



Local Development Framework

Green Belt Study 2011



West Lancashire Borough Council



Green Belt Study

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1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this study is to review land around the edge of the existing built-up area that is included within the West Lancashire Green Belt and identify whether or not this land still meets the purposes of including land within Green Belt, as set out in National Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2). The outcome of this study will provide evidence for the Local Development Framework (LDF) in order to establish an up to date Green Belt boundary that better reflects the purposes of the Green Belt when considering the land today.

1.2 The Green Belt in West Lancashire, covers 90.86% of the total land in the Borough. Detailed Green Belt boundaries were established around Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough in 1987, Skelmersdale and the Eastern Parishes in early 1992, the Northern Parishes in mid 1992 and the settlements in the Western Parishes in 1999. The Green Belt Boundaries where West Lancashire borders Sefton and Knowsley were established through the Merseyside Green Belt plan in 1983. Due to the significant amount of land this covers it would be inappropriate and unfeasible to assess the entire Green Belt. Therefore a targeted approach focusing on the parcels on the edge of the existing settlements in the Borough has been adopted.

1.3 The consultation edition of the Lancashire Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum (March 1986) identifies the main purposes of the West Lancashire Green Belt and states: "In West Lancashire the extensive Green Belt will compliment both the Merseyside and Greater Manchester Green Belts aimed at the containment of the two metropolitan areas and will also contain westward pressures from Central Lancashire. In the northern half of the area it will ease the problems of sporadic development which has slowly been resulting in the coalescence of individual smaller settlements".

1.4 The Study has been carried out alongside similar studies being undertaken by Sefton and Knowsley, who neighbour West Lancashire to the east and the south respectively. Both Sefton and Knowsley have used independent consultants Envision to validate each stage of the methodology whilst West Lancashire has used Lancashire County Council to provide independent validation of the study.

1.5 For the purposes of West Lancashire, this review has been prompted by the Local Development Framework (LDF) process which has identified development needs for the Borough to 2027, including a total of 87ha of new employment land and 300 dwellings per year for a 15 year period (2012-2027), totalling 4,500 new dwellings.

1.6 Through the LDF process it has become evident that due to the significant amount of land designated as Green Belt in the Borough and the limited amount of land available for development that is not designated as Green Belt, achievement of the above targets will not be possible unless development is permitted within the Green Belt or Green Belt boundaries are amended.

1 Introduction

1.7 PPG2 stresses that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances exist. Before any change can be approved, each authority must satisfy the Secretary of State that it has considered all reasonable opportunities for development in the urban areas, and that it has considered the possibility of neighbouring authorities meeting any outstanding development needs.

1.8 In order to evidence this final point, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Housing and Spatial Planning Co-ordinating Group agreed in June 2009 that, once all the Merseyside authorities and West Lancashire have completed their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Strategic Housing Market Assessment & Employment Land & Premises studies, an initial assessment ('Overview Study') should be carried out to understand the capacity of each authority to meet its own needs, and to assess whether any authority has the ability to meet any of the needs of the adjoining authorities. A further report recommending that a brief is prepared to carry out this work was agreed by the Merseyside District Planning Officers in October and by the LCR Housing & Spatial Planning Coordinating Group and Board in November 2009. This work commenced in spring 2010, and upon completion will indicate the extent to which neighbouring authorities may assist in meeting development requirements. At this point in time, it is not anticipated that the Overview Study will identify any capacity elsewhere in the LCR to meet West Lancashire's needs.

1.9 As a result of the study validation process and stakeholder input between the 3 authorities, revisions have been made to the methodology to ensure the focus remains on the main purpose of this study "to identify whether or not land still meets the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and to establish an enduring boundary". In addition to these changes and due to the very differing geographical context between West Lancashire and the two partner authorities, it has been necessary for West Lancashire to diverge to some extent from the shared methodology to suit local circumstances. Stage 1, paragraph 4.4 sets out the differing circumstances between West Lancashire and Sefton and Knowsley and Stage 2 identifies why the methodologies have diverged. All revisions have been documented and substantiated to show the process followed in order to deliver the outcomes of the study.

1.10 This study will not identify specific sites which will be allocated for development in the future. However, it will produce an assessment of the suitability of land which is currently in the Green Belt for meeting potential development needs. This assessment will then form one strand of the evidence base which will be used to inform the Local Development Framework process and the production of the Core Strategy for West Lancashire.

2 Policy Context

National & Regional

2.1 Since the commencement of the Green Belt Study in December 2009, the political context in which the Study and planning in general is set has changed considerably including a change in government and alterations to various strands of planning policy and guidance. The most significant of these changes is the intention of Government to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which was announced on 6th July 2010. However, until RSS is revoked through the enactment of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill it remains part of the Development Plan.

2.2 The relevance of this relates to Policy RDF4 of the North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021⁽¹⁾. The policy suggested that there was no need for any exceptional substantial strategic change to the Lancashire Green Belt before 2011, with a further presumption against any exceptional substantial strategic change beyond 2011. It added that any other local detailed boundary changes should be examined through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.

2.3 Advice produced by the Department for Communities & Local Government dated 6th July 2010⁽²⁾ states that the Government continues to be committed to the protection of the Green Belt, regardless of any intention to revoke Regional Strategies. Local authorities should continue to apply policies in accordance with PPG2. They should consider the desirability of designating new Green Belt or making adjustments of an existing Green Belt boundary working with other local planning authorities as appropriate.

2.4 Paragraph 2.4 of PPG2 states that “up-to-date approved Green Belt boundaries are essential, to provide certainty as to where Green Belt policies do and do not apply and to enable the proper consideration of future development options”.

2.5 Paragraph 2.6 continues “once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. If such alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed boundaries defined in adopted ... development plans should be altered only exceptionally.”

2.6 Both of these paragraphs confirm that local authorities can consider making changes to existing Green Belt boundaries, in conjunction with other local authorities as appropriate, and provided that the other requirements of PPG2 are met.

2.7 Paragraph 2.10 of PPG2 requires local authorities to take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They are required to consider the consequences for sustainable development (e.g. in terms of the effects on car travel) of channelling development towards the inner edge of the Green Belt, towards towns & villages inset within the Green Belt, or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

1 The North West of England Plan Regional Strategy to 2021, GONW, September 2008

2 ‘Question & Answer’ advice attached to the latter from the Department of Communities & Local Government’s Chief Planner, dated 6th July, 2010

2 Policy Context

2.8 Paragraph 2.12 requires local authorities, when preparing new development plans that contain proposals affecting the Green Belt, to relate these proposals to a timescale that is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the plan, so that the Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered again at the end of the plan period.

2.9 Paragraph 2.12 also states that strategic guidance for metropolitan areas, should provide a strategic framework for considering the issue of providing safeguarded land to meet the needs of the longer timescale. However, there is no guidance as to what this entails, or who should coordinate or prepare this guidance following the abolition of the Regional Body. Metropolitan local authorities are also advised to consider the broad location of anticipated development beyond the plan period, its effects on urban areas contained by the Green Belt and on areas beyond it, and its implications for sustainable development.

2.10 Finally, section 3 of PPG2 sets out the general presumption against inappropriate development, which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other clear harm, is clearly outweighed by other (unspecified) considerations. Paragraph 3.13 states that development plans should make clear the local planning authority's intended approach in respect of large-scale developments in the Green Belt, whether appropriate or not.

Local Planning Context

2.11 The West Lancashire Replacement local Plan (2006) will eventually be replaced by the Core Strategy and the emerging LDF. The Council is currently considering the preferred option for development which will be identified within the Core Strategy. This study along with the results of other studies carried out by each of the local authorities has been used to inform the development requirements which must be planned through the LDF. The main studies include the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) April 2010, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2009/2010, and the Joint Employment Land & Premises Study (JELPS) January 2010, to identify the need for different land uses.

2.12 West Lancashire Borough Council are currently working on the "Preferred Option" for development which will go out to consultation, along within this study as a piece of important evidence, in May/June 2011.

3 Methodology

3.1 The Methodology outlined in this section divides the study into three stages in order to;

- assess whether parcels of land within West Lancashire still meet the purposes of including land within the Green Belt;
- identify parcels which may no longer fulfil the purposes as set out in PPG2;
- identify any constraints and opportunities which would support or inhibit development; and
- provide evidence which will support and establish an enduring and up to date Green Belt boundary.

3.2 The study was carried out in the following three stages.

STAGE 1 - Sub-division of the West Lancashire Green Belt into parcels.

Due to the extent of the Green Belt in the Borough, the focus was on the land designated as Green Belt surrounding the existing settlement areas. The Green Belt was then divided into parcels using mainly existing strong physical boundaries as a guide to identify logical parcels which could then be assessed.

STAGE 2 - Assessment of all parcels against the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

A set of criteria was established in order to measure how well land contributed to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Some purposes such as "to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another", have only one criterion in order to assess whether parcels do or don't fulfil it. Others such as "to check the unrestricted sprawl of urban areas" have two criteria as it was considered there was more than one important measure requiring consideration.

STAGE 3 - Assessment of the remaining parcels against sustainability criteria

Following Stage 2, the parcels considered not to fulfil at least one purpose of the Green Belt were then assessed against sustainability criteria (constraints and opportunities). The conclusion of this stage identified the likelihood of each parcel to support development.

3 Methodology

3.3 As the study progressed and was validated, revisions to the methodology were necessary. This was mainly due to the differing geographical contexts of West Lancashire and the Sefton and Knowsley Boroughs, as set out in paragraph 4.4 of Stage 1. These changes are documented at each stage identifying what the change was, why it was made and how it diverges from the methodology used by Sefton and Knowsley.

3.4 In addition to the differences in geographical context, one of the main differences is that the methodology for the West Lancashire Study only includes three stages, whilst the Sefton and Knowsley studies both include a fourth stage. The fourth stage of the Sefton and Knowsley study consists of an assessment of how the parcels still remaining at stage 4 contribute to meeting identified needs in each settlement area and an indicative capacity of those parcels.

3.5 For West Lancashire, the primary purpose of this study is to assess land on the edge of existing settlements that is currently designated Green Belt, to establish whether or not it continues to fulfil the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Therefore, it was considered more appropriate for the West Lancashire context to limit the Green Belt study to simply assessing the land against the purposes and then establishing any broad sustainability issues relating to any parcels not considered to be contributing to Green Belt purposes. This would then provide an indication of which Green Belt parcels might be most suitable for development if required in the future. Any detailed assessment of specific parcels of land designed to consider local needs and the capacity of those parcels would be assessed and established through the LDF in a Site Allocations DPD, should any Green Belt land be required for development.

4 Stage 1: Identification of Parcels

4.1 The first stage of the Green Belt Study identified parcels in each of the Boroughs that would be subject to assessment throughout the study. Sefton & Knowsley have completed an assessment of the entire Green Belt within their respective boundaries. However, due to the size and shape of West Lancashire's Green Belt this approach was considered inappropriate. Instead, a targeted approach used, focusing on areas immediately around the Borough's towns and main settlements and adjacent to areas of urban concentration within the adjoining Boroughs of Sefton and Knowsley (along the boundary).

4.2 The only exclusions to this within West Lancashire are the main settlement areas within the Northern Parishes. No assessment has been carried out here due to the large amount of open land on the urban fringe which surrounds the settlement areas of Banks, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank, amounting to more than 139 hectares. Development pressures within these areas are likely to lead to the release of open land on the urban fringe before consideration would be required of Green Belt parcels. Consequently, there is no need to assess the Green Belt here or consider how enduring the boundary is.

4.3 In addition, Stanley Gate (Bickerstaffe) and Crawford have also been omitted from assessment of the surrounding Green Belt. This is due to the fact that these settlements, which are predominantly linear residential settlements, have little or no access to, and are some distance from, the closest local services and facilities. These exclusions were informed by the West Lancashire Borough Council Settlement Study 2010.

4.4 The varying approach to assessment between West Lancashire and the neighbouring authorities shows the distinct difference between the authority areas and how the Green Belt functions within each area on a local level as opposed to the collective function of the Mersey and Lancashire Green Belt. Within Sefton and Knowsley the main Green Belt function appears to relate to the prevention of existing settlement areas merging, whilst within West Lancashire the predominant function is to prevent urban sprawl. However, there are limited portions of the Green Belt within West Lancashire which act as an important buffer preventing urban areas merging.

4.5 For the purpose of the West Lancashire study, settlement areas 'inset' within the Green Belt area were assessed due to the potential for development pressures to lead to the compromising of the Green Belt boundaries. However, settlement areas 'washed over' by the Green Belt, and therefore subject to Green Belt designation, were not assessed.

4.6 Parcels were mainly identified using existing strong physical features such as main roads, railways and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, although commitments such as new roads if they will provide a strong and defensible boundary in the future, were also considered.

4.7 The Green Belt was sub-divided into parcels identified using the following criteria;

- character and land use;

4 Stage 1: Identification of Parcels

- impact on openness; and
- clearly defined and durable physical boundaries.

4.8 Paragraph 2.9 of PPG2 states that boundaries should be clearly defined using readily recognisable features wherever possible. Weak boundaries can be vulnerable to urban encroachment whereas strong boundaries are less likely to be altered on an ad hoc basis, and are more likely to withstand the passage of time, which is essential if the Green Belt boundaries are to have longevity. This was assessed during Stage 2 of the process through purpose 1.

4.9 Ordnance Survey Maps and aerial photographs were used initially to identify the sections and parcels. The boundaries were then checked on site to ensure that they were strong, and a photographic record of the boundary was then made. At the end of this stage, each parcel was assigned a unique reference number, based on the settlement area.

4.10 As the Green Belt boundaries are already in existence, there are inevitably some existing boundaries that are 'weak'. This is particularly an issue in the West Lancashire mosslands, where there is a lack of roads and other physical features, and many of the field boundaries comprise ditches and drains which are not readily visible from ground level. When the parcels were inspected, a number of boundaries were altered where a better, more robust boundary was identified in the vicinity.

4.11 Any such amendments were made as part of the Stage 2 site assessments and implemented during the electronic recording of data also within the Stage 2 process. The newly formed parcel was then reassigned a new reference number and then reassessed as a whole in terms of how well the overall parcel met the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Therefore, the newly formed parcels are those that have been assessed and reported on within this study.

4.12 A total of 258 Parcels were identified for assessment and a map of each settlement and the sites assessed are included in Appendix 1.

5 Stage 2: Assessment of Parcels Against the Purposes of Including Land within the Green Belt

5 Stage 2: Assessment of Parcels Against the Purposes of Including Land within the Green Belt

5.1 Following identification of the parcels at Stage 1, each parcel was then assessed to establish whether or not it still meets one or more of the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

5.2 Paragraph 1.4 of PPG2 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and that the key attribute of including land in the Green Belt is its openness. Paragraph 1.5 of PPG2 states that there are five purposes for including land in the Green Belt:

- To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from 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.

5.3 The initial draft methodology for West Lancashire identified that each parcel must be assessed for how well it meets each of the purposes along with how many of the purposes it was considered to meet robustly. The outcome of this assessment resulted in one of the following judgements being made of a parcel;

- parcels considered to meet the majority or all of the purposes robustly were ruled out and removed from further analysis in Stage 3 of the study (Red);
- parcels considered to meet some of the purposes or all of the purposes to a degree were carried over to the Stage 3 assessment with a note of caution (Amber); or,
- parcels assessed as meeting none or a limited amount of the purposes to some extent were carried over to Stage 3 for further assessment (Green).

5.4 Following validation of the methodology by Lancashire County Council, it was identified that in order to accurately interpret PPG2, this approach was not appropriate. Paragraph 1.5 of PPG2 states that “for land to be included in the Green Belt it must contribute to one (or more) of the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt”. PPG2 does not suggest that any of the purposes are more important than the others, therefore, the methodology has been slightly amended to ensure that if any parcel met one (or more) of the purposes in a robust way it would be considered as contributing to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. As such, the parcel would be considered "red" and taken no further in the process of assessment and only where a parcel did not meet any of the five purposes fully would it be considered "green" and progressed to Stage 3.

5 Stage 2: Assessment of Parcels Against the Purposes of Including Land within the Green Belt

5.5 The reason for this change in approach is that even if a parcel met only one of the purposes it was still fulfilling the purpose of including land within the Green Belt and therefore should remain as such and should be ruled out of the study. For sites that were only able to partially meet all five purposes then further consideration was required at Stage 3 and this parcel would be considered "green" and taken through to the next stage. This approach is shared by the partner authorities.

5.6 In order to assess the collective purposes of including land within the Green Belt a robust and measurable criteria was required for each purpose. In addressing each purpose, some required only 1 criteria, for example purpose 2 used only one simple measure of distance. However, purpose 1 was assigned 2 measures to consider containment and boundary strength. Where more than one measure has been assigned to a purpose, the reasons for doing so have been identified. Also, it is assumed that in order to wholly fulfil a purpose, the parcel must meet all of the measures set out. The only exception to this is Purpose 3 which has up to 5 criteria, depending on the location of the parcel. This exception is explained in detail in paragraph 5.27 onwards. All raw data which was collected for all the parcels can be viewed within Appendix 2.

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

5.7 The consultation edition of the Lancashire Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum (March 1986) states: "In West Lancashire the extensive Green Belt will compliment both the Merseyside and Greater Manchester Green Belts aimed at the containment of the two metropolitan areas and will also contain westward pressures from Central Lancashire. In the northern half of the area it will ease the problems of sporadic development which has slowly been resulting in the coalescence of individual smaller settlements". This statement clarifies the importance of the West Lancashire Green Belt in preventing the uncontrolled growth of the surrounding urban areas (Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Central Lancashire) along with the important function of protecting the countryside from sprawl. This is in contrast with the partner authorities, both of whom have a much higher concentration of urban areas relying on the Green Belt designation to act as a buffer between settlement areas.

5.8 Although West Lancashire is located between the large built up areas of Merseyside (including Sefton and Knowsley), Greater Manchester and Central Lancashire, only some of the settlements within the Borough can be considered as "large built-up areas". These include Skelmersdale, Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough. The remaining se all of the settlements defined within the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan as "rural settlements" can be considered large. As PPG2 does not give a definition of "large built up areas", it would be inappropriate to assess Green Belt parcels around the smaller settlements against Purpose One which clearly states it is to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

5.9 Therefore, any settlement area classed as main settlements within the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan and key service centres within the emerging Core Strategy are considered to constitute a "large built-up area" and have been assessed against Purpose One. However, any settlements classed as a rural settlements within the Local Plan are considered to be too small to be classed as "large built-up areas" and were not assessed against Purpose One. There are some exceptions to this including where settlements merge and cross boundaries and these are identified below.

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Table 5.1 Large and Rural Settlements

Settlement	Classification	Justification
Appley Bridge	Large settlement	Although classed as a rural settlement within the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan, Appley Bridge is connected to the larger settlement areas of Shevington Vale and Shevington within Wigan and is therefore considered large.
Burscough	Large settlement	Main settlement area and key service centre.
Halsall	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Haskayne	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Knowsley	Large settlement	A large urban area in the adjacent authority area containing settlements such as Kirby and Tower Hill.
Mere Brow	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Newburgh	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Ormskirk / Aughton	Large settlement	Main settlement area and key service centre.
Parbold / Hilldale	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Rufford	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Scarisbrick	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Sefton	Large settlement	A large urban area in the adjacent authority area containing settlements such as Southport and Formby.
Skelmersdale	Large settlement	Main settlement area and key service centre.
Up Holland	Large settlement	Although it is classed as rural settlement, Up Holland is connected to the main settlement

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		of Skelmersdale and also to Orrell Post and is therefore considered large.
Westhead	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.
Wrightington / Mossy Lea / Hunger Hill	Rural settlement	Rural settlement.

5.10 As the above interpretation of Purpose One was not established until after the data collection stage, the raw data included in Appendix 2 displays collected data for Purpose One against all parcels. However, this data was simply discounted for the smaller parcels as part of the analysis.

5.11 The following assessment criteria was applied to the large settlements in order to measure them against Purpose One and establish how well a parcel is able to contain the urban area and restrict it from sprawl:

Table 5.2 Purpose One Criteria

Purpose 1	Criteria	Criteria Definition	Score
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	A) How well contained by the urban area each parcel is	Not contained - the majority of the parcel is detached from the urban area and no more than one side is adjacent to urban concentration	Red
		Partly contained - approximately 50% of the parcel is adjacent to an urban area	Amber
		Well contained - the majority of the parcel or 75% or more is enclosed by urban area	Green
	B) Boundary Strength	See tables 5.4 and 5.5 for more details	Stronger Green Weaker Red

5.12 Firstly the parcels were assessed in terms of how well 'contained' each one was by the adjacent urban area. In other words, if the parcel was developed would it result in sprawl of the urban area or would it be well contained by existing built-up areas.

5.13 Secondly, the strength of the parcel boundary was assessed as this also plays an important role in restricting urban sprawl. Paragraph 2.9 of PPG2 indicates the need to retain strong Green Belt boundaries, assisting in defining a permanent and appropriate boundary between the developed area and the countryside beyond. Therefore, a second measure of Purpose One was to consider whether encroachment into the Green Belt

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parcels adjacent to an urban area could be firmly ‘contained’ by strong physical and / or visual features to the extent that it could not lead to “unrestricted sprawl” into adjoining parcels.

5.14 In order to ensure that a consistent approach was taken when assessing the strength of the boundary feature/features, a step by step process and consistent hierarchy were used in line with advice from Lancashire County Council (LCC) through the validation process.

1. Consider how penetrable the boundary is by development.
2. Establish the boundary feature type as this will indicate whether the boundary is likely to be strong or weak.
3. Establish consistency of the boundary (strong, moderate or weak).
4. Follow the same steps for the proposed new boundary if Green Belt encroachment occurred.
5. Make an assessment between the two to assess if the new boundary would be stronger (green) or weaker (red).

Boundary features	
Durable features	Features lacking durability
<p>Landform – valley, ridge, depression, drumlin, river, stream.</p> <p>Vegetation – protected woodland, copse.</p> <p>Constructed – motorway, main road, railway, buildings with strong established line, canal, wall.</p>	<p>Field boundary – hedge, fence, line of trees</p> <p>Constructed - ditch, tracks, private roads, buildings with weak intermittent line.</p>

Boundary prominence		
Strong and robust boundary	Moderate boundary	Weak boundary
Combination of more than one feature some of which are substantial (see list above), features intact, well developed and durable, boundary is a prominent feature within the landscape	Comprised of one feature (see list above), some features not intact leading to gaps within the boundary, features lack durability, some condition issues, and few prominent features	One minor infrequent feature, large gaps between features, little or no durability, poor condition and no prominent features

5.15 The assessment consists of two criteria as both were considered to be of equal importance in determining the measure of Purpose One. The first criteria relating to containment of the parcel allows for 3 responses in order to build up an accurate picture of what the parcel is actually like. Only where the parcel is assessed as being red for

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both measures i.e. not contained and would result in weaker boundaries, would it be ruled out for further assessment based on the assumption that it wholly fulfils Purpose One.

5.16 If a parcel was considered to be amber, as it was only partly contained, this alone would not rule it out from further assessment and a judgement would be made on the extent to which this measure is impacting on the purpose i.e. although it is only partly contained, would encroachment into the Green Belt and expansion of the urban area into the parcel lead to what might be considered as "sprawl" or would it be a logical continuation of urban growth?

5.17 Following the assessment of the above two measures, of the original 258 parcels, the following 114 parcels (Table 5.3) were ruled out of the study at this stage as they were considered to wholly meet Purpose One of the Green Belt. Development within these parcels could lead to unrestricted urban sprawl as they were not well contained and had weaker boundaries than the existing Green Belt boundary.

Table 5.3 Parcels Meeting Purpose One

Settlement	Site ID	Address
Appley Bridge	APB.03	Land between Appley Lane North (Knockout Field)
Appley Bridge	APB.04	Land off Appley Lane North (Park House Farm)
Appley Bridge	APB.06	Land to the South of Finch Lane
Appley Bridge	APB.07	Land to the South of Finch Lane (Delf House Wood)
Appley Bridge	APB.08	Land between Finch Lane and Stoney Gate
Appley Bridge	APB.10	Land North of Skull House Lane
Appley Bridge	APB.12	Land directly south of Calico Brook
Appley Bridge	APB.13	Land North of Speakmans Drive
Appley Bridge	APB.14	Land at Heyes Street
Aughton	AUG.02	Land to north of New Lane
Aughton	AUG.03	Land off New Lane
Aughton	AUG.05	Land off Prescott Road
Aughton	AUG.06	Land off Prescott Road
Aughton	AUG.07	Land off Prescott Road / Sefton Gardens
Aughton	AUG.10	Land south of Middlewood Road

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Aughton	AUG.11	Land east of Belvedere Park
Aughton	AUG.12	Land south of Belvedere Park
Aughton	AUG.13	Land south of Ledson Grove
Aughton	AUG.14	Land off Bold Lane, Aughton
Aughton	AUG.15	Land off Bold Lane, Aughton
Aughton	AUG.17	Land off Winifred Lane (Lime Tree Farm)
Aughton	AUG.18	Land east of Northway
Aughton	AUG.19	Land rear of Church Lane
Aughton	AUG.24	Land adjacent Formby Lane
Aughton	AUG.25	Land adjacent Turnpike Road
Aughton	AUG.26	Land off Liverpool Road
Aughton	AUG.27	Land rear of Liverpool Road
Aughton	AUG.28	Land adjacent Turnpike Road
Aughton	AUG.29	Land rear of Holborn Drive
Burscough	BUR.01	Land to the South of Abbey Lane Playing Fields
Burscough	BUR.02	Abbey Lane Playing Fields
Burscough	BUR.03	Beaufort Hotel, Pippin Street / High Lane
Burscough	BUR.04	Land north of Pippin Street
Burscough	BUR.05	Land at Burscough Airfield
Burscough	BUR.06	Land adj Plantation Cottage
Burscough	BUR.07	Burscough airfield (former), Tollgate Road
Burscough	BUR.13	Land at Crabtree Farm, Crabtree Lane
Burscough	BUR.15	Land at Orrell Farm, Orrell Lane
Burscough	BUR.16	Land at Orrell Lane
Burscough	BUR.18	Land off Crabtree Lane
Burscough	BUR.20	Land off Black Moss Lane
Burscough	BUR.21	Land between Moss Road & Warpers Moss Lane

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Burscough	BUR.22	Land adj. to Burscough Curve (North)
Burscough	BUR.25	Land north of School Lane
Burscough	BUR.26	Playing fields off School Lane
Burscough	BUR.27	Land off Wheat Lane / School Lane
Burscough	BUR.28	Land north of School Lane
Burscough	BUR.29	Land off Carr Lane
Burscough	BUR.30	Land at Top Locks
Burscough	BUR.31	Land off Briars Lane
Burscough	BUR.32	Land off Briars Lane
Burscough	BUR.33	Land off Briars Lane
Burscough	BUR.34	Land off Square Lane
Burscough	BUR.35	Land off Square Lane
Burscough	BUR.37	Land at Mill Dam Farm
Knowsley	KNOWB.01	Land to the North of Swallow Close
Knowsley	KNOWB.02	Land to the North of Stopgate Lane, Simonswood
Knowsley	KNOWB.03	Land at Dale Lane adj. to the Rail Line
Knowsley	KNOWB.04	Land to the South of Woods Farm
Knowsley	KNOWB.05	Land at Southead and Bullens Farm.
Knowsley	KNOWB.06	Land adj. to Woodward's Plantation
Knowsley	KNOWB.07	Land at Spencers House Farm
Knowsley	KNOWB.08	Land at Whitemoss Horticulture
Knowsley	KNOWB.09	Land at North Perimeter Road
Knowsley	KNOWB.10	Land adjoining Boundary Lane and North Perimeter Road
Ormskirk	ORM.03	Land adjacent Dark Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.05	Land south of Wigan Road
Ormskirk	ORM.13	Land rear of Redgate
Ormskirk	ORM.17	Land off Heskin Lane

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Ormskirk	ORM.18	Land between Narrow Moss Lane and Blackacre Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.19	Land off Blackacre Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.20	Land to west of High Lane
Sefton boundary	SEFB.01	Land at Pool Hey Lane, Brown Edge
Sefton boundary	SEFB.04	Land to the north of Birkdale Cop
Sefton boundary	SEFB.05	Land to the South of Birkdale Cop
Sefton boundary	SEFB.07	Land at Fine Janes Farm, Moss Road, Birkdale
Sefton boundary	SEFB.09	Land to the South of Greaves Moss Farm
Sefton boundary	SEFB.11	Land between Segars Lane and New Cut Lane
Sefton boundary	SEFB.12	Land at New Cut Lane
Sefton boundary	SEFB.16	Land to the north of Woodvale Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.01	Land between the M58 and White Moss Road South
Skelmersdale	SKEM.02	Land to the South White Moss Road South
Skelmersdale	SKEM.03	Land to the North of Whitemoss Road South
Skelmersdale	SKEM.04	LCC Highways Depot, Whitemoss Business Park
Skelmersdale	SKEM.05	Land at Whitemoss Road South - adj. to Whitemoss Business Park
Skelmersdale	SKEM.07	Land to the South of Moss Lane, Whitemoss
Skelmersdale	SKEM.08	Land at White Moss
Skelmersdale	SKEM.09	Land at White Moss, between Whitemoss & Pimbo.
Skelmersdale	SKEM.10	Land at Holland Moss, Nipe Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.11	Land at Nipe Lane (Pimbo West)
Skelmersdale	SKEM.13	Land to the South of Wigan - Kirkby Rail Line
Skelmersdale	SKEM.14	Land at Balcarres Farm, Crawford
Skelmersdale	SKEM.15	Land South of Balcarres Farm, Crawford
Skelmersdale	SKEM.16	Land to the Rear of Crawford School

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Skelmersdale	SKEM.17	Land between Pimbo Industrial Estate & Pimbo Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.18	Land at Pimbo Lane, adjacent to the Railway Line
Skelmersdale	SKEM.19	Land at Pimbo Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.20	Land at Chequer Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.21	Land at Tower Hill Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.22	Beacon Park
Skelmersdale	SKEM.23	Land to the north of Beacon Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.25	Land to north of Cobbs Brow Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.27	Land to the north of Vale Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.29	Land off Vale Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.30	Land at Holland Business Park
Skelmersdale	SKEM.31	Land west of Firwood Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.32	Land west of Firwood Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.33	Land west of Firwood Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.34	Land west of Firwood Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.36	Land between Primrose Farm & Presbytery, Liverpool Road
Up Holland	UPH.03	Land south of School Lane
Up Holland	UPH.05	Land east of Parliament Street
Up Holland	UPH.07	Land to west of College Road
Up Holland	UPH.09	Land south of Former St Josephs College

5.18 The methodology used by Sefton and Knowsley in terms of assessing Purpose 1 differs slightly from that applied within West Lancashire. The main difference relates to the differentiation between rural and main settlements within the West Lancashire study as Sefton and Knowsley define all "large built-up areas" as including any built up area or inset village identified within the Sefton and Knowsley Unitary Development Plans. Whilst this was the appropriate approach for the neighbouring authorities due to the size of the settlement areas within their Boroughs, it was inappropriate to use this approach within West Lancashire as the geographical make up of the Borough consists of much smaller rural settlements along with larger main settlements.

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

5.19 The draft Methodology indicated that purpose 2 would be assessed using distances between settlements. Following the initial validation stages of this study, both Sefton and Knowsley concluded that this would be too arbitrary for assessment within their authority areas. They did agree in principle that the smaller the gap, the more likely it was that it was essential and should be kept open. However, given that this is likely to be the most fundamental purpose of Green Belt designation within the largely urbanised Borough's of Sefton and Knowsley, this concept required additional detail to allow them a greater analysis of fact and degree. Therefore, the methodologies at this point diverge and Sefton and Knowsley used a more descriptive assessment method to consider the function of the gap.

5.20 For the purpose of the West Lancashire Green Belt Study, as the urban concentration is significantly less than that within Sefton and Knowsley boundaries, a measure of distances would be an adequately suitable assessment of the role each parcel plays in preventing settlements from merging and the following criteria was used;

Table 5.4 Purpose Two Criteria

Purpose 2	Criteria	Criteria Definition	Score
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The width of the strategic open gap between urban areas	Removal of the parcel from Green Belt would leave a gap of <1km	Red
		Removal of the parcel from Green Belt would leave a gap of 1 -2km	Amber
		Removal of the parcel from Green Belt would leave a gap of >2km	Green

5.21 PPG2 indicates that wherever practical, Green Belts should be several miles wide. The West Lancashire Green Belt covers the majority of the Borough and there are some areas between settlements that must be kept undeveloped to maintain separation. For the purpose of this Study, “neighbouring towns” includes all settlements, including “inset” villages. This is essential if individual towns and villages are to retain their individual character. Towns and villages in neighbouring authorities’ areas are also taken into account.

5.22 Only where the removal of the parcel would result in a gap of less than 1km would the parcel be considered red and ruled out from any further assessment at later stages, based on the assumption that it fulfils Purpose Two, as identified in PPG2.

5.23 The majority of parcels were assessed as having little or no impact on the buffer gaps between settlements as the Borough is relatively sparsely populated with minimal urban concentration. The parcels considered to form part of a strategic gap were primarily to the north and south of the Ormskirk/Aughton settlement areas, to the south and east of Skelmersdale and in and around some of the smaller rural villages. Many

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of these parcels had already been ruled out of further assessment as they fulfilled Purpose One, however, the following 26 parcels (Table 5.5) were also ruled out as a result of the Purpose Two assessment.

Table 5.5 Parcels Meeting Purpose Two

Settlement	Site ID	Address
Aughton	AUG.16	Land to the west of Bold Lane
Aughton	AUG.20	Land off Bold Lane
Aughton	AUG.23	Land adjacent St Michael Road
Hilldale	HILL.01	Land opposite Middlehurst Wood
Hunger Hill	HUNH.01	Land at Lassell House Farm
Mossy Lea	MOSL.01	Diglake Farm
Ormskirk	ORM.04	Land to north of Wigan Road
Ormskirk	ORM.06	Land north of Ruff Lane (Ruff woods)
Parbold	PAR.01	Land South of Alder Lane including Wayfarers PH
Parbold	PAR.02	Land North of Wayfarers PH Alder Lane
Parbold	PAR.05	land opposite Lancaster Lane/ Opposite Brandreth Park
Parbold	PAR.06	Land south of Fairhurst Farm, Parbold
Parbold	PAR.15	Land at Chorley Road
Scarisbrick	SCAR.01	Brown Edge Farm, Southport Road
Scarisbrick	SCAR.02	Land to east of New Hall Drive
Scarisbrick	SCAR.11	Land to the South of Fir Tree farm
Scarisbrick	SCAR.13	Land to the West of Carr Cross
Sefton boundary	SEFB.02	Land to the Rear of Southport Road (A570)
Sefton boundary	SEFB.03	Land to the South-West of Southport Road (A570)
Up Holland	UPH.01	Land south of Tower Hill Road (Giants Farm)
Up Holland	UPH.02	Land south of Tower Hill Road (Higher Tower Hill Farm)
Up Holland	UPH.04	Land east of Priory Road

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Up Holland	UPH.06	Land bounded by College Road and Lafford Lane
Wrightington	WR.01	Land North of Sand Hole Farm
Wrightington	WR.02	Land North of Lower Broadhurst Farm
Wrightington	WR.03	Land at Mossey Lea Road

Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

5.24 The draft Methodology proposed that this purpose would be assessed on the basis of the boundary strength and whether the parcel contained land uses that fulfil the Green Belt objectives set out in paragraph 1.6 of PPG2, or supports countryside uses as defined in paragraph 16 of Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17)⁽³⁾. It was considered that this approach would enable assessment of the extent to which the countryside has been successfully safeguarded for appropriate uses such as agriculture, nature conservation and recreation.

5.25 Through the validation process, it was considered that including the land use within the assessment of each parcel was crossing the line into testing objectives which, as is stated in paragraph 1.7 of PPG2, “The extent to which the use of land fulfils these objectives is however not itself a material factor in the inclusion of land within the Green Belt, or in its continued protection...The purposes of including land in Green Belts are of paramount importance to their continued protection, and should take precedence over that of land use objectives”.

5.26 Whilst this is a valid point, paragraph 1.6 of PPG2 does indicate that a number of uses can play a positive role in fulfilling Green Belt objectives, and paragraph 16 of PPS7 ‘Sustainable Development in Rural Areas’ defines a number of countryside uses that should be supported. The objectives set out in paragraph 1.6 are:

- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- to secure nature conservation interest; and
- to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

5.27 Parcels that support the Green Belt objectives or are in a defined countryside use (e.g. in use as a country park) are more likely to fulfil a positive Green Belt role, and may also be less susceptible to change than other uses.

3 PPS17: Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open space, Sport and Recreation, ODPM, July 2002

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5.28 Therefore, this measure should still be considered alongside other appropriate measures which would give an accurate assessment of how well the Green Belt designation has been able to safeguard the countryside from encroachment of inappropriate development and uses within each particular parcel.

5.29 An additional measure of building coverage and use was then applied to establish the extent of development which does not fall within an appropriate countryside use. The measure of age was also recorded as a note to identify whether or not any development within the parcel occurred before or after the Green Belt designation. This is a useful measure as it shows how the parcel has been able to safeguard the countryside from encroachment since the Green Belt designation.

5.30 The presence of a strong physical boundary is likely to be one of the most important factors in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. However, as this had already been assessed as part of the measures for Purpose One, it would not need to be applied to all parcels. Therefore, this measure was only applied to parcels around the rural settlements that had not already been assessed against Purpose One criteria.

5.31 The following criteria was used to assess Purpose Three:

Table 5.6 Purpose Three Criteria

Purpose 3	Criteria	Criteria Definition	Score
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Building coverage and parcel uses		
	3a) What percentage of the parcel is covered in development?	Less than 10%	Red
		10 - 25%	Amber
		Greater than 25%	Green
	3b) Building use (and age included as a text note to establish pre or post Green Belt designation)	Countryside use	Red
		Partial Countryside use	Amber
		Non countryside use	Green
	3c) Land use in defined countryside use	Less than 25%	Green
		24-50%	Amber
		Greater than 50%	Red
	Boundary strength (applied to parcels not already assessed against Purpose One)		
	3d) See tables 5.4 and 5.5 for more details		Stronger Green Weaker Red

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5.32 As with Purpose One, parcels must be assessed as "red" against all criteria in order for it to be considered as wholly fulfilling Purpose Three of the Green Belt. The only exception to this relates to the parcels around the smaller rural settlements which were not assessed against Purpose One but were assessed against criteria 3d in addition to criteria 3a to 3c. Given the presence of a strong physical boundary is identified as being of great importance when assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, parcels assessed as red against only 2 out of 3 criteria (3a to 3c) but assessed as red against 3d, were also ruled out from further assessment at Stage 3. Although the amount of development and use of land are helpful gauges in judging how well the parcel has assisted in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the presence of a strong physical boundary is considered to be of significant importance and justifies this approach.

5.33 Of the sites not previously ruled out as a result of fulfilling purpose 1 or 2 of the Green Belt, the following 103 parcels (Table 5.7) were considered to wholly meet Purpose Three of the Green Belt.

Table 5.7 Parcels Meeting Purpose Three

Settlement	Site ID	Address
Appley Bridge	APB.01	Land adjacent to Boundary Brook, Hall Lane
Appley Bridge	APB.02	Land at Hall Lane
Appley Bridge	APB.05	Land rear of 108-122 Appley Lane North
Appley Bridge	APB.09	Land incorporating Finch Farm
Appley Bridge	APB.11	Land to the south of Leeds Liverpool canal
Aughton	AUG.01	Land north of New Lane
Aughton	AUG.08	Land rear of Molyneux Road and Sefton Gardens
Aughton	AUG.09	Land rear of Molyneux Road
Aughton	AUG.21	Land rear of Brookfield Lane
Aughton	AUG.22	Land off Church Lane
Burscough	BUR.14	Land north of Higgins Lane
Burscough	BUR.17	Land between Burscough Sports Club & Crabtree Lane
Burscough	BUR.36	Land by The Poplars
Halsall	HAL.01	Land to the West of New Street
Haskayne	HASK.01	Land to the North of Blundells Farm

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Haskayne	HASK.02	Land at Hollin Farm, School Lane
Haskayne	HASK.03	Land to the North of Hollin Farm, School Lane
Hilldale	HILL.02	Land to the East of Chorley Road
Hilldale	HILL.03	Playing Fields at Chorley Road, Hilldale
Hunger Hill	HUNH.02	Land to the West of Lane Farm
Hunger Hill	HUNH.03	land to the east of the school
Hunger Hill	HUNH.04	Land to the Rear of 161 Mossey Lea Road
Hunger Hill	HUNH.05	Land to the North of Lane Farm
Mere Brow	MEBR.01	Land south of The Gravel B5246
Mere Brow	MEBR.02	Land North West of Leisure Lakes access road
Mere Brow	MEBR.03	Land South of Tabby Nook
Mere Brow	MEBR.04	Land off the B5246
Mere Brow	MEBR.05	Land West of Platt Bridge
Mere Brow	MEBR.06	Land to the rear of properties on Mere Brow
Mere Brow	MEBR.07	Land to the East of Tabby Nook
Mere Brow	MEBR.08	Land to the South of Bank Farm
Mossy Lea	MOSL.02	Land to the North of Manse Avenue
Mossy Lea	MOSL.03	Land to the West of Manse Avenue
Newburgh	NEW.01	Land to the West of Tears Lane
Newburgh	NEW.02	Land off Course Lane (Adjacent Church)
Newburgh	NEW.03	Land behind properties on Ash Brow.
Newburgh	NEW.04	Land to the rear of Ash Brow
Newburgh	NEW.05	Land on Culvert Lane (North)
Newburgh	NEW.06	Land at Back Lane, Newburgh
Newburgh	NEW.07	Land at Sandy Lane
Newburgh	NEW.08	Land at Rothwells Mushroom Farm, off Course Lane
Newburgh	NEW.09	Land at Lawrensons Farm, Tears Lane

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Newburgh	NEW.10	Land to the West of Woodcock Cottage
Newburgh	NEW.11	King Georges Playing Fields
Newburgh	NEW.12	Land to the Rear of Properties on Cobbs Brow Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.08	Land on corner of Altys Lane and Brook Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.09	Land between St Helens Road and Altys Lane, Ormskirk
Ormskirk	ORM.10	Land at Scarth Hill Lane, Ormskirk
Ormskirk	ORM.11	Land to west of Altys Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.12	Land off Holborn Hill
Ormskirk	ORM.14	Land off Asmall Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.15	Land off Southport Road
Ormskirk	ORM.16	Land off Southport Road, rear of Tennyson Drive
Parbold	PAR.03	Land North West of Parbold adjacent to the River Douglas
Parbold	PAR.04	Land to the North of Lathom Avenue
Parbold	PAR.07	Former Knotts Delph
Parbold	PAR.08	Site close to Lindley Hotel, Parbold
Parbold	PAR.09	Land North of Parbold Hill
Parbold	PAR.10	Tennis Court Site on corner of Parbold Hill and Wood Lane
Parbold	PAR.11	Land directly south of Wood Lane
Parbold	PAR.12	Land off Brambe Way, Parbold
Parbold	PAR.13	Land to the South of Alder Lane Bridge
Parbold	PAR.14	Land at Douglas Farm
Rufford	RUFF.01	Land North West of Brick Kiln Lane
Rufford	RUFF.02	Land at Hill View Farm
Rufford	RUFF.03	Land North of Dam Brook bridge
Rufford	RUFF.04	Land North West of Brick Kiln Lane

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Rufford	RUFF.05	Land to the West of the A59
Scarisbrick	SCAR.03	Plant Groves North of Brook House Farm
Scarisbrick	SCAR.04	Land North of Jacksmere Lane
Scarisbrick	SCAR.05	Land adjacent to Pool Hay Lane
Scarisbrick	SCAR.06	Land at the junction of Hall Lane and Bescar Brow Lane
Scarisbrick	SCAR.07	Land North of Cliffe Wood
Scarisbrick	SCAR.08	Land to the North of Woodacre Lane
Scarisbrick	SCAR.09	Rushton Nurseries
Scarisbrick	SCAR.10	Land to the South of Scarisbrick Moss
Scarisbrick	SCAR.12	Land North of Drummersdale Lane
Scarisbrick	SCAR.14	Land directly north of Culshams Plantation
Scarisbrick	SCAR.15	Alderbrook Farm, Jacksmere Lane
Scarisbrick	SCAR.16	Land at Jacksmere Lane
Sefton boundary	SEFB.06	Land to the South of Moss Road (B5243)
Sefton boundary	SEFB.08	Land at Greaves Moss Farm, Moss Road, Birkdale
Sefton boundary	SEFB.10	Land to the East of Guildford Road
Sefton boundary	SEFB.14	Land to the north of Segars Lane
Sefton boundary	SEFB.15	Land at White Otter and Hill House Farm
Sefton boundary	SEFB.17	Land to the east of Vale Crescent
Shirdley Hill	SHH.01	Land to the rear of Turburn Farm
Shirdley Hill	SHH.02	Land at Glendene Farm
Shirdley Hill	SHH.03	Shaws Garth. Land to the southeast of Shirdley Hill
Skelmersdale	SKEM.06	Land at Moss Lane, Whitemoss
Skelmersdale	SKEM.12	Land at Moor Side Farm and Barton House Farm, (Pimbo)
Skelmersdale	SKEM.24	North of Lucas Cottage, Beacon Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.26	Cobbs Clough Lane / Vale Lane

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Skelmersdale	SKEM.35	Blaguegate Playing fields and land rear of the Presbytery
Skelmersdale	SKEM.37	Land south of White Moss Road
Skelmersdale	SKEM.38	White Moss Road playing fields
Up Holland	UPH.08	West of Hallbridge Gardens
Westhead	WEST.01	Land at Mawdsleys Farm
Westhead	WEST.02	Land to the rear of Properties on School Lane
Westhead	WEST.03	Playing Fields of School Lane
Westhead	WEST.04	Playing Fields of School Lane
Wrightington	WR.04	Land to the rear of residential properties on Mossy Lea Road
Wrightington	WR.05	Land behind residential properties on Church Lane and Mossey Lea Road

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

5.34 West Lancashire's Green Belt does not contain any nationally recognised historic towns, the setting of which requires high levels of protection. Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5)⁽⁴⁾ defines setting as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve”.

5.35 As part of the assessment of the individual parcels, a number of assets were identified which were considered to be important in terms of maintaining the setting. This included a number of villages and parklands, whether designated as Conservations Areas or not. However, a setting was not normally identified around listed buildings. This was because it was generally felt that in most cases, the setting of a listed building was likely to be relatively localised, and unlikely to impact on the whole of a parcel. Equally it was noted where a parcel was particularly open and visible across the wider landscape.

5.36 However, no parcels were discarded from the study as a result of the Purpose Four assessment. This was based on the fact that the assumptions made would be largely subjective and could differ depending on what any future use of a parcel was to be in the event it was released from Green Belt designation. Further consideration to this issue may be given through the Local Development Framework process in the event Green Belt parcels are identified to meet development needs and the type, mix and design of the development has been explored.

4 PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Department of Communities and Local Government, March 2010

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Table 5.8 Purpose Four Criteria

Purpose 4	Criteria	Criteria Definition	Score
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Whether a parcel helps preserve the setting of an historic town, village or park	Parcel contributes significantly to the setting of an historic town, village or park	Red
		Parcel has limited contribution to the setting of an historic town, village or park	Amber
		Parcel has no impact on the setting of an historic town, village or park	Green

5.37 This approach was shared with the Sefton and Knowsley Borough Council Green Belt Studies.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

5.38 Given the study was carried out, to some extent in partnership with neighbouring authorities, this allowed for a useful exchange methodologies and for advice to be input by consultants contracted out by Sefton and Knowsley. The forum for doing this was a series of workshops which took place during the early stages of the study and allowed all partners to discuss the most suitable approach to the study based on the local context for their area.

5.39 During the workshops it was agreed that the first four purposes could be measured with a good degree of confidence. However, there was very little consistent evidence that could be used to indicate whether development was likely to have a positive or negative impact on regeneration priorities. The workshops concluded that this was likely to depend on the details of the scheme and on future regeneration priorities and initiatives, as well as issues such as distance between the site being developed and any regeneration priority and the links between them, including any possibility of cross-subsidisation.

5.40 It was therefore concluded that PPG2 Purpose Five could not be adequately addressed as part of this Study, and should be deferred for consideration through the preparation of the Core Strategy, and the Development Management process once any planning application is submitted. This approach is also shared by the partner authorities and consequently, it was agreed that only the first four PPG2 purposes should be examined as part of this Study.

Overall parcel summary

5.41 The Stage 2 assessment resulted in a total of 15 parcels (Table 5.9) from the original 258 being considered as "Green" as they did not wholly fulfil any of the Green Belt purposes as set out in PPG2. Therefore, the parcels were then progressed to the Stage 3 assessment in order to review any identified constraints and positive attributes.

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Table 5.9 Remaining Parcels Requiring Stage Three Assessment

Settlement	Site ID	Address
Aughton	AUG.04	Land off Parris Lane, Aughton
Burscough	BUR.08	Land rear of Lordsgate Lane
Burscough	BUR.09	Land rear of Liverpool Road South
Burscough	BUR.10	Land at Yew Tree Farm, Higgins Lane
Burscough	BUR.11	Land adj. to Burscough Employment Area
Burscough	BUR.12	Land adj. to Burscough Employment Area
Burscough	BUR.19	Land between Moss Nook & Red Cat Lane
Burscough	BUR.23	Land adj. to Burscough Curve (South)
Burscough	BUR.24	Land at Haydock Farm
Ormskirk	ORM.01	Land rear of Grove Farm, High Lane, Ormskirk
Ormskirk	ORM.02	Land at Bath Farm, Dark Lane
Ormskirk	ORM.07	Land between Ruff Lane and St Helens Road (Edge Hill)
Rufford	RUFF.06	Land at the Manor House, Station Road
Sefton boundary	SEFB.13	Land to the South of New Cut Lane
Skelmersdale	SKEM.28	Land to the south of Vale Lane

5.42 The results and raw data relating to the Stage 2 assessments can be found in Appendix 2.

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6 Stage 3: Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

6.1 Stage 2 assessed each parcel and ruled out those which were considered to be wholly fulfilling at least one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The remaining 15 parcels of land within the study did not wholly meet any of the set criteria for measuring each purpose of the Green Belt and therefore have been carried forward to Stage 3 i whether this land could contribute to meeting the development needs of the Borough.

6.2 The 15 parcels were then subjected to assessment to consider how deliverable and sustainable they are. In order to consider deliverability, a set of constraints were devised which could be considered prohibitive, restrictive or limiting to development. In order to consider the sustainability of the parcel, access to services and transport links other than the car were assessed. In addition, any positive attributes for delivering the parcel such as improved access to services for the wider area or the removal of a conflicting use were identified.

6.3 It is important to note that Stage 3 of this study presents the issues, constraints and opportunities for delivering development on parcels of land currently designated as Green Belt. It does not identify which parcels will be allocated for development as this will form part of the Local Development Framework process for which this piece of work forms part of the comprehensive evidence base.

6.4 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, states that in delivering sustainable development, planning authorities should seek to *"provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by **ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car, while recognising that this may be more difficult in rural areas**"* (Paragraph 27 (v)).

6.5 In accordance with the above requirement of National Planning Policy, a desktop approach to source information from GIS and various other records was used to consider the sustainability and accessibility of the parcel along with development constraints. The assessment consisted of the following:

- **Soil and Land Resources:** Consideration of the parcels topography, ground stability, geological allocations, agricultural grading of the land, mineral activity, land contamination issues and whether or not the parcel is previously developed land.
- **Biodiversity and Natural Environment:** Is the parcel within or adjacent to any International, National, Regional or Local environmental designation, protected trees, woodland or mineral safeguarding areas?
- **Heritage and Landscapes:** Is the parcel within or adjacent to any historical assets or does it fall into a designated landscape recognised for its importance?

6 Stage 3: Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

- **Climatic Factors, energy and flooding:** Is the parcel within an area of known flood risk? Does the parcel suffer from any surface water flooding issues? Are there any opportunities for the parcel to deliver low or zero carbon energy initiatives?
- **Air and water quality and resources:** Does the parcel suffer from any known issues relating to water supply and waste water treatment? Does it relate to an Air Quality Management Area?
- **Infrastructure:** Does the parcel have any significant infrastructure requirements? Does the parcel contain any infrastructure facilities, such as pipelines, overhead power lines or buildings which could constrain development of the parcel or access to it?
- **Accessibility:** Does the parcel have adequate access to the local highways network? Will the development of this parcel create congestion on local roads? Is the parcel within easy reach of local services? The travel times and distances used to assess the accessibility of the parcels were informed by Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines. They are the same as those used to calculate Regional Spatial Strategy Indicator 7 *Accessibility - Access to 6 basic services within 30 minutes by public transport*. The results were calculated using the software package Accession. This software was developed by MVA consultancy as a response to the need for local authorities to carry out accessibility and resource audits, following the 2003 DfT report "Making the Connections". The thresholds used for time and distance are advised by DfT and included within the calculation.
- **Summary:** Are there any key deliverability issues associated with the parcel? What would the cumulative impacts be if the parcel was developed? Are there any positive benefits that the development of a parcel may have, such as the creation of new infrastructure to solve an identified need and the creation of new wildlife habitats to improve the local environment?

6 Stage 3: Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

6.6 In terms of the constraints considered through the Stage 3 assessment, each one was categorised in order to identify the intensity of the constraint and to consider whether it was a prohibitive, restrictive or a limiting factor in delivering development. The classifications are set out below:

Table 6.1

<p>Prohibitive - Contrary to wider planning guidance and unlikely to be capable of mitigation</p>	<p>International/National wildlife sites Flood Zone 3a & 3b Flood Storage Areas Historic Parks and Gardens Cemeteries</p>
<p>Restrictive - Would not entirely prohibit new development</p>	<p>Flood Zone 2 Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment Agricultural Land (grades 1,2 & 3) Conservation Areas Regionally Important Geological Sites Mineral Safeguarding Areas Listed Buildings Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Interest Local Nature and Wildlife Sites</p>
<p>Limiting - Could be mitigated</p>	<p>Setting of Conservation Areas/Heritage Assets Surface Water Flooding Close Proximity to Prohibitive or Restrictive Constraints Recreation Areas TPO's/ Ancient woodland Contaminated land issues Local Landscape Designations</p>

Ormskirk and Aughton

Aug.04 - Land off Parrs Lane

6.7 This is an extensive parcel covering more than 23 hectares and located south east of the main settlement area. It contains scattered residential development along the south-eastern boundary of Parrs Lane, linear residential development along the north-eastern periphery fronting Long Lane and a cluster of residential development to the west of the parcel on Orchard View. The remainder of the parcel is currently in use for a mix of agricultural / grazing uses and the north-western boundary is defined by the Liverpool-Ormskirk rail line. The parcel is surrounded by urban settlement on 3 sides and only open to the east, hence the reason for inclusion in this Stage 3 analysis.

6.8 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints were identified for AUG.04, however the parcel is, in parts, classed as grade 1 agricultural land which is considered to be a restrictive constraint, as are the tight limits placed on the capacity of the nearest waste water treatment plant. Some limiting factors were also evident as the parcel is adjacent to an area of Landscape History of Local Importance, contains a protected tree and is adjacent to Sandfield Park, a former landfill site.

6.9 Accessibility - The parcel is located adjacent to the settlement area of Ormskirk and Aughton which is one of the key service centres of the Borough and benefits from many services and good rail and road links to the wider area. The parcel is within 30 minutes public transport time of all the key community, health, leisure and entertainment facilities and within required walking distances for local services such as GP, primary school, local centre and employment area. It also benefits from being well within 30 minutes public transport time of Edge Hill University. The only exception is that the parcel is not within fifteen minutes walk of an informal recreation facility. The parcel is well served by public and other means of transport and the majority of it is within 400m of a bus stop and proposed or existing cycle path and well within 800m of a train station, as it is located between Aughton Park and Town Green stations on the Liverpool - Ormskirk line with a regular 15 minute service. Due to the rural road network which predominates around the parcel, capacity of the immediate network could cause some concern and present difficulties for traffic moving from the parcel to the strategic road network. Gaining access to the parcel should not present any major difficulties.

6.10 Summary - The parcel is well located in terms of proximity to rail, cycle and pedestrian links as well as distance from many of the key service centre facilities on offer in Ormskirk. Green links could also be made into the town centre and to many of the required facilities and public transport points. The main restriction relating to AUG.04 is the presence of grade 1 agricultural land and the requirement to protect this important resource. Consequently, other parcels, not containing the best grade agricultural land should be considered first. If this parcel was developed along with the other parcels subject to stage 3 assessment, the cumulative impact on the settlement area (Ormskirk/Aughton) could be negative in relation to traffic congestion and waste water capacity issues affecting the entire settlement area.

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ORM.01 - Land rear of Grove Farm, High Lane

6.11 The parcel is located to the north of the main settlement area of Ormskirk and between the A59 to the west and the Ormskirk - Preston Rail line to the east. The parcel covers around 8.7 hectares and contains some farm buildings/houses associated with the use of the land, although the parcel does not appear to be in active use currently. The surrounding area is mainly agricultural to the north and south east with residential areas to the north and south west, ensuring it is well contained by the existing urban area.

6.12 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints were identified as a result of the desk top exercise. The parcel is in parts classed as grade 1 agricultural land which is considered to be a restrictive constraint along with the lack of capacity at the waste water treatment works (New Lane, Burscough) which affects the majority of Ormskirk and Burscough. Limiting factors include the proximity to Martin Mere, an International Wildlife Site, along with the proximity to a Local Nature Conservation Site which should be given consideration to establish the role this parcel plays, if any, in supporting these nearby designations. Also a limiting factor is the proximity to a listed building in the adjacent parcel of land. However the railway embankment which lies between the two should provide ample screening and limit the potential impact development may have of the heritage asset.

6.13 Accessibility - The parcel is located adjacent to the settlement area of Ormskirk, one of the key service centres of the Borough benefiting from many services and good rail and road links to the wider area. The parcel is within 30 minutes public transport time of all the key community, health, leisure and entertainment facilities and within required walking distances for local services such as GP, primary school, local centre and employment area. It also benefits from being well within 30 minutes public transport time of Edge Hill University. The only exception is that the parcel is not within fifteen minutes walk of a proposed informal recreation facility. The parcel is well served by bus, rail and cycle links. However, vehicular traffic may cause additional strain on the already congested Ormskirk Town Centre one way system. Access into the parcel can be easily taken from the A59 boundary.

6.14 Summary - The parcel is adjacent to existing residential areas. Therefore, development of a similar nature would not be considered incongruous with the surrounding area. Opportunities to create green links into the town centre and capitalise on the relationship the parcel has with the service centre of Ormskirk are a clear benefit to this parcel and the lack of any prohibitive constraints indicates that the parcel should not be ruled out from further consideration in the event Green Belt boundaries are amended to accommodate the Boroughs growth needs. The main restriction relating to ORM.0, aside from waste water issues which could be mitigated, is the presence of grade 1 agricultural land and the requirement to protect this important resource. Consequently, other parcels, not containing the best grade agricultural land should be considered first. If this parcel was developed along with the other parcels subject to stage 3 assessment, the cumulative impact on the settlement area (Ormskirk/Aughton) could be negative in relation to traffic congestion and waste water capacity issues affecting the entire settlement area.

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ORM.02 - Land at Bath Farm, Dark Lane

6.15 Land at Bath Farm covers around 17 hectares and is located north of the Ormskirk settlement area. The parcel contains Bath Farm and some residential properties on Dark Lane. The surrounding land is a mixture of open fields and a proportion is used in agricultural activity. The railway line extends along the west of the parcel, and residential development lies to the south and south west creating a degree of containment around the parcel. The land to the north of the parcel is mainly open and in agricultural use.

6.16 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints were identified for the parcel although some restrictive constraints were present. A proportion of the parcel is designated as grade 1 agricultural land and the waste water treatment issue constraining ORM.01 and the wider Ormskirk and Burscough area must also be considered as a restrictive constraint. Limiting factors include the proximity of the parcel to the International Wildlife Site of Martin Mere, the Local Nature Conservation Site and the listed building north of the parcel known as Bath Lodge. Given the distance to each of these constraints the likelihood is that the impact, if any, will be minimal and mitigation will be a realistic solution.

6.17 Accessibility - The parcel is within walking distance of Ormskirk Town Centre, so from an accessibility perspective is well served and is easily within 30 minutes public transport time of all key services including community, health, leisure and entertainment facilities. Public transport links are also available for bus, rail and a cycle route within 400 - 800m from the parcel, making it highly sustainable. It also benefits from being well within 30 minutes public transport time of Edge Hill University and within easy walking distance. The main concern regarding accessibility relates to the difficulty to gain access to the parcel due to the rail line to the west and the existing properties to the south and east blocking access to the surrounding road network. Also additional traffic onto Dark Lane and through the town centre as a result of development within this parcel would further exacerbate the existing congestion issues in Ormskirk.

6.18 Summary - The parcel is very sustainable in terms of access to facilities, infrastructure and sustainable transport links. Existing rights of way along the southern boundary of the parcel could help to improve further green links to the wider settlement. The main restrictions relating to ORM.02 are the waste water issue which could possibly be mitigated and the access to the highway which would require possible demolition of existing properties and may therefore impact deliverability. The presence of grade 1 agricultural land and the requirement to protect this important resource should also be considered. As with the other parcels around the Ormskirk settlement, development of this and the other stage 3 parcels together could result in negative cumulative impacts, particularly relating to the existing town centre traffic congestion and waste water capacity issues which affect the wider settlement area.

ORM.07 - Land between Ruff Lane and St Helens Road (Edge Hill)

6.19 The parcel is located adjacent to Edge Hill University and east of the Ormskirk settlement area. As it is situated on the A570, one of the main routes through the Borough, it is considered a 'gateway' to Ormskirk. It contains a small amount of

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development relating to some residential uses on the south and east peripheries, along with some development (car parking and sports fields) associated with Edge Hill University. The remainder of the parcel is in use as agricultural land.

6.20 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints were identified for the parcel although some restrictive constraints were present. A proportion of the parcel is designated as grade 1 agricultural land and the waste water treatment issue constraining the wider Ormskirk and Burscough area must also be considered as a restrictive constraint. Limiting factors include the proximity of the parcel to the International Wildlife Site of Martin Mere, protected trees within the site, and proximity of the parcel to a conservation area and the fact that part of the site is within an Area of Landscape History of Local Importance. However, given the distance to most of the constraints the likelihood is that the impact, if any, will be minimal. Also mitigation will be a realistic solution and sensitive design can be used in areas of landscape importance.

6.21 Accessibility - The parcel is just over the acceptable walking time and distance (ten minutes or 800m) to the nearest retail centre (Ormskirk) as it is between 1.5 - 2km away. However, most community facilities, such as schools, leisure centres and GP's are well within 30 minutes public transport time. The parcel is accessible on 3 sides by road, including the A570 to the south which is a main arterial route through the Borough. The main concern is that any additional traffic generated in the event the parcel was developed would have further negative impacts on the already congested A570 route which can be severe during peak University registration times.

6.22 Summary - Although the parcel is just over acceptable walking distances as set by Department for Transport guidelines, many facilities could be reached by public transport, cycle and on foot. However, these alternative methods would need to be fundamental to the design of any development as the impact of additional and unmitigated traffic levels would burden the already overloaded road network at particular times of the year. The waste water issue continues to be a constraint for any development, whether in or out of Green Belt designated land and must be resolved regardless of whether or not this parcel remains within the Green Belt. In terms of opportunities, the location of the parcel means it could easily build upon the employment opportunities relating to Edge Hill University and the chance to integrate into any site wide renewable or decentralised energy solutions. The cumulative impact of delivering this parcel along with other parcels around the Ormskirk and Aughton settlement area could be negative in relation to traffic congestion and waste water capacity issues and would need to be managed through phasing and appropriate mitigation.

Burscough

BUR.08 - BUR.12

6.23 As the parcels BUR.08 - BUR.12 are effectively sections of a wider much larger parcel, the assessment below summarises all 5 parcels together. This is to avoid repetition and to make reference to the fact the parcels form part of a larger parcel.

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6.24 In total the parcels cover just over 73 hectares and are not in current use. Consisting of open land between the industrial area and residential area the parcels contain only a small garage associated with the residential use on the southern boundary which appears to be curtilage extension into the Green Belt and Yew Tree Farm which is now a derelict farm house and associated derelict buildings.

6.25 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints are present within the parcels and the main restrictive constraint is the waste water issue which effects all of the parcels and much of Burscough, Ormskirk and the outlying areas, although this could be capable of mitigation. In terms of limiting factors the parcel is within close proximity to a conservation area, listed building, protected trees, an area of Landscape History of Regional Importance, local nature site and the international nature site at Martin Mere. The majority of these issues would require further consideration and potentially investigation but are likely to have a minimal impact on the deliverability of the parcel. In terms of land quality, much of the parcel is classed as grade 2 agricultural land and so carries a certain amount of important resource value, although not as much as grade 1. In addition contamination of some of the land is also potentially an issue given the former royal navy base use at BUR.08 , former depot use at BUR.09 and in filled pond at BUR.10.

6.26 Accessibility - In terms of accessibility the parcel is within 30 minutes public transport time of all the key community, health and recreational facilities and within walking distance of open and recreational space. In terms of walking distance to local facilities, the local centre, GP and primary school are all accessible on foot by the parcels to the east and closest to the A59, whilst those to the west are slightly beyond acceptable thresholds. Sustainable transport links include the rail station which is within 800m of the east of the parcel and a bus stop within 400m along with public rights of way to encourage walking on the edge of the parcel. The parcel is within approximately 30 - 45 minutes public transport time of Edge Hill University so is reasonably accessible.

6.27 Access to the south of the parcels can be gained from the top of Lordsgate Lane, to the west from Tollgate Road, to the north east through Yew Tree Farm onto the A59 and to the north from Higgins Lane. The cumulative impact of developing these parcels together is likely to generate significant additional vehicular traffic which could exacerbate the existing congestion within Burscough and also further down the network in Ormskirk Town Centre. Given the existing sustainable links and the potential to improve these through increased frequency of bus or rail services and with promotion and improvement of green links, some of the traffic congestion could be mitigated to some extent.

6.28 Summary - Given the main restrictive constraint relates to waste water, providing this can be mitigated, the limiting factors are unlikely to hinder the delivery of these parcels. The cumulative impact of delivering all parcels together is likely to cause some traffic concerns which could only be mitigated to some extent due to the constrained nature of the existing road network. However, there are some positive cumulative impacts of delivering all parcels together. The existing good access to most services in acceptable public transport time and to many within walking distance including sustainable transport links could be improved for the parcels to the west by creating through routes. This would also allow for potential delivery of some on site facilities

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which would improve access to services for all parcels and the wider area. In addition, the larger parcel would improve the viability and potential to link into the adjacent employment area and deliver a decentralised energy system.

BUR.19 - Land between Moss Nook & Red Cat Lane

6.29 BUR.19 covers 3.7 hectares and is used partially for agriculture and is partly open fields with some residential outbuildings and gardens areas in the north of the parcel. Bordered on 3 sides by residential areas with agricultural fields to the north, the parcel is relatively well contained.

6.30 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints were identified for this parcel and the restrictive constraints include the agricultural land classification of grade 1 and the waste water issue as with the other Burscough and Ormskirk parcels. Limiting factors include proximity to protected trees and an area of landscape history of county importance. Also this parcel is the closest of all the parcels in Stage 3 to the international nature site of Martin Mere which is about 1.5km away, so consideration should be given to the role this parcel has in supporting this designation.

6.31 Accessibility - The parcel lies north of the Burscough settlement which has many of its own local services. It is within 30 minutes public transport time of all the main community, health and leisure facilities with the exception of a university which takes between 30 and 45 minutes to get to in Ormskirk. The parcel is also within walking distance of a local centre for convenience shopping, a GP and an employment area, although access to a primary school is slightly further at around 1km away. There is also a bus stop and a rail station within walking distance of the parcel with good links to Southport and Manchester. Limited access to recreational and public open space is an issue. The parcel can be directly accessed from Red Cat Lane. However, increased traffic may have an impact on this rural road which already has traffic calming measures in place. On a wider scale, impacts are likely to include a negative effect on the congested village centre, particularly at the Tesco roundabout.

6.32 Summary - The parcel has a good level of accessibility to local services and transport links and no prohibitive constraints. However, the parcel has limited access to recreational and public open space and its environmental value could be significant given the grade 1 agricultural land (which is an important resource) and the proximity to Martin Mere, which should be given significant consideration in the event development of this parcel is required through the Core Strategy. Cumulatively if this parcel was to be delivered with the other parcels in Burscough and those in the Stage 3 assessment, the main concern would be exacerbating traffic on the already congested rural road network around Burscough and Ormskirk.

BUR.23 - Land adjacent to Burscough Curve (South) and BUR.24 - Land at Haydock Farm

6.33 Both BUR.23 and BUR.24 share many similar attributes so will be discussed together to avoid duplication. Both parcels cover just over 2 hectares each and are grassed over. No built development is present within BUR.23 to the north and only three residential properties and several outbuildings associated with Haydock Farm are located within BUR.24 which is the southern most parcel. Both parcels are located

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between the disused Burscough Curves which link the Ormskirk - Preston rail line with the Southport - Manchester line. The Burscough Curves are currently safeguarded within the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan in order to secure future rail reinstatement.

6.34 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints are evident and the restrictive constraints include the agricultural land classification of grade 1 and the waste water issue as with the other Burscough and Ormskirk parcels. In terms of limiting factors, proximity to protected trees, a listed building and an area of landscape history of county importance require consideration. Also this parcels are within 3km of the international nature site of Martin Mere so consideration should be given to the role they have, if any, in supporting this designation.

6.35 Accessibility - Both parcels are located east of the Burscough settlement which has many of its own local services. They are within 30 minutes public transport time of all the main community, health and leisure facilities with the exception of a university which takes between 30 and 45 minutes to get to Edge Hill in Ormskirk. Limited access to recreational and public open space is an issue although the main local services such as primary school, GP, local centre and employment centre are all within 400m walking distance with the exception of a university which takes between 30 and 45 minutes via public transport. Also there is a bus stop, rail station and cycle path all within easy walking distance of the parcel. The main issue with accessibility is that both parcels are enclosed by rail lines on all sides. BUR.23 has no physical access at all and this would need to be constructed under or over either the operational or disused rail line. BUR.24 is dissected to the south by School Lane. However, residential properties line the road and prevent easy access to the parcel which is at the rear. In the event access could be made, the implications of additional volumes of traffic on this very narrow road would be negative as would the wider impacts on the already congested village.

6.36 Summary - Although both parcels are relatively sustainable in terms of access to local services and transport links, physical access to the northern parcel, BUR.23, would be almost impossible, requiring construction under or over existing rail lines which would be unviable. Parcel BUR.24 to the south could take access over residential land which could potentially require demolition and would lead to increased vehicular traffic in this location which could be problematic. Other main concerns include the impact on the internationally designated wildlife site at Martin Mere. Whilst it is noted that the parcel is some 3km away from Martin Mere and substantial development lies between the two, it is important to establish whether or not the parcel forms part a wildlife route which assists in the sustaining of the internationally important site. In addition the grade 1 agricultural land must be considered as an important resource. Cumulative impacts are also likely to be negative as a result of the increased traffic on the congested road network.

Skelmersdale

SKEM.28 - Land to the south of Vale Lane

6.37 This 9.3 hectare parcel is predominantly used for agricultural purposes. There is a small set of farm buildings within the south of the parcel, along Spa Lane and adjacent to the north of the parcel along Vale Lane is some residential development

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which borders agricultural land. Adjacent to the south of the parcel is some industrial development at the Stanley Employment Area and to the east a public recycling centre can be found.

6.38 Constraints - No prohibitive constraints were identified within parcel, and the restrictive constraints included grade 1 agricultural land classification effecting part of the parcel and a listed building within the parcel. In terms of limiting factors, the parcel is within 1km of an area of Landscape History of Regional Importance which would require consideration but is capable of mitigation. The parcel suffers from significant ground condition issues relating to past mining activities and instable ground. This could have a negative impact on the deliverability of the parcel due to remediation costs.

6.39 Accessibility - Skelmersdale is the largest settlement area in the Borough and to some extent is well served by local amenities such as schools, GPs and open space provision. However, parts of the settlement suffer poor accessibility due to the new town layout which favours private vehicles and in some areas has a lack of local services. In terms of access the parcel is within 30 minutes public transport time of all major community, leisure and health facilities with the exception of a university which is about 45 minutes away by bus to Edge Hill in Ormskirk. The biggest draw back is the fact that the nearest local centre for basic shopping is about 2km away from the parcel as is a GP, primary school and public open space, although the latter is likely to be of lesser importance given the relatively easy access to the countryside in many parts of the Borough. A cycle route and bus stop is within 400m walking distance of the parcel. However, as with the rest of Skelmersdale, access to a rail station is significantly further away in Up Holland. In general the road system in Skelmersdale is well set up with spare capacity and traffic would be likely to use the access from Glenburn Road roundabout, although it would be possible to access the parcel via Spa Lane and Vale Lane provided the capacity of these rural roads was improved.

6.40 Summary - The main issue affecting the deliverability of SKEM.28 is the major ground condition issue which will be difficult to resolve and potentially very costly. This is likely to hinder the viability of any development here. Constraints also include the agricultural land classification due to its significance as an important resource requiring protection and the limited accessibility to a local service centre and some key facilities such as primary education and a GP. In addition there could be potential for conflicting land use issues given the recycling centre which is adjacent to the east of the parcel. Given this was the only parcel to make it through to stage 3 in the Skelmersdale settlement area, it is unlikely that the cumulative impacts of developing this and the other 17 parcels would be negative.

Sefton Boundary

SEFB.13 - Land to the South of New Cut Lane

6.41 This Parcel covers just over 15 hectares and includes the residential gardens of some properties and agricultural land. There are a few small buildings within the parcel, which lies south of New Cut Lane and adjacent to the border of Sefton. The north and west of the parcel is bounded by residential properties and the south is agricultural land with Fine Janes Brook running through part of the parcel and along the eastern boundary.

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6.42 Constraints - A very small part of the parcel is classed as Flood Zone 3 and Fine Janes Brook runs through the parcel, therefore this could be prohibitive as development should be directed away from areas at risk of flooding. However, given the small portion of the parcel which is subject to this designation it is unlikely to restrict development potential of the wider parcel. The only Restrictive constraint identified for SEFB.13 is the land classification as grade 1 agricultural which requires protection as a resource. Limiting factors include proximity to protected trees and the proximity (less than 1km) to a Regionally Important Geological Site as well as proximity to a SSSI less than 1km. Ground condition could present an issue due to the peat land which predominates within this area.

6.43 Accessibility - Access to the site could be taken via New Cut Lane but the implications of increased vehicular traffic on the surrounding rural moss road network is likely to be detrimental. In terms of accessibility to local services, the parcel is closer to the settlement area of Birkdale in the neighbouring authority of Sefton and would benefit from the range of facilities locally, which includes primary and secondary schools, doctors surgery, library, local shops and recreational facilities. Transport links are reasonable with Birkdale train station being less than 1.5km away and bus stops within walking distance of the parcel. Therefore, sustainability of this parcel is better than would be expected given the positioning adjacent to the Sefton Boundary and the links to local services within Sefton such as primary and secondary schools, doctors surgery, library, local shops and recreational facilities. The parcel is within approximately 40 minutes public transport time of Edge Hill University so is reasonably accessible.

6.44 Summary - A small portion of the parcel is subject to a potentially prohibitive constraint due to the flood risk zone 3 designation adjacent too, and slightly within, the parcel, although only to a minor degree. The likelihood is this could be easily mitigated through appropriate on site solutions. Consideration must also be given to the land resource as it is grade 1 agricultural land and requires a degree of protection. The parcel benefits from close proximity to the Sefton boundary which results in improved accessibility to services within Sefton. However, any additional traffic generated from the parcel which looks to Burscough or Ormskirk or travels through these settlements to the strategic road network (M6 and M58) is likely to have a negative impact on the rural road network. The road system is built on the moss land which predominates in this part of the Borough and is unlikely to be capable of significant improvement in order to mitigate any negative impacts from increased traffic generation. There are unlikely to be any cumulative impacts from delivery of this parcel along with the other parcels in the stage 3 assessment due to the substantial distance between the parcels and existing major settlement areas within the Borough. Also the existing urban mass which lies within the Sefton boundary to the west of the parcel could potentially absorb much of the impact if this parcel was developed.

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Rural Parcels

RUFF.06 - Land at the Manor House, Station Road

6.45 The parcel contains the Manor House but is mainly used in conjunction with the Rufford Marina development and associated buildings. The Leeds-Liverpool canal and the other half of the marina development are located directly to the east of the parcel. Station Road runs along the northern boundary of the parcel, and there is a residential area to the west.

6.46 Constraints - A small portion to the north east of the parcel is designated as Flood Zone 3, therefore this could potentially be a prohibitive constraint to development. The entire eastern boundary of the parcel is also classified as Flood Zone 3. Therefore, development should only be considered within this parcel where there is no available land elsewhere that is not effected by flood Risk or where the development proposed is a compatible use. Restrictive constraints are also quite significant as the parcel contains agricultural land classed as grade 1, 2 and 3 so is an important resource. The lack of capacity at the waste water treatment works (New Lane, Burscough) which affects the majority of Ormskirk and Burscough and some of the outlying areas including Rufford is restrictive but capable of mitigation. Limiting factors include the proximity to Martin Mere, an International Wildlife Site, which should be given consideration to establish the role this parcel plays, if any, in supporting this nearby designation. Proximity to tree preservation orders, and a listed building are also limiting factors but more importantly the heritage value of the parcel requires consideration as it falls within a Conservation Area and an Area of Landscape History of Regional Importance.

6.47 Accessibility -Rufford looks toward Burscough for many of its services and is located on the main north/south road in the Borough and alongside the Ormskirk-Preston rail line. Due to this location, the parcel and Rufford is well served by a variety of public transport, with its own rail station providing a limited service between Ormskirk and Preston and a regular bus service to Southport, Preston, Ormskirk, Burscough, Tarleton and Chorley. The settlement benefits only from a post office, primary school and petrol station and has no local amenities such as GP or local centre with grocery shopping facilities, making the sustainability of this parcel low. The parcel is within approximately 30 - 45 minutes public transport time of Edge Hill University so is reasonably accessible. Access could be taken from Station Road but it would need to pass through the existing marina development and could pose some potential issues in relation to easements and ransom strips.

6.48 Summary - The parcel is constrained by a prohibitive restriction relating to the Flood Zone 3 designation to the north east and along the entire length of the eastern boundary. There are also many restrictive constraints including the agricultural land classification, heritage concerns and ecological concerns due to the proximity to Martin Mere. Cumulatively these constraints could have a negative impact requiring significant investigation and mitigation if possible. Furthermore, the parcel does not benefit from many local services and is therefore considered unsustainable. Finally, the deliverability of the parcel could also be hindered due to the need to gain access through the existing marina development. As a result of the cumulative impact of the constraints affecting this parcel and its low sustainability and deliverability constraints relating to access, this parcel should be ruled out.

Overall Findings

6.49 The following tables give an overview of the main findings from the above assessments of each parcel. Although there are very few parcels with prohibitive constraints, some parcels are significantly less sustainable than others or have greater levels of restrictive constraints which could lead to delivery problems within the parcel. As most of the limiting factors identified are capable of mitigation, these have not been included in the below tables which summarise the crucial factors when considering the suitability of the parcels for development.

6.50 As a result of the findings, no parcel can be entirely ruled out, as even those with prohibitive flood zone designations are only effected in a very small way and may be suitable for compatible uses. However, in line with Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, other parcels should be considered first.

6.51 The parcels can be grouped into the following 3 categories;

- parcels that are **highly constrained** as they are so unsustainable or suffer severe delivery restrictions,
- parcels that are **moderately constrained** due to land use designations and negative cumulative impacts such as highways concerns, and
- parcels that are **least constrained** and most capable of mitigation in order to support development.

6.52 It should be noted that the issue of waste water is one which impacts on much of the main settlement areas of Ormskirk and Burscough and the outlying areas for land both inside and outside of the Green Belt. Therefore, a solution to this issue must be sought regardless of the outcome of this study.

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6.53 The following 5 parcels are either so unsustainable that development should not be directed there or are subject to deliverability constraints which are likely to cause severe issues;

Table 6.2

Parcel ID	Prohibitive	Restrictive	Sustainability	Cumulative Impacts +/-	Deliverability	Opportunities
BUR.23		Agricultural Land grade 1 Waste Water	Average access to local services and transport links	Existing congestion in town centre could be exacerbated. Also negative impact in relation waste water	Totally land locked by rail lines	
BUR.24		Agricultural Land grade 1 Waste Water	Average access to local services and transport links	Existing congestion in town centre could be exacerbated. Also negative impact in relation to waster water	Almost land locked, severe access issues	
ORM.02		Agricultural Land grade 1	Good access to local services and transport links	Cumulative impact of delivering this parcel with others in Ormskirk would be negative with respect to traffic and	Access would be required through existing residential land	

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				waste water impact		
RUFF.06	Flood Zone 2&3 in parts	Agricultural Land grade 1 Waste Water	Poor access to local services - unsustainable	Could have a slightly negative impact on the existing traffic issues in Burscough. Waste water issue would be worsened	Access would need to be taken through an existing operational development so could be problematic	
SKEM.28		Agricultural Land grade 1 Listed Building	Average access to local services and transport links	Unlikely to be negative given road and utility infrastructure is good and this is the only Skelmersdale parcel in Stage 3	Ground condition poor could impact viability and delivery. Conflicting land use with rubbish tip	

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6.54 The following 3 parcels contain a moderate amount of constraints and sustainability issues and are still likely to present negative cumulative impacts for delivering development;

Table 6.3

Parcel ID	Prohibitive	Restrictive	Sustainability	Cumulative Impacts +/-	Deliverability	Opportunities
AUG.04		Agricultural land grade 1	Good access to local services and transport links	Negative impact as a result of the increased traffic generation and existing congestion		
BUR.19		Agricultural land grade 1 Waste Water	Average access to local services	Cumulative impact of limiting and restrictive constraints is significant in terms of ecological and environmental factors. Also cumulative impact of developing parcel along with others in Burscough could be negative in terms of traffic and waste water		

6 Stage 3: Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

SEFB.13	Flood Zone 2&3 in parts	Agricultural land grade 1	Good access to local services in adjacent Local Authority area. Traffic implication on rural road network are likely to be negative	Cumulative impacts unlikely to be negative due to location to far west of Borough.	Peat bog could restrict deliverability	
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6 Stage 3: Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

6.55 The following 6 parcels are those considered to have the least constraints and deliverability issues. If delivered collectively the parcels in Burscough also offer an opportunity to improve access to local services and integrate a decentralised energy system, due to scale, which could serve the wider employment area.

Table 6.4

Parcel ID	Prohibitive	Restrictive	Sustainability	Cumulative Impacts +/-	Deliverability	Opportunities
BUR.08, 09, 10, 11, 12		Waste Water	Average access to local services and transport links	Could be negative in relation to increased traffic on both Burscough and Ormskirk Town Centre. Also waste water constraint		Decentralised Energy System due to scale. Localised services such as schools and shops. Both could serve the wider area. Potential for improvements to transport network
ORM.01		Agricultural land grade 1. Waste Water	Good access to local services and transport links. Traffic congestion could be an issue	Could be negative in relation to traffic and waste water constraint		
ORM.07		Partial Agricultural land grade 1.	Good access to local services and	Could be negative in relation to traffic and waste		Could improve the employment benefits

6 Stage 3: Assessment of Constraints and Opportunities

		Waste Water	transport links. Traffic congestion could be an issue for the town centre and periodically on the A570 at Edge Hill	water constraint		associated with the University. Could also improve traffic situation if strategic solutions are employed as a condition of delivering this parcel.
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6.56 The results and raw data relating to the Stage 3 assessment can be found in Appendix 3.

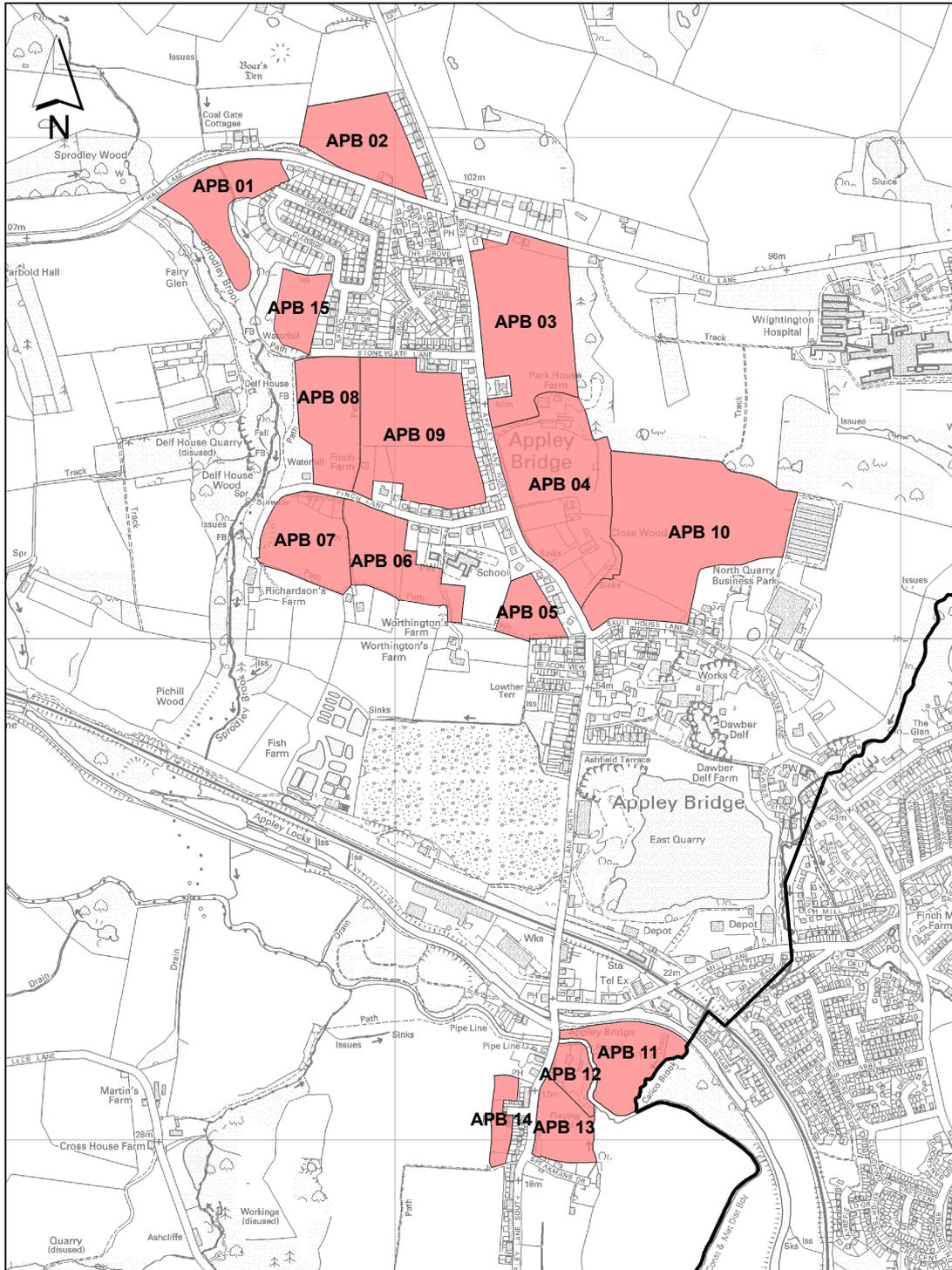
Next Steps

6.57 The information collected within this study will form an important plank of evidence within the West Lancashire Local Development Framework (LDF). The Core Strategy is the central document within the LDF and will identify how much development is required and broadly where this development will be delivered. If the Core Strategy identifies a shortfall of land within the existing settlement areas then it will need to look at land within the Green Belt. In doing so, the document must identify locations where Green Belt boundaries could change.

6.58 This document provides an assessment of parcels of land within the Green Belt which have been subjected to 3 stages of filtering and examination. This information should be used in conjunction with other strands of evidence within the LDF in order to identify specific sites to be allocated for development at a later stage and once the Core Strategy has been found sound by the Planning Inspectorate and has been adopted by the Borough Council.

Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps

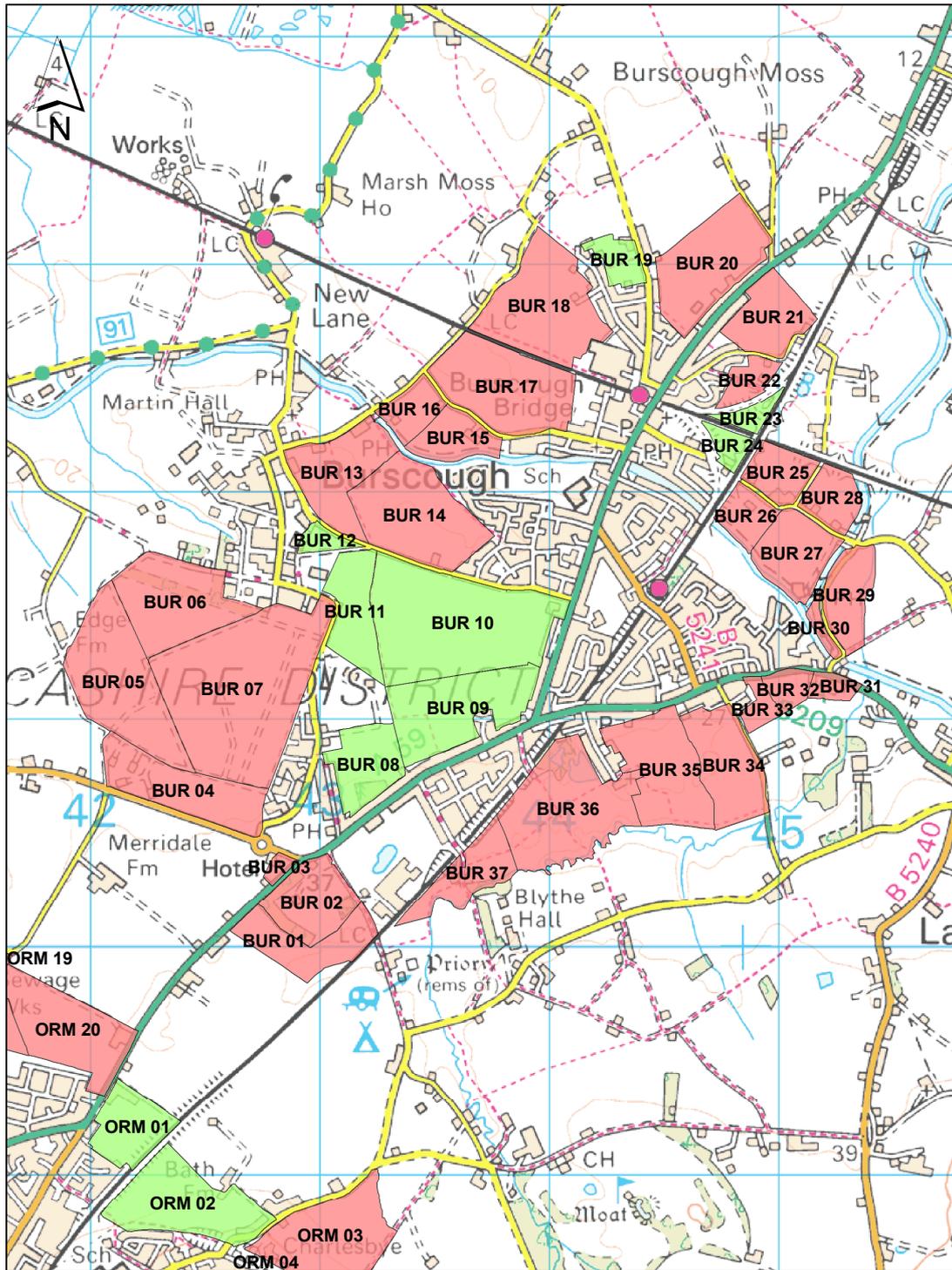
Picture .1 Maps of all Green Belt parcels



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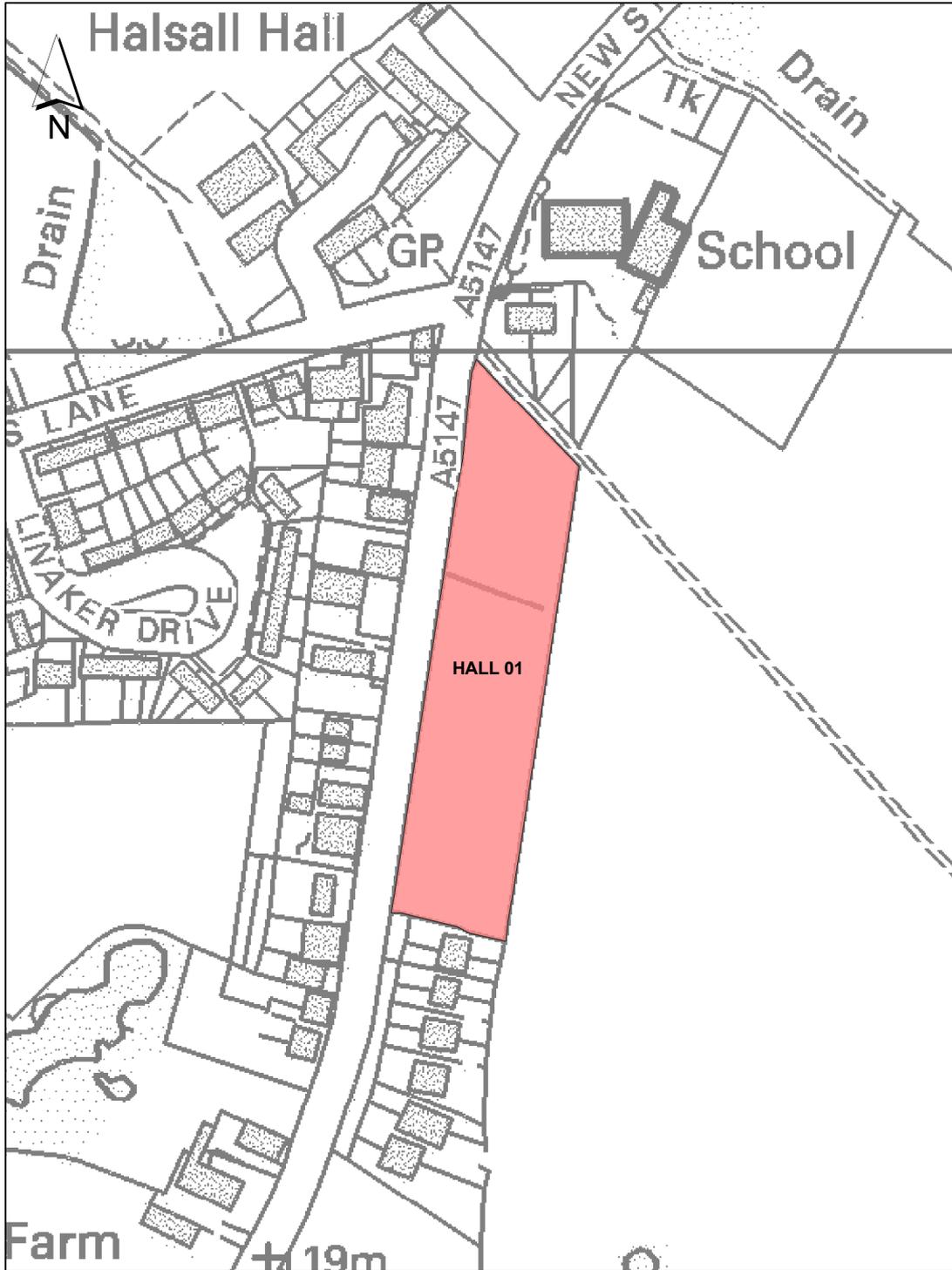
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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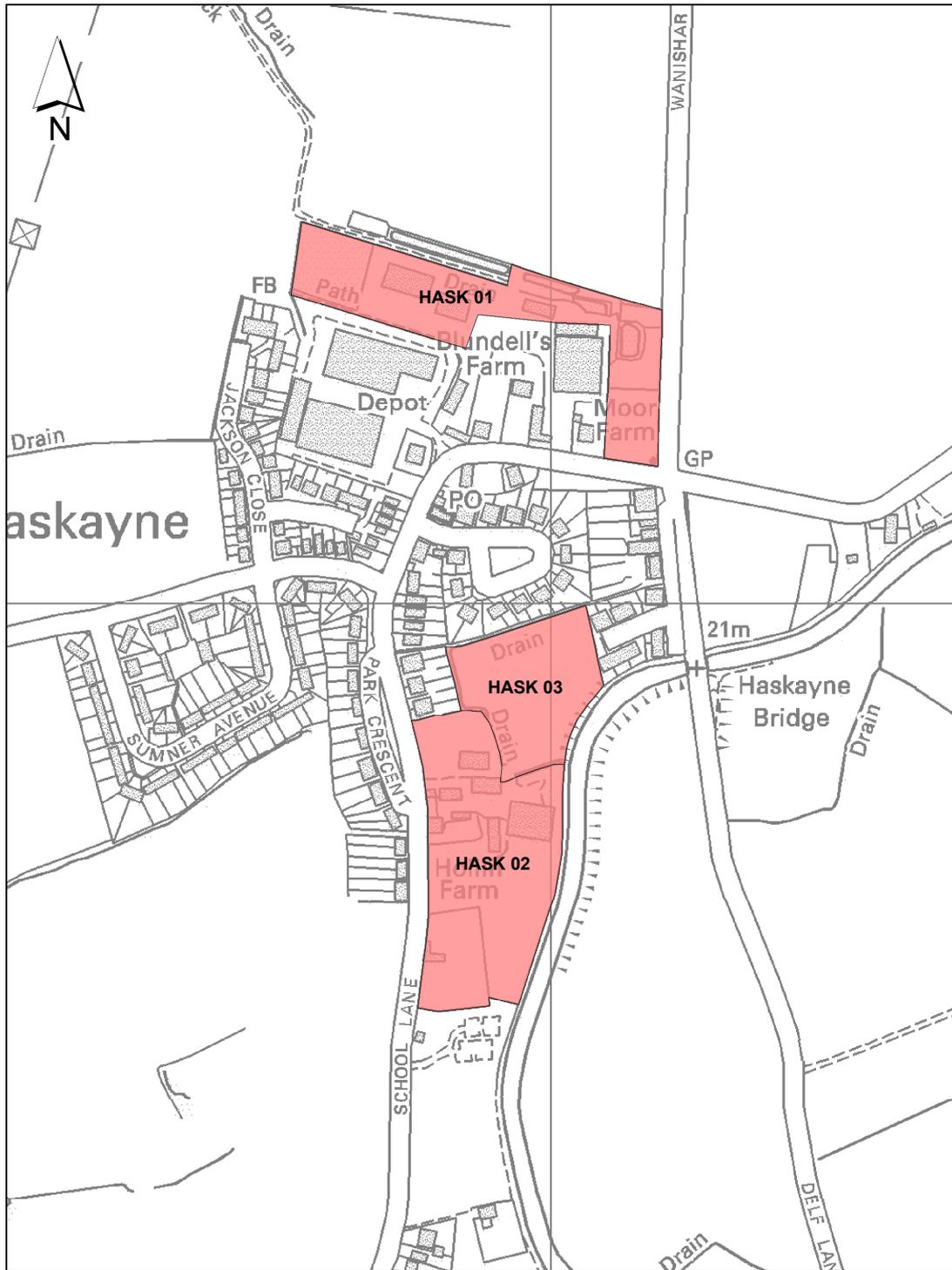
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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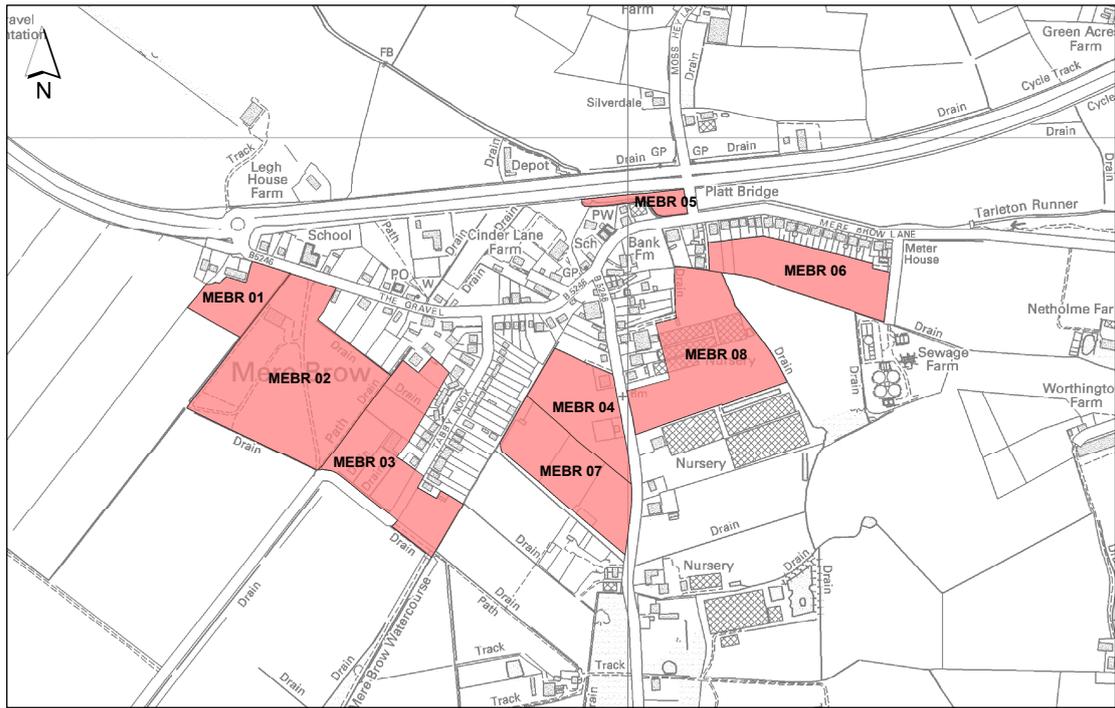
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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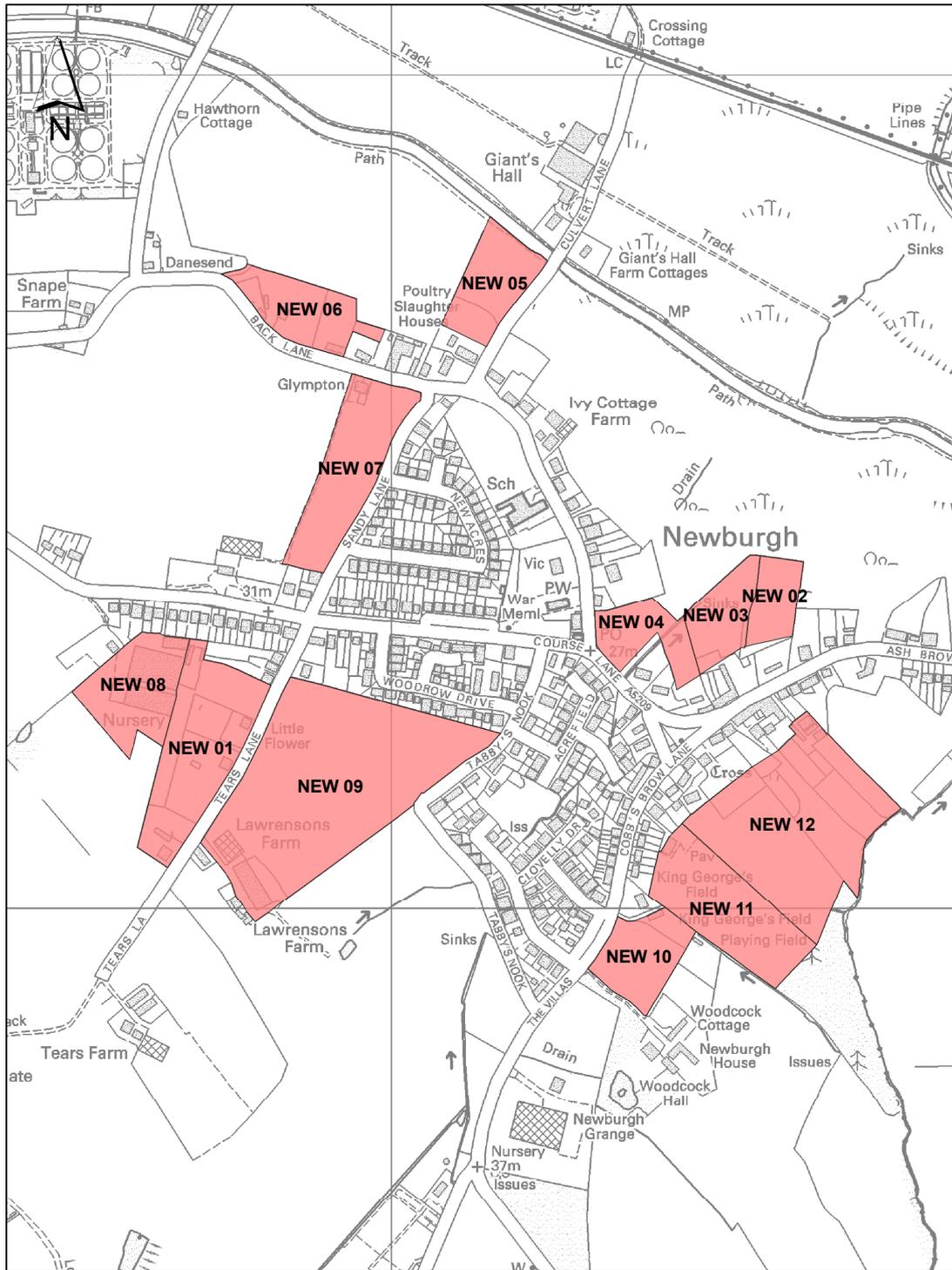
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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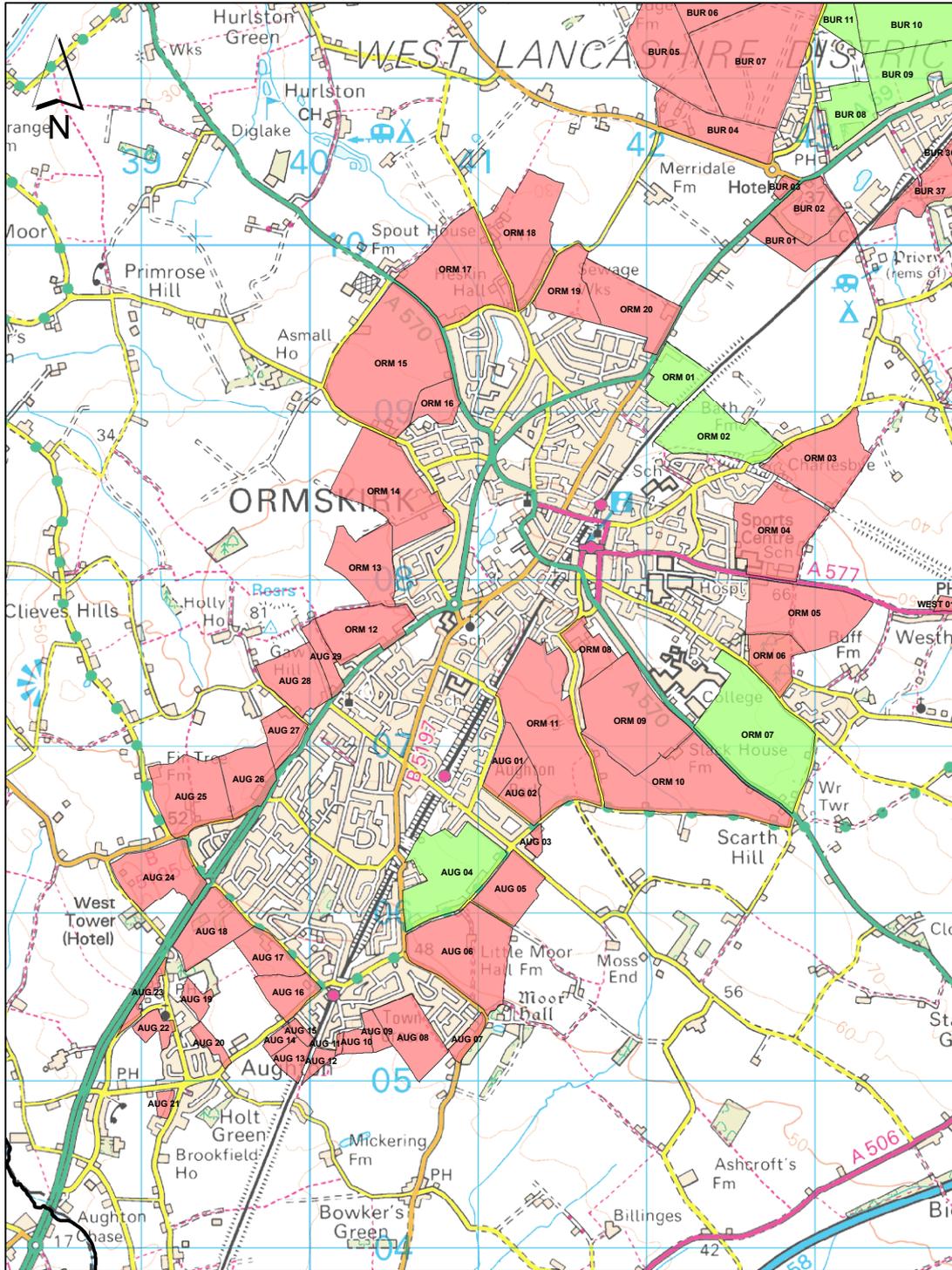
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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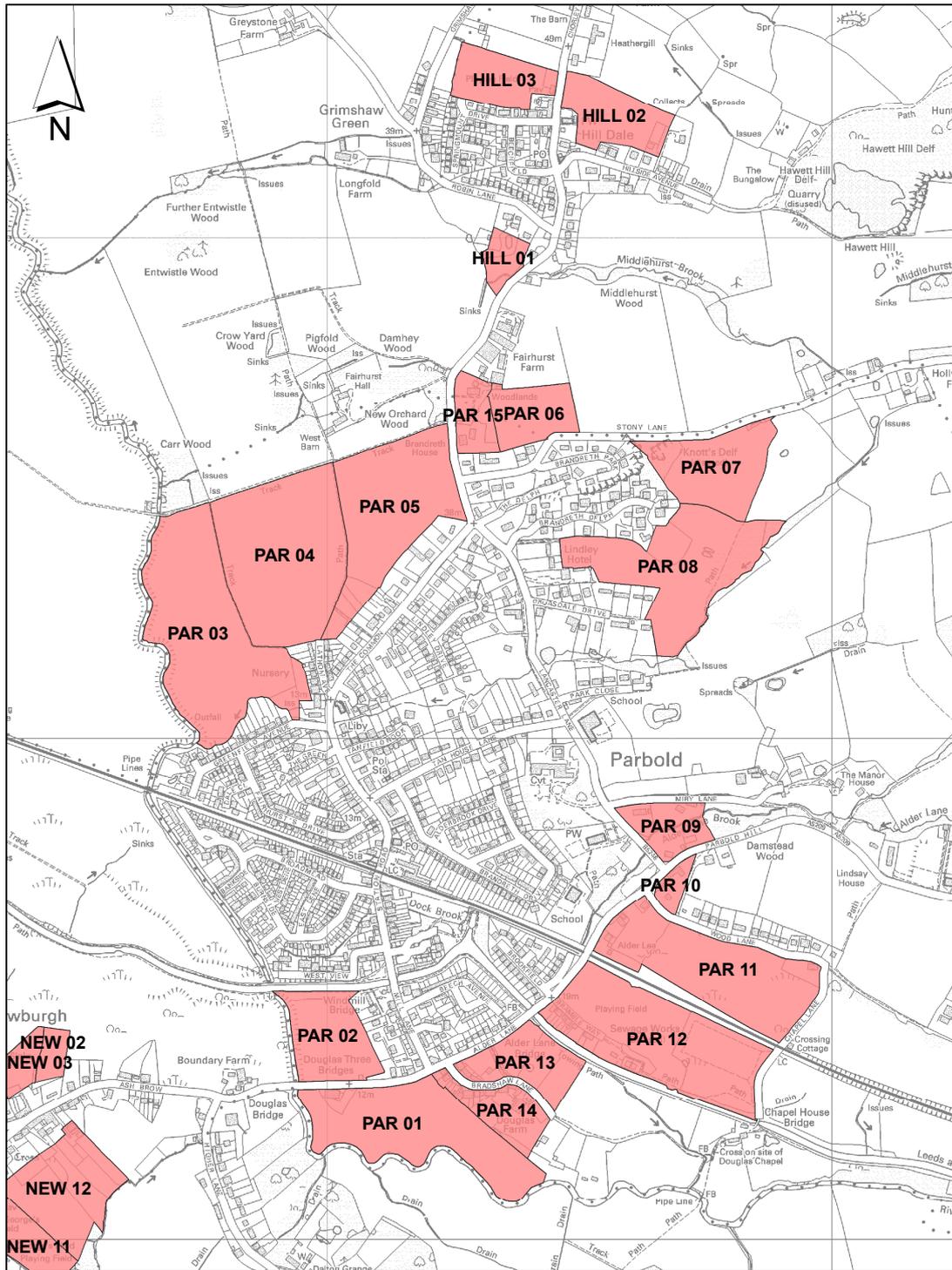
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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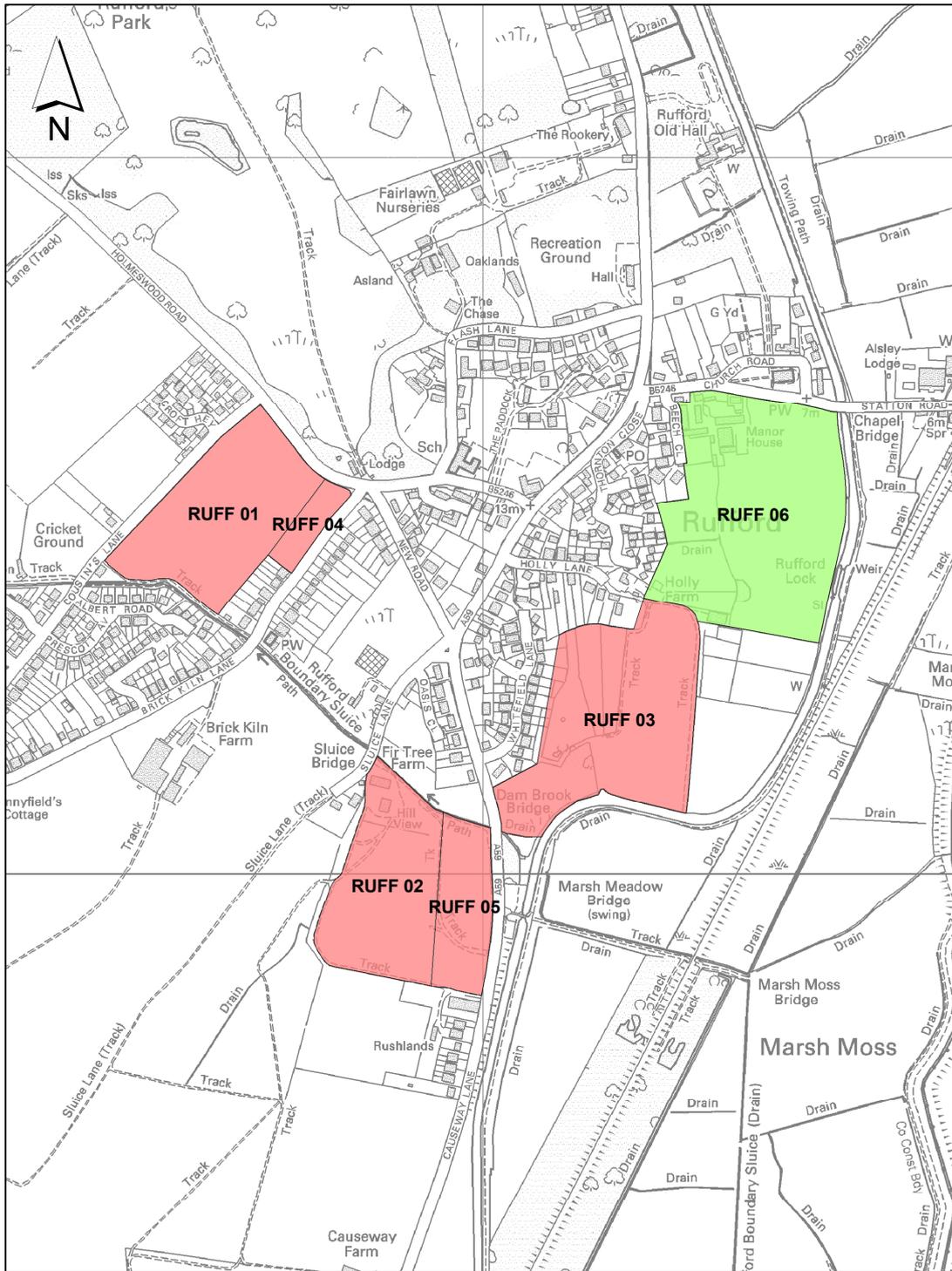
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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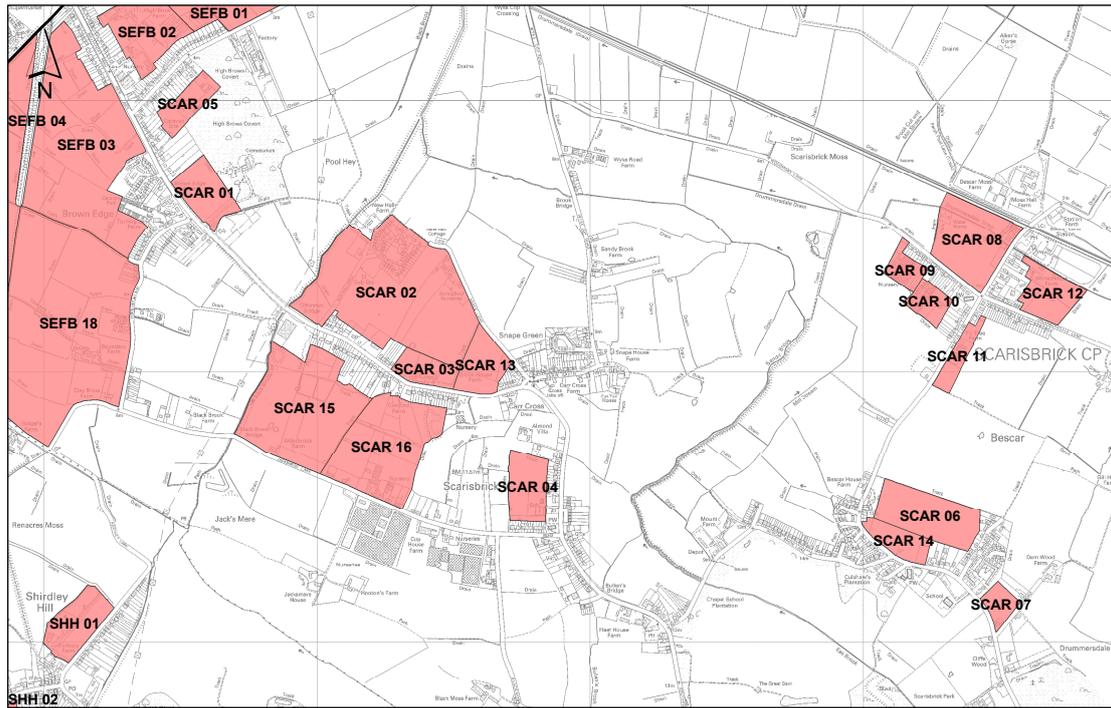
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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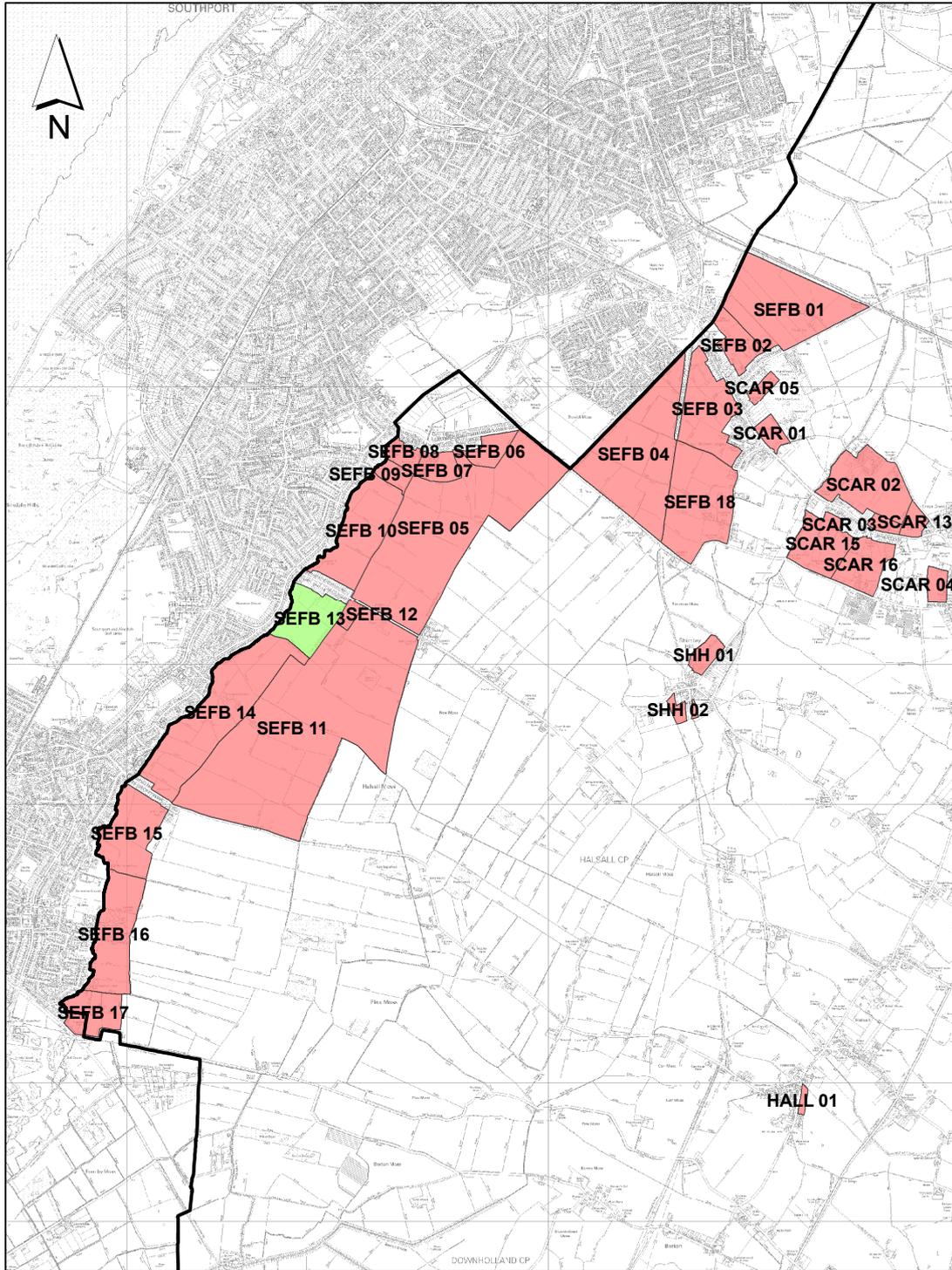
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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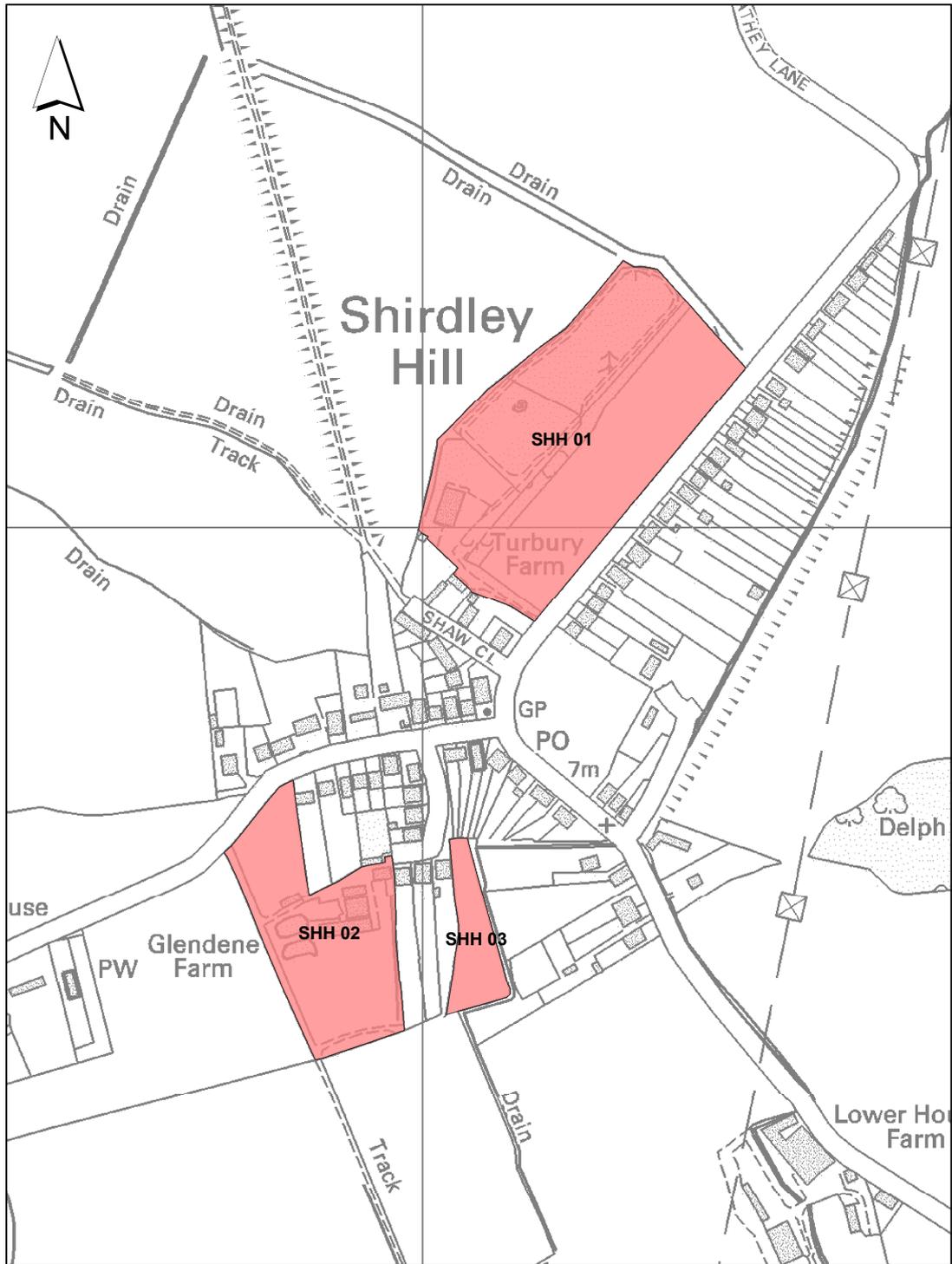
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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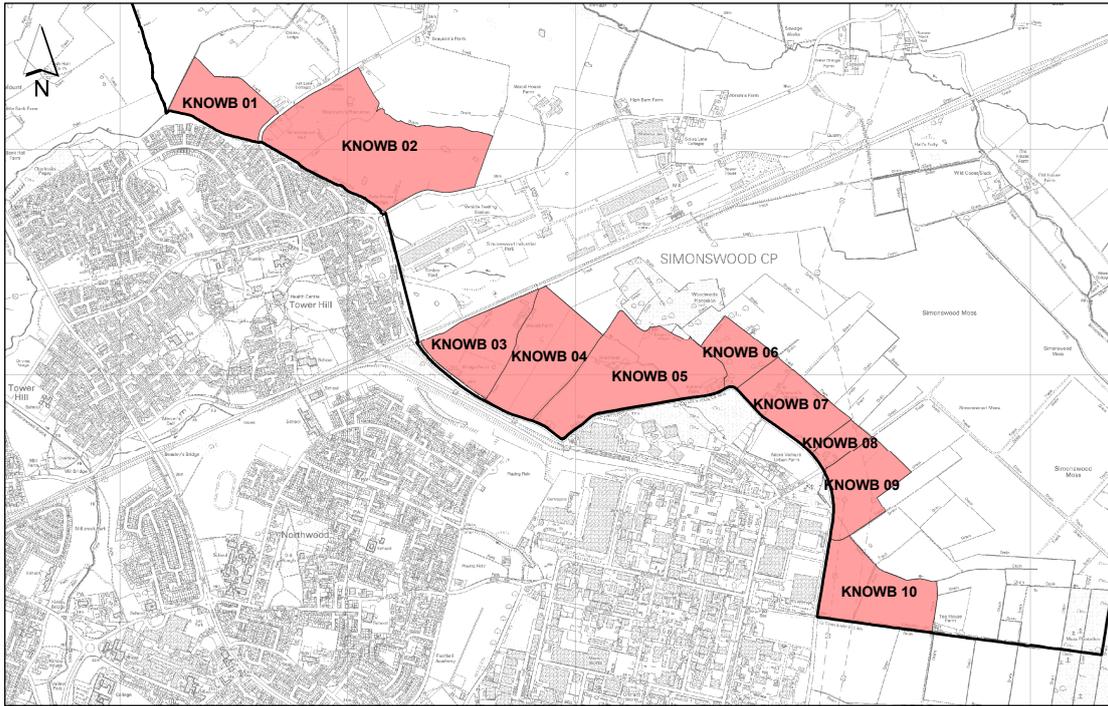
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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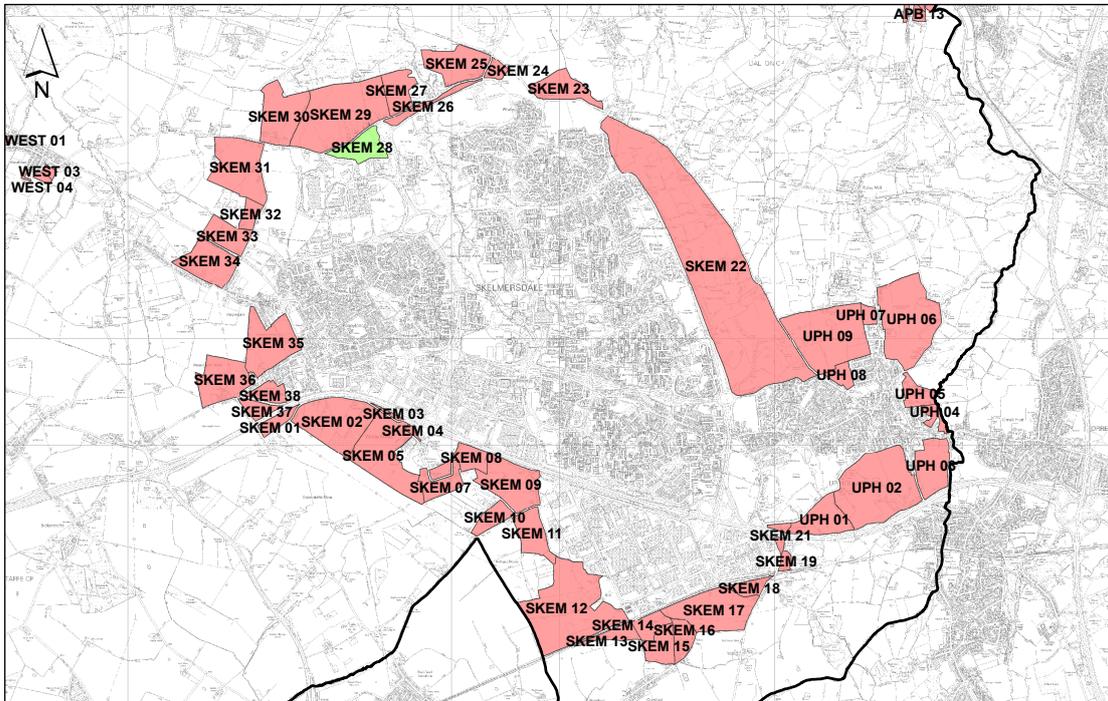
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Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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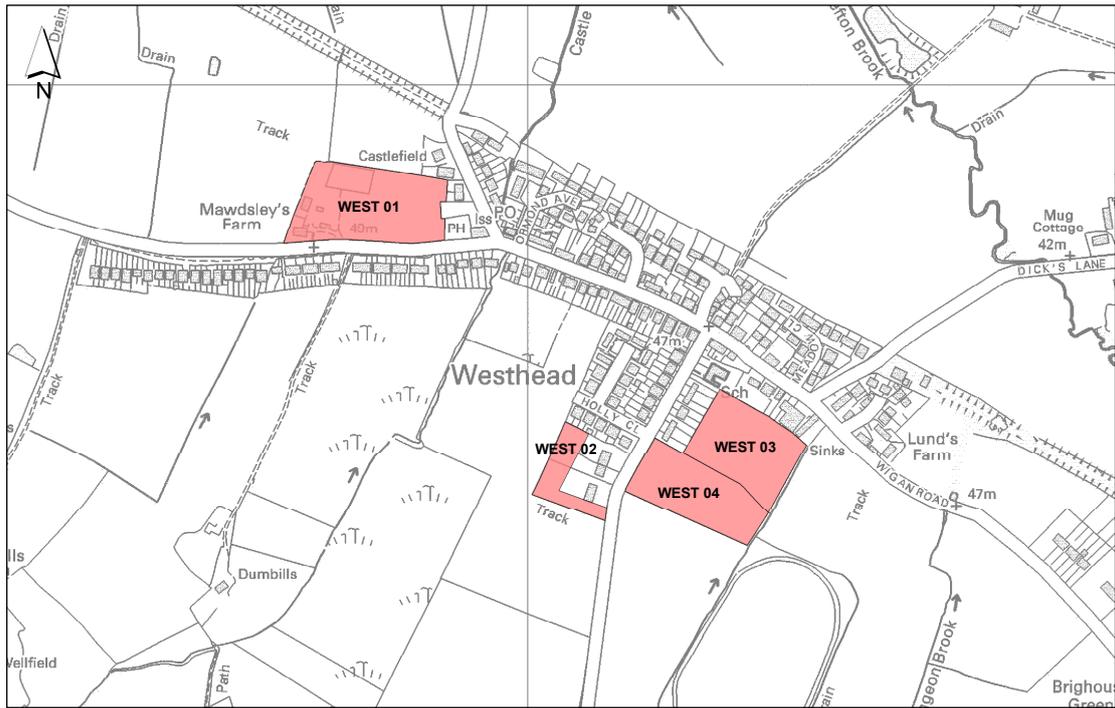
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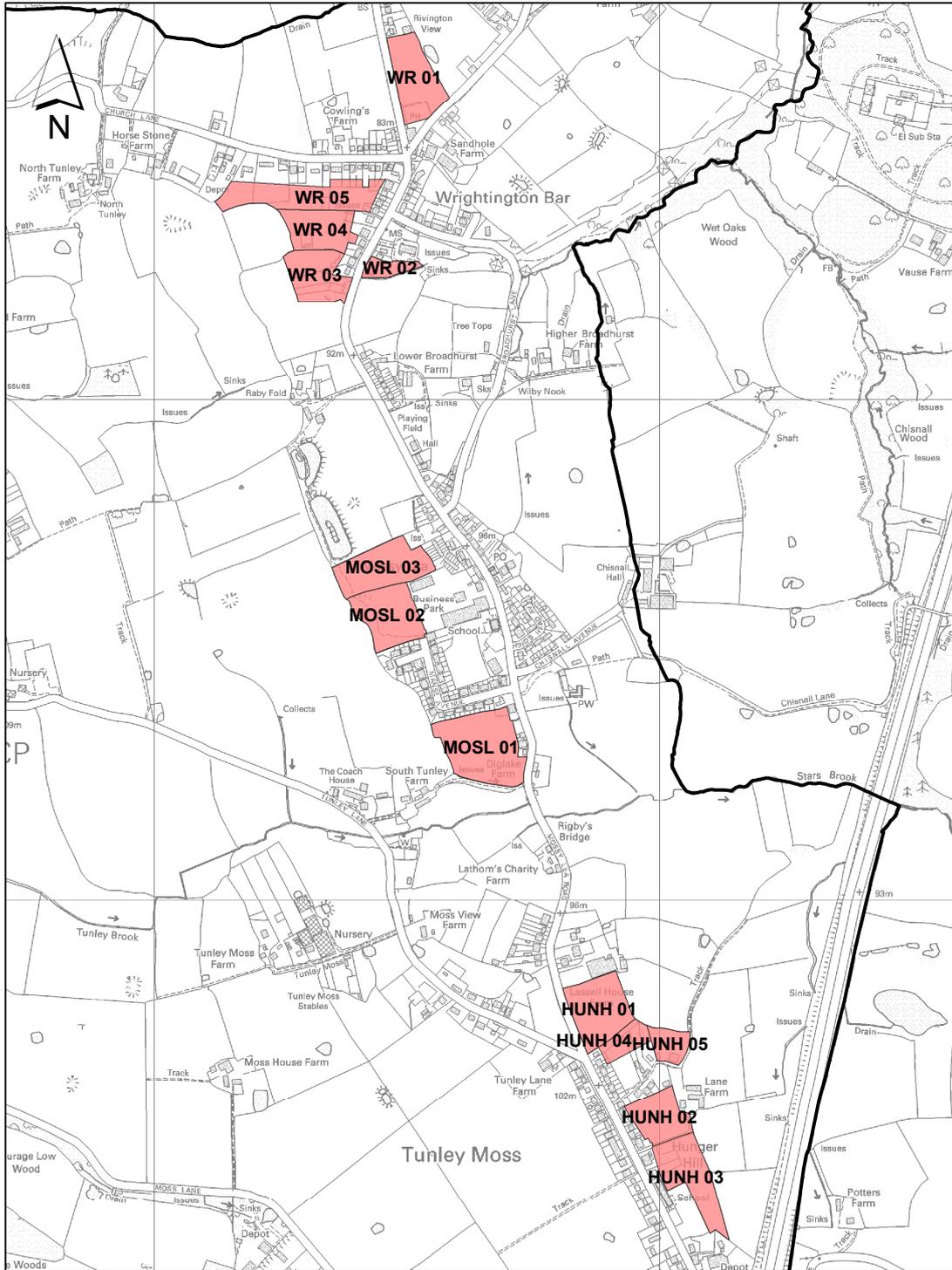
Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps



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Appendix 1: Green Belt Parcels Maps

Appendix 2: Stage 2 Data Analysis

.1 Due to the size of the data file containing the Stage 2 data analysis, this is appended separate to this document.

Appendix 2: Stage 2 Data Analysis

Appendix 3: Stage 3 Data Analysis

.1 Due to the size of the data file containing the Stage 3 data analysis, this is appended separate to this document.

Appendix 3: Stage 3 Data Analysis
