

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Green Belt Review Study

Part 1 Report: Strategic Review

Part 2 Report: Settlement and Site Appraisal



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Amec Foster Wheeler Environment
& Infrastructure UK Limited





Report for

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Document revisions

No.	Details	Date





Executive summary

Background and Purpose of this Report

1. This Report has been produced as part of the Local Plan evidence base for Staffordshire Moorlands Council to review the Green Belt across the District. The study is being undertaken in two stages: a strategic review of Green Belt purposes (this document) and a more detailed site-based assessment of potential land which could be considered for review of the Green Belt boundaries. The study offers a professional, objective judgement on the role of the Green Belt in Staffordshire Moorlands District, as measured against the purposes set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF (paragraph 79) establishes that: *“The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”* Green Belts serve 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. The NPPF is clear (paragraph 83) that, *“once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan”*. However, the NPPF is equally clear (paragraph 14) that *“Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs...unless specific policies...indicate development should be restricted”*. This Review relates to the preparation of the current Local Plan although further reviews of the Green Belt (both strategic and local) could be required as part of the preparation of subsequent Local Plans.
3. This Study is in two parts. Part 1 is strategic in nature and reviews the contribution of land to Green Belt purposes as set out in the NPPF. Part 2 considers specific sites proposed for development and land with potential for release, and makes recommendations on land which could be considered for release.

Assessment Methodology

4. A summary of the key stages in the Part 1 methodology is as follows:
 - Identification of initial Green Belt parcels using OS maps, aerial photos and site visits, with strong boundaries (typically roads) being used to define boundaries of the parcel.
 - Assessment of the contribution (significant contribution, contribution, limited contribution) of each parcel against the five Green Belt purposes as set out in the NPPF. The Green Belt qualities of ‘openness’ and ‘permanence’ (as interpreted through firm boundaries) are key criteria.
 - Record the results of the assessment using a matrix and a three-level colouring, with an overall colouring assessment applied to each parcel.
 - Consideration is given to possible areas for inclusion in the Green Belt using the same assessment criteria (i.e. potential role in preventing sprawl, encroachment, merger and protecting the setting of historic towns) that were used for assessing the existing Green Belt.

- The most appropriate detailed Green Belt boundaries cannot be identified until the level of development, likely densities, sustainable development considerations and land take is known and until other elements of the evidence base have been considered.
5. The results of this exercise are recorded in a matrix which sets out how each parcel meets or does not meet each Green Belt purpose, including an overall valuation of contribution to Green Belt purposes. In light of the analysis some of the parcels might be revisited as well as redefining boundaries of the parcels if, for example, a finer-grained analysis was needed. Particular attention is paid to both inner and outer boundaries of the Green Belt. Within each parcel, following from the matrix, a succinct colouring system is used as the ‘headline’ supported by narrative justifying the assessment.

The Green Belt Purposes Colouring Assessment

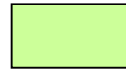
Parcel makes a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes:



Parcel makes a contribution to Green Belt purposes:



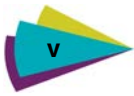
parcel makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes:



6. Dark green indicates a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes and amendment of Green Belt boundaries is unlikely to be appropriate, although there could be modest adjustments to boundaries to create a more logical settlement envelope for example. Mid green indicates that the purposes are partially being fulfilled and that the boundary could be revised if other factors so indicate. Light green indicates that there is a relatively limited contribution to Green Belt purposes and these areas could be considered for Green Belt release if desired and subject to other considerations. This approach is considered to be more favourable than a complex scoring system that gives different weightings to different purposes. However, for all colours any proposals for the release of land from the Green Belt, of whatever scale, in accordance with the NPPF, would have to be justified through ‘Exceptional Circumstances’, or through ‘Very Special Circumstances’ if Green Belt status is to remain. The colouring assessment includes a commentary and discussion of each parcel, and the colouring for each parcel then presents the overall conclusion of this assessment process. Land that could be added to the Green Belt i.e. that might improve the function of the Green Belt or could be part of setting long term boundaries is also considered as part of the assessment exercise using Green Belt purposes to test their potential function.

Study Results

7. The character of the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands is diverse, reflecting the sharp gradient from the generally well-defined urban edge of Stoke-on-Trent to what are relatively remote rural areas. In this respect the Green Belt serves its primary function of helping to contain the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation, in particular creating a clearly defined separation between town and country on its eastern fringes.
8. The maintenance of openness is the principal function of Green Belt policy and in this sense the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands has been clearly successful, with a clear check made on urban sprawl and encroachment into open countryside which is likely to occur in the absence of the policy. As such, the rural character of the District has been maintained, critically the largely open character of the countryside and the separation of villages and towns.



9. More widely, the whole of the Green Belt is considered to be performing a clear function in respect of the various aspects of five strategic Green Belt purposes as identified in the NPPF. Figure ES1 illustrates the overall contribution to Green Belt purposes of the parcels surveyed showing a broad pattern of:

- A Significant Contribution made by land in the immediate fringe of the conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent maintaining a clear distinction between town and country, and land between Congleton and Biddulph where there is danger of merger along the A527 corridor.
- A Contribution made by all other parcels, for varying reasons but principally protecting the openness of very accessible countryside by preventing incremental urbanisation.
- No land identified as overall making a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes.

There are no parcels which do not make at least a contribution to one or more of the purposes of Green Belt, and most perform multiple functions.

10. In summary, the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands District:

- Limits the encroachment of the conurbation into Staffordshire Moorlands District.
- Maintains the rural character and settlement pattern of the District, particularly in the proximity of the conurbation.
- Limits sprawl along the main transport corridors through the eastern part of the District, thereby helping to maintain the identity of settlements situated along these routes.
- Contains growth of the principal settlements of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle, thereby maintaining their relative compactness and rural setting.
- Makes a contribution to Green Belt purposes either singly or in multiple, reflecting the role of Green Belt policy in systematically implementing development restraint which would be more difficult to achieve through policies limiting development in the 'open countryside'.

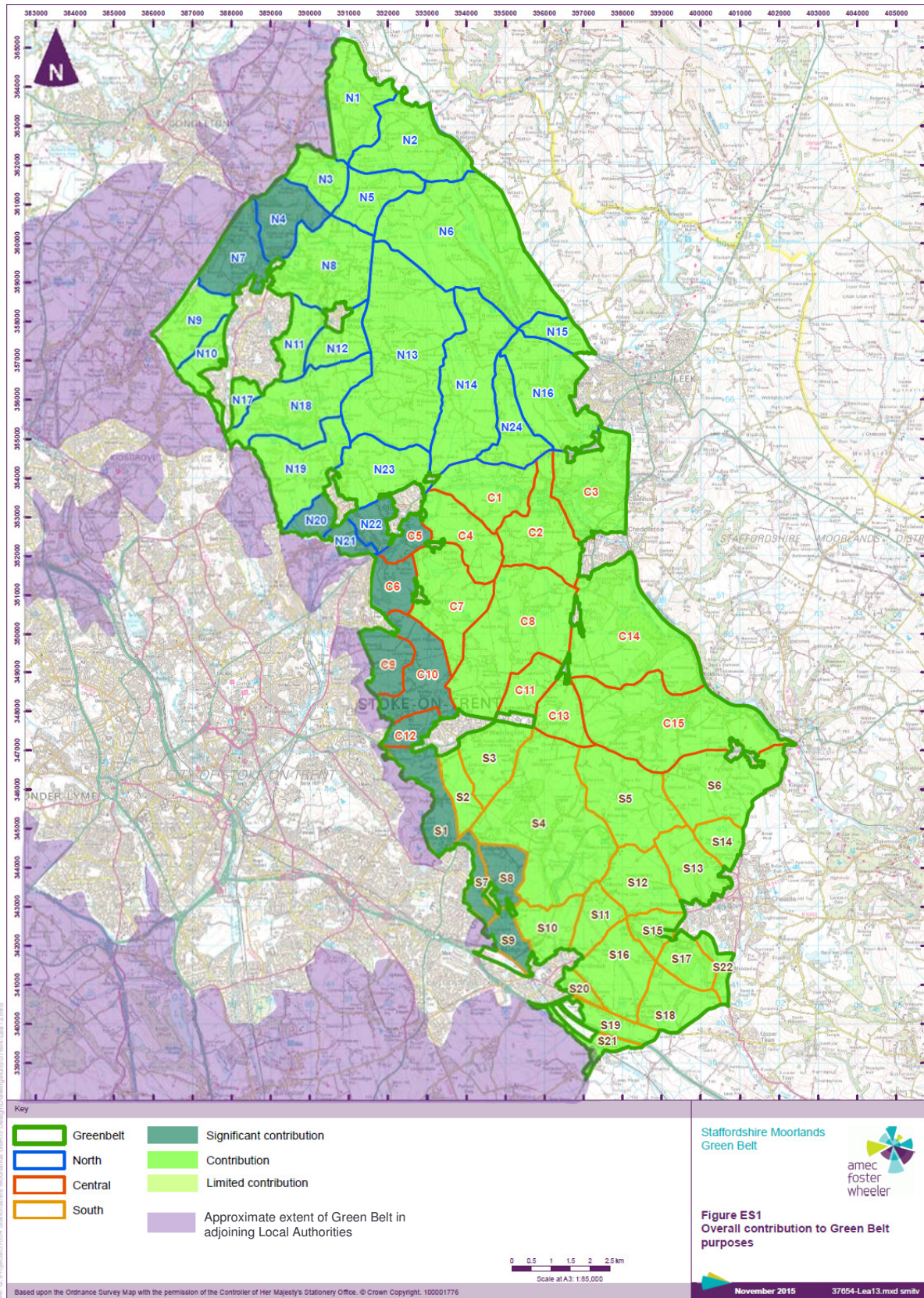
11. Locally, the function of the Green Belt largely mirrors its strategic role, helping to provide the countryside context for the District's villages and towns. In some instances, principally along the main transport corridors, of particular importance is the maintenance of the separation of the settlements where there is some evidence of sprawl.

12. A number of areas have been identified as holding potential for more positive management (for example to promote recreational opportunities) and thereby reinforce the function of the Green Belt. These areas are concentrated in the boundary between Staffordshire Moorlands District and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

13. No land has been identified as having potential to be added to the Green Belt to reinforce its purposes or address clear issues such as sprawl or encroachment into open countryside.



Figure ES1 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes



14. A number of areas were identified for more detailed investigation for their potential for release, reflecting their containment and overall contribution to the Green Belt as follows:
 - a. Land to the north west of Biddulph
 - b. Land to the west of Biddulph
 - c. Land to the south of Biddulph
 - d. Land to the north of Biddulph Moor
 - e. Land to the south of Folly Lane, Cheddleton
 - f. Land to the north of Forsbrook
 - g. Land to the south east of Forsbrook
15. Note these areas were derived independently from the Sites Options Consultation¹, based on professional judgement of the potential for release in the context of not causing undue damage to the strategic Green Belt function in the locality and opportunities for achieving good urban form. Part 2 of this report combines these areas with those of Options Consultation to test the Green Belt role, strategically and locally, of all potential sites.

The Part 2 Study

16. The Part 1 Review is strategic in nature and explores the performance of the Green Belt designation against NPPF criteria to assess its function and relevance in Staffordshire Moorlands. As part of the review, a number of areas were identified for further analysis where release of land from the Green Belt was considered to not damage its overall function. Part 2 considers the merits of these areas identified in the Part 1 review for potential release, along with specific site identified in the sites options consultation¹, and landscape considerations. Further aspects of the evidence base such as sustainability will need to be applied alongside these observations. Potential development sites in the following settlements are recommended for consideration as part of the Local Plan for release from the Green Belt without causing damage to its strategic or local function. Recommendations for consideration for release are in some instances caveated with suggestions on the timing of release and masterplanning issues.
 - a. Bagnall (1 site)
 - b. Biddulph (7 sites)
 - c. Biddulph Moor (4 sites)
 - d. Blythe Bridge & Forsbrook (6 sites)
 - e. Brown Edge (2 sites)
 - f. Caverswall (2 sites)
 - g. Cheadle (3 sites)
 - h. Cheddleton (6 sites)
 - i. Cookshill (1 site)
 - j. Dilhorne (1 site)

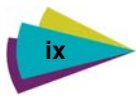
¹ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (July 2015) Sites Options Consultation Booklet



- k. Draycott (1 site)
 - l. Endon (7 sites)
 - m. Hulme (1 site)
 - n. Kingsley (1 site)
 - o. Leek (no sites)
 - p. Longsdon (3 sites)
 - q. Rudyard (2 sites)
 - r. Stockton Brook (2 sites)
 - s. Werrington (3 sites)
 - t. Wetley Rocks (1 site)
17. Recommendations on the potential phasing of Green Belt release alongside revisions to draft settlement boundaries are also made.

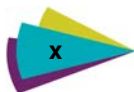
Duty to Co-operate Statement

As part of the preparation of this study, authorities adjoining Staffordshire Moorlands District who also host the North Staffordshire Green Belt (Stoke-on-Trent, Cheshire East, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford) have been consulted: first, to seek views on the methodology to be employed in undertaking the study and second to seek views on the draft final study. Responses received supported the study and its approach.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Study Remit

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council engaged Amec Foster Wheeler consultants to undertake a review of the Green Belt in the District. The Review is required to respond to emerging evidence associated with the latest District housing need figures as a result of the publication of the 2012 District's Household Projections along with other evidence in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects authorities to base their Plans upon adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence regarding the environmental characteristics of their areas.

A full Green Belt Review is now necessary. This evidence is needed to support the policies and proposals to be contained in the new Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan covering the plan period 2011 - 2031. The final document needs to show that the presence of statutory Green Belt within the Staffordshire Moorlands has been properly taken into account in the preparation of the Plan and that the Green Belt boundaries have been critically assessed to ensure that they are appropriate to fulfil their purpose as defined in the NPPF, during the plan period and beyond. However, further reviews of the Green Belt (both strategic and local) could be required as part of the preparation of subsequent Local Plans.

The main purpose of this review is to assess the extent to which the part of the North Staffordshire Green Belt falling within the Staffordshire Moorlands boundary meets the five purposes of the Green Belt as stated in paragraph 80 of the NPPF; is open in character and contributes to the wider openness of the Green Belt. The review also:

- Makes an assessment of opportunities to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt as outlined in Paragraph 81 of the NPPF;
- Reviews land on the edge of the Green Belt to ascertain if the designation should be extended having regard to the provisions of paragraph 82 of the NPPF; and
- Makes recommendations about defining any new Green Belt boundary in line with paragraph 85 of the NPPF.

This Report presents the outputs of the research as part of the broader evidence base to be considered alongside other aspects of the Local Plan evidence base.

1.2 The National Planning Policy Context

The centrepiece of the approach to Green Belt Assessment is the NPPF's advice on Green Belts which largely re-iterates (albeit in a more concise fashion) that originally set out in PPG2, namely the statement of the five purposes of Green Belts, criteria for review, and guidance on how Green Belt boundaries should be set, including the treatment of settlements within the Green Belt, including the identification of safeguarded land for future development needs and the establishment of boundaries for the long term. The five purposes of Green Belt are central to the Green Belt Assessment, providing the reference point for the rationale behind the original designation and a framework for testing its current form and function.

The NPPF is clear that, once established, Green Belt boundaries *"should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of a Local Plan"* (para 83). However, the NPPF is equally clear that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs... unless specific policies ... indicate development should be restricted.

The Planning Inspectorate in emphasising the role of robust evidence to underpin local plans, has increasingly identified the importance of a comprehensive Green Belt review in this process. For example, the Inspector's Report of the Dacorum Core Strategy acknowledged that a comprehensive Green Belt review should be undertaken *"in order to ensure that a justifiable balance between meeting housing need and protecting the Green Belt can be secured. Without such comprehensive evidence a robust conclusion on the*

potential for the identification of additional housing sites, either for the medium/long term (as potential sites within the urban areas decrease) or for beyond the plan period, cannot be satisfactorily drawn”.

1.3 Local Planning Context

As set out in the Study remit, the early consideration of the role of Green Belt land in helping to meet the development needs of the District is important and will complement other aspects of the evidence base including the likely distribution of housing need, opportunities and constraints analysis and Sustainability Appraisal.

Changes to Green Belt boundaries have not been undertaken in the District since the last Local Plan was produced in the mid-1990s, and it is apparent that Green Belt development will be needed in the District to accommodate its objectively assessed housing needs.

The District’s Adopted Core Strategy (Policy SS5b – Biddulph Area Strategy) states that: *“Sites for new housing development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocations DPD within the following broad locations and in the following priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:*

- *Within the urban area*
- *Extension to the urban area to the west of the Bypass (Area 4)*

Small Urban Extensions in the Green Belt to be identified as part of a comprehensive review of the Green belt Boundary around Biddulph through the site allocations and review of the Core Strategy”.

1.4 The Study Area

The study area is that part of the North Staffordshire Green Belt falling within Staffordshire Moorlands District, excluding the Peak District National Park (which has its own planning authority). The general extent of the North Staffordshire Green Belt (43,836ha) and that portion falling within Staffordshire Moorlands (17,420ha) is shown in Figure 1.1.

1.5 Designation and Purposes of the North Staffordshire Green Belt

The North Staffordshire Green Belt was approved by Staffordshire County Council in 1967, and by extension the North Staffordshire Green Belt Local Plan (June 1983), with the following aims:

- (a) *To limit the expansion into adjoining open country of the urban areas of North Staffordshire forming part of the Potteries Conurbation.*
- (b) *To prevent the following towns and settlements in the adjoining open area from merging with the Potteries Conurbation and with other settlements:*

- a. *the built-up areas of Kidsgrove and Biddulph;*
- b. *the settlements of Brown Edge, Endon, Stanley, Bagnall, Stanley Moor, Norton Green, Baddeley Green, Baddeley Edge, Light Oaks, Werrington, Cellarhead, Caverswall, Cookshill, Blythe Bridge, Forsbrook, Meir Heath, Barlaston, Alsagers Bank, Halmer End, Miles Green, Wood Lane, Bignall End and Audley.*

- c. *To prevent the coalescence of the following towns and settlements around the Potteries Conurbation:*

Leek with Longsdon; Leek with Cheddleton; Longsdon with Cheddleton; Longsdon with Endon; Cheddleton with Folly Lane; Folly Lane with Wetley Rocks; Wetley Rocks with Cellarhead; Cheadle with Kingsley Holt; Kingsley with Kingsley Holt; Cheadle with Dilhorne; Cheadle with Forsbrook; Fulford with Meir Heath; Stone with Oulton; Stone with Yarnfield; Tittensor with Barlaston; Barlaston with Stone; Madeley Heath with Madeley; Betkey with Audley.

- d. To maintain the present open character of the land within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and to prevent the coalescence of smaller settlements not mentioned above.

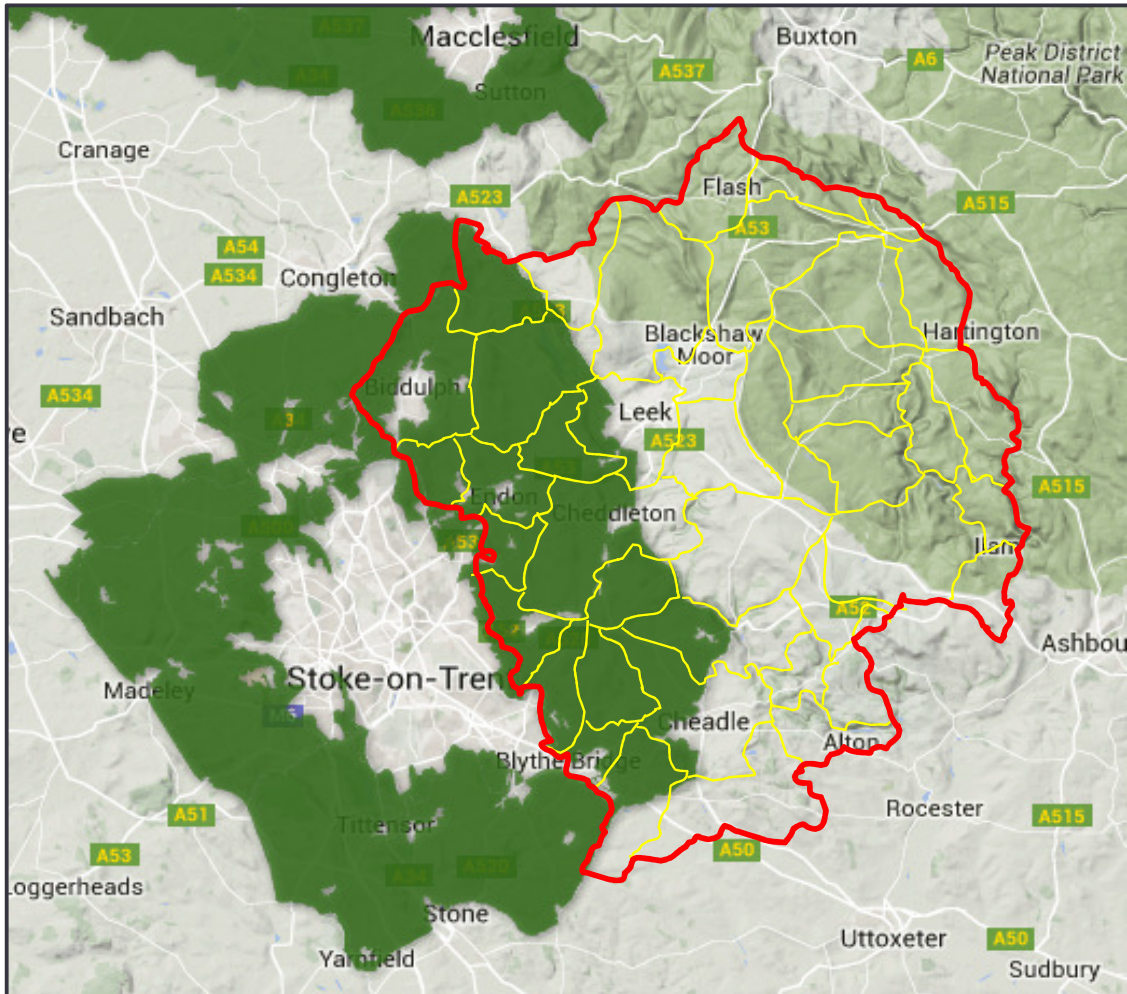
In addition, a major aim of the North Staffordshire Green Belt Local Plan is to promote positive policies for the use of land within the Green Belt.

The Green Belt now defined for North Staffordshire is linked to the Green Belt in Cheshire ... to provide and maintain a broad belt of open countryside in which the interests of agriculture will predominate and which will be available for the enjoyment of the inhabitants of the Potteries Conurbation.

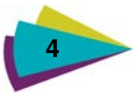
Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2, 1988) added two purposes to the then existing Green Belt policy which are also of relevance to the function of the North Staffordshire Green Belt: 4) to safeguard the countryside; and 5) to assist urban regeneration.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (1998) replaced the North Staffordshire Green Belt Local Plan and made amendments to the inner boundaries of the Green Belt around Blythe Bridge, associated with the construction of the A50 which created enclosed land which could be readily parcelled for development. In turn, the Site Allocations component of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan could propose further amendments in the light of development needs.

Figure 1.1 Extent of the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands District²



² Base map: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/greenpolitics/planning/9708387/Interactive-map-Englands-green-belt.html>



2. Methodology for the Review of the Green Belt in Staffordshire Moorlands District

2.1 Introduction

There is no nationally specified methodology to undertake a Green Belt Review. The following methodology reflects emerging good practice across a number of Green Belt Review studies including several undertaken by Amec Foster Wheeler. The methodology is considered to be an objective and robust approach to the evaluation of Green Belt form and function, as well as providing a sound basis for a more detailed review of the potential for release of land required to meet development needs where damage to the overall function of the Green Belt would not occur. In addition, other aspects of the evidence base, would need to be explored to help determine whether Exceptional Circumstances are present and might justify removal of land from the Green Belt, or allow development within the Green Belt under Very Special Circumstances. .

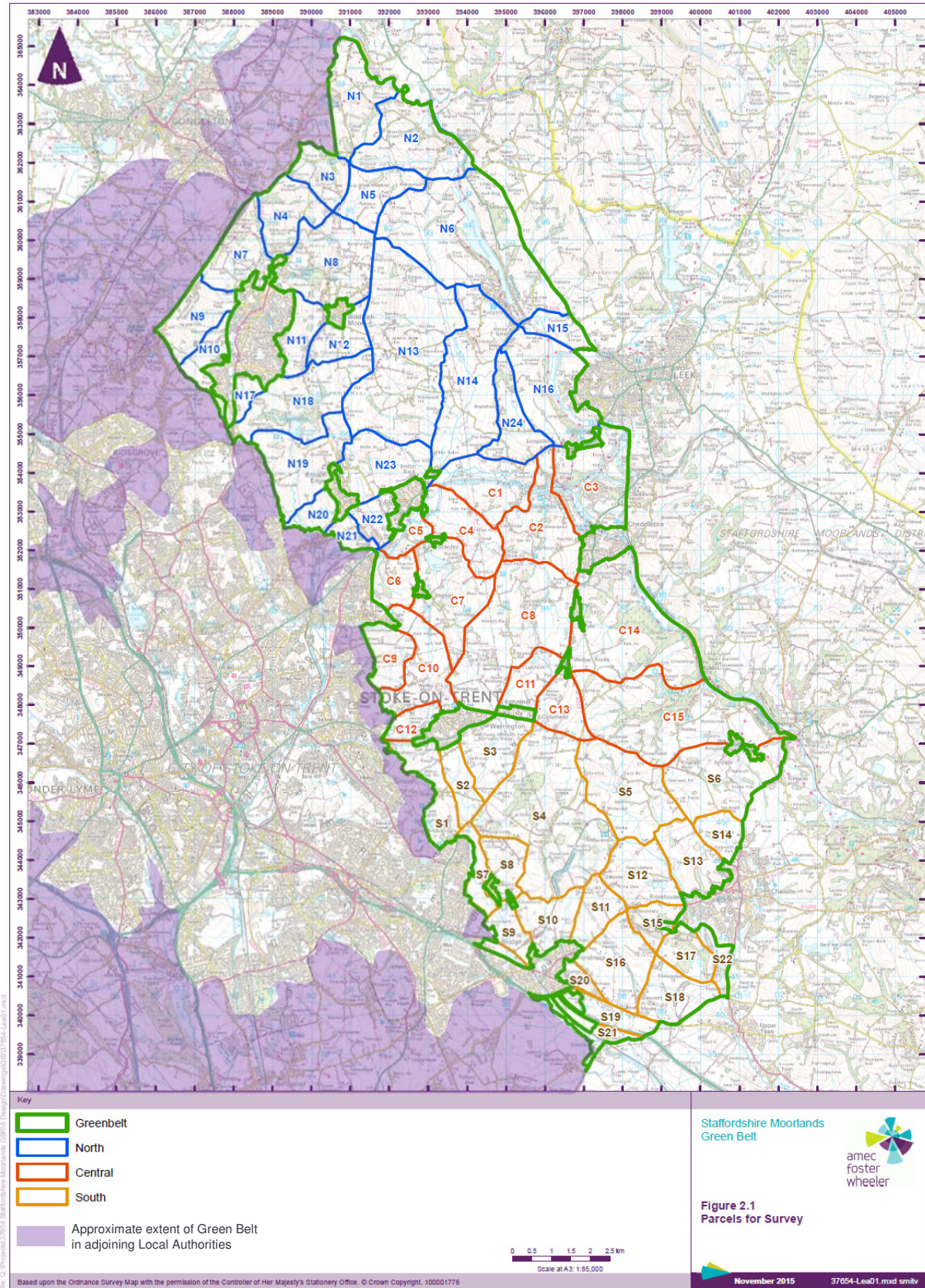
2.2 Identification of Land Parcels for Survey

Identification of appropriate land parcels for survey was initially through the use of Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photos, using roads and the edge of built development as the primary means of division. Some of the boundaries of these parcels were adjusted following site visits, particularly in the vicinity of settlements where land use patterns are complex and can only be confirmed through ground-truthing. The definition of parcels of land in this way is purely to make the assessment exercise manageable. They do not bear any specific relation to landscape character areas, for example, or areas of ecological importance, although these factors could have a bearing on recommendations of the appropriateness of land for release.

Figure 2.1 shows the 61 parcels used to survey Green Belt form and function. To aid analysis, these have been split into three broad groups – north, central and south – divided by the A53 Endon to Leek road and the A52 Werrington to Kingsley Road.

The number and scale of these parcels is such that a reasonable balance is struck between their size and the conclusions reached on their Green Belt function. In addition, further sub-division is possible (for example using detailed features on the ground) should detailed analysis be required to test whether release of parts of the parcel might be reasonable.

Figure 2.1 Green Belt Parcels for Survey



2.3 Assessment of parcels against Green Belt purposes

This task involved appraising each Green Belt parcel against each of the five Green Belt purposes and forming a preliminary conclusion on its contribution. Particular attention was paid to both inner and outer boundaries of the Green Belt, anticipating further work on recommendations for potential release and extension. The definitions set out in Table 2.1 helped to guide the assessment, along with a detailed Assessment proforma set out in **Appendix A**.

Table 2.1 Definition of Terms Applied in the Review

Green Belt Purpose	Definition
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Sprawl – spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way (Oxford Dictionary online). Large built-up areas – in the context of this study this is Stoke-on-Trent and to a lesser extent Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle.
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Neighbouring towns – Stoke-on-Trent, Biddulph, Congleton and Cheadle Merging – this can be by way of general sprawl (above) or; Ribbon development – the building of houses along a main road, especially one leading out of a town or village (Oxford Dictionary Online). This includes historical patterns of, or current pressures for, the spread of all forms of development along movement corridors, particularly major roads.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Encroachment – ‘a gradual advance beyond usual or acceptable limits’ (Oxford Dictionary online). The countryside – open land with an absence of built development and urbanising influences, and characterised by rural land uses including agriculture and forestry. Openness – absence of built development or other urbanising elements (i.e. not openness in a landscape character sense which concerns topography and woodland / hedgerow cover).
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Historic town – settlement or place with historic features identified in local policy or through conservation area or other historic designation(s). In Staffordshire Moorlands this relates to the towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle.
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	Where development in open countryside is likely to render previously developed land in particular vicinity unattractive to develop.

The fieldwork assessed each parcel in respect of its contribution to Green Belt purposes (notably in respect of the key criterion of openness) along with the robustness of the boundaries which define that parcel. Particular attention has been paid to:

- Existing land use;
- Proximity and relationship to the built-up area;
- Degree of enclosure/openness;
- Distance and visual connection to historic urban centres/key urban areas; and
- Relationship to the wider countryside.

The purpose of the assessment is to consider the extent to which the land fulfils the five purposes of Green Belts as set out in the NPPF in light of the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy³ which is to: *“prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and their permanence”*.




The results of this exercise are recorded in a matrix (**Appendix B**) which comments on how each area meets or does not meet each of the five Green Belt purposes.

A simple colouring system (see Figure 2.2) and accompanying narrative set out the conclusions for each parcel. There are a total of six maps which summarise the extent to which each parcel fulfils each Green Belt purpose along with an overall assessment. This approach provides a simple tabular and graphical

³ National Planning Practice Guidance para 79

representation of those areas where there is most potential to remove land from the Green Belt, where land should remain in the Green Belt and where there is potential for the designation of new Green Belt.

Figure 2.2 The Colouring Assessment

Parcel makes a <u>significant contribution</u> to Green Belt purposes and a boundary review should probably be avoided, although this would not preclude release either in whole or in part.	
Parcel makes a <u>contribution</u> to Green Belt purposes indicating that the purposes are partially being fulfilled and that the boundary could be revised in light of other planning factors.	
Parcel makes a <u>limited contribution</u> overall to Green Belt purposes indicating that these areas might be more readily considered for Green Belt release, subject to other planning considerations.	

The colouring is used to indicate the contribution to Green Belt purposes only and to make recommendations on particular parcels or groups of parcels which could merit further consideration in light of development requirements and the findings of other evidence base studies.

2.4 Setting Long Term Boundaries

The NPPF (para 83) emphasises the importance of enduring Green Belt boundaries beyond the Plan period, providing the certainty which is a principal feature of Green Belt policy. This includes the identification of areas where Green Belt could be extended to strengthen its existing purposes and to provide for potential 'compensation' of land removed from the Green Belt elsewhere. The tests applied to the designation of new Green Belt are as rigorous as those for its removal i.e. the demonstration of 'exceptional circumstances'.

2.5 The Role of Green Belt Policy in Promoting Regeneration

The role of Green Belts in promoting regeneration is difficult to prove, although in the context of the North Staffordshire Green Belt this is clearly a significant issue. This, and the wider function of the Green Belt, is made clear in the 1998 Local Plan as follows:

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan September 1998

Development Strategy

1.17 A feature of the development strategy for North Staffordshire is the emphasis on regeneration of the Potteries Conurbation particularly through the re-use of derelict and degraded sites. This objective is complemented by a Green Belt around the conurbation which prevents its outward spread into the surrounding open countryside.

1.18 The western half of the Staffordshire Moorlands is in the North Staffordshire Green Belt. In order to protect the purposes of the Green Belt the Local Plan has sought to locate new development proposals within settlements which are excluded from the Green Belt by 'inset' boundaries or in settlements beyond the outer limits of the Green Belt. Only where special circumstances exist has development been proposed in the Green Belt.

Professional judgement is applied in to determining where this strategic function is being fulfilled.

2.6 Positive use and management of the Green Belt

Green Belt is by definition a restrictive policy and the challenges of maintaining attractive and productive land, particularly in the urban fringe, is widely recognised. This issue was well summarised in the North Staffordshire Green Belt Local Plan (June 1983) (para 2.52) as follows:



“The success of a Green Belt policy tends to be judged on the quality of the landscape maintained or created, and whilst the Green Belt is not solely responsible for landscape quality, it should play an ever increasing part in this direction, and in this respect landscape planning principles should form an integral part of Green Belt policy.”

There are a wide variety of land uses which include development of varying degrees and which conform with Green Belt policy, most notably agriculture, sport and recreation such as golf courses. Equally, land use changes, such as the conversion of agricultural land to ‘horsiculture’ and the creation of a typically urban fringe character of small-scale sub-divided fields, perhaps with an unkempt appearance and various temporary structures, can quickly degrade the sense of openness and rural character. Land which has seen the withdrawal of farming or is left unmanaged as part of development speculation is particularly vulnerable to character change.

The role of planning policy in promoting positive use and management of the Green Belt is largely restricted to the specification of investment in recreational opportunities associated with development occurring either in the Green Belt (under Green Belt policy, or Very Special Circumstances or as a result of the revision of Green Belt boundaries) or in the immediate vicinity of the Green Belt where a clear connection between a development and recreation provision can be established. As part of the survey, the potential for positive use of the Green Belt was considered, indicating where further investigation, potentially in the context of proposed release of land, is warranted.

2.7 Detailed Assessment of Urban Edges, Village definition and potential for Green Belt extension

Based on the outputs of the strategic review, Part 2 of the study will consider urban edges and the role of the Green Belt in the definition of the District’s villages, along with the potential for extension of the Green Belt where ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist either to create a more coherent boundary to the existing Green Belt or to respond to potential removal of land from the Green Belt.

The NPPF (para 86) identifies how settlements should be treated, with the intention that there should be a review of the role of the Green Belt in respect of defining how individual settlements could and might need to grow without having to demonstrate case-by-case ‘very special circumstances’. The NPPF states that:

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

Particular account will be taken of the potential for ‘in-setting’ of settlements which could be a focus for appropriate development at a scale that would merit revision of Green Belt boundaries (i.e. accommodating growth beyond local affordable housing needs), without compromising the strategic purposes of the Green Belt.

2.8 Duty to Co-operate Statement

As part of the preparation of this study, authorities adjoining Staffordshire Moorlands District who also host the North Staffordshire Green Belt (Stoke-on-Trent, Cheshire East, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford) have been consulted: first, to seek views on the methodology to be employed in undertaking the study and second to seek views on the draft final study. Responses received supported the study and its approach.



3. The Character of the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands and Consideration of Landscape Issues

The character of the Green Belt in Staffordshire Moorlands is as varied as anywhere in the country, ranging from urban fringe land in the immediate vicinity of Stoke-on-Trent to relatively remote rural land to the east. The landscape character of Staffordshire Moorlands District exerts a considerable influence over the perception of openness of the Green Belt. The elevated character of significant tracts of the Green Belt means that there are middle and long-distance views, filtered by well-treed hedgerows which bound typically small to medium sized fields. Extensive woodland cover is limited to a relatively few discrete areas.

Mixed farming dominates land use across the Green Belt, interspersed with villages, hamlets and farmsteads of varying size. Formerly, much of the Green Belt merited designation Special Landscape Area status (which in line with national policy has been removed under the current Local Plan), reflecting its visual attractiveness and westerly context for the Peak District National Park.

Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate the relationship between the Green Belt parcels identified for survey and landscape character, nature conservation and open space resources and flood risk. Whilst these factors do not have a direct bearing on the conclusions reached in respect of the function of the Green Belt against national purposes, they are important in identifying the character of parcels which can influence opportunities for positive management and constraints should areas be identified as holding potential for release for development.

The following principal characteristics can be identified from this mapping:

- The dominance of 'plateau' and 'slope' landscapes which combined with vegetation offers extensive short, medium and long-distance views, in turn influencing the perception of openness and sensitivity to the effects of built development, either substantial or incremental.
- The dominance of nature conservation sites in some parcels (such as Consall Wood), often co-incident with Country Parks such as at Deep Hayes.
- The concentration of flood risk along the River Churnet, reflecting the elevated and undulating character of much of the Green Belt.

More detailed survey material in respect of landscape character and function is contained in the district-wide landscape character study⁴ which has been used to help inform the appraisal of individual Parcels set out in Appendix B. This is of particular importance in respect 'insetting' of a number of the District's settlements into the Green Belt; any change to this inset boundary would need to be informed by the detailed landscape considerations in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment.

⁴ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (October 2008) Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment

Figure 3.1 Landscape Character Areas and Types and Green Belt Parcels

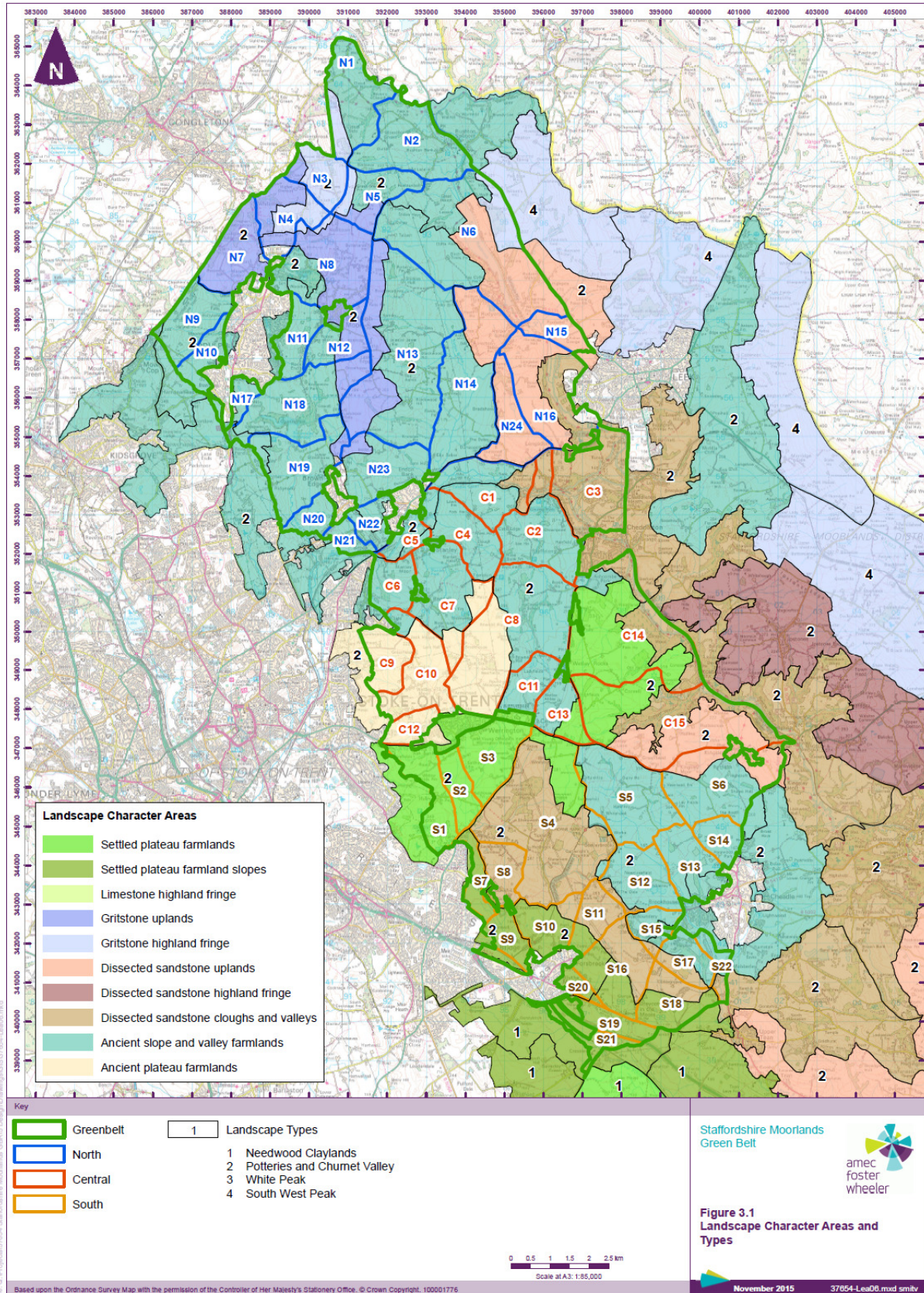


Figure 3.2 Nature Conservation and Open Space Assets and Green Belt Parcels

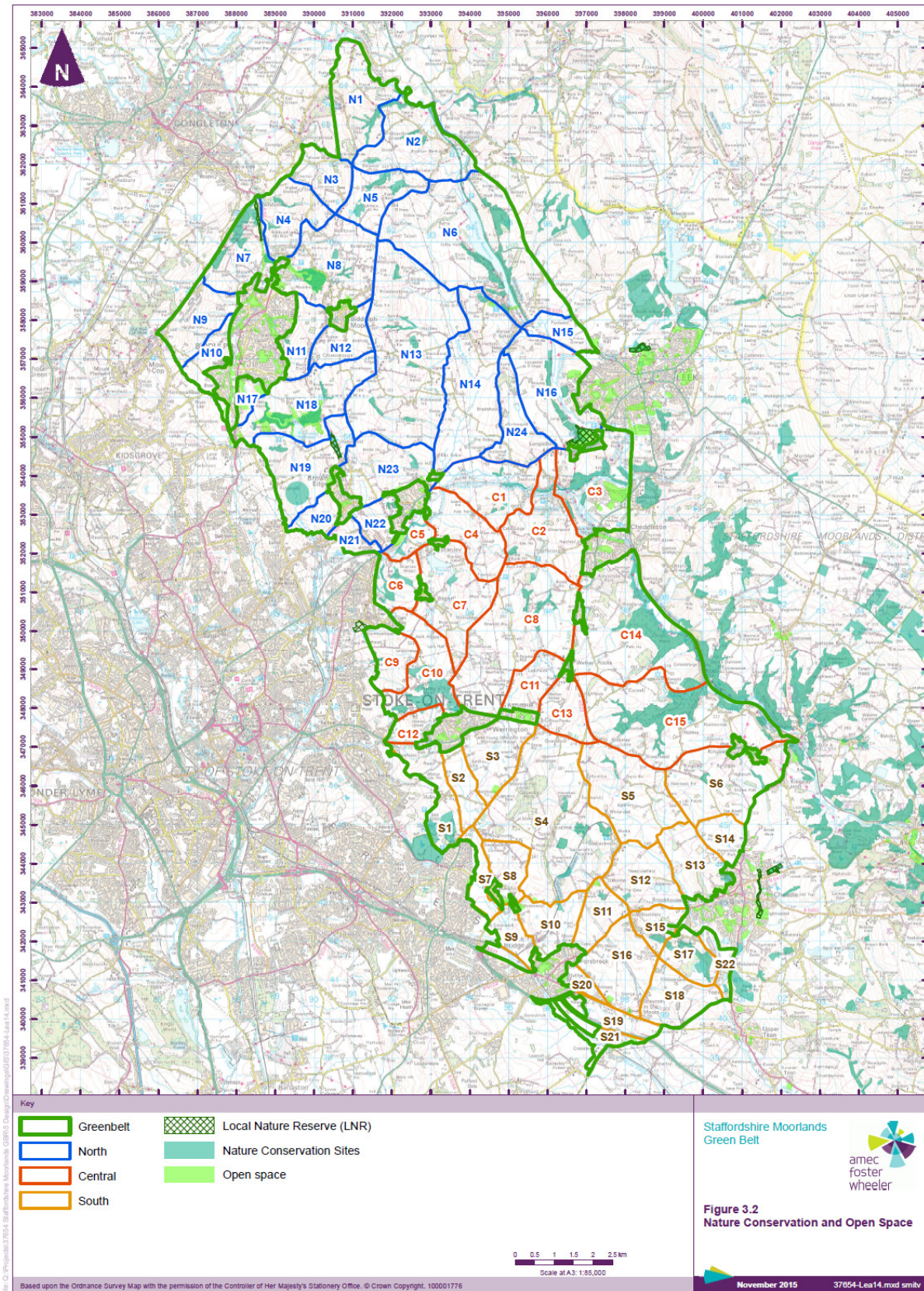
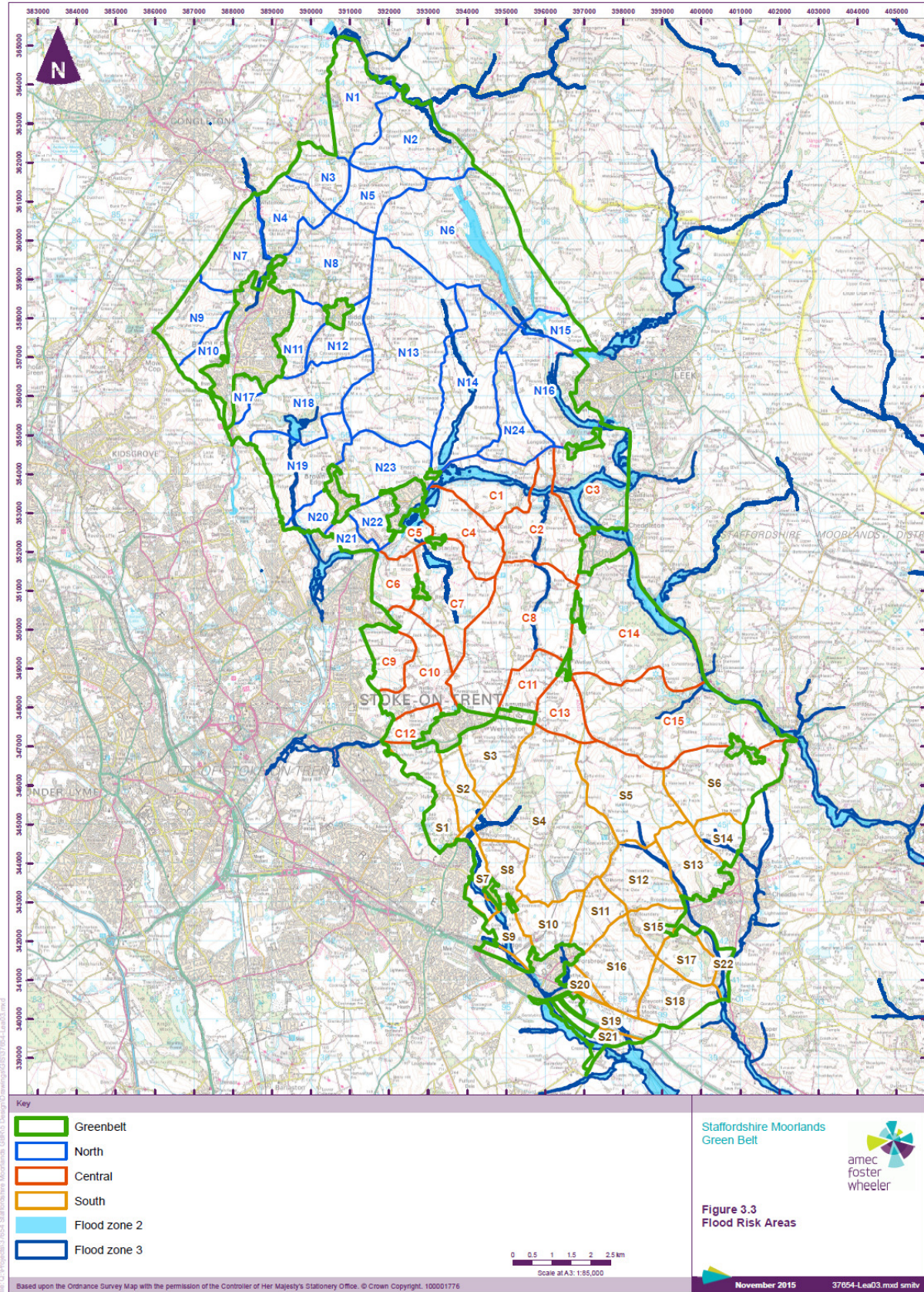


Figure 3.3 Flood Risk and Green Belt Parcels



4. Study Results

4.1 The Function of the North Staffordshire Green Belt in Staffordshire Moorlands District

As noted in section 1.5, the North Staffordshire Green Belt was established in the late 1960s primarily to contain the conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent, along with maintaining the rural character and settlement pattern of land in Staffordshire Moorlands District. Identified in the original purposes for designation was the aim of preventing the coalescence of a number of settlements, largely situated on the major roads traversing the District (principally the A521 between Cheadle and Forsbrook, the A52 between Werrington and Kingsley; the A520 between Leek and Werrington; the A53 between Endon and Leek; the A527 between Congleton and Biddulph).

The pressures for development associated with these corridors identified some fifty years ago have multiplied and intensified with a significant expansion of car ownership and use.

The character of the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands is diverse, reflecting the sharp gradient from the generally well-defined urban edge of Stoke-on-Trent to what are relatively remote rural areas. And in this respect the Green Belt serves its primary function of helping to contain the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation, in particular creating a clearly defined separation between town and country on its eastern fringes.

The maintenance of openness is the principal function of Green Belt policy and in this sense the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands has been clearly successful, with a clear check made on urban sprawl and encroachment into open countryside which would undoubtedly occur in the absence of the policy. As such, the rural character of the District has been maintained, critically the largely open character of the countryside and the separation of villages and towns.

More widely, the whole of the Green Belt is considered to be performing a clear function in respect of the various aspects of five strategic Green Belt purposes as identified in the NPPF. Figure 4.1 illustrates the overall contribution to Green Belt purposes of the parcels surveyed showing a broad pattern of:

- A Significant Contribution made by land in the immediate fringe of the conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent maintaining a clear distinction between town and country, and land between Congleton and Biddulph where there is danger of merger along the A527 corridor.
- A Contribution made by all other parcels, for varying reasons but principally protecting the openness of very accessible countryside by preventing incremental urbanisation.
- No land identified as overall making a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes.

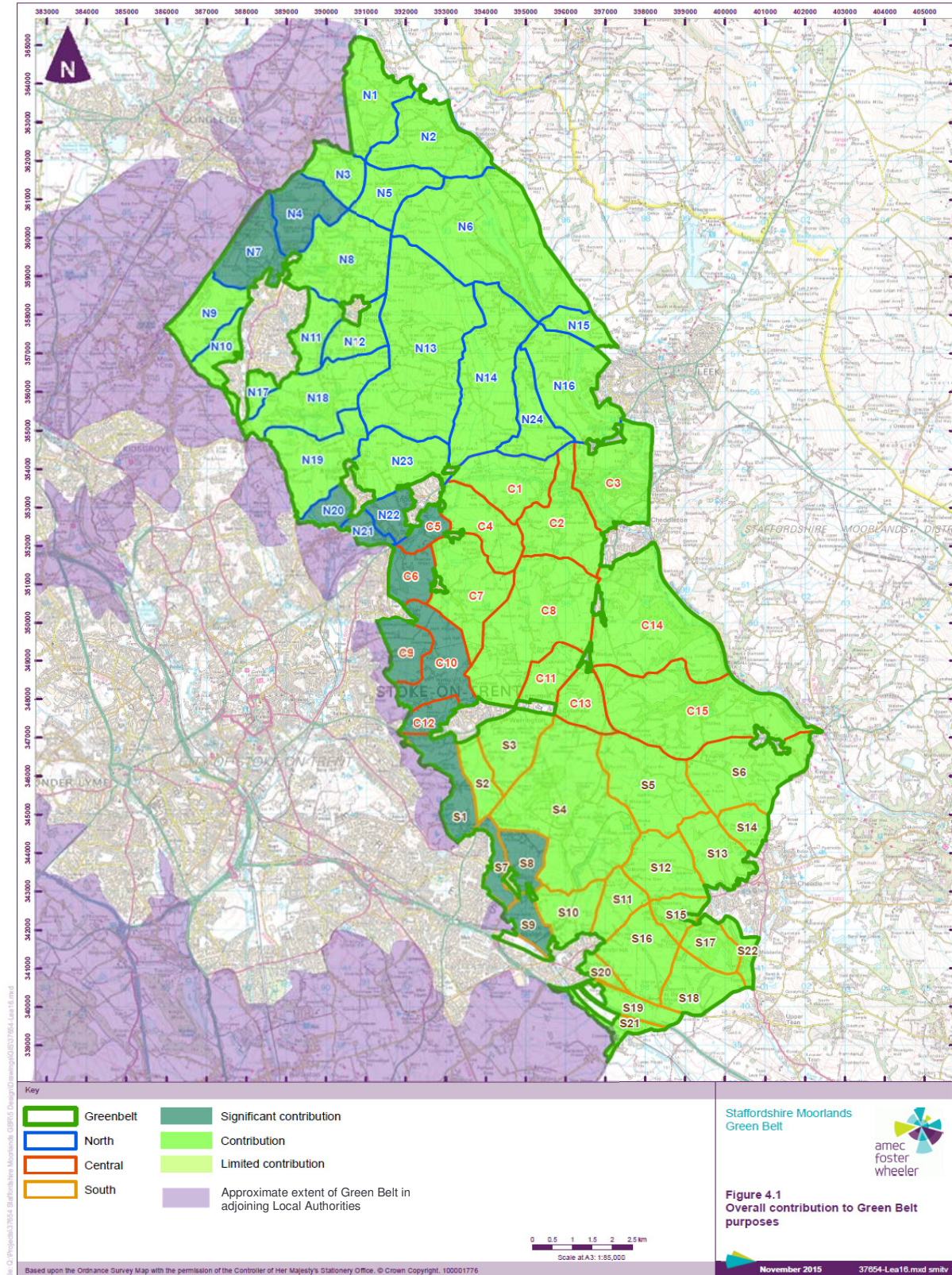
There are no parcels which do not make at least a contribution to one or more of the purposes of Green Belt, and most perform multiple functions.

In summary, the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands District:

- Strongly limits the encroachment of the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation into Staffordshire Moorlands District.
- Maintains the rural character and settlement pattern of the District, particularly in the proximity of the conurbation.
- Helps to limit sprawl along the main transport corridors through the eastern part of the District, thereby helping to maintain the identity of settlements situated along these routes.
- Contains the western expansion of the principal settlements of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle, thereby maintaining their relative compactness and rural setting.

- Makes a contribution to Green Belt purposes either singly or in multiple, reflecting the role of Green Belt policy in systematically implementing development restraint which would be more difficult to achieve through policies limiting development in the 'open countryside'.

Figure 4.1 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes



Locally, the function of the Green Belt mirrors its strategic role, helping to provide the countryside context for the District's villages and towns. In some instances, principally along the main transport corridors, the principal function of the Green Belt is the maintenance of the separation of the settlements where there is some evidence of sprawl and attendant erosion of identity.

The positive use of Green Belt land is most important to prevent the decay of landscape structure and ultimately contribute to maintaining the purposes of the Green Belt through strong boundaries. Strategically, the urban fringe in the vicinity of Stoke-on-Trent is of particular importance in this regard where the robustness of farming enterprises could be under pressure for various reasons.

Notwithstanding the above, there are locations where, in principle, modest release of land from the Green Belt could occur without damage to the overall function of the Green Belt, reflecting the balance between the need for development land, protection of the District's rural character, settlement pattern and sustainable development. These are considered below and the subject of Part 2 of this Report. Equally, there are a number of locations where the adjustment of Green Belt boundaries could occur to reflect the patterns of past development. This is principally in the immediate vicinity of settlements where development has been granted under Very Special Circumstances, but Green Belt remains washed over the new development.

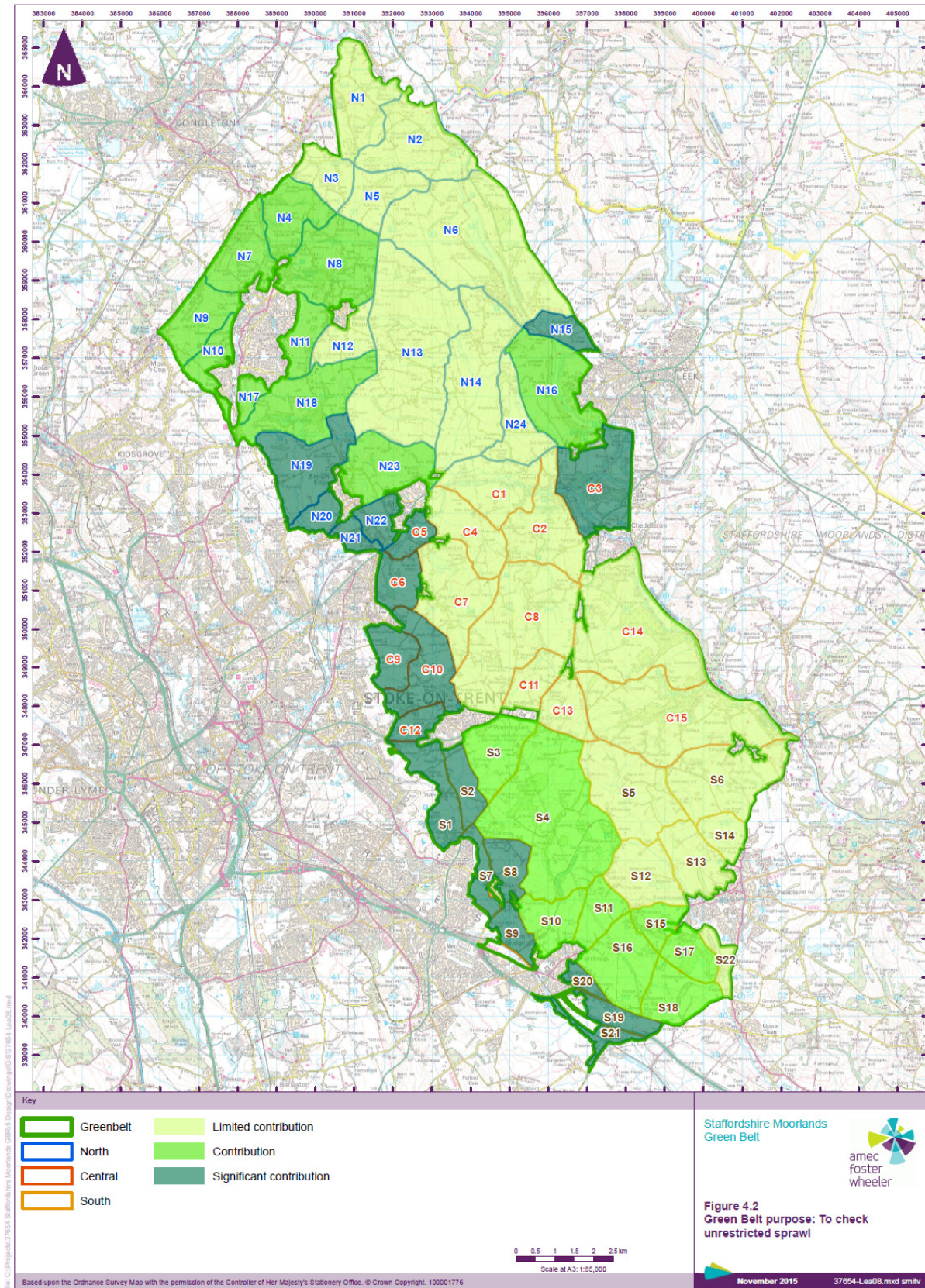
4.2 Analysis by Green Belt Purpose

Figures 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 and Table 4.1 summarise the results of the evaluation of the contribution by individual purposes of the Green Belt across Staffordshire Moorlands. The following patterns emerge from this analysis:

- The significant contribution to preventing the eastward sprawl of the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation, but also around the western fringes of Leek and to a lesser degree Biddulph and Cheadle (Figure 4.2).
- The importance of the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands District acting in concert with the Green Belt within the City of Stoke-on-Trent and Cheshire East District at particular 'pinch points', notably between Biddulph and Cheadle and Biddulph and Kidsgrove (at Brindley Ford) where the relatively narrow gaps are clearly under pressure (Figure 4.2). To the south, Green Belt which abuts the built edge of Stoke-on-Trent (which is within the City of Stoke-on-Trent) acts with that in Staffordshire Moorlands to contain development. Along much of its extent in this location, the local authority boundary is nominal in terms of Green Belt function, although this boundary has clearly been used as the development boundary in some instances.
- The significant contribution to preventing the potential merger of Biddulph and Congleton along the A527, but also to a lesser extent Biddulph and Kidsgrove, and the Endon, Longsdon and Leek corridor along the A53 (Figure 4.3). The separation function can also be observed to a lesser degree between Forsbrook and Cheadle.
- The significant contribution of Green Belt on the fringes of the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation to preventing encroachment into what quickly becomes open countryside, and more widely the contribution of the Green Belt to this function, reflecting the accessible character of the countryside (being dissected by the A53, A52 and A520) and evidence of incremental urbanisation along parts of these corridors (Figure 4.4).
- A contribution to the maintenance of the countryside setting of the historic towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle, these being characterised by a clear countryside setting for typically tight built edges (Figure 4.5).
- A contribution to the regeneration of the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation by the cluster of parcels which form the western edge of the Green Belt (Figure 4.6). This portion of the Green Belt acts in concert with Green Belt within Stoke-on-Trent. This function, which is difficult to prove *per se*, is a product of the checking of sprawl and encroachment, and thereby the re-appraisal of brownfield site viability, provided that the width of the Green Belt is sufficient to prevent 'leapfrogging'.

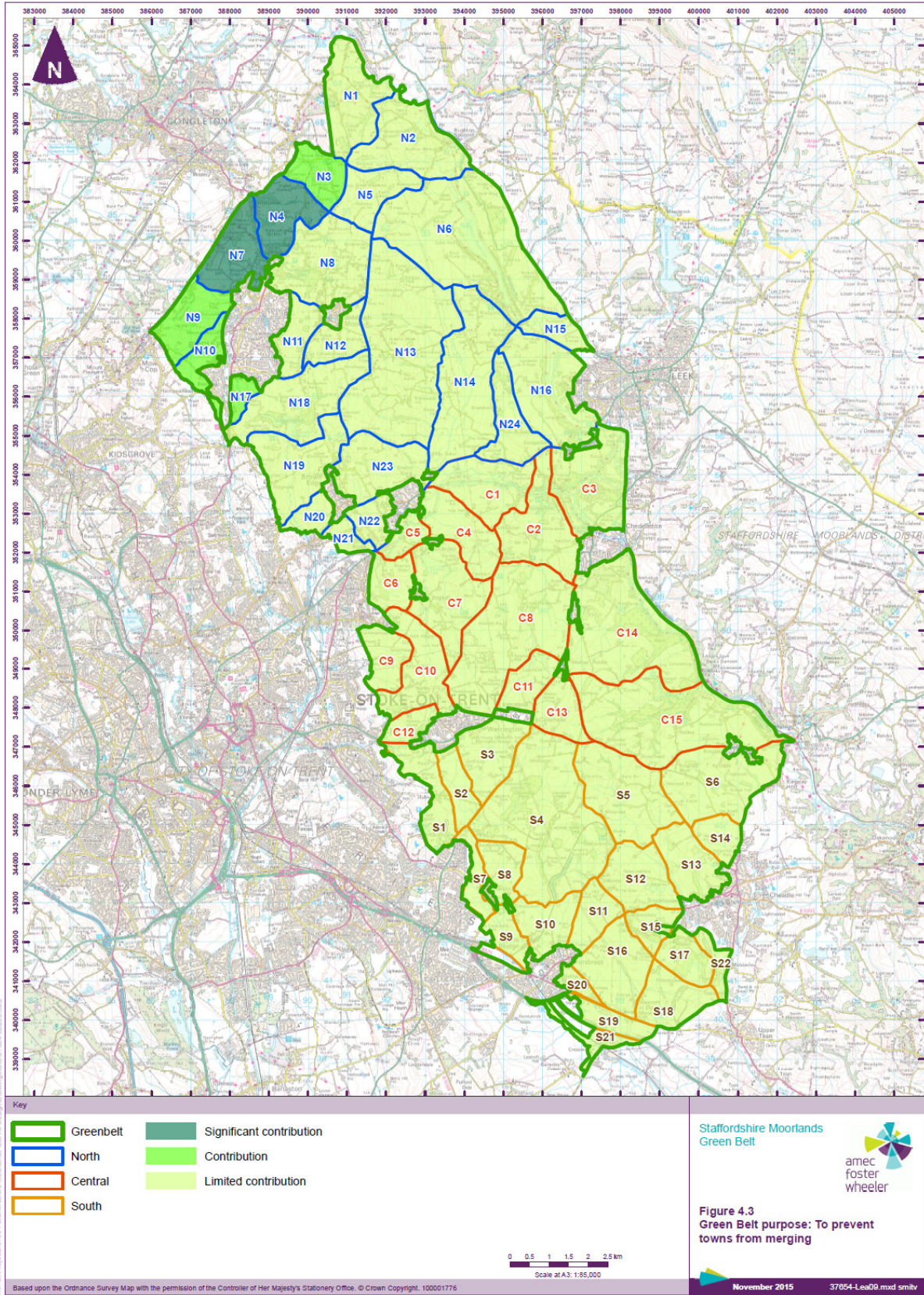
Checking the Unrestricted Sprawl of large Built-Up Areas

Figure 4.2 Contribution to Checking Sprawl



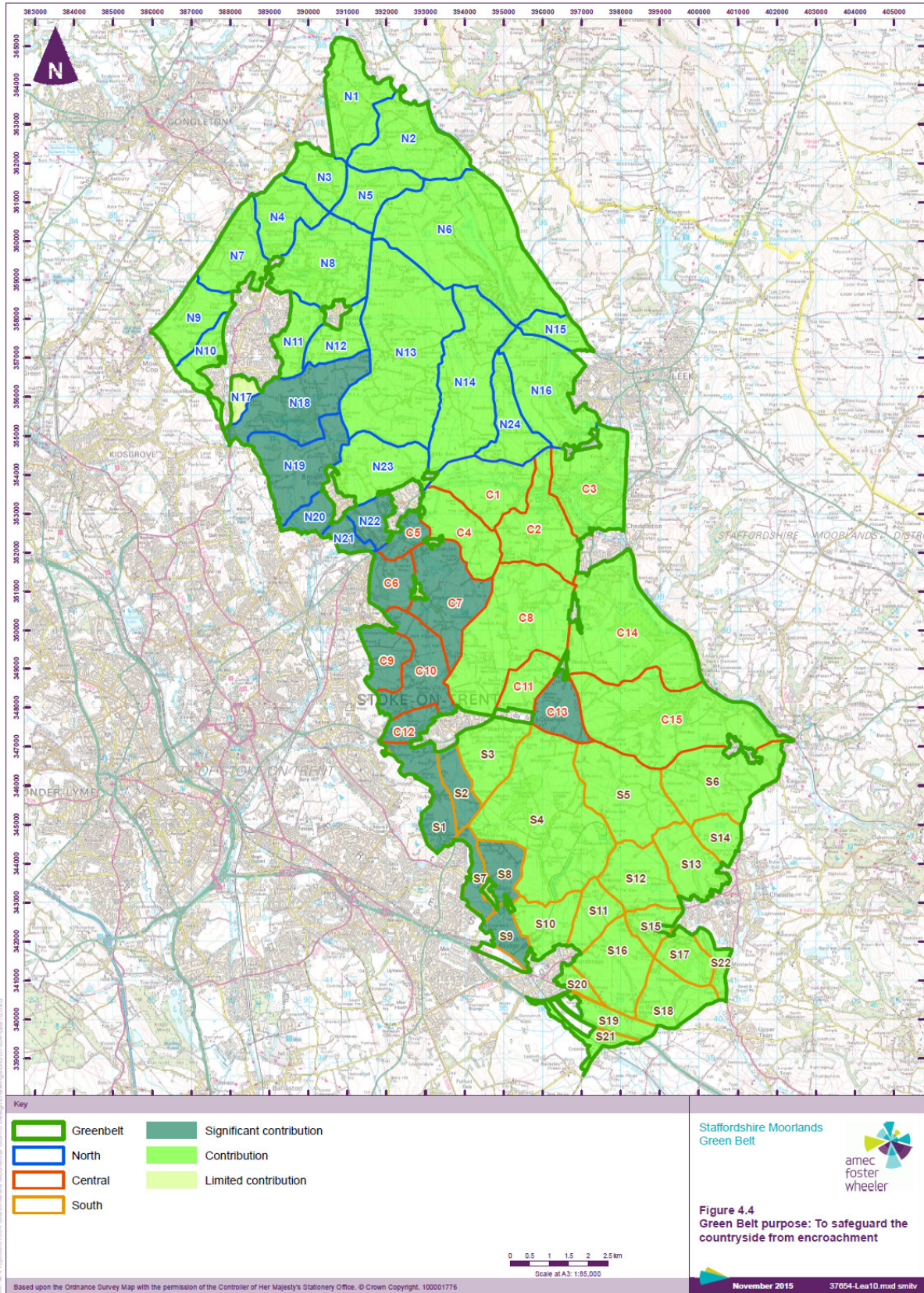
Preventing the Merger of Towns

Figure 4.3 Contribution to Preventing the Merger of Towns



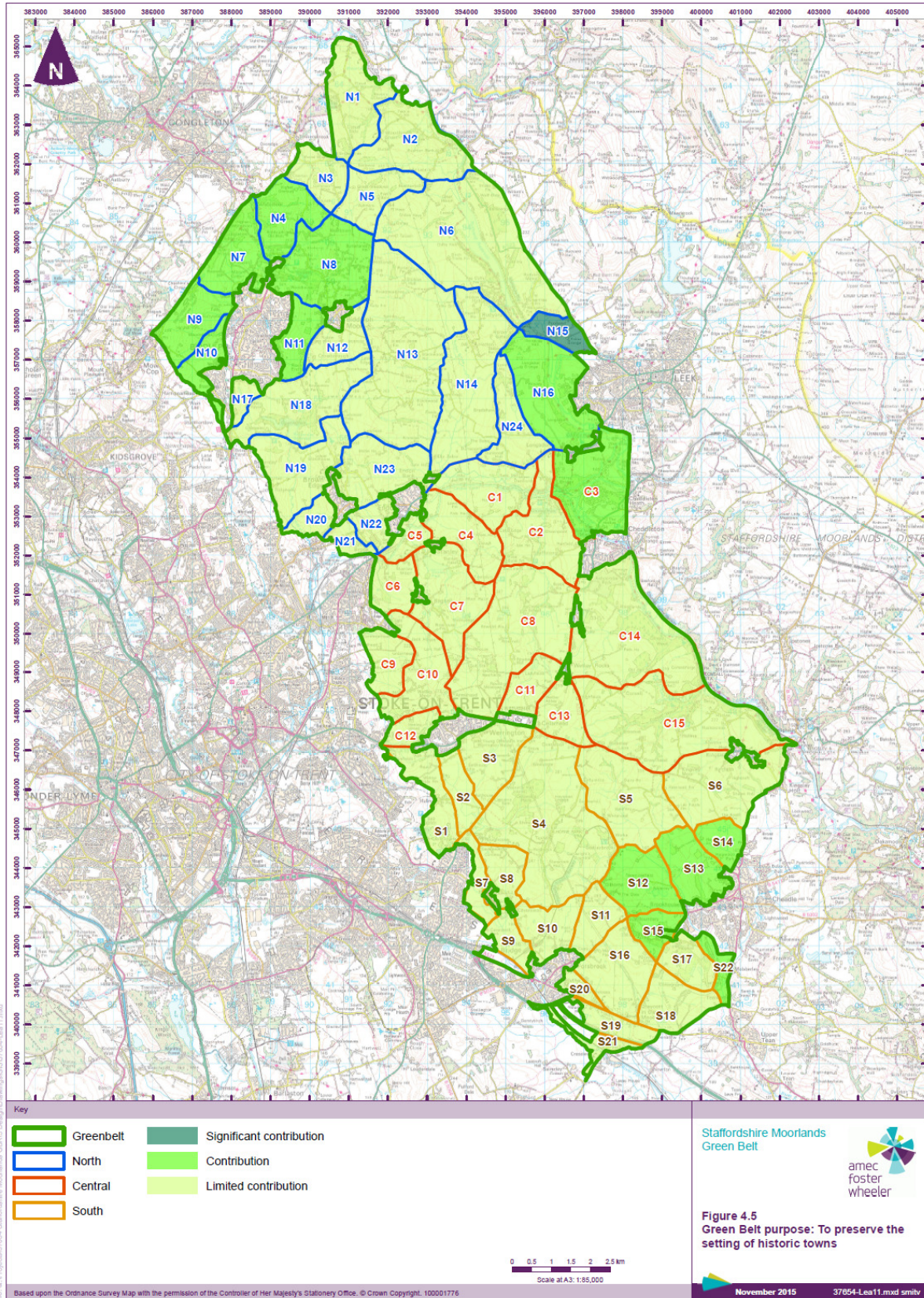
Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment

Figure 4.4 Contribution to Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment



Contributing to the Setting of Historic Towns

Figure 4.5 Contribution to Preserving the Setting of Historic Towns



Assisting Regeneration

Figure 4.6 Contribution to Assisting Regeneration

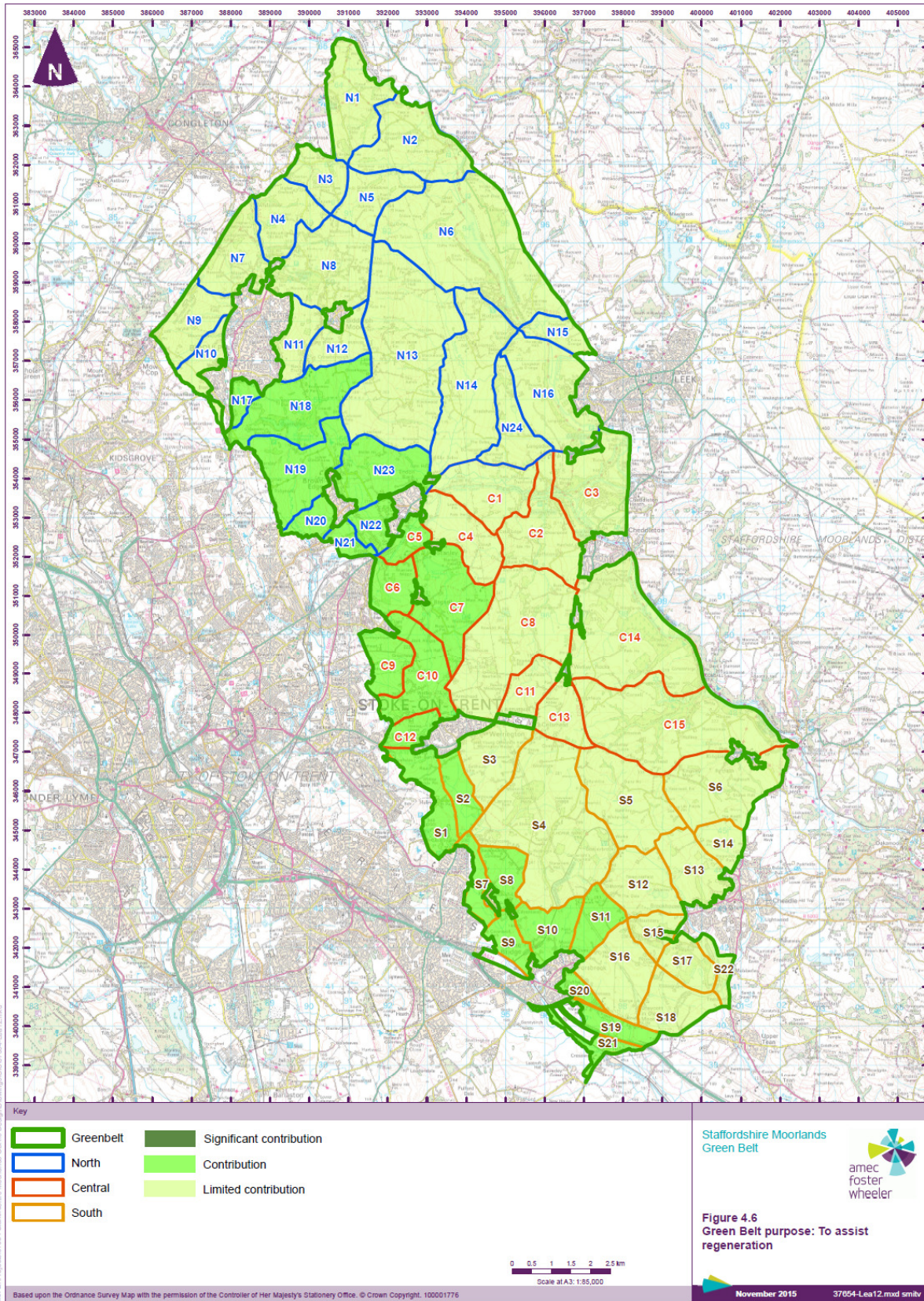


Table 4.1, derived from Appendix B, summarises the evaluation of survey parcels by Green Belt purposes, including the 'overall' assessment presented in Figure 4.1, Section 4.1 above.

Table 4.1 Summary Evaluation of Green Belt Purposes (see also Figures 4.1 – 4.6 and **Appendix B**)

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
N1 Land to the east of The Cloud	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Forms part of the open countryside to the east of Congleton which is of an open, rural character and sensitive to urbanisation – part of a cluster of parcels (N1, N2, N3 & N5) which perform a similar function.
N2 Land to the west of Rushton Spencer	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Forms part of the open countryside to the east of Congleton which is of an open, rural character and sensitive to urbanisation – part of a cluster of parcels (N1, N2, N3 & N5) which perform a similar function.
N3 Land to the north of Newtown	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Forms part of the open countryside to the east of Congleton which is of an open, rural character and sensitive to urbanisation – part of a cluster of parcels (N1, N2, N3 & N5) which perform a similar function.
N4 Land to the north of Biddulph	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	One of two parcels (N4 & N7) which play a significant role in preventing the merger of Congleton and Biddulph, particularly along the A527, where the gap is less than 1km and there is a perception of the emergence of a continuous settlement.
N5 Land to the east of Newtown and west of Rushtonhall	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Forms part of the open countryside to the east of Congleton which is of an open, rural character and sensitive to urbanisation – part of a cluster of parcels (N1, N2, N3 & N5) which perform a similar function.
N6 Land to the north and north west of Rudyard	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	One of a group of five parcels (N6, N13, N14, N23 & N24) which form a significant proportion of the northern part of the Green Belt. Despite being relatively remote rural areas, their open, sparsely settled character makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of urbanisation.

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
N7 Land to the north west of Biddulph	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	One of two parcels (N4 & N7) which play a significant role in preventing the merger of Congleton and Biddulph, particularly along the A527, where the gap is less than 1km and there is a perception of the emergence of a continuous settlement.
N8 Land to the north east of Biddulph	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N8, N11, N12 & N18) which act to contain Biddulph, prevent its merger with Biddulph Moor to the east, maintaining the rural context for recreational assets to the north and south of Biddulph.
N9 Land to the west of Biddulph	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Parcels (N9 & N10) which form the western context for Biddulph and complement Green Belt within East Cheshire District which contains the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation to the south east.
N10 Land to the west and south west of Biddulph	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Parcels (N9 & N10) which form the western context for Biddulph and complement Green Belt within East Cheshire District which contains the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation to the south east. Reflecting local topography and containment, potential for release in part without significant damage to the function of the Green Belt in this location.
N11 Land to the east of Biddulph, west of Biddulph Moor	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N8, N11, N12 & N18) which act to contain Biddulph, prevent its merger with Biddulph Moor to the east, maintaining the rural context for recreational assets to the north and south of Biddulph.
N12 Land to the south and south east of Biddulph Moor	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N8, N11, N12 & N18) which act to contain Biddulph, prevent its merger with Biddulph Moor to the east, maintaining the rural context for recreational assets to the north and south of Biddulph.
N13 Land to the east of Biddulph Moor	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	One of a group of five parcels (N6, N13, N14, N23 & N24) which form a significant proportion of the northern part of the Green Belt. Despite being relatively remote rural areas, their open, sparsely settled character makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of urbanisation.

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
N14 Land to the south of Rudyard and north east of Endon	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	One of a group of five parcels (N6, N13, N14, N23 & N24) which form a significant proportion of the northern part of the Green Belt. Despite being relatively remote rural areas, their open, sparsely settled character makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of urbanisation.
N15 Land to the north west of Leek	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Forming the northern gateway to Leek, this parcel is potentially vulnerable to urbanisation along the A523 with some evidence of this occurring.
N16 Land to the west of Leek	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Dominated by Deep Hayes Country Park, this parcel forms the western context of Leek and acts to prevent urbanisation of the countryside in this location.
N17 Land to the south of Biddulph	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	A well-contained parcel bounded by the A527, the urban edge of Biddulph and a minor road which is part of the transition between the urban area and open countryside to the south east. Reflecting high degree of containment, potential for release without significant damage to the function of the Green Belt in this location.
N18 Land to the south east of Biddulph	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N8, N11, N12 & N18) which act to contain Biddulph, prevent its merger with Biddulph Moor to the east, maintaining the rural context for recreational assets to the north and south of Biddulph.
N19 Land to the north west of Brown Edge	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N19, N20, N21 & N22) which prevent the absorption of Brown Edge and Endon by the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation immediately to the south west.
N20 Land to the south west of Brown Edge	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N19, N20, N21 & N22) which prevent the absorption of Brown Edge and Endon by the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation immediately to the south west.
N21 Land to the south of Brown Edge	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N19, N20, N21 & N22) which prevent the absorption of Brown Edge and Endon by the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation immediately to the south west.

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
N22 Land between Brown Edge and Endon	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of an arc of parcels (N19, N20, N21 & N22) which prevent the absorption of Brown Edge and Endon by the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation immediately to the south west.
N23 Land to the north of Endon, east of Brown Edge	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	One of a group of five parcels (N6, N13, N14, N23 & N24) which form a significant proportion of the northern part of the Green Belt. Despite being relatively remote rural areas, their open, sparsely settled character makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of urbanisation.
N24 Land to the north of the A53 west of Leek	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	One of a group of five parcels (N6, N13, N14, N23 & N24) which form a significant proportion of the northern part of the Green Belt. Despite being relatively remote rural areas, their open, sparsely settled character makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of urbanisation.
C1 Land to the east of Endon, south of the A53	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Part of the central core of the Green Belt (parcels N14, N24, C1, C2, C3, C4, C8) in this locality which strategically ensures that there is a proper separation between the Stoke conurbation and Leek and that the accessible countryside in this location is protected from encroachment, particularly along key transport corridors such as the A53.
C2 Land to the west of Cheddleton	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Part of the central core of the Green Belt (parcels N14, N24, C1, C2, C3, C4, C8) in this locality which strategically ensures that there is a proper separation between the Stoke conurbation and Leek and that the accessible countryside in this location is protected from encroachment, particularly along key transport corridors such as the A53.
C3 Land to the south west of Leek, north of Cheddleton	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Part of the central core of the Green Belt (parcels N14, N24, C1, C2, C3, C4, C8) in this locality which strategically ensures that there is a proper separation between the Stoke conurbation and Leek and that the accessible countryside in this location is protected from encroachment, particularly along key transport corridors such as the A53.

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
C4 Land to the south east of Endon, north east of Stanley	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Part of the central core of the Green Belt (parcels N14, N24, C1, C2, C3, C4, C8) in this locality which strategically ensures that there is a proper separation between the Stoke conurbation and Leek and that the accessible countryside in this location is protected from encroachment, particularly along key transport corridors such as the A53.
C5 Land to the south of Endon, north west of Stanley	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Forming the southerly context for Endon and separating Endon from Stanley this parcel has both a local and a more strategic function being part of the arc of Green Belt which contains the eastern edge of the Stoke conurbation.
C6 Land to the south of Stanley Moor, west of Bagnall	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of the arc of Green Belt in this locality (parcels N21, N22, C5, C6, C9, C10, C12) which helps (along with Green Belt within Stoke-on-Trent District) to contain the eastern edge of the conurbation.
C7 Land to the east of Bagnall and south of Stanley	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	A parcel which supports Green Belt to the west which contains the eastern edge of Stoke.
C8 Land to the north east of Werrington	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Relatively remote, though still accessible via the A52 and A520, land which forms part of the core of the Green Belt (parcels C8, C11 and C13).
C9 Land to the west of Kerry Hill	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of the arc of Green Belt in this locality (parcels N21, N22, C5, C6, C9, C10, C12) which helps (along with Green Belt within Stoke-on-Trent District) to contain the eastern edge of the conurbation.
C10 Land to the north west of Werrington	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of the arc of Green Belt in this locality (parcels N21, N22, C5, C6, C9, C10, C12) which helps (along with Green Belt within Stoke-on-Trent District) to contain the eastern edge of the conurbation.
C11 Land to the north east of Werrington, west of Wetley Rocks	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Relatively remote, though still accessible via the A52 and A520, land which forms part of the core of the Green Belt (parcels C8, C11 and C13).

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
C12 Land to the west of Werrington, north of the A52	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of the arc of Green Belt in this locality (parcels N21, N22, C5, C6, C9, C10, C12) which helps (along with Green Belt within Stoke-on-Trent District) to contain the eastern edge of the conurbation.
C13 Land to the east of Werrington, north of the A52	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Relatively remote, though still accessible via the A52 and A520, land which forms part of the core of the Green Belt (parcels C8, C11 and C13).
C14 Land to the south of Cheddleton, east of Wetley Rocks	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Relatively remote rural areas forming the eastern edge of the Green Belt helping to substantiate the function of the Green Belt as a whole.
C15 Land to the west of Kingsley, north of the A52	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Relatively remote rural areas forming the eastern edge of the Green Belt helping to substantiate the function of the Green Belt as a whole.
S1 Land to the south west of Werrington, north west of the A520	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of a suite of parcels (C12, S1, S2, S7, S8, S9) in this locality which help to contain Stoke-on-Trent immediately to the west. There are various functions being performed principally containing sprawl from the conurbation and urbanisation of what is a highly accessible area.
S2 Land to the south of Werrington, north of the A520	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Part of a suite of parcels (C12, S1, S2, S7, S8, S9) in this locality which help to contain Stoke-on-Trent immediately to the west. There are various functions being performed principally containing sprawl from the conurbation and urbanisation of what is a highly accessible area.
S3 Land to the south of Werrington, north west of the A520	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Supports the role of Green Belt immediately to the west in containing the growth of the conurbation and protecting the countryside from incremental urbanisation.
S4 Land to the south east of Werrington, east of the A520	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Supports the role of Green Belt immediately to the west in containing the growth of the conurbation and protecting the countryside from incremental urbanisation.
S5 Land to the south of the A52 between Kingsley and Werrington	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the land in a relatively accessible location, bounded by the A52 to the north.

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
S6 Land to the south of Kingsley	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the land in a relatively accessible location, bounded by the A52 to the north.
S7 Land to the west of Cookshill and Roughcote	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of a suite of parcels (C12, S1, S2, S7, S8, S9) in this locality which help to contain Stoke-on-Trent immediately to the west. There are various functions being performed principally containing sprawl from the conurbation and urbanisation of what is a highly accessible area.
S8 Land to the north and east of Cookshill	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of a suite of parcels (C12, S1, S2, S7, S8, S9) in this locality which help to contain Stoke-on-Trent immediately to the west. There are various functions being performed principally containing sprawl from the conurbation and urbanisation of what is a highly accessible area.
S9 Land between Cookshill/ Caverswell and Blythe Bridge	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Part of a suite of parcels (C12, S1, S2, S7, S8, S9) in this locality which help to contain Stoke-on-Trent immediately to the west. There are various functions being performed principally containing sprawl from the conurbation and urbanisation of what is a highly accessible area.
S10 Land to the north of Forsbrook	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Supports the role of Green Belt immediately to the west in containing the growth of the conurbation and protecting the countryside from incremental urbanisation.
S11 Land to the north east of Forsbrook, north west of the A521	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Supports the role of Green Belt immediately to the west in containing the growth of the conurbation and protecting the countryside from incremental urbanisation.
S12 Land to the west of Cheadle, north of the A521	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the land in a relatively accessible location, as well as being part of the setting for Cheadle.
S13 Land to the north west of Cheadle, south west of the A522	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the land in a relatively accessible location, as well as being part of the setting for Cheadle.
S14 Land to the north of Cheadle between the A522 and A521	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contributes to maintaining the openness of the land in a relatively accessible location, as well as being part of the setting for Cheadle.

Green Belt Purpose	Check unrestricted sprawl	Prevent towns merging	Safeguarding from encroachment	Setting of towns	Assist regeneration	Overall	Commentary on overall strategic function
S15 Land to the west of Cheadle, south of the A521	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Helps to maintain the western edge of Cheadle and thereby the broader separation of Cheadle from the Stoke conurbation to the west.
S16 Land to the east of Forsbrook, south east of the A521	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Supports the role of Green Belt immediately to the west in containing the growth of the conurbation and protecting the countryside from incremental urbanisation.
S17 Land to south of Cheadle at Harplow	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Helps to maintain the western edge of Cheadle and thereby the broader separation of Cheadle from the Stoke conurbation to the west.
S18 Land to the east of Draycott in the Moors	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Supports the role of Green Belt immediately to the west in containing the growth of the conurbation and protecting the countryside from incremental urbanisation.
S19 Land between the A50 and Draycott in the Moors/ Stonehouses	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Performs a clear role in helping to contain the eastward expansion of the conurbation, associated with the A50 corridor, albeit compromised by past boundary adjustments.
S20 Land to the east of Blythe Marsh	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Part of wider containment of pressures for eastward expansion of the conurbation in the vicinity of the A50 corridor. However there could be opportunities for modest rounding off adjacent to the current urban edge without significant damage to Green Belt function.
S21 Land between the A50 and the District boundary	Significant Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Performs a clear role in helping to contain the eastward expansion of the conurbation, associated with the A50 corridor, albeit compromised by past boundary adjustments.
S22 Land forming part of the south west fringe of Cheadle	Limited Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Helps to contain the western edge of Cheadle, albeit compromised by past boundary adjustments.

4.3 Areas Identified for Detailed Scrutiny

Locally, the function of the Green Belt mirrors its strategic role, helping to provide the countryside context for the District's villages and towns. In some instances, principally along the main transport corridors, the principal Green Belt function is the maintenance of the separation of the settlements where there is some evidence of sprawl which could result in their merger, visually if not functionally.

A number of areas have been identified for more detailed investigation for their potential for release without significant damage to the function of the Green Belt either strategically or locally, reflecting their containment and overall contribution to the Green Belt (Figure 4.7) and are as follows:

- (a) Land to the north west of Biddulph
- (b) Land to the west of Biddulph
- (c) Land to the south of Biddulph
- (d) Land to the north of Biddulph Moor
- (e) Land to the south of Folly Lane, Cheddleton
- (f) Land to the north of Forsbrook
- (g) Land to the south east of Forsbrook

These areas have been identified independently of the sites consulted upon⁵ as part of the emerging Local Plan which are identified as holding potential for development. The Part 2 Report will consider the Green Belt contribution of areas (a) to (g) alongside the land consulted upon as part of the Local Plan, identifying their merits to be considered alongside various other aspects of the evidence base.

⁵ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (July 2015) Site Options Consultation Booklet

Figure 4.7 Land Identified for Detailed Survey in Respect of Potential for Release

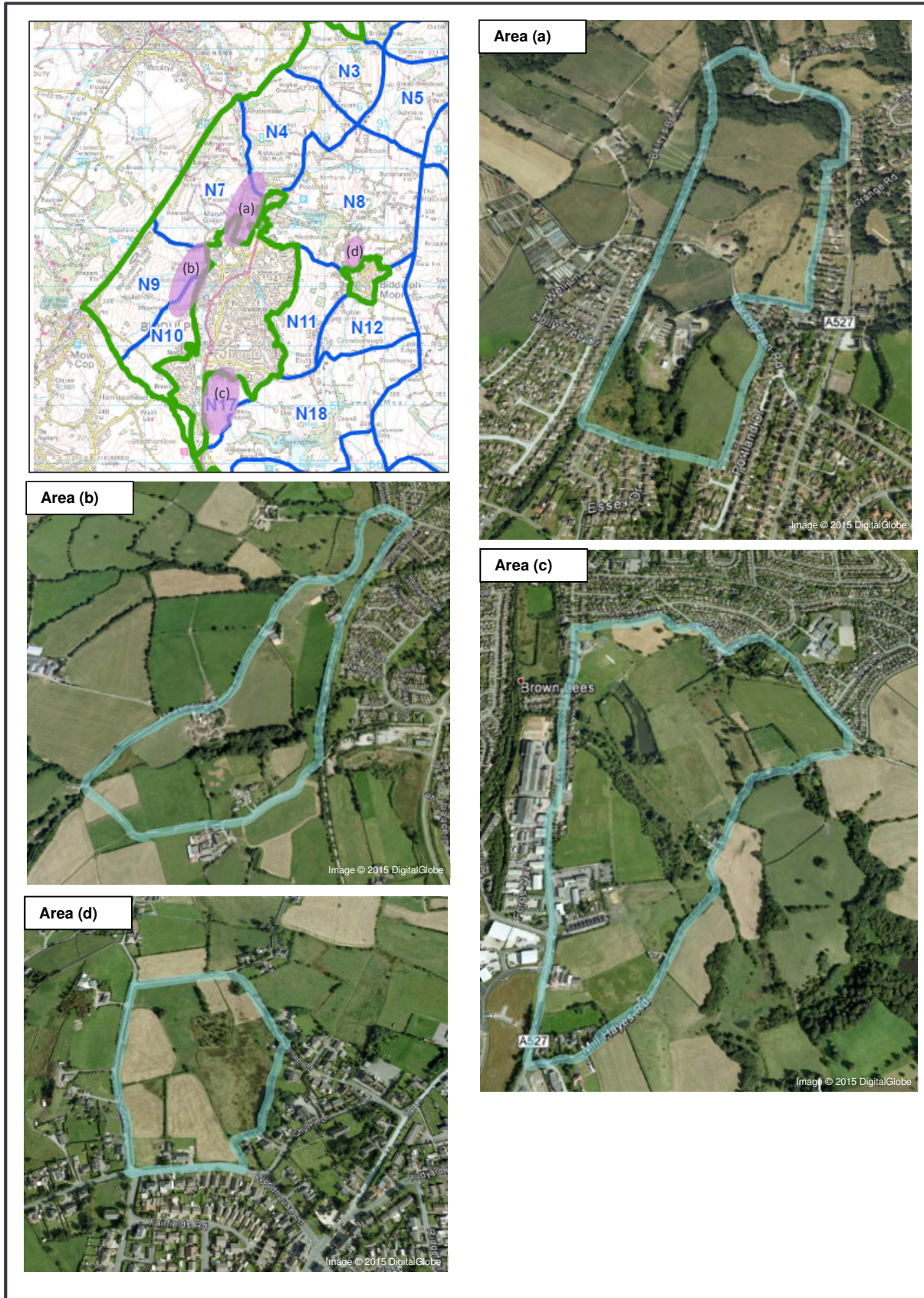
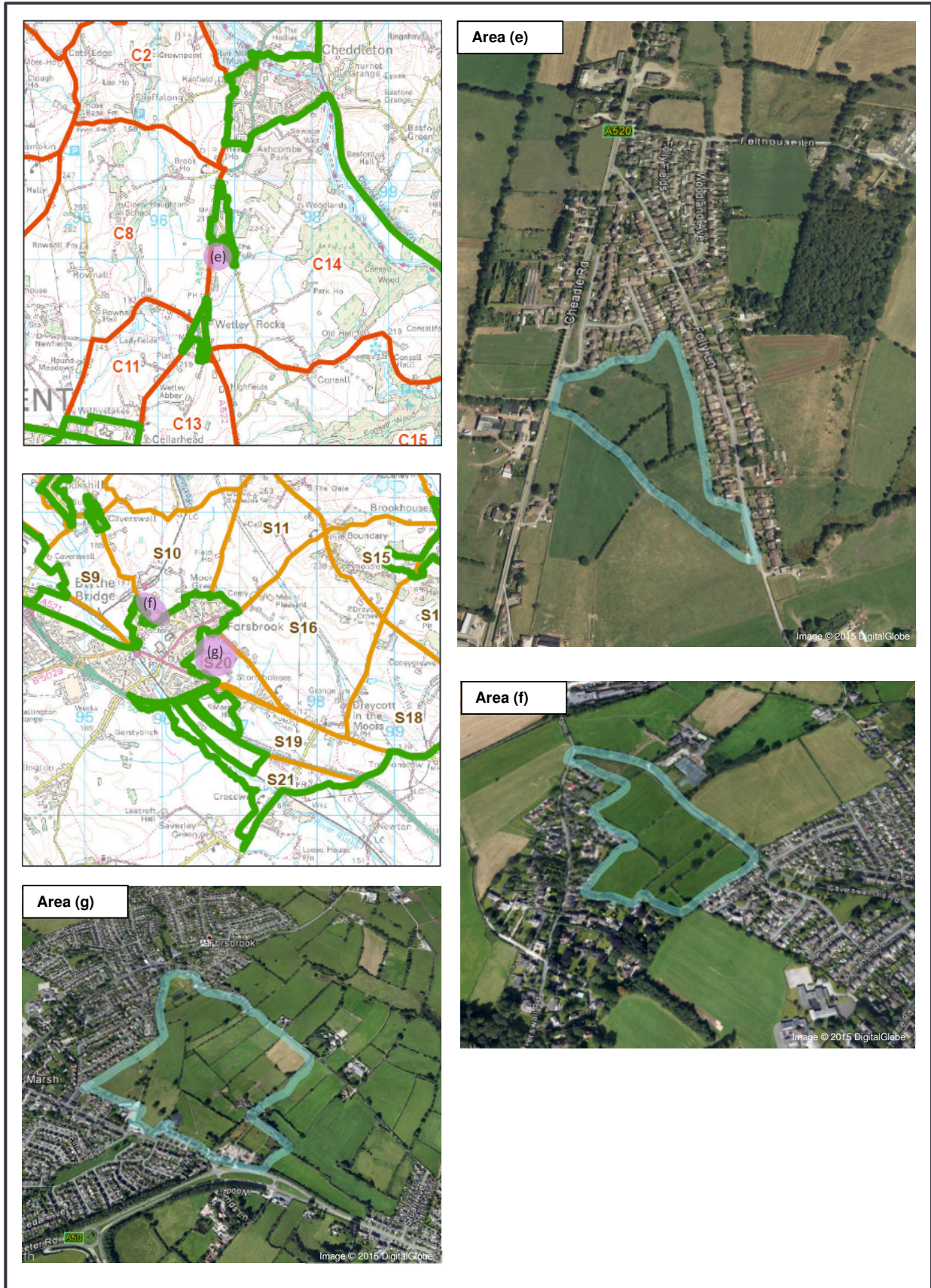


Figure 4.7 (cont.) Land Identified for Detailed Survey in Respect of Potential for Release



4.4 Potential for Extension of the Green Belt

At a strategic scale, no areas were identified which merit the extension of the Green Belt, either to strengthen its purposes or to address issues of incremental urbanisation which is damaging the openness of the countryside. Perhaps the two clearest potential 'candidates' are land to the south of Leek along the A520 corridor where there is some evidence of sprawl towards Cheddleton, and the east side of Cheadle, where development is focused because of the Green Belt to the west. In both cases, there are four considerations which militate against designation (and the proving of Exceptional Circumstances required to do so):

- The unwarranted constriction of the growth these settlements.
- The absence of clear easterly boundaries to create a logical new extent of the Green Belt.
- The absence of a clear contribution of this land to the overall purposes of the Green Belt, that is, the containment of the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation and the urbanisation of the peripheral countryside.
- The existence of policies which are designed to control development in the open countryside.

Part 2 of this Report will explore this in more detail as part of the detailed scrutiny of boundaries.

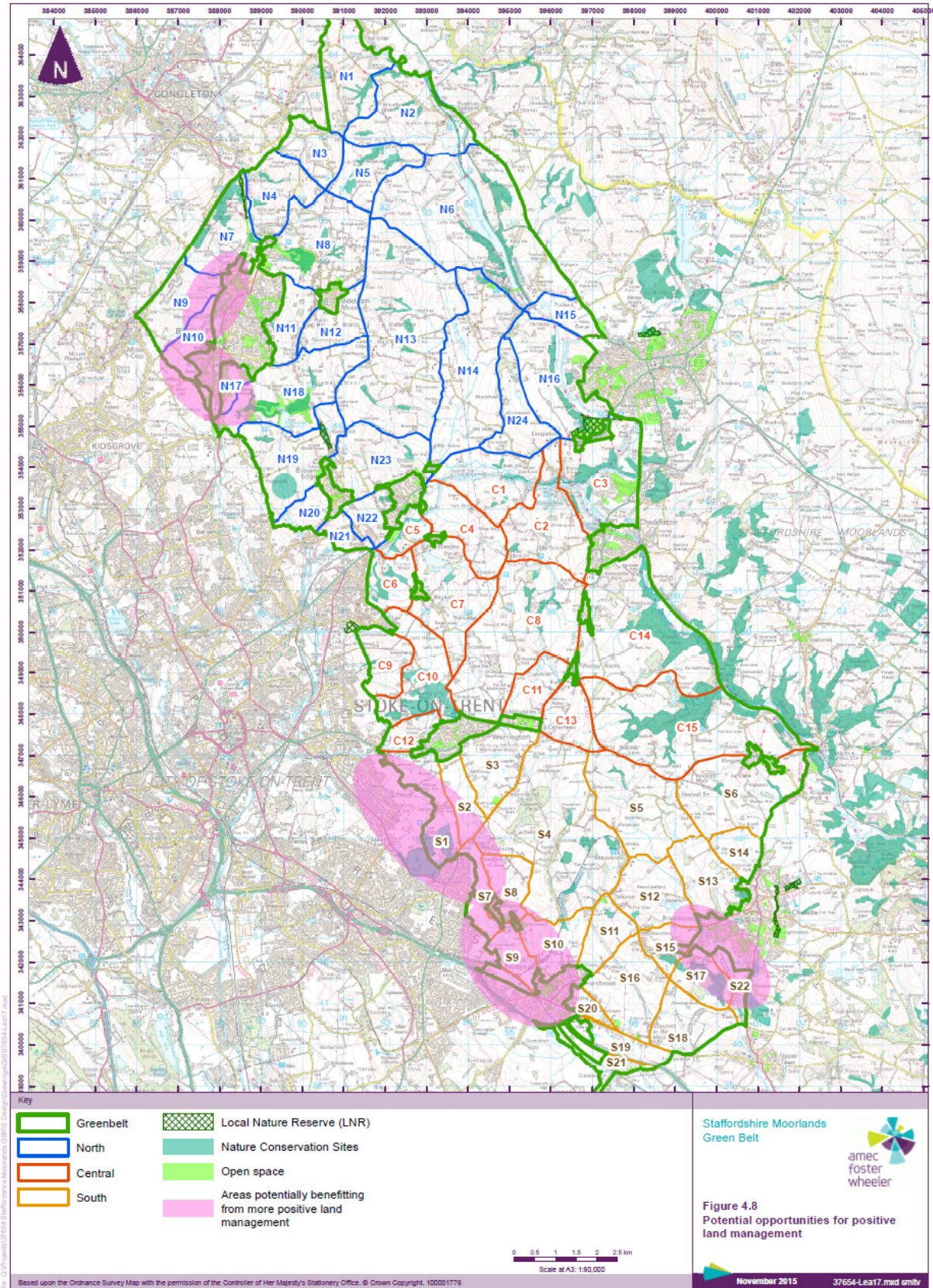
4.5 Encouraging the Positive Use and Management of the Green Belt

There are a number of areas of Green Belt which have been identified as making a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes. These lie in the immediate vicinity of the urban fringe of Stoke-on-Trent and display clear signs of land which is not in positive use for agriculture, recreation or other uses, and/or present opportunities for reinforcing current uses such as nature conservation. The broad location of these is identified on Figure 4.8.

As noted in section 2.6, direct intervention to strengthen the landscape character is typically reliant upon new development prompting opportunities to improve recreational opportunities, for example. The progressive erosion of landscape structure and wider changes in land use (for example to horsiculture) can greatly affect both the appearance of the Green Belt and the sense of openness that should characterise it. Whilst landscape quality is not a Green Belt criterion, as noted in the NPPF, identifying opportunities for enhancing landscape character of the Green Belt is important.

Should development opportunities be identified within or in the vicinity of the areas identified in Figure 4.8, consideration should be given to positive land management and/or enhancement of landscape structure, ranging from the provision of recreational and nature conservation opportunities as more comprehensive approaches through to PRow enhancement and tree planting as part of selected intervention.

Figure 4.8 Indicative Areas with Opportunities for more Positive Land Management





5. Part 2: Settlement & Site Appraisal

5.1 Introduction

In the light of the strategic analysis set out in Part 1 of this Report, Part 2 considers five related matters:

1. The potential for release of land from the Green Belt for development over the Plan period and beyond (safeguarded land). This land was identified through the analysis of the Part 1 Report and through the consultation on preferred development sites⁶. Land and specific sites are judged on against the contribution of the land to Green Belt purposes in a strategic and local context, and draws on evidence relating to the landscape setting of settlements⁷.
2. The boundaries of villages currently inset into Green Belt, namely:
 - a. Bagnall
 - b. Biddulph Moor
 - c. Blythe Bridge & Forsbrook
 - d. Brown Edge
 - e. Caverswell & Cookshill
 - f. Cheddleton
 - g. Endon
 - h. Kingsley
 - i. Stanley
 - j. Werrington & Cellarhead
 - k. Wetley Rocks
3. The role of villages currently washed over by Green Belt and the potential for their insetting.
4. Opportunities for the adjustment of the Green Belt boundary to reflect past development and releases made through the previous Local Plan (September 1998).
5. The potential for positive management of the Green Belt in areas where its character and condition have been degraded (for various reasons) and the role that land development, either within the Green Belt to adjacent to it, might play in this.

5.2 'Washed Over' and 'Inset' Status of Settlements

Any adjustment of Green Belt boundaries should offer the opportunity to create a cleaner and clearer settlement edge, reaffirming the role of the openness of the Green Belt and policy permanence beyond the new boundary. Investigation of land in the vicinity of villages currently washed over by the Green Belt reflects the need to explore areas for potential development across the Green Belt as a whole and the support in the NPPF for consideration of the role of such settlements as follows:

86. If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be

⁶ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (July 2015) Site Options Consultation Booklet

⁷ Wardell Armstrong (2008) Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment

protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.

The result of this policy direction is the potential creation of three types of Green Belt settlement:

- **Inset Settlement** where the settlement is excluded from the Green Belt and Green Belt policies do not apply to development within the settlement.
- **Washed-over Settlement** where settlements are 'washed over' by the Green Belt and Green Belt policies apply within them in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt in that location. Similar exceptions to constraints on development apply as within the Green Belt as a whole, although limited infilling may be permitted within the built-up area, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including the settlement in Green Belt in the first place.
- **Washed-over Settlement with an Infill Boundary** where settlements have an infill boundary drawn around their main built-up area where allowing limited development which would still be expected to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including the village in Green Belt in the first place.

A significant aspect of the character of the settlement pattern in Staffordshire Moorlands is the network of hamlets and villages, some linear associated with key roads through the District and others nucleated. Green Belt designation effectively preserves this pattern of built form, and could constrain the ability to allow for modest development to support diverse and resilient communities in these areas. This reflects currently policy guidance in the NPPF which states that:

84. 'When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, Local Authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development' as well as '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'.

Many settlements have been given an infill boundary but this is typically very tightly drawn to the built edge, thus giving very limited opportunity for additional development to occur without requiring the release of Green Belt, or development within the Green Belt under Very Special Circumstances. This study has reviewed the boundaries both as currently constituted and in the context of proposed development. No case was found (for example by virtue of size) for settlements which are currently washed over to be given a new inset boundary. In the case of inset settlements where there is a potential case for considering a development site for potential release from the Green Belt, recommendations on the extent of the village infill boundary are given accordingly

5.3 Summary of Recommendations for Green Belt Release

Table 5.1 summarises the conclusions reached in Green Belt terms in respect of the land proposed for development under the site options consultation, land identified as having potential for release in the Part 1 Strategic Green Belt Review, and associated actions for the Local Plan. Table 5.1 should be read in conjunction with the settlement and site analysis set out in Appendix C.

Table 5.1 Recommendations for Green Belt Release and Settlement Boundary Adjustment (see also Appendix C)

Settlement	Green Belt Status	Potential Green Belt Development Sites	Sites with Potential for Release without damaging Green Belt purposes	Local Plan Actions
Bagnall	Inset	BG008, BG014, BG015	BG008 – land off Clewlovs Bank.	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Biddulph	Inset	BD062, BD063a, BD067a, BD067b, BD067c, BD068, BD069, BD083, BD087, BD110, BD117, BD118/109, BD131b, BD134, BD138a, BD138b, BD144 Land to the north of Mill Hayes Road Land to the south of Akesmoor Lane	BD062 – land to the north of Essex Drive BD068 – land to the south of Marsh Green Road BD069 – land off Orme Road BD087 – land to the north of Beaumont Close BD117 – land to the east of Tunstall Road BD131b – land off Harlech Drive Land to the south of Akesmoor Lane. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period. Land to the north of Mill Hayes Road. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period (in co-ordination with the release of BD069, BD117 & BD131b).	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Town Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Biddulph Moor	Inset	BM008, BM013, BM014a, BM014b, BM021, BM029, BM030, BM031, BM032, BM035 Land between Over the Hill and School Lane	BM013, BM029 – land between Rudyard Road and Hot Lane. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period. First preference for development. BM014a, BM014b – land between Gun Battery Lane and Chapel. Second preference for development.	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Blythe Bridge & Forsbrook	Inset	BB027/028, BB040, BB044, BB045, BB054, BB062, BB086, BB087 Land to the south of Caverswall Old Road Land between Draycott Old Road and Tater Lane	BB040 – land to the south of Caverswall Old Road BD044- land off Chapel Street BB054 – land to the south of Draycott Old Road (only in the context of wider land release) BB087 – Land to the north of Uttoxeter Road Land to the south of Caverswall Old Road Land between Draycott Old Road and Tater Lane (beyond Plan Period)	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Boundary	Washed Over	None proposed	NA	Retain draft infill boundary.
Brown Edge	Inset	BE032, BE041, BE044, BE045, BE056, BE060	BE041 – land off Willfield Lane BE032 – land to the north of Leek Road. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period.	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.

Settlement	Green Belt Status	Potential Green Belt Development Sites	Sites with Potential for Release without damaging Green Belt purposes	Local Plan Actions
Caverswall	Inset	CV004, CV006	CV004 – land off The Hollow, CV006 – land off High Street. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period.	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Cheadle	Inset	CH134a, CH134b, CH135a, CH135b, CH135c, CH165, CH093, CH094, CH128, CH136	CH128 – land off Tean Road CH136 – land off Draycott Cross Road CH093 - land off Tean Road.	CH128 - Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Draft Town Boundary to accommodate proposed development. CH093 – Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of Draft Town Boundary to accommodate proposed development. CH136 - Release under Very Special Circumstances. Retain washed over status, plus amendment of Draft Town Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Cheddleton	Inset	CD002, CD003, CD007, CD008, CD015, CD019, CD115	CD002, CD003 – land between Cheadle Road and Folly Lane. CD004 – land off Folly Lane CD017, CD019 – land to the east of Cheadle Road	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Cookshill	Inset	CL004, CL007	CL007 – land off Roughcote Lane.	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of Draft Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Consall	Washed Over	None proposed	NA	Retain Draft Infill Boundary.
Dilhome	Washed Over	DH004, DH013, DH018, DH026	DH004 – land between High Street and Sarver Lane. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period.	Release under Very Special Circumstances. Retain washed over status, plus amendment of Draft Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Draycott	Washed Over	DC003	DC003 – land between Uttoxeter Road and Cheadle Road.	Release under Very Special Circumstances. Retain washed over status, plus amendment of Draft Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Endon	Inset	EN007, EN012, EN019, EN024, EN030, EN033, EN079, EN101, EN125, EN126	EN024 – land to the east of the Leek Road EN007, EN012, EN019, EN101 – land Houston Avenue/High View Road EN033, EN126 – land to west of Post Lane	Release under Exceptional Circumstances. Amend Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Froghall	Washed Over	None proposed.	NA	Retain washed over status.

Settlement	Green Belt Status	Potential Green Belt Development Sites	Sites with Potential for Release without damaging Green Belt purposes	Local Plan Actions
Hulme	Washed Over	HU002, OC003	HU002 – land off Hulme Road.	Release under Very Special Circumstances. Retain washed over status, plus amendment of Draft Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Kingsley	Inset	KG005, KG019, KG030a, KG026a, KG026b, KG031, KG042, KG049a	KG019 – land between Holt Lane and Dovedale Road KG049a – land to the west of Cheadle Road	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of the Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Kingsley Holt	Inset	None proposed.	NA	Retain Draft Infill Boundary adjacent to Green Belt.
Leek	Inset	LE103	None	Adjust Town Boundary to reflect future development up to the River Churnet.
Longsdon	Washed Over	LO002, LO007, LO021	LO002, LO007, LO021 – land between Leek Road and Sutherland Road. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period.	Release under Very Special Circumstances. Retain washed over status, plus amendment of Draft Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Rudyard	Washed Over	RU016, RU020	RU016 – land off Lake Road; RU020 – land off Rudyard Road. Could be phased for development beyond the Plan period.	Release under Very Special Circumstances. Retain washed over status, plus amendment of Draft Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Rushton Spencer	Washed Over	RS009	None	Amend Draft Infill Boundary to run along A523 Macclesfield Road.
Stanley	Inset	None proposed.	NA	Amend Draft Infill Boundary to accord with Green Belt extent to the north of Stanley Road.
Stockton Brook	Washed Over	SB014, SB016	SB014 – land off Willfield Lane; SB016 – land off Stanley Road (could be phased for development beyond the Plan period).	Release under Very Special Circumstances. Retain washed over status, plus amendment of Draft Infill Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Wetley Rocks	Inset	WR005, WR14a, WR015	WR015 – land off Mill Lane	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development.
Werrington & Cellarhead	Inset	WE003, WE013, WE019, WE027, WE033, WE040, WE041, WE052, WE053, WE069, WE070 WE1, WE2, WE3	WE003 - land off Ash Bank Road opposite Oak Mount Road WE052 - land off Ash Bank Road opposite Johnstone Avenue WE069 - land off Ash Bank Road	Release under Exceptional Circumstances, plus amendment of Village Boundary to accommodate proposed development (to include HMYOI)

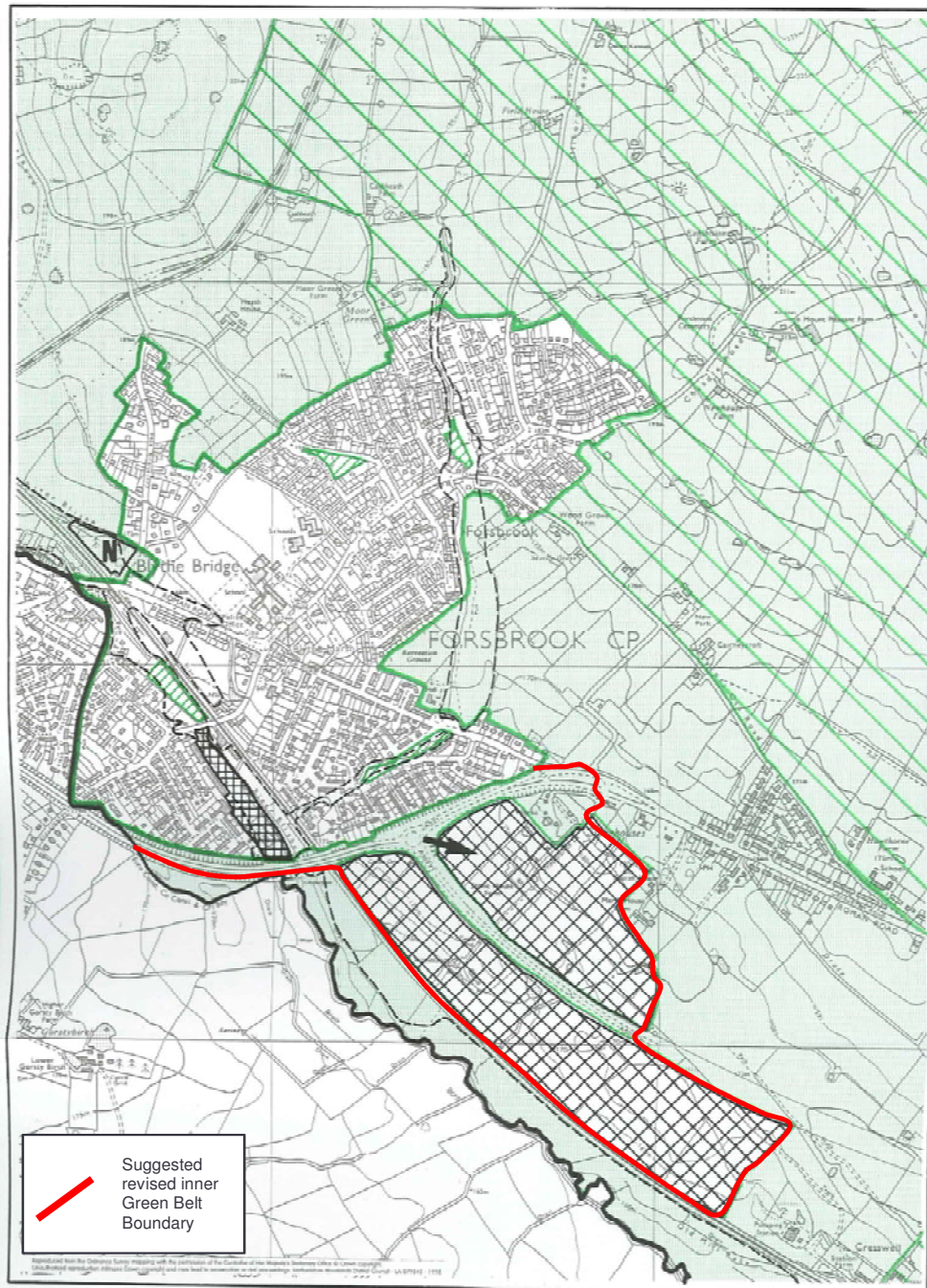
This evaluation of potential land which could be removed from the Green Belt for development purposes has identified a range of sites derived from the Part 1 Report and the Sites Options Consultation which could

come forward for development without significantly comprising the strategic and local purposes of the Green Belt.

5.4 Potential for Green Belt Boundary Adjustment at Blythe Bridge

Land at Blythe Bridge was removed from the Green Belt under the previous Local Plan to allow for the development of a Regional Investment Site. Whilst this development has yet to come forward, a somewhat incongruous inner Green Belt boundary has been left. Figure 5.1 illustrates how this inner boundary might be re-drawn to better reflect local geography.

Figure 5.1 Suggested re-alignment of the inner Green Belt boundary at Blythe Bridge



5.5 Positive Management of the Green Belt

Section 4.5 of the Part 1 Report suggested broad areas where the Green Belt could benefit from more positive land management in order help address some of the typical negative characteristics associated with the urban fringe. These include:

- ▶ erosion of landscape structure through the removal and decay of field boundaries;
- ▶ unmanaged hedgerows leading to 'gappy' boundaries;
- ▶ unmanaged woodland resulting in poor structure and reduced opportunities for healthy succession;
- ▶ fragmentation of land holdings associated with sale and lease for horsiculture;
- ▶ abandonment of land for hope value leading to scrub encroachment;
- ▶ unsympathetic, hard urban edges associated with past estate development which abut open farmland; and
- ▶ informal and sometimes unneighbourly recreational use.

By no means all the urban fringe can be thus characterised, but combinations of these factors operate to lesser or greater degrees. These issues have long been recognised and the subject of various interventions countrywide, with initiatives ranging from Groundwork to community forests. These can demonstrate that relatively modest interventions such as tree planting and access improvements can make a significant difference to the quality of the landscape in these areas. The role of community forestry in particular and its natural fit with Green Belt is acknowledged in the NPPF (para 91).

The allocation of land for development offers the opportunity for positive land management both as part of the development footprint and in the immediate environs. Thus it is reasonable to expect that any development on Green Belt land (either through Very Special Circumstances or Exceptional Circumstances) pays heed to its context and contributes to the character and quality its setting, particularly in respect of the relatively small development plots associated with village locations. Particular attention needs to be paid to:

- ▶ Development densities, building heights and designs appropriate to the receiving environment.
- ▶ Sensitive edge treatment, avoiding visually harsh transitions between built development and the wider countryside.
- ▶ Connecting to and enhancing existing Green Infrastructure and access opportunities,

The Staffordshire Residential Design Guide⁸ is helpful in this respect, but contextual analysis through settlement edge studies and landscape character assessment is also required to ensure a good fit.

⁸ <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/staffshighways/abouthighways/highwayscontrol/ResidentialDesignGuide.aspx>





Appendix A

Green Belt Assessment Proforma

Criteria		Assessment
NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt		
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relationship of this land with the existing built-up area? • Is there evidence of ribbon development along transport corridors? • Does the parcel sensibly round-off the existing urban area to help create good urban form? • Is the parcel part of a wider group of parcels that directly act to prevent urban sprawl? • Does the Green Belt prevent another settlement being absorbed into the large built-up area? • What is the physical gap between the settlement edge of the parcel and the urban edge (i.e. is there a broad gap or is it narrow at this point?) • Would development represent an outward extension of the urban area, result in a physical connection between urban areas, or lead to the danger of a subsequent coalescence between such settlements? • If released from GB could enduring long-term settlement boundaries be established? 	
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the parcel lie directly between two towns and form all or part of a gap between them? • What is the width of the gap and are there significant features which provide physical and visual separation? • Are there intervening settlements or other development on roads which contribute to a sense of connection of towns? • Would development in the parcel appear to result in the merging of towns or compromise the separation of towns physically? • Would the development of the parcel be a significant step leading towards coalescence of two settlements? 	
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clear strong and robust boundaries to contain development and prevent encroachment in the long term? • Does the parcel have the character of open countryside? What is the nature of the land use in the parcel? Is any of the land previously developed? • Is the parcel partially enclosed by a town or village built up area? • Has the parcel been affected by a substantial increase in the mass and scale of adjacent urbanising built form? • Is there any evidence of significant containment by urbanising built form? • Has there been incremental erosion of the open character of the land on the edge of the settlement (so that it appears as part of the settlement)? • Is there evidence of severance from the adjacent Green Belt? 	
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the parcel make a positive contribution to the setting of the historic town? Measured by :- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can features of the historic town be seen from within the parcel? ○ Is the parcel in the foreground of views towards the historic town from public places? ○ Is there public access within the parcel? 	



Criteria		Assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does the parcel form part of an historic landscape that is related to an historic town? 	
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would development in this area render previously developed land in the vicinity or further afield unattractive to develop? • Is there evidence of development pressure in this area (via SHLAA)? 	
Permanence of Green Belt (NPPF paragraphs 83 & 85)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Green Belt Boundary have long term permanence so that it is capable of enduring beyond the plan period? • Are the current boundaries logical? Are there opportunities for the re-definition of the boundary? 	
Sustainable patterns of development (NPPF paragraph 84)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would development in this area help to promote sustainable patterns of development? (Note - consider the consequences 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). 	
Local Role of Green Belt		
Preserving the Character and setting of Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the local landform or landscape form part of the setting of a conservation area or village? • Does the parcel form part of an historic landscape? 	
Defining Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the current Green Belt boundary follow a defensible boundary? • If not, could a logical rounding off be achieved without harm to the function of the remaining Green Belt? 	
Promoting Positive Use of the Green Belt		
Opportunities for Public Access or to provide access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the degree of existing public access? 	
Opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there existing facilities, or there any relevant policies or proposals leading to opportunities in the parcel? 	
Enhancing landscapes and visual amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the parcel form part of the setting of a sensitive landscape (historic or otherwise)? 	
Enhancing biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any national or local biodiversity designations within the parcel? 	
Improving derelict and damaged land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any derelict land in the parcel? • Is there any potential for enhancement other than through development that would be inappropriate within the Green Belt? 	



Appendix B Parcel Analysis

Please see separate document.





Appendix C Settlement and Site Appraisals

Please see separate document.

