ARUP

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Green Belt Village Study

Final Report

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| 29 June 2026

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

In June 2025, Ove Arup and Partners (Arup) was appointed by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) to undertake a Green Belt Assessment (GBA), including this washed over village study, to form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.

The GBA will assess the entirety of the Solihull Green Belt against the five purposes of Green Belt set out in paragraph 143 of the NPPF via a parcel and broad area approach. The GBA did not consider the specific advice set out in paragraph 150 on how villages within the Green Belt should be treated for planning purposes. As such this study is separate but complementary to the GBA. It adopts a different methodology relevant to the different policy requirements of paragraph 150. This study has been conducted ahead of the wider GBA to allow for the recommendations of this study to be used in defining the parcels/broad areas for the GBA.

1.2 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this study is to independently and objectively assess the extent to which villages washed over by the Green Belt meet the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) requirements of paragraph 150:

"If it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt."

The previous guidance on villages within the Green Belt contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2) was superseded by the introduction of the NPPF in March 2012). Paragraph 2.11 of PPG2 set out how development plans should treat existing villages in the Green Belt, in one of three ways:

- If no new building is allowed (other than for agriculture and forestry; essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purpose of including land in it; and for limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings), then the village should be included within the Green Belt. The Green Belt notation should be carried across ("washed over") it.
- If infilling only is allowed, the village should either be "washed over" and listed in the development plan or should be inset (excluded) from the Green Belt. If washed over, the Local Plan may need to define infill boundaries to avoid dispute over whether particular sites are covered by infill policies.
- If limited development or limited expansion is proposed, the village should be inset from the Green Belt.

The current washed over and inset villages in Solihull were considered in accordance with the former PPG2. In light of the different policy position set out in the NPPF, the consideration of whether a village should be included (washed over) or excluded (inset) from the Green Belt now relies on the contribution that the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, rather than the degree of restriction of development sought by the development plan (as per PPG2). It is therefore necessary to consider the status of the washed over and inset villages against this new policy position.

SMBC have conducted a 'Draft Solihull Rural Settlement Hierarchy Assessment'[1] consultation which looked at Solihull's rural settlements to consider whether any of them should be considered towns rather than

[1] Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, (2025), Draft Solihull Rural Settlement Hierarchy Assessment, available here: https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/2025/solihull-council-consults-draft-settlement-hierarchy-and-statement-community-involvement

villages in the context of Green Belt policy and confirm a settlement hierarchy. The following settlement hierarchy was identified:

> "*Urban area: Solihull*
>
> *Towns: Balsall Common, and Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath*
>
> *Villages: Blythe Valley Park, Catherine-de-Barnes, Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath, Hampton in Arden, Hockley Heath, Meriden, Tidbury Green*
>
> *Smaller rural settlements: Barston, Berkswell, Bickenhill, Chadwick End, Eastcote, Illshaw Heath, Millisons Wood and Temple Balsall"*

A decision on the Settlement Hierarchy was confirmed in October 2025, after the consultation responses had been reviewed, with no changes to the above approach.

The towns and majority of the villages have inset boundaries and are therefore excluded from the Green Belt. Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green are partly inset within the Green Belt. The smaller rural settlements are washed over by the Green Belt. As such Cheswick Green, Tidbury Green and all of the smaller rural settlements will be considered as part of this study.

The study will review the washed over villages against paragraph 150. It will consider whether the villages are open in character and whether they make a contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. On this basis, the study will provide recommendations as to whether they could remain in the Green Belt or could be excluded from it.

Where it is recommended that villages are excluded from the Green Belt, the study will consider the potential future inset boundaries. Any alterations to Green Belt boundaries will require the Council to develop an exceptional circumstances case in accordance with paragraph 145 of the NPPF and adopt this as part of the emerging Local Plan.

In relation to the recommendations set out in this study, it should be noted that:

- Recommendations for removal from the Green Belt does not imply that the Council must accept these or that they will appear in an adopted Local Plan.
- Recommendations for removal also do not imply villages will be suitable for development.
- Alterations to Green Belt boundaries require exceptional circumstances, which are fully evidenced and justified, in accordance with paragraph 145 of the NPPF. The Council will need to develop the exceptional circumstances case if alterations are proposed.

1.3 Structure of the Report

This remainder of this Green Belt Village Study is structured as follows:

- Section 2 reviews current national policy in relation to Green Belt villages and reviews the latest guidance on Green Belt village studies, including a comparative review of Green Belt Village studies from other authorities.
- Section 3 sets out the methodology used for the Green Belt village study taking into account the findings from the review of policy, guidance and comparative study review.
- Section 4 sets out the outcomes from Steps 1 and 2 involving the identification of village boundaries and the assessment of the villages against paragraph 150 of the NPPF. A summary of the recommendations is provided.
- Section 5 sets out the proposed new inset boundaries for the villages which were recommended to be inset within the Green Belt.
- Section 6 provides a summary of the study and sets out the conclusions.

2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 Overview

This section provides a review of the national planning policy context in relation to Green Belt villages. It reviews a number of other Green Belt Village studies undertaken by other authorities in order to understand the approach and definition used when determining whether a village should be washed over or inset, in accordance with paragraph 150 of the NPPF.

2.2 National Planning Policy

2.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The NPPF represents the overarching framework governing planning policy in England and establishes the principles and policies against which plan-making and decision-taking should be made. This section summarises the relevant paragraphs in the NPPF with respect to Green Belt.

Green Belt

Paragraphs 142-143 of the NPPF set out the aim and purpose of the Green Belt in England, as follows:

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

143. Green Belt serves 5 purposes:

a) *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*

b) *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*

c) *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*

d) *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*

e) *to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*"

The NPPF stipulates that: "*Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans.*" (paragraph 145).

Paragraph 149 states that: "*When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:*

(a) ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;

(b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;

(c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;

(d) 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 an update to a plan which proposes the development;

(e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and

(f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent."

Paragraph 150 of the NPPF focuses on whether a village should be included or excluded from the Green Belt based on its open character and the contribution this character makes to the openness of the Green Belt:

"If it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt."

The December 2024 version of the NPPF introduced a number of significant changes to Green Belt policy. However, the provisions of the paragraphs cited above were largely unchanged – with no change to paragraph 150 regarding the inclusion of villages in the Green Belt (other than its renumbering, having previously formed paragraph 149).

2.2.2 National Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') provides an additional layer of interpretive clarification and guidance to the NPPF. The PPG does not provide any further guidance on the assessment of Green Belt villages. However, it provides some guidance on the definition of openness "…these include, but are not limited to:

- *…openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume*
- *the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness*
- *the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.*" [Paragraph 013, Reference ID: 64-013-20250225, published 27 February 2025]

2.3 Comparative Review of Green Belt Village studies

This section provides a review of Green Belt Village studies undertaken by other authorities. The purpose of this review was to understand the approach and comparative definitions used for determining whether a village should be inset or washed over in accordance with both local circumstances and the requirements of paragraph 150 of the NPPF. This will help support the production of an appropriate methodology for this study that is robust and meets the requirements for a Local Plan evidence base.

The full review table is provided at Appendix A and the relevant components of paragraph 150 are considered in turn within this section. The following studies were reviewed:

- Guildford Council Green Belt and Countryside Study;
- Selby Council Status of Villages in the Green Belt;
- Vale of White Horse Council Green Belt Review; and
- Runnymede Council Green Belt Villages Review.

The Vale of White Horse Review, the Guildford Green Belt and Countryside Study, and the Runnymede Council Green Belt Villages Review have all been through Examination. The Inspector for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan did not comment on the approach to the assessment of villages. The Inspector for the Guildford Local Plan commented that the study was "*comprehensive and well-founded*" (Inspectors Report paragraph 101) whilst the Inspector for the Runnymede Local Plan commented that the wider Green Belt review (including the village review) was "*comprehensive, systematic and based on a robust, consistently applied methodology*" (Inspectors Report, paragraph 68). The Inspectors also commented on the exceptional circumstances case (this is discussed in Section 2.4 below).

2.3.1 Overall Approach

All of the studies included a staged approach consisting of some or all of these stages:

- Identify villages to be assessed;
- Identify development limits of village;
- Assessment of open character;
- Assessment of openness;
- Decision on insetting or washing over of village; and
- Review development limits/boundaries where village is to be inset.

The Vale of White Horse Council Green Belt Review included the village assessment as part of the wider Green Belt Assessment.

2.3.2 Open Character

Open character was largely assessed based on factors relating to the built form and open space within the village, these included:

- Density
- Settlement pattern
- Types of dwelling/property
- Distribution of properties
- Plot size
- Building heights
- Enclosures or barriers
- Scale and Form
- Extent of open space
- Vegetation
- Topography
- Views

Assessments were qualitative and often involved a variant of the High, Medium and Low ranking system based on definitions of these according to the above criteria.

2.3.3 Important Contribution to Openness

There was some overlap between the studies on the assessment of open character and openness with similar criteria applied to both assessments.

Where the assessment of openness was different, it was emphasised that openness focused on the physical and/or perceptual connection between the openness of the village and the openness of the Green Belt. The following criteria were considered:

- The continuation of open areas within the village with the surrounding open land beyond the village;
- Relationship between Green Belt and/or open space and built form;
- The boundaries of the village and whether these were incomplete or indistinguishable; and
- Views into and out of the village and their restriction by natural or man-made features.

Assessments were qualitative and often involved a variant of the High, Medium and Low ranking system based on definitions of these according to the above criteria.

The NPPF does not explicitly define openness however the PPG provides guidance on the definition of openness. Given that the Selby Council and Runnymede Council studies predate the PPG, they both included a definition of openness, referencing case law or creating their own definitions:

- Selby Council: the *'extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built form and urbanising influences, rather than from a landscape character sense.'*
- Runnymede Council: openness is *'epitomised by land that is not built upon and does not include buildings which are unobtrusive, camouflaged or screened in some way.'* - Heath & Hampstead Society v London Borough of Camden [2007] EWHC 977 (Admin) & Timmins/Lymn v Gedling Borough Council [2014] EWHC 654.

2.3.4 Identification of Villages to be Assessed

Most of the studies determined the villages to be assessed based on an established settlement hierarchy. In the case of Runnymede Council, where an established settlement hierarchy did not exist the study applied definitions of a 'village' from established sources.

2.3.5 Identification of Village Boundaries

Where studies identified a need for new village boundaries, these were defined according to durable, visible and permanent features, for example:

- Natural landscape features such as woodlands, hedgerows, rivers, or protected woodland.
- Manmade features, including roads, railway infrastructure or existing developments.
- A combination of durable features, such as A-roads, and less durable physical features, such as tree lines and garden boundaries.

2.4 Exceptional Circumstances

As set out in paragraph 145 of the NPPF, local authorities must demonstrate exceptional circumstances in order to amend Green Belt boundaries. The change in policy position from PPG2 to paragraph 150 of the NPPF relating to whether a Green Belt village should be washed over or inset represents the basis for an exceptional circumstances case to be developed. Having reviewed examples from elsewhere it appears that on its own, the change in policy position is unlikely to be sufficient given that it needs to be backed up by evidence. In particular, whilst the legal cases of *Gallagher Homes Limited and Lioncourt Homes Limited) v Solihull Council* [2014] was concerned with adding land back in to the Green Belt, it clarifies the expectations on the exceptional circumstances case that the NPPF requires to justify modifying the Green Belt. Paragraph 130 of the High Court judgement set out that "*In other words, something must have occurred subsequent to the definition of the Green Belt boundary that justifies a change. The fact that, after the definition of the Green Belt boundary, the local authority or an inspector may form a different view on where the boundary should lie, however cogent that view on planning grounds, that cannot of itself constitute an exceptional circumstance which necessitates and therefore justifies a change and so the inclusion of the land in the Green Belt*"[2]. This position was subsequently supported by the Court of Appeal[3].

Since the Court of Appeal decision, various Local Plan examinations have provided clarity on the expectations to amend Green Belt boundaries to inset villages. It is likely that the change in policy position combined with evidence of a robust and clearly justified assessment of the Green Belt villages based on a

[2] PHD2 High Court Judgement Gallagher Homes Ltd v Solihull MBC 2014 EWHC 1283

[3] Court of Appeal Judgment Solihull MBC v Gallagher Homes Ltd C1/2014/1702

consistent methodology could provide the exceptional circumstances case required to amend Green Belt boundaries.

This has been demonstrated by Guildford Council. The Council's Green Belt and Countryside Topic Paper (2017) at paragraph 4.8 states: "*Insofar as exceptional circumstances are required in order to amend Green Belt boundaries, the change in policy approach, as set out above, together with the detailed consideration of each village, provides the justification for amending Green Belt boundaries to inset selected villages*." The detailed evidence is provided in the Council's Green Belt and Countryside Study (2014). The Local Plan Inspector for the Guildford Local Plan at paragraph 101 of the Inspector's Report (March 2019) concluded that there were exceptional circumstances to inset the villages from the Green Belt. He states: "*In previous plans, all the villages except for Ash Green were washed over by the Green Belt, but the NPPF states that only those villages whose open character makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt should be included within it. The submitted Plan therefore insets 14 villages from the Green Belt based on the comprehensive and well-founded work of the Green Belt and Countryside Study. The villages concerned do not have an open character that contributes to the openness of the Green Belt, and the Plan establishes the new Green Belt boundary around them*."

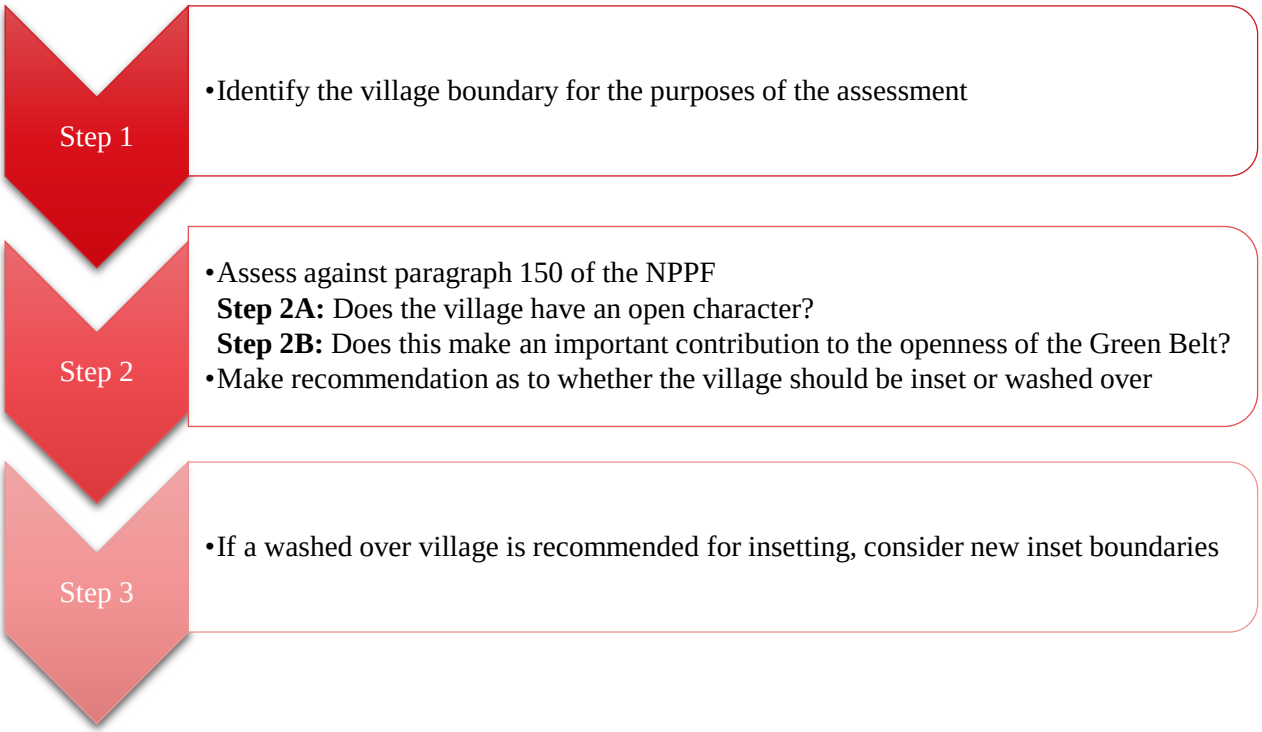
The Inspector for the Runnymede Local Plan at paragraph 49 of the Inspector's Report (May 2020) acknowledged the change in policy position in relation to Green Belt villages stating: "*Thirdly, the detailed boundary of the Green Belt was established in 1986. Since then, development has rendered some parts of the boundary illogical or indefensible, and discrepancies have come to light that need to be corrected. Furthermore, national planning policy on villages that are `washed over' by the Green Belt has altered since 1986, and it is necessary to review whether the policy framework for the borough's Green Belt villages remains sound."* The Inspector concluded that based on the review of Green Belt villages, there were exceptional circumstances to inset the village of Thorpe. At paragraph 205, the Inspector states: "*On the balance of the evidence about the limited contribution that the village makes to the physical and visual openness of the Green Belt, it is justified and consistent with national planning policy to exclude Thorpe Village from the Green Belt. The Plan's definition of the new Green Belt boundary around village, as shown on the policies map, has been informed by Stage 2 of the Green Belt Villages Review and I am satisfied that it is justified, positively prepared, effective and consistent with NPPF, including that exceptional circumstances exist for the alteration of the Green Belt boundary*."

In contrast, the Local Plan Inspector for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan at paragraph 95 of the Inspector's Report (November 2016) concluded that the exceptional circumstances necessary to remove the washed over village of Farmoor from the Green Belt did not exist as he had seen '*no specific evidence to justify this particular change*'. Whilst the Vale of White Horse Green Belt Review (2014) did include a brief section which assessed whether currently washed over villages should be inset from the Green Belt taking into account paragraph 86 (of the NPPF 2012), this did not have a clear methodology or a clear basis and explanation for the recommendations made.

3. Methodology

3.1 Overview

Given that national policy and guidance does not provide a methodology for assessing Green Belt villages against paragraph 150 of the NPPF, the following methodology has been developed taking into account the comparative studies reviewed in the previous section and relevant national policy, guidance and case law. The methodology utilises an element of professional judgement however it is deliberately detailed and prescriptive in order to ensure a consistent and justified approach. The methodology follows a three step approach:



An example of the assessment proforma which encompasses Steps 1-2 is included at Appendix B.

The following section explains each step of the methodology in turn.

3.2 Step 1: Identification of Village Boundary

Step 1 will require the identification of a boundary around each village for assessment. None of the partly inset or washed over villages have a defined settlement boundary. Therefore, for the purposes of this study only, boundaries have been drawn tightly around the built curtilage of the village.

A desktop exercise using OS mapping will be used to complete this step.

3.3 Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 of the NPPF

Paragraph 150 of the NPPF consists of two clear component parts: an assessment of open character, and an assessment of openness. The comparative studies in Chapter 2 each assessed these components applying different criteria, however all of them used a qualitative scoring system. This approach has therefore been incorporated in the assessment approach to be used in Solihull.

The proforma in Appendix B sets out the criteria to be applied for each component of the assessment, and the definitions of these according to a high, medium and low assessment scale. It is possible that circumstances may arise where there is essentially no open character or no degree of openness – however this will be rare. Such situations will be encompassed within the ‘low’ category, but noted in the explanatory text.

If it is concluded from Step 2A that the village does not have an open character then there is no need to undertake Step 2B and it should be concluded that the village should be excluded from the Green Belt. This is because paragraph 150 specifically refers to the contribution that the open character makes to the openness of the Green Belt thus if the village does not have an open character, consequently it cannot make an important contribution.

A combination of desktop research combined with site visits to each village to verify conclusions will be used to complete Step 2.

Step 2A: Does the village have an open character?

The assessment of open character is focused on the following criteria:

- General pattern of development and density; and
- Scale and form (dwelling type, building height, extent of gaps/open spaces).

These criteria focus on the village itself. Open character will be considered from within the village, either at the centre point of the village or where appropriate, from a number of key locations within the village (this will only be required if the village is large and/or has variations in character within it). The 'Conclusion and Justification' column of the proforma is provided for the assessor to explain the high/medium/low category chosen, and how differences across the village have been accounted for (if relevant).

In determining whether the village overall has an open character, a majority-based approach will be applied whereby if the majority of the criteria are assessed as high or medium, then the village is considered to have an open character. If the majority of the criteria are assessed as low, then the village is not considered to have an open character. Step 2B: Does this open character make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?

Given that paragraph 150 specifically refers to 'openness', it is necessary to define openness for the purposes of this study. The case of *Turner v SSCLG* [2016] EWCA Civ 466 established the principle that openness has both a spatial and a visual dimension. The Judge stated that the concept of 'openness' is not "*narrowly limited to [a] volumetric approach…visual impact is implicitly part of the concept of 'openness of the Green Belt.*"

More recently, the Supreme Court case of *R (on the application of Samuel Smith Old Brewery) v North Yorkshire County Council* [2020] UKSC 3 considered the concept of openness. The Judge concluded:

"*[Openness] is a matter not of legal principle but of planning judgement for the planning authority or the inspector*" [Paragraph 25] … "*…There was no error of law on the face of the report. Paragraph 90 [now NPPF146] does not expressly refer to visual impact as a necessary part of the analysis, nor in my view is it made so by implication. As explained in my discussion of the authorities, the matters relevant to openness in any particular case are a matter of planning judgement, not law.*" [Paragraph 39]

The Supreme Court did not dispute the approach in *Turner* but acknowledged that *Turner* did not specify how visual effects may or may not be taken into account. The Supreme Court judgement clarifies that it is not an implicit requirement to consider the visual effects on Green Belt openness, however it does not imply that this is not relevant – it was just not found to be relevant in this case. Ultimately, it is a matter of planning judgement for the planning authority or the Inspector.

The *Turner* case therefore continues to represent the correct understanding of the concept of openness which has also been formalised in Planning Practice Guidance (see Section 2.2.3). Whilst spatial and visual openness is not explicitly defined, it is understood that spatial openness relates to the level of built form present. By contrast, visual openness relates to the *perception* of openness – for example, the impact that topography, long views and vegetation have on the openness of the Green Belt.

This component of paragraph 150 is therefore focused on the relationship between the village and the wider Green Belt. This is primarily from the perspective of the views into and out of the village from the surrounding Green Belt, as well as the relationship of open areas within the village to the surrounding Green

Belt. The intention is that this will be assessed with regard to the village envelope as perceived on the edge of the village, from outside of the village (for example on key approaches into the village), and where appropriate from locations within the village where views are present.

The assessment of Step 2B is based on five criteria that relate to the following:

- Definition of the village;
- Built form, topography and vegetation (focusing on how these enable or obstruct views); and
- Whether open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt.

In determining whether the overall open character of the village makes an 'important contribution' to openness, a majority-based approach will be applied whereby if the majority of the criteria are assessed as high or medium, then the village is considered to make an important contribution. If the majority of the criteria are assessed as low, then the village is not considered to make an important contribution.

Whilst both a high and a moderate score are considered to have an important contribution to the Green Belt, there were some instances where professional judgement was applied to the conclusion to ensure that the overall approach was robust and to show contextual understanding was considered. These instances were when:

- There was a split of 2x high, 1x medium, and 2x low to consider if the overall score should be anything other than medium .
- There was a split of 3/2 with medium and low, to ensure the overall scoring is robust and supported by the assessment given the close split.
- The village was assessed as making an important contribution at Step 2A but not at Step 2B, to apply an additional check to ensure reliability and the accuracy of the overall conclusion,

This approach ensured that borderline decisions were made transparently and that the rationale behind decisions was clearly articulated.

Determining Whether a Village should be 'Washed Over' or 'Inset'

In determining whether a village should be included (washed over) or excluded (inset) from the Green Belt against paragraph 150, both components of the assessment should be taken into account.

It is recognised that in some cases the recommendation will be clear cut however in other cases it may not be. Table 1 below sets out the assessment outcomes from Steps 2A and 2B and how these may impact upon the recommendation. It is recognised that in some instances professional judgment will be required to determine the recommendation on the status of the village, particularly where the assessment is borderline and/or the characteristics are not uniform across the village. Where the village is recommended to be inset and there are significant differences in character across it, consideration could be given as to whether the whole of the village should be inset or instead whether certain areas should remain washed over.

Table 1 Summary of assessment process

Step 2A	Step 2B	Recommendation
Village does not have an open character	No need to undertake this step	Village should be inset
Village has an open character	The open character of the village does not make an important contribution to openness	Village should be inset

Step 2A	Step 2B	Recommendation
Village has an open character	The open character of the village makes an important contribution to openness	Village should be washed over

3.4 Step 3: Definition of New Inset Boundaries

If a recommendation has been made to inset a village (or parts of a village) from the Green Belt, then it will be necessary to define a boundary taking into account paragraphs 145, 148 and 149 of the NPPF. Where it is recommended that a village with existing inset boundaries is to remain inset, these existing boundaries will remain and would not be redefined.

Paragraphs 145, 148 and 149 of the NPPF state the following:

"145. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period…

…148. …when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should determine whether a site's location is appropriate with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

149. When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:

> *(a) ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
>
> *(b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
>
> *(c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
>
> *(d) 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 an update to a plan which proposes the development;*
>
> *(e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and*
>
> *(f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent."*

Any alterations to Green Belt boundaries will require the Council to develop an exceptional circumstances case in accordance with paragraph 145 of the NPPF. The above factors would need to be taken into account when defining new Green Belt boundaries for the villages proposed to be inset. Paragraph 149, parts (b) and (e) will be the most relevant for the current study.

Where it is recommended through this study that the washed over villages be inset, it will be necessary to ensure that boundaries would endure beyond the plan period, as per paragraph 145 and paragraph 149(e) of the NPPF.

The following criteria will therefore be relevant in determining the new inset boundaries:

- Does the inset village include all land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?

- Is the boundary based on physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?

Recommended boundaries will be verified through site visits, conducted in conjunction with assessment against Step 2.

4. Village Assessments and New Inset Boundaries

4.1 Overview

This section sets out the findings from Stages 1, 2 and 3. Stage 1 involved the definition of the village boundaries for the purposes of the assessment. The detailed assessment proformas explain how the village boundary has been defined. As set out in Section 3.2, the existing infill boundary has been used as a starting point and reviewed to ensure it logically follow the built curtilage of the village.

In undertaking Stage 2 and assessing the villages against paragraph 150 of the NPPF, the criteria set out in the proformas and the qualitative scoring system was applied. The justification for the chosen assessment scale is provided in the proformas. Stage 2 was completed via a site visit to each village combined with desktop research[4]. Multiple points within the villages were visited by the assessor to enable them to form a balanced judgement.

Stage 3 involved defining a new inset boundary for the village recommended to be inset within the Green Belt. The methodology set out in Section 3.4 identifies the following criteria based on paragraph 145, 148 and 149 of the NPPF which was used to determine the proposed new inset boundary:

- Does the inset village include all land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?
- Is the boundary based on physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?

4.2 Village Assessments

10 villages in Solihull have been assessed, with the proforma for each village is in Appendix C, and summarised in in Table 2.

Overall, seven villages are proposed to remain as washed over villages. It is considered that the remaining three of Cheswick Green, Millisons Wood and Tidbury Green, are considered for insetting. In this instance, an exceptional circumstance would need to be developed for each village.

[4] Village boundaries were mapped using OS MasterMap to ensure a suitable level of accuracy, noting that the mapbase included in this report are more diagrammatic. The size of the village was based on the hectares of the boundary, and the number of buildings within the village boundary calculated using postcode data from Ordinance Survey (noting there could be multiple addresses in the same building).

Table 2 Solihull Green Belt Village Assessment Summary

Village	No of Buildings	Area (ha)	Pattern of development	Scale of Dwellings	Extent of Gaps	Progressed to Step 2B	Definition	Built form	Topography	Vegetation	Continuation of Open Areas	Step 2B Conclusion	Overall Conclusion
Barston	80	8.5	Medium	Medium	High	Progressed	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Important contribution	Remain in the Green Belt
Berkswell	120	9.7	Medium	Medium	Medium	Progressed	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Important contribution	Remain in the Green Belt
Bickenhill	100	14.7	High	Medium	High	Progressed	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Important contribution	Remain in the Green Belt
Chadwick End	150	11.9	Medium	Medium	Medium	Progressed	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Important contribution	Remain in the Green Belt
Cheswick Green*	1,210	58.3	Low	Low	Medium	Not progressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Exclude from the Green Belt
Eastcote	130	12.3	Medium	Medium	High	Progressed	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Important contribution	Remain in the Green Belt
Illshaw Heath	60	4.4	Medium	Medium	Medium	Progressed	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Important contribution	Remain in the Green Belt
Millisons Wood	290	16	Medium	Medium	Low	Progressed	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Not an important contribution	Exclude from the Green Belt
Temple Balsall	70	6.3	High	High	High	Progressed	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Important contribution	Remain in the Green Belt
Tidbury Green*	770	55.7	Medium	Medium	Medium	Progressed	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Not an important contribution	Exclude from the Green Belt

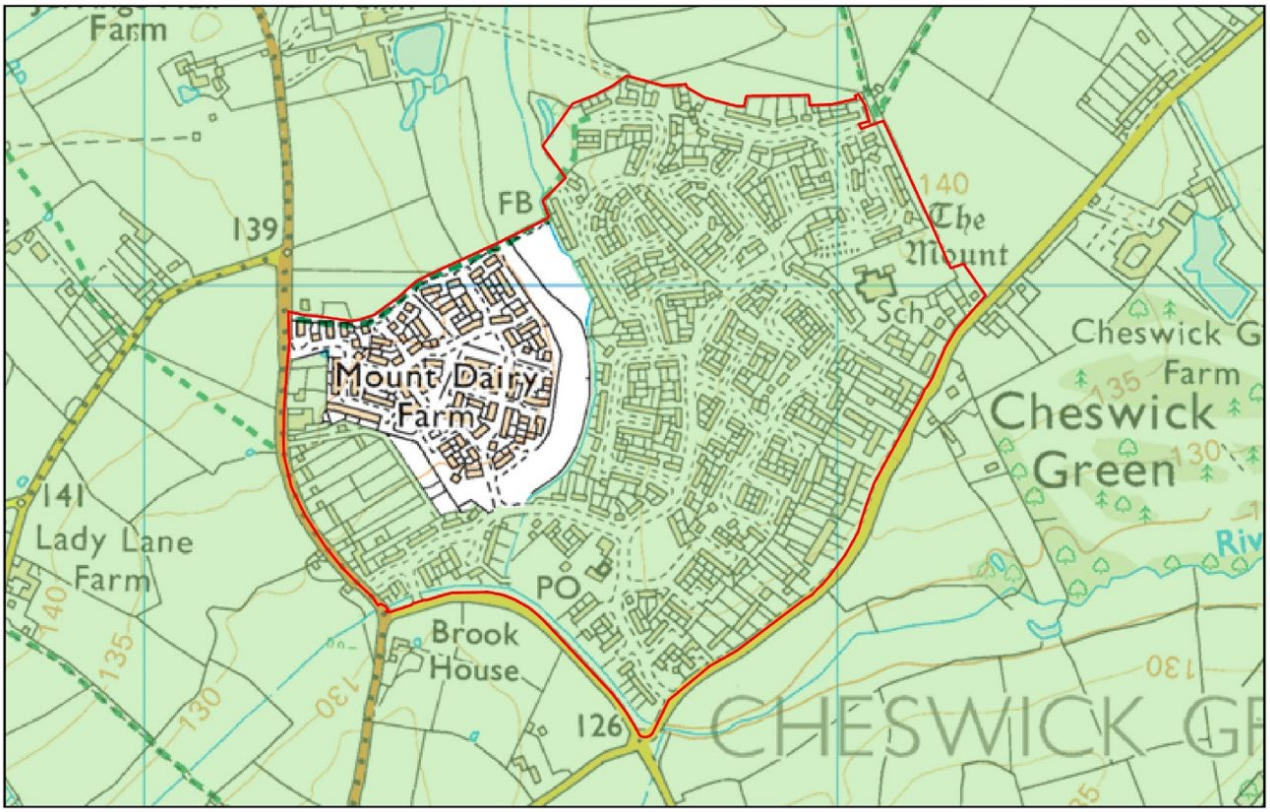
* Parts of the village are already inset

4.3 New Inset Boundaries

The proposed new inset boundaries for Cheswick Green, Millisons Wood and Tidbury Green, are shown below along with the reasoning and justification for the boundary. The approach to defining the new inset boundaries used the following criteria based on paragraph 145, 148 and 149 of the NPPF which was used to determine the proposed new inset boundary:

- Does the inset village include all land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?
- Is the boundary based on physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?

4.3.1 Cheswick Green



Proposed inset boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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Boundary Criteria	Justification
Does the inset village include all land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?	Yes, the boundary includes the main cluster of the village, as well as the existing inset area of land, which is now a completed residential scheme. The area directly to the south of the village, which includes Forget-me-not Farm, agricultural buildings, Earlswood Cricket Club and St Mary Magdelane church have not been included in the area recommended to be inset. The reasons for this include that the area is considered to have an open character that contributes to the Green Belt and has uses that conform with uses acceptable in the Green Belt, such as agriculture. Additionally, the area is considered to be self-contained within three roads: Vicarage Road, Watery Lane and the B4102
Is the boundary based on physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?	Yes, the boundaries consist of roads and the limits of village, which are readily recognisable as they consist of garden, fence, hedge and tree line boundaries. Such boundaries are likely to be permanent.

Boundary Criteria	Justification
	The boundary is the same boundary used for Stage 2 (as shown in the assessment proformas).

4.3.2 Millisons Wood

Proposed inset boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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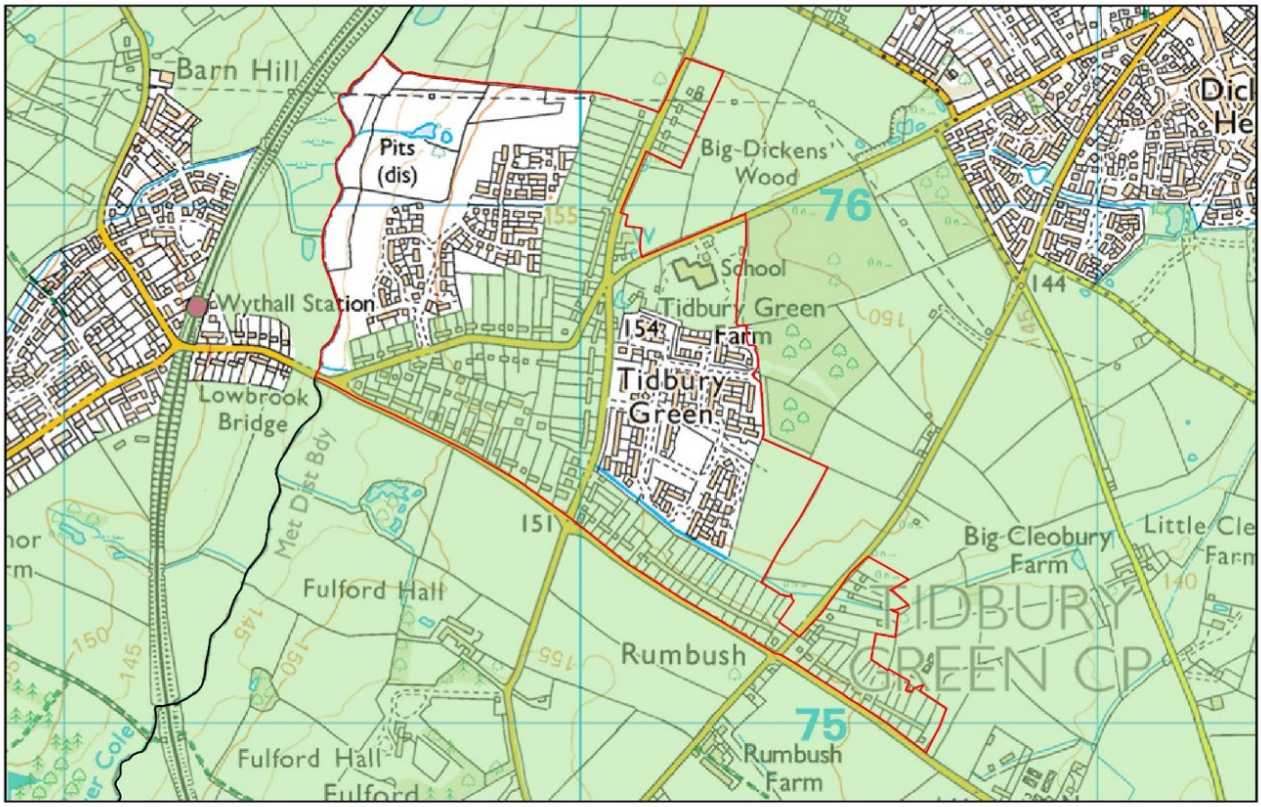
Boundary Criteria	Justification
Does the inset village include all land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?	Yes, the boundary includes the main cluster of development characterising the settlement, as well as an additional cluster of residential development to the north of Birmingham Road. It includes the full extent of the built curtilage of the village, including all the residential properties.
Is the boundary based on physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?	Yes, the boundaries consist of roads and the limits of development, which are readily recognisable as they consist of garden, fence, hedge and tree line boundaries. Such boundaries are likely to be permanent. The boundary is the same boundary used for Stage 2 (as shown in the assessment proformas). There is an area of land to the north of Birmingham Road which includes some dwellings of a similar character to the ones on the south of the road. Whilst the boundary follows the edge of the built form, consideration could be given to removing this from the proposed inset area and use the Birmingham Road as the identifiable boundary.

4.3.3 Tidbury Green



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Boundary Criteria	Justification
Does the inset village include all land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?	Yes, the boundary includes the main cluster of development, as well as the ribbon development along Norton Lane and Rumbush Lane. It includes the full extent of the built curtilage of the village, including all the residential properties along and connected from Norton Lane, Lowbrook Lane, Tilehouse Lane, Fulford Hall Road, Norton Lane and Rumbush Lane. It also includes the village hall and the school, which are located along Dickens Heath Road, with this being contained by a thick area of vegetation. Additionally, there is an area of open space to the east of the village associated with the Tidbury Heights estate (inset allocation). This area is currently washed over by the Green Belt however it is connected to the estate via a path, and provides a play area and what appears to be a drainage pond as part of this development. As this forms part of the functional village, it is recommended that this area is also removed from the Green Belt. It is also noted that the area of landscaping in the previously inset area to the north west of the village (Pastures Drive) was previously removed from the Green Belt and has been included in the inset recommendation for this village.
Is the boundary based on physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?	Yes, the boundaries consist of roads and the limits of development, which are readily recognisable as they consist of garden, fence, hedge and tree line boundaries (including the landscaping delivered as part of the developments on the existing inset areas). Such boundaries are likely to be permanent. The main difference to the boundary used for Stage 2 (as shown in the assessment proformas) is the inclusion of the open space associated with Tidbury Heights (detailed above). Whilst the proposed inset follows an identifiable tree line/hedge boundary, consideration could be given to removing this from the proposed inset area using the built form of Dewberry Road as the boundary (excluding from inset the open space/landscaped area which includes the footpath linking to the play area).

5. Summary and Conclusion

This study provides an independent and objective assessment of the extent to which villages washed over by the Green Belt meet the requirements of paragraph 150 NPPF.

Given that national policy and guidance does not provide a methodology for assessing Green Belt villages against paragraph 150 of the NPPF, a methodology was developed taking into account comparative studies, national policy, guidance and case law. The three stage methodology utilises an element of professional judgement however it is deliberately detailed and prescriptive in order to ensure a consistent and justified approach.

Step 1 of the methodology involved defining the village boundary for the purposes of the assessment. As none of the partially inset or washed over villages have a defined boundary, this was undertaken as a desk-based assessment that drew the village boundaries tightly around the built curtilage of the village.

In order to assess the village against paragraph 150 a number of qualitative scoring criteria were developed. These criteria are shown on the assessment proformas as part of Step 2 of the village assessment. Step 2A and Step 2B are set out in the completed assessment proformas for each village. A site visit of each village was undertaken in order to complete the proformas and a recommendation was made as to whether the village should remain washed over or be inset within the Green Belt.

It was recommended that three villages were considered for insetting: Cheswick Green, Millisons Wood and Tidbury Green. Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green have existing parts of the settlement that are already inset, whereas Millisons Wood is currently washed over in entirety. As stated in Section 1, the recommendations for removal from the Green Belt does not imply that the Council must accept these or that they will appear in an adopted Local Plan.

Stage 3 of the methodology involved proposing new inset boundaries for the village recommended to be inset. The criteria for this was based on paragraphs 145, 148 and 149 of the NPPF. If the Council wish to take forward the recommendation to alter Green Belt boundaries, an exceptional circumstances case will need to be developed.

Appendix A – Green Belt Village Studies from Other Local Authorities

A.1 Green Belt Village Studies from Other Local Authorities

Guildford Borough Council: Green Belt and Countryside Study (2014) Volume IV – Insetting of Villages and Defining New Green Belt boundaries within Guildford Council in accordance with the NPPF

Undertaken by Pegasus Planning – The Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) was adopted in April 2019.

The Local Plan Inspector's Report (March 2019) at paragraph 101 states: "*In previous plans, all the villages except for Ash Green were washed over by the Green Belt, but the NPPF states that only those villages whose open character makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt should be included within it. The submitted Plan therefore insets 14 villages from the Green Belt based on the comprehensive and well-founded work of the Green Belt and Countryside Study. The villages concerned do not have an open character that contributes to the openness of the Green Belt, and the Plan establishes the new Green Belt boundary around them…Having regard to the NPPF, there are exceptional circumstances to inset these villages from the Green Belt.*"

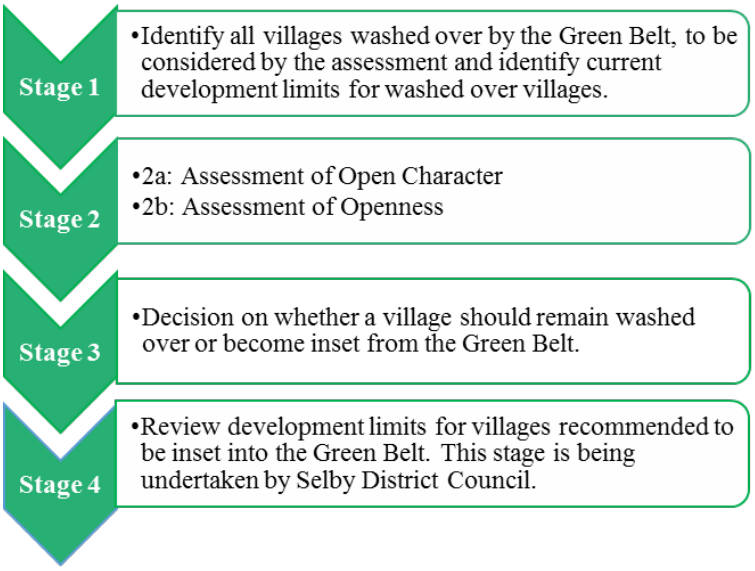
Assessment considerations	Assessment approach
What is the approach to reviewing Green Belt villages?	In Volume IV of the Guildford Borough Green Belt and Countryside Study, the Council assess the insetting of villages and the defining of new Green Belt boundaries using a three stage approach: Stage 1: Assessing the degree of openness within each village through analysis of village form, density and extent of existing developed land Stage 2: Assessing the village surrounds and locations of potential Green Belt defensible boundaries surrounding each village across Guildford Borough Stage 3: Assessing the suitability of each village for insetting within the Green Belt and defining new Green Belt boundaries
How is open character assessed?	Areas of high, medium and low development density were identified within the village area. Built development is the dominant characteristic in high development density areas, while visible open areas are the dominant characteristic for low development density areas. Highly developed settlements with little sense of openness within the built form were classed as making no important contribution to the Green Belt, and therefore would be appropriate to be excluded and form inset land. The areas were defined as follows: • High Development Density – generally includes areas of flats, terrace, detached, semi-detached or singular buildings within densely distributed clusters with enclosed street frontages, small scale garden plots enclosed by fence lines, hedgerows and other buildings. Built development forms the dominant characteristic; • Medium Development Density – generally includes areas of detached, semidetached or singular buildings within closely distributed clusters within medium scale garden plots, small holdings, open spaces or small fields. Built development is the prevalent characteristic interspersed with visible open areas; and • Low Development Density – generally includes singular detached buildings that are sparsely distributed within large garden plots, country estates or open farmland. Open areas form the dominant characteristic interspersed with infrequent buildings.
How is openness assessed?	The locations of developed and open areas were mapped to determine their relation to the openness of the surrounding Green Belt. A judgement on their openness was

	based on professional discretion, using aerial imagery, base mapping and site surveys to support the decision.
Does the assessment include a definition for openness?	There is not a definition of openness however the study explains how 'important contribution to openness' is assessed, as follows: "*13.16 NPPF paragraph 86 [replaced by paragraph 140] notes that if the open character of the village makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should remain washed over by the Green Belt. It is recognised that the absence of built development and presence of trees can contribute to openness in Green Belt terms. In this instance however, paragraph 86 requires the contribution to the openness to be important i.e. significant or considerable in other words. For this to occur, a high degree of perception of this openness contribution is required i.e. it is readily apparent that the role that the village environment serves to contribute to openness of the wider Green Belt.* *13.17 Where a settlement is highly developed and has little sense of openness within the built form, there would be no important contribution to be secured and therefore it would be unnecessary to include such land and it would be appropriate for it to be excluded and form 'inset' land within the Green Belt. Additionally, if such land is then physically enclosed to a significant degree by topography and/or vegetation there would be little opportunity to observe the land in question, and little opportunity to perceive how such land could significantly contribute to openness in Green Belt terms, thus limiting its opportunity to contribute to the openness of the area to any significant degree or attach any sense of importance. In these circumstances i.e. a combination of a strong sense of development with little sense of openness, coupled with a well contained village (physically and/or visually), the land will be unable to make an important contribution either literally or perceptually, and therefore can be argued as unnecessary in designation terms and could justifiably be excluded from the Green Belt in accordance with the NPPF guidance. Such an arrangement would result in a village being inset in the Green Belt."*
How is the assessment scored?	Each village is subject to 3 criteria: • Does the majority of the village exhibit an open character? • Do open areas within the village appear continuous with surrounding open land beyond the village – from within and/or outside of the village? • Does the majority of the village exhibit incomplete, indistinguishable boundaries that would not permit the provision of new Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 85 (last point)? Each of these questions is given either a + or -. Villages that scored 2 +'s or more were classed as making an important contribution to the Green Belt and insetting was not considered appropriate. Villages that scored 2 -'s or more were classed as making no important contribution to the Green Belt and should be inset. Villages that exhibited a combination of + and – were either determined with justification or subject to further discussion with the adjoining authority.
How does the study determine what constitutes a village?	Villages are determined by settlement hierarchy, given a number between based on factors including: • Population • Defined settlement • Shops • Schools • Other community facilities • Public transport

	• Employment
How are new village boundaries defined?	The boundaries of each land parcel are clearly demarcated by visible landscape features such as woodlands, hedgerows, roads or railway infrastructure. This ensures that if a village is deemed suitable for development, it would be physically and visually contained, and not need altering at the end of the plan period. The detailed locations of defensible Green Belt boundaries were identified from site surveys, aerial imagery and detailed OS mapping between 1:5,000 and 1:12,000 scale. The detailed locations of woodlands, hedgerows, treebelts, highways and railway infrastructure surrounding each village were also mapped. Recommended boundaries do include treebelts, woodlands and hedgerows. Whilst they consist of plants, such features are clearly recognisable, and with regards permanence will often be in place as long as, if not longer than, much built development. Such features are therefore considered to adhere to the boundary definition requirements, as set out in paragraph 85 of the NPPF.

Selby District Council: Status of Villages in the Green Belt (November 2016)

Undertaken by Arup – not been through Examination

Assessment considerations	Assessment approach
What is the approach to reviewing Green Belt villages?	The method assesses whether the villages currently washed over by Green Belt should remain washed over: 
How is open character assessed?	Open character is assessed throughout each village, as well as from the edges and centre of the settlement looking outwards and views looking towards the village, according to the following qualitative scoring: High: The village has an open character with infrequent buildings, e.g. sparsely distributed detached dwellings set in large plots. There is inconsistent or dispersed built form. There are open areas throughout the village development limits contributing to a sense of openness. There are low levels of vegetation or low lying vegetation which allow open views. There is a lack of separation between the Green Belt and the village Development Limits. Medium: The village has a built character with clustered detached or semi-detached properties set in medium plots. There may be areas of open space within the development limits, but some areas are enclosed due to built form, rising topography or dense vegetation. There are partially obscured views into and out of the village due to built form, topography or dense vegetation. There is some sense of separation between the Green Belt and the village Development Limits Low: The village is dominated by built form with terraced properties with yards, closely spaced detached or semi-detached properties set in small plots. There is a lack of open space within the development limits and a perception of enclosure due to built form, dense vegetation or steep or rising topography. Views into and out of the village are predominantly restricted by built form, topography or dense vegetation. There is clear separation between the Green Belt and the village Development Limits.

Criteria	Strength Scale		
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
Density of development	Low density	Medium density	High density
Spacing of built form	Open	Partially open	Narrow
Vegetation	Low lying and/or sparse	Partially dense	Tall and/or dense
Topography	Flat allowing views	Mixed allowing some views	Steep and/or rising obstructing views
Open Space	Space forms prominent feature	Some open space	Limited open space
	If the majority of the criteria scores a combination of high and medium, then the village is considered to be open in character.	If the majority of the criteria score a combination of low and medium, then the village is considered to not have an open character.	

How is openness assessed?

Through a physical and/or perceptual connection between the openness of the village and the openness of the Green Belt. A perceptual connection is one that relates to the ability to interpret or become aware of something through the senses including experiencing views. This does not require direct access to open space and green infrastructure, but can be perceived.

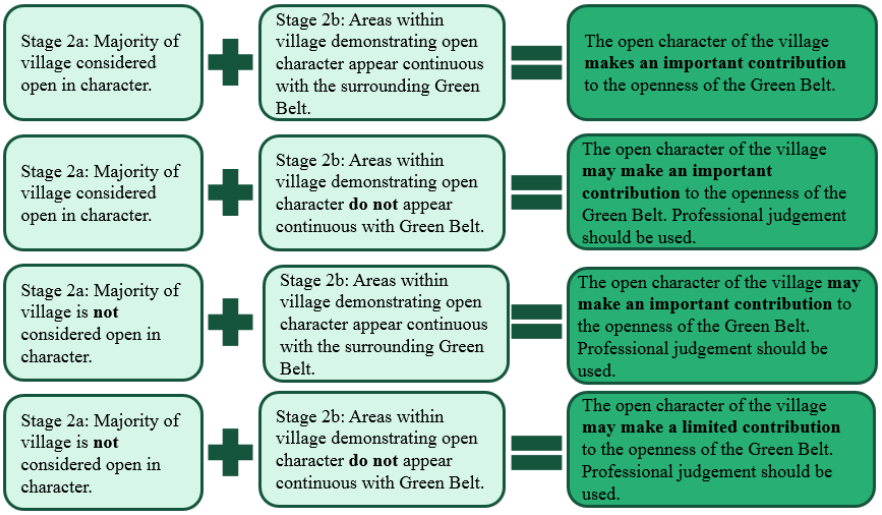
Criteria	Strength Scale		
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
Relationship between Green Belt and built form	Continuous perception	Continuous perception exists in parts	Broken perception
Views into and out of the village	Open	Partial views	Obstructed/Restricted
	If the majority of the criteria score a combination of high and medium, then the village **is considered continuous** with the Green Belt.	If the majority of the criteria score a combination of low and medium, then the village is considered **to not be** continuous with the Green Belt.	

Where the majority of criteria score medium, professional judgement informed by site work has been used to identify whether the village is considered to have an open character. The criteria to be used in this methodology are defined as:

- **Relationship with the surrounding Green Belt** which is concerned with the physical and/or perceptual connectivity of the openness of a village with the surrounding open countryside, for example a village surrounded by dense trees is not visually connected to the surrounding open countryside.
- **Views into and out of the village** which relates to the visual permeability of a village, is heavily influenced by the factors which inform the assessment of openness. The presence of open views into and out of a village contribute to the physical and/or perceived continuation of the open character of the Green Belt into the village.

Does the assessment include a definition for openness?

In the Selby Stage 1 Green Belt Study, openness is defined as the 'extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built form and urbanising influences, rather than from a landscape character sense'.

How is the assessment scored?	Qualitative – The degree of open character and degree of openness are qualitatively assessed on a scale of High, Medium and Low as shown above. The overall scoring in determining whether a village should be inset or washed over firstly defined 'important contribution' in terms of the qualitative scoring system. For the open character of a village to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt a high or medium-high degree of open character was required based on the criteria assessed in Stage 2. For a village to exhibit a limited contribution, a low or low-medium degree of open character was required based on these criteria. If the village exhibits a limited contribution to the openness of the Green Belt then it would be appropriate to inset the village within the Green Belt. Villages that are recommended to be inset will then be considered in Stage 4 to determine whether the '*character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons*' such as by a conservation area or planning policy. Combining the outcomes from Stages 2a and 2b determines whether the village makes an important contribution or may make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. 
How does the study determine what constitutes a village?	Villages are defined by settlement hierarchy as of the Selby Core Strategy 2013. Settlements are ranking in the following order: • Principal Town • Local Service Centres • Designated Service Villages • Secondary Villages with defined Development Limits All villages investigated within this study are identified as Secondary Villages with defined Development Limits. The Core Strategy emphasises that growth in these areas would be inappropriate with the exception of some housing development within Development Limits such as conversions or replacement dwellings.
How are new village boundaries defined?	Boundaries are defined by their durability. Durable features are both natural and manmade, including rivers, protected woodland, motorways or existing developments. Less durable features include field, tree lines, or unmade roads. Therefore, new village boundaries are defined along durable borders which preserve the openness of the Green Belt without the need to be altered at the end of the plan period.

Vale of White Horse District Council: Green Belt Review Phase 1&2 (2014)

Undertaken by Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd / Terra Firma Consultancy – Local Plan Part 1 adopted in December 2016 following Examination in 2015-16.

The Local Plan Inspector did not specifically comment on the Green Belt Village assessment methodology however the village study had recommended that the washed over village of Farmoor should be inset from the Green Belt. The Inspector stated at paragraph 95 of the Inspectors Report (November 2016): '*I have seen no specific evidence to justify this particular change. Moreover, it is unclear to me why Farmoor should be an "inset" village when other smaller villages (as defined by policy CP3), including Dry Sanford, Shippon, South Hinksey, Sunningwell and Wytham would remain "washed-over" by the Green Belt. If and when a subsequent review of the Green Belt takes place it would make sense to consider, as part of this, the appropriateness of each of these villages as being either "inset" or "washed-over" by the Green Belt. However, at the current time I conclude that the exceptional circumstances necessary to remove Farmoor from the Green Belt do not exist.*'

Assessment considerations	Assessment approach
What is the approach to reviewing Green Belt villages?	The Green Belt Village Assessment forms a part of the wider Green Belt Assessment. Section 12 of the document contains the assessment which consists of a simple table of the washed over villages being assessed against paragraph 86 according to open character and contribution to openness, from which a recommendation is made. There does not appear to be a clearly defined methodology for the assessment against paragraph 86 [now paragraph 140]. Stage 1: subdivide green belt into land parcels. Stage 2: assessment of edge of settlement within land parcels against five green belt purposes and recommendations. Stage 3: assessment of whole land parcels against five green belt purposes and recommendations. Stage 4: assessment of additional land for inclusion in an extension to the green belt and recommendations. Stage 5: assessment of small villages within the green belt and their potential for inclusion as inset settlements within the green belt and recommendations.
How is open character assessed?	There does not appear to be any set criteria which has been applied. Example of the description as follows 'Small linear rural hamlet broken up by tree lines, very small fields and large gardens'.
How is openness assessed?	There does not appear to be any clear criteria which are to be used. The assessment is related to the landscape which the village forms part of, for example: 'Part of the vale landscape south of Wootton.'
Does the assessment include a definition for openness?	There is no definition for openness as part of the village assessment.
How is the assessment scored?	There is no scoring system used. It is unclear how the descriptions in the open character and openness columns relate to the recommendation.
How does the study determine what constitutes a village?	There is no definition for villages, or what constitutes a village, but under the Core Strategy villages are ranked according to settlement hierarchy.
How are new village boundaries defined?	Study notes that precise boundaries will need to be assessed however does not set out how this will be done.

Runnymede Borough Council: Green Belt Villages Review (February 2016)

Undertaken by Runnymede Council – The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan was adopted in July 2020 following examination in 2018/19.

The Local Plan Inspector's Report (May 2020) at paragraph 67-68 considers the wider Green Belt Review (which included the Green Belt villages review). The Inspector states:

"67. The Green Belt review was undertaken as a series of complementary studies and carried out in stages that examined it first at a strategic level, and then at a more fine-grained level to assess the performance of smaller parcels of land against Green Belt purposes; the studies also included a Green Belt Villages review and a technical review of the Green Belt boundaries. The overall process took account of good practice advice from the Planning Advisory Service, comparator studies carried out by other local planning authorities whose plans were found sound, and Landscape Institute advice on landscape visual assessment.

68. I consider the robustness of the Green Belt review and the justification for the proposed release of land in more detail in Issues 3 and 4 below in relation to the Plan's site allocations. In summary, I have concluded that the review was comprehensive, systematic and based on a robust, consistently applied methodology that properly reflected local circumstances and the unique characteristics of the borough in assessing how the Green Belt serves the purposes laid down in national planning policy."

At paragraphs 204-205 of the Inspector's Report, the Inspector considered the exceptional circumstances case for excluding Thorpe from the Green Belt:

"204. *I have concluded in Issue 2 above that there are exceptional circumstances in principle for altering the Green Belt boundary in the Plan. In bringing forward the Plan, the Council carried out a review of the Green Belt villages, including Thorpe, taking account of the advice in paragraph 86 of NPPF. Particular attention was paid to the character of the edges of the village envelope and their relationship with the wider Green Belt.*

205.On the balance of the evidence about the limited contribution that the village makes to the physical and visual openness of the Green Belt, it is justified and consistent with national planning policy to exclude Thorpe Village from the Green Belt. The Plan's definition of the new Green Belt boundary around village, as shown on the policies map, has been informed by Stage 2 of the Green Belt Villages Review and I am satisfied that it is justified, positively prepared, effective and consistent with NPPF, including that exceptional circumstances exist for the alteration of the Green Belt boundary."

Assessment considerations	Assessment approach
What is the approach to reviewing Green Belt villages?	Stage 1 - Identify developed areas in Runnymede which are currently 'washed over' by (included within) the Green Belt and which could be considered 'villages' or 'settlements which function as a village'. Stage 2 – If an area is considered for review, identify a boundary around the village for the purposes of a working assessment. Stage 3 - Consider whether the village has an open character. Stage 4 - Consider the relationship that the village has with the openness of the surrounding Green Belt. Stage 5 – Make a decision as to whether a village should be 'washed over' by the Green Belt or if it should be excluded; Stage 6 - If a decision has been made to exclude a village (or parts of), consider detailed village boundaries.
How is open character assessed?	A detailed consideration of a village's character will include the following: • Density – Consider the density of built/residential development as a whole and how this differs (or not) across the village area;

• Scale & Form - Consider different development forms and how this changes (or not) across the village area taking into account:

• Type of dwelling – flatted, terraced, semi-detached, detached

• Plot size – small, medium, large

• Building heights – one, two or more storeys in height

• Enclosures or barriers - natural or man-made

• Extent of open space or gaps in frontages – Are there any open areas within the village boundary or gaps in frontages? Are views restricted or if gaps in frontages are evident are views through obscured and by what?

• Topography – flat, undulating, sloped, rolling. Significant stands of trees/hedgerows.

The degree of open character exhibited and whether this is low, medium or high should taken into account the above factors. The criteria was developed using comparative studies as a guide. The descriptions for low, medium and high are as follows:

Degree of Open Character	Definition
Low	Area dominated by built form with closely spaced two story or higher flats, terraces or semi-detached/detached properties set in modest/small plots in uniform patterns or blocks. Enclosures predominantly man-made. Open areas are few or incidental with limited gaps in frontages restricting or partially restricting short views through. Any longer views through gaps are obscured or partially obscured predominantly by built development. Limited stands of trees/copses or non-landscaped vegetation.
Medium	Area has a built character with clusters of detached/semi-detached single/two storey dwellings set in modest plots. Modest gaps in frontages with largely unrestricted short views through. Longer views partially obscured by built development or obscured/partially obscured by vegetation. Enclosures either natural or man-made. Modest amount of open areas within the village boundary.
High	Buildings are dispersed within the village boundary and are predominantly detached single/two storey set in large plots. Extensive gaps between development with short views predominantly unrestricted and long views unobscured or partially obscured by vegetation. Enclosures are either natural or if man made are low lying or obscured by vegetation. Open areas present throughout the village boundary.

How is openness assessed?

The relationship the village has with the openness of the surrounding Green Belt is based on:

• Views into and out of the village along its periphery and whether views in/out are restricted and/or obscured and if so, whether by natural, man-made or topographical features.

• Relationship between open or private amenity areas on the periphery of the village and the surrounding Green Belt and how these interact with any gap to an adjacent settlement or development.

Villages were qualitatively categorised based on the degree of openness within the surrounding green belt into high, medium, and low categories:

Degree of Openness	Definition
Low	Views into and out of the village are largely restricted or partially restricted by built development or topography with any views through obscured predominantly by built development. No continuance of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt. Majority of village boundary clearly defined.
Medium	Views into and out of the village partially restricted by built development or topography or restricted by vegetation. Views through partially obscured by built development or vegetation. Few open areas continue into surrounding area. Part of village boundary clearly defined but other parts unclear.
High	Views into and out of the village are largely unrestricted by built development or topography and/or only partially be vegetation. Views through unobscured by built development or only partially by vegetation. Open areas continue into the surrounding Green Belt. No clearly defined village boundary.

Does the assessment include a definition for openness?	The assessment references court cases that state that openness is 'epitomised by land that is not built upon and does not include buildings which are unobtrusive, camouflaged or screened in some way.' - Heath & Hampstead Society v London Borough of Camden [2007] EWHC 977 (Admin) & Timmins/Lymn v Gedling Borough Council [2014] EWHC 654 In assessing the openness of the village of Thorpe, the review considers: density, open space, spacing, views, vegetation and topography.
How is the assessment scored?	Qualitative- the assessment is scored by High, Medium, or Low categories (these are defined separately according to the assessment of open character and separately for the assessment of openness – as above) In terms of coming to an overall judgement, Stage 5 explains the approach: *"3.23 A decision will be made as to whether a village should be 'washed over' by the Green Belt or if it should be excluded based on the results from stages 3 and 4. It is likely that different areas of a village will exhibit different density and forms of development rather than exhibit a uniform pattern. Similarly views into or out of a village from different locations will exhibit different levels of restriction and boundaries are likely to be distinct/indistinct in different areas. Where this is the case, a view will be taken as to how different areas combine to produce an overall degree of open character or openness (or not).* *3.24 As such, if the majority of the village is considered to have a high degree of open character and its impact on the openness of the Green Belt is high then the village should be 'washed over'.* *3.25 If the majority of the village exhibits a low open character with a low impact on the openness of the surrounding Green Belt, the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.* *3.26 However there will be occasions which are less clear cut, for instance, a village is open in character but does not make a contribution to the openness of the Green Belt or is not open in character but does make a contribution. There will also be occasions where villages show a degree of both open/closed characteristics and a degree of contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, but not uniformly across the whole village area. In these instances it will be necessary to form a view as to whether the village should be 'washed over' or excluded, accepting that some areas may still exhibit a much higher or lower degree of open character or contribution to openness. If it is considered that a village should be excluded then consideration could be given to whether areas of a village should remain 'washed over' and others excluded."*
How does the study determine what constitutes a village?	The document notes that according to the Oxford English Dictionary, a village is defined as '*a group of houses and associated buildings, larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town, situated in a rural area*'. The National Geographic website defines a village as '*A village is a small settlement usually found in a rural setting. It is generally larger than a hamlet, but smaller than*

	a town. Some geographers specifically define a village as having between 500 and 2,500 inhabitants'. The definition of a hamlet is '*A small settlement, generally one smaller than a village and strictly (in Britain) one without a Church*'.
How are new village boundaries defined?	If the majority of the village exhibits a low open character with a low impact on the openness of the surrounding Green Belt, the village should be excluded from the Green Belt. In contentious villages with less clear definitions, the decision to wash over or exclude these villages will be down to professional judgement.

Appendix B – Green Belt Village Blank Assessment Proforma

B.1 Green Belt Village Blank Assessment Proforma

NAME OF VILLAGE				
[INSERT MAP OF VILLAGE]				
Context				
Current status of village	*Inset / Washed over*			
Village size ***[Insert number of homes in village, calculated from OS post code data. This can be used as contextual information to inform other parts of assessment below]***				
Step 1: Village Boundary				
Area to be assessed	*What constitutes the village for the purposes of the assessment? Justification*			
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF				
Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village				
Criteria				
Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	High	Medium	Low	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Sparsely distributed or dispersed, low density*	*Linear or small clusters across the village, medium density*	*Clustered, high density*	*Explanation of category taking into account differences across the village*
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Predominantly detached dwellings, 1-2 storeys*	*Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	*Large numbers of terraced dwellings or flats, with some buildings taller than 2 storeys*	
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*Gaps in frontages and/or areas of open space form prominent features within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is closely linked across the village*	*Some gaps in frontages and/or some areas of open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is linked in parts across the village*	*Limited gaps in frontages and/or limited open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is not linked across the village*	
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	*If the majority of the criteria score either high/medium then the village is considered to have an open character.* *If the majority of the criteria score low then the village is considered to not have an open character and there is no need to undertake the second step of the assessment.*			
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt				
Criteria				

Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	High	Medium	Low	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Village mostly has scattered dwellings at its edges that gradually fade into wider countryside*	*Part of village has a clear visual edge but other parts are more gradual*	*Majority of village has a clear and distinct visual edge*	*Explanation of category taking into account differences across the village*
Built form[5]	*Built form is sparse and/or building/frontages contain gaps allowing for views*	*Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	*Views are largely restricted by built form and building/frontages are solid without gaps*	
Topography[6]	*Topography allows widespread views into and out of the village*	*Topography allows for some views into and out of the village*	*Topography results in limited views into and out of the village*	
Extent of vegetation[7]	*Low lying and/or sparse, allowing views into and out of the village*	*Partially dense, allowing for views into and out of the village in places*	*Tall and/or dense, generally obstructing views into and out of the village*	
Do open areas[8] **within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt**	*Open areas continue into surrounding Green Belt*	*Continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt is partially disrupted by built form or tall boundary features*	*No continuance of open areas into surrounding Green Belt*	
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	*If the majority of the criteria score either high/medium then the village is considered to make an important contribution.* *If the majority of the criteria score low then the village is considered to not make an important contribution. If the scores are split (e.g. 2x high, 1x medium, 2x low, or a 3/2 split with moderate and low), use professional judgement.*			
Summary and Conclusion				
Summary	***Summary of the above***			
Conclusion	***Retain as washed over / Retain as inset / Village should be changed from washed over to inset***			

[5] This refers to any form of built development including residential properties, employment uses, warehouses, schools, and sports facilities.

[6] This refers to the configuration of the national and artificial physical features which make up the surface of the land.

[7] This refers to the assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs.

[8] This refers to gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces within the village.

Appendix C – Solihull Green Belt Village Assessment Proformas

C.1 Barston

Green Belt Village Assessment

Washed over village assessment boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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Context	
Current status of village	The village is currently washed over by the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 80 buildings and is approximately 8.5ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village has no existing boundaries identified in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village, including the gardens accompanying a number of the residential properties along Barston Lane, Oak Lane and Banner Lane. The village boundary also includes the cemetery associated with Saint Swithin's Church and House.

Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF

Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village

Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Medium - Linear or small clusters across the village, medium density*	The village is characterised by its linear layout which is dispersed along the village's main roads: Barston Lane and Oak Lane. The density of the village remains relatively regular across the settlement.

Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	The village is predominantly characterised by a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings, which are 2-storeys in height.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*High - Gaps in frontages and/or areas of open space form prominent features within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is closely linked across the village*	Across most of the village, there are large gaps in frontages and there are significant areas of open space within the village boundary, including the cemetery around Saint Swithin's Church and House. There is also a large amount of open space to the rear of the village hall, which is likely residential gardens. There are no meaningful links to the Green Belt as the open spaces are enclosed by built form.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a high contribution to one criteria and a medium contribution to two assessment criteria for Step 2A. The village is therefore considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. Progress to Step 2B assessment	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Medium - Part of village has a clear visual edge but other parts are more gradual*	The structure of the village is more defined along Oak Lane, with the village boundary following the regular shaped gardens associated with the residential dwellings. However, the dwellings along Barston Lane and Hob Lane are more scattered, with some more set back from the main roads and giving the appearance of fading into the wider countryside.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	Medium – There are areas with opportunities for some views due to gaps in frontages, however, views are also restricted by ancillary features like garages and fences. Views through gaps in the built forma are also obstructed by vegetation and topography.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Medium - Topography allows for some views into and out of the village*	The topography of the village is relatively unchanging, and there are limited areas with enhanced views due to obstructing built form and vegetation. However, due to higher topography to the north of Oak Lane, there are some views into and out of the village.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Low - Tall and/or dense, generally obstructing views into and out of the village*	Vegetation is partially dense, with tall trees and hedgerows lining roads in places, especially along Barston Lane and around the Barston Lane and Oak Lane junction. This restricts views into and out of the village and often blocks views through gaps in frontages. Looking from the north of Oak Lane towards Barston Lane, views into the countryside are expected due to higher topography, however, these are obstructed by vegetation.
Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*Medium - Continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt is partially disrupted by built form or tall boundary features*	The village is defined along Oak Lane by regular residential gardens which are contained from continuing into the green belt by vegetation in the form of hedgerows. However, other areas of the village are defined by more irregular residential rear gardens which provide for some degree of continuation of open areas into wider Green Belt.

Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to four assessment criteria and a low contribution to one of the assessment criteria for Step 2B. The village is therefore considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
Summary and Conclusion	
Summary	Barston is considered to have an open character and make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
Conclusion	Retain as washed over

C.2 Berkswell

Green Belt Village Assessment		

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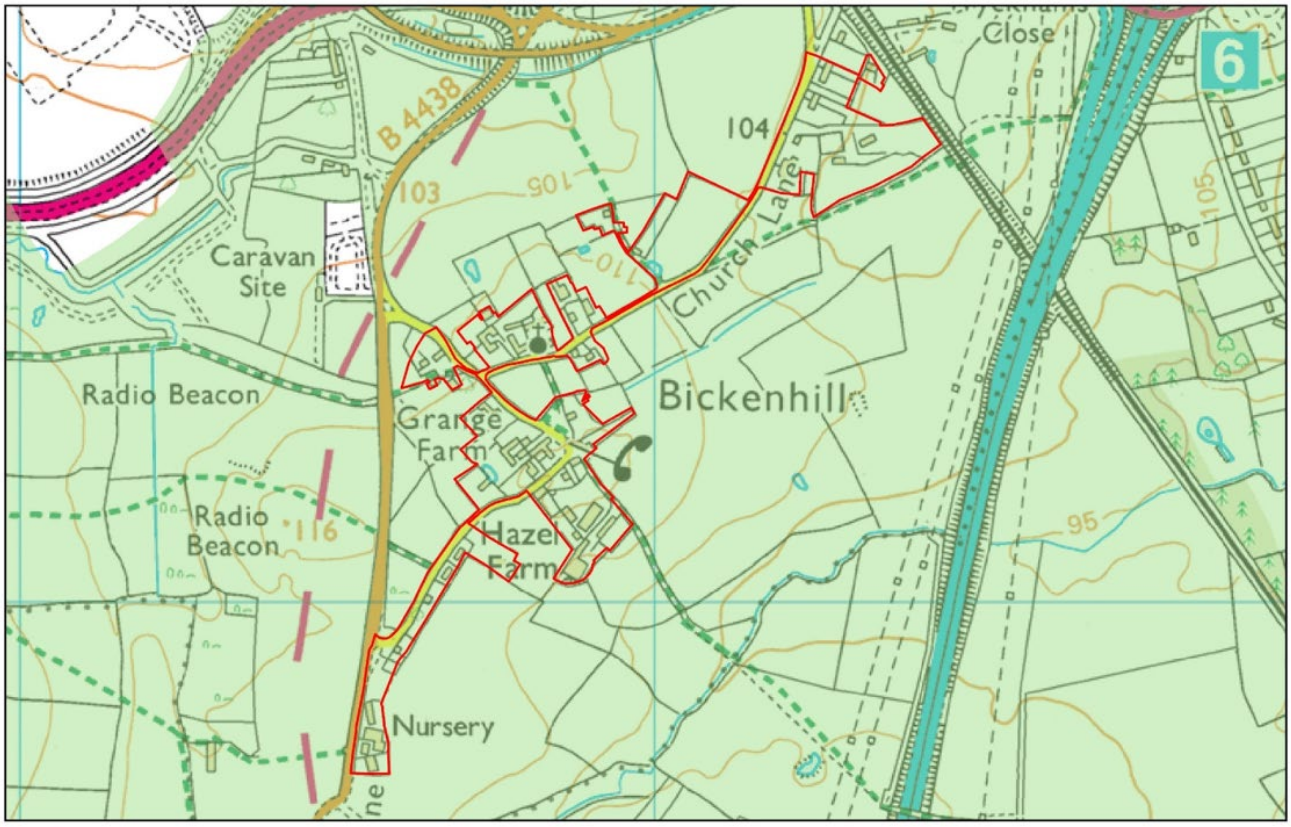
Context		
Current status of village	The village is currently washed over by the Green Belt.	
Village size	The village has approximately 120 buildings and is approximately 9.7ha in size.	
Step 1: Village Boundary		
Area to be assessed	The village has no existing boundaries in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village, including the gardens accompanying a number of the residential properties. Additionally, there is a cemetery associated with the church. There is one isolated property along Meriden Road which has not been included within the village boundary, given its separate character from the remainder of the village and that it is set back from the road.	
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF		
Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Medium - Linear or small clusters across*	The village is characterised by linear development around the village's four main roads: Spencer's Lane, Lavender Hall Lane, Coventry Road, and Meriden Road.

	the village, medium density	There is also more clustered development around Church Lane, including St John Baptist Anglican Church.
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	There are mostly detached and semi-detached dwellings across the village, predominantly 1-2 storeys in height. There is some terraced development along Pound Close, we well as along Church Lane.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*Medium - Some gaps in frontages and/or some areas of open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is linked in parts across the village*	There are often detached dwellings across the village with gaps in frontages, however, there are also some terraced dwellings that have no gaps in frontages. There is an area of open space formed of the St John Baptist Anglican Church cemetery. The Green Belt is not linked across the village.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to the three assessment criteria for Step 2A, and it is therefore considered to have an open character. Progress to Step 2B assessment	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Medium - Part of village has a clear visual edge but other parts are more gradual*	The majority of the village has a clear and distinct visual edge, which is defined by relatively regular gardens and linear urban form. However, there is an area of the village around the church and the primary school which is more irregular in terms of the urban layout, including an open space surrounded by the local roads, meaning that this area of the village edge is more gradual. Nevertheless, this area is also contained by a dense area of vegetation, which does give some perception of enclosure, especially around the church.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	The Green Belt is visible in parts of the village through gaps in the built form, notably along Lavender Hall Lane and Spencer's Lane. However, there limited longline views, including through the school and church grounds, due to ancillary features like garages and fencing, as well as vegetation within the village and the wider countryside.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Low - Topography allows for some views into and out of the village*	The topography has a limited role in enhancing views into and out of the village. Whilst it increases along Coventry Road, there are no views due to the built form and vegetation. There are some views at the village boundary along Spencer's Lane, although these are restricted by the topography of the surrounding countryside and vegetation.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Low - Partially dense, allowing for views into and out of the village in places*	There is tall and dense vegetation across most of the village which often restricts views. Vegetation is dense in the central junction of the village where the four main roads meet, with a dense line of tall trees and other vegetation extending along Meriden Road. There is also dense vegetation around the church and cemetery.

Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*Medium - Continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt is partially disrupted by built form or tall boundary features*	Whilst the village boundary is defined predominantly by residential gardens, these are often regular in size and shape and are contained by vegetation. Additionally, the large area of open space around the church (the cemetery) is surrounded by a dense area of woodland which prevents the open area continuing into the Green Belt. However, the open area associated with the agricultural buildings along Spencer's Lane appears to have less defined boundaries, which do allow for some continuation into the Green Belt.
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to three of the assessment criteria and a low contribution to two of the assessment criteria for Step 2B. Professional judgement has been applied to the overall conclusion and it has been judged that the village does not take away from the openness of the Green Belt, particularly given its small size. Therefore, the village is considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Summary and Conclusion		
Summary	Berkswell is considered to have an open character and to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Conclusion	Retain as washed over	

C.3 Bickenhill

Green Belt Village Assessment



Washed over village assessment boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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Context	
Current status of village	The village is currently washed over by the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 100 buildings and is approximately 14.7ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had no existing boundaries in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village, including the gardens accompanying a number of the residential properties along St Peters Lane and Church Lane. Additionally, the boundary includes a farm (Hazel Farm) due to its close connection to the rest of the village and role in forming the central cluster of development.
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF	

Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village

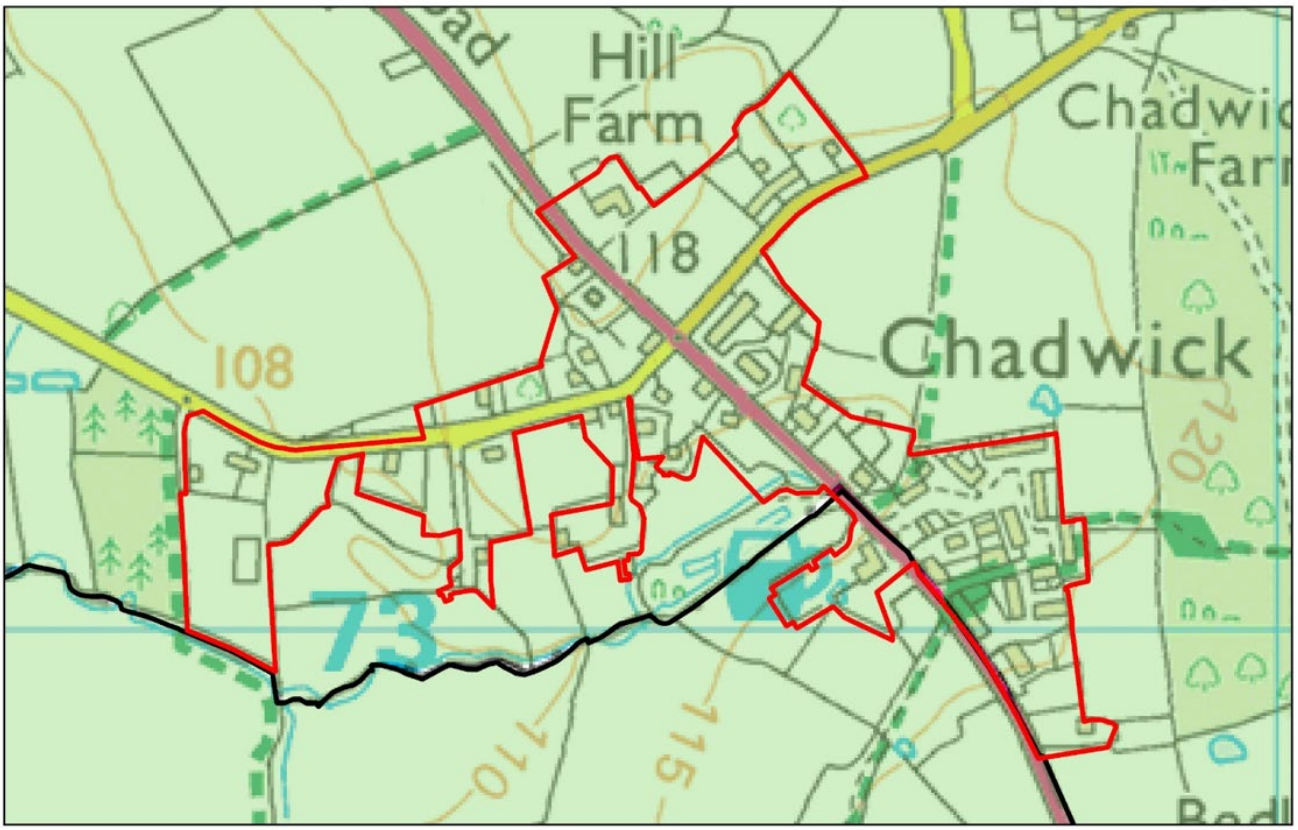
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*High - Sparsely distributed or dispersed, low density*	Development is largely linear along the village's main roads: St Peters Lane and Church Lane. Most dwellings are situated in large plots, reflecting that dwellings are often spaced apart with large frontages. The Gypsy and

		Traveller Site along Church Lane, and Hazel Farm along St Peters Lane are notable features with large areas of open space. Additionally, the cemetery associated with St Peter's Church is adjacent to the church and provides for an area of open space.
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	Dwellings are predominantly detached and 2-storeys, with some semi-detached dwellings. Additionally, Church Farm B&B appears to be a relatively large complex compared to the rest of the village.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*High - Gaps in frontages and/or areas of open space form prominent features within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is closely linked across the village*	There are numerous gaps in frontages and there are multiple areas across the village where there are gaps in built form along the village boundary. This means that the Green Belt is closely linked across the village, including at the junction between Church Lane and St Peters Lane and to the south of the Gypsy and Traveller Site.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a high contribution to two criteria and a medium contribution to one of the assessment criteria for Step 2A and is therefore considered to have open character. Progress to Step 2B assessment.	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Medium - Part of village has a clear visual edge but other parts are more gradual*	Whilst the village form follows a relatively linear structure and has a more clustered central section, there are some areas where the perceived visual definition is less clear, such as around the church, due to some scattered dwellings and a gap to the Gypsy and Traveller Site.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	Whilst the village is predominantly formed of residential development, it also includes a car dealership, a farm and a church, as well as an Air BnB (Church Farm Accommodation) . As there are large gaps between the buildings, there are opportunities for views into the Green Belt. For example, there are gaps between the dwellings to the south of the village along St Peters Lane where there are views into the Green Belt to the east. Nevertheless, these views are often restricted by obstructing vegetation.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Medium - Topography allows for some views into and out of the village*	Topography across the village changes slightly and appears to be higher in the centre of the village where dwellings are more clustered. This allows for some views into and out of the village along St Peters Lane and by Hazel Farm, as well as through gaps in dwellings to the south of St Peters Lane.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Medium - Partially dense, allowing for views into and out of the village in places*	There are some views into the Green Belt over low lying and less dense vegetation along St Peters Lane and towards Hazel Farm. However, vegetation is dense across the majority of the settlement and often obstructs views into and out of the village. Where the Green Belt is linked across the village at the St Peters Lane/Church Lane junction and adjacent to the Gypsy and Traveller site, dense vegetation obstructs any views into the Green Belt.

Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*Medium - Continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt is partially disrupted by built form or tall boundary features*	The majority of the village is defined by irregular garden boundaries which are not defined and provide continuance into the Green Belt. However, there are some areas where there are regular residential rear gardens that are bounded by a mix of low lying and taller vegetation, as well as vegetation defining Hazel Farm and the Gypsy and Traveller Site. These areas have clearer boundaries and partially disrupt the continuation of open areas into the Green Belt.
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to five criteria for Step 2B. The village is therefore considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Summary and Conclusion		
Summary	Bickenhill is considered to have an open character and make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Conclusion	Retain as washed over	

C.4 Chadwick End

Green Belt Village Assessment



Washed over village assessment boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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Context	
Current status of village	The village is currently washed over by the Green Belt. The majority of the village lies within the Solihull Green belt, however there is a small section, comprising the Olive Tree pub, which is within the West Midlands Green Belt and in the Warwick District Council administrative area.
Village size	The village has approximately 150 buildings and is approximately 11.9ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had no existing boundaries in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village, including the gardens accompanying a number of the residential properties along Netherwood Lane, Warwick Road and Oldwich Lane West. Additionally, Hill Farm has been included in the north of the village due to its close proximity to the remainder of the village.

Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF

Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village

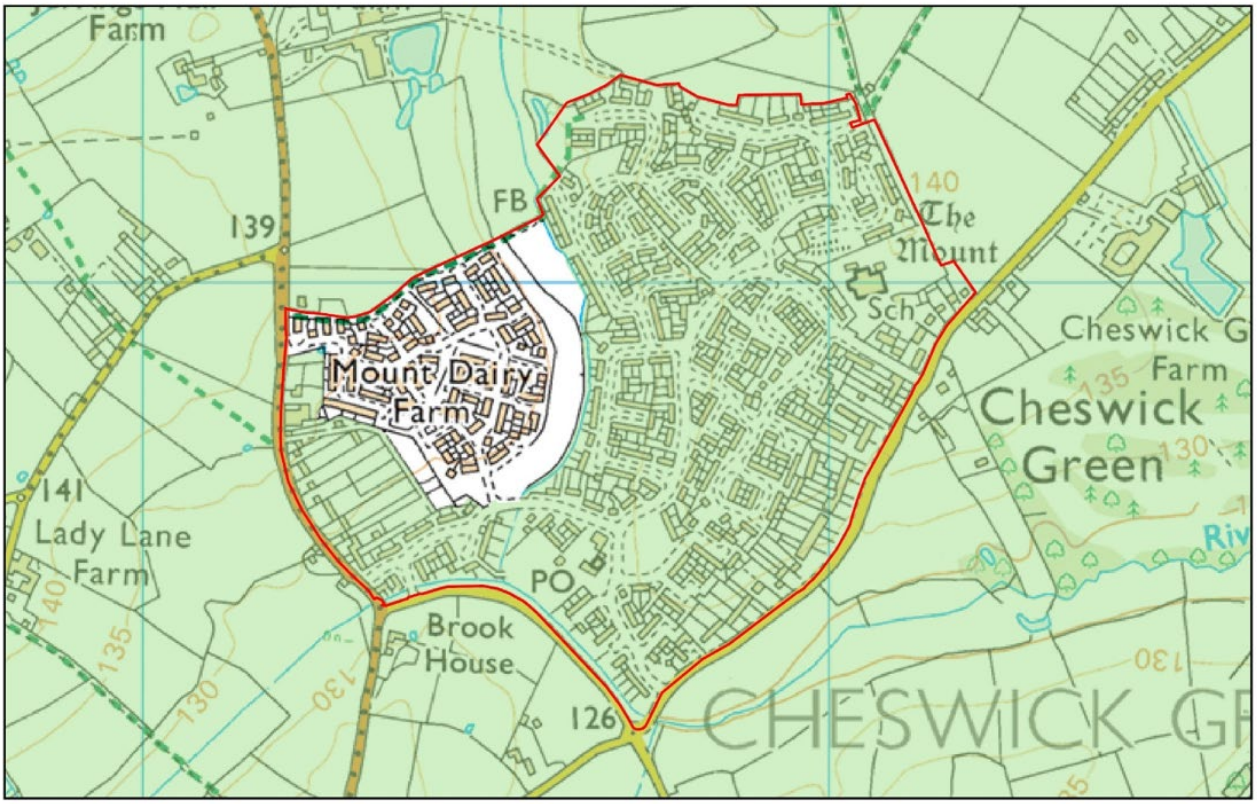
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Medium - Linear or small clusters across the village, medium density*	The village mostly follows a linear development pattern along the main roads: Warwick Road, Netherwood Lane, and Oldwich Lane West. Development along Netherwood Lane and Oldwich Lane West is more sparsely distributed,

		however, it is denser along Warwick Road. There is also a small cluster of development around Wheeler Close.
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	The village is formed predominantly of a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings which are 1-2 storeys in height. Within Wheeler Close, there are several terrace developments including some single storey dwellings. There are also terraced dwellings along Warwick Road.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*Medium - Some gaps in frontages and/or some areas of open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is linked in parts across the village*	In the north of the village along Netherwood Lane and Oldwich Lane West, where development is more sparsely distributed, there are larger gaps in frontages. Along Warwick Road and in the cluster around Wheeler Close, there are areas where there are limited gaps in frontages. There is a large area of open space in the centre of the village at the junction of Warwick Road, Netherwood Lane and Oldwich Lane West. However, this doesn't contribute much to the village's sense of openness as it is enclosed by vegetation. The Green Belt is not linked across the village.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to three of the assessment criteria for Step 2A, and it is therefore considered to have an open character. Progress to Step 2B assessment	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Medium - Part of village has a clear visual edge but other parts are more gradual*	There is a greater perception of visual definition in the south of the village and along Warwick Road, where development is denser relative to the rest of the village and there is a cluster of development around Wheeler Close. In the northern section of the village, around Netherwood Lane and Oldwich Lane West, the larger gaps between dwellings give the appearance of the village being more scattered, with a less defined visual edge. For example, Hill Farm along Warwick Road is more set back from the rest of the village, giving a more gradual level of definition.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	Views are partially restricted by built form in places, especially where development is denser along Warwick Road and around Wheeler Close. Where development is more sparce, around Netherwood Lane and Oldwich Way West, there are gaps where there are views into and out of the village. Additionally, there is some openness by the Orange Tree Pub from the associated car park, where there are some views, yet these are also restricted by vegetation in the surrounding countryside.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Low - Topography results in limited views into and out of the village*	The topography is relatively unchanging throughout the village, with most views being obstructed by built form and vegetation. However, where there is no built form along Netherwood Lane, views are restricted by the higher topography of the neighbouring field.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Medium - Partially dense, allowing for views into and out of the village in places*	There is partially dense vegetation lining the roads in the village, which allows for views into and out of the village in places. For example, whilst there are large gaps in built form along Netherwood Lane and Oldwich Way West,

		views into the countryside are often obstructed by tall and dense vegetation.
Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*Medium - Continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt is partially disrupted by built form or tall boundary features*	There are some areas, such as the cluster of development around Wheeler Close, where it appears that the village boundary is formed of regular residential rear gardens that are enclosed by boundary features. However, there are other areas, especially in the northern part of the village, where the built form is less dense and the village boundary is defined by large and irregular residential plots, with areas of less dense vegetation forming the boundary to the countryside. There are therefore areas where there is some continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt.
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to four of the assessment criteria and a low contribution to one of the assessment criteria for Step 2B. The village is therefore considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Summary and Conclusion		
Summary	Chadwick End is considered to have an open character and make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Conclusion	Retain as washed over	

C.5 Cheswick Green

Green Belt Village Assessment



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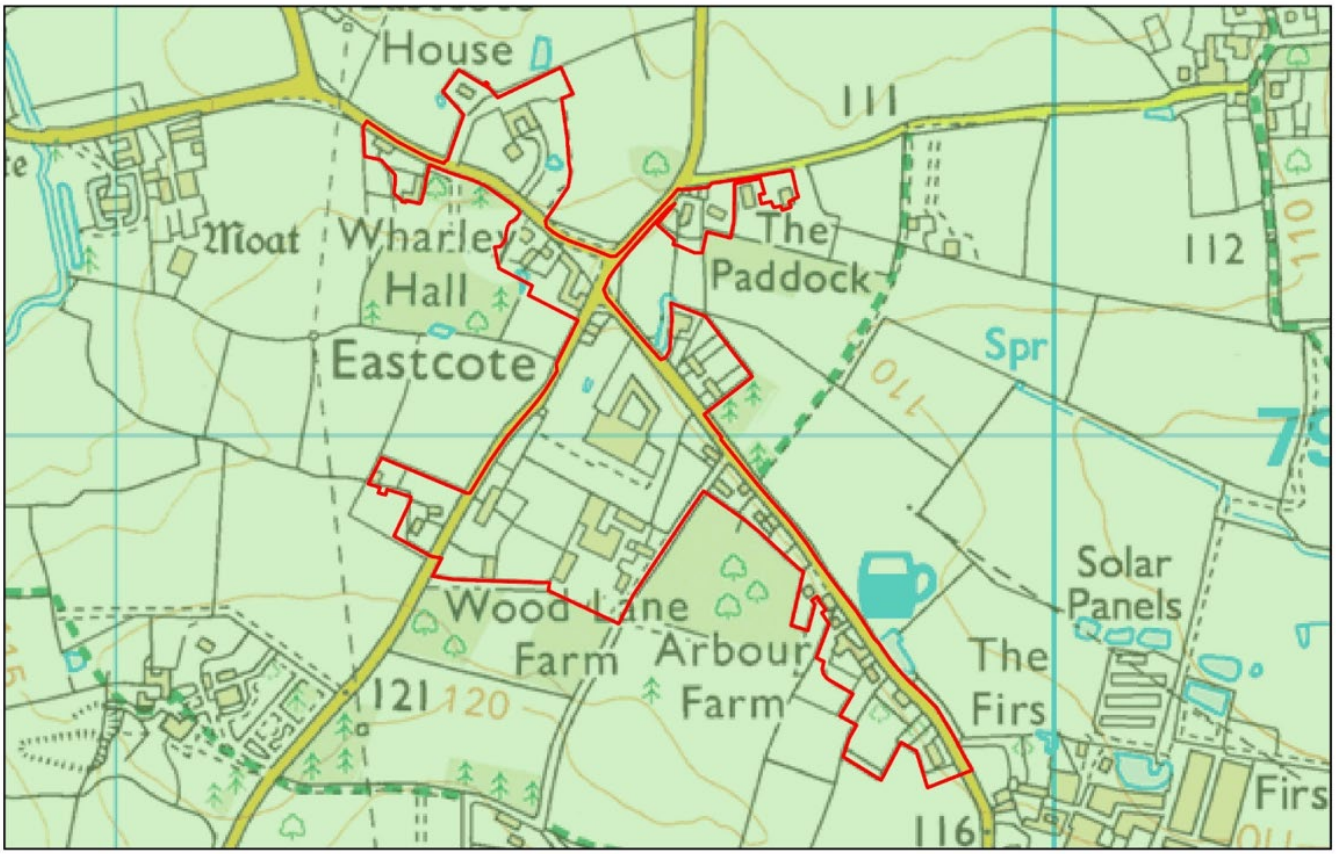
Context	
Current status of village	The village is partially inset from the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 1,210 buildings and is approximately 58.3ha in size
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had a partly inset boundary from the Solihull Local Plan reflecting a previous housing allocation (since built out). The village boundary used here includes that development, and is defined by the clustered development in Cheswick Green, and the boundaries include Creyholds Lane, residential gardens, Tanworth Lane, and Watery Lane. There are some isolated dwellings nearby to the village, including to the east of Creynolds Lane, the east of the B4102 and along Lady Lane, however, these have not been included as they do not contribute to the self-contained nature of the village. Additionally, Earlswood Cricked Club, St Mary Magdalane church, Forget-me-not Farm and a cluster of buildings to the south of Watery Lane have not been included as these are self contained in an area of open space bounded by three roads.
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF	
Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village	

Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Low - Clustered, high density*	The village comprises tightly clustered development, although the density of the built form increases slightly in the newer development at the inset area of land, relative to the rest of the village. The built form gives the village an enclosed character.
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Low - Large numbers of terraced dwellings or flats, with some buildings taller than 2 storeys*	There is a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced housing in the village, with some flats above an area with retail development opposite Benches Green. The dwellings in the area of the village currently washed over by Green Belt are predominantly 1-2 storeys in height, although in the newer inset development, there are many 3-storey dwellings.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*Medium - Limited gaps in frontages and/or limited open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is not linked across the village*	There are some gaps in frontages, especially where there are detached houses, although there is limited connection to the Green Belt. There are some open spaces in the village, including Benches Green, a patch of long residential gardens along Tamworth Lane, and a new area of open space separating the new development inset area from the washed over part of the village. These have some contribution to the village's open character, although are often enclosed by the built form. The Green Belt is not linked across the village.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to one of the assessment criteria and a low contribution to two of the assessment criteria for Step 2A. It is therefore not considered to have an open character. Step 2B assessment not required.	
Summary and Conclusion		
Summary	Cheswick Green is not considered to contribute to the open character of the Green Belt. An assessment of the particular contribution made to the openness of the Green Belt is therefore not required.	
Conclusion	Village should be changed from washed over to inset	

C.6 Eastcote

Green Belt Village Assessment



Washed over village assessment boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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Context	
Current status of village	The village is currently washed over by the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 130 buildings and is approximately 12.3ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had no existing boundaries in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village, including the gardens accompanying a number of the residential properties. Additionally, Christmas Tree Farm has been included within the boundary due to its location in the central cluster of the village and being surrounded by the retirement village and dwellings along Knowle Road.
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF	

Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village

Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Medium - Linear or small clusters across the village, medium density*	The village is characterised by linear development along Barston Lane, with some development also located along Eastcote Lane and Knowle Road. There is a cluster of development between Barston Lane and Knowle Road which is

		characterised by large areas of open space. The clustered development includes Eastcote Park Retirement Village.
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	Dwellings are predominantly detached and 1-2 storeys. Eastcote Park retirement village is located in the centre of the village and offers some flats and higher density development, although this is also 2-storeys in height.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*High - Gaps in frontages and/or areas of open space form prominent features within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is closely linked across the village*	There are large gaps in frontages, and open space is a prominent feature throughout the village. Residential gardens and open space around the retirement village are a notable feature within the village. There are areas where the Green Belt is closely linked across the village, such as along Eastcote Lane and adjacent to the Malt Shovel pub along Barston Lane.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a high contribution to one of the assessment criteria and a medium contribution to two of the assessment criteria for Step 2A, and is therefore considered to have an open character. Progress to Step 2B assessment.	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Medium - Part of village has a clear visual edge but other parts are more gradual*	The village has a relatively well-defined village boundary, following a mix of linear and clustered development. However, there are also some more scattered dwellings, such as along Eastcote Lane which are more disconnected from the rest of the village and do appear to fade into the countryside.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	There are areas where the built form is more clustered, such as in the centre of the village, where views are blocked. However, there are also often large gaps in between dwellings. For example, along Barston Lane, there are often areas of open space between dwellings, as well as dwellings that are closer together and gaps in frontages are infilled by garages and fencing. Whilst there are several areas where development only lines one side of the road, including along Barston Lane, views into and out of the village are often restricted by vegetation.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Medium - Topography allows for some views into and out of the village*	The topography of the village is relatively unchanging. There are some long line views into the surrounding Green Belt and into the village from Knowle Road and Walsal End Lane due to gaps in vegetation and built form. Other areas of the village, such as along Barston Lane, have limited views due to obstructing vegetation and built form.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Medium - Partially dense, allowing for views into and out of the village in places*	There are areas of the village where vegetation is dense and blocks views, particularly towards the centre of the village and along Barston Lane.
Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*High - Open areas continue into surrounding Green Belt*	Most of the village boundary features comprise residential gardens, which are defined by irregular and regular boundaries formed of low lying and taller vegetation. However, most of the open space and gardens in the village are contained by thin lines of vegetation which provide for a high degree of continuation of open areas into the wider Green Belt.

Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a high contribution to one assessment criteria and a medium contribution to four assessment criteria for Step 2B. The village is therefore considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
Summary and Conclusion	
Summary	Eastcote is considered to have an open character and make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
Conclusion	Retain as washed over

C.7 Illshaw Heath

Green Belt Village Assessment

Washed over village assessment boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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Context	
Current status of village	The village is currently washed over by the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 60 buildings and is approximately 4.4ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had no existing boundaries in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village, including the gardens accompanying a number of the residential properties along Kineton Lane, Illshaw Heath Road, and Dyers Lane.
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF	

Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village

Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Medium - Linear or small clusters across the village, medium density*	The development of the village is clustered around the triangular junction of the village's main roads: Kineton Lane, Dyers Lane and Illshaw Heath Road. However, there is also linear ribbon development along Kineton Lane, which gives the character of openness.

Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	The village is formed of a mix of semi-detached and detached houses, which are relatively low in density and predominantly 1-2 storeys in height. For example, along Kineton Lane the dwellings are predominantly semi-detached. There are some terraced houses along Ilshaw Heath Road, although these are on small plots with large gaps in the built form.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*Medium - Some gaps in frontages and/or some areas of open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is linked in parts across the village*	There are gaps in the frontages between the dwellings and there are large areas of open space within the village, including in the centre if the village in the junction of the three main roads. However, especially along the ribbon development on Kineton Road, gaps in frontages are filled by ancillary features, such as garages and fencing which does block views into the Green Belt. The Green Belt is not closely linked across the village.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to three of the assessment criteria for Step 2A assessment. Progress to Step 2B assessment.	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Low - Majority of village has a clear and distinct visual edge*	The village mostly has a clear and distinct visual edge, comprising development around the central triangular junction formed of Illshaw Heath Road, Kineton Lane and Dyers Lane. There is also linear development extending along Kineton Lane, although this is connected to the rest of the village and does not fade into the countryside.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	The relatively low density of development and gaps in frontages means that there are areas where there are views. Additionally, development along Kineton Lane is along the north western side of the road, and therefore there are views to the south east. There are large gaps between the dwellings along Illshaw Heath Road, although views are restricted by vegetation.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Medium - Topography allows for some views into and out of the village*	The topography of the village appears to be relatively unchanging, although there are views along Dyers Lane and where Dyers Lane and Kineton Lane converge due to breakages in built form and vegetation. However, views in this location are not long line due to vegetation in the surrounding countryside.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Medium - Partially dense, allowing for views into and out of the village in places*	There are areas where tall and dense vegetation obstructs views into and out of the village, particularly along Kineton Lane and Illshaw Heath Road. Whilst in other areas, such as along Dyers Lane and Kineton Lane, vegetation in the village is less dense, however the vegetation in the surrounding countryside restricts long line views out of and into the village.
Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt	*Low - No continuance of open areas into surrounding Green Belt*	There is a small section of the garden associated with the house at the junction, where Kineton Lane and Illshaw Heath Road meet, where the weak boundary features do not appear to prevent the continuation of open space into the Green Belt. However, this is only a

(gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)		limited area and it does appear that there is some low-lying fencing acting as a boundary. Across the remainder of the village, open spaces and gardens are contained by regular lines of tall and dense vegetation and roads, meaning that there is no continuance of open area into the surrounding Green Belt.
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to three of the assessment criteria and a low contribution to two of the assessment criteria for Step 2B. Professional judgement has been applied to the overall conclusion and it has been judged that the village does not take away from the openness of the Green Belt, particularly given its small size. The village is therefore considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Summary and Conclusion		
Summary	Illshaw Heath is considered to have an open character, and to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Conclusion	Retain as washed over	

C.8 Millisons Wood

Green Belt Village Assessment

Washed over village assessment boundary
West Midlands Green Belt
SMBC authority boundary

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Context	
Current status of village	The village is currently washed over by the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 290 buildings and is approximately 16.0ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had no existing boundaries in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village, including the gardens accompanying a number of the residential properties within a clustered area of development to the south of Birmingham Road. Additionally, several properties to the north of Birmingham Road have been included within the boundary as they are located in close proximity to the main cluster of the village. There is a business park to the east of the village, however, this has not been included within the boundary given its minimal contribution to the character of the settlement, and the fact that it is already located outside of the Solihull Green Belt within the Coventry City Council administrative area.
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF	
Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village	

Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification

General Pattern of existing development and density	*Medium - Linear or small clusters across the village, medium density*	The western half of the village is structured in a more linear pattern, following two roads: Albert Road and Grace Road. The character of this area is less dense and more open relative to the rest eastern side which is characterised by cul-de-sac. Additionally, the small cluster of dwellings to the north of Birmingham Road are linear and low density along the Birmingham Road.
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	The village is formed of a mix of semi-detached and detached dwellings, which are predominantly 2-storeys. The western half of the village appears to have more semi-detached dwellings with larger gardens than the eastern half.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*Low - Limited gaps in frontages and/or limited open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is not linked across the village*	There are some gaps in frontages, although they are often filled by ancillary features, such as garages and fencing. There are many residential gardens across the village, although there is no other open space. There is access to Millisons Wood, a nature reserve, from the south of Albert Road, and whilst this provides some connection to the Green Belt, the dense nature of the vegetation means that there is no visual connection to areas of open countryside.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to two of the assessment criteria and a low contribution to one of the assessment criteria for Step 2A and is therefore considered to have open character. Progress to Step 2B assessment.	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Low - Majority of village has a clear and distinct visual edge*	The village is clearly defined by the clustered nature of the settlement. Whilst there are several dwellings located to the north of Birmingham Road, these do not appear to be scattered and do not fade into the countryside.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	Views are largely restricted by built form across the village due to limited gaps between dwellings, and the infilling of gaps by ancillary features, such as garages and fencing. There are some views into the Green Belt where the cul-de-sac roads end, such as at the end of Albert Road and Bonneville Close, however these are often obstructed by low lying vegetation and Millisons Wood. The views into the countryside from James Dawson Drive are the most open views in the village, with more low lying vegetation forming the village boundary.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Low - Topography results in limited views into and out of the village*	The topography of the village remains relatively flat across the village. Since the surrounding countryside has limited changes in topography, there are limited views into and out of the village due to obstructing vegetation and built form.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Medium - Partially dense, allowing for views into and out of the village in places*	Whilst there is limited vegetation and open spaces within the village itself, surrounding vegetation, including Millisons Wood, encloses the village and typically obstructs views into and out of the village.

Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*Low - No continuance of open areas into surrounding Green Belt*	There is no continuance of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt as the open areas in the village, formed of residential gardens, are contained by vegetation consisting of tree belts, low lying hedgerows and dense woodland. Whilst there is access to Millisons Wood, a nature reserve adjacent to the village and in the Green Belt, this is adjacent to residential properties on the estate meaning there is no continuance with open areas in the village.
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to two of the assessment criteria and a low contribution to three of the assessment criteria for Step 2B. The village is therefore considered to not make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Summary and Conclusion		
Summary	Millisons Wood is considered to have an open character, however it does not make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. Since the village was progressed from Step 2A but was not considered to make an important contribution at Step 2B, professional judgement has been applied to support the overall conclusion. Whilst the village was judged to have an open character, its contribution to the openness of the Green Belt is significantly impacted by the limited views as a result of topography and built form, which reduce the visual connection to the Green Belt. Additionally, the village has a clear and defined visual edge and does not fade into the countryside, which reduces the sense of openness as the boundary between the village and the countryside is not blurred.	
Conclusion	Village should be changed from washed over to inset	

C.9 Temple Balsall

Green Belt Village Assessment

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Context	
Current status of village	The village is washed over by the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 70 buildings and is approximately 6.3ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had no existing boundaries in the Solihull Local Plan. The village boundary used here consists of clustered development, including some residential development. The most defining features of the village are a church, school (including car park) and manor house. There is a cemetery associated with the church to the south east of the main settlement, however, this has not been included within the boundary given its distance from the cluster of development and its separation from the settlement by a thick area of trees.
Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF	

Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village

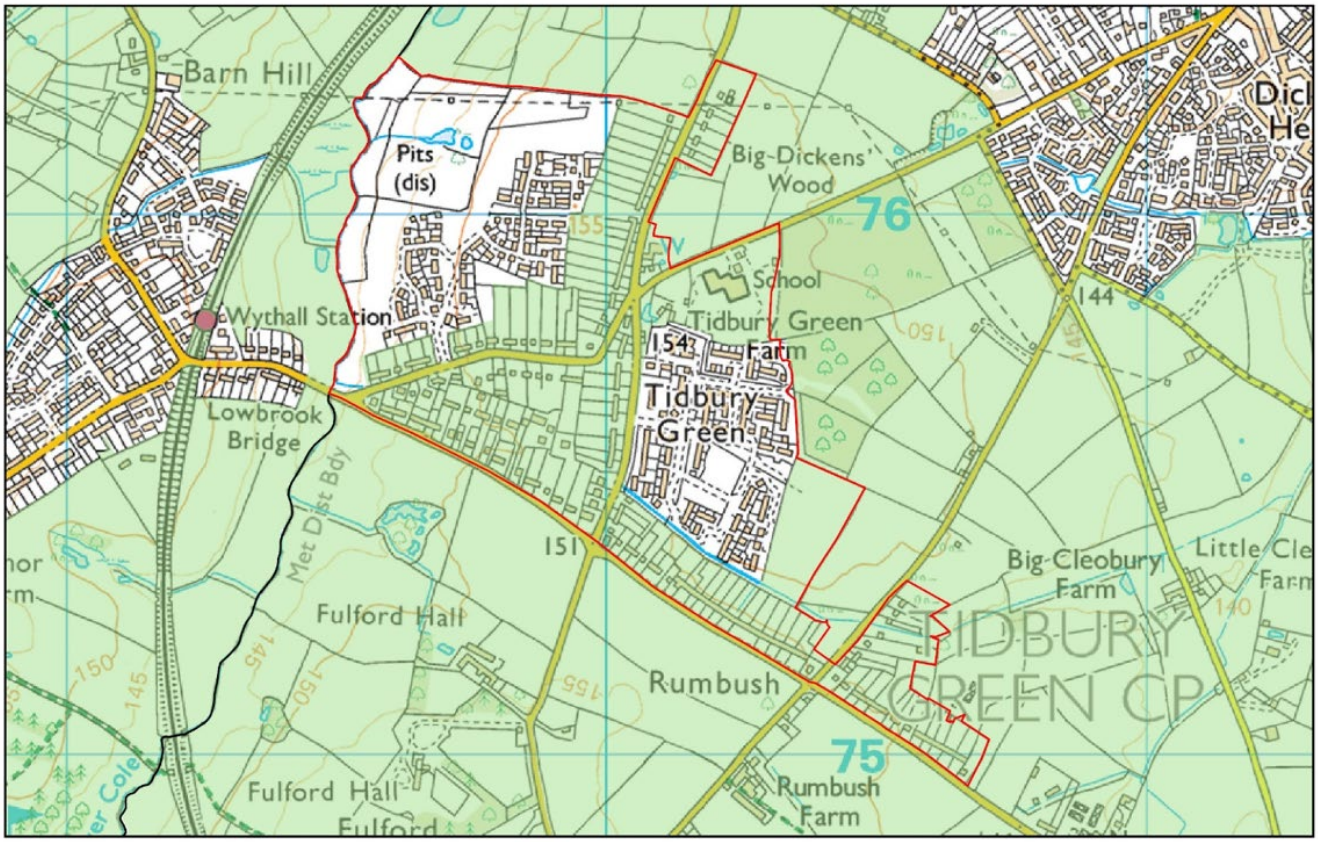
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*High - Sparsely distributed or dispersed, low density*	The village is characterised by dispersed buildings with a small cluster around an area of large open space associated with Temple House. A large area of the village also comprises car parking.

Scale of dwellings and urban form	*High - Predominantly detached dwellings, 1-2 storeys*	Whilst there are limited residential dwellings, the village comprises predominantly detached built development which is scattered and low in density.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*High - Gaps in frontages and/or areas of open space form prominent features within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is closely linked across the village*	There are large gaps between frontages due to the scattered nature of the village. Additionally, the village is characterised by a large area of open space associated with Temple House, with some adjacent built form. Additionally, there are car parks in the village which are associated with the school. The Green Belt is linked across the village.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a high contribution to three of the assessment criteria for Step 2A. It is therefore considered to have an open character. Progress to Step 2B assessment.	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village **(visual perception)**	*Medium - Part of village has a clear visual edge but other parts are more gradual*	The village is characterised by areas that are more clustered, such as around the school, and areas that are more dispersed, including the car parks and Temple House. Due to this dispersed nature, there are areas where the visual edge of the village are more gradual.
Built form **(including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)**	*Medium - Views are partially restricted by built form in places although gap in building/frontages allow for views in places*	There are areas, such as the school, where views are significantly restricted by built form as development is denser relative to the rest of the village. However, other areas, such as towards the eastern section of the village, have less dense built form and therefore there are more opportunities for views into the Green Belt.
Topography (both natural and artificial)	*Medium - Topography allows for some views into and out of the village*	The topography of the village is relatively unchanging and there are views into and out of the village, such as along Fen End Road West. There is a small area along Balsall Street where there is a view into the village, including of the church, due to the flat topography. However, this view and other views along the road are primarily obstructed by vegetation.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*High - Low lying and/or sparse, allowing views into and out of the village*	Tall and dense vegetation often obstructs views into and out of the village, particularly along Balsall Street and Fen End Road West.
Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*Medium - Continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt is partially disrupted by built form or tall boundary features*	There are areas of the village with continuation into the surrounding Green Belt, such as the central open space which has visual connections to the north east and south. There is limited continuation to the west, such as the open space by the church and school is contained by a treeline.
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a high contribution to one of the assessment criteria and a medium contribution to four of the assessment criteria for Step 2B. The village is therefore considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Summary and Conclusion		

Summary	Temple Balsall is considered to have open character and make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
Conclusion	Retain as washed over

C.10 Tidbury Green

Green Belt Village Assessment



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Context	
Current status of village	The village is partially inset from the Green Belt.
Village size	The village has approximately 770 buildings and is approximately 55.7ha in size.
Step 1: Village Boundary	
Area to be assessed	The village had partly inset boundaries from the Solihull Local Plan reflecting previous housing allocations (since built out). The village boundary used here consists of the built curtilage of the village including the residential gardens that accompany a number of the residential properties. The previously inset areas of land, which now comprise residential development, have also been included within the village (but not the associated landscape / open space). The village boundary also includes some ribbon development along Norton Lane and Rumbush Lane, given its close connection to the rest of the village.

Step 2: Assessment against Paragraph 150 NPPF

Step 2A: Assessment of 'open character' of the village

Criteria	Assessment Scale (Degree of open character)	Conclusion and Justification
General Pattern of existing development and density	*Medium - Linear or small clusters across*	The village is characterised by clustered development. It is considered relatively medium density in the part of the village

	the village, medium density	currently washed over by the Green Belt along the village's three main roads: Norton Lane, Fulford Hall Road, and Lowbrook Lane. Whilst the development in this area of the village remains clustered, the development forms a more ordered and linear pattern along the roads. However, in the areas of the village that have been inset from the Green Belt, with one cluster to the north west (along Pastures Drive) and one cluster to the east (Tidbury Heights), there is higher density development relative to the washed over areas. Additionally, there is more linear development extending along Norton Lane/Rambush Lane.
Scale of dwellings and urban form	*Medium - Mix of semi-detached or terraced dwellings alongside detached dwellings, predominantly 2 storeys*	The areas of the village that are washed over by Green Belt are lower in density, predominantly detached and range from 1-2 storeys in height. Whilst the newer developments in the areas of the village that have been inset have a higher density in comparison to the rest of the village, they are similar in character with a mixture of detached and semi-detached dwellings, between 1-2 storeys in height.
Extent of gaps and open spaces	*Medium - Some gaps in frontages and/or some areas of open space within the village boundary and/or the Green Belt is linked in parts across the village*	In the lower density areas of the village (predominantly the areas washed over by the Green Belt), there are some gaps in frontages as the dwellings are predominantly detached and follow a more linear structure along the village's three main roads. Despite this, there is limited connection to the Green Belt through these gaps due to built form features like garages and fencing. Whilst there are some detached dwellings in the inset areas, due to ancillary features like garages/walls and the more clustered shape of the urban form, the gaps between the dwellings to not appear to contribute much to the openness of the village. However, there are some open spaces in the village, especially associated with the newer developments in the inset areas, and these are considered to make a contribution to the openness of the village and offer some limited views into the Green Belt. The Green Belt is not linked across the village.
Conclusion: Does the village have an open character?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution as this was the consistent scoring across the assessment criteria. It is therefore considered to have an open character. Progress to Step 2B assessment.	
Step 2B: Relationship of the village with the 'openness' of the Green Belt		
Criteria	Assessment Scale (Level of contribution)	Conclusion and Justification
Perceived level of definition of the village (visual perception)	*Low - Majority of village has a clear and distinct visual edge*	The majority of the village has a clear and distinct visual edge, which does not fade into the countryside. The southern boundary is formed of linear development along Norton Lane and the rest of the development is relatively clustered.
Built form (including dwellings, commercial properties, community facilities)	*Low - Views are largely restricted by built form and building/frontages are solid without gaps*	The built form is predominantly characterised by residential development, with limited commercial properties other than a small car dealership. Views are largely restricted by built form and although development is less dense in the area of the village washed over by the Green Belt (with some small gaps in frontages) there are still limited views. In the newer inset development along Pastures Drive, there are some views into the Green Belt beyond the new area of open space and a gap in the built form, however, the majority of gaps in built form have restricted views due to vegetation and ancillary features such as garages and fencing.
Topography	*Medium - Topography allows for some views*	The topography across the village is relatively unchanging which does not allow for any enhanced views into and out of the village

(both natural and artificial)	*into and out of the village*	for the most part. However, due to the village's flat nature, there are views into the Green Belt from the southern boundary along Norton Lane, which are sometimes restricted by vegetation.
Extent of vegetation (assemblage of plants, trees or shrubs)	*Low - Tall and/or dense, generally obstructing views into and out of the village*	There is tall and dense vegetation throughout the village, especially lining the village's three main roads. Whilst vegetation is more sparce in the newer inset developments, this generally does not offer more opportunities for views as views are mostly restricted by built form.
Do open areas within the village appear continuous with the surrounding Green Belt (gardens, village greens, parks, roadside verges and embankments, and other incidental spaces)	*Medium - Continuation of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt is partially disrupted by built form or tall boundary features*	There is limited continuance of open areas into the surrounding Green Belt. Whilst there village boundary consists of residential back gardens in many areas, these are often regular in shape and contained by vegetation. In the newer inset areas, there are areas of landscaping and / or open space associated with the developments. With the scheme to the north east of the village, the area of landscaping includes a park, as well as some connection to footpaths through a more natural area. This area of open space was included in the previous inset designation, and therefore views into this area are not considered to be views into the Green Belt. However, associated with the new development on the western side of the village, there is a park (Tidbury Heights Playground), which is currently washed over by the Green Belt. From the Tidbury Heights development (notably Dewberry Road), there is some continuance into the surrounding Green Belt, with a footpath and associated landscaping linking Tidbury Heights and the playground. The land with the playground on is well defined with a tree lined boundary, therefore disrupting further continuance.
Conclusion: Does the open character of the village make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt?	The village is considered to make a medium contribution to two of the assessment criteria, and a low contribution to three of the assessment criteria for Step 2B. Professional judgement has been applied to the overall conclusion and it has been judged that the village does take away from the openness of the Green Belt, particularly given its large size. The village is therefore not considered to make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.	
Summary and Conclusion		
Summary	Tidbury Green is considered to have an open character, however it does not make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. Since the village was progressed from Step 2A but was not considered to make an important contribution at Step 2B, professional judgement has been applied to support the overall conclusion. Whilst the village was judged to have an open character, its contribution to the openness of the Green Belt is significantly impacted by dense vegetation and built form, which obstruct much of the connection in terms of views to the Green Belt. The village also has areas of open space, including space associated with the inset development in the north west and inset development to the east. The open space to the west is already inset and bounded by vegetation, and therefore views into this area/from this area are not considered to be important views into the Green Belt. The open space to the east is currently washed over, and whilst there is a connection to the space by a footpath, there are limited further visual connections due to a tree line boundary on the playground land. Overall, there is limited connection to the Green Belt through the open spaces in the village. Additionally, the village has a clear and defined visual edge and does not fade into the countryside, which reduces the sense of openness as the boundary between the village and the countryside is not blurred.	
Conclusion	Village should be changed from washed over to inset	