

# Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy: Site Selection Report: February 2016

---

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version [SD001] (LPS) was published in March 2014 and formally submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in May 2014. The examination hearing sessions commenced in September 2014, but were adjourned by the Inspector in October 2014, pending the preparation and submission of further evidence by Cheshire East Council (CEC), as set out in the Inspector's Interim Views on the LPS, dated 6 November 2014 [PSA017b]. This was followed by a further letter of clarification [PSA018] on the 28 November 2014.

1.2 At paragraph 2(vii) of the Inspector's clarification letter, he refers to the site selection process and highlights the following: *"... the reasons for selecting particular sites, compared with other potential sites, are not always readily apparent, including the weight to be given to the various factors and the associated judgement ..."*. However, in the same paragraph, the Inspector also acknowledged that a lot of work has already been done on site selection, stating *"CEC seems to have undertaken a rigorous and comprehensive approach to the selection of the proposed Strategic Sites and Strategic Locations during the preparation of the Plan"*.

1.3 During the suspension of the examination, the Council produced additional evidence in support of the LPS; this included a Site Selection Methodology (SSM) flow diagram [PSE040]<sup>1</sup> (see Appendix 1) and the completion of additional work, including the Urban Potential Assessment (UPA) and the Edge of Settlement Assessment (ESA) [PSE039]. On 31 July 2015, the Council requested the Inspector to formally resume the Examination. Resumed hearing sessions were held between 21 and 30 October 2015, which included discussion on the UPA, ESA and SSM (Matter 5).

---

<sup>1</sup> The SSM flow diagram has been revised (see Section 3 of this Report) therefore [PSE040] is now superseded by Figure 1 of this Report.

1.4 Following the conclusion of those resumed hearings, on 11 December 2015 the Inspector provided the Council with his Further Interim Views on the additional evidence [REA021]. In relation to Matter 5, the Inspector's views included:

- *"... CEC seems to have adopted a reasonable and balanced approach to the UPA"* (paragraph 58);
- *"Given the comprehensive, objective and consistent nature of the ESA, it will form a key input into the site-selection process."* (paragraph 59:)
- *"CEC has developed a 10 stage site-selection process to ensure the selection of strategic and other site allocations is undertaken in an objective, consistent and comprehensive way (SSM)"* (Paragraph 60)
- Regarding the SSM, *"CEC's hearing statements provide more detail and much of this information could be usefully added to the methodology, to ensure a more precise, consistent and transparent approach."* (Paragraph 61)

1.5 The purpose of this Report is to set out the SSM that has been used by the Council for identifying the sites (including safeguarded land) for development within the LPS.

1.6 The SSM formalises the site selection process used in the LPS; the Council has been carrying out further work on the site selection process since November 2014, when work commenced on the production of the UPA and ESA. The SSM does not seek to replace the extensive evidence base that informed the site selection process and the preparation of the Submitted LPS generally; this includes for example:

- the 'Development Strategy' [BE100], included constraints and other information on sites included within it, along with those sites that had been considered as 'alternatives';
- the 'Preferred Sites Justification Paper' [SD015], included relevant information for the Strategic Sites (including for example site characteristics, constraints and capacity);
- the 'Non Preferred Sites Justification Paper' [SD016], included relevant information for the sites that have been previously considered but not included as Strategic Sites (including for example site characteristics, constraints and capacity); and

- All of the sites considered in the site selection process that informed the preparation of the submitted LPS were also subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) [SD003] and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) [SD004] and [SD005].

1.7 The SSM responds to:

- the Inspector’s concerns in paragraph 2 (vii) of the Inspector’s clarification letter dated 28 November 2014 [PSA018], as set out above;
- the large number of ‘Omission’ sites that were submitted, at the Regulation 19 publication stage of the LPS;
- additional evidence submitted to the Inspector by the Council during summer 2015 which included an uplift in the employment land and housing numbers for the Plan period; and
- the Inspector’s Further Interim Views published in December 2015 [REA021].

1.8 This Report sets out the SSM and shows how development sites have been selected for inclusion in the LPS. The SSM has considered the sites that were included in the Submitted LPS, along with other potential sites to achieve the Revised Spatial Distribution of Development (RSDD), as set out in Option 6 in Table 3 of the Spatial Distribution Update Report – AECOM [PSE035]; further detail of the RSDD is set out in Section 2 of this Report.

1.9 The Report’s output is set out on a town-by-town basis and identifies a list of sites to be recommended to Cheshire East’s Council to be included in the Proposed Changes to the Local Plan Strategy (2016) for public consultation. The SSM and its outcomes have been informed by Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment work on an iterative and ongoing basis.

## **SECTION 2 - THE AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT LAND REQUIRED AND ITS DISTRIBUTION**

2.1 The amount and spatial distribution of development proposed by the Council is derived from the evidence submitted to the Inspector on 31 July 2015.

2.2 The number of dwellings and amount of employment land proposed to be provided is shown as Option 6 in Table 6 of the Spatial Distribution Update Report – AECOM [PSE035]

this was informed by the work produced in the form of the Alignment of Economic, Employment and Housing Strategies – Ekosgen Report [PSE032] and Cheshire East Housing Development Study – ORS Report [PSE033], along with other appropriate sources of evidence. The amount and spatial distribution of development are reflected in the Council’s suggested revisions to Policy PG6 (Spatial Distribution of Development) [PSE041]. See Table 1 below.

Settlement	Revised Plan Approach (PG6) Expected level of Development	
	Housing (dwellings)	Employment (ha)
Crewe	7,700	65
Macclesfield	4,250	20
Congleton	4,150	24
Alsager	2,000	40
Sandbach	2,750	20
Middlewich	1,950	75
Nantwich	2,050	3
Handforth (inc NCGV)	2,200	22
Wilmslow	900	10
Knutsford	950	15
Poynton	650	10
Local Service Centres	3,500	7
Rural (including Alderley Park and Wardle)	2,950	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>380</b>

**Table 1: the Council’s suggested revisions to Policy PG6 (Spatial Distribution of Development) [PSE041]**

2.3 The 36,000 dwelling requirement identified within the Cheshire East Council Proposed Changes to the LPS (Consultation Draft) February 2016 is the minimum requirement for housing development within Cheshire East across the Plan period. The Council needs to be sure that the 36,000 dwelling requirement will be completed by 2030. It is appropriate and recognised good practice for a local planning authority to apply an additional level of flexibility to settlements, in order to accommodate for any potential

future changes to sites or even changing housing market conditions over the life of the LPS, to ensure that the housing requirement is achieved. This means that the total level of housing provided in each settlement will normally be higher than the expected level of development that is required. This additional amount of housing will be referred to as a 'flexibility factor'. In most settlements this will normally be between 2.5% and 7.5% to ensure an average of around 5% across the Borough as a whole.

2.4 Further information on the flexibility factor can be found in the Council's Housing Topic Paper (2016). This accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, and recent Inspector decisions on Local Plans.

2.5 The total employment land requirement identified within the Cheshire East Council Proposed Changes to the LPS (Consultation Draft) February 2016 already includes a 20% flexibility factor, as set out in the Alignment of Economic, Employment and Housing Strategy (Ekosgen Report) [PS E032], ¶¶3.55 – 3.58. Consequently, there is no need to add a further flexibility factor for employment land at the settlement level.

2.6 The amount of land required to meet the development requirements will be split between the LPS (in the form of Strategic Sites and Strategic Locations) and the Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document (SADPD)/ Neighbourhood Plans (NPs). The SSM will be applied to those sites considered for inclusion in the LPS and SADPD (possibly in a refined form) and its use will be encouraged to consider sites for inclusion in Neighbourhood Plans.

2.7 The exact split of sites between the LPS and SADPD/NPs is dependent upon a number of factors including the type and size of development opportunities and the number of existing committed sites; it is considered however that this will ensure that a variety of size and type of sites are provided to meet the development requirements.

2.8 As the LPS is a strategic document, it includes site allocations that are considered to be of a 'strategic' nature; such sites are considered to be capable of accommodating 150 dwellings or more, 5 hectares of employment land or a combination of the two. The Council considers this to be an appropriate size to be strategic in nature; it is also a threshold used by Government to determine whether to consider using the Secretary of State's 'call-in' or

recovery powers (Planning applications: called-in decisions and recovered appeals January 2014). In paragraph 62 of his Further Interim Views [REA021], the Inspector stated that this site size threshold *"... seems reasonable in the context of Cheshire East ..."*

**2.9 The Amount and Distribution of Safeguarded Land** - The Council has sought professional advice from Arup and has set out a clear methodology for calculating the appropriate amount of safeguarded land; this is set out in the Safeguarded Land Technical Annex [PSE031a.5] as well as the Council’s Resumed Hearing Statements ([RM3.001], [RM3.001a] & [REB011]). The Council’s revised assessment proposes to designate 200 hectares of Safeguarded Land. In paragraph 51 of his Further Interim Views [REA021] the Inspector observed that the Council *"seems to have taken a balanced and cautious approach to the issue of Safeguarded Land, which seems logical, rational, effective and justified by the supporting evidence."*

2.10 The Inspector’s Further Interim Views also note (at paragraph 49) that *"there is some uncertainty about whether Safeguarded Land should be designated in subsequent plans, as well as in the amended LPS"*. The Council is clear that Safeguarded Land should not be designated in subsequent plans, but it may be appropriate to designate some Safeguarded Land through the second part of the current Local Plan, the SADPD. Safeguarded Land should in the main be designated through strategic sites as part of the Local Plan Strategy, but it may also be appropriate to designate some smaller areas of safeguarded land in Local Service Centres through the SADPD.

2.11 There is no practice guidance on the spatial distribution of Safeguarded Land; however, the Council has carried out further work on this matter which is included as Appendix 2 to this document. The amount of safeguarded land required for each settlement to meet the overall requirement of 200 ha is set out in Appendix 2 and shown in Table 2 below.

Settlement / Area	Indicative Safeguarded Land Requirement
Crewe	No requirement
Macclesfield	95 ha
Congleton	No requirement

Alsager	No requirement
Sandbach	No requirement
Middlewich	No requirement
Nantwich	No requirement
Handforth (including NCGV)	10 ha
Wilmslow	24 ha
Knutsford	28 ha
Poynton	19 ha
Local Service Centres	24 ha
Rural (including Alderley Park and Wardle)	No requirement
Total	200 ha

**Table 2: Amount of safeguarded land required for each settlement**

### **SECTION 3 - THE SITE SELECTION METHODOLOGY**

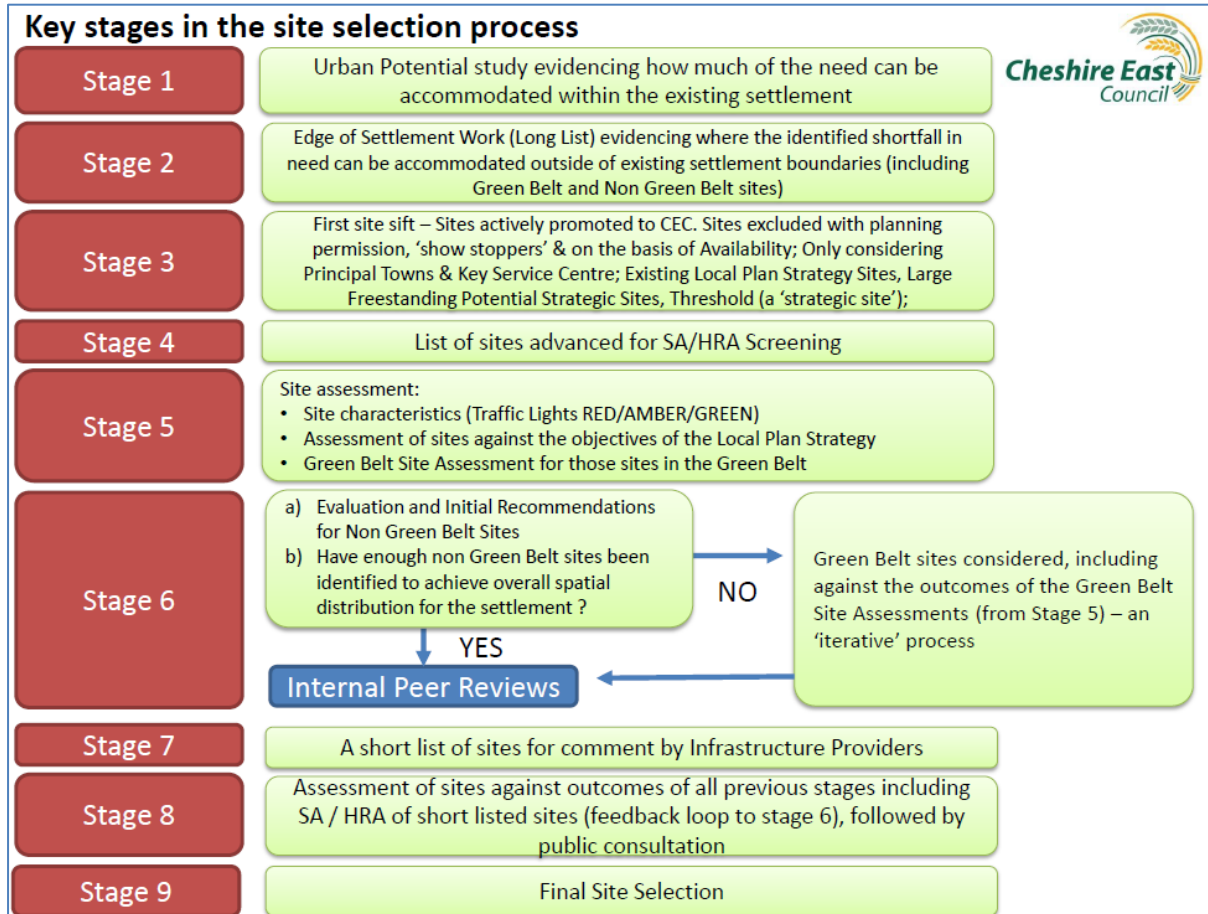
3.1 The Site Selection Methodology (SSM) sets out the steps undertaken to determine the sites that should be selected to meet both the housing and employment levels identified through the Council's work on spatial distribution and the 'flexibility factor', in relation to the provision of land for new homes, along with a sufficient amount of Safeguarded Land, as set out in Section 2 and Tables 1 and 2 of this Report.

3.2 As previously noted, the site selection process was carried out on a settlement-by-settlement basis, using the RSDD requirements as the starting point. This point was highlighted by the Inspector, at paragraph 61 of his Further Interim Views where he stated that the fact that the site selection process was carried out on a settlement-by-settlement basis *"should be clarified in any updated site selection methodology."* For the Green Belt towns where Safeguarded Land is required in addition to land for housing and employment, the Appendix 2 requirements are used as the starting point for Safeguarded Land.

3.3 **Consideration of Green Belt sites in the SSM** – On 31 July 2015, the Council submitted the Green Belt Assessment Update 2015 (GBAU) [PSE034 and PSE034a] to the Inspector. The GBAU does not identify parcels of land for removal from the Green Belt; it does however show what contribution parcels of land make to the purposes of including

land in the Green Belt. The SSM includes further Green Belt Site Assessments to aid decision-making when considering potential sites for development that are located within the Green Belt (see Stage 5 below). The findings of the GBAU as well as the Green Belt Site Assessments are an integral part of the SSM as it relates to Green Belt sites.

**3.4 Stages in the SSM** - As work on the SSM has progressed, its implementation has led to a reordering of the stages and each stage being further defined. Key amendments to the SSM are highlighted in this Report, in boxes for each stage, so that it is clear what has changed. Although the SSM process is set out in stages, it has proved necessary in practice to move between stages on an 'iterative' basis for example where further evaluation and short listing of sites, at Stage 8, has meant that it has been necessary to return to Stage 7 to consider sites for short listing again. The Key Stages in the SSM process (as revised) are set out in the flow diagram below, which supersedes the SSM [PSE040] that was the subject of the Hearings in October 2015 but is included as Appendix 1 for reference purposes. The SSM has been used to consider sites allocated in the Submitted LPS and potential new sites to meet the identified uplift in housing and employment requirements.





**Figure 1: Revised Site Selection Methodology (2016)**

**The Revised SSM Stages are as follows:**

**3.5 Key amendments to the SSM are highlighted in this Report, in the form of a ‘Revised Approach Summary’, in boxes for each stage, so that it is clear what has changed.**

3.6 The SSM is comprised of a series of stages; the UPA and ESA [PSE039] form Stages 1 and 2 of the SSM and provide part of the evidence of how much of the required development can potentially be met within and adjacent to the Principal Towns (PTs), Key Service Centres (KSCs) and Local Service Centres (LSCs). The detailed methodology for each assessment that feeds into the site selection process is provided in the individual documents (e.g., the UPA and ESA [PSE039]); a summary of stages 1 and 2 of the SSM is provided below.

#### **Stage 1 - Urban Potential Assessment (UPA) [PSE039]:**

3.7 As set out in the methodology for the UPA [PSE039a] this work involved assessing sites to examine the potential within the Principal Towns (PTs) ; Key Service Centres (KSCs) and Local Service Centres (LSCs) to provide additional housing (on both brownfield and greenfield sites) in the Plan period. The summary findings of the UPA are shown on Table 1 of [PSE039]; the further detailed assessments of individual sites are included in [PSE039b]. The UPA findings show how much development could potentially be accommodated within each of the PTs, KSCs and LSCs.

#### **Stage 2 - Edge of Settlement Assessment (ESA) [PSE039]:**

3.8 As set out in the methodology for the ESA [PSE039a] this work involved assessing sites immediately adjacent to the settlement/Green Belt boundaries of the PTs, KSCs and LSCs that had previously been considered or had been submitted as representations (‘Omission Sites’) as potential development sites through the Local Plan process, along with two ‘free standing’ ‘Omission Sites’ at Cheshire Gateway and Gorsty Hill, which were included due to the scale of the proposals, and to ensure that all reasonable alternatives have been considered.

3.9 The ESA did not assess the Strategic Sites, Strategic Locations and Safeguarded Land in the submitted LPS [SD001], as the purpose of producing the ESA was to address the

concerns expressed by the Inspector in his 6 November 2014 Interim Views (at paragraphs 76 and 78), as to the consideration of sites, in particular, smaller sites, around the fringes of towns and settlements.

3.10 The ESA identifies those sites that may be considered further for inclusion in the LPS as potential Strategic Sites, along with those that could be given further consideration for inclusion in the SADPD/in NPs. This illustrates the ‘pool of sites’ available for development; summary findings are shown on Tables 2, 3 and 4 of [PSE039]; the further detailed assessments of individual sites are included in [PSE039b].

3.11 For each site considered, both in the UPA and ESA (Stages 1 and 2) research included looking at site characteristics and constraints, planning history, representations made etc, including a site visit, and for each site a pro forma was completed, as required in the methodologies.

### Stage 3 - First sift of sites:

**Stage 3 Revised Approach Summary:** This stage does not now limit sites to those being actively promoted to the Council through the Local Plan process.

3.12 Sites from Stages 1 & 2, along with other sites being promoted to the Council for development that were of a size that met the Strategic Site size threshold definition and were located in a Principal Town or Key Service Centre, were assessed against the following criteria:

**Settlement Hierarchy** - Only sites in and on the edge of PTs and KSCs, together with the ‘free standing’ ‘Omission Sites’ of Gorsty Hill and Cheshire Gateway are to be considered in Stage 3. These settlements were chosen to be consistent with the LPS Policy PG6 Spatial Distribution, whilst the two ‘free standing’ sites are also considered in Stage 3, due to the scale of their proposals and to ensure that all reasonable alternatives have been considered. The allocation of sites for development in the LSCs and Other Settlements and Rural Areas will be dealt with in the SADPD/in Neighbourhood Plans.

**Availability** – Sites not being actively promoted were excluded. This ensures that the NPPF requirement for sites to be “available” (Para 47 Footnotes 11 and 12) is met.

**Site size** - ‘Strategic Site’ threshold size of 150 units or more or 5 hectares of employment land or more or a combination of both; smaller sites will be assessed when the SADPD is produced /or in Neighbourhood Plans.

**Status of planning applications on sites –**

- Sites with planning permission shown in the housing commitments list of 30/09/15 were excluded, unless they were sites that had been proposed as Strategic Sites in the Submitted LPS which are included within the site selection process, to ensure that all candidate sites for inclusion in the LPS were considered using a consistent methodology.
- If a site included in the submitted LPS had the benefit of planning permission and development had commenced upon it, the site was not considered any further in the SSM.
- Where an 'Omission' site had the benefit of planning approval, it was not progressed through the SSM, as the purpose of site allocation is to guide future development plan decision making and the allocation of such sites with planning permission is not likely to serve a useful planning purpose (an exception to this is made if the site with the benefit of planning approval lies within a larger 'Omission' site or if the planning permission was granted after 30/09/15.)

**'Show stoppers'** – Such sites were excluded, for example those with international or national designations, such as the presence of a SSSI or historic battlefield site.

**Other Reasons** - If sites were not subject to the full SSM process for some other reason, this is clearly set out in the relevant town Report.

**Figure 2: Stage 3 Site Sift Assessment Criteria**

3.13 Sites that were assessed in the ESA also included a recommendation as part of their individual assessments which, using the above criteria, stated whether or not a site was recommended for further consideration for inclusion in the LPS or within the SADPD.

#### **Stage 4 - List of sites advanced for SA/HRA Screening**

3.14 All remaining sites from the Stage 3 'site sift' are then taken forward for joint SA/HRA screening (by settlement) along with the Submitted LPS Sites, including those with planning permission. This ensured that all sites were assessed in a consistent manner and at the same time (the sites in the Submitted LPS have already been the subject of both SA and HRA however they are also included within the list of sites to be advanced for SA/HRA screening). The Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum 2016 and Habitats Regulations Assessment Addendum 2016 will be published along with the public consultation on the sites proposed for inclusion in the LPS.

3.15 The initial SA / HRA screening considered all sites identified at Stage 4 for further assessment. Further SA / HRA work has been undertaken throughout the remaining stages of the SSM on an iterative and ongoing basis.

#### **Stage 5 - Evidence Gathering for all candidate sites**

**Stage 5 Revised Approach Summary:** This stage has been redefined as an 'evidence gathering' stage. In practice, it has proved most effective to gather evidence for and visit all

of the sites at the same time, rather than separating this out into two stages, for the non-Green Belt and Green Belt sites. It was also more practical to gather the evidence to consider how the sites related to the Vision and Strategic Priorities of the LPS; this was previously shown as taking place at Stage 8 of the SSM.

3.16 For each settlement, an assessment is made of the most up-to-date development completions and commitments (30/09/15), to ascertain whether enough sites have been identified to achieve the amount of development proposed for that settlement in the RSDD ([PSE035], SDUR, Table 43).

3.17 The results of the UPA (Stage 1 of the SSM) also inform this stage of the SSM, by indicating if there are any potential Strategic Sites within the PTs and KSCs and providing evidence to assist in the evaluation of the potential for Strategic Sites/Locations to be allocated within them. This ensures that the potential of land within the settlements is considered, in advance of land that lies adjacent to the settlements. This is in accordance with one of the NPPF's Core Planning Principles which is to 'encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.' This is also reflected in Policy SE2 of the Submitted LPS which encourages the redevelopment/reuse of previously developed land.

3.18 If there is still an outstanding requirement for sites, all sites from the 'site sift' at Stage 3 (including the sites in the submitted LPS) are assessed as follows:

- Site visits to all sites
- Red/Amber/Green 'traffic light' assessment and site commentary
- Performance in relation to the objectives of the LPS Vision (p47 of LPS) and Strategic Priorities (pp50-53 of the LPS.)
- Green Belt Assessment (for those sites in the Green Belt)

3.19 The information resources used are listed at Appendix 3.

3.20 This ensures that all relevant information (including site characteristics, constraints and capacity) is captured for each site in a consistent way.

3.21 **Red/Amber/Green ‘traffic light’ assessment and site commentary:** Sites are assessed against a detailed series of site assessment criteria using a ‘traffic light’ system whereby all of the criteria were given a Red/Amber/Green rating based on set parameters. The ‘traffic light’ system considers site specific criteria, based on three broad areas of whether the site is available; achievable; and suitable, taken from the NPPF paragraph 47; the assessment gives equal weight to each of those broad areas; they can be summarised as follows:

- **‘Availability’** – All sites are being actively promoted for development; this is considered to also form part of the ‘deliverability’ prospects of a site.

In terms of the availability of sites to be considered as Safeguarded Land, there should be a ‘reasonable prospect’ of such sites being available when they may be required (that is after the end of the Plan period.) This is consistent with the NPPF definition of ‘Safeguarded Land’ in paragraph 85, as land that can be used to meet longer term development needs beyond the end of the Plan period without the need to alter Green Belt boundaries, as such it is land that can be available and deliverable in the longer term.

- **‘Achievability’** – This includes criteria that relate to market attractiveness; viability and information relating to the deliverability of the site such as masterplans and detailed studies that have been prepared for the site.
- **‘Suitability’** - The criteria were broken down into a number of site characteristics, including criteria where an objective assessment could be made.

3.22 Alongside the ‘traffic lights’ a commentary was used to pick up significant factors and to evidence the ‘traffic light’ choices.

3.23 The detailed criteria for the assessment reflect the requirements of national guidance, to ensure that all assessments are carried out in a consistent and objective way.

3.24 The detailed criteria for the assessment have not been weighted. The ‘traffic light’ assessment provides a way of presenting information about the characteristics, constraints, capacities and circumstances of sites in a consistent way which then enables this, along with other factors, to form part of the overall site selection process and ultimately the recommendation of whether or not a site should be included in the LPS.

3.25 The detailed ‘Traffic Light’ criteria, including a commentary that illustrates how the criteria relate to National Guidance and Policies in the LPS, are set out in of Appendix 4 of this Report; a blank ‘traffic light’ site assessment pro forma is attached as Appendix 5.

3.26 The ‘traffic light’ criteria are summarised as follows –

Is the site <b>available</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate site commentary</li> </ul>
Is the site <b>achievable</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market attractiveness – economic viability</li> <li>• Is the site achievable?</li> </ul>
Is the site <b>suitable</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape impact</li> <li>• Impact on the character of the settlement and urban form</li> <li>• Impact on Green Gap (criteria only applies in the former Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan area)</li> <li>• Neighbouring uses</li> <li>• Highways Access</li> <li>• Local Highways</li> <li>• Impact on strategic road network</li> <li>• Heritage Assets</li> <li>• Flooding/drainage</li> <li>• Ecology</li> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders</li> <li>• Air Quality</li> <li>• Minerals</li> <li>• SA Accessibility Assessment</li> <li>• Outcome of HRA (Stage 4 of methodology)</li> <li>• Brownfield or Greenfield land</li> <li>• Agricultural Land Quality</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Summary of criteria used in ‘Traffic Light’ site assessment**

3.27 In addition to the ‘traffic light’ assessments, all sites were assessed against the objectives of the LPS Local Plan Strategy (Vision (p47) & Strategic Priorities (pp50-53 LPS); the four Strategic Priorities frame the assessment criteria as follows:

<p><b>Promoting Economic Prosperity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would improve the range of employment land/premises that would be attractive to businesses to start up or grow</li> <li>• Would enhance the vitality, viability and accessibility of a town centres</li> <li>• Supports a major regeneration schemes in Crewe or Macclesfield town centre</li> <li>• Would directly benefit rural businesses</li> <li>• Capitalises on the accessibility of the Borough to particularly in relation to the Manchester City Region, Manchester Airport or HS2</li> </ul>
<p><b>Creating Sustainable Communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located within or adjoining a Principal Town or Key Service Centre</li> <li>• Would provide a Sustainable Village</li> <li>• Scope to provide or enhance conveniently located community services</li> <li>• Opportunities to link with nearby neighbourhoods through sustainable transport nodes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Protecting and Enhancing Environmental quality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capable of respecting the character and distinctiveness of the immediate locality</li> <li>• Capable of maintaining and enhancing the character and separate identity of the settlement(s)</li> <li>• Avoids land at risk from flooding</li> <li>• Would result in the remediation of contaminated land</li> <li>• The site lies outside a notified area of high pollution</li> <li>• Capable of conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment</li> <li>• Specific opportunities to create/maintain high quality and accessible green infrastructure that is part of a network of greenspace</li> <li>• Would avoid the use of Green Belt land</li> <li>• Would help establish a clearly defined new Green Belt boundary that is likely to endure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reducing the need to travel, promoting sustainable modes of transport, improving the road network</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would provide homes that would be close, or easily accessible, to where people work, shop, access services and enjoy recreational facilities</li> <li>• Located conveniently close to existing sustainable modes of transport</li> <li>• Could reasonably be expected to contribute to extending/enhancing sustainable transport services and/or facilities</li> <li>• Could reasonably be expected to contribute to providing additional road transport infrastructure that would improve connectivity</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Summary of the criteria used to assess sites against the Vision and Strategic Priorities of the LPS.**

3.28 Each site is assessed to see how and if it would contribute to the LPS Vision and Strategic Priorities as set out above, with a brief commentary given for each section, picking up factors of significance.

3.29 It should be noted that, at planning application stage, more detailed site assessment work will take place; the evidence gathering in the SSM is to inform the site selection process and ultimately the Policy wording for those sites recommended for inclusion in the LPS which is also carried out as part of Stage 8 of the SSM process.

3.30 **Green Belt Assessments (for those sites in the Green Belt)** - for each of the Green Belt sites, a Green Belt Site Assessment (GBSA) is produced on a proforma, including the following details:

- Potential area of Green Belt for release
- Green Belt assessment for potential area of release
- Resulting Green Belt boundary
- Assessment of surrounding Green Belt
- Exceptional circumstances

3.31 The detailed GBSA Methodology (GBSAM) is set out in Appendix 6 of this Report. A 'critical friend' review of the GBSAM was carried out by Arup which is included within Appendix 6.

3.32 It should be noted that the GBSAs do not recommend which sites are to be released from the Green Belt for development; they are however used, at Stages 6, 7 and 8, within the overall assessment of each Green Belt site, with all of the other factors included in the SSM, to assist in ultimately recommending which Green Belt sites should be released for development.

### **Stage 6 – Assessment of housing and employment land supply; Assessment of all Sites (using all available information, including that from previous stages of the SSM) and Peer Reviews**

3.33 At this stage in the SSM a decision point is reached. Have enough non-Green Belt sites been identified to meet the development requirements for that settlement (see



Section 2 of this Report)? If the answer is 'Yes' then the methodology progresses to the Peer Review part of Stage 6. (NB: All of the sites assessed in the SSM are subject to internal Officer Peer Review, by town, to ensure consistency in approach.) If the answer is 'No' then the candidate Green Belt sites will be required to be assessed as 'top up' in Stage 6.

3.34 This stage includes the following sub-stages:

- (i) Assessment of the housing and employment land supply position for each settlement;
- (ii) Assessment of all non-Green Belt sites, using all information already gathered;
- (iii) Peer Reviews of all non-Green Belt sites;
- (iv) If there are sufficient suitable non-Green Belt sites to meet the identified development needs in a settlement, work progresses to stage 7;
- (v) If there are insufficient non-Green Belt sites, all Green Belt sites are assessed using an iterative process;
- (vi) Peer Reviews of all Green Belt sites.

3.35 **The sub-stages are set out below:**

- (i) **Assessment of the housing and employment land supply position for each settlement:** this enables the outstanding development requirements for each settlement to be identified, (see section 2 of this Report)
- (ii) **Assessment of all non-Green Belt sites, using all information already gathered:** using the information gathered in previous stages of the SSM, along with any other information that is available relating to the sites (including information available in the existing evidence base and that supplied by site promoters);
- (iii) **Peer Reviews of all non-Green Belt sites:** this is an internal Cheshire East Officer process that is carried out for all sites assessed. The Peer Review ensures consistency of approach and explores if additional information regarding sites may be required; for example further information may be requested from a site promoter. Any additional information is then requested from the site promoters/obtained from the appropriate information source and fed into the site evaluation process; this may result in an updating of the information

gathered at Stage 5 in relation to the 'Traffic Light' and Vision and Strategic Priorities.

At this stage of the SSM it may also be necessary to consider whether boundaries of sites could be reviewed, to potentially enable the release of a smaller part of a larger site, to meet the overall development requirements of a settlement. This will involve elements of 'professional planning judgement' and may require further information gathering work to be carried out on smaller site areas, to feed back to Stage 5 of the SSM, to ensure that sufficient information has been gathered.

- (iv) If there are sufficient suitable non-Green Belt sites to meet the identified development needs in a settlement, work progresses to Stage 7;
- If there are insufficient non-Green Belt sites, all Green Belt sites are assessed using an iterative process**, as set out in the 'critical friend' review of the GBSAM (Appendix 6); this is summarised below:

- Assess Green Belt sites which make 'no contribution' in the GBSA;
- Review Green Belt parcels that make 'no contribution' to Green Belt purposes in the GBAU [PS E034] to determine whether any further potential strategic sites could be found within those parcels;
- Assess Green Belt sites which make a 'Contribution' in the GBSA;
- Review Green Belt parcels that make a 'Contribution' to Green Belt purposes in the GBAU to determine whether any further potential strategic sites could be found within those parcels;
- Assess Green Belt sites which make a 'significant contribution' in the GBSA;
- Review Green Belt parcels that make a 'Significant Contribution' to Green Belt purposes in the GBAU to determine whether any further potential strategic sites could be found within those parcels;
- Assess Green Belt sites which make a 'major contribution' in the GBSA.

**Table 5: Summary of iterative process of assessment of Green Belt sites.**

3.36 It should be noted that the above assessment process is iterative and only progresses onto the next stage if there are insufficient suitable sites to meet the needs of the settlement.

3.37 This iterative process ensures that the SSM prioritises land within settlement boundaries before considering land for release which performs a lower function in Green Belt terms.

3.38 It is important to note that, when considering exceptional circumstances, relating to the potential release of land from the Green Belt, a stronger exceptional circumstances case will be required where parcels which make a 'significant' or 'major' contribution are considered for release.

3.39 **Safeguarded Land** – As set out in paragraphs 2.9 – 2.11 of this Report, there is a requirement to provide 200 hectares of safeguarded land; the above process will also be followed when considering land to be released from the Green Belt for safeguarding. The NPPF, at paragraph 85, defines safeguarded land as land which can be used to meet longer term development needs beyond the end of the Plan period without the need to alter Green Belt boundaries; as such it can be land which is available and developable in the longer term.

3.40 All sites, including those in the Green Belt, will be considered on a town by town basis and each town will set out how the iterative approach described above is applied in each case.

(vi) **Peer Reviews of all Green Belt sites**, as in sub-stage (iii).

### **Stage 7 – Short listing of Sites and consultation with Infrastructure Providers**

**Stage 7 Revised Approach Summary:** Short listing of sites previously took place at Stage 9, including public consultation; it is considered appropriate to short list at this stage to ensure that the infrastructure providers consultation only takes place in relation to sites that are considered to be suitable and enables further refinement of the sites list following the completion and evaluation of the outcomes of this stage (which form Stage 8).

3.41 This stage can be split into two sub-stages as follows:

- (i) **Shortlisting of Sites** – The shortlisting of sites, at this stage, will enable the overall performance of each site, in relation to the information gathered in previous stages, along with existing evidence from the previous stages of Plan preparation, to be considered. As stated in Stage 5, the 'Traffic Light' criteria are not weighted. The consideration of all of the available evidence enables

potentially competing considerations to be assessed and reconciled. For example, a site that has a low impact in terms of Green Belt may be valuable as open space or for biodiversity. It also enables individual sites to be placed in the broader context of the Plan as a whole and what it is seeking to achieve. This stage involves the use of 'professional Planning judgement', when considering all of the information that has been gathered in relation to the sites and the process of site selection which is considered to be an entirely reasonable approach.

3.42 The shortlisting is carried out in an iterative way, to ensure that all suitable non-Green Belt sites are short listed first, followed by suitable Green Belt sites:

- If sufficient non-Green Belt sites have been 'shortlisted' to meet the development needs of a settlement, Green Belt sites will not be given any further consideration.
- If sufficient non-Green Belt sites have not been 'shortlisted' to meet the development needs of a settlement, Green Belt sites assessed in Stage 6 will be given further consideration. The sites will be considered in the same iterative order as in Stage 6, according to their contribution to Green Belt.

3.43 Peer reviews are then carried out of all sites, to ensure consistency in short listing of sites.

- (ii) **Consultation with Infrastructure Providers and statutory consultees, including external and internal Cheshire East Council bodies** - Only those sites shortlisted are subject to this consultation, to minimise the number of sites to be assessed by the infrastructure providers/consultees, and to give them a realistic pool of sites to consider for a town, thereby enabling the combined impact of the potential development sites to be assessed. The comments received are then evaluated and summarised and included in the Settlement/Site Reports.

If the findings from the consultation exercise meant that further information was required relating to a site, such as a Heritage Impact Assessment, this was then actioned and a further consultation carried out, to confirm if the additional information had dealt with any concerns raised within the initial consultation. Any additional information gathered at this stage was then also fed back to Stage

5 of the SSM. If however the findings from the consultation exercise meant that issues raised could not be resolved and/or could potentially hinder the development of the site, further consideration of the site would be made and if it was no longer considered to be suitable for inclusion within the LPS, a further assessment of potential sites would take place, by going back to sub-Stage 7(i) 'short listing' of this stage of the SSM. Any 'new' short listed sites would then also be subject to consultation with Infrastructure Providers and statutory consultees.

### **Stage 8 – Assessment of short listed sites against the outcomes of the previous stages of the SSM and public consultation**

**Stage 8 Revised Approach Summary:** This stage previously comprised the assessment of sites in relation to the Vision and Strategic Priorities of the LPS; this now takes place within Stage 5. The assessment of short listed sites against the outcomes of the previous stages of the SSM and public consultation previously took place at Stage 9 of the SSM.

3.44 This stage has two sub-stages:

- (i) **Assessment of short listed sites against the outcomes of the previous stages of the SSM**, using the same process as that used for short listing the sites in Stage 7 of the SSM. If, taking into account the responses received during the infrastructure providers and statutory consultees consultation in Stage 7, any of the sites are no longer considered to be suitable, a further assessment of potential sites would take place, by going back to Stage 7 (shortlisting) of the SSM. Any 'new' short listed sites would then also be subject to consultation with Infrastructure Providers and statutory consultees and then re-evaluated, to ensure that they are suitable sites. The short listed sites are then considered further and additional refinements to the sites are then made (if required).

The information gathered for the final short listed sites is then used to inform the production of a Policy for each site, to ensure that appropriate mitigation, infrastructure and other site specific development requirements are delivered,

when the site is developed. As stated above, it is also important to note that, at planning application stage, more detailed site assessment work will take place which could result in additional site specific requirements which would be secured by condition on any planning approval. Within this sub-stage sites and their Policies are also subject to further SA and HRA, to determine any further impacts of sites, along with their cumulative impact. Peer reviews are then carried out of all sites, to ensure consistency in short listing of sites. Within this sub-stage, the findings of the SSM for each site are summarised in a Town/Site Report, along with a recommendation in relation to each site, regarding whether or not it should be included within the LPS.

- (ii) **Public consultation** – The outcomes of the preceding stages and the conclusions of all of the site assessment work, in relation to all of the sites that have been assessed, are then comprehensively consolidated in a full report, on a settlement-by-settlement basis, in order to identify a list of sites to be included in the revised version of the LPS and recommended to Cheshire East’s Meeting of Council for public consultation and submission to the Inspector. A six-week public consultation will then take place.

## Stage 9 – Final Site Selection

**Stage 9 Revised Approach Summary:** The final site selection previously took place at Stage 10; by including the assessment of sites in relation to the Vision and Strategic priorities of the LPS in Stage 5 of the SSM, the process can be completed in nine stages, as opposed to 10 previously.

3.45 This stage takes into account the responses made to the public consultation that took place in Stage 8 and it will take into account any additional comments from infrastructure providers and statutory consultees that were received during the public consultation.

3.46 If the responses received during the public consultation raise issues with existing sites, then it could require the Traffic Lights/Vision and Strategic Priorities to be re-evaluated back to Stage 5. If new sites are introduced, then they would need to go through the initial site sift at Stage 3, and where appropriate through the successive stages to be evaluated against the existing sites.

3.47 The Council will then consider if any further amendments, in relation to the sites, should be made.

## **SECTION 4 – SITE SELECTION METHODOLOGY OUTPUTS**

4.1 To enable the documentation of the completion of the various stages of the SSM, a report is produced for each of the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres, along with separate reports for the ‘free standing’ sites of Alderley Park; Cheshire Gateway; Gorsty Hill and Wardle. The reports are structured as follows:

- The RSDD is set out, for each settlement, along with the level of housing completions and commitments as at 30 September 2015 and the amount of employment completions and commitments at 31 March 2013. As stated in section 2 of this Report, the amount of land required for housing for each settlement may be higher than that set out in the RSDD; the figures for each settlement are set out in the Council’s Housing Topic Paper (2016) and will also be set out in the report for each settlement. Those figures are then taken into consideration and the outstanding requirement for the settlement is set out, for both housing and employment.
- The Strategy for the development of the settlement/area is set out.
- The findings of the UPA for the town are noted, to give an indication of how much (if any) additional development could be accommodated within the town.
- All sites considered are listed. If a site has not been subject to the full SSM it is made clear why this is the case (for example the Council has been informed that a site is no longer available).
- The Sustainability Appraisal of the sites is referred to.
- The status of any Neighbourhood Plan/intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan is confirmed.

- Each site (including the sites in the submitted LPS) is assessed. The stages set out in the SSM are cross referenced, where appropriate, so the linkages are clear.
- The individual site potential is described and the assessment then summarises the following:
  - (i) Traffic light Criteria broken down into availability, achievability and suitability;
  - (ii) LPS Vision and Strategic Priorities criteria;
  - (iii) Infrastructure providers' responses (for those sites shortlisted in Stage 7) – summary of issues of significance raised;
  - (iv) If a site had previously been the subject of public consultation eg in a Draft Town Strategy; the level of support for that site is provided;
  - (v) Green Belt considerations (if appropriate).
- All of the factors summarised above (Traffic light Criteria; LPS Vision and Strategic Priorities criteria; Infrastructure providers' responses; level of support in previous consultation and Green Belt considerations) are then considered in an 'Analysis and Conclusions' section which will consider overall findings for each site in terms of its availability, achievability, viability and suitability (from the 'Traffic Light' assessments), along with how well a site contributes to delivering the Vision and Strategic Priorities of the Local Plan Strategy; relevant comments from infrastructure providers and Green Belt considerations. This ensures that all of the available evidence has been considered for each site and will enable the sites to be differentiated, taking into account these overall findings. A recommendation is then made, stating whether the site should, or should not, be included as an allocation in the LPS. As stated in Stage 7 of the SSM, this part of the site selection process includes an element of 'professional planning judgement' which will ensure that sites are recommended for inclusion in the LPS, taking into account all of the factors considered.
- The sites recommended for inclusion in the LPS are then listed.
- The concluding sections of the Report show how the development requirements for the settlement concerned can be met and how much of that requirement will be met through the LPS and how much will be met through the SADPD/NP process.



**Appendices to the Settlement/Site Reports are:**

1. Map showing all sites considered in the site selection process
2. All completed Traffic Light forms
3. All completed Vision and Strategic Priority forms
4. Summary of infrastructure providers and statutory consultee comments
5. Green Belt Assessments (for settlements/sites in the Green Belt)

**SECTION 5 – CONCLUSIONS OF THE SSM REPORT**

5.1 The SSM provides a framework for the assessment of sites for inclusion in the LPS and subsequently in the SADPD/within Neighbourhood Plans. The SSM formalises the site selection process used in the LPS and does not seek to replace the extensive evidence base that informed the LPS and the preparation of the Submitted LPS generally.

5.2 National planning guidance is clearly followed within the SSM and is appropriately referenced within its various stages.

5.3 There are nine stages that comprise the SSM; these are clearly set out within the methodology in Section 3 of this Report. Each stage is approached in an iterative way, however, the Methodology recognises that, in practice, it may be necessary to return to one or more Stages of the SSM; e.g., if circumstances change with the availability of a site or responses from the infrastructure providers' consultation mean that a site is no longer considered to be suitable and so on. This ensures that all sites are subject to SA and HRA at the appropriate stage and that the SSM is flexible enough to respond to changes in circumstances and/or the receipt of new evidence.

5.4 The Town/Site reports that are produced at Stage 8 of the SSM include recommendations for each site, regarding its potential inclusion in the LPS. The Town/Site reports clearly show how the RSDD for each settlement can be met, along with the provision of sufficient safeguarded land within the LPS and provide a list of sites at the end of each report that are recommended for inclusion in the LPS in this respect.

## **SITE SELECTION REPORT: LIST OF APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** – Site Selection Methodology (SSM) flow diagram [PSE040] (for reference only as this is now superseded)

**Appendix 2** – Proposed Spatial Distribution of Safeguarded Land

**Appendix 3** – Site Selection Methodology: Information Resources Used

**Appendix 4** – Site Selection Methodology: Detailed ‘Traffic Light’ criteria

**Appendix 5** – Site Selection Methodology: Blank ‘Traffic Light’ proforma

**Appendix 6** – Green Belt Site Assessment (GBSA) Methodology

Annex 1: GBSA Method Advice Note (Arup)

Annex 2: Green Belt Boundary Definitions

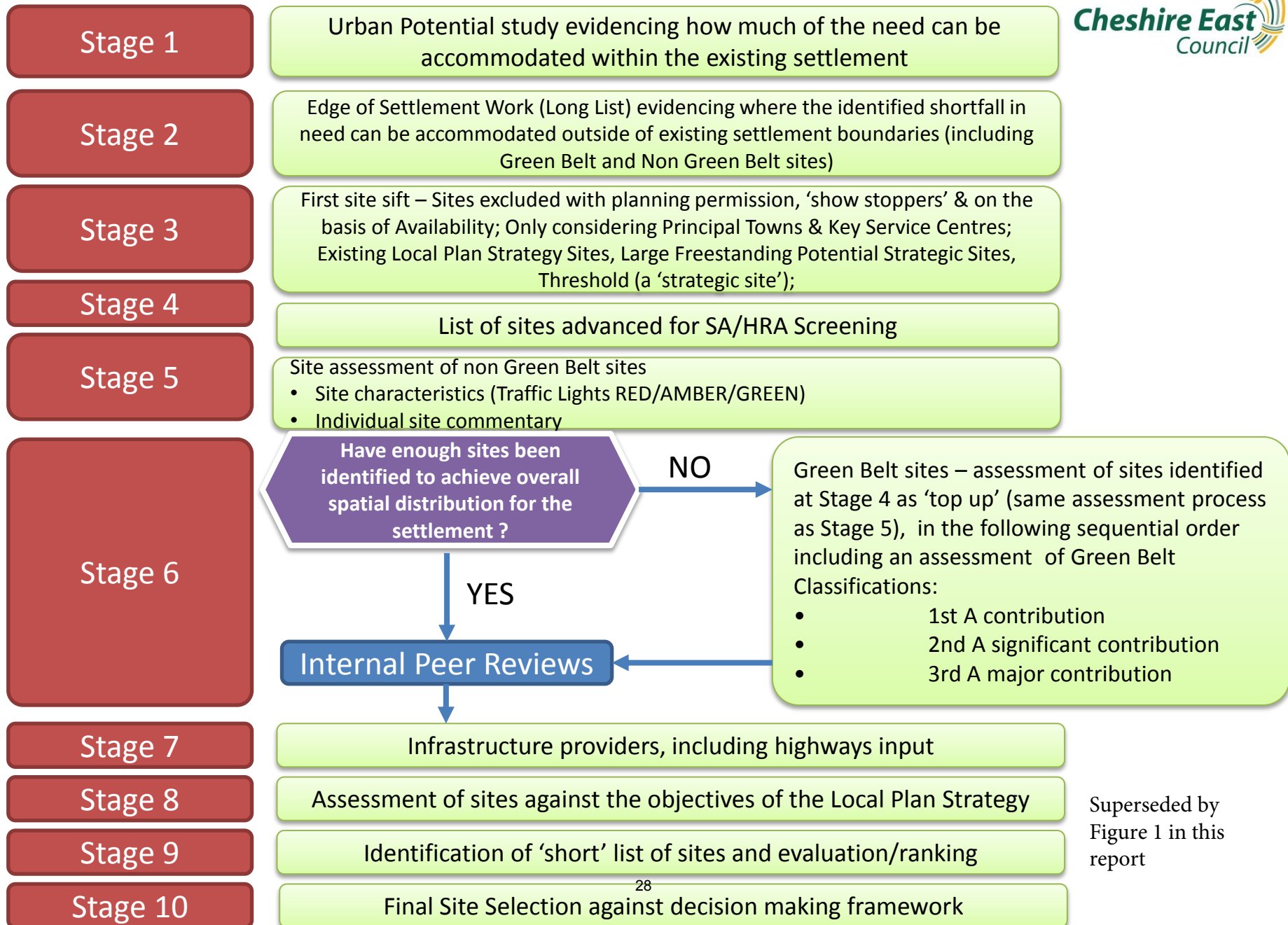
Annex 3: Green Belt Assessment Update [PS E034] Assessment Methodology

Annex 4: GBSA Review (Arup)

Appendix 1: Site Selection Methodology (SSM) flow diagram [PSE040] (for reference only as this is now superseded)

---

# Key stages in the site selection process



Superseded by Figure 1 in this report

# Appendix 2: Safeguarded Land Considerations

---

## Introduction

1. To make sure that the new Green Belt boundary retains a degree of permanence and will not need to be altered again at the end of the Plan period, it is necessary to identify areas of “safeguarded land”. This is land that is excluded from the Green Belt but which is not allocated for development during the current plan period.
2. The Safeguarded Land Technical Annex (SLTA) [PS E031a.5] sets out the rationale for including Safeguarded Land in the Local Plan and an appropriate method to calculate the overall requirement for Safeguarded Land. This proposes that 200 ha of Safeguarded Land be designated, which represents a balanced approach giving confidence that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered again at the end of the plan period, whilst minimising the impact on the Green Belt.
3. The Inspector’s Further Interim Views [RE A021] considers that the Council *“seems to have taken a balanced and cautious approach to the issue of Safeguarded Land, which seems logical, rational, effective and justified by the supporting evidence.”*
4. The Inspector’s Further Interim Views also note that *“there is some uncertainty about whether Safeguarded Land should be designated in subsequent plans, as well as in the amended LPS”*. The Council is clear that Safeguarded Land should not be designated in subsequent plans, but it may be appropriate to designate some Safeguarded Land through the second part of the current Local Plan, the SADPD. Safeguarded Land should in the main be designated through strategic sites as part of the Local Plan Strategy, but it may also be appropriate to

designate some smaller areas of safeguarded land in Local Service Centres through the SADPD.

## Distribution of Safeguarded Land

5. As noted in the Inspector's Further Interim Views, "*there is little guidance available on defining the appropriate amount of Safeguarded Land*". In addition, the Planning Practice Guidance observes that establishing future need for housing within the plan period itself is 'not an exact science'. Accordingly, the anticipation of future needs beyond the plan period is similarly fraught with multiple variables.
6. Similarly, there is little guidance available on determining the possible basis for future spatial distribution of development. In distributing the total of 200ha, consideration must be given to the NPPF requirements related to Safeguarded Land:
  - ¶179: one of the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their permanence;
  - ¶183: when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should have "*regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period*";
  - ¶184 when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, "*local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development*".
  - ¶185: when defining Green Belt boundaries, authorities should "*satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period*"; and "*where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer term development needs stretching way beyond the plan period*".
7. It is the requirement not to alter Green Belt boundaries again at the end of the plan period that informs the total amount of Safeguarded Land needed. As set

out in the SLTA (¶13.6), the Safeguarded Land will be available, if needed, as a buffer to ensure that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be reviewed again until the end of the next plan period (2045) at the very earliest.

8. When considering the distribution of Safeguarded Land, full consideration should be given to this requirement not to alter the Green Belt boundary again at the end of the Plan period. This means that it should be provided in locations where it is likely to be able to assist in meeting future development requirements, should it be required to do so.
  
9. As described in the SLTA (¶¶16.5-6.7), the total amount of Safeguarded Land required is based on a projection of development requirements for the northern sub-area only, because other parts of the Borough will be able to meet their own development requirements in the future without requiring further changes to the Green Belt boundary. As the total 200ha of Safeguarded Land is to be provided to make sure that the northern sub-area can meet future development requirements without further Green Belt alterations, the distribution of that land should be to the northern-sub area only, i.e. within the North Cheshire Green Belt only. It will not be appropriate to distribute a proportion of the safeguarded land to locations in the South Cheshire Green Belt.

## **Options Considered for Spatial Distribution of Safeguarded Land**

10. Four options were considered for the distribution of Safeguarded Land to settlements inset within the North Cheshire Green Belt:
  1. Provision of all 200ha in the Principal Town of Macclesfield;
  2. Provision of Safeguarded Land distributed proportionately by settlement, based on the Revised Spatial Distribution of Development (RSDD) as proposed through the Spatial Distribution Update Report (SDUR) [PS E035] and the Council's suggested revisions to Policy PG 6 (Spatial Distribution of Development) [PS E041];

3. Provision of Safeguarded Land distributed proportionately by settlement based on the resident population; and
4. A hybrid approach based on options 2 and 3 above.

11. Each of these options is considered in turn below:

### **Option 1: Provision of all Safeguarded Land in the Principal Town of Macclesfield**

12. As the only Principal Town within the North Cheshire Green Belt, Macclesfield is likely to continue to be the focus for growth in North Cheshire beyond the current plan period. Consequently, its ability to accommodate future development needs will be vital in ensuring the permanence of the Green Belt boundary.

13. Whilst all towns in the North Cheshire Green Belt share some relationship with each other and are within the same Housing Market Area, each does have its own needs and requirements. Provision of all the Safeguarded Land in Macclesfield would mean that no provision is made in any of the other settlements inset within the North Cheshire Green Belt. Given that the Safeguarded Land identified now may well provide for a significant proportion of future development needs post 2030, it is unlikely that such a distribution would allow for sustainable patterns of development in the future, as required by NPPF (¶84). The lack of provision in any of the other settlements may well compromise the intended permanence of the Green Belt boundary due to their inability to accommodate development requirements in the next plan period.

### **Option 2: Provision of Safeguarded Land distributed proportionately by settlement, based on the Revised Spatial Distribution of Development**

14. The total amount of Safeguarded Land is derived from projecting forwards the current planned provision for the north of the Borough for a further period of



time beyond the plan period, using the proposed Spatial Distribution for the current plan period as set out in the SDUR and the method set out in the SLTA.

15. Given the accepted difficulties in predicting the overall future development requirements beyond the plan period, it would be even more difficult to predict with any degree of certainty a precise breakdown of where future development should be located. As a result, the current proposed spatial distribution of development could be used as a basis for distributing the Safeguarded Land by settlement.
16. The proposed spatial distribution, as set out in the SDUR distributes housing numbers and employment land requirements to each of the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres in the settlement hierarchy, as well as overall requirements for Local Service Centres and rural areas (without disaggregating them to specific settlements). The proposed distribution for Local Service Centres and rural areas is for the whole of the Borough, not just the northern sub-area. As set out in the SLTA ¶9.2, for the purposes of calculating the total amount of safeguarded land, the SDUR requirements for Local Service Centres and rural areas have been apportioned based on population to estimate the requirements for Local Service Centres and rural areas in the North Cheshire Green Belt.
17. To determine the starting point for the spatial distribution of Safeguarded Land under Option 2, the total amount of Safeguarded Land (200 ha) is firstly apportioned to each of the locations within the North Cheshire Green Belt identified in the proposed spatial distribution (Macclesfield; Handforth including the North Cheshire Growth Village; Wilmslow; Knutsford; Poynton; Local Service Centres; and rural areas).
18. In the interests of promoting sustainable patterns of development, it will not be appropriate to designate safeguarded land in rural areas. Future development in these areas is likely to continue to come from the continued recycling of land, windfalls and development allowed under rural exceptions policies.

Consequently, the amount of safeguarded land apportioned for the rural areas has been redistributed proportionately to each of the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres (but not the Local Service Centres as these are smaller settlements with fewer facilities and services where future development is likely to be provided to meet locally-arising needs).

19. This results in the distribution of Safeguarded Land set out in Table 1 below.

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Safeguarded Land Requirement (option 2)</b>
Macclesfield	75 ha
Handforth Including North Cheshire Growth Village	45 ha
Knutsford	21 ha
Poynton	16 ha
Wilmslow	19 ha
Local Service Centres	24 ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>200 ha</b>

**Table 1: Safeguarded Land Requirement by Settlement under Option 2 (Distribution Based on Current Plan Proposed Spatial Distribution of Development)**

20. The current plan's proposed spatial distribution takes full account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. By using this distribution for providing Safeguarded Land to meet potential future development requirements, these sustainable patterns of development are likely to continue in the future.

21. However, the current plan's proposed spatial distribution seeks to provide a new settlement (the North Cheshire Growth Village) at Handforth East to assist in meeting some of the needs of other settlements inset within the Green Belt. By using this spatial distribution as a basis for providing Safeguarded Land, there would be an assumption that this assistance with meeting needs of other settlements would continue into the next plan period. This may not be an appropriate assumption to make at this point in time for a future plan period.

### Option 3: Provision of Safeguarded distributed proportionately by settlement based on population

22. An alternative method of distributing the total amount of Safeguarded Land could be to distribute it proportionately, based on the resident population of each settlement.
23. A similar method to option 2 has been employed to calculate the distribution under option 3. To determine the starting point for the spatial distribution of Safeguarded Land under Option 3, the total amount of Safeguarded Land (200 ha) is firstly apportioned to each of the locations within the North Cheshire Green Belt identified in the proposed spatial distribution (Macclesfield; Handforth including the North Cheshire Growth Village; Wilmslow; Knutsford; Poynton; Local Service Centres; and rural areas) but based on their resident populations rather than the proposed spatial distribution of development.
24. In the interests of promoting sustainable patterns of development, it will not be appropriate to designate safeguarded land in rural areas. Future development in these areas is likely to continue to come from the continued recycling of land, windfalls and development allowed under rural exceptions policies. Consequently, the amount of safeguarded land apportioned for the rural areas has been redistributed proportionately to each of the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres (but not the Local Service Centres as these are smaller settlements with fewer facilities and services where future development is likely to be provided to meet locally-arising needs).
25. This results in the distribution of Safeguarded Land set out in Table 2 below.

Settlement	Safeguarded Land Requirement (option 3)
Macclesfield	81 ha
Handforth Including North Cheshire Growth Village	10 ha
Knutsford	20 ha
Poynton	20 ha

Wilmslow	37 ha
Local Service Centres	32 ha
Total	200 ha

**Table 2: Safeguarded Land Requirement by Settlement under Option 3 (Distribution Based on Resident Population)**

26. This option would provide Safeguarded Land in each settlement based on their 'fair share' considering their current populations.

27. However, given that this option involves the consideration of population size alone, it could be inconsistent with the need to promote sustainable patterns of development across all of the settlements in the northern part of the borough.

### **Option 4: Hybrid Approach Based on Options 2 and 3**

28. A further option 4 uses option 2 as its basis for distributing Safeguarded Land, but so as not to skew the distribution of Safeguarded Land to Handforth because of the presence of the North Cheshire Growth Village, the amount of land to be provided in Handforth is based on the apportionment by current population (10 ha).

29. The difference between the amount of Safeguarded Land in Handforth to be provided under option 2 (45 ha) and option 3 (10 ha) is then re-distributed to the other Principal Towns and Key Service Centres proportionately.

30. This results in the distribution of Safeguarded Land set out in Table 3 below.

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Safeguarded Land Requirement (option 4)</b>
Macclesfield	95 ha
Handforth Including North Cheshire Growth Village	10 ha
Knutsford	28 ha
Poynton	19 ha
Wilmslow	24 ha
Local Service Centres	24 ha
Total	200 ha

**Table 3: Safeguarded Land Requirement by Settlement under Option 4 (Hybrid Approach)**

## Summary of Options

31. Table 4 shows the distribution of Safeguarded Land under each of the four options.

Settlement	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4 (preferred option)
Macclesfield	200 ha	75 ha	81 ha	95 ha
Handforth Including NCGV	-	45 ha	10 ha	10 ha
Knutsford	-	21 ha	20 ha	28 ha
Poynton	-	16 ha	20 ha	19 ha
Wilmslow	-	19 ha	37 ha	24 ha
Local Service Centres	-	24 ha	32 ha	24 ha
Total	200 ha	200 ha	200 ha	200 ha

**Table 4: Summary of Options for the Distribution of Safeguarded Land**

32. Out of options 1-3 presented above, option 2 is considered to provide the most appropriate basis for the distribution of Safeguarded Land, however using option 2 alone skews the amount of Safeguarded Land to be distributed to Handforth (45 ha) as it makes the assumption that this area would continue to assist in meeting some of the needs of other towns in future plans.

33. Option 1 is discounted from further consideration as it is unlikely to give the same degree of permanence to the Green Belt as other options which distribute Safeguarded Land to different settlements. . It would fail to address the potential future development needs of settlements other than Macclesfield and therefore fail to promote sustainable patterns of development.

34. Option 3 has some merit as an approach, but is not preferred over option 2. Option 2 is likely to better meet potential future development needs and achieve a more sustainable pattern of development.
35. Option 4 is chosen as the preferred option for the distribution of Safeguarded Land as it enables the continuation of sustainable patterns of development set out in the current spatial distribution but redistributes part of the additional land directed to Handforth under option 2 so as not to assume that Handforth will continue to assist in meeting development needs of other settlements in future plan periods.

### **Other Considerations for the Site Selection Methodology**

36. The preferred option (option 4) for the distribution of Safeguarded Land provides a starting point for consideration of safeguarded sites through the Site Selection Methodology. The identification of safeguarded sites in each settlement should have proper regard to other planning considerations, including the Green Belt Site Assessments, traffic light pro formas and assessment against the vision and strategic objectives of the Local Plan in line with the Site Selection Methodology.
37. Sites for Safeguarded Land should be considered through the Site Selection Methodology, along with sites for housing and employment development. For each of the towns where Safeguarded Land is required, the consideration of each site should include whether the site is suitable for allocation, suitable for safeguarding or not suitable to be included within the Local Plan Strategy.
38. Safeguarded Land is not allocated for development and is not intended for development during the current plan period. It may not be needed beyond the Plan period but is included to give confidence that the Green Belt boundary will not need to be altered again in the next plan period. Consequently, the land may be required for development at some time in the future. Therefore, the same

considerations should broadly apply through the Site Selection Methodology, in terms of traffic light forms, Green Belt and consistency with the Local Plan Strategy Vision and Strategic Objectives. The Traffic Light Forms consider various factors grouped under “Availability”, “Achievability” and “Suitability”. As Safeguarded Land is not intended for development in this plan period, the considerations of “Availability” and “Achievability” may not be quite so important as for sites to be allocated, although it would still need to be demonstrated that the land could be developed at some point in the future.

39. Because Safeguarded Land is not allocated for development now, it will be a reasonable approach for the Site Selection Methodology to consider allocating the best sites within each town for development now, whilst safeguarding the next best sites for possible future development.

40. Where there are sites that are broadly of similar merit and capable of being subdivided, consideration should be given to whether it would be more appropriate to allocate part and safeguard part of each site (rather than allocate one and safeguard the other for example). This may also enable more development to come forwards in the early years of the remaining plan period.

# Appendix 3: Site Selection

## Methodology: Information Resources Used

---

- i. Urban Potential Assessment (UPA) and Edge of Settlement Assessment (ESA) [PSE039], [PSE039a] and [PSE039b].
- ii. Base maps
- iii. SHLAA sites: Information from the 'live' Cheshire East SHLAA
- iii. Cheshire East Council Housing Completions and Commitments Lists (most up to date list used)
- iii. Saved Local Plan Policies from relevant Local Plans.
- iv. Town Strategies and responses made to their consultations –  
[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial\\_planning/cheshire\\_east\\_local\\_plan/local\\_plan\\_consultations/town\\_strategies\\_2012.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/town_strategies_2012.aspx)
- v. GIS maps and aerial images/photographs: Aerial images and maps can be found at <http://aragorn.ourcheshire.cccusers.com/ce/webgis/>  
  
This can assist in providing further information including constraints, in particular Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, TPO's, Wildlife designations and flooding.
- vi. Non Preferred Sites Justification Paper [SD016]: <http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library>
- vii. Omission Sites submitted to the Local Plan Strategy: the 'Objective' consultation system holds information on representations submitted on sites:  
<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/sub?pointId=2792765>
- viii. Planning Histories of sites <http://aragorn.ourcheshire.cccusers.com/ce/webgis/>
- ix. The Employment Land Review (Appendix E2), (document [BE009]) <http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library> assesses large existing employment areas and the final row in the pro-forma for each (overall view / reasoning) indicates if there is potential for changes to other land uses.
- x. Local Plan Strategy Submission Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal [SD003] and Addendum ( 2016)



<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library?tab=files>

xi. Local Plan Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Final Report) [SD004] and Local Plan Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Summary Report) [SD005]

<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library?tab=files>

xii. Locally Listed Buildings in Cheshire East

[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial\\_planning/cheshire\\_east\\_local\\_plan/supplementary\\_plan\\_documents/local\\_list\\_historic\\_buildings.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/supplementary_plan_documents/local_list_historic_buildings.aspx)

xiii. Hearing Statements Submitted to Matters 14 & 15

<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library?tab=files>

xiv. Highway Studies prepared for the Local Plan Strategy

<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library?tab=files>

xv. Infrastructure Delivery Plan [SD012]

<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library?tab=files>

xvi Cheshire East Council Open Space Assessments [BE018]

<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library?tab=files>

xvii. Information from Cheshire East Council's Assets Team, relating to potential sites that could be available for development.

xviii. Any other relevant documents in the Local Plan Strategy Examination Library

<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library?tab=files>

xix. Supplementary information provided by site promoters

xxx. Infrastructure Delivery Plan – [SD 012] and any subsequent updates

xxxi. Cheshire East Council Geographical Information Systems – Contaminated land, Cheshire East dataset (accessed December 2015).

xxxii. Heritage Impact Assessments – produced by Cheshire East Council

xxxiii. Green Belt Site Assessments (CEC, 2016)

xxxiv. The Development Strategy [BE100]

xxxv. Preferred Sites Justification Paper [SD015]

xxxvi. Habitats Regulations Assessment [SD004] and [SD015] and Addendum (2016)

**N .B** – This list is not exhaustive and other relevant sources of information, particularly from the Examination Library, will be used, if considered to be appropriate.

# Appendix 4: Detailed 'Traffic Light' Criteria

---

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
1. Is the Site Available	All sites taken through Stage 1 are being actively promoted through the Local Plan Strategy or have been the subject of a recent planning application, and are therefore all considered to be available with evidence of a landowner / developer’s intention to develop. In relation to potential Safeguarded Land sites, there should be a ‘reasonable prospect’ of such sites being available when they may be required (that is after the end of the Plan period.) This is consistent with the NPPF definition of Safeguarded Land in paragraph 85, as land that can be used to meet longer term development needs beyond the end of the Plan period without the need to alter Green Belt boundaries, as such it is land that can be available and deliverable in the longer term.			<p>Deliverability raised by Inspector / Schedule of Matters and Issues (PSA002a)Para 73.</p> <p>Availability is part of deliverability.</p> <p>NPPF Para.47, NPPG Viability</p>
2. Is the Site Achievable?	<p>2.1 Market attractiveness – economic viability</p> <p>(Note – cross reference to CIL viability work (in the Local Plan Examination Library BE 042)</p>	<p><b>NPPG Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 10-001-20140306</b></p> <p>...the sites and scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened.</p> <p><b>NPPG Paragraph: 005Reference ID: 10-005-20140306</b></p> <p>Local Plans and neighbourhood plans should be based on a clear and deliverable vision of the area. Local Plan vision and policies are</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = Evidence indicates broad site viability</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Marginal viability / potentially viable</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Not viable and unlikely to become viable</p>	<p>Viability raised by Inspector / Schedule of Matters and Issues (PSA002a) para 73 and Clarification letter 28.11.2014 para 2vii.</p> <p>NPPF– considering deliverable and developable sites in line with the intentions of para 47 of the NPPF</p> <p>NPPG Viability - Reference ID: 10-005-20140306 Evidence should be</p>

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
	2.2 Is the site achievable?	<p>realistic and provide high level assurance that plan policies are viable.</p> <p>Development of plan policies should be iterative – with draft policies tested against evidence of the likely ability of the market to deliver the plan’s policies, and revised as part of a dynamic process.</p> <p>Evidence should be proportionate to ensure plans are underpinned by a broad understanding of viability. Greater detail may be necessary in areas of known marginal viability or where the evidence suggests that viability might be an issue – for example in relation to policies for strategic sites which require high infrastructure investment.</p> <p>To determine whether a site is achievable, the following factors were taken into account:</p>	<p>Green = Representation includes a detailed master-plan for the site and</p>	<p>proportionate to ensure plans are underpinned by a broad understanding of viability. Greater detail may be necessary in areas of known marginal viability or where the evidence suggests that viability might be an issue – for example in relation to policies for strategic sites which require high infrastructure investment.</p>

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site is available for development (owner is known to be willing for the site to be developed and the site has been actively promoted through the plan making process)</li> <li>• There has been development interest in the site (site is promoted by or has the involvement of a developer; pre-application discussions have taken place and/or; further detailed planning reports have been prepared to support the sites development)</li> <li>• There is no significant physical constraint on/adjacent to the site which would prevent it from being developed.</li> <li>• There is no known impediment to development or redevelopment of the site which might affect the viability.</li> </ul>	<p>/ or supporting information including for example transport assessments, ecological reports, landscape assessments etc or has a resolution to grant planning permission.</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Representation includes a limited level of supporting information for example a supporting statement by one agent/developer, with minimal information.</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Representation includes little or no site specific supporting information</p>	

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no necessary obligations or mitigation measures that would render development of the site unviable</li> <li>• The site is located in an area attractive to the market and where there is likely to be sufficient demand to deliver development</li> </ul>		
3. - Is the site Suitable?	3.1 Landscape impact	<p>What would be the likely impact on the local landscape, including views from and onto the site and degree of visual prominence. The strength of the outer boundary is also a factor.</p> <p>Are there any <b>Sensitive Receptors</b>? Footpaths/ bridleways, landscape designations etc.</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = No impact or development could improve the landscape</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = There will be an impact, but potential to be mitigated through sensitive layout and design</p> <p><b>Red</b> = There will be significant landscape impact that will be difficult to mitigate</p>	<p>NPPF – protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, paragraph 109 of the NPPF</p> <p>LPS Policy SE4 (Landscape)</p>
	3.2 Impact on the character of the	What is the relationship to the existing character and form of the	<p><b>Green</b> = Site is wholly within the settlement (infill) or is substantially* enclosed by the settlement on 3 sides.</p>	

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
	settlement and urban form	settlement  *Substantially – more than 50% of one side of the development	<p><b>Amber</b> = Site is immediately adjacent to the built form and substantially* enclosed by development on 2 sides</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Site is on the edge of the settlement only adjoining development on 1 side or not adjoining a settlement.</p>	
	3.3 Impact on Green Gap (N.B Criteria only used for the settlements of Crewe and Nantwich)	Does the site fill part or all of a green gap as defined in the Crewe and Nantwich BC Local Plan	<p><b>Green</b> = No</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = In part</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Yes (all or most of the site)</p>	CNBC Local Plan Policy NE.4 (Green Gaps)
	3.4 Neighbouring uses	Is the proposed use compatible with neighbouring uses?	<p><b>Green</b> = Site within/on the edge of an established residential area and proposed for residential use</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Site within/on the edge of an established industrial area and is proposed for employment uses</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Site within / on the edge of a mixed use area where no known amenity issues exist which would preclude development</p>	<p>NPPF – always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings – paragraph 17 – core planning principle of the NPPF</p> <p>LPS Policy SE12 (Pollution, Land Contamination and land Instability)</p> <p>NPPG Noise</p>



Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
			<p><b>Amber</b> = Site within/on the edge of a mixed use area and/or major transport infrastructure where some form of mitigation will be required to minimize any impact</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Site within/on the edge of uses which are not considered compatible e.g. residential on the edge of an industrial area especially where there are known amenity issues</p>	
	3.5 Highways access	<p>Is there a physical point of Highway access to site?</p> <p>Is there a possibility of creating an access within the landholding?</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = Existing access into the site</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Access can be created within the landholding</p> <p><b>Red</b> = No apparent means of access/access would be difficult to achieve</p>	<p>NPPF – safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people - paragraph 32.</p> <p>LPS Policy IN1 (Infrastructure)</p>
	3.6 Local Highways	<p>Are there any known local highways issues that could impact on the site (e.g. narrow access roads or busy junctions nearby).</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = No known issues</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Known issues that could be mitigated by appropriate measures</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Significant concerns that impacts will be difficult to mitigate</p>	<p>‘Sustainable development’ is one of the factors influencing spatial distribution of development (Inspector’s interim views (PS A017b).</p> <p>NPPF – development should</p>

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
				<p>only be prevented on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe – paragraph 32</p> <p>LPS Policy IN1 (Infrastructure)</p>
	3.7 Impact on Strategic Road Network	Impact on Strategic Road Network, with reference to relevant Highway Studies/models	<p><b>Green</b> = No significant constraints</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Constraints which can be overcome / mitigated</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Significant constraints which are difficult to mitigate</p>	<p>Sustainable development' raised by Inspector (Inspector's interim views (PS A017b) Para 73 73 and Clarification letter 28.11.2014 para 2vii</p> <p>NPPF – development should only be prevented on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe – paragraph 32</p> <p>LPS Policy IN1 (Infrastructure)</p>

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
	3.8 Heritage Assets	<p>Will there be any impact on Designated or Non Designated Heritage Assets* and their setting(s) ?</p> <p>* A list of designated and non designated assets is given on page 142 of the LPS</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = None</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Heritage Impact Assessment or Archaeological desk based assessment would need to be carried out to establish the significance of the heritage asset and potential for harm. The appropriateness of the site for development can then be determined based on this information and potential for mitigation defined.</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Significant concerns over the potential for harm to a designated or non-designated heritage asset.</p>	<p>Impact on environmental sites, Inspector's clarification letter (28.11.2014) 2vii</p> <p>NPPF- positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment – paragraph 126</p> <p>LPS Policy SE7 (The Historic Environment)</p> <p>NPPG Conserving and enhancing the historic environment</p>
	3.9 Flooding/drainage	<p>Are there any known flooding or drainage issues</p> <p>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [BE 017]</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = None (Majority in Flood Zone 1/no drainage issues)</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Some issues but where appropriate mitigation is possible (Majority in Flood Zone 2/some drainage issues that could be readily mitigated)</p>	<p>NPPF – taking account of flood risk and climate change impacts - paragraph 99-104</p> <p>LPS Policy SE13 (Flood Risk</p>

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
			Red = Significant concerns that impact will be difficult to mitigate (Majority in Flood Zone 3/significant drainage issues that will be difficult to address)	and Water Management)  NPPG Flood Risk and Coastal Change
	3.10 Ecology	Are there any known/likely ecological issues within, adjoining or close to the site (e.g. old trees, hedgerows, ponds, watercourses, buildings to be demolished/converted, areas of scrub or woodland, grassland with a diversity of plants or designated sites) (See policy SE 3 in the LPS for lists of national/international and local/regional designations)).	Green = None known  Amber = Likely issues but appropriate mitigation is likely to be possible  Red = Significant issues are known or are likely which will be difficult to mitigate	NPPF – minimize impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity - paragraphs 117-119  LPS SE3 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)  NPPG Natural Environment
	3.11 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	Are there any TPO's on or immediately adjacent to the site?	Green = None  Amber = There are protected trees on or immediately adjacent to the site but they could readily be accommodated within any development with sensitive design/layout, for example trees located on site boundaries or in areas that could become open space.	NPPF – conserve and enhance biodiversity - paragraph 118  LPS Policy SE5 (Trees, Hedgerows and woodland),

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
			<p><b>Red</b> = There are protected trees on or immediately adjacent to the site which will be difficult to accommodate or will have a significant impact on any development, for example at the site entrance, or significant numbers in the centre of the site.</p>	<p>NPPG Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas.</p>
	3.12 Air Quality	<p>Is the site in an Air Quality Management Area?</p> <p><a href="http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/environmental_health/local_air_quality/review_and_assessment/aqma_area_maps.aspx">http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/environmental_health/local_air_quality/review_and_assessment/aqma_area_maps.aspx</a></p>	<p><b>Green</b> = No part of site falls within Air Quality Management Area</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = Part of site falls within Air Quality Management Area</p> <p><b>Red</b> = All of the site falls within Air Quality Management Area</p>	<p>NPPF – take into account air quality management areas - paragraph 124,</p> <p>LPS Policy SE12 (Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability)</p> <p>NPPG Air Quality</p>
	3.13 Minerals	<p>Minerals are a natural finite resource, they can only be worked where they are found and Mineral Planning Authorities have a requirement to plan for the steady and adequate supply of minerals.</p> <p>Is the site within or adjacent to an area where there is a known mineral interest?</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = No</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = In a Mineral Safeguarding Area (including the 250m Buffer Zone) or an Area of Search.</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Is an allocated Mineral site or a known site for potential allocation, or is within a Preferred Area.</p>	<p>NPPF – facilitating the sustainable use of minerals - paragraphs 142-149,</p> <p>LPS Policy SE10 (sustainable provision of Minerals)</p> <p>NPPG Minerals</p>

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
		<a href="http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/saved_and_other_policies/cheshire_minerals_local_plan/cheshire_minerals_local_plan.aspx">http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/saved_and_other_policies/cheshire_minerals_local_plan/cheshire_minerals_local_plan.aspx</a>		
	3.14 Sustainability Appraisal Accessibility Assessment	<p>How accessible is the site to open space, local amenities and transport facilities?</p> <p>N.B – The Accessibility Assessment of the Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum (2016) will be published alongside the Site Selection Methodology.</p>	<p><b>Green</b> = Majority of the criteria are 'green'</p> <p><b>Amber</b> = A mix of 'red/amber/green'</p> <p><b>Red</b> = Majority of the criteria are 'red'</p> <p>N.B. The commentary here is as important as the balancing of the traffic lights.</p>	<p>Sustainability Appraisal is one of the factors influencing spatial distribution of development Inspector's interim views (PS A017b) Para 73 73 and Clarification letter 28.11.2014 para 2vii.</p> <p>NPPF – Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA directive) should be an integral part of the Plan making process - paragraph 165 ,</p>

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
				LPS Policies SD1 (Sustainable Development in CE) and SD2 (Sustainable Development Principles)
	3.15 Outcome of HRA (stage 4 of methodology)	Are there any HRA implications highlighted in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy  N.B – The Habitat Regulations Assessment Addendum (2016) will be published alongside the Site Selection Methodology.	Green = unlikely to result in any significant adverse impacts  Amber = likely significant effects but where avoidance/mitigation measures are possible  Red = likely significant effects where avoidance/mitigation would be difficult to achieve	NPPF – Local Plans may require other assessments including Habitats Regulations Assessment – paragraph 166
	3.16 Brownfield/Greenfield land	Is the land brownfield, greenfield or a mix of both	Green – Brownfield  Amber – A mix of brown and greenfield land  Red – Greenfield	NPPF – encourage the effective use of land - paragraph  LPS Policy SE2 (efficient use of land)
	3.17 Agricultural Land  Information sources used, for consistency:  Natural England	Does the site protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?  N.B. Currently there is insufficient evidence to differentiate between Grade 3a & 3b Agricultural Land in some settlements in the Borough.	Green – Class 4 & 5; other; ‘settlement’  Amber – Class 3, 3b (where known)  Red – Class 1, 2 & 3a (where known)	NPPF – take account of the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land - paragraph 112

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Detailed criteria	Basis of Traffic Light choice	Commentary
	agricultural classification maps -  <a href="http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx">http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx</a>  Cheshire East Geographical Information Systems – Agricultural Land Classification, Natural England dataset	For those settlements that it has been possible to differentiate between Grade 3a and 3b, Magic has been used.  <a href="http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx">http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx</a>		



# Appendix 5: Blank 'Traffic Light' proforma

---

<b>Site Address and Local Plan Representation Number:</b>		<b>Site Potential:</b>
---	--	------------------------

Overall Criteria	Sub criteria	Traffic Light Choice	Commentary
1. Is the site Available?			
2. Is the site Achievable?	2.1 Market attractiveness-economic viability		
	2.2 Is the site achievable?		
3. Is the site suitable	3.1 Landscape impact		
	3.2 Impact on the character of the settlement and urban form		
	3.3 Impact on Green Gap (N.B Criteria only used for the settlements of Crewe and Nantwich)		
	3.4 Neighbouring uses		
	3.5 Highways access		
	3.6 Local Highways		
	3.7 Impact on Strategic Road Network		
	3.8 Heritage Assets		
	3.9 Flooding/drainage		
	3.10 Ecology		
	3.11 Tree Preservation Orders		
	3.12 Air Quality		

<b>Site Address and Local Plan Representation Number:</b>		<b>Site Potential:</b>
---	--	------------------------

	3.13 Minerals		
	3.14 SA Accessibility Assessment		
	3.15 Outcome of HRA (stage 4 of methodology)		
	3.16 Brownfield / Greenfield		
	3.17 Agricultural Land Classification		

# Appendix 6: Green Belt Site Assessment (GBSA)

---

## Introduction

1. The Green Belt Assessment Update (“GBAU”) [PS E034] provides an assessment of the whole of the Green Belt in Cheshire East (at stage 1) and a detailed assessment of parcels of land surrounding settlements (at stage 2). Parcels of land are defined using clear boundaries made up of physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent (moderate and strong boundaries in the study). The GBAU is a pure assessment of the degree to which each parcel of land contributes to the purposes of Green Belt, as defined in NPPF (¶180). It does not consider development sites or define land on the basis of sites or land ownership boundaries.
2. Green Belt considerations will be very important in the selection of sites, and the Site Selection Methodology (“SSM”) proposes an iterative process to prioritise sites making a lower contribution to Green Belt purposes. In some cases, the boundaries of potential sites to be considered through the SSM site boundaries correspond with the GBAU parcel boundaries, in which case the GBAU parcel assessment result can be used. However, in many cases, sites either span multiple parcels or are smaller areas within parcels, or both. In these cases, whilst the GBAU gives an indication of the importance of Green Belt, it does not provide a consistent base on which to determine the degree to which the site contributes to the purposes of Green Belt.
3. As part of the Site Selection work, there is a need for some further Green Belt analysis for those potential sites currently within the Green Belt. This is carried out at stage 5 “site assessment”. A Green Belt Site Assessment has been carried out for each of the Green Belt sites at stage 5, alongside the site characteristics (traffic lights red / amber / green) and the assessment of sites against the

objectives of the LPS. This informs decision-making in subsequent stages of the SSM.

## Methodology

4. A draft methodology for carrying out the Green Belt Site Assessments was shared with Arup for review. A copy of Arup's advice note is included as Annex 1 to this Appendix. It broadly endorsed the method proposed and provided some examples of best practice advice and recommendations for a few key areas relating to Green Belt site selection process, identification and treatment of boundaries, relationship with surrounding Green Belt parcels and process for re-appraising sites located within the Green Belt. The critical friend advice contained in the Arup note has been incorporated into the methodology for the Green Belt Site Assessment work and the wider Site Selection Methodology.

## Methodology Overview

5. As set out in the Inspector's Further Interim Views [RE A021] (¶146), the Inspector considers that *"the approach set out in the GBAU seems to reflect national policy and address most of the shortcomings of the previous Green Belt Assessment. It provides a set of more comprehensive and proportionate evidence to inform, rather than determine where the release of Green Belt land may be necessary at the site-selection stage, within the wider context of increased development requirements and the other studies including the UPA and ESA. There are outstanding concerns about specific land parcels and the designation of specific areas of land to be released from the Green Belt, including whether such designations will be made in subsequent plans, but these do not detract from the overall adequacy and approach of the GBAU"*.
6. The approach to carrying out the Green Belt Site Assessments utilises the detailed methodology set out in the GBAU (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 as shown in Annex 3 to this Appendix) to assess Green Belt sites against the purposes of

Green Belt. Each site assessed as making ‘no contribution’, a ‘contribution’, a ‘significant contribution’ or a ‘major contribution’ in line with the GBAU methodology. To fully appreciate the impacts of site release on the Green Belt, further consideration is given to the resulting Green Belt boundary, the surrounding Green Belt and the exceptional circumstances required to justify release of land from the Green Belt

## **Defining Sites for Assessment**

7. The SSM considers all sites identified through the ESA. Early stages of the methodology exclude sites with planning permission, ‘show stoppers’ and on the basis of availability. The Green Belt Site Assessment considers all Green Belt sites taken through to stage 5 of the SSM.

## **Relationship of Site with GBAU Parcels**

8. An assessment of the relationship of the potential strategic site with GBAU parcels of land has been carried out. This describes the site’s relationship to parcels in the GBAU, listing the relevant parcels and describing differences in boundaries. This highlights the site’s degree of consistency with parcels in the GBAU. If the site is largely consistent with GBAU parcels, then the GBAU parcel assessment against the purposes of Green Belt can be applied to site but where there are material differences a further site assessment against Green Belt purposes is required.

## **Consideration of Boundaries and the Potential Area to be Released from the Green Belt**

9. NPPF (¶85) requires new Green Belt boundaries to be defined clearly using features that are “*readily recognisable and likely to be permanent*”. The GBSA must consider whether release of the site would create a new recognisable permanent Green Belt boundary, or whether one could be created.

10. The GBAU parcels are drawn to defined strong or moderate boundaries (as defined in GBAU Table 4-1 and Table 4-2), so if the site corresponds to parcel boundaries, then there will be a readily recognisable boundary. Weak boundaries (defined in GBAU Table 4-3) were not used to define parcels in the GBAU as they are either irregular, inconsistent, lack physical features or lack permanence. The definitions of strong, moderate and weak boundaries included in the GBAU Tables 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3 are included as Annex 2 to this Appendix.
11. If removal of the site from the Green Belt would not result in a readily recognisable Green Belt boundary, the following considerations apply:
- Could a wider area of Green Belt be released which does have a recognisable permanent boundary?
  - Could a recognisable permanent boundary be created as part of the development?
12. There are also cases where release of a site would result in small pockets of Green Belt remaining, isolated from the wider Green Belt. This section also sets out where additional land would need to be released to avoid isolated pockets remaining.
13. The outcomes of the section describe (a) whether a suitable boundary exists / could be created / does not exist; and (b) the extent of land that would need to be released from the Green Belt (which may not accord with the proposed site boundaries). The remainder of the Green Belt Site Assessment considers this 'area of land to be released' if it differs from the development site boundary. The assessment in this section is deliberately carried out before the Green Belt Site Assessment (against the five purposes), as the strength of the boundary is then considered as part of the purpose 1 and 3 assessments. Where a suitable boundary could be created, any future site policy should include a requirement for appropriate boundary treatment.

## **Green Belt Site Assessment**

14. Using the assessment methodology set out in the GBAU (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 as shown in Annex 3 to this Appendix), carry out a new assessment against each of the 5 purposes of Green Belt (and overall) for the potential area of land to be released.
15. Where the potential area of land to be released from the Green Belt corresponds to one GBAU parcel, this assessment will be the existing assessment of the parcel. Where there are differences, a new Green Belt Assessment of the potential area of land to be released has been carried out.
16. The Green Belt site assessments included a site visit to each and every site under consideration.
17. In accordance with the GBAU assessment methodology, the outcomes from the Green Belt Site Assessments will be a site-based assessment against the five purposes and a categorisation of the site according to the contribution it makes to the purposes of Green Belt ('non contribution', 'contribution', 'significant contribution' or 'major contribution') to inform the iterative approach to site selection under stage 6 of the SSM.

## **Surrounding Green Belt**

18. When reviewing potential areas of land for release from the Green Belt it is important to consider the wider implications of release of Green Belt in addition to the individual sites in isolation. Adopting a strategic approach to Green Belt release will ensure the overall purposes of the Green Belt in Cheshire East are maintained including purpose 2 "to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another" whereby gaps are maintained between towns.



19. Understanding the relationship with other Green Belt sites also avoids individual development sites protruding into the Green Belt which risks future encroachment, avoids the creation of small pockets of Green Belt surrounded by development and where possible enables the logical rounding off of settlements.
20. To understand the relationship between Green Belt sites within the Site Selection process, the following have been considered:
- **Understand the status of surrounding Green Belt:** In some cases adjacent Green Belt sites may also be considered for release within the Site Selection process. The assessment notes the status of surrounding Green Belt to inform the strategic view. This is important to assist in assessing combined impacts such as whether potential release of multiple sites would affect Green Belt function, particularly in relation to purpose 2, prevention of neighbouring towns from merging.
  - **Assess the impact of the potential release of a site on surrounding Green Belt parcels:** In some cases the release of a site within the Green Belt will alter the function of the surrounding Green Belt. The assessments consider the impacts on adjacent GBAU parcels to determine whether the contribution they make to the five Green Belt purposes may change as a result of release of the site being assessed. It also considers whether release of the site would alter the function of the GBAU general area of Green Belt in which it is located.

## Exceptional Circumstances

21. The exceptional circumstances for the North Cheshire Green Belt are set out in general terms in the GBAU. These are the need to allocate sufficient land for market and affordable housing and employment development, combined with the significant adverse consequences of not doing so, particularly because it is not practicable to fully meet the development needs of the area without amending Green Belt boundaries.

22. This section sets out the identified development requirements by settlement. The general exceptional circumstances will only flow down to site-specific exceptional circumstances if there are no other suitable sites available to meet the settlement development requirements where release would cause less harm to the Green Belt (i.e. no other suitable sites that make a lower contribution to Green Belt purposes).
23. There may also be additional site-specific exceptional circumstances (both for sites in the North Cheshire Green Belt and the South Cheshire Green Belt). However, these are better considered at the decision-making stage of the SSM rather than on the GBSA pro forma to enable consideration of all site-related issues together.

## **Review**

24. After all Green Belt site assessments were drafted, Arup completed a final review of the assessment pro formas which made some recommendations for additional considerations for some assessments. These have been incorporated into the final Green Belt Site Assessments included as part of the site selection work. The Arup final review is included as Annex 4 to this Appendix.

## **Appendix 6 Annex 1 GBSA Review (Arup)**

---

Subject Green Belt Site Assessment Method

Date 15 December 2015

Job No/Ref 242043-04

---

# 1 Cheshire East Green Belt Site Assessment Method – Advice Note

---

## 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this note is to present a critical friend review of the ‘Green Belt considerations in the Site Selection Methodology’ which was issued in draft to Arup on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015. This note sets out the approach proposed by Cheshire East along with best practice advice and recommendations for a few key areas relating to the Green Belt site selection process, identification and treatment of boundaries, relationship with surrounding Green Belt parcels and process for re-appraising sites located within the Green Belt.

## 1.2 Cheshire East Approach

The approach proposed by Cheshire East is based on the Green Belt Assessment Update (GBAU, 2015) [PS E034]. Further refinement of the Green Belt methodology has been detailed in the Site Selection Methodology to take account of sites which either span multiple Green Belt parcels or form a smaller area which covers part of a Green Belt parcel.

Further analysis of potential sites currently in the Green Belt will be carried out at stage 5 ‘information gathering’, with proformas prepared for each site identified in the Green Belt. The proforma includes the following details:

- Potential area of Green Belt for release;
- Green Belt assessment for potential area for release;
- Resulting Green Belt boundary; and
- Exceptional circumstances.

Following a Green Belt assessment for each site, the proformas set out the contribution that the site makes to Green Belt purposes (no contribution, contribution, significant contribution, or major contribution).

### 1.2.1 Selection Process

The process for selection of sites in the Green Belt is described within the wider Site Selection Methodology and not fully detailed in the ‘Green Belt considerations’ note supplied by Cheshire East. Further discussion has clarified that Cheshire East propose using the following selection process for non-Green Belt and Green Belt sites.

Subject Green Belt Site Assessment Method

Date 15 December 2015

Job No/Ref 242043-04

1. Complete traffic light forms, assessment of compliance with the LPS vision and strategic objectives for all sites and complete a Green Belt site assessment for those sites in the Green Belt.
2. Assess non-Green Belt sites by settlement, and confirm if there are sufficient sites to meet housing and employment requirements within each settlement.
3. If there are insufficient non-Green Belt sites to meet the needs of a settlement, assess Green Belt sites which make 'No Contribution' in the Green Belt Site Assessments.
4. If there are insufficient Green Belt sites which make 'No Contribution' to meet the needs of a settlement, assess Green Belt sites which make a 'Contribution' in the Green Belt Site Assessments
5. If there are insufficient sites to meet the needs of a settlement, review Green Belt parcels which make a 'contribution' to identify whether further sites can be found and if these are suitable, available and achievable for development.
6. If there are no further suitable sites which make a 'contribution', assess potential sites which have been assessed as making a 'significant contribution' in the Green Belt Site Assessments.
7. If there are still insufficient sites to meet the needs of a settlement, review Green Belt parcels which make a 'significant contribution' to identify whether further sites can be found and if these are suitable, available and achievable for development.
8. If there are no further suitable sites which make a 'significant contribution', assess potential sites which have been assessed as making a 'major contribution' in the Green Belt Site Assessments.

Taking account of the approach to exceptional circumstances in section 1.3.4, it should be noted in the Site Selection Methodology that a stronger exceptional circumstances case is required in cases where Parcels which make a 'significant' or 'major' contribution are considered for release.

This iterative approach enables Cheshire East Council to prioritise land within a settlement boundary before considering land for release which performs a lower function in Green Belt terms.

## 1.2.2 Safeguarded Sites

Land to be released from the Green Belt for future safeguarding should be taken through the same assessment as Green Belt development sites (see section 1.3). It is recommended the 'Green Belt considerations in the Site Selection Methodology' makes reference to the decision making process for assessing and identifying land for safeguarding.

Land for safeguarding can also be identified through the assessment process in cases where a potential development site forms a smaller part of a Green Belt parcel and it is appropriate for the whole parcel to be considered for release. Safeguarded land is defined in NPPF paragraph 85 as land which can be used to meet longer term development needs beyond the end of the plan period without the need to alter Green Belt boundaries, as such it can be land which is available and developable in the longer term.

Subject Green Belt Site Assessment Method

Date 15 December 2015

Job No/Ref 242043-04

### 1.2.3 Appraisal of Sites in the Green Belt

Where potential development sites cross Green Belt parcel boundaries or form a smaller part of the Green Belt parcel area, the proposed methodology looks to carry out an assessment of the site in the Green Belt using the methodology set out in the Green Belt Assessment Update.

The methodology states the existing parcel assessments from the Green Belt Assessment Update can be used as a starting point to inform the overall assessment. Whilst the previous assessment information provides useful context the methodology recognises the need to carry out a new assessment against each of the five purposes of the Green Belt.

### 1.2.4 Boundary Considerations

The Green Belt Assessment Update (2015) section 4.3 defined parcels using ‘strong’ or ‘moderate’ boundaries. These include main roads, development with strong established boundaries, established waterways, protected woodland and hedgerows, prominent field boundaries and footpaths. It is recognised that potential development sites tend to follow land ownership boundaries and these may not align with the physical boundaries used to define Green Belt parcels. Therefore, when assessing sites for release in the Green Belt the methodology proposed by Cheshire East council considers:

- a. Whether a wider area of Green Belt should be released which has a recognisable permanent boundary;
- b. Whether a recognisable permanent boundary can be created as part of the development.

Both these approaches are considered in detail below.

The council also sought legal advice on definition of Green Belt boundaries (13<sup>th</sup> November 2015). These have been defined in line with NPPF paragraph 85 as “features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”. The council has interpreted this to be features that are recognisable on the ground and can include weaker boundaries as long as they are “readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”.

In the Green Belt Assessment Update (2015) weaker boundaries were not considered as these were considered to be irregular, inconsistent, lack physical features and lack permanence. It is advised that Cheshire East Council use boundaries which meet the requirements of NPPF paragraphs 83 and 85, having regards to permanence. Where these boundaries do not exist the Council should consider the creation of permanent boundaries through development, as set out below.

## 1.3 Critical Friend Review

### 1.3.1 Introduction

The following section sets out a critical friend review and recommendations on key aspects of the Green Belt site selection process proposed by Cheshire East Council. Where possible reference has been made to best practice in adopted Local Plans or approved applications. The issues considered within the critical friend review are:

- Green Belt boundaries;

Subject Green Belt Site Assessment Method

Date 15 December 2015

Job No/Ref 242043-04

- Exceptional circumstances; and
- Relationship with other Green Belt parcels.

## 1.3.2 Green Belt Boundaries

### Release of a Larger Green Belt Site

The benefits of considering a larger Green Belt site for release are that it enables boundaries to be used which accord with NPPF paragraph 83 and “have regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period”. Considering a larger area for release also means sites for safeguarding can be considered alongside potential development sites.

It is recommended larger Green Belt sites are considered for release where it presents a logical rounding off of a settlement, avoids potential development sites protruding into the Green Belt and avoids the creation of small pockets of Green Belt surrounded by development.

### Creation of Boundaries Through Development

There are a number of ways a permanent and long lasting boundary can be created through development. The following examples reflect how these have been addressed elsewhere:

**Northstowe Phase 2 Planning Statement (August 2014 – outline permission for phase 2 granted June 2015)** – Section 6.4 take account of design guidelines and propose “a ‘confident edge’ to the development, onto the green separation and green ways.” This proposal considers use of the development edge as forming the defined boundary between development and green areas.

**Elmbridge Local Plan (Adopted April 2015)** – The following policies make reference to the siting of development in relation to the Green Belt boundary. Policy DM2: Design and Amenity seeks to ensure more prominent elements of building are located furthest from the Green Belt boundary and ensure softer landscape features such as gardens are located closest to it. In addition, policy DM17 includes the requirement for proposals to be sited and designed to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt and should include a high quality landscape scheme.

**Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Adopted July 2015)** Policy ‘STRAT 3’ includes release of land from the Green Belt for an urban extension for Chester. This policy specifies the requirement for “an agreed development brief for the site to ensure the delivery of a high quality urban extension...” rather than specifying boundary treatment along the revised Green Belt boundary.

Taking account of the above examples, it is recommended site specific policies in the Local Plan make provision for a development brief which details the boundary treatment required to create recognisable and permanent boundaries and take account of the siting of development to either create a ‘hard’ boundary edge or a boundary defined through planting and landscaping.

Subject Green Belt Site Assessment Method

Date 15 December 2015

Job No/Ref 242043-04

### 1.3.3 Exceptional Circumstances

The Green Belt Assessment Update (2015) sets out the exceptional circumstances for release of Green Belt to meet development needs. The Green Belt site assessment methodology includes a section in the proforma to take account of exceptional circumstances.

It is anticipated in the majority of cases the ‘general’ exceptional circumstances would apply to justify the release of land from the Green Belt which has been assessed as making a ‘contribution’. In these cases the proforma references the exceptional circumstances case as set out in the Green Belt Assessment Update (2015).

In all cases it is recommended the proforma sets out the conclusions for exceptional circumstances taking account of the following:

- Settlement needs and the contribution a site makes to overall Green Belt release around a settlement; and
- General exceptional circumstances for the Borough as set out in the Green Belt Assessment Update (2015).

There should also be consideration of site specific circumstances, although these may be better considered at the decision-making phase of the Site Selection Methodology rather than on the Green Belt proforma.. This will enable consideration of all site-related issues together.

Greater emphasis should be placed on site specific exceptional circumstances where the Council is considering the release of land in the Green Belt which has been assessed as making a ‘significant’ or ‘major’ contribution to the overall purpose of the Green Belt. In this instance it is recommended the exceptional circumstances case discounts alternative locations that make a ‘contribution’ to the Green Belt as part of the justification for release of land which has been assessed as making a ‘significant’ or ‘major’ contribution.

There may be a strategic economic or housing needs case for a specific site to be released which performs a higher Green Belt function and this should also be set out as part of the justification for exceptional circumstances. Any case for exceptional circumstances should also take account of the requirements set out in NPPF paragraph 82.

### 1.3.4 Relationship With Other Green Belt Sites

When reviewing potential areas of land for release from the Green Belt it is important Cheshire East Council considers strategic release of Green Belt around settlements in a more holistic way rather than considering individual sites in isolation. Adopting a strategic approach to Green Belt release will ensure the overall purposes of the Green Belt in Cheshire East are maintained including purpose 2 “to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another” whereby gaps are maintained between towns.

Understanding the relationship with other Green Belt sites also avoids individual development sites protruding into the Green Belt which risks future encroachment, avoids the creation of small pockets of Green Belt surrounded by development and where possible enables the logical rounding off of settlements.



Subject Green Belt Site Assessment Method

Date 15 December 2015

Job No/Ref 242043-04

To understand the relationship between Green Belt sites within the Site Selection process the following is recommended:

- **Understand the status of surrounding Green Belt:** In some cases adjacent Green Belt sites may also be considered for release within the Site Selection process. It is recommended the proforma includes a table which notes the status of surrounding Green Belt to inform the strategic view.
- **Assess the impact of the potential release of a site on surrounding Green Belt parcels:** In some cases the release of a site within the Green Belt will alter the function of the surrounding Green Belt. It is recommended the proforma consider whether the ‘contribution’, ‘significant contribution’ or ‘major contribution’ surrounding parcels make to the five Green Belt purposes is reviewed to understand if there is any changes as a result of release of the site being assessed.

## 1.4 Recommendations

In summary the recommendations for the critical friend review are:

1. Use the iterative approach described in section 1.3 to consider and discount Green Belt sites which make a ‘contribution’, before considering sites which make a ‘significant contribution’ or ‘major contribution’ to the Green Belt.
2. Include potential land for safeguarding within the same Green Belt site assessment methodology and detail the safeguarded sites selection process in the Site Selection Methodology.
3. In cases where the site for assessment forms part of the Green Belt parcel, consider the release of the whole Green Belt parcel where it forms a logical rounding off of the settlement or avoids the development site protruding into the Green Belt. The Site Selection Methodology should consider whether the remaining area of the Green Belt parcel can be allocated as safeguarded land.
4. In cases where a readily recognisable boundary that is likely to be permanent cannot be identified, include a site specific policy which specifies the type of boundary treatment required. This can either be achieved through creation of a ‘hard’ development edge against the Green Belt or through landscaping and planting to establish a recognisable and permanent boundary.
5. Greater emphasis should be placed on site specific exceptional circumstances in cases where a site is located in a Green Belt parcel which makes a ‘significant’ or ‘major’ contribution. In these cases it should be demonstrated that sites are not suitable in areas which make a ‘contribution’ to the overall purpose of the Green Belt, and the exceptional circumstances meet the requirements set out in NPPF paragraph 82.
6. To ensure a holistic assessment is carried out it is important to take account of the release around settlements and ensure gaps are maintained between towns.
7. To ensure a strategic view of Green Belt release and associated boundary changes is maintained, it is advised Cheshire East Council add further information in the proformas to

Subject Green Belt Site Assessment Method

Date 15 December 2015

Job No/Ref 242043-04

identify surrounding Green Belt parcels which are also being assessed through the Site Selection process, and to check the impact of potential release of land on the surrounding Green Belt parcels.

8. Finally, where a site crosses one or more Green Belt parcel boundaries or forms a smaller area of a Green Belt parcel the approach adopted by Cheshire East to re-assess the site using the Green Belt Assessment Update methodology is supported.

## Appendix 6 Annex 2: Green Belt Boundary Definitions

1. The tables below set out the boundary definitions for the GBAU.

<b>Strong Boundaries</b>	<b>Grading Priority</b>	<b>Reasons for grading</b>
Motorway	1	Strong identifiable boundary with strong permanence
Main road (A roads, B roads and unclassified roads)	1	Strong identifiable boundary with strong permanence
Railway line (in use)	1	Strong identifiable boundary with strong permanence
Residential, employment or other development with strong established boundaries	2	Site specific however should provide strong identifiable boundary with strong permanence
Reservoirs, lakes and meres	2	Site specific however should provide strong identifiable boundary and have a substantial degree of permanence
Rivers, streams and canals	3	Site specific however should provide strong identifiable boundary and have a substantial degree of permanence
Protected woodland (TPO) and ancient woodland	3	Designations provide statutory protection and a substantial degree of permanence
Protected hedges	4	Designations provide statutory protection and a substantial degree of permanence; hedges have a less identifiable boundary than woodland
Prominent topography	5	Site specific however topography should have prominent physical features

Table 4-1: Strong Boundaries

<b>Moderate Boundaries</b>	<b>Grading Priority</b>	<b>Reasons for grading</b>
Minor road (e.g. single track or unmetalled road) or byway open to all traffic	1	Road should provide a moderate boundary with moderate degree of permanence.
Residential, employment or other development with intermediate established boundaries	2	Intermediate built form comprises imprecise or softer boundaries which may not restricted growth within the Green Belt.
Private road (maintained)	3	Site specific however there may be a clearly defined boundary with a substantial degree of permanence if the road is maintained
Prominent field boundaries (i.e. clearly defined and accompanied by continuous physical features such as significant hedge, stone wall, watercourse, line of trees)	3	Site specific however there may be a clearly defined boundary with a substantial degree of permanence
Prominent public footpath, public bridleway or restricted byway (i.e. clearly defined and accompanied by other physical features such as significant hedge, stone wall, watercourse, line of trees)	3	Site specific however there may be a clearly defined boundary with a substantial degree of permanence
Disused railway lines (where in cutting or on raised embankment)	4	Physical feature would provide an identifiable boundary
Line of protected trees (TPO)	4	Physical feature would provide an identifiable boundary and protection would provide a degree of permanence.
Non protected woodlands	5	Tree line of mature trees would provide an identifiable boundary
Brook (where wooded or with steep sides)	5	Physical feature would provide an identifiable boundary

Table 4-2: Moderate Boundaries

<b>Weak Boundaries</b>	<b>Grading Priority</b>	<b>Reasons for grading</b>
Residential, employment or other development with weak or intermediate established boundaries	1	Irregular, inconsistent or intermediate built form comprises imprecise or softer boundaries which may not restricted growth within the Green Belt
Other public footpath, public bridleway or restricted byway that is not clearly defined as a physical feature or is unaccompanied by other physical features	2	Lack of physical features represents a weak boundary
Disused railway line (where level with surrounding area)	2	Lack of physical features to define the boundary would result in a weak boundary
Open space boundaries	3	Site specific however likely to have inconsistent boundary
Private road (unmaintained)	3	
Non-protected hedges	4	Non-protected hedgerows lack permanence in comparison to protected hedgerows; if hedge is intermittent or less mature this creates a weak boundary
Line of non-protected trees	4	Non-protected trees lack permanence in comparison to protected trees; if trees are intermittent or less mature this creates a weak boundary
Brooks (non-wooded and level with surroundings)	5	Weak boundary due to weak physical features
Culverted watercourses	5	Weak boundary due to weak physical features
Field boundaries (where physical features are lacking or intermittent)	5	Site specific however the field boundary will form a weak boundary if physical features are lacking
Power lines	5	Weak boundary

Table 4-3: Weak Boundaries

## Appendix 6 Annex 3: GBAU Assessment Methodology

1. The following assessment methodology is reproduced from the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update (GBAU) [PS E034] (Sections 4.4 and 4.5)

### 4.4 Assessing the Five Purposes

#### 4.4.1 Introduction

##### **Green Belt Purposes**

The Green Belt in Cheshire East has been assessed against the five Green Belt purposes as set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

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

##### **Assessment Categories**

For each purpose and for the overall assessment of Green Belt, the following summary assessment has been applied:

**Major Contribution** – contributes to the purpose in a strong and undeniable way, where removal of this parcel from the Green Belt would detrimentally undermine this purpose.

**Significant Contribution** – contributes to the majority of the purpose but does not fulfil all elements.

**Contribution** – makes a limited degree of contribution to the purpose, as some relationship has been identified between the parcel and the purpose.

**No Contribution** - makes no contribution to the Green Belt purpose.

This classification for the overall assessment uses the categories from the Green Belt Assessment 2013 and provides a further definition to provide guidance on how each category has been applied. The 2015 Update has also introduced ‘no contribution’ to take account of areas or parcels within the Green Belt which do not have a role in fulfilling some or all Green Belt purposes. Section 4.5 provides further details on how the assessment has been applied.

##### **‘Settlement Hierarchy’**

To enable a detailed technical assessment to be carried out for Green Belt parcels, the following settlements have been identified within the ‘settlement hierarchy’ (policy PG2 in the submitted version of the Local Plan Strategy). These have been used to inform the location of Green Belt parcels and to support the assessments against Green Belt purposes. The settlements have been defined by CEC as Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres.

These settlements are identified within Cheshire East’s Local Plan Submission settlement hierarchy. Parcels identified around Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres have been carried forward from the Green Belt Assessment 2013 and reviewed for the 2015 Update.

‘Other’ Settlements and Rural Areas are also defined within the settlement hierarchy. Arup and Cheshire East Council decided to adopt a pragmatic approach to ‘other settlements’ to take account of Green Belt purposes and sustainability factors.

Where General Areas have been assessed as making a ‘contribution’ to Green Belt purposes, ‘other settlements’ inset within the Green Belt have been included in the 2015 Update. Where General Areas have been assessed as making a ‘significant contribution’ or ‘major contribution’, the Green Belt Assessment Update 2015 has just focused on Green Belt parcels around Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres.

Hierarchy	Settlements	Settlements inset within or adjacent to the Green Belt
Principal Town	Crewe and Macclesfield.	Macclesfield
Key Service Centre	Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.	Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow
Local Service Centre	Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury.	Alderley Edge, Bollington, Chelford, Disley, Mobberley and Prestbury
Other Settlements and Rural Areas	The following inset settlements are included in the 2015 Update due to their location in General Areas considered to make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes: High Legh, Scholar Green, Rode Heath, Mount Pleasant and Mow Cop	High Legh, Scholar Green, Rode Heath, Mount Pleasant and Mow Cop
Adjacent Areas	In addition to settlements in Cheshire East, Kidsgrove was included as there is Green Belt land directly adjacent to the urban area within Cheshire East that is in a General Area considered to make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes	Kidsgrove

Table 4-1: Cheshire East Settlement Hierarchy

To enable each parcel to be assessed consistently against the five Green Belt purposes in the following section we have used definitions; a table with key questions and recommended approaches; further detail on the methodology; and justification of the method to guide the assessment of General Areas and Green Belt parcels.

## 4.4.2 Purpose 1: To Check The Unrestricted Sprawl Of Large Built-Up Areas

### Box 1: Purpose 1 Definitions

Sprawl - the straggling expansion of an urban or industrial area, irregular or straggling form, spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way.

Well connected (or well contained) – “contiguous land” highly contained by the existing urban area, i.e. to be surrounded by high levels of built development.

Contained land – displays low levels of containment within the urban form, i.e. to be surrounded by low levels of built development.

Open land – land which is lacking of development.

Urban area – this refers to areas in the settlement hierarchy (see section 4.4.1).

Round-off – where the existing settlement is an irregular shape, will the parcel fill in a gap and / or complete the shape?

Settlement pattern – see settlement hierarchy in section 4.4.1.

Ribbon development – a line of buildings extending along a road, footpath or private land generally without accompanying development of the land to the rear. A “ribbon” does not necessarily have to be served by individual accesses nor have a continuous or uniform building line. Buildings sited back, staggered or at angles and with gaps between them can still represent ribbon development, if they have a common frontage or they are visually linked.

### Purpose 1 Assessment Guidance

Key Questions	Recommended Approach
1. Boundary Definition: Would future development be firmly contained by strong or physical features?	Describe the strength of parcel boundaries using the definitions in section 4.3.
2. Level of Containment: A. Does the parcel protect open land that is well connected or contained by the urban area? B. Would development help “round off” the settlement pattern?	Check the definitions in box 1 and the settlement hierarchy in section 4.4.1. Describe the degree of connection to the urban area (referencing the relevant settlement in the hierarchy). Identify if there is any potential for “rounding off”.
3. Ribbon Development: What role does the parcel play in preventing ribbon development?	Check the definition in box 1. Describe if ribbon development is present or if there is the potential for ribbon development. Describe the extent the parcel plays a role in preventing ribbon development.
What is the overall assessment for purpose 1?	Options: Major contribution; Significant contribution; Contribution; or No contribution.

### Purpose 1 Justification

The approach for purpose 1 is based on the guidelines used by Cheshire East for the Green Belt Assessment 2013. Further key questions have been included to enable a robust and consistent assessment.



### 4.4.3 Purpose 2: Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

#### Box 2: Purpose 2 Definitions

Settlements – see settlement hierarchy in section 4.4.1 and also include villages inset into the Green Belt.

Openness – the visible openness of the Green Belt in terms of the absence of built development, a topography which supports long line views and low levels of substantial vegetation. Consider both actual distance (the distance between settlement and countryside) and perceived distance (e.g. a wooded area located between a new development and the settlement would not impact the perception of openness from the settlement). Openness should be assessed from the edge of the settlement / inset boundary outwards.

Essential gap – a land gap between two or more settlements where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between settlements.

Largely essential gap – a land gap between two or more settlements where limited development may be possible without merging of settlements.

Less essential gap – a land gap between settlements where development may be possible without any risk of merging of settlements.

Merging – combining to form a single entity.

### Purpose 2 Assessment Guidance

Key Questions	Recommended Approach
Would a reduction in the gap between the settlements compromise the openness of the Green Belt land?	Provide a comparison of the remaining gap with adjacent gaps between settlements, if development of the parcel were to take place. Describe whether the parcel forms an essential, largely essential or less essential gap between (named) settlements (see box 2). Describe if reduction in the gap would lead to actual or perceived merging of settlements.
Do natural features or infrastructure provide a strong physical barrier or boundary which maintains the presence of the gap between settlements?	Using the boundary definitions in section 4.3, consider strong boundaries only. Describe whether the parcel plays a major, significant or limited role, or no contribution in maintaining the gap when considering the presence of strong natural features or infrastructure.
What is the overall assessment for purpose 2?	Options: Major contribution; Significant contribution; Contribution; or No contribution.

### Purpose 2 Justification

The approach for purpose 2 is based on the guidelines used by Cheshire East for the Green Belt Assessment 2013. Further key questions have been included to enable a robust and consistent assessment.

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

### Box 3: Purpose 3 Definitions

Strong and robust boundaries – refer to the strong and moderate boundaries defined in section 4.3.

Encroachment – to intrude or advance gradually beyond an acceptable or established limit.

Urbanising influences – built environment uses which adjoin or are adjacent to the parcel such as residential properties / development; industrial uses; school / sports / community leisure uses; and farms.

Settlement – refer to settlements in the settlement hierarchy in section 4.4.1.

Openness – the visible openness of the Green Belt in terms of the absence of built development, a topography which supports long line views and low levels of substantial vegetation. Consider both actual distance (the distance between settlement and countryside) and perceived distance (e.g. a wooded area located between a new development and the settlement would not impact the perception of openness from the settlement). Openness should be assessed from the edge of the settlement / inset boundary outwards.

Major degree of openness – contributes to openness in a strong and undeniable way, where removal of this parcel from the Green Belt would detrimentally undermine the overall openness of the Green Belt.

Significant degree of openness – contributes to openness in a significant way, whereby removal of part of this parcel would not have a major impact upon the overall openness of the Green Belt.

Limited degree of openness – makes a limited contribution to openness, whereby the removal of this parcel would not impact upon the overall openness of the Green Belt.

No degree of openness – makes no contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.

Beneficial uses – identified as opportunities to provide access to the countryside; for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes; to retain and enhance visual amenity; and to retain and enhance biodiversity (as defined in NPPF paragraph 81).

## Purpose 3 Assessment Guidance

Key Questions	Recommended Approach
Are there strong and robust boundaries to contain development and prevent encroachment in the long term?	Refer to the definitions in box 3. Identify strong, moderate and / or weak boundaries around the parcel which will prevent or allow encroachment.
Existing urbanising influences: A. What is the existing land use / uses? B. What is the proximity and relationship to the settlement? C. What is the relationship to the countryside?	Refer to the definitions in box 3. Describe if there are any urbanising influences within or adjacent to the parcel. Describe the relationship of the parcel to the settlement and the surrounding countryside.
3. Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside?	Refer to the definitions in box 3. Use the guidelines in table 4.5 to decide the degree of openness taking account of built form, long line views and vegetation.
Does the parcel serve a beneficial use of the Green Belt which should be	Refer to the definitions in box 3.

Key Questions	Recommended Approach
safeguarded?	List the beneficial uses served by the parcel or state where there are no beneficial uses.
What is the overall assessment for purpose 3?	Options: Major contribution; Significant contribution; Contribution; or No contribution.

Built Form	Long-line views	Vegetation	Degree of Openness
Less than 10%	Open long-line views	Low vegetation	Major degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	Major - Significant degree of openness
	No long line views	Low vegetation	Major - Significant degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	Significant degree of openness
Less than 20%	Open long-line views	Low vegetation	Major - Significant degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	Limited - Significant degree of openness
	No long line views	Low vegetation	Limited – Significant degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	Limited degree of openness
Between 20 and 30%	Open long-line views	Low vegetation	Limited - Significant degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	Limited degree of openness
	No long line views	Low vegetation	Limited degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	No degree of openness
More than 30%	Open long-line views	Low vegetation	Limited degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	No degree of openness
	No long line views	Low vegetation	No degree of openness
		Dense vegetation	No degree of openness

Table 4-2: Degree of Openness

### Purpose 3 Justification

The approach for purpose 3 is based on the guidelines used by Cheshire East for the Green Belt Assessment 2013. Further key questions have been included to enable a robust and consistent assessment. This includes defining the degree of openness as set out in Table 4-5.

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

In order to identify historic towns in Cheshire East for the purposes of the Green Belt Assessment Update, it was important to define ‘historic’ to ensure a consistent

approach was applied to settlements across the Borough. The approach involved a review of background documents and desk-based research, to firstly identify ‘historic towns’ and secondly to support the assessment of the role which Green Belt plays in preserving the setting and character of historic towns.

### **Stage 1: Determining a ‘Historic Town’ within Cheshire East.**

A review of the background evidence-based documents indicates there is variation in the definition of a ‘historic town’ within Cheshire East:

- Using the Cheshire County Council Cheshire Historic Towns Surveys (2003), the following settlements were identified as ‘historic towns’ within Cheshire East: Alsager, Brereton, Congleton, Middlewich, Sandbach, Audlem, Bunbury, Crewe, Nantwich, Wybunbury, Alderley Edge, Bollington, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nether Alderley and Wilmslow.
- The Core Strategy identifies ‘historic towns’ as Nantwich and Knutsford (see figure 2.5 Cheshire East Functional Diagram)
- The Cheshire Historic Landscape Assessment (2007) identified post-medieval settlements as including Crewe, Nantwich, Sandbach, Congleton, Middlewich, Holmes Chapel, Congleton, Macclesfield, Knutsford and Poynton.

Due to the different conclusions for ‘historic towns’ resulting from the background research, it was necessary to carry out a desk-based assessment of the ‘historic’ characteristics of principal towns, key service centres and local service centres within the Green Belt. The assessment looked at two key factors:

- Is the settlement listed in the Domesday Book?
- Does the settlement have historic fabric from post 1086 which is identified through the presence of a conservation area?

The assessment ascertained whether towns had an ‘historic core’ which existed prior to the Domesday Period (see Table 4-6 below) using the information from the 1086 Domesday Book<sup>1</sup>. It was important to consider whether the historic fabric from settlements listed in the Domesday Book had been preserved beyond 1086 and also to capture post 1086 historic settlements; therefore the assessment criteria also included the presence of a conservation area within the development limits.

This approach has been taken because the Domesday Book compiled in 1086 forms a benchmark and a reliable source of evidence for identifying the historic nature of the settlements within the Green Belt. Post-Domesday historic cores are captured by assessing whether settlements have a Conservation Area, evidenced by CEC Conservation Area Appraisals.

This method was recommended by Arup’s heritage and landscape experts qualified in heritage conservation with chartered memberships in the Institute of Archaeology and the Landscape Institute. The approach combining both information from the Domesday Book and the conservation area designations provides additional robustness, with continued protection of a historic core within the settlement centre.

It should be noted this method provides a high level assessment for the purposes of the Green Belt assessment. It is anticipated Cheshire East Council would carry out

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/cheshire.html>

further detailed heritage and landscape assessments as part of detailed site appraisals outside of the scope of the Green Belt Assessment Update.

<b>Core Strategy Settlement in the Green Belt</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Domesday Book</b>	<b>Conservation Area</b>	<b>Designated</b>	<b>Appraised</b>	<b>Reason for conservation area designation</b>
Principal Towns						
Macclesfield	Domesday Book recorded settlement in 1183 as a market town			1969	2005	Macclesfield Town Centre
				1975	2009	Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area The Macclesfield Canal is of considerable architectural, historic and scenic interest
				1990	-	Prestbury Road, Macclesfield
				1994	-	Hurdsfield Road
				1990	-	Buxton Road, Macclesfield
				1988	-	Christ Church, Macclesfield
				1969 / 2005	2005	Town Centre, Macclesfield
				1982	-	Barracks Square, Macclesfield
				1996	-	Park Lane, Macclesfield
				1978 / 1993	-	High Street, Macclesfield
				1969 / 1993	-	Park Green, Macclesfield
				1990	-	St. Paul's Square, Macclesfield
Key Service Centres						

Core Strategy Settlement in the Green Belt	Comment	Domesday Book	Conservation Area	Designated	Appraised	Reason for conservation area designation
Alsager	Small farming village until 19 <sup>th</sup> century due to rail connections. Significant Bronze Age site near town.			1981	2004	Alsager Conservation Area
Congleton	Origins during the roman occupation however became a market town during the Anglo-Saxon period. Granted first town charter in 1272 and was rebuilt following floods in 1451. Potential for Stone Age and Bronze Age sites near town.			1980	2010	Lawton Street / Moody Street
				1969	2010	Congleton West Street
				1975	2009	Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area The Macclesfield Canal is of considerable architectural, historic and scenic interest
				-	-	Park Lane, Congleton
Handforth	Handforth Hall dates back to 1562 however significant growth occurred in 1960's and 1970's when two overspill housing estates were created.					
Knutsford	Recorded in Domesday Book; post WWII overspill housing estates were created			1989	2005	Knutsford
				1976	2005	Legh Road, Knutsford
				2006	2006	Cross Town, Knutsford
				2006	2007	Heathfield Square, Knutsford
				1994	-	St Johns, Knutsford
Poynton	Omitted from Domesday Book, first mention is 1289. Extensive house building from 1870's and post					

Core Strategy Settlement in the Green Belt	Comment	Domesday Book	Conservation Area	Designated	Appraised	Reason for conservation area designation
	WWII.					
Wilmslow	Originally Anglo-Saxon settlement however developed in 19 <sup>th</sup> century with the expansion of the railways			1975	2008	Styal, Wilmslow
				1988	2008	St Bartholomew's, Wilmslow
				1988	-	Bollin Hill
				1980	2008	Hawthorn Lane
				1988	-	Highfield, Wilmslow
Local Service Centres						
Alderley Edge	Early medieval settlement recorded in 13th century. Evidence of Mesolithic and Bronze age occupation.			1974	2004	Following the construction of the railway in 1842, local landowner, Sir Humphrey de Trafford, laid out an extensive estate of new roads and new houses were incrementally added, filling-in most of the available sites by 1910. Of these, nine are now listed grade II. The conservation area boundary largely reflects de Trafford's original estate boundaries although also included are properties along Congleton Road and Whitebarn Road, mainly built between 1910 and the 1930s. The conservation area is notable for its heavily

Core Strategy Settlement in the Green Belt	Comment	Domesday Book	Conservation Area	Designated	Appraised	Reason for conservation area designation
						wooded streets and substantial Victorian villas.
				1989	-	Davey Lane, Alderley Edge
				1987	-	Elm Grove, Alderley Edge
				1989	-	Trafford Road, Alderley Edge
Bollington	Developed in 19th century due to cotton spinning.			1976	2006	Bollington
				1993	-	Bollington Cross
				1973	2006	Kerridge
				1975	2009	Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area The Macclesfield Canal is of considerable architectural, historic and scenic interest
Chelford	Village with a Georgian church.					
Disley	Anglo-Saxon origins, developed in 19th century due to cotton mill			1973	2006	Disley
				1973	-	Higher Disley
Mobberley	Church constructed in 1245.			1976	2006	Mobberley Conservation Area
Prestbury	There is no evidence of a settlement before Saxon times and major development occurred in 19th century.			1990	-	Prestbury Conservation Area

Table 4-3: Historic Nature of Core Strategy Settlements in the Green Belt

Whilst Chelford was listed in the Domesday Book it has not been taken forward as an 'historic town' for the purposes of this assessment, as the town does not include a



conservation area. Therefore the historic fabric is likely to have been eroded over time due to infill development and is not considered to have a historic core. This was confirmed by CEC.

#### **Cheshire East Historic Towns:**

Using the information from Table 4-6, the following settlements have been identified as 'historic towns' for the purposes of the Green Belt Assessment Update. These are towns which have a conservation area and in some cases have also been listed in the Domesday Book.

Macclesfield, Alsager, Congleton, Knutsford, Bollington and Mobberley all have an historic core which existed within the Domesday Book and a designated Conservation Area within their core.

Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, Disley and Prestbury have a designated Conservation Area at their core.

### **Stage 2: Assessing the proximity of historic elements to the Green Belt.**

The second stage in assessing the contribution which Green Belt makes to Purpose 4 was to analyse the proximity of the settlement's historic core to the Green Belt boundary. This step captures whether the role of the Green Belt in preserving the setting of the historic core has been weakened by modern in-fill development within the development limits.

To assess the role of the Green Belt in protecting the historic core, the following buffers were applied from the edge of the Green Belt inset boundary for settlements defined as 'historic towns':

- 500m for Principal Towns;
- 250m for Key Service Centres; and
- 250m for Local Service Centres.

The distances defined for the buffers took into consideration the overall scale of the settlement and took account of the relationship between the settlement's historic core and land within the Green Belt located on the settlement edge. The buffer was used as a 'spatial container' to assess the types of in-fill or edge of settlement development surrounding the historic core, further details the approach to this stage are set out in the Purpose 4 Assessment Guidance.

The buffer distances were agreed in collaboration with CEC and based on respective settlement size and application of judgment (as there is no formal guidance on this matter). The purpose of undertaking this step was to assess whether the historic core has been diluted through modern in-fill development. The outcome of this assessment is a focussed analysis of those historic towns where the Green Belt performs some role in preserving the setting and special character.

### **Stage 3: Additional factors for preserving the setting and special character.**

Additional factors were also taken into consideration in order to fully understand the role of the Green Belt in preserving the character and setting of the 'historic towns' defined for the purposes of the Update. These additional factors include settlement characteristics, historic elements, and Green Belt characteristics. Further details on the assessment criteria for stage 3 are set out in the Purpose 4 Assessment Guidance.

## Purpose 4 Assessment Guidance

Key Questions	Recommended Approach
Is the nearest settlement to the parcel a historic town?	Describe which historic towns the parcel is located near to using the historic towns list defined in section 4.4.5. If there are no historic towns near to the parcel, the parcel makes “no contribution” to this purpose.
Has the historic core been diluted through modern infill development within the development limits?	Assess the proximity of the historic elements to the Green Belt using a buffer from the internal Green Belt boundary of: 250m for Local Service Centres 250m for Key Service Centres 500m for Principal Towns Assess the types of infill or edge of settlement development within the buffer area defined from the inset boundary to check whether the historic core or conservation area boundary is: Adjacent to parcel boundary; Separated by non-designated but pre WWII development; Separated by post WWII development; or Separated by trees or other natural features.
What role does the Green Belt play in preserving the setting and special character of the historic town?	This applies if the settlement has a strong historic core which the Green Belt has a role in preserving. Consider the following: Settlement form including size and scale of settlement; form (cluster / linear / ribbon); and focus (inward / none / one directional e.g. along a river). Historic elements such as conservation areas; doomsday record; listed buildings and registered parks and gardens. Relationship with the Green Belt parcel including land form; land cover; and landscape features of the parcel. Outward and inward views between the historic settlement and the parcel including key views, land marks and detractors.
What is the overall assessment for purpose 4?	Options: Major contribution – parcels surrounding those settlements which are considered to have a strong historic core with historic assets in close proximity to the Green Belt. Significant contribution – parcels which surround those settlements which are considered to have a historic core an historic assets which are not in close proximity to the Green Belt boundary. Contribution – parcels surrounding those settlements which have a historic core and diluted buffer with modern (post WWII) infill development. No contribution – parcels surrounding settlements which are not defined as historic towns for the purposes of the Green Belt Assessment.

## **Purpose 4 Justification**

The approach for purpose 4 has been informed by the best practice review and specialist technical advice from the heritage and landscape architects in Arup. The approach is based on sound evidence from established historical sources (the Domesday Book) and Council based assessments (Conservation Areas). The first principles for the approach to purpose 4 are also informed by legal advice to define what is meant by an 'historic town'.

#### 4.4.6 Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land?

##### Box 4: Purpose 5 Definitions

Urban regeneration – investment and development to improve the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area.

Brownfield land – an urban site for potential development that has previously been developed.

Urban Potential – potential development from sites located within urban areas (defined as % of current settlement capacity).

Settlement – refer to the settlements in the settlement hierarchy in section 4.4.1.

#### Urban Potential of Brownfield Land in Cheshire East and Neighbouring Authorities

When assessing purpose 5, it was important to take account of the Inspector’s concerns regarding the impact of Green Belt on urban regeneration. The best practice review in section 3.3 identified a few possible approaches. Following discussions with Cheshire East, it was agreed the evidence on urban potential of settlements was the most up to date in informing the level of urban regeneration within settlements in the Green Belt.

For the purposes of the Update, it was decided to consider potential brownfield supply from undeveloped brownfield sites and sites found through the Cheshire East urban potential assessment of brownfield land within principal towns, key service centres and local service centres. This was deemed to encompass ‘derelict and other urban land’.

Taking account of best practice elsewhere and the relationship between development of sites within urban and Green Belt areas, it was decided parcels surrounding respective settlements all had an equal role in assisting in urban regeneration. This includes settlements within Cheshire East and settlements in neighbouring authorities located adjacent to the administrative boundary.

The degree of contribution Green Belt parcels make in fulfilling purpose 5 was defined by assessing the potential for urban regeneration within settlements in Cheshire East and neighbouring authorities. To understand the potential for regeneration, undeveloped brownfield supply and urban potential figures were used and compared to total settlement size to assess the percentage brownfield development within urban areas. A threshold was then applied relating to the scale of potential urban regeneration.

This method recognises the Inspector’s interim views and sufficiently differentiates the role of the Green Belt in Cheshire East in encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. It should be noted the purpose 5 assessment is a theoretical exercise as it is an assessment of ‘potential’ and there is no guarantee that restricting development on Green Belt parcels judged as making a ‘contribution’ will result in the development of brownfield sites within adjacent settlements.

Table 4-7 shows the urban potential of settlements (within the settlement hierarchy) in the Green Belt and the thresholds applied when assessing Green Belt contribution to purpose 5.

For settlements in neighbouring authorities outside of Cheshire East, the Council has applied the following methodology:

- The brownfield and urban potential figures have been collated using the information sent by neighbouring authorities.
- The total number of dwellings in each settlement has been extracted from the 2011 Census data. Ward boundaries have been used wherever possible (e.g. Heald Green) but there are some instances where ward and settlement boundaries are not well aligned (e.g. High Lane). In these instances, output areas have been used to match the settlement boundary as closely as possible.
- Some sites in the data provided by Stockport and High Peak Councils have been excluded where they do not fit with Cheshire East Councils methodology for defining brownfield potential (e.g. are greenfield / open space etc.) or they do not fit the methodology for assessing Green Belt land against purpose 5 (e.g. they are not within settlements that directly adjoin an area of Cheshire East Green Belt).

It should be noted figures for the large brownfield redevelopment site at Woodford Aerodrome in Stockport have also been excluded as it is Green Belt site and does not align with the purpose 5 methodology for “assisting in urban regeneration and recycling of derelict and other urban land.” The site is not adjacent to any inset settlement and is included within the Green Belt. As such, it is not considered to be ‘urban land’ or offer opportunities for urban regeneration. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to include it in the assessment of Green Belt parcels against this purpose.

**Purpose 5 Assessment Thresholds:**

- No contribution: Zero urban potential
- Contribution: >0 - 1% urban potential
- Significant contribution: >1% - 5% urban potential
- Major contribution: >5% urban potential

Settlement	Total dwellings	Brownfield Commitments & Urban potential (number of dwellings)	Percentage of total	Green Belt assessment
Alderley Edge	2,574	56 brownfield	2.2%	Significant contribution
Alsager	5,384	13 brownfield	0.2%	Contribution
Bollington	3,613	262 brownfield	7.3%	Major contribution
Chelford	577	187 brownfield	32.4%	Major contribution
Congleton	11,981	357 brownfield	3.0%	Significant contribution
Disley	2,038	218 brownfield	10.7%	Major contribution
Handforth	3,219	20 brownfield	0.6%	Contribution
Knutsford	6,131	31 brownfield	0.5%	Contribution
Macclesfield	24,144	967 brownfield	4.0%	Significant contribution
Mobberley	1,401	1 brownfield	0.1%	Contribution
Poynton	5,667	43 brownfield	0.8%	Contribution
Prestbury	1,577	12 brownfield	0.8%	Contribution
Wilmslow	10,733	62 brownfield	0.6%	Contribution

Table 4-4: Urban Potential of Cheshire East Settlements Inset or Adjacent to the Green Belt<sup>2</sup>

## Settlements outside Cheshire East

Settlement	Total dwellings	Brownfield Commitments & Urban potential (number of dwellings)	Percentage of total	Green Belt assessment
Bowden, Trafford	3,889	63	1.6%	Significant Contribution
Bramhall, Stockport	10,481	257	2.5%	Significant contribution
Cheadle Hulme, Stockport	11,484	116	1.0%	Contribution
Hale Barns, Trafford	3,981	75	1.9%	Significant Contribution
Hale, Trafford	4,338	53	1.2%	Significant Contribution
Hazel Grove, Stockport	8,169	375	4.6%	Significant contribution
Heald Green, Stockport	5,054	2	0.0%	No contribution
High Lane, Stockport	1,962	7	0.4%	Contribution
Kidsgrove, Newcastle-under-	7,094	272	3.8%	Significant Contribution

<sup>2</sup> Source: Urban Potential Study 2015

Settlement	Total dwellings	Brownfield Commitments & Urban potential (number of dwellings)	Percentage of total	Green Belt assessment
Lyme				
New Mills, High Peak	3,785	257	6.8%	Major Contribution

Table 4-8: Urban Potential of Adjacent Settlements in Neighbouring Areas

## Purpose 5 Assessment Guidance

Key Questions	Recommended Approach
What is the brownfield urban potential of the respective settlement (including settlements in neighbouring authorities where parcels are located on an administrative boundary)?	See Table 4-7 for percentage urban potential for respective settlement.
What is the overall assessment for purpose 5?	Major contribution – urban potential > 5% Significant contribution – urban potential > 1% - 5% Contribution – urban potential > 0% - 1% No contribution – no urban potential and / or parcel has no links to settlements identified as principal towns, key service centres or local service centres.

## Purpose 5 Justification

The approach for purpose 5 takes account of the Inspector’s interim views as it adopts a settlement focused approach. A pragmatic approach has been adopted due to the variation applied to purpose 5 by other authorities. A significant number of authorities have screened out this purpose, whilst others have been based on very specific urban regeneration information. In order to progress the assessment in Cheshire East, it was felt the most robust approach was to use undeveloped brownfield land and urban potential data as a way of assessing the potential for urban regeneration between settlements in the Borough.

## 4.5 Overall Assessment

The purpose of the overall assessment is to consider the outcomes of each of the five purposes and then make a judgement on the overall contribution the parcel makes to the Green Belt. The definitions for each of the following assessment categories are set out in section 4.4.1:

- Major Contribution;
- Significant Contribution;
- Contribution; and
- No Contribution.

To ensure consistency through the Assessment Update and assist in making the judgement for the overall assessment the following guidance has been used.

Firstly the assessor considers the outcomes of each of the five purposes and then makes a judgement based on the extent the parcel fulfils the Green Belt purpose as defined in NPPF paragraph 79:

*“The fundamental aim of the Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and permanence.”*

The principles for making the overall assessment take account of the contribution the parcel has made for each of the five purposes. Whilst consideration needs to be given to applying equal weighting to each of the five purposes, a final judgement needs to be made taking account of the fundamental aim of the Green Belt. Therefore the Green Belt Assessment Update has applied the following guidance to the overall assessment. It should be noted that this is guidance as professional judgement is also required. Therefore, an explanation is provided for the summary conclusion for each parcel.

For parcels where one or two of the five purposes were identified as providing a “major contribution” the assessor had to consider if the release of the parcel from the Green Belt would detrimentally undermine the Green Belt purpose and the overall Green Belt function defined by NPPF paragraph 79. If this was the case, the parcel was deemed to be making a “major contribution” to the Green Belt.

For cases where four or more of the same contribution category were identified, it was considered the overall assessment should reflect the majority contribution. For example, a parcel makes a “contribution” to purposes 1, 2, 3 and 4; and a “significant contribution” to purpose 5. The overall assessment would be the parcel made a “contribution” to the Green Belt. The exception to this is where the “major contribution” principle makes an over-riding case. This principle also cannot be applied where up to four purposes make “no contribution” as the overall assessment will always need to reflect the “contribution” made from the other purpose. This is likely to only be the case where purpose 4 is not relevant as the parcel is not related to an historic town, therefore leaving four purposes to be considered.

Where the assessment of the five purposes results in a split of two assessments in the same category, the assessor had to defer to the greater of the two contributions identified to take account of the necessary weight given to Green Belt policy. For example two of the purposes are identified as making a “contribution” and two purposes make a “significant contribution”. The overall assessment is the parcel makes a “significant contribution” to the Green Belt.

Equally, where the assessment includes one “major contribution” and one “significant contribution”; or two purposes are identified as making a “significant contribution” then the overall assessment is “significant contribution”. This reflects a balanced judgement, recognising the function of the Green Belt for these two purposes.



## **Appendix 6 Annex 4 GBSA Review (Arup)**

---

Subject     Review of Site Proformas

Date        19 January 2016

Job No/Ref

Cheshire East Green  
Belt

## Cheshire East Council: Green Belt Site Assessment Review

### 1 Introduction

---

Arup has provided advice on work undertaken by Cheshire East Council on Green Belt considerations as part of the Site Selection Methodology, the Green Belt Site Assessment Advice Note issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> December helped inform the approach for the Green Belt Site Assessment. A total of 52 Green Belt sites have been considered as part of the Site Selection work. Cheshire East Council provided completed assessment proformas for all 52 sites and a brief review of the work completed by Cheshire East Council was carried out by Arup. The Arup review has been summarised in this note and any concerns or suggestions for improvement have been set out.

The method used by Cheshire East is based on the Green Belt Assessment Update (GBAU, 2015) [PS E034]. The Green Belt methodology was refined in the Site Selection Methodology to take account of sites which either span multiple Green Belt parcels or form a smaller area which covers part of a Green Belt parcel. The information provided by Cheshire East in the site assessment proformas can be grouped as follows:

- Sites which align with the original Green Belt parcel boundary; and
- Sites which form part of the original Green Belt parcel or comprise of several parcels.

As such this is a review of the Green Belt sites assessed by Cheshire East, and checks back against the original Green Belt parcel assessments where applicable.

### 2 Approach Taken For The Arup Review

---

Arup completed a review of each proforma produced by Cheshire East Council for the 52 Green Belt sites. Out of the 52 proformas provided by Cheshire East Council, 14 had the same or similar boundaries and therefore only a high level review was carried out to check the site did not differ from the assessment in the Green Belt Assessment Update (GBAU 2015). A more focused review was undertaken of 38 sites where Cheshire East Council has carried out a revised Green Belt assessment due to the proposed site being different to the corresponding Green Belt parcel.

The review completed by Arup involved a desk based exercise, based on information supplied by Cheshire East Council and the previous methodology and sites assessment work detailed in the published Green Belt Assessment Update (GBAU, 2015) Local Plan Inquiry document reference PS E034. Arup has not revisited the sites and has provided a desk based 'sense-check' of the work undertaken by Cheshire East. It is important that site visits are undertaken for each of the sites under consideration and we understand this has been done by Cheshire East Council.

#### **Sites with no boundary change**

Subject Review of Site Proformas

Date 19 January 2016

Job No/Ref

Cheshire East Green  
Belt

For sites which correspond to the boundary of the original Green Belt parcel, Arup have checked the Cheshire East review against the original assessment to confirm “As there has been no boundary change the assessment made for the parcel in the GBAU is considered to still be valid.” Arup also checked the conclusions for the surrounding parcels were consistent with the original assessment.

### **Sites using a revised boundary**

For sites which form part of the original Green Belt parcel or span several Green Belt parcels, Arup have completed a review to ensure the approach taken by Cheshire East Council is “consistent with the methodology used for the GBAU”. Therefore this part of the review focused on the correct application of the GBAU 2015 method, rather than conformity with the original GBAU parcel assessment.

The following sections set out a summary of the issues identified in the site review. An appendix to this note provides an Arup proforma for each of the 52 sites which checks and comments on the information provided by Cheshire East Council.

## **3 Boundary Definition**

---

For all the proformas reviewed, the boundary definition corresponds to the method used to define boundaries in the GBAU 2015, with a few exceptions. The GBAU 2015 methodology classified boundaries into ‘strong’, ‘moderate’ and ‘weak’ categories. Taking the NPPF paragraph 85 definition of ‘features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent’, the GBAU grouped boundaries into these three categories whereby main roads, rivers and railway lines were considered strong boundaries whereas intermittent treelines, drainage ditches or fence lines were considered weaker boundaries due to their likely degree of permanence. The GBAU 2015 advocated the use of strong boundaries where possible to define Green Belt parcels, the method also did not make use of any weaker boundaries.

Due to the location of some sites there are no physical features that can be used to define a boundary and some ‘weaker’ features have been used. Although these boundaries were considered to be ‘weaker’ when using GBAU 2015 boundary definitions, these have been drawn logically. These sites will require policies to be drafted to ensure boundaries are established through development which are ‘readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.’

The boundaries for sites PSS204, PSS205, PSS215 and PSS500 are not considered to be ‘readily recognisable or permanent’ as they do not follow clear physical boundaries nor do they follow field boundaries. It needs to be clarified what has justified the drawing of these boundaries in this way, for example is it due to land ownership? In each case policy is also required to ensure the creation of a permanent boundary through development.

Taking account of NPPF guidance it is recommended that boundary lines follow a feature that is ‘readily recognisable and likely to be permanent’. Where this is not possible for sites that use boundaries with ‘no physical features’ it is suggest logical boundaries such as field boundaries are used or a brief statement made to state how the boundary has been defined (eg. land ownership). Policy will then need to ensure that boundary treatments create a boundary that is recognisable and

Subject Review of Site Proformas

Date 19 January 2016

Job No/Ref

Cheshire East Green Belt

likely to be permanent, further details regarding a possible policy approach are set out in the ‘Green Belt Site Assessment Advice Note’ (December 2015).

## 4 Assessment Against Green Belt Purposes

---

Sites defined by Cheshire East which use a different boundary have been reviewed by Arup to check that the assessment methodology corresponds with GBAU 2015 method to assess Green Belt purposes. Many of the site assessments consider all aspects of the Green Belt purposes assessment method, in a few instances it would be useful for Cheshire East to cover some additional details to support the justification of the overall assessment for that purpose. The following section highlights areas which could be considered further.

### **Purpose 1: To Check Unrestricted Sprawl Of Large Built Up Areas.**

For sites PSS501, PSS901 and PSS1021b Arup has noted that Cheshire East could provide further detail in the assessment regarding the degree of connection to the urban area and extent of ribbon development. These points have been noted in the site reviews in the appendix to this note.

### **Purpose 3: To Assist In Safeguarding The Countryside From Encroachment.**

Arup suggest Cheshire East Council carry out a brief check the Green Belt site assessments against purpose 3 as some information may have been considered but this has not been noted.

The first key question to review Purpose 3 against, “Are there strong and robust boundaries to contain development and prevent encroachment in the long term?” recommends that the assessor should “identify strong, moderate and/or weak boundaries around the site which will prevent or allow encroachment.” It is recommended this is considered to take account of potential points of encroachment where existing boundaries are not recognisable or permanent.

A few of the assessments do not specify what the urbanising influences in or around the site are, these are identified in the site review in the appendix. Overall the Cheshire East Council assessment generally addresses the urbanising influences, the relationship of the site to the settlement and surrounding countryside and the degree of openness. We would also suggest Cheshire East Council note where the site is clearly used for beneficial purposes such as access to the countryside as this can be one factor in assessing purpose 3.

## 5 Assessment of Surrounding Land Parcels

---

Through the Green Belt site assessment Cheshire East Council have consistently specified the impact of the release on the surrounding Green Belt parcels. Based on the assessments completed by Cheshire East and a clarification discussion, our understanding is the assessment of surrounding parcels will not change in the majority of cases.

Where differences in the outcome of an assessment against one of the five Green Belt purposes or overall conclusion have occurred as a result of the site assessment, it would be beneficial for Cheshire East Council to state the assessment changes in the conclusion. Any issues identified can then be mitigated through site specific policy.

Subject Review of Site Proformas

Date 19 January 2016

Job No/Ref

Cheshire East Green Belt

In addition, it would be useful for the Site Selection Methodology to include a brief summary to demonstrate the impact of Green Belt release at the settlement scale has been considered, to take account of the combined impact of Green Belt release or the impact on NPPF purpose 2 'to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another'.

## 6 Exceptional Circumstances

---

A general exceptional circumstances case has been set out by Cheshire East in each proforma and this aligns with the case set out in the GBAU. It is recognised as part of the wider Site Selection Methodology, the exceptional circumstances section will consider site specific circumstances when considering the site for development. As this has not been specified within the proformas provided by Cheshire East Council, this aspect of the exceptional circumstances case has not been reviewed by Arup.

## 7 Site Selection Methodology

---

The Arup review recognises that the Green Belt Site Assessment work is part of the wider Site Selection Methodology work. As such, it is understood the explanation regarding the relationship between the Green Belt Assessment Update and the Green Belt Site Assessment work will be detailed by Cheshire East Council in the Site Selection Methodology.

It would be useful for the Site Selection Methodology to include a section signposting to the relevant documents that have informed the Green Belt Site Assessment, including the Arup Green Belt Assessment Advice Note and this Green Belt Sites Review.

To ensure the process is clearly explained, it would also be useful for Cheshire East Council to provide an explanation on how the Green Belt sites have been selected for assessment and any cases where the outcome of the site assessment has changed from the original parcel assessment.

## 8 Conclusion

---

In conclusion, for those sites where the boundary aligns with the original Green Belt parcel boundary the sites have been checked and correspond to the original assessment. For those sites which use a different boundary the majority of the assessments follow the methodology used in the GBAU 2015 however there are some queries raised above against certain assessment criteria that need to be addressed to ensure the proformas and the GBAU fully correlate.

A few issues have been raised over the definition of some of the boundary lines for some of the Green Belt sites, our assessment shows in the most part these are logical and follow the methodology set out in the GBAU 2015.

Recommendations have also been made regarding a brief check of purpose 3 for sites identified in the note in section 3; and a review of the impact on surrounding GBAU parcels. For sites which are likely to be removed from the Green Belt for development the surrounding parcel assessment would

Subject Review of Site Proformas

Date 19 January 2016

Job No/Ref Cheshire East Green  
Belt

benefit from a concluding statement that states whether any assessment of purposes has changed and whether this will impact on the overall assessment of the parcel. This will ensure the proformas are clear on the impacts that the release of a site may have and help inform decision making for the next stage of the site selection process.

It would be useful for the Site Selection Methodology to also include a brief overview of the combined impact of Green Belt release across settlements including whether potential release would affect 'neighbouring towns merging into one another'