

West Berkshire District Council

Appropriate Countryside Designation Study

Reference: 289054/CT/HR

| 21 November 2022



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

Study Purpose

West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) has commissioned Ove Arup and Partners (Arup) to conduct a focussed study to help identify if an appropriate and specific planning designation for the countryside around the towns of Newbury and Thatcham is needed to support the Local Plan Review (LPR) 2022 – 2039.

Newbury and Thatcham are the largest towns in West Berkshire and both are expected to accommodate growth over the LPR period and beyond. The strategic site of Sandford (circa 1,500 dwellings) was allocated in the Core Strategy 2012 and a large proportion of the site now has planning permission. A proposed allocation to the North East of Thatcham (circa 2,500 dwellings) was included in the regulation 18 version of the emerging LPR. Other smaller non-strategic sites around both towns are also proposed.

The key purpose of the study is to carry out an assessment of the land and assess alternate forms of potential planning designation which could safeguard the unique characters and separate identities of Newbury and Thatcham and the settlements surrounding them.

The potential types of designations considered included Green Belt, Green Gap/Wedge and Local Green Space. The study also reviewed the potential impact of having no specific designation, with reliance on existing or amended district wide countryside protection policies only. It outlines the potential advantages and disadvantages of the types of designation/non designation and make recommendations on the most appropriate approach for the Council to consider as part of the LPR.

Structure of Report

The structure of the remainder of the report is as follows:

- Chapter 2: Potential Types of Designations to be considered – this section provides a brief overview/introduction to the types of designations considered in this study.
- Chapter 3: National Policy and Guidance – this chapter reviews relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG).
- Chapter 4: Local Policy and Evidence – this chapter reviews the current and emerging local plan context and relevant evidence base documents with a particular focus on existing landscape evidence.
- Chapter 5: Relevant Examination, Appeal and Case Law Review – this chapter reviews relevant examinations, appeals and case law relating to Green Belt, Green Gaps/Wedges and Local Green Space from elsewhere around the country. This chapter also includes a review of relevant appeals within West Berkshire, which will help to determine the strength of the existing countryside protection policies.
- Chapter 6: Methodology – this chapter sets out the methodology used in the study.
- Chapter 7: Key Findings and Recommendations – this chapter sets out the key findings of the study relating to each of the potential policy designations and makes recommendations accordingly.
- Chapter 8: Conclusion

2. Potential Types of Designations to be considered

Green Belt

Green Belt is a national policy designation which heavily restricts new development from taking place within its boundaries, although amendments can be made if exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist and certain uses are deemed acceptable.

The idea of a Green Belt was first formally proposed by the London Regional Planning Committee in 1929, after fears that urban expansion was resulting in a lack of green space in the capital. In 1938 it was introduced in law around London with the purpose of keeping urban sprawl in check, preventing towns from merging together and promoting the recycling of derelict land.

In 1955 it was rolled out to the whole of England as a whole government circular which urged local councils to consider designating green belts where they wanted to restrict urban growth.

In 1988 the principles of the Green Belt were incorporated in Planning Policy Guidance Note No 2 (PPG2) issued by the Government and these principles remain largely unchanged in the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Currently there are designated Green Belts around the following towns/cities;

- Blackpool
- West Midlands, Birmingham, Coventry
- Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole
- Bristol and Bath
- Burton upon Trent and Swadlincote
- Cambridge
- Derby and Nottingham
- Gloucester and Cheltenham
- Merseyside and greater Manchester
- South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire
- Greater London
- Lancaster, Morecambe, Carnforth
- Tyne and Wear, Durham and Hexham
- Oxford
- Stoke-on-Trent
- York

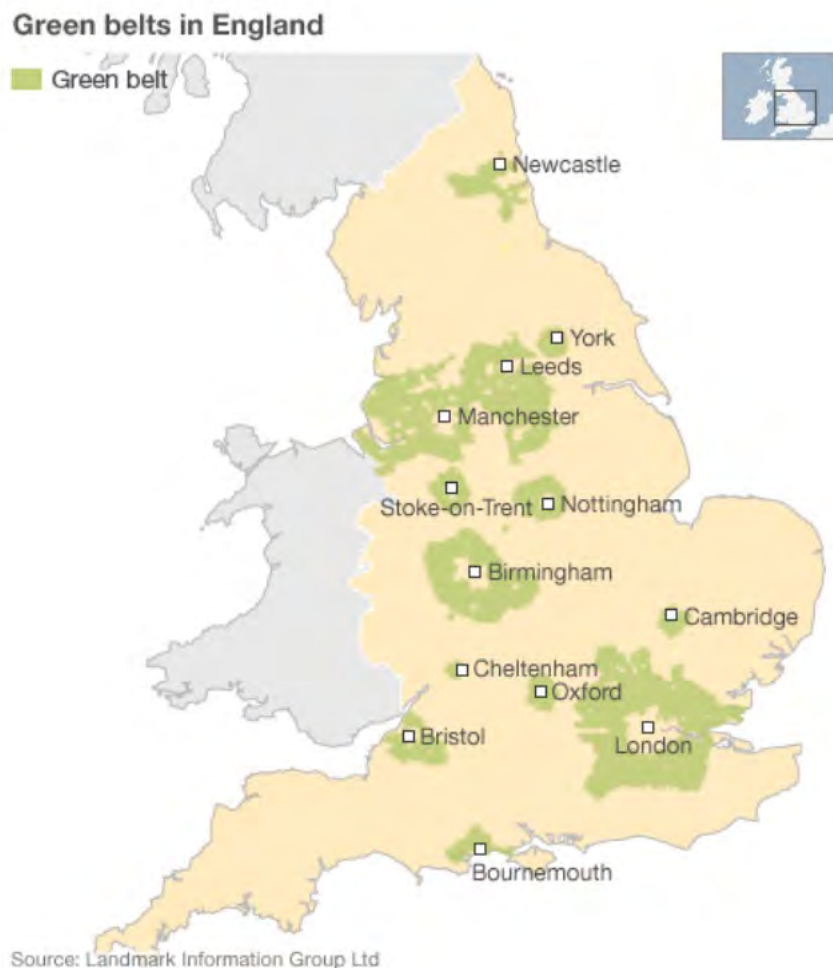


Figure 1 – Green Belts in England (Source PAS and Landmark Information Group Ltd)¹

Although small additions and other revisions have been made to the Green Belt, no completely new Green Belt designations around entire towns/cities have been adopted since the 1980s. As discussed further in Chapter 3 below, current government policy states that the general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established and that new Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances.

Green Gaps/Wedges

Neither Green Gaps or Wedges are national policy designations and therefore are not mentioned in the NPPF or the associated National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). These are local designations that some local planning authorities have chosen to adopt and therefore the aims and purposes of them vary from area to area. Whilst they are mostly referred to as Green Gaps/Wedges as their primary purpose is to protect the open/countryside area around settlements, they may sometimes be known by other names such as ‘countryside protection areas’.

For the purpose of this study, Green Gaps and Wedges are fundamentally the same, however a Green Gap is considered to be the area separating two or more settlements whereas a Green Wedge provides a green ‘lung’ or corridor into an urban area from an area of open countryside.

Given that they are not national designations, the strength of a Green Gap/Wedge policy as protection against development is also variable and dependent on other local factors and the justification for designation. This is discussed further in Chapter 5, which reviews relevant case

¹ PAS Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt 2015 [green-belt-244.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](https://www.local.gov.uk/green-belt-244.pdf)

law, appeals and local plan examinations. As West Berkshire does not currently have any designated Green Gaps or Wedges, this review focuses on other local authority areas.

Local Green Space

Local Green Space designation was first introduced in 2012 as part of the NPPF in order to protect local green areas which are valued by local communities. The Local Green Space designation allows councils through the preparation of local plans and town and parish councils and neighbourhood forums the ability, through neighbourhood development plans, to identify and protect areas that are of particular importance and value to the community.

Further details of what can/cannot be designated as Local Green Space is set out in Chapter 3 (National Policy and Guidance) below. However, in summary they are required to be close to the community they serve, demonstrably special to the local community and local in character (i.e. not an extensive tract of land).

No Designation

The study also reviews whether any specific type of new designation (Green Belt, Green Gap/Wedge or Local Green Space) is appropriate and would add value to the LPR or whether reliance on general district wide policies would be most appropriate for West Berkshire. This may be a continuation of the existing policies as set out in the current Local Plan or new/amended policies that could be introduced as part of the LPR.

3. National Policy and Guidance

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24th July 2018, 19th February 2019 and most recently on 20th July 2021. The summary below sets out some of the key points for the most relevant sections for this study.

3.1.1 Green Belt

The Green Belt principles have changed little since their inception, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) takes forward the previous national Green Belt policy set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), PPG2 (Green Belts).

Policy for Green Belt is set out in paragraphs 137, 138 and 139 of the NPPF, which sets out the objectives of Green Belt Land and the general approach to new Green Belt. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that *'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 their permanence.'* This is elaborated in the NPPF paragraph 138, which states that Green Belt should service five purposes as set out below.

'The Green Belt serves five 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.*

Land designated as Green Belt is established through development plans, and as set out in NPPF paragraph 139 *'the general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established. New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions. Any proposals for new Green Belts should be set out in strategic policies, which should:*

- a) demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;*
- b) set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;*
- c) show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;*
- d) demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with strategic policies for adjoining areas; and*
- e) show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.'*

When proposing to designate new Green Belt, local planning authorities must demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies are not adequate, and whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary.

National policy is clear that the land should be designated as Green Belt because of its position rather than its recreational use or landscape quality. However, Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states “*local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.*”

These positive roles should be sought once the Green Belt is designated, and the lack of a positive role, or the poor condition of Green Belt land, does not necessarily undermine its fundamental role to prevent urban sprawl by being kept permanently open.

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) ‘Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt²’ guidance confirms land can only be included in Green Belt to achieve the five purposes of Green Belt (as set out in paragraph 138 in the NPPF). Therefore, land proposed for inclusion in the Green Belt should be assessed against the five purposes to identify the level of contribution made and whether the land contributes to the overall aim of Green Belt.

3.1.2 Green Gap/Green Wedge

Green Gaps/Wedges are not specifically recognised in the NPPF.

3.1.3 Local Green Space

As part of the NPPF (first published in 2012), the government introduced a new designation to protect local green areas which are valued by local communities. The Local Green Space designation allows the council through the preparation of its local plan and, where relevant, by parish councils and neighbourhood forums through their own community-led neighbourhood development plans (NDPs), the opportunity to identify and protect areas that are of particular importance and value to the community.

Paragraph 101 of the NPPF (2021) states: *‘the designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.’*

Setting out the circumstances for using the designation, paragraph 102 of the NPPF continues that, *‘the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:*

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*

² PAS (2015) planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/green-belt-244.pdf>

c) *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land*’.

By designating land as Local Green Space, paragraph 103 of the NPPF states, ‘policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.’

3.1.4 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraphs 174 to 176 of the NPPF set out national policy in relation to countryside protection.

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF (2021) sets out specific ways that “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

It is encouraged to maintain and enhance existing green infrastructure networks and where possible development should come forward on land with the least amount of environmental value. Paragraph 175 of the NPPF states that: “*Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”*

Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that: “*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”*

3.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides further more detailed guidance on how the policies of the NPPF should be applied.

3.2.1 Green Belt

Guidance on Green Belt contained within the NPPG relates only to existing Green Belt therefore it is considered there are no relevant paragraphs relating to the designation of new Green Belt within the NPPG.

3.2.2 Green Gap/Green Wedge

Green Gaps/Wedges are not specifically recognised in the NPPG.

3.2.3 Local Green Space

The NPPG provides further detail relating to Local Green Space. This includes the purpose of Local Green Space, how new Local Green Space is to be designated, what type of land could be considered for designation and other criteria relating to scale and location.

In summary, Local Green Space provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. It is to be designated through the local plan or neighbourhood plan process and should be demonstrably special and hold particular local significance. The designation of new Local Green Space is a matter for local discretion but could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.

The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, but it must be reasonably close and not be an extensive tract of land. Consequently, blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a ‘back door’ way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name.

Relevant paragraphs from the NPPG are reproduced in Appendix A.

3.2.4 Countryside/Landscape

The NPPG contains the following paragraphs relating to countryside and landscape which are considered relevant for this study.

How can planning policies conserve and enhance landscapes?

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary.

The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.

Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

How can the character of landscapes be assessed?

For a designated landscape, the relevant management plan will contain further information on the area's particular character and beauty.

Where appropriate, landscape character assessments can be prepared to complement Natural England's National Character Area profiles. Natural England provides guidance on undertaking these assessments.

To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed.

To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used.

Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

How should development within the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty be dealt with?

Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.

Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

4. Local Policy and Evidence

4.1 Current Local Plan

The relevant parts of the development plan for this study are the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) 2012 and the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSADPD) 2017.

The Core Strategy sets out the Council's overall planning strategy to 2026. Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy allocates the strategic site at Sandlesford to deliver a phased development of up to 2,000 dwellings, a new primary school, retail facilities, business employment and a network of green infrastructure. The site is to the south of Newbury and comprises approximately 134 hectares of land. The concept plan for the site only proposes to develop 39% with the rest taken up by open space and woodland. The Core Strategy emphasises the need for the development to include significant green infrastructure considering the site's location, topography, and landscape importance. It also notes that the site has the potential to form a high quality southern gateway to Newbury. The formation of a country park or equivalent area of public open space in the southern part of the site will therefore protect that sensitive landscape area in perpetuity, as well as protecting the registered historic landscape and setting of the former Sandlesford Priory, a Grade I listed building. It will also protect the views when approaching Newbury along the A339.

Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy aims to ensure that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character, creating a strong sense of place and local identity. It adopts a landscape character led approach for proposed development and makes clear that it should be informed by and respond to the distinctive character areas and key characteristics identified in relevant landscape character assessments. The supporting text notes that a key feature of even the larger settlements is the way in which few have coalesced in recent times, and so the blurring of the physical distinction between places has largely been avoided.

No other specific policies in the extant Core Strategy are of direct relevance to this exercise, although other policies provide context and help indicate the long-term direction of travel.

The Core Strategy provides for only modest growth in Thatcham in the period to 2026. Thatcham had seen considerable growth in the years prior to this and the Core Strategy focus is on regeneration rather than major growth. The Inspector examining the Core Strategy concluded that this was a reasonable approach and that in any overall review to accommodate more housing, Thatcham would need to be considered again.

The HSADPD currently allocates non-strategic housing sites across West Berkshire. It highlights that the countryside surrounding both Newbury and Thatcham contain a number of important environmental and heritage assets. It makes clear that the main focus for housing growth over the plan period is largely Newbury focused due to its existing services and facilities, rather than Thatcham due to its rapid expansion in previous years. Accordingly, the HSADPD allocates a number of small/medium sized sites around Newbury and Thatcham. It also sets out that although some settlement boundaries have already been re-drawn to include the developable areas of allocated sites, the new Local Plan will review all settlement boundaries across the District.

4.2 Emerging Local Plan Review (LPR)

The Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan. The Local Plan Review (LPR) will guide development in the District up to 2039. A regulation 18 consultation on the Emerging Draft version of the LPR took place from December 2020 to March 2021. The Council is due to undertake the next stage (regulation 19) consultation on the Draft LPR in January 2023.

The current regulation 18 Emerging Draft suggests the main focus for growth in West Berkshire is the Newbury and Thatcham area, where two strategic urban extensions are proposed; the first, through Policy SP16, at Sandleford, a greenfield site to the south of Newbury, already allocated in the Core Strategy, where approximately 1,500 homes could be developed, and the second, through Policy SP17, at North East Thatcham, another greenfield site for approximately 2,500 homes. The current Emerging Draft LPR states that strategic development in Thatcham will bring considerable benefits to the town, not only in the provision of new housing, including affordable housing, but in the provision of new schools, community facilities and recreational provision.

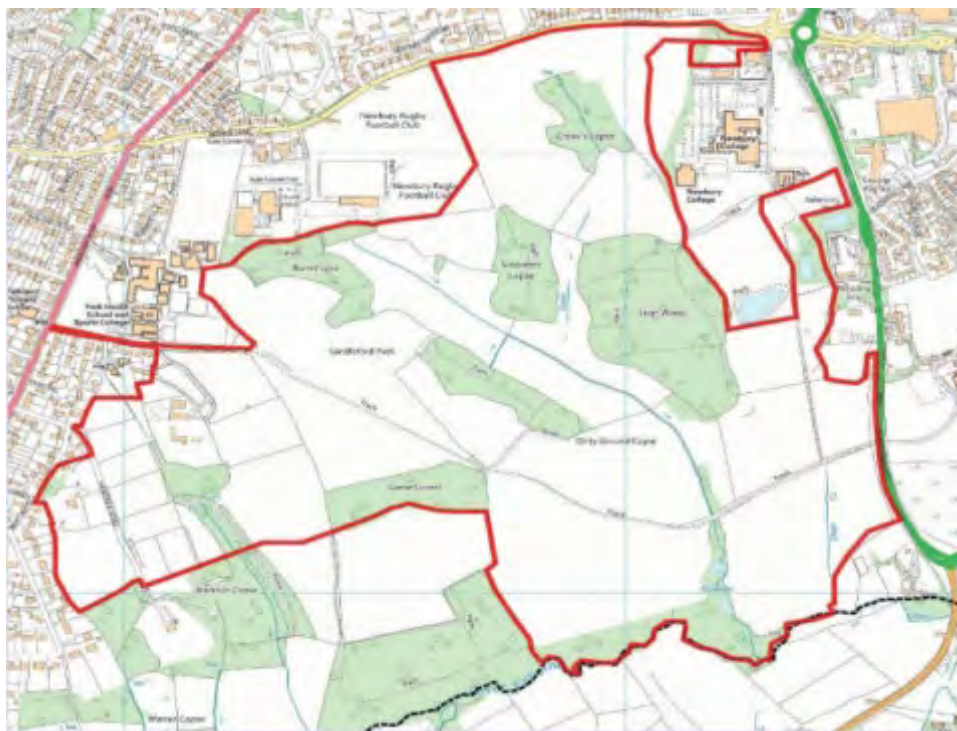


Figure 2 - Sandleford Park Strategic Site

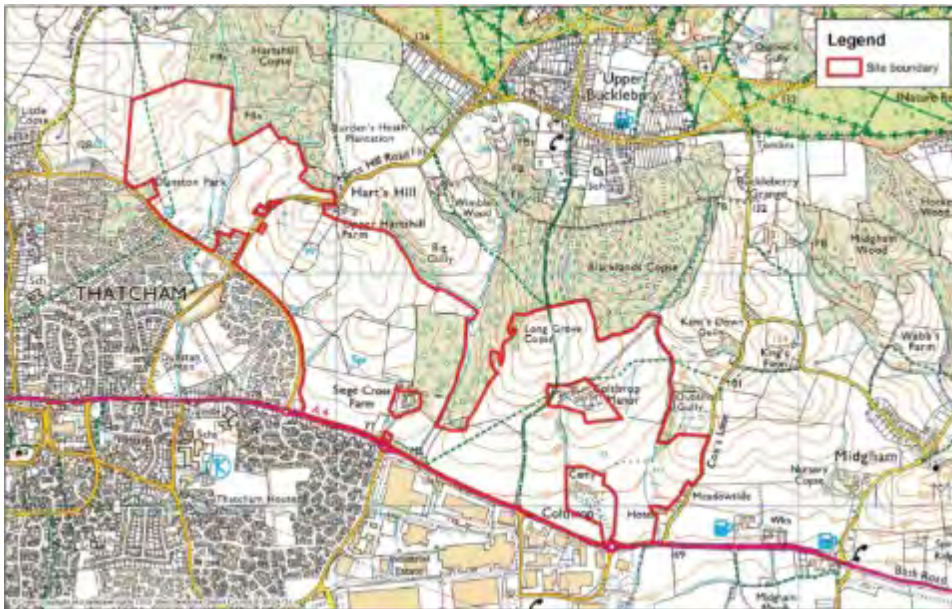


Figure 3 - North East Thatcham Strategic Site

There are also a number of non-strategic allocations proposed around Newbury and Thatcham as shown in the Emerging Draft LPR.

For the purposes of this study the issue of the allocations proposed in the Emerging Draft is assumed to be potentially open and subject to the findings of this study.

4.2.1 Relevant policies in the Emerging LPR

Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives represent the key delivery outcomes that the Local Plan Review should achieve. Relevant objectives to this study include:

- 1) Climate change: *“To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and minimise demand for energy and other resources”.*
- 6) Culture: *“Together with partners, to develop and promote the cultural distinctiveness of the area, recognising it is fundamental to the improved future wellbeing and sustainability of West Berkshire’s economy and communities.”*
- 7) Heritage: *“To conserve and enhance the local distinctive character, identity, significance and special interest of the built, historic and natural environment in West Berkshire’s towns, villages and countryside.”*
- 8) AONB: *“Together with partners, to continue to conserve and enhance the North Wessex Downs AONB, with appropriate landscape-led development delivering wider environmental, economic and social benefits.”*
- 9) Green infrastructure and healthy living: *“To ensure that West Berkshire contains a strong network of multi-functional green infrastructure which provides health and environmental benefits and enhances the overall quality of life of sustainable communities.”*

Policy SP2: North Wessex Downs AONB

“Development will respond positively to the local context, conserving and enhancing local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB.”

The policy is supported by the following evidence:

- The North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2002) draws out the special qualities of the landscape and identifies the main issues that will need to be addressed to conserve its special character and outstanding qualities.
- The Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs

Policy SP5: Responding to climate change

Includes requirements for development to be planned and designed to respond to climate change, including

*“To improve wildlife habitat and species conservation and connectivity to allow for movement in response to climate change in accordance with policy SP11; and
To maintain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and improve the environmental performance of heritage assets without compromising their significance...”*

Policy SP7: Design principles

Requires new development to strengthen sense of place through high quality locally distinctive design and place shaping, *“taking opportunities available for conserving and enhancing the character, appearance and quality of an area and the way it functions”*. The policy requires new development to be in accordance with principles including:

“Context – development will be landscape-led, conserving and enhancing the landscape character and historic context of both the site and its wider surroundings in accordance with policies SP8 and SP9;

Character and identity – the siting and layout of development will promote the efficient use of land which integrates effectively with its surroundings, contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through its relationship to surrounding built and natural features, spaces, historic street patterns, plot boundaries, and uses and activities...

Green infrastructure (GI) – development will be designed to maximise the potential for strengthening GI in accordance with policy SP1- and should include arrangements for its long term maintenance and management...”

Policy SP 8: Landscape character

This policy supports landscape-led development which conserves and enhances the diversity and local distinctiveness of the local landscape character. Particular regard will be given to:

- a) Its valued features and qualities*
- b) The sensitivity and capacity of the area to change*
- c) Ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.*

Development should be demonstrably informed and respond positively to the evaluation of the distinctive landscape character areas set out in the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019) and other relevant landscape character assessments.

Proposals for development should be accompanied by an appropriate landscape assessment...”

The supporting text to the policy states:

“one of the key issues facing West Berkshire is the conservation and enhancement of the distinctive local character of both the natural and built environment... Having an understanding of this distinctive character and using this as a positive tool in accommodating necessary change will ensure that the inherent qualities and valued features of West Berkshire’s landscape will continue to be appreciated.

Conserving and enhancing the distinctive landscape character of the District is given considerable weight in line with national policy which sets out that valued landscapes should be protected in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.

...The AONB is characterised by the quality of its chalk landscape which ranges from remote open downland, dramatic skyline escarpments, contrasting wooded downland, and the small scale intimate settled river valleys of the Lambourn and Pang. As a nationally valued and designated landscape the North Wessex Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in accordance with its national status and this is set out in policy SP2.

A landscape does not have to have a designation to be valued locally. Outside the AONB, the River Kennet, from Newbury to Reading, lies within a distinctive broad corridor of an open lowland landscape characterised by a variety of wetland habitats including wet meadow, reed bed, and flooded gravel workings...

Value can apply to areas of landscape as a whole or to individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. There are no locally designated landscapes in West Berkshire. All landscapes across the District have some degree of value and all development should therefore respond positively to the identified character and valued qualities inherent in that local landscape. The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019 evaluates and provides an understanding of what is important and why, for each identified local landscape character area across the District. It provides a framework for informed decisions to be made as to whether different landscapes should evolve by:

*Conserving the existing and historic character;
Enhancing existing character by introducing new features into the landscape;
Strengthening or restoring a previous character; or
Creating a new character when a sense of place and local distinctiveness have been eroded or lost.*

... Settlements are a key component of the landscape... The separate and distinctive identity of these individual settlements helps to define communities and is an important feature of the local character of West Berkshire. A variety of rural settlement forms can be seen from the nucleated patterns common on the chalk downs, to the more dispersed patterns found in the southern part of the District. Much of the pressure for development is around the edges of settlements, which can physically lead to coalescence or introduce an increase in activity which has an urbanising effect. Despite this, a key feature of even the larger settlements is the way in which few have coalesced in recent times and so the blurring of the physical distinction between places has largely been avoided. The retention of these actual and perceived visual breaks remain important for the continued retention of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

The supporting evidence relevant to this policy includes:

- West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2002)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (2007) and Historic Environment Character Zoning

SP 9: Historic environment

“The historic character, sense of place, environmental quality and local distinctiveness of West Berkshire will be sustained and enhanced through new development. Development proposals will conserve and, where appropriate, enhance those aspects of the historic environment which are recognised as being of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest, or of landscape or townscape significance. These heritage assets include:

- a) Listed buildings;*
- b) Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites of national importance;*
- c) Registered Parks and Gardens;*
- d) Registered battlefields;*
- e) Conservation areas;*
- f) Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes that have been added to the West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets; and*
- g) Other places, spaces, structures and features which may not be formally designated by are recognised as significant elements of West Berkshire’s heritage and are positively identified on the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record, or through the development management process.”*

SP10: Green infrastructure

This includes requirements for new development to protect and enhance existing GI assets and linkages and add to the local network for the benefit of the natural environment and the health and wellbeing of the community. The supporting text outlines examples of GI assets including natural and semi-natural rural and urban green spaces, parks and gardens, amenity green space, allotments, orchards and farmland, rivers and canals.

SP 11: Biodiversity and geodiversity

This policy requires development to conserve and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity, including to protect biodiversity and/or geodiversity value, minimise fragmentation and maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancements and connection of natural habitats, deliver net gain, provide or retain appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites, provide coherent ecological permeability integrated to the wider green infrastructure and any nature recovery network identified in the location.

“Development that would have a direct or indirect adverse effect on designated sites, protected or priority species or habitats that are considered to have geological and biodiversity value, will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts...”

The supporting text provides an overview of the designated sites in West Berkshire including Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Geological Sites.

Policy SP 16: Sandlesford strategic site allocation

In relation to protecting and enhancing the landscape, the policy requires development to:

“...be limited to the north and west of the site in order to respect the landscape sensitivity of the wider site and to protect the registered historic landscape and setting of the Sandlesford Priory...;

[to provide]...a network of green infrastructure...which will:

Conserve the areas of ancient woodland and provide appropriate buffers between the development and the ancient woodland...; and

Respect the landscape significance of the site on the A339 approach road into Newbury.”

The following relevant supporting evidence accompanies the policy:

Sandleford Park SPD (2015)

Sandleford Park, Newbury Landscape and visual assessment (2009)

Policy SP 17: North East Thatcham strategic site allocation

In relation to protecting and enhancing the landscape, the policy requires development to provide:

“...a network of green infrastructure which will include a new strategic country park linking Thatcham to the plateau and the AONB”

The following relevant supporting evidence accompanies the policy:

Thatcham Growth Study (2020).

Policy DC 1: Development in the countryside

This policy states there will be a presumption against new development outside of adopted settlement boundaries. Exceptions to this include development which is appropriately designed and located and satisfies one or more of the criteria listed, which include sites allocated as part of the Development Plan. The policy states that *“planning permission will not be granted where a proposal harms or undermines the existing relationship of a settlement within the open countryside, where it does not enhance the character and distinctiveness of the rural area, including the special qualities and natural beauty of the landscape of the AONB...”*.

The supporting text reinforces the importance of conserving and enhancing the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting. It also states *“planning guidance makes clear that planning policies and decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The appreciation that all countryside will have some such qualities means that it needs to be protected or safeguarded.”*

It also states: *“the countryside of West Berkshire is characterised by small settlements and dispersed farmsteads. Due to the constant pressure for development, these settlements and farmsteads are at risk from piecemeal development. Cumulative impact is an important consideration in these areas, as incremental changes when viewed collectively can significantly change the character of a landscape”*.

A number of other development control policies are also relevant to protecting and enhancing the environment, including:

Policy DC 8: Conservation areas

Policy DC 10: Non-designated heritage assets

Policy DC 11: Registered Parks and Gardens

Policy DC 12: Registered battlefields

Policy DC 13: Assets of archaeological importance

Policy DC 14: Trees, woodland and hedgerows.

4.3 Landscape evidence

There are a number of landscape studies covering the study area which provide a comprehensive understanding of the character, valued qualities, sensitivity and capacity of the landscape.

4.3.1 West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019)

The landscape character assessment provides evidence on valued qualities and sensitivities across the District. The following landscape character areas are relevant to the study area:

WH1: Inkpen Woodland and Heathland Mosaic
WH2: Greenham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic
WH3: Wickham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic
WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic
UV1: Kennet Upper Valley Floor
UV2: Lambourn Upper Valley Floor
FC4: Winterbourne Farmed Chalk Mosaic
LV1: Kennet Lower River Valley

Landscape functions such as its role in contributing to the setting of settlements, is highlighted in the landscape character assessment. These aspects are drawn out for the relevant landscape character areas within the proformas for each parcel.

4.3.2 North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The AONB lies adjacent to the north of the study area. The designation recognises the character, value and quality of the North Wessex Downs. Two resources relate to the landscape:

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2002)

The landscape character assessment defines and describes the eight landscape character types of the AONB. The character type surrounding the settlements of Thatcham and Newbury is ‘Lowland Mosaic’. It has a strong wooded character, with its origins as part of the medieval forests. It is a small-scale intimate landscape, with a number of small settlements and hamlets including Upper Bucklebury. Large, interconnected woodland blocks and a strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. The accompanying character sheets note there are some limited longer views such as at Bucklebury Upper Common.

Management Plan: 2019-2024; Theme 1: Landscape

The plan highlights some key issues, including:

- “a) *The potential for development beyond the AONB boundary to visually damage or undermine the scale and critical qualities of landscape character areas...*
- m) *Intense pressure for development throughout the AONB and its setting that threatens the character and quality of its landscape and risks merging of small settlements, encroachment by larger settlements and changes to the scale and nature of development boundaries...*”

The AONB strategic objectives for 2019-2024: the Landscape, include:

- “S.01 *Maintain and enhance the tranquillity and distinctive landscape character of the North Wessex Downs and its setting...*”
- “LA 06 *Ensure that all development in or affecting the setting of the AONB conserves and enhances the character, qualities and heritage of the North Wessex Downs landscape.*”

North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on the setting of the AONB

The North Wessex Downs AONB released a position statement on the setting of the AONB in 2019. This states that whilst the setting of the AONB does not have a defined geographical boundary, it should be addressed as “*the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design can be considered to have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the North Wessex Downs AONB*”.

It continues, “*The surroundings of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the protected landscape of the AONB add value to each other as the landscape and landforms link visually and functionally, joining the surroundings of the AONB. Proposals for change in the setting should, therefore, have regard to the inter-relationship with the AONB and the landscape character and special qualities*”.

4.3.3 Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009)

A landscape sensitivity study was undertaken for the main towns of West Berkshire. The reports of relevance to this study are:

- Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study
- Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study
- Potential strategic sites assessments.

The aspects relevant to the separation of settlements in relation to the sensitivity studies is drawn out within the proformas for each parcel.

4.3.4 Landscape Capacity Assessment (2015 and 2020)

The landscape capacity assessments were undertaken for potential housing sites in, or within the setting of, the AONB, and a potential site in Newbury (2020). The reports of relevance are:

- Cold Ash
- Newbury
- Thatcham

The aspects relevant to the separation of settlements in relation to the sensitivity studies is drawn out within the proformas for each parcel.

4.3.5 Landscape sensitivity & capacity study for land north east of Thatcham (2021)

The study was undertaken for the area of land to the north east of Thatcham. The study concluded that the area overall has a medium capacity, defined as ‘*The landscape could accommodate areas of new development in some parts, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are landscape and visual constraints and therefore the key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.*’

The study notes that the assessment of the site’s landscape capacity relates to the entire site, and there is variability in the landscape and visual characteristics of the site, which will have an impact on local landscape capacity. It also states that “*should development proposals be brought forward it is recommended that detailed landscape and visual impact exercises be undertaken to test landscape capacity in more detail.*”

- Overall visual sensitivity is assessed as medium. Page 100 of the study summarises visual sensitivity. There is little discussion specifically in relation to settlement separation or setting, though the study notes that visual sensitivity is associated with upper slopes, and lower sensitivity with lower slopes.
 - *Existing vegetation on the boundary with Bath Road and Floral Way visually contains the northward extent of existing developed land.*”
- Overall landscape sensitivity is assessed as medium. Page 100 of the study landscape sensitivity, including the following points in relation to settlement separation and intervisibility:

- *“The study site performs an important function in separating Thatcham from smaller rural settlements to the north.”*
- *“The study site is not within AONB and there is little visual intervisibility between them. Nevertheless, the setting of the AONB does not rely exclusively on visual criteria and this is a sensitivity to be addressed should the land be brought forward for development.”*
- Wider landscape sensitivity is assessed as medium. Page 101 of the study summarises wider landscape sensitivity, including the following points in relation to settlement separation and intervisibility:
 - *“Little visual relationship with the AONB to the north, but forms part of the setting of the AONB.”*
 - *“Some intervisibility between upper parts of the study site and distant locations on the southern side of the Kennet Valley.”*
 - *“No intervisibility between the study site and the centre of Thatcham.”*
 - *“From many parts of the site, viewing to the south and east the light-coloured roofs of the units on the industrial land to the east of the town are visible, heightening the perception of nearby urban influences.”*
 - *“Extensive planting along [Bath Road and Floral Way] mitigates the impact of the road and traffic, and reinforces the edge of settlement. The highways define and contain the north eastern extent of the urban area, but some uses have spilled over into the landscape to the north, such as the Mercure Hotel on Cox’s Lane and the crematorium, as well as the food alleviation reservoir.”*
 - *“The landscape separates northern Thatcham from small village settlements at Cold Ash and Upper Bucklebury. Thatcham is at a relatively low elevation within the Kennet valley, with the villages at higher elevations. This vertical differential contributes to their separation.”*
 - *“...The upper parts of the study site appear in some views and in these contribute to the valley landscape context and the setting of the AONB. Generally, however, views north from these locations are obstructed by woodland occupying the north-facing valley sides. Where the opposite side of the valley is visible, Thatcham town centre is hidden in the valley, with the undeveloped slopes rising behind.”*

5. Relevant Examination, Appeal and Case Law Review

This chapter reviews relevant case law, appeals and local plan examinations in other local authorities and West Berkshire where relevant.

5.1 Green Belt

As noted in Chapter 3, national guidance states that the general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established and new Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, therefore there are relatively few relevant examples to draw upon. The examples below are for significant Green Belt extensions/additions in areas with an existing Green Belt.

Cheshire East Council Local Plan Examination (October, 2014)

Cheshire East District Council initially proposed the designation of new Green Belt within its Local Plan in 2014, that extended the existing boundary around Barthomley and Englesea Brook toward the north and west in order to safeguard the gaps between Crewe and Haslington, Weston, Shavington and Nantwich. The Proposed Submission Local Plan was supported by an evidence document 'New Green Belt and Strategic Open Gaps Study', demonstrating the case for designating new Green Belt between Nantwich and Crewe.

The Inspector³ reviewing the Proposed Submission Local Plan commented that there was “*insufficient justification for establishing a new Green Belt in the south of the district*” (Section A, Paragraph 4). One of the reasons why the Inspector found insufficient justification in this case was that the Green Gap policy (which applied to part of the area proposed as new Green Belt) was adequate protection for the land, until the issue of the Council not being able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply became apparent as demonstrated in appeals that were allowed in the Green Gap showing that the gaps were vulnerable to development. Other issues that the Inspector noted, of relevance include:

- The evidence report reviewed the options against the criteria but did not explicitly identify the exceptional circumstances needed to establish the new Green Belt;
- There was a lack of identification of detailed boundaries for the proposed new Green Belt (stating these will be defined through Site Allocations), so the Inspector is unable to comment on their appropriateness;
- The area of proposed Green Belt extended ‘much further than that currently covered by the Green Gaps policy, which may not be fully justified’ and includes areas which are already the subject of site allocations;
- Finally, there did not seem to be a major change in circumstances to justify establishing a new area of Green Belt, as the nearby towns were previously suitable locations for growth.

³ Stephen J Pratt, Inspector (2014) Cheshire East Council, Examination of the Cheshire East Local Plan strategy – Inspector’s interim views on the legal compliance and soundness of the submitted Local Plan Strategy. Available at: <https://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/documents/s57237/Appendix%201a%20Inspectors%20Interim%20Views.pdf>

Northumberland County Council (January, 2022)

Northumberland County Council proposed a Green Belt extension around the Morpeth area. The Regional Planning Guidance in 2002 originally identified an extension to the Green Belt and this was defined generally within the text of the Northumberland Structure Plan (2005).

Paragraph 6.2 of the Council's Hearing Statement on Green Belt sets out its justification for the Morpeth Green Belt Extension: *"The outer boundary has been identified to reflect the area described within saved Policy S5 – Extension to the Green Belt (2005) (NCC.19.36). It is the view of the Council that, in line with paragraph 135 of the NPPF, the general extent of the Morpeth Green Belt extension is already established. Therefore, other outer boundary options which differ from the area described in saved Policy S5 would represent a change to the Green Belt and would require exceptional circumstances."*

In defining the boundary for the extension, the Council undertook a review of the inner and outer Green Belt boundary. The review of the inner Green Belt boundary was to ensure that the boundary included sufficient land to meet the growth requirements. The review of the outer Green Belt boundary used textual references within the Structure Plan to define the outer boundary using strong infrastructure and natural features. The Green Belt will preserve the special setting and character of Morpeth, prevent Morpeth from merging with neighbouring settlements, assist regeneration of villages in South Northumberland and safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

The Council submitted its Local Plan May 2019 and it was adopted in January 2022. The Inspector's report⁴ recommends some minor amendments but concludes that the council's *"approach to the Morpeth Green Belt in the Plan is justified and in accordance with national policy."* (Paragraph 153).

5.2 Green Wedge/ Green Gap

Case Law

Recent case law relating to Green Gap/Green Wedge policies in England has been reviewed to inform the recommended approach in West Berkshire.

Worthing Borough Council (July, 2022)

The recent case of Worthing Borough Council v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities & Anor [2022] EWHC 2044⁵ is relevant to consider. The High Court quashed the decision of the planning inspector who had granted consent on appeal for housing in a Green Gap. The Court found that the Inspector had failed to take account of the development's conflict with two policies, SS1 (spatial strategy) and SS4 (development in the countryside) of the emerging Local Plan and/or failed to give adequate reasons as to the assessment of the development against those policies. The Inspector gave full weight to the adopted development plan policy 13 (The Natural Environment and Landscape Character) and had not considered emerging policies SS1 and SS4 as part of the Council's case at the inquiry. The emerging policies proposed a new balancing exercise, in accordance with the NPPF and taking account of current housing needs. The Court concluded that the Inspector should have assessed the development against the emerging policies and determined the appropriate weight to give to them.

⁴ Inspectors Report (2022) Report on the Examination of the Northumberland Local Plan. Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Local%20Plan/Northumberland-Local-Plan-Report-Final-26-January-2022.pdf>

⁵ Worthing Borough Council v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing And Communities & Anor [2022] EWHC 2044. Available at: <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2022/2044.html>

The proposed development was within the setting of the South Downs National Park. The Court determined that the Inspector had not given sufficient weight to protecting the National Park. The Inspector found that there would be a moderate adverse impact on views from the National Park but concluded that the setting of the National Park would not be materially affected. The Judge disagreed with this conclusion, and stated that the inspector should have had regard to the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949 which has a statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Park and harm should be attributed great weight in accordance with paragraph 176 of the NPPF which was absent from the Inspector's planning balance.

Liverpool City Council (May, 2020)

The case of Liverpool Open and Green Spaces (LOGS) v Liverpool City Council & Ors [2020] EWCA Civ 86⁶ is an interesting case due to the fact that the Court of Appeal was persuaded to entertain the appeal despite assurances that the planning permission under challenge would not be implemented. Whilst the case was technically 'academic' the appeal raised issues of public importance and proceeded to court of appeal.

The decision to proceed to court of appeal was determined as the Green Wedge policy argument was considered to be of significant importance for planning in Liverpool and general importance for the rest of the country. The appeal considered whether LCC had (1) misinterpreted the Green Wedge Policy (Policy OE3) and (2) failed to comply with the duty in section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, when granting two planning permissions. The first permission originally granted by LCC was to provide 39 dwellings in in the Calderstones/Woolton Green Wedge and to convert two grade II listed buildings into 12 apartments. The second permission was to relocate the miniature railway on the land. LOGS challenged both planning permissions in separate claims for judicial review and was successful. LCC then appealed against the order of Kerr J to quash the two planning permissions.

Both grounds of appeal were heard including the question of compliance with section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 duty which was not a point of wider importance and the Court dismissed the appeal in part on the basis that there had been failure to comply with the duty under section 66(1).

Regarding where LCC had misinterpreted Policy OE3, the committee reports in respect of both permissions shows that considerations were made on the impact that the developments would have on the Green Wedge and Green Space. The report stated that the proposed developments would not constitute in a departure of Policy OE3, given that there would only be limited impacts. Kerr J concluded that the officer's report was wrong to conclude that there would be limited impacts, however, the Judge thought otherwise and concluded that the assessment of the proposal against policy OE3 was correct, and the policy was lawfully applied in a sequence of rational and clearly justified conclusions.

The Court noted that under Liverpool's Green Wedge Policy OE3 there are two areas of assessment, which other decision makers could adopt when approaching development in a designated 'Green Wedge'. The first being whether the proposed development would affect the open character of the Green Wedge (a matter of planning judgement), and the second being whether it would reduce the physical separation between existing built-up areas (a matter of fact). To assess the affect the development would have on the open character of the green wedge, the judgement states that "*what is required is a realistic assessment of the impact that this development, on this site, and its own surroundings, will have on the "predominately open character" of the Green*

⁶ LOGS v Liverpool City Council & Ors [2020] EWCA Civ. Available at: <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2020/861.html>

Wedge. Whether that impact is acceptable, or not, is for the city council to judge, as decision-maker.”[Paragraph 44]

Appeal Review

Recent appeals relating to ‘Green Gap’ policies in England have also been reviewed to inform the recommended approach in West Berkshire.

Tendring District Council (December, 2021)

The appeal against the decision of Tendring District Council (APP/P1560/W/21/3268225)⁷ was for an outline scheme for 65 dwellings in a green gap and a conservation area. The inspector dismissed the appeal. The appeal site was situated within a local green gap identified in the local plan to maintain the separation between the suburban parts of three settlements. The same local green gap designation has been carried forward in the council’s emerging plan. Although the inspector accepted the harm arising from this conflict with policy would be limited in visual terms because the site was bounded by housing on three sides, he maintained the value of the green gap was not entirely related to visual prominence but had some landscape value too, it preserved a degree of openness and spatial relief within an expanding built-up area. The inspector concluded the proposal would be contrary to the adopted development plan as a whole. In addition, significant weight was given to the conflict with emerging policies, given their advanced stage towards adoption.

Tendring District Council (July, 2021)

The appeal by Land Allocations Limited against Tendring District Council (APP/P1560/W/20/3259859)⁸ was for an outline scheme for up to 130 dwellings. The inspector dismissed the appeal. The proposed scheme was situated in a local green gap (policy EN2) and an emerging strategic green gap (policy PPL6) to prevent the coalescence between Kirby Cross and Kirby Le Soken. The inspector stated that the development “*would increase the extent of urban development and encroach into the countryside, permanently changing the rural character of the locality*” [paragraph 24] and reducing the sense of openness. He concluded that the benefits of the proposal which included market and affordable housing were insufficient to outweigh the harm proposed by the scheme.

Cheshire East Council (January, 2021)

The appeal against the decision of Cheshire East Council (APP/R0660/W/17/3177499)⁹ was for a residential development of up to 29 dwellings. The inspector allowed the case. The appeal site was located in a strategic green gap in which development was contrary to the recently adopted local plan for Cheshire East, which had rolled forward the 17-year-old green gap boundaries pending a future review. The inspector found that the proposed development would cause no significant erosion of the physical and visual gap between settlements and limited harm to landscape character. The inspector concluded that the new homes proposed would make a contribution towards the council’s housing land supply which outweighed the limited harm to the strategic gap.

⁷ Inspectors Report (2021) Appeal Ref: APP/P1560/W/21/3268225 Land off Trinity Road, Mistley, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2AU. Available at: <https://www.richboroughstates.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/5.-APP.P1560.W.21.3268225.pdf>

⁸ Inspectors Report (2021) Appeal Ref: APP/P1560/W/20/3259859 Land east of Halstead Road, Kirby Cross, Essex CO13 0LP. Available at: <https://www.richboroughstates.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/4.-APP.P1560.W.20.3259859.pdf>

⁹ Inspectors Report (2018) Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/17/3177499 Land at Shavington Villa, Rope Lane, Shavington, CW2 5DT. Available at: <https://www.richboroughstates.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2028a.pdf>

Tendring District Council (September, 2017/2018)

The appeal by Ray Chapman Associates against the decision of Tendring District Council (APP/P1560/W/16/3164169)¹⁰ was for an application for 175 dwellings. The Inspector allowed the case. The appeal site was located in a designated local green gap between settlements Clacton-on-Sea and Little Clacton in Essex. The inspector considered the relevance of the green gap policy in light of the contested housing supply position in the area. The policy, adopted in 2007, sought to protect the character and open setting of land between the settlements. The inspector noted that the appeal site was regularly used for car boot sales, which had an urbanising effect. He also found that mature vegetation on one boundary meant its contribution to the settlements' settings was not readily apparent. The inspector considered the policy as out of date as it specifically referred to a plan period that had expired. The council's appeal statement stated that the area had a housing land supply of only 4.4 years. The inspector concluded that persistent under delivery of new homes in previous years had been exacerbated by the green gap policy, so the NPPF objective of boosting housing supply meant it should be afforded only limited weight.

However, in 2018 the decision to approve the scheme was quashed by the High Court due harm to the green gap and the area's character and appearance. The inspector had found that the council could in fact show a five-year housing land supply and that the proposal would impact the area's open character, physically bringing the settlements closer together. The inspector had stated that with a five-year land supply in place, the NPPF's tilted balance in favour of sustainable development was not triggered. The High Court concluded that the conflict with the green gap policy was sufficient on balance to quash the decision to approve the proposed scheme.

Cheshire East Council (February, 2018)

The appeal by Mulbury Homes (Shavington) against the decision of Cheshire East Council (APP/R0660/W/17/3185440)¹¹ was for 30 homes on the edge of a large village in Cheshire. The inspector dismissed the case. The appeal site was situated on the edge of a large village in Cheshire and mostly within a designated Strategic Green Gap. Cheshire East Council were only marginally below a five-year housing land supply so this did not outweigh the conflict with the local plan spatial strategy and the strategic green gap policy. The inspector concluded that "*the proposed development would erode the SGG to a not insignificant degree*" [paragraph 45] and would have an urbanising impact.

Waverly Borough Council (February, 2018)

The appeal by Farnham Estates against the decision of Waverly Borough Council (APP/R3650/W/17/3180922)¹² was for 43 houses. The inspector allowed the appeal and granted consent. The appeal was within a strategic gap between Farnham and Aldershot as defined by Policy C4 of the Waverly Borough Local Plan (LP) which looks to resist development in this location. The inspector found the site surrounded by a railway line, rugby club and other development, which effectively cut the site off from the wider countryside and he judged it contributed little to the function of the strategic gap in preventing urban coalescence. The inspector concluded that the "*proposed development would not materially affect the character and appearance of the area and it would not materially affect the Strategic Gap*" [paragraph 11].

¹⁰ Inspectors Report (2018) Appeal Ref: APP/P1560/W/16/3164169 Land South of Centenary Way/North of London Road Clacton on Sea, Essex CO16 9QZ. Available at: <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewDocument.aspx?fileid=28847516>

¹¹ Inspectors Report (2018) Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/17/3185440 Land to the rear of 71 Main Road, Shavington, Cheshire CW2 5DU.

¹² Inspectors Report (2018) Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/17/3180922 Green Lane Farm, Green Lane, Badshot Lea, Farnham GU9 9JL. Available at: <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=3180922>

Tendring District Council (February, 2017)

The appeal by Bloor Homes Eastern against the decision of Tendring District Council (APP/P1560/W/16/3156452)¹³ was for an outline application of 276 dwellings and associated works. The inspector dismissed the case. The appeal site was part of a local green gap which was designated to maintain a clear separation between West Clacton and Jaywick. The Inspector found that the proposed development would be contrary to policy EN2 (local green gap policy) as it would “effectively result in the coalescence of the two settlements, and detract from the character and appearance of the area” [paragraph 36]. On balance, the Inspector found that the significant environmental harm caused by the merging of the settlements would demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development. Although Tendring District Council did not have a five-year housing land supply, the council’s estimate of a 4.84 year housing supply was marginally close and deemed reasonable.

Tendring District Council (December, 2021)

The appeal against the decision of Tendring District Council (APP/P1560/W/21/3268225)¹⁴ was for an outline scheme for 65 dwellings in a green gap and a conservation area. The Inspector dismissed the case. The appeal site is situated within a local green gap identified in the local plan to maintain the separation between the suburban parts of three settlements. The same local green gap designations have been carried forward in the council’s emerging plan. Although the inspector accepted the harm arising from this conflict with policy would be limited in visual terms because the site was bounded by housing on three sides, he maintained the value of the green gap was not entirely related to visual prominence but had some landscape value too, it preserved a degree of openness, greenery and spatial relief within an extensive and expanding built-up area. The inspector concluded the proposal would be contrary to the adopted development plan as a whole. In addition, significant weight was given to the conflict with emerging policies, given their advanced stage towards adoption.

Conclusions

Based on the appeals reviewed above, there have been mixed results in terms of how designated green gaps perform at appeal. However, in the majority of cases the appeal has been dismissed demonstrating that the policy approach does offer protection. In the cases of Cheshire East (2021) and Waverly (2018), which were both allowed, housing land supply was noted as an important consideration in the decision. Housing land supply was also an issue in the Tendring 2017 case which was initially allowed however was then overturned once a 5 year housing land supply was demonstrated.

5.3 Local Green Space

Since the introduction of Local Green Spaces (LGS) in 2012, there have been a number of cases relating to LGS designation. The majority of these cases were dismissed as the appeal site was land that had been designated as LGS in adopted local plans and made neighbourhood plans. A few of the cases were allowed and all but one related to designated LGS in emerging local plans or neighbourhood plans.

In January 2020, a proposed housing development for two self-build houses on a designated LGS in Cheltenham was dismissed at appeal. The Inspector found that the proposed development would “cause harm to the beauty and recreational value of the LGS” [paragraph 7] as it would enclose the

¹³ Inspectors Report (2017) Appeal C Ref: APP/P1560/W/16/3156452 Land north of Rush Green Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 7BQ. Available at: <https://cornerstonebarristers.com/wp-content/uploads/old/appeal-decision-land-north-of-rush-green-road-clacton-on-sea.pdf>

¹⁵ Inspectors Report (2021) Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/20/3259296 Hambridge Lake, Hambridge Road, Newbury RG19 3TR. Available at: https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/PH_211221_Item9a.pdf

adjacent footpath. Although the council could only demonstrate a 3.7-year housing land supply of deliverable sites, the benefits of the scheme would not be sufficient to overcome the significant harm the proposed development would cause to the LGS.

A recent appeal case in Caterham, Tandridge was dismissed in May 2021 due to the proposed development of 27 dwellings and associated works causing a partial loss of a proposed LGS designation in an emerging neighbourhood plan. The Inspector concluded that “*the harm to the character and appearance of the area, including through the loss of local green space, is of a magnitude that attracts very significant weight*” [paragraph 17]. Despite Tandridge Council having a shortfall in its 5-year housing land supply, the Inspector found that significant negative effects of the scheme outweigh the benefits.

With the majority of cases being dismissed at appeal for proposed development on designated LGS demonstrates, that this designation offers a strong level of protection when in an adopted or made development plan.

5.4 Relevant appeals in West Berkshire

This section reviews relevant appeals within West Berkshire to determine the strength of the existing countryside protection policies.

Hambridge Lake, Hambridge Road, Newbury RG19 3TR (November, 2021)

The recent appeal against West Berkshire Council by Mr Hamilton for erection of 41 holiday chalets and clubhouse, access, parking, and landscaping in Newbury was dismissed on 30th November 2021¹⁵. The Inspector refers to the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) which identifies the appeal site as falling within the LV1 Lower River Valley landscape character area. This sets out the role that the valley floor plays in the setting of the individual character of Newbury and Thatcham as distinct separate settlements and pressure for development that encroaches the valley floor is a threat to the distinction between these two settlements. “*Although the role that the appeal site plays in maintaining separation between the settlements may be limited in its physical extent, it is nonetheless an important role*” [Paragraph 39].

The Inspector concluded that the proposed development would pose significant harm on the character and appearance of the site and surrounded area and conflicted with the adopted Core Strategy policies CS17 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), CS18 (Green Infrastructure) and the landscape parts of CS19 (Historic Environment and Landscape Character). The appellant argued that policy CS19 is out of date as it requires all development to conserve and enhance its location compared to the update NPPF stating this should only be in protected areas. The Inspector concluded that it is broadly consistent with the NPPF, and that the proposal would result in significant adverse harm to landscape character and visual impact.

This appeal case demonstrates that the area between Thatcham and Newbury is currently protected by specified policies relating to landscape character and by the LCA identifying the area as having a strong rural setting that plays an important role in maintaining the distinct separation between the two settlements. The proposed development was identified as having considerable economic benefits to the area, however, these did not outweigh the significant harms to the landscape character.

¹⁵ Inspectors Report (2021) Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/20/3259296 Hambridge Lake, Hambridge Road, Newbury RG19 3TR. Available at: https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/PH_211221_Item9a.pdf

Land South of Garden Close Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6PP (August, 2017)

The appeal made by Gladman Developments Limited against the decision of West Berkshire Council was for a proposed development for up to 85 residential dwellings in Newbury and was dismissed on 22nd August 2017¹⁶. The main considerations for this appeal was whether the Council could demonstrate a five year housing land supply, the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and whether the proposal constitutes sustainable development.

West Berkshire Council could demonstrate a five year housing land supply of 5.2 years. The appeal site sat within Local Landscape Character Area 15B: Wash Common Farmland that has medium to high sensitivity to development. This area largely separates the settlements of Newbury and Enborne Row. Despite there being no specific gap protection policy, the inspector concluded that *“the scheme would result in the unacceptable coalescence of Newbury and Enborne Row”* [paragraph 57] which was supported by the supporting text of Policy CS19 in the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012) where the importance of the separate identities of settlements in West Berkshire is referred to. The Inspector also notes the Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003) (BLCA) which sets out that one of the key development requirements for the appeal site area is to conserve the distinctive dispersed settlement character. It was concluded that the proposed development did not comply with the policies set out in the Core Strategy so did not constitute sustainable development. Therefore, the case was dismissed.

This case demonstrates the importance of supporting text and evidence in protecting the integrity of the gap between Newbury and Enborne Row and maintaining the distinction between settlements.

Siege Cross, Land North of Bath Road, Thatcham, Berkshire (July 2017) and Land at Henwick Park, West of Heath Lane and North of Bowling Green Road, Thatcham, Berkshire (July 2017)

There were two appeals made against the decisions of West Berkshire Council, one was for a proposed urban extension for up to 495 homes (Siege Cross, Land North of Bath Road)¹⁷ and the other for an outline application for up to 225 new homes on farmland outside of Thatcham (Land at Henwick Park, West of Heath Lane and North of Bowling Green Road)¹⁸. The inspector initially recommended both appeals to be allowed in conjunction with one another. However, since the inquiries closed the adoption of the HSADPD identified a five year housing land supply for West Berkshire, so the secretary of state concluded that the inspectors findings were no longer accurate and that there had not been a persistent under delivery of new homes. The secretary of state assessed the schemes against the up-to-date development plan policies which seeks to limit the scale of new housing outside of the towns boundaries unless they are allocated sites, and dismissed both cases.

The review of relevant appeals in West Berkshire demonstrates that generally the current landscape character approach is working well, however, this is subject to the district’s housing land supply situation.

¹⁶ Inspectors Report (2017) Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/16/3153899 Land South of Garden Close Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6PP. Available at: <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewDocument.aspx?fileid=22983554>

¹⁷ Inspectors Letter (2017) application ref: 15/00296/OUTMAJ Siege Cross, Land north of Bath Road, Thatcham, Berkshire. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633258/17-07-27_DL_IR_Siege_Cross_3141449.pdf

¹⁸ Inspectors Letter (2017) Application Ref: 15/01949/OUTMAJ Land At Henwick Park, West Of Heath Lane And North Of Bowling Green Road, Thatcham, Berkshire. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633276/17-07-27_DL_IR_Henwick_Park_Thatcham_3144193.pdf

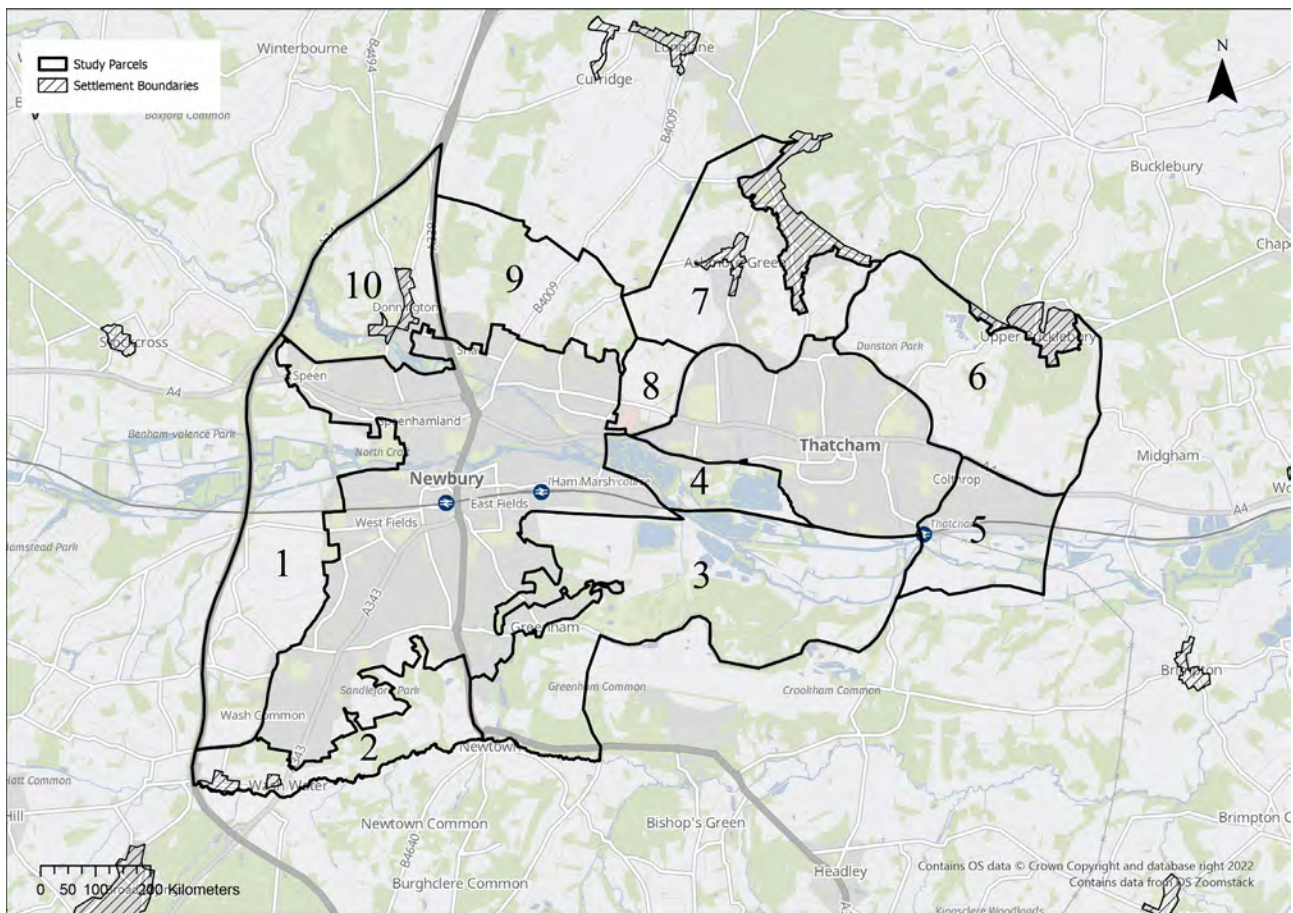
6. Methodology

This chapter sets out the methodology used to review the study area and assess the different types of policy designations to be considered. There is no agreed approach to undertaking a study of this kind and therefore the proposed methodology has drawn on the implications identified from the national policy and guidance review, the local policy and evidence base review and the appeals/examination and case law review as set out in Chapters 3-5.

Step 1: Study Area and Parcel Identification

- The overall study area was agreed with WBDC at inception stage and is shown in the map below. The study area includes the countryside around both Newbury and Thatcham.
- Smaller parcels were then identified for more detailed assessment. 10 parcels have been identified and agreed with WBDC. The boundaries of these parcels use features such as settlement/district boundaries, roads, rivers, footpaths, established tree lines etc where possible, however a thorough review of detailed boundaries for any potential policy designations may be required at a later stage.

Figure 4 - Map of Study Area and Parcels



Step 2: Collect General Parcel Information

This step involved collecting general parcel information and producing maps. General information and existing designations/constraints have been collected for each parcel, as shown in the table below. This includes a review of existing landscape character evidence.

Table 1 – General Parcel Information collected

Parcel Ref	
Parcel Name/Description	
Parcel Size	(in hectares)
Parcel Adjoins	Name of Settlement(s)
Distance to nearest settlement(s) at shortest and furthest points	XX km to XX (shortest) XX km to XX (longest)
Description of where parcel is located and distance to other settlements	XXX
Includes any of the following:	
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>AONB</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>
<i>Landscape Commentary</i>	<i>Desk-based on review of existing landscape evidence, referencing relevant published landscape character, sensitivity and capacity studies.</i>

Step 3: Parcel Assessment

Green Belt Assessment

The study considers whether there is a potential case for the designation of a new Green Belt around Thatcham and Newbury. Given the strategic nature of Green Belt, the assessment will be based on the study area as a whole, however it will also include a high-level assessment of the five purposes of the Green Belt at parcel level.

Summaries for each parcel are provided however recommendations on whether exceptional circumstances for the designation of new Green Belt exist, as required by NPPF, are set out for entire study area.

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

The original strategic purpose of the first Green Belt designation was to check the sprawl of London, although, it was then also designated around other large cities and towns, such as Birmingham, Manchester/Liverpool, Leeds, York etc.

The scoring for purpose 1 is set out the table below. However, following review it is considered that neither Newbury nor Thatcham represents a ‘large built up area’ and are relatively small towns in the context of designating new Green Belt. Therefore, all parcels will score ‘No’ (Red) to both of the questions below.

Table 2 – Green Belt Purpose 1 Questions

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	Yes	Green
	Partially	Amber
	No	Red

NPPF Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

In addition to the clear function of this purpose in preventing towns from merging and therefore protecting existing gaps between towns, it also forms the basis for maintaining the existing settlement pattern. This purpose is of relevance to Newbury and Thatcham.

Table 3 – Green Belt Purpose 2 Questions

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	Yes	Green
	Partially	Amber
	No	Red

*Further detail/guidance on how yes, partially or no are determined are set out in Appendix B

NPPF Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

This purpose seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, or a gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change. The assessment considers openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as ‘*countryside*’. Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development rather than from a landscape character perspective, where openness might be characterised through topography and presence or otherwise of woodland and hedgerow cover.

Table 4 – Green Belt Purpose 3 Questions

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Yes	Green
	Partially	Amber
	No	Red

*Further details on how yes, partially or no are determined are set out in Appendix B

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

This purpose serves to protect the setting of historic settlements by retaining the surrounding open land or by retaining the landscape context for historic centres.

As outlined in an advice note published by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS)¹⁹, the assessment of this purpose relates to very few settlements in practice, due largely to the pattern of modern development that often envelopes historic towns today. Cambridge is a good example of a settlement where the setting of the historic centre is contextualised by rural features, where the views across the ‘backs’ retain a special status in planning terms.

Table 5 – Green Belt Purpose 4 Questions

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
Does the parcel help preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Yes	Green
	Partially	Amber
	No	Red

*Further details on how yes, partially or no are determined are set out in Appendix B

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

Purpose 5 focuses on assisting urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. In Green Belt Assessments this purpose is usually either not assessed or is each parcel is deemed as making an equal contribution.

For this study, purpose 5 will be assessed at study level and each parcel will score the same.

Overall Assessment: A summary will be made of how well each parcel potentially meets the five purposes of the Green Belt.

¹⁹ PAS (2015) Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/green-belt-244.pdf> (Accessed: 6 July 2022).

A general summary will also be provided as to whether or not there may be ‘exceptional circumstances’ to support a new Green Belt around Thatcham and Newbury. However, the criteria to determine exceptional circumstances set out in the NPPF include considerations which are beyond the scope of this study. Therefore whilst this study will make recommendations to WBDC, the overall decision on the exceptional circumstances will need to be taken by the Council.

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

There is no set definition of a Green Gap or Wedge in the NPPF or NPPG, therefore a set of potential purposes/criteria need to be established for this study.

Arup has identified the following potential criteria/purposes of Green Gaps/Wedges based on its experience elsewhere and research undertaken of other local planning authorities with Green Gap/Wedge policies for the purposes of this project:

- To prevent coalescence/merging (perceptual and physical) of settlements by maintaining open land between them to protect the separate identity of the settlements
- To guide development form (maintain existing or influence form and direction of urban development)
- Provide a ‘green lung’ into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area)
- Provide essential green infrastructure

Some of these questions overlap with the purposes of Green Belt and Local Green Space as discussed above and below.

Table 6 – Green Gap/Wedge Questions

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	Yes - An essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.	Green
	Partially - A wider gap between settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.	Amber
	No - A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements <u>or</u> Area does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernible contribution to separation	Red
Does the area provides a ‘green lung’ into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	Yes – the area forms a strongly connected corridor or network of green infrastructure which penetrates into existing or planned areas of built form	Green
	Partially - a fragmented corridor or network of green infrastructure exists with	Amber

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
	several clearly defined connections remaining	
	No - a collection of disparate green spaces weakly linked by fragmented corridors with little penetration into existing or planned areas of built form or area does not meet this purpose	Red
Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes - the area is part of a formal network of green infrastructure which includes parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features etc	Green
	Partially – the area provides sporadic or isolated areas green infrastructure	Amber
	No - The area does not provide essential green infrastructure	Red

Local Green Space Assessment

As set out in the NPPF and NPPG, Local Green Space designations should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land. Therefore, some of the study parcels identified are likely to be too large to be considered as a whole. If there are smaller areas within parcels that could potentially be suitable for Local Green Space Assessment instead of a Green Belt/Gap/Wedge designation, these will be identified and assessed based on the following criteria.

The study will make recommendations about potential areas that could be considered for Local Green Space designation based on the criteria below however further work, including engagement with local communities is likely to be required given that one of the key requirements of Local Green Space is that it should be demonstrably special to the local community. Therefore, the list of potential LGSs identified is not definitive and further spaces may be suggested or amendments made by the local community.

Table 7 – Local Green Space Questions

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
Is the area accessible to the public?	Yes – the area is fully accessible to the public with long term access (such as rights of way) already established	Green
	Partially – the area does not have formal access rights (such as a designated right of way) but is informally accessed by members of the public for recreational use	Amber
	No - the area is not easily accessible to the public. <i>Note this does not necessarily mean the area would not be suitable as Local Green Space for other reasons</i>	Red
	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area	Green

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Partially - the area is within 15-30 minutes walking distance of a residential area	Amber
	No - the area is not within 30 minutes walking distance of a residential area	Red
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	Yes – strong evidence has previously been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community.	Green
	Partially – some/limited evidence has been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community.	Amber
	No – no evidence has been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community.	Red
Is the area of historic significance? *Note some heritage assets will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.	Yes – the area is known to have historical significance. History to be noted.	Green
	Partially – the area is not known to have historical significance but is close to an area which does and could affect the setting.	Amber
	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance	Red
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes – the area is regularly used for formal recreational purposes such as a playing field (uses to be specified)	Green
	Partially – the area appears to be used as for informal recreational purposes such as dog walking/jogging	Amber
	No – the area does not appear to be used for any recreational purpose	Red
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity? <i>Guidance from the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (as shown in Appendix B Landscape Value Guidance - Perceptual [Wildness and Tranquillity] Factor) will be used to help inform the scoring of this criterion</i>	Yes – the area is considered to have high levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity as set out in Table 8 below.	Green
	Partially - the area is considered to some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity as set out in Table 8.	Amber
	No - the area is not considered to have any levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity as set out in Table 8.	Red
Is the area rich in wildlife?	Yes - Evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.	Green

Questions	Answer*	Score/Rating
<p><i>*Note some wildlife sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.</i></p> <p><i>Guidance from the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 as shown in Appendix B Landscape Value Guidance - Natural Heritage factor will be used to help inform the scoring of this criterion</i></p>	Partially – Some/limited evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.	Amber
	No – No evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.	Red

Limitations of this study

Although focused on the towns of Newbury and Thatcham, this is a relatively strategic-level study and therefore does not assess impact of individual development proposals in detail.

The majority of the assessment has been made using existing evidence and desktop review using GIS and relevant mapping and aerial imagery. Site visits were then conducted to verify the desktop assessment. The site visits were undertaken from publicly accessible roads and footpaths and in some cases access was not possible and visibility into the site was limited.

7. Key Findings and Recommendations

Parcel 1

This parcel is located between the western edge of Newbury and the A34, covering an area between Elmore Plantation to the north and Wash Common to the south.

A large proportion of parcel 1 is covered by existing designations/constraints including a Registered Battlefield of the First Battle of Newbury 1643, two Conservation Areas and several Local Wildlife Sites.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C

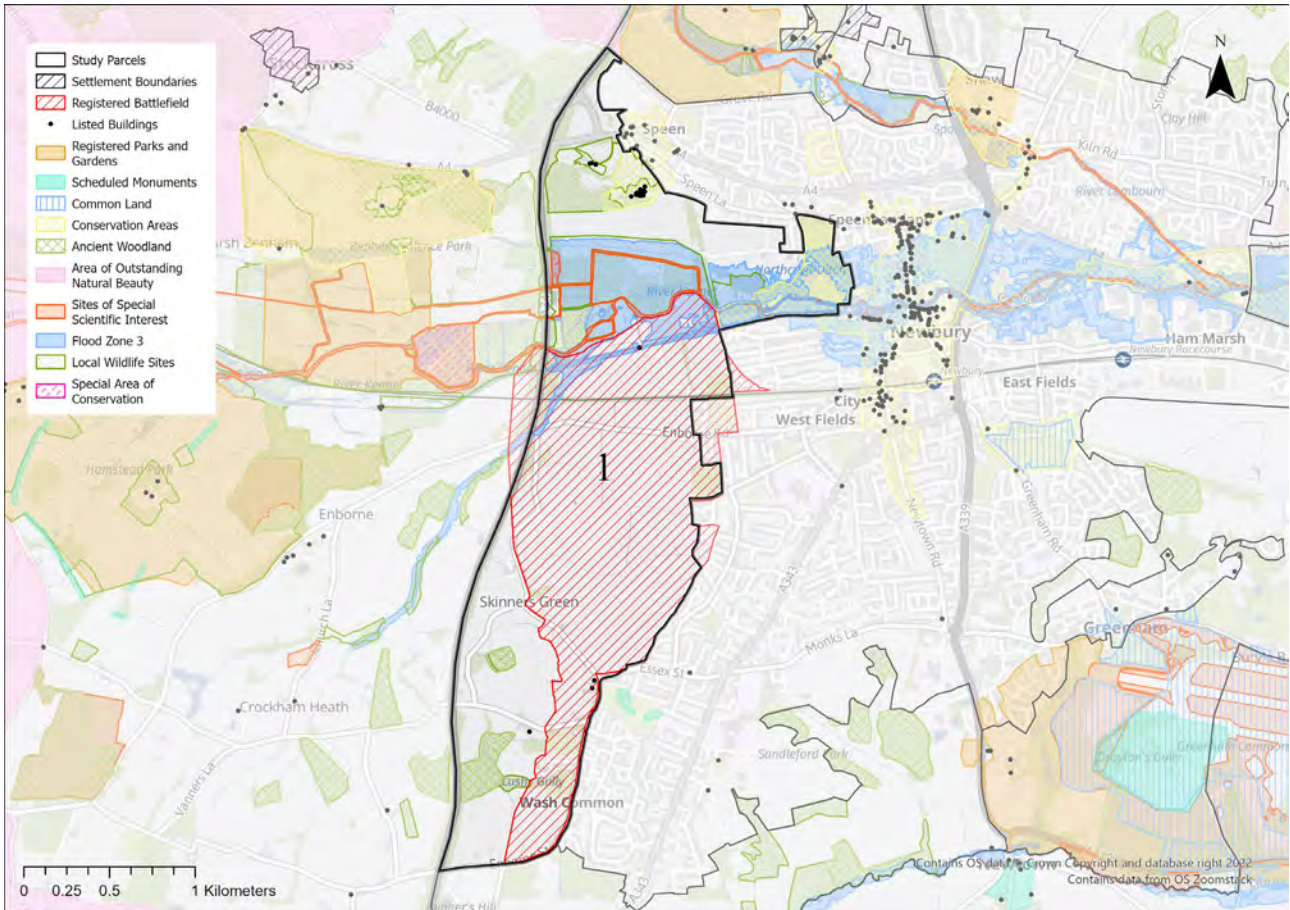


Figure 5 – Parcel 1 Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	No	A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Yes	4.41% built up area Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Partially	Parcel makes limited contribution to the broader setting of a historic town by providing a countryside setting for a historic core which is inward facing, and has a weak relationship with the surrounding countryside.
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary	A summary of the findings relating to green belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	No	A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	Partially	Partially – an area to the north of the parcel along the River Kennet and through Northcroft Park penetrates from Newbury town centre into the surrounding countryside.
Purpose 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	The parcel provides direct access to the open countryside via designated rights of way and recreational routes. It also provides a range of other designations such as the Registered Battlefield of the First Battle of Newbury 1643, and several Local Wildlife Sites.
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	<p>Part of parcel 1 meets purpose/criteria 2 and provides a 'green lung' from the open countryside into the centre of Newbury. As noted in the Green Belt assessment above, this green 'finger' runs along the River Kennet from the countryside to the west (albeit broken by the A34) into the centre of Newbury providing a direct link to the historic centre of Newbury, although views are mostly limited by vegetation/buildings. This area is largely protected by other designations and/or majorly constrained by the River and flood zone 3 and is unlikely to be developed. Therefore, whilst it does essentially function as a green lung, given the existing constraints and designations, it is not considered that there is a need for a further designation as a green wedge/gap.</p> <p>Other green infrastructure in parcel 1 is covered by existing designations and/or is open countryside that does not provide a gap between settlements, therefore potential Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended.</p>	

Local Green Space

No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study. There are relatively few parts of this parcel that are not already protected from development by other designations/constraints. No areas within this parcel have been submitted to WBDC for consideration.

Parcel 2

The parcel is located to the south of Newbury and straddles the border to Hampshire. It contains the settlement of Enborne Row to the south and also part of the strategic site at Sandelford which was allocated in the Core Strategy. The settlement boundary has already been amended by WBDC to take account of the developable area of the site.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

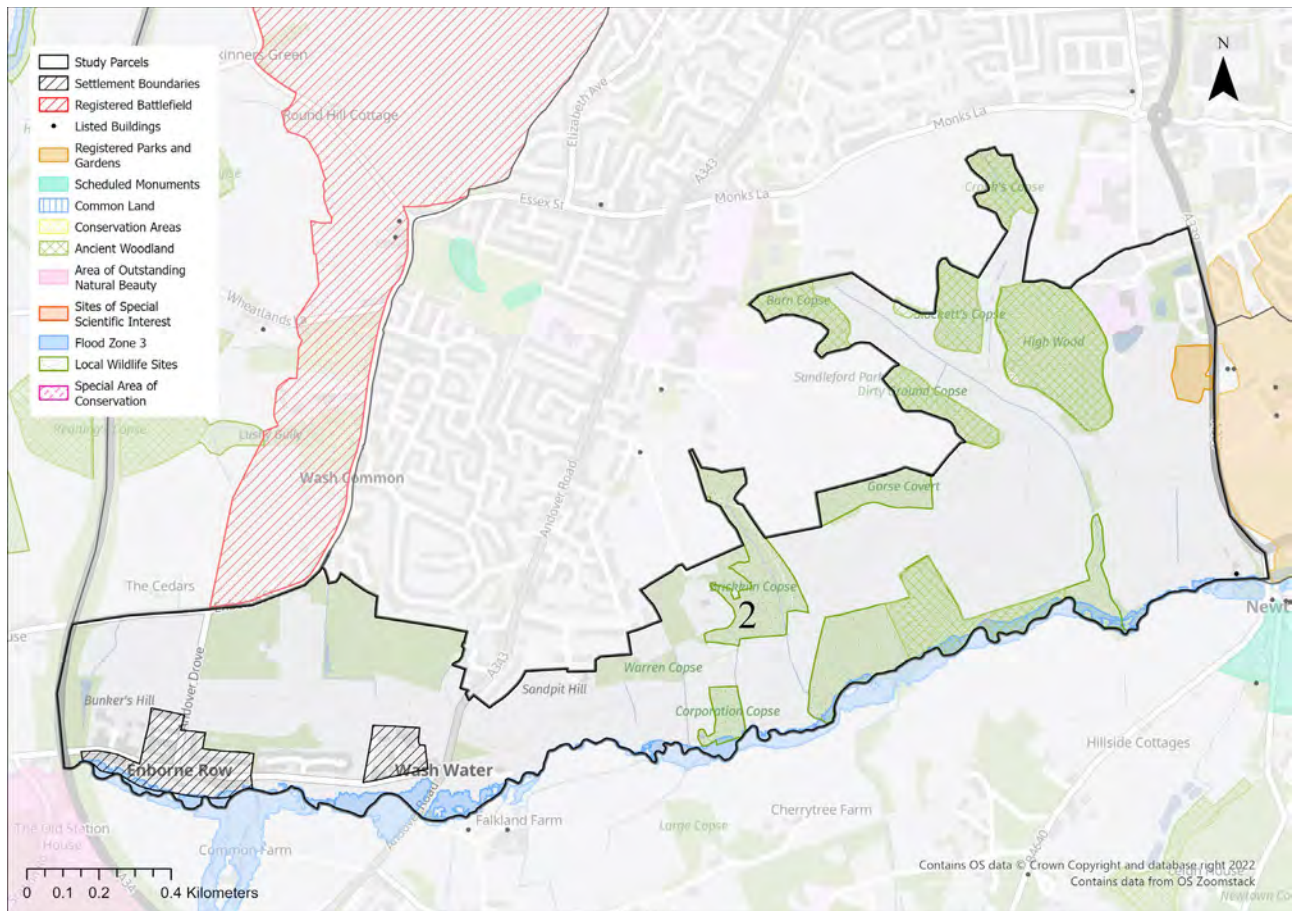


Figure 6 – Parcel 2 Constraints Map

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Partially	Part of the parcel, the gap between Newbury and Enborne Row/Wash Water has been identified as an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Yes	3.63% Built Up Area (as existing) 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	Partially	Part of the parcel, the gap between Newbury and Enborne Row/Wash Water has been identified as an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Partially – the area does not provide any formal recreational uses however does include rights of way so is likely used for walking/jogging etc and general enjoyment of the countryside. It is noted that the southern part of the Sandleford site will be a country park.
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	Part of parcel 2 meets purpose/criteria 1 as set out above. This includes land between Newbury and Enborne Row/Wash Water. On this basis this area (shown in Figure X below) is recommended as a potential Green Gap/Wedge designation . This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.	

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
		Parcel 2 also partially meets purpose 3 as it provides rights of way which link Newbury to the open countryside and are therefore likely to be used for walking/jogging etc and general enjoyment of the countryside.

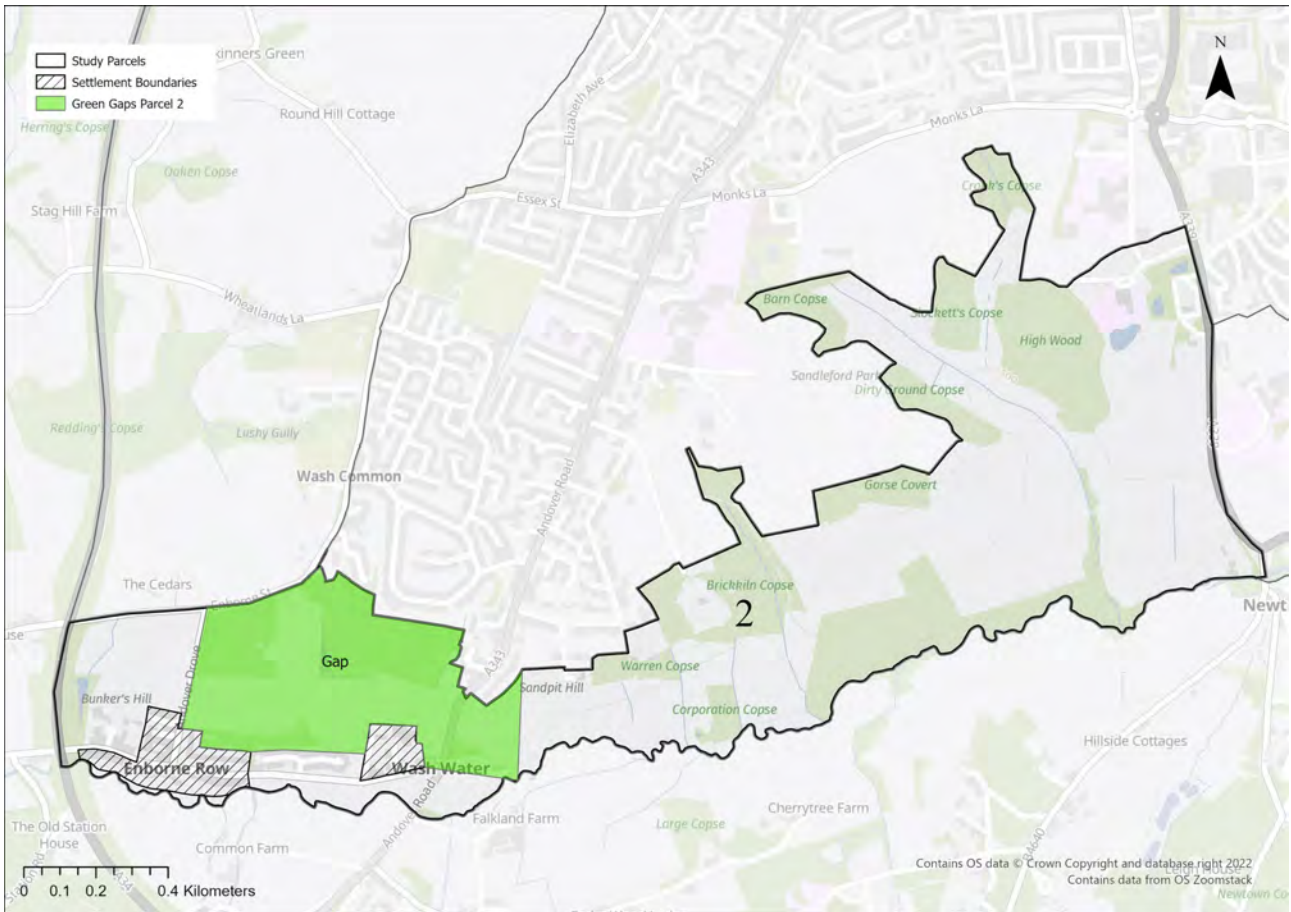


Figure 7 – Parcel 2 Potential Green Gap

Local Green Space

No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study. No areas within this parcel have been submitted to WBDC for consideration.

Parcel 3

Parcel 3 is a large parcel running along the southern edge of Newbury and Thatcham. Large parts of the parcel are covered by existing designations and constraints, including Thatcham Reed Beds and part of Greenham Common, as shown in the map below.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

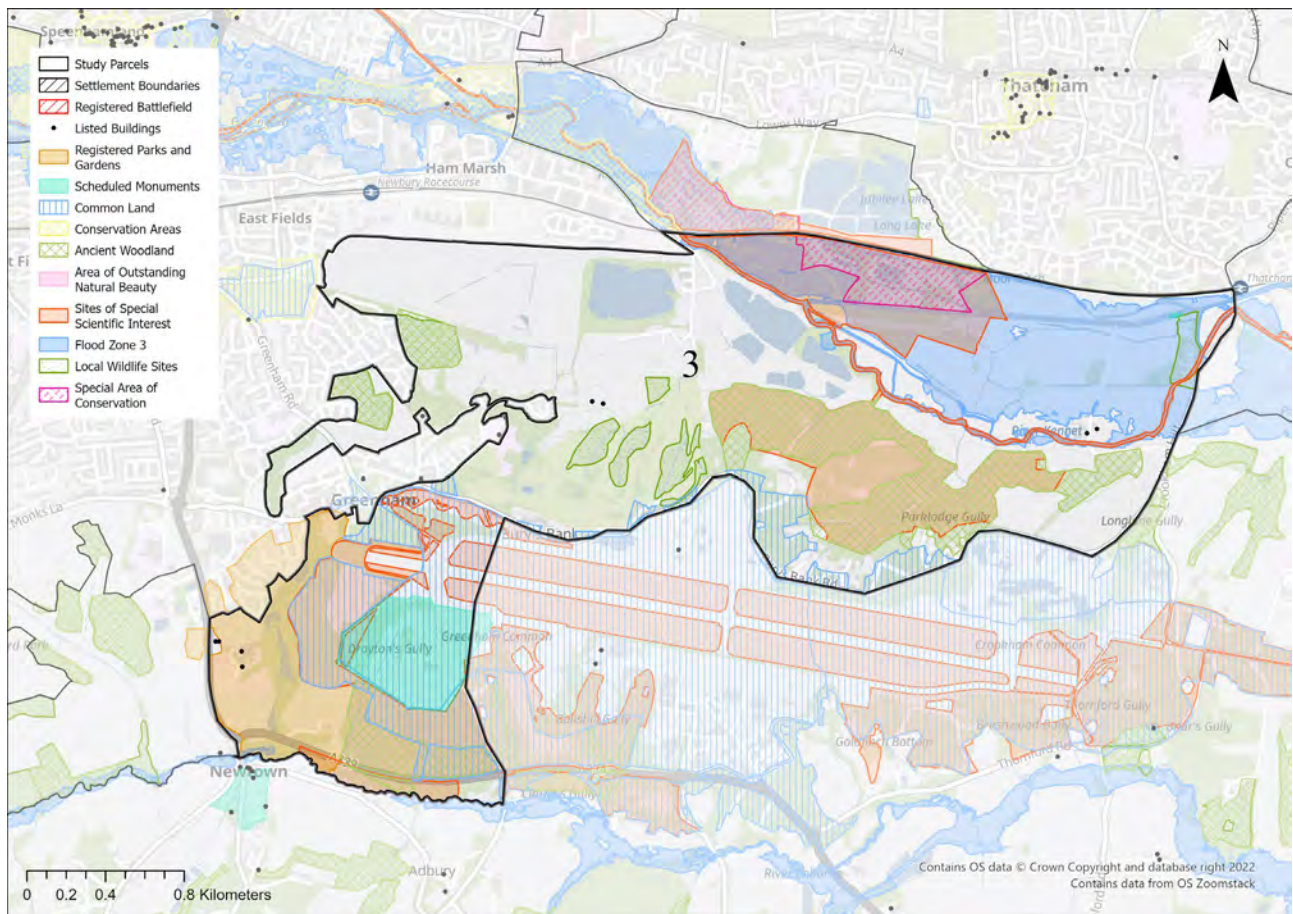


Figure 8 – Parcel 3 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	No	This parcel provides a less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Yes	4% Built up area Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	No	This parcel provides a less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area)	Partially	A relatively small green 'finger' runs into Newbury around Greenham Lane, however a large proportion of this area was allocated in the Housing Sites Allocations DPD. Other large parts of this finger are designated as Local Wildlife Sites and part is land protected in perpetuity as a biodiversity corridor (as part of the allocated development)
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	This parcel contains part of Greenham Common, which is designated as 'Common Land' The parcel also contains Newbury Racecourse, Newbury and Crookham Golf Course, Thatcham Town Football Club.
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	<p>Parcel 3 does not provide an essential gap between settlements however, it does provide some essential green infrastructure.</p> <p>A small finger of green runs into Newbury within this parcel providing access from Newbury out into the countryside, however a large proportion of this area is allocated for housing and other parts of the 'finger' are designated as Local Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>On the basis of the above a Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended for parcel 3. However, some smaller areas have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation.</p>	

Local Green Space

Two areas have been identified as potentially suitable for LGS designation, these are Newbury and Crookham Golf Course and Pigeons Farm Road Playground/John W Mello Playing Field. See Parcel proforma for further details.

Parcel 4

Parcel 4 is a relatively small parcel located between Newbury and Thatcham to the north of the railway line but to the south of the A4. It contains a number of lakes and large area of the parcel is within floodzone 3.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

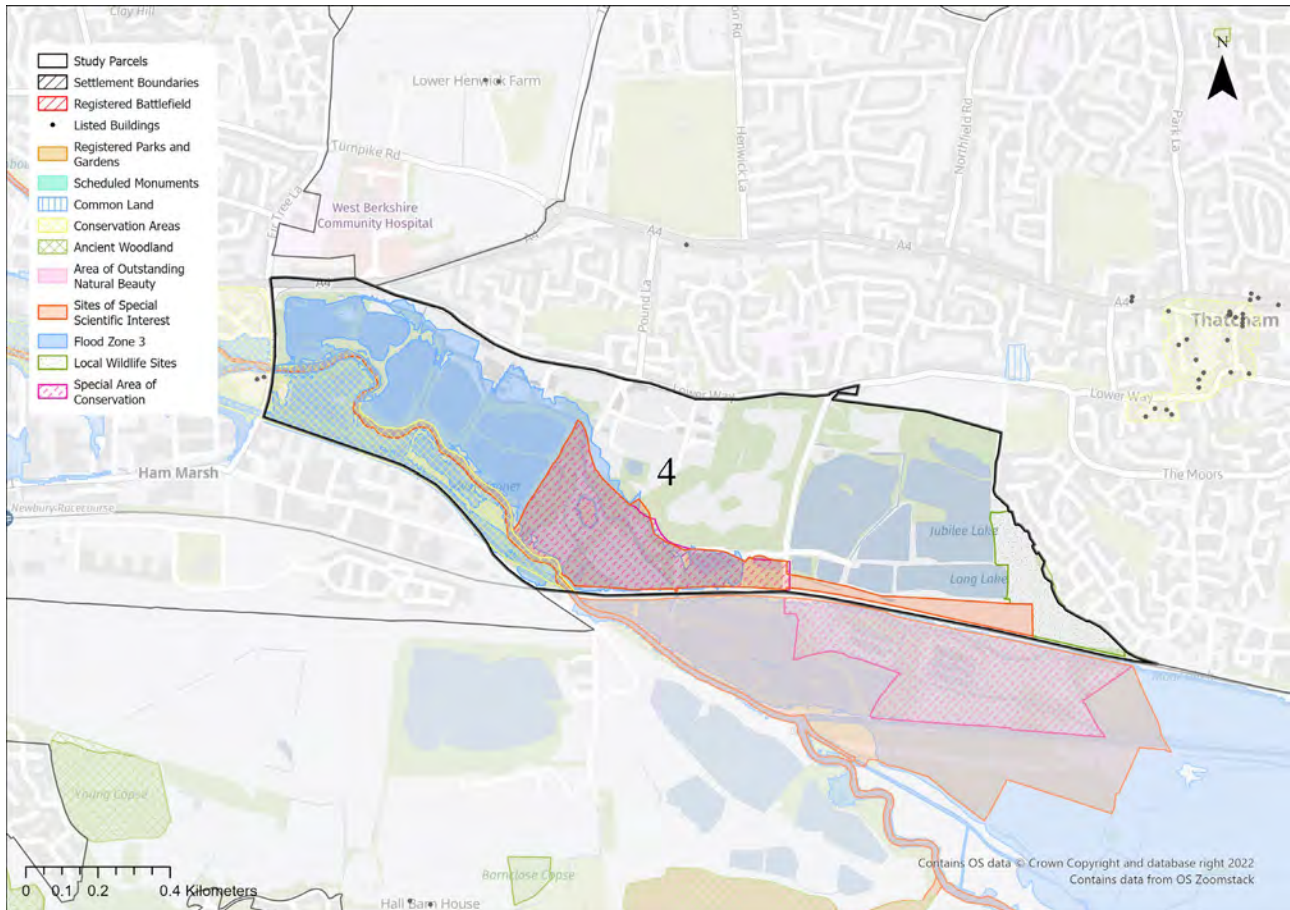


Figure 9 – Parcel 4 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Yes	Yes this parcel provides an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Partially	8.55% built up area Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character.
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Although Newbury is a historic town, there are no historic designations adjacent or close to this parcel.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	Yes	Yes this parcel provides an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. .
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	Yes – part of the area provides fishing lakes and the Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre. The area also contains rights of way and recreational routes for walking etc along the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal.
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	Parcel 4 forms an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham and also provides important green infrastructure. On this basis, the entire parcel is recommended for potential Green Gap/Wedge designation	

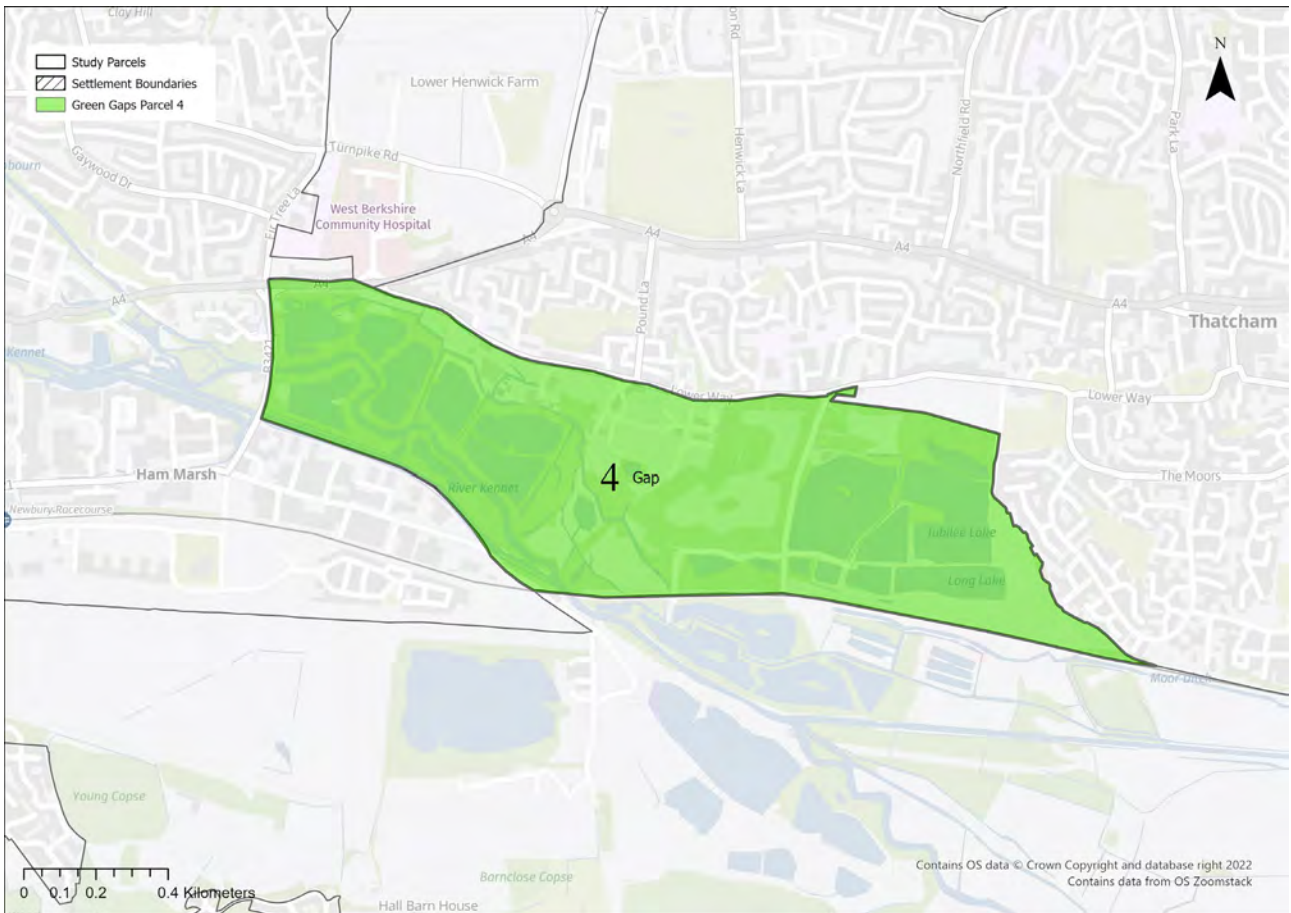


Figure 10 – Parcel 4 Potential Green Gap

Local Green Space

Two areas have been identified as potentially suitable for LGS designation, these are Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre and associated lakes and Hambridge Lakes. See Parcel proforma for further details.

Parcel 5

The parcel is located to the west of Thatcham and is intersected by the railway line. The northern part of the parcel includes Colthrop Industrial Estate which is outside of the settlement boundary. The southern part of the parcel contains the Kennet & Avon Canal and includes large areas of flood zone 3 and a SSSI.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

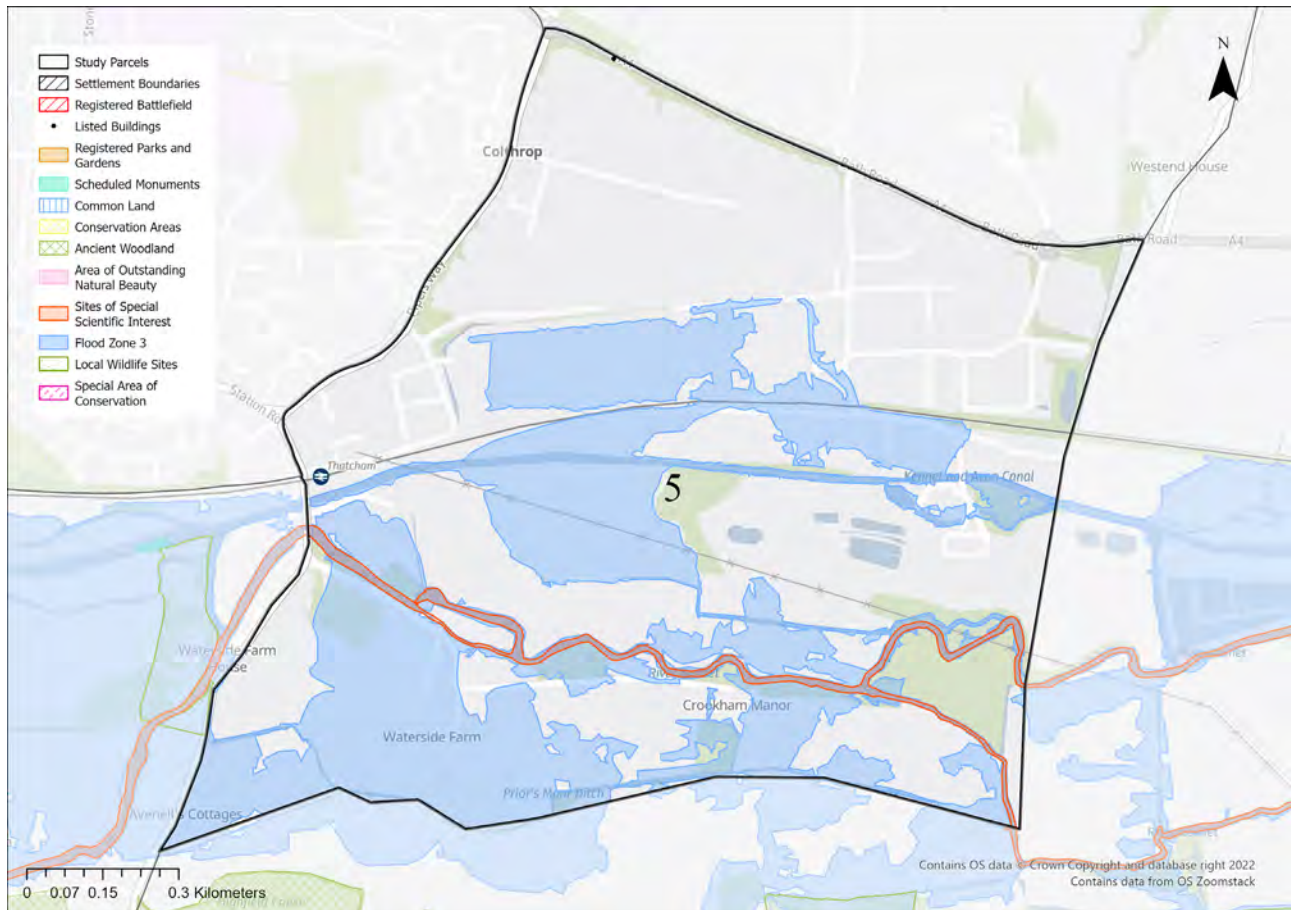


Figure 11 – Parcel 5 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	No	This parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernible contribution to separation.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Partially	40.13% built up area Contains more than 20% built form overall and northern part of site possesses an urban character (Colthrop Industrial Estate). Southern part of site is mostly agricultural land and a quarry and possesses a largely rural character.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	No	Parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernible contribution to separation.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Partially – the area contains Thatcham Football Club and some rights of way
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	<p>This parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and does not provide a green lung into urban areas. Part of the parcel is Colthrop Industrial Estate and remaining area is mostly agricultural land. Thatcham Football Club and a few rights of way provide small areas of green infrastructure.</p> <p>On the basis of the above a Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended for parcel 5.</p>	

Local Green Space

No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study. No areas within this parcel have been submitted to WBDC for consideration.

Parcel 6

The parcel is located to the north east of Thatcham. It represents the area between Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

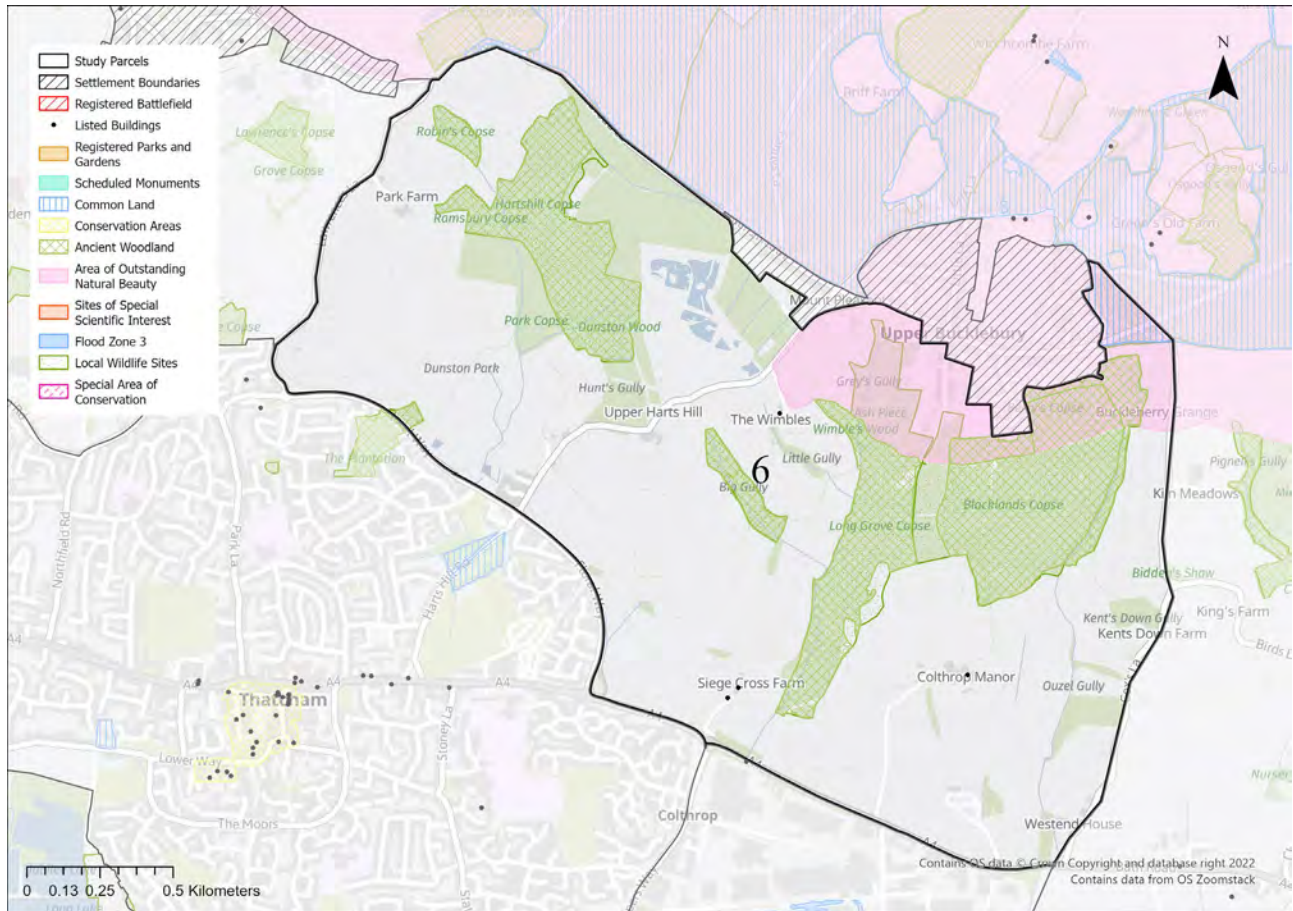


Figure 12 – Parcel 6 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Partially	This parcel forms a wider gap between settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Yes	4.67% Built up Area Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	Partially	This parcel forms a wider gap between the settlements of Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging and loss of individual identity.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	The area provides a network of rights of way for walking etc
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	<p>As existing, this parcel provides a 'wider gap' between Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury where there may be scope for development but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.</p> <p>The proposed North East Thatcham strategic allocation is, however, included in this parcel. As noted in Chapter 4 the issue of the allocations proposed in the Emerging LPR is assumed to be potentially open. Given that a masterplan has yet to be produced for the North East Thatcham site which would identify which areas of it would be proposed as green infrastructure/green space, it is not possible to provide a further assessment of the gap at this time. However, if all of the area outlined in the regulation 18 Emerging Draft were to be developed, then the remaining land between the built up area and Upper Bucklebury would be likely to form an essential gap between the settlements and a potential gap designation for part of this area could then be considered. Although there is no intervisibility between the site allocation and the AONB due to topography and woodland blocks, there is a perceptual relationship, with the landscape forming a zone of transition between the hard and defined urban edge of Thatcham and the valued landscape of the AONB. Despite its proximity to the town, the allocation area currently has a very rural character, resulting from its sense of openness, few views of development or human influence, defined sloping topography and the irregularly shaped woodland blocks which create a varied and interesting landscape. Cox's Lane and footpaths through the area feel rural and tranquil. The topography of the allocation area is distinctly different from that of Thatcham, sloping up to the north towards the AONB. This creates a sense of separation from the urban area and the rural landscape. While large</p>	

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
		<p>parts of this land are designated as ancient woodland and/or AONB, a gap policy could be beneficial to the remaining areas especially in respecting the topography and in maintaining the varied rural landscape and the approach to, and setting of, the AONB.</p> <p>It is recommended that further assessment is undertaken when more information is available.</p>

Local Green Space

No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study. No areas within this parcel have been submitted to WBDC for consideration.

Parcel 7

The parcel is located to the north/north-west of Thatcham and goes up the boundary of Cold Ash and includes the settlement of Ashmore Green.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

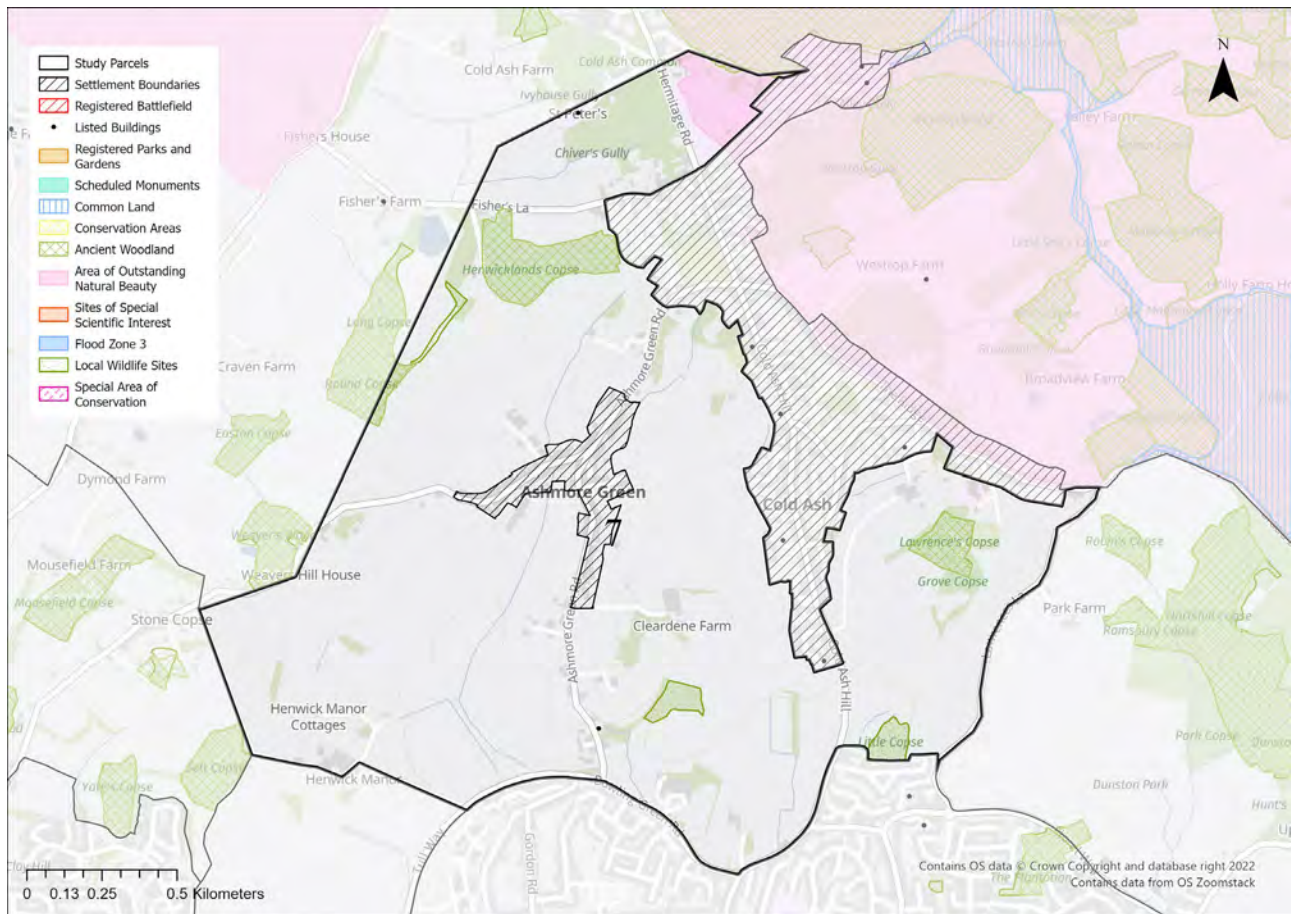


Figure 13 – Parcel 7 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Partially	Parts of this parcel provide an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. These are the areas between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Yes	4.37% Built up Area 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	Partially	Parts of this parcel provide an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. These are the areas between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	The area provides a network of rights of way for walking etc and general access to the countryside.
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	<p>The land between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green (as shown on the map below) are essential gaps and on this basis are recommended for potential Green Gap designation.</p> <p>The parcel also provides some green infrastructure in the form of rights of way and access to countryside.</p>	

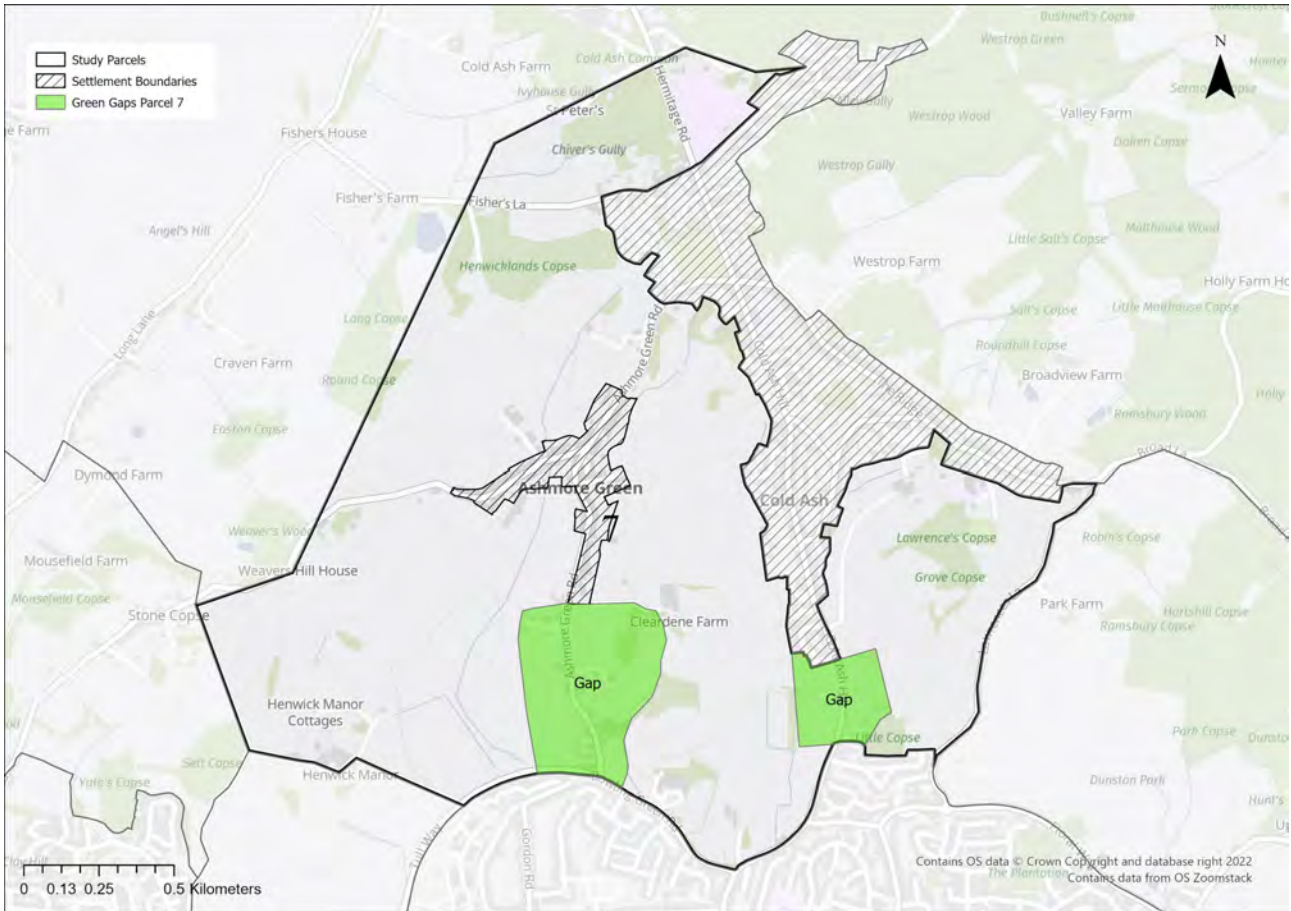


Figure 14 – Parcel 7 Potential Green Gaps

Local Green Space

Two areas have been identified as potentially suitable for LGS designation, these are Claredene Wood and Little Copse which were both put forward for LGS designation in the draft Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan. See Parcel proforma for further details.

Parcel 8

This parcel sits in the northern part of the area between the towns of Newbury and Thatcham. It includes West Berkshire Community Hospital to the south.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.



Figure 15 – Parcel 8 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Yes	This parcel forms an essential gap between the settlements of Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Partially	8.19% Built up Area 3: Contains less than 10% built form (due to the presence of the hospital) however the rest of the land possesses a largely rural character.
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	Yes	This parcel forms an essential gap between the settlements of Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	The area provides a driving range (golf) and horse keeping/riding related facilities. It also provides a public right of way for walking and related activities.
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	Parcel 8 forms an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham and also provides some important green infrastructure. On this basis, the entire parcel is recommended for potential Green Gap/Wedge designation	

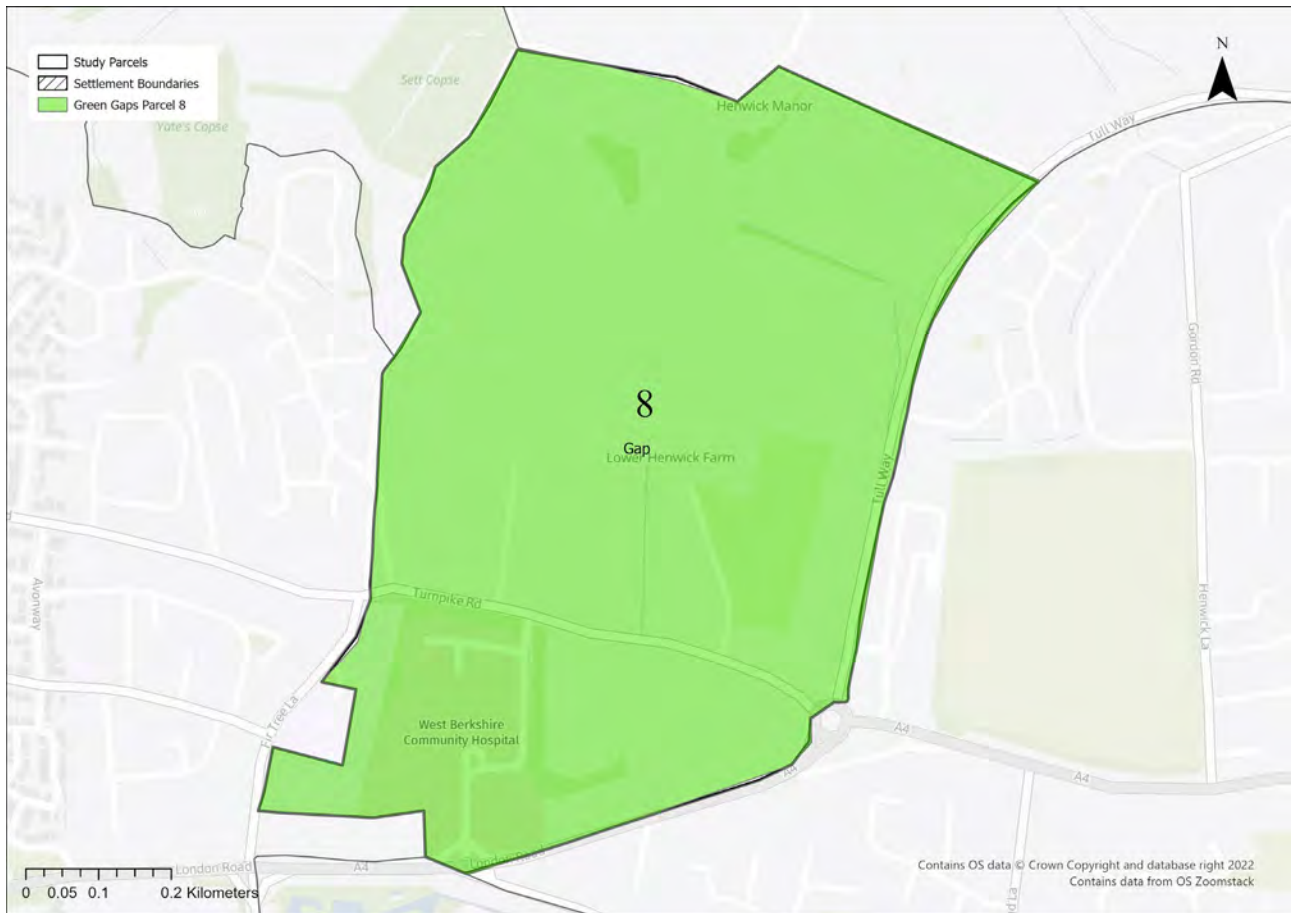


Figure 16 – Parcel 8 Potential Green Gaps

Local Green Space

One area has been identified as potentially suitable for LGS designation, this is Lower Henwick Driving Range. See Parcel proforma for further details.

Parcel 9

The parcel is located to the north of Newbury and predominantly features a combination of agricultural and wooded land. However, it does contain the site of the Vodafone HQ and new housing (currently under construction) in the south western corner of the parcel.

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

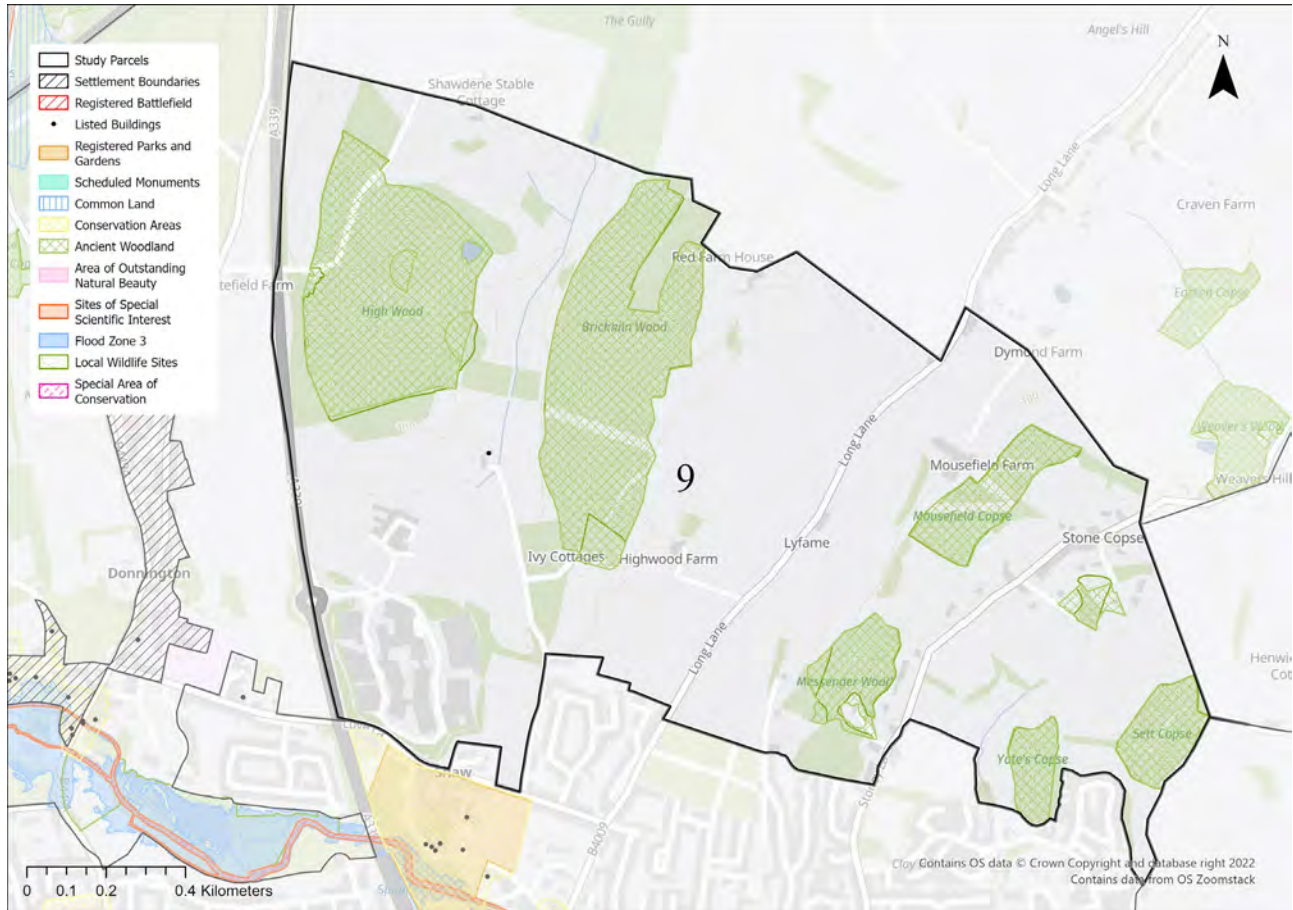


Figure 17 – Parcel 9 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	No	A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Yes	5.23% 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations	A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.	

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	No	A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area)	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	The area provides rights of way for walking and related activities and general access to the countryside
Green Gap/Wedge Summary	Parcel 9 does not provide an essential gap between settlements therefore a Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended.	

Local Green Space

No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study. No areas within this parcel have been submitted to WBDC for consideration.

Parcel 10

The parcel covers the north-west area of Newbury and contains the settlement of Donnington

The full proforma with further parcel details can be found in Appendix C.

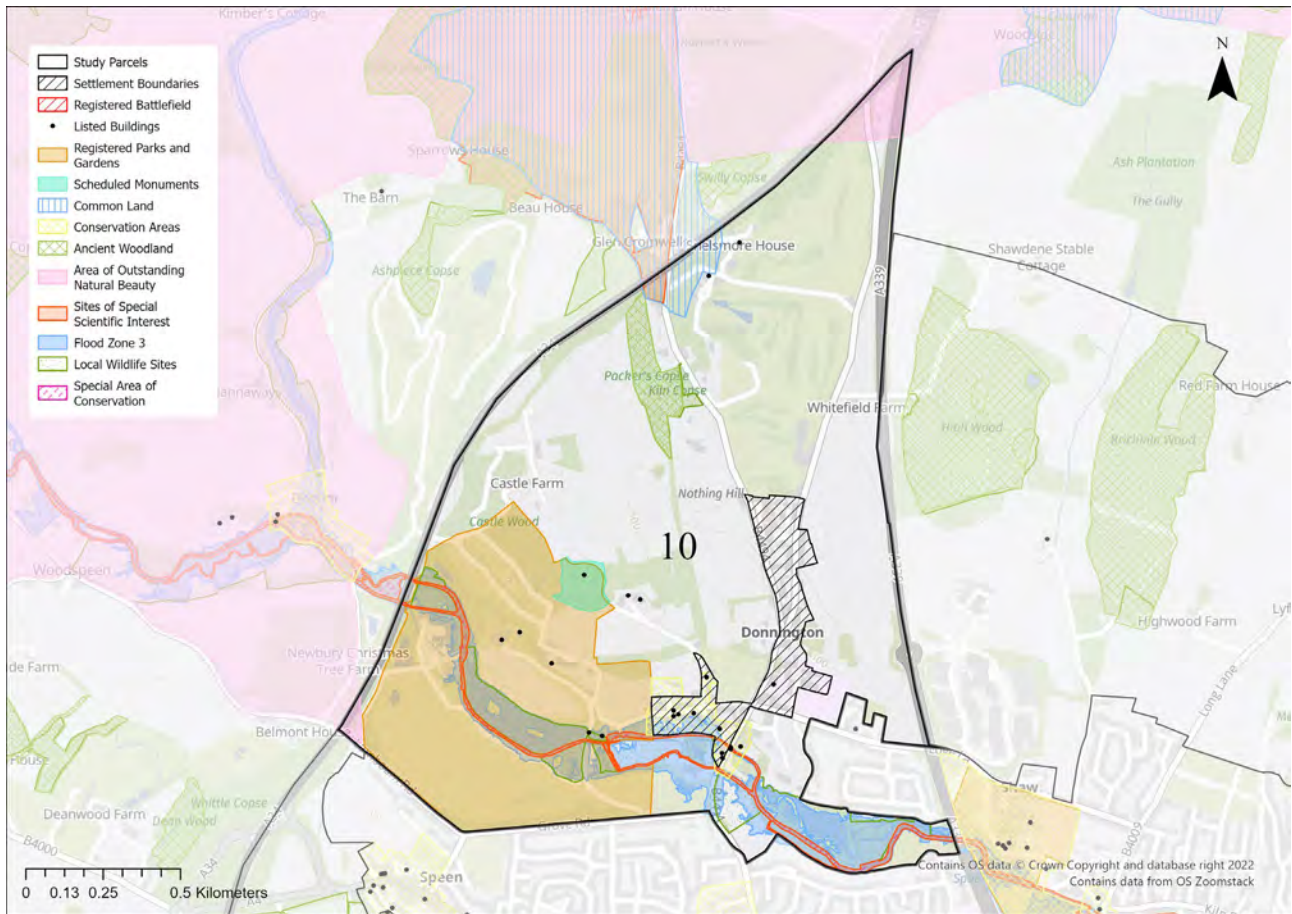


Figure 18 – Parcel 10 Designations and Constraints

Green Belt Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Partially	Part of the parcel, the area between Newbury and Donnington is an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Partially	8.34% Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character. Parcel contains the village of Donnington hence higher percentage built up area.
Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Partially	Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, or protects open land which has a strong

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
		connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury however, the availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.
Green Belt Summary/Recommendations		A summary of the findings relating to Green Belt will be provided at a study wide level.

Green Gap/Wedge Summary

Purpose	Does this parcel meet this purpose?	Comment
Purpose/Criteria 1: Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements.	Partially	Part of the parcel, the area between Newbury and Donnington is an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose/Criteria 2: Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Purpose 3/Criteria 3: Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	The area provides rights of way for walking and related activities and general access to the countryside. It also contains two golf courses, and the designated heritage assets of Donnington Castle and Donnington Grove Historic Park and Garden.
Green Gap/Wedge Summary		The area between Newbury and Donnington is an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. The gap is already small and new development which is under construction (adjacent to the A339) is eroding this gap further. Therefore, a Green Gap designation is recommended for this area. On this basis, the area is recommended for potential Green Gap/Wedge designation

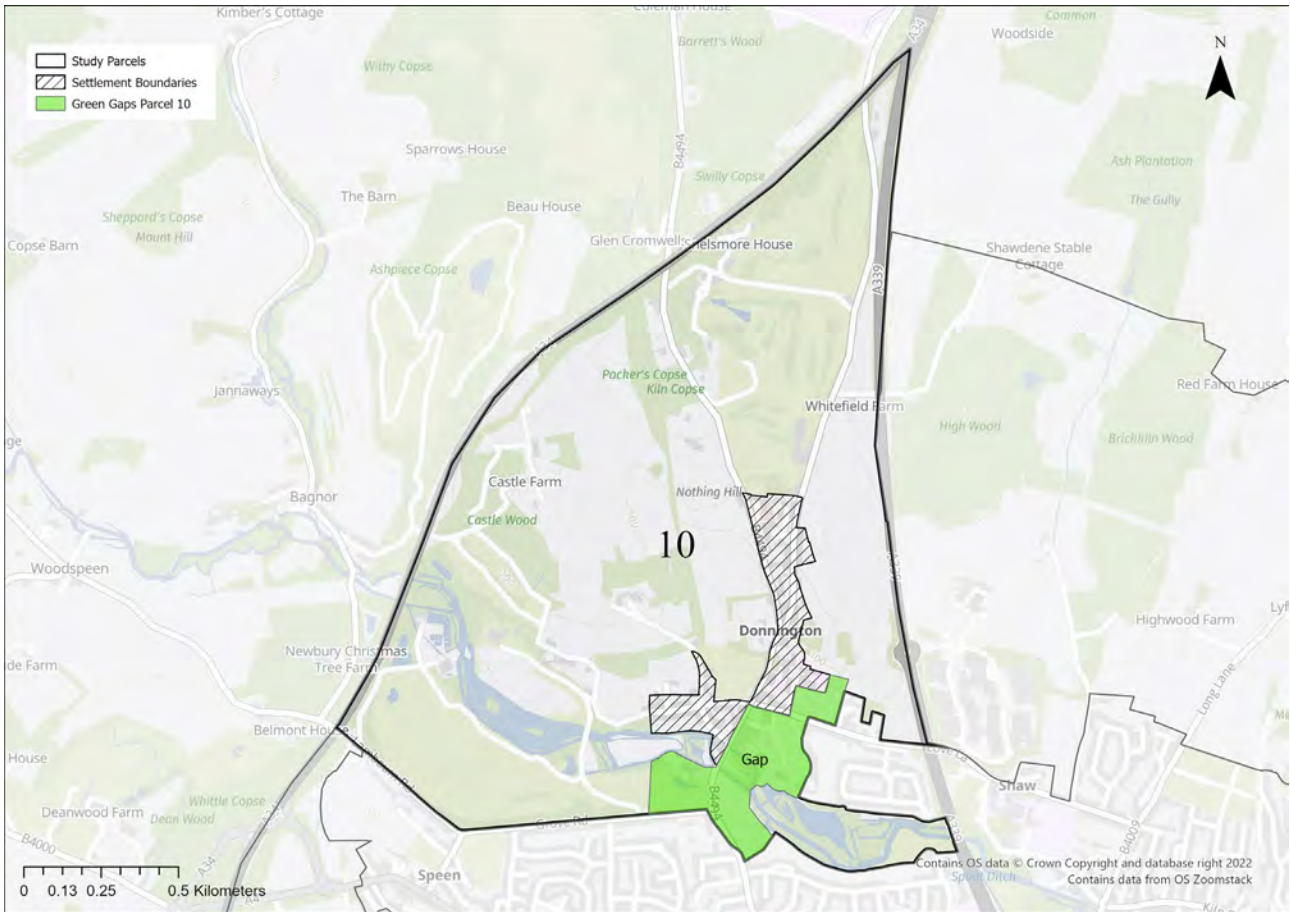


Figure 19 – Parcel 10 Potential Green Gap

Local Green Space

Three areas have been identified as potentially suitable for LGS designation, these are Newbury Tennis Courts, playground and recreation centre (off Poplar Place), Donnington Cricket Club and Playground and Donnington Valley Golf Course. See Parcel proforma for further details.

Green Belt Conclusions

Although there are no parcels which meet purpose 1 of the Green Belt (to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) as Newbury and Thatcham are not considered to be large built-up areas, several of the parcels did partially or fully meet purpose 2 (to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another). Parcels 4 and 8 fully meet purpose 2 as they provide an important gap between Newbury and Thatcham and development of these areas would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.

Parcels 2, 6, 7 and 10 partially meet purpose 2 as parts of the parcels (as set out in the parcel summaries above) are considered to provide either ‘essential gaps’ where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between settlements or ‘wider gaps’ between settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.

The majority of parcels, meet purpose 3 (assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment) with the only exceptions being parcels 4, 5 and 8 which partially meet purpose 3 due to having higher percentages of built up area. For parcel 5 this is due to the inclusion of Colthrop Industrial Estate which is outside of the settlement boundary however the remainder of the parcel would be considered countryside if assessed alone. Parcels 4 and 8 form the gap between Thatcham and Newbury and some built development including the West Berkshire Community Hospital and Newbury Sewage Treatment Works.

Parcel 1 was partially considered to meet purpose 4 (to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns), as part of the parcel provides access to the open countryside to the west from the centre of Newbury. Parcel 10 also partially met purpose 4 as it contains Donnington Conservation Area and Donnington Castle which has views down towards Donnington and Newbury.

Purpose 5 (to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land) was not assessed at parcel level as it is widely accepted in Green Belt reviews/studies that all Green Belt land in a particular area is likely to perform equally. It is beyond the scope of this study to undertake a full review of the West Berkshire housing and employment land supply, however a high-level review of the Council’s Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) has been carried out along with a review of mapping and aerial imagery and observations during the site visits. It seems apparent that there are very few sites available for development/redevelopment within the main built up areas of Newbury and Thatcham, which are vacant or derelict. However two large sites were promoted through the HELAA that whilst occupied, do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury.

Sites within the built up areas of Newbury and Thatcham are likely to be highly attractive to prospective developers and therefore it is likely that these will be developed, where other policies allow, regardless of any potential designation/restriction of areas at the edges of the settlements. All parcels were therefore assessed as not meeting this purpose.

Do Exceptional Circumstances exist for the designation of a new Green Belt?

The NPPF states that new Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions. Any proposals for new Green Belts should be set out in strategic policies, which should:

- a) demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;*
- b) set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;*
- c) show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;*

d) demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with strategic policies for adjoining areas; and

e) show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.’

Whilst some of these points do not fall within the scope of this study and West Berkshire Council would need to make the final case based on a range of considerations, it is our view that demonstrating exceptional circumstances to justify a new Green Belt will be difficult and is unlikely to be accepted by a local plan inspector. Our review of recent and relevant appeals within West Berkshire demonstrated that existing policies are so far performing well at appeal. Whether there are any Green Gap/Wedge designations required or amendments necessary to existing policies is discussed further in the next section. However, whilst there may be development pressure within this area, there is no evidence to suggest that normal planning and development policies would not be adequate.

Whilst there are proposed large extensions to both Newbury and Thatcham proposed in the LPR, these alone are not considered to warrant the justification for a completely new Green Belt. Due to the largely rural nature of West Berkshire and the large proportion of the District covered by the AONB, a Green Belt around the District’s largest towns Newbury and Thatcham would likely impact further growth and sustainable development in the towns, which have been previously been considered suitable for growth.

Green Gap/Wedge Conclusions

As discussed in the Green Belt conclusion section above, there are several parcels that either fully or in part currently provide an essential gap between settlements.

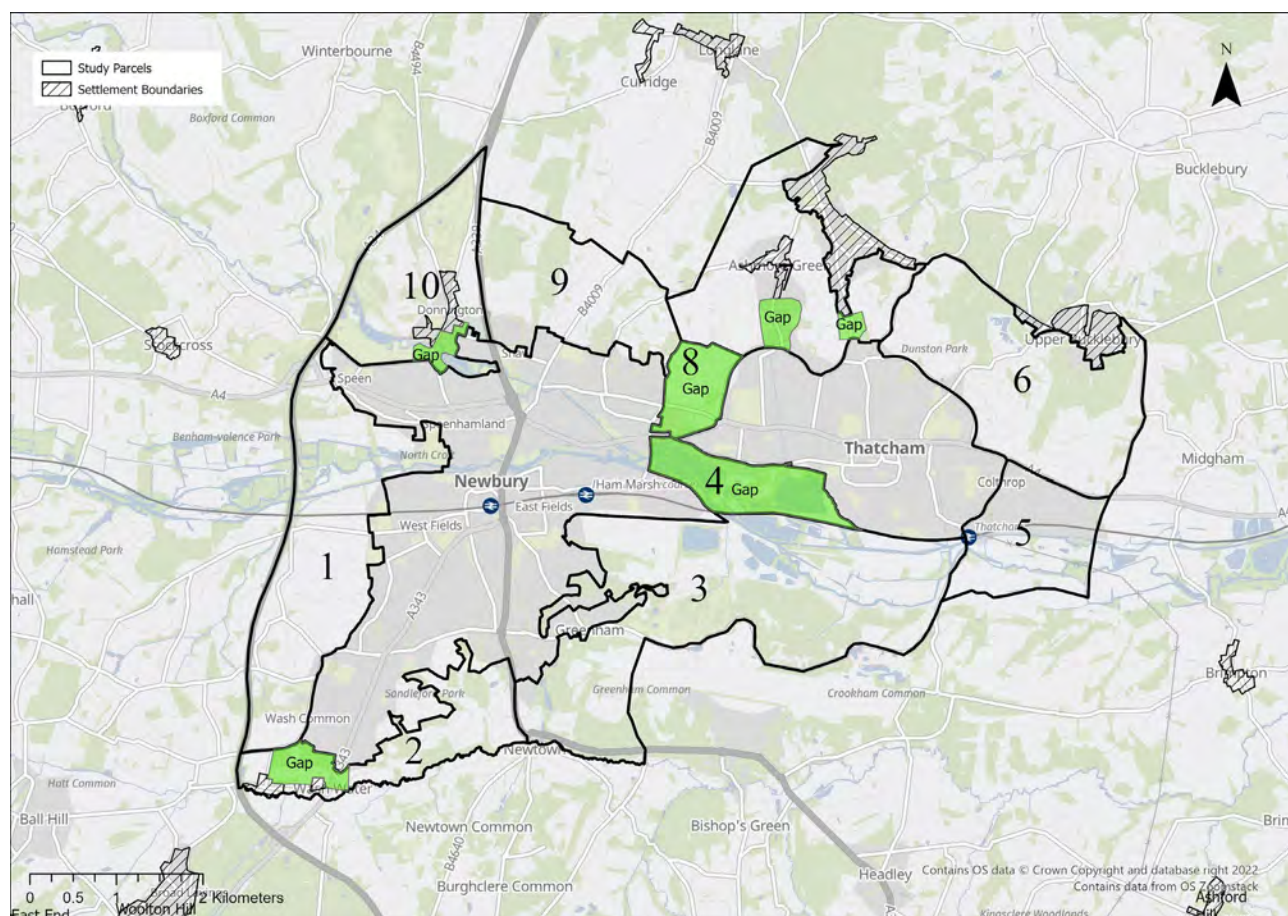


Figure 20 - Green Gaps Overview

These are;

- **Parcel 2 (part)** – the land between the southwestern edge of Newbury and Enborne Row provides an essential gap between the settlements. Some of this land was the subject of an appeal (land south of Garden Close Lane) which is discussed in Chapter 5. The inspector concluded that the scheme would result in the unacceptable coalescence of Newbury and Enborne Row.
- **Parcel 4 (whole)** – this parcel provides an essential gap between Thatcham and Newbury where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. Part of this parcel was subject of an appeal (Hambridge Lake, Hambridge Road) which is discussed in Chapter 5. The inspector concluded that although the role that the appeal site plays in maintaining separation between the settlements may be limited in its physical extent, it is nonetheless an important role. This separation role remains particularly important along the southern side of the London Road given the near coalescence of Newbury and Thatcham to the north.
- **Parcel 7 (part)** – The land between Thatcham and Cold Ash and the land between Cold Ash and Ashmore Green have been assessed as essential gaps.
- **Parcel 8 (whole)** - this parcel provides an essential gap between Thatcham and Newbury.
- **Parcel 10 (part)** – the land between Newbury and Donnington provides an essential gap. The gap between Newbury and Donnington is already very small and there is limited physical and separation between them and further development at Land adjacent to Hilltop, Oxford Road is under construction which reduces this gap further.

Local Green Space

The review of LGS policy and guidance highlighted that LGS offers similar ‘protection’ from development to Green Belt. However, it should not be a blanket designation of open countryside and should not be proposed as a ‘back door’ way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name. Therefore, none of the parcels assessed are wholly suitable for LGS designation so several smaller areas/sites within those parcels have been identified. Areas with an existing designation have not been included with the exception of one site which was included in the draft Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan.

The identified areas in this study theoretically meet the requirements of LGS however it is recommended that further consultation with the local community is carried out to determine whether they are demonstrably special to that particular local community. The local community may suggest other areas that were not identified here if they can demonstrate that the requirements are met. Due to the scale of the areas identified, the LGS findings do not impact the wider findings of this study relating to Green Belt or Green Gap/Wedge designation and whether a specific planning designation is needed to safeguard the unique characters and separate identities of Newbury and Thatcham and the settlements surrounding them as part of the Local Plan Review (LPR).

No Designation (General countryside/landscape policy)

As set out above, a number of potential Green Gaps/Wedges have been identified in the study. This section will review whether or not a new designation/policy is required in the LPR for these areas or whether existing policy(ies) or an amended general countryside policy would provide sufficient protection.

Existing Core Strategy policy CS19 sets out that a landscape character led approach is encouraged for proposed development and that it should be informed by and respond to the distinctive character areas and key characteristics identified in relevant landscape character assessments. The supporting text refers to coalescence of settlements and the importance of maintaining separate settlement

identities. It also refers to three separate landscape character assessments, although these have now been replaced by the single West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in 2019 as part of the evidence base for the emerging local plan.

Two relatively recent appeals in areas identified as ‘gaps’ were discussed in Chapter 5, both of which were dismissed. Both inspectors referenced Policy CS19 along with the supporting text and the LCA.

The Inspector for the Hambridge Lake appeal concluded that Policy CS19 was broadly consistent with the NPPF, and that the proposal would result in significant adverse harm to landscape character and visual impact. He found that the size of the proposal would blur the existing sharp line between rural and urban, and significantly degrade the separation role of the site and its positive rural contribution to the adjacent urban area. This separation role remains particularly important along the southern side of the London Road given the near coalescence of Newbury and Thatcham to the north.

Another appeal at Garden Close Lane, which is on the southern edge of Newbury, was within the area identified by this study as a gap between Newbury and Enborne Row/Wash Water. In this appeal, the appellant suggested that there is no specific policy protection against coalescence and there is no gap protection policy. The Inspector disagreed and concluded that the scheme would run directly in contrast to the aims of Policy CS19 in relation to the coalescence and importance of separate identities of settlements and he was not persuaded of the view that Enborne Row and Newbury are not separate or distinct settlements.

In summary, it would appear that the existing policy approach is performing well at appeal in relation to the coalescence between the settlements. However, it should be noted that these decisions are within the context of WBDC having a five year housing land supply and it is possible that a different conclusion could be reached if this was to drop below five years.

Emerging Policy SP:8 Landscape Character sets out a similar landscape-led approach and therefore is likely to perform similarly at appeal. Part c states that particular regard will be given to ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character. The supporting text references the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019 and states that it provides a framework for informed decisions to be made as to whether different landscapes should evolve. The supporting text also sets out that the separate and distinctive identity of these individual settlements helps to define communities and is an important feature of the local character of West Berkshire and that the retention of these actual and perceived visual breaks remain important for the continued retention of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

Overall Conclusion/Policy Recommendation

This study has reviewed the countryside around Newbury and Thatcham to help determine whether a specific planning designation is needed to safeguard the unique characters and separate identities of Newbury and Thatcham and the settlements surrounding them as part of the Local Plan Review (LPR). The designations that have been reviewed are Green Belt, Green Gaps/Wedges and Local Green Space.

It has reviewed how well the land would potentially meet the purposes of the Green Belt and although it found some of the parcels would meet some of the purposes of the Green Belt, it has concluded that it is unlikely that exceptional circumstance exist to justify the designation of a new Green Belt.

The study also examined potential local green space designation. The review of national policy and appeal decisions clearly shows that local green spaces offer a similar level of protection to green belt however, also that none of the parcels or even the essential gaps identified would be suitable for

designation due to their scale and would not meet the requirements of the NPPF. A few potential smaller areas that may be suitable for local green space designation were found within the parcels. These are mostly playgrounds, recreational/sporting facilities etc.

The study reviewed the gaps between Newbury and Thatcham and the surrounding settlements and found several areas which provide 'essential' gaps between them that could potentially be designated as new Green Gaps/Wedges. However, it also found that the current Core Strategy policies, which use a landscape character led approach are performing well at appeal and that the policy in the emerging LPR follows a similar approach and would be expected to perform similarly, providing that the council has a five year housing land supply.

The green gap case law and appeal review highlighted that in other areas, green gap policies were generally being supported however, development can potentially be allowed on green gaps/wedges if the council does not have an up-to-date local plan and a five-year housing land supply under the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is therefore questionable as to whether a specific Green Gap/Wedge policy would have any additional benefits or offer any additional protection compared to the current approach should the housing land supply fall below five years. It should also be noted that the lack of a five-year housing land supply does not necessarily mean that a development should be allowed and an assessment of the potential harm would still need to be carried out and a planning judgement made on the harm versus the potential benefits.

That said, whilst a green gap/wedge policy may not offer any additional weight compared to other policies in the event of a less than five year housing land supply, having an additional green gap/wedge policy may offer some benefits in the form of designating specific areas as green gaps/wedges and giving more certainty rather than relying on general policy and supporting text relating to the coalescence of settlements. This would allow the council to clearly set out which gaps between settlements it is specifically seeking to protect.

In our view, WBDC would be justified in keeping its existing approach to preventing the coalescence of settlements by continuing to rely on the existing approach however, WBDC would also be justified in creating a new green gap policy should it wish to specifically define the particular gaps that it wishes to protect. Should this be the preferred option, it is suggested that the gaps identified as essential gaps in this study are designated under this policy and identified on the policies map.

Appendix A – Relevant NPPG Paragraphs

What is Local Green Space designation?

Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 37-005-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

How is land designated as Local Green Space?

Local Green Space designation is for use in Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans. These plans can identify on a map ('designate') green areas for special protection. Anyone who wants an area to be designated as Local Green Space should contact the local planning authority about the contents of its local plan or get involved in neighbourhood planning.

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 37-006-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

How does Local Green Space designation relate to development?

Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. **In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.**

Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 37-007-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

What about new communities?

New residential areas may include green areas that were planned as part of the development. Such green areas could be designated as Local Green Space if they are demonstrably special and hold particular local significance.

Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 37-012-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

What types of green area can be identified as Local Green Space?

The green area will need to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.

Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 37-013-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

How close does a Local Green Space need to be to the community it serves?

The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close. For example, if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served.

Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 37-014-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

How big can a Local Green Space be?

There are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be because places are different and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed. However, paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. **Consequently blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a ‘back door’ way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name.**

Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

Is there a minimum area?

Provided land can meet the criteria at paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework there is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space.

Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 37-016-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

What about public access?

Some areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may already have largely unrestricted public access, though even in places like parks there may be some restrictions. However, other land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (eg green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty).

Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present. Any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with land owners, whose legal rights must be respected.

Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 37-017-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

What about public rights of way?

Areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may be crossed by public rights of way. There is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation.

Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 37-018-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

Does land need to be in public ownership?

A Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. However, the local planning authority (in the case of local plan making) or the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space. Landowners will have opportunities to make representations in respect of proposals in a draft plan.

Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 37-019-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

Would designation place any restrictions or obligations on landowners?

Designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners.

Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 37-020-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

Who will manage Local Green Space?

Management of land designated as Local Green Space will remain the responsibility of its owner. If the features that make a green area special and locally significant are to be conserved, how it will be managed in the future is likely to be an important consideration. Local communities can consider how, with the landowner's agreement, they might be able to get involved, perhaps in partnership with interested organisations that can provide advice or resources.

Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 37-021-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

Can a Local Green Space be registered as an Asset of Community Value?

Land designated as Local Green Space may potentially also be nominated for listing by the local authority as an Asset of Community Value. Listing gives community interest groups an opportunity to bid if the owner wants to dispose of the land.

Related policy: paragraphs 99-100

Paragraph: 022 Reference ID: 37-022-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014

Published 6 March 2014

Countryside/Landscape

The NPPG contains the following paragraphs relating to countryside and landscape which are considered relevant for this study.

How can planning policies conserve and enhance landscapes?

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary.

The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.

Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

How can the character of landscapes be assessed?

For a designated landscape, the relevant management plan will contain further information on the area's particular character and beauty.

Where appropriate, landscape character assessments can be prepared to complement Natural England's National Character Area profiles. Natural England provides guidance on undertaking these assessments.

To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed.

To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used.

Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

How should development within the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty be dealt with?

Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.

Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

Appendix B – Green Belt Criteria, Landscape Value Guidance, Boundary Guidance

B.1 – Further Details of Green Belt Criteria

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

The original strategic purpose of the Metropolitan Green Belt was to check the sprawl of London. However, it is recognised that the wider Green Belt also plays a role in preventing the unrestricted growth of other large settlements. This assessment therefore considers the role of Green Belt Parcels in preventing the sprawl of London, but also in restricting the sprawl of large built-up areas.

Although ‘sprawl’ is a multi-faceted concept and thus has a variety of different definitions, this Assessment has adopted a simple definition, considering sprawl as ‘the outward spread of a large built-up area at its periphery in a sporadic, dispersed or irregular way’. In order to appraise the extent to which the Green Belt keeps this in check, it is necessary to consider:

- a. Whether the Green Belt Parcel falls at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up area(s);
- b. The degree to which the Green Belt Parcel is contained by built-form, and the nature of this physical containment, as well as the linkage to the wider Green Belt; and
- c. The extent to which the edge of the built-up area has a strongly defined, regular or consistent boundary.

Purpose 1: Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria	Score
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	a. Land parcel is at the edge of one or more large built up areas	PASS: Parcel meets Purpose 1. FAIL: Parcel does not meet Purpose 1 and will score 0 for Criteria (b).
	b. Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary.	5+: Parcel is contiguous with two or more large built-up areas which are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
5: Parcel is contiguous with two or more large built-up areas which are predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features.		
3+: Parcel is connected to one or more large built-up area(s) which is/are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.		
3: Parcel is connected to one or more large built-up area(s) which is/are predominantly		

Purpose	Criteria	Score
		bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features.
		1+: Parcel is enclosed by one large built-up area which is predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
		1: Parcel is enclosed by one large built-up area which is predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features.
		Score XX/5
Purpose 1 overall assessment		Red = 1/1.5 Amber = 3/3+ Green = 5/5+

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

In addition to the clear function of this purpose in preventing towns from merging and therefore protecting existing gaps between towns, it also forms the basis for maintaining the existing settlement pattern. National policy provides no guidance over what might constitute ‘towns’ and whether this purpose should also take into consideration the gaps between smaller settlements. The extent to which an area of Green Belt protects a land gap is assessed using the following definitions:

- ‘*Essential gaps*’, where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between settlements.
- ‘*Wider gaps*’, where limited development may be possible without coalescence between settlements.
- ‘*Less essential gaps*’, where development is likely to be possible without any risk of coalescence of settlements.

Purpose	Criteria	Score
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Prevents development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	5: An essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
		3: A wider gap between settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.
		1: A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.

Purpose	Criteria	Score
		0: Parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernable contribution to separation.
		Score XX/5
	Purpose 2 overall assessment	Red = 0/1 Amber = 3 Green = 5

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

This purpose seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, or a gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change. The assessment considers openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as ‘*countryside*’, thus resisting encroachment from development. Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development rather than from a landscape character perspective, where openness might be characterised through topography and presence or otherwise of woodland and hedgerow cover. The score attributed to a Parcel is initially determined on the basis of the percentage built form. Thresholds were informed by the pattern of development across the Borough and developed based on experience from previous studies and professional judgement. Scores are then considered further in light of qualitative assessments of character, undertaken through site visits and revised as judged appropriate. This assessment considers, in particular, the extent to which a Parcel might be reasonably identified as ‘*countryside*’ / ‘*rural*’ (in line with the NPPF). In order to differentiate between different areas, broad categorisation has been developed encompassing assessments of land use (including agricultural use), morphology, context, scale and links to the wider Green Belt:

- ‘*Strong unspoilt rural character*’ is defined as land with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland/scrubland and open fields.
- ‘*Largely rural character*’ is defined as land with a general absence of built development, largely characterised by rural land uses and landscapes but with some other sporadic developments and man-made structures.
- ‘*Semi-urban character*’ is defined as land which begins on the edge of the fully built up area and contains a mix of urban and rural land uses before giving way to the wider countryside. Land uses might include publicly accessible natural green spaces and green corridors, country parks and local nature reserves, small-scale food production (e.g. market gardens) and waste management facilities, interspersed with built development more generally associated with urban areas (e.g. residential or commercial).
- ‘*Urban character*’ is defined as land which is predominantly characterised by urban land uses, including physical developments such as residential or commercial, or urban managed parks.

Purpose 3 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criterion	Score
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.	5: Contains less than 3% built form and possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		3: Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character.
		2: Contains less than 15% built form and/or possesses a semi-urban character.
		1: Contains more than 15% built form and/or possesses an urban character.

Purpose	Criterion	Score
		0: Contains more than 20% built form and possesses an urban character.
Total score		xx/5
	Purpose 3 overall assessment	Red = 0/1 Amber = 2/3 Green = 4/5

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

This purpose serves to protect the setting of historic settlements by retaining the surrounding open land or by retaining the landscape context for historic centres. As outlined in the advice note published by PAS, the assessment of this purpose relates to very few settlements in practice, due largely to the pattern of modern development that often envelopes historic towns today. Cambridge is a good example of a settlement where the setting of the historic centre is contextualised by rural features, where the views across the ‘backs’ retain a special status in planning terms.

Purpose 4 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criterion	Score
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.	5: Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, and protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
		3: Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, or protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
		1: Parcel makes limited contribution to the broader setting of a historic town by providing a countryside setting for a historic core which is inward facing, and has a weak relationship with the surrounding countryside.
		0: Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Total score		xx/5
	Purpose 4 overall assessment	Red = 0 Amber = 1 Green = 3/5

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

Purpose 5 focuses on assisting urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. Assessment of Green Belt against this purpose will not enable a distinction between Green Belt Parcels as all Green Belt achieves the purpose to the same extent. Therefore, this purpose will be reviewed at a study wide level on a qualitative basis with inputs from West Berkshire District Council in relation to derelict or other urban sites.

B.2 – Landscape Value Guidance

This table will be used to help guide some of the criteria for local green space as identified above.

Table 8 – Landscape Value, from the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’ (LI TGN 02/21)

Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value
Natural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape	<p>Presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.</p> <p>Extent and survival of seminatural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type.</p> <p>Presence of distinctive geological, geomorphological or pedological features.</p> <p>Landscape which contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services, for example distinctive ecological communities and habitats that form the basis of ecological networks.</p> <p>Landscape which makes an identified contribution to a nature recovery/ green infrastructure network.</p>
Cultural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape	<p>Presence of historic landmark structures or designed landscape elements (e.g. follies, monuments, avenues, tree roundels).</p> <p>Presence of historic parks and gardens, and designed landscapes.</p> <p>Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets (especially if identified in specialist studies).</p> <p>Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth. This includes natural time depth, e.g. presence of features such as glaciers and peat bogs and cultural time depth e.g. presence of relic farmsteads, ruins, historic field patterns, historic rights of way (e.g. drove roads, salt ways, tracks associated with past industrial activity).</p>
Landscape condition	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure	<p>Good physical condition/ intactness of individual landscape elements (e.g. walls, parkland, trees).</p> <p>Good health of elements such as good water quality, good soil health. Strong landscape structure (e.g. intact historic field patterns).</p> <p>Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence).</p>
Associations	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts	<p>Associations with well-known literature, poetry, art, TV/film and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape.</p> <p>Associations with science or other technical achievements.</p> <p>Links to a notable historical event Associations with a famous person or people.</p>
Distinctiveness	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity	<p>Landscape character that has a strong sense of place (showing strength of expression of landscape characteristics).</p> <p>Presence of distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic of a particular place.</p> <p>Presence of rare or unusual features, especially those that help to confer a strong sense of place or identity.</p> <p>Landscape which makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement.</p> <p>Settlement gateways/approaches which provides a clear sense of arrival and contribute to the character of the settlement (may be ancient/historic).</p>
Recreational	Landscape offering recreational	Presence of open access land, common land and public rights of way (particularly National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal

Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value
	opportunities where experience of landscape is important	Paths and Core Paths) where appreciation of landscape is a feature. Areas with good accessibility that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and spiritual experience/ inspiration. Presence of town and village greens. Other physical evidence of recreational use where experience of landscape is important Landscape that forms part of a view that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense	Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features, such as dramatic or striking landform or harmonious combinations of land cover. Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture. Presence of natural lines in the landscape (e.g. natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors, coastal edges). Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape. Memorable/ distinctive views and landmarks, or landscape which contributes to distinctive views and landmarks.
Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)	Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies	High levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet. Presence of wild land and perceptions of relative wildness (resulting from a high degree of perceived naturalness rugged or otherwise challenging terrain, remoteness from public mechanised access and lack of modern artefacts). Sense of particular remoteness, seclusion or openness. Dark night skies. A general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting.
Functional	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape	Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, e.g. natural hydrological systems/ floodplains, areas of undisturbed and healthy soils, areas that form carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands and oceans, areas of diverse landcover (benefits pest regulation), pollinator-rich habitats such as wildflower meadows. Areas that form an important part of a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network. Landscapes and landscape elements that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities.

B.3 – Boundary Guidance

Due to the nature of this study and its focus on green belts, gaps/wedges etc, the study area will initially be based on settlement boundaries.

Where smaller parcel/sub area parcel identification is required, the following guidelines will be used to assess boundaries where possible. Preference will be given to permanent man-made and natural features where possible. If none can be found, additional boundary features will be used.

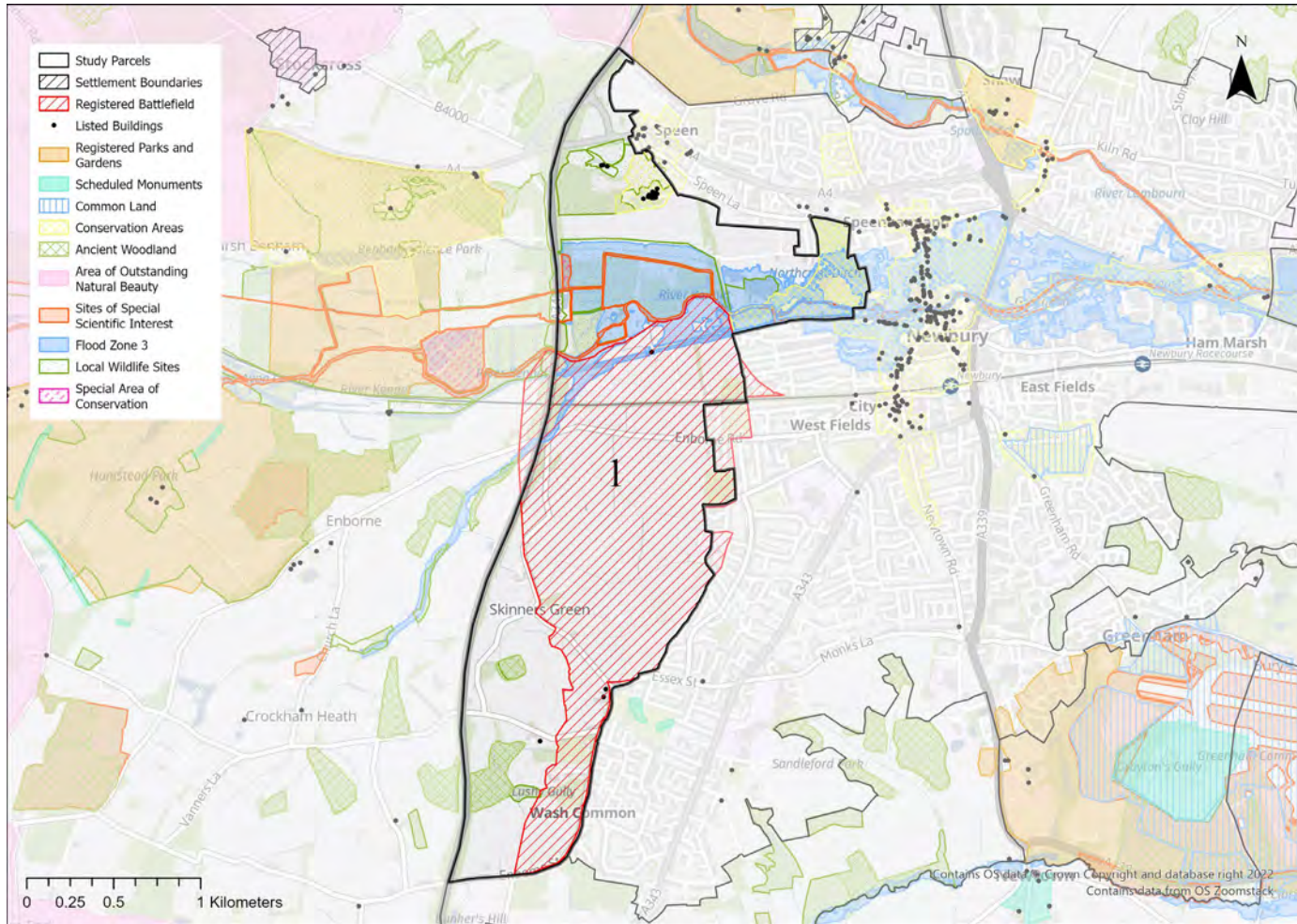
Permanent Man-made and Natural Features	Additional Boundary Feature
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<p>Motorways</p> <p>A and B Roads</p> <p>Railway lines Canals</p> <p>Rivers and waterbodies</p> <p>Natural 'buffer' features such as ridgelines</p>	<p>Unclassified public and private roads</p> <p>Smaller water features, including streams and other watercourses</p> <p>Prominent physical/topographical features, e.g. embankments</p> <p>Existing development with strongly-established, regular or consistent boundaries</p> <p>Well-established woodland edges, tree belts and hedgerows</p>
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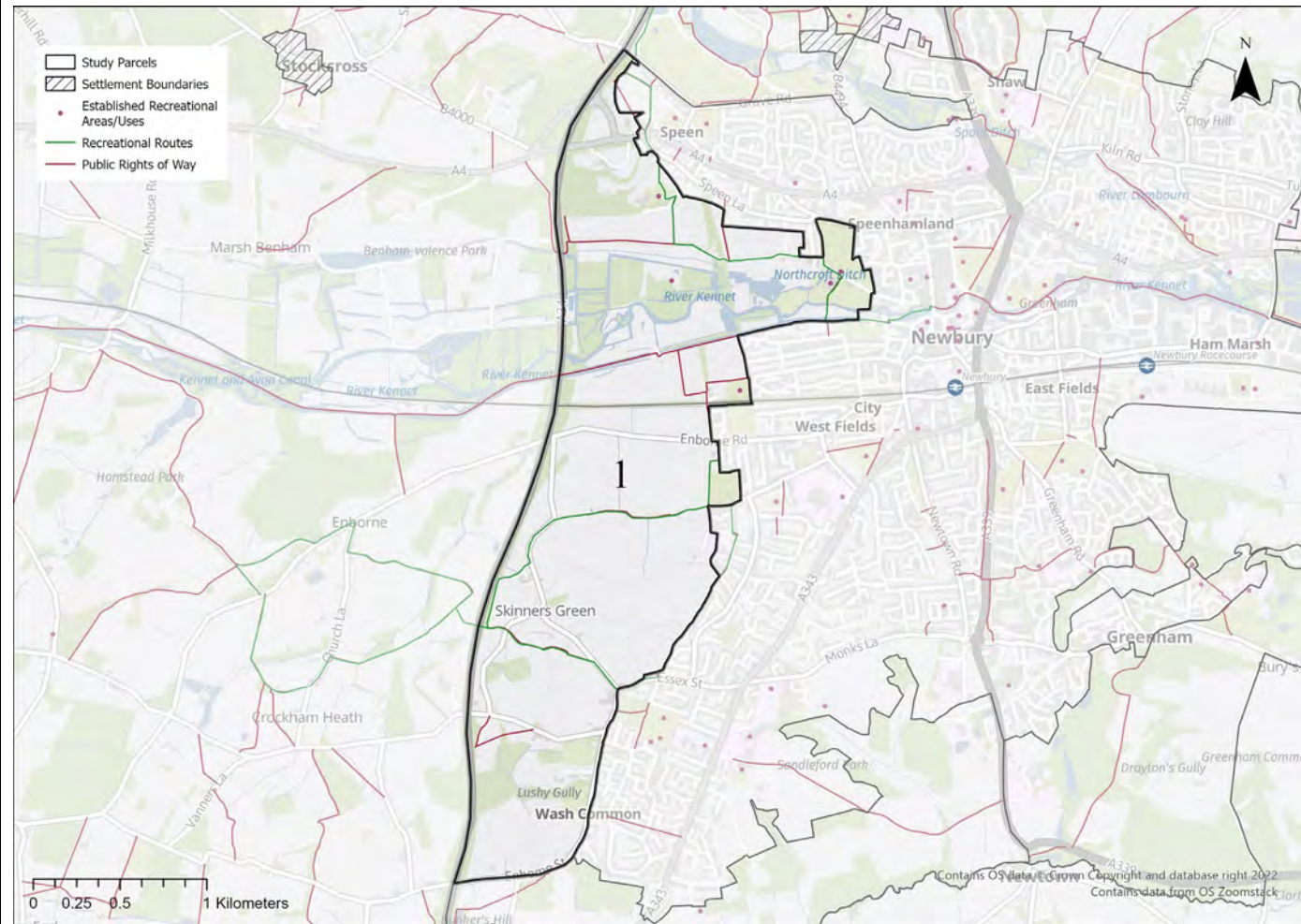
Appendix C - Parcel Proformas

Parcel 1

Parcel 1 Constraints Map



Parcel 1 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	1	
Parcel Description	Land between the western border of Newbury and the A24, covering an area between Elmore Plantation to the north and Wash Common to the south.	
Parcel Size	457 ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Newbury	
Distance to nearest settlement(s)	<p>Stockcross (West Berkshire):</p> <p>1.6km (nearest point) 4.6km (widest point)</p> <p>Kintbury (West Berkshire):</p> <p>6.6km (nearest point) 7.8km (widest point)</p>	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	Yes	Approximately 50% of the Speen Conservation Area is partially located within the northern part of the study parcel.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	Yes	A small part of the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain is located to the north-west of the parcel, adjacent to Speen Moor Plantations. This designation is primarily in place to protect the habitat of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail.
<i>SSSI</i>	Yes	The River Kennet SSSI runs through the northern part of the parcel. The designation runs through several points around the Speen Moor Plantations.
<i>AONB</i>	Adjoins	There is no overlap with the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty although the designated area touches the north-western corner of the parcel boundary.
<i>Common Land</i>	Yes	There is a small area of Common Land overlapping with the north-eastern boundary of the parcel. The Common Land follows the River Kennet.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	Yes	The Benhem Park and Speen Moor Local Wildlife Site is partially located to the north of the parcel. The area is characterised by wet woodland, floodplain grazing marsh, lowland wood pasture and parkland.
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	No	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens located within the study parcel.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	Yes	The River Kennet runs through the northern part of the site, and much of the surrounding wetlands fall within the Flood Zone 3 designation.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	Yes	Much of the study parcel is located on the site of the First Battle of Newbury 1643.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	No	There is no overlap with the Thames Basin Heath SPA.

<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	Yes	<p>There is a cluster of Listed Buildings located to the north of the parcel, in addition to several scattered towards the south. The listed buildings are as follows:</p> <p>Grade II Adnams Tomb approximately 10 Metres to south of Tower of Church of St Mary Barn approximately 30 metres to south of Wash Common Farmhouse Elmore House Enborne Bridge over Kennet & Avon Canal Eyles Tomb approximately 6 Metres to north of north aisle of Church of St Mary Garden House approximately 30 Metres to west of south Front of Speen House Group Of 5 chest tombs to south of Nave of Church of St Mary Guyers Bridge and Lock At SU 455669 Hansom Tomb approximately 6 metres to south of porch of Church of St Mary Hemsted Tomb approximately 13 metres to north of vestry of Church of St Mary Majendie Tomb approximately 14 metres to south of chancel of Church of St Mary Norris Tomb approximately 7 metres to north of vestry of Church of St Mary Outbuildings adjoining Speen House to west Parish Church of St. Mary Speen House Tomb approximately 12 metres to south of nave of Church of St Mary Tomb approximately 20 metres to south of tower of Church of St Mary Tomb approximately 7 metres to south of nave of Church of St Mary Tomb approximately 8 metres to east of chancel of Church of St Mary Tomb approximately 8 metres to south of chancel of Church of St Mary Wash Common Farmhouse Wheatlands Farmhouse</p>
<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	No	No overlap between the study parcel and any Scheduled Monuments. Two barrow cemeteries on Wash Common are designated SM's, located close to the south-eastern boundary of the parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	Yes	The southern part of the parcel contains two areas of Ancient Woodland, Oaken Copse and Reddings Copse.
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	Yes	There are a number of Public Rights of Way running across the parcel.

<i>Recreational Routes</i>	Yes	The Wash Common Recreational Route runs through the middle of the parcel. Lambourn Valley Way runs through the top of the site to the north, forming part of the Speen Moors country walk. National cycle route 4 follows the Kennet & Avon Canal.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	Yes	There are a number of playing fields located along the eastern boundary of the parcel. Falkland Cricket Club is located in the south-east.
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	<p>The parcel spans a number of Historic Environment Character Areas: Newbury to the north, Kennet Valley West in the middle of the site, and Valleys South West to the south of the site.</p> <p>The area within Newbury covers the Speen area of the historic town. The area retains a mixture of historic and 20th century buildings.</p> <p>The Kennet Valley West part of the parcel is largely characterised by open fields and water meadows.</p> <p>The Valleys South West area is characterised by modified historic fieldscapes and large plantations and woodlands.</p>
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	<p>WH1: Inkpen Woodland and Heathland Mosaic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Varied land cover mosaic including connected network of woodland and heathland and important ecological habitats. -Intimate small scale rural character/dark skies: the woodland and land cover mean that there is a rapid transition from the urban edge of Newbury to a more intimate rural landscape. The area feels very rural and quiet, and is valued by the local community for its dark skies and peaceful surroundings, which feels far away from modern life. -The strategy states: “5) <i>Maintain the distinctive patterns of settlement and rural character: Conserve the pattern and character of small hamlets and loose linear settlements, each with their own identity. Large scale development would not be in keeping with this rural landscape. The gradual expansion, merging and coalescence of linear settlement will result in a more suburban character...</i>” <p>UV1: Kennet Upper Valley Floor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The distinct winding watercourses of the valley which give a strong sense of place: the River Kennet interconnects winding braded channels, interconnecting canals, weirs and pools, forming a complex and important network.

		<p>-Ecologically valuable habitats along the river corridor, including the mosaic of wetlands and the chalk river habitat of the River Kennet.</p> <p>-Important heritage features, including the Kennet & Avon Canal, and parts of the conservation areas of Speen and Newbury.</p> <p>-Sparsely settled, rural character: settlement is limited to higher ground along the valley. The undeveloped nature of the valley close to the river creates a peaceful and tranquil quality. Wooded parts of the river valley create a sense of enclosure.</p> <p>-Semi-enclosed character of the valley, with high levels of tranquillity, which feels far removed from the nearby urban area of Newbury.</p> <p>-Importance for recreational activity, including numerous public rights of way and the river and canal which are particularly valued as a result of their location linking Newbury and Hungerford.</p> <p>-The strategy states: “6) <i>Conserve the overall sparsely settled and rural character of the landscape: Retain the overall rural character of the valley including its sparsely settled character with its tranquil and enclosed experiential character. Avoid introducing suburbanising features...</i>”</p> <p>WH3: Wickham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic Only a very small part of this LCA falls within the parcel, mostly comprising the A34.</p>
	<p>Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas</p>	<p>LLCA20A: West Speen (section within the northernmost part of the area)</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium to high</p> <p>-Long views, especially from higher ground, across the Kennet Valley to high ground to the south, with distant views of Beacon Hill.</p> <p>-Long views north to Donnington Castle from the A34/A4 junction.</p> <p>-Rural character of the western approach into Newbury.</p> <p>-Open valley sides are very sensitive to built development which could be very intrusive.</p> <p>LLCA8E: Speen Valley (section within the northern part of the area)</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium</p> <p>-Strong connection with the wider valley landscape west of the A34 despite the physical severance, and strong visual continuity with the valley sides to the north.</p> <p>-Part of an important green corridor flowing into and through Newbury.</p> <p>-Development outside the area on higher ground could be damaging to the valley’s essentially rural character.</p> <p>LLCA11A: Enborne Wooded Lowland (section within the central/northern part of the area)</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium</p> <p>-Visually open area.</p> <p>-Encroachment of built form west of Newbury onto the valley side could be very intrusive from the sensitive valley landscape and higher ground to the north and west.</p>

		<p>LLCA15B: Wash Common Farmland (part of the LLCA falls within the southern part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Overall sensitivity: Medium to high-Long views to higher ground to the north (including Donnington Castle), west and south.-Prominent piece of higher ground between the valleys to the north and south.
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Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score/ Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	No	Red	A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Yes	Green	4.41% built up Score 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Partially	Amber	Parcel makes limited contribution to the broader setting of a historic town by providing a countryside setting for a historic core which is inward facing, and has a weak relationship with the surrounding countryside.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

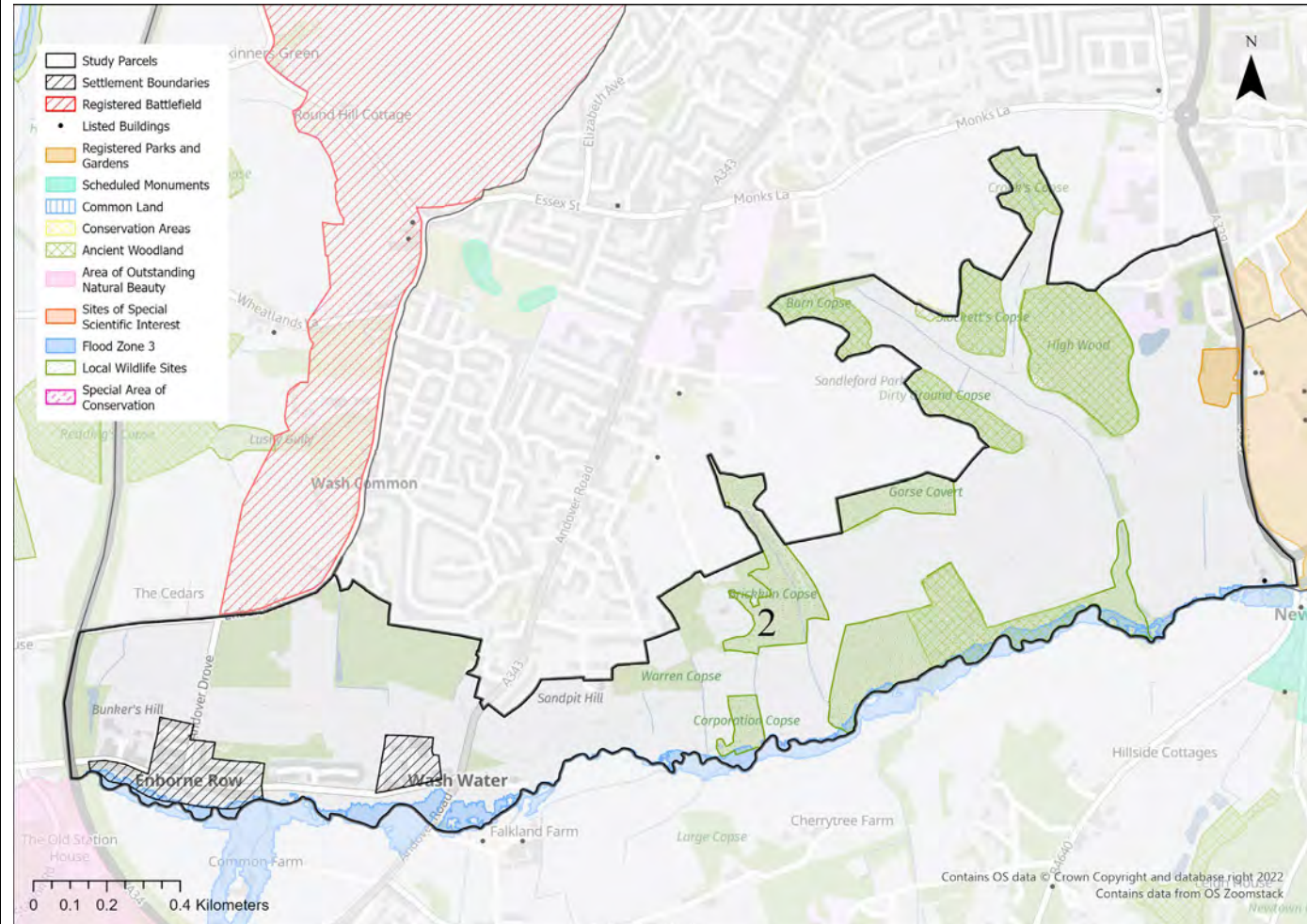
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	No	Red	A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	Partially	Amber	Partially – an area to the north of the parcel along the River Kennet and through Northcroft Park penetrates from Newbury town centre into the surrounding countryside.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	Green	The parcel provides direct access to the open countryside via designated rights of way and recreational routes. It also provides a range of other designations such as the Registered Battlefield of the First Battle of Newbury 1643, and several Local Wildlife Sites.
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	<p>Part of parcel 1 meets purpose/criteria 2 and provides a 'green lung' from the open countryside into the centre of Newbury. As noted in the Green Belt assessment above, this green 'finger' runs along the River Kennet from the countryside to the west (albeit broken by the A34) into the centre of Newbury providing a direct link to the historic centre of Newbury, although views are mostly limited by vegetation/buildings. This area is largely protected by other designations and/or majorly constrained by the River and flood zone 3 and is unlikely to be developed. Therefore, whilst it does essentially function as a green lung, given the existing constraints and designations, there is not a need for a further designation as a green wedge/gap.</p> <p>Other green infrastructure in parcel 1 is covered by existing designations and/or is open countryside that does not provide a gap between settlements, therefore potential Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended for this part of the area.</p>		

Local Green Space

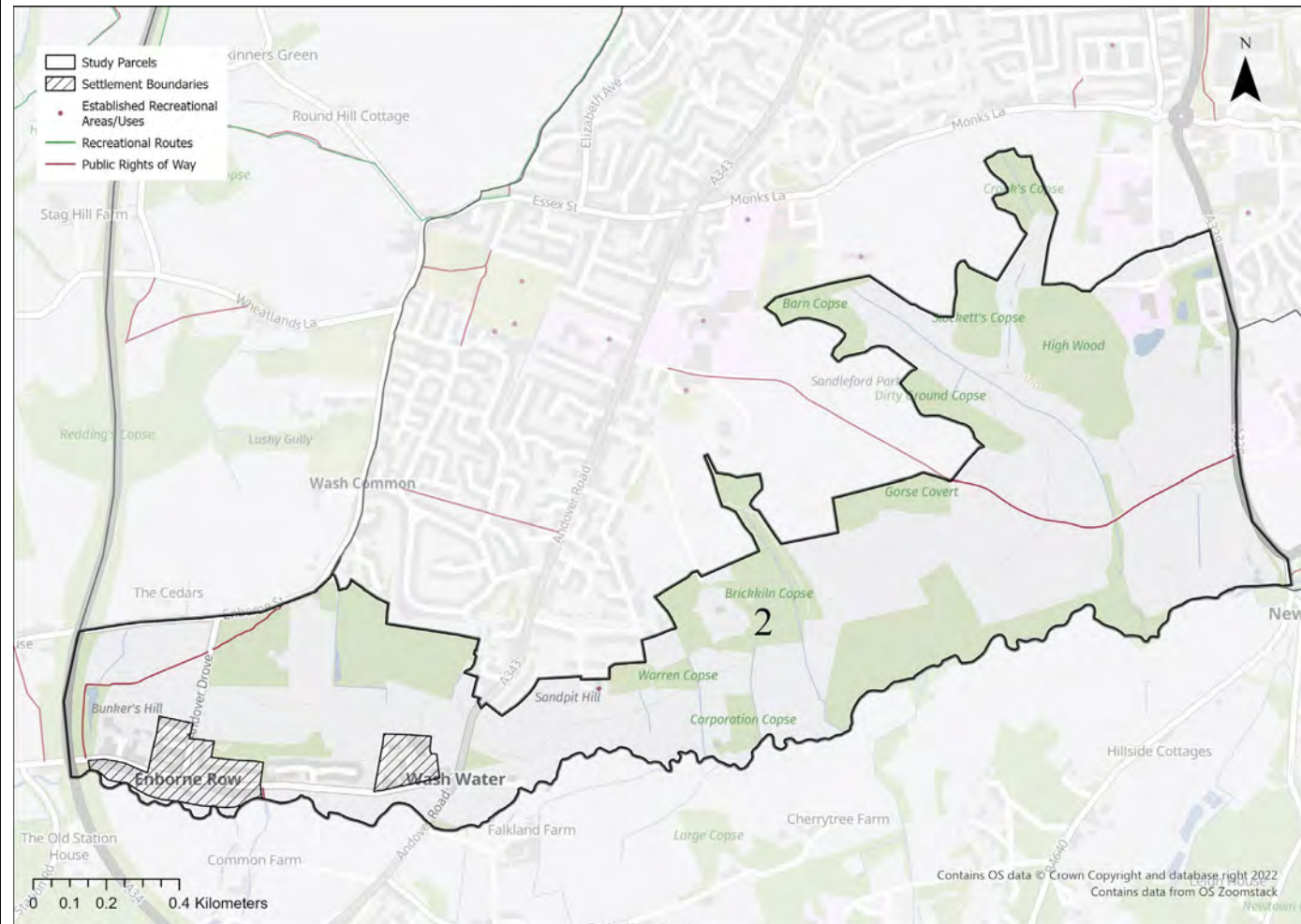
No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study. There are relatively few parts of this parcel that are not already protected from development by other designations/constraints. No areas within this parcel have been submitted to WBDC for consideration.

Parcel 2

Parcel 2 Constraints Map



Parcel 2 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	2	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel is located to the south of Newbury, and straddles the border to Hampshire. The border to the south of the parcel follows the course of the River Enborne.	
Parcel Size	207 ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Newbury	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	The settlement of Enborne Row is located within the parcel, approximately 150m from the Newbury boundary at the closest point. In addition, Woolton Hill is located approximately 2km south of the boundary, whilst Burghclere is located 2.8km to the south. Both Woolton Hill and Burghclere are located within the neighbouring authority of Basingstoke and Deane.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	No	There are no Conservation Areas overlapping with the parcel boundary.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	No	There are no Special Areas of Conservation overlapping with the parcel boundary.
<i>SSSI</i>	No	There are no SSSI sites overlapping with the parcel boundary.
<i>AONB</i>	No	There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty overlapping with the parcel boundary. The North Wessex Downs AONB is located to the south-west of the parcel.
<i>Common Land</i>	No	There is no Common Land located within the parcel.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	Yes	There are several Local Wildlife Sites located within the parcel boundary: High Wood Complex – Crook’s Copse Corporation Copse Waterleaze Copse Brick Kiln Copse All offer protected woodland habitats.
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	Yes	Part of Sandford Priory is located to the eastern boundary of the parcel. The park is Grade II listed.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	Yes	The southern boundary of the parcel follows the path of the Kennet and Avon Canal. As a result, there is consistent overlap between the Flood Zone and the parcel boundary.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	No	The parcel does not contain any registered battlefields.

<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not overlap with the Thames Basin Heath SPA.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	One Grade II listed building is located within the study parcel: Sandleford Place
<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Scheduled Monuments located within the parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>No</i>	There are several areas of designated Ancient Woodland within the study parcel, including: Barn Copse Crooks Copse Slockett's Copse Dirty Ground Copse High Wood
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are several designated Public Rights of Way within the site, most prominently connecting Sandleford Park to Sandleford Priory.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no established Recreational Routes within the parcel.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Oakley Farm Caravan Park is located in the south-western corner of the parcel.
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	The parcel is entirely located within the Newbury historic character area. The area is defined by a mixture of historic and 20 th century buildings that broadly follow the historic layout of the town.
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	WH2: Greenham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic -Extensive heathland, acid grassland and woodland: including a number of ancient woodland copses and linear ghyll woodlands create important habitats. - Tapestry of agricultural land: The pattern of fields, woodland and commons separating settlements can give individual settlements an intimate and secluded feel.

		<p>-The strategy states: ‘2) Retain and enhance open views. The open views experienced from Sandleford Priory and Park and Cookham Common should be considered in all land management, which may include development outside of the District’</p> <p>‘6) Ensure integration of new development into the landscape: Any new development should be integrated into the landscape. There is an opportunity to enhance the urban-rural interface in this area at Newbury. The distinction between separate settlements and the role of the landscape as a setting to the character of those individual settlements should be respected...’</p> <p>UV4: Enborne Upper Valley Floor A small part of this LCA runs along the southern boundary. Particular valued features include the sparsely settled rural character of the river valley, and sense of enclosure and tranquillity.</p> <p>WH1: Inkpen Woodland and Heathland Mosaic A small part of this LCA occupies the western part of the area, which includes: -Varied land cover mosaic including connected network of woodland and heathland and important ecological habitats. -Intimate small scale rural character/dark skies: the woodland and land cover mean that there is a rapid transition from the urban edge of Newbury to a more intimate rural landscape. The area feels very rural and quiet, and is valued by the local community for its dark skies and peaceful surroundings, which feels far away from modern life. -The strategy states: “5). Large scale development would not be in keeping with this rural landscape. The gradual expansion, merging and coalescence of linear settlement will result in a more suburban character...”</p>
	<p>Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas</p>	<p>LLCA15B: Wash Common Farmland (part of the LLCA falls within the western part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium to high. -Very secluded in some lower areas where enclosed by topography and vegetation.</p> <p>LLCA18D: Sandleford Park (part of the LLCA falls within the eastern part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Remains an important open area contributing to the rural setting of Newbury.</p>
	<p>Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Potential Strategic Development Sites</p>	<p>Part of Area 2: Enborne Valley Southern part of local landscape character area 15B The southern part of this LLCA is strongly related to the small scale rural Enborne valley, and the housing at Enborne Row is clearly separated at present from the Wash Common area of Newbury. The topography is rather complex and steeply sloping, with minor valleys running down to the Enborne. The area feels</p>

		very secluded on the lower ground, but there are very long views from places on the higher ground. The area has medium to high overall sensitivity, principally due to landscape, visual, historic and cultural factors.
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Site Assessment

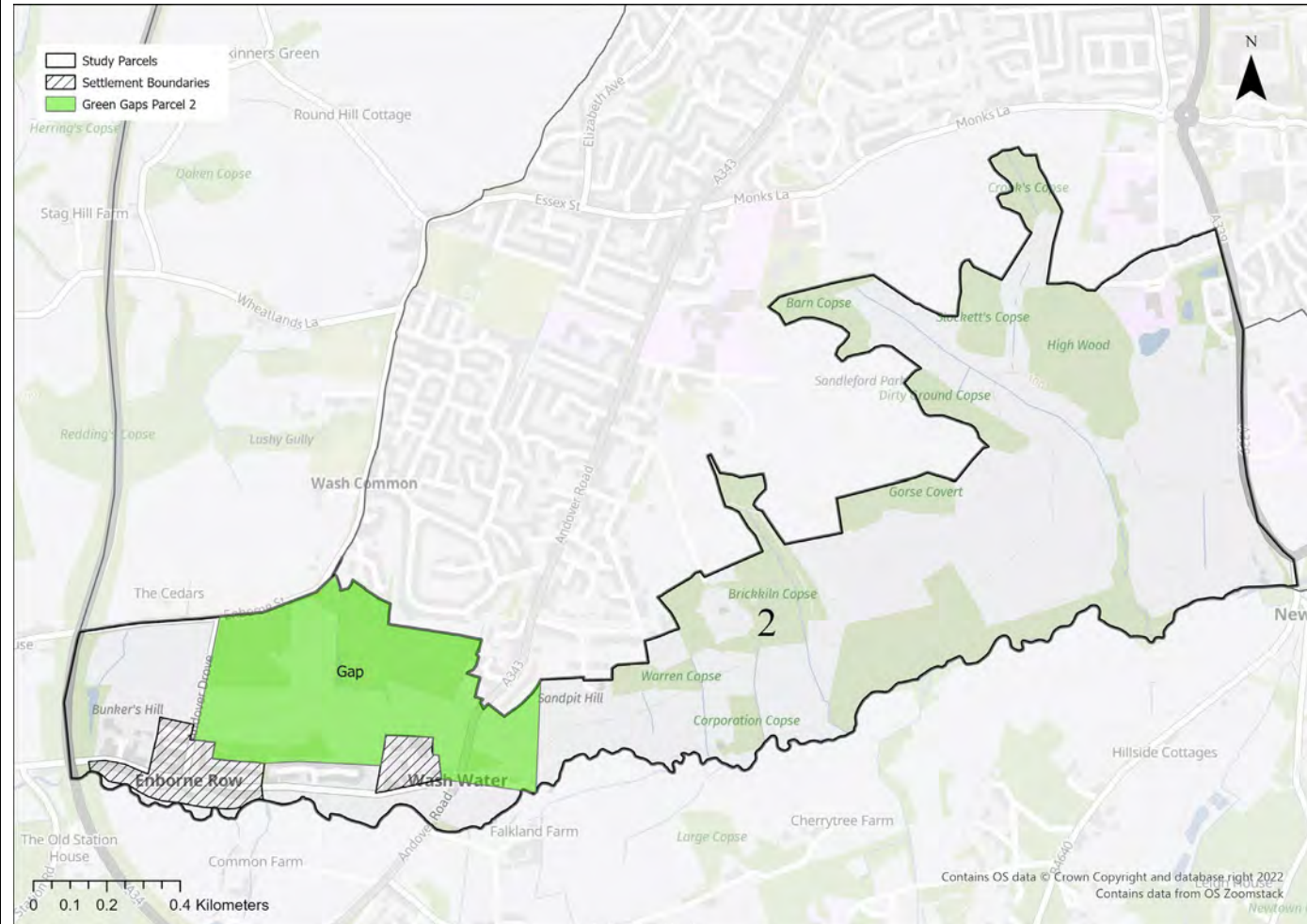
Green Belt Assessment				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	Partially	Amber	Part of the parcel, the gap between Newbury and Enborne Row/Wash Water has been identified as an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Yes	Green	3.63% Built Up Area 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character (as existing).
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area.

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	Partially	Amber	<p>Gap between Newbury and Enborne Row: 5 5: An essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.</p> <p>Gap between Newbury and Burghclere (Basingstoke and Deane) 1: A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.</p>
Does the area provides a ‘green lung’ into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	Red	No – this parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Amber	<p>Partially – the area does not provide any formal recreational uses however does include rights of way so is likely used for walking/jogging etc and general enjoyment of the countryside.</p> <p>It is noted that the southern part of the Sandleford site will be a country park.</p>
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	<p>Part of parcel 2 meets purpose/criteria 1 as set out above. This includes land between Newbury and Enborne Row/Wash Water. On this basis this area (shown in Figure X below) is recommended as a potential Green Gap/Wedge designation.</p> <p>Parcel 2 also partially meets purpose 3 as it provides rights of way which link Newbury to the open countryside and are therefore likely to be used for walking/jogging etc and general enjoyment of the countryside.</p> <p>Landscape notes on the area highlighted for potential green gap designation: Area feels like open countryside. Few (or no) views between the settlements due to topography and woodland.</p>		

Settlements currently have separate identities. Enborne Row feels a very separate settlement from the southern and suburban edge of Newbury, though the physical distance is not huge in some places. Enborne Row is a valley settlement whereas Newbury is on the higher ground. Enborne Row feels very loose knit, rural. The settlements should not be allowed to merge.

Parcel 2 Green Gaps Recommendation

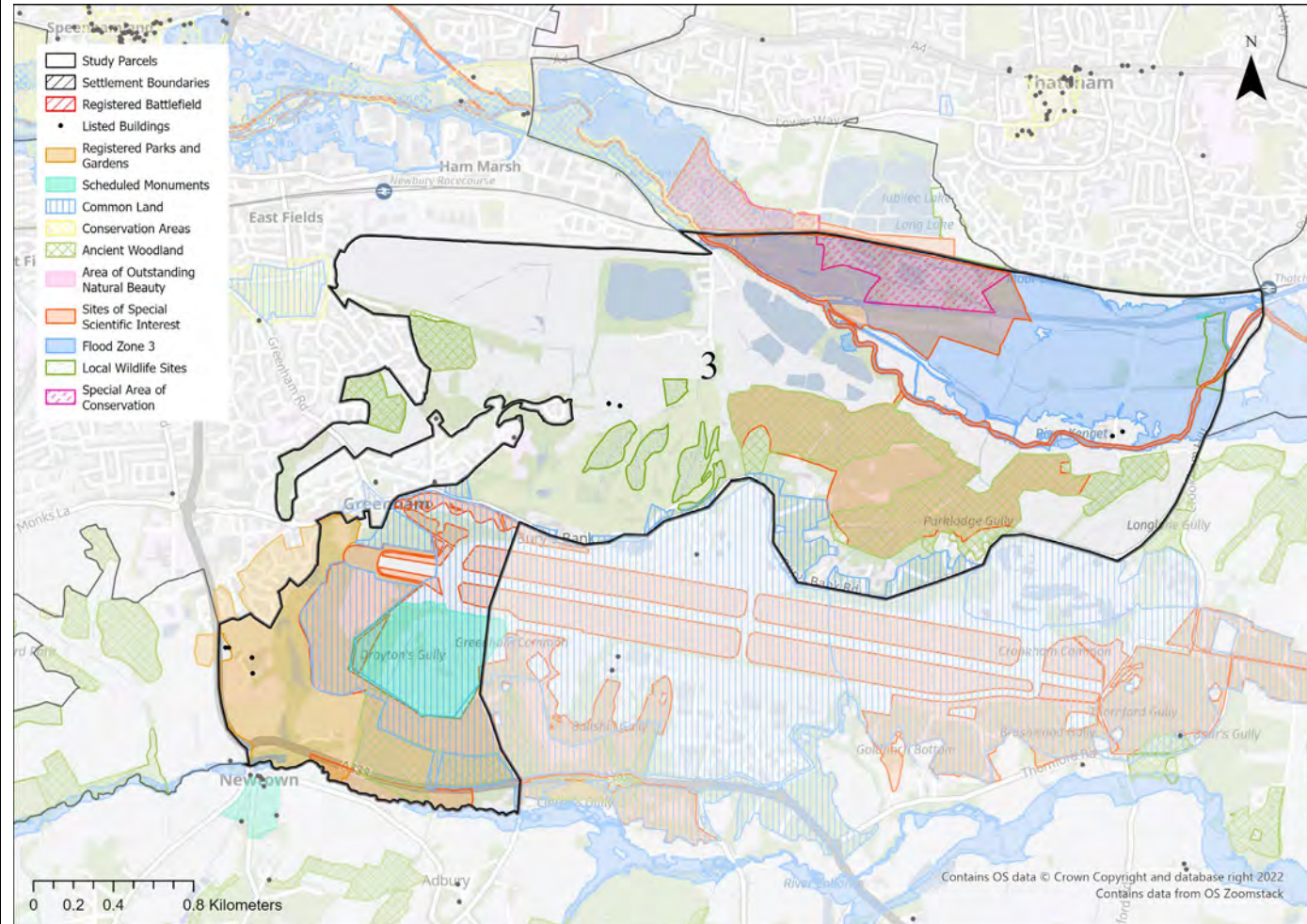


Local Green Space

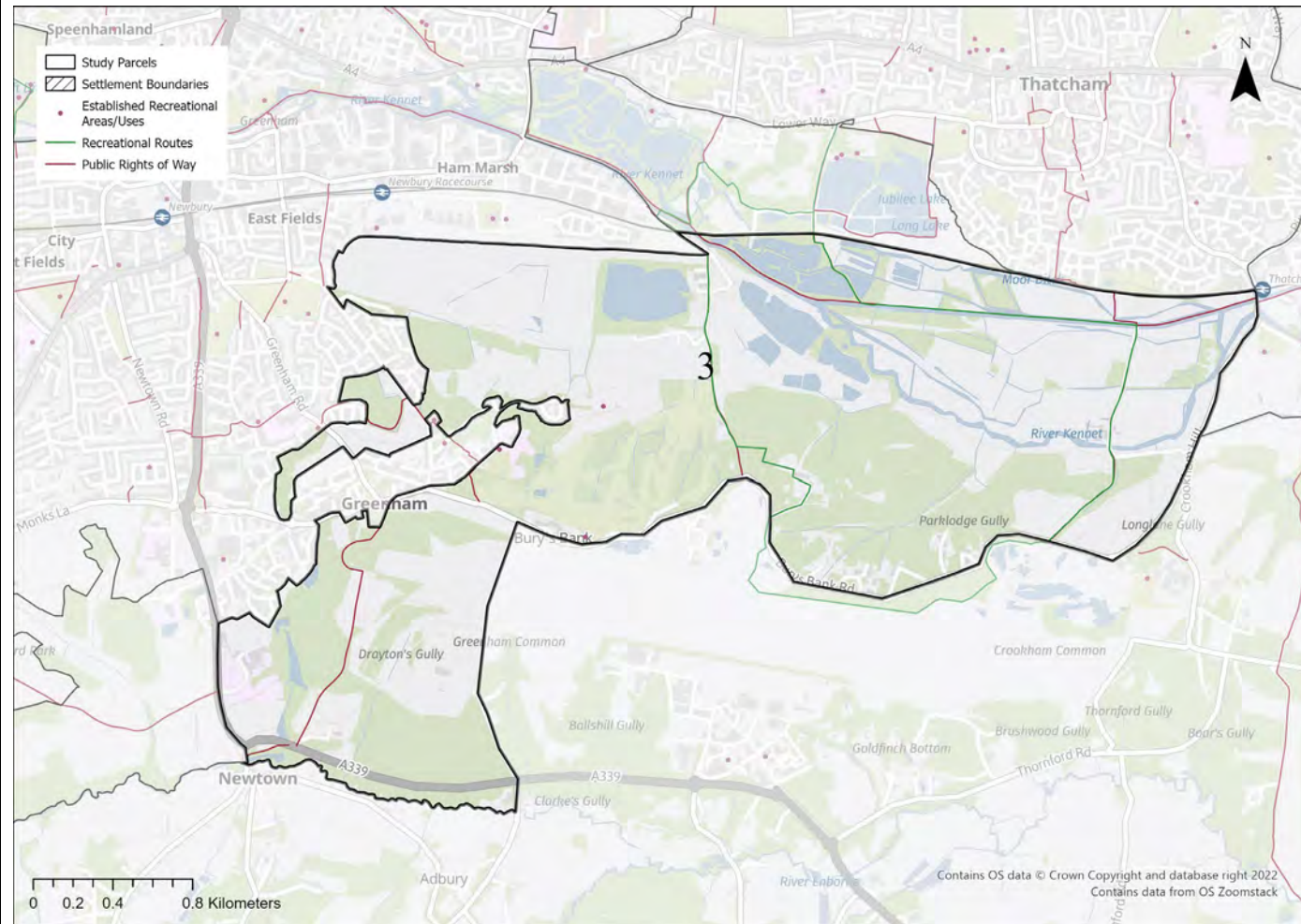
No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study.

Parcel 3

Parcel 3 Constraints Map



Parcel 3 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	3	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel covers a wide area spanning between Newbury and Thatcham to the south, including the land between the two settlements on the southern side.	
Parcel Size	756ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Thatcham and Newbury	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	There are several settlements located to the south of the parcel within Basingstoke and Deane. Burghclere is located approximately 2.5km to the southwest. Ecchinswell is located approximately 3.9km to the south. Ashford Hill is located 4.2km to the southeast.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>Yes</i>	A small part of the Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area (containing Hanbridge Farm) is located in the northernmost part of the parcel.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Special Areas of Conservation located within the study parcel.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest located within the parcel: Bowdown and Chamberhouse Woods Greenham and Crookham Commons River Kennet Thatcham Reed Beds
<i>AONB</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not overlap with any Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The parcel features a number of areas of designated Common Land within the parcel. They are located along the banks of the River Kennet and across Greenham and Crookham commons.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Several Local Wildlife Sites are located within the study parcel: Greenham and Crookham Common Waterside Farm Reedbed West Wood Young Copse
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The Grade II listed Sandleford Priory is located within the parcel boundary.

<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The River Kennet runs through the northern part of the parcel. As a result, much of the parcel is located within Flood Zone 3.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	No registered battlefields are located within the parcel.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The Thames Basin Heath SPA is not located within close proximity of the study parcel.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>	There are a number of listed buildings located within the study parcel. Grade II: Barn approximately 10 metres to east of Pigeon Farmhouse Barn approximately 70 metres to east of Pigeon Farmhouse Chamberhouse Cottages Chamberhouse Farmhouse Dairy adjoining Sandleford Farmhouse to east Sandleford Farmhouse Stable Block approximately 10 metres to north of Sandleford Priory Grade I: Sandleford Priory
<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>	There are two Scheduled Monuments located within the study parcel: Monkey Marsh Lock, Kennet & Avon Canal Cruise missile shelter complex, Greenham Common Airbase
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>	There are several areas of Ancient Woodland located within the study parcel. Great Wood/Cakeball Copse Peckmoor Copse West Wood Young Copse
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>	Much of the parcel features a network of public footpaths and bridleways connecting Newbury and Thatcham to the wider countryside, with strong links from the urban settlements to Greenham and Crookham Commons to the south.

<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>	The West Berkshire Living Landscape walk, designated to highlight the unique and diverse wildlife and heathland around Greenham and Crookham Commons, stretches from the north to the south of the parcel as part of the overall circular route.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>Yes/No/adjoins</i>	<p>There are a number of established recreational uses within the parcel, including:</p> <p>Pigeons Farm Road Play Area Newbury and Crookham Golf Course Thatcham Allotments Cherry Bird Country Park Holiday Lodges</p> <p>There are water-based recreational activities based around the various bodies of water located within the parcel.</p>
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	<p>There are three historic character zones included within the study parcel:</p> <p>Newbury to the east, covering the development to the north of Sandleford Priory.</p> <p>The majority of the parcel is covered by the Enborne-Kennet watershed, which covers the historic commons used as military airbases in the 20th century. The relatively unaltered wiids and nature of land cover give the area a distinct historic character.</p> <p>The northern part of the parcel falls under the Kenney Valley East character area, noted for its historic watermeadows to the south of Thatcham.</p>
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	<p>WH2: Greenham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic</p> <p>-Extensive heathland, acid grassland and woodland: including part of the open expanse of heathland and grassland on Greenham Common, ancient woodland and linear ghyll woodlands create important habitats.</p> <p>-Scenic and open views from the plateau: Sandleford Priory provides important open views southwards towards Penwood and Newtown. Greenham Common provides views over the valleys to the north and south.</p>

		<p>-Heritage and cultural associations: the airbase and Ministry of Defence land are evidence of the important phase of our culture. Sandleford Priory and parkland also provide valued historic sense of time-depth.</p> <p>-Recreational value of Greenham Common, including open access land.</p> <p>- Tapestry of agricultural land: The pattern of fields, woodland and commons separating settlements can give individual settlements an intimate and secluded feel, contrasting with the open nature of the Common.</p> <p>-The strategy states: ‘2) <i>Retain and enhance open views. The open views experienced from Sandleford Priory and Park and Cookham Common should be considered in all land management, which may include development outside of the District</i>’.</p> <p>‘6) <i>Ensure integration of new development into the landscape: There is an opportunity to enhance the urban-rural interface in this area at Newbury. The distinction between separate settlements and the role of the landscape as a setting to the character of those individual settlements should be respected.</i>”</p> <p>UV4: Enborne Upper Valley Floor</p> <p>A small part of this LCA runs along the southern boundary. Particular valued features include the sparsely settled rural character of the river valley, and sense of enclosure and tranquillity.</p> <p>LV1: Kennet Lower River Valley</p> <p>-Ecologically valuable habitats along the river corridor, including the mosaic of wetland habitats and the River Kennet.</p> <p>-Historic landscape features and a sense of time-depth, including the industrial heritage associated with the Kennet and Avon Canal.</p> <p>-Strong rural and sparsely settled character, with much of the area retaining its agricultural character despite its proximity to major settlements such as Newbury.</p> <p>-Valued destination for recreation, including public rights of way and water based recreation/boating for those who live in Newbury and Thatcham.</p> <p>-Distinctive visual character: views within the valley can be extensive and open. Where woodland allows, there are views to the higher ground of the North Wessex Downs AONB.</p> <p>-The strategy states: ‘7) <i>Conserve the distinct identities of individual settlements: Conserve the overall sparsely settled character in the valley. Seek to avoid unsympathetic linear development and ensure that individual settlements retain their distinct identities... Conserve the role that the valley floor character plays in the setting of the individual identities of Newbury and Thatcham.</i>’</p>
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	<p>Newbury and Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas</p>	<p>LLCA20C: Newbury Racecourse (section within the north western part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Open exposed area, highly visible from surrounding hillsides including the North Wessex Downs to the north. -Visual and physical open space links with Stroud Green.</p> <p>LLCA8D: South Thatcham Valley Farmland (section within the north eastern part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium to high -Largely open landscape. -Exposed to views from rising ground to north and south and from east. -Forms an important setting to the wooded escarpment to the south, linking this whole escarpment and flood plain together into a cohesive whole. -Contrast with urban Thatcham is an important feature of the area.</p> <p>LLCA20B: West Greenham (section within the central north western part of the area between Newbury and Greenham). -Overall sensitivity: Medium to low -Open piece of ground on high ridge south of Newbury. -Part of the very small gap between the main body of Newbury and the Pinchington Lane area and Greenham to the east. -Tall structures on this high ground could be highly visible from the northern side of the valley.</p> <p>LLCA13B: Greenham Western Plateau Woodlands and Heath (section within the south western part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium to high -Long views to the north and south in more open areas. -Important open ground in the north west of the area (north of Greenham), overlooking Newbury.</p> <p>LLCA18D: Sandford Park (part of the LLCA falls within the far western part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Remains an important open area contributing to the rural setting of Newbury. -Former Sandford Priory a landmark feature.</p> <p>LLCA14E: Greenham Plateau Edge (central part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Important wooded backdrop to racecourse and Newbury/Thatcham. -Greenham Church and a water tower are landmarks in distant views. -Views to Donnington Castle from Greenham Church and filtered views to racecourse from lower areas. -Strong landscape and visual links to valley side to the east and north.</p>
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		<p>-The small undeveloped gap between Newbury and Greenham is very important as a backdrop for the town and the racecourse.</p> <p>LLCA14K: Greenham Common Plateau Edge (section within the south eastern part of the area)</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium to high</p> <p>-Wooded backdrop to plateau area of Greenham Common.</p> <p>LLCA14G: Sayers and Aspen Copses (section within the central part of the area)</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium to high</p> <p>-Rolling steep topography forming part of the southern escarpment to the Kennet Valley.</p> <p>-Exposed views from the northern AONB escarpment and the Kennet Valley.</p> <p>-Escarpment mirrors that to the north on the edge of the AONB and frames the Kennet Valley. Important to the setting of the valley floor.</p> <p>-Forms an important setting to scattered houses adjacent to Greenham and Crookham Common.</p>
	<p>Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for: land south of Newbury Racecourse (2020)</p>	<p>A small part of the area south of Newbury Racecourse is assessed in the study.</p> <p>Visual sensitivity score: Medium/high: <i>“Due to the location of the site on a valley side, this permits views from the south down across the site, which then further extends and links with the adjacent facing northern Kennet Valley side. The site as a series of small fields provides a setting for Audrey’s Meadow, setting for Saint Mary’s Church and visual separation of Greenham from Newbury.”</i></p> <p>Landscape sensitivity score: Medium/high: Well intact area of small fields, hedgerows, semi-enclosed by woodland including Young Copse an Ancient Woodland and Lodge Covert.</p> <p>Wider landscape sensitivity: High: <i>“Site is part of the open landscape setting between the two settlements of Newbury and Greenham... Part of the area of open land which separates Greenham from Newbury which then further continues to the east and west”.</i></p> <p>Overall landscape sensitivity: High</p> <p>Relationship with adjacent settlement: <i>“The site forms an open wedge of land between Newbury and Greenham...”</i></p> <p>Conclusion and recommendations</p> <p><i>The site has a Low capacity for development due to the site being constrained in a number of ways where any development would affect views and characteristics which would cause harm to the landscape...</i></p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The open setting of Young Copse, an ancient woodland...</i> • <i>An area which contributes to the separate identities of Newbury from Greenham...”</i> • <i>The well-defined and established settlements [sic] edges of Newbury and Greenham</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Long views from the valley side to the north and the North Wessex Downs AONB</i>• <i>The open rural setting of the grade II* listed Saint Mary's Church”.</i>
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Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score /Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	No	Red	This parcel provides a less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Yes	Green	4% 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

Question	Answer	Score /Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	No	Red	This parcel provides a less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area)	Partially	Amber	A relatively small green 'finger' runs into Newbury around Greenham Lane, however a large proportion of this area was allocated in the Housing Sites Allocations DPD. Other large parts of this finger are designated as Local Wildlife Sites and part is land protected in perpetuity as a biodiversity corridor (as part of the allocated development)
Does the area provide essential green infrastructure	Yes	Green	This parcel contains part of Greenham Common, which is designated as 'Common Land' The parcel also contains Newbury Racecourse, Newbury and Crookham Golf Course, Thatcham Town Football Club.
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	<p>Parcel 3 does not provide an essential gap between settlements however, it does provide some essential green infrastructure.</p> <p>A small finger of green runs into Newbury within this parcel providing access from Newbury out into the countryside, however a large proportion of this area is allocated for housing and other parts of the 'finger' are designated as Local Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>On the basis of the above a Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended for parcel 3. However, some smaller areas have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation.</p>		

Potential Local Green Space Designation

LGS3A: Newbury and Crookham Golf Course

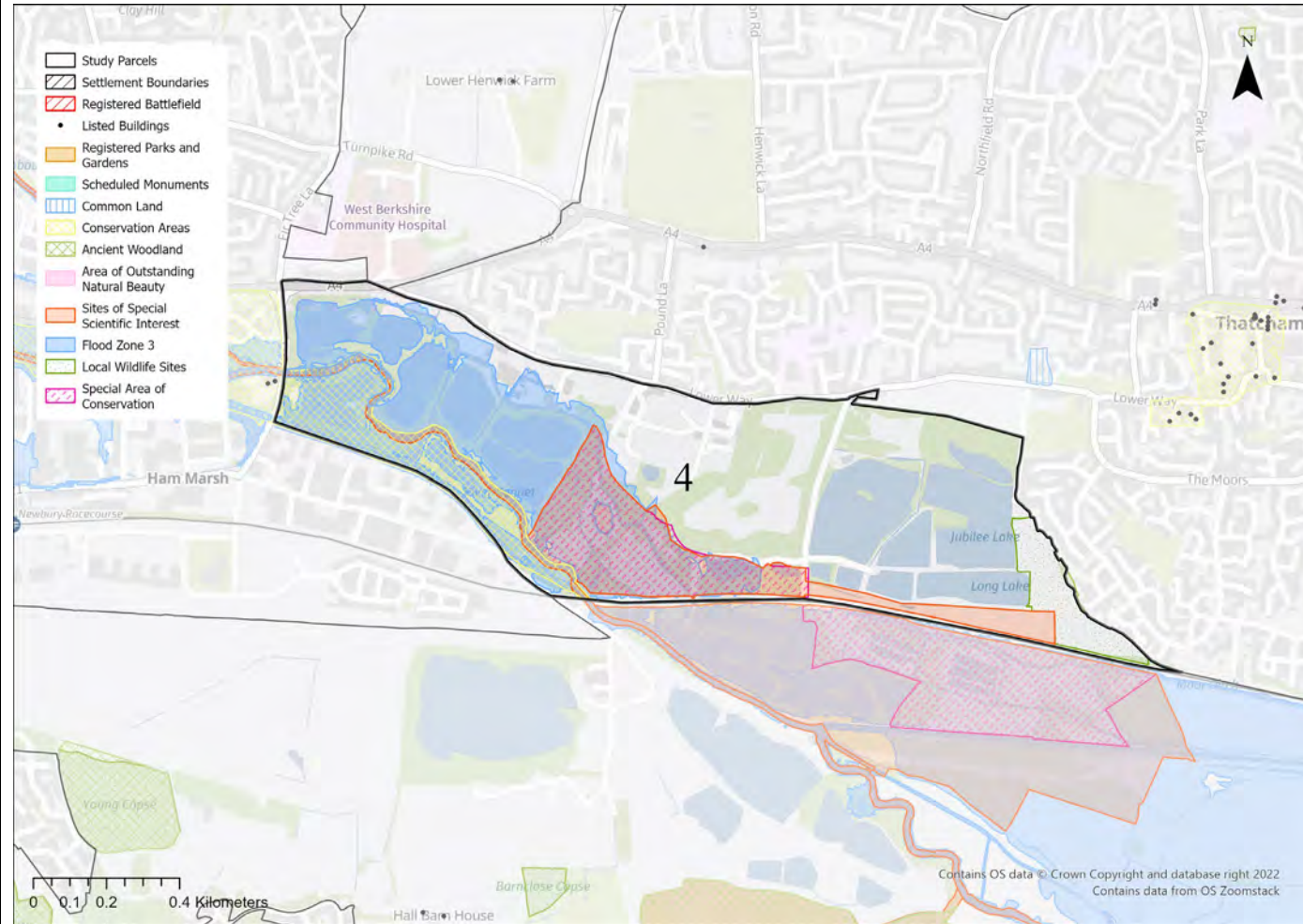
Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Partially	Amber	Partially – the racecourse is accessible for those paying to use the golf course
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	No	Red	No – no evidence has currently been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that it is not.
Is the area of historic significance? *Note most historical sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.	Partially	Amber	Partially – the area is not known to have any historic significance other than the history of the golfcourse. The course was established on this site in the 1920s, laid out across much of the estate of Greenham Lodge, a country house built by the architect Norman Shaw in the late 19th century for the Baxendale family
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is regularly used for formal recreational purposes (golf course)
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Partially	Amber	Access not possible – assessment made by desktop review. Partially – the area is <u>expected</u> to have some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity due to location and use, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet. However, sporting activities will also be taking place here.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	Partially	Amber	Access not possible – assessment made by desktop review. Parts of the golf course are designated as Local Wildlife Sites therefore it is likely that the area would include the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets two of the criteria and partially meets four of the criteria for Local Green Space designation.		

LGS3B: Pigeons Farm Road Playground/John W Mello Playing Field

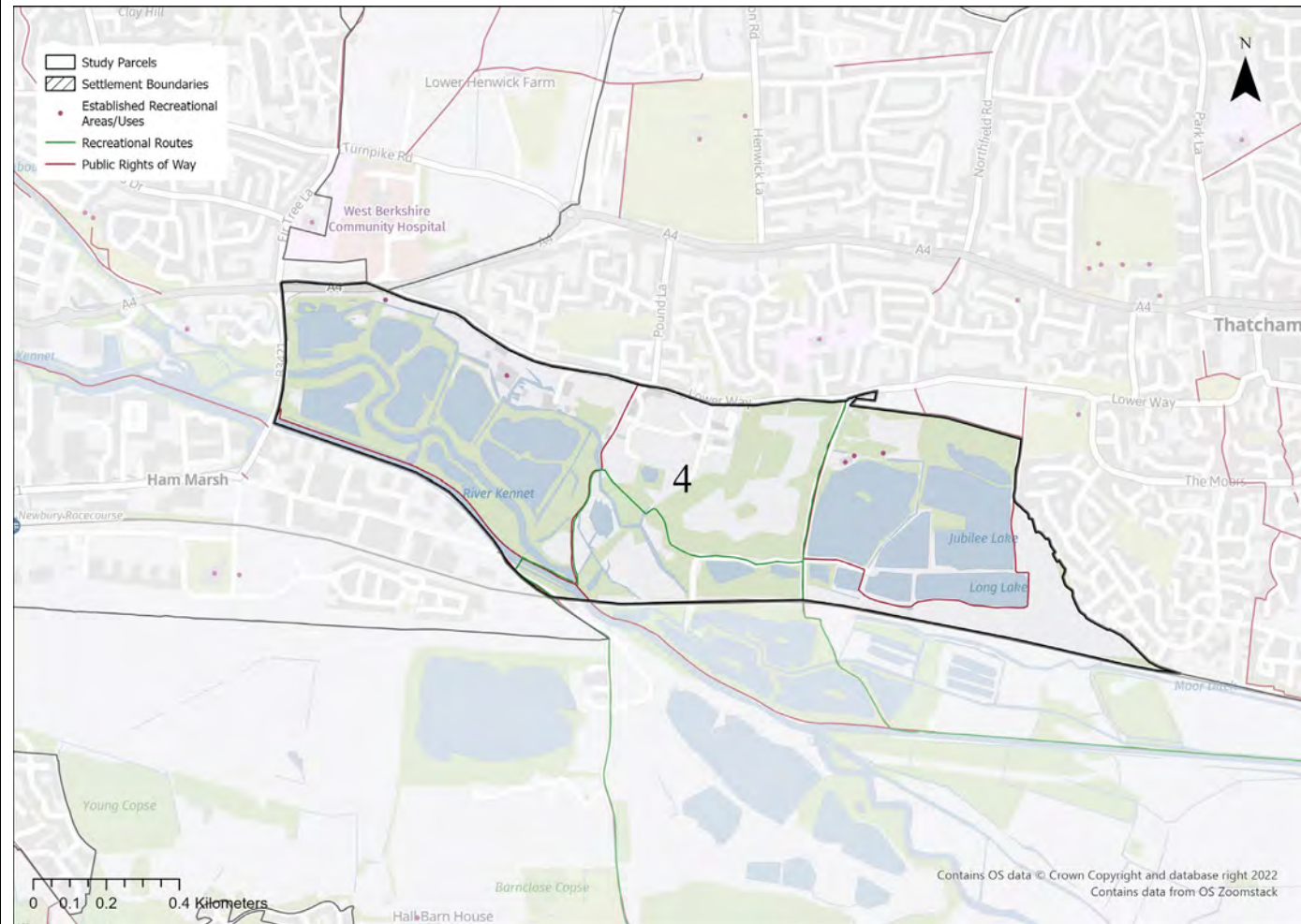
Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Yes	Green	This area is fully accessible to members of the public.
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	No	Red	No – no evidence has currently been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that it is not.
Is the area of historic significance? *Note most historical sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.	Yes	Green	Contains a locally listed sports stand and score board of a former baseball diamond, created when RAF Greenham was controlled by the USAAF during the Cold War
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes – playing field and playground
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Partially	Amber	Partially – the area has some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity due to location and use, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet. However, sporting activities will also be taking place here.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	No	Red	No – No evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets four of the criteria and partially meets one of the criteria for Local Green Space designation.		

Parcel 4

Parcel 4 Constraints Map



Parcel 4 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	4	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel covers a small area spanning between Newbury and Thatcham.	
Parcel Size	116ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Thatcham and Newbury	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	The parcel is a gap between Thatcham and Newbury. The gap is 60m at its narrowest point and approximately 1.7m at its widest point.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Part of the Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area within the western part of the parcel.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The parcel contains part of the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain Special Area of Conservation.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest located within the parcel: River Kennet Thatcham Reed Beds
<i>AONB</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not overlap with any Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no areas of Common Land located within the parcel.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Yes</i>	One Local Wildlife Site is located within the study parcel: Long Lake Marsh (part of Thatcham Reed Beds)
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens located within the parcel boundary.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The River Kennet runs through the parcel. As a result, much of the parcel is located within Flood Zone 3.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	No registered battlefields are located within the parcel.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The Thames Basin Heath SPA is not located within close proximity of the study parcel.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Listed Buildings Located within the study parcel.

<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Scheduled Monuments located within the study parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no areas of Ancient Woodland located within the study parcel.
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The parcel features a network of public footpaths and bridleways connecting Newbury and Thatcham to the wider countryside, with strong links from the urban settlements to Greenham and Crookham Commons to the south.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The parcel contains parts of the West Berkshire Living Landscape walk, designated to highlight the unique and diverse wildlife and heathland around Greenham and Crookham Commons.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of established recreational uses within the parcel, including: Thatcham Allotments Thatcham Lakes Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre Thatcham Reed Beds There are water-based recreational activities based around the various bodies of water located within the parcel.
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	The parcel falls under the Kenney Valley East character area, noted for its historic water meadows to the south of Thatcham.
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	LV1: Kennet Lower River Valley -Ecologically valuable habitats along the river corridor, including the mosaic of wetland habitats and the River Kennet. -Historic landscape features and a sense of time-depth, including part of the Newbury Conservation Area and the industrial heritage associated with the Kennet and Avon Canal. -Strong rural and sparsely settled character, with much of the area retaining its agricultural character despite its proximity to major settlements such as Newbury.

		<p>-Valued destination for recreation, including public rights of way and water based recreation/boating for those who live in Newbury and Thatcham. Former gravel pits provide opportunities for informal recreation, including the Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre.</p> <p>-Distinctive visual character: views within the valley can be extensive and open. Where woodland allows, there are views to the higher ground of the North Wessex Downs AONB.</p> <p>-The strategy states: ‘7) <i>Conserve the distinct identities of individual settlements: Conserve the overall sparsely settled character in the valley. Seek to avoid unsympathetic linear development and ensure that individual settlements retain their distinct identities... Conserve the role that the valley floor character plays in the setting of the individual identities of Newbury and Thatcham.</i></p>
	Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas	<p>LLCA8C: Thatcham Lakes</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium</p> <p>-Important setting to the south of Thatcham and east of Newbury. The sharp contrast with the built form is of significant value. In most cases the boundary is well vegetated, thus containing the settlements.</p> <p>-Provides an important open area which physically and visually separates Newbury from Thatcham.</p>

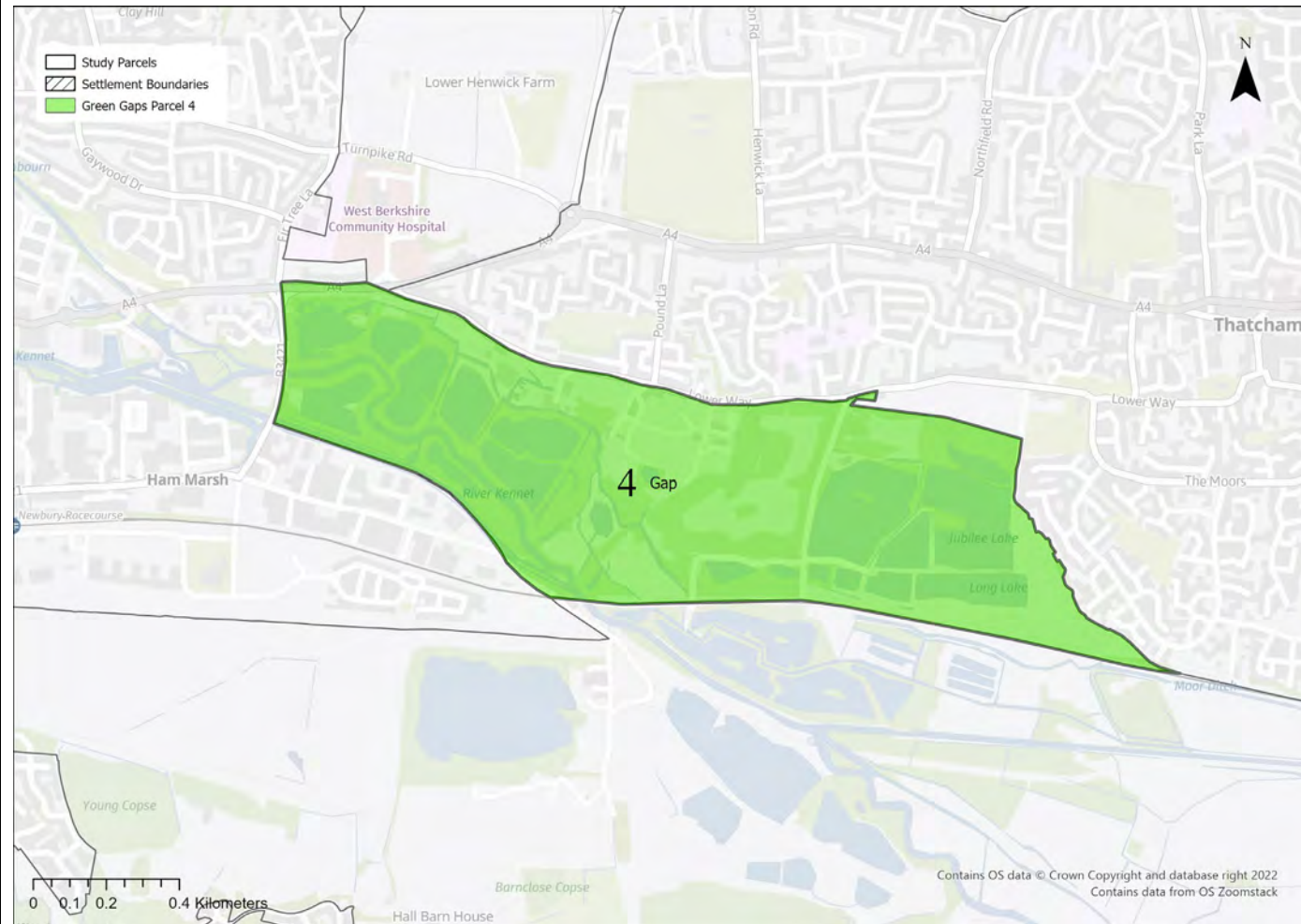
Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment – Whole Parcel to be assessed				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	Yes	Green	Yes this parcel provides an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Partially	Amber	8.55% built up area Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character.
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	Yes	Green	Yes this parcel provides an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	Green	Yes – part of the area provides fishing lakes and the Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre. The area also contains rights of way and recreational routes for walking etc along the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal.
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	<p>Parcel 4 forms an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham and also provides important green infrastructure. On this basis, the entire parcel is recommended for potential Green Gap/Wedge designation.</p> <p>Landscape comments on gap between Newbury and Thatcham: Perceptually and physically the gap between settlements feels very small. Vegetated edge to lakes – dense and few or no views from Lower Way (edge of Thatcham) to Newbury. Therefore this area of vegetation and open land is very important in separating the two settlements.</p>		

Parcel 4 Green Gaps Recommendation



Local Green Space Assessment

LGS4A: Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre and associated lakes

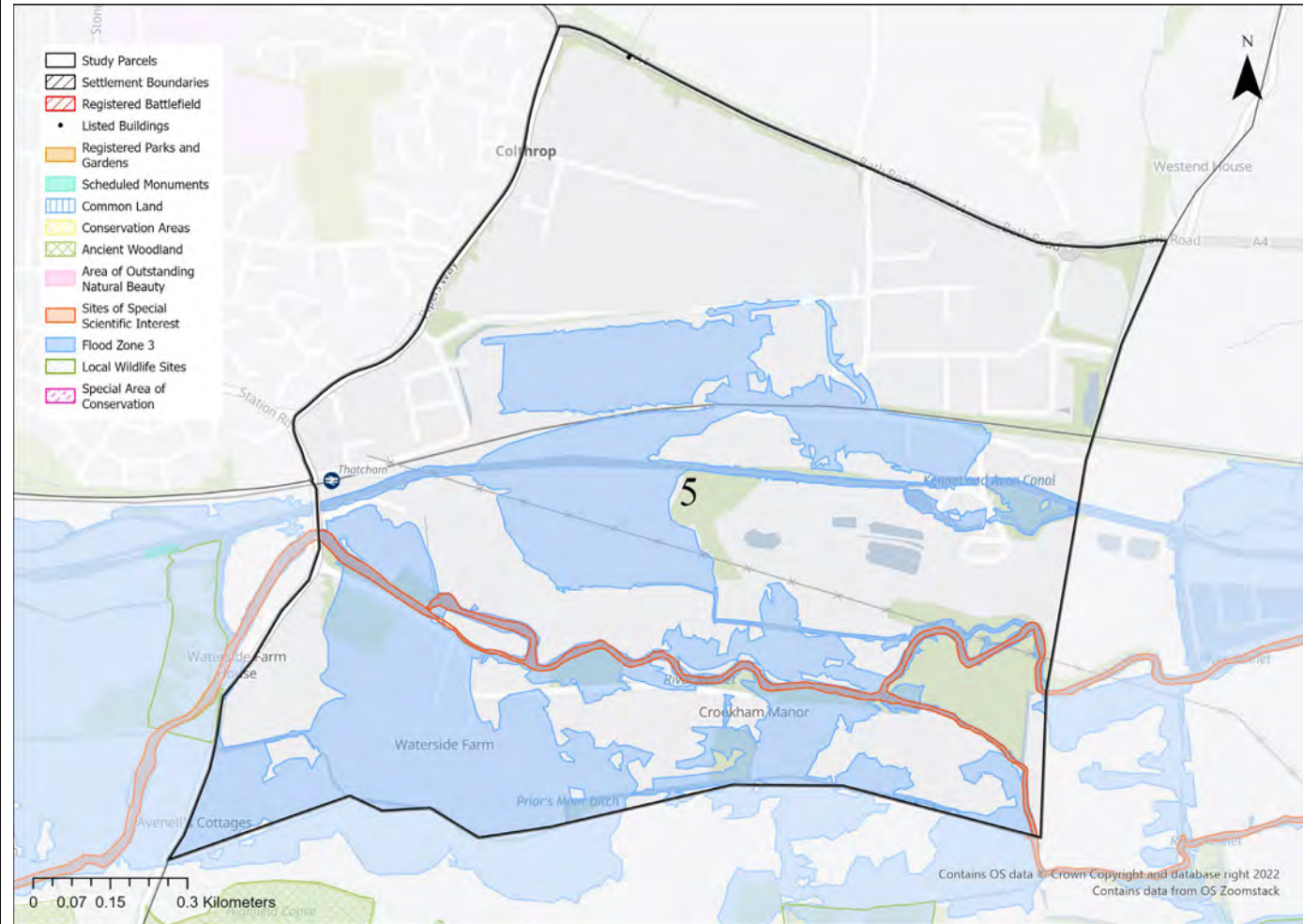
Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Yes	Green	This area is fully accessible to members of the public. Donations are requested but not required.
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	Partially	Amber	This area is not formally designated but is a Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust nature reserve, and is therefore deemed to demonstrate moderate local significance through this status and frequency of use.
Is the area of historic significance?	No	Red	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area contains a Nature Discovery Centre, play areas, cafe and walking routes.
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is considered to have high levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	Yes	Green	1. Yes - Evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place. 2. 3. See Discovery Centre website Nature Discovery Centre Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (bbowt.org.uk)
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets five of the criteria for Local Green Space designation.		

LGS4B: Hambridge Lakes

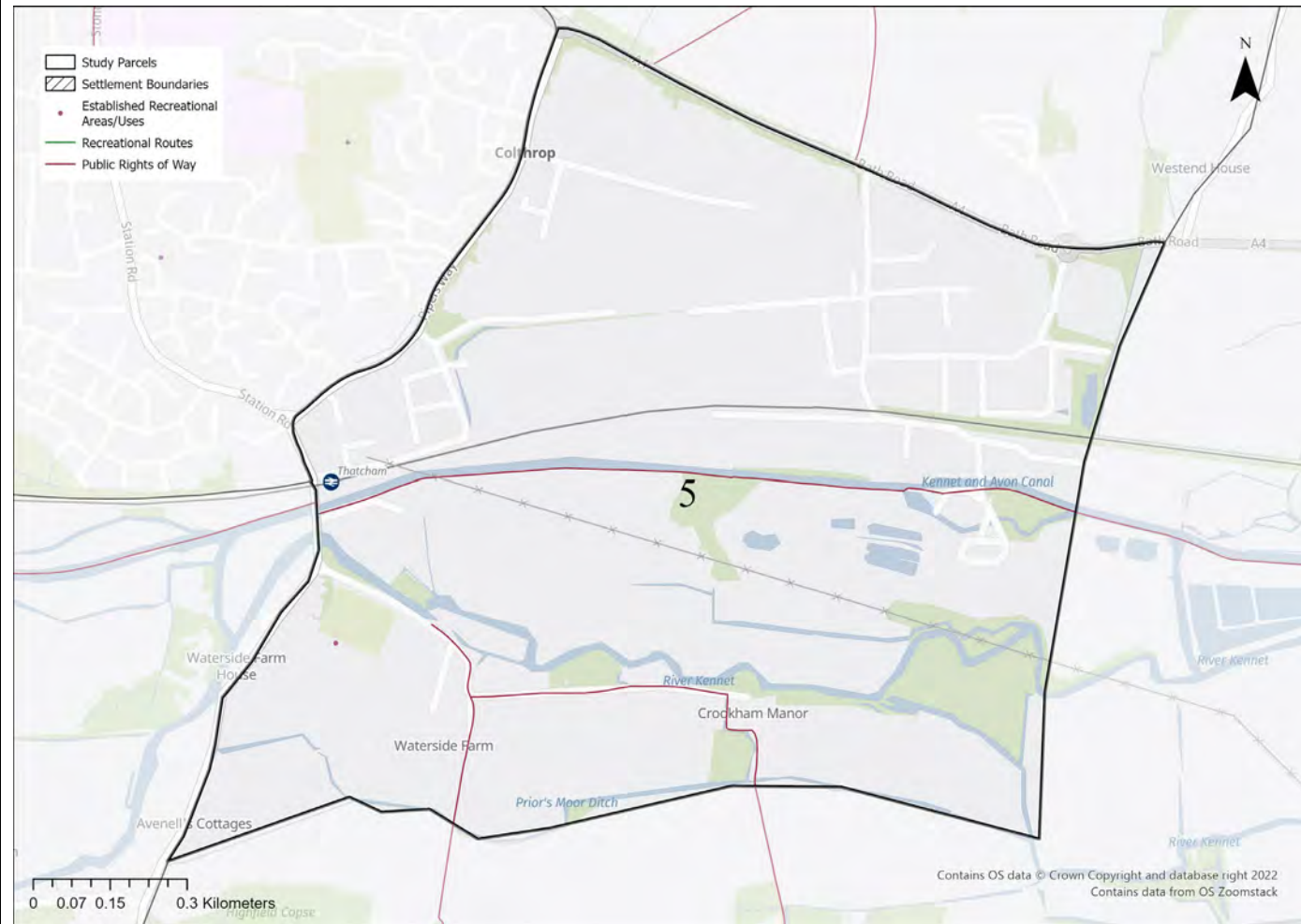
Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Partially	Amber	The lake is accessible for those paying to fish. However upon site visit it is not clear whether the site is open as no obvious access was noted.
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	No	Red	No – no evidence has been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community.
Is the area of historic significance?	No	Red	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance.
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is used for fishing.
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity? <i>This question is linked to the local landscape designation criteria below (see Table 8 - Perceptual [Wildness and tranquillity] Factor)</i>	Partially	Amber	Access not possible – assessment made by desktop review. Partially – the area is <u>expected</u> to have some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity due to location and use, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet.
Is the area rich in wildlife? <i>*Note most wildlife sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.</i> <i>This question is linked to the local landscape designation criteria below (see Table 8) - Natural heritage Factor</i>	Partially	Amber	4. Access not possible – assessment made by desktop review. 5. Yes - Evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place. The area contains various lakes and is within a biodiversity opportunity area therefore is likely to be rich in wildlife.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets two and partially meets three of the criteria for Local Green Space designation.		

Parcel 5

Parcel 5 Constraints Map



Parcel 5 Movement Map



		Guidance Notes
Parcel Ref	5	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel is located to the west of Thatcham. Both the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal run through the middle of the site.	
Parcel Size	190 ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Thatcham	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	Brimpton is located approximately 1.6km to the southeast. Woolhampton is located 2.8km to the east.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>No</i>	The are no Conservation Areas located within the study parcel.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Special Areas of Conservation located within the study parcel.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>No</i>	Part of the River Kennet Site of Special Scientific Interest is located within the study parcel.
<i>AONB</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty located within the study parcel.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no areas of Common Land located within the study parcel.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Local Wildlife Sites located within the study parcel.
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens located within the study parcel.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Due to the prominence of the River Kennet and the Avon and Kennet Canal within the parcel, much of the space is located within Flood Zone 3.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no registered battlefields located within the study parcel.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The study parcel is not within close proximity to the Thames Basin Heath SPA.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	One listed building is located within the study parcel, the Grade II listed milestone at SU5327 6721
<i>Scheduled monuments</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no scheduled monuments located within the study parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>No</i>	There is no Ancient Woodland located within the study parcel.
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There is a public footpath running alongside the Kennet & Avon Canal. Further, there are footpaths connecting Thatcham to the Commons to the south of the parcel.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no formal Recreational Routes located within the parcel boundary.

<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Thatcham Town Football Club is located within the parcel.
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	The study parcel contains both the Thatcham and Kennet Valley East historic character areas. The Thatcham part of the parcel is of a largely industrial character. The Kennet Valley East part is defined by meadows along the banks of the waterways.
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	LV1: Kennet Lower River Valley -Ecologically valuable habitats along the river corridor, including the mosaic of wetland habitats and the River Kennet. -Historic landscape features and a sense of time-depth, including part of the Newbury Conservation Area and the industrial heritage associated with the Kennet & Avon Canal. -Strong rural and sparsely settled character, with much of the area retaining its agricultural character despite its proximity to major settlements such as Newbury. -Valued destination for recreation, including public rights of way and water based recreation/boating for those who live in Newbury and Thatcham. -Distinctive visual character: views within the valley can be extensive and open. Where woodland allows, there are views to the higher ground of the North Wessex Downs AONB. -The strategy states: ‘7) <i>Conserve the distinct identities of individual settlements: Conserve the overall sparsely settled character in the valley. Seek to avoid unsympathetic linear development and ensure that individual settlements retain their distinct identities... Conserve the role that the valley floor character plays in the setting of the individual identities of Newbury and Thatcham.</i> ’
	Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas	LLCA20D: Colthrop Park (within northern part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Low - Highly visible from adjacent rural landscapes. -Setting to the Kennet & Avon Canal towpath. -Its built form contrasts strongly with that of the settlement and is extremely prominent from rural areas to the north and south. Urban planting along Pipers Lane forms some sort of transition between the two areas. LLCA8D: South Thatcham Valley Farmland (section within the southern part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium to high

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Largely open landscape.-Exposed to views from rising ground to north and south and from east.-Forms an important setting to the wooded escarpment to the south, linking this whole escarpment and flood plain together into a cohesive whole.-Contrast with urban Thatcham is an important feature of the area.
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Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernible contribution to separation.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Partially	Amber	40.13% built up area Contains more than 20% built form overall and northern part of site possesses an urban character (Colthrop Industrial Estate). Southern part of site is mostly agricultural land and a quarry and possesses a largely rural character.
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

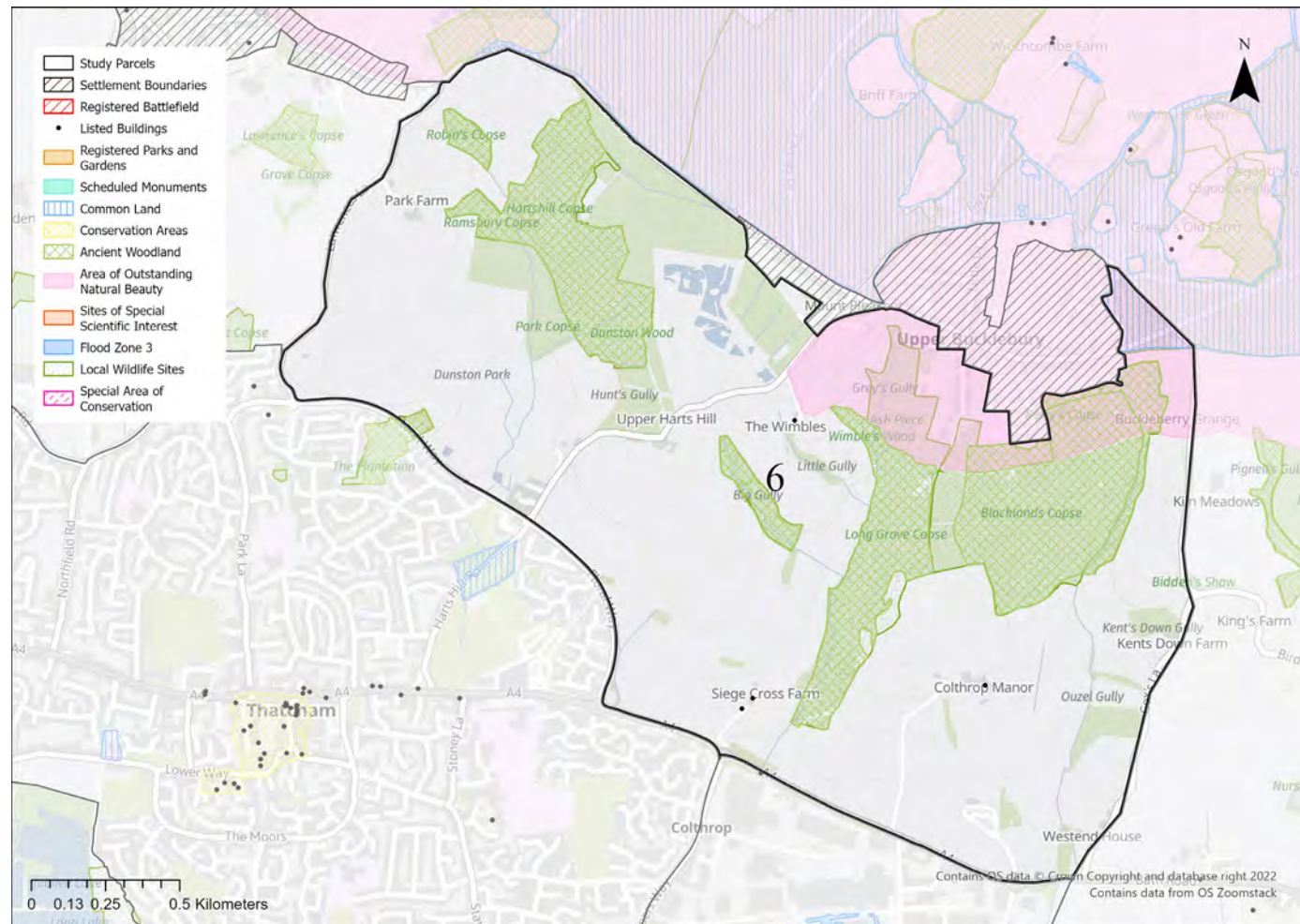
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	No	Red	Parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernible contribution to separation.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Amber	Partially – the area contains Thatcham Football Club and some rights of way
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	This parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and does not provide a green lung into urban areas. Part of the parcel is Colthrop Industrial Estate and remaining area is mostly agricultural land. Thatcham Football Club and a few rights of way provide small areas of green infrastructure. On the basis of the above a Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended for parcel 5.		

Local Green Space

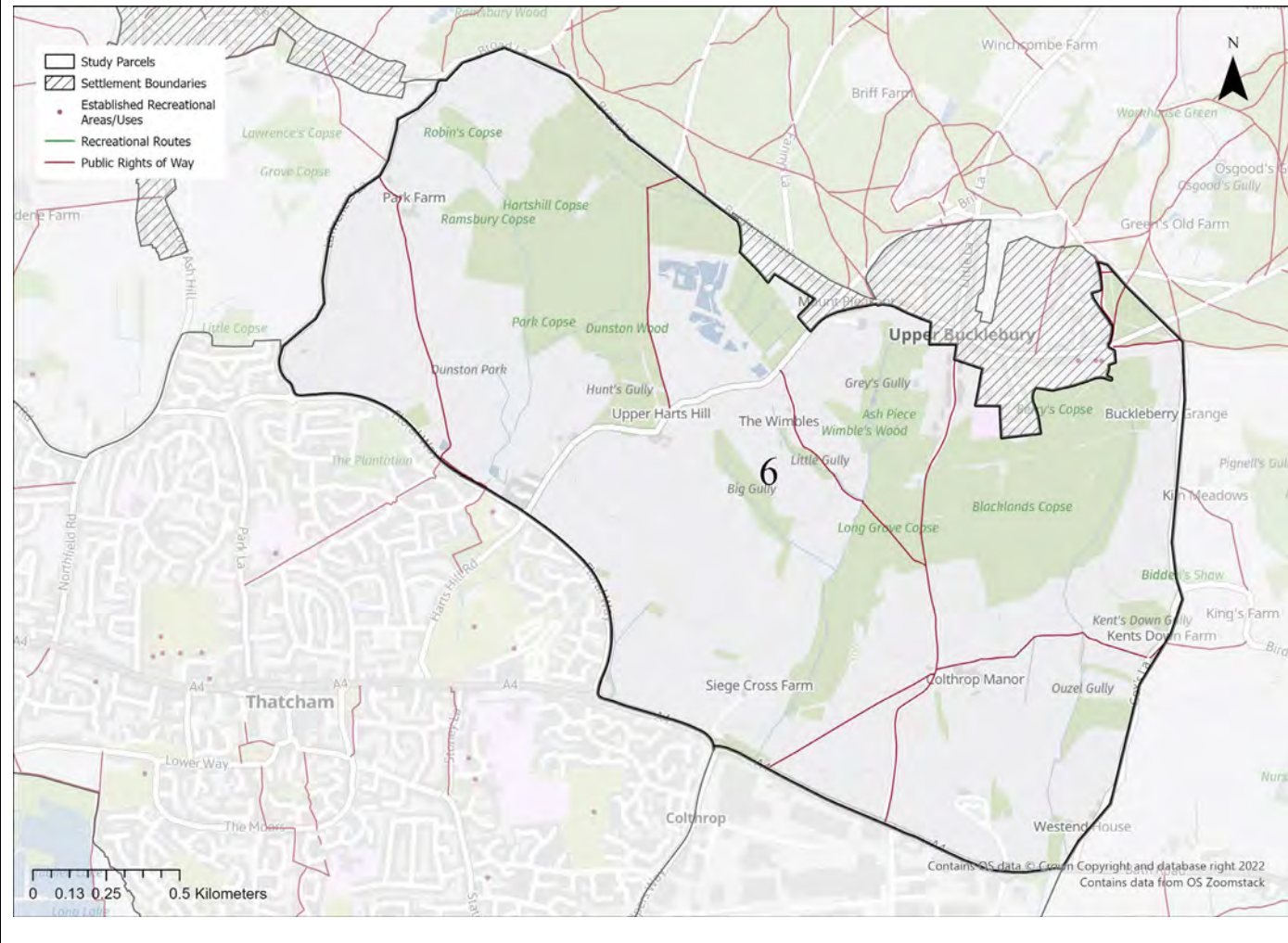
No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study.

Parcel 6

Parcel 6 Constraints Map



Parcel 6 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	6	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel is located to the north east of Thatcham. It represents the area between Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury.	
Parcel Size	494 ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Thatcham	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	Upper Bucklebury is approximately 1.5km from the Thatcham settlement boundary.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not contain any Conservation Areas.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not contain any Special Areas of Conservation.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not contain any Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
<i>AONB</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The northern part of the parcel is partially covered by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The northern part of the parcel is partially covered by the Bucklebury Common Common Land, which adjoins the parcel along most of the northern border.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The parcel features a number of designated Local Wildlife Sites: The Plantation Blacklands and Berry Copse Long Grove Copse Big Gully Robin's Copse Hartshill Copse Bucklebury Lower Common
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens located within the parcel.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>No</i>	No part of the parcel is located within Flood Zone 3.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Battlefields located within the parcel.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The Thames Basin Heath SPA is not located in close proximity to the parcel.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of Listed Buildings located within the study parcel. Grade II:

		Barn approximately 15 metres to south west of Siegecross Farmhouse Barn at Colthrop Manor Briar Cottage Cart shed approximately 60 metres to south west of Siegecross Farmhouse Pear Tree Cottage The Wimbles
<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Scheduled Monuments located within the study parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are several areas of Ancient Woodland located within the study boundary: Blacklands Copse Hartshill Copse Long Grove Copse Robin's Copse The Plantation
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of footpaths and bridleways running throughout the parcel, connecting Thatcham to the Common Land and woodland directly to the north of the site.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no established Recreational Routes located within the study parcel.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no established recreational uses in this area.
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	The parcel is largely located within the Kennet Valley East historic character area. Part of the site is located within the Snelsmore and Bucklebury Commons character area, characterised by dense woodland and common land.
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic -The visual role of the wooded ridge crest and slopes: the woodlands along the east-west ridge create a unifying backdrop for the larger settlements to the south of the area and within the AONB to the north. Views from the ridge are frequently limited by tree cover, creating a secluded character, but open locations provide views south to the southern side of the Kennet valley, and north to AONB chalk downland rising to a wooded ridge. Open farmland on the lower slopes contributes to a sense of separation between the elevated character area and the towns of Thatcham and Newbury in the valley below.

		<p>-The varied land cover mosaic and important habitats: including valley woodlands, wooded ridgelines, heathland, rivers and varied field pattern contribute to an interesting and intimate landscape.</p> <p>-A very rural character away from major roads and urban edges: Landform and tree cover mean that away from the urban edges of Thatcham and Newbury and from the M4 there is a rapid transition upslope to a more intimate rural landscape, with small traditional villages and farmsteads and dark skies.</p> <p>-Recreational value: the strong network of public rights of way in proximity to the large settlements of Newbury and Thatcham.</p> <p>-The strategy states: “5) <i>Retain a sense of distinction between individual settlements through a clear understanding of the role of landform, tree cover and rural buildings in characterising settings and in forming boundaries that conserve and enhance distinctions in character. Avoid extended linear development along roads, which creates a more developed character resulting in the loss of individual settlement identity....</i>”</p> <p>“6) <i>Conserve elements that mark a transition between settlement and countryside Where possible retain small, enclosed fields around villages, and farm buildings which contribute positively to rural character.</i>”</p>
	<p>Landscape sensitivity & capacity study for land north east of Thatcham (2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall visual sensitivity is assessed as medium. Page 100 of the study summarises visual sensitivity. There is little discussion specifically in relation to settlement separation or setting, though the study notes that visual sensitivity is associated with upper slopes, and lower sensitivity with lower slopes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Existing vegetation on the boundary with Bath Road and Floral Way visually contains the northward extent of existing developed land.</i>” • Overall landscape sensitivity is assessed as medium. Page 100 of the study landscape sensitivity, including the following points in relation to settlement separation and intervisibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>“The study site performs an important function in separating Thatcham from smaller rural settlements to the north.”</i> ○ <i>“The study site is not within AONB and there is little visual intervisibility between them. Nevertheless, the setting of the AONB does not rely exclusively on visual criteria and this is a sensitivity to be addressed should the land be brought forward for development.”</i> • Wider landscape sensitivity is assessed as medium. Page 101 of the study summarises wider landscape sensitivity, including the following points in relation to settlement separation and intervisibility:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>“Little visual relationship with the AONB to the north, but forms part of the setting of the AONB.”</i> ○ <i>“Some intervisibility between upper parts of the study site and distant locations on the southern side of the Kennet Valley.”</i> ○ <i>“No intervisibility between the study site and the centre of Thatcham.”</i> ○ <i>“From many parts of the site, viewing to the south and east the light-coloured roofs of the units on the industrial land to the east of the town are visible, heightening the perception of nearby urban influences.”</i> ○ <i>“Extensive planting along [Bath Road and Floral Way] mitigates the impact of the road and traffic and reinforces the edge of settlement. The highways define and contain the northeastern extent of the urban area, but some uses have spilled over into the landscape to the north, such as the Mercure Hotel on Cox’s Lane and the crematorium, as well as the food alleviation reservoir.”</i> ○ <i>“The landscape separates northern Thatcham from small village settlements at Cold Ash and Upper Bucklebury. Thatcham is at a relatively low elevation within the Kennet valley, with the villages at higher elevations. This vertical differential contributes to their separation.”</i> ○ <i>“...The upper parts of the study site appear in some views and in these contribute to the valley landscape context and the setting of the AONB. Generally, however, views north from these locations are obstructed by woodland occupying the north-facing valley sides. Where the opposite side of the valley is visible, Thatcham town centre is hidden in the valley, with the undeveloped slopes rising behind.”</i>
	<p>Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas</p>	<p>LLCA14F: Colthrop Manor Plateau Edge (within the southern part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Good views across the area and long views across the Kennet Valley. -Part of the hillsides that enclose the Kennet Valley, and is highly visible from the valley and the Greenham escarpment. -Provides a strong contrast to the urban form of Thatcham town and Colthrop Park. -Forms an important setting to Thatcham and rural transition zone between the urban area and the AONB.</p> <p>LLCA13D: Hart’s Hill Plateau Woodlands (within the north western part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Strong landscape links with the wider AONB landscape to the north. -Separated from Thatcham by topography.</p>

	<p>Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Potential Strategic Development Sites</p>	<p><i>Area 9, North of Colthrop, East Thatcham</i></p> <p>This assessment covers the south eastern part of this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The area is a key part of the wider landscape north east of Thatcham. -It is enclosed in part to the north by major blocks of woodland but at its western end is part of a wider field pattern which continues north west. -It is visually prominent, as the site rises up to the prominent ridge side. -Important as a rural setting to Thatcham. -The scale of the proposed strategic site would have a major adverse landscape impact but there may be some scope for limited urban expansion on the lower part of the site in close proximity to the crematorium. Such limited expansion would require a very strong landscape edge, designed to avoid altering the character of the open, smooth valley side. Key features of interest would need to be retained within a suitable landscape setting.

Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment – Whole Parcel to be assessed				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score /Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above.
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	Partially	Amber	This parcel forms a wider gap between settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Yes	Green	4.67% Built up Area 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

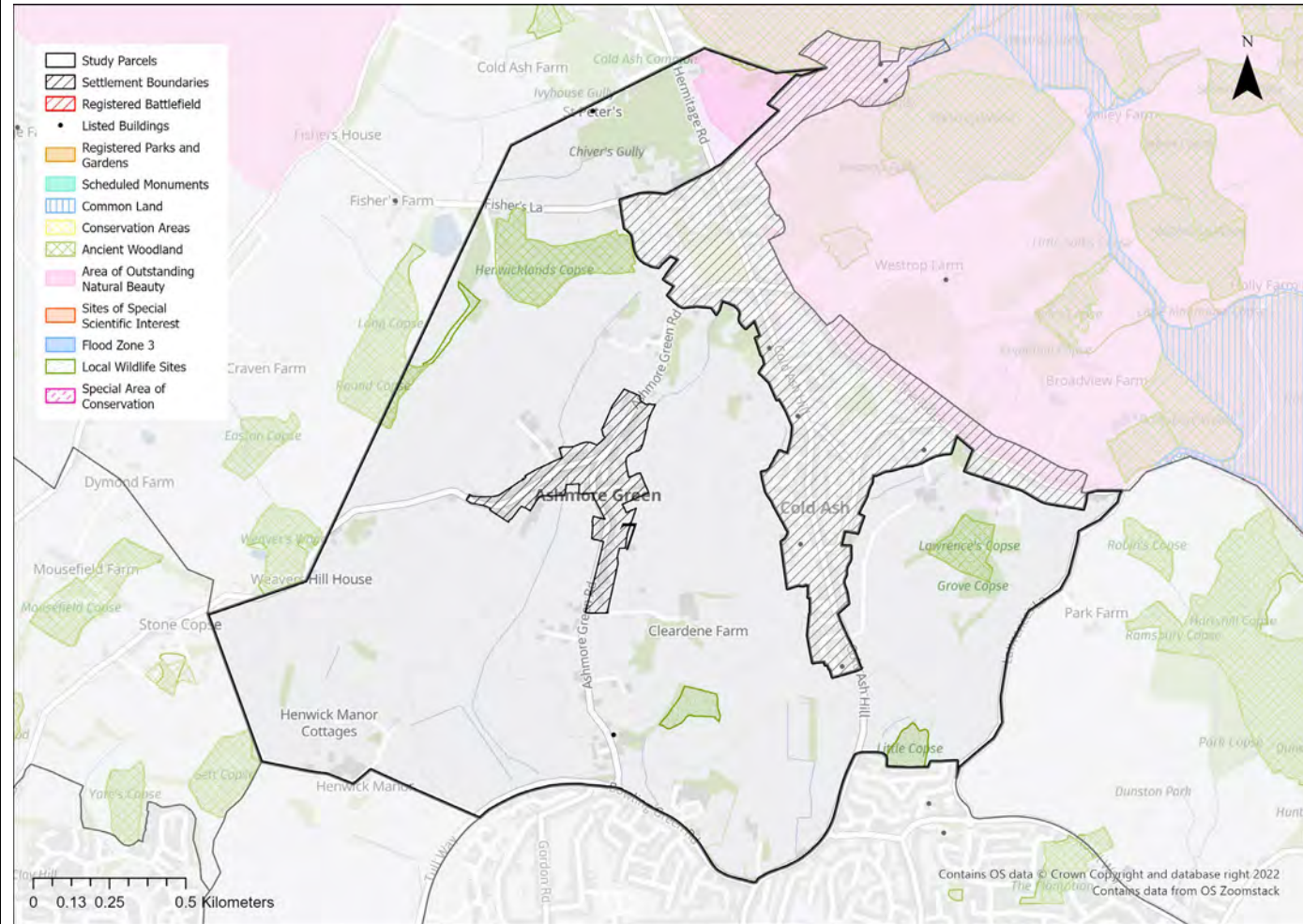
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	Partially	Amber	This parcel forms a wider gap between the settlements of Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging and loss of individual identity.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Amber	The area provides a network of rights of way for walking etc
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	<p>As existing, this parcel provides a 'wider gap' between Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury where there may be scope for development but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.</p> <p>The proposed North East Thatcham strategic allocation is, however, included in this parcel.</p> <p>As noted in the main report (Chapter 4) the issue of the allocations proposed in the Emerging LPR is assumed to be potentially open. Given that a masterplan has yet to be produced for the North East Thatcham site which would identify which areas of it would be proposed as green infrastructure/green space, it is not possible to provide a further assessment of the gap at this time. However, if all of the area outlined in the regulation 18 Emerging Draft were to be developed, then the remaining land between the built up area and Upper Bucklebury would be likely to form an essential gap between the settlements and a potential gap designation for part of this area could then be considered.</p> <p>Although there is no intervisibility between the site allocation and the AONB due to topography and woodland blocks, there is a perceptual relationship, with the landscape forming a zone of transition between the hard and defined urban edge of Thatcham and the valued landscape of the AONB.</p> <p>Despite its proximity to the town, the allocation area currently has a very rural character, resulting from its sense of openness, few views of development or human influence, defined sloping topography and the, irregularly shaped woodland blocks which create a varied and interesting landscape. Cox's Lane and footpaths through the area feel rural and tranquil. The topography of the allocation area is distinctly different from that of Thatcham, sloping up to the north towards the AONB. This creates a sense of separation from the urban area and the rural landscape. While large parts of this land are designated as ancient woodland and/or AONB, a gap policy could be beneficial to the remaining areas especially in respecting the topography and in maintaining the varied rural landscape and the approach to, and setting of, the AONB.</p> <p>It is recommended that further assessment is undertaken when more information is available.</p>		

Local Green Space Assessment

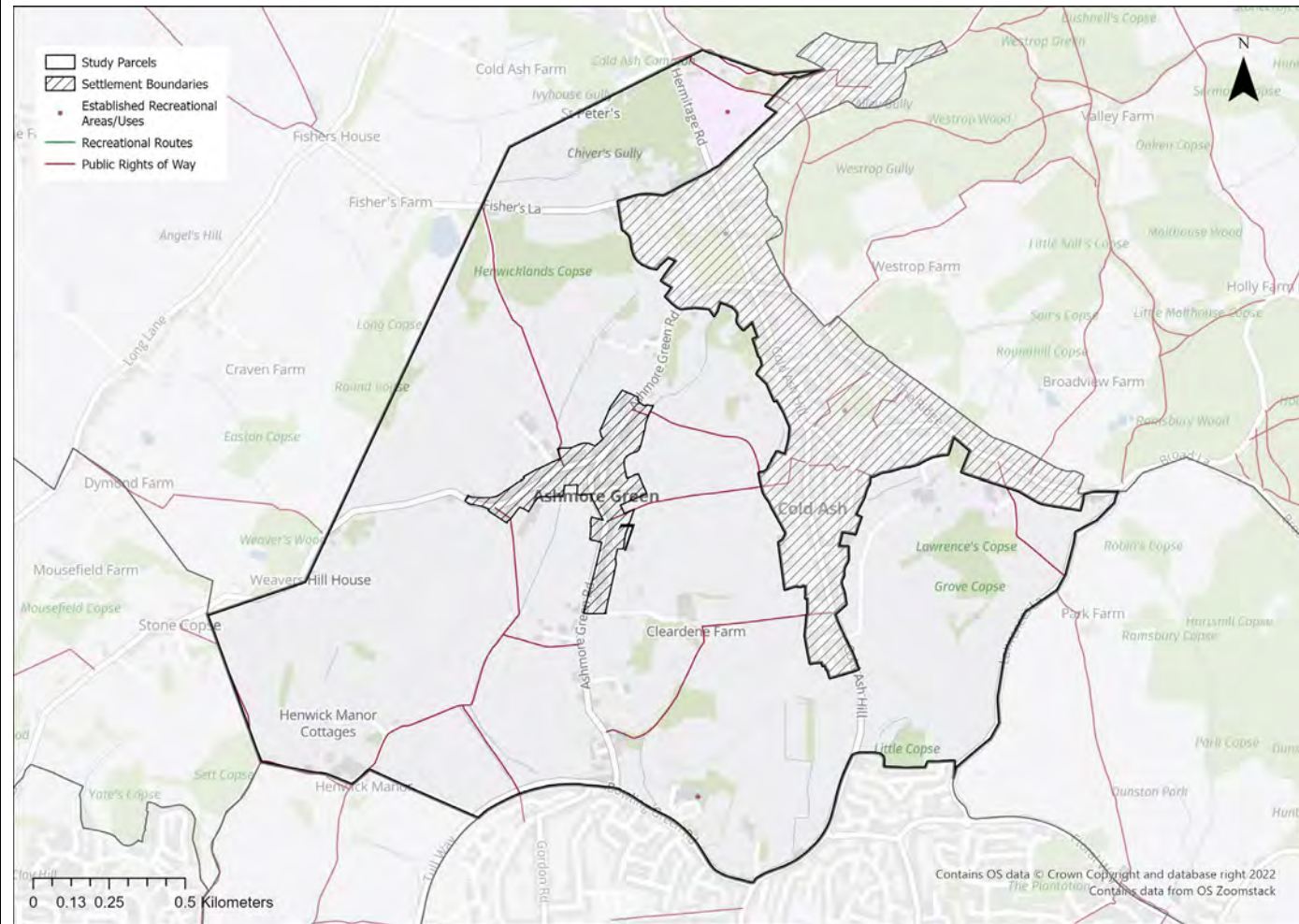
No areas within this parcel have been assessed for potential Local Green Space designation as part of this study.

Parcel 7

Parcel 7 Constraints Map



Parcel 7 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	7	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel is located to the north-west of Thatcham and contains the settlements of Ashmore Green and Cold Ash.	
Parcel Size	369 ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Thatcham	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	The parcel contains the settlements of Ashmore Green, approximately 600m from the Thatcham border. Cold Ash is located approximately 250m north of Thatcham at the narrowest point, and 2.3km at the widest point.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Conservation Areas located within the study parcel.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Special Areas of Conservation located within the study parcel.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest located within the study parcel.
<i>AONB</i>	<i>Adjoins</i>	The north-eastern border of the site adjoins the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>No</i>	There is no Common Land located within the study parcel.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites located within the study parcel: Lawrence's Copse Little Copse Cleardeane Farm Wood Carrotty Cow Leaze/Round Copse All provide woodland habitats.
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the study parcel.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>No</i>	No part of the study parcel is located within Flood Zone 3.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Battlefields located within the study parcel.

<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The Thames Basin Heath is not located in close proximity to the study parcel.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of Listed Buildings located within the study parcel. Grade II: Downe House School Old Henwick Cottage
<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Scheduled Monuments located within the study parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are two areas of Ancient Woodland located within the study parcel: Hardwick's Copse Lawrence's Copse
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There is a dense network of public footpaths connecting the parcel with the surrounding areas.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no established recreational routes within the study parcel.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of recreational facilities in Cold Ash, including: Cold Ash Recreation Ground Playing Field to the south of St Finian's Catholic School To the north of Ashmore Green is the Thirtover branch of Berkshire Guides, with associated recreational facilities.
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	The parcel is located entirely within the Snelsmore and Bucklebury Commons historic character area, largely defined by modern agricultural landscape but featuring substantial ancient woodland and heathland.

	<p>West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas</p>	<p>WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic [A small part of the parcel at its northern tip extends into the AONB.] -Nationally valued landscape which forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB. The mosaic of ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations, remnant heathland and open farmland, deriving from the area’s varied geology, and the sense of seclusion often engendered from this mix, are noted as special qualities relating to this character area. -The visual role of the wooded ridge crest and slopes: the woodlands along the east-west ridge create a unifying backdrop for the larger settlements to the south of the area and within the AONB to the north. Views from the ridge are frequently limited by tree cover, creating a secluded character, but open locations provide views south to the southern side of the Kennet valley, and north to AONB chalk downland rising to a wooded ridge. Open farmland on the lower slopes contributes to a sense of separation between the elevated character area and the towns of Thatcham and Newbury in the valley below. -The varied land cover mosaic and important habitats: including valley woodlands, wooded ridgelines, heathland, rivers and varied field pattern contribute to an interesting and intimate landscape. -A very rural character away from major roads and urban edges: Landform and tree cover mean that away from the urban edges of Thatcham and Newbury and from the M4 there is a rapid transition upslope to a more intimate rural landscape, with small traditional villages and farmsteads and dark skies. The transition in character along Stoney Lane between Shaw and Ashmore Green is an example of this. -Recreational value: the strong network of public rights of way in proximity to the large settlements of Newbury and Thatcham. -Historic landscape character, including the vernacular character of settlements, historic field patterns and the role of woodland in limiting urban influence. -The strategy states: “5) <i>Retain a sense of distinction between individual settlements through a clear understanding of the role of landform, tree cover and rural buildings in characterising settings and in forming boundaries that conserve and enhance distinctions in character – e.g. the historic farmstead at Henwick, along a rural lane, contained by tree cover and on rising ground, marks a rapid change to a rural landscape from the nearby edge of Thatcham. Avoid extended linear development along roads, which creates a more developed character resulting in the loss of individual settlement identity...</i>” “6) <i>Conserve elements that mark a transition between settlement and countryside. Where possible retain small, enclosed fields around villages, and farm buildings which contribute positively to rural character.</i>”</p>
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	<p>Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas</p>	<p><i>Landscape sensitivity study, 2009: Newbury/Thatcham</i></p> <p>LLCA14A: Ashmore Green and Lower Ash Plateau Edge (falls within the central part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Complex rolling topography part of the long escarpment along the southern edge of the AONB. -Long views from east part across Kennet Valley. -Strong linear settlement pattern. -Well defined edge to Thatcham. <p>LLCA15A: West Thatcham Farmland (part of the LLCA falls within the south western part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Contributes to the open landscape separating Thatcham from Newbury, to the south. -Henwick Manor sits on a gentle ridge which forms a northern boundary to the south facing slopes. -Strong visual and landscape links with the remainder of the east-west ridge. <p>LLCA13C: Upper Cold Ash Plateau (part of the LLCA falls within part of the north eastern part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium -The settlement of Cold Ash forms a distinctive linear pattern along the ridgeline. Loose grain, with large gardens, in marked contrast to Thatcham.
	<p>Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Potential Strategic Development Sites</p>	<p>Area 8: North Thatcham (southern part of LLCA14A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium to low. -Not the most visually prominent part of the LLCA. -The site sits relatively low within the landscape and is less sensitive than other parts of the LLCA. -The site selection includes the minor valley and treed area around Henwick Old Farm, one of the historic farmsteads in the LLCA. -LLCA a key part of wider landscape of North Thatcham.

	<p><i>Landscape capacity assessment of potential housing sites within and adjacent to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Thatcham (2015)</i></p>	<p>This assessment covers a site north of Thatcham.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thatcham generally has a very well defined northern boundary which separates the town from the AONB. -To the north of Thatcham the slopes start gently and then steepen, with incised valleys and higher bluffs. -Views from the south of Thatcham, from the Greenham/Crookham escarpment, allow vistas across the valley to the town and open countryside to the north above the settlement edge. In these views Thatcham is prominent but contained within the valley floor. Individual properties on higher ground such as Colthrop Manor and Henwick Manor, are prominent within the open countryside. -Further major expansion of Thatcham northwards towards the AONB may impact on the landscape setting of the AONB. -The open fields are an important part of the open wider landscape above Thatcham. -The open countryside separates the settlements and separate identities of Cold Ash and Thatcham.
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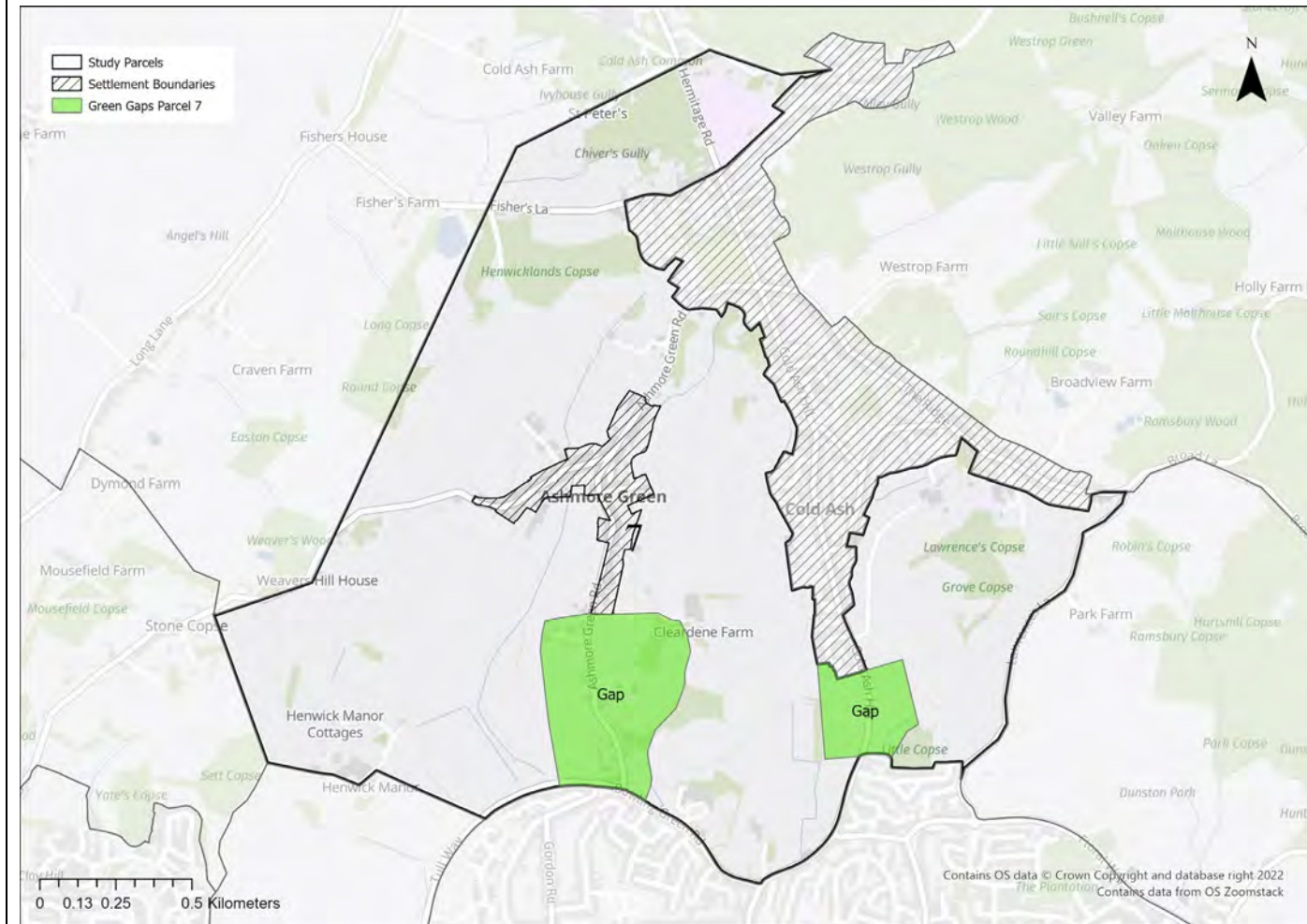
Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment – Whole Parcel to be assessed				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score /Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	Partially	Amber	Parts of this parcel provides an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. This is the area between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Yes	Green	4.37% Built up Area 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	Partially	Amber	Parts of this parcel provides an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. This is the area between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Amber	The area provides a network of rights of way for walking etc and general access to the countryside.
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	The areas between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green are essential gaps and on this basis are recommended for potential Green Gap designation. The parcel also provides some green infrastructure in the form of rights of way and access to countryside.		

Parcel 7 Greens Gaps Recommendation



Local Green Space Assessment

LGS7A: Cleredene Wood

Note Cleredene Wood has been proposed as LGS in the Cold Ash NDP

Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is fully accessible to the public with long term access (such as rights of way) already established
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	Yes	Green	Yes – this area has been submitted as a potential LGS in the Cold Ash NDP
Is the area of historic significance?	No	Red	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Partially	Amber	Partially – the area appears to be used as for informal recreational purposes such as walking/dog walking
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is considered to have high levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity as set out in Table 8 below.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	Yes	Green	6. Yes - Evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place. Part of the woods is a local wildlife site however the remaining area has no designation
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets five of the criteria and partially meets one of the criteria for Local Green Space designation.		

LGS7B: Little Copse

Note Little Copse is already designated as a Local Wildlife Site so therefore would not normally be assessed by this study. However, it has been submitted as a potential LGS in the Cold Ash NDP

Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Partially	Amber	Partially – the area does not have formal access rights (such as a designated right of way) but is informally accessed by members of the public for recreational use
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	Yes	Green	Yes – this area has been submitted as a potential LGS in the Cold Ash NDP
Is the area of historic significance?	No	Red	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Partially	Amber	Partially – the area appears to be used as for informal recreational purposes such as walking/dog walking
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is considered to have high levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity as set out in Table 8 below.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	Yes	Green	Yes – the site is also a wildlife site.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets five of the criteria and partially meets one of the criteria for Local Green Space designation. However, this site is all designated as a local wildlife site. Whilst this does not preclude an additional LGS designation, there is likely to be little additional benefit in terms of protection.		

Parcel 8

Parcel 8 Constraints Map



Parcel 8 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	8
Parcel Name/Description	This parcel sits in the northern part of the area between the towns of Newbury and Thatcham.
Parcel Size	72 ha
Parcel Adjoins	Thatcham/Newbury

Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	The closest settlement is Ashmore Green, approximately 750m north of the boundary of the parcel. The parcel fills a gap between Thatcham and Newbury, approximately 60m wide at the narrowest point and 700m at the widest point.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Conservation Areas located within the study parcel.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Special Areas of Conservation within the study parcel.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest located within the study parcel.
<i>AONB</i>	<i>No</i>	No part of the site is covered by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>No</i>	The study parcel does not overlap with an area of Common Land.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Adjoins</i>	The Sett Copse Local Wildlife Site adjoins the north-eastern boundary of the parcel.
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the study parcel.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>No</i>	No part of the parcel is located within Flood Zone 3.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Battlefields located within the site boundary.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel is not in close proximity to the Thames Basin Heath SPA.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are two Grade II listed buildings within the study parcel: 2 Barns approximately 20 metres to east of Lower Henwick Farmhouse Lower Henwick Farmhouse
<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Scheduled Monuments within the study parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>Adjoins</i>	The Sett Copse Ancient Woodland adjoins the north western boundary of the study parcel.
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are public rights of way running along the borders of the parcel in addition to connecting the West Berkshire Community Hospital in the south to Ashmore Green and Cold Ash to the north.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no established Recreational Routes within the study parcel.

<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	Yes	The parcel contains the Lower Henwick Driving Range.
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	<p>The lower part of the parcel sits within the Thatcham historic character area. The relevant part of this area is largely characterised by 20th century housing and the modern community hospital building.</p> <p>The northern part of the site is located within the Snelsmore and Bucklebury Commons historic character area. This area is characterised by modernised open land used primarily for farming.</p>
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	<p>WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic</p> <p>-The visual role of the wooded ridge crest and slopes: Open farmland on the lower slopes contributes to a sense of separation between the elevated character area and the towns of Thatcham and Newbury in the valley below.</p> <p>-A very rural character away from major roads and urban edges: Landform and tree cover mean that away from the urban edges of Thatcham and Newbury and from the M4 there is a rapid transition upslope to a more intimate rural landscape, with small traditional villages and farmsteads and dark skies.</p> <p>-Recreational value: the strong network of public rights of way in proximity to the large settlements of Newbury and Thatcham.</p> <p>-The strategy states: “5) <i>Retain the distinction between and individual identity of settlements. Retain a sense of distinction between individual settlements through a clear understanding of the role of landform, tree cover and rural buildings in characterising settings and in forming boundaries that conserve and enhance distinctions in character. Avoid extended linear development along roads, which creates a more developed character resulting in the loss of individual settlement identity....</i>”</p> <p>“6) <i>Conserve elements that mark a transition between settlement and countryside Where possible retain small, enclosed fields around villages, and farm buildings which contribute positively to rural character.</i>”</p> <p>LV1: Kennet Lower River Valley</p> <p>A small part of the area in the south falls within this character area.</p> <p>-The strategy states: ‘7) <i>Conserve the distinct identities of individual settlements: Conserve the overall sparsely settled character in the valley. Seek to avoid unsympathetic linear development and ensure that individual settlements retain their distinct identities... Conserve the role that the valley floor character plays in the setting of the individual identities of Newbury and Thatcham.</i>’</p>

	<p>Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas</p>	<p>LLCA2E: Lower Henwick Dipslopes (southern part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium to low Relevant key elements of landscape sensitivity: -Visually and physically separates Newbury from Thattham. -The area is exposed to the hard built form edge of both Newbury and Thattham. This area therefore forms an important edge to both settlements. LLCA15A: West Thattham Farmland (part of the LLCA falls within the northern part of the area) -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Forms part of the northern escarpment to the Kennet Valley. -Forms part of the open landscape separating Thattham from Newbury.</p>
	<p>Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Potential Strategic Development Sites</p>	<p><i>Area 5: Between Newbury and Thattham</i> <i>-Although the landscape sensitivity is medium-low, it is essential to maintaining the physical and visual gap between Newbury and Thattham. Both urban edges are highly visible and the LLCA is very open and exposed..”</i></p>

Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment – Whole Parcel to be assessed				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above.
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	Yes	Green	This parcel forms an essential gap between the settlements of Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Partially	Amber	8.19% Built up Area 3: Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character.
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Although Newbury is a historic town, there are no historic designations adjacent or close to this parcel.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	Yes	Green	This parcel forms an essential gap between the settlements of Newbury and Thatcham, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area)	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Yes	Green	The area provides a driving range (golf) and horse keeping/riding related facilities. It also provides a public right of way for walking and related activities.
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	<p>Parcel 8 forms an essential gap between Newbury and Thatcham and also provides some important green infrastructure. On this basis, the entire parcel is recommended for potential Green Gap/Wedge designation.</p> <p>Landscape notes: Very rural character in the upper part of the parcel. North of Turnpike Road, the horse paddocks and driving range give an urban fringe feel but north of this the sloping agricultural fields feel very rural.</p> <p>The open field south of Turnpike Road feels exposed and open to the major road junction.</p>		

Parcel 8 Green Gaps Recommendation



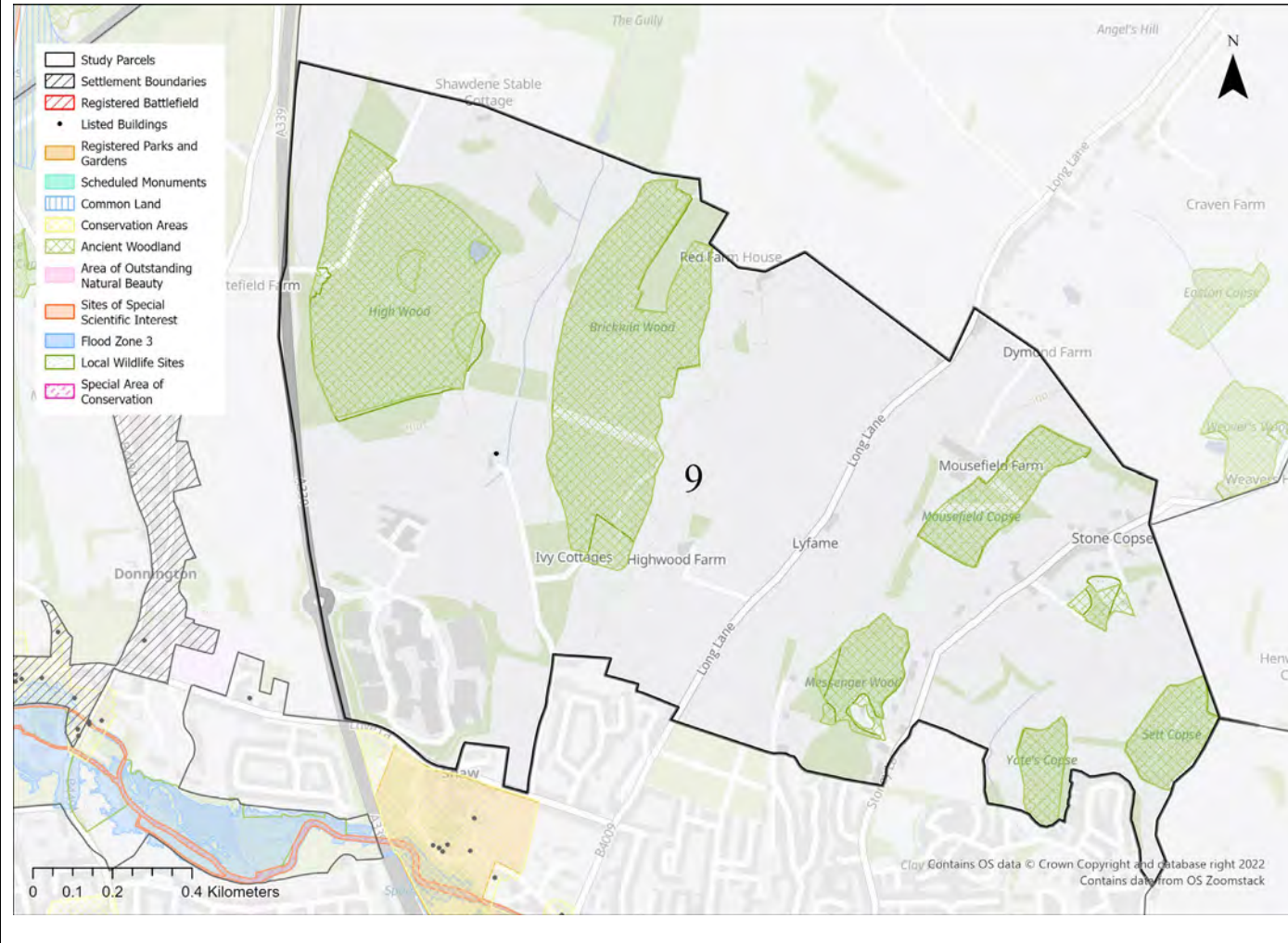
Local Green Space Assessment

LSG8A: Lower Henwick Driving Range

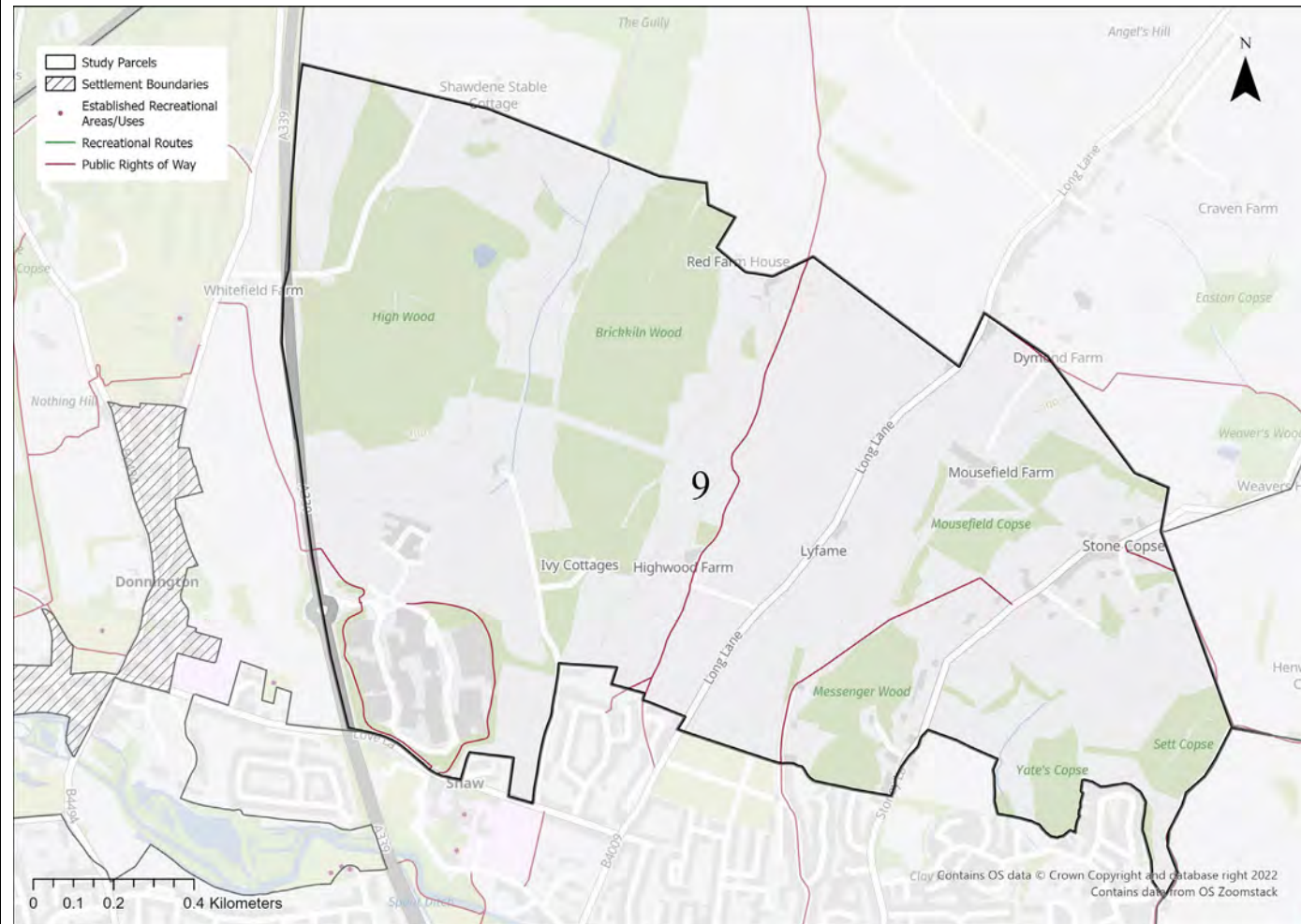
Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Partially	Amber	Partially – the driving range is accessible for those paying to use the facility
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	No	Red	No – no evidence has currently been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that it is not.
Is the area of historic significance? *Note most historical sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.	No	Red	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is regularly used for formal recreational purposes (driving range).
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Partially	Amber	Partially - the area is considered to some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity however also contains sporting use and is close to built up areas
Is the area rich in wildlife?	No	Red	No – No evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets two and partially meets two of the criteria for Local Green Space designation		

Parcel 9

Parcel 9 Constraints Map



Parcel 9 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	9	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel is located to the north of Newbury and predominantly features a combination of agricultural and wooded land.	
Parcel Size	286 ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Newbury	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	The closest settlement to the parcel is Curridge (approximately 2km to the north)	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>No</i>	No Conservation Areas are located within the parcel boundary. The Shaw Road and Crescent Conservation Area adjoins the southern boundary.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not contain any Special Areas of Conservation.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>No</i>	The parcel does not contains any Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
<i>AONB</i>	<i>No</i>	No part of the parcel overlaps with any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no areas of Common Land located within the parcel.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites located within the parcel: Stone Copse Sett Copse Yate's Copse Brick Kiln Wood High Wood Mousefield Copse Messengers Copse
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the study parcel.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>No</i>	No part of the parcel is located within Flood Zone 3.
<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Battlefields located within the study parcel.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The Thames Basin Heath SPA is not located in close proximity to the study area.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There is one Grade II listed building within the study parcel: Barn at Shaw Farm

<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no scheduled monuments located in the study parcel.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are several areas of designated Ancient Woodland within the parcel boundary: Brick Kiln Wood High Wood Messengers Copse Mousefield Copse Sett Copse Yates Copse
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are public several public footpaths and bridleways connecting the land to the north of the parcel to Newbury in the south.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no established recreational routes within the study area.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no established recreational areas or uses located within the study parcel.
<i>Landscape Commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	The study parcel is located within the Snelsmore and Bucklebury Commons historic character area. The area is characterised by dense areas of woodland and modernised agricultural landscape.
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) Local Character Areas	WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic -The visual role of the wooded ridge crest and slopes: the woodlands along the east-west ridge create a unifying backdrop for the larger settlements to the south of the area and within the AONB to the north. Views from the ridge are frequently limited by tree cover, creating a secluded character, but open locations provide views south to the southern side of the Kennet valley, and north to AONB chalk downland rising to a wooded ridge. Open farmland on the lower slopes contributes to a sense of separation between the elevated character area and the towns of Thatcham and Newbury in the valley below. -The varied land cover mosaic and important habitats: including valley woodlands, wooded ridgelines, heathland, rivers and varied field pattern contribute to an interesting and intimate landscape. -A very rural character away from major roads and urban edges: Landform and tree cover mean that away from the urban edges of Thatcham and Newbury and from the M4 there is a rapid transition upslope to a more intimate rural landscape, with small traditional villages and

		<p>farmsteads and dark skies. The transition in character along Stoney Lane between Shaw and Ashmore Green is an example of this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recreational value: the strong network of public rights of way in proximity to the large settlements of Newbury and Thatcham. -The role of woodland in limiting urban influence. -The strategy states: “5) <i>Retain a sense of distinction between individual settlements through a clear understanding of the role of landform, tree cover and rural buildings in characterising settings and in forming boundaries that conserve and enhance distinctions in character – e.g. the historic farmstead at Henwick, along a rural lane, contained by tree cover and on rising ground, marks a rapid change to a rural landscape from the nearby edge of Thatcham. Avoid extended linear development along roads, which creates a more developed character resulting in the loss of individual settlement identity...</i>” “6) <i>Conserve elements that mark a transition between settlement and countryside Where possible retain small, enclosed fields around villages, and farm buildings which contribute positively to rural character.</i>” <p>FC4: Winterbourne Farmed Chalk Mosaic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Woodlands and strongly wooded horizons: the wooded context helps integrate settlements within the landscape, and creates a unifying backdrop for the area, which is visible from many other areas in the district. The woodland restricts views within the area, and creates an enclosed landscape. -Rural character away from major roads and urban edges: there is a rapid transition to a more intimate rural landscape. -Winding rural roads and sunken lanes, lined by overgrown hedgerows and wide grass verges contribute to the area’s rural feel, even in close proximity to Newbury. -The strategy states: “7) <i>Maintain the rural settlement character... formed of small hamlets and loose linear settlements...</i>”
	<p>Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas</p>	<p>LLCA15A: West Thatcham Farmland (part of the LLCA falls within the eastern part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Contributes to the open landscape separating Thatcham from Newbury, to the south east. -Strong visual and landscape links with the remainder of the east-west ridge. <p>LLCA11B: Mousefield Wooded Lowland (central part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium to low -Strong connectivity with the wooded ridge north of Newbury and Thatcham. -Strong contrast between the built up area of Newbury to the south, and the open countryside.

		<p>LLCA14B: Shaw Farm Plateau Edge (western/central part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium -Strongly rural character in contrast to built up area of Newbury to the south, with an immediate sense of open countryside along Long Lane on leaving the town. -Woodland on higher ground within and just outside area visually prominent from within and outside area. <p>LLCA2F: Shaw Farm Dipslopes (western part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium to low -Open countryside in strong contrast to built up areas to south, somewhat eroded by presence of Vodafone headquarters. <p>LLCA13A: Brickkiln Wood (central part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium to high -Prominent area of semi natural woodland, part of the wooded ridge north of Newbury/Thatcham. -Forms part of the backdrop in views from the north of Newbury.
	Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Potential Strategic Development Sites	<p>Area 4: North Newbury</p> <p>Southern parts of local landscape character areas 2F, 11B and 14B. Area 2F has a medium to low overall landscape sensitivity, and medium wider sensitivity. It has a poor landscape structure, and its character of open countryside in contrast to the built up area to the south is rather diminished by the presence of the large Vodafone headquarters and undistinguished and prominent development to the west of Oxford Road. However, its openness is important in helping to maintain the character of Donnington village as separate from Newbury, and Shaw Farm Road in the east of the area has more features of seclusion and stronger rural character. Recommendation: development in Area 2F could be acceptable provided that the integrity of Donnington village can be maintained, and that the character of Shaw Farm Road can be protected.</p>

Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score /Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	No	Red	1: A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Yes	Green	5.23% 4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No	Red	Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

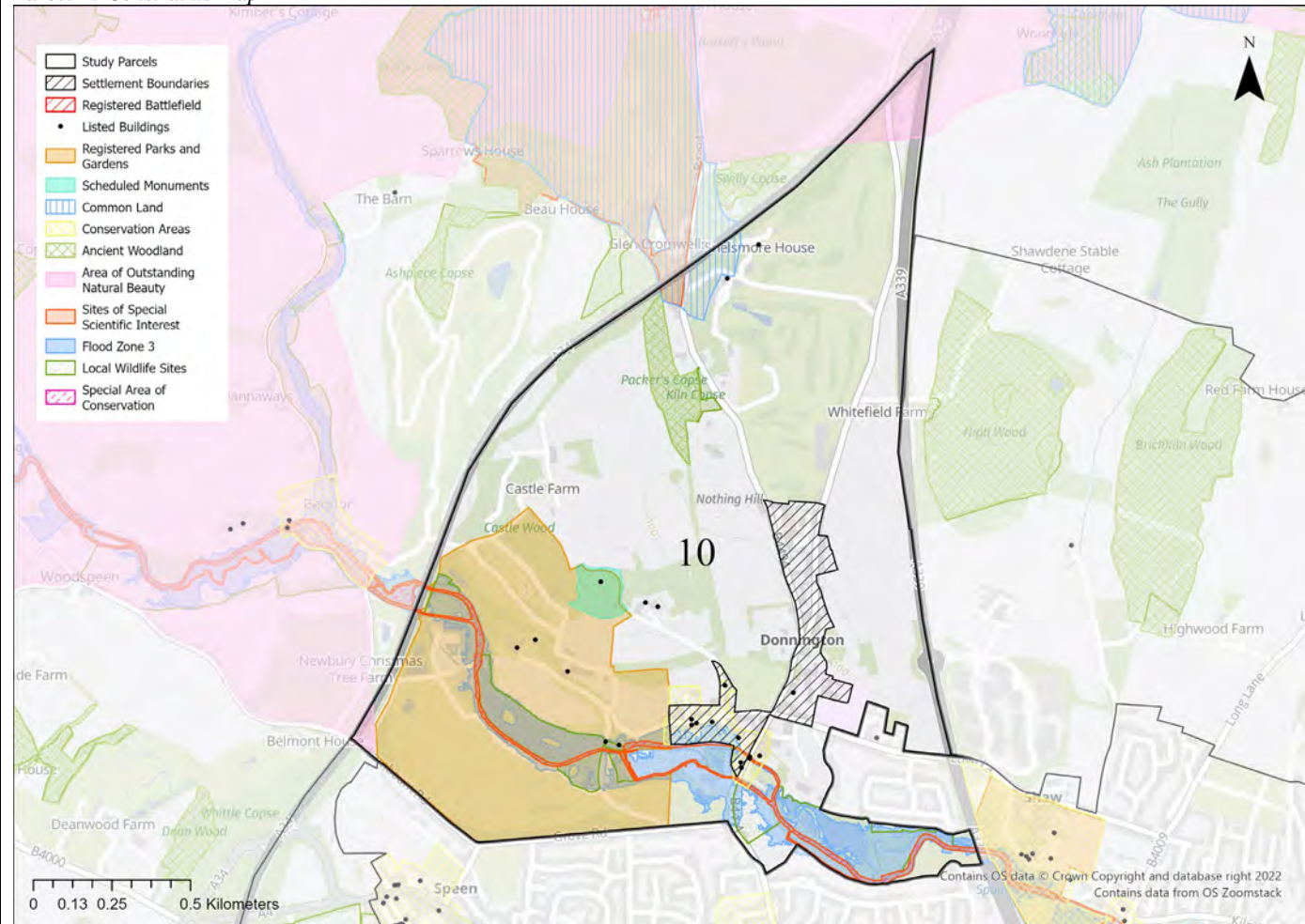
Question	Answer	Score /Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	No	Red	A less essential gap between settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Amber	The area provides rights of way for walking and related activities and general access to the countryside
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	Parcel 9 does not provide an essential gap between settlements therefore a Green Gap/Wedge designation is not recommended.		

Local Green Space Assessment

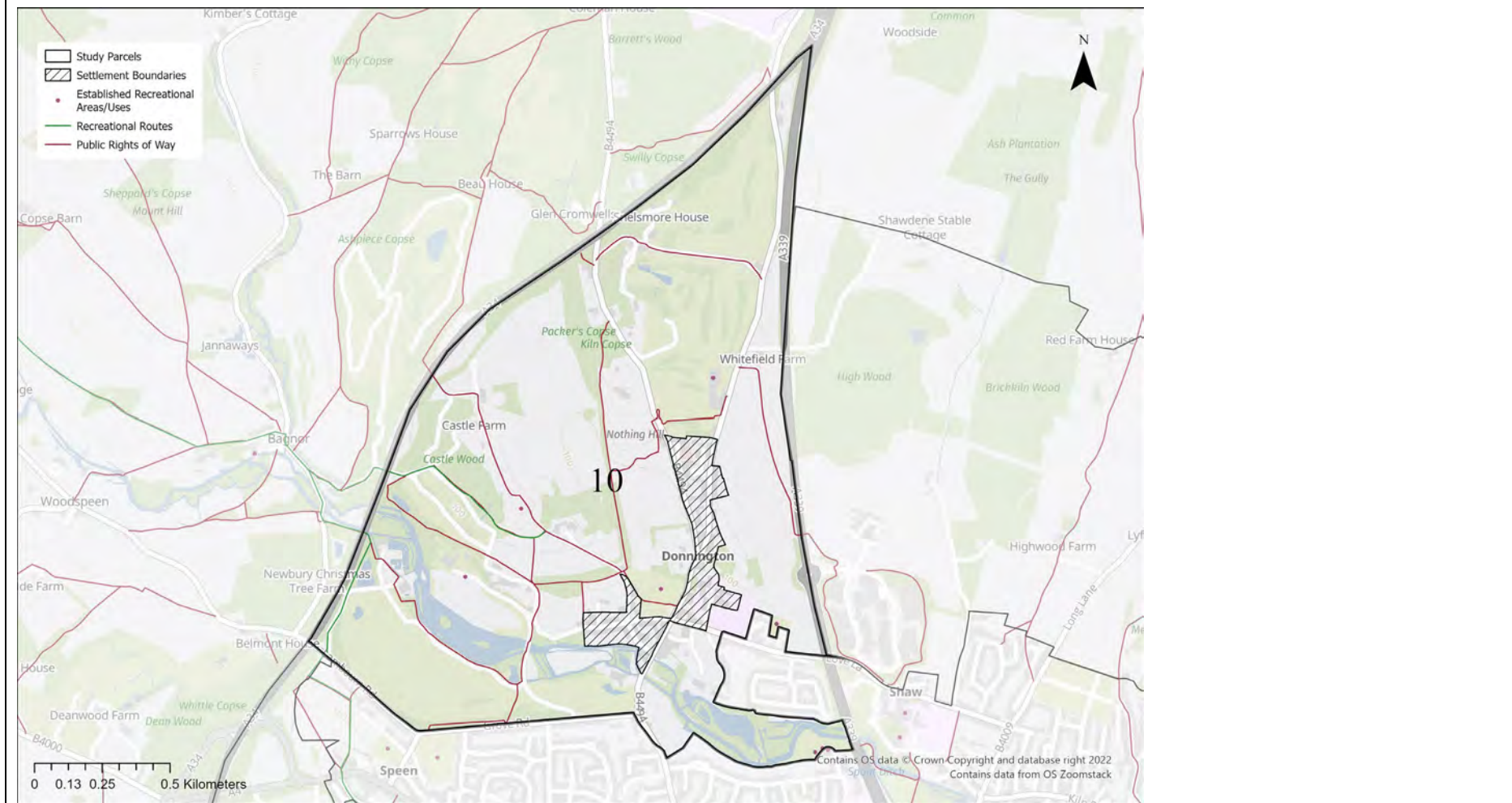
No potential areas for LGS Assessment identified in this parcel

Parcel 10

Parcel 10 Constraints Map



Parcel 10 Movement Map



Parcel Ref	10	
Parcel Name/Description	The parcel covers the north-west area of Newbury and contains the settlement of Donnington.	
Parcel Size	281 ha	
Parcel Adjoins	Newbury	
Distance to nearest settlement (Gap)	Donnington is located within the study parcel, approximately 60m from the settlement boundary of Newbury. Stockcross is located approximately 1.7km to the west.	
Parcel Includes:		
<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Donnington Village Conservation Area is located within the study parcel.
<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>	<i>No</i>	No Special Areas of Conservation are located within the study parcel.
<i>SSSI</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The Snelsmore Common and River Lambourn Sites of Special Scientific Interest are both partially located within the study parcel.
<i>AONB</i>	<i>Yes</i>	A small part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located within the study parcel.
<i>Common Land</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There is a slight overlap between the Snelsmore Common and the north-western border of the study area.
<i>Local Wildlife Site</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites located within the study parcel: Packer's and Kiln Copse Donnington Grove Field Newton's Lane Field Donnington Grove Park Mill Pond Field Meadows and Wetlands near Donnington
<i>Registered Parks and Gardens</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The Grade II listed Donnington Grove Registered Park and Garden is located in the south-western corner of the parcel.
<i>Flood zone 3</i>	<i>Yes</i>	The River Kennet runs through the southern half of the study parcel and consequently much of the parcel is located in Flood Zone 3.

<i>Registered battlefields</i>	<i>No</i>	There are no Registered Battlefields located in the study parcel.
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA</i>	<i>No</i>	The Thames Basin Heath SPA is not located within close proximity of the parcel.
<i>Listed Building(s)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<p>There is a range of listed buildings located within the study parcel:</p> <p>Grade II:</p> <p>1, Castle Lane Boundary wall to the Priory including gatepiers and gates Bridge over lake approximately 400 metres to southeast of Donnington Grove Brook House Dene Cottages Donnington Castle House Donnington Dene Fishing lodge on north bank of River Lambourn approximately 420 metres to southeast of Donnington Grove Garden house approximately 35 metres to northeast of Donnington Grove Ivy Cottage Lockett's Bridge Meadow Way Milestone approximately 30 metres to south of Donnington Hospital Snelsmore House Stable Block approximately 150 Metres to east of Donnington Grove Stables approximately 20 Metres to west of Donnington Castle House The Old Tannery The Priory Tonayne House and Coach House adjoining to north</p> <p>Grade II*</p> <p>Donnington Grove Donnington Hospital</p> <p>Grade I:</p> <p>Donnington Castle</p>

<i>Scheduled Monuments</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There is one Scheduled Monument located within the study parcel: Donnington Castle: a quadrangular castle and 17th century fieldwork.
<i>Ancient Woodland</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There is one area of Ancient Woodland located within the study parcel: Kiln Copse/Packer's Copse
<i>Public Rights of Way</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There is a dense network of public footpaths connecting Donnington to Newbury but also around the various natural and historic features within the study parcel, most notably the area around Donnington Castle.
<i>Recreational Routes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Parts of the Lambourn Valley Way run through the parcel.
<i>Established recreational areas/other uses (type to be specified)</i>	<i>Yes</i>	There are a number of established recreational areas and uses within the study parcel: Donnington Castle Donnington Golf Course Donnington Grove Golf and Country Club Shaw-cum-Donnington Recreation Ground Newbury Allotments Newbury Tennis Courts Almond Avenue Recreation Ground The Castle School sports facilities
<i>Landscape commentary</i>	Historic Environment Characterisation (2007)	The majority of the study area is located within the Newbury historic character area, which covers the suburban Speen and the Donnington settlement. The southern part of the site is located within the Kennet Valley West character area, featuring modernised agricultural fields and historic woodland.
	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019)	FC4: Winterbourne Farmed Chalk Mosaic [a small part of the northern tip of the area falls within the AONB] -Nationally valued landscape which forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB. Special qualities which underpin the designation in this character area include the mosaic of ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations, remnant heathland and more open farmland areas where sunken lanes heighten the sense of seclusion.

	Local Character Areas	<p>-Woodlands and strongly wooded horizons: the wooded context helps integrate settlements within the landscape, and creates a unifying backdrop for the area, which is visible from many other areas in the district. The woodland restricts views within the area, and creates an enclosed landscape.</p> <p>-Rural character away from major roads and urban edges: there is a rapid transition to a more intimate rural landscape.</p> <p>-Winding rural roads and sunken lanes, lined by overgrown hedgerows and wide grass verges contribute to the area’s rural feel, even in close proximity to Newbury.</p> <p>-Historic landscape character: historical and archaeological features combine with the parkland areas and woodland limiting urban influence to evoke a perception of strong time-depth in the landscape.</p> <p>-The strategy states: “7) <i>Maintain the rural settlement character... formed of small hamlets and loose linear settlements...</i>”</p> <p>UV2: Lambourn Upper Valley Floor A small part of this LCA runs through the northern part of the area.</p> <p>-Ecologically valuable habitats along the river corridor.</p> <p>-Semi-enclosed character of the valley, with high levels of tranquillity. A sense of remoteness is experienced within the valley, which feels far removed from Newbury.</p> <p>-Important heritage and archaeological features.</p> <p>-Strongly rural character, with limited development.</p> <p>-Lambourn Valley Way along the river corridor, an important and popular recreational trail.</p> <p>-The strategy states: “7) <i>Conserve the distinct character and individual identities of settlements within the valley ...</i>”</p> <p>A very small part of WH3 Wickham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic falls within the area, however it is occupied by golf course. Any valued features are already covered by UV2 and FC4.</p>
	Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Local Landscape Character Areas	<p>LLCA2F: Shaw Farm Dipslopes (eastern part of the area)</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium to low</p> <p>-Open area helps to maintain character of Donnington as separate from Newbury.</p> <p>LLCA14C: Donnington Plateau Edge (central part of the area)</p> <p>-Overall sensitivity: Medium</p> <p>-Views to Donnington Castle and Park.</p> <p>-Donnington maintains its village character in the centre of the settlement, and the village is separated from Newbury by an important corridor of open landscape along the River Lambourn. -Donnington is barely separated from the Love Lane area of Newbury. The village maintains its separate identity, but this would be under threat if there were further development within or near the area.</p> <p>-Good visual links with the higher ground to the east and west, and lower ground to the east, and to a lesser extent south in the Lambourn valley.</p>

		<p>LLCA18A: Donnington Park (south western part of the area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overall sensitivity: Medium to high -Long and important views south to and from Donnington Castle, and views to southern valley side. -Secluded from Newbury. -Strong visual links with the higher ground to the south, and the castle is a major landmark feature from surrounding areas including the A34.
	<p>Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Potential Strategic Development Sites</p>	<p>Area 4: North Newbury</p> <p>Southern parts of local landscape character areas 2F, 11B and 14B. Area 2F has a medium to low overall landscape sensitivity, and medium wider sensitivity. It has a poor landscape structure, and its character of open countryside in contrast to the built up area to the south is rather diminished by the presence of the large Vodafone headquarters and undistinguished and prominent development to the west of Oxford Road. However, its openness is important in helping to maintain the character of Donnington village as separate from Newbury, and Shaw Farm Road in the east of the area has more features of seclusion and stronger rural character.</p> <p>Recommendation: development in Area 2F could be acceptable provided that the integrity of Donnington village can be maintained, and that the character of Shaw Farm Road can be protected.</p>

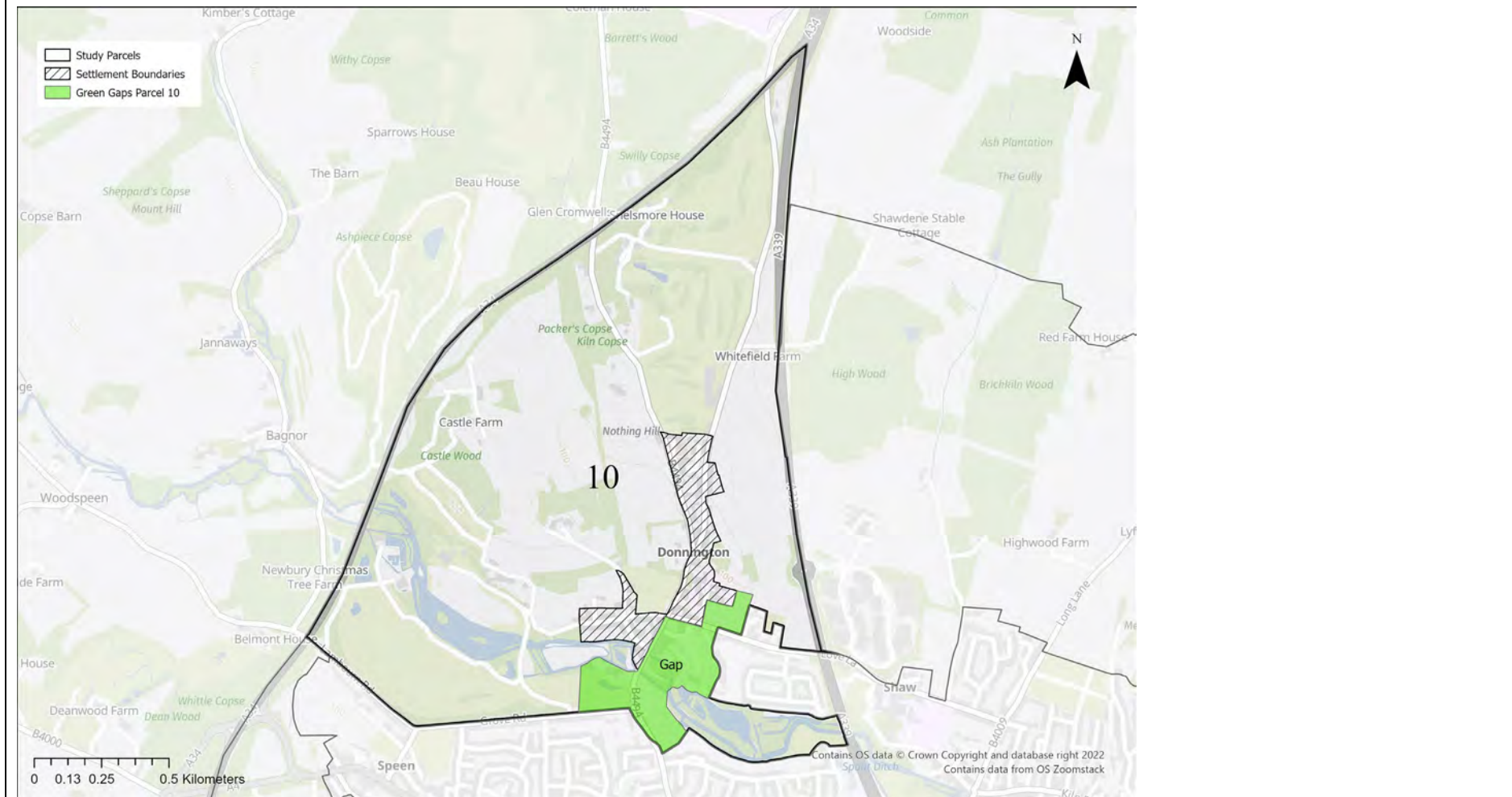
Site Assessment

Green Belt Assessment				
Purpose	Question	Answer	Score /Rating	Notes
Purpose 1	Is the land at the edge of one or more large built up areas?	No	Red	No parcels in this study are located at the edge of one or more 'large built up areas'.
	Does the parcel prevent the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary?	No	Red	As above
Purpose 2	Does the parcel prevent development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.	Partially	Amber	Part of the parcel, the area between Newbury and Donnington is an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Purpose 3	Does the parcel protect the openness of the countryside and is not covered by significant development.	Partially	Amber	8.34% 3: Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character.
Purpose 4	To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Partially	Amber	Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, or protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.
Purpose 5	To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	No	Red	Very few sites (which are derelict/vacant) remain in the built up area of Thatcham or Newbury. Two large sites do offer future significant regeneration opportunities in Newbury. The availability of greenfield sites is not considered to contribute significantly to urban regeneration in this area
Parcel Summary	Summary of how many purposes this parcel meets and the scores. Any other important notes to summarise			

Green Gap/Wedge Assessment

Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Does the area prevent development that would result in the merging or significant erosion of the gap between neighbouring settlements	Partially	Amber	Part of the parcel, the area between Newbury and Donnington is an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Does the area provides a 'green lung' into urban areas (i.e. penetrating from open countryside into an urban area)	No	Red	This parcel does not provide a green lung into an urban area.
Provides essential green infrastructure	Partially	Amber	The area provides rights of way for walking and related activities and general access to the countryside. It also contains two golf courses, and the designated heritage assets of Donnington Castle and Donnington Grove Historic Park and Garden.
Green Gap/Wedge Assessment Summary	The area between Newbury and Donnington is an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. The gap is already small and new development which is under construction (adjacent to the A339) is eroding this gap further. On this basis, the area is recommended for potential Green Gap/Wedge designation		

Parcel 10 Green Gaps Recommendation



Local Green Space Assessment

LGS 10A: Newbury Tennis Courts, Playground and recreation ground (off Poplar Place)

Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is fully accessible to the public with long term access (such as rights of way) already established
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	No	Red	No – no evidence has been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community. However, this does not mean that it is not.
Is the area of historic significance? *Note most historical sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.	No	Red	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance.
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is regularly used for formal recreational purposes. It includes a recreation ground, tennis courts and children’s play park.
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Partially	Amber	Partially - the area is considered to some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity however sports and recreational uses are also taking place.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	Partially	Amber	7. Partially – Some/limited evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place. The area is adjacent to the river and a biodiversity opportunity area. It is also close to a local wildlife site.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets three and partially meets two of the criteria for Local Green Space designation.		

LGS 10B: Donnington Cricket Club and Playground

Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Yes	Green	Yes – the Cricket Club and Playground is fully accessible to the public with long term access (such as rights of way) already established.
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Yes	Green	Yes - the area is within reasonable walking distance (15 mins) of a residential area.
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	No	Red	No – no evidence has currently been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that it is not.
Is the area of historic significance? *Note most historical sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.	No	Red	No – the area is not known to have any historic significance
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes – the area is regularly used for formal recreational purposes including a children’s play area and cricket pitch
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Partially	Amber	Partially - the area is considered to some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity however sports uses and a playground are also taking place here.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	No	Red	No – No evidence to suggest the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets three and partially meets one of the criteria for Local Green Space designation.		

LGS 10C: Donnington Valley Golf Course

Local Green Space Assessment			
Question	Answer	Score/Rating	Notes
Is the area accessible to the public?	Partially	Amber	Partially – the golf course is accessible for paying customers.
Is the area within reasonable proximity to an established residential area?	Partially	Amber	Partially - the area is within 15-30 minutes walking distance of the edge of Donnington
Is the area demonstrably special and does it hold particular local significance	No	Red	No – no evidence has currently been submitted to show that this area is considered to be special to the local community. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that it is not.
Is the area of historic significance? *Note most historical sites will already have some form of designation and therefore will not be assessed.	Yes	Green	Golf clubhouse is grade II listed building (Snelsmore House)
Is the area used for recreational purposes?	Yes	Green	Yes the area is regularly used for formal recreational purposes such as a playing field (golf)
Does the area provide a place of particular tranquillity?	Partially	Amber	Access not possible – assessment made by desktop review. Partially – the area is <u>expected</u> to have some levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity due to location and use, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet. However, sporting activities will also be taking place here.
Is the area rich in wildlife?	Partially	Amber	Access not possible – assessment made by desktop review. Part of the golf course are a biodiversity opportunity areas therefore it is likely that the area would include the presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.
Local Green Space Summary	This area meets two and partially meets four of the criteria for Local Green Space designation. However, it is approximately 25-30 minutes walk from the edge of Donnington meaning it does not fully meet the reasonable proximity to an established residential area which is key criteria for LGS.		