

NPPF Green Belt Purposes		Issues for consideration	Criteria	Score /Value	Assessment method notes
2	To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	a Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements.	What is the width of the gap between the settlements?	If <1km, 4 If between 1km and 2km, 2 If more than 2km, 0	<p>Merging = the joining or blurring of boundaries between two settlements.</p> <p>All towns and villages within the study area and adjacent Districts are considered settlements in the assessment. Industrial estates, business parks and gypsy & traveller sites are not considered to be settlements.</p> <p>This purpose seeks to prevent settlements from merging to form larger settlements. The width of open countryside between settlements has been used to assess the role of Green Belt in maintaining separation. The narrower the gap, the greater the role the Green Belt plays. The distance between settlements has been measured from the urban edge of every Green Belt parcel identified in the study area to the urban edge of the nearest neighbouring settlement. The narrowest point between the settlements is measured.</p> <p>Figure 3.3 illustrates the measuring process.</p>
3	To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	a Significance of existing urbanising influences. ¹¹	<p>Does the parcel contain countryside?</p> <p>Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development? (not including agricultural and forestry related development).</p>	<p>If land parcel contains countryside and no urbanising development, and is open, 2</p> <p>If land parcel contains countryside and limited urbanising development, and is relatively open, 1</p> <p>If land parcel does not contain countryside or contains urbanising development compromising openness, 0</p>	<p>Encroachment from urbanising influences = intrusion, gradual advance of buildings and urbanised land beyond an acceptable or established limit.</p> <p>Urbanising influences include features of an urban environment, such as street lighting and pavements.</p> <p>Urbanising built development doesn't include agricultural or forestry-related development or isolated historic schools/churches.</p> <p>Countryside is land/scenery which is rural in character, i.e. a relatively open natural, semi-natural or farmed landscape.</p>

¹¹ The significance of existing urbanising influences has a direct influence over the relative openness of Green Belt parcels. The presence of urbanising influences is therefore used as a proxy for assessing the degree of openness within a parcel.

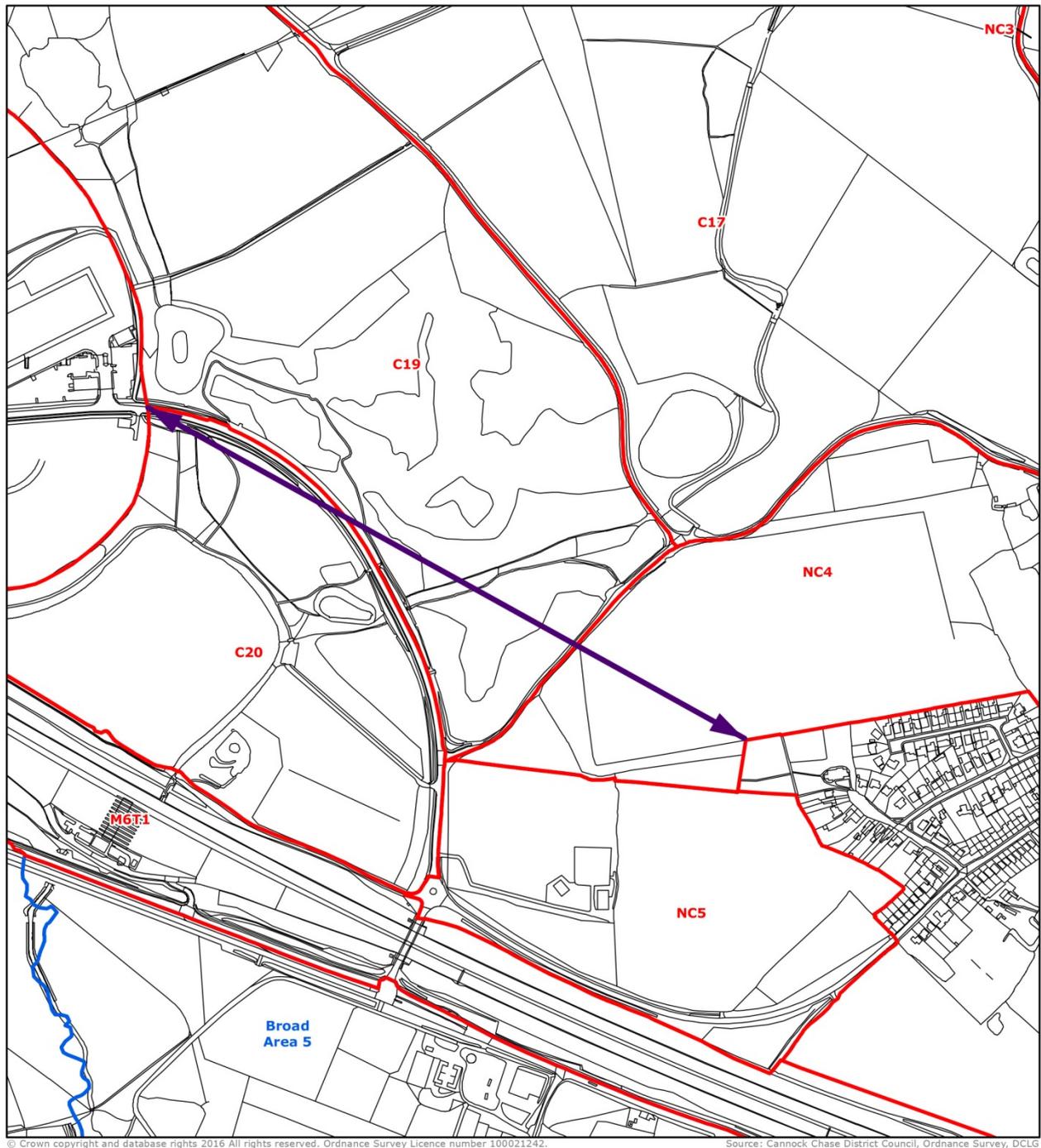
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	<p>b Significance and permanence of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment.</p>	<p>Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel).</p>	<p>If no significant boundary between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, 2</p> <p>If less significant boundary between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, 1</p> <p>If significant boundary(s) between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, 0</p>	<p>Readily recognisable and permanent features are used to define the borders of Green Belt parcels. The presence of features which contain development and prevent encroachment can, in certain locations, diminish the role of a Green Belt parcel in performing this purpose. The significance of a boundary in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment is judged based on its relative proximity to the existing urban edge of a settlement and its nature.</p> <p>Boundaries are assumed to play a stronger role (and the Green Belt parcel, therefore, a weaker role) in inhibiting encroachment of the countryside when they are located relatively close to the existing urban edge of a settlement because if the Green Belt parcel were released they would represent a barrier to further encroachment of the wider countryside.</p> <p>Where boundaries border the existing urban edge of a settlement, any further expansion of the settlement would breach that boundary and it would play no further role in preventing encroachment of the wider countryside. In these cases, the Green Belt parcel is judged to play a stronger role in preventing encroachment.</p> <p>Boundaries that are more permanent in nature or more difficult to cross are assumed to play a stronger role in inhibiting encroachment of the countryside. Examples include railway lines, rivers, canals, and motorways/dual carriageways. Examples of boundary types that are assumed to play a weaker role include minor roads, streams, and topographic features, such as ridges.¹²</p> <p>Footpaths play an even weaker role.</p>

¹² The relative permanence of a boundary, although relevant to the assessment of parcels of land against Purpose 3, is not, in itself, directly linked to the significance of its role in inhibiting encroachment of the countryside, e.g. streams, canals and topographic features are permanent but development can relatively easily be accessed from the corridor in which the feature lies.

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4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	a Parcel forms an historical and/or visual setting to the historic town.	<p>Is the parcel partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town?</p> <p>Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core¹³ of an historic town?</p>	<p>If parcel is partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town and has good intervisibility with the historic core of the town, 4</p> <p>If parcel is partially or wholly within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within an historic town or has good intervisibility with the historic core of the town, 2</p> <p>If parcel has none of these features, 0</p>	<p>The following historic towns are considered in the assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannock • Rugeley <p>Site visits and topographic mapping are used to inform judgements as to whether land parcels have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town.</p>
5 To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	a The need to incentivise development on derelict and other urban land within settlements.	<p>All Green Belt makes a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the amount of greenfield land available for development and encouraging developers to seek out and recycle derelict / urban sites. This makes it difficult to assess whether one individual parcel considered in isolation makes a more significant contribution than another to incentivising development on previously developed land. What can be said is that all parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose and are each given a score of 4.</p>		

¹³ The historic cores of the historic towns identified have been defined using the Conservation Areas which sit close to the centre of each historic town.

Figure 3.3 – Measuring process for assessing parcels against Green Belt purpose 2



3.18 **Figure 3.3** above illustrates the measuring process for assessing purpose 2 of Green Belt purposes as described in the assessment method notes of **Table 3.1** above.

Task 5: Consultation

- 3.19 Before LUC assessed the Green Belt within Cannock Chase District a Method Statement was prepared for consultation with the statutory consultees, the District's duty to cooperate partners and the public. Two phases of consultation were undertaken by Cannock Chase District Council:
- Phase 1 consulted on a draft of the Method Statement (10th November to 19th December 2014)
 - Phase 2 consulted on a final version of the method statement, following consideration of consultee responses for Phase 1 (11th May to 29th May 2015)
- 3.20 Thirty-seven consultees responded with comments in the first round. All comments were reviewed and, where appropriate, amendments were made to the method and Green Belt parcels before the second round of consultation on a revised method.
- 3.21 Five consultees responded with comments to the second round of consultation. These comments were reviewed and appropriate minor amendments to the method made prior to the assessment of identified parcels and broad areas.
- 3.22 A detailed record of the consultee comments, responses and methodology amendments is outlined in the tables in **Appendix 5**.

Task 6: Green Belt assessment

Desk-based assessment

- 3.23 Each land parcel and broad area was assessed using OS maps, aerial images and relevant GIS data to gain a clear understanding of how they performed against the purposes. Scores and detailed notes on the judgements for each land parcel and broad area were input into an Access database. All ratings were rigorously cross-checked and reviewed to ensure consistency, clarity and transparency in all judgements.
- 3.24 Clear, colour-coded GIS maps linked to the Access database were prepared illustrating the defined land parcels and broad areas, the key environmental and cultural considerations and the overall assessed contribution of each land parcel and broad area to each of the purposes of Green Belt.
- 3.25 On completion of the Green Belt assessment, each parcel's scores against each criterion were combined to generate a total score for the parcel. The higher the score the greater the parcel's contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
- 3.26 The aggregation of scores across all the purposes is a practical way of understanding the overall and relative contribution of the Green Belt in the District; however, the NPPF does not require all the purposes of Green Belt to be met simultaneously. Indeed, parcels of land can make a significant contribution to the Green Belt purposes without performing all of the purposes of Green Belt. Parcels' scores against each of the Green Belt purposes were therefore recorded so that the contribution of all parcels against all purposes can be examined.
- 3.27 As stated under Task 2, some of the land parcels assessed were areas of land currently outside the Green Belt but which could be designated as Green Belt. The same criteria were used to assess land parcels of existing Green Belt and non-Green Belt land adjacent to large built-up areas, such as settlements and strategic employment sites.
- 3.28 The review of land parcels adjacent to Gypsy and traveller sites provides a good indication of the most appropriate areas for site expansion beyond the plan period.

Boundary adjustments

- 3.29 The alignment of the boundaries of the District's existing Green Belt designation were checked to ensure that it followed readily recognisable features on the ground, in accordance with the NPPF. Where this was not the case, e.g. irregularities in the Council's Green Belt maps,

recommendations have been made on the appropriate realignment of the designation along readily recognisable and permanent features on the ground.

Interim reporting

- 3.30 Following the desk-based Green Belt assessment, reports were prepared summarising all the desk-based judgements made for each parcel and broad area. Clear, colour-coded maps providing an overview of the scores accompanied the individual parcel and broad area reports.
- 3.31 Detailed discussions on these draft outputs were used to inform the site visits.

Task 7: Site visits

- 3.32 All the Green Belt parcels and broad areas were visited. During the site visits, judgements made remotely were reviewed on the ground and modified or verified as appropriate.
- 3.33 Following the completion of the desk based assessments, all parcels and broad areas were visited to check and verify the judgements and conclusions reached in the assessment. The site visits were particularly important in assessing the parcels' relationships with the historic cores of the District's historic towns. Fieldwork included driving many of the roads within each parcel and walking along public rights of way, with particular attention given to locations providing recreational views.
- 3.34 If as part of the detailed assessment process it was observed that a parcel of land has very distinct attributes within different sections of the parcel, this was recorded in the assessment database. Where this was the case, ratings were applied, to reflect the assessment relevant to the larger part of a parcel.

Task 8: Final reporting and review

- 3.35 This report represents the final output of the Green Belt study. It presents the findings for all parcels and broad areas assessed in Chapter 4 below and in further detail in **Appendices 1 and 2**.