

**Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council  
and Dorset Council**

# **Strategic Green Belt Assessment Stage 2 Harm Assessment**

**Final report**  
Prepared by LUC  
December 2020



**Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council  
and Dorset Council**

**Strategic Green Belt Assessment  
Stage 2 Harm Assessment**

**Project Number**  
10946

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Study Aim and Key Objectives

**1.1** Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) and Dorset Council (DC) are preparing their Local Plans and will be producing their Options Consultations as part of that process. This Green Belt Assessment has been prepared to feed into that process.

**1.2** The Councils are also considering the impact of the Planning White Paper and the Government's consultation on the housing standard method and how this affects the consideration of Green Belt release.

**1.3** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in paragraphs 135 and 136 that "Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans".

**1.4** Case law, as established in *Calverton Parish Council v Greater Nottingham Councils & others* (2015), indicates that planning judgments setting out the 'exceptional circumstances' for the amendment of Green Belt boundaries require consideration of the 'nature and extent of harm' to the Green Belt and 'the extent to which the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt may be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent'.

**1.5** In order to inform the review of potential strategic options for growth, a comprehensive analysis of Green Belt land is required<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Inspectors' comments from the examination of a number of plans have highlighted the requirement for a comprehensive assessment and consideration of Green Belt purposes: The Inspector's preliminary conclusions (S Emerson) to Bath and North East Somerset Council (June 2012) highlighted that having an "up-to-date and comprehensive review of the Green Belt in the district is necessary to see whether all the land so designated fulfils the Green Belt purposes".

**1.6** The Green Belt study comprises two stages:

- The **Stage 1** Contribution Assessment has identified variations in the extent to which the Green Belt within the BCP and Dorset Council areas currently meets the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Green Belt Purposes; and
- The **Stage 2** Harm Assessment (this report) has assessed the potential harm to the NPPF Green Belt purposes – both direct harm via release of Green Belt land and indirect harm via impact on adjacent Green Belt land – resulting from the release of land for development.

**1.7** The methodology presented in this document covers the **Stage 2** assessment of harm to the Green Belt purposes. It should be read in conjunction with the Stage 1 report, which sets out the background to the study, including Green Belt policy and context; previous Green Belt studies; and the contribution assessment methodology.

**1.8** The Stage 2 study has assessed a number of strategic options for Green Belt release within the BCP and DC areas, identifying which land, if released for development, would be likely to cause greater or lesser harm to the Green Belt purposes.

**1.9** The purpose of the study is not to identify land that is suitable for development, or to set out the exceptional circumstances for releasing land from the Green Belt. These will be matters for the Councils to consider in their local plans. The outputs, alongside wider evidence relating to other environmental/sustainability considerations, will inform decisions regarding the relative merits of meeting the Councils' development needs in different locations.

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The Inspector's report (A Thickett) to Leeds City Council (September 2014) emphasised that Green Belt studies should be "fair, comprehensive and consistent with the Core Strategy's aim of directing development to the most sustainable locations", i.e. Green Belt reviews should be 'comprehensive' rather than 'selective'.

The Inspectors' Letter (L Graham) to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils (May 2015) emphasised that Green Belt studies should make clear "how the assessment of 'importance to Green Belt' has been derived" from assessments against the individual purposes of Green Belt.

# Chapter 2

## Harm Assessment Methodology

**2.1** This chapter sets out the methodology used to undertake an assessment of variations in the harm that would result from the release of specific sites/areas of search within the Green Belt of BCP Council and Dorset Council.

**2.2** The methodology within the Stage 1 report sets out the relevant policy context and case law, and this has been used to inform the assessment criteria and the definitions of key terms used in the Green Belt assessment.

### Assessment approach

#### Relationship with Stage 1 assessment

**2.3** The Stage 1 assessment was a comprehensive analysis of all Green Belt land within the BCP and DC areas. It assessed the contribution of land to the purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF, which are:

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

**2.4** The Stage 1 study provided ratings and supporting text to assess the relative contribution of land to the Green Belt purposes, identifying parcels of land to reflect spatial variations in:

- The **openness** of land. Green Belt openness relates to lack of ‘inappropriate development’ rather than to visual openness; thus both undeveloped land which is screened from view, and development which is not considered ‘inappropriate’, are still ‘open’ in Green Belt

terms. The presence of ‘urbanising development’ within the Green Belt can diminish the contribution of land to the Green Belt purposes,

- The **relevance** of each Green Belt purpose. This is defined as the extent to which the purpose is applicable; for example whether, with regard to Purpose 2, land lies in a gap between towns and, if so, how wide that gap is.
- The relationship between Green Belt land and land inset<sup>2</sup> from the Green Belt – termed the degree of **distinction**. Land that is more strongly related to urbanising development typically makes a weaker contribution to all of the first three Green Belt purposes, being less likely to be perceived as sprawl (Purpose 1), narrowing the gap between towns (Purpose 2) or encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3). The assessment of distinction considered four interrelated elements:
  - Urban containment;
  - Landform and land cover;
  - Urbanising visual influence; and
  - Boundary features;

**2.5** The Stage 1 study defined parcels progressing outwards from the edges of inset settlements, with larger parcels in the ‘outer’ Green Belt areas. The assessment of these outer areas was high level and strategic. Unlike the parcels defined around the settlement edges it did not include a detailed analysis of distinction or an assessment of variations in openness, reflecting a lower likelihood of such areas being considered for release as extensions of existing inset settlements.

## Scope of Stage 2 assessment

**2.6** On the basis of a wide range of considerations, including sustainability factors, need assessment and outputs of the Stage 1 Green Belt study, BCP Council and Dorset Council identified a number of areas/sites where the release of land for development might potentially be considered. The identification of the sites/areas of search was informed by the strategic

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<sup>2</sup> Land within or adjoining built-up areas that is located outside of the Green Belt.



planning work undertaken as part of the ongoing preparation of the BCP Local Plan and Dorset Local Plan; and the call for sites undertaken by each of the two authorities in 2019.

**2.7** The areas were identified by the Councils following consideration of a number of key planning considerations including the following;

- the settlement hierarchies;
- proximity to services and employment;
- assessment of areas not affected by absolute constraints (see paragraph 2.14);
- flood risk; and
- impact on habitat sites.

**2.8** As part of the Local Plan process the Councils will consider the implications of changes to the government's housing standard method and how it affects the consideration of these sites / areas for potential Green Belt release.

**2.9** The Stage 2 study has assessed the potential harm to the Green Belt purposes that release of these identified sites/areas of search would cause.

**2.10** The assessment of harm combines consideration of the loss of the contribution of released land, taken from the findings from the Stage 1 study, with an assessment of any additional impact that this release of land would have on the contribution of remaining adjacent Green Belt land.

**2.11** The assessment has considered the harm of release of individual Stage 1 parcels or parts of parcels that lie within sites/areas of search, and also any potential to reduce harm by releasing smaller parts of parcels. Each identified variation in harm is presented as a separate 'release scenario'.

**2.12** It is assumed, other than in a few instances where stated otherwise, that any potential release scenario would constitute expansion of an existing inset settlement area, rather than creation of a new inset development area. In those instances where a parcel does not lie immediately adjacent to an inset settlement edge, it has been assumed that some intervening land would also be released in order to create a connection. No assumption has been made as to the exact extent of this intervening release, but the knowledge that the released land will be

part of the existing inset area has enabled judgements of impact on settlement gaps to be made.

**2.13** To inform the assessment of harm, a detailed Stage 1 assessment has also been undertaken for any land located in ‘outer areas’ (see paragraph 2.5) which was found to fall within sites/areas of search defined by Dorset and BCP Councils for inclusion in the Stage 2 analysis.

**2.14** Certain designations are considered to be ‘absolute constraints’ to development, as set out within the Stage 1 methodology, and these areas have not been assessed within this Stage 2 harm study. Absolute constraints include the following:

- Special Areas of Conservation;
- Special Protection Areas;
- Ramsar sites;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Ancient woodland;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Registered Parks and Gardens; and
- Common land.

**2.15** It is important to note that, although these constrained areas have not been assessed for harm, they can perform as areas of open land and/or as boundary features – which can have a bearing on the assessment of harm that would be caused from the release of adjacent unconstrained Green Belt land.

**2.16** Several other designations which, although not deemed to be absolute constraints, are likely also constitute some degree of constraint to development, are included for reference on output mapping as ‘potential’ constraints. These are:

- Flood zones 2 and 3;
- 400m Heathland Area; and

- Local Nature Reserves.

## Harm Assessment: Steps

**2.17** The harm assessment process was subdivided into three steps: 5, 6 and 7. This follows on from the four steps carried out as part of the Stage 1 contribution assessment, as shown in **Figure 2.1**. Further information on Steps 1-4 is included in the Stage 1 Strategic Green Belt Assessment.

**2.18** The three steps were carried out for each parcel or part of a parcel lying wholly within a potential release site/area of search.

**2.19** When considering the potential impact of the release of land on the adjacent Green Belt the following assumptions were made:

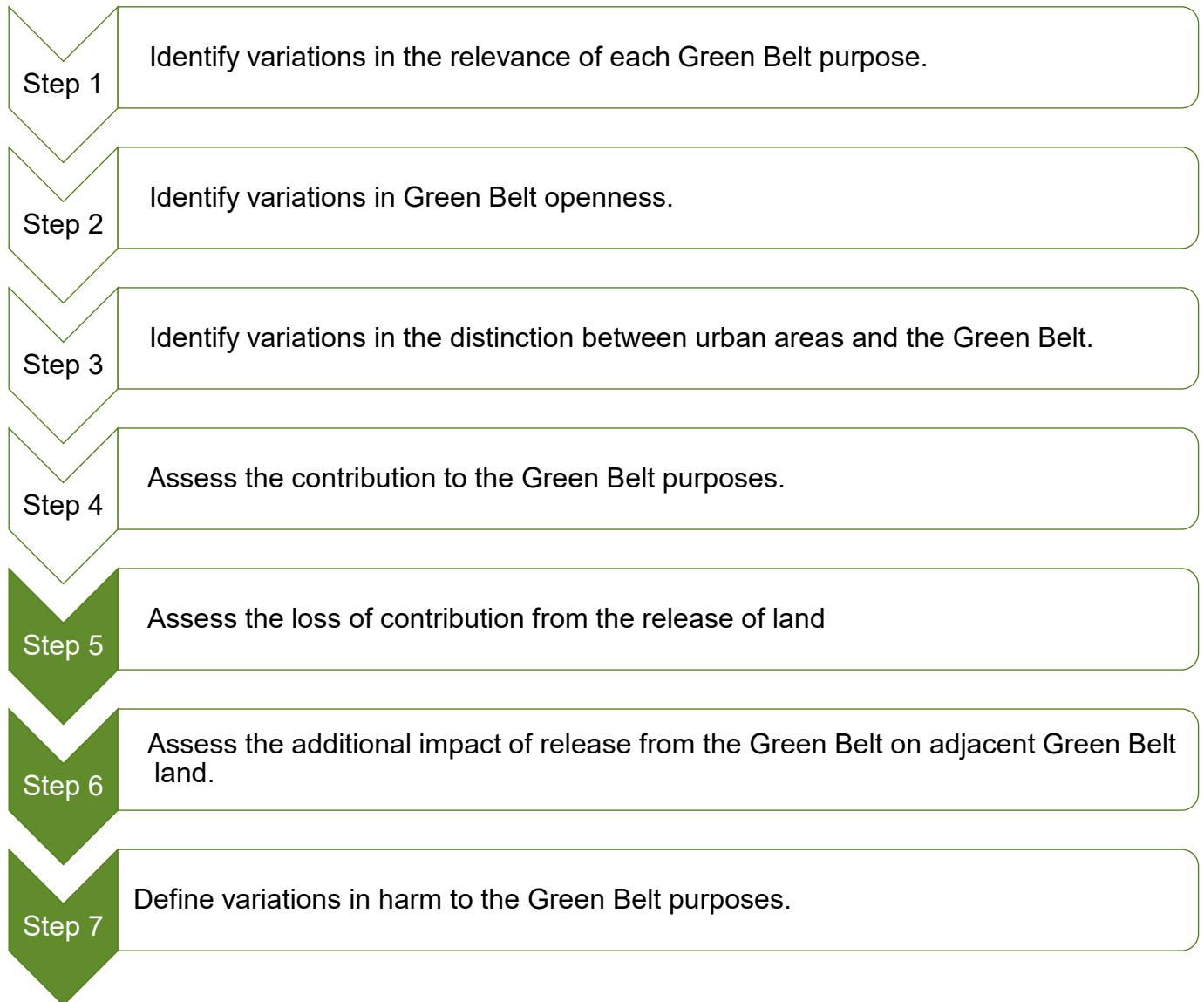
- The released land will lose openness;
- The revised Green Belt boundaries will retain existing physical boundary features surrounding release scenarios; and
- Future development within a parcel will be of similar scale to existing development within the inset settlement edge, unless otherwise specified.

**2.20** It is necessary to assume that the land will be developed but it is recognised that there is potential for mitigation such as boundary strengthening and density of development within an inset area to influence this. Due to the strategic nature of this assessment and lack of consistent and detailed information currently available about future developments, the study does not include a consideration of specific mitigation proposals that may be associated with development proposals for particular promoted sites. However, **Chapter 4** sets out some general mitigation and enhancement measures that could potentially be applied.

**2.21** Step 7 combined the judgements from Steps 4, 5 and 6 to identify variations in harm, with release scenarios being defined to reflect these variations.

**2.22** Steps 5 and 6 are explained in further detail below.

Figure 2.1: Contribution Assessment Steps<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Steps 1-4 were completed as part of the Stage 1 assessment. Please refer to the Stage 1 Study report for further details of the methodology used and the findings of that study.

## Step 5: Assess the loss of contribution from the release of land

**2.23** The loss of contribution to the Green Belt purposes as a result of the release of a parcel of land equates to the contribution ratings assessed for that parcel in the Stage 1 study.

**2.24** Where release of a parcel would also, in order to form an expansion of the inset settlement, necessitate the release of intervening land, the loss of contribution is that associated with the highest-contributing parcel. If, for example, a potential release includes land that makes a *relatively strong* contribution to Purpose 3 and land which makes a *moderate* contribution to Purpose 3, the overall contribution is *relatively strong*, and there would be a *relatively strong* loss of contribution were it to be released.

**2.25** The loss of contribution to the Green Belt purposes associated with the area released provides a 'base' level of harm, but weakening of the adjacent Green Belt can add to the level of harm. This was considered in Step 6.

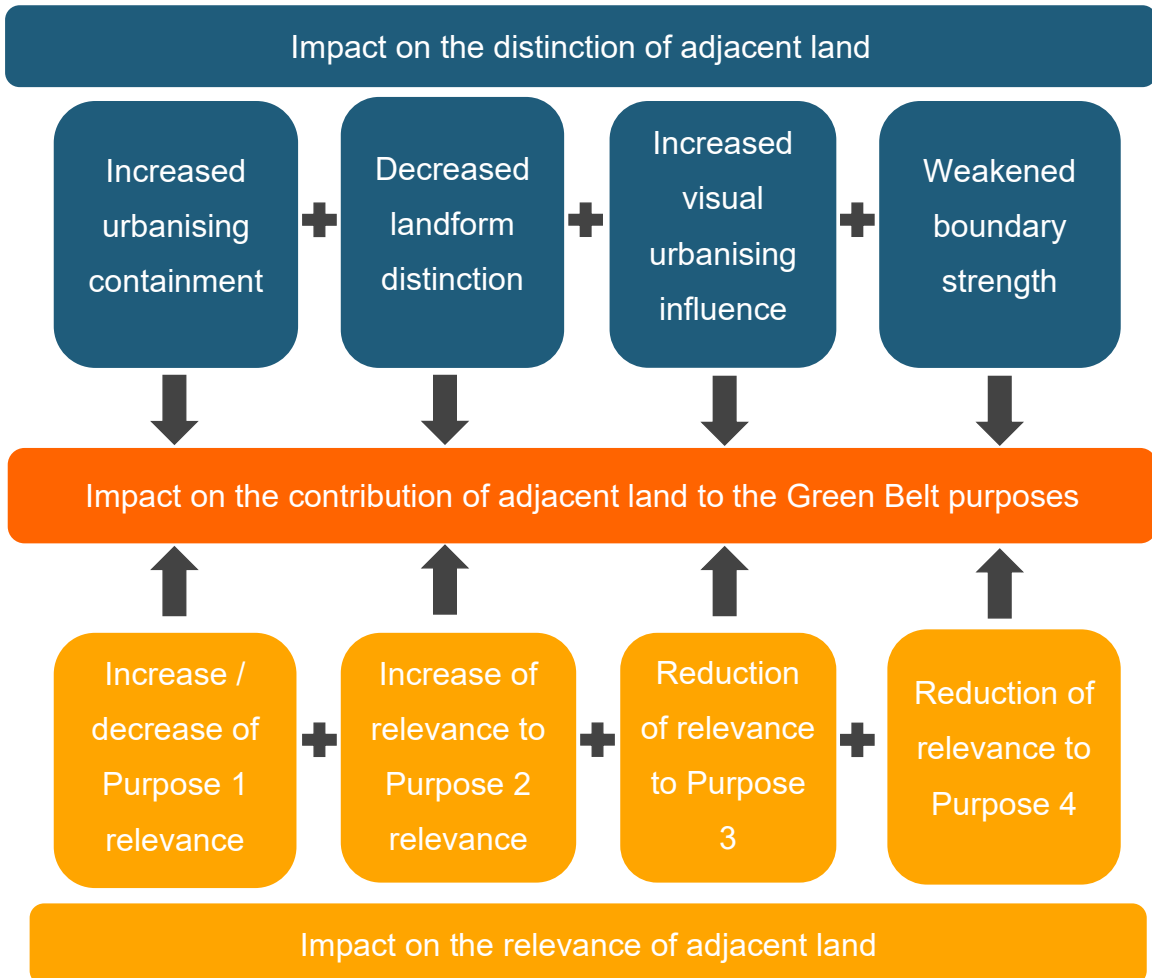
## Step 6: Assess additional impact of release on adjacent Green Belt

**2.26** Adjacent Green Belt land is defined in this study as the land that lies next to and/or in close proximity to land/parcels being assessed for potential release.

**2.27** The assessment of the additional impact of the release of land on adjacent Green Belt land considered two factors: the impact on the distinction (from inset areas) of the adjacent land and the impact on the relevance of the adjacent land to the NPPF purposes. The third factor, openness, which was considered in the Stage 1 Contribution Assessment is not relevant to the assessment of impact on adjacent land as it is assumed that adjacent land will remain open.

**2.28** **Figure 2.2** illustrates the elements that were considered when assessing the impact of release on adjacent Green Belt land. The paragraphs below explain this in more detail.

Figure 2.2: Variations in impact of release on adjacent land.



## Impact on distinction

**2.29** Release of land could impact the distinction of adjacent Green Belt land in a number of ways, including:

- Increasing urbanising containment – e.g. land which currently faces onto inset development on one ‘front’ could become partially enclosed by the extended inset settlement area;
- Changing landform distinction – e.g. land on a valley side which is currently distinct from a hilltop settlement could lose distinction if adjacent slopes are released;

- Increasing visual urban influence – land that was previously some distance from the nearest urbanising influences may be in closer proximity, particularly if there is limited visual separation;
- Weakening boundaries – e.g. a release of land crossing a strong and consistent separating feature, such as a railway line, and replacing it with a weaker boundary, such as a hedgerow, would weaken distinction, but moving the Green Belt boundary to a strong and consistent separating feature would maintain the distinction of Green Belt land beyond.
- Even in the absence of significant boundary features, distinction from an urban area increases with distance, so this was factored into the judgement. Conversely, if boundary features are close together their combined impact can be diminished by lack of distance to separate them.

**2.30** The weakening of distinction of adjacent Green Belt land from the inset area by the release of a parcel of land will affect the contribution of the adjacent land to Green Belt Purposes, and therefore increase the harm of release of the parcel of land.

## Impact on relevance

**2.31** The release of land could also affect the extent to which a Green Belt purpose is considered 'relevant' for adjacent land, i.e. the potential for adjacent land to play a role with regard to each Green Belt purpose (see Chapter 4 of the Stage 1 Study report). Both increases and decreases in relevance can occur, resulting in either an increase or decrease in contribution to the Green Belt purpose, and in either case, as described below, the impact will lead to an increase in potential harm.

**2.32** However far the large built-up area (i.e. the south east Dorset conurbation) expands, Purpose 1 will be relevant to adjacent Green Belt land, so land that was previously too far away from the inset edges of the large built-up area to contribute to this purpose may become close enough to play a role in preventing its further sprawl. The relevance of adjacent retained Green Belt land to Purpose 1 could also be reduced, with release of land resulting in adjacent retained Green Belt land becoming perceived as being within the large built-up area – i.e. due to greater containment.

**2.33** For Green Belt Purpose 2 – maintaining separation between settlements – the relevance of the purpose was considered to increase as the size of a settlement gap diminishes. In these circumstances, an increase in contribution to Purpose 2 will increase harm.

**2.34** The relevance of adjacent retained Green Belt land to Purpose 3 – preventing encroachment on the countryside – would rarely be affected. The release of adjacent land will not change a parcel's land use, preventing it from being considered countryside. However, release of land could result in adjacent retained Green Belt land becoming contained to the extent that it is too isolated from the wider Green Belt to be considered part of the countryside, or resulting in land uses within adjacent retained Green Belt land becoming associated with the expanding inset area.

**2.35** The relevance of adjacent retained Green Belt land to Purpose 4 – protecting the setting and special character of a historic town – could potentially be reduced by adjacent development, if that development changes the relationship between the contributing adjacent Green Belt land and the historic town. This is most likely to take the form of intervening development as a result of release of Green Belt land affecting important views, which would subsequently reduce the relevance and thus contribution of the adjacent retained Green Belt land to Purpose 4.

## Assessing the level of impact on adjacent land

**2.36** The contribution to Green Belt purposes of adjacent land can be weakened in the ways described above, regardless of whether the adjacent land makes a stronger or weaker contribution to the Green Belt purposes than the release parcel. However, when it comes to considering the level of harm from release of the parcel, it is only the impact on adjacent land that makes a *stronger* contribution to Green Belt purposes than the land within the parcel that affects the assessed level of harm from release of the parcel.

**2.37** This is because weaker contributing adjacent land could be released in conjunction with stronger contributing land without increasing overall harm (see paragraph 2.24). Therefore, if the adjacent land is being retained and not released, that cannot increase harm, even if there is an impact on the contribution of weaker performing adjacent land.



**2.38** The assessments of impact on adjacent Green Belt make it clear where release would have an impact on land that makes a stronger contribution to the Green Belt purposes (which could therefore increase harm) and where release will affect land which does not make a stronger contribution (and which therefore cannot increase harm).

**2.39** Six rating levels for impact on adjacent Green Belt have been used, ranging from major to negligible. **Table 2.1** provides guidance notes and benchmark examples for ratings of impact on adjacent land, but different combinations can result in different ratings. The table provides examples, not a comprehensive list of potential combinations. The assessment of impact on adjacent land is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, based on the table below, but also considering the contribution of the adjacent land.

Table 2.1: Guidance notes and examples used to inform the assessment of impact of release on adjacent Green Belt land that makes a stronger contribution to one or more Green Belt purpose, or which is located in an outer area.

Impact on adjacent Green Belt	Notes	Examples
<b>Major impact</b>	<p>The merging of inset settlements that are currently distinct would be considered a major impact, although this would be an impact on Green Belt functionality more than an impact on adjacent Green belt land; or</p> <p>A combination of moderate-major impacts.</p>	<p>E.g. 1. Release of land would result in the merging of Purpose 2 settlements that are currently distinct. This would be a major impact.</p> <p>E.g. 2. Release would reduce a narrow gap between Purpose 2 settlements to a very narrow gap, and would also weaken the role of land which forms part of the core setting of a historic town. Together these would be a major impact.</p>

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Impact on adjacent Green Belt	Notes	Examples
<b>Moderate-major impact</b>	<p>A significant change affecting a purpose of higher relevance; or</p> <p>A combination of moderate impacts.</p>	<p>E.g. 1. Release of land would significantly increase the urbanising visual influence and containment of adjacent land and would breach a strong boundary feature – e.g. a dual-carriageway. This would be a moderate-major impact.</p> <p>E.g. 2. Release of land would result in containment of land located adjacent to the large built-up area, such that it would now be perceived as being within the large built-up area. It would also weaken the Green Belt boundary and increase urbanising visual influence. In combination this would be a moderate-major impact, affecting contribution to Purposes 1, 2 and 3.</p>
<b>Moderate impact</b>	<p>A reduction in distinction sufficient to cause a reduction in contribution by two levels (e.g. from strong to moderate); or</p> <p>A moderate change affecting a purpose of higher relevance; or</p> <p>A combination of minor-moderate impacts.</p>	<p>E.g. 1. Release of land would result in containment of land located adjacent to the large built-up area, such that it would now be perceived as being within the large built-up area. This would be a moderate impact in terms of relevance of Purpose 1.</p> <p>E.g. 2. Release would diminish with views of land forming part of the broad visual setting of a historic town. This would be a moderate impact.</p>

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#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

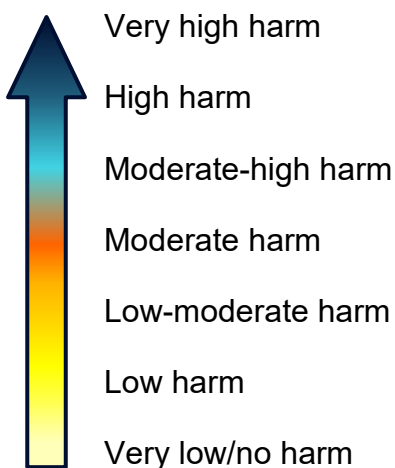
Impact on adjacent Green Belt	Notes	Examples
<b>Minor-moderate impact</b>	<p>A reduction in distinction sufficient to cause a reduction in contribution by one level (e.g. from strong to relatively strong); or</p> <p>A limited change affecting a purpose of higher relevance; or</p> <p>A combination of minor impacts.</p>	<p>E.g. 1. Release of land would increase the urbanising visual influence and containment of adjacent land. This would be a minor-moderate impact.</p> <p>E.g. 2. Release of land would reduce the landform distinction of adjacent land and would result in the creation of a robust gap between Purpose 2 settlements that were previously considered too far apart to be 'neighbouring'. This would be a minor-moderate impact.</p>
<b>Minor impact</b>	<p>A reduction in distinction, but not enough to cause a reduction in contribution; or</p> <p>A limited change affecting a purpose of lower relevance.</p>	<p>E.g. 1. Release of land would reduce the landform distinction of adjacent land. This would be a minor impact.</p> <p>E.g. 2 Land between Purpose 2 settlements which were previously considered too far apart to be 'neighbouring' would now be considered to form a settlement gap, albeit a robust one. This would be a minor impact.</p>
<b>Negligible impact</b>	<p>Only Green Belt land that does not make a stronger contribution to any purpose would be affected by the release of land; or</p> <p>Release of land would result in negligible impact on the distinction of and the relevance of all Green Belt purposes of adjacent Green Belt land.</p>	<p>E.g. 1. Adjacent Green Belt land does not make a stronger contribution to any of the Green Belt purposes.</p> <p>E.g. 2. Release of land would not impact the distinction adjacent Green Belt land or relevance of this land to Green Belt purposes. This would be a negligible impact.</p>

## Step 7: Define variations in harm to the Green Belt purposes

**2.40** The assessment of loss of contribution of land to the Green Belt purposes (Step 5) was combined with the assessment of the additional impact of its release on remaining land designated as Green Belt (Step 6) to determine an overall assessment of the harm of releasing each assessed parcel of land from the Green Belt.

**2.41** Where it was noted that release of a smaller part of a parcel could reduce overall harm by having less impact on adjacent Green Belt land, a separate release scenario was defined. In line with the minimum parcel size applied at Stage 1, separate release scenarios were not identified for areas of less than 1 hectare.

**2.42** Green Belt harm was rated using a seven-point scale ranging from very high to very low harm as follows:



**2.43** **Table 2.2** provides benchmark examples of overall harm ratings, but different combinations will result in different ratings. A stronger contribution to multiple purposes, a *very strong* level of distinction from the inset settlement (resulting in a particular strong contribution to one or more purposes) and a higher level of impact on adjacent land typically increase harm, whilst a weaker contribution and lower impact on adjacent land typically reduce harm. However, professional judgement was used in each individual case to consider how much weight to attach

to each contributing element. Clear and detailed justification is provided for all ratings given in relation to how the overall judgement of Green Belt harm is reached.

**2.44** Where a release of land would encompass areas with different harm ratings, the overall harm rating will always equate to the highest parcel or part-parcel harm rating.

Table 2.2: Benchmark examples used to inform the assessment of overall harm to the Green Belt purposes

Harm to Green Belt purposes	Benchmark examples
<b>Very high harm</b>	<p>Release of land results in a loss of land which makes a particularly strong contribution to two of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute at least a minor-moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of land which makes a particularly strong contribution to three or more of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute at least a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute at least a moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land.</p>
<b>High harm</b>	<p>Release of land results in a loss of strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor-moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of strong contribution to two of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of land which makes a particularly strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land.</p>
<b>Moderate-high harm</b>	<p>Release of land results in a loss of strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p>

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Harm to Green Belt purposes	Benchmark examples
	<p>Release of land results in a loss of relatively strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor-moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of relatively strong contribution to two of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land.</p>
<b>Moderate harm</b>	<p>Release of land results in a loss of strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, but would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of relatively weak contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of moderate contribution to two of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land.</p>
<b>Low-moderate harm</b>	<p>Release of land results in a loss of moderate contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of moderate contribution to two of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of relatively strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, but would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land.</p>
<b>Low harm</b>	<p>Release of land results in a loss of moderate contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of relatively weak contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Release of land results in a loss of relatively weak contribution to two of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land.</p>

Harm to Green Belt purposes	Benchmark examples
<b>Very low harm</b>	<p>Release of land results in a loss of relatively weak contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or</p> <p>Land makes a weak/no contribution to all Green Belt purposes, and its release would have a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land.</p>

## Stage 2 Harm Assessment Outputs

**2.45** The Stage 2 Assessment Outputs are organised by settlement as follows:

- Bournemouth Airport;
- Bransgore;
- Bournemouth;
- Burton;
- Christchurch and Highcliffe;
- Colehill;
- Corfe Mullen;
- Ferndown and West Parley;
- Lytchett Matravers;
- Merley, Canford Magna and Oakley;
- Poole;
- St Leonards and St Ives;
- Sturminster Marshall;
- Three Legged Cross;
- Verwood;

- Wareham;
- West Moors;
- Wimborne Minster.

**2.46** For each settlement the output comprises:

- An initial page, including:
  - An OS map showing the settlement, relevant Green Belt parcels (identified in the Stage 1 report), the proposed release sites/areas of search, any absolute constraints, and any of the particular potential constraints listed in paragraph 2.16.
- A summary page, including:
  - An OS map as above, but shaded showing variations in the assessed level of harm across release sites/areas of search
- For each parcel within a site/area of search around the settlement:
  - Each contribution assessment for parcel land encompassed by the release scenario – either taken from the Stage 1 report, or in the case of parts of outer areas that fall within areas of search / sites, assessed as part of the Stage 2 analysis – including map and aerial view of the parcel, and assessment text;
  - A harm assessment page for each harm scenario within a parcel, showing:
    - The loss of contribution from release of the scenario;
    - A description of the impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt, for all parcels which make a stronger contribution to any of the Green Belt purposes (and which can therefore increase harm), noting the level of impact on each;
    - A list of those adjacent parcels which do not make a stronger contribution (and which will not increase the overall level of harm);
    - An overall rating for impact on adjacent Green Belt;
    - A summary of overall harm, stating loss of contribution, impact on adjacent Green Belt and overall harm rating.



## Chapter 2

### Harm Assessment Methodology

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

**2.47** Where a site/area of search includes land that falls within an outer area of Green Belt, the parcel reference has been amended to indicate the inset settlement that it is being assessed in association with. For example, land in OA41 that has been assessed as a potential expansion of Corfe Mullen has been assigned the reference CM-OA41.

**2.48** Where more than one part of an outer area has been included in sites/areas of search, a letter is used to distinguish them. For example, there are two separate parts of OA1 assessed in association with the potential expansion of Verwood so these are termed VE-OA1a and VE-OA1b.

# Chapter 3

## Summary of Findings

**3.1** This chapter sets out the findings of the assessment of Green Belt harm.

### Summary of Harm Assessment Findings

**3.2** The findings of the assessment of harm are summarised by settlement in **Table 3.1** and the maps in **Appendix A** show the potential degree of harm to the Green Belt purposes that would result from release of land within the proposed sites / areas of search.

**3.3** In each location where alterations to Green Belt boundaries are being considered, a planning judgement is required to establish whether the sustainability benefits of Green Belt release and the associated development outweigh the harm to the Green Belt designation. In light of this, this assessment of harm to the Green Belt purposes does not draw conclusions as to where land should be released to accommodate development, but identifies relative variations in harm to the designation.

**3.4** It is recognised that the sites / areas of search are not finalised, and that sites will be proposed for release at a later stage of the Local Plan process for DC and BCP.

**3.5** The detailed findings of the assessment of harm are included in **Appendix B**, organised by settlement.

Table 3.1: Green Belt assessment of harm ratings.

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Bournemouth Airport	Release of assessment site in the eastern part of BA2 as a new inset area	47.99	High
Bournemouth Airport	Release of the central part of BA3 as a new inset area	14.03	Moderate-high
Bournemouth Airport	Release of the assessment site in the southern part of BA8, as a new inset area	5.35	Moderate-high
Bournemouth Airport	Release of the assessment site at the eastern end of BA8, as an expansion of the Bournemouth Airport and Business Park inset area	0.27	Very low
Bournemouth Airport	Release of BA-OA11 as a new inset area	3.25	Moderate-high
Bournemouth Airport	Release of BA-OA21 as a new inset area	1.29	High
Bournemouth Airport	Release of BA-OA24 as a new inset area	2.27	Moderate-high
Bransgore	Release of land in BG1 as an expansion of Bransgore	14.21	Moderate
Bransgore	Release of land in BG3 as an expansion of Bransgore	16.64	Moderate-high

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Bournemouth	Release of land in the area of search within BO2, as an expansion of Bournemouth	8.81	Moderate-high
Bournemouth	Release of BO3 as an expansion of Bournemouth	11.49	Very high
Bournemouth	Release of BO6 as an expansion of Bournemouth	2.20	Moderate-high
Bournemouth	Release of land within BO7 as an expansion of Bournemouth	2.47	Moderate-high
Bournemouth	Release of BO8 as an expansion of Bournemouth	12.05	Very high
Bournemouth	Release of the southern part of BO8 as an expansion of Bournemouth	28.57	High
Bournemouth	Release of the northern part of BO9, within the area of search, as an expansion of Bournemouth	5.07	Very high
Bournemouth	Release of BO-OA16 as an expansion of Bournemouth	9.96	High
Bournemouth	Release of BO-OA17 as an expansion of Bournemouth	13.07	High
Bournemouth	Release of land within BO18 as an expansion of Bournemouth	54.43	High

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Bournemouth	Release of BO19 as an expansion of Bournemouth	1.57	Low-moderate
Bournemouth	Release of BO20 as an expansion of Bournemouth or Throop	1.21	Low
Bournemouth	Release of BO21 as an expansion of Throop	2.16	Low
Bournemouth	Release of BO24 as an expansion of Bournemouth or Throop	7.92	Low-moderate
Bournemouth	Release of land in BO25 as an expansion of Bournemouth or Throop	42.88	Moderate
Bournemouth	Release of BO26 as an expansion of Bournemouth or Throop	4.48	Low-moderate
Bournemouth	Release of land within BO27 as an expansion of Bournemouth	15.55	High
Bournemouth	Release of BO28 as an expansion of Bournemouth	2.28	Moderate-high
Bournemouth	Release of BO29 as an expansion of Bournemouth	4.07	Low-moderate
Bournemouth	Release of BO30 as an expansion of Bournemouth	11.97	High

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Bournemouth	Release of land within BO31 as an expansion of Bournemouth	26.17	High
Burton	Release of the eastern part of BU1 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Burton	0.85	Moderate
Burton	Release of land within BU2 as a new inset area	8.02	Moderate
Burton	Release of BU3 as an expansion of Burton	13.00	Moderate-high
Burton	Release of BU4 as an expansion of Burton or Winkton	16.06	Moderate-high
Burton	Release of BU5 as an expansion of Burton	4.90	Low-moderate
Burton	Release of BU6 as an expansion of Burton	2.26	Low-moderate
Burton	Release of BU7 as an expansion of Burton	14.95	Moderate-high
Burton	Release of the western part of BU8 as an expansion of Burton	36.20	Moderate-high
Burton	Release of BU9 as an expansion of Burton	3.40	Moderate-high

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Burton	Release of the northern part of BU10 as an expansion of Burton	4.84	Moderate-high
Burton	Release of BU12 as an expansion of Burton	7.88	Moderate
Burton	Release of BU13 as an expansion of Burton	2.16	Moderate-high
Burton	Release of BU-OA13 as an expansion of Winkton	7.20	High
Burton	Release of the eastern part of BU14 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Burton	6.65	Moderate-high
Burton	Release of BU-OA14 as an expansion of Burton	3.17	High
Christchurch & Highcliffe	Release of the south/east part of CH2 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Christchurch	1.63	Low
Christchurch & Highcliffe	Release of CH3 as an expansion of Christchurch	2.50	Low
Christchurch & Highcliffe	Release of land in CH4 as an expansion of Christchurch	7.43	Low-moderate

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Christchurch & Highcliffe	Release of the western part of CH12 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Christchurch & Highcliffe	13.60	Moderate-high
Corfe Mullen	Release of the south western part of CM2 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	1.55	Moderate
Corfe Mullen	Release of land within CM4 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	1.96	Moderate-high
Corfe Mullen	Release of land within CM5 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	8.54	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of CM6 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	12.09	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of the southern part of CM8 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	5.74	Moderate
Corfe Mullen	Release of land within CM10 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	8.59	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of the eastern part of CM12 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	19.33	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of western part of CM12 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	11.70	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of the western part of CM14 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	8.19	High



## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Corfe Mullen	Release of land within CM15 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	5.43	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of the majority of CM16 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	2.23	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of northern and central parts of CM37 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	3.98	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of land within CM39 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	6.56	High
Corfe Mullen	Release of CM-OA41 as an expansion of Corfe Mullen	15.27	High
Colehill	Release of CO6 as an expansion of Colehill	11.17	Moderate
Colehill	Release of the central and eastern parts of CO7 as an expansion of Colehill	35.87	High
Colehill	Release of land within CO8 as an expansion of Colehill	2.36	Moderate
Colehill	Release of the western part of CO9 as an expansion of Colehill	11.62	High
Colehill	Release of southern part of CO10 as an expansion of Colehill	1.67	Low-moderate

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Colehill	Release of land within CO11 as an expansion of Colehill	1.76	High
Colehill	Release of central and western parts of CO11	5.93	Moderate-high
Colehill	Release of western part of CO13 as an expansion of Colehill	7.22	Moderate-high
Colehill	Release of land within CO12 as an expansion of Colehill	0.79	Low-moderate
Colehill	Release of CO13 as an expansion of Colehill	3.26	High
Colehill	Release of CO14 as an expansion of Colehill	15.33	High
Colehill	Release of small area in north west of CO15 as an expansion of Colehill	0.78	Moderate-high
Colehill	Release of CO16 as an expansion of Colehill	3.75	Moderate-high
Colehill	Release of land within CO17 as an expansion of Colehill (Canford Bottom)	10.71	Moderate-high
Colehill	Release of CO18 as an expansion of Colehill (Canford Bottom)	1.77	Low

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Colehill	Release of the east of CO19 as an expansion of Colehill or Stapehill	0.99	Low-moderate
Colehill	Release of land within CO20 as an expansion of Colehill	9.50	Very high
Colehill	Release of south of CO23 as an expansion of Colehill	3.86	High
Colehill	Release of land within CO24 (south of Canford Bottom roundabout) as an expansion of Colehill	3.25	Moderate-high
Colehill	Release of the eastern part of CO25 as an expansion of Colehill	5.30	High
Colehill	Release of CO26 as an expansion of Colehill	6.82	Low-moderate
Colehill	Release of the eastern part of CO27 as an expansion of Colehill	23.07	Very high
Colehill	Release of northern half of CO28b as an expansion of Colehill	4.60	Moderate
Colehill	Release of CO28 as an expansion of Colehill	3.22	Moderate-high
Colehill	Release of CO29 as an expansion of Colehill	3.00	Moderate

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Colehill	Release of CO-OA29 as an expansion of Colehill	11.88	Very high
Colehill	Release of northern part of CO30 as an expansion of Colehill	21.07	High
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE-OA26a as an expansion of Ferndown	0.73	Moderate
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE-OA26b as an expansion of Ferndown	8.21	Moderate-high
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of most of FE19 as an expansion of Colehill or Stapehill	5.31	Very high
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE-OA28 as an expansion of Ferndown	23.41	High
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE-OA29 as an expansion of Ferndown	10.92	High
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of land within FE43 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	34.44	Very high
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of the northern part of FE43 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	21.59	High
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE46 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	7.82	Moderate

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE48 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	2.59	Moderate
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE49 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	5.23	Moderate
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE50 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	7.59	Moderate-high
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE51 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	16.75	High
Ferndown & West Parley	Release of FE52 as an expansion of Ferndown & West Parley	1.86	High
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY1 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	0.89	Moderate
Lytchett Matravers	Release of LY-OA1 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	0.95	High
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land in the central part of LY2 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	1.52	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of south west of LY7 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	4.16	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of south east of LY7 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	3.93	Moderate-high

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY8 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	2.17	Moderate
Lytchett Matravers	Release of central and western parts of LY9 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	3.15	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY12 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	4.90	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY13, to the south of Wimborne Road, as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	5.58	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of the central and northern parts of LY14 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	16.13	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY15 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	1.93	Moderate
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY16 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	5.64	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of the northern part of LY17 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	2.73	Low
Lytchett Matravers	Release of north east of LY18 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	19.91	Moderate-high

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Lytchett Matravers	Release of LY19 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	7.60	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY22 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	2.12	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of LY23 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	6.29	High
Lytchett Matravers	Release of northern part of LY24 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	7.95	High
Lytchett Matravers	Release of southern part of LY24 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	2.78	High
Lytchett Matravers	Release of eastern part of LY24 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	4.23	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of LY25 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	3.05	Moderate
Lytchett Matravers	Release of northern part of LY26 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	3.01	Moderate-high
Lytchett Matravers	Release of land within LY27 as an expansion of Lytchett Matravers	3.42	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of land within ME1 as an expansion of Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	5.78	Low-moderate

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of the eastern part of ME2 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	2.69	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of ME9 as an expansion of Merley	15.00	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of the southern part of ME10 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Merley	22.96	High
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of ME11 as an expansion of Merley	20.05	Very high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of land within ME12 as an expansion of Merley	8.69	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of land within ME13 as an expansion of Merley	34.44	High
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of the north eastern part of ME14 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Merley	7.76	High
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of the north western edge of ME14 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Merley	15.14	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of ME15 as an expansion of Merley	1.95	Low-moderate



## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of the northern part of ME16 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Merley	8.09	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of the northern part of ME17 as an expansion of Merley	2.43	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of land within ME18 to the north of Merley Park Road, and land within the area of search to the south of Merley Park Road, as an expansion of Merley	2.27	High
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of ME18, north of Merley Park Road, as an expansion of Merley	13.43	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of land within ME19 as an expansion of Merley	9.29	Moderate
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of the eastern part of ME20 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Merley	5.63	Moderate-high
Merley, Canford Magna & Oakley	Release of ME-OA32 as an expansion of Merley	18.36	Very high
Poole	Release of PO-OA31a as an expansion of Poole	83.87	Very high
Poole	Release of PO-OA31b as an expansion of Poole	6.56	Moderate-high

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Poole	Release of the northern part of PO19 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Poole	3.62	High
Poole	Release of PO20 as an expansion of Poole	7.13	High
Poole	Release of land within PO21 as an expansion of Poole	20.88	High
Poole	Release of land within PO22 as an expansion of Poole	4.22	High
Poole	Release of the western part of PO23, within the area of search, as an expansion of Poole	4.01	High
St Leonards and St Ives	Release of land within SL-OA10 as an expansion of St Leonards and St Ives	28.29	Moderate-high
St Leonards and St Ives	Release of north of SL15 as an expansion of St Leonards and St Ives	14.60	High
St Leonards and St Ives	Release of SL16 as an expansion of St Leonards and St Ives	18.03	Moderate-high
St Leonards and St Ives	Release of land within SL17 as an expansion of St Leonards and St Ives	41.54	Moderate-high
St Leonards and St Ives	Release of SL20 as an expansion of St Leonards and St Ives	3.37	High

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
St Leonards and St Ives	Release of southern and eastern parts of SL21 as an expansion of St Leonards and St Ives	7.59	Moderate-high
Sturminster Marshall	Release of the southern part of SM1 as an expansion of Sturminster Marshall	3.39	Low
Sturminster Marshall	Release of land within SM7 as an expansion of Sturminster Marshall	12.53	Moderate-high
Sturminster Marshall	Release of land within SM10 as an expansion of Sturminster Marshall	10.04	Moderate
Sturminster Marshall	Release of land within SM12 as an expansion of Sturminster Marshall	4.15	Moderate-high
Sturminster Marshall	Release of SM13 as an expansion of Sturminster Marshall	14.81	Moderate-high
Sturminster Marshall	Release of land within SM14 as an expansion of Sturminster Marshall	8.50	Moderate-high
Sturminster Marshall	Release of eastern part of SM15 (within the area of search) as an expansion of Sturminster Marshall	9.31	Moderate-high
Three Legged Cross	Release of northern part of TH1 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	2.21	Low-moderate
Three Legged Cross	Release of land within TH2 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	2.53	Moderate

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Three Legged Cross	Release of TH-OA2 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	0.36	Moderate-high
Three Legged Cross	Release of TH4 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	1.98	Low
Three Legged Cross	Release of TH6 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	4.03	Low-moderate
Three Legged Cross	Release of TH7 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	9.08	Low-moderate
Three Legged Cross	Release of northern part of TH27 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	2.78	Moderate
Three Legged Cross	Release of the northern part of TH30 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	7.55	Moderate-high
Three Legged Cross	Release of land within TH31 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	6.74	Moderate-high
Three Legged Cross	Release of central part of TH32 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	0.89	Moderate-high
Three Legged Cross	Release of the eastern part of TH33 as an expansion of Three Legged Cross	4.12	Moderate-high
Verwood	Release of VE-OA1a as an expansion of Verwood	17.59	High

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Verwood	Release of VE-OA1b as an expansion of Verwood	13.03	High
Verwood	Release of VE5 as an expansion of Verwood	12.45	Moderate-high
Verwood	Release of land within VE13 as an expansion of Verwood	66.36	High
Verwood	Release of north of VE16 as an expansion of Verwood	6.57	Moderate-high
Verwood	Release of north of VE17 as an expansion of Verwood	9.53	High
Wareham	Release of northern part of parcel WA6 as an expansion of Wareham	2.03	Moderate-high
Wareham	Release of eastern part of WA7 as an expansion of Wareham	6.43	Moderate-high
Wareham	Release of WA8 as an expansion of Wareham	1.24	Low-moderate
Wareham	Release of the southern part of WA9 as an expansion of Wareham	5.23	High
Wareham	Release of western part of WA10 an expansion of Wareham	2.74	Low

## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Wareham	Release of the central part of WA11 an expansion of Wareham	1.44	Moderate
West Moors	Release of western part of WE3 as an expansion of West Moors	7.68	Moderate-high
West Moors	Release of the northern part of WE4 as an expansion of West Moors	8.79	Moderate-high
Wimborne Minster	Release of WI-OA1a as an expansion of Wimborne	5.18	High
Wimborne Minster	Release of WI-OA1b as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	2.76	Moderate-high
Wimborne Minster	Release of south east of WI1 as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	4.71	Moderate-high
Wimborne Minster	Release of land within WI14 as an expansion of Wimborne Minster or Stone	11.67	High
Wimborne Minster	Release of southern part of WI20 as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	15.82	High
Wimborne Minster	Release of northern part of WI20 as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	10.60	High
Wimborne Minster	Release of northern part of WI27 as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	6.20	Moderate

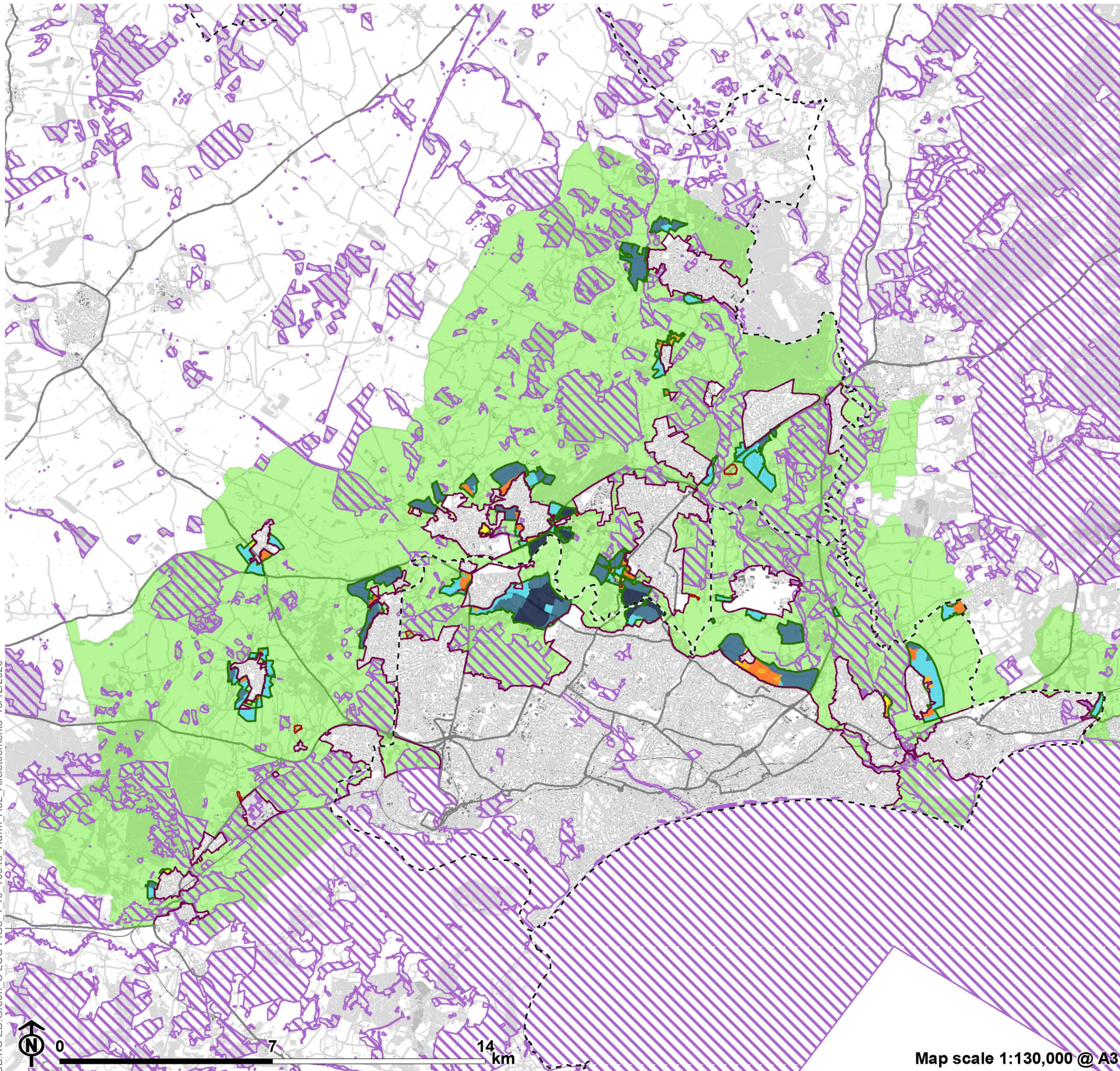
## Chapter 3

### Summary of Findings

#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Settlement	Release Scenario	Area (ha)	Harm Rating
Wimborne Minster	Release of land within WI28 as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	11.51	High
Wimborne Minster	Release of northern part of WI29 as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	2.40	Moderate
Wimborne Minster	Release of a small belt of trees in the western part of WI32, as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	0.63	Moderate-high
Wimborne Minster	Release of the central and western parts of WI34, as an expansion of Wimborne Minster	10.23	Low

**Figure 3.1**  
**Harm ratings**



- - - Local Authority boundary
  - Inset area
  - Green Belt not assessed at Stage 2
  - Site / area of search
  - No openness
  - Absolute constraint(s)
- Harm rating**
- Very high
  - High
  - Moderate high
  - Moderate
  - Low moderate
  - Low
  - Very low

CB:KC EB:Green\_C LUC FIG3\_1\_r0\_10946\_Harm\_A3L\_AllSettlements 15/12/2020

Map scale 1:130,000 @ A3



# Chapter 4

## Making Changes to the Green Belt

**4.1** The following chapter sets out the key steps that the Councils should consider if there is an identified need to release land from the Green Belt. The chapter also sets out potential mitigation measures that could be applied to reduce the potential harm to the Green Belt, if land is released. This is followed by a discussion of the potential opportunities for enhancing the beneficial use of the Green Belt (in line with Paragraph 141 of the NPPF). However, it should be noted that this chapter does not contain an exhaustive list of potential mitigation measures or enhancement opportunities. In particular if the Councils decide to release land from the Green Belt, their Local Plans will need to set out opportunities to enhance the remaining Green Belt to compensate for its loss.

### Making changes to the Green Belt

**4.2** The NPPF requires changes to the Green Belt to be made through the Development Plan process. If such changes are made, the process should include demonstration of exceptional circumstances, including consideration of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, i.e. planning for economic growth, housing need, health and wellbeing, accessibility and biodiversity, cultural heritage and climate change resilience.

**4.3** A common interpretation of the policy position is that, where necessitated by development requirements, plans should identify the most sustainable locations for growth. This policy position should be maintained unless outweighed by adverse effects on the overall integrity of the Green Belt according to an assessment of the whole of the Green Belt based around the five purposes. In other words, the relatively poor performance of the land against Green Belt purposes is not, of itself, an exceptional circumstance that would justify release of the land from the Green Belt. Conversely, higher performing Green Belt may be appropriate for release where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.

**4.4** Before concluding that 'exceptional circumstances' exist to justify changes to the Green Belt, Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that local authorities should demonstrate that all other 'reasonable options' for meeting its identified need for development have been considered. In particular local authorities need to consider whether their strategy:

- makes effective use of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
- optimises the density of development in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and
- explores whether other authorities can help to meet some of the identified development requirement.

**4.5** Should the Councils decide to release land from the Green Belt, careful consideration also needs to be given to the form of the amended Green Belt boundaries. As set out in Para 139 of the NPPF:

"When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:

- ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
- make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;
- be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and
- define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent."

**4.6** Further guidance on establishing the necessary ‘exceptional circumstances’ for making alterations to Green Belt boundaries is set out in the recent High Court judgement: *Compton Parish Council and others v Guildford Borough Council and others* (2019). This involved an appeal opposed to the principle and extent of land proposed for release from the Green Belt in the Council’s submitted Local Plan. The judge concluded:

- “There is no definition of the policy concept of ‘exceptional circumstances’ for altering Green Belt boundaries. This itself is a deliberate policy decision, demonstrating that there is a planning judgment to be made in all the circumstances of any particular case.”
- “The ‘exceptional circumstances’ can be found in the accumulation or combination of circumstances, of varying natures, which entitle the decision-maker, in the rational exercise of a planning judgment, to say that the circumstances are sufficiently exceptional to warrant altering the Green Belt boundary...there will almost inevitably be an analysis of the nature and degree of the need, allied to consideration of why the need cannot be met in locations which are sequentially preferable for such developments, an analysis of the impact on the functioning of the Green Belt and its purpose, and what other advantages the proposed locations, released from the Green Belt, might bring, for example, in terms of a sound spatial distribution strategy.”

## Mitigation to reduce harm to Green Belt

### The concept of mitigation

**4.7** One of the factors weighed up in the judgement of harm resulting from the release of a Green Belt area, is the impact that the loss of openness would have on other Green Belt land. This is assessed by considering how neighbouring land would rate in terms of its contribution to Green Belt purposes were the area in question to be urbanised i.e. would its contribution be weakened? In many cases this is a key factor in the judgement: a site might in itself be small but its development could represent a more significant change than its physical area might suggest if, for example, it resulted in the breaching of a strong boundary feature, or an increase in the built containment of adjacent land.

**4.8** There is the potential to reduce harm to the remaining Green Belt by implementing measures which will affect the relationship between the remaining Green Belt land and urban areas. Measures which increase the contribution that land is judged to make to Green Belt purposes, offsetting to some degree the predicted reduction in contribution, could strengthen the case for release of a particular area. However, any release of Green Belt land will still require 'exceptional circumstances' to be demonstrated.

**4.9** Mitigation could apply either to land being released or land being retained as Green Belt. There is an overlap between the latter and the concept of beneficial use of Green Belt land as set out in the NPPF, in that mitigation can also present an opportunity to enhance beneficial use.

## Mitigation themes

**4.10** The extent to which harm can be mitigated will vary from site to site, but potential measures can be considered under different themes. The Green Belt purposes are considered to relate to the relationship between the land area in question, developed land, and the countryside. This relationship is influenced by: the location of the area; the extent of openness within it; and the role of landscape/physical elements, including boundary features (in either separating the area from, or connecting it to) built-up areas and the wider countryside.

**4.11** **Table 4.1** below lists some mitigation measures that could be considered as part of the planning and development process. Which mitigation measures are the most appropriate will vary, depending on local circumstances and will need to be defined as part of the master planning process.

Table 4.1: Potential measures to mitigate harm to Green Belt

Mitigation measure	Benefits	Considerations
Use landscaping to help integrate a new Green Belt boundary with the existing edge, aiming to maximise consistency over a longer distance.	Maintaining sense of separation between urban and open land.	A boundary that is relatively homogeneous over a relatively long distance, such as a main road, is likely to be stronger than one which has more variation. Landscaping works can help to minimise the impact of 'breaches' in such boundaries.
Strengthen boundary at weak points – e.g. where 'breached' by roads	Reducing opportunities for sprawl.	The use of buildings and landscaping can create strong 'gateways' to strengthen settlement-edge function.
Define Green Belt edge using a strong, natural element which forms a visual barrier – e.g. a woodland belt.	Reducing perception of urbanisation, and may also screen residents from intrusive landscape elements within the Green Belt (e.g. major roads).	Boundaries that create visual and movement barriers can potentially have detrimental effects on the character of the enclosed urban areas and the amenity of residents.
Create a transition from urban to rural, using built density, height, materials and landscaping to create a more permeable edge.	Reducing perception of urbanisation.	This may however have implications in terms of reducing housing yield.
Consider ownership and management of landscape elements which contribute to Green Belt purposes.	Ensuring permanence of Green Belt.	Trees and hedgerows require management to maintain their value in Green Belt terms, and the visual screening value that can be attributed to them is more limited if they are under private control (e.g. within back gardens).

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#### Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Stage 2 Harm Assessment

Mitigation measure	Benefits	Considerations
Enhance visual openness within the Green Belt.	Increasing perception of countryside.	Although openness in a Green Belt sense does not correspond directly to visual openness, a stronger visual relationship between countryside areas, whether directly adjacent or separated by other landscape elements, can increase the extent to which an area is perceived as relating to the wider countryside.
Improve management practices to enhance countryside character.	Increasing strength of countryside character.	Landscape character assessment can help to identify valued characteristics that should be retained and where possible strengthened, and intrusive elements that should be diminished and where possible removed.
Design and locate buildings, landscaping and green spaces to minimise intrusion on settlement settings.	Maintaining perceived settlement separation by minimising the extent to which new development intrudes on the settings of other settlements.	Analysis of settlement settings, including consideration of viewpoints and visual receptors, can identify key locations where maintenance of openness and retention of landscape features would have the most benefit.
Maintain/create separation between existing washed-over settlement and new inset settlement.	Minimising urbanising influences that could weaken the justification for retaining the washed-over settlement's status.	Ensure that the gap is sufficiently wide to maintain a sense of separation.

Mitigation measure	Benefits	Considerations
Design road infrastructure to limit perception of increased urbanisation associated with new development.	Reducing perception of urbanisation.	Increased levels of 'activity' can increase the perception of urbanisation.
Use sustainable drainage features to define/enhance separation between settlement and countryside.	Strengthening separation between urban and open land.	Need to determine if local topography and ground conditions are suitable.

## Beneficial Use of Green Belt

**4.12** The purposes of the Green Belt do not make any reference to the quality or use of land falling within the designation, but Paragraph 141 of the NPPF, states that:

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

**4.13** Furthermore, Paragraph 138 of the NPPF states that where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should “set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land”. This could be achieved through legal agreements in conjunction with the release of land and planning consent for development, or through strategic enhancement initiatives e.g. creation of community woodland.

**4.14** The NPPF suggests different types of beneficial use. They relate principally to the environmental quality of the land, but can also, through strengthening boundary/buffer roles and affecting landscape and visual character, affect the contribution of land to Green Belt purposes.

**4.15** The updated Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) also endorses the preparation of supporting landscape, biodiversity or recreation evidence to identify appropriate compensatory improvements, including:

- “new or enhanced green infrastructure;
- woodland planting;
- landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
- improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;
- new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and
- improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision”.

**4.16** Some of the mitigation measures listed in the previous section which relate to Green Belt land can also be considered beneficial uses, but there is broader scope for introducing or enhancing uses of Green Belt land that (by adding to its value) will strengthen the case for that land’s future protection, regardless of whether it is classified as Green Belt. Some examples are provided in **Table 4.2** below.

**4.17** Beneficial uses could potentially be achieved through planning conditions, section 106 obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy. The PPG stresses the need for early engagement with landowners and other interested parties to obtain the necessary local consents, establishing a detailed scope of works and identifying a means of funding their design, construction and maintenance.



Table 4.2: Potential beneficial uses of Green Belt

Beneficial use	Considerations
Improving access	Enhancing the coverage and condition of the rights of way network and increasing open space provision.
Providing locations for outdoor sport	Some outdoor sports can represent an urbanising influence; an emphasis on activities which do not require formal facilities is less likely to harm Green Belt purposes.
Landscape and visual enhancement	Using landscape character assessment as guidance, intrusive elements can be reduced and positive characteristics reinforced.
Increasing biodiversity	Most Green Belt land has potential for increased biodiversity value – e.g. the management of hedgerows and agricultural field margins, and provision of habitat connectivity, planting of woodland. There may also be opportunities to link enhancements with requirements to deliver 'biodiversity net gain' associated with development proposals.
Improving damaged and derelict land	Giving land a functional, economic value is a key aspect in avoiding damage and dereliction through lack of positive management, but this needs to be achieved with minimum harm to characteristics/qualities which help it contribute to Green Belt purposes.

**4.18** Many of the beneficial uses outlined in the table above could be identified via a Green Infrastructure (GI) Study. This would identify the key opportunities for landscape, access, recreation and biodiversity enhancement within the Green Belt and beyond.

**4.19** It is noted however, that Local Authorities may still be able to protect features such as open spaces, leisure facilities, burial grounds and nature conservation sites through other policy approaches / designations.

## Conclusion

**4.20** This study has assessed the harm to the Green Belt purposes of releasing land for development within sites/Areas of Search at the settlement-edges to facilitate the expansion of the South East Dorset Conurbation area and existing inset settlements. The findings of this study will form an important piece of evidence for BCP/DC's emerging Local Plans.

**4.21** However, as outlined above there are other important factors that need to be considered when establishing exceptional circumstances for making alterations to Green Belt boundaries, most notably sustainability, viability and deliverability issues. Whilst the ideal would be to minimise harm to the Green Belt, it may be that the most sustainable locations for development will result in high harm to the Green Belt.

**4.22** In each location where alterations to Green Belt boundaries are being considered, planning judgement is required to establish whether the sustainability benefits of Green Belt release and the associated development outweigh the harm to the Green Belt designation. In addition, consideration will also need to be given to potential measures to mitigate harm to the Green Belt, as well as potential opportunities to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt. It is noted that many potential enhancement opportunities may relate to land which is in private ownership and therefore careful consideration will need to be given to how and if these opportunities can be delivered.

**4.23** Should the Councils decide to release land from the Green Belt, it is suggested that outline policy guidance or masterplans could be prepared as part of, or following on from, the Local Plan process. Masterplans could draw on the findings of the Green Belt Study and any detailed site-based Green Belt assessment work to indicate precise development areas, new permanent Green Belt boundaries (existing or new features) and appropriate considerations for the layout and design of new developments and opportunities to enhance beneficial use. Such an approach, together with specific policies for the development of the land, may help to minimise harm to the remaining Green Belt.