

Local Plan: Part 1 Green Belt Assessment – Whitchurch Strategic Development Location

Introduction

Bath & North East Somerset Council, along with Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council are developing a Joint Spatial Plan (2016-2036), which, once adopted, will identify the quantum of housing and economic development required for the sub-region. The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) also identifies Strategic Development Locations across the sub-region, but does not define boundaries for these locations. One such Strategic Development Location is at Whitchurch. The Local Plan (2016-2036), which is being developed in parallel to the JSP, will need to identify the precise boundaries of the location.

The purpose of this assessment is therefore to assist in the definition of the precise boundaries of the Whitchurch Strategic Development Location. It has been informed by the JSP Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment, which was used to advise the identification of the Strategic Development Locations. The assessment builds on the work done in the JSP Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment which considered the performance of cells in respect of the purposes of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF. This assessment considers Green Belt performance in greater detail and assesses the impact of development on the Green Belt.

Cells 49B and 52A-G were assessed in the JSP Green Belt Stage 2 Assessment and these are shown on the image below.

The cells to be assessed through the Local Plan Green Belt assessment are discussed below.

Local Plan Green Belt Assessment: Study Area

The JSP Stage2 Green Belt Assessment has been used as the basis for the Local Plan Part 1 Green Belt Assessment. The level of cell resolution used in the JSP Assessment is considered to be sufficiently refined so that more detailed refinement is not considered necessary at this stage. It may however be the case that when undertaking further Local Plan Green Belt assessment, considering impact of the emerging development area and assisting in defining a new detailed Green Belt boundary, the cell boundaries need to be more refined.

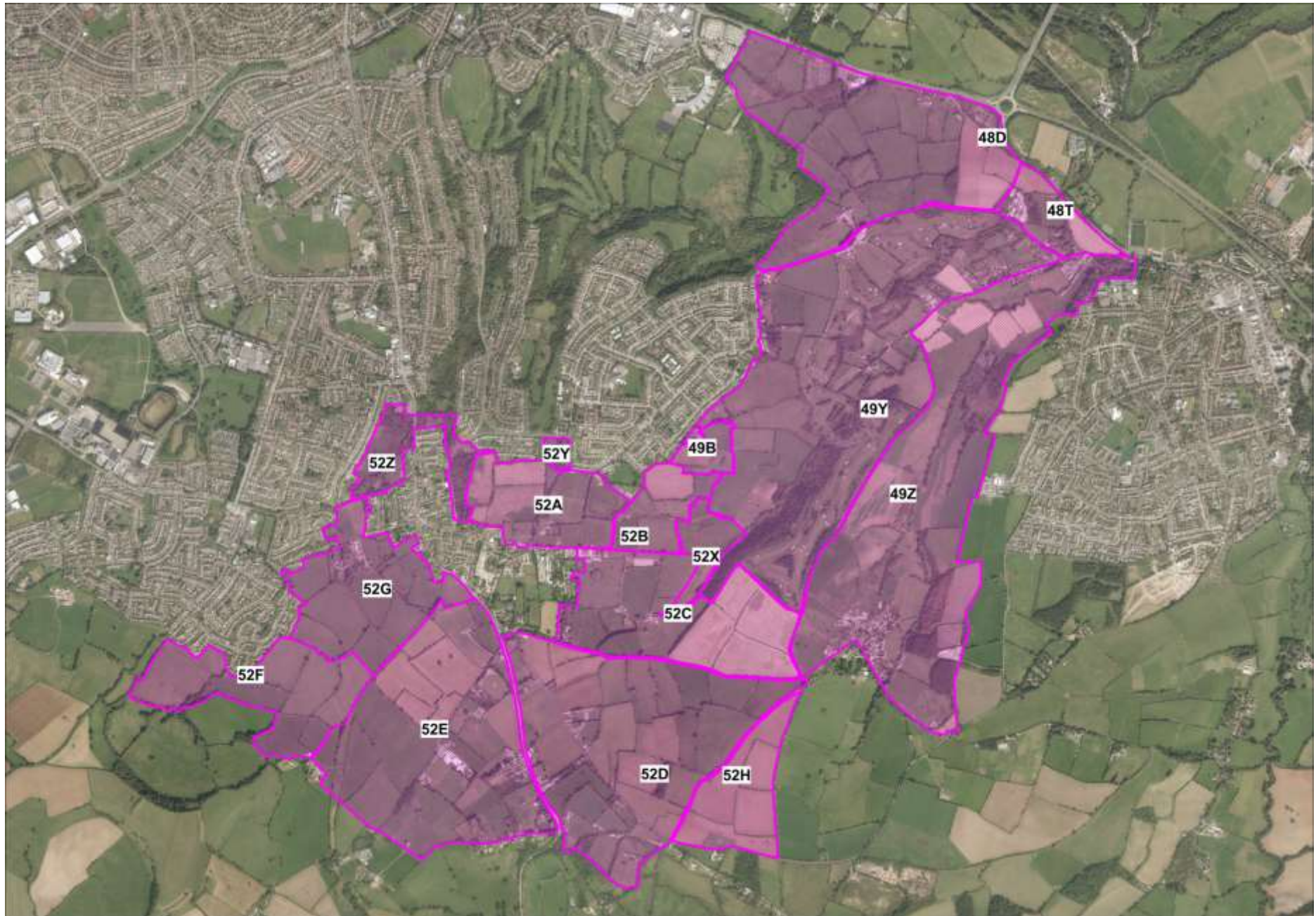
A number of additional cells to those covered by the JSP Stage 2 Assessment (and shown on the image below) are included in this assessment for the reasons set out below.

Cell 52H is included within the assessment because this land is now considered to be potentially suitable as part of the Whitchurch Strategic Development Location which is identified in the Local Plan Options document. The extent of the cell and its contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt has been assessed using the same methodology as was used for the JSP Green Belt Stage 2 Assessment.

The Local Plan Options document indicates the extent of the area considered to be potentially suitable as part of the Strategic Development Location. Comments are also sought in the Options document on whether some adjoining areas of land might be suitable for development. In order to be comprehensive and to inform any further consideration of Green Belt impact in these areas additional cells are included in this assessment i.e. cells 52Y and 52Z, as well as some of those defined in the Stockwood area e.g. 52X (see below).

Potential route for orbital link from A4-A37-South Bristol Link Orbital link: the Joint Transport Study identifies the need for the orbital link. Potential route alignment options are subject to a separate assessment study. In order to inform the study and a consideration of the Green Belt impact of route alignment options the Green Belt performance of additional cells 48T, 49Y, 49Z and 52X forms part of this assessment. Stockwood Vale was assessed at a high level in the JSP Green Belt Stage 1 Assessment - November 2015 (extracts are included as Appendix 1).

The cells covered by the Local Plan Green Belt assessment are shown in the map below.



Appraisal criteria

The extent of the cell and its contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt has been assessed using the same methodology as was used for the JSP Green Belt Stage 2 Assessment. The aim of the assessment is to determine an overall contribution rating for each cell based on a combination of assessments against each relevant Green Belt purpose. In doing this the assessment does not approach all Green Belt purposes in the same way. The approach has been tailored to reflect the wording of the Green Belt purposes in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 80).

Green Belt purposes 1, 2 and 4 are directly expressed:

- 1 - to **check** the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- 2 - to **prevent** neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- 4 - to **preserve** the setting and special character of historic towns;

Whereas purposes 3 and 5 are expressed as assistance roles:

- 3 - to **assist** in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- 5 - to **assist** in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

These five statutory purposes of the Green Belt form the basic appraisal criteria. In addition, the appraisal assesses the further, 'local Green Belt purpose' which seeks *"to preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages and hamlets"*. The local purpose is of continuing relevance having regard to the reasons for the original designation of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt (one of the reasons for the Green Belt given in the 1966 County of Somerset Development Plan Written Statement was to specifically prevent the merging of Bristol, Keynsham, Saltford and Bath and to preserve the identity and character of the surrounding towns, villages and hamlets; this has consequently been included in each subsequent Development Plan including the current adopted B&NES Core Strategy/Placemaking Plan).

In order to demonstrate variations between the cells in terms of the extent of their contribution, a scale with three rating levels has been devised as set out below:

Major contribution		<p>Cell makes a major contribution to serving Green Belt purposes</p> <p>These cells can be considered to be at the front line of contributing to purposes of Green Belt.</p>
Contribution		<p>Cell makes a contribution to serving Green Belt purposes</p> <p>Noting that the Green Belt is an extensive designation, not all cells are likely to be at the front line of making a contribution. The 'contribution' rating is applicable to those cells which support the purposes of Green Belt, particularly in combination with other cells.</p>
Limited contribution		<p>Cell makes a limited contribution to serving Green Belt purposes</p> <p>These are cells which are considered to have only a limited or negligible contribution to individual purposes. They do not have a significant role in themselves and do not have a significant role in supporting or assisting the purposes of Green Belt in combination with other cells.</p>

The approach to the assessment is set out in the tables below. These show the purpose being considered, questions asked in determining the contribution rating and indicators to assist the assessment process. In all cases, a cell is only assessed and rated against a Green Belt purpose if the JSP Stage 2 cell within which it wholly or partially sits was identified as contributing to that purpose.

It should be noted that no assessment was made in the JSP Stage 2 Assessment against Purposes 4 (preserve special character of historic towns) and 5 (assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land). In terms of Purpose 4 it was considered that land adjoining Whitchurch does not provide the setting for the historic core of Bristol, and therefore the appraisal area is not considered to serve this purpose. Purpose 5 was considered to be applicable to the Green Belt as a whole and is therefore not subject to further assessment.

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;	Major contribution Does stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) make a major contribution to	
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	<p>checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up area of Bristol?</p> <p>Does stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) make a major contribution to preventing Whitchurch village from being subsumed within Bristol?</p> <p>Contribution Does stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) make a contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up area of Bristol?</p> <p>Does stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) make a contribution to preventing Whitchurch village from being subsumed within Bristol?</p> <p>Limited Contribution Does stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) make a limited contribution to check the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up area of Bristol?</p> <p>Does stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) make a limited contribution to preventing Whitchurch village from being subsumed within Bristol?</p>	
<p>2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>Major contribution Does stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) provide a gap between</p>	<p>Scale and location of the stage 2 cell</p> <p>Extent of existing gap between relevant</p>

	<p>settlements (towns/city) which prevents them from merging into one another?</p> <p>Would development of a stage 2 cell (including in combination with neighbouring cells) significantly reduce gap between settlements (towns/city) or result in a perception of merger?</p> <p>Contribution Does stage 2 cell contribute towards a gap between settlements (towns/city)?</p> <p>Limited Contribution Does Stage 2 cell provide a limited contribution to the gap between settlements (towns/city) (especially where separation is provided by other cells and the overall gap is substantial)?</p>	<p>settlements</p> <p>Physical features which provide perception of separation (e.g. topography, major river)</p>
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<p>3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>Contribution Does the cell contain features and uses characteristic of the countryside and is it predominantly open?</p> <p>Does Green Belt designation assist in safeguarding stage 2 cell from encroachment?</p> <p>Limited Contribution Does stage 2 cell contain limited recognisable features and/or contain or is surrounded by development not characteristic of the countryside to the extent that cell has a notably reduced countryside character?</p>	<p>Scale and location of the stage 2 cell.</p> <p>Presence of assets that are characteristic of countryside or provide access to countryside:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agricultural and forestry/woodland ● Public rights of way ● Outdoor sport or outdoor recreation with an open character <p>Extent of urbanising development within or surrounding the land</p>
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	Does stage 2 cell have limited connectivity to the wider countryside?	
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<p>6. Local Green Belt Purpose: To preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages and hamlets within the Green Belt</p>	<p>The inclusion of the sixth “local” purpose takes account of the original intention behind the Green Belt designation and is consistent with the purposes of the Green Belt set out in the B&NES Adopted Core Strategy.</p> <p>The Green Belt designation in this land parcel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents development that would result in merging of or significantly erode gaps between settlements (including villages and hamlets) and therefore protects their individual identity. • Contributes towards protecting the open setting of Keynsham, villages and hamlets.
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A judgement has been made in determining the overall contribution rating of each cell. That judgement is based on the assessment against each purpose and the commentary included in the assessment table. It was guided by the following principles that were applied in the JSP assessment:

- Where a cell secured a rating of ‘major’ against either purpose 1, 2 or 3, or the Local Green Belt purpose, the overall rating was determined to be ‘major’.
- Where the cell secured a rating of contribution against 1, 2, or 3, or the Local Green Belt purpose, the overall rating was determined to be ‘contribution’
- Where the contribution was determined to be ‘limited’ against purposes 1, 2 or 3 or the Local Green Belt purpose the overall rating was either ‘contribution’ or ‘limited contribution’ having regarded to the rating against purpose 3, the commentary in the assessment table and the scale and location of the cell.

Consistent with approaches taken to Green Belt assessment in plan making exercises elsewhere, this assessment does not attempt an aggregate or cumulative rating for cells. For example, if a major contribution is identified for three purposes, the rating for the cell is not greater than where a single purpose is rated as major. This is because whilst paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that the *fundamental aim* of Green Belt is to ‘prevent urban sprawl’ by keeping land permanently open, paragraph 80 identifies five Green Belt purposes which are distinct and in some cases complementary. There is no indication that the purposes have cumulative effect i.e. the NPPF does not suggest that the more purposes performed, the greater the value land has in Green Belt terms.

Consideration of Green Belt Boundaries and Safeguarded Land

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF reiterates points about the intended permanence of Green Belt boundaries and meeting requirements for sustainable development, but also refers to the need to use clear boundary features likely to be permanent:

“When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:

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


The appraisal work within this study is likely to be of relevance to the process of considering and identifying new permanent Green Belt boundaries and the potential for ‘safeguarded land’. This study does not make specific recommendations on these matters; these will need to be considered in due course in a separate assessment.


Local Plan Green Belt Assessment of Green Belt Purposes


The table below shows a summary of the contribution to the national purposes of the Green Belt each cell makes (where relevant these are drawn from the JSP Stage 2 Green Belt assessment).


<i>Contribution to the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt</i>				
<i>Cell</i>	<i>Purpose 1 (sprawl) contribution</i>	<i>Purpose 2 (merger) contribution</i>	<i>Purpose 3 (encroachment) contribution</i>	<i>Overall contribution</i>
49B	Major Contribution	Major Contribution	Contribution	Major Contribution
52A	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52B	Major Contribution		Contribution	Major Contribution
52C	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52D	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52E	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52F	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52G	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52H	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52X	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution
52Y	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
52Z	Major Contribution	-	Contribution	Major Contribution
48D	Major Contribution	Major Contribution	Contribution	Major Contribution
48T	Contribution	Major Contribution	Contribution	Major Contribution
49Y	Major Contribution	Major Contribution	Contribution	Major Contribution
49Z	Contribution	Major Contribution	Contribution	Major Contribution


Set out below is the appraisal of Green Belt purposes for each cell. Where relevant this appraisal draws from the JSP Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment. For all cells the local purpose “to preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages and hamlets” is assessed.


49B (51ha)		Green Belt purpose 1,2,3	
Contribution to purpose 1		Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located immediately to the south-east of Stockwood, part of the built up area of Bristol. There are no strong physical features within or adjacent to the cell, and while the cell is located at the top of Stockwood Vale, the vale is not a physical feature capable of restricting sprawl. The cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol.</i>			
Contribution to purpose 2		Major contribution	
<i>This cell lies between Stockwood (Bristol) and Keynsham. The existing gap between the two settlements is approximately 1.6km. The gap is characterised by the steep topography of Stockwood Vale but this does not provide a visual break between the two settlements. Land to the immediate east of the cell drops away steeply, from 75m altitude at the edge of the cell to 40m at the vale bottom. However, the presence of the vale does not necessarily render development unviable and the cell therefore makes a major contribution to preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham.</i>			
Contribution to purpose 3		Contribution	
<i>This cell is located between the built-up area of Stockwood and the western slope of Stockwood Vale. The cell consists of agricultural fields separated by hedgerows. The cell contains no significant urbanising features and is considered part of the open countryside. The cell therefore makes a contribution to preventing encroachment in to the countryside.</i>			
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)		Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located between the built-up area of Stockwood and the western slope of Stockwood Vale. It forms part of the gap between Stockwood and Keynsham. Development in this location would increase the visibility of built development when viewed from Keynsham. This would contribute towards adversely affecting the character, identity and setting of Keynsham.</i>			
Overall contribution		Major contribution	
<i>The cell makes a major contribution to preventing the sprawl of Bristol and with adjacent land to preventing Keynsham merging with Bristol.</i>			
			

52A (27ha)		Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5	
Contribution to purpose 1		Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located immediately to the south of the built up area of Bristol and immediately north and east of Whitchurch village which, although close to the city, is a developed area surrounded by undeveloped land. The cell occupies an undeveloped gap between Whitchurch village and Bristol. If the cell was developed, the sprawl of the urban area could subsume Whitchurch village compounding the effect of sprawl. The cell therefore makes a major contribution to checking the sprawl of the urban area.</i>			
Contribution to purpose 2		-	
<i>Not applicable</i>			
Contribution to purpose 3		Contribution	
<i>This cell is located to the south of the built-up area of Stockwood and the north-west of Whitchurch village. Open countryside lies to the west. The land rises gently from west to east. The cell consists of a mix of agricultural fields and recreations fields, with Staunton Lane bisecting the cell roughly in half, north-south. The cell is predominantly open and of a countryside character. It is therefore considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment in to the countryside.</i>			
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)		Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located immediately to the south of the built up area of Bristol and immediately north and east of Whitchurch village which, although close to the city, is surrounded by undeveloped land and therefore separate from the city. The cell occupies an undeveloped gap between Whitchurch village and Bristol. If the cell was developed, it would adversely affect the individual character, identity and setting of Whitchurch village. The cell therefore makes a major contribution to this local purpose</i>			
Overall contribution		Major contribution	
<i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol at this location between the edge of the city and Whitchurch village.</i>			
			

52B (14ha)	Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5	
Contribution to purpose 1	Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located immediately to the south-east of Stockwood, part of the built up area of Bristol. There are no strong physical features within or adjacent to the cell, and while the cell is located at the top of Stockwood Vale, the vale is not a physical feature capable of restricting sprawl. The cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 2	Contribution	
<i>This northern part of the cell lies between Stockwood (Bristol) and Keynsham. The existing gap between the two settlements is approximately 1.6km in the northern part of this cell. The gap is characterised by the steep topography of Stockwood Vale but this does not provide a visual break between the two settlements. Land to the immediate east of the cell drops away steeply, from 75m altitude at the edge of the cell to 40m at the vale bottom. However, the presence of the vale does not necessarily render development unviable and the cell therefore makes a contribution to preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 3	Contribution	
<i>This cell to the south of Stockwood, with countryside located to the east, west and south. The cell occupies land long the top of Stockwood Vale, before it drops into the vale itself (i.e. outside the cell). The cell consists of a mix of agricultural fields and recreational fields, with Staunton Lane bisecting the cell roughly in half, north-south. The cell remains predominantly open and of a countryside character and is therefore considered to make a contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.</i>		
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)	Contribution	
<i>This cell is located between the built-up area of Stockwood and the western slope of Stockwood Vale. It forms part of the gap between Stockwood and Keynsham. Development in this location would increase the visibility of built development when viewed from Keynsham. This land, particularly the north eastern extent of the cell, would contribute towards adversely affecting the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham.</i>		
Overall contribution	Major contribution	
<i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol at this location at the edge of the city and Whitchurch village.</i>		
		


52C (52ha)		Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5	
Contribution to purpose 1		Major contribution	
<p><i>The cell lies adjacent to cells 52a, 52b, and committed development at Whitchurch village. The cell contains field boundaries within it but no strong physical features. The eastern boundary lies near the top of the plateau, before it descends into Stockwood Vale. While Stockwood Vale to the east of the cell is steeply sloped, it is not so steep that it could not be developed. This side of the cell therefore does not contain physical features which, in the absence of Green Belt policy, would restrict development. Therefore, the cell makes a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol, in combination with other cells.</i></p>			
Contribution to purpose 2		-	
<i>Not applicable</i>			
Contribution to purpose 3		Contribution	
<p><i>52c is located east of land removed from the Green Belt at Horseworld. As the cell stretches from west to east, it skirts the top of Stockwood Vale, which descends away from the cell to the north-east. To the north-west, east and south lie open countryside. Further east is the village of Queen Charlton. Within the cell consists of open fields and several farms. It is of a predominantly countryside character and is considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i></p>			
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)		Contribution	
<p><i>This cell is located on the eastern edge of Whitchurch village and to the west of Queen Charlton. Development in this location would affect the individual character, identity and setting of the villages.</i></p>			
Overall contribution		Major contribution	
<p><i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol at this location close to the edge of Bristol and Whitchurch village.</i></p>			
			

52D (96ha)		Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5	
Contribution to purpose 1		Major contribution	
<p><i>This cell does not lie adjacent to Bristol but to the south/south-east of Whitchurch village which is very close to the edge of the city. It checks the sprawl of Bristol in combination with cells further north and north-west. The north-western corner of this cell abuts a site allocated for residential development of around 200 dwellings. The western boundary of the cell follows the A37, with the southern boundary taking the course of a combination of field boundaries and Woollard Lane. The eastern boundary follows Dapwell Lane. The cell is crossed by Highwall Lane, Charlton Road, Hursley Lane and Woollard Lane, as well as field boundaries. These roads could increase access potential for development of this cell. This cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol, in combination with other cells.</i></p>			
Contribution to purpose 2		-	
Not applicable			
Contribution to purpose 3		Contribution	
<p><i>This cell is located to the east of the A37, is bounded by Queen Charlton Lane to the north and Highwall Lane to the east. The southern boundary of the cell follows the edge of the plateau before it drops away further south. The cell is also crossed by other minor roads. The cell contains a number of dispersed buildings, including residential and agricultural development and a cemetery. The overriding character however is one of countryside, because the vast majority of the cell consists of agricultural fields, separated mainly by hedgerows. The cell forms part of the wider countryside and is considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i></p>			
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)		Contribution?	
<p><i>This cell is located to the south of Whitchurch village, and to the south west of Queen Charlton. Development in the northern part of this cell would affect the individual character, identity and setting of the villages.</i></p>			
Overall contribution		Major contribution	
<p><i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol.</i></p>			
			

52E (92ha)		Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5	
Contribution to purpose 1		Major contribution	
<p><i>This cell does not lie immediately adjacent to Bristol but adjoins the south of Whitchurch village. It checks the sprawl of Bristol in combination with cells further north-west. The eastern boundary of the cell follows the A37, with the southern, northern and western boundaries following field boundaries. There are no strong physical features which would check the sprawl of Bristol in the absence of Green Belt policy. The A37 would be more to encourage the sprawl of Bristol, given its orientation in relation to the latter. This cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol in combination with neighbouring cells.</i></p>			
Contribution to purpose 2		-	
<i>Not applicable</i>			
Contribution to purpose 3		Contribution	
<p><i>This cell lies between the lower slopes of Maes Knoll and the A37, on land that gently undulates. To the north of the cell lies Whitchurch village and south and east there is open countryside. Within the cell there is a garden centre, some residential and agricultural buildings and sports pitches, but the largest component of the cell is agricultural fields, which gives the cell a countryside character. The cell is therefore considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i></p>			
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)		Contribution	
<p><i>This cell is located to the south of Whitchurch village. Development particularly in the northern part of this cell would affect the individual character, identity and setting of the village.</i></p>			
Overall contribution		Major contribution	
<p><i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol.</i></p>			
			


52F (36ha)		Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5	
Contribution to purpose 1		Major contribution	
<i>This cell lies adjacent to Bristol. Physical features within the cell consist of field boundaries and minor roads. The cell, due to adjacency to Bristol and lack of any features which could check the sprawl of Bristol in the absence of Green Belt policy, is considered to make a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol.</i>			
Contribution to purpose 2		-	
<i>Not applicable</i>			
Contribution to purpose 3		Contribution.	
<i>Cell 52f is located to the south of Whitchurch, Bristol and occupies the lower slopes of the iron age hill fort of Maes Knoll. To the west and south are the slopes and the fort itself. To the east lies open countryside, including fields and recreation pitches. The cell contains no significant urbanising features and is therefore considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i>			
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)		Contribution?	
<i>Not applicable</i>			
Overall contribution		Major contribution	
<i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol at this location adjacent to the city.</i>			




52G (41ha)	Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5
Contribution to purpose 1	Major contribution
<i>This cell is similar to 52a in that it contains undeveloped land which separates Whitchurch village from Bristol. This cell is located immediately to the east of the built up area of Bristol and immediately west of Whitchurch village which, although close to the city, is a developed area surrounded by undeveloped land. The cell occupies an undeveloped gap between Whitchurch village and Bristol. If the cell was developed, the sprawl of the urban area would subsume Whitchurch village compounding the effect of sprawl. The cell therefore makes a major contribution to checking the sprawl of the urban area.</i>	
Contribution to purpose 2	-
<i>Not applicable</i>	
Contribution to purpose 3	Contribution
<i>This cell is located between Bristol and the village of Whitchurch, located to the west and east of the cell respectively. To the south of the cell there is open countryside. The predominant character of this cell is countryside, the vast majority being arable land, with two farm complexes. The cell is generally flat, before it begins to rise up towards Maes Knoll, beyond the cell to the south-west. The cell is considered to make a contribution to purpose 3.</i>	
Contribution to purpose 4	-
<i>Not applicable</i>	
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)	Major contribution
<i>This cell is located to the west of Whitchurch village and east of the built up area of Bristol. Development in this location would affect the individual character, identity and setting of the village.</i>	
Overall contribution	Major contribution
<i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol at this location adjacent to the city.</i>	
	


52H (23ha)		Green Belt Purposes 1, 3, 5	
Contribution to purpose 1		Major contribution	
<i>This cell does not lie adjacent to Bristol but to the south-west of Queen Charlton village. It checks the sprawl of Bristol in combination with cells further north and west. The cell is bounded by Highwall Lane, Charlton Road and Hursley Lane. These roads could increase access potential for development of this cell. This cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol, in combination with other cells.</i>			
Contribution to purpose 2		-	
<i>Not applicable</i>			
Contribution to purpose 3		Contribution	
<i>This cell is located to the east of the A37, is bounded by bounded by Highwall Lane, Charlton Road and Hursley Lane. The overriding character is one of countryside, because the vast majority of the cell consists of agricultural fields, separated mainly by hedgerows. The cell forms part of the wider countryside and is considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i>			
Contribution to Local Purpose (preserve the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham and the villages)		Contribution	
<i>This cell is located to the south of Queen Charlton village. Development in this location, particularly to the north of the cell, would affect the individual character, identity and setting of the village.</i>			
Overall contribution		Major contribution	
<i>The cell makes a major contribution to checking sprawl of Bristol at this location.</i>			



52Y		Aerial photo with cell boundary 
Contribution purpose 1	Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located immediately to the south of the built up area of Bristol, between two parts of Stockwood. It is undeveloped, and, while small, serves to check the unrestricted sprawl of Bristol, in combination with other cells. The cell's proximity to the urban edge of Bristol, and the cell's connectivity with the wider countryside within the Green Belt means that the cell makes a major contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of Bristol.</i>		
Contribution purpose 2	Not assessed	
Contribution purpose 3	Contribution	
<i>This cell is located south of Craydon Road and north of Staunton Lane. It is undeveloped, consisting of informal public open space. It is adjacent to other undeveloped land to the south-west and south-east. The cell is considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment in to the countryside.</i>		
Contribution to local purpose	Contribution	
<i>This cell is located immediately to the south of the built up area of Bristol between two parts of Stockwood. The cell adjoins land forming an undeveloped gap between Whitchurch village and Bristol. If developed (in conjunction with land in cell 52A) it would adversely affect the individual character, identity and setting of Whitchurch village. The cell therefore makes a contribution to this local purpose</i>		
Overall contribution	Major contribution	
<i>The cell scores 'major contribution' against purpose 1 and 'contribution' against purpose 3. The overall score is therefore 'major contribution'.</i>		

52Z		Aerial photo with cell boundary
Contribution to purpose 1	Major contribution	
<p><i>The cell is located immediately adjacent to, and between, the built up areas of Bristol and Whitchurch village. The cell occupies an undeveloped area that separates Whitchurch village and Bristol urban area. The same reasoning that was applied to the gap in cell 52A is applicable here. Therefore, the cell makes a major contribution to checking the sprawl of Bristol.</i></p>		
Contribution to purpose 2	Not assessed	
<p>Contribution to purpose 3</p> <p>Contribution</p> <p><i>The cell is located between Whitchurch village and Bristol. Open countryside is located to the south, south-west and east of Whitchurch village, to which the cell is connected, through undeveloped land. The cell consists of agricultural land and mature woodlands which cover a significant proportion of the area. It is therefore considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment in to the countryside.</i></p>		
Contribution to local purpose	Major contribution	
<p><i>This cell is located immediately to the south of the built up area of Bristol and immediately north, west and east of Whitchurch village which, although close to the city, is surrounded by undeveloped land and therefore separate from the city. The cell occupies much of the undeveloped gap between Whitchurch village and Bristol. If the cell was developed, it would adversely affect the individual character, identity and setting of Whitchurch village. The cell therefore makes a major contribution to this local purpose</i></p>		
Overall contribution	Major contribution	
<p><i>The cell scores 'major contribution' against purpose 1 and 'contribution' against purpose 3. The overall score is therefore major contribution.</i></p>		


As set out in the section on the Study Area above this Local Plan Green Belt Assessment appraises the contribution to Green Belt purposes of cells that could be affected by the potential route of the Orbital Link Road. Impacts on the Green Belt of the orbital link will be assessed in a separate study when more information is available about the potential route alignments. The land cells are taken from the JSP Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment.

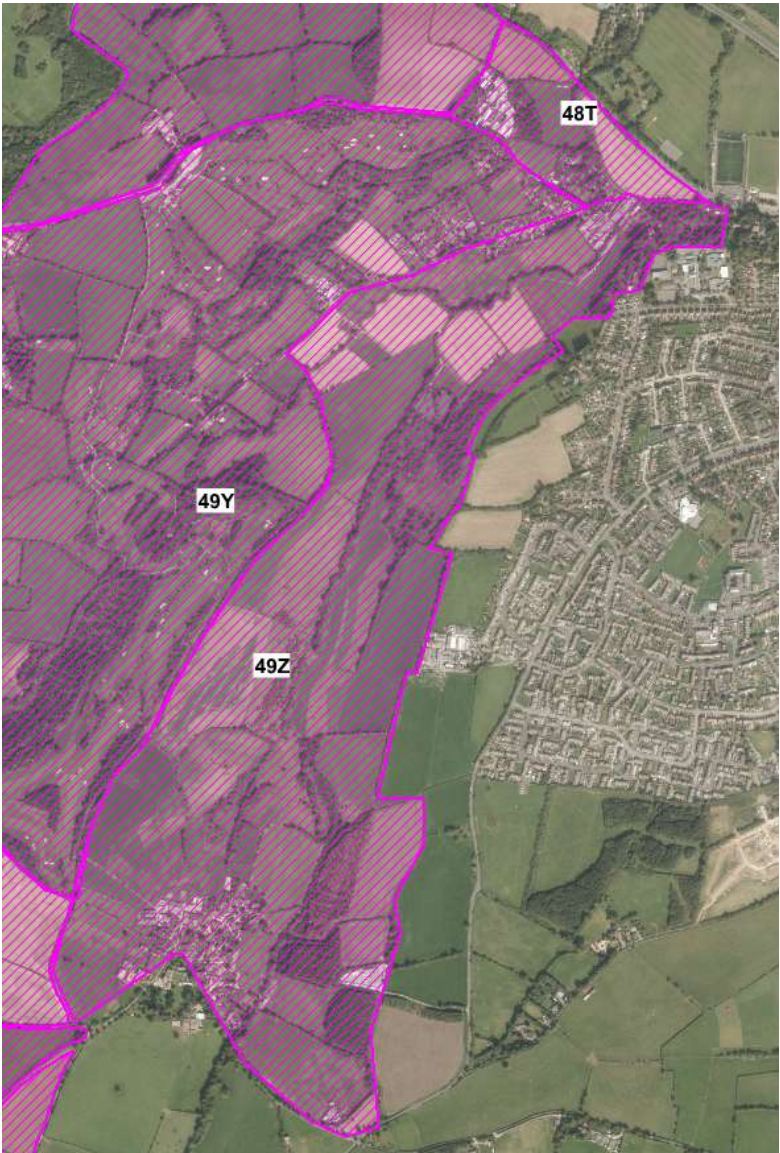
48D (85ha) Green Belt Purposes 1, 2, 3, 5	Aerial photo with cell boundary	
Contribution to purpose 1 Major contribution		
<p><i>This cell is located adjacent to Brislington Park & Ride at the western edge of the city and then stretches for over 1.5km towards Keynsham in the east. Within the cell only field boundaries are present, and these do not check sprawl, in the absence of Green Belt policy. Furthermore, the A4 to the north could encourage sprawl from Bristol, given its orientation in relation to the built up area of Bristol (i.e. travelling away from Bristol). Therefore, the cell makes a major contribution to preventing urban sprawl</i></p>		
Contribution to purpose 2 Major contribution		
<p><i>48D is located within a gap between Keynsham and Bristol of less than 2km, which is considered a narrow gap. The cell, in combination with other land, provides a gap between the two settlements. Development of the cell, alone or in combination with other cells, would significantly reduce the gap. Furthermore, due to the presence of other development occupying the gap between Hicks Gate roundabout and Keynsham, development of this cell alone could result in the perception that the gap between Keynsham and Bristol had been closed, and with other cells, would result in the actual closure of the gap. This cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to preventing the merger of Keynsham & Bristol.</i></p>		Contribution to purpose 3 Contribution
<p><i>Cell 48D consists almost entirely of agricultural land. The A4 and Hicks Gate roundabout detract from the countryside character of the cell, particularly the northern part of the cell. Due to the extensive nature of the cell it is considered that it makes a contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.</i></p>		Contribution to local purpose Major contribution
<p><i>48D is located within a gap between Keynsham and Bristol of less than 2km, which is considered a narrow gap. The cell, in combination with other land, provides a gap between the two settlements. Development of the cell, alone or in combination with other cells, would significantly reduce the gap. Furthermore, due to the presence of other development occupying the gap between Hicks Gate roundabout and Keynsham, development of this cell alone could result in the perception that the gap between Keynsham and Bristol had been closed, and with other cells, would result in the actual closure of the gap. This cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to maintaining the individual character and identity of Keynsham.</i></p>		


Overall contribution	Major Contribution	
<i>The cell makes a major contribution to restricting the sprawl of Bristol and preventing the city and Keynsham from merging into one another</i>		

48T	Aerial photo with cell boundary	
Contribution to purpose 1	Contribution	
<i>At its closet point Bristol is located 1.5km from the cell (at Brislington Park & Ride). The cell' southern boundary follows Stockwood Hill, its eastern boundary Old Bristol Road and its northern boundary Durley Hill. The western boundary abuts cell 48D, from which it is separated by a hedgerow along the northern part and the boundary of a residential property along the southern part. The south-western corner of cell 48T contains the residential property and Whitegate Nurseries. The openness of the cell has therefore to some extent been compromised. Give the relationship and fairly weak separation between cell 48T and 48D it considered this cell makes a contribution to purpose 1 and a more major contribution in combination with cell 48D.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 2	Major contribution	
<i>48T is located within a gap between Keynsham and Bristol of less than 2km, which is considered a narrow and important gap. This cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to preventing the merger of Keynsham and Bristol</i>		
Contribution to purpose 3	Contribution	
<i>This cell is contains some existing residential development and Whitegate Nurseries, but consists, predominantly, of undeveloped agricultural land. Therefore the cell makes a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 4	Not assessed	
Contribution to local purpose	Major contribution	
<i>48T is located within a gap between Keynsham and Bristol of less than 2km, which is considered a narrow gap. Development of the cell, alone or in combination with other cells, would significantly reduce the gap. Furthermore, due to the presence of other development occupying the gap between Hicks Gate roundabout and Keynsham, development of this cell alone could result in the perception that the gap between Keynsham and Bristol had been closed, and with other cells, would result in the actual closure of the gap. This cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to maintaining the individual character and identity of Keynsham.</i>		
Overall contribution	Major contribution	
<i>The cell scored 'major contribution' against purpose 2. The overall score is therefore 'major contribution'.</i>		



49Y		Aerial photo with cell boundary 
Contribution to purpose 1	Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located immediately east of Stockwood (part of Bristol), west of Keynsham, and north of Queen Charlton village. There are limited strong physical barriers within the site; the vale is not considered a physical feature capable of restricting sprawl, and the cell is predominantly undeveloped. The cell is therefore considered to make a major contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of Bristol, including the prevention of Queen Charlton being absorbed in to the built up are of Bristol.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 2	Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located between Keynsham and Bristol in a gap of undeveloped land approximately 1.4km in width at the shortest point, but generally about 1.5-1.8km in width. Stockwood Vale characterises the vast majority of the gap. The gap is therefore considered to be an important one in preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham. While the vale is present, as previously stated, it is not so steep that development would be prevented due to topography. The cell, in combination with cells 49Z and 49A, is therefore considered to make a major contribution to preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 3	Contribution	
<i>The cell predominantly consists of open countryside, including agricultural land and a golf course. It is therefore considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i>		
Contribution to local purpose	Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located between Keynsham and Bristol in a gap of undeveloped land approximately 1.4km in width at the shortest point, but generally about 1.5-1.8km in width. Stockwood Vale characterises the vast majority of the gap. The gap is therefore considered to be an important one in preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham and therefore, the separate identity of the town. While the vale is present, as previously stated, it is not so steep that development would be prevented due to topography. Any development, in combination with cells 49A & Z, would adversely affect the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham.</i>		
Overall contribution	Major contribution	
<i>The cell scored 'major contribution' against purpose 1 & 2 and scored contribution against purpose 3. The overall score is therefore 'major contribution'.</i>		

49Z		Aerial photo with cell boundary 
Contribution to purpose 1	Contribution	
<i>The cell lies adjacent to cell 49Y, which itself is immediately east of Stockwood (Bristol). The cell is located about 0.7km-1km from the built up area of Bristol. The cell also contains the village of Queen Charlton. The cell therefore checks the unrestricted sprawl of Bristol, in combination with cell 49Y and in addition, it prevents Queen Charlton from being absorbed in the built-up area of Bristol, in combination with cell 49Y. It is therefore considered that the cell makes a contribution to preventing the unrestricted sprawl of Bristol.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 2	Major Contribution	
<i>This cell is located between Keynsham and Bristol in a gap of undeveloped land approximately 1.4km in width at the shortest point, but generally about 1.5-1.8km in width. Stockwood Vale characterises the vast majority of the gap. The gap is therefore considered to be an important one in preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham. While the vale is present, as previously stated, it is not so steep that development would be prevented due to topography. The cell, in combination with cells 49Y and 49A, is therefore considered to make a major contribution to preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 3	Contribution	
<i>The cell predominantly consists of open countryside, but also includes the village of Queen Charlton. The vast majority of the cell is undeveloped and it is therefore considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 4	Not assessed	
Contribution to local purpose	Major contribution	
<i>This cell is located between Keynsham and Bristol in a gap of undeveloped land approximately 1.4km in width at the shortest point, but generally about 1.5-1.8km in width. Stockwood Vale characterises the vast majority of the gap. The gap is therefore considered to be an important one in preventing the merger of Bristol and Keynsham and therefore, the separate identity of the town. While the vale is present, as previously stated, it is not so steep that development would be prevented due to topography. Any development, in combination with cells 49A & Y, would adversely affect the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham.</i>		
Overall contribution	Major Contribution	
<i>The cell scored 'major contribution' against purpose 1 & 2 and 'contribution' against purpose 3. The overall score is therefore 'major contribution'.</i>		

52X		<p>Aerial photo with cell boundary</p> 
Contribution to purpose 1	Contribution	
<i>The cell is located south east of Stockwood, part of the built up area of Bristol (although separated from Bristol by cells 52B & C). There are no strong physical features within or adjacent to the cell. Neither the vale nor the woodland located immediately east are considered to be physical features capable of restricting sprawl. The cell is therefore considered to make a contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of Bristol.</i>		
Contribution to purpose 2	Contribution	
<i>The northern part of the cell contributes to the gap between south Bristol & Keynsham</i>		
Contribution to purpose 3	Contribution	
<i>The cell is not adjoined at any point to existing development and consists entirely of agricultural fields with hedgerow. As such can be categorised as countryside character and is considered to make a contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside.</i>		
Contribution to local purpose	Contribution	
<i>The northern part of this cell is located between the built-up area of Stockwood and the western slope of Stockwood Vale. It forms part of the gap between Stockwood and Keynsham. Development in this location would increase the visibility of built development when viewed from Keynsham. Development in the northern part of the cell, in combination with cells 49A, Y & Z, would contribute towards adversely affecting the individual character, identity and setting of Keynsham. The southern part of the cell lies within the gaps between Stockwood, Queen Charlton & Whitchurch village. Development here would contribute to adversely affecting the individual character, setting and identity of both villages.</i>		
Overall contribution	Contribution	
<i>The cell scores 'contribution' against purposes 1, 2 & 3. The overall score is therefore 'contribution'.</i>		

Commentary on the Assessment

Contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt

Purpose 1 (sprawl)

All cells adjoining Bristol were judged as making a MAJOR CONTRIBUTION to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. The detailed assessment in the tables below shows there is little to differentiate the cells in their contribution to this purpose. However, cells 52A, B and 52G include land which separates Whitchurch village from Bristol. This land therefore serves both to restrict the sprawl of Bristol and to prevent Whitchurch village from being subsumed within Bristol. Land within these cells is therefore considered to be more important in terms of purpose 1 than other cells and parts of cells in the Whitchurch Strategic Development Location potential area. Land within cells that could be affected by the potential route of the orbital link were also assessed as making a major contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 2 (merger)

None of the cells within the area identified as potentially suitable as part of the Whitchurch Strategic Development Location were assessed as making any contribution to this purpose in the assessment. Cell 49B was assessed as making a MAJOR CONTRIBUTION to preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another, because it occupies part of an important gap between Bristol and Keynsham. However, the significant difference in the level of contribution to purpose 2 indicates land in this area should be subject to further scrutiny. The adopted methodology requires that cells be defined using identifiable boundaries. This has the result that land either side of a boundary may be scored differently and its contribution to a purpose somewhat artificially divided. If the boundaries are ignored this would result in more gradual changes in the way land contributes to the Green Belt purposes. In the case of cell 52B, if such an approach were adopted, the part of the cell that is closest to cell 49B would make some contribution to purpose 2, and this would reduce further away from cell 49B.

Land within cells that could be affected by the potential route of the orbital link were assessed as making a major contribution to this purpose, given they lie within the narrow gap between Stockwood/Bristol and Keynsham.

Purpose 3 (encroachment)

All the cells were assessed as making a CONTRIBUTION to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The detailed assessment in the tables below also makes little differentiation between the cells in the contribution they make to this purpose, with the exception that some of the cells contain scattered buildings, although this is not considered to affect the overriding countryside character of the cells.

Purposes 4 (to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) and 5 (to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land) were not assessed in detail because they, respectively, were not relevant or made an equal contribution to the purpose.

Impact of development on the Green Belt

For the purposes of this assessment, development is considered to be housing-led development. It is recognised that Whitchurch Strategic Development Location is likely to include some other types of development, such as office development, but the majority of land at the Whitchurch Strategic Development Location is expected to be housing development. Characteristics such as density or height are not differentiated in this assessment. The assessment compares the existing land, which is largely undeveloped land, to housing-led development, and the impact this would have on the Green Belt. Consideration of the impact of such development in this assessment is focussed on the area considered potentially suitable as part of the Whitchurch Strategic Development Location. Further assessment of the impact of either housing-led development in other areas and/or the orbital link will be undertaken at a later stage.

The assessment shows that all the cells make a MAJOR CONTRIBUTION to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. The introduction of development into these cells would therefore have a highly negative impact on the Green Belt in relation to this purpose. Where there is little to differentiate the contribution these cells make to checking unrestricted sprawl, the impact on the Green Belt is also similar. It was noted that the cell containing land separating Whitchurch village from Bristol restricts the sprawl of Bristol and prevents the subsuming of Whitchurch into Bristol. By extension, the impact of development in these gaps is likely to be the most harmful to the Green Belt, in relation to checking unrestricted sprawl.

Regarding the prevention of the merger of neighbouring towns, the only cell that serves this purpose is 49B. Indeed, this cell was assessed as making a MAJOR CONTRIBUTION in this respect, due to its location in an important gap between Bristol and Keynsham. Development in this cell would therefore have a highly negative impact on the Green Belt. Development of the other cells would have no impact on the Green Belt in respect of preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another.

The assessment scored all cells equally in respect of their contribution to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The detailed analysis showed some minor differences in the cells, largely due to the presence of scattered buildings, but this was not considered to have a significant effect on the overall character of the cells or their Green Belt performance in respect of purpose 3. The impact of development is also likely to be fairly uniform across the cells, in respect of this purpose. However, while the impact of development on the Green Belt in respect is considered to be uniform across the cell, it should be noted that the assessment considered the performance of cells against the Green Belt purposes, but did not consider access to the countryside as part of the assessment. While safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and access to the countryside are not one and the same, access to the countryside is something local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance¹. Therefore, cells could be differentiated between those that currently allow existing communities to access the countryside easily, such as those adjacent to the urban edge of Bristol and Whitchurch, and in particular any that contain public rights of way. By extension, the development of such land, is likely to have a more negative impact on the Green Belt.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, 2012, paragraph 81

Conclusion

Development in all cells will have a significant/highly negative impact on Green Belt Purpose 1 (sprawl) and negative impact on Purpose 3 (encroachment). Development in cell 49(B) will have a significantly negative impact on Purpose 2 (merger). As such in those areas considered to be potentially suitable as part of the Whitchurch Strategic Development Location the most significant harm to the Green Belt is likely to be caused by development in cells to the north & west of Whitchurch and adjoining Stockwood.

Next Steps

Alongside developing a preferred option in the new Local Plan for the Whitchurch SDL during 2018, further Green Belt assessment will be undertaken to identify Green Belt harm in relation to the proposed site allocation, identify appropriate Green Belt boundaries and assess any potential for safeguarded land in accordance with the NPPF. Further assessment of harm to the Green Belt of the orbital link from the A4-A37-South Bristol link will also be undertaken.

Appendix 1: Extract from JSP Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment (November 2015)

Map extract from the JSP Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment showing Cells 48 and 49 between Keynsham and Stockwood Vale:

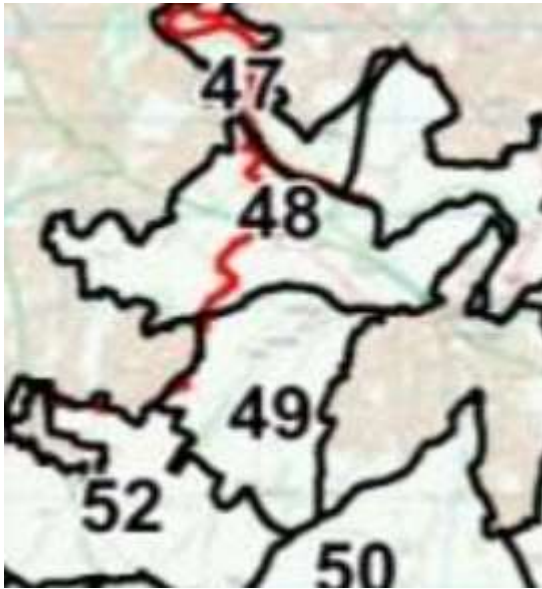


Table extract from the JSP Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment showing the assessment of Cells 48 & 49 from Hicks Gate, and between Keynsham and Stockwood Vale.

Cell No. Name	Purpose					Description and Commentary
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	
48. Hicks Gate/northern Keynsham	✓ Prevents sprawl of Bristol either side of A4	✓ Prevents merger of Bristol & Keynsham.	✓ Safeguards mainly open land from encroachment	- North western part of cell protects setting of Keynsham Conservation Area	✓ Proximity to South Bristol regeneration area	<p>This cell forms a narrow gap of between 1.3 to 2 km between Bristol and Keynsham and to the north of Keynsham a gap of under 1 km to Bristol urban area (Longwell Green) to the north. Cell primarily comprises open land in agricultural/horticultural uses and outdoor recreation uses (particularly to the north of Keynsham). On the edge of Bristol (Brislington) there is a small industrial area, institutions in large grounds and scattered dwellings.</p> <p>Development of a Fire Station at Durley Hill has been granted planning permission and is being implemented.</p> <p>The western part of the cell forms an undeveloped wedge of land between the Brislington and Stockwood areas of Bristol.</p> <p>The cell directly serves Green Belt purposes 1, 2, 3 and 5.</p>

Cell No. Name	Purpose					Description and Commentary
	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	
49. West of Stockwood	✓ Checks sprawl of Bristol	✓ Prevents merger of Bristol & Keynsham Also maintains the separation of village (Queen Charlton)	✓ Safeguards mainly open land from encroachment	- Preserves the setting of Queen Charlton Conservation Area	✓ Proximity to S. Bristol regeneration area	<p>This cell to the west of Stockwood forms a narrow gap of around 1.3km between Bristol (Stockwood) and Keynsham. It contains a limited loose cluster of development around Old Bristol Road/Stockwood Hill, but is principally open and rural in character. Topographically the cell mainly comprises the valleys of two streams that merge towards the northern part of the cell.</p> <p>The cell directly serves four of the five purposes of the Green Belt.</p>

