotham Ightham Platt (<i>including Wrotham Heath and Crouch</i>) Plaxtol Addington and Addington Clearway Golden Green	Stansted Dunks Green Snoll Hatch Fairseat Shipbourne <i>*Nb: the established built-up areas of these settlements are not appraised against Green Belt criteria, but subject to an overview of character, constraints and boundaries</i>

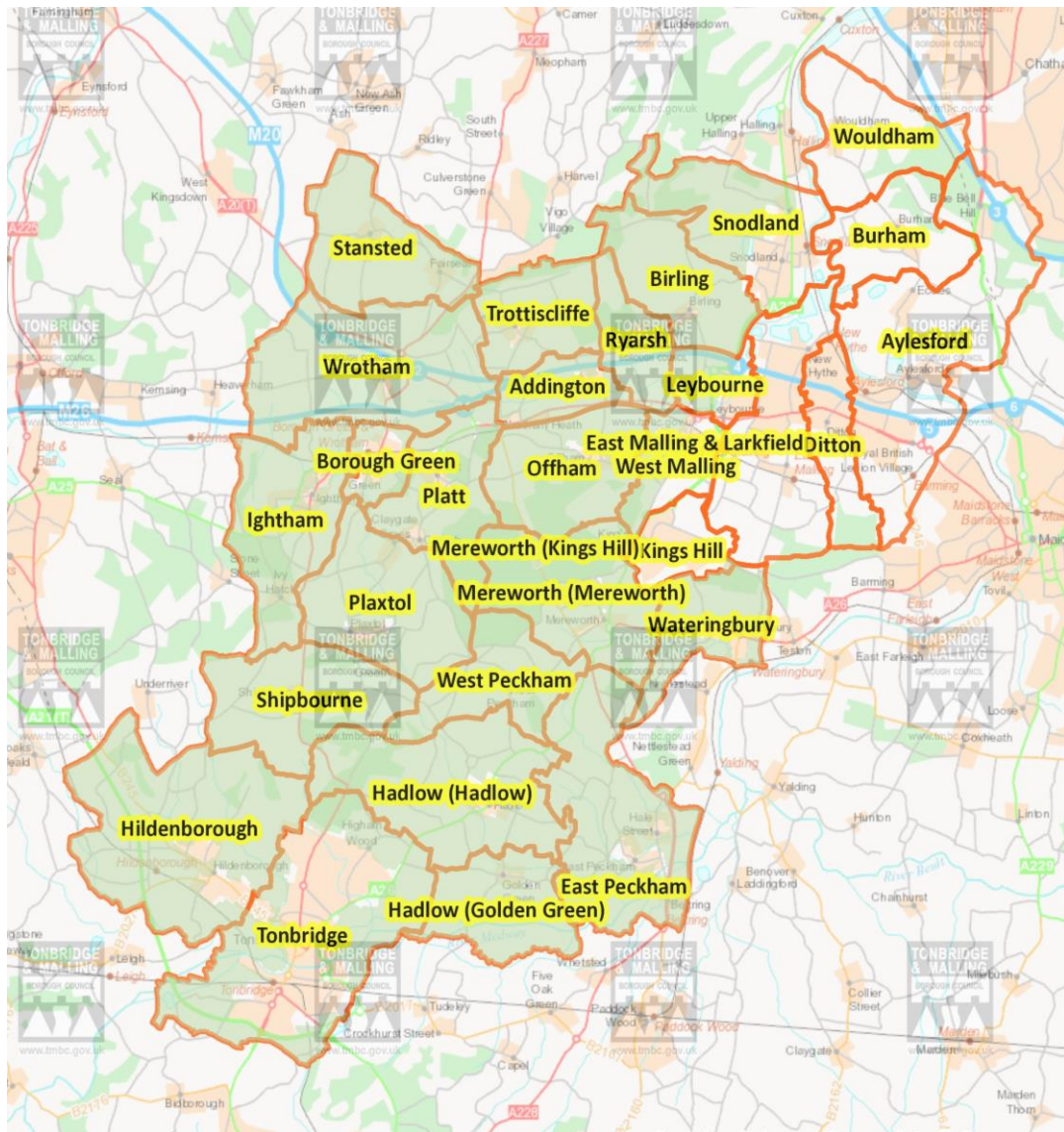


Figure 3 – Green Belt extent (shown in green) and current parish boundaries. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2016 OS 100023300. NTS.

- 3.1.3 Study areas are considered as per existing parish boundaries, or in the case of Tonbridge, the area boundary defined on the Council's current Development Plan Proposals Map. Please see 'Study Areas' within the Appendices for further clarification.
- 3.1.4 For the purposes of this document, Tonbridge has been split into 6 no. parcels, and Hadlow has been split into two distinct parish 'zones', in order to study Golden Green separately and provide clarity to the study. Furthermore, the parish of Kings Hill includes a small area to the east which will be assessed under consideration of Wateringbury, given its close proximity and relationship with this area, and for ease and simplicity.

3.1.5 The methodology has been chosen following careful consideration of NPPF policy, and also following research and peer review of similar studies produced by other LA's. These include:

- *Bath and North East Somerset Green Belt Review Stage 1 Report, April 2013*
- *Rushcliffe Green Belt Review Part 1, June 2013*
- *Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment prepared for Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, November 2013*
- *Stevenage Green Belt Review Part 1 – Survey against Green Belt Purposes, February 2013*

3.1.6 No Green Belt Reviews/Studies have so far been published by neighbouring authorities as part of their Local Plan process. However, some adjoining authorities are in the process of producing a Review and are at varying stages. This includes Sevenoaks District Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Gravesham Borough Council. Dialogue will be ongoing in respect of sharing of methodology and ongoing assessments (as per the Duty to Cooperate requirements of the Localism Act, 2011).

3.1.7 The study takes the following approach:

- a. The key constraints (land designations, environmental factors etc) are mapped using 'LocalView' GIS mapping services.
- b. The Green Belt designation is mapped, using 'LocalView' GIS mapping services. OS maps and aerial photography are overlaid where necessary.
- c. Areas are identified, and depending on their size and proportions, broken down into specific parcels which will be labelled for clarity and to aid in the assessment process.
- d. Officer-level assessment is made of the identified areas or parcels against four of the purposes set out within the NPPF, as well as assessment against paragraph 79 of the NPPF in terms of openness and boundaries.
- e. The results are recorded in a table, alongside a notation of other key factors, constraints, designations, and other information deemed important or relevant. Reference is made to existing policy designations (as per the Council's existing Development

Plan), such as existing protected employment sites or other Major Developed Sites.

- f. An overview of character is also made within the Appendices for each area/parcel, for background/information only.
- g. The assessments are then subject to an Officer peer review.

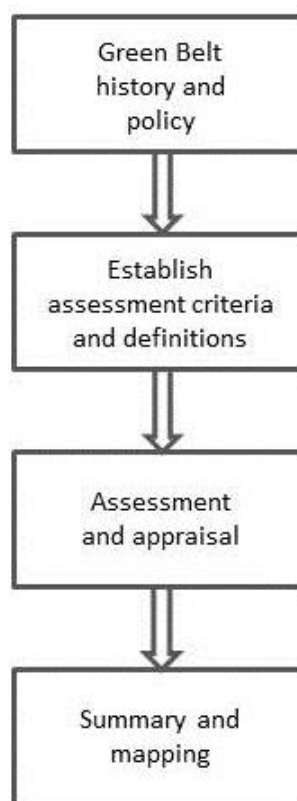


Figure 4 – Methodology diagram

Identification of Parcels

- 3.1.8 Where necessary as set out above, in larger settlements for example (such as Tonbridge), areas have been broken down into separate parcels to ensure that the Green Belt study is clear and accurate. Parcels have been defined by existing physical features such as roads, lanes and building lines, existing parish boundaries, or natural features such as field boundaries and hedgerow demarcation for example. Rationale for parcel identification is contained within the Appendices.
- 3.1.9 These parcels are only defined for the purposes of this study and for clarity, and do not confer any boundary or demarcation outside of this document.

Neighbouring Authorities

- 3.1.10 The assessment will focus on land within TMBC only. Assessment cannot be made on land outside of the influence of TMBC and thus no judgement will be made on land outside of the boundary of the borough.

Assessment against NPPF Green Belt Purposes

- 3.1.11 The following criteria have been used in the assessment of each area of Green Belt examined in this study. Each Green Belt purpose is equally significant.

Table 2 – Assessment criteria

Purpose of the Green Belt	Key Questions	Assessment Criteria
To check the unrestricted sprawl* of large built-up areas*	Does the land have a role to play in containing development? Are there any other features/designations that provide this function?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area context – containment provided by adjoining areas • Any permanent and recognisable physical boundaries and features such as roads, topography, woodland, lakes, watercourses etc
To prevent neighbouring towns* from merging* into one another (see definitions glossary on page 19 for more information on the scope of this study in respect of 'towns')	What is the surrounding context and proximity to nearby settlements and built-up areas? Has the presence of the Green Belt designation in itself protected against merging historically and presently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of the Green Belt in a wider, strategic sense • Whether there is potential for development to result in a merger of built-up areas and/or neighbouring authorities • Any permanent and recognisable physical boundaries such as roads, woodland, lakes, watercourses etc
To assist in safeguarding the countryside* from encroachment*	What is the surrounding context and character and might this change? Are there any other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character and context of the surrounding land, and whether it is open countryside, urban or

	designations in place such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)?	<p>rural/semi-rural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition of the existing Green Belt boundaries • Any permanent and recognisable physical boundaries such as roads, woodland, lakes, watercourses etc
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*	<p>What is the relationship between the land and historic towns/places/areas and other heritage assets?</p> <p>Are there views, or other special qualities? Does the area provide a buffer? Are there other designations or features that provide this function?</p>	The proximity of the Green Belt to historic towns, villages, places, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings etc and its role and relationship with these features
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	-	<i>Assessment is not made against this criterion as it is considered that this is an equal and inherent function across the whole Green Belt designation</i>
Other Factors	-	<i>This assessment box allows consideration of the openness* of the area, the clarity of existing boundaries*, and any future commitments and key extant planning permissions, as well as existing policy designations such as safeguarded land.</i>

*** Definitions used within this study:**

Sprawl: Defined by Oxford Online Dictionary as ‘spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way’.

Built-up areas: Areas with a clear concentration or mass of housing or other buildings for example, including villages and towns.

Boundaries: Within this study, because a large area of the borough is within the Green Belt, the assessment of boundaries focusses mainly on the boundary of the Green Belt immediately surrounding/adjacent to built-up areas, although dependent on the study area, can also include the wider context where appropriate. Because of the size of the study, boundaries are assessed at a wider/general scale and not on a plot by plot basis.

Neighbouring towns: Meaning the larger settlements in the borough, in this case the Urban Areas and Rural Service Centres. (Nb: opportunity is also taken in this study to provide an assessment of Other Rural Settlements (and an overarching assessment of those smaller areas washed over by Green Belt) even though they do not formally fall under this definition, for completeness).

Merging: Defined by Oxford Online Dictionary as ‘combine or cause to combine to form a single entity’, and ‘blend or cause to blend gradually into something else so as to become indistinguishable from it’.

Countryside: That part of the borough lying outside the confines of the Urban Areas as identified in Policy CP11 and the Rural Service Centres and Other Rural Settlements identified under Policies CP12 and CP13 in the Council’s Core Strategy.

Encroachment: Defined by Oxford Online Dictionary as to ‘advance gradually beyond usual or acceptable limits’.

Historic Towns: Within this study, a place or area with historic features/assets such as Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas etc. May also include areas with Listed Buildings or other heritage assets.

Openness: the absence of development and buildings and other elements that may provide a more urban character. Consideration will also be given to visibility and views.

Major Developed Sites: As defined on page 29 of the adopted Development Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DLA DPD).

Safeguarded Land: As defined under paragraph 85 of the NPPF.

Assessment Matrix

- 3.1.12 A table will be used to provide a robust and clear assessment. The table is to be read alongside the relevant Appendices which include overview sheets and mapping.
- 3.1.13 Alongside assessment of the criteria contained within the NPPF, assessment is also made of relevant other factors and constraints. These include current

policy designations and future or key extant planning permissions or commitments.

- 3.1.14 Commentary and analysis will be provided and a judgement at Officer-level made against each criteria by using different colour-ways and hatching patterns under the heading 'Assessment', as below:




Performs well or successfully against purpose of the Green Belt	
Performs moderately against purpose of the Green Belt	
Limited or no contribution to purpose of the Green Belt	

Table 3 – Assessment colour coding and hatching

4. Assessment of Urban Areas and Rural Service Centres

4.1 Urban Areas

Tonbridge and Hilden Park (Appendix A)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
TO1	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The built form edge around Tonbridge has already been eroded significantly by existing built features including the nursery and football club, providing this area with a semi-urban feel. Some residential buildings also within the Green Belt near Hilden Park.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> The parcel sits between Tonbridge and Hilden Park which are both part of the overall Tonbridge urban area. There have already been some incursions into the Green Belt which have eroded the built form edge within this parcel.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The parcel nestles between two established settlements and the character of the area is perhaps less open in general, due to existing uses (recreation, commercial nursery etc).	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The parcel is close to a Conservation Area which extends into Tonbridge Town however it is buffered from the Green Belt by thick woodland planting to the south-west of the existing Safeguarded Land.	<i>Limited or no contribution</i>
	Other Factors <u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> An area subject to Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding) travels across the parcel. Smaller area of TPO's and Ancient Woodland to the north. <u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary typically follows the built form edges in this location.	

	<p><u>Openness:</u> A large proportion of the parcel to the north is taken up by a commercial nursery which is a highly managed landscape. There are also recreation uses. The southern part of the parcel is more open.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> An area of Safeguarded Land can be found (Core Strategy Policy CP4), reserved for future development.</p>	
TO2	<p><u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt designation protects against sprawl to some degree, but in conjunction with existing physical markers including hedgerows and the railway lines and particularly the River Medway, which provides key demarcation and a strong function in this respect.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> The proximity of the land to Hilden Park and Hildenborough means that the Green Belt does have a role to play in this respect. Existing features including the railway lines and River also help provide this function.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> There is generally a clear demarcation between built form and the wider countryside provided by hedgerow bunds and other features as described. The Green Belt makes a contribution but in conjunction with other features including these other elements.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt area abuts a Conservation Area and in some parts the designations overlap, although the areas are buffered by tree belts and other physical markers.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> A large area of the parcel is subject to Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding), due to the proximity of the River Medway. Large water bodies are also evident (Barden Lake). A Conservation Area is in close proximity. A Local Wildlife Site can also be found here.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary travels around the built form edges in this location, however in places this cuts across woodland/tree belts and gardens, which have less recognisable features.</p>	

	<p><u>Openness:</u> Recreational uses and buildings are generally located close to the built form boundary. Large water bodies can also be found and the River encourages recreation.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	
TO3	<p><u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> Features including water bodies and woodland, as well as the A21 road and railway line, act as boundaries that would help to prevent sprawl. The fact that Green Belt is also located in this area further prevents potential sprawl.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Existing features and boundaries also help address this function.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> In addition to the Green Belt, features including water bodies and woodland, as well as the A21 road and railway line, act as boundaries that would help prevent encroachment.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The parcel contains a Conservation Area that is washed over by the Green Belt designation. However the AONB also addresses this function.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The parcel is significantly covered by Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding). A Conservation Area can also be found to the centre of the parcel. AONB to the south and Historic Park and Garden.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> An area of Safeguarded Land can be found in this location. Elsewhere, the Green Belt typically follows the built form edge.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> Generally an open landscape but with some buildings and other urbanising physical features including infrastructure (railway and road).</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> An area of Safeguarded Land can be found (Core Strategy Policy CP4).</p>	

TO4	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The existing A21 road network, and woodland tree cover, act as significant boundaries that would help to prevent sprawl. The AONB designation also helps provide this function.	Limited or no contribution
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Existing features and boundaries address this function in conjunction with existing designations.	Performs moderately
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The land in this location does form a wider connection to the countryside to the south, particularly given the AONB designation. The A21 road has 'urbanised' the immediate location to some degree.	Performs moderately
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The built-up area is generally detached from historic areas and Conservation Areas. There is a Historic Park and Garden within the landscape but surrounding road networks contribute to the setting at this point. AONB also provides this function where it is located in this parcel.	Limited or no contribution
Other Factors <u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> A small part of the parcel is Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding), and TPO's (Tree Preservation Orders - groups and individual trees) can also be found. A large proportion of the area is also covered by an AONB. Smaller areas of Ancient Woodland, Local Wildlife Sites and Historic Park and Garden. <u>Boundaries:</u> The boundary generally travels along the built form edge, however there are areas where the Green Belt cuts into woodland, where there is a lack of clear defining features. <u>Openness:</u> Few buildings found; the road dominates. Surrounding land generally open with intermittent hedgerows/trees. <u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.		
TO5	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does assist in restricting sprawl around existing housing areas, particularly as the character is more rural and open in character within this parcel. The River and areas of trees help reinforce the landscape character and existing	Performs well

	boundaries.	
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Existing features and boundaries address this function in conjunction with existing designations.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> This parcel forms a strong connection with the open countryside to the east, which is generally open in character.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt in this location is sufficiently detached from Hadlow to the north-east and located away from the historic core of Tonbridge town centre.	<i>Limited or no contribution</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The parcel is significantly covered by Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding). Local Wildlife sites can also be found here.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt is considered to be well defined within this parcel, with the urban edge providing good definition.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> Generally an open landscape but with some sporadic existing buildings.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> Areas of land abutting the built form area are safeguarded for employment purposes (Development Plan).</p>	
T06	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does 'visually' contain the built-up area to the north, as it runs along the built form edge and presents containment and clear definition within this parcel. Heavily farmed landscape also helps contain the built edge. There has been some small scale building in the Green Belt (individual houses/farming) but these are located away from the built form edge and do not urbanise the parcel or detract from the overall sense of openness.	<i>Performs well</i>

	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Alongside the Green Belt designation, existing farmed landscapes and belts of woodland (some of which is Ancient Woodland) also help provide a buffer and natural boundary.</p>	<p><i>Performs moderately</i></p>
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> There has only been sporadic building in the Green Belt in this location, some distance from the edge of the town, such that the land retains a sense of openness. The Green Belt makes a significant contribution to this criterion and in conjunction with other features including natural elements such as trees and wooded belts.</p>	<p><i>Performs well</i></p>
	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt in this location is sufficiently detached from Hadlow to the north-east and some distance away from the historic core of Tonbridge town centre.</p>	<p><i>Limited or no contribution</i></p>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> The parcel contains a number of individual TPO's and group TPO's, mainly to the west. Ancient Woodland is also found in this location. A very small area is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding). Land to the east is less constrained.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt is considered to be clear within this parcel, with the built form edge providing good definition.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> Generally an open landscape but with sporadic existing buildings but these are located away from the urban edge. Farmed landscape evident.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	

Kings Hill (Appendix B)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Kings Hill	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does help to define and contain the Kings Hill area to the south in particular. To the west the road also aids in this function.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> The closest settlements are West Malling and Mereworth. Existing farmed landscapes and belts of woodland (much of which is Ancient Woodland) also help provide a buffer and natural boundary. To the west the road also aids in this function.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> There has only been sporadic building (including small hamlets of housing and farming based building) in the Green Belt in this location such that the land retains a sense of openness. The area benefits from significant woodland and tree belt cover in many places which act as a 'natural' buffer.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> There are a number of Conservation Areas to the south and south-west of Kings Hill, with some abutting the Green Belt boundary. The Green Belt does provide a contribution to the setting of the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings away from the Kings Hill area (including in particular Mereworth and Mereworth church and beyond) and there are some far reaching views towards the south.	<i>Performs well</i>
	Other Factors <u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> Within the Green Belt, areas around Kings Hill are subject in parts to Local Wildlife Sites, Conservation Area, and Ancient Woodland designations. <u>Boundaries:</u> The current boundary of the Green Belt located to the west is considered to be well defined and clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map, being fairly tightly drawn and following closely the route of Malling Road as well as existing properties, and the parish boundary. However where the Green Belt cuts across areas of tree planting/golf course to the south there are no evident physical place markers.	

	<p><u>Openness:</u> Generally an open landscape but with sporadic existing buildings of a residential and farming/industrial nature. Farmed landscape evident including polytunnels and worked fields.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> An approval for additional housing at Kings Hill located away from the Green Belt.</p>
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Leybourne (Appendix C)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Leybourne	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The existing A228 road and also existing woodland areas and lakes act as boundaries that would likely help prevent significant sprawl. The fact that Green Belt is also located in this area further prevents potential sprawl.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Existing features and boundaries as described above address this function, in conjunction with the Green Belt designation.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The land in this location does help form a connection to the wider countryside to the west, however recent developments in this vicinity such as Leybourne Chase/Grange have already started to change the character of this area in parts. AONB designation to the north also serves to assist this function.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt in this location does perhaps help provide an open setting for the existing Ancient Monument to a degree. Views are somewhat restricted.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> Land in the surrounding area includes Conservation Area, TPO's, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3 (high risk of flooding) designations. Land immediately to the north of the Leybourne parish boundary is also designated as AONB.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> Close to the built-up area, the current boundary of the Green Belt is considered to be well defined and clearly shown on the</p>	

	<p>Development Plan Proposals Map, following closely the route of Castle Way and the A228, as well as the rear gardens of existing properties.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> Sporadic development and existing buildings including residential buildings and farming settlements can be found. Residential development can be found at Leybourne Chase/Grange.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> Work at Leybourne Chase/Grange is still ongoing. This area is washed over by the Green Belt.</p>
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Snodland (Appendix D)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Snodland	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does provide a clear boundary to the western side of the town that may otherwise perhaps be vulnerable.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> The Green Belt has generally provided a clear edge to the settlement to the west. To the south and east (the latter of which is away from the Green Belt), other features including the A228 road network and Leybourne Lakes help prevent merging. The area is somewhat mixed therefore and thus has been categorised as performing moderately.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> There has only been sporadic and mostly historic and/or farm based building in the Green Belt in this location such that the land generally retains a sense of openness.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The historic core of Snodland and its Conservation Area is removed from the Green Belt designation and buffered by existing buildings. Views of the town's Conservation Area from within the Green Belt are restricted by other built form and the topography. Within the Green Belt smaller Conservation Areas can be found (Paddlesworth and Holborough Mill) where the setting is assisted by other	<i>Limited or no contribution</i>

	designations including AONB and a Local Wildlife Site.	
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> Areas of AONB are found within the Green Belt to the west, alongside other landscape considerations including a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary is generally tight to the existing built-up area and road network. A small portion of Green Belt is located to the south of the Tesco depot which is removed somewhat from the wider expanse of Green Belt to the north-west.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> Generally an open landscape but with sporadic existing buildings, waterbodies and tree belts/woodlands. Worked landscape evident.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> Work to the north at Holborough Lakes is ongoing. To the south-west there is a protected site (Ham Hill).</p>	

4.2 Rural Service Centres

Borough Green (Appendix E)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Borough Green	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does help to define the built-up area, alongside existing established woodland and hedgerow bunds as well as AONB designation.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Borough Green is already linked to Platt to the east. The Green Belt designation does help keep Ightham separate although this is in conjunction with existing woodland areas, as well as AONB designation which provides (and reinforces) a buffer. Wrotham is separated clearly by the motorway which cuts across to the north and forms a ready recognisable and permanent boundary.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> This is perhaps a more successful function to the south, where the character is more rural and the area links up to wider countryside. To the north, existing uses, the AONB and the motorway/road network provide this function more successfully. The area is somewhat mixed therefore and thus has been categorised as performing moderately.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt does provide a setting for nearby Ightham (where there is a Conservation Area), in conjunction with the wooded areas in this part of Borough Green. There are no Conservation Areas within the built-up area itself. The AONB also assists this function.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	Other Factors <u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The area of Green Belt to the south of Borough Green includes TPO woodland/groups, Ancient Woodland and AONB. The north is less constrained. The parish boundary is abutted by AONB to the north and west. <u>Boundaries:</u> The northern Green Belt designation is considered to be well defined. The southern area of Green Belt generally follows the built form edge, however it becomes less clear to the south-west where the designation cuts through fields, with less physical demarcation available.	

	<p><u>Openness:</u> To the south: a varied topography with views restricted by woodland. Retains a rural, countryside feel. To the north: Flatter topography, with fewer trees, providing more achievable views across the landscape. A more managed landscape with some buildings. The Celcon factory is found to the south-east.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> Protected sites found in the northern area of the Green Belt designation (Major Developed sites in the Green Belt - Pond Works and south Cricketts Farm).</p>
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East Peckham including Hale Street (Appendix F)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
East Peckham and Hale Street	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the larger built-up areas, including residential zones and areas of a more industrial nature (to the south-east). The Green Belt does help contain the different areas, with the Green Belt boundary particularly tightly drawn around Hale Street. There are also fewer other designations here.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> The Green Belt currently provides a small 'gap' between East Peckham and Snoll Hatch. The Green Belt does also serve to keep a separation and a 'gap' between East Peckham and Hale Street. Built-up areas are well defined however.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area forms a connection to wider countryside which is generally open and rural in nature and includes some high quality agricultural land. Some physical features to the east (road network) also assist in this respect.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> There are a number of Conservation Areas to the west, washed over by the Green Belt. This includes Snoll Hatch. The surrounding fields help provide an open setting at this point particularly given the flatter nature of the landscape.	<i>Performs well</i>

	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The area is predominantly subject to Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding) designations. There are a number of Conservation Areas to the west.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Development Plan Proposals Map shows the Green Belt to be clearly defined and easily recognisable, and excludes the major built up areas and buildings. Some adjacent areas (such as Snoll Hatch) are washed over by the Green Belt.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A typically flat landscape with open fields and some agricultural and more managed land. The area retains a rural feel but the road network to the east is perhaps more urbanising. Wooded areas to the south-east.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> There is an area of safeguarded land to the south-east. Also a Major Developed site in the Green Belt can be found (land at East of Tonbridge Road, Little Mill).</p>
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Hadlow (Appendix G)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Hadlow	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the built form area, which focusses on the main residential areas. The Green Belt does therefore help visually contain this developed area, and provides separation between other uses to some extent, including Hadlow College, which sits within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area forms a connection to wider countryside which is generally open and rural in nature; however there are a number of farm buildings and educational uses particularly to the southern portion of the Green Belt which influence the character here and introduce more developed elements. Hadlow College can also be found within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> There are two Conservation Areas in Hadlow, with the largest encompassing the Grade I Listed Hadlow Tower, a tall folly extending to approximately 64m in height, built in the 18th century, which can be viewed within the Green Belt from the south and west of the settlement in particular.</p>	<i>Performs well</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> A larger area to the west is covered by Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding). There is also a Conservation Area more centrally within Hadlow which includes Hadlow Tower and other heritage assets. Large TPO area to the north, with a Historic Park and Garden beyond.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The boundary is considered to be clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map, with the Green Belt boundary following the built-up area, focussed on the main residential settlement. There may be some potential for confusion within the area to the south, where the boundary cuts across open land and trees. There is also an area to the south-west which encompasses a number of buildings, which are included within the Green Belt designation.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> Sporadic development and existing buildings are found within the Green Belt, closer to the built-up area particularly to the south-east and south/south-west. Further out, the land is open in character, with agricultural uses predominating, with some polytunnels in use.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> There is a small area of CP4 Safeguarded Land to the north west. Hadlow College is a Major Developed site in the Green Belt (DLA DPD).</p>	

Hildenborough – (excluding Hilden Park) (Appendix H)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
<p>Hildenborough</p>	<p><u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does help contain the area to a degree, but this is also in conjunction with features such as the strongly evident railway line to the south. The northern 'edge' is perhaps more vulnerable to sprawl, with fewer defining physical features. The area is somewhat mixed therefore and thus has been categorised as performing moderately.</p>	<p><i>Performs moderately</i></p>

	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Alongside the Green Belt designation, wooded areas prevents merging of the built-up areas, and to the south other features including woodland and the railway line do provide a buffer.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area retains a rural feel with open fields, forming a patchwork to the north; to the south other features including woodland and the railway line do provide a buffer.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> A Historic Park and Garden lies within the Green Belt and abuts a Conservation Area which extends into the built-up area. Views into this area from the Green Belt are obtainable from Stocks Green Road.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> There are some areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding) evident. There is also a Conservation Area to the north-west. TPO areas and Ancient Woodland also evident.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The boundary is considered to be clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map, with the Green Belt boundary following the major built-up areas.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A mixed landscape but generally open fields without heavily managed arable land. The railway line introduces an urbanising feature but other development has been limited.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	

West Malling (Appendix I)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
West Malling	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does help contain the area to the west, as it runs along the built form edge and presents visual containment and clear definition in this area.	<i>Performs well</i>

	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Since Kings Hill has expanded, separation has been reduced to a degree. There has been only sporadic development within the Green Belt.</p>	<p><i>Performs moderately</i></p>
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area retains a rural feel with open fields; the Green Belt does form a connection to the wider countryside to the west.</p>	<p><i>Performs well</i></p>
	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> West Malling is a historic town, much of which is designated as a Conservation Area, with the High Street accommodating a significant number of Listed Buildings. The historic eastern side of the town, where the majority of the Conservation Area can be found, does not contain Green Belt. To the western side, the Green Belt plays a role in providing a setting for the Conservation Area (and Historic Park and Garden Areas). The area is somewhat mixed therefore and thus has been categorised as performing moderately.</p>	<p><i>Performs moderately</i></p>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The majority of the town is designated as a Conservation Area. To the north of the town and to the east is an area at high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3). Large TPO area to the south.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The current boundary of the Green Belt located to the west is considered to be well defined and clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map, following closely the route of the built-up area and St Leonards Street.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A generally open landscape with open fields and a lack of urbanising features – a typical rural landscape. Thick vegetation serves to block views from various points.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	

5. Assessment - Other Rural Settlements

5.1 Other Rural Settlements

Wateringbury (Appendix J)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Watering-bury	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the built-up area and largest concentration of development, which is focussed along the main roads leading to Maidstone and Tonbridge. The Green Belt does therefore help visually to contain the developed area, but in conjunction with some dense field boundaries and trees which help provide a natural buffer. There are some smaller areas of development washed over by the Green Belt designation, including the area around and including The Orpines, located to the east of the settlement.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> The nearest settlements (Mereworth and Kings Hill) are a distance away. Nettlestead (within the confines of Maidstone Borough Council) is located to the south-west, which is closer in proximity and there are fewer physical features here to help prevent/control any merging.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The wider area retains a rural feel with open fields and views of the countryside; the Green Belt does form a connection to the wider countryside.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The open landscape does provide a setting around the more historic core of the village, however views in and out of this part of the settlement are blocked by existing buildings, gardens and vegetation. To the north the Green Belt could be considered to provide a setting for the Historic Park and Garden although hedge boundaries provide definition here and there are no public views.	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> Within the settlement the main designation is Conservation Area. To the south, areas at risk of flooding (medium and high risk) can be found, with the River Medway located here. Ancient Woodland to the north.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The parish/Council boundary provides a clear 'cut off' for the Green Belt to the south. Otherwise the boundary is considered to be clear and shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map, generally following the built-up area and existing field demarcation. However there are some areas such as at The Orpines which are washed over by Green Belt.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> The area has a rural and Kentish feel with some Oast houses nestled in the countryside. There are few urbanising features away from the settlement, and the area remains generally open in nature.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>
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Birling (Appendix K)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Birling	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary follows the built-up area, and this is clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map. The Green Belt does therefore help contain the developed area and separate it from the open countryside. The AONB washes over the settlement.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area retains a very rural feel with open fields; the Green Belt does form a connection to the wider countryside.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> Much of the settlement is designated as a Conservation Area. The Green Belt does play a role in providing a setting for this area, particularly given the smaller nature of the settlement and the fact the Conservation Area extends	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	into the Green Belt and there are views from footpaths. However the AONB also serves this function.	
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The area is also designated as AONB, and the village has a large Conservation Area.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary is considered to be clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map and generally tightly drawn around the developed area.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A generally open landscape with open fields and a lack of urbanising features – a typical rural and Kentish landscape.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	

Ryarsh (Appendix L)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Ryarsh	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary typically follows tightly the built-up area, and this is clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map. There are a number of farm buildings/larger houses to the east that fall within the Green Belt. The Green Belt does help contain the developed area and separate it from the open countryside. The AONB washes over the settlement.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area retains a rural feel with open fields; the Green Belt does form a connection to the wider countryside.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> Much of the settlement is designated as a Conservation Area. The Green Belt does play a role in providing a setting for this area, particularly given the smaller nature of the settlement and the fact that the Conservation Area extends into the Green Belt. There are some views over	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	buildings within the Conservation Area particularly from the north. However the AONB also serves this function.	
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The area is also designated as AONB. A large area of high risk Flood Zone 3 can be found to the east. Much of the area is designated as a Conservation Area.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the built-up area and is clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map, however there are a number of farm buildings/larger houses adjacent to the core of the village that fall within the Green Belt. However, the village is small, so there is less opportunity for boundary confusion.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A generally open landscape with open fields and a lack of urbanising features – a typical rural, Kentish landscape.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> Ryarsh brickworks is a Major Developed site in the Green Belt (Development Plan).</p>	

Mereworth (Appendix M)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Mereworth	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt surrounds three distinct areas of the village and this separation prevents merging of the village into one large whole. The Green Belt does therefore help contain the areas.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area retains a rural feel with open fields; the Green Belt does form a connection to the wider countryside.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> Much of the village to the south is designated as a Conservation Area and there is a Historic Park and Garden located to the south, abutting the village and extending into the Green Belt. The Green Belt plays a role in providing a setting for this and the wider area. There are	<i>Performs well</i>

	also views from the Green Belt into the village and of Mereworth Church, with its imposing and impressive spire.	
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> The main designation to the south of the village is that of the Conservation Area. A large area of Ancient Woodland to the north.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary is considered to be clearly shown on the Development Plan Proposals Map. There are some areas where the boundary cuts through gardens where there is a lack of physical features, allowing for potential confusion, but generally the definition is considered to be clear.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> There are far reaching views available from roads within the Green Belt looking west and south. From within the village, dense vegetation and existing buildings tend to block views of the surrounding landscape. The land is considered to be generally open in nature with farming uses, and some intensive polytunnels.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> A small area near Alders Wood is safeguarded through the Core Strategy and as a Major Developed site in the Green Belt (DLA DPD).</p>	

Offham (Appendix N)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Offham	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the built form area, which is focused around the village recreation field and along Teston Road. The Green Belt does therefore help contain the developed area and separate it from the more open and somewhat wooded countryside.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area retains a rural feel with open fields; the Green Belt does form a connection to the wider countryside.	<i>Performs well</i>

	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> Part of Offham is a Conservation Area and there are other areas within the Green Belt that are designated as Conservation Areas as well. The Green Belt has a role to play in providing a setting for these areas, facilitating views across the landscape.</p>	<i>Performs well</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> A Local Wildlife Site can be found to the south, and within the settlement there is a large Conservation Area. Larger areas of Ancient Woodland evident.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> There are some areas to the north of the settlement (and to some extent, areas in the south) where the Green Belt boundary appears to cut through woodland and garden land without any physical demarcation or identifiable features.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> The landscape slopes down towards the settlement so there are views obtainable across surrounding lanes and roads. The landscape presents a mixed character; to the west there is an open landfill site and the area is also more wooded, whereas fields are more open in nature to the east and are generally farmed for agricultural purposes.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	

West Peckham (Appendix O)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
West Peckham	<p><u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> Field boundaries, roads and wooded areas help provide some containment to the settlement, which due to its small size appears fairly self-containing. Green Belt serves mainly to assist in respect of this function.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> Due to the small size of the settlement the area visually relates to the wider countryside.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt does play a role in providing a setting for this area, particularly given the smaller nature of the settlement and the fact that the Conservation Area extends into the Green Belt. There are also a number of Listed Buildings contained within this area.</p>	Performs well
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other Designations:</u> Few constraints – a Conservation Area is found covering part of the settlement and extending into the Green Belt. Smaller areas of TPO's, Local Wildlife Sites and Ancient Woodland.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The smaller size of the settlement helps aid the clarity of the boundaries of the Green Belt, which are considered to be clearly defined on the Development Plan Proposals Map.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> The landscape is predominantly farmed. Polytunnels are a common sight and are found mainly to the north. To the south, farming is less intensive and the land remains mainly open.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified near the settlement boundary.</p>	

Trottiscliffe (Appendix P)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Trottiscliffe	<p><u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the built form, and the Green Belt does therefore help contain the developed area and separate it from the open countryside, given there are fewer defining features that help provide this function in themselves.</p>	Performs well
	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area relates closely in character to the wider, surrounding open countryside, however the AONB also</p>	Performs moderately

	has a role to play in this respect.	
	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt does play a role in providing a setting for this area, particularly given the smaller nature of the settlement and the fact that the Conservation Area extends into the Green Belt. There are also a number of Listed Buildings contained within this area. However the AONB also helps serve this function.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> The area is also designated as an AONB, with a large proportion of the settlement being a Conservation Area. To the north and south, Special Areas of Conservation are located. A small area of Ancient Woodland is to the south.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> There are some areas around the settlement where the Green Belt boundary appears to cut through woodland and open garden land with few boundary features. Otherwise, the boundary does focus on the built-up area and the smaller size of the settlement aids in providing clarity.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> There are only a few clusters of building in the landscape (mainly related to farming, although some houses can be found) and thus the area retains an open feel.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	

Wrotham (Appendix Q)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Wrotham	<p><u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> One of the larger settlements, the Green Belt, in conjunction with the AONB designation, does help to contain the area visually. The motorway networks do assist in this function by providing clear physical markers.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Alongside the Green Belt designation, existing features and boundaries also assist (for example the M26 motorway which separates the area from Borough Green).</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	The AONB also has a role to play here.	
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The area, particularly to the west, relates closely in character to the wider, surrounding open countryside. The AONB also has a role to play in this respect. The existing motorway network has a function in this respect to the north, east and south, acting as a clear, readily recognisable boundary. The area is somewhat mixed therefore and thus has been categorised as performing moderately.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Conservation Area extends into the Green Belt, however the AONB also helps serve this function.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> The area is also part of an AONB. There are two Conservation Areas present; a small area to the north, and a larger area to the south-east which covers a large part of the settlement in this location and extends into the Green Belt. A Local Wildlife Site can be found to the north and north-west.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the built form edge and area of safeguarded land, as well as Kemsing Road and Borough Green Road.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> The landscape surrounding the settlement is open in character, comprising large fields, which in some locations provide for extensive views across the AONB. The motorway network cuts through the landscape to the north, south and east and does introduce a more urbanising feature.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> A small area of safeguarded land (Policy CP4) to the north.</p>	

Ightham (Appendix R)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Ightham	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The situation is unusual in that a large area of lower density developed land south of the main settlement is included within the Green Belt. To this end, the settlement is already considered to have a dispersed pattern. The AONB, road network and woodland areas may help serve this function more successfully.	Limited or no contribution
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.	Performs moderately
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> This function is relevant to the north part of the settlement, currently excluded from the Green Belt. The AONB, road to the west and woodland areas to the east help provide containment and prevent encroachment. The area is somewhat mixed therefore and thus has been categorised as performing moderately.	Performs moderately
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The large Conservation Area extends significantly into the Green Belt from the built-up area, the AONB however also helps provide a setting and function.	Performs moderately
	Other Factors <u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> There is an AONB designation surrounding the area, although the area around the low density housing to the south is excluded from this designation. Immediately around and within the settlement the main designations are that of a Conservation Area and areas at high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3). Smaller areas of TPO's and Ancient Woodland can also be found. <u>Boundaries:</u> The Green Belt boundary, on the face of it appears confusing. Whilst some developed areas which are less wooded are excluded from the Green Belt, other low density developed areas to the south, nestled within existing woodland (such as Nutfields) are washed over by the Green Belt designation. Where the Green Belt boundary does abut the settlement, the boundary generally follows the edge of gardens and roads. <u>Openness:</u> A highly wooded area in general which serves to block	

	<p>visibility and views. The area retains a rural/semi – rural feel.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>
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Platt - including Wrotham Heath and Crouch (Appendix S)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Platt (incl. Wrotham Heath and Crouch)	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt does play a role in this respect, but in conjunction with other features including existing woodland, the railway line to the north and road networks. To the east, in particular, existing green infrastructure comprising heavily wooded areas provide a strong buffer that helps to control potential sprawl.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> At Wrotham and Crouch, the settlements are small and considered to be self-contained and detached from neighbouring areas. At Platt, part of the settlement adjoins Borough Green, but the land around this area is well separated by woodland areas and road networks.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The Green Belt does play a role in this respect, but in conjunction with other features including existing woodland, the railway line to the north and road networks.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> Both Platt and Crouch have a number of Listed Buildings, some with curtilages included within or backing onto the Green Belt. Two large Conservation Areas are found at Platt but views can be restricted by hedgerow and bunds. However the AONB also helps serves this function.	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> Platt – other designations include Conservation Area, Ancient Woodland and TPO's. At Crouch there are a handful of protected TPO trees and groups, with Local Wildlife Sites and Conservation Area to the west. At Wrotham Heath, to the west some protected woodland groups of trees can be found, and Local Wildlife sites.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> Platt adjoins Borough Green with the Green Belt boundary generally following the built-up area.</p> <p>Wrotham Heath is a small area which aids in the clarity of the boundaries.</p> <p>At Crouch, again the size of the settlement and containment of the area assists in providing clarity, however some garden areas are included within the Green Belt.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> To the east, a heavily wooded landscape prevents far reaching views. In other areas the land is more open, with few urbanising features. A generally rural feel across the area.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>
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Plaxtol (Appendix T)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Plaxtol	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The Green Belt boundary generally follows the built form boundary. The Green Belt does therefore help visually contain the developed area. Containment is additionally provided by existing tree belts.	<i>Performs well</i>
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away with only sporadic development within the Green Belt.	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The surrounding area is very rural in nature and the area does form a connection to the wider countryside on all sides.	<i>Performs well</i>

	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Green Belt has a role to play in relation to the setting of the large Conservation Area to the west (which extends into the built-up area), which also incorporates Fairlawne Park/Estate and a number of Listed Buildings. However the AONB also plays a role here.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> Part of the settlement is included within a larger Conservation Area that extends into the countryside and to Shipbourne and the Fairlawne Estate. The wider area is also designated as an AONB, and there are areas at medium and high risk of flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3) to the east.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The settlement is fairly contained and concentrated along The Street, in a linear fashion. The Green Belt boundary does generally accord with the built-up area, with only small scale and one-off development/buildings within the surrounding land.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> An open, rural landscape with a patchwork of fields and woodland areas.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified in the immediate vicinity.</p>	

Addington and Addington Clearway (Appendix U)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Addington and Addington Clearway	<p><u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> Addington Clearway in particular has buildings and lower density areas that are included within the Green Belt, located close to or adjacent to the main settlements. Whilst the Green Belt plays a function for those parts that are excluded from the designation, there has already been some sprawl to a certain extent.</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>
	<p><u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Alongside the Green Belt designation, Addington is separated from nearby settlements by woodland, a golf course and the road network. Addington Clearway, whilst close to Wrotham Heath, maintains adequate separation through existing physical features including dense</p>	<i>Performs moderately</i>

	woodland and the A20.	
	<p><u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> As well as the Green Belt, there are other physical features that help protect the countryside from encroachment – these include the road to the south of Addington Clearway and woodland to the north, and at Addington, the road to the north and south does help provide some demarcation.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p><u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> The Conservation Area at Addington extends into the Green Belt which in itself may afford some protection in respect of the setting of the area. No function in this respect at Addington Clearway. As the function is somewhat mixed in this location, the area is categorised as performing moderately.</p>	Performs moderately
	<p>Other Factors</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> At Addington Clearway, other designations are landscape based, with larger groups of TPO's to the north. There is an area at high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3). At Addington, there is a large Conservation Area to the west with some Ancient Monument sites, and a Local Wildlife Site. To the south, an area at high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3) can be found.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> The boundary generally accords with the larger built-up areas, although there are a few buildings washed over by the Green Belt around Addington, and at Addington Clearway, to the south-east in particular.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> The Golf Club makes up a large portion of the character of the area, which is typically open, with some more densely wooded areas. Views across the land are restricted in places by dense/tall tree cover.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>	

Golden Green (Appendix V)

Parcel/Area	Overview	Assessment
Golden Green	<u>Check unrestricted sprawl:</u> The boundary is fairly tightly drawn where shown, however there is development adjoining the boundaries and dotted along Three Elm Lane which is washed over by the Green Belt and which provides the settlement with a dispersed pattern. To this end, the settlement is already considered to have a varied and scattered grain.	Limited or no contribution
	<u>Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:</u> Other settlements are some distance away. The two areas which make up Golden Green are 'linked' visually via dispersed development along the main road.	Performs moderately
	<u>Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment:</u> The surrounding character is very rural in nature and the area does link to the wider countryside.	Performs well
	<u>Preserve setting and special character of historic towns:</u> Not considered to be a function of the Green Belt in this location.	Limited or no contribution
	Other Factors <u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> The main constraint is that of flood risk originating from the River Bourne, which extends around the settlement and across part of the built-up area to the south-east. This includes areas at both medium and high risk of flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3). <u>Boundaries:</u> The settlement is somewhat dispersed along Three Elm Lane, with some development included within the Green Belt (most noticeably for example to the west). The boundary does accord with the more dense built-up area, and is considered to be clearly defined on the Development Plan Proposals Map, however the scattered pattern of built form may cause some confusion. <u>Openness:</u> A rural, open landscape with a lack of urbanising features. <u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.	

6. Overview - Areas washed over by Green Belt

Stansted, Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green, Shipbourne and Fairseat (Appendix W)

	Overview
Stansted	<p><u>Character:</u> Stansted is a small hamlet located to the north of the borough. It is entirely washed over by Green Belt. The main area is intersected by road networks comprising typically narrow rural lanes. There are larger properties located here, of which many are detached.</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> Part of the settlement is also designated as a Conservation Area, with swathes of Ancient Woodland located in the surroundings. A number of Public Rights of Way run through the settlement.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> There are no boundaries as the Green Belt washes over the entire settlement.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A very rural landscape, with no urbanising features. Areas of woodland found within the countryside.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>

	Overview
Snoll Hatch	<p><u>Character:</u> Snoll Hatch is a small collection of mainly residential buildings to the south-west of East Peckham. It is entirely washed over by Green Belt. The area is intersected by Addlestead Road and Snoll Hatch Road.</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> Snoll Hatch is designated as a Conservation Area. There are also Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding) found in this area.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> There are no boundaries as the Green Belt washes over the entire settlement.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A very rural landscape to the south, with areas of woodland and the River Medway.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>

	Overview
Dunks Green	<p><u>Character:</u> A very small hamlet comprising of a very limited number of houses, typically semi-detached or detached in form, completely washed over by Green Belt. The area is surrounded by farmed fields and woodland areas.</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> The area is also designated as AONB, with a number of Public Rights of Way extending into the area to the west.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> There are no boundaries as the Green Belt washes over the entire settlement.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A very rural landscape, with no urbanising features. Areas of woodland found within the countryside.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>

	Overview
Shipbourne	<p><u>Character:</u> Shipbourne is a small hamlet with limited development of a dispersed pattern.</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> The area is also designated as AONB, with Conservation Areas, Ancient Woodland, Local Wildlife Sites and TPO's. An area of Flood Zone 2 and 3 (medium and high risk of flooding) is located within the settlement and a number of Public Rights of Way can also be found.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> There are no boundaries as the Green Belt washes over the entire settlement.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A very rural landscape, with no urbanising features. A generally open character. Wooded landscape found in the surroundings.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>

	Overview
Fairseat	<p><u>Character:</u> Fairseat is a small hamlet located to the north of the borough. It is entirely washed over by Green Belt. The main area is intersected by road networks comprising typically narrow rural lanes. There is a mix of properties found in the locality, including terraced and detached houses.</p> <p><u>Surrounding Constraints/Other designations:</u> A large part of the settlement is designated as a Conservation Area.</p> <p><u>Boundaries:</u> There are no boundaries as the Green Belt washes over the entire settlement.</p> <p><u>Openness:</u> A very rural landscape, with no urbanising features. Areas of woodland found within the countryside.</p> <p><u>Future Commitments/Key Extant Planning Permissions:</u> None identified.</p>

7. Summary and Mapping

Nb. Stansted, Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green, Fairseat and Shipbourne do not form part of this assessment, as they are washed over by Green Belt.

7.1 Criteria 1: Check unrestricted sprawl

Performing well	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO5, TO6, Kings Hill, Snodland
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> East Peckham and Hale Street, Hadlow, West Malling
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Birling, Ryarsh, Mereworth, Offham, Trottiscliffe, Plaxtol

Performing moderately	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO1, TO2, TO3, Leybourne
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> Borough Green, Hildenborough
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Watlingtonbury, West Peckham, Wrotham, Platt (including Wrotham Heath and Crouch), Addington and Addington Clearway

Limited or no Contribution	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO4
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> None
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Ightham, Golden Green

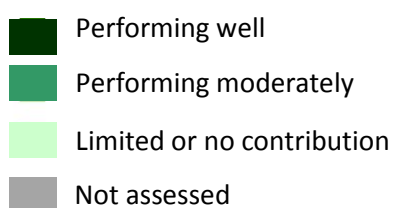
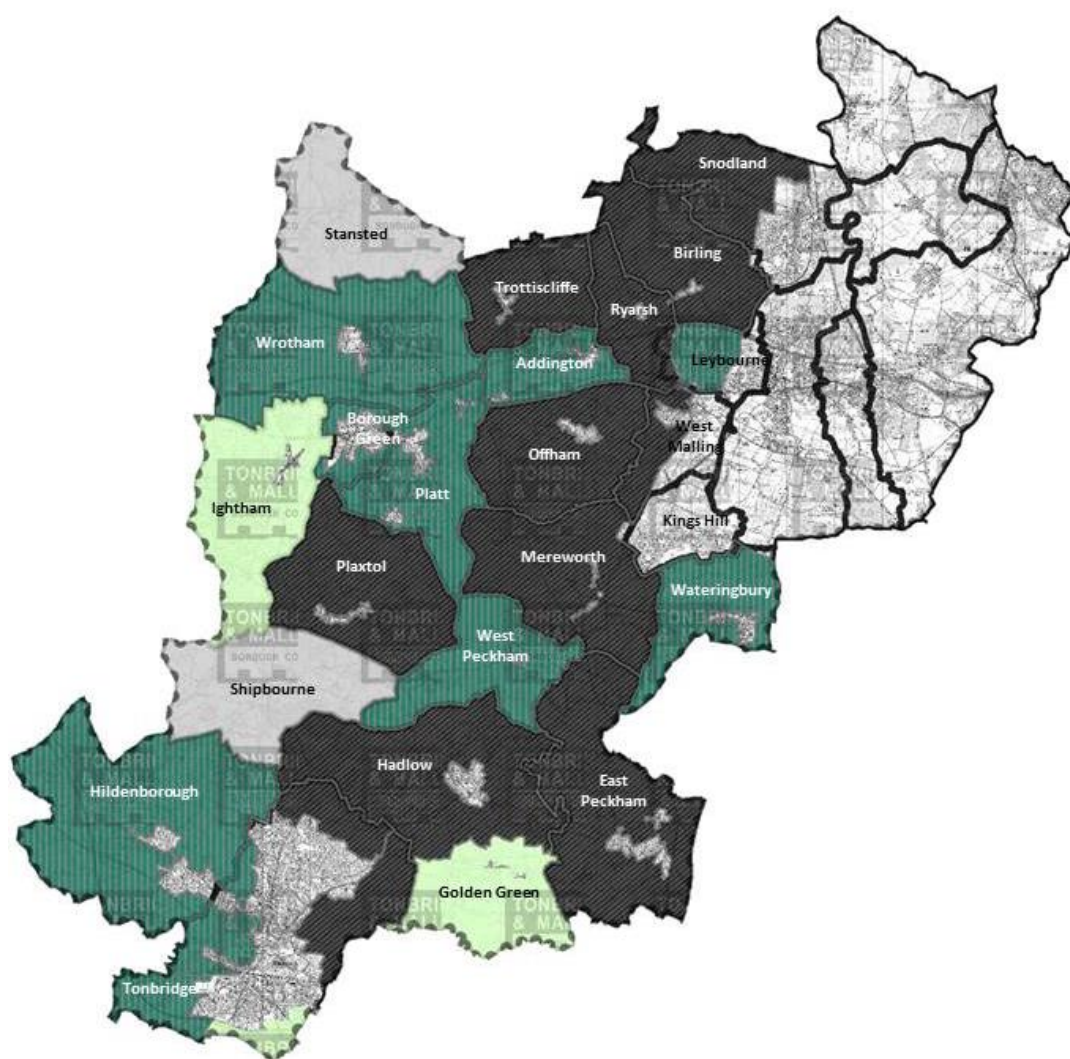


Figure 5 – Assessment against Criteria 1. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 OS 100023300. NTS.

Nb –Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green and Fairseat are not highlighted individually on this map.

7.2 Criteria 2: Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another

Performing well	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> None
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> None
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> None

Performing moderately	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO1, TO2, TO3, TO4, TO5 and TO6, Kings Hill, Leybourne, Snodland
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> Borough Green, East Peckham and Hale Street, Hadlow, Hildenborough, West Malling
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Watlingtonbury, Birling, Ryarsh, Mereworth, Offham, West Peckham, Trottiscliffe, Wrotham, Ightham, Platt (including Wrotham Heath and Crouch), Plaxtol, Addington and Addington Clearway, Golden Green

Limited or no Contribution	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> None
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> None
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> None

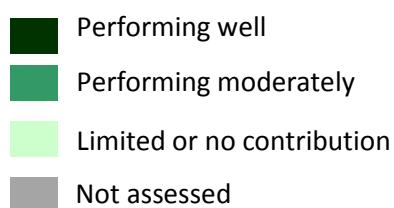
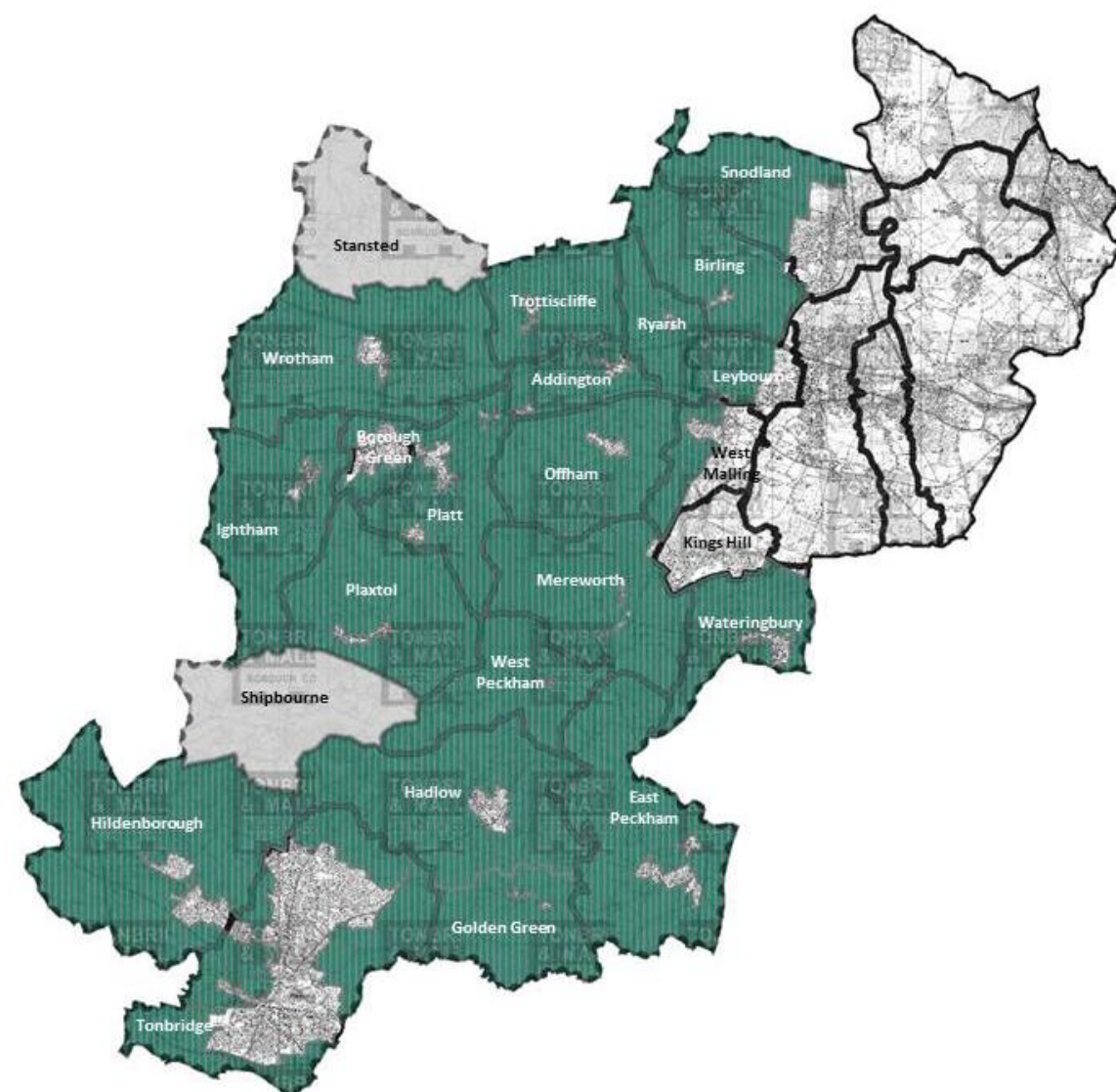


Figure 6 – Assessment against Criteria 2. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 OS 100023300. NTS.

Nb – Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green and Fairseat are not highlighted individually on this map.

7.3 Criteria 3: Assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment

Performing well	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO5 and TO6, Kings Hill, Snodland
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> West Malling
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Watlingtonbury, Birling, Ryarsh, Mereworth, Offham, Plaxtol, Golden Green

Performing moderately	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO1, TO2, TO3 and TO4, Leybourne
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> Borough Green, Hadlow, Hildenborough, East Peckham and Hale Street
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> West Peckham, Trottiscliffe, Wrotham, Addington and Addington Clearway, Ightham, Platt (including Wrotham Heath and Crouch)

Limited or no Contribution	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> None
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> None
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> None

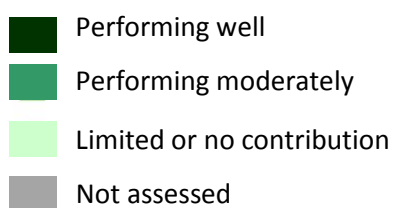
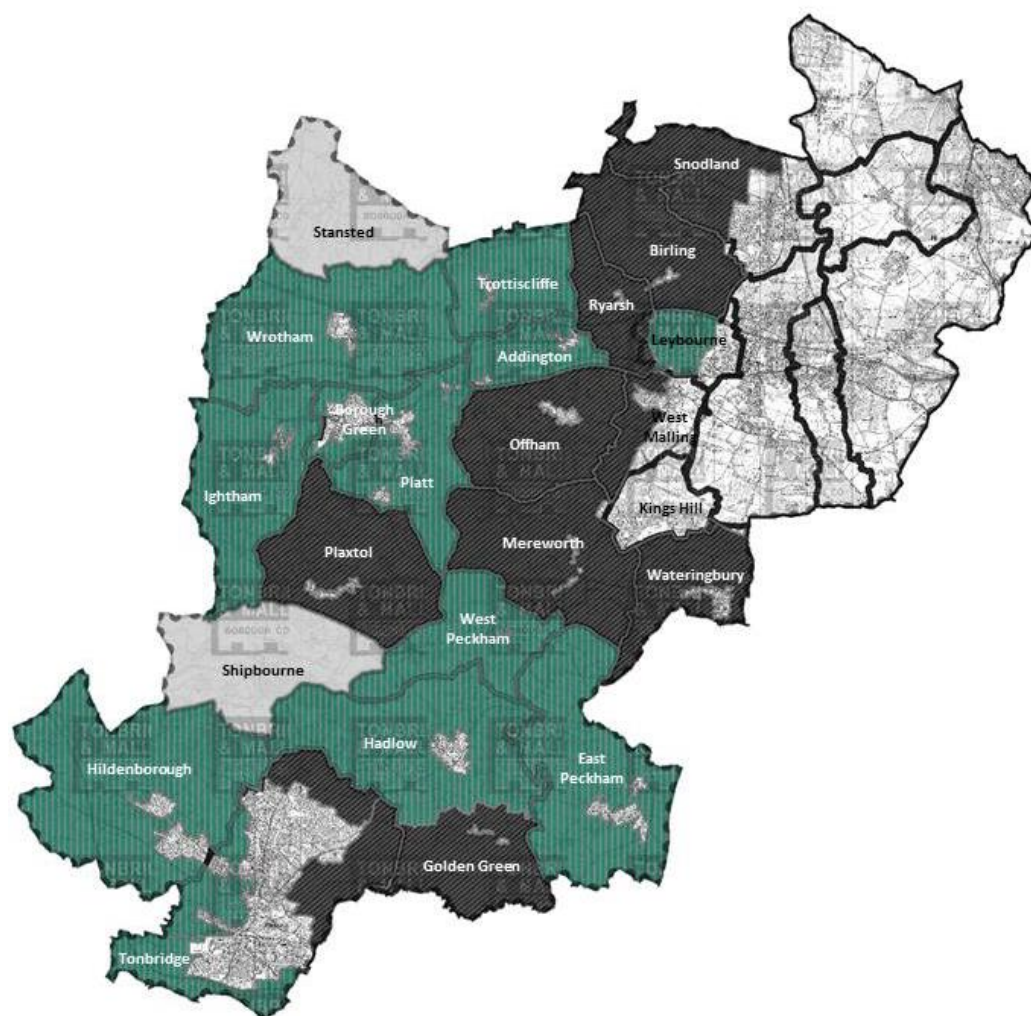


Figure 7 – Assessment against Criteria 3. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 OS 100023300. NTS.

Nb –Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green and Fairseat are not highlighted individually on this map.

7.4 Criteria 4: Preserve setting and special character of historic towns

Performing well	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> Kings Hill
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> Hadlow, Hildenborough, East Peckham and Hale Street
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Mereworth, Offham, West Peckham

Performing moderately	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO2, TO3, Leybourne
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> Borough Green, West Malling
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Birling, Ryarsh, Watlington, Trottiscliffe, Addington and Addington Clearway, Wrotham, Plaxtol, Ightham, Platt (including Wrotham Heath and Crouch)

Limited or no Contribution	Area or Parcel
	<u>Urban Areas:</u> TO1, TO4, TO5 and TO6, Snodland
	<u>Rural Service Centres:</u> None
	<u>Other Rural Settlements:</u> Golden Green

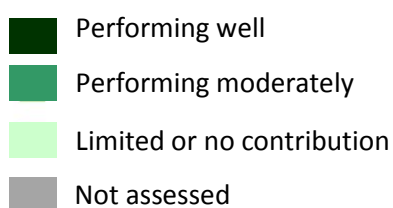
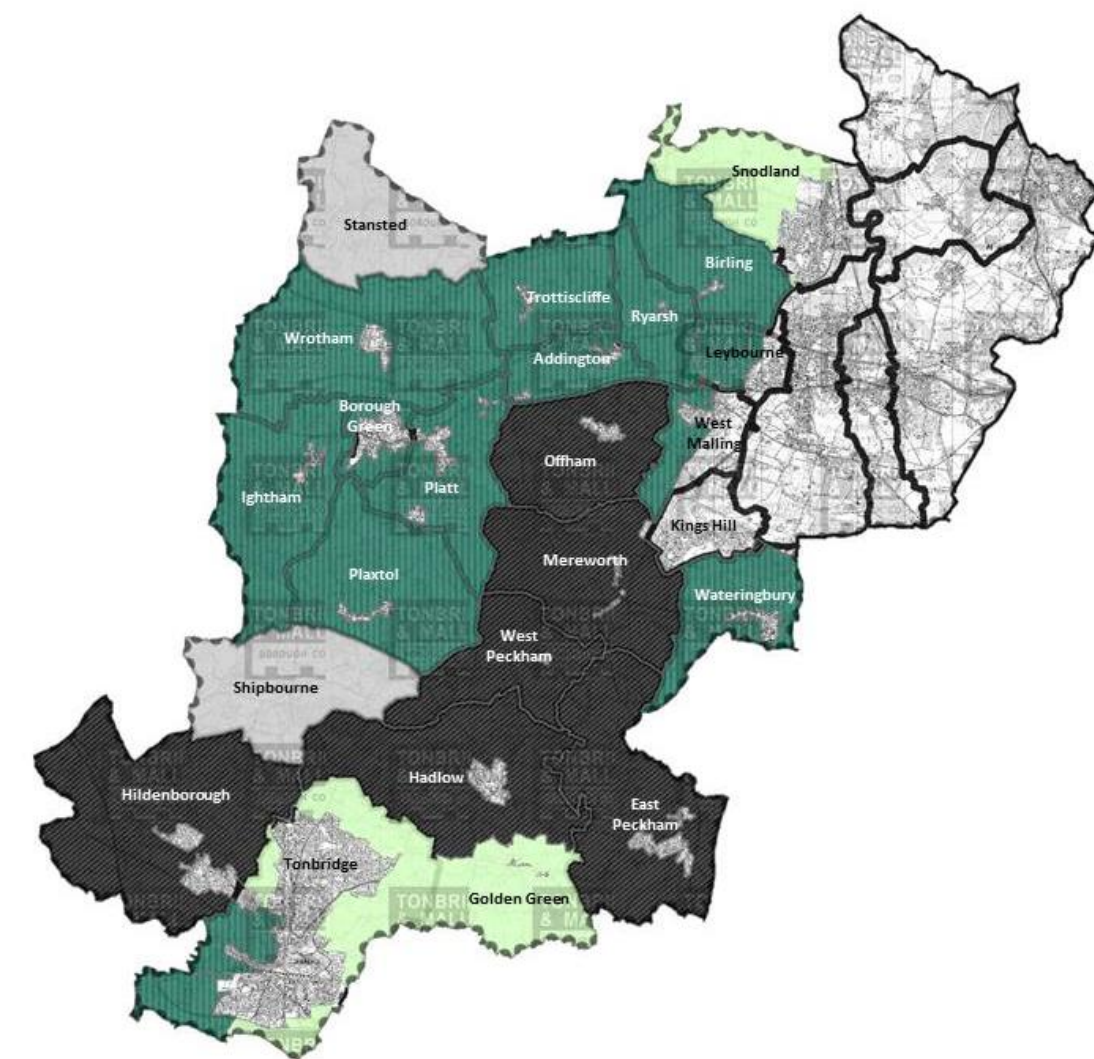


Figure 8 – Assessment against Criteria 4. Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 OS 100023300. NTS.

Nb –Snoll Hatch, Dunks Green and Fairseat are not highlighted individually on this map.

8. Next Steps

Overview

- 8.1.1 The study has provided an overarching assessment of the Green Belt designation within the borough of Tonbridge & Malling, and has provided a 'snapshot' of the current situation, other factors and constraints.
- 8.1.2 The assessment carried out has been made at Officer-level and has also been subject to peer review in the form of team workshops, meetings and discussion. Rather than using a scoring or points system, a colour coding and hatch pattern approach has been taken for simplicity. To undertake the review, the borough has been subdivided into parish/study areas and then further parcels where required. Tables and Appendices including mapping have been used so that content can be presented clearly.

Next Steps

- 8.1.3 The Green Belt Study has focussed on the criteria contained within the NPPF, and whilst constraints and other designations have been touched upon, an appraisal has not been carried out against sustainability objectives for example. Further study options include:

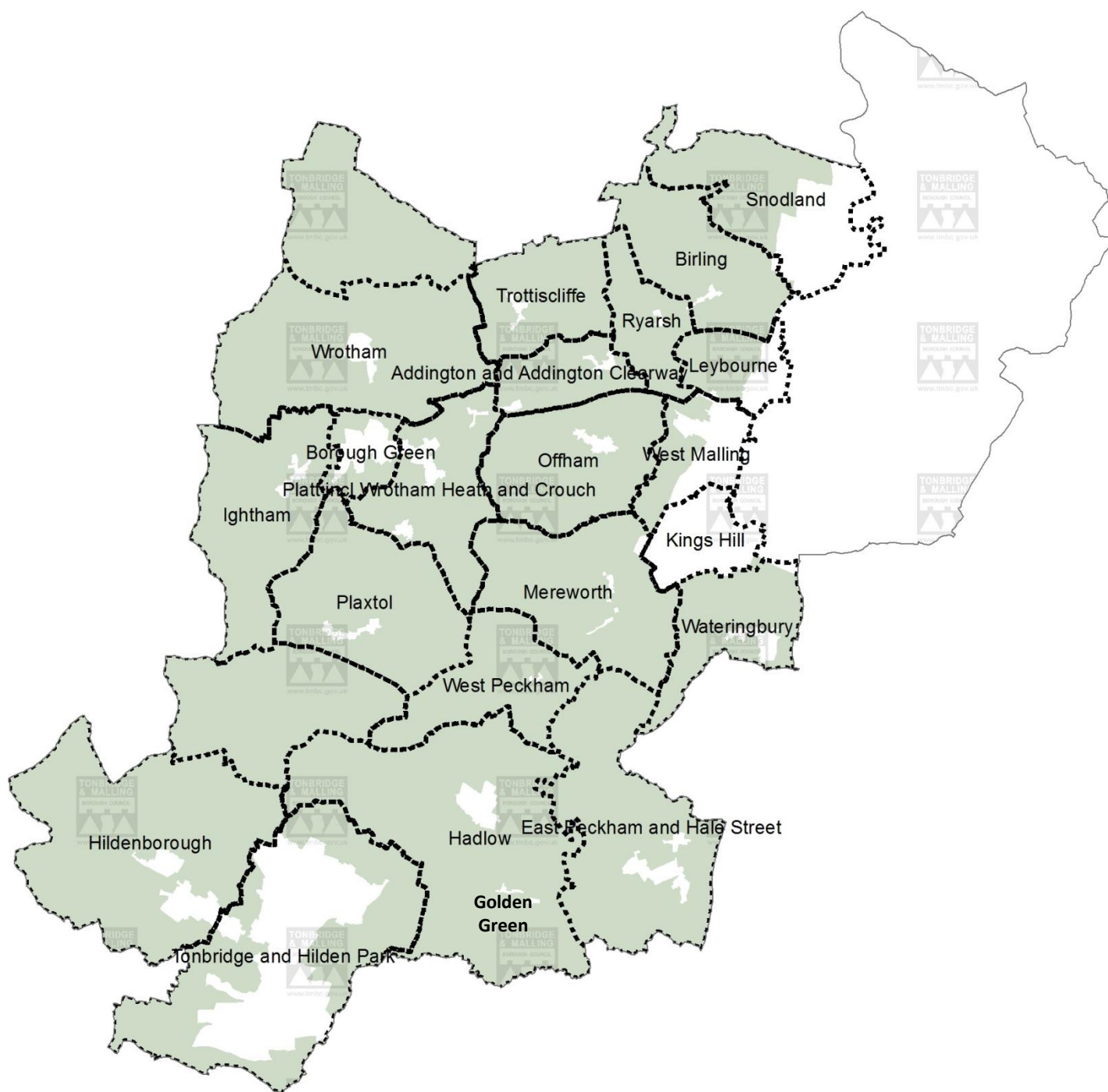
1 – Review the Study in light of other emerging evidence, and outcomes from consultation exercises in respect of the Local Plan.

2 - As part of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development (paragraph 84 in the NPPF), more detailed study into land identified as having a limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt could be carried out, so that specific areas can be studied at a closer scale.

3 – As part of the Local Plan and collection of evidence, more detailed study of those areas performing well could be carried out, in order to consider ways of strengthening/protecting the designation/boundaries where assessed as being successful/clear, perhaps by improving access for recreation for example or by meeting other objectives.

Appendices



Study Areas



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map scale: NTS

Legend

-  Study areas/parish boundaries
-  Green Belt

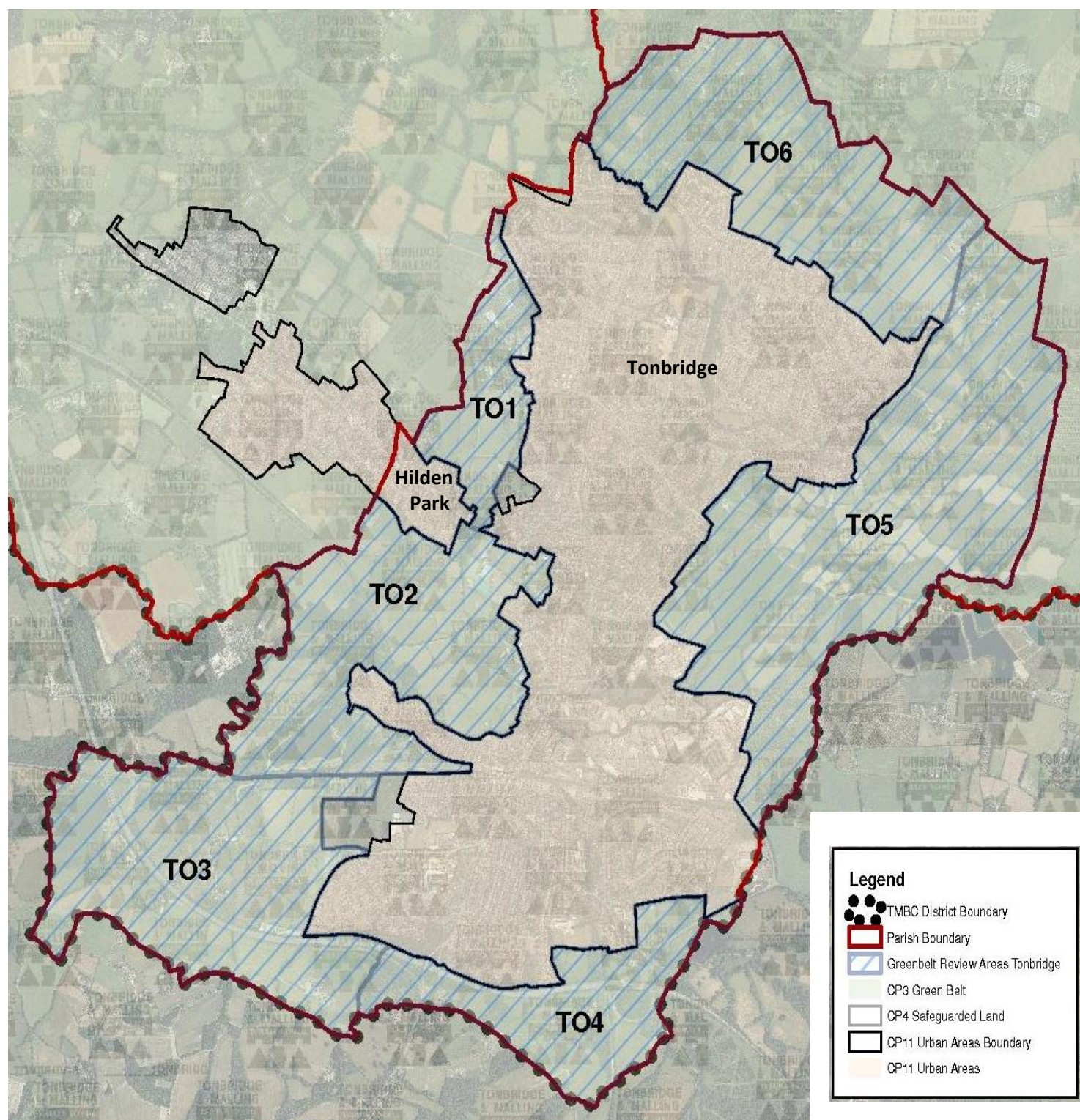
Appendix A

Tonbridge and Hilden Park

Tonbridge and Hilden Park



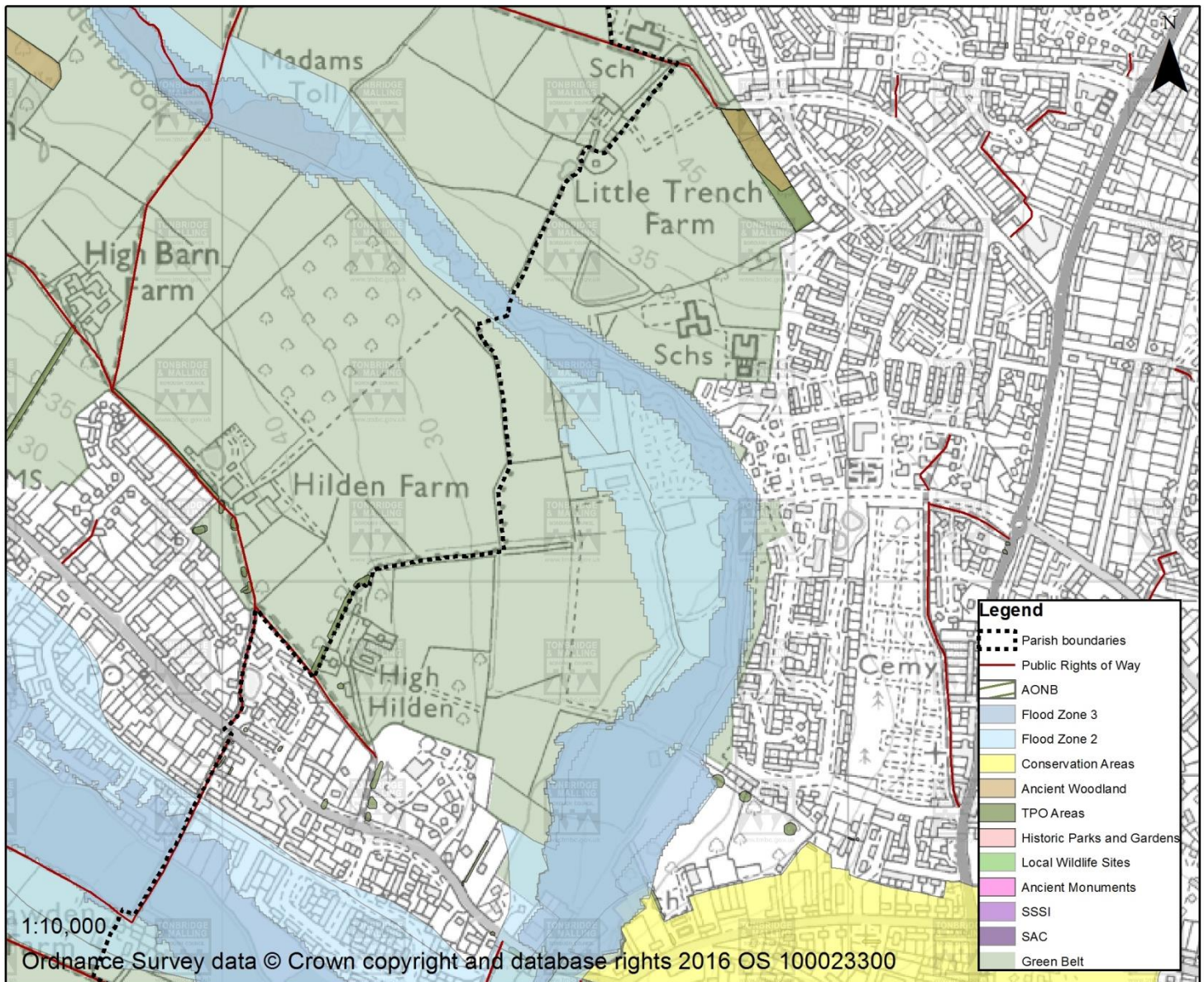
map scale: NTS



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Nb: The majority of agricultural land in this area is graded Good to Moderate (Agricultural Land Classification map London and the South East (ALC007) - Natural England), with some smaller areas graded Very Good or Poor.

Parcel TO1



Overview – Character and Features

The area is generally flat in nature, with hedgerow and tree planting located sporadically within the landscape. A commercial nursery is located to the north, abutted by a TPO woodland group. A school and football club can also be found here, with some existing buildings located within the Green Belt near Hilden Park.

Parcel Rationale

A self contained area due to abutting parish boundaries, the location of the road to the south, and the Green belt boundary, which lends itself to independent appraisal.

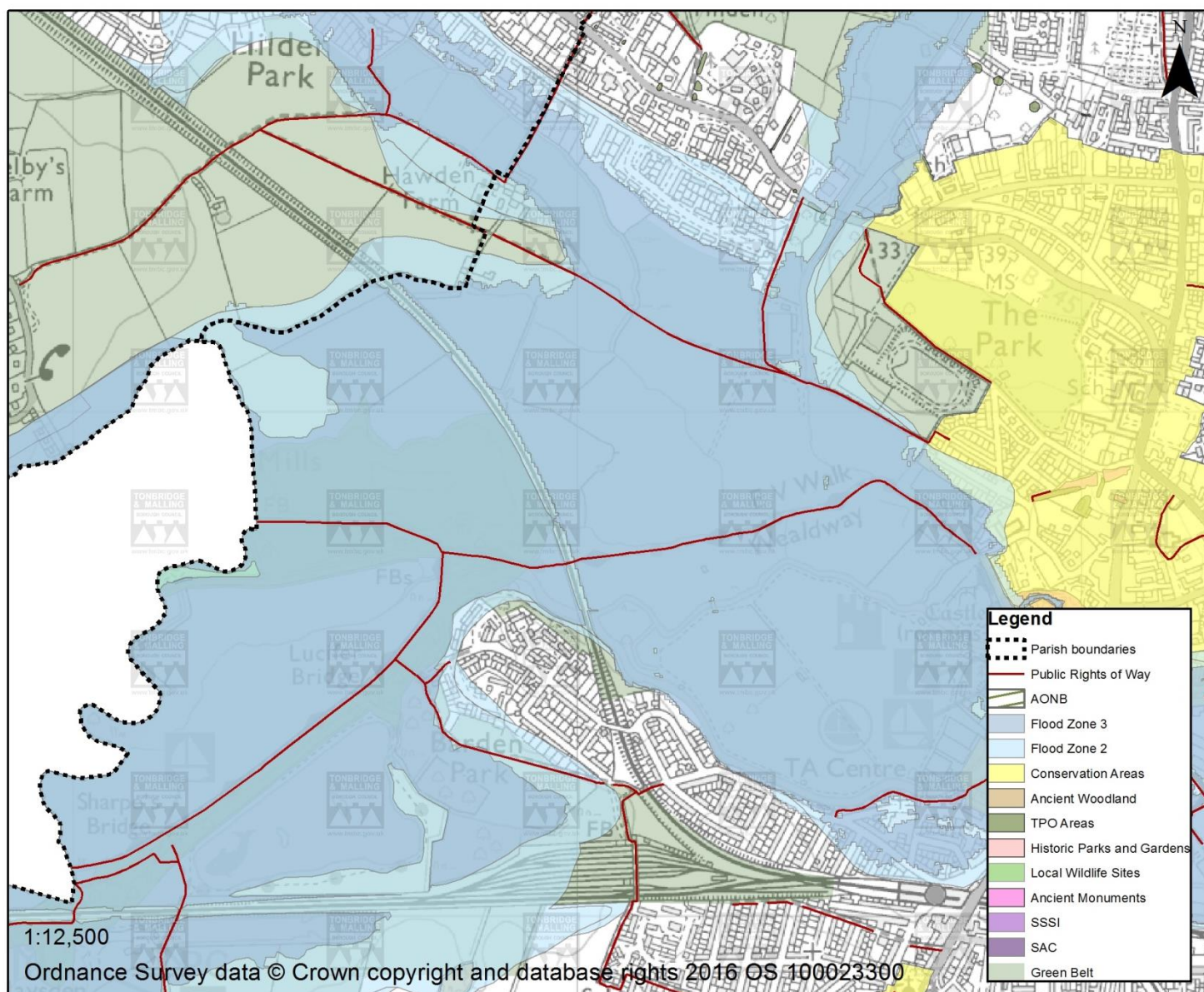
Openness and Visibility

Boundary hedging, planting and existing built form tend to block views from within Tonbridge from a pedestrian viewpoint. The land is considered to be generally open, particularly to the south of the parcel.

Boundaries and Definition

In this location, an area of safeguarded land can be found. Elsewhere the Green Belt boundary typically follows the built form edges, however there have been some incursions in the Green Belt, as described.

Parcel T02



Overview – Character and Features

A varied character of open fields, farmed landscape, large water bodies and woodlands. The area is cut through by a railway line and the River Medway. A network of fields can be found, linked by hedgerow bunds. Closer to the existing built form edge of Tonbridge and to the east of Hilden Park, the land has a recreational feel, with playing fields and children's play spaces.

Parcel Rationale

The railway line, alongside existing parish boundaries, provides a clear parcel between the areas around Tonbridge.

Openness and Visibility

Public Rights of Way extend across the area and around the largest water body. Views across the Green Belt are achievable in many places due to the area's topography.

Boundaries and Definition

The Green Belt boundary travels around the built form edges in this location, however in places this cuts across woodland and gardens, which have less recognisable features.