



ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review – Part 1

September 2013

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1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of the Green Belt Review

- 1.1.1 This Review seeks to address whether the District's objectively assessed need for development can be accommodated within the constraints created by the Green Belt. It explores the relationship between the strategy and the purposes of the Green Belt. While the focus in recent decades has been to concentrate development into existing built-up areas utilising previously developed land, there is a finite amount of this type of land available, resulting in a need to explore options on the edges of the existing towns or even a new settlement. As four of the five main towns in East Herts are surrounded by Green Belt this would result in the need to explore the potential for Green Belt land to accommodate some development. The research undertaken throughout the plan-making process provides evidence of an objectively assessed need for new development. The only appropriate time to review Green Belt boundaries is in response to a justified objectively assessed need. At the same time, without a Green Belt Review there could be no development strategy.
- 1.1.2 Green Belts have always been a highly emotive subject, and as a policy, has arguably been one of the most successful policies in UK Planning history. As such, consecutive Governments have attached great importance to Green Belts. Retaining the principles set out in the well-established but now revoked Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the policy requirements for Green Belts (paragraphs 79 to 92): *'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.'*
- 1.1.3 Green Belts serve five purposes:
- *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
 - *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
 - *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
 - *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
 - *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*
- 1.1.4 This Review will address each of these purposes in order to determine which Green Belt sites are suitable, and sequentially preferable to release for strategic development needs. It assesses the district's Green Belt at a variety of levels, from a district-wide level down to specific sites and assigns a score for each in order to aid comparison. Commentary has been included where this helps to clarify discrepancies or raise site-specific issues that will need to be considered.
- 1.1.5 The NPPF sets out some of the functions of the Green Belt and requires local planning authorities to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the

Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land (paragraph 81). It also defines the role of Green Belts in promoting sustainable patterns of development: *'When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development'* (paragraph 84). This Review considers these issues by considering the role of the district's Green Belt from a district-wide to site specific level, making recommendations to the emerging development strategy as appropriate.

1.1.6 Local planning authorities are required to establish Green Belt boundaries in their local plans to set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policies. Green Belt boundaries should only be established as part of the preparation or review of a local plan and should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. As such, it is important that boundaries are established with regard to their intended permanence, enduring beyond the emerging plan period. There are six criteria within the NPPF that should be considered when defining Green Belt boundaries. Local planning authorities should:

- *Ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- *Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- *Where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- *Make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;*
- *Satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and*
- *Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent (NPPF, 2012, paragraph 85).*

1.1.7 Addressing each of these points in turn; as has already been stated, there is an identified need for development within East Herts over the emerging plan period. Through the sieving process a large number of potential development locations have been discounted for various reasons, leaving a reasonable shortlist of options. This Review as a whole seeks to determine whether land within the shortlist should be kept permanently open for Green Belt purposes. It also suggests subsequent alterations to the Green Belt boundary where necessary, that will not need altering at the end of the development plan period, and which are defined clearly using recognisable physical features which are likely to be permanent. The Review therefore makes recommendations of where alterations to the Green Belt boundary will be needed in order to accommodate the needs identified, in order to achieve the delivery of the development strategy in the District Plan.

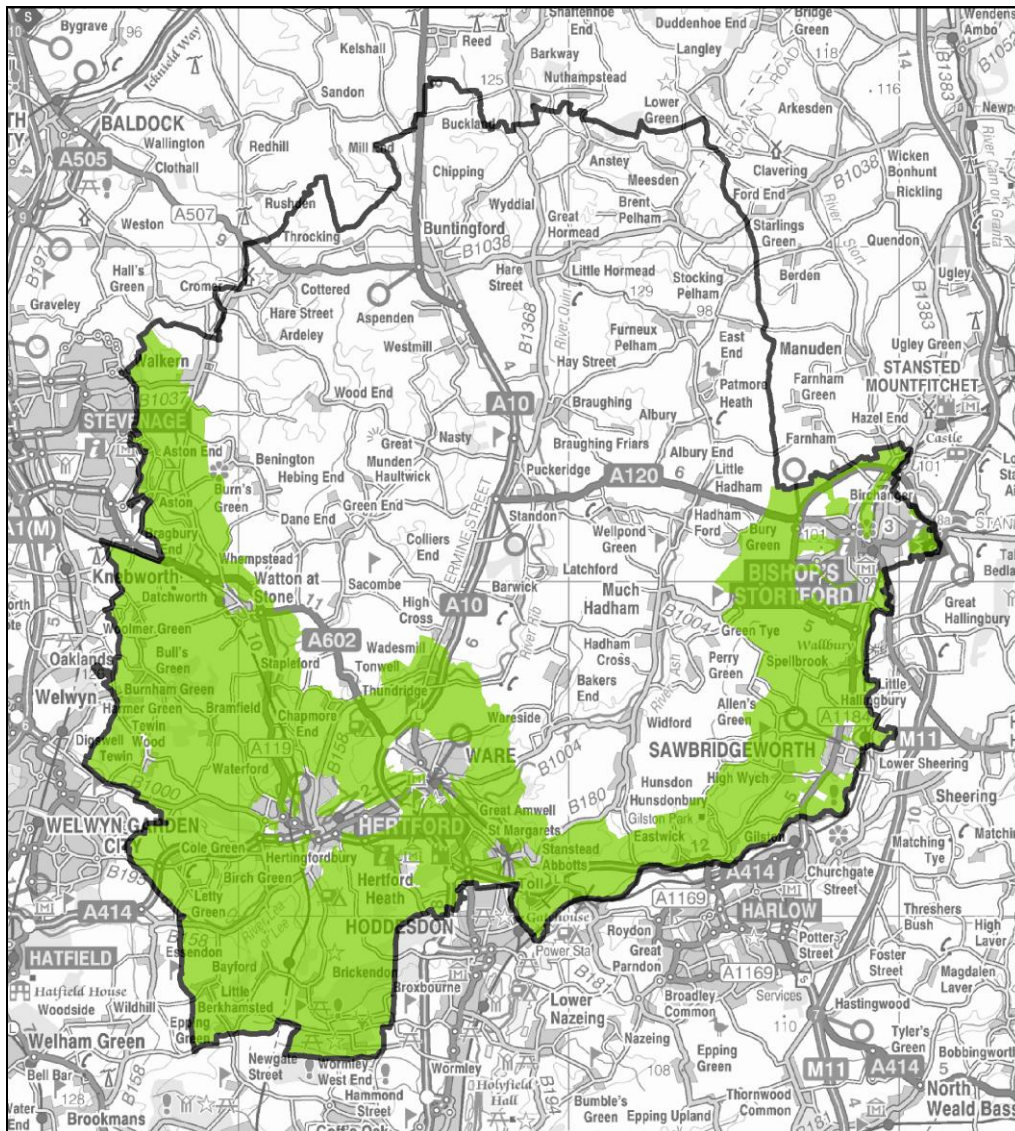
1.1.8 It is important that the Green Belt Review forms an integrated part of the development strategy. Without Green Belt boundary amendments, the

strategy cannot be delivered. At the same time, there is no need for a Green Belt Review unless a development strategy determines and justifies the need to review the Green Belt. As such, the Review seeks to estimate the approximate quantum of development that could occur as a result of the recommended boundary amendments which will be used to inform the development strategy. The findings of the Review are presented in the form of detailed tables with supporting maps and commentary.

1.2 Background to the Review

- 1.2.1 Approximately the southern third of the district lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt (17,530 hectares). The remainder of the district is covered by the 2007 Local Plan Second Review policy area of 'Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt'. Four of the district's main towns are surrounded by Green Belt; Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware (see Figure 1.1).
- 1.2.2 In the absence of a regional or county-wide plan, the duty to plan for Green Belts falls to the local planning authority, which should set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy and determine the appropriateness of existing Green Belt boundaries during the review of a local plan. The Green Belt policy should consider the ability of Green Belt boundaries to remain effective for the time period proposed for the District Plan and beyond i.e. its permanence. *'Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances'* (NPPF, 2012, paragraph 83).
- 1.2.3 The Green Belt in East Herts has been established since the 1970's to the south of Hertford and Ware, and since 1993 has extended to wrap around Bishop's Stortford. Since then there have been few changes to the Green Belt in the district. Minor alterations have typically occurred on the urban fringe when digitisation of the proposals map enabled the boundary to be 'neatened'. The 2007 Local Plan Second Review proposed some alterations to the Green Belt to facilitate education planning to the south of Bishop's Stortford, but this was not accepted by the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector.
- 1.2.4 The NPPF states that *'when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary'* (NPPF, 2012, paragraph 84).

Figure 1.1: Designated Green Belt in East Herts District (Local Plan Review 2007)



1.2.5 Given that East Herts is a very large district with a relatively large rural area which lies beyond the Green Belt, a policy of general restraint has been applied across the district. The local policy is almost identical to Green Belt policy, and this approach has been approved by Inspectors since the 1993 Local Plan. In response to the Issues and Options consultation, many comments were received to the effect that the Green Belt should not be altered and this approach to restraint should remain. However, as the consultation document explained; *‘whilst we acknowledge that two-thirds of the district is not covered by Green Belt, we do not think that it would be either realistic or sustainable to propose a development strategy option which seeks to locate development exclusively outside the Green Belt’* (Issues and Options Consultation Document, 2010, Section 3.6).

1.2.6 We know that there is a finite amount of brownfield or previously developed land within the urban areas of our towns. Future recycling of urban land is

likely to take the form of intensification of existing buildings or estates, the act of which could create increased demand for existing services and facilities, but due to the constrained nature of such sites these developments tend not to be able to provide essential community facilities or infrastructure on site. Since four of the district's five towns and many of the villages are surrounded by Green Belt, it is doubtful whether it is possible to meet the requirement to 'promote sustainable patterns of development' without reviewing the Green Belt and extending existing settlements. It would also be very difficult and expensive to provide adequate supporting infrastructure if all development were to take place beyond the Green Belt, given that the settlements outside the Green Belt areas are relatively small.

- 1.2.7 If development in East Herts was located solely within or around Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware, i.e. within the Green Belt, this would undermine the ability of villages and the town of Buntingford to maintain a viable community. It would also result in additional development pressure on the towns.
- 1.2.8 It is important to recognise that the Green Belt is simply a strategic planning tool used to ensure that the fundamental aim and the five purposes of the Green Belt are met. Given the need for development in the district, it is difficult to balance both protecting the Green Belt and enabling sustainable development. The most proactive approach is to assess Green Belt principles, and see where the most important areas of Green Belt lie, and then review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with this assessment. If there is no option but to develop in the Green Belt, the best locations need to be sought.
- 1.2.9 It is important to note that just because a location is within the Green Belt this does not, for the purposes of strategic planning, preclude the potential for development to be located there. Nor would this assessment be the sole consideration when developing the strategy. In response to a Judicial Review of an application for Green Belt development in St Albans¹, a High Court Judge stated that *"Green Belt policy is not an outright prohibition on development in the Green Belt. Rather it is a prohibition on inappropriate development in the absence of very special circumstances"* (paragraph 29). Whether a location forms part of the development strategy or not would depend on the balance of many strategic planning factors. This assessment therefore seeks to inform whether the development strategy would be possible in relation to Green Belt principles.

1.3 Approach taken for the East Herts Green Belt Review

- 1.3.1 Following a desk-based study into a number of Green Belt reviews completed over recent years, a hybrid methodology has been established in order to determine what the strategic needs of the district are in terms of its Green Belt. The Review takes the form of five parts.

¹ Hunston Properties Ltd vs' Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and St Albans City and District Council, 5.9.2013)

- Part 1 – District-Wide Review
- Part 2 – Detail Site Assessment and Boundary Review
- Part 3 – Major Developed Sites
- Part 4 – Minor Boundary Amendments
- Part 5 – New Green Belt
- Part 6 – Long Term Needs

1.3.2 Each part of this review has been designed in a bespoke manner and has been fully integrated with the preparation of the development strategy. The methodology for Part 1 of the Review is straightforward and can be presented as a stand-alone piece of work. Part 2 of the Review which consists of a detailed site assessment comprises two stages: firstly, to assess how an area of search or a sub-area within it performs its Green Belt role against the five Green Belt purposes and therefore whether the area should be retained as Green Belt or could be considered for release in response to a need for development; secondly, a consideration of potential boundaries that could be used to reinforce the Green Belt if a release were to occur in this location. The connection between the strategy selection process and the Green Belt Review is fairly complicated and is explained in more detail in Part 2 of the Review. In this way, this review illustrates a narrative of how Green Belt considerations have been managed in relation to the preparation of the District Plan.

1.3.3 In line with the requirements of the NPPF, the Review details in Parts 3, 4, 5 and 6 how the development strategy will approach major developed sites within the Green Belt, minor amendments to inner boundaries as a result of enhancements to digital mapping technology, new or compensatory Green Belts and any potential requirements for Green Belt allocations within or beyond the emerging plan period. These sections will be presented as part of the overall approach to Green Belt alongside the proposed development strategy.

1.4 Review of Existing Green Belt Review Methodologies

1.4.1 In order to inform this Review, a desk-based assessment has been undertaken of the approach taken by neighbouring authorities and of similar Reviews undertaken over the last few years. There are few consultancies that specialise in Green Belt Reviews, and without a standard national approach they tend to refer to the approaches taken in existing Reviews. Each Review however is adapted to meet the specific circumstances of the authority and as such no one methodology is the same.

1.4.2 Broxbourne Council undertook an inner boundary review in 2008 (Prospect Planning) and a two stage Review of the Green Belt in 2008 (updated in 2010) by Scott Wilson. It is presumed that there will be an update presented as part of their anticipated forthcoming revised draft Local Plan. Both studies were undertaken in the policy context of PPG2 and the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England. The Scott Wilson methodology is very similar to the approach East Herts Council has taken, differing only in that each area is

scored against weighted criteria.

- 1.4.3 Uttlesford District Council undertook a Green Belt Boundary Scoping Report in 2011 in order to consider the principle of allocating land for development within the part of their district which is currently within the Green Belt. It is a fairly limited Report, focussing largely on their response to the East Herts Issues and Options Consultation. As none of the options presented by Uttlesford District Council so far are located within the small strip of Green Belt which lies across the southern edge of the district, the Scoping Report identifies no need to review the Green Belt in response to their own needs.
- 1.4.4 Welwyn Hatfield Council has joined with St Albans City and District Council and Dacorum Borough Council to undertake a Green Belt Review. The methodology is very similar to that used for the East Herts Green Belt Review. Part 1 of the joint Review will be published in the next few months. The study area extends eastwards from Welwyn Garden City to include land at Panshanger Park and up to the urban edge of Hertford. Whilst this approach is logical it will be necessary to ensure that any recommendations presented in the Review are considered carefully in the light of the Duty to Co-operate.
- 1.4.5 Stevenage Borough Council published Part 1 of their Green Belt Review as part of their Local Plan 1st Consultation earlier this year. Their methodology is again very similar. In responding to Stevenage's consultation East Herts Council identified a number of concerns over the consistency of the scoring of sites within the Green Belt to the east of the town as this is largely within East Herts District. Part 2 of the Stevenage Green Belt Review will need to contain a detailed site assessment in response to the emerging development strategy for Stevenage. It will be necessary to ensure that any recommendations presented in the Stevenage Review are considered carefully in the light of the Duty to Co-operate.
- 1.4.6 North Herts District Council has identified a need for a Green Belt Review and has expressed a desire to extend the Green Belt in order to provide further protection in strategic gaps between settlements. So far Green Belt issues have been covered in a number of technical documents, but not in the form of a single Green Belt Review.

2. District-Wide Review

2.1 Previous Technical Work on Green Belt

- 2.1.1 Chapter 1 of the Strategy Supporting Document sets out the iterative process guiding the preparation of the District Plan. It explains how the Council has considered various scales and types of development across the entire district, moving towards smaller scales of development at more specific locations or Areas of Search. The first stage of the Plan preparation involved identifying the strategic issues faced by the district and how the district plan could help resolve those issues. Chapter 2 of the Strategy Supporting Document details these issues in the form of Strategic Overviews. The Green Belt acts as a clear constraint to be considered in the preparation of the development strategy. The Green Belt Strategic Overview identified the need for a Green Belt Review and set out how the Green Belt would be assessed as part of the Plan preparation processes.
- 2.1.2 Chapter 3 of the Strategy Supporting Document sets out the process of identifying and refining Areas of Search for different scales of development. Carried out in three stages, the first stage was to identify large areas of search capable of accommodating a new settlement of approximately 5,000 dwellings. Of the fourteen areas considered, eight were discounted as being unsuitable against three criteria: transport infrastructure, settlement networks and coalescence risks. Six options were taken forward to be assessed in further detail, and as a result of this very high level assessment, three smaller areas of search were identified adjacent to three neighbouring towns.
- 2.1.3 The second stage of Chapter 3 was to create a range of criteria-based assessments against which each location was tested. 21 topics were created which included three on Green Belt issues:
- **Green Belt** – whether an area of search is within the Green Belt or not. This would not act as an absolute constraint to development, rather it sought to simply highlight the fact that further detail would need to be sought if the location was taken through to the next stage;
 - **Strategic Gaps** – whether an area of search lies in a location that forms a strategic gap between two settlements that is necessary in preventing coalescence. Strategic Gaps usually refer to neighbouring towns within the Green Belt. However, the settlement pattern in East Herts is such that the gaps between towns and nearby villages (some beyond the Green Belt) are just as important in some cases as the gaps between towns and therefore were also given consideration during this criteria-based assessment; and
 - **Boundary Limits** – whether there are clear identifiable features that could form physical or visual boundaries to any potential development within that area of search.

- 2.1.4 The third stage was the testing of each area of search (69 in total) against the criteria to give a traffic light rating. The criteria-based assessments of Strategic Gaps and Boundary Limits have informed the District-wide high level Review where it relates to the three related purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF; its role in preventing merging between towns, its role in checking unrestricted sprawl and in preventing encroachment into the countryside. The Green Belt purposes relating to historic towns and safeguarding the countryside which the high level Green Belt Review assessed are considered as part of other criteria-based assessments including Historic Assets, Designated Wildlife Sites, Landscape Character, Agricultural Land and Environmental Stewardship. The three Green Belt criteria-based assessments were undertaken at a high level and therefore formed a useful tool when sieving out unreasonable alternative development options. They also form a useful starting point for both the high-level and more detailed Green Belt Review.
- 2.1.5 The Topic Assessments carried out for Chapter 3 of the Strategy Supporting Document considered Areas of Search against three criteria. Table 2.1 below shows the criteria used for the Boundary Limit assessment. The criteria-based assessment was designed to be high-level based upon initial scale assumptions of 500 dwellings. The District-Wide Assessment subject to this Review is based upon a different set of criteria, looks at far broader areas and is designed to cover more than boundary features (see Table 2.3). The two assessments use a similar red, amber, green rating system where red denotes significant issues that would need further investigation for example. However, the reasoning behind each colour rating is different and therefore comparative areas may not score the same.

Table 2.1: Assessment Criteria used for Boundary Limit Assessment in Chapter 3 of the Strategy Supporting Document

Red	Areas that are within the Green Belt/Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and do not have a clear boundary limit to growth.
Amber	Areas that are within the Green Belt/Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, which do not have a clear boundary limit to growth in all directions.
Green	Areas that are within the Green Belt/Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and have a clear boundary limit to growth.

- 2.1.6 Chapter 4 of the Strategy Supporting Document refines this further by considering the cumulative impacts of development around a settlement. Chapter 4 takes all the criteria-based assessments and considers them in relation to each other to determine the relative importance of each issue for that particular location. For example, the lack of education capacity may be of greater importance than the fact that the location was within the Green Belt, or that the risk of flooding outweighed the fact that a location had good employment land potential. In this way Green Belt is considered as part of a balance of wider considerations.

- 2.1.7 The second stage of Chapter 4 involved evaluating the results of the Area Assessments on a town or settlement basis in order to consider the possible implications of combinations of development options on the town as a whole and to refine the assumed scales of development at each Area of Search. For example, one area of search could potentially accommodate 500 dwellings, but once this area is combined with one or more around the same town, the scale of development may be too great and the overall numbers would need to be scaled down accordingly. The results of the Settlement Evaluations are included in **Chapter 4 of the Strategy Supporting Document**.

2.2 Approach and Methodology to the District-Wide Review

- 2.2.1 This part of the Green Belt Review seeks to assess the East Herts Green Belt at a District-wide level. As the Council is undertaking this Review independently of other authorities, it is not directly taking account of other authorities published or emerging Green Belt Studies. However, the plan-preparation process as a whole will consider issues of cross-boundary development within the Strategy Supporting Document in relation to the Duty to Co-operate.
- 2.2.2 As a starting point, the district will be divided into areas based upon the boundaries established in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2007. The LCA boundaries were, where possible, made to follow identifiable features visible on the ground, or along contour lines or between fixed features where no visible features were present. This approach is consistent with the approaches used for similar Green Belt Reviews. For the purposes of this stage of the Green Belt Review some of the LCA areas are grouped where they perform similar roles in Green Belt terms. These groupings reflect physical boundaries such as major roads and landscape features where necessary. For example, the LCA divides the woodland to the south of Hertford into several LCA areas. However, the whole of this land has the same characteristic and role in Green Belt terms at this high-level, and as such have been grouped as one area for the purposes of this assessment. Similarly, larger LCA areas have been divided where a smaller land area would enable a more accurate assessment of the Green Belt purposes. Table 2.2 below shows the identification number for the district-wide assessment and the corresponding LCA identification numbers with a brief description.

Table 2.2 District Wide Assessment Areas with Corresponding Landscape Character Assessment Area

District-Wide Assessment ID	Corresponding Landscape Character Assessment Area
1	39 – Middle Beane Valley
2	38 – Aston Estate Farmland
3	40 – Bramfield – Datchworth Sloping Farmland
4	41 – Bramfield Wood, Tewin Wood and Datchworth Uplands
5	70 – Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes
6	42 – Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

7	67 – Bramfield Plain
8	68 – Lower Beane Valley
9	69 – Stonyhills
10	75 – Lower Rib Valley
11	76 – Ware Parklands
12	90 – Middle Rib Valley
13	89 – Wareside – Braughing Uplands
14	43 – Mimram Valley Parklands
15	77 – Kingsmead and Hartham Common Floodplain
16	45 – Welwyn Fringes
17	44 – Panshanger Parkland
18	66 – Cole Green and Hertingfordbury Settled Farmland
19	65 – Middle Lea Valley West
20	47, 48, 49 – Essendon – Brickendon Farmed Slopes, West End – Brickendon Wooded Slopes, Little Berkhamsted Ridge Settlements
21	63 – Bayfordbury, Brickendonbury and Balls Parkland
22	62, 57 – Broxbourne Woods Complex, Thunderfield Ridges
23	64 – Hertford Heath
24	78 – Great Amwell Ridge and Slopes
25	79, p77 – Amwell Floodplain, part Kingsmead and Hartham Common Floodplain
26	88 – Lower Ash Valley
27	80 – Rye Meads
28	81 – Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands
29	81, 82 – Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands, River Stort
30	81 – Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands
31	82 – River Stort
32	84, 82 – High Wych Slopes, River Stort
33	84 – High Wych Slopes
34	85 – Thorley Uplands
35	85 – Thorley Uplands
36	85, 82 – Thorley Uplands, River Stort
37	86 – Perry Green Uplands
38	150 – Hadhams Plateau
39	149, 151 – Bourne Brook Valley, Stort Meads
40	None – Bishop's Stortford Golf Course
41	None / Birchanger Wood and land within Uttlesford District

2.2.3 Map 2.1 below illustrates the areas used and the corresponding ID numbers.

2.2.4 Each of these areas is assessed against four of the five purposes of the Green Belt.

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Not assessed:

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

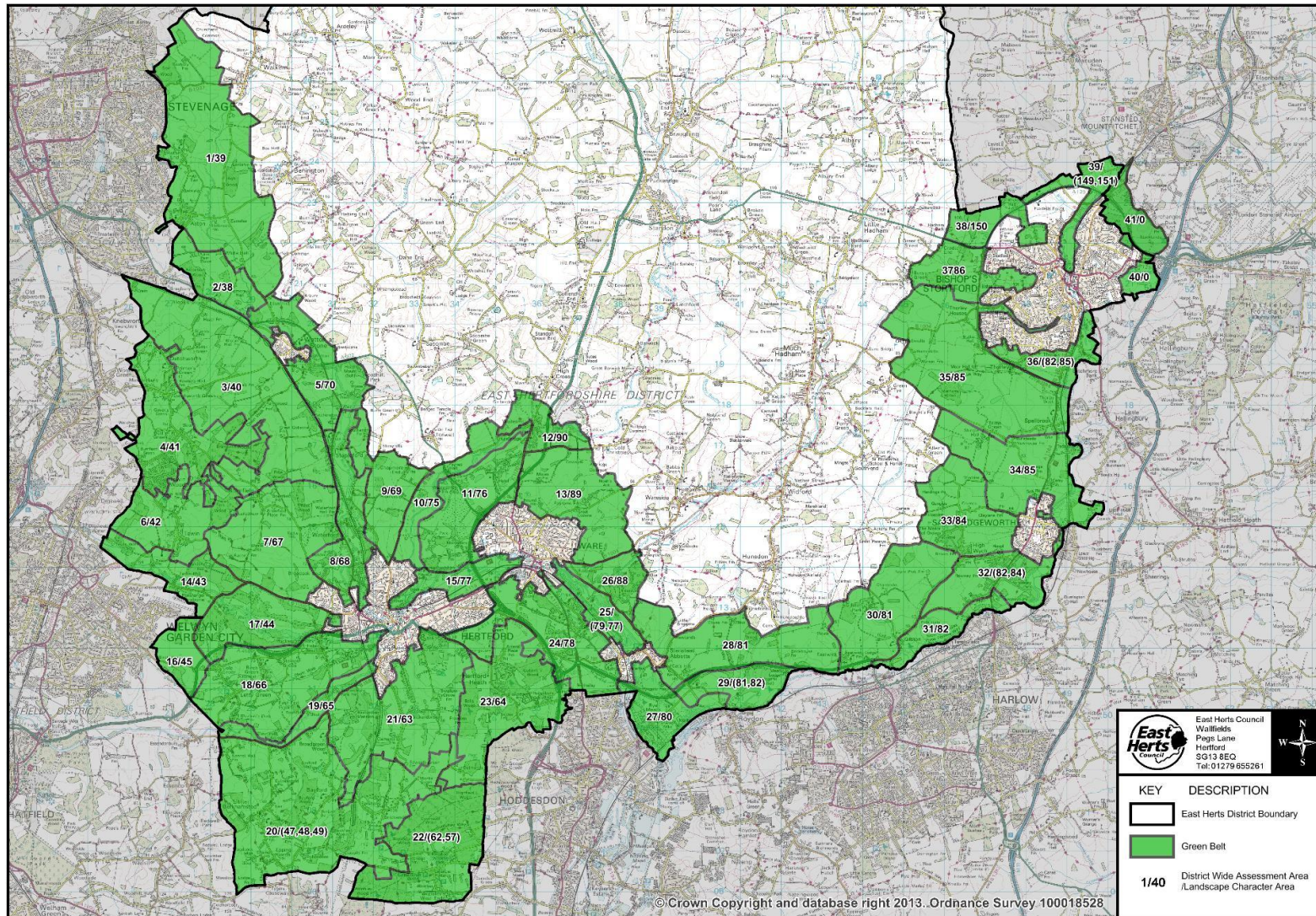
2.2.5 In undertaking this assessment, it is important to maintain consistency. As such, a loose set of criteria are applied for each purpose so the reader can understand the matters considered. These are contained in Table 2.3 below. The NPPF does not define what precisely is meant by 'sprawl' and 'encroachment'. To assist the assessment of land against these tests, the following dictionary definitions (Cambridge Dictionaries On-line²) are used:

- Sprawl: *"the disorganised and unattractive expansion of an urban or industrial area into the adjoining countryside"*
- Encroachment: *"to advance gradually beyond usual or acceptable limits"*

2.2.6 With regards to the first purpose – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, the nature of East Herts is that of market towns with satellite villages located close to the towns in order to utilise the town's services. In many cases, the Green Belt designation has prevented these villages from growing. However, the NPPF emphasis is on preventing the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. As such, while it may be necessary to mention villages in some locations, the emphasis in this assessment is on large built-up areas, i.e. the four towns within the Green Belt, with East Herts and adjoining towns.

² <http://oxforddictionaries.com>

Map 2.1: District Wide Assessment Areas with Corresponding Landscape Character Assessment Area



- 2.1.7 With regards to the second purpose – to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another, it is necessary to consider not only the towns but also the villages that lie between. While the emphasis is on towns and large built-up areas, it is necessary to consider the impact development may have on merging or encroaching upon the villages that lie in proximity to the towns. It would not be appropriate to ignore these villages simply because the purpose is about preventing the merging of towns, particularly as part of the character of the district is the relationship between the historic market towns and its satellite villages.
- 2.1.8 With regards to the third purpose – to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, it is necessary to consider whether there are any sites of nature conservation value within the areas being assessed and the nature of the countryside, its openness and accessibility. The countryside immediately adjacent to towns is the most accessed countryside and therefore has considerable value for recreational, health and educational purposes. Encroachment, as the definition says is to advance beyond usual or acceptable limits. Development located too close to sites of nature conservation value may cause demonstrable harm or compromise the vitality of the asset, i.e. going beyond the acceptable limit of that asset.
- 2.1.9 Part of achieving this purpose is therefore to define limits within which development may be acceptable. In some locations, the lack of any definable boundary limits may strengthen the role of the Green Belt, as without the Green Belt designation, there may be no other method of preventing development encroaching into the countryside. In other locations however, the lack of an identifiable boundary to limit development may weaken the strength of the Green Belt as one defining feature of a Green Belt is its permanence. The gradual encroachment of development into a location with no definable boundary to limit development could undermine the permanence of the Green Belt, which in turn acts as precedence for more development.
- 2.1.10 For the purposes of a high-level review, there is limited value in assessing whether there are clear boundaries to development as no decision has been made as to the location or possible scale of development. Where clear boundaries exist these have been mentioned in the commentary. Areas that have hard natural or man-made boundaries are likely to be more successful in retaining their permanence than boundaries based on moveable river courses or intermittent or unprotected hedgerows. This part of the review has been informed by the Criteria-Based Assessments carried out for Chapter 3 of the Strategy Supporting Document, which used an initial scale assumption and looked in more detail at particular locations. Part 2 of the Green Belt Review will contain a more detailed boundary assessment of specific areas of search.
- 2.1.11 With regards to the fourth purpose – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, there are few locations where development on the edge of a town or urban area will affect the historic core or Conservation Area of the district's historic market towns, as each historic core has been surrounded over time by urban development of various ages, which often bear no visible resemblance to the historic core. The setting and special character

of a location may be subject to different interpretation, as each town would be unique. For some locations it would be its setting within a particular landscape, or the urban form as shaped by physical features, such as rivers or geological features, and in more recent years by the constraints caused by man-made features such as roads or railways. For some locations, the evolution of a town has been influenced by large landholdings such as country-house estates or farms. There are several Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings across the district, often within or in close proximity to towns which also influence the setting and special character of a town. The Landscape Character Assessment has been used to inform this purpose.

2.1.12 With regards to the fifth purpose - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, at this level, there is limited use in assessing the role of an area in assisting in urban regeneration as the Green Belt as a whole contributes towards this purpose by limiting the available alternative development sites outside the urban area, thereby prioritising the use of previously developed sites within the urban area. Therefore, as it would be somewhat arbitrary to claim that a particular part of the Green Belt would contribute more to this purpose than another, each area would be given the same rating. For these reasons this criterion has not been used in the assessment here.

2.1.13 There are very few remaining large 'regeneration' sites in the four East Herts towns surrounded by Green Belt, with exceptions being the Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard and Mead Lane, Hertford. It could be argued that the Green Belt plays a role in relation to regeneration of Stevenage and Harlow, and Welwyn Garden City, where the New Town legacy has resulted in small areas of industrial decline. These New Towns are relatively constrained, creating additional pressure on Green Belt development in order to act as a catalyst for regeneration.

Table 2.3: Matters considered for each Green Belt purpose

Purpose	Matters Considered
1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>What role does the location play in preventing urban sprawl?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there evidence of existing ribbon development or non-compact development?
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>What role does the location play in preventing towns or urban areas from merging?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would a reduction in the gap between urban areas or towns compromise the openness of the Green Belt land? Are there features which could continue to perform this role?
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there clear strong features that could provide a robust Green Belt boundary to restrict sprawl and prevent encroachment in the long term?* Are there already significant urbanising influences?

	<p>Has there already been encroachment by built development?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there features of nature conservation value that would be harmed by further encroachment? • Are there opportunities for accessing the wider countryside beyond settlements that would be compromised by development? <p>*This aspect will be assessed at a high level as part of the Criteria-based Assessment in the Strategy Supporting Document and in the Detailed Site Assessments in Part 3.</p>
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>Are there views and links to the historic centres?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would development compromise the quality of the historic core or Conservation Area within a settlement? <p>Does the land have an impact on the special character of the town?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would development detrimentally alter the shape and form of a historic settlement, where this is an important part of the character and setting of a town? • Does the land form part of a gateway into a town? • Does the area contain Scheduled Monuments, Areas of Archaeological Significance or Historic Parks and Gardens that would need to be considered in any development?

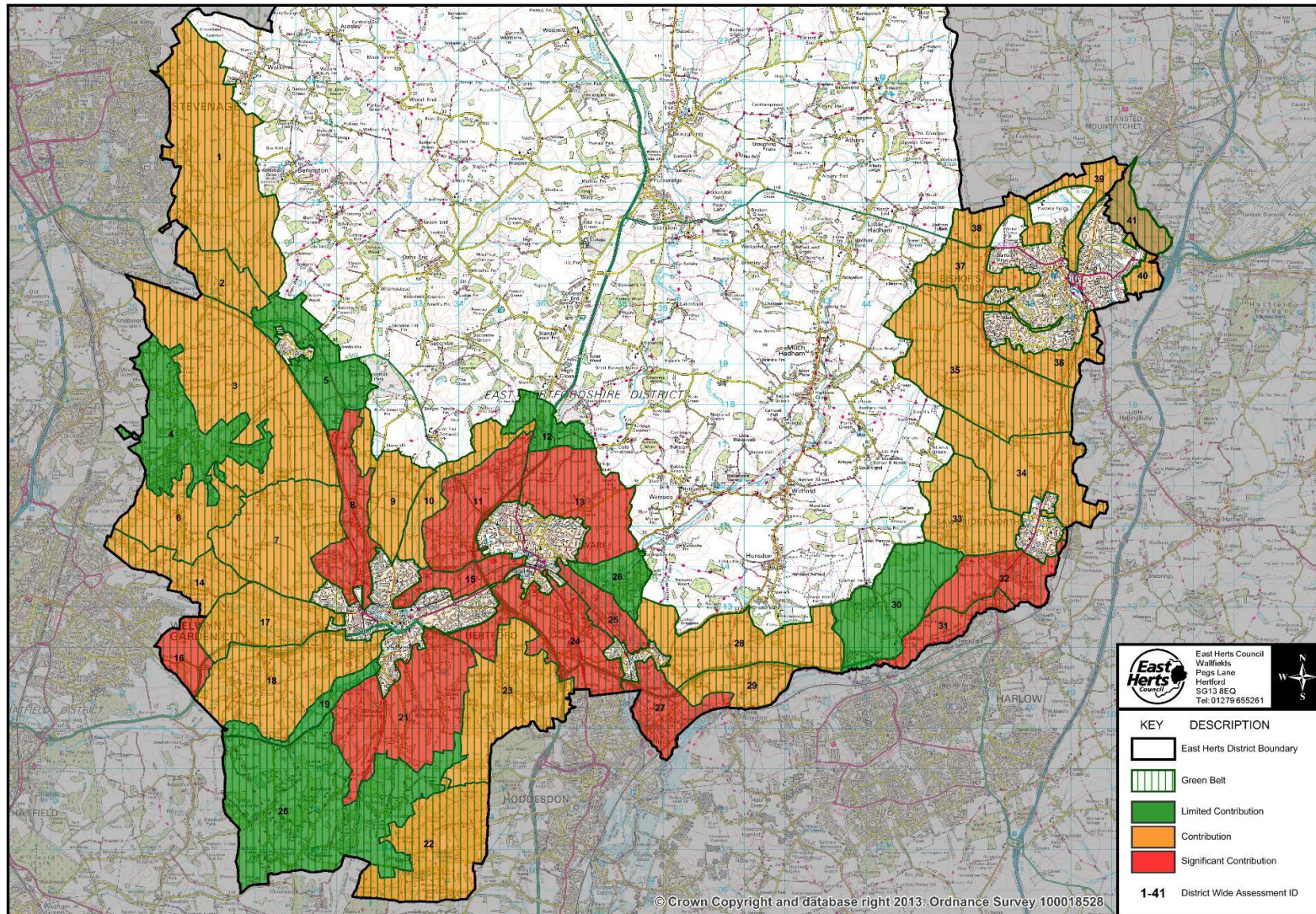
2.1.14 Each area is given a score of red, amber or green to illustrate its contribution to the Green Belt purposes as illustrated in Table 2.4 below. At this stage the assessment seeks to highlight whether there are significant constraints and to indicate where further detail will be necessary at later stages. This colouring approach is considered to be more accessible than a complex scoring system, which is more appropriate at the detailed level assessment stage. For this high-level assessment it is more appropriate to include an explanation or commentary and to highlight where further issues may need to be considered later.

Table 2.4 District-Wide Green Belt Review Template

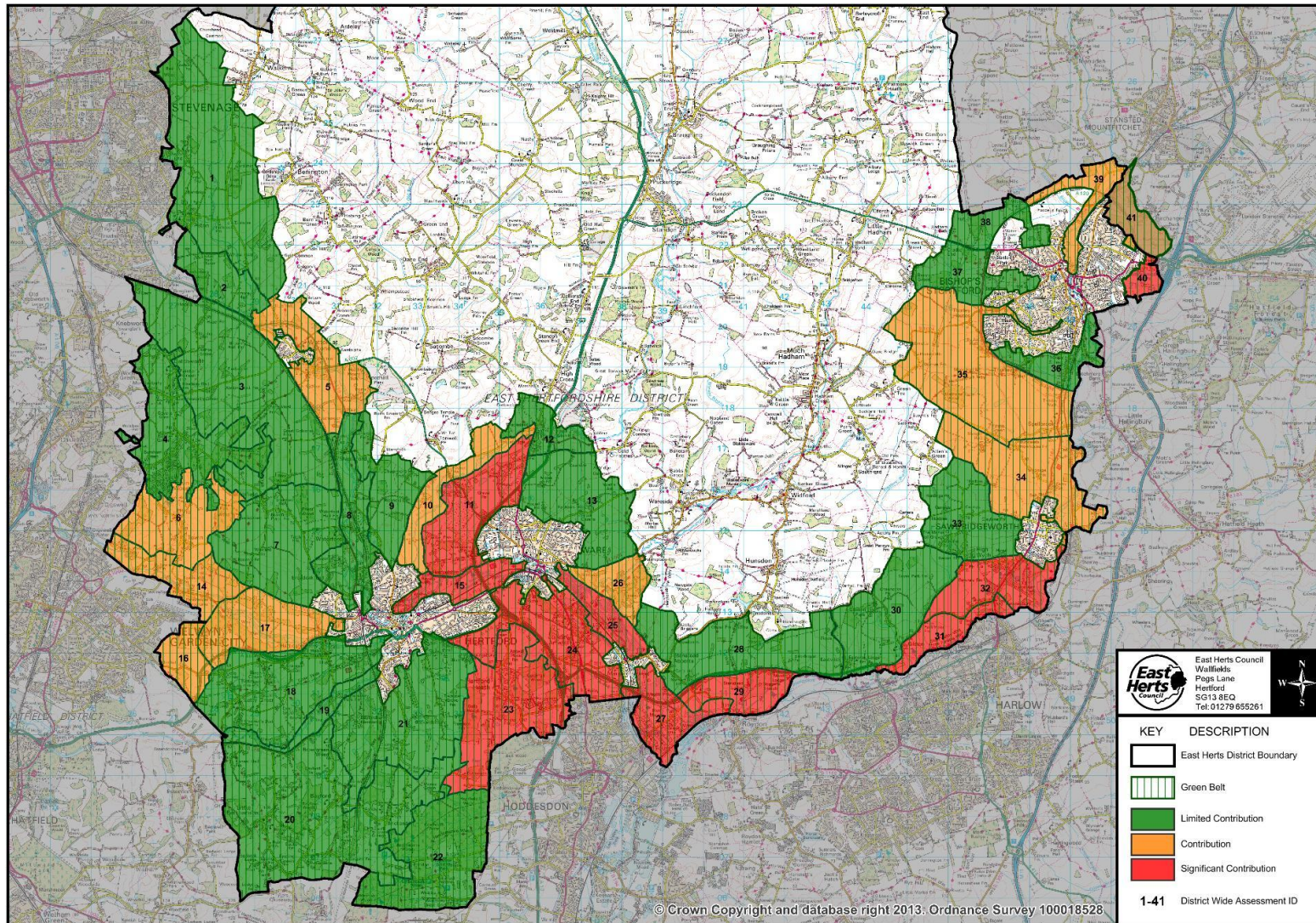
District-Wide Area ID	Related LCA ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
ID	ID and description	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	Contribution

2.1.15 This district-wide review at this stage does not seek to definitively state whether a location should be discounted for further assessment, rather it informs the process of choosing and refining areas of search for further assessment. The results of this high-level district-wide assessment are contained in **Appendix 1**. The following four maps summarise the results of each purpose assessment.

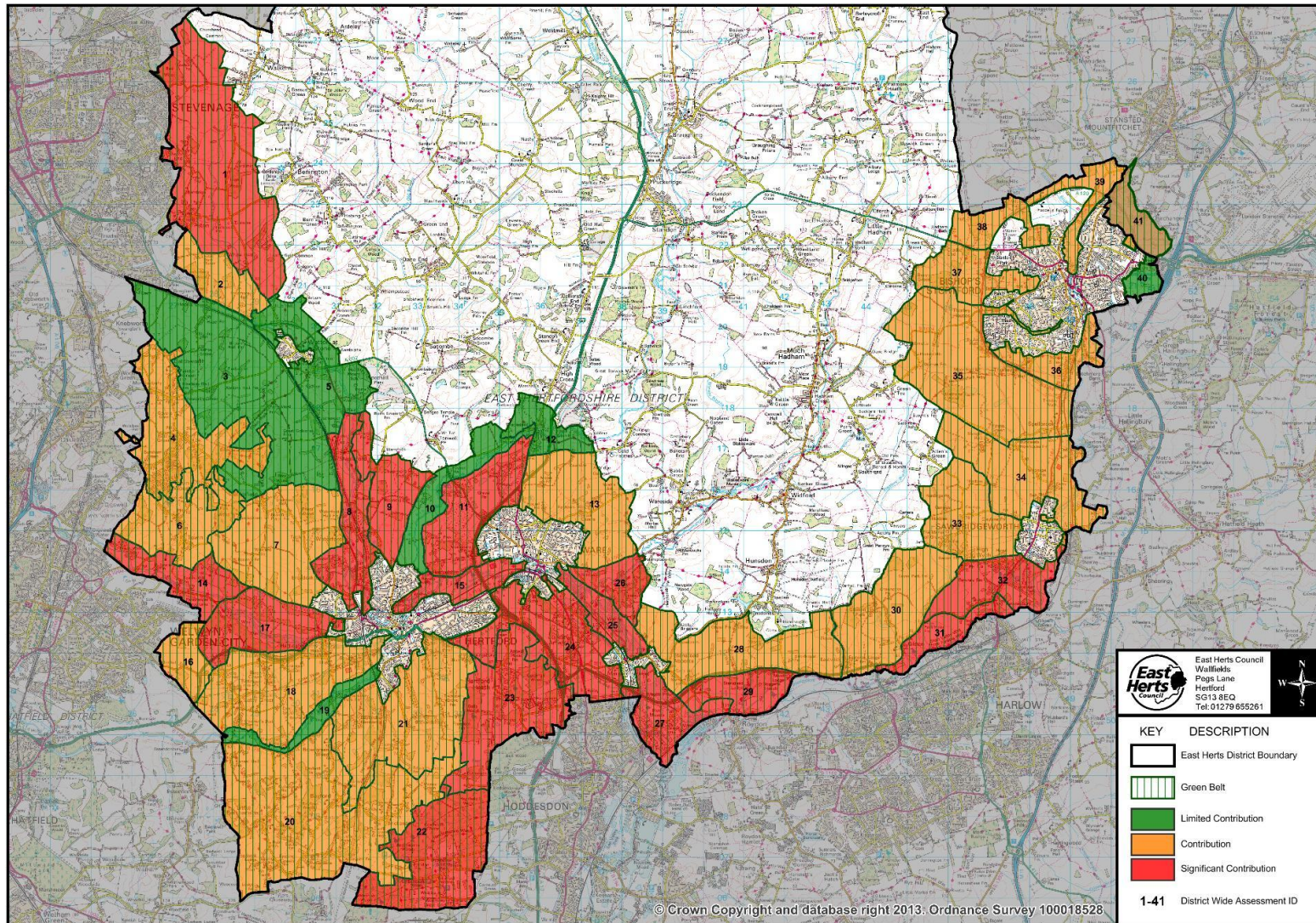
Map 2.2: Purpose 1 - Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas



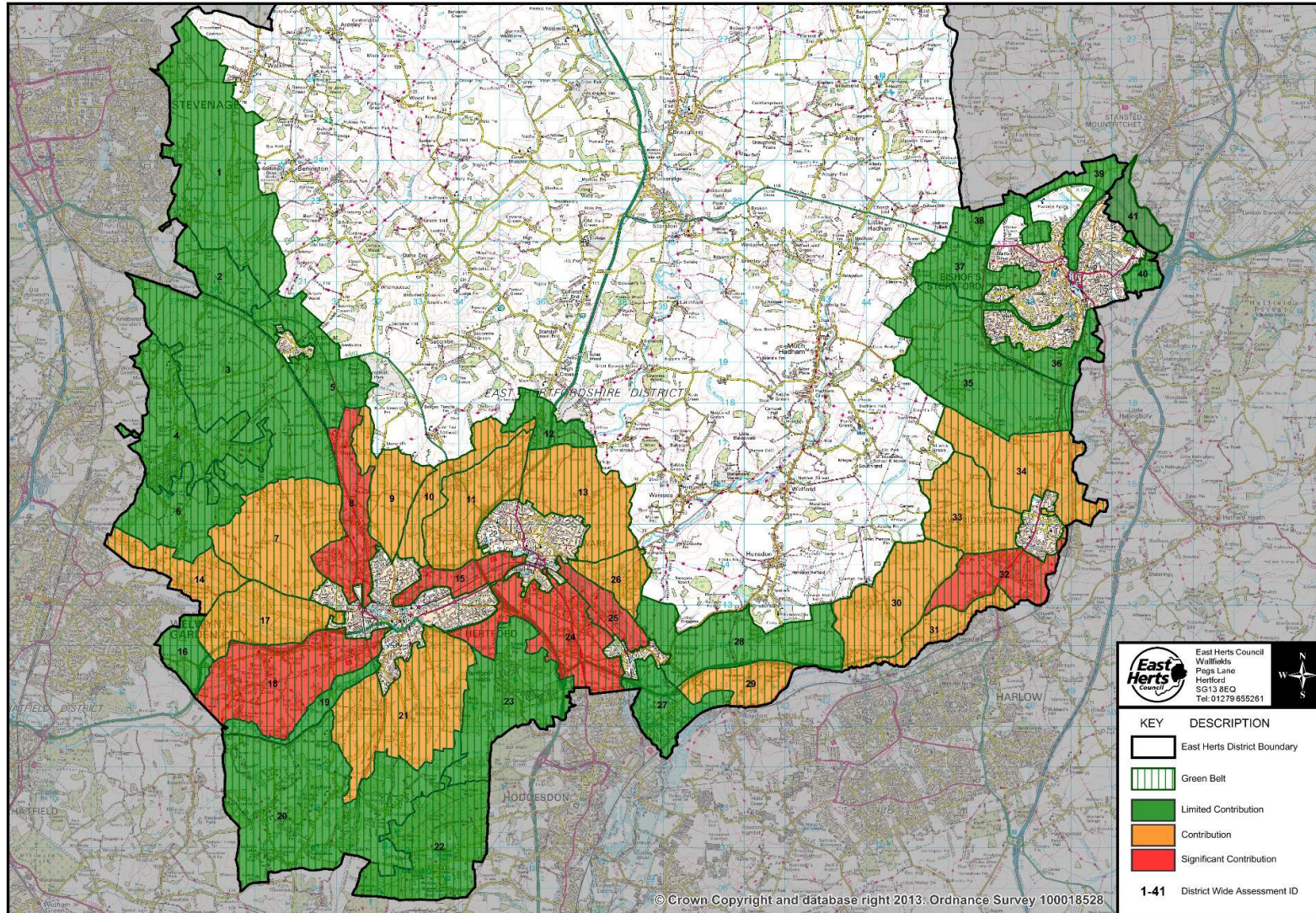
Map 2.3: Purpose 2 - Prevent Neighbouring Town Merging into One Another



Map 2.4: Purpose 3 - Assist in Safeguarding the Countryside From Encroachment



Map 2.5: Purpose 4 - Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns



Appendix 1: Results of Part 1 – High Level Review

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
	Key:	Limited Contribution	Contribution	Significant Contribution	
1	39 – Middle Beane Valley	<u>Contribution</u> - This area of Green Belt immediately abuts the built-up area of Stevenage, and contains some residential estates and dwellings which although planned have effectively breached the obvious boundary of Gresley Way. The Green Belt has prevented further eastward development and therefore contributes to preventing unrestricted sprawl.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Whilst there are no towns to the east of Stevenage, there are hamlets, isolated dwellings and small villages that would be encroached upon or enveloped should development spread eastwards from the town.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - Gresley Way which runs along the eastern edge of Stevenage is the obvious boundary to development in this location, preventing built development extending up the west-facing valley slope. The residential estate off Edmonds Drive has already encroached eastwards of Gresley Way. This area contains not only several Wildlife Sites, but also a SSSI. It also contains the highly vulnerable chalk stream river and the wide Beane Valley landscape.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Stevenage is contained within a landscape bowl and development in this location would change that characteristic by extending up the valley sides. Development would be some distance away from the centre of the town or Old Stevenage. There are several Areas of Archaeological Significance within this location and several very old villages. Aston is largely covered by a Conservation Area, reflecting its age and architectural interest.
2	38 – Aston Estate Farmland	<u>Contribution</u> - This area of Green Belt immediately abuts the built-up area of Stevenage, and contains some hamlets and isolated dwellings extended along the A602. The presence of the golf course and floodplain along with Green Belt status has prevented further eastward development and therefore contributes to preventing unrestricted sprawl.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Whilst there are no towns to the east of Stevenage, there are hamlets, isolated dwellings and small villages that would be engulfed should development spread eastwards from the town.	<u>Contribution</u> - While the golf course is a highly managed landscape, nonetheless it is acknowledged as an appropriate use within the Green Belt. In addition to small woodlands, this land contains large manor house estates with associated buildings and farmlands with uniform field and road boundaries. The area contains some steep south-facing slopes which are highly visible, with only narrow lanes providing access through an otherwise very remote landscape despite its proximity to Stevenage.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Stevenage is contained within a landscape bowl and development in this location would change that characteristic by extending up the valley sides. Development would be some distance away from the centre of the town or Old Stevenage. The southern tip of Stevenage has extended along the A602. The majority of properties visible from the A602 are of a domestic scale or are clearly related to an agricultural holding.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
3	40 – Bramfield – Datchworth Sloping Farmland	<u>Contribution</u> - The north-western part of this area contributes to preventing the unrestricted sprawl of Stevenage southwards towards Knebworth, a large village. There has already been an elongation of Stevenage southwards along the A602, which acts as a clear boundary to growth.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area does not contribute to preventing towns from merging as there is significant distance between Stevenage and its nearest towns of Hertford and Buntingford. This is one of the few areas which contain no settlements, only farm holdings. There are however, villages on the edge of this area which may have expanded without the Green Belt designation.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area contains undulating and gently sloping arable farmland with no settlements, only isolated farm dwellings. There are many areas of woodland ranging in size, nearly all ancient woodland covered by local Wildlife Site status, often cut into by agricultural holdings. This area is widely visible from and to surrounding areas and is a rather exposed landscape lacking vertical elements. The crematorium is an anomaly with little evidence of integration with its surroundings. There is a clear boundary to development in the railway line which runs across the north of the area.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The urban area of Stevenage has already extended southwards along the A602 and the railway line towards the District boundary. These residential estates largely replicate the New Town style but are some distance from the centre of Stevenage. There are many areas of archaeological significance, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Roman Road dissects the area east to west. This area wraps around the south of Watton-at-Stone village where Green Belt status has helped to prevent the southward expansion of the village.
4	41 – Bramfield Wood, Tewin Wood and Datchworth Uplands	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area contains several settlements set around extensive village greens or within dense woodland. Although these settlements are classified as villages, they are large villages which would have significant scope and demand to grow if it were not for the Green Belt designation. The villages act like beads on a string between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. There is already a degree of ribbon development between the villages and with little much more growth they could become one conglomeration.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area does not contribute to preventing towns from merging. However, the Green Belt has prevented villages surrounding this area from expanding into this area.	<u>Contribution</u> - The majority of this area is densely wooded with many local Wildlife Sites including Bramfield Woods, particularly noted for its high level of biodiversity. In most cases woodland would be a potential boundary to development. However, Burnham Green is a village deliberately set within Hopkins Wood. Because the area is heavily wooded, views into and out of the settlements here are screened and the character is one of tranquillity apart from during peak time, when vehicle noise disturbs the locality. Due to this area's proximity to Stevenage and the A1(M), there is an underlying sense of the encroachment of urban influence.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - There are no large settlements in this area, though there are many areas of archaeological significance and a Roman Road which dissects the area east to west. This area wraps around the Tewin Wood and Datchworth settlements where Green Belt status has helped to prevent the expansion of the villages.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
5	70 – Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - There is no large built-up area in this location, however, this area wraps around the north and eastern edge of Watton-at-Stone village. The A602 bypass wraps around the north-east of the village and a railway line runs to the west. These features are clear boundaries to limit development.	<u>Contribution</u> - Although Watton-at-Stone is a village and not a town, its location approximately midway between Hertford and Stevenage is a key feature of the A602 corridor. Development to the north-west of the village and the south-east of Stevenage would reduce the distance of the strategic gap between the town and the village.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Despite the bypass and railway line forming clear boundaries to development, the village of Watton-at-Stone remains compact and tightly defined. There are several small local Wildlife Sites, but access to and from the village and the wider countryside is limited by the bypass and the private land holdings.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - While Watton-at-Stone is a village and not a town, nonetheless it is largely covered by Conservation Area status and is surrounded by historic estates and Areas of Archaeological Significance.
6	42 – Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland	<u>Contribution</u> - This area contains the village of Tewin, which is removed from the Green Belt with a tight village boundary. However, the form of the village is not compact, consisting of a north-south ribbon development. While Tewin is not a large built-up area, its proximity to Welwyn Garden City makes this area important in preventing further non-compact development and the northwards expansion of Welwyn Garden City.	<u>Contribution</u> - The Green Belt in this location assists in preventing the northward growth of Welwyn Garden City.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are several small local Wildlife Sites in this area. In addition, this area contains a Local Nature Reserve to the north of Tewin village. The area is reasonably close to the A414 and is affected by a loss of tranquillity. In most cases woodland would be a potential boundary to development. However, there are examples of villages in proximity to this area which are set within woodland.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area has been largely influenced by the occupation and management of large manor house estates. Tewin itself contains a Conservation Area and bares the marks of the Cowper family estate who owned much of the area between the 18th to 20th centuries. However, the area makes a limited contribution to preserving the setting of Welwyn Garden City, which is largely framed to its north by the River Mimram.
7	67 – Bramfield Plain	<u>Contribution</u> - This area abuts in part the western edge of the built-up area of Hertford. As such it has a role in preventing the growth of the town in this direction.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - While, this area contains the small village of Bramfield, there is sufficient distance between Hertford and surrounding towns of Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage that this area alone has a limited contribution in this respect.	<u>Contribution</u> - This area contains several local Wildlife Sites and pockets of ancient woodland. The area is open with long views over farmland and river valleys. This gives the impression of remoteness despite the areas' proximity to Hertford. Apart from the small village of Bramfield there is no evidence of encroachment, but there are several features which could be used to create a new boundary to development.	<u>Contribution</u> - Although this area forms a gateway into Hertford from the west, the area is removed from the historic core of the town by 20th Century development. Not only has the shape of Hertford's growth in this direction been influenced by the river courses, but also by the historic Goldings estate in the neighbouring area. The B1000 has also contributed to the spreading of Hertford westwards along this road. Without the Green Belt designation, there would likely be more growth in this location. There are also several Areas of Archaeological Significance in this area.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
8	68 – Lower Beane Valley	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - The Green Belt designation in this area contributes to preventing the growth of Hertford to the north along with other land-based designations such as floodplains and designated sites of nature conservation interest. Where the Green Belt extends into the town itself in the form of a green finger, this land acts as open space for recreational purposes and the Green Belt designation has helped to prevent sprawl of adjoining residential estates into the green finger.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Whilst this area contains several small villages which could be subsumed into any northern growth of Hertford, there is sufficient distance between Hertford and other towns or the large village of Watton-at-Stone, that this area alone has a limited contribution in this respect.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area consists of a narrow flat floodplain with steeply rising valley sides. Being a river environment there are many local Wildlife Sites and a Local Nature Reserve of considerable local value. The area is well-linked to the urban area of Hertford through the Hertfordshire Way which in this location follows the River Beane through a series of small villages and a converted manor estate.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - The former Goldings Estate once a large manor estate with landscaped grounds is now converted into a residential development, but the estate and the villages of Waterford and Stapleford retain their historic character, which together frame the approach to Hertford from the north. There are several Areas of Archaeological Significance in this area, particularly to the north. Where the Green Belt extends into the town itself in the form of a green finger, this land extends into the town centre Conservation Area and has helped shape the growth and form of the town.
9	69 – Stonyhills	<u>Contribution</u> - The southern most tip of this area abuts the northern most built-up part of Hertford, where there has been historic and ongoing mineral extraction. This mineral activity has shaped the northern growth of Hertford as much as the Green Belt designation. Once this mineral working has completed this land will have significant pressure to accept built development.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Whilst this area contains several small villages, there is sufficient distance between Hertford and other towns or the large village of Watton-at-Stone that this area alone has a limited contribution in this respect.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - There are extensive footpaths through this area which contains part of the Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve and several small Local Wildlife Sites. Much of the land here is becoming more urbanised through mineral workings, allotments and highway paraphernalia.	<u>Contribution</u> - The southern most part of this area abuts the northern most part of Hertford and therefore contributes to preserving the setting of the historic town. However, much of the land here is becoming more urbanised through mineral workings, allotments and highway paraphernalia and is also some distance from the historic core of the town.
10	75 – Lower Rib Valley	<u>Contribution</u> - Where this area abuts the northern edge of Bengeo, north Hertford, it contributes to preventing unrestricted sprawl. However, the River Rib is the dominant landscape feature here which limits development perhaps more so than the Green Belt designation.	<u>Contribution</u> - The northward expansion of Hertford into this area would reduce the gap between the towns of Hertford and Ware, due to the way the towns are located next to each other with Ware latitudinally further north than Hertford.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area contains the floodplain of the River Rib, a tributary of the River Lea. However, there are no environmental designations within this area and public access is limited.	<u>Contribution</u> - Where the southern edge of this area abuts the built-up area of the north of Hertford it contributes towards maintaining the relative compactness of the town.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
11	76 – Ware Parklands	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area is key in restricting the sprawl of the neighbouring towns of Hertford and Ware, which has already occurred in some places.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area is key in preventing the two towns of Ware and Hertford from merging together as has already happened along the Ware Road. However, the A10 which runs alongside the western edge of Ware forms a strong boundary to development.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - The landscape in this area is dominated by current and historic mineral workings, though these are largely screened by vegetation. There are two small areas designated as Sites of Special Interest of geological merit near to Hanbury Manor. There are also several woodland areas which although not designated, are important features. There have been many conversions of farm holdings into small residential estates within this area, representing encroachment. The A10 which runs tightly alongside the western edge of Ware forms a strong boundary to development of the town itself.	<u>Contribution</u> - This strategic gap between Ware and Hertford is a key part of the character and relationship between the two towns. Despite extensive mineral extraction, the historic pattern of this area is still evident. There are two large areas of parkland with manor houses, although Hanbury Manor has been converted to a golf course. The A10 which runs tightly alongside the western edge of Ware forms a strong boundary to development of the town and has contributed to preserving the relatively compact nature of Ware more so than Green Belt designation in this area.
12	90 – Middle Rib Valley	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area contains the two villages of Wadesmill and Thundridge, which although separate villages, have little visible separation. Although not large built-up areas, the Green Belt designation has contributed to preventing sprawl and maintaining the separate identities of the two villages. These villages lie in close proximity to the north of Ware.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The Green Belt designation has a role in preventing the two villages of Thundridge and Wadesmill from merging into one another physically. This purpose relates however to towns and there is sufficient distance between the two villages and the north of Ware. The A10 also acts as a barrier to development.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - There are few Local Wildlife Sites within this area and with the exception of Youngsbury Historic Park and Garden there are few features of note. The landscape is dominated by a very open and visible south-east facing slope. Access through the area is generally very good.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area contains the Historic Park and Garden at Youngsbury and contributes to preserving the setting of this parkland and the two villages of Thundridge and Wadesmill. However, the distance between this area and Ware to the south is sufficient that this area has no contribution to preserving the setting of Ware.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
13	89 – Wareside – Braughing Uplands	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area has a significant contribution in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of development of Ware as the area wraps around the north and eastern edges of Ware.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - There are no towns to the north or east of Ware. The Green Belt does however, contribute to preventing the eastwards and northwards growth of Ware which would reduce the gap between the town and the villages of Thundridge, Wadesmill and Wareside.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are few Local Wildlife Sites within this area and with the exception of Fanhams Hall and parkland there are few features of note. However, the landscape is dominated by a very open and visible south-east facing slope and access through the area is generally very good.	<u>Contribution</u> - The area, where it abuts Ware contributes to maintaining the relatively compact nature of the town. However, the town itself has grown northwards through the late twentieth Century, removing any connection with the historic core of the town. The Green Belt does however, prevent further northwards growth, contributing to preserving the Historic Park and Garden at Fanhams Hall.
14	43 – Mimram Valley Parklands	<u>Contribution</u> - This area contains much of the River Mimram with its relatively steep south-facing valley slopes along with the B1000 and as such, these features contribute to preventing the northwards growth of Welwyn Garden City as much as the Green Belt status.	<u>Contribution</u> - The Green Belt in this location assists in preventing the northward growth of Welwyn Garden City towards Tewin. There may be sufficient distance between Welwyn Garden City and settlements to the north, however, this area contributes to preventing the loss of the gap between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - There are several small local Wildlife Sites and Areas of Archaeological Significance in this area. In addition, this area contains a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Historic Park and Garden. The proximity of the area to the B1000 affects the tranquillity of the area. The Panshanger Park to the south of this area and the footpaths and towpaths of the River Mimram are well used points of access to the wider countryside between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City.	<u>Contribution</u> - The River Mimram and the B1000 along with other land-based designations contribute to preserving the historic setting of Welwyn Garden City as much as Green Belt status.
15	77 – Kingsmead and Hartham Common Floodplain	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area is key in restricting the sprawl of the neighbouring towns of Hertford and Ware, which has already occurred in some places.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area is key in preventing the two towns of Ware and Hertford from merging together as has already occurred along the Ware Road.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area contains a large Local Wildlife Site which is also a Local Nature Reserve, one of four flagship reserves in the district. It is also a well-accessed popular green link between the two towns.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area is important in influencing the historic growth and current shape of the two towns. The western part of this area lies within the Hertford Town Centre Conservation Area and is a key feature of the centre of Hertford. The eastern part of this area lies within the Ware Town Centre Conservation Area and as such is a key feature of this part of Ware.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
16	45 – Welwyn Fringes	Significant Contribution - This area abuts the built-up area of Welwyn Garden City and as such plays a significant contribution in preventing the outward growth of the town to the north and east as much as the physical landscape constraints in the area.	Contribution - This area lies between Welwyn Garden City to the west and Hertford to the east, and as such development would reduce the distance and the strategic gap between the two towns.	Contribution - The Panshanger estate has encroached into countryside alongside the Panshanger Aerodrome. The proximity of the area to the B1000 and the A414 affects the tranquillity of the area. Although the Panshanger Park lies to the east, access through this area to the Park is fairly limited. This area contains two reasonably sized local Wildlife Sites and is almost entirely covered by several Areas of Archaeological Significance.	Limited Contribution - The Panshanger estate of Welwyn Garden City is one of more recent parts of the town, some distance from the historic centre of the New Town.
17	44 – Panshanger Parkland	Contribution - This area lies between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford. Where it abuts the edge of built-up area of Hertford it contributes to preventing the westward growth of Hertford.	Contribution - This area lies between Welwyn Garden City to the west and Hertford to the east, and as such development would reduce the distance and the strategic gap between the two towns.	Significant Contribution - Nearly the whole area is covered by Panshanger Park, a designated local Wildlife Site and Historic Park and Garden. Access through the park is best achieved from the urban edge of Hertford. The Park contains many ancient trees of significant historic and aesthetic value.	Contribution - The area is a relic of historic parkland though the original park landscape and structures have been almost entirely removed. There is an ongoing plan for mineral extraction and restoration. Although this area forms a gateway into Hertford from the west, the area is removed from the historic core of the town by 20th Century development. It does however, contribute to the evolving shape of the town spreading westwards along the B1000.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
18	66 – Cole Green and Hertingfordbury Settled Farmland	<u>Contribution</u> - The eastern most part of this area abuts the south western edge of Hertford and as such helps to prevent the growth of Hertford in this direction. However, in this location, the village of Hertingfordbury has had an urbanising influence, leaving little land between the village and the town undeveloped. The floodplain and the A414 have contributed to preventing growth as much as the Green Belt in this location. The Green Belt is important here in preventing further growth of Hertford sprawling into Hertingfordbury. Where the Green Belt extends into the town itself in the form of a green finger, this land acts as open space for recreational purposes and the Green Belt designation has helped to prevent sprawl of adjoining residential estates into the green finger.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Whilst this area lies between Welwyn Garden City to the west and Hertford to the east, there is sufficient distance between the two towns that this area alone has a limited contribution in this respect.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are several small Local Wildlife Sites throughout this area which is dissected by the Cole Green Way, an abandoned railway line now a Local Wildlife Site and important public right of way and Sustrans route. There are several small villages along well-used roads which run parallel to the A414, and as such, the area is affected by constant low-level noise. There is already a degree of encroachment from Hertford and the village of Hertingfordbury into this area.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - The eastern edge of this area extends into the Hertford Town Centre Conservation Area in the form of a green finger, and as such has a role in preserving the setting of the town and the shape of its growth. Physical constraints have also contributed to this role, such as flood plains and the railway line viaduct. Two of the villages in this area are Conservation Areas and there are several large Areas of Archaeological Significance.
19	65 – Middle Lea Valley West	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Only a small part of this area lies close to Hertford, but built development is influenced more by the flood plain here than by Green Belt Designation.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Whilst this area lies between Welwyn Garden City to the west and Hertford to the east, there is sufficient distance between the two towns that this area alone has a limited contribution in this respect.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area contains the flat-bottomed valley of the River Lee/Lea, most of which is also a Local Wildlife Site. The flood plain is more of a constraint to development here than Green Belt designation.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Although this area abuts the south western edge of Hertford it is somewhat removed from the historic core of the town and as such has a limited role in preserving the setting of the town, which in this location is more defined by flood plains and the railway line viaduct.

East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review: Part 1

District-Wide Assessment ID	Landscape Character Assessment Area ID	1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
20	47, 48, 49 – Essendon – Brickendon Farmed Slopes, West End – Brickendon Wooded Slopes, Little Berkhamsted Ridge Settlements	Limited Contribution - Three LCA have been grouped together for their common features of historic villages within woodland settings with undulating slopes and some steep banks around small plateaus where arable land is dominant. These areas are some distance from larger settlements but the Green Belt designation has contained the growth of villages and hamlets.	Limited Contribution - Whilst this area lies between Welwyn Garden City to the west, Hertford to the east and Broxbourne towns to the east, there is sufficient distance between the towns that this area alone has a limited contribution in this respect.	Contribution - This area contains many large Local Wildlife Sites, predominantly ancient woodland of the Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods complex and river valleys. There has been some encroachment through isolated dwellings and the ribbon development expansion of the villages of Bayford and Brickendon.	Limited Contribution - This area has a limited role in preserving the setting of historic towns, however there are several villages covered by Conservation Area status and several large Areas of Archaeological Significance.
21	63 – Bayfordbury, Brickendonbury and Balls Parkland	Significant Contribution - This area immediately abuts the southern edge of Hertford, where there is considerable pressure to expand the town. As such, this area plays a significant contribution in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of Hertford.	Limited Contribution - The distance between the south of Hertford and the nearest town (Hoddesdon) to the south-east is sufficient that this area has a limited contribution in this respect. There are however several isolated farmsteads and a small hamlet within this area.	Contribution - There are many Local Wildlife Sites in this area, predominantly ancient woodlands and roadside hedges and verges. Because the historic parklands have been institutionalised there is relatively little public access through this area. The edge of Hertford is reasonably well screened by vegetation.	Contribution - The southern estates of Hertford are somewhat disconnected from the historic core of the town, being largely of 1960's construction. However, the Green Belt here has helped to protect the many historic estates that have shaped the growth of the town to the south. The Historic Park and Garden of Bayfordbury and of Balls Park form dominant landscape features. Other Areas of Archaeological Significance are situated around historic manor houses and parklands, which are now converted into residential or employment uses.

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22	62, 57 – Broxbourne Woods Complex, Thunderfield Ridges	<u>Contribution</u> - This area contains a small part of LCA 57 which is somewhat different in character to Area 62 but in Green Belt terms plays a similar role in forming a strategic belt between Hoddesdon (and its westward sprawl along Hammond Street) and villages to the south of Hertford. Without the nationally important woodland and Green Belt designation it is likely that residential development south of this area within Broxbourne Borough would be greater than at present.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The distance between the south of Hertford and the nearest town (Hoddesdon) to the south-east is sufficient that this area has a limited contribution in this respect. There are however a few isolated houses and the Paradise Wildlife Park local zoo within this area, which is a significant local attraction, with many urban features including parking areas. To the south of this area there is a small hamlet of large houses, often with paddocks in Wormley West End. These suburban features may well grow without the Green Belt designation.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - There are many Local Wildlife Sites in this area which also contains the National Nature Reserve, Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest at Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods, which is noted for its oak-hornbeam woodlands.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Although this area lies between Hoddesdon and Hertford and contains several dwellings, this area plays no role in preserving the setting of any historic towns.
23	64 – Hertford Heath	<u>Contribution</u> - Hertford Heath, although currently a Category 1 village which enables the village to grow through small infill developments within a defined boundary, a large amount of built development associated with the village lies outside of this boundary. The nature of this development has created an urban environment, particularly around Haileybury College. The Green Belt that abuts the edge of Hoddesdon along with the A10 prevents the urban expansion of Hoddesdon.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - Although the A10 forms an obvious boundary to the westward growth of Hoddesdon, development is already proposed close to the A10 junction within Broxbourne Borough. The Green Belt in this location plays a significant role in retaining the gap between Hoddesdon and Hertford.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area contains many large Local Wildlife Sites, a SSSI around Hertford Heath and several Local Nature Reserves, noted for their ancient woodland. The area is well connected with the surrounding area and the village of Hertford Heath is framed by its woodland blocks. Due to good road links and the large Haileybury College, the village lacks tranquillity through intensive activity associated with the school and link road between Hoddesdon and the south of Hertford along Mangrove Road.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The parts of Hoddesdon which abut this area are already built up to the local authority boundary and any further westward development would need to be within East Herts. However, this area plays a limited role in preserving the setting of a historic town as much of Hoddesdon has changed significantly in the last 30 years.

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24	78 – Great Amwell Ridge and Slopes	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area plays a significant contribution in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of Hertford, Ware and Hoddesdon as the area lies between the three towns where there is considerable pressure to grow. This area also contributes to preventing the unrestricted growth of Hoddesdon northwards where it would result in coalescence with the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets and the sprawling village of Great Amwell.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area plays a significant contribution in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of Hertford, Ware and Hoddesdon as the area lies between the three towns where there is considerable pressure to grow. This area also abuts the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets and the sprawling village of Great Amwell, both covered by sizeable Conservation Areas.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - There are several small Local Wildlife Sites in this area, however, the area immediately abuts the Lea Valley which contains sites of Ramsar, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest designations. The major road network and expanse of utilities makes this area a predominantly suburban rather than rural area. The area lacks tranquillity apart from alongside the river itself.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - Where this area abuts the southern edges of Hertford and Ware, it contributes to preserving the setting of the two historic towns as separate settlements, which are relatively compact forms heavily influenced by river valleys.
25	79, 77 – Amwell Floodplain, part Kingsmead and Hartham Common Floodplain	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area covers the floodplain of the River Lea/Lee between the south of Ware and the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets. As such, it plays a significant role along with the River Lea/Lee Valley and its environmental assets of European importance, in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of both settlements.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area covers the floodplain of the River Lea/Lee between the south of Ware and the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets. As such, it plays a significant role along with the River Lea/Lee Valley and its environmental assets of European importance, in preventing the southward growth of Ware and the northward growth of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area contains the Lea Valley Amwell Quarry which is a Ramsar Site of European Importance covered by designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest as well as a Local Nature Reserve.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - Where this area abuts the southern edge of Ware and the northern edge of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets, it contributes to preserving the setting of the two historic settlements, both of which contain sizeable Conservation Areas.
26	88 – Lower Ash Valley	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Only a small part of this area lies adjacent to the eastern edge of Ware and as such has a limited role in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of the town. The majority of the area is covered by the flat bottomed valley of the River Ash with steep valley sides. This landscape prevents development more so than the Green Belt designation in this area.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are no towns to the east of Ware. However, if the landscape was not a greater constraint, this area would contribute to preventing the eastwards and southwards growth of Ware which would reduce the gap between Ware and the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets to the south.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area contains the large Local Wildlife Site of Easney Wood. However, the value of this area lies in its proximity to the Lea Valley and the contribution this area makes to the Ramsar site adjacent. The valley setting and the corridor created by the disused railway line contributes to maintaining an east-west wildlife corridor.	<u>Contribution</u> - A small part of this area touches the eastern edge of Ware and as such has a contribution towards preserving the setting of the town. The landscape and floodplain influences the shape of Ware as much as the Green Belt designation in this area. However, there are many important historic features and estates which have also contributed to the shape and growth of the town.

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27	80 – Rye Meads	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area covers the floodplain of the River Lea/Lee between the north east of Hoddesdon and the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets. As such, it plays a significant role along with the River Lea/Lee Valley and its environmental assets of European importance, in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of both settlements.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area covers the floodplain of the River Lea/Lee between the north east of Hoddesdon and the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets. As such, it plays a significant role along with the River Lea/Lee Valley and its environmental assets of European importance, in preventing the merging of Hoddesdon and Stanstead Abbots St Margarets.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area contains the Lea Valley Amwell Quarry which is a Ramsar Site of European Importance covered by designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest as well as a Local Nature Reserve. This area is dominated by the Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works and associated utilities.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The part of Hoddesdon which abuts this area has seen considerable change over the last 30 years or so and therefore bears no relation to the historic core of Hoddesdon. However, the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets is covered by a sizeable Conservation Area.
28	81 – Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands	<u>Contribution</u> - The Green Belt in the west of this area around Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets plays a significant role in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of the village, which being otherwise relatively unconstrained would have likely spread further eastwards along local roads.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area contributes to preventing the merging of neighbouring towns only in combination with area 29 to the south which contains the River Stort Valley. The Green Belt in this location does however have a role in preventing the growth of various small settlements in this area.	<u>Contribution</u> - There is a small amount of ribbon development stretching into this area from Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets to the west. There are two relatively large woodlands of Wildlife Site status in this area. Being on predominantly southward-facing slopes, the estate parklands and arable fields are prominent. The Harcamlow Way, a popular Right of Way extends throughout this area although access to the parklands is limited.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area plays a limited role in preserving the setting of historic towns. However, where the area abuts the large village of Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets it influences the form of the eastern edge of the settlement.
29	81, 82 – Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands, River Stort	<u>Contribution</u> - The River Stort and its floodplain has formed the strongest barrier to the northern growth of Harlow, which was originally designed to not breach the Stort Valley. This has been strengthened by the construction of the A414.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - The Green Belt in this location contributes towards the strategic gap between Roydon and Harlow to the south, Stanstead Abbots/St Margarets to the north and Hoddesdon to the west.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - This area contains a wealth of Wildlife Sites and a Local Nature Reserve/ SSSI, along with Rights of Way and Historic Parklands on the south-facing slopes of the Stort Valley.	<u>Contribution</u> - The original plan for the New Town of Harlow intended the River Stort and its valley to act as the northern limit to the settlement. There are a number of Historic Parkland estates within this area. However, the Stort Valley, A414 and railway line contribute to preventing the northward extent of Roydon and Harlow as much as the Green Belt designation.

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30	81 – Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The distance of this area from the nearest towns means this area of Green Belt has limited purpose in terms preventing the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The large estate of Gilston Park and the village of Eastwick are the only notable settlements that would likely be larger if not for the Green Belt designation.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are several Wildlife Sites and important ancient woodlands in this area that are made more valuable given the large expanse of land managed as estate parklands or small farm holdings. The rising valley slopes make the countryside highly visible.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are several historic estates that have evolved into mansions with modern residential units in the grounds, which along with Eastwick village are the only forms of settlement in the area. However, the southward facing slopes of this area are a part of the Stort Valley which contributes to the setting of the New Town of Harlow.
31	82 – River Stort	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - The River Stort and its floodplain has formed the strongest barrier to the northern growth of Harlow, which was designed to not breach the Stort Valley. The Green Belt has prevented the northward sprawl of Harlow.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - Particularly in the eastern part of this area, the Green Belt contributes along with the Stort Valley, to preventing Harlow from expanding northwards towards Sawbridgeworth. Otherwise, there is only the small village of Gilston that might otherwise be encroached upon.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - The floodplain of the River Stort has formed the strongest barrier to encroachment. There are several stretches of the valley that are protected by Wildlife Site, Nature Reserve and SSSI status.	<u>Contribution</u> - The Stort Valley was designed to be the northern extent of the New Town of Harlow. However, there are physical constraints such as the valley environment that has contributed to this purpose more so than the Green Belt designation.
32	84, 82 – High Wych Slopes, River Stort	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - Even despite the Green Belt designation there is a considerable amount of sprawl leading south from Sawbridgeworth. Built development extends from Harlow right up to the County boundary.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - There has been considerable built development in this area which has almost closed the gap between Sawbridgeworth and the New Town of Harlow to the south with considerable sprawl along all roads connecting the two towns. The Green Belt Strategic Gap is the only thing preventing the merging of the two settlements.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - There has been considerable built development in this area which has encroached upon a number of Wildlife Sites and has reduced the open nature of the area by enclosing the few remaining farmland areas with suburban housing estates.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - There has been considerable built development extending along all roads connecting Sawbridgeworth and Harlow. This has artificially extended the form of Sawbridgeworth to the south reducing the compactness of the small market town and the setting of the historic parkland of Pishiobury Park has been subsumed in the urban features of the A1184.

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33	84 – High Wych Slopes	<u>Contribution</u> - There are several hamlets and farm holdings along with the significant ribbon development all along High Wych Road including the High Wych village itself which have all sprawled along the main road to the south of this area. The Green Belt has helped to contain development but much harm to the openness has already occurred.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - There is no town to the west of Sawbridgeworth, but the village of High Wych lies in proximity. There has already been a degree of ribbon development along the main roads in this area.	<u>Contribution</u> - The Rivers Nursery and Orchard is a key Wildlife Site as well as being of national arboricultural importance. There are many small lanes with some ribbon development leading to isolated hamlets but there are few features to form a boundary to development.	<u>Contribution</u> - Sawbridgeworth is a compact town and the Green Belt along with a small floodplain to the immediate west of the town has contributed to maintaining its form.
34	85 – Thorley Uplands	<u>Contribution</u> - There are several hamlets, farm holdings and an industrial park which has seen a number of changes of use to non-industrial uses within close proximity to Sawbridgeworth. If not for the Green Belt it is likely these would be larger. The built-up- area of Sawbridgeworth in this location has been contained by the existing land uses of two schools and a football ground.	<u>Contribution</u> - The village of Spellbrook lies halfway between Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth and has seen considerable ribbon development along London Road. Unchecked, there would be much more built development along the A1184. There is however, still a sufficient distance between the towns of Bishop's Stortford to the north and Sawbridgeworth to the south.	<u>Contribution</u> - The floodplain of the River Stort immediately adjacent to Sawbridgeworth is a Wildlife Site and is part of a non-designated historic estate. Apart from this small part to the east of the area, the land is dominated by arable farmland with some pastures with extensive open views. The degree of ribbon development around Spellbrook has created some encroachment into the countryside.	<u>Contribution</u> - Along with the constraints afforded by the railway line and river, the Green Belt here has helped prevent the northward growth of Sawbridgeworth, retaining the relatively compact nature of the town.

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35	85 – Thorley Uplands	<u>Contribution</u> - The A1184 St James Way (Bishop's Stortford Distributor Road) has created an effective boundary to the southward development of Bishop's Stortford but there are small farm holdings and the converted Thorley Hall within this area south of this road which, if not for Green Belt would probably have become more urbanised. Where the Green Belt extends into the town itself in the form of a green finger, this land is fairly narrow and acts as open space for recreational purposes and the Green Belt designation has helped to prevent sprawl of adjoining residential estates into the green finger.	<u>Contribution</u> - The village of Spellbrook lies halfway between Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth and has seen considerable ribbon development along London Road. Unchecked, there would be much more built development along the A1184. There is however, still a sufficient distance between the towns of Bishop's Stortford to the north and Sawbridgeworth to the south.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are several Wildlife Sites in this area and also the Thorley Flood Pound SSSI in the eastern part of this area. The floodplain of the River Stort is an important feature of the eastern half of this area. The expanse of arable farmland has reduced tree and hedge cover considerably leaving valuable small pocket woodlands and meadows. The degree of ribbon development around Spellbrook has created some encroachment into the countryside.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Prior to the construction of the A1184 St James Way (Bishop's Stortford Southern Distributor Road), the railway line, river and County boundary shaped the form of the town, more so than the Green Belt in this location. This area is some distance from the historic core of Bishop's Stortford which has largely been subsumed by modern development and the A1184 St James Way, to have a limited contribution in preserving the setting of the historic town. Where the Green Belt extends into the green finger running into centre of the town it, has contributed to shaping the more recent growth of the town.
36	85, 82 – Thorley Uplands, River Stort	<u>Contribution</u> - East of the B1529, there is little space between the road and the railway behind existing development. East of the railway the floodplain prevents development. The Whittington Way has formed a boundary to development. However, ribbon development has already occurred along the B1529 Thorley Street, which has the effect of urban sprawl stretching south of Bishop's Stortford.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - There are a number of small settlements that could be encroached should development breach the A1184. The Green Belt immediately south of the town indirectly contributes to preventing the merging of Bishop's Stortford with the village of Spellbrook, but there is sufficient distance between this area and the town of Sawbridgeworth to the south.	<u>Contribution</u> - The physical barrier created by the A1184 St James Way to the south of this area acts as a barrier to accessing the wider countryside to the south of Bishop's Stortford. While there are no Wildlife Sites within the land south of Whittington Way, it does contain a section of the Hertfordshire Way, a footpath and Right-of-Way of considerable value. However, to the east of the A1184 London Road, this area contains a SSSI and Local Wildlife Site on floodplain. Ribbon development along Thorley Street has the function of screening much of the land off Whittington Way from view when approaching the town from the south.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Prior to the construction of the A1184, the railway line, river and County boundary shaped the form of the town, more so than the Green Belt in this location. The village of Thorley previously associated with Thorley Hall has been subsumed into the edge of Bishop's Stortford, forming the entry into the town from the south. This area is some distance from the historic core of the town and doesn't contribute to preserving the setting since the construction of the A1184 St James Way.

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37	86 – Perry Green Uplands	<u>Contribution</u> - The A1184 Bishops Park Way and the A120 junction serves as a barrier to preventing the unrestricted sprawl of Bishop's Stortford to the west. Although it is unlikely the A1184 Bishops Park Way would be breached, this strip of Green Belt serves to prevent further westward growth of Bishop's Stortford. Where the Green Belt extends into the town itself in the form of a green finger, it contains agricultural land and open space for recreational purposes, mostly associated with schools. The Green Belt designation has helped to prevent sprawl of adjoining residential estates into the green finger.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - There are several small settlements to the west of the town that lie just beyond the current Green Belt boundary, but there are no towns. However, the A1184 Bishops Park Way serves as an effective barrier.	<u>Contribution</u> - The A1184 Bishops Park Way acts as a barrier to accessing the wider countryside to the west of Bishop's Stortford. There are several small woodlands of Wildlife Site status that might otherwise be encroached. However, within the green finger the land is open and flat, with long views. The area also acts as a considerable local resource for recreational activity.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Where the Green Belt extends into the green finger running into centre of the town, it extends into the Town Centre Conservation Area, and as such has a role in preserving the special character of the town. Outside the bypass the area is some distance from the historic core of the town and doesn't contribute to preserving the setting of the town since the construction of the A1184 Bishops Park Way.
38	150 – Hadhams Plateau	<u>Contribution</u> - The area of Green Belt which is beyond the A120 bypass has a limited contribution compared to the bypass itself which acts as a clear physical barrier to development. Although it is unlikely the A120 would be breached, this strip of Green Belt serves to prevent further northward growth of Bishop's Stortford. Within the bypass, the only part of this area that remains Green Belt is the part covered by Hoggates Wood and land south of Dane O'Coys Road. The rest of the land between the existing built-up area and the A120 is designated as Safeguarded Land where the provisions of Green Belt policy would apply until such time a strategic need is established.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area has a limited role in preventing Bishop's Stortford from merging with any neighbouring town.	<u>Contribution</u> - The A120 serves this purpose more effectively than just the strip of Green Belt. Outside the bypass, there are several small woodlands of Wildlife Site status that might otherwise be encroached, but access to this area to and from the town is limited. The Hoggates Wood area is a considerable local asset and is a Local Wildlife Site. There are a number of large isolated houses located along Dane O'Coys Road, but no other evidence of encroachment.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area is some distance from the historic core of the town and doesn't contribute to preserving the setting of the town since the construction of the A120.

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39	149, 151 – Bourne Brook Valley, Stort Meads	<u>Contribution</u> - The area of Green Belt which is beyond the A120 bypass has a limited contribution compared to the bypass itself which acts as a clear physical barrier to development. Although it is unlikely the A120 would be breached, this strip of Green Belt serves to prevent further northward growth of Bishop's Stortford. Within the bypass, the land that runs from the A120 southwards between Hazeland Road and the railway line acts as a green finger running into the centre of the town. This land is a flood plain providing a physical barrier to sprawl into this area.	<u>Contribution</u> - There are only small villages to the north of Bishop's Stortford. However, to the north-east lies the small town of Stansted Mountfitchet and the Green Belt here prevents the southward expansion of Stansted Mountfitchet towards Birchanger village and the A120.	<u>Contribution</u> – The River Stort is a considerable local asset in terms of access to the countryside. There are several Local Wildlife Sites along the green finger and much of this land is also used for local recreational purposes.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - Where the Green Belt extends into the green finger running into centre of the town, it extends into the Town Centre Conservation Area, and as such has a role in preserving the special character of the town. This area is some distance from the historic core of the town and doesn't contribute to preserving the setting of the town since the construction of the A120.
40	None – Bishop's Stortford Golf Course	<u>Contribution</u> - This area of Green Belt contributes to preventing the eastward expansion of the town towards the M11 and the Birchanger Green Services estate on junction 8 of the M11.	<u>Significant Contribution</u> - While the Birchanger Green Services is not a town, it is an intensively used urban feature alongside the complex junction 8 of the M11 which, when viewed together with the existing infrastructure along the A1250 and A120 junctions and the infrastructure of Stansted Airport there is an almost continuing urbanisation between Bishop's Stortford and the Airport. This area of Green Belt plays a significant role in preventing not towns but a town and a large urban area from merging.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - The land is currently occupied by a golf course offering recreational activity though not on a wide public access. There is limited access through this area to the countryside beyond. The M11 also creates a clear barrier to accessing the wider countryside. There are several small Local Wildlife Sites within the area.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area has a limited contribution towards preserving the setting and special character of Bishop's Stortford as a market town. The area is some distance from the historic core and is separated by relatively recent residential estates and large employment areas.

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41	None / Birchanger Wood and land within Uttlesford District	<u>Contribution</u> - The village of Birchanger lies in close proximity to the north-eastern edge of Bishop's Stortford, separated by Birchanger Wood and the A120. The District and County boundary is tightly drawn to the edge of Bishop's Stortford and this along with the Birchanger Wood has prevented the northwards sprawl of the town as much as Green Belt designation in this location.	<u>Contribution</u> - While Birchanger village is not a town, development in this location would reduce the distance between the built-up edge of Bishop's Stortford and the urban mass that is the Stansted Airport and its environs.	<u>Contribution</u> - Birchanger Wood is a Local Wildlife Site of considerable value in this otherwise urban area. The village of Birchanger consists of two small residential areas separated only by a playing field. However, the village sprawls eastward in the form of ribbon development along Birchanger Lane.	<u>Limited Contribution</u> - This area has a limited contribution towards preserving the setting and special character of Bishop's Stortford as a market town. The area is some distance from the historic core and is separated by relatively recent residential estates and large employment areas.

