

North Somerset Council  
**Local Development Framework**

**South West Bristol  
Green Belt Assessment**

**Scoping Report**

## **South West Bristol Green Belt Assessment Scoping Paper June 2009**

### **Purpose of producing a 'Green Belt Assessment' for South West Bristol**

1. The Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) have identified South West Bristol as an area for an urban extension of 10,500 dwellings, 9,000 of which should be located in North Somerset. In doing so the RSS proposes to amend the general extent of the Green Belt to accommodate the urban extension. The current extent of the Green Belt in this area is shown on Map 1.
2. The aim of Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Strategic level green belt studies were undertaken as part of the RSS process to evidence the appropriateness of amending the general extent of the Green Belt boundary in South West Bristol, in order to accommodate an urban extension (Colin Buchanan, West of England and Baker Associates for Ashton Park Ltd). However there is now a need to undertake a more detailed assessment of the land within the area of search, to assess how well it fulfils the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in PPG 2. The South West Bristol area forms part of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt, which fulfils all of these five purposes.

These are:

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

The purpose of this Green Belt Assessment is to:

- identify those areas of existing Green Belt, which contribute most to meeting the 5 purposes,
- provide a basis for identifying detailed, defensible, long-term Green Belt boundaries,
- to ensure the resultant Green Belt is as effective as possible.

What the study will be used for:

- assessing the emerging development proposals at South West Bristol in relation to their impact on the Green Belt,
- providing evidence to develop the Core Strategy and other LDF documents.

## **Programme**

3. Scoping Paper published on the website June 2009 and interested stakeholders notified that we are commencing a Green Belt Assessment, inviting comments on the suggested methodology by the end of July 2009.
4. Review any comments on suggested methodology and study area.
5. Agree the study area and sub-divide the South West Bristol area into different parcels of land in order to assess how well each performs in terms of the five purposes of including land in Green Belts as set out in PPG 2. A suggested methodology for this is shown in Appendix 1. The proposed study area and sub-areas are set out in Map 2.
6. Agree a methodology for assessing how well areas of land fulfil the Green Belt functions. This will involve reviewing any previous studies for the West of England area, any greenbelt assessments undertaken by other local authorities or other parties, and best practice. Guidelines for interpreting the PPG2 purposes in this assessment are suggested at Appendix 2.
7. Survey each parcel and rank them against PPG2 criteria.
8. Prepare a draft Assessment and seek Executive Member approval for consultation.
9. Consultation with local stakeholders is expected to take place in September. Details of this have yet to be fully developed however this will include local parish council representatives and other interest groups as well as all those involved with the South West Bristol Planning Together Workshops. The draft document will also be published on the website.
10. Following review of the responses to the draft assessment, necessary changes can be made and the final document agreed by Executive Member. It will then be used as supporting document to the Core Strategy.

## **Output**

11. The Green Belt appraisal will be used to assess the emerging development proposals at South West Bristol in relation to their impact on the Green Belt and to provide evidence to develop the Core Strategy and other LDF documents.

## **Appendix 1 Identifying the study area and individual sub-areas (parcels)**

### **Identifying the study area**

1. In defining the Green Belt study area all existing Green Belt land south and south east of Long Ashton has been included. The eastern extent is determined by the North Somerset/Bristol administrative boundary although it must be noted that there are sections of existing Green Belt within Bristol which could become 'isolated' if alterations were to be made in the North Somerset edge. However, it is for Bristol City Council to determine the future of these areas as part of their LDF Framework. The southern extent is, in the main, determined by the rising landform but with the boundary defined by Dundry Lane, Highridge Road and significant belts of trees, whilst to the west, Wild Country Lane the A38 and the reservoirs provide the extent of the study area. This area includes all sites which have at some point been suggested as possible development areas or suggested as land that should be removed from the Green Belt. This is not to suggest that any of the sites are suitable for development simply that they are being assessed on the basis of their Green Belt purposes.

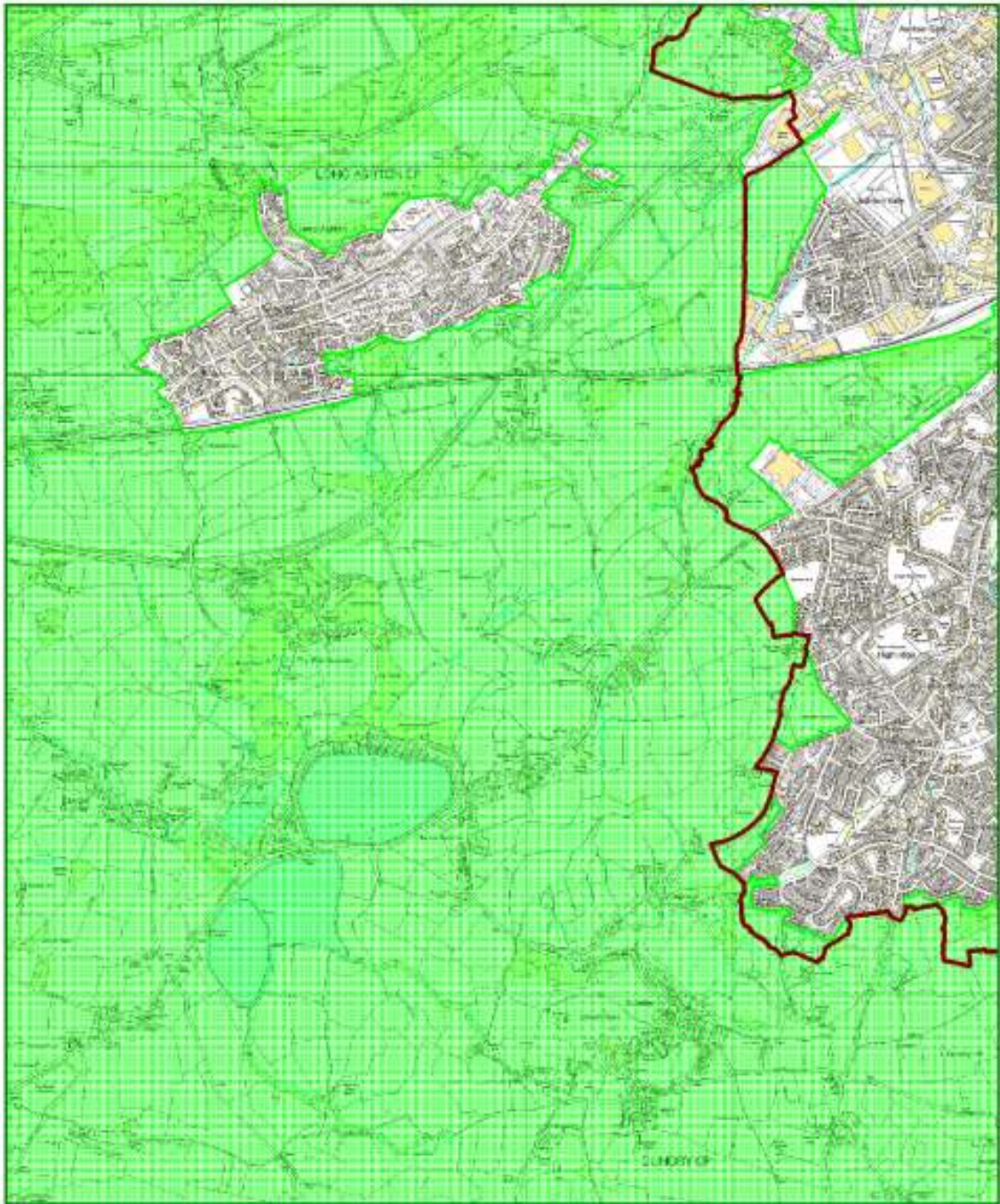
### **Individual parcels within the study area**

2. It was apparent from the field survey that the area could not be taken as a whole as the character of the area varies considerably over the site. Within the study area 17 individual sites have therefore been selected. These have been determined, where possible, by parcelling land into discrete areas using readily identifiable boundaries such as roads, railways, streams, water features, belts of trees and woodland. Where the boundaries are less clearly defined, changes in topography and land use have been used to determine the areas. Field boundaries which closest match the changes in height or uses have been selected.
3. Map 2 shows the Study area and identifies the individual parcels of land.

## Appendix 2 Purposes of the Green Belt

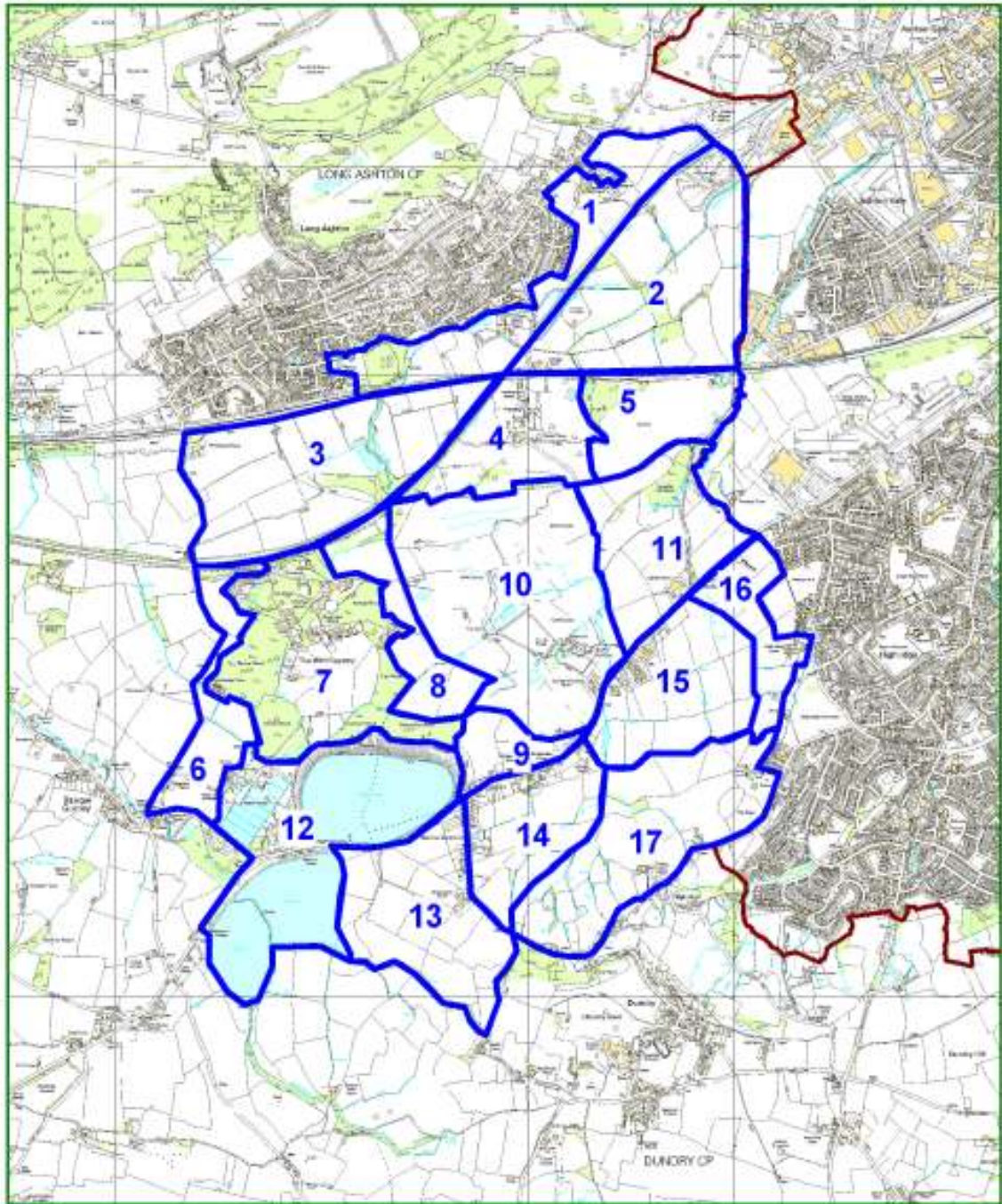
In order to provide consistency and clarity as to how the 5 purposes of the Green belt have been interpreted, the following guidelines will be used:



1. **To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.**  
For the purposes of this study the large built-up area is deemed to be the developed area of Bristol (and sites which visually form part of the urban area such as the David Lloyd Tennis centre and Park and Ride). Parcels of land which are contiguous with this and which restrict the further expansion of Bristol are likely to contribute highly to this purpose.
2. **To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.**  
For the purposes of this study the settlements in question are Long Ashton and Bristol.
3. **To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.**  
Encroachment into the countryside may come from both built development and pressure from urban fringe activities including outdoor recreation. It may be evident in areas adjacent to the existing built up area, or detached from it. Encroachment may be ad hoc, or small in scale, but cumulatively it can threaten the character and integrity of the countryside. Some sporadic development and encroachment from urban uses has taken place in the past within the Study Area. In assessing the parcels of land those areas of countryside under greatest threat of encroachment will be rated as of greater importance.
4. **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.**  
In assessing this purpose consideration will be given to the special setting and historic characteristics of Bristol and Long Ashton. Regard will be had to the historic and landscape setting, prominent views to and from the settlement and the gateways and approaches. The setting includes the Ashton Court Estate, important topographical and natural features, as well as landmark buildings, such as Dundry and Long Ashton churches.
5. **To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.**  
This may only be relevant in so far as if Green Belt is to be released in the long term then its release could be phased to ensure that land within the urban area is developed first. This purpose would therefore be relevant once such a long term plan was made. It is considered that all areas within the study area have a similar value for this purpose.



 <b>North Somerset</b> COUNCIL	<b>Development &amp; Environment</b> Planning Policy and Research Somerset House Oxford Street Weston-super-Mare BS23 1TG	<b>Current extent of North Somerset and Bristol Green Belt Map 1</b>	
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 <b>North Somerset</b> COUNCIL	<b>Development &amp; Environment</b> Planning Policy and Research Somerset House Oxford Street Weston-super-Mare BS23 1TG	<b>Suggested parcel boundaries</b> <b>Map 2</b>	
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