

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough
Council

Green Belt Review

Approach and Method Report

Issue | 06 November 2014

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd
Admiral House Rose Wharf
78 East Street
Leeds LS9 8EE
United Kingdom
www.arup.com

ARUP

Document Verification

ARUP

Job title		Green Belt Review		Job number	
Document title		Approach and Method Report		File reference	
Document ref					
Revision	Date	Filename			
Draft 1	18 Nov 2013	Description	First draft		
			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name	Victoria Robinson	Nicole Harrison	Nicole Harrison
		Signature			
Issue	10 Jun 2014	Filename	2014.06.10 Phase 1 Green Belt Review.docx		
		Description			
			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name	Victoria Robinson	Nicole Harrison	Nicole Harrison
		Signature			
issue	10 sept 2014	Filename			
		Description			
			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name	Jane Healey Brown	Laura Marchant	Jane Healey Brown
		Signature			
issue	6 November 2014	Filename			
		Description			
			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name	Jane Healey Brown	Jane Healey Brown	Jane Healey Brown
		Signature			
Issue Document Verification with Document					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

Contents

	Page
1 Introduction	0
1.1 Overview	0
1.2 Scope of the Study	0
2 Background and Context	2
2.1 Historic Context of the Barnsley Green Belt Review	2
2.2 Justification for a Green Belt Review	3
3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Requirements	5
4 Recent Comparative Examples	6
4.1 Initial Work	6
4.2 Neighbouring Authorities and Duty to Cooperate	7
4.3 Comparative Examples	7
5 Methodology	14
5.1 Introduction	14
5.2 Stage 1: Identification of Green Belt ‘General Areas’ for consideration for release	15
5.3 Stage 2: Technical Site Assessment	21
5.4 Stage 3: Re-appraisal of Resultant Land Parcels	22
6 Glossary of Terms	23

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Arup has been appointed by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) to assist them with preparing a Green Belt review as part of the evidence base informing the draft Local Plan.

The purpose of this Green Belt Review is to provide an independent and objective appraisal of Green Belt General Areas against the five nationally-defined purposes of the Green Belt, before assessing Green Belt General Areas against high level technical constraints. In conjunction with the wider Local Plan evidence base, Resulting Land Parcels identified within the Green Belt Review will be assessed against housing and employment site selection methodologies.

The outcome of the study will be used by the Council, alongside their objectives for growth, to inform decisions on options for releasing land from the Green Belt through the Local Plan making process.

This report describes and explains the approach used in the Barnsley Green Belt Review.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The Barnsley Green Belt Review is framed by a move towards preparing a new Barnsley Metropolitan Council Local Plan.

Barnsley has sought to lead discussions with neighbouring authorities through a Sheffield City Region Green Belt Review 'Common Approach'. This Common Approach, which is attached at Appendix A, was agreed by all nine Local Authorities within the Sheffield City Region in Summer 2014. The Barnsley Green Belt Review Methodology therefore aligns with this 'Common Approach'. This method document has also been issued to neighbouring authorities for comment. These two approaches are important components of Barnsley's proactive approach to the required 'Duty to Cooperate'.

The three stage approach used in the Barnsley Green Belt Review is summarised in Figure 1 below. This is a full Green Belt review which starts with a strategic assessment and comes down to more localised reviews.

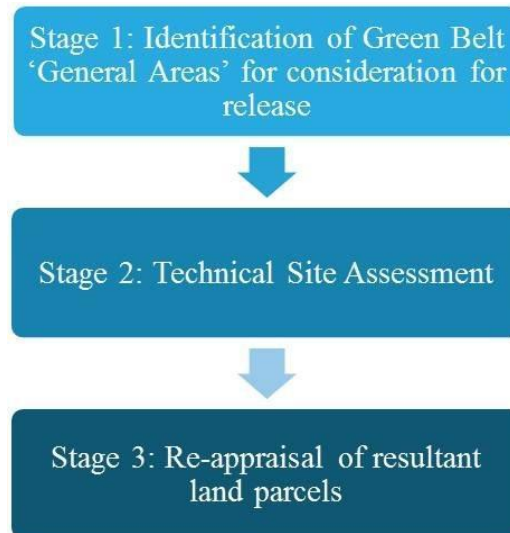


Figure 1 Three Stages of Barnsley Green Belt Review

As a starting point, the Green Belt review sets out the locally-specific rationale for undertaking a Green Belt Review and appraises the Council's draft Green Belt Review methodology against a series of best practice examples. The aim of the appraisal was to understand local knowledge behind a Green Belt review and assist in the development of a robust and defensible methodology for appraising Green Belt land against the five nationally defined Green Belt purposes.

Once the appraisal of Green Belt land against the five nationally-defined Green Belt purposes was complete, Green Belt areas were quantitatively ranked based on their performance against the Green Belt Assessment proforma. Green Belt General Areas which performed weakly against the purposes of the Green Belt were assessed against a number of high-level technical site constraints. The purpose of this part of the study is to ensure that land which is weakly performing against the NPPF Green Belt purposes is sufficiently unrestricted by technical site constraints.

For efficiency and for a seamless assessment of Green Belt sites to be undertaken, the high-level technical site constraints identified align with the initial exclusion criteria within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Alongside SHLAA sites, Resultant Land Parcels identified as outcomes from the Green Belt Review will be assessed against the Housing Site Selection Methodology and the Employment Site Selection Methodology.

A separate conclusion section, Barnsley Green Belt Review: Stage 3 summarises the Green Belt Resultant Land Parcels to be removed and seeks to ensure that defensible boundaries remained following removal of the Resultant Parcels from the Green Belt

2 Background and Context

2.1 Historic Context of the Barnsley Green Belt Review

The nature of Barnsley's historic development has led to a dispersed pattern of settlements. As a result, a large proportion of the countryside in Barnsley is designated as Green Belt land; overall, it accounts for 77% of total land in the Borough.

Background Paper 6 to the Barnsley Core Strategy Examination provides a synopsis of the establishment of the Barnsley Green Belt and how it has been re-defined through the plan making process over time, as follows:

- In 1974, local government throughout the country was reorganised. This included the creation of South Yorkshire County Council and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.
- The South Yorkshire Structure Plan was approved in 1979 and illustrated the general extent of the Green Belt.
- Between 1982 and 1990 a total of 8 Local Plans which covered much, but not all, of the Borough were adopted by the Council. Detailed Green Belt policies and boundaries were defined in accordance with Structure Plan policy.
- In April 1990 the Commencement Order for the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was issued. In April 1993 the Council published the Consultation Draft UDP, and then the Deposit Draft in November 1994. The UDP was adopted in 2000. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt were defined on the UDP proposal maps.
- The UDP proposals added 365 hectares to the Green Belt and deleted 213 hectares. Much of the land added to the Green Belt was colliery related or former mineral railways, whilst most of that deleted was to be used for employment purposes. In effect, the Green Belt changes at that time represented an exchange of the old employment locations for the new ones, aiding the major structural changes taking place in the economy of Barnsley.
- In 2005, the Council commenced work on the Local Development Framework by producing a series of background papers and a suite of Local Development Documents. This included a localised review of the Green Belt to include minor changes to address mapping anomalies, accuracy issues, changes in physical features and to provide more defensible boundaries. However, the 2005 LDF was not taken forward and has been superseded.
- Both Regional Planning Guidance for the Yorkshire and Humber (2004) and the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy (2008) stated that the general extent of the Green Belt should not be changed, but supported localised reviews.
- Policy CSP 34 'Protection of the Green Belt' of the Core Strategy (2011) states that 'Green Belt Boundaries will be subject to localised review only to accommodate changes necessary to deliver the borough's distribution of new employment sites'.

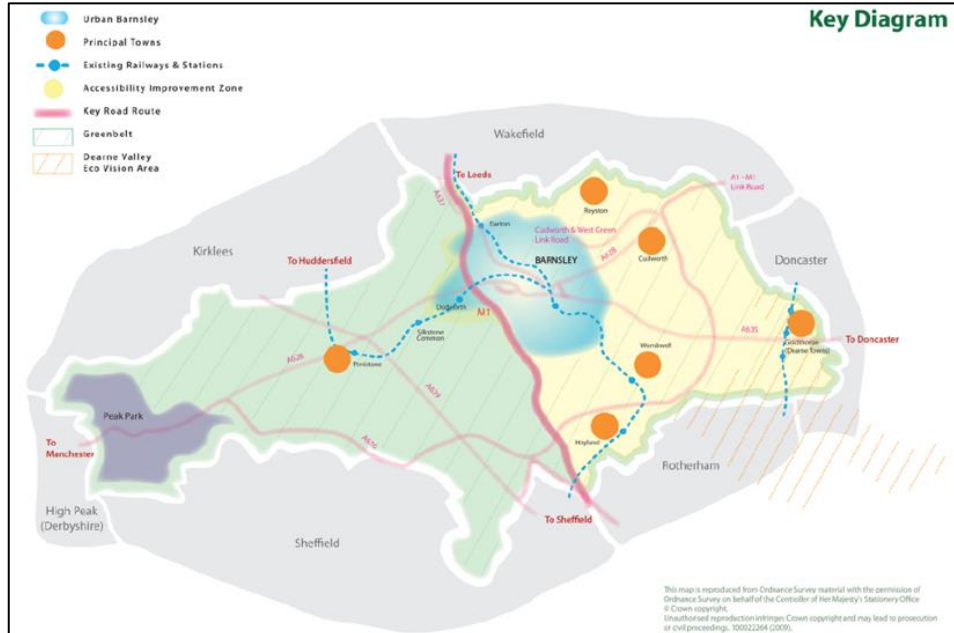
- Paragraph 14.2 of the Consultation Draft of the Development Sites and Places DPD (2012), states that The Council has:

‘undertaken a localised review of the Green Belt boundaries which has included minor changes to the Unitary Development Plan Green Belt boundaries. These have been undertaken to reflect changes to the physical features on the ground, where planning permission has been granted for development in the Green Belt, to correct previous cartographic errors, and to define more defensible boundaries. These changes also include accuracy corrections.

In 2013, Barnsley MBC decided that it would begin producing a new Local Plan, recognising the changing economic strategy for the Borough and reacting to the opportunity to increase Barnsley’s significance in both the Sheffield and Leeds City Regions. It is noted that to realise these aspirations this approach would consider, where appropriate, the release of Green Belt land to enable this transition and facilitate the new strategy.

In summary, the Green Belt Boundary was established at a time when development pressures (driven by population growth and economic trends) were less. Barnsley continues to transit from a significant manufacturing economy to becoming more diverse in the economic sectors represented in the Borough. It is considered that this has impacted on patterns of development where more activity is happening within larger settlements well connected to the transport network.

Figure 2 Barnsley Core Strategy (2011) Key Diagram



2.2 Justification for a Green Belt Review

NPPF paragraph 81 states:

'Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.'

The Barnsley Green Belt has been in place for 35 years with only minor changes in this time. As the Local Plan is forward thinking it is appropriate to consider undertaking a Green Belt review.

Since the 1990s there have been significant changes in the Barnsley and Sheffield City Region economies. It is considered that this has changed development pressures and therefore the profile of settlements.

Sheffield City Region authorities have committed to the 'Common Approach' to Green Belt review. A number of the authorities have either completed or commenced their own Green Belt reviews and the others are considering their response. It is therefore logical that Barnsley, as part of the Sheffield City Region, should undertake a Green Belt review.

The NPPF is clear that local planning authorities must identify a five year supply of specific deliverable sites with an additional 5% buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market. In examining the current land supply as part of the Draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013), Peter Brett Associates have advised that including land released from the Green Belt would assist in providing a deliverable land supply.

It is considered therefore, that there is a clear justification for a Green Belt review to ensure that Barnsley can demonstrate an objectively assessed housing requirement, including having the requisite number of sites to ensure a five-year supply. Following the Review of the Green Belt it will be important to distinguish between land that will be available for development and land that will be safeguarded for future use. In determining any revisions to the Green Belt, a new, permanent defensible boundary will need to be identified.

3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Requirements

The NPPF sets out the role and purpose of the Green Belt in England, as follows:

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

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- 1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- 2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- 3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- 4. To preserve the setting and specialist character of historic towns; and*
- 5. To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*

The NPPF endorses the permanence of Green Belts as an essential characteristic (paragraph 79) and stipulates that ‘*once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstance, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan*’ (paragraph 83). In terms of accommodating future development, there is a recognised need to include land released from the Green Belt to provide a portfolio of sites. This is an arguable ‘exceptional circumstance’ (paragraph 82) for reviewing the boundary.

The NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary review with sustainable patterns of development (paragraph 84). Local planning authorities are encouraged to consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

Paragraph 85 states that “*when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:*

- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- 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 well beyond the plan period;*
- make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;*
- satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and*
- define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.”*

4 Recent Comparative Examples

The following section appraises the Initial Work undertaken by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Officers and also the approach employed by recent Green Belt Reviews.

4.1 Initial Work

The Barnsley Planning Policy Team undertook some initial work and also produced a draft brief for a Green Belt Review. The initial work focused only on Green Belt land that was adjacent to existing Sub Regional or Principal Towns, but included a review of 127 sites against the five purposes of Green Belt as defined in NPPF.

Topic	Initial Work
Nature of Green Belt	The nature of Barnsley's historic development has led to a dispersed pattern of settlements, which has resulted in a large proportion of the countryside in Barnsley becoming designated as Green Belt land.
Rationale for Green Belt Review	The rationale behind the Green Belt review is to identify Green Belt sites that could help meet the potential housing land supply shortfall. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment prepared by Peter Bretts Associates (2013), has established that there is not sufficient land to accommodate the planned housing delivery. The Green Belt Review seeks to promote sustainable patterns of development in Green Belt locations which will cause least harm to the Green Belt purposes.
Approach to Green Belt Review	<p>The Initial Green Belt Review work reiterates the need to pursue sustainable development. The methodology is undertaken through the three following stages.</p> <p><u>Stage 1: Selection of Potential Locations</u></p> <p>The starting point for the review begins with a 'long list' of sites which form extensions to an existing urban area, with locations chosen on the basis that they have the potential to promote sustainable development. The existing urban area is defined as a Sub Regional Town or Principal Town.</p> <p><u>Stage 2: Exclusion of Specified Designations</u></p> <p>Secondly, the review excluded locations which were subject to designations including: moderate or significant likelihood of Flooding; Agricultural Land Grades 1 & 2; Landfill (and exclusion area of 400 metres); Natural Heritage Sites and SSSIs; Historic Park or Gardens; Cemeteries; and, Air Quality Management Areas.</p> <p><u>Stage 3: Assessment against the Five Purposes of Green Belt</u></p> <p>The Initial Work establishes that sites will be reviewed against the five purposes of the Green Belt.</p> <p>In assessing potential harm, the review emphasises that two of the purposes are more important within the Barnsley context. The purpose of restricting urban sprawl will generally have less impact on areas which are already contained by the existing built form or where there is a (new) strong outer boundary defined. Preventing the merging of neighbouring towns will be more important where existing strategic gaps are narrow.</p> <p>The methodology assumes that the impact of Green Belt release assisting urban regeneration is likely to be the same across all locations. As there are no historic town within the Borough, this purpose of the Green Belt has not been assessed.</p>

Method of Assessment	<p>The Initial Work uses a quantitative assessment matrix to score sites. The higher the score, the worse the performance against Green Belt considerations.</p> <p>To assess against the purposes of urban sprawl and the merging of towns, a partially qualitative approach has been introduced.</p>
----------------------	--

4.2 Neighbouring Authorities and Duty to Cooperate

To achieve the principles of Duty to Cooperate, it will be necessary to understand the method used by each of the neighbouring local authorities to assess whether Green Belt land in their area is fulfilling the five purposes of Green Belt land.

To encourage consistency in Green Belt Review assessment and ensure on-going dialogue is achieved between neighbouring Local Authorities, Barnsley has sought to lead discussions with neighbouring authorities through a Sheffield City Region Green Belt Review ‘Common Approach’.

The Common Approach, which is attached at Appendix A, was agreed by all nine Local Authorities within the Sheffield City Region in June 2014. By amalgamating the existing Phase 1 Green Belt reviews currently being undertaken within the City Region and a number of ‘best practice examples’ as a start point, the method follows a ‘three stage approach’. This can be summarised as:

- Stage 1 – Identify general areas within the Green Belt
- Stage 2 – Technical site assessment
- Stage 3 – Re-appraisal of resultant land parcels.

The Barnsley Green Belt Review methodology has been developed in accordance with the SCR Green Belt Review ‘Common Principles’.

The sharing of the detailed method with neighbouring authorities through the sharing of this report ensures the Duty to Cooperate discussions are based on a full understanding of Barnsley Council’s approach.

4.3 Comparative Examples

The following section sets out the specific approach taken by other Local Planning Authorities to each component of the Green Belt Review. Local Authorities included:

- North East Derbyshire Green Belt Review Methodology, August 2012
- Cheshire West and Chester Green Belt Stage 2 Technical Site Assessment (2013) (includes short Stage 1 Green Belt Review) 2013
- Bath and North East Somerset Green Belt Review Stage 1, 2012
- South Gloucestershire Green Belt Review, 2012 and
- Dacrom, St Albans, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, November 2013.

Selection of Potential Locations

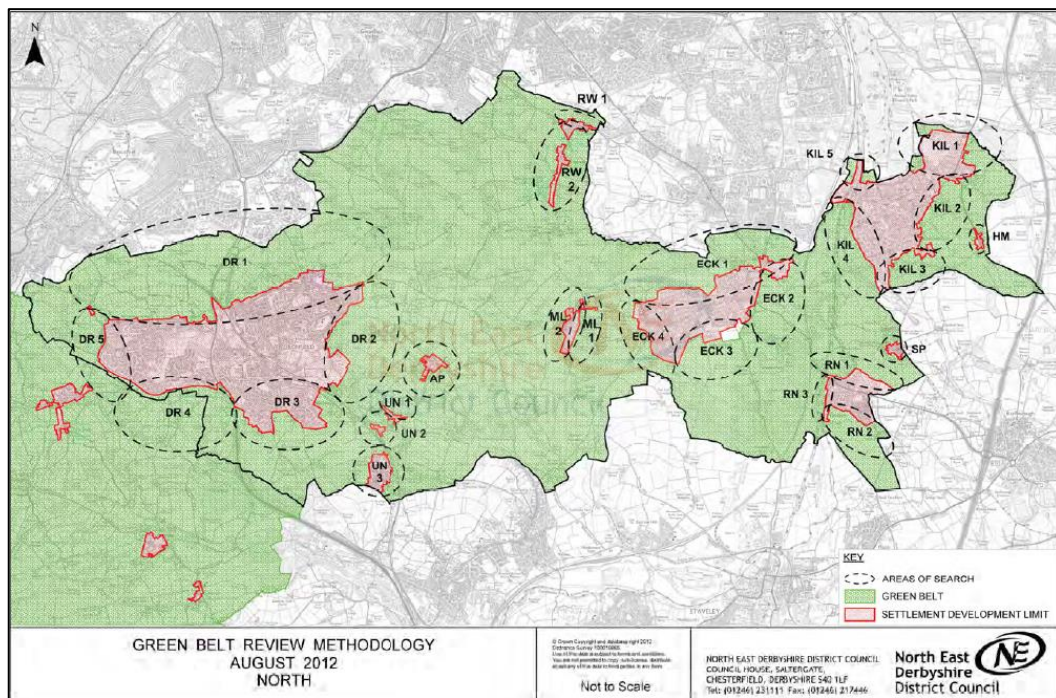
Example 1: North East Derbyshire Borough Council

The North East Derbyshire Green Belt Review is focussed upon the Green Belt surrounding the settlements in the north and west of the district, with the sole purpose of identifying suitable land that is capable of providing affordable housing in line with the emerging strategy and policies in the Local Plan. Almost half of the population (98,200 people) lives within the four towns, however, the Green Belt Review assesses the Green Belt surrounding each of the smaller settlements.

The first stage in the methodology is to assess the function of ‘general areas’ of Green Belt land around existing settlements in the north of the district against the five purposes set out in the NPPF. These ‘general areas’ are largely North, South, East and West of the larger settlements and for smaller settlements, these general areas encompass the entire surrounding area.

Each purpose was assessed against a numerical scoring mechanism, as it was considered most suitable to enable an objective assessment to identify those areas of Green Belt that are least sensitive to change and where development would be least damaging in principle. General areas which are considered least sensitive to change were then assessed against technical site-based constraints pro forma.

Figure 3: North East Derbyshire approach to assessment of strategic ‘General Areas’



Example 2: Rotherham Borough Council

The Review takes the existing inner Green Belt boundary, which was defined by the UDP, as the start point for assessment.

A total of 127 logical parcels were identified for purposes of assessment based on character areas. Each individual parcel was set to be of similar character, to have a similar impact on the openness of the Green Belt and wherever possible to be clearly defined by durable, significant and strong physical boundaries that are capable of withstanding the passage of time. Parcel identification was informed by Rotherham’s Landscape Character Assessment (2010). The parcels for release

form the Green Belt will be assessed and identified as part of the future stages of the Rotherham Green Belt Review.

Strong boundaries were defined as a motorway; public and made roads; a railway line; river; stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical features (e.g. ridgeline); protected woodland/hedge; existing development with strong established boundaries.

Weak boundaries are considered to be private/ unmade roads; field boundaries; power lines; non-protected woodlands/hedge and trees; development with weak or intermediate boundaries.

Exclusion of Specified Designations

Example 1: Cheshire West and Chester Council

To achieve consensus around which specified designations should form part of the Stage 2 Green Belt Review, a workshop was held with partisan representatives from Cheshire West and Chester City Council. The workshops allowed for debate around the inclusion of criteria, whether or not to prioritise certain constraints, and whether some factors were locally more significant or should carry more weight in an assessment.

Officers agreed a list of site-based constraints which were largely consistent with the specified designations set out in the Initial Work undertaken by Barnsley. Constraints were themed by Flood Risk, Statutory Designations, Land Use and Built Environment, Access and Accessibility, Topography, Landscape Character and Visual Assessment, Historic Environment and Biodiversity and Natural Environment.

The workshop confirmed that the assessment should recognise the difference between quantitative and qualitative constraints. It was decided that quantitative constraints should be considered first and that qualitative constraints should supplement the assessment. Local considerations which shape the way that Chester has developed over time and influence the Green Belt surrounding Chester were considered to be an integral part of the qualitative analysis.

Example 2: North East Derbyshire Borough Council

The approach employed by North East Derbyshire Council was to undertake a detailed site identification and assessment which will inform the Local Plan (part 2): Allocations Document. This detailed site appraisal stage considered the boundary strength of new Green Belt boundaries, an assessment of nature of historic conservation designations, physical limitations of the site or infrastructure constraints.

Firstly, the boundary strength of the sites will be given careful consideration to ensure that they remain robust and defensible over time. Criteria used to determine the site boundaries include roads and railways, hedgerows and prominent physical features, flood risk and the existing built form.

Beyond the specified designations set out in Barnsley's Initial Work, the assessment proforma considers:

- Nearby nature or historic conservation designations including local nature reserves and listed buildings;

- Physical limitations such as ground conditions, hazardous risks or contaminated land, location of pylons and access to existing infrastructure;
- Potential impacts on protected species, landscape, agricultural land quality, neighbouring uses and open space and recreation; and,
- Accessibility to public services such as GP Surgeries, Pharmacies, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Post Offices.

Example 3: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

In defining the Green Belt boundary, Rotherham also sought to apply general “operational criteria”:

- In order to produce a boundary which is easily identifiable and recognisable on the ground and which possess the requisite permanence, features such as roads, watercourses, landmarks and field boundaries have been used wherever possible.
- Areas such as playing fields and open lanes which have no environmental or physical links to the open countryside are not included within the Green Belt, but those areas which extend the countryside into urban centres have been preserved and fulfil an important function as “Green Wedges”.
- On the urban fringe there were substantial areas of open land which were blighted or had a poor environment. These may be linked to the open countryside, but may not necessarily be protected by the Green Belt because they do not fall within its objectives or may even benefit from development.

Additionally collieries or other such industrial landscape features, which were originally considered as Green Belt land, have been included into the assessment of Green Belt General Areas.

Assessment against the Five Purposes of the Green Belt

Example 1: Cheshire West and Chester Council

Consistent with the Initial Work undertaken by Barnsley, the Chester Green Belt Review placed emphasis on one of the Purposes of the Green Belt, and considered one Purpose to be of little relevance to the local context of Chester.

Officer discussions drew attention to the continued relevance of the conclusions reached in an existing historic landscape and environmental capacity document. The officers upheld the clarity the study provided in understanding what the Green Belt purpose ‘to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns’ means in relation to Chester and the attributes that need to be protected in order for this important purpose not to be undermined.

The Council’s Local Plan Preferred Policy Directions (2012) states that the take-up of development opportunities within the urban area has now resulted in there being insufficient urban land to meet the City’s future development needs. Therefore, the ability of the Chester Green Belt to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land at a local level, has been considered to be consistent across all areas of Green Belt assessment.

Areas considered for Green Belt release were assessed at two separate stages against these locally-tailored ‘purposes’. Taken from an existing assessment in the

Stage 1 Green Belt study undertaken by Chester, strategic areas were qualitatively assessed against the locally-specific Green Belt purposes. Following the Arup technical site-based constraints assessment, resultant land parcels were then subsequently re-assessed against the ‘purposes’ of the Green Belt.

Example 2: Bath and North East Somerset

Similar to the approach adopted in the Chester example, Bath and North East Somerset primarily appraised each Green Belt land parcel against the five Green Belt ‘purposes’ described in the National Planning Policy Framework within the context of the local reasons for the original designation of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. Land Parcels are also appraised against a sixth local purpose that seeks to preserve the individual identity of the service centres within the Green Belt.

Land parcels were then subsequently assessed against three Green Belt criteria, which appraised the extent to which the Green Belt has further positive planning attributes with respect to landscape value, biodiversity value and outdoor recreation.

Example 3: Rotherham Borough Council

Rotherham Borough Council were advised by the Planning Advisory Service that assessment against the NPPF purposes ran the risk of becoming very subjective and repetitive. The methodology was therefore amended to combine purpose 1 and 3, and 2 and 4. The methodology also identified that the robustness of the boundary was considered more important than the land use and character in identifying parcels.

By combining the assessment of purposes 1 and 3, the following categorisations were reached:

Well contained (WC) / High Urban Influence (HUI):

- A parcel must be adjacent to an urban area and bounded by strong physical features such as main roads, railways or tree belts. This would prevent any development within the parcel from encroaching beyond the parcel boundary into the open countryside in neighbouring parcels, and hence if developed would be likely to have a minimal impact on the overall openness of the Green Belt.
- Land possesses a semi-urban to urban character and is no longer perceived to be part of the open countryside. Impact upon openness is significant to total.
- Land may contain degraded land that provides opportunities for enhancement.

Partly contained (PC) / Medium Urban Influence (MUI)

- Where only a small part of the parcel is ‘contained’ by the urban area. This category includes parcels that abut an urban area for any part of their boundary, as these parcels may be a suitable location for development, even if the area is currently not physically well-contained by the urban area. Furthermore, the relationship with the urban area may change if an adjoining parcel were to be developed.
- Land possesses a semi-rural character and there is already a perception of significant encroachment with significant impact upon openness.
- There may be other constraints to further encroachment.

Not contained (NC) / Low Urban Influence (LUI) :

- Parcels that are ‘not contained’ by an urban area, and are therefore areas where development would lead to urban sprawl, includes parcels that are not adjacent to an urban area. Such parcels are not, by definition, ‘contained’ by an urban area. In the case of parcels that are physically separated from an urban area e.g. by a main road (dual carriageway or motorway) or railway, these are also considered to be ‘not contained’.
- Parcel possesses a predominantly open rural character.
- There may be limited or no other fundamental constraints to encroachment (such as a strong landscape feature that could assist in fulfilling this purpose by containing development from outlying countryside).

By combining purposes 2 and 4, the effect of releasing Green Belt on named settlements is assessed. Based on advice from the Planning Advisory Service, the assessment of these purposes assessed ‘neighbouring towns’ in surrounding local authorities. On principle it was considered that the smaller the gap, the more likely it is essential that it should be kept open.

The assessment of Green Belt release on the ability to merge neighbouring towns was based on a visual and actualised distance between neighbouring settlements. Any gaps that are considered to be ‘fundamental’ to maintaining distance between two settlements was considered to be ‘Essential’, and any gaps which were considered to accommodate some development were classified as ‘partly being within an Essential Gap’. ‘Narrow Gaps’ were considered to be wider than essential gaps, but still sensitive to development and ‘wide gaps’ were considered to be areas where development are not likely to impact on the integrity of the gap. The function or perceived size of gaps resulting from topography and visibility, were not considered.

For the fifth purpose of ‘assisting in urban regeneration’; the Council considered that by the overall restrictive nature of Green Belt and its limitation of the supply of other development opportunities, Green Belt encourages regeneration and re-use of land at a strategic level. Rotherham considered it impossible to judge how any given parcel of land within the Green Belt would contribute to the fulfilment of this purpose.

Technical Method: Method of Assessment

Example 1: Cheshire West and Chester Council

Whilst the assessment considered both quantitative and qualitative constraints, a predominantly qualitative approach was taken throughout the Review. This was considered to add a greater depth to the overall assessment.

Officer workshops were used to confirm the approach of utilising GIS mapping and GIS datasets to underpin the assessments. Mapping the various constraints and how they interact would help reveal the relative importance of certain criteria, whilst offering a balanced approach of reconciling both quantitative and qualitative constraints. Agreed data sets reflected the site-based constraints which were confirmed earlier.

Example 2 and 3: Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Green Belt Review

Both the Bath and North East Somerset and the South Gloucestershire Green Belt Reviews take a discursive approach followed by a summary section.

Based on the large number of sites already assessed in the Initial Work undertaken by Barnsley Council, it is worth offering further consideration to the South Gloucestershire technical assessment approach. This Green Belt Review comprised a Stage 1 evaluation of the performance of the whole Green Belt through a traffic-light mechanism, followed by a Stage Two commentary-based response and conclusion statement.

Example 4: Dacorum, St Albans, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Green Belt Review

The Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield approach assessed the contribution of defined Parcels to the purposes of the Green Belt in a quantitative and qualitative way. A colour coding system denotes the extent of the contribution to the Green Belt, and supporting text explains how the classification has been arrived at.

Figure 4 Approach by Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield to Green Belt

Dark green	Significant contribution to GB purposes
Mid green	Partial contribution to GB purposes
Light green	Limited or no contribution to GB purposes

The assessment does not go so far as to assess the overall contribution the parcel makes to the Green Belt in a quantitative manner, instead, the overall assessment is provided as a written evaluation only. A hybrid quantitative and qualitative approach may be useful to consider within the Barnsley assessment, to allow detailed and consistent assessment of a large number of Green Belt Parcels.

5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Using the ‘lessons learnt’ from previous examples and initial work undertaken by the Barnsley Planning Policy Team, the following section sets out the proposed methodology for undertaking the Green Belt Review in Barnsley.

An overview of the methodology is set out below:

	Start Point for the Review	The National Planning Policy Framework and recent decisions by the Planning Inspectorate expects the Local Plan Making process to carry out a full and comprehensive review of all Green Belt land across all settlements. A clear start point for the review is fundamental to the robustness of the study.
	Identify and map General Areas	Define Strategic ‘General Areas’ around each of the Sub-Regional Town, Principal Towns and Villages within Barnsley, to allow for an assessment of function of Green Belt at a strategic level.
	Assess General Areas against five purposes of the Green Belt	Assess each of the General Areas against the equally-weighted purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework using the Green Belt assessment proforma.
Stage 2	Define Site-Based Constraints	To ensure that the Green Belt Review aligns within the Housing Site Selection Methodology and the Employment Site Selection Methodology, it is necessary for the Green Belt Review to assess the high level technical constraints which remove sites before they enter the HSSM or the ESSM.
	Identification and mapping of Resultant Land Parcels	The strategy for the assessment of technical site constraints was to identify Resultant Land Parcels which were least constrained by high-level site constraints. General Areas which were not ‘significantly impacted’ by technical site constraints were identified as ‘Resultant Land Parcels’ which could be re-appraised against the five purposes of the Green Belt.
Stage 3	Re-appraisal of Resultant Land Parcels	Following the site-based constraints assessment, Resultant Land Parcels which are considered to be least constrained and which performed the weakest Green Belt function suitable were re-assessed against the original five ‘purposes’ of Green Belt to ensure that the resultant boundary is robust and defensible.
	Identification of Resultant Land Parcels suitable for potential release	Following an assessment against the Housing Site Selection Methodology and Employment Site Selection Methodology, the Review concludes with a separate section on Resultant Land Parcels which are considered suitable for release from the Green Belt.

5.2 Stage 1: Identification of Green Belt ‘General Areas’ for consideration for release

5.2.1 Start Point for the Review

Comprehensively assessing strategic areas of the Barnsley Green Belt against the five purposes of the Green Belt is a fundamental starting point for the Green Belt Review.

The Economic Strategy (2012) seeks to take a bottom –up approach which creates the right conditions to enable growth to occur across the Borough, and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013) considers a review of the Green Belt necessary to enable the most deliverable portfolio of land to be considered for allocation. The amount of housing land required will need to be confirmed based on the findings from the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN).

Previous work undertaken by Barnsley examined and scored 127 Green Belt sites around the Core Strategy defined Sub-Regional Town and Principal Towns. Whilst this is useful background context and data, it is clear that the NPPF and recent decisions by the Planning Inspectorate expect the Local Plan making process to carry out a full and comprehensive review of *all* Green Belt land across all settlements within Barnsley. This is to ensure a policy neutral approach to the assessment and build in legitimacy and a sense of robustness to the assessment of the Green Belt.

Safeguarded land identified within the UDP Background Paper has been considered within the SHLAA (2013) as potential locations for housing development. As such, the Green Belt review will need to consider whether or not any additional land from the Green Belt should be identified as safeguarded land.

5.2.2 Identifying ‘General Areas’ within the Green Belt

In order to bring some definition to the overall assessment it is necessary to identify strategic ‘General Areas’ around each of the Sub-Regional Town, Principal Towns, and Villages within Barnsley. It is logical that these ‘general areas’ are to the north, south, east and west of larger settlements. For smaller settlements, the ‘General Areas’ are likely to encompass the entire surrounding area.

Each of these ‘General Areas’ were then assessed against the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. This began to refine the assessment and move the analysis forward from considering the whole of the Green Belt within the borough, to considering the more defined ‘General Areas’.

The ‘General Areas’ were derived through deliberations at a BMBC officer workshop. In defining these ‘General Areas’, the robustness of what could become the new permanent and defensible boundary was considered more important than the existing land use and character. The General Areas were then mapped as shapefiles within GIS.

To achieve the principles of Duty to Cooperate and ensure proactive cooperation from the beginning of the Green Belt review process, the approach to the review

was discussed with neighbouring authorities through the Sheffield City Region Green Belt Review meetings.

5.2.3 Assess General Areas Against Purposes of the Green Belt

It is considered necessary to give full consideration to each of the five NPPF ‘purposes’ of Green Belt. This will allow for differentiation of the function of the Green Belt General Areas and for appraisal the General Areas in terms of how they fulfil the purposes of Green Belt.

From recent examples and previous experience, it is considered necessary to respect local circumstances and unique characteristics which have an effect on how some of the five Green Belt purposes are perceived in the local area. Recent reviews have also assessed the five purposes of the Green Belt in both a quantitative and qualitative way.

Green Belt Purposes Method of Assessment

Assessment of the extent to which Green Belt land is fulfilling the purposes within the NPPF is reported in both a qualitative and quantitative approach. Each of the Green Belt purposes were assessed out of a score of five, which resulted in each General Area attaining a score out of 25:

- A higher score represents a General Area which more strongly fulfils the purposes of the Green Belt, and therefore this is unlikely to constitute a General Area to be considered for potential release from the Green Belt.
- A lower score represents a General Area which fulfils the Green Belt purposes within the National Planning Policy Framework to a weaker extent and which may be more appropriate for potential release from the Green Belt.

The overarching aim of the Review was to identify unconstrained Green Belt land which was fulfilling the purposes defined within the NPPF to the weakest degree. Resultant Green Belt Parcels were categorised by the relative extent to which these fulfil the Green Belt Purposes (see table 1 below).

Table 1 Extent to which Green Belt General Areas fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt.

Overall Strength of Green Belt against 5 purposes	Score	Equivalent Wording
	9 or less	Weak or Very Weak
	10 - 12	Relatively Weak
	13 - 15	Moderate
	16 - 17	Relatively Strong
	18 and above	Very Strong

General Areas which were considered to be fulfilling the Green Belt purposes to a relatively strong or very strong degree were not assessed beyond Stage 1. Green Belt General Areas which were considered to be fulfilling the purposes of the Green Belt to a moderate degree, or weaker, were assessed for relevant site based constraints (Stage 2), and any Resultant Land Parcels were re-appraised against the five purposes of the Green Belt (Stage 3).

Purpose 1: Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The strength of the Green Belt to check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas was determined by appraising the strength of the *existing* Green Belt boundary and the extent to which Green Belt area was contained within the existing built form.

Boundary Definition

Boundary definition should reflect NPPF Paragraph 85, which states that Local Authorities should ‘define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent’.

Durable/ ‘Likely to be Permanent’ Features	Infrastructure: Motorway; public and made roads or strongly defined footpath/track; a railway line; river; Landform: Stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical features (e.g. ridgeline); protected woodland/hedge; existing development with strongly established, regular or consistent boundaries.
Features lacking in durability/ Soft boundaries	Infrastructure: private/ unmade roads; power lines; development with weak, irregular, inconsistent or intermediate boundaries. Natural: Field Boundary, Tree line

The function of the *existing* Green Belt area in preventing sprawl, which would not otherwise be restricted by a barrier, has been considered through the extent the existing built form has strongly established or recognisable boundaries:

- ‘Strongly established’, ‘regular’ or ‘consistent’ built form comprises well-defined or rectilinear built form edges which have restricted recent growth in the Green Belt.
- ‘Irregular’, ‘inconsistent’ or ‘intermediate’ built form comprises imprecise or ‘softer’ boundaries, which have not restricted growth within the Green Belt.

The qualitative approach allows for full justification of the quantitative scoring of each purpose. The lexicon used to describe this purpose is based on the degree to which the existing and proposed boundary fulfils terms in Table 2.

Table 2 Relative strength of existing Green Belt boundary

	Score	Equivalent Wording
Increasing strength ↓	1	Weak or Very Weak
	2	Relatively Weak
	3	Moderate
	4	Relatively Strong
	5	Very Strong

Level of Containment

As the sub-regional town, Urban Barnsley should be regarded as the primary ‘large built-up area’ within the Borough. Preventing the unrestricted urban sprawl of this centre is the focus of this ‘purpose’, and therefore Green Belt in this area should function to:

- Protect open land contiguous to one of the following: Urban Barnsley, Royston, Goldthorpe, Cudworth, Wombwell, Hoyland, Penistone and the Villages.

These criteria will be defined specifically in relation to each Green Belt appendix. Open land is considered to be the extent to which Green Belt land is lacking in development and contiguity is considered to be the extent to which Green Belt adjoins the existing built form of the defined settlement. Low levels of built form adjoining the Green Belt boundary represent a Green Belt General Area which has a low level of contiguity, whilst high levels of containment within the existing urban area reflect Green Belt which is highly contiguous.

This purpose will also consider a series of ‘Green Swathes’ which dissect areas between settlements, or ‘Green Arcs’ which unite wider areas of Green Belt. Green Belt which forms one of these features, will be considered to protect valued open land that is contiguous to Urban Barnsley or the six Principal Towns.

- Protect the strategic gap between Barnsley town centre and the larger towns of Royston, Goldthorpe, Cudworth, Wombwell, Hoyland and Penistone

This purpose strictly assesses the ‘strategic gap’ between Barnsley and the six Principal Towns identified within the Jacobs Barnsley Settlement Assessment (2007 update). Green Belt General Areas are appraised by their role in protecting a strategic gap of 1.5km¹ or more and preventing development which would result in one of the six Principal Towns from being absorbed into Urban Barnsley.

- Display low levels of containment within current development patterns and existing urban form.

Highly contained General Areas are likely to have a strong functional relationship with the existing built form. Green Belt land which is within the existing built form could be considered to display high levels of containment.

Purpose 2: Assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The focus of this purpose will be to protect Green Belt land which is enjoyed for ‘openness’ and the extent it has resisted ‘encroachment’ from past development.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access, to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation and to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity, or to improve damaged and derelict land (Paragraph 81). Therefore Green Belt land will be assessed for:

¹ Based on analysis of the method used by other local planning authorities, where 1.5 km was a relatively universal distance used, e.g. Bath and North East Somerset, Newcastle, Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

- The number of beneficial uses it contains (1 or less, 2 or 3 and 4 or more); and,
- The approximate level of audience which the beneficial uses serve (Local Neighbourhoods, Barnsley Borough or Regional).

This purpose will also be assessed by the extent to which the Green Belt boundary is protecting the ‘openness’ of the countryside. ‘Openness’ refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered ‘open’ from a landscape character perspective, and will be appraised against the following features:

- Levels of built form, where low levels of development suggest a high level of openness; and
- Topography, where ground levels support long-line views.

Purpose 3: Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

As the four larger settlements (or ‘Principal Towns’) to the east of the Borough are within close proximity to one another (Royston, Cudworth, Wombwell and Hoyland), it will be important to retain Green Belt areas which restrict the merging of these neighbouring towns. The extent to which an area of Green Belt protects a valued land gap will be assessed as follows:

- ‘Essential Gap’ is defined as a land gap between two or more Principal Towns, or a settlement within Barnsley and neighbouring settlements listed within Table 3 below. The highest score is attained where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between these Towns, and a lower score is received where this land gap is more than 1km or perceived to be more through landscape or built form features.
- ‘Largely essential’ or ‘Narrow’ gap represents a gap between areas connected to the same or different Principal Towns, a land gap between a Principal town or Village within Barnsley and n, the land gap between a Village and a Principal Town or a land gap between two Villages.
- A ‘wide’ land gap represents an area of Green Belt which does not protect an essential gap that prevents the merging of two towns or defined settlements within the Core Strategy.

Table 3 Settlements within neighbouring Local Authorities

<p>Kirklees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huddersfield • Hepworth, Holmfirth, Upper Cumberworth and Clayton West.
<p>Sheffield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheffield • Stocksbridge, Deepcar • Chapel Town, High Green
<p>Rotherham</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotherham • Wath Upon Dearne, Brampton
<p>Doncaster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doncaster • Harlington, Barnburgh

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexborough
<p>Wakefield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wakefield • South Kirkby, South Elmsall, Hemsworth • Smaller settlements of Ryhill, Woolley, Notton

Purpose 4: Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Barnsley has 18 designated Conservation Area, 23 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 667 Listed Buildings; however there are no historic towns within the Borough. The extent to which land within the Green Belt makes a positive contribution to the setting or preserves key views has also been appraised as follows:

- There are no listed buildings in or near the Green Belt area and/or land at this location has very little historic character recognised as being of conservation value (attains 1 out of 5)
- There is one Grade II listed building within the Green Belt area and/or land has weak historic character, form or scale recognised as being of conservation value (attains 2 out of 5);
- There are two or more Grade II listed buildings within the Green Belt General Area and/or the Green Belt has some role in safeguarding the characteristic historic form, or scale, or setting of a Conservation Area (attains 3 out of 5);
- There is one Grade I listed building, one conservation area or one SAM within the Green Belt area and/ or where land has relatively strong historic character, form and scale remains (attains 4 out of 5);
- There are a number of Grade I listed features, conservation areas or SAMs within the Green Belt area and/ or land has a significant historic relationship with its countryside setting and would be highly sensitive to development (attains 5 out of 5)

Whilst the Borough does not contain any Historic Towns, it does contain a number of organically grown villages for which the historic character should be preserved.

Purpose 5: Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

National Green Belt policy is partly based on the presumption that the overall restrictive nature of the Green Belt encourages regeneration and re-use at the strategic level by channelling development activity into the urban area. It could, however, be argued that Green Belt policy has dampened development and therefore stifled some economic opportunities. This implicit control of the Green Belt designation has resulted in a number of recent comparative Green Belt Reviews² removing the fifth purpose within their assessments.

² St Albans, Dacorum and Welwyn Hatfield Green Belt Review (2013) and Sefton Borough Council Green Belt Review (2013)

The shape of Barnsley's Green Belt is uniquely piecemeal and less-ordered, which is largely characteristic of the historic coal-mining nature of the Borough. To reflect the less-ordered nature of the Green Belt, no Green Belt General Areas will be awarded a score of 5 out of 5. This fifth purpose will be included on this basis for completeness in relation to NPPF.

Rushcliffe Borough Council Green Belt Review (Consultation Draft, 2013) and the South Gloucestershire Green Belt Review sets out a consistent baseline score for all Green Belt sites (for example, a score of 3). Where there is significant new development or large previously developed sites within the Green Belt, it could be considered that the Green Belt designation at this location has not strongly assisted in urban regeneration. A General Area possessing these characteristics will attain a lower score of 2.

It is however less straightforward to appraise where land with a Green Belt designation is supporting urban regeneration more than a comparative area of Green Belt. For this reason, no General Areas will be awarded more than a total of 3 out of 5.

5.3 Stage 2: Technical Site Assessment

5.3.1 Refining the 'General Areas'

In order to refine the 'general areas' and ensure that 'deliverable' sites are identified and assessed, an initial sift of the 'general areas' will remove land which falls within formal Statutory Designations. These include national level Statutory Designations such as SSSIs, RAMSAR, National Park etc, and other statutory designations, including PRoW etc.

It is unlikely that land which falls within a statutory designation would be deemed suitable and deliverable, and therefore it is not appropriate that this land remains in the assessment process.

5.3.2 Further refinement of 'General Areas' through Site-Based Constraints

Following the initial sift of formal national-level Statutory Designations, General Areas were assessed for three further site-based constraints. These three technical site constraint criteria align with the criteria developed by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council as part of the Housing Sites Selection Methodology and Employment Sites Selection Methodology. This ensures that all sites (both within and outside of the Green Belt) are appraised in a consistent and robust manner.

The three site based constraints comprised:

- **Flood Risk** based on referencing Environment Agency Flood Risk Zones 1, 2, 3a and 3b and significant surface water flooding), which is evidenced by the Barnsley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2010).
- **Historic Environment** based on Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens);
- **Topography/ Landscape/ Visual** based on the following:

- Land Use and Built Environment, considering neighbouring and adjacent land use typologies and the formation of the built development;
- Biodiversity and Natural Environment, including specified designations such as Local Wildlife sites , Ancient Woodlands etc and the ecological and natural environmental characteristics of an area;
- Topography, including site levels, steep slopes and natural features of the landscape.
- Landscape Character and Visual Assessment, based on the character, sensitivity and value of an area's landscape and how it might be affected by development)

It is expected that the analysis will further refine the land which is potentially suitable for release from the Green Belt. Land which is significantly impacted by the above site-based technical constraints is not assessed further as a Resultant Land Parcel. Land which is not significantly constrained will result in the identification of a series of 'Resultant Land Parcels' which will be further tested against the purposes of Green Belt.

5.4 Stage 3: Re-appraisal of Resultant Land Parcels

Following the site-based constraints assessment, resultant land parcels which are considered to be technically suitable for Green Belt release will be re-assessed against the original five 'purposes' of Green Belt defined by the NPPF.

This final assessment is to understand whether any of the Resultant Land Parcels, if removed from the Green Belt, will meet the requirements of Paragraph 80 and Paragraph 85 of the NPPF. This stage will be reported in a qualitative style.

Any resulting land parcels proposed for release from the Green Belt will then subsequently be put forward for assessment using the Barnsley Housing Site Assessment Methodology and Employment Site Selection Methodology.

6 Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition in the context of Barnsley's Green Belt Review
Large Built up Area'	In the context of this study, Urban Barnsley (including the settlements of Darton and Dodworth) has been defined as the 'large built up area'. This definition is consistent with the identification of Barnsley as the 'Sub-regional town' within the adopted Barnsley Core Strategy and consistent with the Jacobs Barnsley Settlement Assessment (2007 update).
'Strategic Gap'	A land gap between Urban Barnsley and the six principal towns within the Borough (including Royston, Goldthorpe, Cudworth, Wombwell, Hoyland and Penistone).
'Containment'	Containment refers to the extent to which Green Belt is contained within the existing built form. High levels of containment refers to Green Belt, of which 50% or more is within the existing built form. Low levels of containment refers to Green Belt which is largely independent of current development patterns.
'Open Land'	Open Land is considered to comprise land which is lacking of development; however 'openness' refers to the visible openness of the Green Belt in landscape character terms which is assessed against Purpose 2.
Beneficial Use	A Green Belt Beneficial use is identified as opportunities to provide access, to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation and to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity, or to improve damaged and derelict land
'Openness'	Openness refers to the visible openness of the Green Belt in landscape character terms. 'Openness' will be derived from a low level of built form, a topography which supports long-line views and low levels of substantial vegetation.
'Essential Land Gap'	'Essential Gap' is defined as a land gap between two or more Principal Towns, where development would significantly reduce the actual distance between these Towns.
'Largely Essential Land Gap'	'Largely essential' or 'Narrow' gap represents a gap between areas connected to the same or different Principal Towns, a land gap between a Principal town or Village within Barnsley and neighbouring settlements listed in Table 3, the land gap between a Village and a Principal Town or a land gap between two Villages.
'Wide Land Gap'	A 'wide' land gap represents an area of Green Belt which does not protect an essential gap that prevents the merging of two towns or defined settlements within the Core Strategy.
'Green Swathes' or 'Green Arcs'	Green Swathes or 'Green Arcs' comprise areas of Green Belt which dissect areas between villages or which unit areas of Green Belt. These will be defined graphically
'Functional Relationship'	<p>The 'Functional Relationship' of the Green Belt to the existing built form is based on cumulative assessment of levels of containment, levels of previously developed land and topography.</p> <p>Green Belt which displays high levels of containment, high levels of previously developed land and topography which increases a sense of confinement is considered to have a strong functional relationship with the existing built form.</p> <p>Green Belt which displays low levels of containment, little or no previously developed land and a very open topography, is considered to have a relatively weak functional relationship with the existing built form.</p>

Site Details	Site Reference			
	Location			
	Site Area (Ha)			
	Developed area	Percentage of development within the 'General Area'		
	Land adjoining the existing urban area	Total length of the perimeter adjoining the urban form		
Purpose	Fulfilment of the Purpose		Assessment	Qualitative Summary and Score
Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Boundary Definition		Score: 5= most fulfils this criteria and therefore is unlikely to constitute a Green Belt 'General Area' for release, 1= least fulfils criteria and therefore constitutes an area which could potentially be considered for release.	
	Durable/ 'Likely to be Permanent' Features	Infrastructure: Motorway; public and made roads; a railway line; river;	1: 'general area' which is weakly bordered by features lacking durability or permanence. One or two boundary features may exist but these may be sparse or intermittent, or the existing built form boundary is very irregular, inconsistent or intermediate. This boundary would not restrict development from sprawling. 3: 'general area' which has two or more boundary features which are fairly prominent. Contains at least one boundary which is weak or lacking permanence.	
		Landform: Stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical features (e.g. ridgeline); protected woodland/hedge; existing development with strong established boundaries.		
	Features lacking in durability/ Soft boundaries	Infrastructure: private/ unmade roads; power lines; development with weak or intermediate boundaries.		
Natural: Field Boundary, Tree line				

	Level of Containment	Score: 5= land unsuitable for release from Green Belt 1= least fulfils criteria	Summary and Score
	Protect open land contiguous to (<i>name Urban Area, Principal Town or Villages</i>)	<p>5: Contiguous to (<i>name Urban Area or Principal Town</i>) and would generally protect the Green Belt from urban sprawl. These green belt areas protect ‘Green Arcs’ or ‘Green Swathes’ which distinguish villages.</p> <p>3: Connected to (<i>name Urban Area or Principal Town</i>) and would protect ‘open land’ from urban sprawl.</p> <p>1: Connected to (<i>name Urban Area or Principal Town</i>), but which does not protect land considered to be ‘open land’.</p>	
	Protect the strategic gap between Barnsley town centre and the larger towns of Royston, Cudworth, Goldthorpe, Wombwell, Hoyland and Penistone).	<p>5: ‘general area’ which is fundamental to maintaining a ‘strategic gap’ of less than 1.5km between the Town Centre and neighbouring larger towns.</p> <p>3: ‘general area’ which protects a ‘strategic gap’ which is already more than 1.5km wide.</p> <p>1: ‘general area’ which does not function to protect a ‘strategic gap’.</p>	
	Displays low levels of containment within the existing development patterns.	<p>5: Not contained within the existing urban form. Development in this Green Belt area would be largely independent of the existing development patterns.</p> <p>3: Partly contained (between 20% and 50% contained) within the existing form. Development within this green belt area would not constitute a natural rounding of the built form.</p> <p>1: Highly contained within the urban form (approximately 50% and above). Development within this green belt area would represent a natural rounding of the built form .</p>	
	Total Score		0 / 5
Assisting in safeguarding the countryside from	Positively enhances the beneficial use of the Green Belt, by providing access to the countryside, provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and	<p>5: Supports four or more ‘beneficial uses’ of the Green Belt which serve a Local, Borough and Regional audience.</p> <p>3: Supports two or three ‘beneficial uses’ which may be less</p>	

encroachment	biodiversity or to improve damaged and derelict land.	well promoted and be valued by a Local or Borough audience 1: Supports one beneficial use of the Green Belt or less, which may be valued by a local or no audience.	
	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.	5 represents a ‘general area’ which protects the intrinsic openness of the countryside. This may include general areas which are considered locally important to maintaining the openness of the Green Belt or which have a strong unspoilt rural character. These areas will contain less than 5% built form. 3 represents a ‘general area’ which possesses a largely rural, open character with a very low level of built form (less than 25% built form). 1 represents a ‘general area’ which possesses a semi-urban character and built form, or which possesses large areas of previously developed land (more than 25% built form).	
	Total Score:		0 / 5
Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Prevent development that would result in a merging of or a significant erosion of ‘strategic gaps’ between these larger settlements or settlements outside the borough.	5: would represent an ‘essential gap’, where development would visually or physically reduce this to an unacceptable width. 3: would represent a ‘largely essential gap’ or a ‘narrow gap’ where there may be scope for some development, but were the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restrict settlements from merging 1: a ‘wide gap’ or an area of Green Belt which does protect a land gap between settlements	
	Total Score		0 / 5
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Make a positive contribution to the setting or protect key views to conservation area or historic assets	5: ‘General area’. contains a number of Grade I listed features, conservation areas or SAMs within the Green Belt area and/ or land has a significant historic relationship with its countryside setting and would be highly sensitive to development 3: The ‘General Area’ contains two or more Grade II listed	

		<p>buildings within the Green Belt General Area and/or the Green Belt has some role in safeguarding the characteristic historic form, or scale, or setting of a Conservation Area</p> <p>1: This 'General area' contains no listed buildings in or near the Green Belt area and/or land at this location has very little historic character recognised as being of conservation value</p>	
	Total Score		0 / 5
Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	The overall restrictive nature of the Green Belt encourages regeneration and re-use at the strategic level, by channelling development activity into the urban area.	<p>3: All Green Belt General Areas will be awarded a consistent baseline score for the overall restrictive nature of the Green Belt.</p> <p>2: Locations where there is significant new development or large previously developed sites, Green Belt at this location is not considered to be strongly assisting in urban regeneration.</p>	
	Total Score		0 / 5
Total			0 / 25