



Woking Green Belt Review

Final Report

On behalf of **Woking Borough Council**

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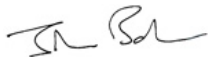

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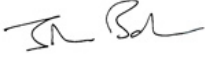


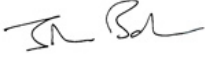

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Peter Brett Associates and Enderby Associates were commissioned to undertake a review of the Green Belt boundary around Woking Borough. The purpose of this work was to review the land beyond the existing urban area with a view to identifying areas of land suitable for housing, and which could accommodate Gypsy and Traveller sites for the plan period (up to 2027) and beyond to 2040. This included:

- Suitable, deliverable and sustainable sites which could deliver 550 homes in the period 2022 – 2027
- Additional land which could accommodate a further 1200 dwellings between 2027 and 2040 (Approximately 40ha)
- Gypsy and Traveller sites for 20 pitches up to 2027 and a further 9 pitches between 2027 and 2040 (including potential for transit use of sites)
- Defining a new Green Belt boundary beyond these areas which would endure until 2040.

The need for new schools, either individually or as part of development sites, was also considered.

Green Belt is a strategic policy tool which is used to restrict development around and between Towns and Cities. It has five main purposes which are identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

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 special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The Core Strategy for Woking Borough (part of the emerging development plan) sets out the need for a review of the Green Belt to accommodate the housing requirement for the Borough until 2027. This is because sufficient land cannot be identified within existing urban areas to accommodate all the housing that is required. The Council has also taken the decision to include within this review the need to safeguard land to meet housing needs until 2040. This is in order to ensure the enduring permanence of the Green Belt boundary beyond the period of the Core Strategy.

Approach

The Green Belt review has been carried out in a series of stages. The approach followed was to identify large areas (or parcels) of land which were potentially most suitable for removal from the Green Belt, based on their relative contribution to the five purposes of Green Belt, and their potential to deliver sustainable forms of development. Specific sites within these areas were then investigated to identify sites which were suitable and could be delivered for housing development. At the same time, a review of sites available for Gypsy and Traveller use was also carried out, and potential sites for their use identified.

Stage 1 – Sieve mapping

This stage considered the entire Green Belt around Woking Borough. A series of high level environmental ‘constraints’ were identified, and large areas of land affected by these constraints were excluded from further consideration. This included the requirement to avoid development within 400metres of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, and large areas of land at high risk from flooding (within flood zone 3 as defined by the Environment Agency). Figure 1 identifies these constraints, and figure 2 shows the areas of land excluded from further consideration.

Stage 2 – Strategic Review of Land Parcels

Following the sieve mapping exercise, a large area of land around the Borough was identified for further study. This area is shown in Figure 3. In order to carry out a meaningful assessment of the way that different areas perform in Green Belt terms, it was necessary to divide the land up into 31 parcels, and these are also shown in Figure 3. Two separate assessments were then carried out: a **Green Belt Assessment**, and a **Sustainability Assessment**.

The Green Belt Assessment reviews the way that each parcel of land contributes to each of the first three purposes of Green Belt. It identifies whether each parcel is of critical, major, moderate, negligible or no importance to maintaining each purpose of Green Belt in that location. The results are then brought together to identify the relative suitability of each parcel for removal from Green Belt. Figure 5 identifies which parcels are considered to be most and least suitable.

The Sustainability Assessment considers 3 key issues: strategic accessibility, environmental constraints, and the potential for integration with existing local communities which have a good level of services and facilities. The results of this assessment are shown in figure 6, which identifies the potential relative sustainability of each parcel.

Following these assessments, a series of ‘preferred parcels’ for further study were identified. The practical implications of development in these parcels was then explored, including existing land uses, and the landscape capacity for change. This exercise removed a number of further parcels from consideration. The remaining parcels considered suitable for removal from the Green Belt were parcel 4, parcel 6 and parcel 20. Parcel 4 is considered to be particularly sensitive in landscape and Green Belt terms, but this has been weighed against its very high potential to deliver sustainable development. Any development delivered here will need to be sensitively designed to create a strong landscape edge to development. Parcel 7 was also considered to have potential for removal from the Green Belt, if all the development required cannot be delivered in the other parcels.

Stage 3. Identifying Sites and Overall Potential

Following the identification of preferred parcels, the work focussed on the potential of specific sites to deliver the required level of housing. Sites were considered for their suitability, availability and achievability in line with the policy approach set out in the NPPF (National planning Policy Framework). The sites considered were those promoted to the Council by landowners and agents through the 2011 SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability) update, and the 2013 Call for sites carried out by the Council. At this stage, sites outside the accepted parcels that had been promoted to the Council were also considered. This was because it is quite possible that individual sites might be both sustainable and appropriate for removal from the Green Belt, despite the wider parcel within which they were assessed, being considered inappropriate. A stakeholder meeting with local landowners and agents was held to inform the work in this stage.

Once suitable sites had been identified, the potential yield (or amount of housing that could be delivered on the site), was then assessed. Sites were also considered for their ability to accommodate new schools. Figure 8 identifies the deliverable sites identified within the Borough. The table below sets out the amount and type of development that could be delivered on each site. It shows that approximately 1830 homes could be delivered against an identified requirement for 550 homes to 2027 and a potential need for a further 1200 to 2040 (a total of 1750).

Site Reference	Estimated Dwelling Yield
WGB004a	592
WGB006a	85
WGB006b	135
WGB009a	223
WGB0020a	188 ¹ Plus secondary school & allowance for G& T site in parcel
WGB0020c	171
WGB0020d	210
WGB0020e	50 ² Plus shops / facilities to enhance local centre.
WGB0020f	0
WGB0020g	12
WGB022a	37
WGB7	Up to 130
Overall potential housing yield from suitable sites	1,833

Stage 4 – Gypsy and Traveller sites

This part of the work sought to identify potential suitable sites for Gypsies and Travellers to accommodate 20 pitches for the period to 2027, and a further 9 pitches on safeguarded land for the period to 2040. An additional site to be provided as a transit site for travelling showpeople was also requested.

¹ This is the estimated number of dwellings which can be accommodated on the northern part of the site, with a secondary school (10ha) and a potential Gypsy and Traveller site (1ha) to the south. It should be noted that this does not suggest that this site in particular accommodates a Gypsy and Traveller site, but this is to make allowance for that site somewhere in parcel 20.

² This is a notional amount to allow for housing to come forward in conjunction with retail development, either above shop units or adjacent.

The work to identify potential Gypsy and Traveller sites was undertaken at the same time as the work in stages 2 and 3.

'Planning policy for traveller sites' (CLG, March 2012) states that the overarching aim of Government is "to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community." (para 3).

The TAA has identified a need for residential pitches to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs, relevant to Woking Borough. These provide residents with a permanent home and can be privately owned, publicly rented for affordable pitches, or privately rented to other Gypsies and Travellers. The size and the amount of facilities available on these sites varies between sites.

The Council have also asked PBA to identify potential transit site for Travelling Showpeople.

In Woking Borough there are currently 2 private and 1 public owned and occupied Gypsy and Traveller sites, ranging in size from 3 pitch family sites to two sites containing 15 pitches each. All sites have full planning permission.

In 2013 a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (TAA) was completed by Woking Borough Council. This identified pitch provision to meet residential needs by 2027 for the authority as 20 pitches and a further site to be safeguarded to deliver 9 pitches between 2027 and 2040. The 20 pitches are required to address the needs of all identifiable households. The overall need to 2040 is 29 pitches.

Stage 5. Options for Development

There are three broad options for delivery of sites for housing, Gypsies and Travellers, and Educational requirements.

Option 1 would bring forward parcel 6 first. This would deliver 480 dwellings between 2022 and 2027. Additional land would be required from parcel 20 to reach the total of 550 dwellings. The remaining areas would be safeguarded for development between 2027 and 2040

Option 2. This would bring forward parcel 20 first. Not all the parcel would be required, and the western parts would remain safeguarded for development from 2027 – 2040. The remaining parcels would also be safeguarded.

Option 3. This would bring forward parcel 4 first. This would provide 550 dwellings on its own, with an additional 42 which would need to be provided beyond 2027. The remaining sites and parcels would be safeguarded for development beyond 2027.

Option 3 would bring forward the development in what is potentially the most sustainable location first. Option 1 would provide a balanced approach, with sites coming forward around the Borough between 2022 and 2027. This would provide flexibility in delivery and allow for a variety of housing types to be delivered at different densities and in different locations.

Parcel 20 includes a site suitable for a new secondary school. Surrey County Council has identified broad areas within the Borough where they would like to see new primary schools located. However, with the exception of parcel 20, these do not coincide with any of the parcels or sites recommended for removal from the Green Belt. Other schools would therefore need to come forward as exceptions sites within the Green Belt.

There are currently no promoted sites within parcel 7, and the identified level of housing which could be delivered from that parcel is estimated. Further work will need to be done by the

Council to investigate the availability of this site if it is to be removed from the Green Belt for development.

In terms of Gypsy and traveller sites, there is a need to identify 29 pitches by 2040. It is our recommendation that the Council meet their pitch requirements in the following way:

- Safeguard Existing Sites to prevent their loss to other uses and increase the identified pitch requirement for the Borough;
- Grant full planning permission for existing sites with temporary permission;
- Identify and allocate sites within or adjacent to the urban area (outside the Green Belt), including working with developers of potential urban extensions within parcels 4, 6 and 20 to provide Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Overall pitch numbers should be determined by the council subject to further consideration of detailed masterplanning and viability work undertaken by developers.

Only if the Council is unable to deliver sufficient sites to meet identified TAA needs within the first 5 years or by 2027, should they consider options within the Green Belt, including:

- Investigate the potential for intensification of existing sites;
- Consider the allocation of potential new sites within the Green Belt.

Recommendations for a new Green Belt Boundary

This part of the report makes recommendations on the re-drawing of the Green Belt boundary to 2040. There is a clear distinction between areas which we recommend are removed to accommodate new development, and other areas which we recommend should be removed in order to rationalise the Green Belt boundary at locations where land is contributing little or nothing to the purposes of Green Belt.

Figure 11 illustrates the recommended new Green Belt boundary. This includes:

- Removal of parcel, 20 and parts of parcels 6,4,7,9 and 22 from the Green Belt
- Rationalisation of the Green Belt boundary elsewhere around the Borough to remove areas, particularly where boundaries are not well-defined along enduring boundaries, represent historical anomalies in the boundary, or where areas of land make little /no meaningful contribution to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes but only provide a local protective, as opposed to a strategic function.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Study

1.1.1 Peter Brett Associates and Enderby Associates were commissioned to undertake a review of the Green Belt boundary around Woking Borough. The purpose of this work was to review the land beyond the existing urban area with a view to identifying areas of land suitable for housing, and which could accommodate Gypsy and Traveller sites for the plan period (up to 2027) and beyond to 2040. Specifically, the purposes of the study were to:

- Carry out a review of the Green Belt around Woking Borough to identify suitable sustainable and deliverable sites to deliver approximately 550 homes at an average density of 30 dwellings per hectare;
- Identify potential additional sites to be safeguarded³ for residential development between 2027 and 2040, approximately 40 hectares of land (this equates to 1200 at 30dph net); and
- As part of this work, identify potential suitable sites for Gypsies and Travellers to accommodate 20 pitches for the period to 2027, and a further 9 pitches on safeguarded land for the period to 2040. An additional site to be provided as a transit site for travelling show people.

1.1.2 In addition, the work was required to take on board the possible need for new schools around the Borough, and the potential for the Green Belt review to identify sites suitable for new schools, either alone or as part of a residential urban extension. Surrey County Council identified 4 broad areas where they wanted to consider the potential for additional primary schools, and one broad area where they wanted to consider the potential for an additional secondary school.

1.2 The Role of Green Belt in Woking Borough

1.2.1 Green Belt is a strategic policy tool which has historically been used for the purpose of restricting development around and between towns. It takes on a particularly important role in areas subject to high levels of development pressure, such as around Woking Borough and its neighbouring authorities.

1.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies five purposes of the Green Belt as follows:

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 special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

³ The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers to the need for local authorities to identify 'safeguarded land' where necessary, 'in order to meet longer term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period'. Local Planning Authorities should: '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' – NPPF para 85.

- 1.2.3 Whilst it is generally accepted that purposes 1, 3 and 5 apply to all Green Belt land, there is some debate about when to apply the purposes relating to the merging of towns, and the setting of historic towns (purposes 2 and 4). This is discussed further in **Chapter 3**.
- 1.2.4 Woking and the surrounding area is characterised by a network of larger and smaller towns within the wider influence of London. As such development pressures are high, and, without Green Belt, there would be high potential for this area to come under the influence of continuous or semi-continuous suburban development between the larger towns. The Green Belt around Woking Borough and neighbouring authorities therefore plays an extremely important role in containing development and helping to retain the individual identity of the settlements in the area. The brief for the study notes that an important additional context for the study around Woking Borough should be the *“preservation of the character and quality of the setting of the Borough.”* It should be noted here that the review addresses this issue through consideration of the *“landscape character and capacity for change”* of each area of land being assessed.
- 1.2.5 Whilst this review is being undertaken solely for the Borough of Woking, it does not take place in isolation, and the review has therefore considered the extent of the Green Belt beyond the Borough, and the potential for narrowing of gaps between towns in neighbouring authorities. It has also considered the results of any work ongoing in neighbouring authorities to review their own Green Belt boundaries.
- 1.2.6 The policy context for the review is provided within the emerging Development Plan for the Borough. The Core Strategy was adopted in October 2012. It seeks to make provision for housing in the Borough for the period to 2027. However, since the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has indicated that insufficient sites are likely to be found to deliver the full housing requirement within the urban area in this period, the Core Strategy has identified the Green Belt as a broad location from which specific sites will need to be identified to meet that requirement.
- 1.2.7 Core Strategy Policies CS6 ‘Green Belt’ and CS10 ‘Housing provision and distribution’ identify the Green Belt as a potential future direction of growth to meet housing need between 2022 and 2027. Specifically, a need for 550 new dwellings has been identified from within the Green Belt, through a process of Green Belt review.
- 1.2.8 The review has been carried out as an integral part of the work for the Development Delivery DPD, which will identify specific sites within the Green Belt to deliver the housing requirement around Woking Borough between 2022 and 2027. Sites identified for removal from the Green Belt as part of the review, will therefore be considered as part of the process of preparing that DPD.

1.3 Approach and Methods

- 1.3.1 National planning policy – currently the NPPF and previously PPG2 – has always provided for a change to the Green Belt to be made through development plans where there were exceptional circumstances. There has always been a distinction between changes to the general extent of the Green Belt made through the strategic plan – the structure plan or regional strategy – and the definition of the boundary of the Green Belt set out in the local plan. Whilst neighbourhood plans developed by local communities may in some parts of the country have a role in identifying development land, there is effectively now only one level of development plan for establishing and reviewing the Green Belt and this is the local plan. In Woking Borough the Local Plan has different parts, with the Core Strategy setting the overall spatial strategy for the Borough and the Development Delivery DPD allocating development sites in accordance with the spatial strategy. Within the context of the Core Strategy’s policy for provision for a specified level of development to be provided for in areas that have been the subject of Green Belt policy, the changes to the Green Belt for Woking Borough are to be entirely dealt with in the Development Delivery DPD.

- 1.3.2 Though the national policy position is set out, there has never been any guidance on how Green Belt reviews should be undertaken, either from the government or from any other body in a form which has any significant status. It remains therefore for local planning authorities to follow a process of their own making, mindful of the outcomes to be achieved and as always of good professional practice, with a clear, evidence based, logical approach.
- 1.3.3 Peter Brett Associates and its predecessor planning consultancy firms has undertaken many Green Belt reviews at both the strategic and local level over many years and has seen the work of others, including in situations where strategic land is being promoted for development by the practice on behalf of landowners or developers.
- 1.3.4 Land can only be designated as Green Belt in order to fulfil the five purposes of including land in Green Belt which have been reiterated through successive policy statements (with the fifth purpose added in 1985). Central to all credible approaches to Green Belt reviews therefore is the need to consider to what degree land contributes to the achievement of those purposes. This task is made difficult by the rather generalised and overlapping drafting of these purposes and by the practical point that they are not all capable of being interpreted in a locationally-specific way. Nevertheless a reasonable and generally applied principle is to consider whether developing land would significantly damage the integrity of the Green Belt in that location, or put another way, whether that development would significantly undermine the original reasons for designating the land as Green Belt.
- 1.3.5 Various Green Belt reviews have sought to assess the contribution to the achievement of the Green Belt purposes in different ways. Whilst the quality of the landscape affected is explicitly not to be a consideration in designating Green Belt, techniques such as Landscape Character Analysis have proved useful in undertaking reviews, because they consider matters that are relevant such as the contribution particular areas of land make to the setting and hence the separate identity of settlements.
- 1.3.6 Review methodologies have to consider how the assessment of Green Belt land against the purposes of including land in the Green Belt are to be considered cumulatively. That is, are those purposes affected simply added up, or do some purposes carry more weight than others for instance?
- 1.3.7 A further issue for any Green Belt review is how other factors affecting the choice of development land are dealt with where Green Belt policy applies. Other matters that are part of national planning policy, and/or well established planning principles still have to be taken into account in preparing development plans. If land represents an environmental asset - as a wildlife habitat for instance – or its development would increase the risk of flooding taking place, these issues have to be respected but land is not designated as Green Belt to address these matters. Green Belt review methodologies therefore have to determine at what point these possible constraints are considered in the process and whether some constraints would carry more weight than Green Belt designation should there be an apparent conflict in choosing locations for development.
- 1.3.8 The composite concept of sustainable development is a further dimension and a very significant one since local authorities preparing plans have a statutory duty to carry out this process in a way which seeks to achieve more sustainable development. For the avoidance of doubt, Green Belt is a matter of policy not statute. The significance of sustainability which includes social and economic objectives and as well as environmental objectives, and hence is served by promoting greater accessibility amongst other things, is that the land on the edge of larger settlements where development might contribute to more sustainable patterns of land use is often designated as Green Belt.
- 1.3.9 There is no right approach through all of these considerations. The relationship between sustainable development and Green Belt is only very slightly touched in policy statements (at para. 84 of the NPPF currently), and no methodologies have risen clearly above others as best practice.

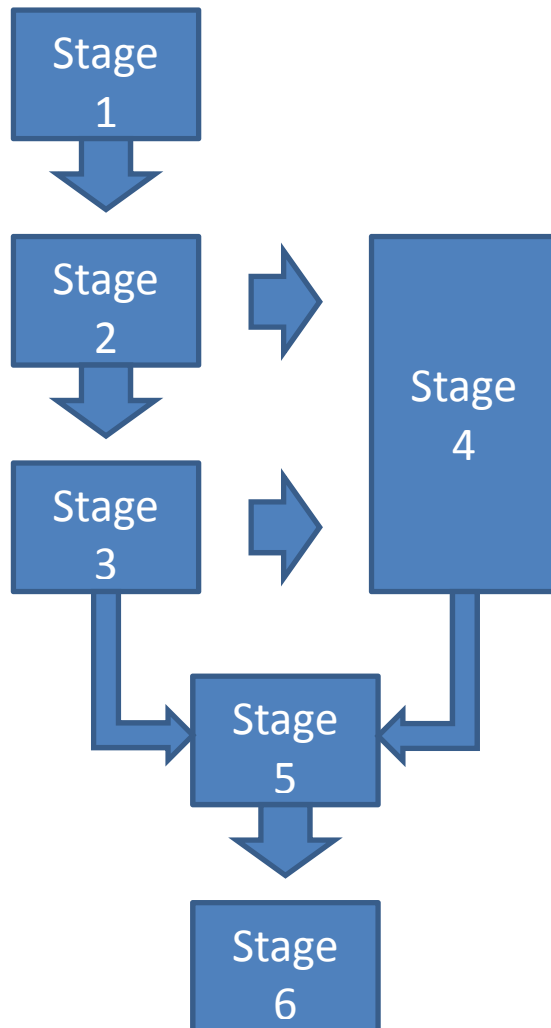
- 1.3.10 For the purposes of this study PBA has adopted – after discussion with the Council – a methodology which represents an amalgam of the best of other studies of this nature. The task is to assist the Council in identifying land for development in the Local Plan and therefore the methodology has to take account of all of the issues influencing the choice of development land, as well as meeting the requirements for any change proposed to the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The approach taken therefore embraces the need to have regard to environmental constraints, the objective of achieving sustainable development and the requirement for land identified in the plan for development to be deliverable.
- 1.3.11 The Council requires a comprehensive approach to the review of Green Belt around Woking Borough, in order to ensure that an enduring and robust new boundary is identified to endure beyond the plan period to 2040.
- 1.3.12 Our overall approach to the task has been to combine an assessment of the suitability of areas of land for removal from the Green Belt, with an assessment of the sustainability of these areas. This recognises the priority that the NPPF gives to the importance of sustainable development, as well as the importance of Green Belt considerations. The essence of the approach was to:
- Identify locations according to sustainability criteria, with particular emphasis on locationally specific issues such as accessibility, relationships with existing communities, and environmental issues;
 - Carry out a parallel exercise of considering the contribution that land parcels make to the achievement of the purposes of Green Belt, insofar as the purposes are relevant, locationally specific and distinctive; and
 - Combine the outputs from the two assessments to identify preferable locations, most usually by choosing the most sustainable locations provided that these are not outweighed by the significance of the effect their development would have on the integrity of the Green Belt as a whole.
- 1.3.13 The outcomes of the findings of each of the assessments are carefully considered and discussed to carry out a ‘sense-checking’ exercise, ensuring that the most appropriate areas are being recommended for removal from the Green Belt.
- 1.3.14 The review involved a series of stages. At each stage, areas of land were eliminated from consideration, to leave a series of sites at the end of the process, that are considered most acceptable in Green Belt terms as well as being sustainable and deliverable. These stages of work were as follows:
- **Stage 1. Sieve / Overview.** This stage considered the entire Green Belt around Woking Borough. Environmental constraints were mapped, and any large / strategic areas that were subject to absolute constraints were excluded from the study.
 - **Stage 2. Review of Green Belt and Sustainability.** Areas remaining following Stage 1 were divided into parcels and assessed in two parallel processes. The first assessed each parcel against Green Belt purposes and the second assessed each one against a set of sustainability criteria. Following this, the parcels considered most and least suitable as preferred areas for further study were identified. These were then considered for their ability to deliver development in terms of their land-use and landscape capacity for change, and in terms of the potential to re-draw the Green Belt boundary in a suitably robust location.
 - **Stage 3. Deliverability.** This stage looked primarily at the parcels recommended for removal from the Green Belt following Stage 2, and considered the potential of sites within those parcels to deliver housing. It also looked at the potential of individual promoted sites not within parcels recommended for removal from the Green Belt, to

consider whether these individual sites might be viewed differently from their larger parcel. All sites were considered in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability. The need for and opportunity to deliver school sites, either as part of housing sites or separately, was also considered at this stage.

- **Stage 4. Gypsy and Traveller work.** This part of the work is identified as a separate stage. However, the work was carried out at the same time as the work for Stages 2 and 3. The work considered the potential for additional pitches at existing sites, the potential from individual promoted sites, and the potential from the parcels identified for removal from the Green Belt to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers.
- **Stage 5. Identify sites, safeguarded land and new Green Belt Boundary.** This stage brought together all previous work to identify preferred sites for housing, and areas which could accommodate Gypsy and Traveller sites. The report outlines our recommended approach to deliver sites up to 2027 and for the delivery of safeguarded land between 2027 and 2040. It then goes on to identify a new Green Belt boundary, including areas which are currently contributing little in terms of Green Belt purposes and which should be removed from the Green Belt in order to rationalise the boundary, but which are not identified for development.
- **Stage 6. Reporting.** This stage involved writing a report detailing each stage of the methodology and the results. The report was discussed with officers and presented to members before the final report was completed.

1.3.15 The flow chart below shows the relationship of the different stages of work:

Woking Green Belt Review: Stages of



1.4 Structure of the Report

1.4.1 The report is structured to reflect the methodology and each chapter reports on a different stage of the work, leading to conclusions and recommendations in **Chapters 6 and 7** on 'Options for development' and 'Recommendations for a new Green Belt boundary' respectively.

2 Stage 1 - Sieve Mapping / Overview

2.1.1 The initial stage of work considered the entire Green Belt around Woking Borough. Through a process of desk review and initial site work it identified strategic areas of land which should not be considered for development due to 'absolute' constraints (see **Paragraph 2.2.3** below). It also reviewed changes to the Green Belt in neighbouring Boroughs to establish whether these might have any impact on the review. An Interim Report was produced at the end of Stage 1.

2.2 Sieve Mapping

2.2.1 A comprehensive list of environmental constraints was identified as the starting point for this exercise. This was compiled following a review of Core Strategy Policies and the Proposals Map, a review of the SPA and its Avoidance Strategy (see **Section 2.2** below), consideration of the constraints identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map (1999) from which there are a number of saved policies, and a review of the GIS datasets held by the Council.

2.2.2 The purpose of this stage was to identify which areas of land should be excluded from further study, and which areas would be identified as 'parcels' for further study in Stage 2. This stage was not about identifying every small piece of land that might be unsuitable for development, but about identifying the key constraints which would involve large areas of land. Any consideration of these areas against either Green Belt purposes or sustainability criteria would be superfluous and hence they were removed from consideration at this early stage. The desk review exercise was supported by initial site work, which informed the understanding of the broad character of the areas surrounding Woking and the various constraints.

2.2.3 Constraints were mapped and their implications considered. Those which provided an absolute constraint on significant areas of land were identified. These constraints were:

- Thames Basin Heaths SPA, and 400m exclusion zone;
- Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC;
- Large areas of land at risk from flooding (flood zone 3;)
- Common land;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and
- Conservation Areas.

2.2.4 In relation to flooding constraints, it should be noted that the sequential approach is applied in relation to the consideration of parcels and sites for development. The stage 1 sieve therefore excludes all significant areas within flood zone 3. Flood zones 3 and 2 are also a particular consideration within the environmental constraints part of the sustainability assessment (section 3.3)

2.2.5 **Figure 1** (located before the appendices) shows the mapped constraints. **Figure 2** combines these and identifies in grey all the areas of land that are subject to those constraints.

2.2.6 **Figure 2** shows that the areas of constrained land are not always located as simply defined tracts of land. The purpose of this stage was to help to identify meaningful parcels for assessment. Therefore, some of the areas shown in grey in **Figure 2** have not been excluded, as they form smaller parts of a wider parcel of land which is unconstrained. On the other hand, there are other small areas which are not in themselves covered by a constraint, but which are

surrounded on all sides by constrained land. These areas have been excluded from further study.

- 2.2.7 For example, there are a series of small areas in the east of the Borough which, whilst not actually in flood zone 3, are surrounded by flood zone 3, and are actually within flood zone 2. Any consideration of these isolated pockets for housing development would be impractical. There are other small areas which are similarly 'landlocked' and these are not retained for further study. Conversely, parcels 21, 22 and 27 (shown in figure 3) contain areas of constrained land, but they are not excluded from the study as they also contain significant areas of unconstrained land.

Figure 3 summarises the results of the sieving exercise and presents the areas excluded from the study in in grey tones.

2.3 International Designated Sites (SPA and SAC)

- 2.3.1 Within and adjacent to the Borough are a number of sites that are subject to international and national nature conservation designations made under the European Birds Directive and the European Habitats Directive. There are a number of areas within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (**Figure 4**). The Core Strategy directs development away from these areas and the brief for the Green Belt review required that the impact of this policy was considered at an early stage in the review.

- 2.3.2 A review of policy relating to these areas and the implications of this for the study has been carried out by an ecologist as part of our work during Stage 1. Relevant policy and strategy documents include Core Strategy Policies CS7 and CS8, saved policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, and consideration of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy 2010 – 2015. The review has considered the wider implications of the SPA / SAC policy.

- 2.3.3 The report is located at **Appendix A**. In summary, the following needed to be considered as part of the Green Belt review:

- Natural England considers that avoidance of adverse effects is not possible within 400 metres of the SPA and as such there is a ban on all residential development in this zone.
- Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) is identified in order to ease pressure on the SPA.
- Preference should be given to releasing Green Belt land within the catchment areas of SANGS. Where housing provision cannot be supported by an agreed / established SANG, preference should be given to land within the catchment of a known potential SANG or to locations with potential for development to provide a new SANG.
- The Council's avoidance strategy identifies 3 SANGS and a further 3 potential SANGS. Since this strategy was published, all the potential SANGS have now been adopted, and there is an additional potential SANG at West Byfleet. The delivery framework sets out the area of SANG required as 8ha of new open space per 1000 new population. The SANGS provide a total of 153.7ha, and we understand from the Council that this provides for the SANGS requirements up to 2027. **Table 2.1** below lists the SANGS, their approximate areas, and the catchment that they will serve.

Table 2.1: SANGS in Woking Borough

Name	Site area	Catchment
Brookwood Country Park	29 ha	5km
White Rose Lane	8.2 ha	2km
Horsell Common	19.8 ha	5km
Heather Farm	23.9ha	5km
Brookwood	8 ha	2km
Hoe Valley	3.7 ha	2km
Mayford	8.3 ha	2km
Moor Lane	17.3 ha	4km
Gresham Mill	11.3 ha	4km
Byfleet (proposed)	13.7 ha	4km
Westfield (proposed)	10.5 ha	2km
Total Area	153.7	

- In relation to the SAC, the review needed to consider the impact of increased traffic flows to designated sites and the potential for urban development to affect the water supply to wetland communities. The hydrological catchment of the SAC components on the western side of the Borough at Sheets Heath and Pirbright Common, Brookwood needed therefore to be considered. BSG Ecology advised that in terms of Sheets Heath, drainage is from the land to the west and north of the site on land outside the Borough. Brookwood Heath supports Hodge Brook which is fed largely from land outside the Borough. Part of the catchment is in the Borough south of Brookwood Cemetery and in part of Worpleston golf course.

2.3.4 The considerations above have been taken into account in the Sieve mapping process and are reflected in **Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4**. The issues in relation to SANGs have been addressed during the Stage 2 assessment of parcels, and throughout the remainder of the project.

2.4 Green Belt Changes in Neighbouring Boroughs

2.4.1 As part of the stage one work, planning policy officers in all Boroughs adjoining Woking Borough were also contacted, to find out whether they were carrying out a Green Belt review, and if so, which areas of land they might be identifying for potential release from the Green Belt. This was important information for Stage 2 of the project. The Green Belt assessment considered parcels of land against the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. This includes purpose 2: *“to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.”* In order to assess this purpose, it was important to have an indication of where neighbouring towns might be expanding towards Woking Borough.

2.4.2 The results of this exercise were as follows.

- Guildford Borough Council has carried out a Green Belt review. The 'Green Belt and Countryside Study' was published in July 2013. It identifies a number of 'Potential Development Areas' (PDA's) within the Borough. Rather than identifying several larger 'parcels' of development, the study identifies a relatively large number of smaller areas / sites throughout the Borough. Some of these are adjacent the existing urban area, and others are adjacent to villages. Two PDA's are identified north of the town of Guildford. These would provide for two isolated areas of development surrounded by woodland north of Salt Box Road and West of the A320. These would sit within the gap between Guildford and Woking, and their proximity to Woking would be broadly comparable to existing development east of the A320. In addition, several PDA's are identified around the villages of Send and Send Marsh. If developed, these would increase the size of villages close to the areas of Westfield and Old Woking in the south of the Borough. Currently, none of these areas have been allocated for development. The Council has recently commissioned additional work to investigate potential development areas on the edge of the Borough but adjacent to settlements within other Boroughs. This includes Old Woking. The Local Plan process will now consider all the PDA's in relation to a new identified housing requirement, and identify which are considered to be most suitable, available and achievable in order to deliver this requirement.
- Runnymede Borough Council has carried out a Green Belt review. As a result, the Council is proposing to remove the former DERA Barracks site from the Green Belt. This is at Longcross, approximately 4.7km from the Woking Borough boundary. This is sufficiently far from the boundary to have no impact upon the consideration of Green Belt purposes in our assessment.
- Surrey Heath Borough Council has an adopted Core Strategy (February 2012). It has not and does not intend to carry out a review of the Green Belt in its area. A major planning application has been approved to develop the Deepcut Barracks for housing. This is approximately 2.7km from the edge of Woking Borough in the west. However it does not actually lie within the Green Belt but in countryside beyond Green Belt.
- Elmbridge Borough Council has a recently adopted Core Strategy (2011). This does not include a requirement to carry out a Green Belt review, and the forthcoming allocations document will not look at Green Belt sites. There are no future plans to consider areas within the Green Belt for housing. In addition, the area of Elmbridge closest to Woking Borough is subject to environmental constraints.

3 Stage 2 - Strategic Review of Land Parcels

3.1 Identifying Parcels for Assessment

- 3.1.1 Following the sieve mapping exercise, a large area of land around the Borough was identified for further study. This area is shown in **Figure 3**. In order to carry out a meaningful assessment of the way in which different areas of land performed in Green Belt terms, and the relative sustainability of locations around the Green Belt, it was necessary to divide up this area of land into parcels.
- 3.1.2 In order to inform the identification of 'parcels' of land, site work was carried out in parallel with the desk review. This enabled the team to gain a good understanding of the character of the Green Belt around Woking Borough, and its landscape setting. **Figure 3** identifies a series of land parcels for further assessment which have been identified based on consideration of the following:
- Absolute constraints identified during the sieve mapping exercise (**Section 2.2**);
 - Broad Landscape Characteristics as identified by site work; and
 - Features on the ground which could provide meaningful boundaries, as identified from site work and from the use of mapping information.
- 3.1.3 In relation to the last point, it should be noted that some parcels are defined more by their boundary with an absolute constraint, than by features on the ground. This has thrown up some 'anomaly' areas. For example, there are places where there is a well-defined boundary (i.e. a road) which should form a logical edge to a parcel (and accord with the Green Belt guidance of using recognisable and permanent boundaries in para.85 of the NPPF). However, this would leave a sliver of land beyond that, which sits between that boundary and an area of principal constraint. Such small slivers cannot be assessed separately as strategic parcels, and so they are combined with the adjacent parcel. The result is that this gives some poorly defined unrecognisable boundaries to parcels (such as the edge of flood zone 3). Our approach has been is to combine such areas with larger parcels, but to be aware as the study progresses, that a recognisable boundary would need to be drawn for the Green Belt if that parcel were to be removed following the review. This may reduce the land available for development, or it may require consideration of the creation of Green Infrastructure networks associated with new development.
- 3.1.4 **Figure 3** identifies 31 parcels of land that have been identified for further study around Woking Borough. These parcels of land were used to carry out both Green Belt assessment and sustainability assessment during Stage 2 of the review. These parcels were then assessed in terms of their Landscape sensitivity and capacity for change.

3.2 Green Belt Assessment

- 3.2.1 As explained previously the land located between the settlement boundary of Woking and the Borough boundary has been divided up into 31 assessment parcels. The identification of these parcels has been influenced by the way in which the land performs in Green Belt terms and its broad landscape characteristics. These parcels are shown on **Figure 3**.
- 3.2.2 Those parcels that were not ruled out due to 'absolute' constraints in Stage 1 have been carried forward for assessment in terms of their 'performance' in fulfilling Green Belt Purposes. The results of this assessment are summarised in **Tables 3.1** and **3.2**. The conclusions are discussed at the end of this section.

- 3.2.3 A particular feature of the assessment methodology is the identification of land that performs a 'Critical' or 'Major' function in fulfilling one or more of the defined Green Belt Purposes. Where land fulfils a 'Critical' Purpose – i.e. where a single Purpose alone is so fundamental to the retention of areas of land in the Green Belt – this Purpose justifies the removal of such areas from the assessment process and consideration of other areas that fulfil Green Belt Purposes to a lesser degree. A similar approach has been used in the assessment of sustainability and environmental constraints of each parcel.

Examination of Green Belt Purposes

- 3.2.4 Green Belt Purposes are extremely difficult to apply to specific areas of land – they are simply too generalised, reflecting the strategic nature and aims of Green Belt policy, which is essentially a rather restrictive 'blunt tool'. To allow more detailed analysis of the way in which areas of land fulfil Green Belt Purposes it has been necessary to examine each Purpose in further detail.
- 3.2.5 For each Green Belt Purpose four categories have been defined against which the performance of assessment parcels may be considered based upon that area's ability to accommodate a strategic level of development. These are shown in **Table 3.1** and elaborated below:
- 'Critical importance' to Green Belt Purpose – where land is 'Fundamental' to the Purpose, justifying its continued retention and protection within Green Belt.
 - 'Major importance' to Green Belt Purpose – where land is of 'Major' importance to the Green Belt Purpose, and where development would conflict substantially with it.
 - 'Moderate importance' to Green Belt Purpose – where land is of 'Moderate' importance to the Green Belt Purpose, and where development would conflict significantly with it.
 - 'Slight/Negligible' importance to Green Belt Purpose – where land is of 'Minor/Negligible' importance to the Green Belt Purpose, and where development would have limited/negligible conflict with it.
 - 'No importance' to Green Belt Purpose - Land where development would have **no** impact on this purpose of Green Belt
- 3.2.6 The parameters used for defining the categories for each Purpose are outlined further below.

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

- 3.2.7 The sense of permanence provided by Green Belt designation is fundamental to the limitation of sprawl and it is the wholesale restriction that the designation places upon development that ensures that the outer expansion of urban areas remains heavily constrained thereby limiting 'sprawl'. However, well located and planned urban extensions are unlikely to constitute 'sprawl' (a term that is based on negativity suggesting the unplanned, uncontrolled spread of development).
- 3.2.8 Most land is likely to contribute to the fulfilment of this Purpose to some degree; land that lies close to the periphery of the urban area is likely to contribute substantially to this Purpose as it is that land that provides the boundary and zone of constraint to urban expansion, whilst land that is more remote is also likely to be important to this Purpose as development in such areas, by virtue of being remote, is likely to be perceived potentially as 'sprawl' being remote from principal urban areas. Another important consideration in assessing the potential of land parcels against this Purpose is whether the land is well contained or not; where land is well contained it is more likely that development may be accommodated within it without giving rise

to the perception of 'sprawl' as the development would be well contained by logical and clear defensible boundaries.

- 3.2.9 The examination of the periphery of Woking shows that there are in fact few areas where the urban area has expanded to boundaries that are poorly defined; this is largely a product of two factors – the boundaries of the urban area are generally quite clearly defined by identifiable and recognisable features, coupled with the fact that it lies within a mature landscape setting with a high level of vegetation cover which reinforces containment and thereby reduces or avoids the perception of 'sprawl' (such as occurs along much of the northern side of the town). As a consequence there are very few areas where existing development creates the perception of a 'poor fit' within the landscape setting and allows development to have an extensive influence over adjoining land beyond, with consequential adverse effects on landscape character and the perception of the town (the south eastern edge of Byfleet being one such area where this is evident). This Purpose therefore has a direct relationship with Purpose 3 (safeguarding of the countryside).
- 3.2.10 There are many areas around the town where land creates a very strong, defined threshold between the edge of the urban area and the outlying countryside beyond. Such thresholds provide strong physical and visual containment of the urban area and protect the land beyond. These areas are judged as being 'Critical' to the containment of the urban area, where there are no other similar areas that lie further from the urban edge that could fulfil a similar function in respect of this Purpose if urban expansion were to take place. Because of their close relationship to existing development, such areas may have a variable landscape character and may not be entirely rural (such as parts of parcel 20).
- 3.2.11 Elsewhere there are areas where such thresholds are much less defined, but the land nevertheless still provides a good level of containment around the urban edge, ensuring a reasonable 'fit' of the urban area within its landscape context; these areas are categorised as being of 'Major' importance. There may be other locations, further from the urban edge that have the potential to perform a similar function if the urban area were to expand (for example at parcel 8).
- 3.2.12 The 'Moderate' category applies to land that is remote from the urban area where other intervening land fulfils a containment function. However, no parcel has been identified as falling within this category.
- 3.2.13 Where the edge of the urban area is poorly contained the land can be categorised as being of 'Slight/Negligible' importance with respect to this Purpose as the perception of 'sprawl' is already apparent. In such locations there may be opportunities to adjust the Green Belt boundary to a create a boundary that provides greater containment, a better 'fit' for existing or potential development, and one that respects the landscape characteristics of the place (parcels 5 and 6 for example).
- 3.2.14 Land considered to be of 'No' importance to the Purpose is generally land that is almost entirely contained by existing urban development (parcel 3 for example).

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

- 3.2.15 The primary function of this Purpose is clear – it is to prevent towns merging. However, it raises questions about whether closing the gap between towns without them merging (either physically or visually) would be acceptable, and whether the merger of other smaller settlements is strictly covered by this Purpose. The NPPF makes no mention of minimum distances (para. 2.9 of superseded PPG2 indicated that "*wherever practicable a Green Belt should be several miles wide, so as to ensure an appreciable open zone all around the built-up area concerned*").
- 3.2.16 For this assessment we have assumed that larger towns should remain separate with a clear physical and visual distinction between them such that they retain their separate identities and

setting. We have also worked on the basis that, despite the fact that the strict definition of the Purpose appears to exclude them, significant smaller settlements are also relevant. The review of the performance of areas of Green Belt against this Purpose is therefore informed by an understanding of whether there is the potential for the intervening land to accommodate a strategic level of development without prejudicing the physical and visual distinction between the settlements.

- 3.2.17 In areas where new development is likely to result in physical coalescence, or at the very least a clearly recognisable perception of merging that would erode the distinct separate identity and character of either / both settlements, the land is considered to be 'Critical' to this Purpose and its retention in Green Belt is of paramount importance. This instance occurs particularly in respect of the separation of Woking from Bisley and also from the smaller but defined settlement of Brookwood.
- 3.2.18 In areas where there is no significant existing inter-visibility between towns, and where more limited development could be accommodated without causing merger or the perception of merging, its retention within Green Belt is considered to be of 'Major' importance to this Purpose. However, in such areas development may lead to a substantial reduction of the separation between other smaller settlements (such as Mayford for example).
- 3.2.19 The performance of the land against this Purpose reduces with the increase in distance between settlements, as not all of the land is likely to be important to maintaining separation. Where a strategic level of development may be accommodated without compromising this Purpose the land can be categorised as being of 'Moderate' importance to the Purpose. However, smaller settlements may be subject to a significant reduction in physical and visual separation, or potential merger as a result of such development.
- 3.2.20 Where Green Belt does not lie directly between two towns, or where the separation between the adjoining settlements is already narrower, it can be adjudged as being of 'Slight/Negligible' importance, as strategic development could be accommodated without being in conflict with this Purpose (such as at parcels 8 and 9). As above, smaller settlements could potentially be affected in the same way as the above two categories.
- 3.2.21 Where Green Belt land does not lie between two principal settlements it is adjudged as being of 'No' importance to the Purpose (such as parcels 3, 7 and 10).

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 3.2.22 Any Green Belt land around the periphery of the town may be said to fulfil this Purpose. It is the overall restrictive nature of Green Belt policy that protects the surrounding countryside by preventing development and directing it towards existing settlements.
- 3.2.23 The former guidance provided in PPG2 made it clear that the quality of the landscape is not a reason for designating land as Green Belt; this is not included in the NPPF. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this review, it has been assumed that the principle remains. The search for the most appropriate locations for any significant development has been informed by an assessment of the principal landscape and characteristics of the parcels of land. By applying this approach in connection with this Purpose it follows that, all other things being equal, areas that have a strong unspoilt, largely intact rural character should be afforded particular protection via this Purpose, in contrast with those areas that possess a semi-urban character and where encroachment has already occurred. Such areas may offer the potential for repair and/or enhancement through a well-considered approach to development. Any urban extension may be considered to be an 'encroachment' into countryside. This is where consideration of landscape character and the potential ability of the landscape to accommodate change fulfils an important role.
- 3.2.24 Where land is identified as possessing a strong unspoilt rural character the land will perform a more critical role in protecting the countryside from encroachment; in such areas any such

encroachment is likely to have a far more significant adverse effect on the characteristics of the countryside and its perception compared to land that possesses a much weaker or semi urban character where the influences of development are already apparent and an intrinsic part of the prevailing character, where such areas may be deemed to contribute less to safeguarding land from encroachment or may no longer be perceived to be part of the open countryside.

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

3.2.25 Woking is not considered to be a town that has a particularly strong historical character. Whilst it has older parts there is no strong relationship between these areas and its wider landscape setting provided by surrounding Green Belt land. This purpose is therefore not considered within the Green Belt Assessment.

Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land

3.2.26 It is the overall restrictive nature of Green Belt that, though its limitation of the supply of other development opportunities encourages regeneration and re-use of land. It is therefore impossible to judge how any given parcel of land would contribute to the fulfilment of this Purpose. This purpose is not considered within the Green Belt Assessment as all land would score equally.

Assessment of Fulfilment of Green Belt Purposes

3.2.27 The following criteria have been used to assess the ‘performance’ of the parcels in respect of Green Belt Purposes 1-3.

Table 3.1: Criteria for Assessment of Parcels against Green Belt Purposes

Green Belt Purpose 1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		
Criteria	Fulfilment of Green Belt Purpose	
Land where development would conflict fundamentally with Green Belt purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The land provides a distinct, well-defined area between Woking / other large built up area(s) and open land beyond, and provides strong containment that prevents the perception of ‘sprawl’; or the land is remote from the built-up area where development would be separated substantially from the existing urban area and may create perception of ‘sprawl’ / sporadic growth. ▪ There may be / is no alternative strong physical / landscape boundary(s) further from the edge of the town that would perform a similar role in containing growth and ensuring a ‘good fit’ for development – strategic level of development may lead to perception of uncontained growth. ▪ The land may / may not be affected already by the existing physical / visual presence of the town / other large built up areas and may have a varied character. 	Critical importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of paramount importance	Critical
Land where development would conflict substantially with Green Belt purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The land contains / contributes to the containment of the 	Major importance to Green Belt	Major

Green Belt Purpose 1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		
Criteria	Fulfilment of Green Belt Purpose	
<p>town/large built up area (although its character may be influenced by it).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic level of development has potential to create perception of poorly contained growth, although other physical / landscape boundaries may exist further from the urban edge that could define and contain growth and prevent the perception of 'sprawl' (although these may require reinforcement to achieve a well-defined limit to development and a new Green Belt boundary). 	<p>Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of major importance</p>	
<p>Land where development would conflict significantly with Green Belt purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land provides some containment of the urban area although it is significantly influenced by its presence and related features/land uses leading to a poorly defined edge, or it may be distant/remote from the urban edge and therefore contribute less to the purpose (other land closer to the urban edge performs the function of containment). 	<p>Moderate importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of moderate importance</p>	Moderate
<p>Land where development would have limited/negligible impact on this purpose of Green Belt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land is physically and visually dominated by/related to the town and already perceived to be part of/or closely related to the urban area, giving a poorly defined edge and possibly the perception of 'sprawl'. Development may allow opportunities for enhancement of degraded land and the definition of a stronger long-term Green Belt boundary. 	<p>Slight/Negligible importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of minor/negligible importance</p>	Slight/ Negligible
<p>Land where development would have no impact on this purpose of Green Belt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land is largely contained by existing development and already forms part of, and is perceived as, part of the town. 	<p>No importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of no importance</p>	None

Green Belt Purpose 2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another (see * Note below)		
Criteria	Fulfilment of Green Belt Purpose	
<p>Land is fundamental to physical separation of neighbouring towns/larger villages (either within or adjoining Green Belt).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any significant reduction in extent would result in physical coalescence, or a perception of merging that would erode the distinct separate identity and character of either/both settlements. 	<p>Critical importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of paramount importance</p>	Critical
<p>Land provides important contribution to separation between neighbouring towns.</p>	<p>Major importance to Green Belt</p>	Major

Green Belt Purpose 2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another (see * Note below)		
Criteria	Fulfilment of Green Belt Purpose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no significant inter-visibility between the towns currently. Some limited development may be possible without causing merger or perception of merging. 	Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of major importance	
Land provides only moderate contribution to separation between neighbouring towns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land is part of a substantial gap (3km or more) between neighbouring towns/large villages with separate identities (e.g. Brookwood / Bisley). Land where well planned strategic levels of development would not result in merger or a perception of merging as a consequence of inter-visibility (although intervening smaller settlements within Green Belt may be affected significantly by reduction of separation, merger or inter-visibility). 	Moderate importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of moderate importance	Moderate
Land does not lie between two towns and makes very limited contribution to separation; or land is a very narrow area which does not provide strategic level of separation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic level of development would have no impact on this Green Belt purpose, although smaller settlements may be affected by reduction in separation, merger, or inter-visibility depending on their proximity to the urban edge. Other strong/well-defined boundary(s) may exist to restrain growth/prevent merging. Width of Green Belt gap may already be narrower at an adjacent location. 	Slight/Negligible importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of minor/negligible importance	Slight/ Negligible
Land does not lie between two towns and makes no discernible contribution to separation.	No importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of no importance	None

* NOTE: Towns are taken to be towns, and larger villages it does not include small villages/hamlets such as Mayford, although reference is made to these as appropriate.

Green Belt Purpose 3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment		
Criteria	Fulfilment of Green Belt Purpose	
Retention of the countryside is fundamental to the purpose of retaining land within Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land possesses a strong, unspoilt rural character which Green Belt designation protects. There may be no other fundamental constraints to encroachment (such as a strong landscape feature that could assist in fulfilling this purpose by containing development from outlying 	Critical importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of paramount importance	Critical

Green Belt Purpose 3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment		
Criteria	Fulfilment of Green Belt Purpose	
countryside).		
Retention of the countryside is of major importance to the purpose of retaining land within the Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land possesses a predominantly rural character. There may be other minor constraints (such as a landscape feature) that would limit encroachment but where the Green Belt provides important protection. 	Major importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of major importance	Major
Retention of the countryside is moderately important to the purpose of retaining land within the Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land possesses a semi-rural character and there may already be a perception of significant encroachment. There may be other constraints to further encroachment. 	Moderate importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of moderate importance	Moderate
Retention of the land is of very limited / no importance to the purpose of retaining land within the Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land possesses a semi-urban character and is no longer perceived to be part of the open countryside. It may contain degraded land that provides opportunities for enhancement. 	Slight/Negligible importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of minor/negligible importance	Slight/Negligible
Land where development would have no impact on this purpose of Green Belt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land forms very narrow area between existing parts of the town or other strong boundary and does not make any recognisable contribution to separation. 	No importance to Green Belt Purpose Continued inclusion within Green Belt of no importance	None

3.2.28 The assessment of parcels against individual purposes is then combined to give an overall judgement of the suitability of that as an area of search based on Green Belt purposes only.

Relative Suitability of Land as Area of Search based upon assessment of Green Belt purposes			
Very Low Suitability	Very Low	Area performs one or more Critical Green Belt purpose(s). Other considerations: Land with Little/No capacity for change.	Land Fundamental to Green Belt

Relative Suitability of Land as Area of Search based upon assessment of Green Belt purposes			
Low Suitability	Low	<p>Area does not perform any Critical Green Belt purposes, but one or more Major purposes.</p> <p>Other considerations: Area may have a Low to Moderate capacity for change.</p>	Retain Land in Green Belt
Moderate Suitability	Moderate	<p>Land performs no Critical Green Belt purposes, but one or more Major purposes.</p> <p>Other considerations: Area has a Moderate/High capacity for change.</p>	Potential longer-term Area of Search
High Suitability	High	<p>Area does not perform any Critical or Major Green Belt purposes.</p> <p>Other considerations: Area has a Moderate/High capacity for change.</p>	Potential Area of Search

3.2.29 **Table 3.2** summarises the assessment of the parcels against Green Belt purposes using the above criteria.

Table 3.2: Assessment of Parcels against Green Belt Purposes

Parcel	Purposes of Green Belt			Notes	Overall Suitability as Area of Search
	1.To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2.To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	3.To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment		
1				<p>1. Land separate from urban area; any development would be isolated. Contains McLaren development; additional development may be perceived as uncontained growth.</p> <p>2. Lies between Woking/Ottershaw (2.5km wide); already contains some development; further development would intensify/increase development extent within gap</p> <p>3. Any further development would be seen as further encroachment (some has already occurred with McLaren development)</p>	Very Low
2				<p>1. Land has contained north east extent of town, to well defined edge along B385. Recently approved extension to the McLaren campus extends into northern part of the parcel (granted on basis of 'exceptional circumstances' – land remains in Green Belt).</p> <p>2. Development extending northwards from urban area would extend parcel towards Ottershaw, although perception of merging would not arise if development were to be limited to southern part; potential for development to lead to perception of merging with development on McLaren extension (although woodland may retain physical/visual separation)</p> <p>3. Strong landscape structure contains urban area. Development in golf course north of road likely to be contained from wider area by woodland.</p>	Low
3				No conflict with purposes – land is recreational and contained on 3 sides by development; recreational character as opposed to	High

				'countryside'.	
4				<p>1. Forms significant tract of land between edge of town and M25, which forms the logical threshold to Byfleet beyond (refer parcel 6). Strong containing landscape features provide clear definition between urban edge and attractive countryside. Broadoaks Major developed site in north west corner but well contained from rest of parcel.</p> <p>2. Provides separation between edge of town and M25/ Byfleet (although urban area already extends to M25 to north, although perception of narrowing of gap may be limited by barrier provided by M25.</p> <p>3. Development beyond existing edge likely to be perceived as encroachment into countryside with a strong, attractive character. Boundaries beyond unlikely to provide same containment as existing</p>	Very Low
5				<p>1. Makes little contribution to purpose due to narrow limited extent. M25 and vegetation along R Wey creates strong barrier/separation between the two built up areas and could provide settlement limit. Development would have no impact on this purpose. Existing boundaries poorly defined. M25 forms clear boundary which forms clear physical and visual boundary between Byfleet and Green Belt land to the west of the M25.</p> <p>2. Urban areas barely separated; M25/R Wey vegetation provides visual clear separation despite proximity.</p> <p>3. Existing development has strong influence over area; this together with urban fringe land uses and no clear connection with land to west/south means land contributes little to purpose.</p>	High
6				<p>1. Designation has prevented expansion of Byfleet into what would be otherwise a generally suitable location. Boundaries poorly defined. M25 forms clear boundary which could provide settlement limit.</p> <p>2. Little contribution to prevention of merging. Any development would be contained by M25 and remain separated from Woking by</p>	High

				<p>parcel 4 beyond which fulfils this purpose.</p> <p>3. As 1, designation has prevented development occurring within an area that is otherwise generally well contained from wider countryside.</p>	
7				<p>1. Designation has restricted eastward expansion of Byfleet into an otherwise quite open landscape. Existing boundary not strong; next defined boundary is treeline and river some distance to east.</p> <p>2. No contribution to Purpose – existing settlement boundary to north and southern edge of Weybridge are close to Cobham.</p> <p>3. Designation protects otherwise relatively unconstrained land (although flood risk along river corridor) beyond existing weak urban boundary.</p>	Moderate
8				<p>1. Existing boundary reasonably well defined long west edge. Designation has limited development form extending into quite open landscape (much of which is golf course). Next strong boundary is along river some distance to east.</p> <p>2. Little contribution to Purpose as no existing development for considerable distance beyond, although Byfleet lies beyond M25 to north east but well separated from parcel by intervening land.</p> <p>3. Designation protects countryside although character eroded by golf course and some scattered development.</p>	Low
9				<p>1. Designation important to prevention of expansion into open mostly exposed arable landscape where it would be perceived as uncontained growth. Generally strong existing boundaries form clear definition between town and country, where no other suitable boundaries exist (except north west corner).</p> <p>2. Little/no contribution to Purpose as no significant outlying settlement.</p> <p>3. As Purpose 1 – safeguards mainly open arable landscape, with distinct character, much of which is exposed on south east facing slopes.</p>	Very Low

10				<p>1. Reasonably contained mainly golf course landscape which is removed from urban edge; any development would be isolated engendering perception of 'sprawl'.</p> <p>2. No contribution to Purpose – approx. 4km gap between parcel and Horsley.</p> <p>3. Designation prevents encroachment into mainly golf course landscape which is largely free of development.</p>	Very Low
11				<p>1. Remote from urban edge but contains large mobile home development which is contained within woodland.</p> <p>2. Small settlement of Ripley 0.6km to south; limited contribution to separation.</p> <p>3. Woodland prevents wider perception of encroachment from that development; parcel therefore appears as part of countryside from outside. Redevelopment of site would be similarly contained.</p>	Very Low
12				<p>1. Land, which includes significant ridge, provides containment of southern edge of town. Existing boundary well defined. No other clear boundary exists until small watercourse and tree line south of ridge.</p> <p>2. Outlying smaller co-joined settlements (Send/Send Marsh) 2km to south of parcel; most of parcel forms indent in existing urban edge</p> <p>3. Mostly a golf course landscape but with rural characteristics. Parcel forms clear limit to, and containment of urban area preventing development from extending up to/beyond ridge.</p>	Very Low
13				<p>1. Existing urban edge well defined along road. Any development would not relate well to existing settlement form, although sewage works to east forms limit southern side is more open with no clear boundary.</p> <p>2. Parcel not between significant settlements, but would protrude into land between Send and southern side of Woking although significant separation would remain.</p>	Low

				3. Road to west forms clear edge to urban area (although development quite apparent from parcel). Development in parcel would extend beyond this well-defined threshold and likely to be perceived as 'tongue' of development encroaching into countryside.	
14				<p>1. Parcel has strong rural character and perceived as quite remote from urban area. Any development likely to be perceived as uncontained growth as no better well defined long term boundaries exist.</p> <p>2. Any development would reduce gap to northern edge of Guilford (2.5km to south). May also reduce separation with Send only 0.6km to east.</p> <p>3. Parcel has strong rural character where any development is likely to give rise to significant encroachment; whilst woods to east and west contain land the southern side is open. Area generally quite visually exposed.</p>	Very Low
15				<p>1. Scattered development within parcel 'blurs' the edge between town and countryside. Designation does impose limits to further development, especially along northern edge and infilling. Northern part particularly important to containment of southern edge of town.</p> <p>2. Southern edge of parcel only 1.4km from northern edge of Guildford.</p> <p>3. Already some encroachment by scattered clusters/ ribbons of development. Designation therefore limits further piecemeal encroachment.</p>	Low
16				<p>1. Designation provides protection of an area that contains ribbons of development which could otherwise be subject to pressure for infilling in intervening fields leading to growth isolated from urban area.</p> <p>2. Parcel lies midway between south edge of town and northern edge of Guildford (just over 3.5km wide). Removal of Green Belt land would reduce separation, although physical and visual separation would remain.</p>	Very Low

				3. Fulfils purpose similar to Purpose 1, although some areas could contain development without giving rise to wider encroachment.	
17				<p>1. Large tract of land with only small areas of existing settlement. Any development would relate poorly to settlement pattern (except at southern edge of Mayford which has specific policy protection) and be unrelated to town.</p> <p>2. Located within 3.8km gap between town and Guildford. Whilst development would not lead to merger it is likely to reduce separation within an area where there are small developments/settlements.</p> <p>3. Area has strong rural character which designation protects; also safeguards against sporadic infilling of small intervening areas within development.</p>	Very Low
18				<p>1. Tract of rural countryside remote from town. Designation protects land where development would be isolated and perceived as uncontained growth.</p> <p>2. Lies midway between Woking and Guildford although gap is 4km wide. Removal of land from Green Belt for development would not lead to merger or perception of merger, but would erode gap that exists, although gap is already narrower to east and robust.</p> <p>3. Any development would be perceived as encroachment into countryside with strong rural character.</p>	Very Low
19				<p>1. Railway on northern edge forms strong boundary containing the area more directly within the influence of the urban area to the north. Parcel contains significant ribbons of detached houses and associated small plots; designation has almost undoubtedly prevented intensification of this development through infill and incremental additions.</p> <p>2. Parcel located between Brookwood and north west Guildford, in gap that is 4km wide. Removal of land from Green Belt for development would not lead to merger or perception of merger, but would erode gap that exists; gap is already narrower to east and</p>	Low

				robust. 3. As Purpose 1, designation prevents further extension of urban area south of railway and encroachment in form of infilling of existing plots. Development extending south of well-defined railway boundary likely to be perceived as encroachment beyond well-defined urban threshold.	
20				<p>1. Part of land is elevated/sloping forming part of gentle escarpment. Designation provides protection of this area where a combination of topography and vegetation contains the urban area. Also prevents development and infilling within larger residential plots along Hook Heath Rd (a Conservation Area). Other suitable boundaries do exist along periphery of parcel.</p> <p>2. Development in parcel would not reduce gap between town and north edge of Guildford – gap is already narrower between Mayford/Guildford, although development would reduce gap/lead to merger with Mayford/ribbon of development along Saunders Lane.</p> <p>3. Designation prevents encroachment onto slopes that are locally exposed and contribute to setting of town (although some areas are more discreet).</p>	Very Low Low
21				<p>1. Railway on northern edge forms strong limit to urban area to north, although existing development abuts eastern side, preventing development extending south (land is golf course). Hook Heath Road would provide alternative boundary.</p> <p>2. Little contribution to Purpose as other parts of urban area are closer to Guildford to south, although development has potential to merge with ribbon of development along Hook Heath Road.</p> <p>3. As Purpose 1, designation prevents further extension of urban area south of railway and encroachment into countryside (although town has already extended beyond this feature to the east). Woodland provides containment so perception of encroachment beyond parcel would be limited.</p>	Low
22				1. Parcel is contained and well related to existing development. As such any development unlikely to be perceived as	Very Low

				<p>uncontained/unrelated growth.</p> <p>2. Prevents merger between south west Woking and Brookwood.</p> <p>3. Land north of the canal is a Country Park which safeguards it from development. Land between the canal and Brookwood Lye Road is mostly Common and SNCI). Some encroachment evident on eastern edge of Brookwood(redundant nursery and gypsy and traveller site)</p>	
23				<p>1. Land contains urban edge and has deterred urban expansion (although safeguarded site lies between parcel and existing built edge).</p> <p>2. Fulfils Purpose by preventing development that could lead to merger with scattered development of Knaphill and Brookwood.</p> <p>3. Designation protects distinctive local landscape which contributes significantly to setting of western edge of Knaphill, (although this is given some protection through the local plan being identified as an area for a country park which will be delivered as part of the development on the allocated site)</p>	Very Low
24				<p>1. Urban area currently well-defined.</p> <p>2. Parcel lies between northern edge of Knaphill and Bisley which is only 0.4-0.8km wide. Land therefore prevents merging of settlements.</p> <p>3. Land prevents development encroaching into attractive rural countryside, beyond well-defined existing edge.</p>	Very Low
25				<p>1. Land removed from urban edge therefore makes particular contribution to this Purpose.</p> <p>2. Parcel located mid-way between Woking and edge of Bisley and West End where separation is approx. 2.5km wide. Parcel therefore makes important contribution to separation.</p> <p>3. Rural area containing golf course within mature landscape. Designation provides important protection against encroachment.</p>	Very Low

26				<p>1. Parcel remote from Woking although adjoining small settlement of Castle Green; designation restricts growth of this small Green Belt settlement which may create impression of sporadic growth within a wider area where there is significant existing scattered development.</p> <p>2. Located within large tract of land between Woking, Chobham (in Green Belt) and West End. Development would not result in merging but would increase development in gap between the town and Chobham.</p> <p>3. Expansion of Castle Green would lead to encroachment into countryside separate from town.</p>	Very Low
27				<p>1. Parcel of land separated from northern edge of town by SPA buffer, which provides part of the northern setting of the urban area. As such development would be separated from town and likely to give rise to perception of unrestricted and unrelated growth.</p> <p>2. Parcel located between Woking and Chobham (in Green Belt) and makes contribution to maintenance of their distinct identities.</p> <p>3. Predominantly rural character although signs of erosion through small development/land use changes. Designation limits encroachment into an area that generally contains little settlement.</p>	Very Low
28				<p>1. Significant contribution to Purpose as land abuts and contains urban edge which is well defined along a clear boundary.</p> <p>2. Makes limited contribution; western part contributes to separation between town and Bisley/West End.</p> <p>3. Parcel exhibits signs of encroachment with small developments (notably at eastern end) which impact adversely on character. Designation provides strong constraint to incremental small changes.</p>	Low
29				<p>1. Existing urban development on adjoins 3 sides. Any development would be well contained, regarded as 'infill' and would have little impact on Purpose.</p>	High

				<p>2. Indent in urban area; no contribution to purpose.</p> <p>3. Predominantly valued recreational land/open space with few rural characteristics; contained from wider Green Belt/countryside to north by road and ribbon of houses.</p>	
30				<p>1. Provides local containment of urban area although other designations (Common Land; Conservation Area; SNCI) serve Purpose by preventing development.</p> <p>2. Provides local separation of parts of urban area but makes no contribution to Purpose.</p> <p>3. Separated from wider countryside by railway; other designations provide substantial constraint to development.</p>	Low
31				<p>1. Separated from urban area by parcel 20 (and partly by 21). Contributes to Purpose by preventing expansion of ribbon development along Saunders Road (although containment of some areas means that carefully located development may not be perceived as unrestricted growth.</p> <p>2. Located within wide gap (3.8km) between town and north edge of Guildford. Development in eastern part would reduce separation with Mayford.</p> <p>3. Designation prevents incremental expansion of existing settlement where some small scale discreetly located development may otherwise be acceptable (particularly where land previously used).</p>	Low

Conclusions Regarding Performance of Land against Green Belt Purposes

3.2.30 The following conclusions may be drawn from the above analysis of the parcels of land against Green Belt Purposes 1-3 (see **Figure 5**):

- With the exception of some small parcels, the land around the periphery of Woking town contributes to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes, generally to a significant or very significant degree.
- Four parcels of land (parcels 3, 5, 6 and 29) were identified as making very little or no contribution to Green Belt Purposes 1-3 and are perhaps a product of historical changes and circumstances.
- Probably as result of past Green Belt land releases the Green Belt boundary around the Borough is generally well defined along logical and enduring boundaries, primarily roads or other significant features, which accords with national planning policy (NPPF, para. 85); there are some areas where boundaries are less well defined (such as along rear gardens of houses adjoining parcel 7, and the northern edge of parcel 15).
- Land in the south of the Borough generally performs a significant role with regard to maintaining separation between the town and Guildford (being 'towns' for the purposes of Purpose 2), whilst land to the north west is important to the continued separation of the town from Bisley (inset within Green Belt) and other washed over settlements such as Chobham.

3.3 Sustainability Assessment

3.3.1 In order to identify the most sustainable parcels which could accommodate urban extensions, a series of indicators were identified. The NPPF and the Woking Core Strategy were used to develop indicators which would measure key factors influencing the potential sustainability of particular locations for development. They relate to the principle of development on a site, rather than specific proposals. There are three key issues that vary with different locations: accessibility, environmental constraints, and opportunities for enhancing or supporting existing communities, and these three elements form the basis of the assessment.

3.3.2 The use of a variety of indicators (rather than one) for each of the three issues identified above helped to build up a comprehensive picture of the potential to deliver sustainable forms of development in each parcel, and ensured that no single indicator could influence the outcome to an undue extent. The process of assessing the sustainability of different parcels is not an exact science. Whilst we have used mechanisms to score and assess parcels of land against different criteria, the results of the assessments are intended to give us an overall picture of those parcels likely to be most sustainable. A process of ranking is used to enhance our understanding of the results, the purpose of this has been to enable us to group parcels into those with highest, medium and lowest potential sustainability. It should also be noted that there is no absolute measure of sustainability. Parcels are considered to be more or less sustainable relative to each other.

Strategic Accessibility

3.3.3 The assessment has measured the relative accessibility of the 31 parcels of land around Woking Borough, as identified in **Figure 3**. The relative accessibility of a location is determined by how easy it is for residents to get around, access shops and services, and undertake the activities that form part of their daily lives. It takes into account all forms of movement including walking, cycling, public transport and private car travel.

3.3.4 The assessment has therefore considered the following for each parcel of land:

- Access to Woking Town Centre in terms of distance, bus journey times, rail facilities, and private car journey times; and
- The propensity of the adjacent residents to walk and cycle.

Accessibility to Woking Town Centre

3.3.5 For this assessment we have considered only the strategic accessibility to Woking Town Centre. Whilst we appreciate that Woking sits within a network of significant towns within Surrey and the wider South East, when we looked at the options for considering additional towns, we concluded that this would not necessarily enhance the strategic assessments. The towns we considered as having potential to include were those which were identified in the South-East Regional Plan as being of regional significance – namely all those centres of secondary or primary significance. Of the Centres within the Woking locality (Guildford, Aldershot, Farnborough, Camberley, Bracknell and Staines) only Guildford was close enough to be considered as an alternative ‘pole’ for the strategic assessment. The proximity of Guildford Town Centre to the assessment parcels south of Woking was key to our considerations. It is clear that Guildford (along with the other towns) will have a ‘pull’ on anyone living south of Woking, and this will give those people ‘options’ for travel to work and other facilities. However, in this instance, we are measuring the potential sustainability in terms of the relative proximity to services. This means that unless one of these parcels was closer to Guildford than Woking, it would not affect our assessment – it would not score more highly in terms of the ability to access services in a sustainable way.

3.3.6 Parcel 15 was investigated, as this was the closest parcel to Guildford. A point in the centre of the parcel on a road was located (Pyle Road) and the travel route and times from here to Woking town centre and Guildford town centre were compared. Woking was closer at 2.8 miles (to Guildford Rd / Victoria Rd junction) compared with Guildford at 4.4 miles (To Station) (actual routes not as the crow flies).

3.3.7 Clearly this is a simplification, and there are also issues of practicality to consider. If we were to factor in assessments of the relative accessibility of Guildford town centre, what weight would we give this? It could not have the same weight as Woking town centre, and any formula derived to do this would be somewhat arbitrary. It would also weight the sustainability assessments in favour of all those parcels in the south of the Borough, without giving any similar consideration to the relative accessibility to a range of towns for those living in the north-east of the Borough, not to mention London itself. On balance, we felt that we should carry out this assessment based on proximity to the closest main urban area, and for all parcels, this is Woking.

3.3.8 Accessibility to Woking Town Centre was initially measured in terms of distance, from a point as close as possible to the centre of the parcel. This was done by using Google Maps, locating a road within each parcel, and seeking directions to ‘Woking’ (Guildford Road/Victoria Road Junction). This measured the actual distances travelled rather than an ‘as the crow flies’ route. The private car journey times were also measured using this method. The bus journey times for the same journeys from each parcel were then determined. This was calculated using times for an AM peak-hour trip. Although it was noted that there is the potential to improve the public transport facilities. The existence of rail links was evaluated by drawing 1km and 1.5km buffer zones around each station (Woking town centre, Brookwood, Worplesdon, and West Byfleet) to determine the proximity to rail facilities in each parcel.

3.3.9 **Table 3.3** overleaf summarises the relative accessibility of each parcel of land in relation to distance, bus journey times, proximity to railway stations, and journey times for the private car.

Table 3.3: Strategic Accessibility

Parcel Reference	Distance to Town Centre (Kilometres)	Bus Journey time to Town Centre (AM peak Minutes)	Car journey time (Minutes)	Distance to Rail Station
1	4.5	17	9	Over 1.5km
2	4.3	16	8	Between 1km and 1.5km
3	6.0	21	12	Less than 1km
4	6.5	29	12	Less than 1km
5	7.1	30	13	Less than 1km
6	8.0	33	14	Between 1km and 1.5km
7	8.5	39	16	Over 1.5km
8	6.9	28	13	Less than 1km
9	4.5	15	9	Over 1.5km
10	6.6	26	13	Over 1.5km
11	5.6	19	11	Over 1.5km
12	4.1	19	8	Between 1km and 1.5km
13	4.6	23	8	Over 1.5km
14	4.2	30	9	Between 1km and 1.5km
15	4.2	29	8	Less than 1km
16	5.0	33	8	Less than 1km
17	4.0	29	7	Less than 1km
18	5.9	48	9	Less than 1km
19	5.9	46	9	Less than 1km
20	3.4	21	7	Less than 1km
21	4.0	33	9	Over 1.5km
22	5.7	23	11	Less than 1km
23	7.0	29	15	Less than 1km
24	6.1	34	13	Over 1.5km
25	5.6	35	12	Over 1.5km
26	5.2	33	11	Over 1.5km
27	4.9	27	11	Over 1.5km
28	5.1	35	11	Over 1.5km
29	5.0	24	11	Over 1.5km
30	3.4	11	7	Over 1.5km
31	3.9	26	7	Less than 1km

- 3.3.10 The highest scoring parcels in terms of strategic accessibility are located towards the south of the town. Parcel 30 and parcels 31, 20, 17 and 15 (south and west of Mayford and Westfield). Most of these scored highly due to the presence of a local rail station close by. Other parcels that were considered to have relatively high strategic accessibility are those south east of the main urban area and close to Old Woking (parcels 12 and 13).
- 3.3.11 The least accessible areas to the town centre in strategic terms include those that are beyond the M25; parcels 5, 6, and 7 scored less well, although they are all close to Byfleet local centre. Parts of the south west of the Borough also scored poorly, including parcels 18 and 19, as well as the parcels to the north of Knaphill and Horsell, except for 29 and 27, the latter has a more direct bus route to the town centre compared to the adjacent parcel 28.

Propensity to Walk and Cycle to Work

- 3.3.12 The propensity to walk or cycle will be influenced by a number of factors including the layout and design of the expansion sites and the layout and design of adjacent areas of the existing city; the potential to 'connect in' to the existing town is particularly important in terms of creating an integrated and accessible city which promotes walking and cycling.
- 3.3.13 The average rates (2011 Census) for England and Wales were 3% for Cycling to work and 11.3% for walking to work. For Woking Borough the average is below these figures, with 2.9% cycling and 9.5% walking. Cycling rates in particular are low in the UK compared to other countries, and there is potential to improve rates across the town.
- 3.3.14 **Table 3.4** overleaf shows the corresponding propensity for people to walk or cycle to work from existing residential communities adjacent to assessment parcels, as derived from the 2011 census (Ward level data).

Table 3.4: Propensity to Walk and Cycle

Parcel Reference	Ward Code Covering Adjacent Urban Area	Ward Name Covering Adjacent Urban Area	% people who cycle to work	% people who walk to work
1	43UMFY	Horsell East and Woodham	2	5
2	43UMFY	Horsell East and Woodham	2	5
3	43UMGK	West Byfleet	2	5
4	43UMGK	West Byfleet	2	5
5	43UMFT	Byfleet	4	6
6	43UMFT	Byfleet	4	6
7	43UMFT	Byfleet	4	6
8	43UMGK	West Byfleet	2	5
9	43UMGH	Pyrford	2	2
10	43UMGH	Pyrford	2	2
11	43UMGH	Pyrford	2	2
12	43UMGE	Mount Hermon East	2	7
13	43UMGG	Old Woking	4	6
14	43UMGD	Mayford and Sutton Green	1	2
15	43UMGD	Mayford and Sutton Green	1	2
16	43UMGD	Mayford and Sutton Green	1	2
17	43UMGD	Mayford and Sutton Green	1	2
18	43UMFS	Brookwood	2	3
19	43UMFS	Brookwood	2	3
20	43UMGJ	St John's and Hook Heath	2	4
21	43UMGJ	St John's and Hook Heath	2	4
22	43UMFX	Hermitage and Knaphill South	3	5
23	43UMGB	Knaphill	2	4
24	43UMGB	Knaphill	2	4
25	43UMGB	Knaphill	2	4
26	43UMGB	Knaphill	2	4
27	43UMGB	Knaphill	2	4
28	43UMGB	Knaphill	2	4
29	43UMFW	Goldsworth West	4	3
30	43UMGJ	St John's and Hook Heath	2	4
31	43UMGD	Mayford and Sutton Green	1	2

- 3.3.15 Parcel 13 to the east of Old Woking scores best in terms of existing propensity to walk and cycle to work, with 5% cycling to work and 10% walking. The parcels to the east of Woking Borough in Byfleet (5, 6, and 7) and West Byfleet (3, 4, and 8) also score particularly well in terms of the propensity to walk and cycle. This is important to acknowledge as the M25 transects this area of the Borough, and creates a barrier in terms of strategic accessibility to Woking Town Centre. The parcels to the south and west of Mayford (14, 15, 16, and 17) also benefit from a higher than average rate of cycling (3%), but a low rate for walking (3%).
- 3.3.16 Areas which scored particularly poorly were those to the east of the Borough in Pyrford (adjacent parcels 9, 10 and 11) where only 2% cycle and 2% walk. The parcels adjacent Brookwood (18 and 19, but not 22 and 23 which are considered to be adjacent the communities in Knaphill) have only 1% cycling and 4% walking. The parcels adjacent communities in St John's and Hook Heath (20, 21, and 30), and Goldsworth West (29) also have low propensity to cycle at 2% and walk at 4%.

Strategic Accessibility Summary

- 3.3.17 The parcels which scored most highly in terms of strategic accessibility were located in several clusters around the edge of the urban area. A cluster of parcels to the south of Woking town (20, 31, 17, 15 and 14) all scored well, as did parcels 22 and 30 in the west. Towards the east of the Borough, parcel 2 scored well (north of Sheerwater) as did parcels 12 and 13. Parcel 3, within the urban area at West Byfleet also scored well.
- 3.3.18 Parcels which scored least well in strategic terms were located further from the centre of Woking. They included a series of parcels in the west: 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, and 28 and another cluster in the east: 6, 7, 10 and 11.

Environmental Constraints

- 3.3.19 Consideration of environmental constraints and designations is an integral part of a sustainability analysis. **Appendix B** contains a full list of the statutory and non-statutory constraints considered as part of this assessment. This list expands upon the list considered during the stage 1 sieve. The assessment parcels identified in **Figure 3** were again used to compare different areas of the Borough. Each parcel has been categorised in terms of whether it provides an absolute, major, minor or negligible constraint to development. **Table 3.5** explains the criteria used in drawing conclusions about the level of constraint.
- 3.3.20 **Table 3.6** overleaf presents the assessment and identifies the level of environmental constraint to development on each parcel of land. The information used has largely been obtained from the Council in the form of GIS data layers. The following should be noted in relation to the constraints information:
- The data relating to Agricultural Land Classification has been obtained from Natural England. At this strategic level, there has been no differentiation available from their data on whether land is classified as 3a or 3b. Furthermore, in the context of Woking Borough, there are only very limited choices in terms of options for urban extensions. Therefore we have not considered Agricultural Land Classification to be a major constraint at this stage.
 - Information on flood risk categories has come from the Council.
 - Data on contamination has been obtained from the Council's Environmental Health team. This data must be treated with extreme caution as it shows only areas which have had some degree of assessment for contamination in the past. The issue of contamination is closely linked to the proposed use on a particular site, and can often be overcome with careful design and mitigation. In addition, it should be noted that all farmland would need to be assessed for potential contamination if a change of use to residential was proposed.

We have therefore flagged up where there is ‘potential’ for contamination (not including farmland), but we have not considered this as a major constraint.

- Information on potential mineral resources has been obtained from Surrey County Council. There are no ‘Preferred Areas’ for mineral extraction within Woking Borough. There are however areas safeguarded under policy MC6 – ‘Safeguarding mineral resources and development’. These areas have been considered as a potential constraint. However it should be noted that this policy does not preclude planning permission being granted for other development. It does require that the County Council be consulted on any proposals in safeguarded minerals areas. We have therefore considered these areas as a minor constraint. It should also be noted that the County Council has requested consultation on any areas that Woking Borough Council proposes to remove from the Green Belt as a result of this review.

Table 3.5: Categorisation of Environmental Constraints

Sustainability Criteria – Environmental Constraints		
Absolute Constraint	Absolute	Land with / adjacent to <u>statutory international / national designations</u> or a level of flood risk that is / are likely to prevent most development. Little / no strategic development potential.
Major Constraint	Major	Land with <u>statutory regional / local designations</u> or flood risk that is / are likely to restrict strategic development potential substantially; Constraints take up a large proportion of the area of the parcel.
Minor Constraint	Minor	Land with <u>local non-statutory constraints</u> , or where statutory regional / local designation(s), or flood risk affect only a small part of area, and are unlikely to impose significant restriction(s) on development potential. Such constraint(s) are likely to be capable of being accommodated within development and/or compensated by mitigation.
Negligible / No Constraints	None	Land with negligible / <u>no known environmental constraints</u> on development potential.

Table 3.6: Level of Environmental Constraints around Woking Borough

Parcel	Description of Environmental Constraints	Summary of Environmental Constraints
1	This area includes a small area within Flood Zone 2. Another section of the parcel is considered to be Grade 3 Agricultural land. Part of the parcel has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
2	In this parcel there are several minor constraints to the north, including a very small area considered to be in Flood Zone 2, some Grade 3 Agricultural land and Safeguarded Mineral Resources (SMR) (see para 3.3.20). About a quarter of the site has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20), and a large area is considered to be a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). South-west of Martyrs Lane is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
3	Parcel 3 has no environmental constraints.	Negligible / no constraint
4	A small corner of Parcel 4 is ancient woodland and BOA. A large portion of the parcel is Grade 3 Agricultural and Safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20). Part of the parcel has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation. In the West of the parcel there is a Grade II listed building, sitting within its own grounds, and this forms part of Broadoaks; an existing 'Major Developed site in the Green Belt'	Minor constraint
5	This parcel is considered to have major constraints due to the presence of high voltage electricity pylons. This is due to the size and shape of the parcel, which leaves little space for development. Noise is also a constraint within this parcel (from the adjacent M25) but this is considered to be something which could be satisfactorily mitigated.	Major constraint
6	This parcel is also crossed by high voltage electricity pylons, which are considered to be a major constraint, although not precluding development. This is due to the size and shape of the parcel, which leaves limited room for development. Noise is also a constraint within this parcel (from the adjacent M25) but this is considered to be something which could be satisfactorily mitigated. There are also small areas safeguarded as a potential mineral resource, a BOA and Flood Zone 2.	Major constraint
7	This parcel is all classified as grade 2 agricultural land. Part of the parcel has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). The parcel is also within flood zone 2. These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
8	This parcel is all classified as grade 3 agricultural land and	Minor

Parcel	Description of Environmental Constraints	Summary of Environmental Constraints
	safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20). Parts of the parcel have also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). About a quarter of the parcel furthest from the urban area is Flood Zone 2 and BOA. These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation	constraint
9	About half of this parcel is classified as grade 3 agricultural land, with some Grade 2, but the part adjacent the urban area is classified as Urban. The eastern part is safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20), and the topography is fairly steep. A large proportion of this parcel is identified as an 'Escarpment and rising ground of Landscape importance'.* Due to the prominence of the escarpment in the landscape, it is likely that only the western half of the parcel is developable.	Major constraint
10	This parcel includes very small areas within Flood Zone 2 and designated as SNCl. It includes a large area classified as grade 2 agricultural land. The entire parcel is safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20). There are also areas of high archaeological importance within the parcel. These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
11	Half of this parcel is identified as grade 2 Agricultural land. The entire parcel is safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20). These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
12	Most of this parcel is classified as grade 3 Agricultural land, with some additional land identified as 'urban'. A small part of the parcel in the south is classified as within flood zone 2. Part of the parcel is also safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20). Much of the parcel has designations that would restrict strategic development potential substantially. This includes SNCl, Registered Park and Garden, and areas of High Archaeological Importance (AHAP). In particular, over half the parcel is identified as an "Escarpment and rising ground of Landscape importance".* This parcel is considered to have major constraints to development.	Major constraint
13	This parcel is primarily grade 3 agricultural land. The entire parcel is safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20). There is a small area within flood zone 2 and a BOA to the south. There is a Sewage Treatment Works on the eastern half of the site which would likely constitute a 'bad neighbour' use, this establishes a major constraint.	Major constraint
14	Most of this parcel is classified as grade 3 agricultural land There are areas of SNCl along the north-western parcel boundary. A significant area is safeguarded as a potential mineral resource (see para 3.3.20) and there are small areas which have been assessed for potential contamination (para 3.3.20). These constraints not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or	Minor constraint

Parcel	Description of Environmental Constraints	Summary of Environmental Constraints
	mitigation.	
15	Most of this parcel is classified as grade 3 agricultural land. Small parts of the parcel have also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
16	All of this parcel is grade 4 agricultural land and a BOA. These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
17	There is a significant Flood Risk (Zone 3) transecting through Parcel 17 and a SSSI on the vast majority of the parcel. Elsewhere parts of the parcel have been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). It is likely that these constraints will prevent most development.	Absolute constraint
18	This parcel is classified as agricultural land grade 4 and a BOA. There is also a very small area in the south within the Flood Zone 2 and two areas of SNCI. These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
19	Most of this parcel is classified as non-agricultural land and BOA. The northern half is a SNCI and ancient woodland. This is likely to restrict strategic development.	Major constraint
20	Much of this parcel classified as grade 4 agricultural land. There is small area to the east within flood zone 2, and a Conservation Area and common land to the north. Almost all the parcel is identified as an "Escarpment and rising ground of Landscape importance". * There are considered to be major constraints to development in the north along the ridge and steeper slopes of the escarpment.	Major constraint
21	Much of this parcel is classified as non-agricultural. The vast majority of the parcel is a BOA, and there is an area in the west within flood zone 3, and two small Conservation Areas. Two small parts of the parcel have been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
22	A canal transects this parcel creating a significant area through the centre that is within flood zone 3. There is a SNCI and BOA on the vast majority of site. The parcel also includes a Conservation Area and common land. As a result of these constraints, there is a significantly reduced developable area.	Major constraint
23	Much of this parcel is grade 4 agricultural land, non-agricultural or urban. This parcel is transected by a canal which creates a significant area through the centre within flood zone 3. Much of the parcel is identified as BOA. The flood zone places significant restrictions on	Major constraint

Parcel	Description of Environmental Constraints	Summary of Environmental Constraints
	development in this parcel.	
24	The majority of this parcel is classified as grade 3 agricultural land. Part of the parcel has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
25	The majority of this parcel is classified as grade 3 agricultural land. This constraint are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation	Minor constraint
26	The majority of this parcel is classified as grade 4 agricultural land, with some Grade 3. This constraint are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation	Minor constraint
27	This parcel contains grade 4 agricultural land. Much of the parcel, particularly the central area, is within flood zone 3 and 2. This area is also subject to designation as a SNCI and within a BOA. These constraints are likely to restrict strategic development potential substantially	Major constraint
28	This parcel is classified as grade 3 and grade 4 agricultural land. A small area lies within Flood Zone 2, and there are small Conservation Areas, common land and an Area of High Archaeological importance. Part of the parcel has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
29	This parcel is classified as grade 4 agricultural land. Much of it is within Flood Zone 2, but there are no other constraints. These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint
30	Almost the entire parcel is a BOA, a SNCI, and common land. and there is a Conservation Area. Part of the parcel has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). This parcel is considered to have absolute constraints to development.	Absolute constraint
31	This parcel is classified as grade 4 agricultural land. An area in the west is within flood zone 3. There is also a very small area of SSSI and BOA. Part of the parcel has also been assessed for potential contamination (see para 3.3.20). These constraints are not considered to be major and could be accommodated in development with design or mitigation.	Minor constraint

* Parcels 9, 12 and 20 include land identified as being part of an "Escarpment and rising ground of Landscape importance". This is a constraint identified in the Core strategy which says in para 5.251: 'Development will not normally be permitted on the slopes of the escarpments which are shown on the proposals map, or which would result in a significant reduction in the amount of tree cover. Development on the top of the escarpments will only be permitted where it would not adversely affect the character of the landscape'.

Environmental Constraints Summary

3.3.21 In terms of the geographical distribution of parcels with different levels of environmental constraint around the Borough, there are no real patterns. There is one parcel with negligible / no constraints (parcel 3). 18 parcels were considered to have only minor constraints to development, and 10 parcels were subject to major constraints. Two further parcels (17 and 30) were considered subject to absolute constraints, in addition to those areas sieved out during stage 1.

Local Communities

3.3.22 Existing communities around the edge of an urban area are potentially able to benefit to a greater or lesser extent from adjacent new development within the Green Belt. Factors which are relevant include the existence of local centres which could be supported by additional development and the potential level of connectivity to those centres. Equally, new development can also benefit from existing shops and services where they are in close proximity. The criteria that was considered is as follows:

- Is there an existing local centre which could be supported by new development?
- Are there existing community facilities (such as schools or a health centre) which could serve new development?
- Is there potential for high levels of local connectivity through existing road connections into the adjacent urban area?
- Are there physical barriers to connectivity such as roads, railways, rivers or canals?

3.3.23 The relationship with existing facilities, including the potential relationship with local communities, is complex. New development can also provide new shopping and community facilities which could benefit local communities. However, we have excluded the potential for this from our initial assessment as it would tend to weight the assessment in favour of areas where larger sites can be provided. We could also say, in theory, that new opportunities could be provided anywhere, and this would not help us to differentiate between the parcels. It should be noted that these issues have been considered in the later stages of the review, and particularly in relation to the site assessments.

3.3.24 It should be noted that there is some overlap between this part of the assessment and the propensity to walk and cycle as outlined in the accessibility assessment; in particular because it is likely that walking and cycling will increase with greater connectivity into the adjacent urban area.

Existing Local Centres in Adjacent Communities

3.3.25 'Local centres' include District, Local and Neighbourhood centres as identified in the Core Strategy Proposals Map (2012) and are as follows:

- Woking Town Centre;
- Knaphill Village Centre;
- St. John's Village Centre;
- Sheerwater Village Centre;
- West Byfleet Village Centre;

- Byfleet Village Centre;
- Horsell Village Centre;
- Goldsworth Park Village Centre;
- Walton Road Village Centre;
- Pyrford Village Centre;
- Brookwood Village Centre;
- Kingfield Village Centre;
- Westfield Village Centre; and
- Old Woking Village Centre.
- Mayford village Centre

3.3.26 For each of the parcels, an assessment was made as to whether any of the above local centres were within a 'reasonable distance' (i.e. within a 1km buffer). The distance to the local centre was also recorded. The results are shown in **Table 3.7** overleaf.

3.3.27 Parcels with good accessibility to local centres included those in the east of the Borough close to Sheerwater, West, Byfleet, Byfleet and Pyrford, as well as a small cluster around Old Woking. Parcels around Brookwood and Knaphill which are close to the edge of the urban area in the west also scored well. The areas scoring least well in this respect includes a cluster of parcels in the south beyond the urban area and Mayford, and a number of parcels which are somewhat removed from the urban area in the north, north-west and south-east.

Table 3.7: Proximity to existing local centres

Parcel Reference	Existing Local Centre in Adjacent Community?	Distance to Local Centre (km)
	Yes / No	Car Distance (km)
1	No	3.80
2	Yes	1.90
3	Yes	0.50
4	Yes	1.00
5	Yes	0.80
6	Yes	1.20
7	Yes	1.20
8	Yes	1.40
9	Yes	0.80
10	No	2.10
11	No	2.10
12	Yes	1.00
13	Yes	0.90
14	Yes	1.20
15	Yes	1.30
16	No	2.00
17	Yes	1.40
18	No	2.90
19	No	2.40
20	Yes	0.70
21	No	2.70
22	Yes	1.10
23	Yes	1.60
24	Yes	1.30
25	No	1.40
26	No	2.70
27	No	1.40
28	Yes	1.20
29	Yes	0.70
30	Yes	0.40
31	No	1.60

Existing Community Facilities and Road Connections

- 3.3.28 Community facilities including Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Health Centres (Doctor's surgeries) and Community Centres were mapped. From this it was determined whether or not each of the parcels are within a reasonable distance to each facility (again, a 1km buffer was used).
- 3.3.29 An assessment of the number of road and other connections into the adjacent urban area from each parcel was made to determine whether there is potential for high levels of local connectivity to existing facilities. The results for each of these are shown in **Table 3.8**.
- 3.3.30 Parcels 2, 3 and 4 in the north-east of the Borough have particularly good access to existing community facilities. These are close to Sheerwater and West Byfleet. Parcel 12 is also relatively close to both Pyrford and Old Woking. In the west of the Borough, parcels 22, 28, 29 and 30 are close to facilities in Brookwood, Knaphill and St Johns. Parcels 13 and 23 also scored well in this respect, and these are close to Old Woking and Brookwood / Knaphill respectively.
- 3.3.31 In terms of the potential for connections into the existing urban area, parcels which score most highly are inevitably those closest to the existing urban area. Parcels 8,9 and 12 in the east, parcels 15, 17, 19, 20 and 21 in the south, and parcel 24 in the north-west all scored highly.

Table 3.8: Community Facilities and Road Connections

Parcel Reference	Are There Existing Community Facilities?				No. of Road Connections into Adjacent Urban Area ⁴
	Primary school	Secondary school	Health centre	Community Centre	
1	No	No	No	No	2
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
5	Yes	No	No	Yes	1
6	Yes	No	No	Yes	2
7	Yes	No	No	Yes	2
8	Yes	No	No	No	3
9	Yes	No	No	No	3
10	No	No	No	No	2
11	No	No	No	No	1
12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
13	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	1
14	No	No	Yes	No	3
15	No	No	No	No	5
16	No	No	No	No	2
17	No	No	No	No	4
18	No	No	No	No	1
19	No	No	No	No	4
20	Yes	No	No	No	4
21	No	No	No	No	3
22	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
23	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	2
24	Yes	No	No	Yes	3
25	No	No	No	No	1
26	No	No	No	No	1
27	No	Yes	No	Yes	2
28	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3
29	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
30	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3
31	No	No	No	No	3

Physical Barriers to Connectivity

3.3.32 A consideration of whether there are any physical barriers that would hinder integration with the existing local community was made. These barriers could include roads, railways, and rivers or canals. The total number of constraints was calculated to compare each parcel to one

⁴ This measurement gives an indication of potential sustainability because it shows how easy it will be to integrate new development with existing communities, maximising potential for pedestrian and cycling opportunities.

another and give a similar weighting all of the criteria listed above. The most highly constrained parcels in this respect were 1,2,19, 20, 21, 22 and 23.

Table 3.9: Physical barriers to connectivity

Parcel Reference	Any barriers to connectivity?			Total Number of Constraints
	Main road	Railway	River / Canal	
1	Yes	No	Yes	2
2	Yes	No	Yes	2
3	No	No	No	0
4	Yes	No	No	1
5	Yes	No	No	1
6	No	No	No	0
7	No	No	No	0
8	No	No	No	0
9	No	No	No	0
10	No	No	No	0
11	No	No	No	0
12	No	No	No	0
13	No	No	No	0
14	No	No	No	0
15	Yes	No	No	1
16	No	Yes	No	1
17	No	Yes	No	1
18	No	Yes	No	1
19	Yes	Yes	Yes	3
20	Yes	Yes	No	2
21	No	Yes	Yes	2
22	Yes	No	Yes	2
23	Yes	No	Yes	2
24	No	No	No	0
25	No	No	No	0
26	No	No	No	0
27	Yes	No	No	1
28	No	No	No	0
29	No	No	No	0
30	No	No	Yes	1

Local Communities Summary

- 3.3.33 Parcels which scored well in terms of their access to local communities included parcel 2, close to Sheerwater and parcels 3 and 4, which are very close to West Byfleet. Parcel 12, which spreads across a wide area and is close to facilities in both Old Woking and Pyrford scored well, as did parcel 13, close to Old Woking. In the west, parcels 22, 30, 28 and 29 scored well. These are close to Goldsworth Park, Knaphill, St Johns and Brookwood.
- 3.3.34 Parcels which performed least well in the local communities assessment included, unsurprisingly, parcels which were removed from the urban area. This included parcel 1 in the north, parcel 11 in the south-east, parcels 16, 17, 18, 19, 21 and 31 in the south-west and parcels 25 and 26 in the north-west.

Conclusions

- 3.3.35 The sustainability assessment has enabled the identification of a series of parcels which have higher potential to deliver sustainable development relative to others (see table 3.10). These are identified in **Figure 6**. The results, and their relationship with the Green Belt assessment, are discussed in **Section 3.5**.

Table 3.10: Results of Sustainability Assessment

Parcel Reference	Strategic Accessibility (Ranked)	Environmental Rank	Local Communities Rank	Overall Sustainability Rank
3	8	1	2	1
2	4	2	8	2
4	13	2	6	3
29	17	2	3	4
12	2	20	1	5
28	25	2	4	6
13	5	20	8	7
22	7	20	7	8
31	9	2	24	9
20	1	20	14	9
15	15	2	19	11
8	17	2	18	12
30	3	30	5	13
1	6	2	31	14
7	29	2	10	15
21	11	2	29	16
24	29	2	12	17
9	10	20	15	18
14	27	2	17	19
11	19	2	26	20
5	14	20	15	21
16	23	2	25	22
26	22	2	27	23

25	28	2	23	24
10	29	2	22	24
18	21	2	30	24
27	15	20	20	27
6	26	20	10	28
23	24	20	13	29
17	11	30	20	30
19	20	20	28	31

3.4 Consideration of Landscape Character and Sensitivity to Change

- 3.4.1 The Borough lies within the Thames Basin Heaths National Character Area as defined in the Character Map of England (Countryside Agency and others; 1999), which covers an extensive tract of land extending westwards in a broad band from the outskirts of London around Esher to beyond Newbury. This provides a strategic scale understanding of landscape character and context of the Borough's landscape but is insufficiently detailed for the purposes of this Review.
- 3.4.2 At a county level, 'The Future of Surrey's Landscape and Woodlands' study (Surrey County Council; 1997) shows that the Borough lies within the Thames Basin Heaths Landscape Character Area, which in turn is divided into sub-character areas, two of which cover parts of the Borough:
- Western Surrey covering land that wraps around the northern, western and south western parts of the town, described as "A low lying and undulating, extensive scale landscape with dense tree cover, heathland and pockets of small scale farmland"; and
 - The Lower Wey which covers the River Wey and associated floodplain between the eastern edge of Woking town and Byfleet and the land south and south east of the town, described as "A flat bottomed valley with gently sloping sides, through which the River Wey and the Wey Navigation meanders, creating an intimate, small scale, yet open landscape."
- 3.4.3 However the study, which is somewhat out of date (in terms of both time and landscape character assessment methodology) is also insufficiently detailed to assist with understanding landscape character at a scale that is helpful for the purposes of this element of the Green Belt review.
- 3.4.4 Unfortunately there is no published landscape character assessment of the Borough to inform an understanding of the local landscape character of the area. The Woking Character Study (The Landscape Partnership; October 2010) provides an evaluation of the townscape of Woking and provides no information on the character of the land beyond the settlement edge. The Heritage of Woking study (Woking Borough Council; 2000) is an inventory of the cultural heritage assets of the Borough only. The Urban Areas of Special Residential Character (SPG; Adopted 2000) provides an analysis of those areas (identified under the former Local Plan) as Residential Areas of Special Character, all of which lie within the urban area. Surrey County Council is leading work on preparing a new Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the County.
- 3.4.5 Therefore, to inform the identification of the assessment parcels and the consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape and its capacity to accommodate changes through development, a preliminary assessment of the landscape characteristics of the parcels has been undertaken

during related site survey work. This is not a detailed landscape character study which is beyond the scope of this Green Belt Review, but provides a strategic ‘overview’ of the prevailing character of the parcels and their potential sensitivity to change and potential for accommodating a strategic level of development. This assessment has involved an examination of the parcels (where visible from publicly accessible locations, and using Google Earth) to identify their particular physical characteristics (such as topography, land cover, land uses, settlement characteristics, nature of boundaries and Green Belt edge), visual characteristics (visibility and inter-visibility, exposure, containment, and visual detractors), and obvious perceptual characteristics (such as sense of place, remoteness, and tranquillity). This has informed judgements on the prevailing character of the area, and its sensitivity and capacity to accommodate potential changes that are likely to arise from strategic levels of residential development. The judgements made are for each parcel as a whole, although it is the case that (particularly in the case of larger parcels), there is the potential for significant local variations in landscape characteristics, and the potential sensitivity and capacity to occur within some parcels. Where this has been found to be particularly the case, this is reflected by a ‘split’ assessment. **Table 3.12** below shows the judgements made in respect of each parcel.

Table 3.11: Criteria for Assessing Landscape Character and Sensitivity to Change

Criteria	Capacity for Change	
<p>Land has predominantly <u>strong unspoilt rural character</u> that is highly sensitive to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land consists of an uncontained exposed open area where the impact of strategic level of development would extend over a considerable area, or where there may be little/no potential to mitigate the adverse effects of changes; or an area of intrinsically strong landscape character. ▪ Strategic level of development likely to have substantial adverse impacts on landscape character and/or substantial adverse impacts on landscape features which may be considered to be important to the setting of the town. 	<p>Little / No Capacity for Change</p> <p>Landscape highly sensitive to change.</p>	<p>Little / None</p>
<p>Land has <u>predominantly intact rural character</u> and is sensitive to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic level of development likely to have significant adverse impacts on landscape character and/or significant adverse impacts on landscape features that are considered to be important and may contribute to the setting of the town. ▪ Land may be poorly contained area (such as elevated open land) where changes could extend over a wide area and there may be limited potential to mitigate the adverse impacts of the changes. 	<p>Low Capacity for Change</p> <p>Landscape sensitive to change.</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Land of either <u>unexceptional character</u> with significant detracting elements or modifications (such as golf course), or area with <u>stronger character</u> that benefits from significant physical/visual containment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land capable of accommodating significant change without undue harm to wider landscape character and/or landscape features that are considered to be important to the setting of the town. ▪ There may be potential for some enhancements to 	<p>Moderate Capacity for Change</p> <p>Landscape capable of accepting some change without undue harm.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

Criteria	Capacity for Change	
landscape character in weaker areas.		
<p>Land with <u>weakly defined character / degraded land.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land capable of accommodating substantial development without adverse impact on wider character and/or landscape features that are considered to be important to the setting of the town. ▪ There is likely to be substantial potential for landscape enhancement. ▪ Area may already contain development which allows for potential for redevelopment. 	<p>High Capacity for Change</p> <p>Landscape capable of accommodating substantial change.</p>	<p>High</p>

Table 3.12: Assessment of Landscape Character and Sensitivity to Change

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)
1	Parcel occupied by McLaren centre and grounds with developed contemporary character / landmark building and associated parking and landscaped grounds. Limited potential in landscape terms to accommodate further development associated with the existing use.	Moderate
2	Golf course landscape with fairways divided by mature tree belts in southern part, all contained by extensive mature woodland. Finer grained landscape to north containing mature woodlands, nurseries (including tree nursery), and small pockets of pasture within strong landscape framework – much of this area subject to recently approved extension to McLaren campus (to remain in Green Belt). Former waste site, contained within woodland, allocated for waste-related development. Very little settlement. Overall, parcel has strong character with extensive woodland which contributes to enclosure and defines northern setting of Woking. Limited capacity to accommodate further significant development without significant adverse effects on important landscape features and prevailing strong character.	Low
3	Recreational landscape comprising school, associated playing fields and park which is contained by existing development and the Broadoaks allocated employment site (a Major developed site in Green Belt). Belts of mature trees and generally open to local views. Space makes contribution to townscape and approach into West Byfleet from east. Whilst there appears to be capacity to accommodate development in the more discreet area of northern playing fields without significant adverse effects, this appears to be prevented by existing established community uses.	Moderate
4	Largely unspoilt level rural character of Lower Wey valley with rectilinear pasture fields and strong vegetation structure, with a strong sense of place. River Wey navigation has strong intimate contained linear character along eastern and south eastern sides and is a recreation corridor. M25 forms strong	Little / None

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)
	boundary to east but is surprisingly well integrated preventing any perception or visual association with Byfleet beyond; associated noise levels are high. Large blocks of mature woodland on northern and western sides contain, integrate and define built up edge such that area has no visual association with the urban area. Broadoaks Major developed site (in Green Belt) is contained by this woodland. West Hall consists of compact group of buildings (including contemporary landmark building) which also contributes to character of area, with associated parkland characteristics. Overall, the area has high landscape sensitivity to change, except the Broadoaks site which is very well contained and lies within the settlement envelope.	
5	Small pockets of land lying between western edge of Byfleet and M25, and associated embankments/screening. Southern field is a sports field. Crossed by HV power line/associated pylons. High level of noise. Belts of mature trees in southern part. Essentially a remnant landscape with limited features of value that is capable of accommodating development without wider harm/adverse visual effects.	Moderate
6	Remnant areas of countryside contained between M25, which forms barrier along western side, and existing residential development on edge of Byfleet, which has a generally urban fringe character with various uses including allotments, recreation, small pasture fields (often intensely grazed by horses), and crossed by HV power line/associated pylons. Visually contained with no visual relationship with West Byfleet to west due to raised M25 and associated screening. Northern fields make a limited contribution to setting of Byfleet as appreciated from A245 and provide separation between houses and M25. Area has potential to accommodate some development without significant adverse landscape/visual effects.	Moderate
7	Parcel forms part of River Wey valley, comprising level largely open landscape of fields separated by recently planted hedges, extending east from built up edge of Byfleet which forms a poorly integrated boundary. Land appears to be managed by Wildlife Trust. Cluster of development intrudes along western side served by access from north. Open, rather sterile character which contrasts with the heavily vegetated, intimate river character beyond. Area has potential to accommodate development without significant wider adverse landscape/visual effects, and would offer opportunity to enhance landscape and create a stronger well defined boundary to the settlement.	Moderate
8	Tract of land within Wey valley, which is largely occupied by a golf course which has created an open artificial landscape with few remaining landscape features. South western part occupied by woodland with some scattered development along Pyford Road. North western part contains leisure centre	Moderate

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)	
	<p>complex, scattered development off Pyrford Road and paddocks, and small contained field off Dodds Lane. High level of tree cover along Wey navigation along eastern side creates strong landscape feature, skyline and visual containment. Whilst western Green Belt boundary defined by Pyrford Road, distinction is 'blurred' by development along eastern side. Overall, a much altered landscape with a weak character that provides some potential for accommodating development without wider landscape and visual effects, especially in pockets of land that are more contained and where development could also be accommodated quite discreetly. There is potential to restore landscape structure.</p>		
9	<p>A broad open arable landscape extending across elevated/sloping land which is consequently quite widely exposed to the south east. The urban edge is generally well contained such that the parcel contributes substantially to the rural setting of the town and its integration within the wider landscape. Northern edge is characterised by smaller fields and a higher level of vegetation, including some woodland, which integrates the urban edge successfully meaning that the urban area is contained from the open landscape beyond. Elveden Close is a small isolated cul-de-sac residential area that is a development 'anomaly' although reasonably integrated. The north western field, west of Coldharbour Road, is elevated and level, being set beyond the upper slopes, partly contained by trees, and consequently more discreet. The open slopes to the east are highly sensitive to change given their open and exposed nature.</p>	Little / None	Low
10	<p>A highly modified golf course landscape subdivided by trees and scattered development east of Pyrford. The two areas are generally quite well contained from the wider surroundings. The eastern side is characterised by a band of vegetation along the Wey navigation, which forms a discreet linear landscape with as strong sense of place, and provides containment from the landscape beyond. Consequently any development would be apparent within the landscape compartments, but otherwise contained, although completely separate from the urban area.</p>	Moderate	
11	<p>Block of mature woodland containing chalet park, adjoining Wey navigation on east and south sides. Woodland forms strong landscape feature and visually contains the development such that it has no wider landscape or visual effects. No capacity to accommodate change without substantial harm to woodland except for potential redevelopment of existing chalet park.</p>	Little / None	High
12	<p>Extensive area of land on south east side of town which contains slopes and broad ridge of elevated land, providing containment of urban area from landscape and contribution to setting of the town. Northern part comprises extensive woodland that provides strong structure on edge of urban area,</p>	Little / None	

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)
	with much of remaining land comprising a golf course straddling the ridge and slopes, with fairways separated by tree groups and belts, creating a modified landscape. Slopes and ridge are exposed in views from some parts of the wider area, particularly the south. Registered Park & Garden in eastern part. Little/no capacity to accommodate strategic development without significant adverse landscape and visual effects.	
13	Level arable fields with no significant features, crossed by access to large sewage works complex to east. Well contained to north by rising land in parcel 12 and vegetation along Hoe Stream, but more exposed across level floodplain landscape of River Wey to south. Recent development at Palace Way beyond western boundary is locally prominent and provides clear visual reference to urban area, whilst Old Woking is reasonably well integrated by vegetation. Any development would create an 'isolated' eastward extension into farmland which would relate poorly to settlement form.	Moderate
14	Level open agricultural landscape of rectilinear pasture fields, defined by low hedges, flanked by some linear blocks of woodland. Strong rural character with few detracting features and little/no association with built up area of Woking. Open nature also allows medium to long distance views, particularly in north/south direction between adjoining woodlands. Settlement limited to some linear development along New Lane and farms and houses at Moor Lane to north. Any development would represent a significant incursion into this sensitive landscape.	Little / None
15	Varied landscape of rectilinear fields, golf course in northern part, and suburban/ribbon development across central part. The parcel straddles a low yet locally pronounced ridge which forms a broad wedge which separates the Wey valley and valley to west that contains the A320. Existing development quite well integrated owing to vegetation cover within large residential plots. Scattered development along fringes. Perception is that the area is quite separate from the urban area; the northern edge adjoins Mayford where development is also quite well integrated by mosaic of small plots, tree belts and small woodlands. Southern part more visually exposed than northern (golf course) part, which benefits from containment provided by the existing residential plots and related tree cover, and woodland east of New Lane. Parcel is generally sensitive to development although some more discreet areas, lying between/ closely associated with existing development in northern part are less sensitive, although this may perpetuate the loose, piecemeal nature of existing development or lead to consolidation of the existing settlement pattern.	Low Moderate
16	A distinctive generally small-scale landscape that possesses a reasonably strong landscape structure based around a low rounded ridge that contributes to providing variety and	Low

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)
	containment. Ribbon of houses along northern edge but well integrated; other scattered development also well integrated. Isolated industrial site located between A320 and railway, but discreet. Sense of remoteness from urban area. Little scope to accommodate significant development without substantial adverse effects on landscape character.	
17	A very varied generally intimate small scale and complex mosaic of small rectilinear fields, oak trees, woodlands and heathland crossed by roads with associated ribbons and pockets of residential development, all generally absorbed within a mature landscape structure that has a clear sense of place. This landscape is particularly sensitive to further change as any significant development may lead to fragmentation of the landscape and/or, amalgamation and intensification of development resulting in significant adverse effects on character.	Low
18	An attractive landscape with considerable variations in topography and vegetation cover; some more open fields with large tracts of woodland with smaller discreet fields and high level of woodland towards southern part. Particular sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout most of area. Little/no scope to accommodate strategic development without substantial adverse landscape and, potentially, visual effects.	Little / None
19	Character defined by extensive golf course landscapes that occupy most of area, separated by scattered detached residential development in large mature plots along Heath House Road. Golf courses characterised by linear fairways separated by linear belts of mature trees. Parcel generally very well contained visually from surroundings due to high level of mature vegetation; occasional views into parts from the adjoining roads. The impression overall is of a mature, predominantly wooded landscape and setting/approach to the town from the south. The strong landscape structure means that it would be possible to integrate development within parts of this landscape without wider visual harm, although this may result in significant adverse effects on landscape features and its existing character.	Moderate
20	Parcel includes south/south east facing slopes with significant levels of vegetation in the form of woodlands and strong tree belts, which contains the existing urban edge and integrates the ribbon of housing along Hook Heath Road (a Conservation Area within Green Belt). Much of the area is identified as Escarpment and Rising Ground of Landscape Importance. Slopes are partly exposed with some areas being contained by vegetation beyond which creates more discreet, contained areas; the level land at the foot of the slopes north of Saunders Lane is notably discreet. The area has a generally strong landscape character, with some weaker areas notably along the A320 which are partially apparent approaching from the south. Overall, the area makes a positive contribution to the	Low Moderate

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)
	southern setting and containment of the town, although there are some areas that are more discreet and which, in visual terms, are less sensitive to change.	
21	Parcel consists largely of a golf course, comprising a modified landscape structure with tree belts, copses and woodlands. Strong belt of mature woodland along southern side. The high level of vegetation creates a discreet landscape compartment, although there are some suburban influences from ribbons of detached houses along the western and eastern sides. The high level of mature tree cover within this parcel and parcel 19 contributes to the wooded southern setting and approach to the town. Whilst the strong landscape structure means that any development would be well contained, it would almost inevitable impact on mature vegetation/landscape features and potentially adversely affect the setting of the town which is well integrated on this side.	Low
22	Parcel has a generally strong character with a combination of valued features (woodland, ponds, and canal) and possesses a strong sense of place, except in the south west corner where there is a redundant nursery and Gypsy and Traveller site which forms an urban fringe landscape of low quality. Land north of the canal comprises a country park that is readily accessible from the town and highly valued for recreation. Vegetation within the country park and area north of Brookwood Lye Road provides containment of the urban area to the north and east and contributes to its local setting, which is appreciated from Brookwood Lye Road; it also provides separation between the town and Brookwood.	Little / None
23	Parcel extends across gentle valley/valley floor of small stream that flows south between higher ground at Sheets Heath and the urban edge of Knaphill. The valley has a strong identity and sense of place with a pattern of low lying/ gently sloping fields, woodland and tree belts. A residential allocation will form a new outer edge to Knaphill, and will provide a country park extending through the valley to the west and south west. The area is visually exposed in views from a short section of the A322 on the eastern edge of Brookwood and contributes to the setting and identity of the urban edge; it also makes a valuable contribution to the separation of Brookwood from the urban area. The valley landscape is particularly sensitive to further change and its protection will be secured through its establishment as a country park.	Little / None
24	Landscape with a soft variable landform that forms a substantial part of the countryside that lies between the north western edge of the town and southern side of Bisley. It has a strong, largely unspoilt and intact character of generally small pasture fields defined by mature oak trees, strong tree belts, woodland strips, woodlands and copses which reinforce the sense of separation between the two built up areas; it contains little settlement with Chobham Road forming a strong, well	Little / None

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)
	defined limit to the town. The area makes a significant contribution to the attractive setting of the edge of the edge of Knaphill and Bisley and is particularly sensitive to change.	
25	Parcel consists principally of a golf course landscape which rises gently to the north west that has been reasonably well integrated into the landscape by the retention of mature tree belts and small woodlands, although much of the former field pattern has been lost. The area is generally well contained and, in conjunction with parcel 24, makes a valuable contribution to the separation of Woking and Bisley and is therefore sensitive to change.	Low
26	A small parcel of sloping land, forming part of a local knoll that increases its prominent in the local landscape, extending south from the cluster of development at Castle Green, which has a reasonably well defined and integrated boundary. The landscape of the remaining open land has been eroded by horse grazing with field boundaries largely absent except along the edges of the parcel; the land is locally exposed and therefore visually sensitive	Low
27	A predominantly quite level rural pastoral landscape characterised by small streams and a mainly well-defined field pattern supporting many trees in hedgerows, tree belts, areas of woodland, and copses, which give a significant degree of containment from the surroundings. Some horse-related activities are eroding character. Occasional nurseries and scattered settlement mainly around fringes of area, with central part largely clear of development and with a degree of remoteness. Landscape contributes to wider setting of town, beyond the heathland and woodland that lies between its northern fringes and the parcel. Any development would be unrelated to the town and is likely to lead to incremental erosion of the character of this area, within a wider area that already contains significant scattered development and small settlements.	Low
28	Strong predominantly rural character dominated by dense mosaic of woodland interspersed with small grass fields and paddocks, with nurseries (some with linear tree lines/ shelterbelts), small area of golf course that extends into area from parcel 25, and scattered suburban development served off the roads that define much of the parcel; garden centre and employment uses at eastern end and recreation ground at south western end. The area provides a high level of containment to the north western side of the town and defines its setting, and most parts are therefore sensitive to change.	Low
29	A well-used recreational landscape comprising a lake, playing fields, all-weather pitches, play space surrounded on all sides by development; the northern edge being defined by a ribbon of houses along Littlewick Road which means there is no recognisable relationship with the countryside to the north (parcel 28). Whilst the landscape has capacity to	Moderate

Parcel	Description	Capacity for Change (Based on Landscape Character and Sensitivity)	
	accommodate development without wider adverse landscape/visual effects the existing uses preclude any development opportunities.		
30	The parcel consists almost entirely of woodland with two notable open areas providing recreation grounds/playing fields. Most of the area is Common and therefore publicly accessible. The railway to the south forms a well-defined boundary to existing urban development and Hook Heath golf course (parcel 21) to the south. The north western edge is defined by the canal with some pockets of residential development; the north eastern side by suburban housing. The recreation ground in the northern part forms a green that contributes to the townscape of the St Johns area. The area generally has a distinctive sense of place and is highly sensitive to change from development.	Little / None	
31	Parcel has a varied character with the linear settlement along Saunders Road defining the northern side, with small/medium sized paddocks and grass fields to the south extending to Smart's Heath Road. The fields are generally defined by hedges with trees, although some boundaries appear to have been removed and fields subdivided to accommodate significant levels of horse grazing which is notable in the north western part. Areas of woodland provide significant features and containment at the western end and, in parts along the southern boundary; overall this gives much of the area a contained character where the ribbon of housing is integrated into the landscape. There are limited views north towards the wooded slopes rising up to Hook Heath Road beyond. Development forms a triangle at the eastern end and is only separated from Mayford by the railway; a large nursery (some of which may be unused), lies to the east of Goose Lane and this area is generally well contained and is potentially less sensitive to change.	Low	Moderate

3.5 Overall Conclusions from Stage 2 Review

- 3.5.1 Following the completion of the Green Belt and Sustainability Assessments, this section brings together the results of those assessments, and considers the 'capacity for change' of each parcel, both in terms of their landscape character and sensitivity and in relation to existing land uses. Parcels recommended for removal from the Green Belt to accommodate new development, are then identified.

Green Belt Assessment

- 3.5.2 The Green Belt assessment has concluded, overall that the great majority of the Green Belt around the Borough of Woking is contributing significantly to the purposes of Green Belt and as such has either low or very low suitability as an area of search.
- 3.5.3 Several small and rather constrained parcels of land were considered to have high suitability for removal from the Green Belt. These are identified on **Figure 5** and in **Table 3.2**. They include several parcels of land in the Byfleet area (parcels 3, 5 and 6) and a parcel in the north-west of Woking town (parcel 29). In terms of its capacity for change, parcel 3 consists of public open space, and a Junior School with associated playing fields, and is therefore unlikely to be developed. Parcel 5 has very limited development potential due to its size, shape and the presence of a Motorway and high voltage power lines along its length. Parcel 6 is similarly constrained, but to a lesser extent. Parcel 29 also consists of public open space and is unlikely to be developed. Only parcel 6 is likely to be able to deliver any potential housing land, and this to a limited extent.
- 3.5.4 Elsewhere, there was only one parcel of land which was considered to have 'moderate' suitability for removal from the Green Belt. This was parcel 7. This parcel is an open area of land on the eastern edge of the Borough, with poor accessibility into Woking town centre.
- 3.5.5 The Green Belt Review will inevitably have to consider parcels with low or even very low suitability for removal from the Green Belt. It also means that the relative sustainability of a parcel of land will be key in reaching conclusions on which areas to remove from the Green Belt. Areas with high potential sustainability therefore need to be considered, regardless of their Green Belt assessment. Areas with low (as opposed to very low) suitability for removal from Green Belt include parcel 2 (north of Sheerwater), Parcel 8 (south-east of West Byfleet), parcel 13 (west of Old Woking - which includes a sewage works), parcel 28 (north of Knaphill), and a cluster of parcels south of Mayford (15, 19, 20, 21, 30, and 31).

Sustainability Assessment

- 3.5.6 The results of the Sustainability Assessment are presented in relative rather than absolute terms. That is to say that the parcels have been ranked according to their scores against the sustainability assessment, and the parcels with the most potential to achieve sustainable development, relative to the others, have been identified. The results of the assessment are illustrated in **Figure 6** and **Table 3.10**.
- 3.5.7 Of the parcels identified as having high suitability for removal from the Green Belt, the Sustainability Assessment has identified two (parcel 3 and 29) as having higher levels of sustainability. Both of these parcels are constrained by their use as public open space and a school. Parcels 5 and 6, which were also identified as having high suitability for removal from the Green Belt, were considered to have lower potential for sustainable development. This was largely due to their distance from Woking Town Centre, and environmental constraints. Both parcels do however have access to Byfleet local centre.
- 3.5.8 Other parcels which were considered to have relatively high potential for sustainability included parcel 2 (north of Sheerwater), parcel 4 (West Byfleet), parcel's 12 and 13 (south

east of the main urban area and close to Old Woking), parcels 20 and 31 (around Mayford), parcel 22 (east of Brookwood) and parcel 28 (north of Knaphill).

- 3.5.9 Parcel 7 has a moderate level of sustainability. The strategic accessibility level in this case was lower than any other parcel. Whilst it has some potential, this makes it less suitable than those parcels identified above for further investigation.
- 3.5.10 Following the Green Belt and Sustainability Assessments, we can therefore identify a series of parcels which we can say are 'preferred' in terms of further investigation for suitability for removal from the Green Belt. These are identified on **Figure 7** and include parcel 2 north of Sheerwater, parcels 3, 4, 5 and 6 around Byfleet, parcels 12 and 13 north-east of Old Woking, parcels 20 and 31 south of Mayford and Westfield, and parcels 22, 28 and 29 west of Woking. Of these, **parcels 3, 5 and 29** can be discounted due to land use constraints. Parcel 7 scored moderately in both assessments. We have included it here, but due to its poor strategic accessibility we consider this to be less suitable than the above parcels.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity for Change

- 3.5.11 At this point it is necessary to consider the *capacity for change* of each of the parcels identified in **Paragraph 3.5.11**. This section also considers whether a suitable new Green Belt boundary can be found within or beyond the parcel in question. In terms of landscape sensitivity, **parcel 2** is considered to have low capacity for change. (see **Table 3.12**). The southern part of the parcel, adjacent to the urban area, is dominated by woodland and includes a golf course. This is considered to have a low capacity for change. The area to the north is a fine-grained landscape where it will be difficult to accommodate significant change without significant adverse effects on the landscape pattern and features; removal of any of this land would also leave an area of development unconnected to the urban area. The presence of the McLaren campus (both existing and proposed) to the north would mean that both parcels 1 and 2 would logically need to be removed from the Green Belt together, realigning the Green Belt boundary a significant distance from the edge of Woking urban area. There are no clear well-defined features that may be used to secure an enduring alternative boundary. Furthermore, this would make a significant incursion into the Green Belt, with only very limited impact on the Council's ability to deliver new housing. Parcel 2 is therefore not recommended for removal from the Green Belt.
- 3.5.12 **Parcel 4** is of Critical importance to two Green Belt Purposes. The north western part includes the Broadoaks Major Developed Site within Green Belt (including a Grade II listed building and its setting). This area is less sensitive to development and lies within the visual envelope of the existing built up area of West Byfleet. Extensive woodland along the eastern side of this area provides strong containment from the unspoilt landscape to the west, checks 'sprawl' and prevents encroachment into this sensitive landscape. This area is regarded as being particularly sensitive to change. However, due to its high potential sustainability and due to limited opportunities elsewhere, we consider that it should be included, although any development here will need to include significant elements of Green Infrastructure.
- 3.5.13 **Parcel 6** is considered to have moderate capacity for change in terms of landscape character and sensitivity. There are also areas within this parcel which are in agricultural use and not subject to constraints which cannot be overcome by mitigation. **Parcel 6 is therefore recommended for removal from the Green Belt.**
- 3.5.14 **Parcel 12** is identified as having little or no capacity for change in terms of its landscape character and sensitivity. It incorporates a very significant ridge of land running west-east, and much of the land in the north-east (adjacent to the urban area) is woodland, which is SNCI, or Registered Park and Garden. Much of the rest of the parcel is a golf course; the combination of land use adjacent to the urban area and landscape sensitivity due to its topography and the contribution that the area makes to the containment and setting of the town makes this an inappropriate location to consider for development. The existing Green Belt boundary is also

- very clearly and well-defined. Parcel 12 is therefore not recommended for removal from the Green Belt.
- 3.5.15 **Parcel 13** encompasses a sewage works which is identified in the Core Strategy as a 'Major Developed site within the Green Belt'. The parcel includes land to its west. Policy CS6 allows for redevelopment of the site, but only for the purposes of sewage treatment, and not for a significantly larger area than the existing footprint. The Landscape Assessment notes that this area has moderate capacity for change, although any development would relate poorly to the existing settlement form. The existing Green Belt boundary is well-defined and any alternative boundary is likely to be inferior. Furthermore, there are likely to be 'bad neighbour' issues adjacent to a sewage treatment works. This parcel is therefore not considered suitable for development or recommended for removal from the Green Belt.
- 3.5.16 **Parcel 22** is located between Brookwood and St John's and north of the railway line. The great majority of this parcel is either subject to environmental constraints or forms part of the Brookwood Country Park SANG. The parcel is considered to have very low suitability for removal from the Green Belt. There is a very small area adjacent to the eastern edge of Brookwood which could accommodate development (a redundant nursery), but the great majority of this parcel is constrained and is considered to have little or no capacity for change. This parcel is therefore not considered suitable for removal from the Green Belt.
- 3.5.17 **Parcel 31** lies to the west of Mayford. The eastern part of this parcel is considered to have moderate capacity for change in landscape terms, whilst the west is considered to have low capacity for change. The area is bounded by existing residential dwellings to the north, and the area to the south is relatively flat. Land use appears to be primarily pasture land and a nursery. Whilst in landscape and land use terms there may be justification for removing at least some of this parcel from the Green Belt (particularly the eastern part which lies close to the village of Mayford) the parcel is considered to be of Major importance to two Green Belt Purposes. Removal of the parcel would further reduce the gap between Guildford and Woking in an already sensitive location. Parcel 31 is therefore not considered to be suitable for removal from the Green Belt.
- 3.5.18 The landscape appraisal identifies that at least part of **parcel 20** has a moderate capacity for change, whilst other areas are considered to be more sensitive. From a landscape perspective it was considered that relatively flat land to the north of Saunders Lane in the west of the parcel could accommodate some development on land that lies at the base of the escarpment feature, whilst an area between Egley Road and the railway north of Mayford might also be capable of accommodating some development. This eastern part of the parcel contains agricultural land, along with a garden centre and an unused nursery. These uses present few constraints to residential development. The presence of the railway creates some access issues for parts of the parcel, but this depends on which parts of the parcel might come forward for development together. Whilst the parcel lies within an area identified as 'Escarpment and Rising Ground of Landscape Importance' this local designation is not substantiated through any published or ratified study. Whilst some parts of Parcel 20 are on rising land, much of this is relatively shallow sloping or quite level (such as directly north of Saunders Road). Other areas are more steeply sloping and elevated and consequently more visually exposed; these areas are the most sensitive to development in landscape and visual terms. **Parcel 20 is recommended for removal from the Green Belt, although parts of it are constrained.**
- 3.5.19 The final parcel considered to have relatively higher potential for sustainability was **parcel 28**, although the landscape appraisal identifies this parcel as having low capacity for change. Sixty to seventy per cent of this area appears to be under woodland and tree belts (often, it appears, associated with nurseries). It is considered to be clearly distinct from the built up area of Woking and plays an important role in contributing to its northern setting and containment of the urban area. There does not appear to be any potential to accommodate significant development here. In addition, re-drawing the Green Belt boundary to the northern side of this parcel (there being no other intermediate, clearly defined feature) would represent

a very significant reduction in the width of Green Belt between the northern edge of the town and Bisley. Parcel 28 is therefore not considered to be suitable for removal from the Green Belt.

- 3.5.20 We have also considered the capacity for change of **parcel 7**. The landscape assessment considers that this has a moderate capacity for change. It is considered to have an open rather sterile character which contrasts with the heavily vegetated intimate river character to the east. It has the potential to accommodate development without significant wider visual / landscape effects, and would provide an opportunity to enhance the landscape between development and the river corridor, creating a stronger, well defined boundary to the settlement. **Parcel 7 has potential for removal from the Green Belt**, but should only be removed if it is considered that other parcels cannot provide sufficient quantum of development for the plan period and beyond to 2040.

Areas with Potential for Removal from the Green Belt

- 3.5.21 In conclusion, we consider that there are three parcels, which, in strategic terms, have potential for removal from the Green Belt. These are parcel 6 at Byfleet, parcel 20 at Mayford, and parcel 4 at West Byfleet. Parcel 4 is particularly sensitive in landscape terms but this has been weighed against its very high potential to deliver sustainable development. However, any development delivered here will need to be sensitively designed to create a strong landscape edge to the settlement. Part of the parcel should also be retained within Green Belt, and this is identified in sections 5 and 6 of the report. The above parcels should be the priority for accommodating development within the Green Belt. However, if all development required cannot be delivered in the above parcels, then it will be necessary to consider the potential from parcel 7.
- 3.5.22 We do not consider any other parcels to be suitable for removal from the Green Belt to accommodate new strategic development.
- 3.5.23 These parcels are in areas which are served by SANGS or potential SANGS (The Council is currently working on a new potential SANG in West Byfleet.)
- 3.5.24 Parcel 20 overlaps with an area identified by the County Council as requiring a Primary and Secondary School. Other areas identified as in need of a primary school were either removed during the stage 1 sieve (an area to the north around 'Six Crosses', and an area south of White Rose Way / around Old Woking), or are within parcel 12, which was not considered suitable for development. In Parcel 12, sites for schools alongside Old Woking Road could be reviewed on an individual basis if they were to come forward, but these are not recommended for removal from the Green Belt.
- 3.5.25 This assessment has so far considered development potential at a strategic level, rather than a site specific level. Furthermore, it has not factored in the availability or deliverability of sites within these parcels (although land use is a factor). It should be noted that this assessment does not therefore rule out the consideration of **individual smaller sites** around the urban area for removal from the Green Belt, provided that they are considered to be in sustainable locations and where their removal will have little conflict with Green Belt purposes. This will be considered during stage 3 of the Green Belt Review, and will sit as an option for development alongside the more strategic options.
- 3.5.26 Conversely, it should also be noted that individual sites within parcels which are considered suitable in strategic terms, may be found to be unsuitable as part of the stage 3 assessments, for example due to access or other constraints.
- 3.5.27 It should be noted here that there are other areas which we consider should be removed from the Green Belt (including both strategic parcels and smaller areas of land). However this would be specifically for the purpose of rationalising the Green Belt boundary and not to accommodate development (these areas are all protected and/or constrained in other ways or

under land uses such as recreation which are highly unlikely to come forward for development). These areas are identified separately in **Section 7**.

4 Stage 3 - Identifying Sites and Overall Potential

4.1.1 Following the consideration of land for release from the Green Belt at a strategic or 'parcel' level, the work focussed on the potential of specific sites to deliver the housing requirement to 2027 and safeguarded land to 2040. The aim of this stage was to identify the sites which were most suitable, but which were also deliverable. All sites were considered in terms of their ability to deliver part of the housing requirement; i.e. whether they were suitable, available and achievable. It should also be noted that any urban extensions into the Green Belt should be supported by all necessary infrastructure in line with the policies in the Core Strategy. This stage of the work also considered the requirements of Surrey County Council's Education department for the provision of new schools around the Borough. It was also carried out in parallel with the work to identify sites for Gypsies and Travellers, and links were made between the two processes (See **Chapter 5**).

4.2 Sources of Sites – Availability

4.2.1 During the early stages of the review, the Council undertook its annual 'Call for sites' exercise for housing and other land. In addition, sites within the Green Belt which were promoted to the 2011 SHLAA review were also identified. Together these provided a pool of available sites for investigation as sites which might be able to deliver the housing, Gypsy and Traveller and education requirements. In addition, the availability of sites was confirmed at a Stakeholder meeting held on 27th August 2013.

4.2.2 All sites put forward which were within the 'parcels' identified following the Stage 1 sieve were considered. This allowed for sites which might be anomalies within parcels to be considered and recommended for removal from Green Belt if it was considered that, individually they were not representative of the entire parcel; for instance if they could be developed sustainably or if their performance in Green Belt terms was less important than the surrounding area. Sites which fell within the area excluded during the stage 1 sieve were not considered as they were judged to be subject to absolute or major constraints that would make them unsuitable for development.

Education Requirements

4.2.3 Early contact was also made with the Education department at Surrey County Council. They were able to identify areas which might be in need of additional pupil places in the plan period and beyond to 2040.

4.3 Review of Site Suitability

4.3.1 This work is similar to that which would be carried out when considering sites as part of a SHLAA process. The suitability of sites was considered in terms of their individual constraints. This included all those constraints which were previously considered at stage 2 (such as flood risk, topography and biodiversity designations). It also considered issues such as the means of access, whether sites were greenfield or brownfield, the potential impact on landscape character and visual amenity, and the ability of sites to link into and help to deliver a Green Infrastructure network. The potential for sites to contribute to sustainable forms of development, both in terms of strategic accessibility and in terms of the potential to enhance or complement local communities, was also considered as part of this assessment.

4.3.2 This part of the work included a desk-based review of constraints and accessibility issues (including the proximity of sites to local centres and services). In addition, all sites were visited in order to get a better understanding of their characteristics, and how these might be developed.

- 4.3.3 Parcels 6, 20 and 4 were recommended for removal from the Green Belt following the stage 2 review. Parcel 7 is also considered as a possibility for removal from the Green Belt. Stage 3 then identified a number of sites within these parcels which were considered to be suitable for development. **Appendix C** identifies the individual sites which are suitable and available in these parcels and gives a summary of their assessment. These sites are listed in **Table 4.1** below and identified in **Figure 8**.
- 4.3.4 It should be noted that, due to various constraints, often part of a site is considered to be suitable for built development, rather than the entire area being promoted. In parcel 20 there were two broad areas considered unsuitable for built development; part of the area which separates Mayford and Woking along Egley Road (A320) (see **Paragraph 4.3.7** below), and the upper slopes and ridgeline of the escarpment that runs broadly south-west to north-east through the parcel. This escarpment is identified in Core Strategy policy CS24. Paragraph 5.251 notes that development on the slopes of identified escarpments, or which results in a 'significant reduction' in the amount of tree cover will not normally be permitted, and development on the top of the escarpments "*will only be permitted where it would not adversely affect the character of the landscape.*" The assessment of landscape character and sensitivity to change (**Section 3.4**) considers that there are some areas, notably the lower slopes and level land along Saunders Lane, and the area west of the A320 which are either less visible, or of weaker landscape character. These could be developed without affecting the overall integrity of the escarpment. Hence, for sites in parcel 20, we consider that the parts of sites which fall on flatter land and the lower slopes of the escarpment will be suitable for built development, whilst the upper slopes and ridgelines will not. These areas will be more suited to the provision of Green Infrastructure and recreational needs.
- 4.3.5 In parcel 6, the presence of high voltage power lines alongside the motorway to the west of the parcel, represents a constraint to development. We consider that the parts of the sites which fall closest to these power lines are unlikely to be suitable for housing development. These could accommodate Green Infrastructure and recreational needs, whilst areas further away to the east, will be more likely to be suitable. This parcel is also subject to noise constraints, but it is considered that these are likely to be able to be mitigated, as they have been elsewhere along the motorway corridor.
- 4.3.6 In parcel 4 it is considered that only part of the area should be removed from the Green Belt. An area of land has been identified in this parcel which could accommodate development to the south-east of the Broadoaks site. This would allow a wedge of Green Belt to be retained between the development area and the M25 / Byfleet. This could provide Green Infrastructure for the development within the Green Belt which would act as a buffer to the Wey navigation corridor with its distinctive character and wildlife corridor function. Access could be provided through Green Belt land from Parvis Road, with a potential pedestrian access through Broadoaks which would give a more direct route into West Byfleet town centre and its services and facilities. The retention of the northern part of the parcel within Green Belt would help to avoid perception of development narrowing the Green Belt separation between Byfleet and West Byfleet. New Green Belt boundaries could be defined along existing features, although some are relatively weak and would require reinforcement along the south-west and south-east.
- 4.3.7 In parcel 7 there are no promoted sites for development. Therefore whilst this may provide an option for development in the longer term, the potential from this parcel is currently unclear.
- 4.3.8 In order to deliver a coherent approach to development that complements and enhances the existing area, it will be necessary to undertake a comprehensive approach to masterplanning sites across each parcel, so that together they deliver housing and other uses, services and Green Infrastructure in the most appropriate way. Therefore there may be sites within parcels, which, whilst not appropriate for built development, could, as part of development within that parcel, contribute recreational and other potential as part of Green Infrastructure.

- 4.3.9 Outside parcels 4, 6 and 20, two additional sites were considered to be suitable for development. These sites are located adjacent to the existing urban area in parcel 9 (site WGB009a) and in parcel 22 (site WGB022a). Both are shown on **Figure 8** and included within **Appendix C**.
- 4.3.10 The assessment of parcel 9 against the fulfilment of Green Belt Purposes shows that the area fulfils a 'Critical' role in respect of Purposes 1 and 3 and has a Low to Very Low suitability as an Area of Search. The Assessment of Landscape Character notes that the area has Little / No or Low capacity to accommodate change; this is a reflection of the open exposed nature of much of the parcel, and the contribution that it provides in terms of the town's setting. However, the north western part is less sensitive – it is set back from the exposed slopes and edge of the ridge and benefits from significant containment provided by a substantial tree belt along Upshot Lane just beyond the ridge top. Whilst the existing Green Belt boundary is well defined, sound alternative boundaries exist along the Upshot Lane and Pyrford Common Road. However, if this area is to be released from the Green Belt for development purposes, consideration will need to be given to the avoidance of any impact on the setting of the Registered Park and Garden at Pyrford Court on the other side of Pyrford Common Road. A small area of development may also be possible in the narrow field between the field and Tegg's Lane to the north, although safeguarding the tree belt will be an important consideration in achieving an acceptable scheme.
- 4.3.11 In terms of its potential sustainability, site WGB009a is well located in close proximity to local community facilities. It lies adjacent to a village hall and scout hut, and close to a school, church and nursery. It is also within 500m from the local centre of Pyrford. Our information shows no internal site constraints. In terms of strategic accessibility, the parcel scored towards the middle of all those considered. Overall, this site is therefore considered to be suitable in sustainability terms.
- 4.3.12 A local opportunity to release land from the Green Belt exists within Parcel 22 (site WGB022a). A redundant nursery lies on the eastern edge of Brookwood, just beyond the settlement boundary. To the east, within the existing Green Belt, lies an established gypsy and traveller site (which is also identified as being suitable for further development – see **Section 5**). To the north lies Brookwood Lye Road and the main line railway to the south; dense woodland lies to the east of the gypsy and traveller site. It is recommended that the Green Belt boundary is adjusted to exclude the old nursery site (and the intervening gardens of the houses to the west), and the gypsy and traveller site. Being largely developed neither of these sites contributes to the openness of the Green Belt; the land may be excluded with the rest of parcel 22 remaining to fulfil its particular function in respect of purposes 1 and 2, with the boundary adjusted along well defined features (the road and the woodland edge to the east).

This site is also well located in terms of its potential sustainability. This parcel is considered to have high potential for sustainability, and the site itself lies within walking distance of Brookwood railway station. In addition, Brookwood village centre and a large Sainsburys on Bagshot road are also within walking distance. The site lies adjacent flood zone 3 and therefore there is some risk of flooding.

Table 4.1: Site Suitability

Site Reference	Suitability
WGB004a	Suitable (this site is identified by the consultant as a suitable area for removal from Green Belt within the wider promoted land)
WGB006a	Suitable – Eastern part only
WGB006b	Suitable – not south west corner
WGB009a	Suitable
WGB0020a	Suitable – northern part only
WGB0020c	Suitable – lower slopes only
WGB0020d	Suitable – lower slopes only
WGB0020e	Suitable – lower slopes only
WGB0020f	Not suitable for built development – restrict to Green Infrastructure
WGB0020g	Suitable – existing developed area only
WGB0022a	Suitable
WGB7	Potentially suitable area adjacent to existing development – no specific sites identified.

SANGS Requirements

4.3.13 The Council is required to provide suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS) within the Borough, due to its proximity to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) (see **Section 2.3**). The Council has identified that it has sufficient SANGS to provide for development until 2027. We have also considered the potential of adopted and planned SANGS to provide for new development on the identified parcels and sites. This has revealed the following:

- Parcel 20: This parcel lies within the 2km buffer zones of SANGS at Mayford and Hoe Valley, and the proposed SANG at Westfield. It lies within the 4km buffer zones of SANGS at Moor Lane and Gresham Mill, and within the 5km buffer zone of the SANG at Heather Mill;
- Parcel 6. This parcel lies very close to the planned SANG at Byfleet (due to be adopted 1 April 2014). Both sites are within 1km;
- Parcel 4: This parcel lies adjacent to the planned SANG at Byfleet (due to be adopted 1 April 2014).
- Site WGB022a lies within 1km of the SANG at Brookwood Country Park; and
- Site WGB009a lies within 4km of the SANG at Gresham Mill and within 5km of the SANG at Heather Mill.

- Parcel 7 lies close to the planned SANG at Byfleet, however the Council may want to consider whether this is sufficient given that this SANG will already serve parcels 4 and 6.

Education Requirements

- 4.3.14 One of the sites in parcel 20 was considered to be suitable for the delivery of a secondary school. Parcel 20 is a sensitive location for delivery of development in Green Belt terms, and there is a risk that the integrity of the gap between Woking and Mayford will be compromised. This is particularly the case in relation to development at site WGB020a, which bridges the gap between the main urban area of Woking, and Mayford along the A320 Egley Road. It is considered that built development can be accommodated on this site, provided that this is located to the north, adjacent to the main urban area of Woking, leaving a wide landscaped verge along Egley Road, and retaining open fields to the south, closer to Mayford. Locating a school here is considered to be an efficient way to achieve these aims. School buildings and an element of housing development could be located on the northern part of the site, allowing the southern part to be used as school playing fields, thus maintaining their openness.

4.4 Achievability – Viability Assessments

- 4.4.1 A site is considered to be achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site within the timeframe required by the Green Belt review. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of the site and the capacity of the developer to deliver and sell housing within that timeframe.
- 4.4.2 A broad assessment of deliverability in terms of viability has been undertaken for each of the accepted and under consideration sites. The basis for this assessment is the evidence base for the Woking Community Infrastructure Levy. A viability report (Woking Borough Council CIL Viability Study) was produced to inform the Council's charging schedule and is considered to provide an up to date assessment of the local market and viability considerations. However, the Charging Schedule will be reviewed before 2022 to take account of Green Belt sites that will be released for development at the time. It is important that the review of the Charging Schedule is properly timed to take account of the economic circumstances at the time. Viability issues were also discussed in broad terms at the Stakeholder meeting which took place on August 27. This meeting was attended by landowners, agents, developers and local estate agents, and provided an additional source of information on viability issues within the Borough. On the basis of the availability of this work and the broad nature of our assessment it is not considered necessary to undertake any further detailed viability testing. It is also considered that as all these sites are being actively promoted that this provides some confidence that those promoting the site consider that the proposed site is deliverable in respect of the well known policy costs and expectations, including the proposed levy.
- 4.4.3 The CIL Viability Study identifies 12 value areas across the Borough on a ward basis and a range of residential scenarios to test the viability within each of the value areas, with different levels of CIL and for brownfield and greenfield sites. The scenarios range from 1 dwelling to 50 dwellings and a variety of mixes dependant on the size and site type. For the purposes of our broad assessment, the closest matching development type is 50 dwellings for most of the potential sites.
- 4.4.4 As no major site specific infrastructure requirements have been identified we consider that per metre costs and values will not vary significantly between the tested scheme of 50 dwellings and the largest of the proposed sites of 300 dwellings. However it could be considered that the sites over 100 dwellings in particular may have different gross to net ratios, so when looking at the residual value, if these are marginal then we would suggest a cautious approach. It should also be noted that the benchmark figure of £250,000, as identified in the CIL Viability Study has been used to assess broad viability. This is on the basis that as all the sites are within the Green Belt, the landowner expectation should be lower with minimal hope value, as if these sites are released then it would be an exception to the prevailing policy.

4.4.5 A summary of our broad assessment is shown below in **Table 4.2**

Table 4.2: Broad Viability Assessment

Site reference	Assessment
4a	Viable
6a	Marginal – just below benchmark
6b	Marginal – just below benchmark
9a	Viable
20a	Viable
20c	Viable
20d	Viable
20e	Viable
20g	Marginal – may involve demolition of existing buildings
22a	Marginal – just below benchmark

4.4.6 As can be seen in **Table 4.2** most of the sites are viable. The exceptions are 6a and 6b and 22a. Viability issues for these sites will need to be looked at in more detail at the time of delivery.

4.5 Site Yields

4.5.1 Following the identification of suitable, available and achievable sites within Woking Borough, it was then necessary to consider the potential yield of each site, to determine whether this pool of sites could in fact deliver the required level of housing set out in the brief.

4.5.2 The process for identifying site yields has been as follows:

- Identify the area of land within the site that is considered suitable for development
- Identify whether part of the site could or should be used for other uses including education and/or a mix of uses to deliver an enhanced local centre, where this would enhance the sustainability of the parcel and the local area
- Where part of the site is suitable only for Green Infrastructure / public space, then a net yield has been calculated for the remainder of the site
- Where all of the site is suitable for housing, then, for larger sites, a notional amount of land has been deducted to provide for Green Infrastructure and open space, and a net yield calculated on the remainder of the site. For smaller sites a net yield has been calculated for the whole site, assuming that this will incorporate incidental open space
- Where it is considered that all or part of a site is suitable for / best used to provide local centre functions, then a notional amount has been identified for housing, based on the

likelihood and desirability that any centre should also accommodate homes, either above retail and other uses, or as higher density housing adjacent to retail / community accommodation

- Net yields have been calculated using a density multiplier. The density levels on some sites, particularly those in parcel 6, are higher than those suggested in the brief, which identifies a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) for all sites. In identifying densities, we have considered Core Strategy policy CS10 (which gives a range of 30 – 50 dph for Green Belt sites). For each site we have made a judgement based on the location, context, characteristics and constraints. We believe that the density levels suggested are appropriate for each site.

4.5.3 The assessment of site yields has naturally also drawn on the site visits and discussions at the stakeholder meeting.

4.6 Overall Potential Housing Yield

4.6.1 **Table 4.3** below identifies the estimated yields for each of the sites. It also sets out the net developable areas for each site. This allows the identification of an overall potential housing yield from all sites, but also allows the information to be considered in terms of net hectares of land likely to be available.

4.6.2 The overall potential housing yield estimated from suitable sites is **1,833 dwellings**. This includes sites in parcels 4, 6, and 20 and sites WGB009a and WGB022a. It also makes an allowance of up to 130 dwellings in parcel 7. In addition, parcel 20 could deliver a **secondary school, a Gypsy and Traveller site**, and an element of **retail / community development** to enhance the rather dispersed provision currently in the Mayford area.

4.6.3 This provides an additional 83 dwellings over and above the identified requirement for 1750 dwellings in the period. It means that 550 dwellings can be delivered within the plan period (up to 2027), and safeguarded land can be provided to accommodate an additional 1283 dwellings up to 2040. It should be noted however that parcel 7 is not currently being promoted and there is therefore uncertainty about this element. Nevertheless, this figure gives some flexibility in the delivery of sites during the plan period, and the need for safeguarded land beyond that period.

4.6.4 The sites identified include significant areas of Green Infrastructure in addition to the net developable areas, particularly in landscape sensitive locations.

Table 4.3: Estimated Site Yields and Development Areas

Site Reference	Estimated Dwelling Yield	Suggested Dwellings Per Hectare	Net Developable area	Additional area for strategic open space and landscaping
WGB004a	592	40	14.8 for housing	4.7 ⁵
WGB006a	85	50	1.7	3.87 ⁶
WGB006b	135	45	3	0.36 ⁶
WGB009a	223	30	7.43	4
WGB0020a	188 ⁷	40	4.7 for housing	1.56 ⁸
WGB0020c	171	30	5.7	1.86 ⁸
WGB0020d	210	30	7	3.2 ⁸
WGB0020e	50 ⁹		1.46	0 ⁸
WGB0020f	0	0	0	7.92
WGB0020g	12	30	0.63	5.35
WGB022a	37	35	1.06	0
WGB7	Up to 130	35	Up to 3.7	1.2
Potential housing yield from suitable sites	1,833		51.18	

⁵ This site includes approximately 30ha which would be removed from the Green Belt. The areas not developed for housing include existing woodland and areas which could accommodate a Gypsy and Traveller site and public open space / Green Infrastructure. Additional Green Infrastructure could also be provided on land to the east which is also within the same ownership but which would remain within the Green Belt.

⁶ The sites identified in parcel 6 form part of a wider masterplanned area owned by the developer which contains public open space and recreation areas. The parcel could also include a Gypsy and Traveller site.

⁷ This is the estimated number of dwellings which can be accommodated on the northern part of the site, with a secondary school (10ha) and a potential Gypsy and Traveller site (1ha) to the south. It should be noted that this does not suggest that this site in particular accommodates a Gypsy and Traveller site, but this is to make allowance for that site somewhere in parcel 20.

⁸ In addition to this amount, an additional 13.27 ha of land could come forward for Green Infrastructure from parcels WGB020f and WGB020g (eastern part). This would serve parcel 20 as a whole as well as existing development and would require an equalisation agreement between the landowners in parcel 20.

⁹ This is a notional amount to allow for housing to come forward in conjunction with retail development, either above shop units or adjacent.

5 Stage 4 - Gypsy and Traveller Sites

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Part of the brief for the Woking Green Belt Review was a requirement to consider future Gypsy and Traveller uses in the Green Belt. The purpose of this chapter is to start the identification process to identify a shortlist of potential sites within the Green Belt to potentially help meet the identified need for Woking Borough Council area under the Traveller Accommodation Assessment (TAA).
- 5.1.2 Work to identify suitable sites for Gypsies and Travellers has taken place concurrently with the main Green Belt Review. The two areas of work require different processes, but each part has been informed by the other as the work has developed.

5.2 Context

- 5.2.1 Gypsies and Travellers have lived in Britain for at least 500 years and probably longer. For the purposes of the planning system, Gypsies and Travellers means:
- 5.2.2 “Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependents’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Show people or circus people travelling together as such.” (Planning policy for traveller sites, CLG, March 2012).
- 5.2.3 Many Gypsies and Travellers continue to pursue an active itinerant lifestyle and are generally self-employed people. However, increasingly communities are becoming more settled.
- 5.2.4 Gypsies and Travellers are not a uniform homogeneous community, but rather a group of communities which share some features but have their own histories and traditions. Even within each main group there are differences between families which emphasises the need to avoid over generalisations. However, the main cultural groups include:
- Romany Gypsies;
 - Irish Travellers; and
 - New Travellers.
- 5.2.5 Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised in law as distinct ethnic groups and are legally protected from discrimination under the Race Relations Acts.
- 5.2.6 Travelling Show people have traditionally been involved in holding fairs and circuses for many hundreds of years. For the purposes of the planning system, Travelling Show people means:
- 5.2.7 “Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their family’s or dependent’s more localized pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.” (Planning policy for traveller sites, CLG, March 2012).
- 5.2.8 The Government published a new policy statement National Policy for Traveller Sites in 2012, replacing Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007 to address future accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people because the previous planning policy arrangements had failed to deliver adequate sites to meet identified needs over the previous 10 years.

- 5.2.9 For the purposes of the planning policy in National Policy for Traveller Sites, “travellers” means “gypsies and travellers” and “travelling show people”
- 5.2.10 Local planning authorities are currently required to identify and allocate sufficient sites to meet the needs of these groups within their local plans. This means that when delivering sites consideration is required to which sites are available and suitable for different groups within the travelling community.
- 5.2.11 The Government’s Good Practice Guide ‘Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites’ covers a range of sites including:
- Permanent residential – permanently sited caravans used for people who travel little, or who want a base from which to travel;
 - Transit – short-term pitches that can accommodate families for up to 90 days, for those with a more nomadic lifestyle who are travelling through the area;
 - Emergency stopping places – used as a temporary basis for authorised short-term pitches for less than 28 days. These are usually provided in the absence of transit provision.
- 5.2.12 Transit sites are used for people travelling through an area. Transit sites and emergency/temporary stopping places allow the police to use their powers to move people on, although emergency/temporary stopping places are more suitable for this purpose. The Councils should work closely with the police to decide if the provision should be split between transit and / or emergency stopping places and whether the provision should be on one site or more.

5.3 Site Requirements and Assessment Criteria

- 5.3.1 ‘Planning policy for traveller sites’ (CLG, March 2012) states that the overarching aim of Government is “to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.” (para 3).
- 5.3.2 The document includes some significant changes to the way in which the site needs of Gypsies and Travellers are planned for. The most significant change has been the removal of regional targets and the replacement with a new system of locally generated targets. Under this, local planning authorities are required to:
- Use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs;
 - Set pitch and plot targets to address the likely permanent and transit site needs accommodation needs of Travellers in their area;
 - Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide five years’ worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - Identify a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for years six to ten and where possible for years 11-15; and
 - Set criteria based policies to meet identified need and/or provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward.
- 5.3.3 There are 3 general types of sites which may be required to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs. These are:

- Residential sites – these provide residents with a permanent home;
 - Transit sites – these are permanent sites that provide temporary accommodation for their residents, normally between 28 days and 3 months; and
 - Emergency/temporary stopping places – these are pieces of land in temporary use as authorised short term (less than 28 days) stopping places for all travelling communities.
- 5.3.4 The TAA has only identified a need for residential pitches to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs, relevant to Woking Borough. These provide residents with a permanent home and can be privately owned, publicly rented for affordable pitches, or privately rented to other Gypsies and Travellers. The size and the amount of facilities available on these sites varies between sites.
- 5.3.5 The Council have also asked PBA to identify a potential transit site for Travelling Show people.
- 5.3.6 The approach taken to site identification in the Green Belt has sought to identify all potential sites and provide recommendations on the type of provision that would be most suitable. **Appendix F** includes recommendations on the form of provision for all shortlisted sites.
- 5.3.7 Sites are made up of a number of caravan pitches and associated facilities. Although there is no national definition of what size a pitch should be, a general guide contained in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites states that “an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan... drying space for clothes, a lockable shed...parking space for two vehicles and a small garden” (para 7.12). On average, usage is approximately 1.7 caravans per pitch.
- 5.3.8 Residential sites provide a permanent home and the amount of facilities on site varies mainly between public and private sites. Public sites will generally have amenity blocks and sometimes play areas and communal spaces. Private site facilities vary enormously depending on the requirements of the residents.
- 5.3.9 In Woking Borough there are currently 2 private and 1 public owned and occupied Gypsy and Traveller sites, ranging in size from 3 pitch family sites to two sites containing 15 pitches each. All sites have full planning permission except Five Acre Farm which has full permission for 13 pitches and temporary permission for 2 pitches.

Table 5.1: Existing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Woking Borough

Site No.	Parcel No	Site Name	Settlement	Planning Status
WOK002	NA	Hatchingtan site, Burdenshott Road	Worplesdon	Public site with permission
WOK003	17	Ten Acres Farm, Smart's Heath Road	Mayford	Private site with permission
WOK004	22	Five Acres Farm, Brookwood Lye Road	Brookwood	Private site with permission

Woking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2013

- 5.3.10 In 2013 a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (TAA) was completed by Woking Borough Council. This identified pitch provision to meet residential needs by 2027 for the authority as 20 pitches and a further site to be safeguarded to deliver 9 pitches between 2027 and 2040. The 20 pitches are required to address the needs of all identifiable households. The overall need to 2040 is 29 pitches. The Council also asked Peter Brett Associates to consider if sites are suitable for use as a transit site for Travelling Show people.

Woking Local Plan

- 5.3.11 The Core Strategy for Woking was adopted in October 2012. This sets out a policy for providing pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in the Borough by 2027. Policy CS14 outlines the Councils sequential approach to providing allocated sites with a Sites Allocations DPD: with sites in the urban area considered before those in the Green Belt. Where there are no sites in the urban area, priority will be given to sites on the edge of the urban area
- 5.3.12 The policy includes criteria for assessing any future planning applications on allocated and non allocated sites.

Number of Sites Required

- 5.3.13 National evidence, backed up by current provision in the Woking Borough area, would suggest that Gypsies and Travellers prefer small sites containing a small number of pitches to accommodate their immediate family and extended family. Government guidance suggests that “experience of site managers and residents alike suggest that a maximum of 15 pitches is conducive to providing a comfortable environment which is easy to manage. However, smaller sites of between 3-4 pitches can also be successful, particularly where designed for one extended family” (para 4.7).
- 5.3.14 The actual number of sites required will be determined according to a number of factors including taking account of:
- The different cultural, ethnic and family groupings of Gypsies and Travellers;
 - The extent to which additional provision could be made through extension or intensification of existing sites; and
 - Whether replacement sites need to be found for existing sites which may be unsuitable or unsustainable.

Travelling Community Involvement

- 5.3.15 Discussions were held in a meeting with Surrey County Council Gypsy and Traveller liaison officers, and a member of the Gypsy and Traveller Forum to discuss the existing public site across the Green Belt area of Woking Borough. The discussions involved discussions around:
- Background to Travellers living in Woking Borough;
 - Existing sites;
 - What makes a good site;
 - Potential broad locations for new sites within the Green Belt; and
 - Any known available new sites.
- 5.3.16 Attempts were made on more than one occasion to contact all Travellers living on sites (or their agents) in the study area. This was to confirm the availability of sites for further pitches to meet their family needs and the potential to provide pitches for other Travellers. Further pitches were explored either within existing sites, extensions to existing sites or provision on new sites. Site visits were arranged with site owners where it was established that land was available to be assessed for further pitches.

Site Location

- 5.3.17 'Planning policy for traveller sites' (CLG, 2012) states that "local planning authorities should ensure that sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally" (para 11).
- 5.3.18 Local planning authorities should strictly limit the provision of sites in the open countryside away from existing settlements or areas allocated in the development plan but can provide for sites in rural areas subject to further considerations (para 23). Where there is a lack of affordable land to meet the needs of the travelling communities, local planning authorities in rural areas should consider allocating small sites specifically for affordable pitches in small rural communities (para 13).
- 5.3.19 Sites should be located so as to provide a settled base that reduces the need for long distance travelling and unauthorised encampment (para 11).
- 5.3.20 Local planning authorities should reflect the extent to which Travellers working and living from the same location could contribute to sustainability (para 11) and therefore should consider mixed sites with residential and business uses or separate sites but in close proximity (para 16).
- 5.3.21 The Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS14 states that the Council may consider granting permission outside of the urban area for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people provided that a demonstrated lack of any deliverable sites in the urban area would provide very special circumstances necessary to allocate sites in the Green Belt. Priority is given to sites on the urban edge, which benefit from good access to employment and facilities, before sites within the open countryside.

Access to Services

- 5.3.22 'Planning policy for traveller sites' (CLG, 2012) states that local planning authorities should promote access to appropriate health services and ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis but avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services (para 11).
- 5.3.23 Local planning authorities should ensure adequate play areas for children (para 24).
- 5.3.24 The Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS14 states that sites should be within a safe and reasonable distance of schools and local facilities.

Relationship to Surrounding Land Uses

- 5.3.25 The Government is keen to promote a peaceful and integrated co-existence between a Gypsy or Traveller site and the local settled community. In order to facilitate this, national guidance states that "where possible, sites should be developed near to housing for the settled community as part of mainstream residential developments" (para 3.7). However, 'Planning policy for traveller sites' states that "local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community" (para 12).
- 5.3.26 The Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS14 states that sites should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the area.
- 5.3.27 DCLG guidance on the design of sites for Gypsies and Travellers also emphasises the importance of locating sites away from heavy industry and states that locations adjacent to industrial areas are unpopular because of their relative isolation, distance from local facilities and because of safety fears.

5.3.28 An important consideration is avoiding noise and disturbance. This can be to the settled community, in terms of the movement of vehicles to and from the site, from the stationing of vehicles on-site and on-site business activities. Given the greater noise transference through walls of caravans than through walls of conventional housing, there can also be noise and disturbance to the gypsies and travellers from adjoining uses, such as from industrial areas, railway lines or from highways.

Site Conditions

5.3.29 'Planning policy for traveller sites' (CLG, 2012) guidance on the design of sites for Gypsies and Travellers identifies that "no sites should be identified for Gypsy and Traveller use that would not be appropriate for ordinary residential dwellings" (para 3.6).

5.3.30 Consequently the following are not considered acceptable locations:

- Sites within floodzone 3; and
- Sites located on contaminated land.

5.3.31 The guidance states that sites should not be located in areas at high risk of flooding such as functional floodplains given the vulnerability of caravans.

5.3.32 Other sites are unlikely to be suitable:

- Sites adjacent to rubbish tips;
- Sites on landfill sites; and
- Sites closer to electricity pylons.

5.3.33 The Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS14 states that sites should have adequate amenity for its intended occupiers.

Essential Services

5.3.34 DCLG guidance on the design of sites for Gypsies and Travellers states that sites must have access to water, electricity, drainage and sanitation, with electricity and sewerage for permanent sites normally through mains systems, although in some locations alternative provision may be appropriate.

5.3.35 'Planning policy for traveller sites' states that local planning authorities should avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services (para 11).

5.3.36 The Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS14 states that sites should have adequate infrastructure and on-site utilities.

Site Criteria

5.3.37 'Planning policy for traveller sites' (CLG, 2012) identifies three key criteria for determining appropriate sites for delivery through the planning system. To be deliverable, sites should:

- Be available - the site should be available;
- Be suitable - the site should offer a suitable location for development now; and
- Be achievable - there should be a realistic prospect that pitches will be delivered on the site within five years (footnote 7, page 3, CLG, 2012).

5.3.38 Our approach to identifying appropriate site criteria therefore builds upon the framework:

- Is the site available?
- Is the site suitable?
- Is the site achievable?

5.3.39 A key consideration, set out within national policy is that criteria should be “fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community” (para 10). Criteria should be clear and transparent and unambiguous. Many previous studies and local plan criteria based policies across the country have used very restrictive criteria which have prevented many reasonable sites from coming forward.

5.3.40 We have taken account of the various criteria from the following sources including:

- National policy in ‘Planning policy for traveller sites’;
- DCLG best practice guidance contained within ‘Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites’; and
- The views of the travelling communities.

5.3.41 For the purposes of the site assessment process, we have identified the following broad site criteria:

Table 5.1: Broad Site Criteria

Availability		There is evidence that the landowner is willing to sell; and/or There is evidence that a developer is interested in developing. There is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems, such a multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements which are not capable of being overcome. The site is public land and is not allocated in a plan or in a strategy for another use, therefore deemed potentially available.
Suitability	Policy Constraints	The site is not within an international environmental designation. The site does not compromise the objectives of nationally recognised designations.
	Physical Constraints	The site is not at high risk of flooding which cannot be mitigated. The site is not located on unstable land. The site is not located on contaminated land which cannot be mitigated. The site has good road access. The site is in reasonable proximity to local services and facilities.
	Potential impacts	Development and use of the site will not have an adverse impact upon the Green Belt, landscape nor biodiversity or the built environment which cannot be mitigated. The site is not subject to unacceptable noise levels nor is it likely to give rise to unacceptable noise levels. The site will have a good residential environment and will not adversely impact upon neighboring residential amenity.
Achievability		Constraints identified are capable of being overcome. Any abnormal costs do not prejudice the ability of the site to be developed.

5.3.42 These broad site criteria above provide an overview of the criteria used to assess sites.

5.3.43 All sites, as identified in para 5.4.1, were subject to a detailed assessment of suitability issues and an examination of achievability issues. Potential capacity and delivery issues were also

investigated. As part of the assessment, a landscape assessment was carried out on sites which lie adjacent built-up areas or within the open countryside.

- 5.3.44 No sites were rejected purely because of their relative location to services and facilities. It is considered that measuring the relative sustainability of sites can help differentiate better sites, if there are more suitable sites identified than required to meet needs.

5.4 Site Assessment

- 5.4.1 Potential Green Belt sites to assess were established from different sources of sites including:

- All land owned by Woking Borough Council was considered, in general sites were found to be unsuitable, due to absolute planning constraints or existing uses, such as schools, open space and car parks;
- Existing Gypsy and Traveller sites were assessed for further intensification and expansion;
- A Call for Sites process was undertaken and sites that came forward were assessed during this project;
- Sites identified during survey work, which were not in any current use were considered. However, letters sent to confirm availability with landowners have not established them as available and they have therefore not been included in the assessment;
- Urban extension sites as identified through the Green Belt review.

- 5.4.2 After an initial assessment of sites for absolute constraints and availability, the remaining sites with identified potential for Gypsy and Traveller use were mapped onto GIS and put on a sites database.

- 5.4.3 This process resulted in 7 sites for assessment. A map of the Woking Borough area is contained in **Appendix D** showing the distribution of sites and constraints.

Site Assessment: Suitability, Availability and Achievability

- 5.4.4 The first stage in the assessment process involved the application of broad suitability criteria, including absolute constraints, together with an initial investigation of likely availability.

- 5.4.5 The application of broad suitability criteria was to sieve out immediately sites which were likely to fail on the grounds of contravening major constraints such as being within international environmental designations or within the boundaries of scheduled ancient monuments or flood zone 3.

- 5.4.6 The examination of availability included:

- Existing Gypsy and Traveller sites: all existing sites were considered potentially available for Gypsy and Traveller use, subject to confirmation from existing occupants;
- Council owned land: all Woking Borough Council land was deemed potentially available for Gypsy and Traveller sites, unless the land is identified as an allocation in a plan or in a strategy for another use.
- Private land: landowners were contacted to confirm that the land is available for Gypsy and Traveller use. If the landowner identified a site as not available, then the site is not considered further for Gypsy and Traveller use.

- 5.4.7 A detailed assessment of suitability, availability and an examination of achievability issues was completed for those sites which did not have any absolute constraints and were identified as potentially available for Gypsy and Traveller use.
- Further investigations of suitability was completed, as set out in section 2 site assessment methodology, which included:
 - Physical constraints including access to the site and accessibility to existing services and facilities; and
 - Potential impacts including landscape impact on sites which lie adjacent the built-up areas.
- 5.4.8 All sites were visited by a landscape architect who assessed the landscape impact of any development having regard to landscape character, sensitivity and visual containment. All sites considered likely to have an unacceptable impact upon the landscape were rejected.
- 5.4.9 All issues of potential achievability identified were subject to investigations where possible, with recommendations on how they can be addressed. We explored the likely economic viability of delivering the site taking into account cost factors, such as site preparation and infrastructure costs. As previously stated, full economic assessments were not carried out, however, we explored the likely economic viability of delivering sites based on PBA's knowledge of working on these studies across the country.
- 5.4.10 **Appendix E** sets out those sites where we consider there is no potential for further provision and the reasons for this decision. **Appendix F** sets out the detailed site assessment results for those sites considered potentially suitable, available and achievable for future provision if new sites in the Green Belt are required.
- 5.4.11 All potentially suitable sites have been subject to an initial broad assessment of the number of pitches which could be provided on site. This has taken account, firstly, of:
- Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide (DCLG, 2008); and
 - Any relevant planning history and existing unauthorised uses.
- 5.4.12 In addition, Peter Brett Associates has developed templates for various forms of Gypsy and Traveller development. We have used these to inform the theoretical capacity of sites. Examples of these templates are set out in **Appendix G**.
- 5.4.13 These have helped to determine the optimum size and configuration of pitches on site. On larger sites we may assume a mix of pitch sizes to reflect the needs of different families.
- 5.4.14 Site capacity has also taken account of on-site constraints and the need, where appropriate, for landscaping and other mitigation measures to achieve a suitable development. Providing good quality landscaping and access arrangements have been taken into account. This will result in sufficient access and accommodation space to create a site which Gypsy and Travellers find attractive. At the same time, sufficient space and landscaping will help to conserve the residential amenity of neighbouring uses.

5.5 Delivery Options

- 5.5.1 In developing their local plans, 'Planning policy for traveller sites' (CLG, 2012) requires local planning authorities to identify and keep up-to-date a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against those locally set targets and a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations to meet needs, where possible, for up to 15 years.

- 5.5.2 The initial starting point would be to consider protecting existing Gypsy and Traveller sites, to ensure that existing needs continue to be met in perpetuity. This is accomplished within the Core Strategy policy CS14, which does protect existing authorised sites. If sites are lost from these uses, then new replacement sites may need to be found to maintain an adequate supply to meet needs in accordance with the identified pitch targets.
- 5.5.3 As part of this study, we have assessed the potential from existing sites to achieve additional pitches either through increasing the capacity within existing boundaries or through site extension onto adjoining land.
- 5.5.4 It is important to note that most current provision within the study area is met on private sites. The future availability of existing sites to accommodate needs is therefore dependent on existing site owners being prepared to accommodate future needs on these sites.
- 5.5.5 It is also important to note that the existing public site is at capacity and restricted by physical constraints. Therefore there is also a need for public provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches within Woking Borough.
- 5.5.6 To assist the Council Deliver Sites PBA have identified a number of potential delivery models to illustrate how the Council might meet its need. It should be noted that sites have not been identified for all delivery options. Delivery models could include:
- Sites which are currently owned by the travelling communities where there is potential for pitches to be created on new sites for the landowners family. The Council should consider encouraging planning applications to meet short and medium term needs through entering into dialogue with site occupants. The Council should consider allocating sites to meet longer term needs through the Local Plan.
 - Sites which are not currently owned by the travelling communities but have been identified as available for these uses. The site could be purchased by the travelling community or the Council should consider additional affordable pitch provision for either buying the site or development their public assets using New Homes Bonus or central Government site grant funding or other monies to secure or increase affordable provision. Allocation in future Local Plan would identify these sites to travelling communities and they could be purchased on the open market.
 - Provision required as part of the planning of large housing urban extension sites. There is the opportunity to require large housing allocations in Allocations DPDs to provide for Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Show people plots. These could then be sold on the open market or affordable pitches brought forward and managed by the Authority or RSLs.

Phasing, Monitoring and Review

- 5.5.7 As with other forms of development, the release of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people sites should be managed to ensure a good fit with identified need. We would suggest that it would be prudent were possible for the Council to identify a potential reserve of pitches/land which could be brought forward in the future if required, rather than wait for the need to be established and then start a review of the development plan at that time.
- 5.5.8 Any release of land to meet future needs would require active monitoring of supply against need, at least on an annual basis. It would also require the Authorities to undertake periodic reviews of their needs evidence base.

Funding Sources

- 5.5.9 The Government has identified that it is focusing on incentivising councils to deliver new housing, including Traveller sites. The 'Planning for traveller sites' (CLG, 2012) identified three potential sources of funding for local authorities:
- 5.5.10 Firstly, the New Homes Bonus scheme operates in the same way for Traveller sites as for other forms of housing. Namely, for every new pitch, a local planning authority will get six years of matched Council Tax funding, with an extra supplement for affordable pitches (such as sites owned or managed by local authorities).
- 5.5.11 Secondly, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has allocated, as part of its National Affordable Housing Programme for 2011-15 £60m to fund the provision of Traveller sites. Local authorities are required to bid for this funding.
- 5.5.12 The HCA has now confirmed allocations for £47m of future funding which will support 71 projects around the country for the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller sites and new pitches on existing sites, as well as the improvement of existing pitches. As of January 2012 a further £12.1m of funding was available for schemes outside of London and has been allocated.
- 5.5.13 Further HCA funding may become available as a result of slippage over the course of the programme. Providers interested in developing Traveller provision are advised to contact their local HCA area office to discuss their proposals.
- 5.5.14 There are also emerging examples within the country of local planning authorities planning for the future provision of sites for travelling communities by allocating urban extension sites for housing and Traveller pitches, requiring developers to design and layout serviced pitches/plots for private sale to Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Show people. Where there is a demonstrable need for affordable provision, some local planning authorities are identifying a need for developers to provide pitches/plots or commuted sums as part of the overall affordable housing contribution required for new housing sites.
- 5.5.15 There are also innovative delivery models being developed in other parts of the country which could provide for funding of initial sites to be recycled to provide for further sites, in the same way as affordable housing and shared equity schemes have been delivered by housing bodies for some years. For example, the Authorities or County Council could consider using Homes Bonus or other monies to buy a site or identify their own public assets and then make them available to organised Gypsy and Traveller groups on a non-profit making basis for them to develop and manage. Such groups could also be offered the opportunity to buy stakes in the site, allowing the income from such sales to be recycled to provide further sites.
- 5.5.16 The Council should investigate these sources of funding further, in partnership with the County Council, Registered Social Landlords and other delivery partners.

6 Stage 5. Options for Development

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The aim of the Green Belt Review was to identify the following in terms of housing land:
- Suitable, deliverable and sustainable sites to deliver 550 new homes by 2027; and
 - A further 40ha of land to assist in delivering the housing requirement between 2027 and 2040. This land is required to deliver approximately 1200 new homes and is to be identified for safeguarding in the Development Delivery DPD.
- 6.1.2 There is also a need for new sites for educational purposes in the near future, and the study also considered options for the provision of primary and secondary schools.
- 6.1.3 In addition, it needed to identify suitable deliverable sites for 20 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller families up to 2027, and a further site to be safeguarded to deliver 9 pitches between 2027 and 2040. The Council also requested Peter Brett Associates to consider the potential for a transit site for Travelling Show people.

6.2 Delivery of sites and land for Housing and Education

- 6.2.1 **Chapter 4** identifies 51.18 hectares of land which could deliver an estimated 1,833 new homes in the period to 2040 (net developable area). The review now needs to consider which of these sites should come forward first; which should be allocated to deliver homes up to 2027, and which should be safeguarded for the future. **Table 6.1** below provides a breakdown of the sites available within different parcels. Parcel 20 alone can deliver 694 dwellings, parcel 4 can deliver 592 dwellings and Parcel 6, together with the individual sites, can deliver 554 dwellings.

Table 6.1: Estimated Site Yields and Development Areas

Parcel or Site Reference	Estimated Dwelling Yield	Net developable area (Ha)
TOTAL FOR PARCEL 4	592	14.8
TOTAL FOR PARCEL 6	220	4.7
TOTAL FOR PARCEL 20	694	19.49
Individual sites in Parcels 9 and 22	260	8.49
Potential in parcel 7	130	up to 3.7ha

- 6.2.2 There are three broad options:
- **Option 1.** Bring forward parcel 6 and the individual sites in parcels 9 and 22 first. This would deliver 480 dwellings in the period to 2027. Part of site WGB0020a would also be required to reach the total of 550 dwellings. Safeguarded land to accommodate a further 1283 dwellings for the period 2027 to 2040 would come from within parcel 20 and parcel 4. Parcel 7 could be included within the safeguarded area to ensure deliverability and

provide flexibility, but investigations would need to be undertaken in regard to its potential availability.

- **Option 2.** Bring forward parcel 20 first. This would deliver 550 dwellings to 2027 and include a site, or part of a site (probably the site furthest to the west) which would need to be safeguarded in order to deliver 144 dwellings up to 2040. Safeguarded land would then be provided in a series of locations around the Borough, at parcel 20, parcel 6, parcel 4, parcel 22, and parcel 9. Parcel 7 could be included within the safeguarded area to ensure deliverability and provide flexibility, but investigations would need to be undertaken in regard to its potential availability.
- **Option 3.** Bring forward parcel 4 first. This would provide 550 dwellings on its own, with 42 additional dwellings which would need to be provided after 2027. All the remaining parcels and sites would then be safeguarded for the period 2027 – 2040. Parcel 7 could be included within the safeguarded area to ensure deliverability and provide flexibility, but investigations would need to be undertaken in regard to its potential availability.

6.2.3 Option 1 provides the housing requirement from 2022 – 2027 through a range of sites across the Borough (parcels 6, 9, 20 and 22). This provides for flexibility in delivery and allows for a variety of housing types to be delivered at different densities in different locations. These sites could also be delivered concurrently.

6.2.4 In numerical terms, it would be simplest to bring forward option 3 first, as it can deliver a total number very similar to that required from 2022 – 2027. However, this does not necessarily mean it is the most appropriate. This parcel scored highest in sustainability terms due to its proximity to West Byfleet town centre, but in terms of deliverability, this site is relatively small and self contained. This may have impacts on deliverability in that the required number of dwellings may not be deliverable on this single site within a five year period. In addition, it does not provide the range of options for delivery that option 1 provides.

6.2.5 Option 2 would appear to be more complex to deliver in that a large part, but not all of the site would need to be brought forward in the period to 2027. It would certainly be preferable to masterplan the whole urban extension in a comprehensive way, integrating housing, educational facilities and any mixed use elements that could form an enhanced local centre. However, it is possible that this could be done to deliver most of the housing from 2021/22 to 2027, continuing beyond this date to deliver the residual amount immediately after 2027. The need and opportunity to deliver a secondary school in this area complicates matters somewhat. Surrey County Council has informed us that they would require a new school to provide for existing and new housing to be open no later than 2017, which is clearly in advance of the housing that would come forward, not only from safeguarded land in the period 2027 – 2040, but also in this plan period (CS10 states that Green Belt sites would be released after 2021/22). Notwithstanding this, delivery of the school early may mean that the Council wishes to take a comprehensive approach to delivery and prioritise development in parcel 20. The Council will now need to decide how and when a new school is delivered in relation to any housing that might come forward on parcel 20.

6.2.6 **If the Council wishes to give priority to the most sustainable location for new development, then option 3 would seem to be the most appropriate. However, if it wishes to give priority to the provision of a range of sites that give flexibility in delivery options around the Borough, then option 1 would be the most appropriate.**

6.3 Education Needs

6.3.1 Surrey County Council have identified areas where they are looking to increase educational provision, with specific parts of the Borough in need of either primary or secondary schools. The Green Belt review has identified one parcel of land where there is potential to deliver a new school in an area of identified need (parcel 20) (see para 6.2.5 above).

- 6.3.2 Elsewhere it has not been possible to identify either individual sites or parcels recommended for removal from the Green Belt, which coincide with a need for schools. It is therefore considered that any additional sites identified for new schools outside the existing urban area would need to be identified within the Green Belt, in order to ensure that a strong and robust Green Belt boundary can be drawn which will endure in the future.
- 6.3.3 If the Council takes forward our recommended approach to identify parcel 20 as safeguarded land, then it will need to consider both the timing and the means of delivery of a new secondary school as part of this parcel. In particular it will need to investigate whether a new school needs to be brought forward by 2017, the relationship of this need to planned housing in the area (beyond 2027 if the parcel is safeguarded), and how this might be delivered.

6.4 Delivery of Sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

- 6.4.1 As set out in Core Strategy policy CS14 the Council should use the sequential approach to identifying suitable sites for allocation. PBA recommend that the Council meets the need for new Gypsy and Traveller provision in the following priority order:
1. Safeguard Existing Sites to prevent their loss to other uses and increase the identified pitch requirement for the Borough;
 2. Grant full planning permission for existing sites with temporary permission;
 3. Allocate sites within or adjacent to the urban area (outside the Green Belt):
 - a. Potential new sites within the urban area;
 - b. Potential new sites within urban extensions recommended for Green Belt release.
 4. Allocate sites within the Green Belt:
 - a. Potential intensification of existing sites within the Green Belt (within existing permitted boundaries);
 - b. Potential new or expanded sites within the Green Belt.
- 6.4.2 In line with Core Strategy Policy it is recommended that the Council strives to provide suitable new sites within or adjacent to the urban area (outside the Green Belt) for new Gypsy and Traveller provision. It is important that the Council explores delivery within or adjacent to the urban area before sites within the Green Belt are considered further.

Safeguarding Existing Sites (1)

- 6.4.3 There are three existing Gypsy and Traveller sites with planning permission within the Borough of Woking and from the site survey, it is clear that these sites are currently in use and are occupied. These sites are currently safeguarded within Core Strategy (2012) policy CA14. Safeguarding these sites will prevent their loss to other uses and therefore ensure that new site provision is only required to meet future needs.

Table 6.3: Existing Authorised Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Woking

Site ref	Parcel No	Site name	Settlement
WOK002	NA	Hatchingtan site, Burdeshott Road	Worplesdon
WOK003	17	Ten Acres Farm, Smart's Heath Road	Mayford
WOK004	22	Five Acres Farm, Brookwood Lye Road	Brookwood

Grant full planning permission for existing sites with temporary permission (2)

- 6.4.4 It is recommended that the Council grants planning permission for the 2 pitches on Five Acre Farm (WOK004) that have temporary planning permission. Granting permission will contribute towards meeting the Council need for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Woking Borough by 2027.

Potential new sites within the urban area (3a)

- 6.4.5 The Green Belt Review has not considered potential options within the Urban Area (outside the Green Belt). The Council is currently investigating the potential for sites within the urban area that could contribute toward meeting the need. It is considered that this potential option should be explored further before sites are perused within the Green Belt.

Potential new sites within urban extensions recommended Green Belt release (3b)

- 6.4.6 There is the potential to deliver sites within urban extensions and strategic sites for Traveller sites. Gypsy and Traveller sites should be required within strategic sites, and this requirement set out as policy within the development plan. A number of authorities around the country are now planning for future Traveller provision through this delivery option. This could include both residential Gypsy and Traveller and transit provision (if required by the Council).
- 6.4.7 The Green Belt review has identified Parcels 4, 6 and 20 as being the most suitable options for Green Belt release. It is considered that a site for up to 15 pitches could be provided within each parcel as part of the development of a mixed and balanced community. It is recommended that the Council consider delivery via planning policy for these locations in more detail and determine the number of pitches on each site following detailed master planning by developers.
- 6.4.8 It is recommended that urban extensions deliver new Gypsy and Traveller provision because they have the ability to contribute significantly to meeting the pitch needs in the Borough, are capable of good design through masterplanning and can complement wider objectives such as housing delivery.

Potential intensification of existing sites within the Green Belt (4a)

- 6.4.9 Of the existing sites WOK002 (Hatchingtan) and WOK004 (Five Acre Farm) are not considered suitable for intensification or expansion, as they already have 15 or more pitches which is the Government's maximum recommended number of pitches for one site. WOK002 is also within flood zone 3 and has international ecological constraints.
- 6.4.10 The site WOK003 (Ten Acre Farm) is potentially suitable for intensification, but is not available for increased Gypsy and Traveller use at this time. The Council should continue to investigate the potential of intensification with the owner, if the TAA pitch requirement is not met within or adjacent to the urban area (outside the Green Belt).

Potential new or expanded sites within the Green Belt (4b)

- 6.4.11 If the Council requires sites within the Green Belt, it can choose to formally identify sites through the plan making process. A total of 2 potential new sites have been identified for Gypsies and Traveller use to meet residential pitch needs. The sites are Land South of Murray's Lane (WOK001) and Land off New Lane, Sutton Green (WOK006). Details of the sites are set out in **Appendix F**.

- 6.4.12 Whilst potentially suitable and available Land South of Murray’s Lane (WOK001) is not recommended for allocation as it forms part of the Parcel 6 urban extension where development could be master planned. The Council should only consider provision at WOK001 in isolation if they decide not to proceed with delivery of a mixed use development in Parcel 6.
- 6.4.13 Land off New Lane, Sutton Green should only be considered further if the Council cannot meet its pitch requirements on new sites within or adjacent to the urban area (outside the Green Belt). The site is considered suitable for residential Gypsy and Traveller use if the Council require a site within the Green Belt. No sites have been identified for potential transit or travelling showpeople use.

Meeting the Need in Woking Borough

- 6.4.14 The Traveller Accommodation Assessment identifies a need for 20 net additional Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches to be developed by 2027 and the brief required consideration of a transit site for Travelling Show people. **Table 6.4** sets out the potential options to meet needs within or adjacent to the urban area (outside the Green Belt), including suitable parcels that could provide Gypsy and Traveller sites as part of a mixed use urban extension.

Table 6.4: Potential Options to Meet Future Need for Pitches in Woking (outside the Green Belt)

Priority	Site Ref	Parcel No	Site Name/Urban Extension	Settlement	No. of additional pitches
3a	NA	NA	Sites within the urban area	Woking	Unknown
3b	NA	4	Urban Extension (Parcel 4)	West Byfleet	Up to 15
3b	NA	6	Urban Extension (Parcel 6)	Byfleet	Up to 15
3b	NA	20	Urban Extension (Parcel 20)	Hook Heath	Up to 15

- 6.4.15 Based on the potential supply of pitches set out in **Table 6.4** it is likely that the Council will be able to meet its need. It will be important for the Council consider the timing of delivery to ensure that the requirement of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012 “to identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of sites against their locally set targets” is met. If sites cannot be brought forward within this timescale the Council will need to consider alternative options within the Green Belt set out in **Table 6.5** below:

Table 6.5: Potential Options to Meet Future Need for Pitches in Woking (within the Green Belt)

Priority	Site Ref	Parcel No	Site Name/Urban Extension	Settlement	No. of additional pitches
4a	WOK003	17	Ten Acres Farm, Smart’s Heath Road	Mayford	Unknown
4b	WOK006	15	Land off New Lane	Sutton Green	3

6.5 Conclusions

- 6.5.1 This Green Belt review has considered the role of parcels of land in relation to the purpose of Green Belt, potential sustainability and landscape capacity for change. The process is underpinned by a robust methodology which is described in this report. The results identify a potential housing yield, and amount of safeguarded land which is close to that identified in the brief.
- 6.5.2 It is our recommendation that the Council releases land from the Green Belt to accommodate future development in the following way:

- Removal of parts of parcel 6, parts of parcel 4, and parcel 20 from the Green Belt along with sites WGB009a and WGB022a as identified in Figure 9. The exact configuration of which development will come forward at each stage is dependent on the Council's priorities and spatial strategy.
- Undertake investigations into the potential availability of land in parcel 7, and consider the removal of this area of land from Green Belt, to be safeguarded for development beyond 2027.
- Consideration of the potential for the delivery of a secondary school within parcel 20.

6.5.3 In terms of Gypsy and traveller sites, there is a need to identify 29 pitches by 2040. It is our recommendation that the Council meet their pitch requirements in the following way:

- Safeguard Existing Sites to prevent their loss to other uses and increase the identified pitch requirement for the Borough;
- Grant full planning permission for existing sites with temporary permission;
- Identify and allocate sites within or adjacent to the urban area (outside the Green Belt), including working with developers of potential urban extensions within parcels 4, 6 and 20 to provide Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Overall pitch numbers should be determined by the council subject to further consideration of detailed masterplanning and viability work undertaken by developers.

6.5.4 Only if the Council is unable to deliver sufficient sites to meet identified TAA needs within the first 5 years or by 2027, should they consider options within the Green Belt, including:

- Investigate the potential for intensification of existing sites;
- Consider the allocation of potential new sites within the Green Belt.

7 Recommendations for a New Green Belt Boundary

- 7.1.1 This study has determined that, in most areas, the designated land around the town fulfils some or all of Purposes of including land in the Green Belt 1-3, although there are some exceptions which are discussed below. The existing Green Belt boundary is, for the most part, well defined following clear, enduring boundaries. Where existing boundaries are less robust, there are generally no better alternative locations for realignment without removing significant areas of land from the designation and compromising the function of the Green Belt.
- 7.1.2 This section makes recommendations for the re-drawing of the Green Belt boundary. There is a clear distinction between areas which we recommend are removed to accommodate new development, and other areas which we recommend should be removed in order to rationalise the Green Belt boundary at locations where land is contributing little or nothing to the purposes of Green Belt.

7.2 Re-drawing the Boundary to Accommodate New Development

- 7.2.1 **Figure 9** illustrates our recommended approach to re-drawing the Green Belt boundary in relation to parcels and sites that have been identified to accommodate new development.
- 7.2.2 **Parcel 6** is a narrow area on the western edge of Byfleet which contributes very little to Green Belt purposes. The boundary here is poorly defined. It is considered appropriate to redefine the Green Belt boundary along the M25 along the western edge of Parcel 6 which provides a clear enduring boundary.
- 7.2.3 **Parcel 20** is also proposed for exclusion from the Green Belt to accommodate strategic development. The boundary should be realigned to follow the well-defined features provided by Saunders Lane and Hook Heath Road (the prevailing Conservation Area policy would safeguard the character of this area). No other alternative 'intermediate' suitable boundaries exist). As part of this alteration it is recommended that the area of Green Belt to the east of Egley Road (part of which was excluded from the parcel during the stage 1 sieving process due to flood constraints) should also be excluded from the Green Belt. This area follows a narrow strip of land along the small watercourse south and east of the Barnsbury Farm Estate and parts are identified as a SNCI. Mayford and the small strip of land east of Drakes Way (which is constrained by flood risk and largely by the Mayford Meadows Local Nature Reserve) would also be excluded, with the boundary being defined along Mayford Green road to join with the existing boundary on Guildford Road, to the east of the Egley Road roundabout. The existing separation of Mayford to the east would be assured by the flood constraint and nature conservation policy. Separation on its northern side may be achieved through the masterplanning process and local green space policy.
- 7.2.4 **Parcel 4** includes a site proposed for exclusion from the Green Belt to accommodate strategic development. The boundary should be realigned to retain a wedge of Green Belt between new development and the M25. It also retains land to the north of development within the Green Belt in order to avoid a perception of development narrowing the Green Belt separation between Byfleet and West Byfleet.
- 7.2.5 The exclusion of the western-most field in **Parcel 9** is proposed to accommodate development, as described in **Section 3**. The realigned boundary should extend along Upshot Lane, and Pyrford Common Road.
- 7.2.6 The exclusion of the south western end of **Parcel 22** is proposed to accommodate development, as described in **Section 3**. The realigned boundary should extend along

Brookwood Lye Road, and the western edge of the adjoining block of woodland to exclude this small area.

- 7.2.7 Parcel 7 contains an area which could be removed from the Green Belt to accommodate new development. If the Council wishes to pursue this option then we would recommend re-drawing the boundary along the lane to the east. This is a fixed feature and provides a visual edge with a tree line running along it. It also ties in well with the existing boundary to the north and south. The area appears to be within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area and there is considerable scope here to create an area adjacent to new development that would contribute to this (particularly in relation to its potential to flood). The extent of the developable area is of course limited by flood risk. Any new Green Infrastructure areas created outside the Green Belt boundary should be protected as open space.

7.3 Re-drawing the Boundary to Remove Other Areas from the Green Belt

- 7.3.1 As part of this comprehensive review, the opportunity has been taken to suggest adjustments to the Green Belt boundary to reflect current local circumstances, particularly where boundaries are not well-defined along enduring boundaries, represent historical anomalies in the boundary, or where areas of land make little /no meaningful contribution to the fulfilment of Green Belt purposes but only provide a local protective, as opposed to a strategic function. The locations where such adjustments are recommended are identified in **Figure 10** and discussed below.
- 7.3.2 It is recommended that three parcels of land are removed from Green Belt on the basis that they contribute very little or nothing to Green Belt purposes (See **Tables 3.1** and **3.2**); these are **parcels 3, 5 and 29**.
- 7.3.3 **Parcel 3 (Area A in Figure 10)**. An area of public open space, a school and associated playing fields which are essentially part of the urban area of West Byfleet being contained by urban development on three sides and the Major developed site in the Green Belt at 'Broadoaks'. It makes no contribution to Green Belt purposes. Its existing open space designation and educational use will provide local protection. The Council may consider whether to increase this protection with an open space policy.
- 7.3.4 **Parcel 5 (Area B on Figure 10)**. This is a narrow area north of parcel 6 which is also being removed from the Green Belt (see **Paragraph 7.2.2** above). This area on the western edge of Byfleet contributes very little to Green Belt purposes and the boundaries are poorly defined. The designation should be removed from the strip of land extending between the existing built up areas on either side of the M25. The existing uses in this area appear to prevent development, and there are significant constraints including overhead power lines, noise and accessibility. An open space designation could nevertheless be included on the recreational areas.
- 7.3.5 **Parcel 29 (Area H on Figure 10)**. This is an area of public open space and playing fields contained by development on all sides and essentially forming a local 'pocket' of open land within the urban edge. The boundaries are poorly defined in places along weak features. It is recommended that this area is excluded from the Green Belt, with the boundary being formed (as a continuation of the existing boundary) along Littlewick Road to the north. The area may be protected by normal open space protection policies.
- 7.3.6 Consideration may also be given to the exclusion of **Parcel 30** from the Green Belt (**Area G on Figure 10**). This area contributes modestly to Green Belt purposes (primarily Purpose 1), and is a distinct well-defined parcel contained between the railway and the Basingstoke Canal and urban area to the north. It is subject to a number of very significant constraints, with most of the area identified as common land, and the northern fringe is a Conservation Area. A high level of policy constraint therefore already exists. If the boundary is to be redrawn it should follow the railway on the southern side.

- 7.3.7 Elsewhere there are other areas of land which we also recommend should be removed from the Green Belt.
- 7.3.8 Part of **parcel 4 (Area D on Figure 10)**. This is the 'Broadoak's site, a 'Major developed site in the Green Belt' which is identified for employment purposes. It already contains significant development with consent for redevelopment, The area to the east of this is recommended for removal from the Green Belt to accommodate new development, and it will no longer serve any Green Belt purposes. It should be removed.
- 7.3.9 Part of **parcel 12**. The north-eastern edge of this parcel (**Area E on Figure 10**) is currently defined along rear garden boundaries. There is an opportunity to realign the boundary (in conjunction with the proposal for **Parcel 9** referred to above) to follow Pyrford Common Road. The land that would be excluded comprises dense woodland that is identified as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and therefore benefits from protection through other policies. The rest of **Parcel 12** would remain designated and fulfil Green Belt Purposes.
- 7.3.10 Land to the west of **Parcel 12** (between Old Woking and White Rose Lane on the southern edge of the Hockering Estate – **Area F on Figure 10**). This land was excluded in the stage 1 sieving process due to flood constraints and was therefore not subject to the formal assessment of its Green Belt function in stage 2. However, it is apparent that the land makes only a very localised contribution to limiting 'sprawl' (Purpose 1); does not lie between towns and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 2; and contains very little 'countryside', being occupied substantially by school/college playing fields and allotments, therefore making only limited contribution to Purpose 3. In any case any development is largely prevented by the flood constraint. There is also a Local Nature Reserve on part of the land. Existing boundaries are varied, but include significant lengths of back garden boundaries. A more logical, appropriate and enduring boundary would be created by a continuation of the existing boundary along Old Woking Road to exclude this area. In order to provide additional protection, the Council may wish to introduce an open space designation on the undeveloped land.
- 7.3.11 Land to the east of **parcel 5 (Area C on Figure 10)**, which was excluded in the stage 1 sieving process due to flood constraints, should be excluded from the Green Belt in that it provides no contribution to Green Belt purposes. However, its omission will require cross boundary coordination to ensure that an appropriate realigned boundary is defined.
- 7.3.12 The central northern section of the town's periphery lies within the SPA or associated 400m buffer and was therefore excluded during the first stage of the assessment. Whilst it may be argued that these areas make some contribution towards the fulfilment of Green Belt Purposes 1 and 3, the boundaries are poorly defined in places by rear gardens in contrast to the clear Green Belt boundary delineated along Littlewick Road in other parts of the northern edge of the town. It is proposed that these areas (identified as **Area I on Figure 10**) are removed from the Green Belt and the boundary adjusted to exclude the areas between Littlewick Road and the urban edge so that Littlewick Road provides a consistent enduring Green Belt boundary. The land would remain protected from development by the high-level constraints which will continue to apply to the excluded area. If the council wishes to provide additional protection, the open space designation on the area of land to the west (**area H**) on **Figure 10**) could be extended to cover this area.
- 7.3.13 It is also proposed that the area which extends south of Six Cross Roads roundabout towards the town centre (Horsell Common, **Area J on Figure 10**) is excluded from the Green Belt. This wedge of land provides a local separation function, protecting undeveloped land that separates parts of the town; it makes no contribution to Purposes 1 and 2. Whilst it does protect the area from encroachment (Purpose 3), this protection is already provided by other designations and related policy. These 'high level' constraints include common land (all of the area), SSCI, SPA buffer, Conservation Area (in parts) and its use as a recreational resource. These would continue to apply and would prevent the prospect of development coming forward. Specific local policies could be provided to add further protection if required.

- 7.3.14 Finally, we have also reviewed the northern edge of **Parcel 9** (Rowley Close / St Nicholas Crescent area) – the existing Green Belt boundary follows the edge of the main built up area along Floyds Lane / Sandy Lane and Pyford Road. Some clusters of development lie just within the Green Belt to the south interspersed with open areas of land and woodland. No suitable clear alternative Green Belt boundary exists that may justify an alteration to the existing boundary in this area and it is recommended that the boundary is retained unchanged.
- 7.3.15 No change is proposed to the Green Belt boundary along the northern edge of **Parcel 15**. The boundary has been examined and alternative boundaries close to the existing settlement edge are poorly defined and offer no better suitable alternative.

7.4 Conclusions

- 7.4.1 We therefore recommend that the Green Belt boundary is re-drawn as described above, partly to accommodate new development, and partly to exclude areas which do not perform a strategic function and contribute little to the purpose of Green Belt, as well as small anomalous areas.

Figure 11 provides a complete illustration of the new Green Belt boundary that we recommend for Woking Borough.