

Land at Chipping Ongar

Green Belt Review
December 2016

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This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with ISO 9001:2008.

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Photograph Panel 1

Photograph Panel 2

Photograph Panel 3

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o.o Summary

L & Q New Homes are promoting a site on the eastern edge of Chipping Ongar for residential development. Despite being considered a potential location for growth in the Issues and Options stage of the emerging Local Plan, in July 2012, and an area for further study in the stage 1 Green Belt review undertaken by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), the Site has not been included as a proposed residential site allocation or for removal from the Green Belt in the Consultation Draft Local Plan (October 2016). The explanation for the omission of the Site as a proposed site allocation within the Consultation Draft Local Plan indicates that this option would “*significantly harm the Green Belt, compromise the historic setting of Ongar, and ... [is] more sensitive in landscape terms. Expansion to the east of the settlement could also harm the Scheduled Monument Ongar Castle*”. Landscape and visual matters are dealt with in a separate report.

This report appraises the stage 2 review of the Green Belt prepared for EFDC in August 2016, comparing the site to the east of Chipping with the seven other potential development locations around Chipping Ongar identified by EFDC in the Consultation Draft Local Plan.

The findings of this report clearly support the removal of the site from the Green Belt for the following reasons:

- The assessment presented in this report demonstrates that the parcel does not make as strong contribution to the Green Belt as presented in EFDC’s stage 2 review for a larger parcel of land.
- Two smaller areas of the site lie to the north of the A414 and make very little contribution to Green Belt purposes. Removal of these areas from the Green Belt would have very little harm on the Green Belt.
- Concerns have been raised about the simplistic approach to deriving the level of harm for each parcel based on the highest rated contribution for any of the Green Belt purposes. Further assessment work has therefore been undertaken relating specifically to The Site. The outcome of our review can be seen in the table on the following page.
- When compared to other potential areas for development around Chipping Ongar, the site performs on a par with all sites apart from one small site (SR-102) to the north of the settlement (see also Figure 12 at the end of this summary in relation to potential encroachment).
- Whilst the exclusion of the site from the Green Belt and its subsequent development could have some harmful impact on the Green Belt, this should be considered in the context of the constrained nature of Chipping Ongar as a whole and the advantages to the setting of Ongar Castle that can be offered through carefully considered development proposals, as well as an established need for new housing.
- The comparison between alternative sites presented in this report highlights the equally constrained nature of other potential development sites around Chipping Ongar, which wouldn’t be able to offer the same degree of benefit to the town.

In light of the above assessment a case can be made for the exclusion of the site from the Green Belt, with a very strong case to remove the small areas of land north of the A414. Whilst the exclusion of the main site from the Green Belt and its subsequent development could be said to have some harmful impact on the Green Belt, this should be considered in

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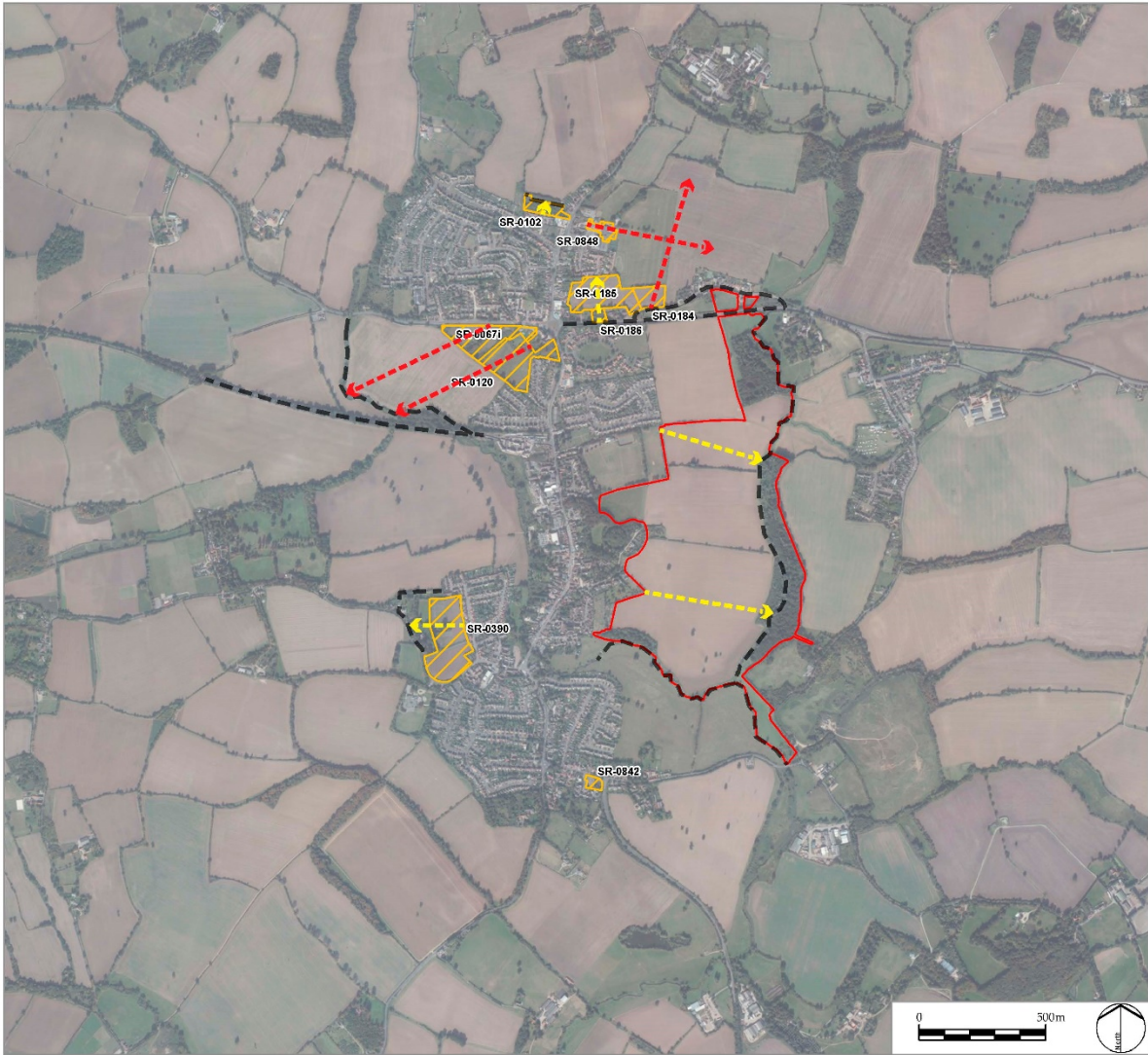
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the context of the constrained nature of Chipping Ongar as a whole and the advantages to the setting of Ongar Castle that can be offered through carefully considered development proposals, as well as an established need for new housing. The comparison between alternative sites presented in this report highlights the equally constrained nature of other potential development sites around Chipping Ongar, which wouldn't be able to offer the same degree of benefit to the town.

Comparison of parcels around Chipping Ongar that contain potential allocated sites

Parcel	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4	Resultant harm if parcel released	Resultant harm if parcel released (excl. purpose 3)
013.3	No Contribution	No Contribution	Relatively Weak	Relatively Strong	High	High
015.1	No Contribution	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	Very High	Very Low
016.1 (containing small part of the site)	No Contribution	No Contribution	Moderate	Relatively Strong	High	High
024.4	No Contribution	Weak	Moderate	Relatively Strong	High	High
023.2 (containing most of the site)	No Contribution	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	Very High	Very High
Site east of Chipping Ongar	No Contribution	No Contribution	Relatively Strong	Relatively Strong	High	High

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- LEGEND
- Site Boundary
 - Existing defensible boundary features
 - Proposed Allocated Sites
 - Proposed residential site allocation
 - Substantial encroachment
 - Limited encroachment

LD̂DESIGN

PROJECT TITLE
CHIPPING ONGAR

DRAWING TITLE
Figure 12:
Potential Encroachment

ISSUED BY	Peterborough	T: 01733 310 471
DATE	12 Dec 2016	DRAWN VW
SCALE @ A3	1:15,000	CHECKED RK
STATUS	Final	APPROVED RK

DWG. NO. 4823_212

No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing.
All dimensions are to be checked on site.
Area measurements for indicative purposes only.
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Sources: Ordnance Survey, Chipping Forest District Council, Esri

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. Background

LDA Design was commissioned by L & Q New Homes in November 2016 to appraise the outputs of a review of the Green Belt review prepared by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) in August 2016. This report relates to a site to the east of Chipping Ongar (see Figure 1 for location). This report also compares the site to the east of Chipping Ongar with potential development locations around Chipping Ongar identified by EFDC in the consultation version of their draft Local Plan, October 2016. This report follows on from a similar report prepared in March 2016 in relation to EFDC's stage 1 Green Belt Review.

1.2. Report Structure

Section 2 summarises the policy background applicable to Green Belt purposes in Epping Forest and emerging policy in relation to growth and housing development requirements throughout Epping Forest.

Section 3 reviews the methodology and outcomes of the EFDC Stage 2 Green Belt Review.

Section 4 considers the outcomes of the EFDC Stage 2 Green Belt Review in relation to the site to the east of Chipping Ongar and looks in further detail at how the site performs against Green Belt purposes.

Section 5 compares the site to the east of Chipping Ongar to proposed allocation sites around Chipping Ongar, comparing their performance in relation to Green Belt purposes.

Section 6 sets out the conclusions of the work in Sections 4 & 5 and uses a 'traffic light' system to indicate which sites could be released from the Green Belt and which are more constrained.

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2.0 Policy Context

2.1. Green Belt and NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England. Section 9 of the NPPF provides guidance in respect of Green Belt land, confirming that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policies is *"to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence"*. Paragraph 80 identifies the five purposes of Green Belt land:

- 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.

The site is located within the designated Metropolitan Green Belt surrounding Chipping Ongar, the boundary of which had not been comprehensively reviewed since the 1980s.

In the Issues and Options document for the emerging Local Plan, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) identified that some Green Belt land may need to be released within the District to accommodate future growth, including land around Chipping Ongar. The Green Belt around Chipping Ongar was not identified within the Issues and Options document as forming a 'strategic Green Belt gap' between settlements. As such, development within the Green Belt in this location would not result in the coalescence of settlements. This is positive in terms of its potential to be considered for Green Belt release.

The consultation Draft Local Plan continues to indicate that land will need to be removed from the Green Belt in order to meet identified development needs, and achieve sustainable forms of development in and around existing settlements. However, the Draft Local Plan proposes pursuing a strategy which seeks to minimise the use of Green Belt land for development whilst focusing development in the most sustainable locations, indicating at paragraph 3.92:

"This approach seeks to protect the most high value Green Belt land wherever possible, drawing on the findings of the Green Belt Review: Stage 2 in particular. It is clear from the Report on Site Selection that insufficient land outside the Green Belt exists to meet the development needs of the District within the Plan period. In order to meet the development needs identified, and achieve sustainable forms of development in and around existing settlements, alterations to the Green Belt boundaries are necessary."

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF identifies that when altering Green Belt boundaries authorities should have regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. Paragraph 85 provides guidance to Councils as to how boundaries should be defined: including using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

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2.2. Adopted Local Plan

The adopted Epping Forest Local Plan was published in 1998 with alterations in 2006. Due weight should be given to relevant policies in the existing plan according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. The relevant saved policies of the Adopted Local Plan are:

- Policy GB2A – Development In The Green Belt which states that planning permission will not be granted for the use of land or the construction of new buildings or the change of use or extension of existing buildings in the Green Belt unless it is considered appropriate (based on compliance with a number of criteria); and
- Policy CP1 - Achieving Sustainable Development Objectives which seeks to secure the provision of sufficient types and amounts of housing accommodation, and different facilities, to meet the needs of the local population, and to retain and improve land resources to meet the recreational and countryside needs of the metropolitan area.

As it stands, the local plan would not support the development of the site due to its Green Belt location. However, there would be no in-principle objection to development of the site should it be removed from the Green Belt.

2.3. Emerging Local Plan

EFDC are currently preparing a new Local Plan which will set out the planning policies and land allocations that will guide development within the District over the next twenty years. There are a number of stages to the Local Plan preparation process, which are outlined below based on the current timetable:

- Current Stage: Consultation on draft plan (8 weeks) (October - December 2016)
- Preparation of Submission Plan and Sustainability Appraisal (September - February 2017)
- Pre-submission publication and representations on soundness (6 weeks) (June-July 2017)
- Submission to Planning Inspectorate for Examination (November 2017)
- Examination in public (EiP) (Subject to discussion with the Planning Inspectorate and timetabling – likely to be early 2018)
- Expected adoption and publication (including policies maps) (October 2018)

As part of this process, EFDC has set out to review its Green Belt boundaries through a two stage process. The second stage has recently been completed on behalf of EFDC. This report looks in part at the findings of Stage 2.

The Consultation Draft Local Plan proposes Sites for Allocation. As set out at paragraph 3.54 of the Consultation Draft Local Plan, the approach to the allocation of sites has been to take each settlement and consider the most appropriate sites in accordance with the following order of priority:

- 1) A sequential flood risk assessment – proposing land in Flood Zone 2 and 3 only where need cannot be met in Flood Zone 1
- 2) Sites located on previously developed land within settlements

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- 3) Sites located on open space within settlements where such selection would maintain adequate open space provision within the settlement
- 4) Previously developed land within the Green Belt (in anticipation of the NPPF being updated to take account of the proposed changes published in December 2015).
- 5) Greenfield/Green Belt land on the edge of settlements:
 - a) Of least value to the Green Belt if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
 - b) Of greater value to the Green Belt if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
 - c) Of most value to the Green Belt if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
- 6) Agricultural land:
 - a) Of Grade 4-5 if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
 - b) Of Grade 1-3 if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
- 7) Enable small scale sites in smaller rural communities to come forward where there is a clear local need which supports the social and economic well-being of that community.

Emerging policy SP 5 – Green Belt and District Open Land indicates the proposed approach to the revision of Green Belt boundaries. This provides a plan of indicative boundary alterations at Figure 3.8 (see Appendix 1). This does not currently include the removal of the site east of Chipping Ongar from the Green Belt.

Emerging policy SP 2: Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033 indicates a suggested allocation of approximately 600 new homes at Chipping Ongar. Specific proposals for Chipping Ongar are set out in section 5 of the Consultation Draft Local Plan and captured in Draft Policy P 4 Chipping Ongar. Nine sites for potential housing allocation are identified in and around Chipping Ongar, as shown on Figure 5.11 of the Consultation Draft Local Plan (see Appendix 2). Detail of the proposed alterations to the Green Belt boundary around Chipping Ongar are shown on the same Figure. Seven of these sites lie within the existing Green Belt and these are all situated to the north and west of Chipping Ongar; none are proposed to the south and east of the settlement. Expansion of the settlement to the south and east, which would include the site to the east of Chipping Ongar, is addressed under 'alternative options' as follows:

“These options would significantly harm the Green Belt, compromise the historic setting of Ongar, and are locations which are more sensitive in landscape terms. Expansion to the east of the settlement could also harm the Scheduled Monument Ongar Castle.”

The implications of this emerging policy, particularly in relation to effects on Green Belt, are considered in the following sections.

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3.0 Findings of the Epping Forest Stage One Green Belt Review

3.1. Methodology Used

The draft Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Green Belt Review (Stage One) was presented to the Council's Cabinet on 3rd September 2015. The information presented included a separate methodology for the full Green Belt Review, as well as the Stage 1 report.

The full Green Belt Review comprises two stages. Stage 1 was prepared in 5 phases (the sixth being the report), as summarised below, and identifies broad locations for further site-specific work to be undertaken. Stage 2 included more detailed assessment of the parcels identified in Stage 1, at a finer grain, with the boundaries of the assessment parcels decided by a combination of desk based assessment and site specific assessment work.

3.1.1. Stage 1

The main purpose of the Stage 1 study was to undertake a high level review of Green Belt land across the District to identify the contribution of the Green Belt towards national Green Belt purposes as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The five phases of Stage 1 were as follows:

- Phase 1 – Understanding the context of the Green Belt Review
- Phase 2 – Appraising the current status of Green Belt land within the District

This phase involved a 'high-level' appraisal of the current status of all Green Belt land within the District, including the extent to which the land within the Green Belt continues to serve the five Green Belt purposes set out at NPPF Paragraph 80.

For the first Green Belt purpose, *"To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas"*, the Review defined large built up areas as London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hoddesdon.

For the second Green Belt purpose, *"To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another"*, the Review considered towns including Chipping Ongar.

The third Green Belt purpose, *"To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment"*, was used to assess the functional performance of existing Green Belt land in safeguarding the countryside.

For the fourth Green Belt purpose, *"To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns"*, the Review considered 'historic' towns including Chipping Ongar.

The Review considered that the fifth Green Belt purpose, *"To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"*, is uniformly fulfilled by the Green Belt as a whole and was therefore not factored into the detailed assessment of sites.

- Phase 3 – Analysing the results of the Phase 2 appraisal

The purposes of this phase were (i) to produce a District-wide analysis identifying the priorities for the protection of the Green Belt in the long-term and, (ii) determine the scope for releasing and safeguarding land currently within the Green Belt, in reference to the contribution land within the District makes in serving the Green Belt purposes.

- Phase 4 – Assessment of 'Non Green Belt' constraints

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The Review identified a number of environmental designations within the district that preclude development taking place. The following constraints were applied on a district wide basis, using GIS mapping software:

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (April 2015) – showing zones 2, 3 and 3b;
 - Special Protection Areas (SPA);
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR); and
 - City of London Corporation Epping Forest Buffer Land (land owned and managed by the City of London Corporation, which although not a formal part of the Forest, is not available for development).
- Phase 5 – Identify broad locations for further assessment.

In essence, this phase applied a buffer around each settlement to define the areas of search, adjusted to defensible boundaries. The settlement hierarchy determines the distance of the buffer, as follows:

- Town 2 km
- Large village 1 km
- Small village 0.5 km

3.1.2. Stage 2

The main aim of the Stage 2 study was to undertake an assessment of the areas immediately adjacent to the District's 22 existing settlements, to identify:

- areas where the Green Belt policy designation should remain;
- any historic anomalies in the existing boundaries; and
- areas where development would be least harmful in Green Belt terms.

Essentially, the Stage 2 study assessed the areas identified in Stage 1 against Green Belt purposes; assessed the harm to the Green Belt if land within those parcels were to be released for development; and appraisal of features that could act as defensible Green Belt boundaries.

The areas identified for further assessment at Stage 1 were sub-divided into smaller parcels, informed by desk study and refined following fieldwork, using existing physical features as boundaries. This included extending parcels beyond the artificial offsets from settlement used to identify areas for further study, where existing features or topography provided more suitable boundaries. The Stage 2 parcels exclude areas identified as absolute constraints wherever possible.

The Stage 2 assessment continues to assess the parcels of land against Green Belt purposes, omitting purpose 5 again as it was not considered helpful in terms of assessing the relative value of land parcels to the Green Belt. The criteria used for Stage 1 were refined to reflect

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the smaller parcel size, with professional judgement used to provide an overall summary rating for each purpose.

The assessment considers two scenarios when assessing the likely harm to the Green Belt; one that takes account of the ratings for purposes 1-4 and a second that excludes the ratings for purpose 3. Paragraph 4.11 of the Stage 2 report indicates:

“Given the rural nature of the District, the majority of the District’s Green Belt performs strongly against purpose 3. It is therefore helpful to undertake some ‘sensitivity testing’ - to look at how the Green Belt performs if purpose 3 is removed from the assessment (and therefore parcels are assessed against purposes 1, 2 and 4 only).”

The criteria used for the assessment, definitions of the ratings used for the contribution to Green Belt by purpose and a framework for assessing harm are provided in Appendix 3 to this report.

3.2. Assessment Findings

3.2.1. Appraisal Results

Within the Stage 2 assessment, the site to the east of Chipping Ongar is mostly located within Green Belt parcel 023.2, with two small areas north of the A414 within Parcel 016.1 and two small areas along the eastern edge of the site outside Green Belt parcels. The two areas along the eastern edge of the site, that are outside of the Green Belt parcels, comprise land that is predominantly woodland.

Green Belt parcel 023.2 runs from the eastern edge of Chipping Ongar, eastwards to the River Rodding, and Parcel 016.1 lies north of the A141 and east of Chipping Ongar. Figure 2 shows the location of the site in relation to these parcels, and represents graphically the scores of each of the parcels around Chipping Ongar for each of the four Green Belt purposes assessed in EFDC’s Stage 2 assessment. Figures 3 and Figure 4 present the potential level of harm to the Green Belt, based on the EFDC assessment, with Figure 4 omitting the rating for purpose 3. Table 1 below summarises the assessment results for parcels 023.2 and 016.1 with the full EFDC appraisals provided at Appendix 4.

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Table 1: Summary of Parcel 023.2 and 016.1 scores

Parcel	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4	Resultant harm if parcel released
023.2	No Contribution	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	Very High
016.1	No Contribution	No Contribution	Moderate	Relatively Strong	High

In relation to purpose 1, both parcel 023.2 and 016.1 are indicated not to contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. This is due to their location away from large built-up areas. The parcels are therefore categorised as making no contribution this purpose.

In relation to purpose 2, both parcels 023.2 and 016.1 do not provide, or form part of, a gap or space between towns. The summary assessments indicate that parcel 016.1 is located partly within the gap between Chipping Ongar and the hamlet of Shelley, and Parcel 023.2 lies within the gap between Chipping Ongar and the village of High Ongar. However, the parcels are categorised as making no contribution to this purpose, but it is recognised that neither of these settlements are considered to be a town.

In relation to purpose 3, the Green Belt designation within parcel 023.2 is considered to make a major contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The summary assessment states that the parcel is predominantly rural and free from development with the exception of the residential development at Great Stony Park in the north west of the parcel, and that the remainder of the parcel consists of open arable fields, allotments on the settlement edge, Chipping Ongar playground and recreation ground, and some individual detached properties with gardens. The Three Forests Way and St Peter's Way public rights of way cross through the parcel, Ongar Castle Scheduled Monument lies in the west of the parcel, and the sloping valley sides and consequent visual connectivity with the wider countryside to the east present a strong rural character. Parcel 023.2 is categorised as making a strong contribution to this purpose.

In relation to purpose 3, parcel 016.1 is indicated as making less of a contribution than parcel 023.2. It contains some ribbon development along High Ongar Road, as well as open fields and recreational fields associated with the adjacent Leisure Centre. It has some weakly defined boundaries including the boundary with the existing settlement to the west. Parcel 016.1 is categorised as making a moderate contribution to this purpose.

In relation to purpose 4, the open landscape within parcel 023.2 is considered to make a major contribution to the setting and significance of the historic town. The parcel lies adjacent to the historic core of Chipping Ongar, part of the Conservation Area as well as the Scheduled Monument of Ongar Castle lie within the parcel, and the Stony Park Conservation Area lies adjacent to the northern part of the parcel. The summary assessment states that new development would be likely to cause harm to the setting and significance of the special character of the town, particularly if it were to affect the existing linear pattern of the historic town that retains its medieval plan form. Parcel 023.2 is categorised as making a strong contribution to this purpose.

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In relation to purpose 4, parcel 016.1 is indicated as making less of a contribution than Parcel 023.2. The summary assessment states that it is unlikely that the parcel forms a significant role in the visual setting of the historic town of Chipping Ongar although it contributes to its sense of physical openness and form, as well as its relationship to the Stony Park Conservation Area, and therefore contributes to its overall setting. Parcel 016.1 is categorised as making a relatively strong contribution to this purpose.

Using the EFDC methodology, the resultant harm to the Green Belt purposes if Parcel 023.2 is released from the Green Belt is given as very high. The resultant harm to the Green Belt purposes if Parcel 016.1 is released from the Green Belt is given as high.

3.3. Limitations of the Stage 2 Review

The stage 2 assessment uses smaller parcels than those used for stage 1, which is an improvement on the stage 1 assessment. The parcels have been defined using recognisable boundary features that are visible on the ground. However, there continues to be some variation across parcels, meaning that this necessitates some generalisation in the assessment of each parcel to achieve a single judgement on the contribution to each Green Belt purpose.

The definitions for the stage 2 assessment ratings are given for a range Strong Contribution – Moderate Contribution – Weak Contribution – No Contribution. However, the ratings used for the assessment introduce interim ratings such as Relatively Strong and Relatively Weak that are not defined or explained. This leaves the methodology open to interpretation.

One of the main aims of the stage 2 review is to identify areas where development would be least harmful in Green Belt terms. There is no attempt in the stage 2 review to produce an overall aggregated score for each parcel, which was the basis for the determination of harm to Green Belt purposes at stage 1. Instead, a rather simplistic approach is taken that relates the contribution to Green Belt purposes of each parcel directly to Green Belt harm. This means that if a parcel makes a strong contribution to one or more of the Green Belt purposes, the harm caused by the release of the parcel is deemed to be high, and conversely if a parcel makes no contribution to any of the purposes, there would be no harm caused by the release of the parcel. No explanation or description is provided in the stage 2 review to support the decisions made in relation to potential harm. The use of a crude scoring system does not provide a robust assessment.

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4.0 Assessment of the site to the east of Chipping Ongar

4.1. Appraisal of site using Stage 2 Methodology

As set out in section 3 above, there remain some shortfalls in the stage 2 assessment of the contribution of parts of Epping Forest District to the NPPF Green Belt purposes. As a result of the shortcomings in EFDC's Stage 2 assessment process and methodology we have undertaken our own Stage 2 Review of The Site, which is set out in this section.

Our review of the site against the NPPF Green Belt purposes initially utilises the EFDC methodology for the stage 2 review. It considers the criteria defined in the report for EFDC (see Appendix 3) and identifies any differences between the assessment of the whole of parcels 023.2 and 016.1 and the smaller site to the east of Chipping Ongar. Subsequently, other factors relevant to the site to the east of Chipping Ongar and its Green Belt location are identified, to add further detail to the analysis.

The table below sets out the assessment of the site to the east of Chipping Ongar against the four Green Belt purposes considered relevant by EFDC, with Figures 5-7 illustrating the differences between the assessment of the wider parcels 023.2 and 016.1, and the site to the east of Chipping Ongar.

The Site (predominantly within Parcel 023.2) Site Size: 74.8 hectares (predominantly within a Parcel of 115 hectares)	
Summary of Assessment Site's Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt	
1st GB Purpose	No Contribution
2nd GB Purpose	No Contribution
3rd GB Purpose	Relatively Strong
4th GB Purpose	Relatively Strong
Summary	High (High without purpose 3)
Total	
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No Contribution
As indicated for the whole of parcels 023.2 and 016.1 in the stage 2 review, the site to the east of Chipping Ongar is remote from large built-up areas and makes no contribution to this purpose.	
2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	No Contribution
As indicated for the whole of parcels 023.2 and 016.1 in the stage 2 review, the site to the east of Chipping Ongar does not provide, or form part of, a gap or space between towns and makes no contribution to this purpose.	

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3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Relatively Strong
<p>As indicated for the whole of parcel 023.2 in the stage 2 review the parcel is predominantly rural and free from development with the exception of the residential development at Great Stony Park in the north west of the parcel, and the remainder of the parcel consists of open arable fields, allotments on the settlement edge, playground and recreation ground, and some individual detached properties with gardens. The Three Forests Way and St Peter's Way public rights of way cross through the parcel, Ongar Castle Scheduled Monument lies in the west of the parcel, and the sloping valley sides and consequent visual connectivity with the wider countryside to the east present a strong rural character. Within the site, the Green Belt designation protects appropriate Green Belt development in the countryside, which specifically includes the site of Ongar Castle, on the western boundary of the site. The two small areas of land within the site that fall within parcel 016.1 protect land that is currently agricultural and relatively flat.</p> <p>The eastern edges of parcel 023.2 and of the site to the east of Chipping Ongar have strong defensible boundaries comprising the River Rodding and the edges of significant woodlands which, in accordance with the stage 2 assessment method, falls within the 'Moderate Contribution' category in relation to defensible boundaries because <i>'The parcel is contained by significant barrier features which may help safeguard the countryside from encroachment'</i> (Stage 2 assessment report Table 3.3). These features would provide strong permanent defensible Green Belt boundaries should land within parcel 023.2 and the site be released from the Green Belt. However, predominantly due to the presence of open arable fields across much of the parcel, the overall contribution is assessed as 'Relatively Strong'.</p>	
4. To preserve the special character of historic towns	Relatively Strong
<p>The site adjoins the historic core of Chipping Ongar at the western boundary, with the Conservation Area extending into the site around the castle, which is also a Scheduled Monument. The site also contains three listed buildings in the vicinity of the castle (Castle House, granary and barn). However, the small areas of the site to the north of the A414 make no contribution to the setting of Chipping Ongar due to physical and visual separation. It is unlikely that Green Belt land would contribute to the significance of the town or heritage assets in the town centre, because the focal point of the medieval buildings was on the main road, rather than the open character of the land within the site.</p> <p>The Castle motte, inner bailey and the above ground portions of the town enclosure earthwork are Scheduled and sited on top of slightly elevated land, to which the open character of the Green Belt land within parts of the site contribute positively both visually and physically. However, many of the historic features of the land within the site, such as field boundaries and veteran trees, have been lost over time. Whilst removal of the site from the Green Belt and subsequent development could alter the setting of the castle, this does not need to be in a negative way. Opportunities exist to enhance the setting of the castle, allowing for improved access and interpretation that could both protect and enhance it.</p> <p>The removal of the Green Belt designation and consequent loss of openness from the urbanising development on the land that abuts the urban edge could cause harm to the historic linear pattern, as identified for the wider parcel 023.2. However, the small areas of the site to the north of the A414 make no contribution to the historic significance of Chipping Ongar or any of the heritage assets in the vicinity.</p>	

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As can be seen from the table above, the site east of Chipping Ongar scores lower than parcel 023.2 for purposes 3 and 4. The site is assessed as making a 'Relatively Strong' contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt compared to a 'Strong' contribution for parcel 023.2 given in the stage 2 assessment. The results for purposes 1 and 2 remain unchanged as the whole Parcel is already acknowledged to make no contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas or preventing neighbouring towns from merging.

The result for the site for purpose 3 is less than for parcel 023.2 for reasons including the presence of strong defensible boundaries on the eastern and southern edges of the site. The result for purpose 4 is less because the site forms the immediate setting to the east of Chipping Ongar, particularly the castle, but much of the historic core faces inwards away from the site, and removal of the site from the Green Belt and subsequent development could alter the setting of the castle but this does not need to be in a negative way. Opportunities exist to enhance the setting of the castle, allowing for improved access and interpretation that could both protect and enhance it.

The smaller areas of the site within parcel 016.1 to the north of the A414 would score differently to the site south of the A414. Whilst scores would remain unchanged in relation to purposes 1 and 2, the scores for purposes 3 and 4 would be reduced. In relation to purpose 3, the housing along High Ongar Road contains these areas of the site (see Viewpoint 3), having already encroached into the Green Belt to a certain extent. The containment of the areas, despite them being countryside, would reduce the score for purpose 3 down to 'weak contribution'. In relation to purpose 4, the physical and visual separation of these areas from Chipping Ongar and other nearby heritage assets mean that these areas do not contribute to this purpose and the score would reduce to 'no contribution'. The overall level of harm resulting from removing these small areas from the Green Belt would be lower than the rest of the site south of the A141.

The potential harm as a result of the release of the site from the Green Belt is lower than for parcel 023.2 as a whole. As previously mentioned, the stage 2 review methodology does not provide an explanation to justify the ratings for Green Belt harm, just a relatively crude comparison table. As set out in section 3 of this report, there are some concerns about using this table as the basis for any judgements. The assessment of the site east of Chipping Ongar against Green Belt purposes indicates that it makes a relatively strong contribution to the Green Belt and therefore the potential level of harm if it were to be released would be high; this is less than indicated in the stage 2 review. If the site to the east of Chipping Ongar is assessed against purposes 1, 2 and 4 only the potential level of harm if it were to be released would remain high.

4.2. Other factors

Both stages of the Green Belt review emphasise the role that defensible boundaries can play in restricting sprawl, preventing settlements merging and reducing encroachment into the countryside. Although the NPPF does not specifically reference defensible boundaries, it is an accepted principle that revisions to the extent of Green Belt should create robust, long-term boundaries. The existing eastern edge of Chipping Ongar has an intermittent boundary, both for the settlement and the Green Belt. The A414 to the north of the site (see

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Figure 9) could become a strong, well-vegetated boundary through enhancement of the existing vegetation to the south of the route, including along the boundary of the site. Equally, the housing along High Ongar Road could become a strong defensible boundary.

The River Roding along the eastern boundary of the site is largely well vegetated (see Figure 9). As discussed in Section 4.1, the river forms a physical boundary and could become a strong defensible boundary, whilst retaining the site of wildlife value that occurs along the river. Cripsey Brook, along the southern boundary of the site, is less well vegetated, but also forms a physical barrier. It could form a similarly defensible boundary to the Green Belt. Watercourses are defined as '*Features considered to form stronger [Green Belt] boundaries*' in Table 3.1 of the stage 2 report, and would be strong permanent boundaries to the Green Belt east of Chipping Ongar should land within the site be released from it.

Constraints identified in relation to the site include ecological designations along the River Roding (see Figure 9). Areas of potential flood risk are also identified along the River Roding to the east of the site and Cripsey Brook to the south. Although these would be absolute constraints to development, any development proposal for the site could be designed to avoid these areas.

Another factor that relates to the site is the location of Ongar Castle and the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area (see Figure 9 and Viewpoints 1 and 2). Ongar Castle is within the ownership of the landowner for the site and included within the site boundary. The castle is an important heritage asset and could be a substantial asset to Chipping Ongar. Whilst it is currently overgrown and difficult to interpret, development within the wider site could be designed to respect and retain the immediate context of the castle, whilst enhancing both its public accessibility and its immediate setting. This could be done through retaining open space, potentially in the form of playing fields or a park, around the castle to create a buffer between it and any future development.

The site slopes gently eastwards, down towards the River Roding (see Figure 10 and Viewpoint 1). Whilst the landform of the site is noticeable from the surrounding area, it is not prominent in views. This is as a result of the combination of both the gentle slope and the role of the vegetation around the site, particularly along the River Roding. Views across the River Roding valley towards the site, such as from the western edge of High Ongar, are relatively limited and filtered by vegetation. Whilst development within the site would physically reduce the gap between Chipping Ongar and High Ongar, a physical and visual gap would be retained between the two settlements and they would not merge. The river corridor would ensure that separation is retained.

Additionally, the site is located in close proximity to the existing town centre and historic core of Chipping Ongar. There are existing pedestrian links into the town centre. The site also offers the potential to create a new relief road, to relieve congestion in the town centre, should there be a large enough housing allocation.

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5.0 Comparison with other Potential Areas for Growth

The Consultation Draft Local Plan identifies proposed allocated sites around Chipping Ongar (see Appendix 2 and Figures 8-11 for locations). Within the existing Green Belt there are seven proposed residential allocations lying within four parcels from the stage 2 review. This section reviews the performance of the proposed allocation sites against the Green Belt purposes, utilising the stage 2 review methodology and further analysis as undertaken for the site to the east of Chipping Ongar in section 4 of this report.

The proposed sites for allocation are located to the north and west of the settlement. These potential areas of growth are located in the following Green Belt parcels from the stage 2 review:

- SR-0067i and SR-0120 - parcel 013.3
- SR-0102 - parcel 015.1
- SR-0184, SR-0185 and SR-018 - parcel 016.1
- SR-0390 - parcel 024.4

The full appraisals of each of these parcels from the stage 2 review is provided at Appendix 5. The table below provides a comparison of the four parcels around Chipping Ongar that contain potential sites for allocation and parcel 023.2 as assessed in the stage 2 assessment, along with the results of the more detailed assessment of the site undertaken in Section 4 above.

Parcel	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3	Purpose 4	Resultant harm if parcel released	Resultant harm if parcel released (excl. purpose 3)
013.3	No Contribution	No Contribution	Relatively Weak	Relatively Strong	High	High
015.1	No Contribution	No Contribution	Strong	Weak	Very High	Very Low
016.1 (containing small part of the site)	No Contribution	No Contribution	Moderate	Relatively Strong	High	High
024.4	No Contribution	Weak	Moderate	Relatively Strong	High	High
023.2 (containing most of the site)	No Contribution	No Contribution	Strong	Strong	Very High	Very High
Site east of Chipping Ongar	No Contribution	No Contribution	Relatively Strong	Relatively Strong	High	High

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Based on the assessments of the parcels alone, the stage 2 review indicates that release of the parcel surrounding the most of the site (parcel 023.2) would result in some of the greatest harm to the Green Belt, jointly with parcel 015.1 if purpose 3 is included in the assessment. However, as the assessment work within Section 4 of this report demonstrates, when the smaller area is considered the site performs less of a Green Belt function than the wider parcel 023.2 and would be more appropriate for Green Belt release, particularly when the assessment excludes purpose 3.

The table below summarises our assessment of the contribution to Green Belt purposes of each of the sites proposed for allocation by EFDC in their Consultation Draft Local Plan. The level of harm assessed in the stage 2 Green Belt review is also indicated, with the text identifying whether the rating for purpose 3 is considered relevant to the level of harm in each case. The assessment of each potential area for growth is then considered to highlight the development potential and constraints for each area (as illustrated on Figure 11), using the following colour coding in the 'Overall Suitability for Development' column:

Red = constraints make the potential area for growth unsuitable for development

Amber = constraints effect the potential area for growth and could effect its suitability for development

Green = the potential area for growth is largely unconstrained or constraints can be readily addressed as part of the scheme design

Proposed allocated site	Comment on Contribution to Green Belt	Resultant harm if parcel released (excl. purpose 3)	Overall Suitability for Development
Sites SR-0067i and SR-0120	Sites SR-0067i and SR-0120 cover most of parcel 013.3. The area performs no function in checking the sprawl of large built up areas, or in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. It is closely related to the existing edge of Chipping Ongar, which wraps around the parcel to the north, east and south. An overgrown hedgerow on the western edge could become a defensible Green Belt boundary, although this might need to be strengthened with further planting. The site is influenced by existing residential development to the north, east and south-east. The parcel does adjoin the Stony Park Conservation Area to the east.	High	

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Proposed allocated site	Comment on Contribution to Green Belt	Resultant harm if parcel released (excl. purpose 3)	Overall Suitability for Development
Site SR-0102	Site SR-0102 is a small site occupying part of the southern edge of parcel 015.1. It performs no function in checking the sprawl of large built up areas, or in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. It adjoins existing residential development to the south and east, and is enclosed by an existing belt of trees to the north which would provide some visual separation and screening from Green Belt land to the north. The existing tree belt would provide a defensible Green Belt boundary (see Figure 12), preventing encroachment into the countryside beyond. It is separated both physically and visually from the historic elements of the town by intervening development in the north of the settlement (including the Shelley Estate).	Very Low	
Sites SR-0184, SR-0185 and SR-0186	These three sites lie within an area of land north of the A141 and south of playing fields and existing new residential development at The Gables, occupying part of the south-western edge of parcel 016.1. The sites perform no function in checking the sprawl of large built up areas, or in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. Site SR-0186 is part of the garden of an existing house that lies within a line of houses north of the A414. The other three sites are all part of the same arable field enclosed on all sides by existing residential development, High Ongar Road or the playing fields, apart from a short section in the north eastern corner where the arable field continues to the north. The section of the edge of Site SR-0184 that adjoins the existing arable	High	

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Proposed allocated site	Comment on Contribution to Green Belt	Resultant harm if parcel released (excl. purpose 3)	Overall Suitability for Development
	field has no edge that would form a defensible Green Belt boundary. The other edges of these sites do have physical features that would form defensible boundaries (see Figure 12). Site SR-0186 lies a few metres north of the Stony Park Conservation Area, separated from it by the A141. The other sites are further separated from it by houses and gardens, and High Ongar Road. It is unlikely that the sites form a significant role in the visual setting of the historic town of Chipping Ongar although they contribute to its sense of physical openness and form, as well as its relationship to the Stony Park Conservation Area, and therefore contribute to its overall setting.		
Site SR-0390	Site SR-0390 comprises an area of arable fields and garden enclosed by residential development to the east and part of the north boundaries, a road to the south and south-west, and vegetated garden and field boundaries to the north-west. It occupies approximately three quarters of parcel 024.4; the land outside SR-0390 but within parcel 024.4 lies to the west and comprises houses with large gardens and small fields enclosed by vegetation. The site performs no function in checking the sprawl of large built up areas, and a weak function in preventing neighbouring towns from merging (being within the gap between Chipping Ongar and North Weald Bassett). The existing Green Belt boundary to the east of the site is relatively well- defined by a settlement boundary following the line of back gardens. The outer site boundaries are strongly defined by some dense tree/ hedgerow boundaries (see Figure 12).	High	

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Proposed allocated site	Comment on Contribution to Green Belt	Resultant harm if parcel released (excl. purpose 3)	Overall Suitability for Development
	The site is in close proximity to the Conservation Area and forms part of the setting of the town, and therefore new development may cause harm to the setting and special historic character of the town.		
Site east of Chipping Ongar	As assessed for the site in Section 4.	High	

This initial assessment indicates that only one site in the Green Belt around Chipping Ongar would result in very low harm if it were released from the Green Belt and is largely unconstrained or constraints can be readily addressed as part of the scheme design. All other sites have a similar level of suitability for Green Belt release as the site, all having a number of factors that would influence their suitability for development. All sites are countryside and, apart from part of SR-0184, have defensible boundaries. The relationship of sites to areas of flood risk, the underlying topography and the potential to enhance or detract from the setting of heritage assets should all be taken into consideration in assessing their suitability for development. The distance from the town centre of the sites north of the A141 is also an important consideration.

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6.0 Summary of the Appropriateness of the site for Green Belt Release

The site is currently located within the Green Belt. However, it was considered for development by the Council in their 2012 Issues and Options document. Whilst there was strong opposition to development of any and all sites identified by the Council at the Issues and Options stage, a recent SHMA has established a strong need for housing in the district. The ongoing Green Belt Review could release the site from the Green Belt, therefore allowing it to come forward without this major constraint.

The Epping Forest stage 1 Green Belt review identified the site within a broad location for further assessment. The further work undertaken within the more fine-grained stage 2 review indicates that the parcel within which the site is located would cause a very high level of harm to the Green Belt if released from the Green Belt, also being very high if the assessment of Green Belt purpose 3 is not taken into consideration. However, some concerns have been raised about the simplistic approach to deriving the level of harm for each parcel based on the highest rated contribution for any of the Green belt purposes. Further assessment work has therefore been undertaken relating specifically to the site east of Chipping Ongar.

The assessment of the site east of Chipping Ongar against the purposes of the Green Belt, utilising EFDC's stage 2 review criteria, indicates it makes less of a contribution to the Green Belt than the wider parcel it is located in. The site has strongly defined boundaries (primarily along watercourses) which would provide permanent strong defensible Green Belt boundaries preserving the countryside beyond from encroachment (purpose 3). The other key difference relates to Green Belt purpose 4, to preserve the special character of historic towns. Whilst development of the site, and its removal from the Green Belt, could potentially affect the setting of Ongar Castle and to a lesser extent Chipping Ongar itself, the opportunity exists to protect and enhance Ongar Castle and the settlement through the design of the site. As the castle is in the same ownership as the site, the opportunity to allow public access and create an attractive and usable setting to the castle as part of any development, giving prominence and access to this substantial asset of the town. Any future development could be designed to avoid affecting areas of potential flood risk and retain the Local Wildlife Site along the River Roding if the site was removed from the Green Belt.

The smaller areas of the site to the north of the A414 currently make very little contribution to Green Belt purposes. Removal of these areas from the Green Belt would have no effect on purposes 1, 2 and 4. In relation to purpose 3, the housing along High Ongar Road contains these areas of the site, having already encroached into the Green Belt to a certain extent. The containment of the areas, despite them being countryside, would reduce the score for purpose 3 down to 'weak contribution'.

When compared to other potential areas for development around Chipping Ongar, the site performs on a par with all sites apart from one small site (SR-102) to the north of the settlement.

In light of the above assessment a case can be made for the exclusion of the site from the Green Belt, with a very strong case to remove the small areas of land north of the A414. Whilst the exclusion of the main site from the Green Belt and its subsequent development could be said to have some harmful impact on the Green Belt, this should be considered in the context of the constrained nature of Chipping Ongar as a whole and the advantages to the setting of Ongar Castle that can be offered through carefully considered development

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proposals, as well as an established need for new housing. The comparison between alternative sites presented in this report highlights the equally constrained nature of other potential development sites around Chipping Ongar, which wouldn't be able to offer the same degree of benefit to the town.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. EFDC proposed approach to the revision of Green Belt boundaries

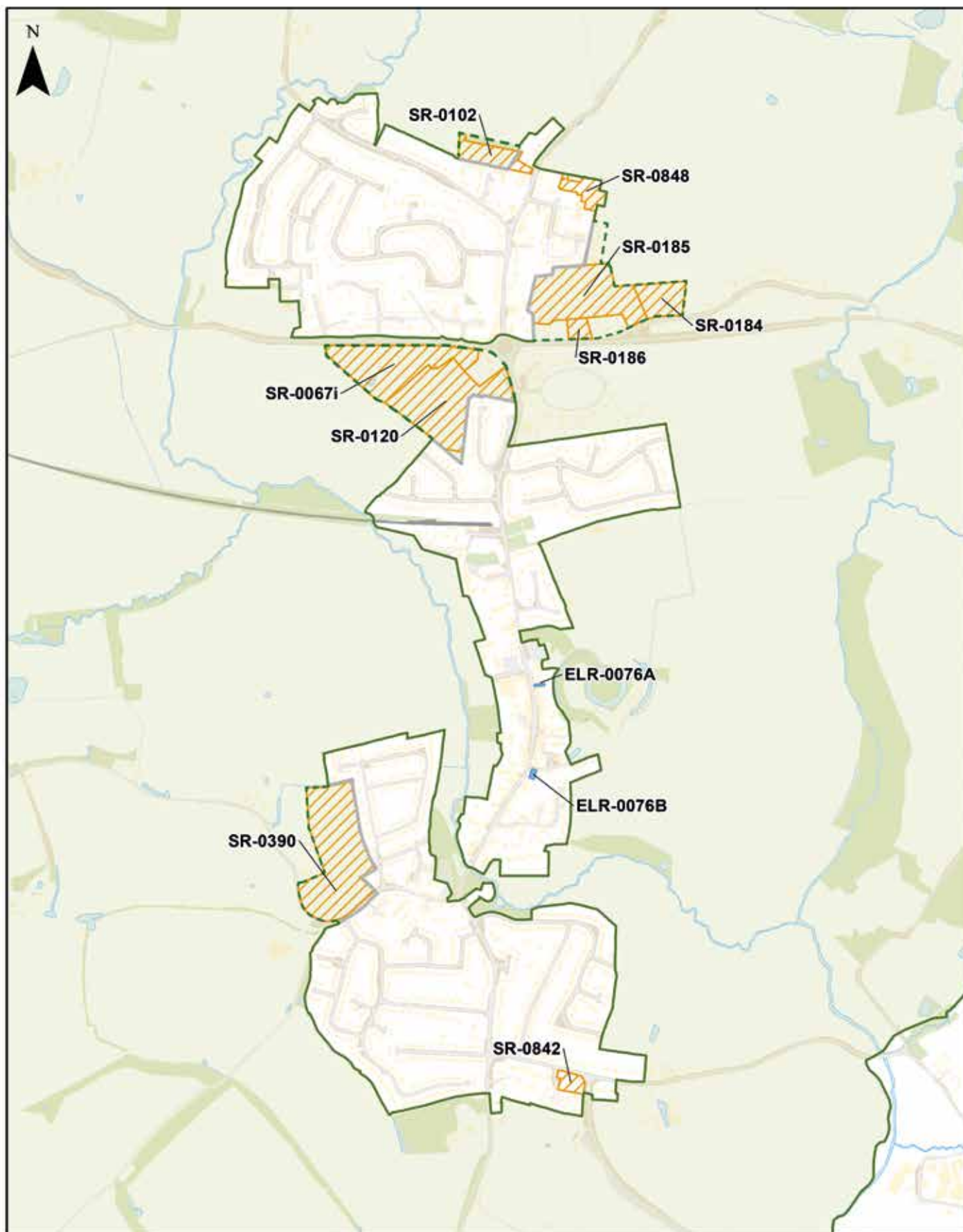
Figure 3.8 - Proposed Green Belt boundary alterations to take account of proposed allocations



The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

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Appendix 2. EFDC Proposed Site Allocations for Chipping Ongar



Local Plan 2011-2033
Draft Plan
Consultation



Drawing No.
EFDC-DP-0003-Rev1

Date: September 2016

Scale: 1:12,000 @A4

Content
Proposed Sites for Allocation and
Green Belt amendments in
Chipping Ongar

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Geo Perspectives, © Natural England 2015

Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Residential site with planning permission | Existing employment sites | Existing Green Belt boundary |
| Proposed residential site allocation | Employment site identified for intensification | Indicative Green Belt boundary amendment |
| Proposed traveller site allocation | Site identified as an extension to an existing employment site | Existing Green Belt boundary to be amended |
| | Potential new employment site | District Open Land |

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**Appendix 3. EFDC criteria used for the stage 2 assessment,
definitions of the ratings used for the contribution to
Green Belt by purpose and a framework for assessing
harm**

Table 3.2 Stage 2 Assessment: Description of criteria

EFDC Stage 1 assessment criteria	Interpretation of criteria for Stage 2 assessment
Purpose 1: Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas (large built up areas are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hoddesdon)	
1) Does the parcel act, in itself, as an effective barrier against sprawl from large built-up areas outside of the study area, specifically London and Harlow, Cheshunt and Hoddesdon□	<p>This criterion relates to the role of the designated parcel, rather than any barrier features that might form its boundaries, or lie within it. To act in itself as an effective barrier a parcel will need to be of a size and in a location that is significant in relation to a large built-up area. This location would need to be adjacent to the large built-up area.</p> <p>It is not necessary to consider the extent to which sprawl has already occurred, as this will be addressed in terms of the role of the parcel as part of the gap between the large built-up area and the settlement to which the parcel being assessed attaches (Purpose 2).</p>
2) Does the parcel contribute, as part of a wider network of parcels, to a strategic barrier against the sprawl of these built-up areas□	<p>If a parcel is adjacent to a large built-up area but in itself would be unlikely to prevent sprawl it can be considered to contribute as part of a wider network, assuming it is adjacent to other parcels.</p> <p>If it is judged that parcels adjacent to a large built-up area are not in themselves sufficient to prevent sprawl, taking into consideration their breadth, the presence of barrier features, the presence of routes which could facilitate sprawl and the presence of existing development which is considered to constitute sprawl, then parcels which are not adjacent to the large built-up area may also be assessed as making a contribution.</p>
3) Are there any defensible boundaries within the parcel (see definition for defensible boundary) which act as an effective barrier against sprawl from large-built-up areas outside of the study area specifically London, Harlow Cheshunt and Hoddesdon□	<p>Barrier features either within or outside of the parcel in question (but still in the Green Belt) may play a role in reducing the likelihood of sprawl, and thus diminishing the role of the Green Belt designation with respect to Purpose 1 within the parcel (or that area of it which lies within the protection of the barrier).</p> <p>In assessing the strength of a barrier feature, consideration need to be given to whether it has been breached, allowing or potentially allowing sprawl to still occur.</p>
Purpose 2: Prevent neighbouring towns from merging (for the purposes of this study towns within the District are considered to be: Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton / Debden, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill, Chipping Ongar, North Weald Bassett, Theydon Bois, Roydon and Lower Nazeing)	
<p>The Stage 2 assessments consider the separation of the Large Built Up Areas as well as the towns for this Purpose. This helps to add additional detail on the relationships between all of the larger settlements with regards to the separation between them.</p> <p>It is also noted that, whilst not directly assessed in terms of settlement gaps, villages can contribute to the perception of a settlement gap. Loss of space between villages that lie between towns can reduce the perception of a gap between those towns.</p>	
4) Does the parcel itself provide, or form part of, a gap or space between towns□	Judgement of what constitutes a gap requires consideration of distance (Q6).
5) Are there any defensible boundaries within the parcel (see definition for defensible boundary) which prevent neighbouring towns from merging□	The perception of the extent of gap, and potential for coalescence, is influenced by the presence of barrier features. However, the role of a barrier feature in reducing the role of a gap should not be overstated: a barrier may prevent settlements from physically merging but it is likely that some form of distance gap will also be required to prevent the perception of loss of separation. The role of the barrier feature in affecting views (see Q8) will affect this.
6) What is the distance (km) of the gap between the towns□	This will be a consideration in general terms in the assessment but as it is only one of a number of factors affecting separation, no cut-off distances relating to different levels of performance against Purpose 2 are defined.
7) Is there evidence of ribbon development on	This is a consideration in terms of perception of a

EFDC Stage 1 assessment criteria	Interpretation of criteria for Stage 2 assessment
well used thoroughfares between towns (B roads and larger)□	settlement gap.
8) What is the visual perception of the gap between the towns□well used thoroughfares□	This is a consideration in terms of perception of a settlement gap, influenced by landscape/townscape characteristics.
9) Would a reduction in the gap compromise the separation of towns in physical terms□	This relates to the consideration of distance between towns in relation to the extent of the parcel in question.
10) Would a reduction in the gap compromise the separation of towns and the overall openness of the parcel visually□	This is a consideration in terms of perception of a settlement gap, influenced by landscape/townscape characteristics.
Purpose 3: Assist in Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment	
Countryside is defined in the Stage 1 glossary as □the land and scenery of a rural area□	
11) Does the Green Belt designation in this land parcel protect countryside that is in use for agriculture, forestry, outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and local transport infrastructure (certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate development based on NPPF paragraph 89, bullets 1 and 2, and paragraph 90, bullet 3)□	The Stage 2 assessments aimed to discern more subtle differences in the performance of the parcels against Purpose 3. As part of this, the assessments considered a more detailed interpretation of □countryside□to differentiate between landscape which is undeveloped (i.e. open) and countryside which contains development. The amount and character of development in terms of whether the development is considered to have an □urbanising□influence is considered under criterion 13.
12) Having regard to the topography of land and location relative to existing development, does the Green Belt designation in this land parcel prevent encroachment, or in some other way assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment□	Q12 at Stage 1 related to the barrier/boundary function that topography can sometimes have, but was a narrower assessment of the role of barriers than was applied to Purposes 1 and 2. A strong barrier, of which topography is one form, may mark a clear distinction between land which is influenced by an adjacent settlement (i.e. a settlement fringe) and countryside which is free from urbanising characteristics, thus reducing the contribution made by land contained within it in to the safeguarding of countryside beyond it. Q12 is therefore amended for Stage 2 to: □Having regard to any barrier features and location relative to existing development, does the Green Belt designation in this land parcel prevent encroachment, or in some other way assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment□□
13) Has there already been any significant encroachment by built development or other urbanising elements□	This criterion involves a judgement on the extent to which a parcel represents □countryside□ In addition to built development and associated features, this question is considered to be applicable to types of development listed under Q11 which, whilst deemed by the NPPF to be □not inappropriate□in the Green Belt, may nevertheless exhibit characteristics which are perceived as urbanising. Conversely, certain other forms of limited development may be considered to retain openness and to therefore not constitute encroachment or urbanisation. A note will be made of urbanising features within the assessment against Purpose 3. Following the review, this information could be used by the Council to identify locations where developer contributions could be used to enhance the openness of the Green Belt.
Purpose 4: Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns (historic towns are defined in accordance with Essex County Council□ Historic Towns Assessment Report: Chipping Ongar, Waltham Abbey, and Epping. Sawbridgeworth, which is located in East Herts, was also included as an historic town due to its proximity to Epping Forest District)8	
14) Are there any historic towns (Chipping Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Sawbridgeworth) within or adjacent to the	A piece of land may still be within the □setting□of an historic town whether or not it is directly adjacent to it, so consideration of Purpose 4 is slightly amended for Stage 2 when considering smaller parcels in more detail than in

⁸ Essex County Council Archaeological Department (now Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch) launched the Essex Historical Towns Survey in 1995 and completed it in 1999. Between 1995 and 1999 thirty-two towns were surveyed in Essex.

EFDC Stage 1 assessment criteria	Interpretation of criteria for Stage 2 assessment
parcel□	Stage 1.
15) To what extent is Green Belt land within the setting of the historic towns and/ or any heritage assets within those towns, especially those closest to the settlement boundary□	There should generally be sufficient information within the Phase 1 assessment and the Essex County Council Historic Towns SPG (1999) to inform the Stage 2 assessments.
16) Does the open character of the Green Belt land contribute positively to the historic significance of the town and/or heritage assets within the town□	This will be addressed.
17) Would the removal of the Green Belt designation and consequent loss of openness from urbanising development on that land, cause harm to the setting and significance of the historic town and heritage assets□	This will reflect the extent to which the parcel contributes positively, as addressed in Q16.
Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	
Not assessed for individual parcels as all parcels were considered to contribute equally.	Green Belt has the potential to make a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the land available for development and encouraging developers to seek out and recycle derelict / urban sites. It is considered that it is not possible to distinguish the extent to which each Green Belt parcels delivers against this purpose and therefore the parcels have not been individually assessed against Purpose 5.

Rating contribution to Green Belt purposes

- 3.23 The definitions used for rating the contribution to Green Belt purposes □from □strong□to □no contribution□□at Stage 1 remained largely valid for Stage 2, but with some minor amendments. These related principally to the function of □barrier features□a term which was used in preference to □defensible boundary□because such a feature need not be a Green Belt boundary (a barrier feature may also be a wide rather than linear landscape element, such as a wood or an area of □difficult□terrain). The revised definitions are set out in Table 3.3 below, with principal changes from the Stage 1 definitions underlined.

Table 3.3 Definitions for Stage 2 assessment ratings

Purpose 1: Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
<p>‘Strong Contribution’ where the parcel acts itself, and as part of a wider network of parcels, as an effective barrier against the sprawl from large built-up areas and is <u>not contained by features</u> which act as an effective barrier against sprawl. There is a strong reliance upon the Green Belt Policy designation to prevent sprawl from large built-up areas in these parcels.</p> <p>‘Moderate Contribution’ where it does not act itself as an effective barrier against sprawl, but may form part of a wider network of parcels to act as a strategic barrier to sprawl. Defensible boundaries may be present which are effective in the prevention of sprawl.</p> <p>‘Weak Contribution’ where the parcel is within reasonable distance to one of the defined □large built-up areas□however makes very little contribution to the prevention of its sprawl.</p> <p>□No Contribution’ where the parcel is of such a distance from the built-up areas, or <u>protected by a defensible</u> barrier to such an extent, that the parcel does not play a role in the prevention of sprawl.</p>
Purpose 2: Prevent neighbouring towns from merging
<p>‘Strong Contribution’ where the parcel is considered to serve as a critical gap /space between the identified towns with no <u>significant barrier</u> features to prevent their merger. There is no or very little evidence of ribbon development on well used thoroughfares between towns and visual perception of the gap between the towns along such thoroughfares is one of openness. A reduction in the gap would compromise</p>

the separation of the towns physically and visually.

‘Moderate Contribution’ where the parcel forms part of a gap / space between the identified towns but it is not of critical importance due to perceived distance between the settlements and/or the presence of barrier features to preserve separation. There may be evidence of ribbon development on well-used thoroughfares indicating the Green Belt designation has not been particularly successful in preventing development which could result in the coalescence of towns. A reduction in the gap is not likely to compromise the separation of the towns physically or visually.

‘Weak Contribution’ where the parcel is located (or partially located) in a gap / space between the identified towns however they are of such a considerable distance apart that its contribution to this purpose is negligible.

‘No Contribution’ where the parcel does not form part of a gap / space between the identified towns or the towns are of such a considerable distance that the gap is not relevant to the Review.

Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

‘Strong Contribution’ where the vast majority of the parcel contains countryside (in use for agriculture, outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and local transport infrastructure: uses that are not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt) and those uses do not represent an urbanising influence. The parcel is not separated from the wider countryside by significant barrier features.

‘Moderate Contribution’ to the Green Belt where the parcel consists predominantly of countryside (in use for agriculture, outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and local transport infrastructure) but these uses may be associated with some urbanising influence. The parcel is contained by significant barrier features which may help safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

‘Weak Contribution’ where the parcel contains some countryside, but the uses within it represent a distinct urbanising influence and it is separated from the wider countryside by significant barrier features.

‘No Contribution’ where the parcel contains little or no countryside because urbanising influences are dominant.

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

‘Strong Contribution’ where a significant portion of the parcel is within the setting of an historic town and/or any heritage assets within that town, especially those closest to the settlement boundary. The Green Belt contributes positively to the historic significance of the town and/or heritage assets within the town and the removal of the Green Belt here is likely to cause harm to the setting and significance of the historic town and its heritage assets.

‘Moderate Contribution’ where a significant portion of the parcel is within the setting of an historic town and/or any heritage assets within that town, especially those closest to the settlement boundary. The Green Belt provides a moderate contribution to the historic significance of the town and/or heritage assets within the town and the removal of the Green Belt here is unlikely to cause considerable harm to the setting and significance of the historic town and its heritage assets.

‘Weak Contribution’ where only a small portion of the parcel is within the setting of the historic towns and/or any heritage assets within those towns. The Green Belt makes little or no contribution to the historic significance of the town and/or heritage assets within the town and the removal of the Green Belt here is unlikely to cause harm to the setting and significance of the historic town and its heritage assets.

‘No Contribution’ where the parcel does not form part of the setting of any historic town.

Assessment of harm to Green Belt purposes

- 3.24 A key aim of the study was to identify areas that would be least harmful in Green Belt terms were they to be released for development.
- 3.25 As agreed with the project Steering Group, there is a direct relationship between the contribution of a parcel to Green Belt purposes and the extent of harm to the Green Belt that would be caused by its release. In other words, if a parcel achieves a higher rating against a particular purpose, this implies greater harm to the Green Belt should the land be released. The framework shown in **Table 3.4** was used to reach a conclusion for each Stage 2 parcel on the degree of harm to the

Green Belt purposes if land within that parcel were to be released through the Local Plan so as to potentially accommodate new development.

Table 3.4 Framework for assessing harm

Stage 2 assessment of parcels	Potential harm caused by release of parcel
Makes a STRONG contribution to one or more GB purposes.	Very high
Makes a RELATIVELY STRONG contribution to one or more GB purposes. No strong contribution to any purpose.	High
Makes a MODERATE contribution to one or more GB purposes. No strong or relatively strong contribution to any purpose.	Moderate
Makes a RELATIVELY WEAK contribution to one or more GB purposes. No strong, relatively strong or moderate contribution to any purpose.	Low
Makes a WEAK contribution to one or more GB purposes. No strong, relatively strong, moderate or relatively weak contribution to any purpose.	Very low
Makes NO contribution to any GB purposes. No strong, relatively strong, moderate, relatively weak or weak contribution to any purpose.	None

Identification of potential anomalies

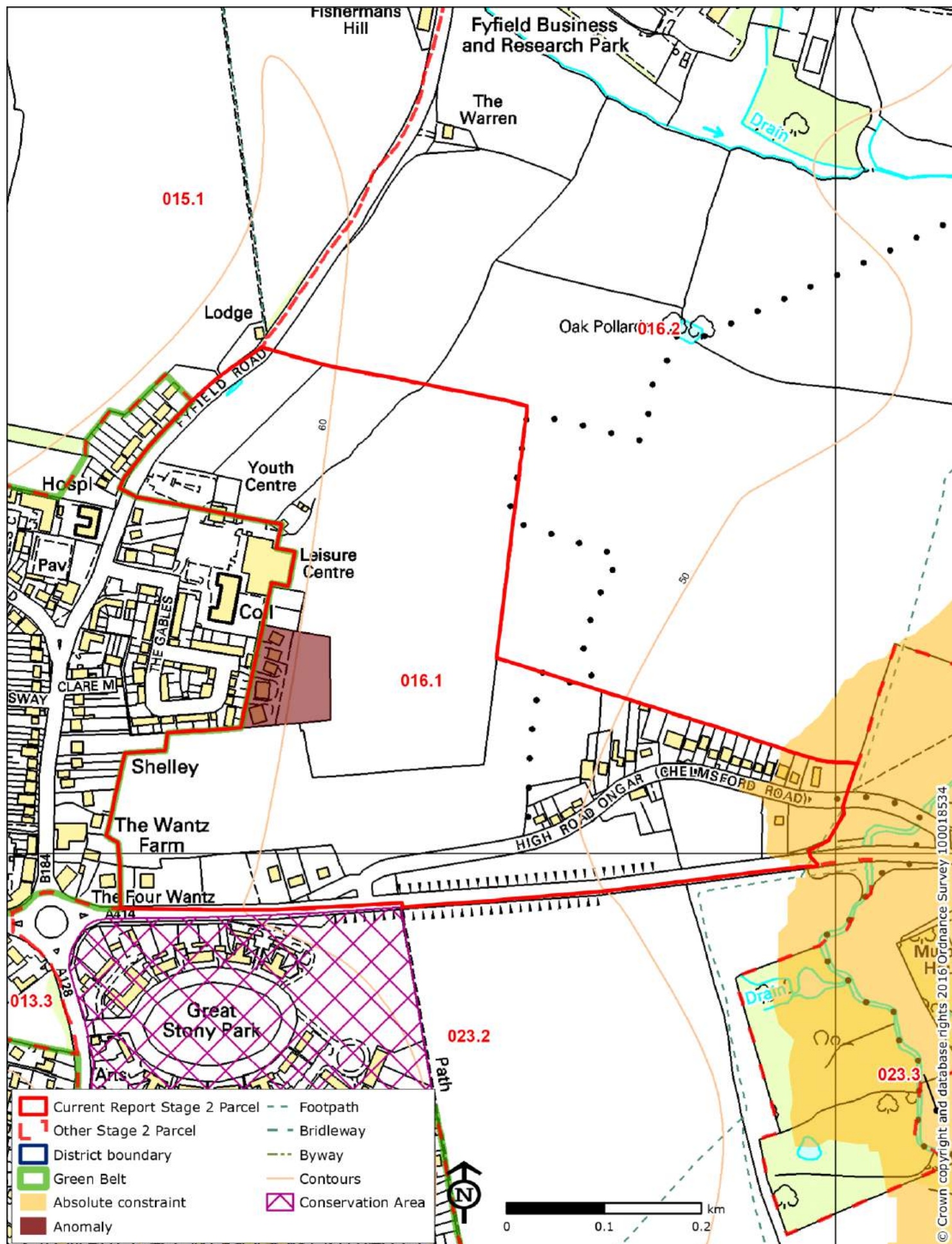
- 3.26 Also by means of desk study and site visits, the Stage 2 study identified potential minor and major anomalies in the Green Belt.
- 3.27 Minor anomalies refer to relatively small scale instances where the current Green Belt boundary does not follow any recognisable feature on the ground and is therefore difficult to enforce. These were identified by checking that the Green Belt boundary follows a recognisable feature on the ground. Examples of minor anomalies include where the Green Belt boundary passes through the middle of gardens, which have been extended.
- 3.28 A potential major anomaly was defined as significant built development which, as a result of its scale, form and density, detracts from land's contribution to Green Belt purposes. In most cases this relates to the loss of openness resulting from the development – the key characteristic of Green Belts. Such inappropriate developments have most likely occurred as a result of special circumstances being demonstrated as part of a planning application or planning appeal. It may have included replacement development, with some of the buildings being replaced pre-dating the Green Belt designation.
- 3.29 They are described as *potential* major anomalies, because there may be sound planning reasons for retaining these areas within the Green Belt. The commentaries in Appendix 1, however, draw conclusions on whether the land associated with potential anomalies is meeting Green Belt purposes. The decision to exclude them from the Green Belt is a policy decision for EFDC, on a case by case basis, and this goes beyond the scope of this Study.

Checking consistency with neighbouring authorities' Green Belt assessments

- 3.30 Green Belt assessments undertaken by the neighbouring authorities were reviewed to ensure that there were no significant differences in the assessment of parcels that meet or cross the shared boundary.

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Appendix 4. EFDC appraisal for parcels 023.2 and 016.1

Stage 2 Assessment

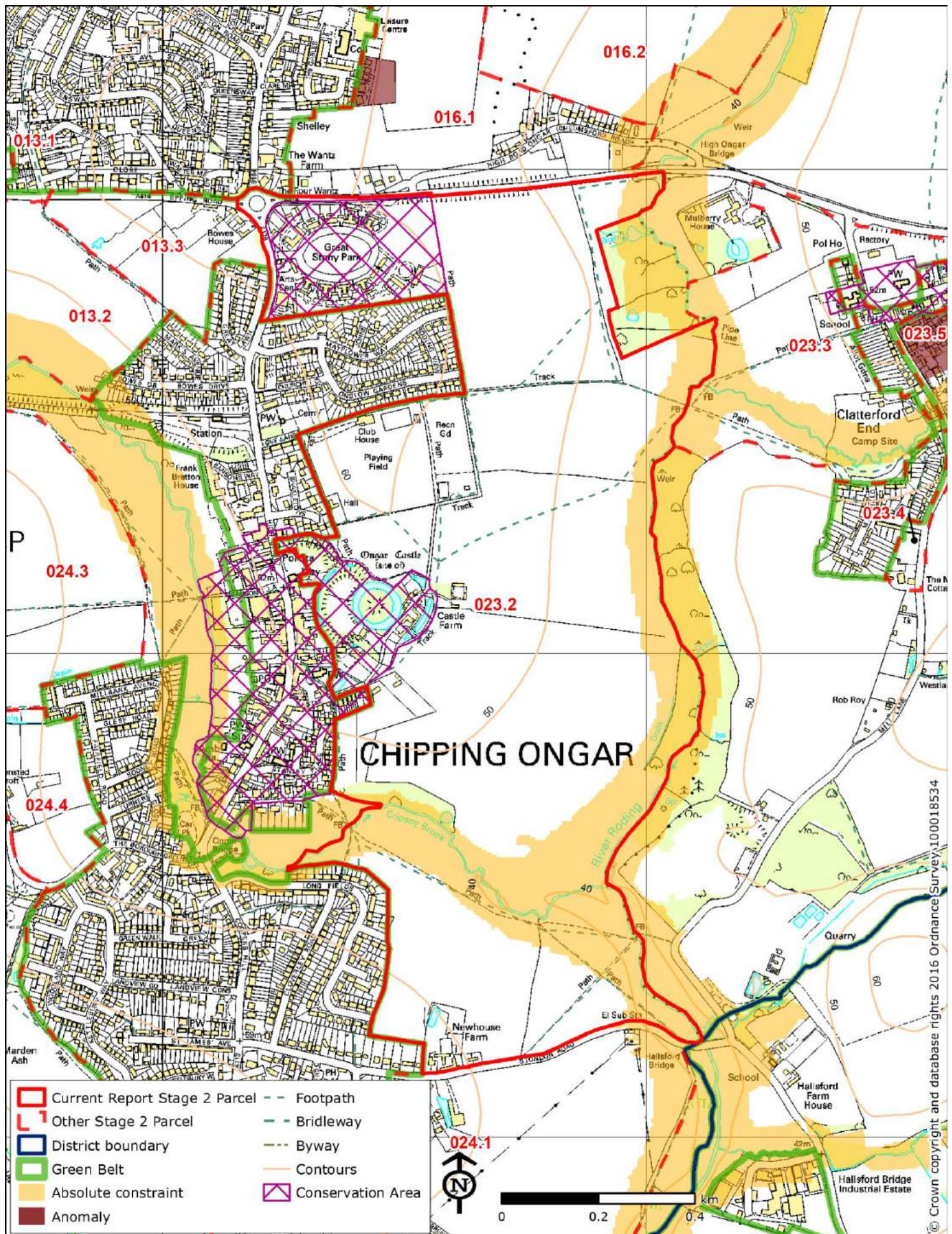
Settlement: Chipping Ongar**Settlement Type:** Town**Stage 2 Assessment****Parcel** 016.1**Parcel Size (Ha)** - 23.72**Summary of Assessment - Parcel's Contribution to the Purposes of Green Belt**

1st Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
2nd Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
3rd Green Belt Purpose	Moderate
4th Green Belt Purpose	Relatively Strong
5th Green Belt Purpose	Not Assessed

Summary of AssessmentResultant harm to the Green Belt purposes if parcel released from the Green Belt: **High**

Purpose 1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No Contribution
(Large built-up areas are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hodddesdon)	
The parcel is remote from a large built-up area and therefore contributes little to this purpose.	
Purpose 2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	No Contribution
(Towns are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt, Hodddesdon, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton / Debden, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill, Chipping Ongar, North Weald Bassett, Theydon Bois, Roydon and Lower Nazeing)	
The parcel lies to the east of Chipping Ongar. It does not lie within a gap between Chipping Ongar and any identified town and therefore contributes little to this purpose. However, it lies partly within the gap between Chipping Ongar and the hamlet of Shelley to the north west of the parcel.	
Purpose 3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Moderate
The parcel contains some ribbon development along High Ongar Road in the south of the parcel. It also contains open fields and recreational fields associated with the adjacent Leisure Centre. The existing Green Belt boundary with the settlement to the west of the parcel is weakly defined by recent settlement at the Gables which could be perceived as encroaching into the countryside, and fencing around sports pitches which add a degree of urbanising characteristics. The outer parcel boundaries are relatively weakly defined by low hedgerows and back gardens (no other stronger parcel boundaries exist nearby) and there is strong intervisibility with the surrounding countryside to the east; however, the southern boundary is strongly defined by the A414. The northern outer boundaries would require strengthening in order to form an appropriate new Green Belt boundary.	
Stage One parcel DSR-016 was given a higher rating because it included land more remote from the settlement edge.	
Purpose 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Relatively Strong
(Historic towns are: Chipping Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Sawbridgeworth)	
The parcel lies adjacent to the Stony Park area of the historic town as identified in the Essex Historic Towns – Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999). The parcel boundary lies approximately 700m to the north of the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area but there is little intervisibility between the Conservation Area and the parcel due to intervening development (including the Shelley Estate) to the south of the parcel. It is considered to be unlikely that the parcel forms a significant role in the visual setting of the historic town of Chipping Ongar although it contributes to its sense of physical openness and form, as well as its relationship to the Stony Park Conservation Area, and therefore contributes to its overall setting.	
Stage One parcel DSR-016 was given a higher rating because it included land more remote from the settlement edge.	
Purpose 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Not Assessed
Not assessed at individual parcel level, as explained in Methodology section of report.	
Consideration of alternative parcel boundaries	
No reasonable alternative boundaries which would significantly alter the assessment have been identified.	
Potential anomalies identified for consideration by EFDC	
The residential development at the Gables to the west of the parcel is a developed area with a similar pattern, form and character to the adjoining settlement to the west. It does therefore performs weakly against the Purposes of Green Belt and lacks openness, and should therefore be considered as a potential anomaly.	

Stage 2 Assessment



Settlement: **Chipping Ongar**Settlement Type: **Town****Stage 2 Assessment**

Parcel 023.2

Parcel Size (Ha) - 114.70

Summary of Assessment - Parcel's Contribution to the Purposes of Green Belt

1st Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
2nd Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
3rd Green Belt Purpose	Strong
4th Green Belt Purpose	Strong
5th Green Belt Purpose	Not Assessed

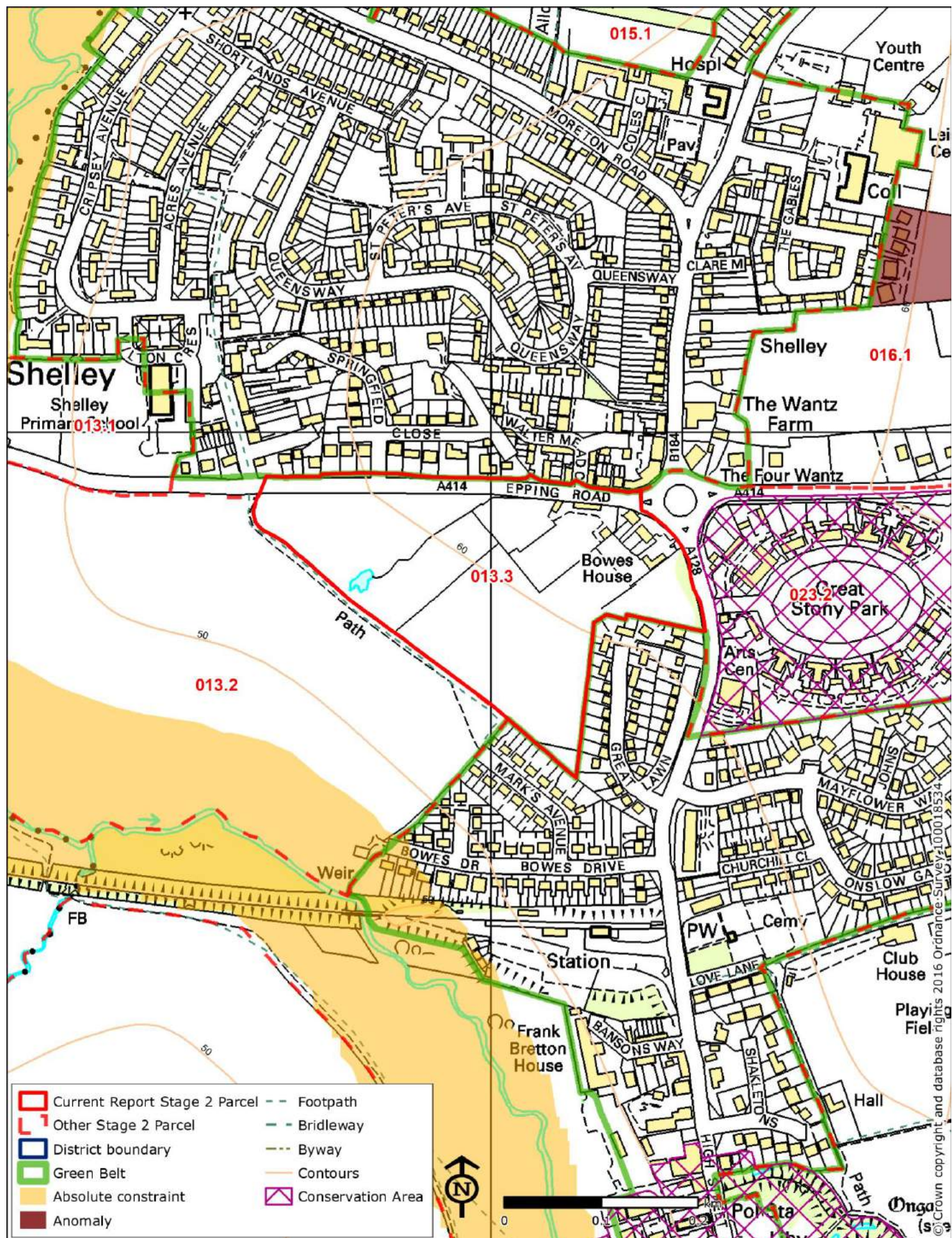
Summary of AssessmentResultant harm to the Green Belt purposes if parcel released from the Green Belt: **Very High**

Purpose 1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No Contribution
(Large built-up areas are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hodddesdon)	
The parcel is remote from a large built-up area and therefore contributes little to this purpose.	
Purpose 2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	No Contribution
(Towns are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt, Hodddesdon, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton / Debden, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill, Chipping Ongar, North Weald Bassett, Theydon Bois, Roydon and Lower Nazeing)	
The parcel lies to the east of the settlement of Chipping Ongar. It does not lie within a gap between Chipping Ongar and any other identified town. However, it does lie within the gap between Chipping Ongar and the village of High Ongar, which lies approximately 1km to the east.	
Purpose 3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Strong
The parcel is predominantly rural and free from development with the exception of the residential development at Great Stony Park in the north west of the parcel. The remainder of the parcel consists of open arable fields, allotments on the settlement edge, Chipping Ongar playground and recreation ground, and some individual detached properties with gardens. The Three Forests Way and St Peter's Way public rights of way cross through the parcel and Ongar Castle Scheduled Monument lies in the west of the parcel. The sloping valley sides and consequent visual connectivity with the wider countryside to the east present a strong rural character. Despite some exposed urban edges with the settlement to the east and south of the parcel, the Green Belt designation within the parcel is considered to make a major contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The development at Stony Park shares more of a relationship with the settlement of Chipping Ongar, however, the form of the settlement and its historic character set in open grounds mean that it does not have an overly urbanising influence.	
Purpose 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Strong
(Historic towns are: Chipping Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Sawbridgeworth)	
The parcel lies adjacent to the historic core of Chipping Ongar as identified in the Essex Historic Towns – Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999). Part of the Conservation Area as well as the Scheduled Monument of Ongar Castle lie within the parcel. The Stony Park Conservation Area lies adjacent to the northern part of the parcel. The open landscape within the parcel is considered to make a major contribution to the setting and significance of the historic town. New development within the parcel would be likely to cause harm to the setting and significance of the special character of the town, particularly if it were to affect the existing linear pattern of the historic town that retains its medieval plan form.	
Purpose 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Not Assessed
Not assessed at individual parcel level, as explained in Methodology section of report.	
Consideration of alternative parcel boundaries	
No reasonable alternative boundaries which would significantly alter the assessment have been identified.	
Potential anomalies identified for consideration by EFDC	
None identified.	

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Appendix 5. EFDC appraisal for parcels 013.3, 015.1 and 024.4

Stage 2 Assessment



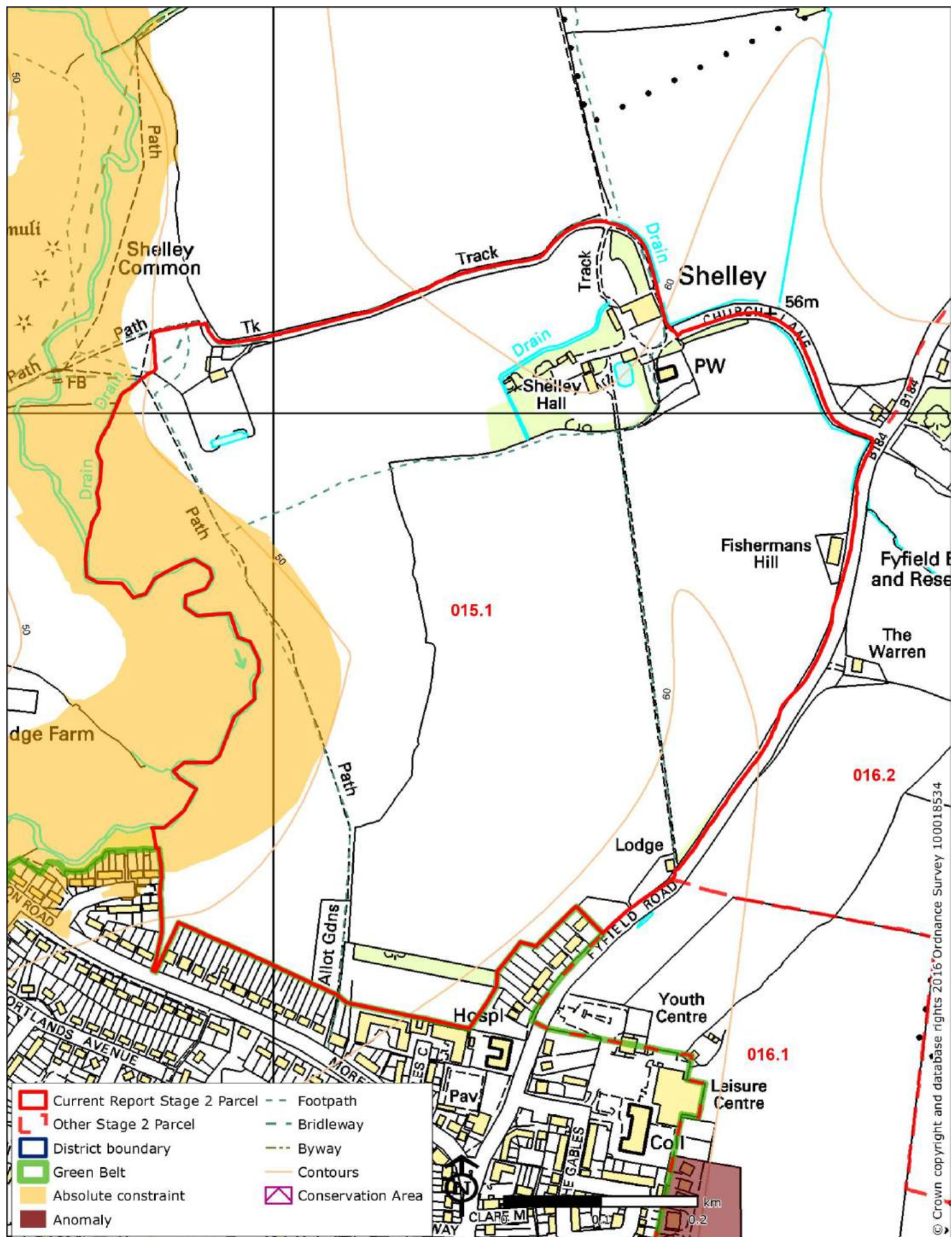
Settlement: Chipping Ongar**Settlement Type:** Town**Stage 2 Assessment****Parcel** 013.3**Parcel Size (Ha)** - 7.41**Summary of Assessment - Parcel's Contribution to the Purposes of Green Belt**

1st Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
2nd Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
3rd Green Belt Purpose	Relatively Weak
4th Green Belt Purpose	Relatively Strong
5th Green Belt Purpose	Not Assessed

Summary of AssessmentResultant harm to the Green Belt purposes if parcel released from the Green Belt: **High**

Purpose 1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No Contribution
(Large built-up areas are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hodddesdon)	
The parcel is remote from a large built-up area and therefore contributes little to this purpose.	
Purpose 2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	No Contribution
(Towns are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt, Hodddesdon, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton / Debden, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill, Chipping Ongar, North Weald Bassett, Theydon Bois, Roydon and Lower Nazeing)	
The parcel is located to the west of Chipping Ongar, adjacent to the settlement edge. It lies within the gap between Chipping Ongar and North Weald Bassett (to the west) which is 3.6 km in this location. However, the parcel lies within the overall envelope of the settlement of Chipping Ongar and therefore development within the parcel would not result in any reduction in the gap between the two towns.	
Purpose 3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Relatively Weak
The parcel is known as Bowers Field and partially divides the northern part of Chipping Ongar from the southern part. The parcel contains some properties with back gardens in the north and east of the parcel, adjacent to the A414/ A128 roundabout. The remainder of land within the parcel is rough open fields with some trees.	
The existing Green Belt boundary (to the north and east) is only relatively weakly defined as houses occur to the south of Epping Road and (outside the parcel) to the west of High Street (where the roads might otherwise have formed a strong boundary). The outer parcel boundary (south western boundary) is sparse in places, defined by trees with some lower vegetation allowing filtered views through - this would require strengthening in order to form a new potential Green Belt boundary. Furthermore, the topography slopes to the south-west, away from the settlement and therefore any new development within the parcel may be visible in the wider countryside and be perceived as encroachment. Nevertheless the parcel relates strongly to the settlement and lies within the overall envelope of the settlement, which wraps around the parcel to the north, east and south. This is considered likely to limit the encroaching influences on the wider countryside of potential new development in the parcel if well-designed.	
Stage One parcel DSR-013 was given a higher rating because it included land more remote from the settlement edge.	
Purpose 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Relatively Strong
(Historic towns are: Chipping Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Sawbridgeworth)	
The eastern parcel boundary adjoins part of the historic town of Chipping Ongar as defined in the Essex Historic Towns – Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999). The parcel does not adjoin Chipping Ongar Conservation Area which is separated from the central core of the village by 1950s development. However, the parcel does adjoin the Stony Park Conservation Area to the east.	
The parcel is enclosed by development to the north, east and south, lying between development in the northern part of Chipping Ongar and the 1950s development to the south. There are few views in to the parcel from the historic core due to the parcel's location and surrounding development. However, the parcel contributes to the openness of the approach to Chipping Ongar from Epping Road to the west and shares a physical connection to the Great Stony Park Conservation Area.	
Purpose 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Not Assessed
Not assessed at individual parcel level, as explained in Methodology section of report.	
Consideration of alternative parcel boundaries	
No reasonable alternative boundaries which would significantly alter the assessment have been identified.	
Potential anomalies identified for consideration by EFDC	
None identified.	

Stage 2 Assessment



Settlement: Chipping Ongar**Settlement Type:** Town**Stage 2 Assessment****Parcel** 015.1**Parcel Size (Ha)** - 44.00**Summary of Assessment - Parcel's Contribution to the Purposes of Green Belt**

1st Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
2nd Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
3rd Green Belt Purpose	Strong
4th Green Belt Purpose	Weak
5th Green Belt Purpose	Not Assessed

Summary of AssessmentResultant harm to the Green Belt purposes if parcel released from the Green Belt: **Very High**

Purpose 1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No Contribution
(Large built-up areas are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hodddesdon)	
The parcel is remote from a large built-up area and therefore contributes little to this purpose.	
The Stage One parcel DSR-015 was given a higher rating because the area within the larger parcel adjoined the large built-up area of Harlow.	
Purpose 2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	No Contribution
(Towns are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt, Hodddesdon, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton / Debden, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill, Chipping Ongar, North Weald Bassett, Theydon Bois, Roydon and Lower Nazeing)	
The parcel is located to the north of Chipping Ongar. It does not lie within a gap between Chipping Ongar and any other town and therefore contributes little to this purpose. However, it does lie within the gap between Chipping Ongar and the smaller settlements of Moreton (approximately 2km to the north west of the parcel) and Chipping Ongar and Fyfield (approximately 3km to the north east of the parcel) and Chipping Ongar and Shelley, a hamlet in the north of the parcel, which it plays an important role in separating.	
Purpose 3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Strong
The parcel contains open agricultural fields and occasional historic farmsteads, Shelley Hall and the adjacent Church of St Peter, woodland blocks and an allotment adjacent to the settlement edge in the south of the parcel. The character of the parcel is rural, unspoilt and largely intact. Public rights of way cross through the parcel. Topography rises towards the north east of the parcel and contributes to a relatively strong outer (northern) parcel boundary. The existing Green Belt boundary to the south of the parcel is relatively strongly defined by field boundaries along back gardens (a generally consistent and defined boundary line). It is considered that the Green Belt designation within the parcel prevents encroachment into the countryside.	
Purpose 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Weak
(Historic towns are: Chipping Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Sawbridgeworth)	
The edge of the parcel is located approximately 500m from the edge of the historic core as identified in the Essex Historic Towns – Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999). It is located approximately 450m from the Stony Park Conservation Area and 1km from the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area. It is separated both physically and visually from the historic elements of the town by intervening development in the north of the settlement (including the Shelley Estate). It is therefore unlikely that the openness of the Green Belt in this parcel makes an important contribution to the significance of the historic town of Chipping Ongar.	
Purpose 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Not Assessed
Not assessed at individual parcel level, as explained in Methodology section of report.	
Consideration of alternative parcel boundaries	
No reasonable alternative boundaries which would significantly alter the assessment have been identified.	
Potential anomalies identified for consideration by EFDC	
None identified.	

Settlement: Chipping Ongar**Settlement Type:** Town**Stage 2 Assessment****Parcel** 024.4**Parcel Size (Ha)** - 7.22**Summary of Assessment - Parcel's Contribution to the Purposes of Green Belt**

1st Green Belt Purpose	No Contribution
2nd Green Belt Purpose	Weak
3rd Green Belt Purpose	Moderate
4th Green Belt Purpose	Relatively Strong
5th Green Belt Purpose	Not Assessed

Summary of AssessmentResultant harm to the Green Belt purposes if parcel released from the Green Belt: **High**

Purpose 1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	No Contribution
(Large built-up areas are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hodddesdon)	
The parcel is remote from a large built-up area and therefore contributes little to this purpose.	
Purpose 2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Weak
(Towns are: London, Harlow, Cheshunt, Hodddesdon, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton / Debden, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill, Chipping Ongar, North Weald Bassett, Theydon Bois, Roydon and Lower Nazeing)	
The parcel is located to the west of Chipping Ongar. It is a small parcel adjacent to existing settlement, and lies within the gap between Chipping Ongar and North Weald Bassett (to the west) which is 4.7 km in this location. However, the distance between the towns and the woodland and landform barriers of the intervening landscape to the west of the parcel means that the parcel has a limited contribution to maintaining separation between the towns.	
Purpose 3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Moderate
The small parcel lies adjacent to the settlement edge of Chipping Ongar, to the north and west of Greensted Road and to the west of the housing development at Fairfield Road. Existing development within the parcel is limited, consisting of detached houses nestled in woodland in the west and north west of the parcel. The remainder of the parcel is open fields divided by hedgerows. The existing Green Belt boundary to the east of the parcel is relatively well- defined by a consistent settlement boundary although it follows the line of back gardens which extends outwards to the east at the northern and southern ends of the parcel, weakening its strength as a permanent Green Belt boundary. The outer parcel boundaries are strongly defined by a dense tree/ hedgerow boundaries and the parcel is very enclosed, indicating it may act as containment to new development if the parcel was to be developed.	
Stage One parcel DSR-024 was given a higher rating because it included land more remote from the settlement edge.	
Purpose 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Relatively Strong
(Historic towns are: Chipping Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Sawbridgeworth)	
The parcel lies very close to the historic town of Chipping Ongar as identified in the Essex Historic Towns – Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999), and in close proximity to the Conservation Area (within 250m). Views from the High Street within the Conservation Area into the adjacent countryside are noted as important elements of the character of the town in the Conservation Area Appraisal. However, the parcel lies the other side of more recent development at Fairfield Road (and adjacent streets) which limits views from the High Street to the countryside within the parcel.	
There are occasional glimpsed views into the parcel from the town and there is a listed building in the north west corner. The open countryside of the parcel forms part of the setting of the town, and therefore new development may cause harm to the setting and special historic character of the town.	
Purpose 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Not Assessed
Not assessed at individual parcel level, as explained in Methodology section of report.	
Consideration of alternative parcel boundaries	
No reasonable alternative boundaries which would significantly alter the assessment have been identified.	
Potential anomalies identified for consideration by EFDC	
None identified.	