

Castle Point Borough Council

Castle Point Borough Green Belt Review 2018 – Part 1

FINAL DRAFT

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 South Essex has historically been identified as a national priority for growth and regeneration. In early 2018 the South Essex Authorities, which include Castle Point Borough Council, agreed to establish the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA). It also agreed a “Memorandum of Understanding” setting out their strategic priorities for joint working under the banner “South Essex 2050”. In order to deliver upon strategic priorities, the South Essex authorities have agreed to begin the preparation of a statutory Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), of which one focus is addressing the provision of the amount, type and distribution of housing required to accommodate its growing population.
- 1.2 Castle Point Borough Council is also in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will set the framework for development within the borough over the next 15 years, up to 2033. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2018 states that ‘The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned’.
- 1.3 Early evidence generated in support of the JSP as well as historic SHLAAs for Castle Point have highlighted that there is likely to be limited capacity within the urban areas of the Borough to accommodate the needs of its growing population. This evidence is suggesting that in order for Castle Point to be able to deliver its Objectively Assessed Need for housing, and subject to unmet need not being able to met outside of the borough, it is likely that a measure of development will be required to take place in land which is currently within the Green Belt. Therefore, as part of the New Local Plan process, a review of the borough’s Green Belt was initiated.
- 1.4 This Green Belt Review 2018 will assess the Green Belt across the borough against the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. It adopts an established best practice approach to Green Belt reviews and has evolved from work originally undertaken by Castle Point Borough Council between September 2010 and November 2013. Specifically, it draws on the findings of the following reports:
 - Castle Point Borough Council Green Belt Functions 2010
 - Castle Point Borough Council Green Belt Landscape Assessment 2010
 - Castle Point Green Belt Boundary Review 2013
- 1.5 Whilst drawing on previous conclusions as appropriate, this Green Belt Review 2018 supersedes all previous Green Belt Studies or Green Belt Reviews prepared by the Council, and sets out the revised and transparent methodology through which a robust assessment of the Green Belt was undertaken.
- 1.6 The findings presented in this 2018 Review will inform subsequent work assessing

specific sites within Green Belt parcels. Should emerging evidence conclude that development in the Green Belt is necessary, the conclusions drawn by the second tranche of Green Belt review work will be used in conjunction with the findings of assessments carried out as part of the Castle Point Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and other technical evidence. The basis of these latter assessments will be wider ranging than this Green Belt Review and will focus on the full range of sustainable planning considerations on a site-by-site basis. If found to be required, the combined role of this subsequent work will be to assess the appropriateness and practicality of realigning Green Belt boundaries to accommodate the proportion of housing need which cannot be accommodated on land which is currently outside of the Green Belt, whilst ensuring that any such development promotes a sustainable pattern of growth and results in the determination of new Green Belt boundaries that can endure for the long term.

2 PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE REVIEW

- 2.1 In early 2018 the South Essex Authorities, which include Castle Point Borough Council, agreed to establish the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA). The South Essex authorities have agreed to begin the preparation of a statutory Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), of which one focus is addressing the provision of the amount, type and distribution of housing to accommodate its growing population.
- 2.2 The Council is also in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will set the framework for development within the Borough over the next 15 years, up to 2033. Early evidence generated in support of the JSP as well as Castle Point's own initial evidence suggest that there is limited capacity within the urban areas in the Borough to accommodate the needs of its growing population. Therefore, the Council is required to look beyond the urban boundary and assess whether there is land outside the urban areas that could accommodate all or a proportion of this growth.
- 2.3 The vast majority of land outside of the defined urban areas within Castle Point Borough is designated as Green Belt. The only exception to this is a large area of open land on the south side of Canvey Island between Haven Road and Thorney Bay Caravan Site, serves as a buffer between the industrial installations adjacent to the Thames and the residential area of Canvey. It also contains natural features providing important wildlife habitats. In view of its particular importance, the site is designated as a 'Green Lung' and is protected from development that would adversely affect its open character, wildlife or amenity value by virtue of the saved Policy EC8 of the Castle Point Borough Council Local Plan 1998.
- 2.4 Due to the predominance of Green Belt land and early evidence suggesting that not all housing need could be met in the urban area, as part of the New Local Plan process, a review of the borough's Green Belt was considered prudent. Whilst the core message of the NPPF is to protect Green Belt land, it does allow for changes to the Green Belt boundary to be made through the preparation or review of a Local Plan.
- 2.5 The purpose of this assessment is to enable the Council to understand how the Borough's Green Belt land contributes to the fundamental aim, characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt. These tests are set out in the NPPF at paragraph 134 and Section 5 of this Review sets out how they have been incorporated into the assessment methodology. This Part 1 document will then be used to inform Part 2 of the Green Belt Review. This will assess a number of sites that are located in the Green Belt which have been promoted to the Council for potential housing development. This assessment will address the potential degree of harm that would be manifested on the Green Belt if those sites were allocated for housing development.

- 2.6 However, before any Green Belt sites are to be considered for housing development, the Council must evidence that exceptional circumstances exist to justify any changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt. Should such exceptional circumstances exist, the Council must also demonstrate that it has fully examined all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. Should these reasonable options be exhausted and the exceptional circumstances be proven, the Council will then be required to consider Green Belt release through subsequent work that takes the contents of this Review forward.
- 2.7 These assessments will allow for the emerging Local Plan to promote a sustainable pattern of growth and, if required, result in the determination of new Green Belt boundaries that can endure for the long term.
- 2.8 The remainder of this Review is structured as follows:

Section 3	Set out relevant National and Local Green Belt Policy
Section 4	Details the assessment area and describes Castle Point Borough's key characteristics
Section 5	Describes the methodology used to assess the Green Belt as part of this review.
Section 6	Reports on the findings of the individual parcel assessments
Section 7	Provides an assessment of the Borough's Green Belt in its spatial context. This highlights both the internal linkages within the Borough and external linkages with the Green Belt outside of the administrative area of Castle Point.
Section 8	Provides an overview of the conclusions settlement-by-settlement across the Borough.
Appendix A	Contains the pro-formas for each individual parcel

- 2.9 PLEASE NOTE: This Green Belt Review 2018 is an evidence base document supporting the emerging Castle Point Local Plan. Planning Advisory Service (PAS) advice (Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, 2015) states that “Any review of Green Belt boundaries should involve an assessment of how the land still contributes to the five purposes noted earlier, and take place via the local plan process”. This Review Part 2 therefore is solely concerned with impacts in relation to the Green Belt purposes as defined in Paragraph 134 of the NPPF.
- 2.10 Further PAS Advice offered through their Question and Answer service states that focussing on when the Green Belt meets one or more of the Green Belt Purposes is likely to be a typical approach to a Green Belt Review. The Green Belt Review 2018 therefore considers the Green Belt in isolation of other planning matters or constraints that would impact on the viability of development, such as areas of high flood risk and the setting of historical buildings.
- 2.11 As previously stated, it is not the purpose of the Green Belt Review 2018 to allocate land for development and/or modify the current boundary of the Green Belt. Instead, this Review will inform the preparation of the Local Plan alongside other published evidence, which will have to satisfy the NPPF requirement of demonstrating ‘exceptional circumstances’ and exhausting reasonable options for otherwise meeting its identified need for development.
- 2.12 Therefore, and if required, the findings of this report may subsequently inform further studies to be carried out by Castle Point Borough Council. These will look to combine the impact that allocating those Green Belt sites submitted to the Council for potential housing would have on the Green Belt with other assessments. These other assessments will be drawn from the Castle Point Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and other technical evidence. Combining assessments in this way ensures that any future development in the Green Belt is inherently sustainable. It will allow the general sustainability of the proposed development to be assessed across a full suite of indicators alongside the role the Green Belt is currently playing in the location of the proposed development, and whether the Green Belt can subsequently be re-aligned such that it still performs a local and strategic function which accords with the Green Belt purposes. Such an approach is considered to be in conformity with national policy when the principle of requiring development to take place in the Green Belt has been established.
- 2.13 It is also important to note that the purpose of this 2018 Review is to understand how the Green Belt is currently performing in the Borough relative to its purposes as set out in the NPPF, rather than being an assessment of the impact that the Green Belt designation has had with regard to shaping development in the Borough.

3 NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The NPPF, first published in March 2012 and revised in July 2018, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The purpose of the NPPF is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has three dimensions; an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.
- 3.2 Each Local Planning Authority is required to produce a Local Plan for its area. Paragraph 31 of the NPPF states that 'The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned'. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states (inter-alia) that 'strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing'. All local plans are examined by an independent planning inspector who is appointed by the Secretary of State to determine if the plan is 'sound'. A 'sound' plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

National Green Belt Policy

- 3.3 Section 13 of the *NPPF* sets out the national policy for Green Belt. It states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land open and identifies the essential characteristics of Green Belts as being their openness and permanence. Paragraph 134 sets out the five purposes that the Green Belt is to serve:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.4 Once Green Belt boundaries have been established, they should only be altered in exceptional circumstances which are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. The NPPF doesn't define what these exceptional circumstances are with respect to altering Green Belt boundaries but it does set out what should be considered when defining Green Belt boundaries. These include the need to ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development, and to define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent (NPPF, paragraph 139).

- 3.5 The NPPF further states that 'before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.' These options are given as making as much use as possible of brownfield and underutilised land, optimising the density of development and whether the Council has entered into dialogue with neighbouring authorities with regard to whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development (NPPF, paragraph 137).
- 3.6 As previously stated, this Green Belt Review does not seek to justify development in the Green Belt, realign its boundaries or seek to explore other opportunities for housing development which exist outside of the Green Belt. The role of the Green Belt Review 2018 is to assess the contribution that the Green Belt makes to its stated purposes (Part 1) and assess the degree of harm that would arise in relation to these purposes by removing those sites put forward for housing allocations from the Green Belt (Part 2).

Local Green Belt Policy

- 3.7 The extant Local Plan for the borough of Castle Point is the Castle Point Local Plan 1998. This was saved in its totality until September 2007 where the Plan expired other than for those policies explicitly saved by the Secretary of State by Direction in 2007.
- 3.8 The basis for the Green Belt was originally set out in Policy GB1 of the Local Plan 1998. This policy set the parameters of the Green Belt through reference to the associated Proposals Map. This policy was not saved by the Direction and it subsequently became a point of legal contention as to whether the Green Belt in Castle Point still existed. However, in *Fox Land and Property Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (C1/2014/0394)*, it was found that the expiration of GB1 did not impact on the existence of the Green Belt.
- 3.9 It was argued by the appellant that the Green Belt effectively disappeared when Policy GB1 expired. It was argued that the policy was essential to the status of the Green Belt in the area of the Local Plan as specific reference was made in Policy GB1 to the Green Belt being identified on the Proposals Map, and life was given in that respect to the identification of the Green Belt in the Proposals Map only by Policy GB1. The remaining saved Green Belt policies all assume the existence of the Green Belt but they do not define it or give it life.
- 3.10 This reasoning was found to be erroneous in various respects. Lord Justice Richards in his Court of Appeal Decision March 2005 remarked that it would be very surprising if six saved policies relating to specific aspects of development in the Green Belt (that is Policies GB2 to GB7) were all wholly ineffective and if national policy on Green Belt had nothing to bite on in the area of the Local Plan simply because one policy, Policy GB1, had not been saved and had ceased to

have effect. It was further ruled that Policy GB1 simply referred to ‘the Green Belt identified on the Proposals Map’; it was necessary and appropriate when applying saved policies GB2 – GB7 to also look at the Proposals Map to see what was the area of “the Green Belt” referred to. It was stated that nothing turns on the fact that, unlike Policy GB1, they did not mention the Proposals Map in terms. Recourse to the Proposals Map in order to inform the proper understanding of the policies was inherent in the statutory scheme.

- 3.11 Further, paragraph 2.8 of the supporting text in the Local Plan makes entirely clear that the Green Belt is the area of land identified on the Proposals Map as Green Belt, and as Paragraph 2.8 serves to inform all the Green Belt policies, it remains saved as it applies to those saved policies. It was therefore concluded that there is still a Green Belt for the purposes of the Local Plan, and that its extent is set out in the Proposals Map of the Local Plan 1998.

4 THE ASSESSMENT AREA

Spatial Portrait

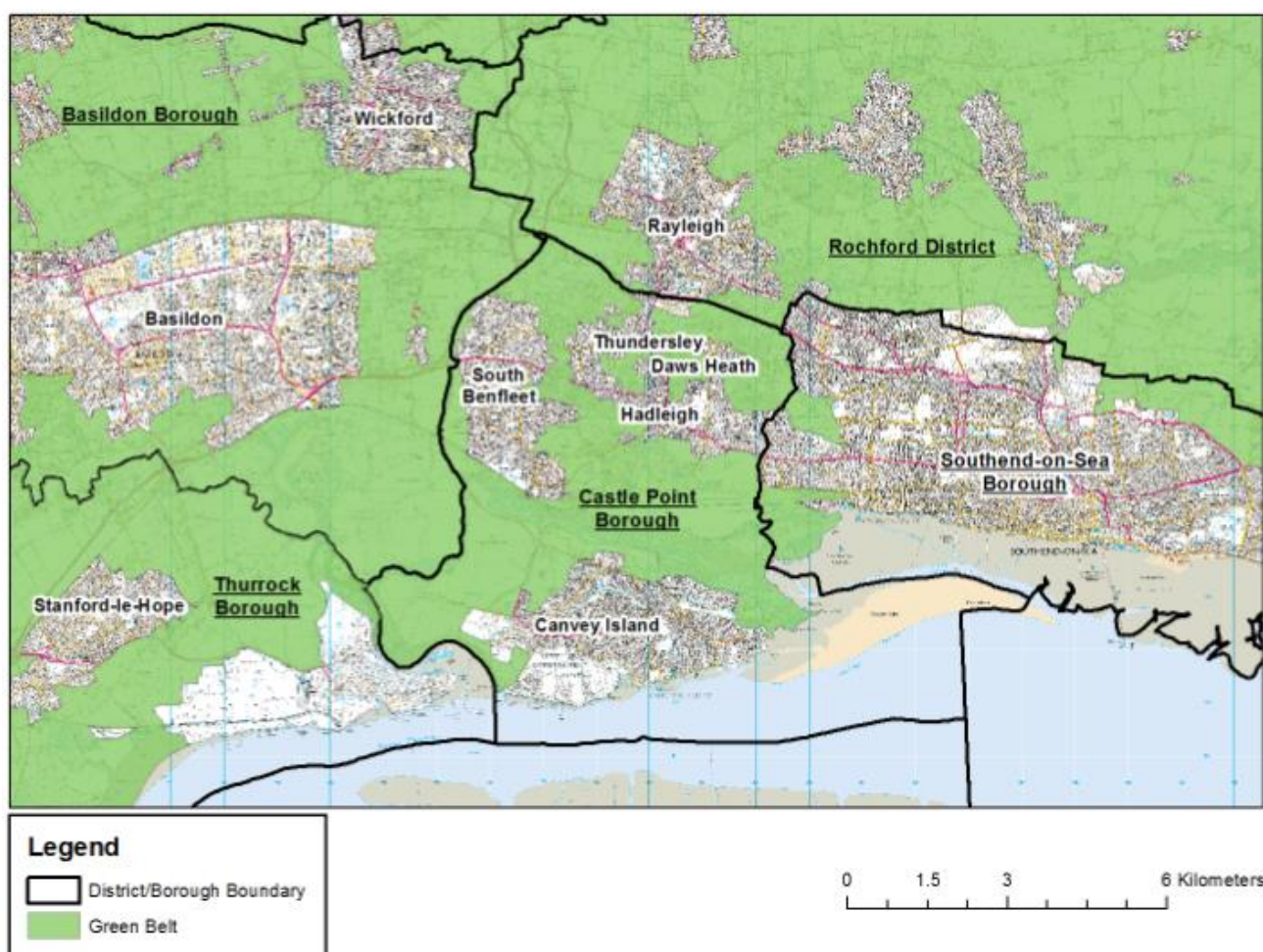
- 4.1 Castle Point is a relatively small local authority area just 45km² in size, with a population of 88,000 people. It sits at the heart of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region on the northern bank of the Thames Estuary between the larger settlements of Basildon and Southend. It is these larger settlements, along with London, on which the borough relies for a great deal of its employment, services and leisure opportunities. The urban areas of Castle Point Borough itself largely comprises of the towns of South Benfleet, Hadleigh, Thundersley and Canvey Island.
- 4.2 Castle Point is well connected with the wider south Essex area, and London, by the highway and railway network. The A13, A127 and A130 pass through Castle Point linking the borough with opportunities in south Essex, London and other locations nearby. The railway service meanwhile is well rated for customer satisfaction and provides fast, direct connections to Basildon, London and Southend, and also connecting services to employment growth locations in Thurrock.
- 4.3 The Thames Estuary is a significant feature in the landscape of Castle Point. It has, and will, continue to play an influential role in the natural environment and scope of development within the borough. It also acts to separate the towns in south Essex with those in north Kent, with data indicating that there is a resultant low level of connectivity between these places despite being relatively close in proximity.

Castle Point Green Belt

- 4.4 The general extent of the Green Belt in Essex was first established in South Essex in the draft Review of the Essex County Development Plan in 1964, which was then approved by the Secretary of State in May 1976 as the Approved Review Development Plan (ARDP). The ARDP was replaced by the Essex County Structure Plan (ECSP) which was updated by a series of reviews before finally being replaced by the Essex and Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan 1996-2011. Policies defining the general extent and outer boundaries of the Green Belt were carried forward from each of these plans to the next. The inner boundary of the Green Belt was to be determined by the Borough Council's as part of the Local Plan process.
- 4.5 Castle Point Borough Council used the Green Belt boundaries established by the ARDP and subsequent County Structure Plans, until the adoption of the Castle Point Local Plan in 1998, when the inner boundary was defined on the Proposals Map. As part of the preparation of the Local Plan 1998, the Council undertook a comprehensive review of the Green Belt boundaries, and they have remained unchanged since then.

- 4.6 The current extent of the Green Belt in Castle Point is 2,750 hectares, which represents approximately 60% of the borough's area. It is tightly drawn around the existing urban area, incorporating most of the undeveloped land within the borough.
- 4.7 The eastern extent of the Green Belt is demarked by the eastern administrative boundary with Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. It is important to identify through the Green Belt assessments that potential Green Belt development could affect Green Belt in an adjacent authority. For example, the eastern extent of the Green Belt in Castle Point is adjacent with Belfairs Park in Southend. This link is important for creating a strategic separation between development in the two settlements, and for providing wildlife corridors which enable the movement of animal and plant species across authority boundaries in order to promote biodiversity at a strategic scale.
- 4.8 The northern and western boundaries of the Green Belt are bound by major transport corridors, the A127, (Southend Arterial Route) to the north and the A130, (Canvey Way and Sadler's Farm Roundabout) to the west. These routes cut through the Green Belt.
- 4.9 The southern area of the Green Belt in Castle Point borders the urban settlement of Canvey Island, and its extent is delineated by the Thames Estuary. This area of Green Belt has a varied topography consisting of marshland, a steep escarpment and some woodland features. This has resulted in a variety of habitats, some of which are of national or European significance.
- 4.10 The following figure depicts the extent of the Green Belt in Castle Point, which amounts to the study area for this report, in the context of the wider extent of the Green Belt in this part of South Essex.

Figure 1: The Green Belt within South Essex



- 4.11 The Green Belt in Castle Point is part of a wider network of Green Belt extending across south Essex. This extended network of Green Belt has been largely effective in maintaining the separation between the towns in south Essex and within Castle Point by ensuring that the open land between towns has remained undeveloped.
- 4.12 As previously stated, the Council has not sought to amend the extent of the Green Belt since 1998. Since the adoption of the Local Plan in that year, the Council has largely been successful in protecting the Green Belt from inappropriate development. However, there is now a need to develop a new Local Plan to accommodate the growth forecasted to take place in the borough over the next 15 years, and emerging evidence suggests that there is a need to re-assess the extent of Green Belt in Castle Point to ensure that it is fit for purpose, and to establish how sustainable development can be best supported.
- 4.13 This Review assesses the Green Belt in Castle Point against the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The following section details the methodology used to assess the Green Belt.

5 METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING THE GREEN BELT IN CASTLE POINT BOROUGH

Introduction

- 5.1 For this Green Belt assessment to be comprehensive and robust, a systematic, transparent and logical methodology has been followed in its production. There is no set way to carry out a Green Belt assessment but it is considered that the following methodology reflects best practice. This section sets out the four stage methodology that will be employed in the assessment of the Green Belt in the Borough. Its comprehensive detailing is offered for transparency and to highlight that the methodology has been applied consistently across the entirety of the Green Belt.

Table 1: Castle Point Green Belt Assessment Methodology

Stage 1	The identification of individual Green Belt Parcels.
Stage 2	Identifying the contribution each Green Belt parcel makes to the Green Belt Purposes as defined by NPPF Paragraph 134.
Stage 3	Identifying the contribution the Green Belt parcels makes to the combined purpose of the Green Belt.
Stage 4	Assessing the Green Belt in a strategic context.

- 5.2 Each stage is discussed below

Stage 1 - The Identification of Individual Green Belt Parcels

- 5.3 In order to allow for a meaningful comparison between different parts of the Green Belt throughout the borough, it was necessary to split the full extent of the Green Belt into separate parcels which could each be subjected to the methodology separately.
- 5.4 The NPPF makes it clear that Green Belt boundaries should be robust and permanent (Paragraph 139). The Council therefore used the following features in the Borough to divide the Green Belt into separate assessment areas:
- Rivers/ Waterways;
 - Railways; and
 - Roads

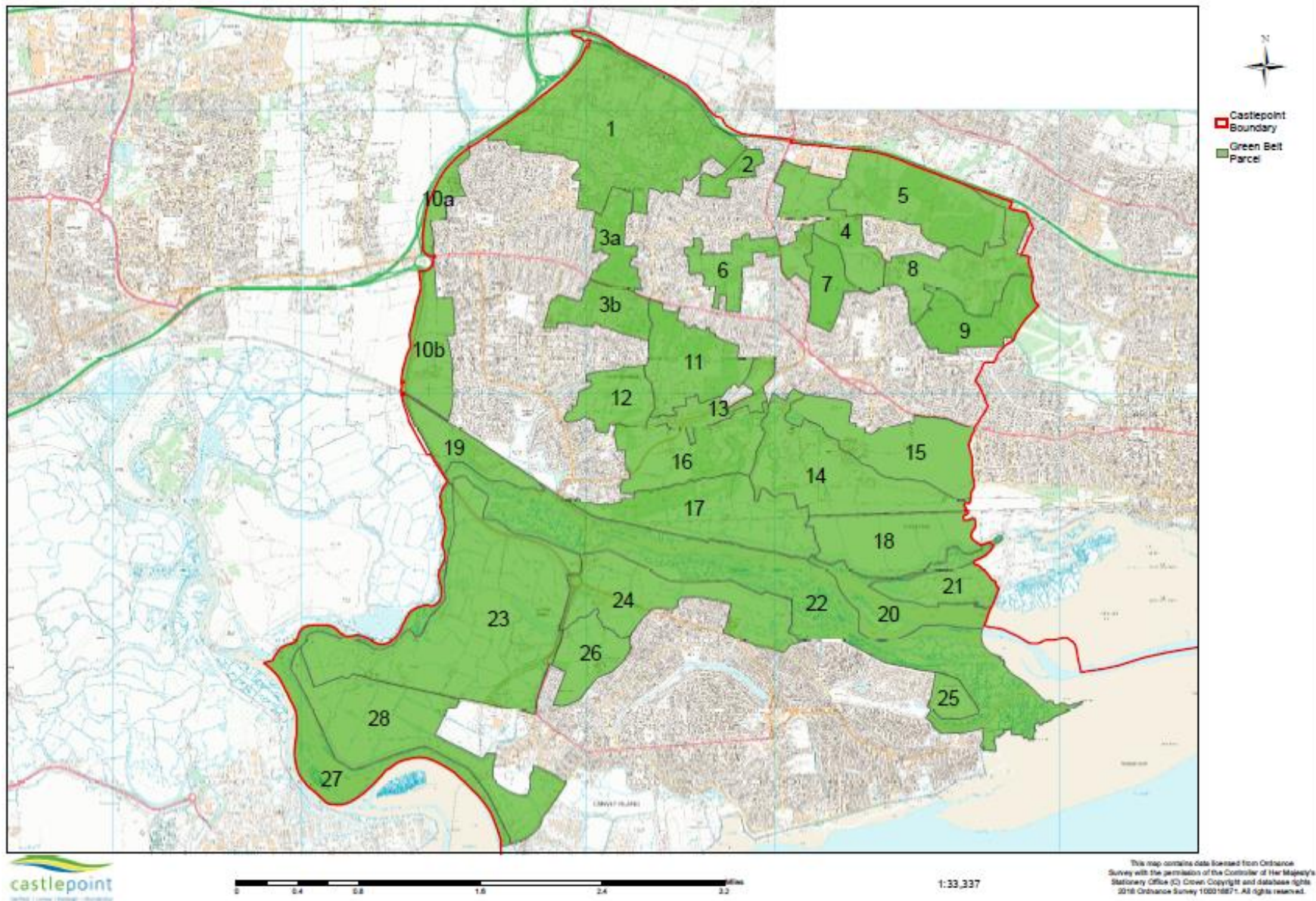
- 5.5 Following this initial sweep, further divisions were made on the basis of features that might be less permanent in nature, such as other water features, belts of trees, marshland, coastal areas and woodland.
- 5.6 Much of the Green Belt in the borough, and particularly in the south, lacks features which could act as strong defensible boundaries upon which to define parcels so recourse often had to be made to features or aspects which are less clearly defined within standard mapping. Changes in land designation and land use were often used to determine the parcels but nonetheless, it is considered that the method employed to define the area boundaries represents a consistent and logical approach.
- 5.7 It is recognised that the process of creating parcels could be managed in alternative ways but it is considered that the approach taken was appropriate and produced a sufficient number of individual parcels to make a comparison meaningful. The rationale behind the demarcation of each parcel can be found on the individual pro-formas that comprise Appendix One
- 5.8 Through the parcelling exercise it was apparent that there are a variety of landscapes and area types within the borough which manifests in the formulation of the Green Belt parcels. Those parcels within the north of the borough tend to be smaller and clustered, whereas the southern Green Belt parcels are of larger areas of similar character and topography.
- 5.9 The identification of these parcels originally took place as a desk based exercise carried out as part of the Castle Point Borough Council Green Belt Functions 2010 study. The study area was based on the extent of the Green Belt as shown on the Proposals Map accompanying the 1998 Local Plan. Following a re-examination of the parcels originally selected as part of this review, it was considered that two of the parcels could be split further. These parcels have been suffixed with –a and –b as appropriate to allow for the retention of the same numbering system between studies. The boundary of a further parcel was also slightly realigned. The realignments carried out subsequent to the parcelling exercise carried out to inform the 2010 study are as below:
- Parcel 3 has been split into Parcel 3-a and Parcel 3-b. The basis of the split was the A13 which forms a clear robust boundary running east-west through the original parcel. This split therefore creates Parcel 3-a north of the A13 and Parcel 3-b to the south of the A13. The new boundary splitting the parcels is considered to show a clear demarcation in land uses.
 - Parcel 10 has been split into Parcel 10-a and Parcel 10b. The split has again been made along the A13, to create a new Parcel 10-a north of Sadlers Farm Roundabout and Parcel 10-b to the south. It was considered that the roundabout acted as a ‘pinch point’ between the two parcels, with

the A13 providing a strong and robust boundary upon which to make the new division. It is however recognised that this split has not resulted in parcels of a particularly different character.

- The boundary between Parcel 8 and Parcel 9 was realigned such that it more closely matches the outline of the Ancient Woodland which was the original basis for the parcelling exercise.

5.10 This exercise resulted in the 28 parcels created for the Castle Point Borough Council Green Belt Functions 2010 report increasing to 30. The figure below highlights the individual parcels that were created as part of the 2010 stratification exercise and subsequently refined as detailed above. The entirety of the Green Belt has been included in this parcelling exercise irrespective of the presence of constraints to development such as the presence of SSSIs or areas of high flood risk. This is consistent with Planning Advisory Service Guidance (PAS) on the Green Belt (Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt, 2015) which states that the whole of the Green Belt should be assessed, and this approach is also in line with best practice

Figure 2: Map showing Individual Green Belt Parcels in the Borough



- 5.11 Consideration was also given to how the Green Belt extended outside of the borough's administrative boundaries. However, in recognition of the fact that the Castle Point Local Plan will only apply to land within the administrative area of Castle Point, the parcels themselves were not extended into adjacent authorities. Nonetheless, as part of their assessment, each parcel will be considered in their context. This includes whether each parcel has a functional relationship with the Green Belt outside of the Borough, and the importance of that functional relationship will also be considered at the strategic level.
- 5.12 Whilst it is recognised that potentially all areas could be further divided into smaller and smaller parcels, for the purposes of this strategic exercise, further divisions beyond those detailed above were not considered appropriate. This was primarily due to the absence of strong, defensible borders as noted above. It is recognised that there may still be specific differences between localised portions of a single Green Belt parcel but careful consideration will be given as to whether there is a dominant characteristic which is representative of the Green Belt parcel as a whole, or where within any individual parcel there are different characteristics which impact on the assessed contribution of the parcel as a single identity. Any such localised difference can be cited and investigated further at the site level should that parcel become subject to any future work which explores the principle of allocating the parcel, or any portion of that parcel, for future development. This is discussed in more detail in Paragraph 5.16

Stage 2 - Identifying the contribution each Green Belt parcel makes to the individual purposes of the Green Belt

- 5.13 As previously stated, there is no set way to carry out a Green Belt Review but best practice is that an assessment of the Green Belt should be on the basis of the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in NPPF paragraph 134. These purposes are set out below;
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - To prevent the neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 5.14 Again, noting that there is no set methodology for conducting a Green Belt Review, and in the interests of transparency, there is merit in setting out how each parcel will be assessed under each of the Green Belt purposes and then defining what will be considered under each purpose.

Assessment System to be employed for each Parcel under each Purpose

- 5.15 The following table sets out the assessment system that will be used to assess

each parcel's contribution to a Green Belt purpose. Whilst there is evidently a hierarchy as required in any assessment system, the following table does not apply any numerical value to the assessment. With regards to the application of the hierarchy, the scale of development that could be accommodated within the parcel would, broadly speaking, be inversely proportional to the increase in the degree of contribution in the matrix below. Essentially, the greater the degree to which the Green Belt parcel contributes to the Green Belt purpose, the less development it could accommodate without reducing its contribution to that purpose.

Table 2: Green Belt Assessment System

Assessed Contribution to Green Belt Purpose	Implication
Not Relevant	The parcel is not relevant to the assessed purpose.
None	The parcel makes no contribution to this Green Belt purpose and as such development would not impact on the assessed contribution to this purpose.
Minor	The parcel makes a limited contribution to this Green Belt purpose and as such development would not significantly impact on the assessed contribution to this purpose.
Moderate	The parcel makes some contribution to this Green Belt purpose and as such development would impact on the assessed contribution to this purpose.
Strong	The parcel makes a clear contribution to this Green Belt purpose and as such development would significantly impact on the assessed contribution to this purpose
Very Strong	The parcel makes a full contribution to this Green Belt purpose. Any new development may be the first example of conflict with the Green Belt purpose or add to the relative absence of such development in the context of the parcel as a whole.

- 5.16 Individual parcels may show a variation in land use across their full extent. This may be because there was no obvious boundary feature by which to sub-divide that parcel into parcels of a more uniform character. Each parcel assessment in this Review will state whether the given assessment applies in whole or is more reflective of the majority of the Green Belt parcel being assessed. In this latter instance, further consideration may be required to determine a more localised context at the site level should that parcel be identified for closer assessment in future work.
- 5.17 Further, it is recognised that due to the nature of the assessment, the assessment system is unavoidably qualitative in nature and each assessment can only be made through planning judgements. For the purposes of clarity, following the description of each Green Belt purpose below, the parcel characteristics which will determine the assessment under that purpose are set out. Not all criteria will need to apply for a parcel to receive a particular assessment, but the degree of contribution that is assessed as best matching the parcel being assessed will be applied.
- 5.18 The above gradational scheme has been developed to recognise that a parcel may still provide a strong Green Belt function even though it contains an element of inappropriate development. This is not to suggest that further development, even that which is minor, is necessarily appropriate within the Green Belt, nor does it suggest that minor inappropriate development does not have an impact on the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 5.19 It is important to note that parcels are assessed on the basis of how they are performing under the Green Belt purposes at the point of their assessment rather than how they have performed since the point of their designation as Green Belt. As such, each assessment is a reflection of the current nature of the Green Belt parcel rather than being an assessment of the effectiveness of the Green Belt designation. For example, a parcel may already have been partially encroached prior to its designation as Green Belt, and its designation as such has acted to halt any further development. Under this assessment however, this parcel would be assessed with regard to the level of encroachment within it rather than the degree of encroachment that has taken place following the Green Belt designation. As such, an assessment of a 'moderate' contribution should not be taken as being of intrinsically less value than a parcel which is providing a 'strong' contribution as it may be considered to be of strategic importance to limit any further development in a parcel which has already been partially developed at any given point in time. In this sense, the Green Belt designation may be performing a critical role with regard to the purpose of limiting future development which would impact on the strategic function of the Green Belt. Such considerations will inform future work which takes these conclusions forward
- 5.20 It is also important to note that the assessed performance of each Green Belt

parcel is relative to the current context and could be subject to change should any modifications be made to the Green Belt as a result of future site allocations or deallocations. For example, the relative contribution that a single parcel makes to maintaining a strategic gap between two different urban centres could increase should another parcel which is also part of that strategic gap be allocated for development.

- 5.21 To clarify, the purpose of this Review is to understand how the Green Belt is currently performing in the Borough relative to those purposes stated in the NPPF rather than to assess the impact that the Green Belt designation has had against those purposes since its inception. The findings of this review do not provide the basis for the removal of a parcel of land from the Green Belt. A relatively lower scoring parcel under the Green Belt purposes does not provide the basis for de-allocation. The parcel may still be performing important strategic functions and importantly, site allocations should be directed to the most sustainable locations, of which the impact on the Green Belt is but one sustainability consideration, albeit an important one.
- 5.22 The findings of Part 1 and Part 2 of this Review will only be required to be taken forward if emerging evidence concludes that there is the requirement for housing development to take place in the Green Belt. At such a point, the conclusions of this Review will be assessed in conjunction with the findings of the Housing Land Availability Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and other relevant technical evidence to ensure that when redefining Green Belt boundaries, there is consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development.
- 5.23 It should also be noted that the NPPF does not seek to apply any weighting to the Green Belt purposes set out in paragraph 134. As such this Review treats each purpose equally under the assessment process.

Green Belt Purpose 1 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 5.24 A well-recognised function of the Green Belt is to limit the sprawl of urban development into the countryside. Urban sprawl is typically considered to be development that is unplanned, with the PAS Green Belt Guidance asking the important question of whether 'development that is planned positively through a local plan, and well designed with good masterplanning' should be considered to be sprawl. Whether a parcel contains sprawl is therefore not so much an issue of whether it contains development but whether that development is a natural fit in the landscape and forms any logical pattern. The degree of permeability between the built-up area and the countryside is also an important consideration.
- 5.25 It is noted that the purpose relates itself only to 'large built-up areas'. It was previously stated that Castle Point do not have an adopted settlement hierarchy as its urban area is primarily comprised of the four large towns of Thundersley, South

Benfleet, Hadleigh and Canvey Island. As such the definition of 'large built-up areas' is defined in the first instance as applying to these four towns within the Borough. Green Belt will also be positively assessed under this purpose if preventing urban sprawl into the Borough from large built-up areas in adjoining administrative areas.

- 5.26 Daws Heath represents the remaining prominent isolated settlement within the Borough. There is a clear albeit relatively small gap between Daws Heath and the larger urban settlements in proximity to it, and these gaps are entirely comprised of Green Belt land.
- 5.27 With Daws Heath being the only distinctly urban settled area outside of the four main towns in the borough, it is considered appropriate to consider Daws Heath alongside the four main towns as being relevant to this Green Belt purpose. This is further considered to be a justified approach as whilst Daws Heath is not in the Green Belt, it is entirely circled by Green Belt such that there is a clearly defined boundary between the settlement and the Green Belt. Daws Heath has also long been recognised as a settlement in its own right within Essex, and features in the prominent historical work 'The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex by Philip Morant, 1763 – 1768'. It is further noted that a Green Belt Review should take local context into account, and therefore it is considered that Daws Heath represents a 'large built up area' in the context of the administrative area.
- 5.28 It is important to note the difference between urban sprawl and encroachment which is addressed under Green Belt Purpose 3. For development to constitute urban sprawl for the purposes of this Review, it must be linked to one of the defined built-up areas. Development not linked to these areas is defined as encroaching development and this is assessed under Purpose 3.
- 5.29 As such, by virtue of the definition, it will be the Green Belt land that directly adjoins the urban boundary of the five built-up areas that will be relevant to this purpose. As such, it was considered appropriate to introduce the assessment tier of 'not relevant' under this Green Belt purpose. Its absence would act to conflate those Green Belt parcels that were not contributing to this purpose by virtue of completely failing to contain urban sprawl with those that were not contributing to this purpose by virtue of not being in proximity to a defined urban area through which development could sprawl, such that the purpose was 'not relevant'. In order to recognise this intrinsic difference, a new assessment tier was introduced to recognise those areas that were 'not relevant' to this Green Belt purpose.
- 5.30 The extent to which the curtilages of residential properties found within a Green Belt parcel amount to urban sprawl (and encroachment) into the countryside has also been considered. Whilst not built development themselves, they are strongly related to built development, can include built development and / or otherwise act to remove land from open countryside. These impacts are still recognised but in

some cases within the borough, the Green Belt has purposely been defined to include residential curtilages as this acts to limit what has been termed ‘garden grabbing’, where large gardens can be partitioned and then sold for housing. Such an action both increases residential density and reduces green field land, which detrimentally affects the character of the Green Belt. In light of this, it is considered perverse to lower the assessment of a Green Belt parcel where it includes residential curtilages when their very inclusion limits urban sprawl and protects green space. However, where residential curtilages comprise a significant majority of a Green Belt parcel such that the area can no longer be deemed countryside, this is recognised through the assessment scoring.

5.31 The following assessment system was applied to Purpose 1

Table 3: Assessment Criteria under Purpose 1

Degree of Conformity with Purpose	Indicative Parcel Characteristics
Not relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is not contributing to this purpose by virtue of not being adjacent to a defined urban area through which development could sprawl.
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is developed to the point that it already functions as an extension to the built-up urban area. • Strategic development could be accommodated without impacting on the purpose.
Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is closely related to an adjacent urban area such that there is no significant break between the built-up urban area and the parcel. • There is a high degree of permeability between the built-up urban area and the parcel.
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel contains some development linked to an adjoining built-up urban area or sprawl from a built-up urban area. • Parts of the parcel lack a strongly

	defined edge between the built-up area and the parcel or there is an alternative feature that provides a strong barrier to development
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land is adjacent to a built-up urban area, or sprawl from a built-up urban area, and contains limited development. • There are no alternative features that would provide a strong barrier to development • Future development in this parcel would display the characteristics of sprawl as it would be poorly related to the existing built form.
Very Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is adjacent to a built-up urban area, or sprawl from a built up urban area, and contains isolated or no development emanating from the adjacent area. • There are no alternative features that would provide a strong barrier to development. • Development would conflict with the purpose.

Green Belt Purpose 2 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 5.32 This purpose is defined in the NPPF as applying to towns only. It has previously been noted that Castle Point Borough do not operate a Settlement Hierarchy as the urban area is primarily comprised of Benfleet, Hadleigh, Thundersley and Canvey Island, and these are therefore all considered to fall under the definition of ‘towns’ for the purpose of this review.
- 5.33 Whilst noting the application of this Green Belt purpose to towns only, PAS Guidance states that ‘*Green Belt is frequently said to maintain the separation of small settlements near to towns*’. The function of this Green Belt purpose is to ensure that urban areas retain separation and are distinctive, potentially with their own unique character and sense of community. Daws Heath in the north east of the borough closely fits this definition of a ‘small settlement near to towns’. As previously stated, there is a clear albeit relatively small gap between Daws Heath and the larger urban settlements in proximity to it, and these gaps are entirely comprised of Green Belt land.

- 5.34 As highlighted above, there is no set methodology for a Green Belt Review, and it is noted that different authorities take different approaches when it comes to defining what constitutes a 'neighbouring town' for assessment under this Green Belt purpose. In each case, the approach is determined by local circumstances and may include settlement hierarchies, population or other criteria considered appropriate in the local context. Therefore, for the reasons previously noted in this methodology section, Daws Heath is considered to be a distinct 'neighbouring town' for the purposes of this study.
- 5.35 This assessment will in the first instance describe the existing gap between any towns and then compare this to the gap that would remain if development of the parcel were to take place. It is however important to note that the notion of preventing neighbouring towns from merging is more one of perception as it is of distance between the two towns. The PAS Green Belt Guidance states that '*a 'scale rule' approach should be avoided. The identity of a settlement is not determined just by the distance to another settlement; the character of the place and of the land in between must be taken into account. Landscape character assessment is a useful analytical tool for use in undertaking this type of assessment.*' As such, this assessment also draws on the Green Belt Landscape Assessment for Castle Point Borough Council, 2010.
- 5.36 Green Belt land that is open in nature with a flat topography and little to no vegetation will have far longer lines of sight than, for example, land which is wooded. There may also be hard barriers to merging such as intervening major infrastructure or waterways. Examples of such barriers in Castle Point which have the potential to impact on this Purpose include the creek to the north of Canvey Island and the A130. Green Belt parcels which are open and contain no obvious barriers to line of sight will be assessed as making a stronger contribution to this purpose as it is the Green Belt designation itself which is preventing urban coalescence by inhibiting development rather than any features which exist within the Green Belt parcel which would otherwise inhibit coalescence or block inter-visibility.
- 5.37 The contribution a parcel makes to this Purpose will be assessed as lower in those areas where relevant land within a strategic gap contains another robust feature that would act to inhibit urban coalescence such as major infrastructure or a significant natural feature which would provide a clear demarcation between two urban settlements even if development was to take place up to their edge.
- 5.38 This Review therefore avoids a 'scale rule' approach. However, at the strategic level distance is clearly a factor when considering whether development will result in neighbouring towns merging into one another and as such, the proportion of the strategic gap between two settlements made up by the parcel being assessed is considered through the assessment criteria. However, the assessment criteria themselves will not be based on any particular distance thresholds as the

topography and landscape features within the total gap are also important factors.

5.39 It was considered apt to also introduce the assessment tier of ‘not relevant’ to this purpose. This allows a distinction to be made between those parcels which are not conforming to this purpose by virtue of containing a level of development such that the parcel operates as an extension to the urban area rather than a gap, with those parcels which are ‘not relevant’ as they are encircled by the same urban area or do not fall into a strategic gap between two defined neighbouring towns.

5.40 The following assessment system was applied to Purpose 2.

Table 4: Assessment Criteria under Purpose 2

Degree of Conformity with Purpose	Indicative Parcel Characteristics
Not Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green Belt parcel is not considered to fall within a strategic gap between two neighbouring towns. • The parcel is encircled by the same urban area.
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel operates as an extension to an adjacent built up area such that it does not perform as a rural break.
Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is between two neighbouring towns but forms a small part of that total gap. • Other parcels forming part of the strategic gap between neighbouring towns may contain strong boundaries and/or features which prevent inter-visibility between these towns. • Well planned development may be accommodated within this parcel due to existing development patterns. • The width of Green Belt between two neighbouring towns is already significantly narrower at other locations

Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is between two neighbouring towns and forms an important part of that gap. • Other parcels forming part of the strategic gap between neighbouring towns may contain strong boundaries and/or features which prevent inter-visibility between these towns.
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is between two neighbouring towns and forms an important part of that gap. • Boundaries or features which prevent inter-visibility between two urban settlements are weak or non-existent in other parcels which form part of the strategic gap.
Very Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel forms the entirety of the strategic gap between two neighbouring towns • Development would lead to urban coalescence or a very strong perception of merging.

Green Belt Purpose 3 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 5.41 For the purposes of this assessment, 'countryside' is defined as land free of development other than for those types of development which are not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as set out in NPPF paragraph 145. These are also referred to in this assessment as uses which are characteristic of the countryside.
- 5.42 'Encroachment' is defined as being where inappropriate development has taken place within the countryside, with the degree of encroachment being the most important basis upon which the contribution each parcel makes to the Green Belt purpose is assessed.
- 5.43 There is a significant variance in the size of the Green Belt parcels that have been defined for assessment. Some parcels are of such a size that their contribution to this purpose can be meaningfully assessed by assessing the parcel itself. Others are relatively smaller and are therefore more significantly influenced by the nature of their peripheries. For these parcels, the connection that the parcel has to the wider countryside is also an important consideration when assessing whether the

parcel itself is contributing to the safeguarding of countryside from encroachment. If the parcel itself is well connected to the countryside, it will be assessed as making a stronger contribution to this Purpose than those which may be largely surrounded by built development to the extent that this impacts on the perception that the parcel is itself part of the wider countryside system.

5.44 This purpose is therefore based on a planning judgement with regard to the amount of development within a parcel, whether the parcel is of such a size that the parcel as a whole is not significantly influenced by its surroundings and, if not, whether the surrounding land uses impact on the perception that the parcel is perceived as countryside. Again, the nature of the land use within the parcel will be important. Densely wooded areas are considered to be ‘open countryside’ as they are free from built development, and the role of the woodland from impeding lines of sight may aid the perception that one is in ‘open countryside’, should inappropriate development be screened from view.

5.45 It is important to note that any aspect of ‘quality’ in terms of the landscape or countryside is not part of this Green Belt Review as it is not featured in any of the purposes. It is instead the degree to which the parcel represents ‘countryside’ or whether it is more defined by landuses contained within it which are not considered to be appropriate in the Green Belt, which is the key to this assessment.

Table 5: Assessment Criteria under Purpose 3

Degree of Conformity with Purpose	Indicative Parcel Characteristics
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is developed to the point that it already functions as an extension to the built-up area. • The parcel forms a very small piece of land which, while it may be undeveloped, is surrounded by development uncharacteristic of the countryside such that it is not perceived as countryside.
Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is semi-urban in appearance. • There is a poor urban / rural boundary and / or the parcel contains significant development inappropriate for the Green Belt such as residential and commercial development. • The parcel is strongly influenced

	<p>by periphery development which takes the form of land uses not characteristic of the countryside.</p>
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is of a semi-rural character and there is a clear perception of encroachment. • There may be other constraining features that are acting to limit encroachment. • The parcel is influenced by periphery development that has some impact on the perception that the parcel is part of the wider countryside.
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel is predominantly rural in character with a general absence of development not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt. • Any development considered inappropriate in a Green Belt location is sporadic in nature and does not define the parcel. • Any periphery development influencing the parcel is generally characteristic of the countryside or not sufficient to significantly outweigh the perception of countryside.
Very Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parcel represents open countryside and is almost entirely free of development considered inappropriate in a Green Belt location when considered as a whole. • Any periphery development influencing the parcel is characteristic of the countryside or not sufficient to outweigh the perception of countryside.

Green Belt Purpose 4 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 5.46 As noted in the PAS Guidance, 'This purpose is generally accepted as relating to very few settlements in practice. In most towns there already are more recent developments between the historic core, and the countryside between the edge of the town.'
- 5.47 There are no towns in the borough which are considered to be historic in nature for the purposes of the application of this Green Belt Purpose. It is held that this purpose applies to a limited number of areas such as Oxford where the Green Belt specifically contributes to its historic significance. As such, this Purpose did not form part of this Review.

Green Belt Purpose 5 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- 5.48 As stated in the PAS Guidance, 'If Green Belt achieves this purpose, then all Green Belt does so to the same extent and hence the value of various land parcels is unlikely to be distinguished by the application of this purpose.' As such this purpose is excluded from this review as each parcel would receive the same assessment.

Presentation of Findings

- 5.49 Each parcel will first be assessed independently on the basis of Stage 2 above. Individual pro-formas for each assessed parcel can be found in Appendix One. Results from Stage 2 will also be collated on a Green Belt purpose-by-purpose basis, such that the results of all parcels are displayed on a map for each Green Belt purpose. This can be found in Paragraph 6.5 onwards.

Stage 3 – Identifying the contribution each Green Belt parcel makes to the combined purpose of the Green Belt

- 5.50 The cumulative assessment presented from Paragraph 6.5 onwards will bring together the results for each parcel under each Green Belt purpose into a single map. The NPPF does not seek to apply any weighting to the Green Belt purposes and as such this Review treats each purpose equally under the combined assessment process.
- 5.51 The purpose of the combined assessment will be to identify the importance of all Green Belt parcels against at least one Green Belt purpose. Each parcel will be depicted by virtue of its greatest contribution across all purposes. This allows conclusions to be drawn based on how each parcel performs under the purpose or purposes it most contributes to, irrespective of what that purpose is, and whether indeed it is contributing to at least one Green Belt purpose and therefore performing as Green Belt is intended.

5.52 This is considered to be a more appropriate approach than trying to amalgamate assessment outcomes across purposes. Amalgamating disparate Green Belt purposes is not considered to be an appropriate way to assess the importance of any single parcel of Green Belt. The results produced could be misleading because, whilst a Green Belt parcel could be absolutely crucial in performing one of the Green Belt purposes, it may not have a significant role in others. A purpose may not even be relevant, but the overall assessment of an individual parcel would be lowered in light of the fact that it is only strongly performing under a single purpose. That purpose could however be of fundamental importance to the Green Belt.

Stage 4 – Assessing the Green Belt in a strategic context

5.53 As well as understanding how the Green Belt performs within Castle Point Borough at a more local level, it is also important to understand whether the Green Belt has any strategic linkages to other Green Belt areas both internally and outside of the Borough. These linkages were taken into account on an adjacent basis when analysing the individual Green Belt parcels but Stage 4 brings these together in order to form a better understanding of the function of the Green Belt in a wider context. This is presented in Section 7

Final Note

5.54 It is important to reiterate that the conclusions drawn by this study do not act to remove any areas of land from the Green Belt. Instead the conclusions provide an understanding of how each individual Green Belt area contributes to the wider Green Belt within the Borough at the point of assessment.

6 THE FINDINGS OF THE GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT 2018

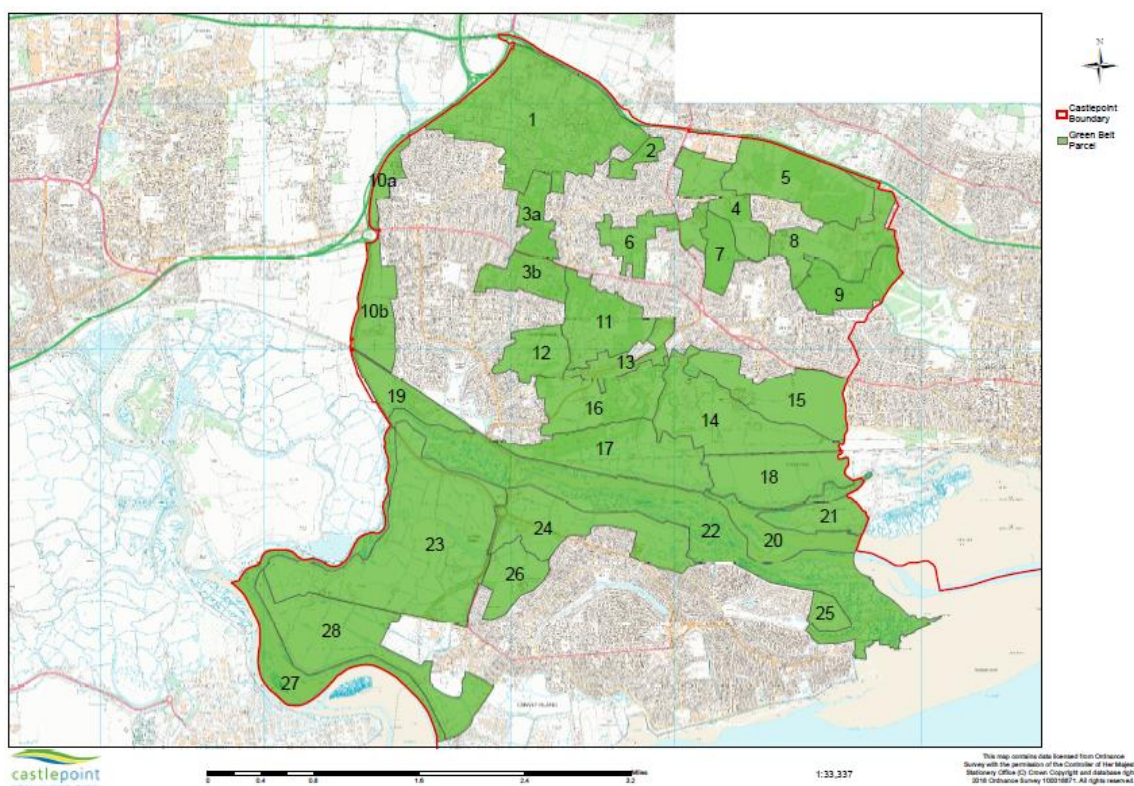
6.1 This section provides a summary of the main findings for Stages 1 – 3, with Stage 4 being presented in Section 7.

Stage 1 - The identification of individual Green Belt Parcels

6.2 Stage 1 identified individual parcels within the total extent of the Green Belt in the borough to allow their assessment on the basis of a transparent methodology. The means by which parcels were derived is described in general terms from Paragraph 5.3 in this report, whilst the justification for the basis for the identification of each parcel can be found within the individual pro-formas in Appendix One.

6.3 As previously mentioned, the extent of the Green Belt was based on the Policies Map which accompanies the adopted Castle Point Local Plan 1998. Initial work supporting the Castle Point Borough Council Green Belt Functions 2010 report identified 28 individual parcels for assessment. As part of this review, it was considered appropriate to sub-divide two of these parcels and re-align the boundary between two other parcels. This is described in Paragraph 5.9. Figure 2 of this report displayed the results of this parcelling exercise and is repeated here as Figure 3 for convenience:

Figure 3: Map showing Individual Green Belt Parcels in the Borough



Stage 2 - Identifying the contribution each Green Belt parcel makes to the three

assessed purposes of the Green Belt

6.4 The full Stage 2 assessment, as described from Paragraph 5.13 and applied to each of the 30 parcels, is set out on a parcel-by-parcel basis in Appendix One. The summarised results of this exercise are presented in Table 6 below and are described on a purpose-by-purpose basis under Stage 3.

Table 6: Headline Results of the Green Belt Parcel Assessment

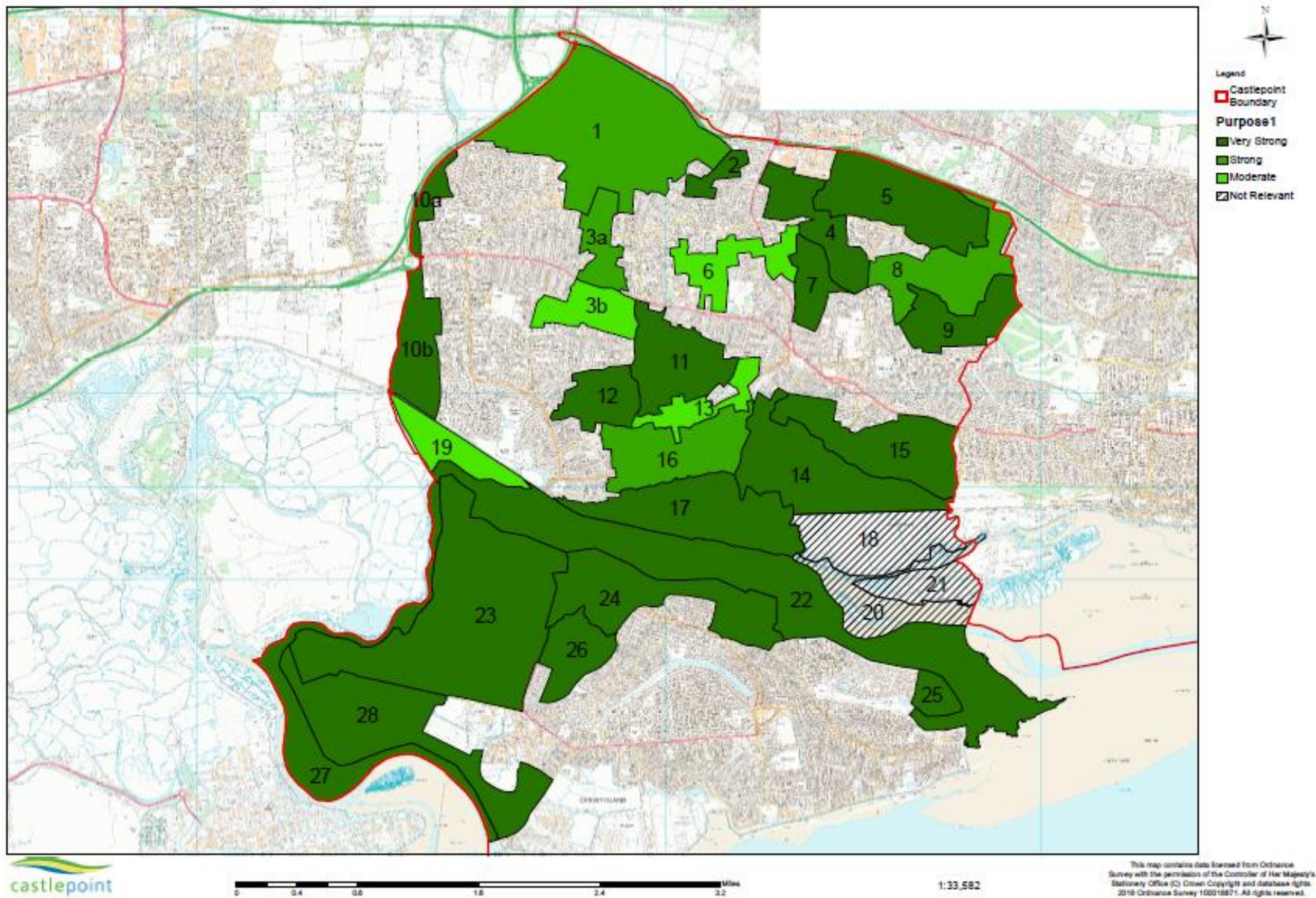
Green Belt Parcel	Purpose 1 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Purpose 2 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Purpose 3 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
1	Strong	Very Strong	Moderate
2	Very Strong	None	Moderate
3a	Strong	Very Strong	Strong
3b	Moderate	Very Strong	Minor
4	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
5	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
6	Moderate	None	Minor
7	Very Strong	Strong	Very Strong
8	Strong	Very Strong	Moderate
9	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
10a	Very Strong	Minor	Minor
10b	Very Strong	Minor	Moderate
11	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
12	Very Strong	Very Strong	Strong
13	Moderate	None	Minor
14	Very Strong	Minor	Very Strong
15	Very Strong	Minor	Very Strong

16	Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
17	Very Strong	Minor	Very Strong
18	Not Relevant	Minor	Very Strong
19	Moderate	Not Relevant	Strong
20	Not Relevant	Minor	Very Strong
21	Not Relevant	Minor	Very Strong
22	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
23	Very Strong	Moderate	Very Strong
24	Very Strong	Minor	Moderate
25	Very Strong	Not Relevant	Moderate
26	Very Strong	Minor	Moderate
27	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
28	Very Strong	Moderate	Very Strong

Stage 3 - Identifying the contribution the Green Belt parcels makes to each individual purpose of the Green Belt

- 6.5 There now follows an assessment of the Green Belt study area against each of the three NPPF Green Belt purposes that were scoped in to this Review.

Figure 4: Green Belt Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

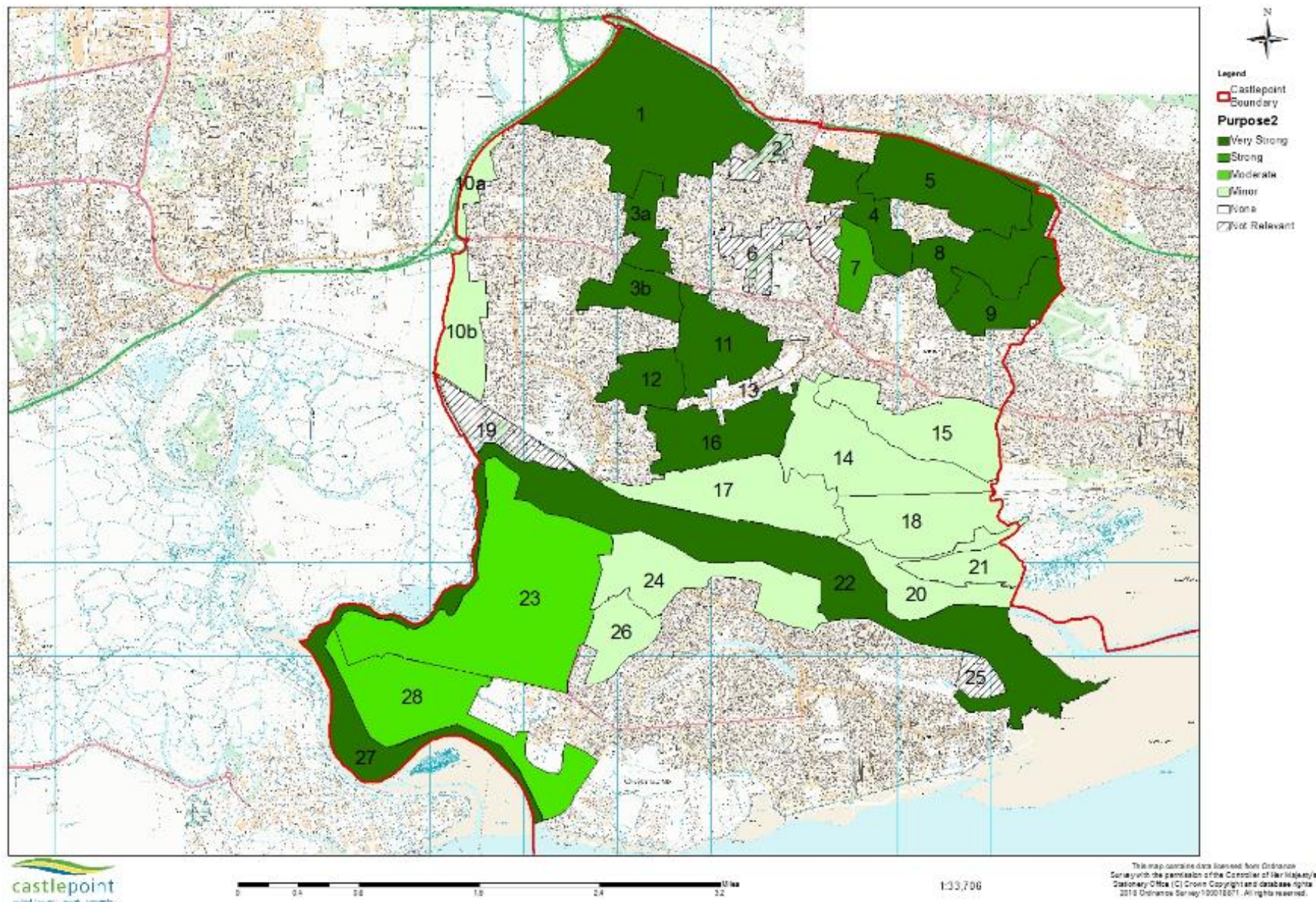


- 6.6 The majority of Green Belt parcels have been assessed as making a very strong contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. Parcels assessed as making a very strong contribution under this purpose are either devoid of sprawl from a defined 'large built-up area' or contain such little development which could be classified as sprawl in comparison to the parcel as a whole that the parcel is overwhelming rural in nature.
- 6.7 The Green Belt around Daws Heath in particular makes a very strong contribution to preventing urban sprawl, both from Daws Heath and the surrounding larger towns of Thundersley, Hadleigh, Leigh-on-Sea in Southend-on-Sea and, to a slightly lesser extent, Rayleigh in the district of Rochford. All parcels surrounding Daws Heath were assessed as making a very strong contribution other than Parcel 8. This parcel contains ribbon development originating from Daws Heath as well as further ribbon development between Daws Heath and Hadleigh. However, although sprawl has therefore occurred within the parcel, the degree of sprawl compared to the size of the parcel, its proximity to three separate urban settlements and the absence of strong boundary features means that the contribution that this parcel makes is still assessed as being strong.
- 6.8 All of the parcels south of Benfleet Creek and a number of parcels between Hadleigh and Canvey Island are also assessed as making a very strong contribution to this purpose. These parcels are either adjacent to an urban area and represent large tracts of land of a similar topography or designation in which any sprawl which is present is minor and not considered to be significant in the wider context of the parcel such that they do not define the parcel, or smaller parcels, also adjacent to an urban settlement within which there is no urban sprawl. It is recognised that in many cases in this sub-area the hydrology would make development impractical but it is considered that the Green Belt designation can act to prohibit a proliferation of marine / water based uses which could sprawl from these urban locations.
- 6.9 In addition to those above, Parcel 10a and Parcel 10b were assessed as making a very strong contribution. The eastern boundary of both these parcels represent the western edge of South Benfleet and despite the absence of a feature which would represent a natural boundary to development, there is very limited sprawl into these parcels.
- 6.10 The Green Belt between South Benfleet and Thundersley contain a varying amount of urban sprawl. Parcel 11 contains a very small amount of sprawl across the northern boundary and isolated residential sprawl in the northern and south west portions but this is not considered to be a significant level of sprawl in the context of the parcel itself. Functioning as a golf course, Parcel 12 is almost entirely free of urban sprawl other than for a small amount of ribbon development in the south east corner which is associated with the ribbon development running through Parcel 13. This Parcel, along with Parcel 3b, contains sufficient urban sprawl that the parcel is

considered to be influenced by a large built-up area and loses a clear definition between the rural environments the Green Belt represents and an adjacent urban area.

- 6.11 A moderate contribution was also assessed for Parcel 6. Although the parcel boundaries are formed by residential curtilages and are therefore not considered to be particularly robust, high density residential development has been resisted across all of the parcel. There is however a small ribbon development along the A129 which cuts through the parcel on the eastern side, and further ribbon development taking the form of residential dwellings both along The Chase, Wensley Road and other private access roads in the centre of the parcel. Again, this development acts to weaken the clear definition between a rural Green Belt environment and an adjacent urban area.
- 6.12 A further moderate contribution was assessed for Parcel 19. Although no residential development has sprawled into the parcel from South Benfleet to the north, this boundary comprises of a railway line. This robust boundary creates a natural barrier to urban sprawl, which acts to reduce the importance of the designation when compared to those Green Belt parcels formed from softer boundaries such as residential curtilages. There is a sewage works located in the western portion of the parcel which is assessed as constituting urban sprawl but this is an isolated development in a parcel which is otherwise open land.
- 6.13 As set out in the methodology, parcels were not considered relevant to this purpose if they were not adjacent to a defined urban area through which development could sprawl. This applies to Parcels 18, 20 and 21 which form part of a larger tract of open countryside stretching down towards Benfleet Creek from Hadleigh

Figure 5: Green Belt Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

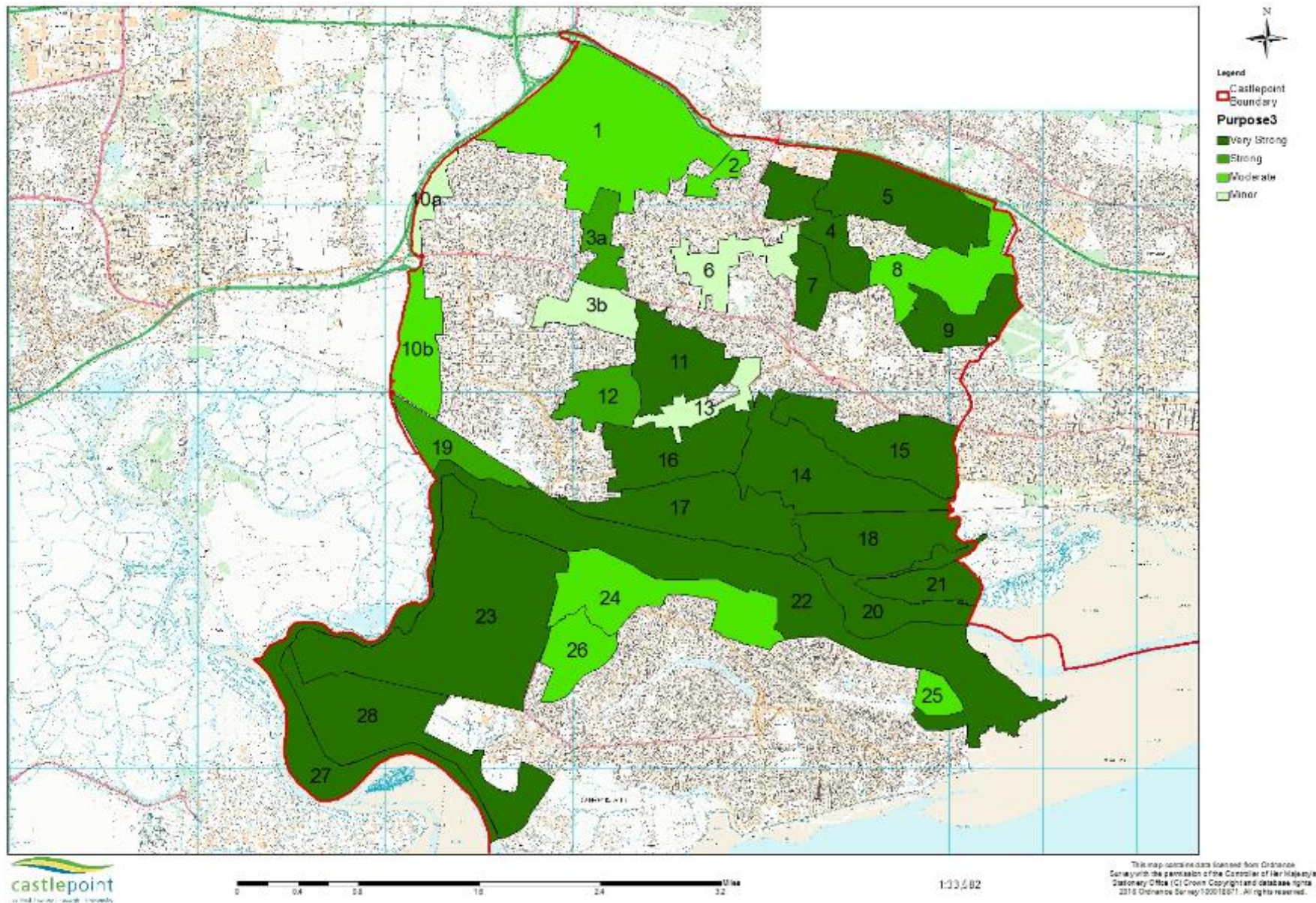


- 6.14 There has been a significant degree of merge in this part of South Essex, with an unbroken chain of urban development running from Rayleigh in Rochford, through Thundersley and Hadleigh in Castle Point and out into the borough of Southend-on-Sea through Leigh-on-Sea and Southend.
- 6.15 The mainland of Castle Point Borough can be broadly described as comprising of a number of urban settlements separated by relatively narrow bands of countryside, the majority of which is designated as Green Belt. In the northern portion of the borough, there are two distinct areas where the Green Belt is making a very strong contribution to the prevention of neighbouring towns from merging into one another. One of these is a linear, sinuous tract of land between South Benfleet and Thundersley whilst the other is a ring separating Daws Heath from Thundersley, Hadleigh, Leigh-on-Sea and, to a lesser extent, Rayleigh, which is also separated by the A127 which forms the northern boundary of the borough at this location.
- 6.16 With regard to the moderate assessment under Parcel 23, the parcel forms the strategic gap between South Benfleet and Canvey Island in conjunction with Parcel 22, and forms the majority of that gap. At the shortest point between the two settlements, Parcel 23 accounts for approximately 1300m of the approximate 1800m total gap. However, Parcel 22 also constitutes a strong boundary between the two settlements which would act to greatly inhibit development, meaning Parcel 23 makes a moderate contribution to this purpose under the methodology employed.
- 6.17 A third distinct area can be seen between Hadleigh and Canvey Island, where a number of parcels have been assessed as making a minor contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. This assessment was made as, despite the fact that in totality these parcels are making a very strong contribution to preventing at least the perception of merge due to the high visibility between Hadleigh and Canvey Island due to the topography in this area, the strategic gap is comprised of a number of parcels which each make a small contribution to the purpose as a whole.
- 6.18 Further minor contributions were assessed for Parcel 10a and Parcel 10b. The parcels broadly represent approximately 100m of the total strategic gap of 500m between New Thundersley and North Benfleet. Coupled with the fact that there is no inter-visibility between New Thundersley and North Benfleet, with the A130 also forming a strong permanent boundary, a minor contribution is considered appropriate.
- 6.19 Parcel 22 and Parcel 27 have been assessed as making a very strong contribution to this purpose under the methodology employed. Parcel 22 follows Benfleet Creek and takes the form of a long sinuous strip that is adjacent to Canvey Island and South Benfleet. Due to the hydrology it is unlikely that traditional urban development would become established in this parcel but the Green Belt

designation acts to prohibit the proliferation of marine / water related built development which could otherwise sprawl between the two urban areas and contribute to the settlements from merging. With regard to Parcel 27, the south of the parcel lies in close proximity to industrial areas associated with Canvey Island and Stanford-le-Hope in Thurrock. Any development along this part of the Creek, particularly at the mouth, would increase actual and perceived merge between these industrial areas, which are currently otherwise separated.

- 6.20 Five parcels were assessed as not being relevant to this purpose. In the case of Parcel 2 and Parcel 6, development of these parcels would amount to an infilling of a single urban area rather than bringing development appreciatively closer to another urban area. With regard to Parcel 19, Parcel 25 and Parcel 26, these parcels were not considered to fall within a strategic gap between two neighbouring towns.
- 6.21 A single parcel was assessed as making no contribution to this purpose. This was Parcel 13 which was assessed as being characterised as ribbon development between South Benfleet and Hadleigh. As such the parcel does not act as a rural break between the two settlements

Figure 6: Green Belt Purpose 3 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment



- 6.22 Just over half of the Green Belt parcels have been assessed as making a very strong contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside. Parcels assessed as making a very strong contribution under this purpose are either devoid of development that would constitute encroachment into the countryside or contain such little development which could be classified as encroachment in the context of the parcel that the parcel is overwhelming rural in nature. In the case of the relatively smaller parcels, those making a very strong contribution to this purpose are also not significantly influenced by periphery development which is uncharacteristic of the countryside.
- 6.23 There is a fair degree of correlation between parcels making a very strong contribution under this Purpose and those assessed as making a very strong contribution to Purpose 1 which relates to preventing urban sprawl. A significant number of the Green Belt parcels in the borough are adjacent to at least one settlement area, and if they are very strongly contributing to preventing urban sprawl it stands to reason that they are also contributing to preventing the encroachment of the countryside.
- 6.24 The Green Belt around Daws Heath makes a very strong contribution to preventing encroachment into the countryside, both from Daws Heath as well as the surrounding larger towns of Thundersley, Hadleigh, Leigh-on-Sea in Southend-on-Sea and, to a slightly lesser extent, Rayleigh in the district of Rochford. All parcels surrounding Daws Heath were assessed as making a very strong contribution other than Parcel 8. This parcel adjoins significant expanses of countryside to the north and south but there is however residential development located along much of the boundaries in the eastern and western portion of the site which influence the perception of the parcel being in open countryside at these locations, which is compounded by the ribbon developments in the centre of the parcel. This leads to Parcel 8 being assessed as making a moderate contribution to this Green Belt Purpose.
- 6.25 All of the parcels between Hadleigh and Canvey Island are also assessed as making a very strong contribution to this purpose other than Parcel 24. Those parcels very strongly contributing are either adjacent to an urban area and represent large tracts of land of a similar topography or designation in which any encroachment which is present is minor and not considered to be significant in the wider context of the parcel, such that they do not define the parcel, or smaller parcels within which there is no encroachment. It is recognised that in many cases the land typology would make development impractical but it is considered that the Green Belt designation can act to prohibit a proliferation of marine / water based uses which could encroach into undeveloped areas. The definition of encroachment incorporates the presence of any development which is inappropriate in the Green Belt irrespective of the proximity to an existing urban area. Therefore, unlike Purpose 1, Parcels 18, 20 and 21 are relevant to this assessment. Although also a function of their topography, these parcels are free from

encroachment and therefore a very strong contribution is assessed. Parcel 24 was assessed as making a moderate contribution due to the presence of the waste facility and leisure centre being assessed as detracting from countryside character whilst there is also a residential influence to the south, although this is tempered by the fact that the parcel contains a strong linkage with the wider countryside to the north.

- 6.26 Parcel 10a and Parcel 10b were also assessed as making a minor and moderate contribution respectively. Although there is very limited encroachment into these parcels, they are relatively narrow strips of land and their perception of being in countryside is impacted by the residential development on their eastern boundary and the A130 to the west.
- 6.27 The Green Belt between South Benfleet and Thundersley contain a varying amount of encroachment. Parcel 11 contains a very small amount of encroachment in the northern portion and the south west but this is not considered to be a significant level of encroachment in the context of the parcel itself and therefore it is assessed as making a very strong contribution. Functioning as a golf course, Parcel 12 is almost entirely free of encroachment other than for a small amount of ribbon development in the south east corner but is under some influence of the residential development around the peripheries of the parcel, leading to a strong contribution. Parcel 3b and Parcel 13 contain sufficient encroachment that the parcel is considered to be semi-urban in appearance. There is a poor urban / rural boundary and / or the parcel contains significant development inappropriate for the Green Belt
- 6.28 A moderate contribution was assessed for Parcel 1. There are a large number of different uses within this parcel although a significant proportion are not considered to be inappropriate to the Green Belt. These include a number of farms, formal and informal recreation uses, stables, riding schools and a cemetery. There are however residential dwellings predominantly in the north east and south east, as well as an industrial estate and a business park in the northern portion. In combination, the parcel is considered to represent a semi-rural character, although there are areas that are entirely rural (particularly in the centre and south west) and others more obviously developed (north and south east).
- 6.29 A minor contribution was also assessed for Parcel 6. Although the parcel boundaries are formed by residential curtilages and are therefore not considered to be particularly robust, high density residential development has been resisted across all of the parcel. There is however a small ribbon development along the A129 which cuts through the parcel on the eastern side, and further ribbon development taking the form of residential dwellings both along The Chase, Wensley Road and other private access roads in the centre of the parcel. The degree of encroachment gives rise to the perception that the parcel is semi-rural in nature internally, but it is also strongly influenced by the residential development

and schools adjacent to almost all of its boundary, and is poorly related to the wider countryside system which act to further impact on its contribution.

- 6.30 A further strong contribution was assessed for Parcel 19. Although screened from the road, the sewage works are visible within the parcel itself and are relatively prominently located just to the east of the centre of the parcel whilst there is also a motorbike track to the east. However, with the sewage works being screened from the A130, the overriding public perception of the site being rural in nature would not be impacted by this facility. Other parts of the site, particularly in the west, are entirely free of development such that overall the parcel is perceived as having a predominantly rural character. The parcel is assessed as being slightly removed from the wider countryside to the west due to the intervening A130 but more closely associated to the countryside in the east where the parcel adjoins the creeks.

Cumulative Assessment

- 6.31 The figure below highlights how each parcel performs under the purpose or purposes it most strongly contributes to, irrespective of what that purpose is. This allows for a snapshot depicting the degree of contribution to at least one Green Belt Purpose of each Green Belt parcel in its spatial context, but not one potentially diminished by disparate purposes that may not always be relevant. The results of that assessment are below:

Figure 7: Green Belt Parcels by Strongest Contribution to One or More Green Belt Purposes

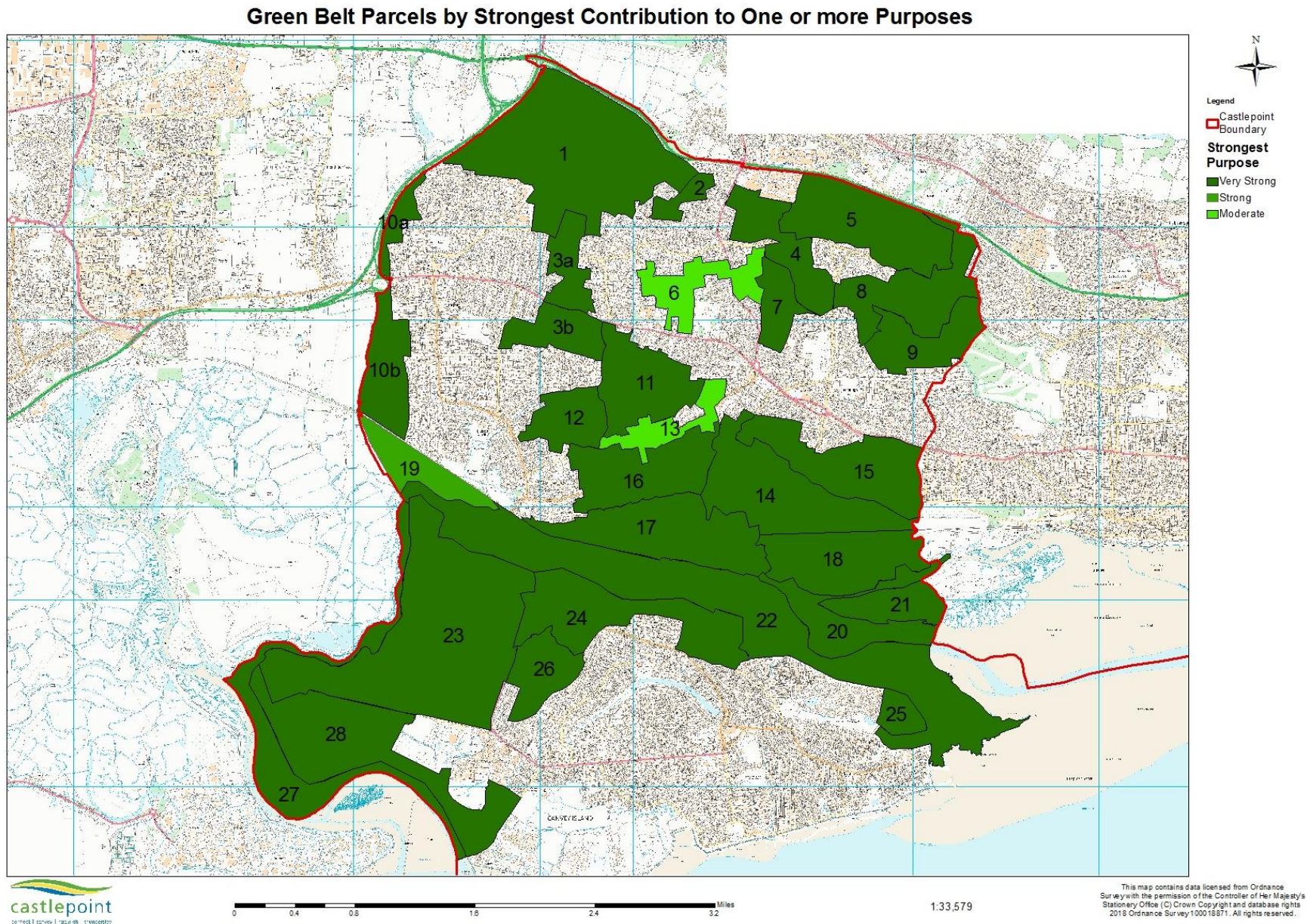


Table 7: Degree of Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Key	Green Belt Parcels	Number of Parcels
Very Strongly contributes to at least one Green Belt Purpose	1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10a, 10b, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	27
Strongly contributes to at least one Green Belt Purpose but does not Very Strongly to a purpose	19	1
Moderate contribution to at least one Green Belt Purpose but does not Strongly or Very Strongly contribute to a purpose	6, 13	2
Minor contribution to at least one Green Belt Purpose but does not Moderately, Strongly or Very Strongly contribute to a purpose		0
Does not contribute or is not relevant to a Green Belt purpose		0

6.32 Of the 30 Green Belt Parcels, all but three were found to make a very strong contribution to at least one Green Belt Purpose. Of the three parcels assessed as not displaying a very strong adherence to Green Belt purposes, one was assessed as making a strong contribution to at least one purpose with the other two making a moderate contribution to at least one purpose.

6.33 The majority of the parcels are therefore important for the role they play in at least one of the Green Belt purposes. For example, and is the case for Parcel 3a and 3b, a parcel may be of particular importance to maintaining the separation of settlements (Purpose 2) but may also include development within it which is considered to be sprawl from the urban area (Purpose 1) or encroachment (Purpose 3), or both, which detract from its contribution to these Green Belt purposes. Nonetheless this parcel provides an important function and this assessment recognises this by virtue of the cumulative assessment finding such a parcel to be very strongly contributing to the Green Belt. The more detailed assessments associated with each individual parcel included as Appendix One provide the specific detail which will allow a further consideration of the function of each parcel on a purpose-by-purpose basis.

- 6.34 It is important to recognise that parcels which were categorised as making less strong contributions to the Green Belt purposes don't necessarily mean that the entire Green Belt parcel only partly contributes. It could be that individual portions within the parcel may no longer be contributing to the purposes to the extent that the parcel as a whole is not demonstrating a full contribution. In such instances further consideration is needed to determine whether all or part of the parcel has a future role to play as part of the Borough's Green Belt. An assessment of lower levels of contribution is also not to suggest that a parcel is performing an intrinsically less important strategic function than one which is more strongly contributing at this point in time. The assessments made are as a result of the current land uses within the parcel and may reflect more acute development pressures which the Green Belt designation is acting to constrain.
- 6.35 In such instances, the parcel could still be strategically important with regard to the maintenance of the Green Belt. Further work which takes this Review into account will be required to establish whether a parcel displaying lower contributions is still providing an important strategic function, or whether development restrictions could be reduced to allow for sustainable development in areas where a measure of development has already taken place. With regard to the cumulative assessment above, consideration will need to be given as to how any proposed development would impact on each of the Green Belt purposes. It could be considered for example that development would have little impact on two of the Green Belt purposes but would have a strong negative assessment on the remaining purpose which would question the suitability of development taking place in that location.
- 6.36 For completeness, the following table sets out the number of parcels which are assessed as making a very strong contribution to each of the three Green Belt purposes:

Table 8: Parcels which Very Strongly Contribute to each of the Three Purposes

Purpose	Parcels which Very Strongly Contribute	Number of Parcels
1 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;	2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10a, 10b, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	19
2 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;	1, 3a, 3b, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 22, 27	12
3 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28	16

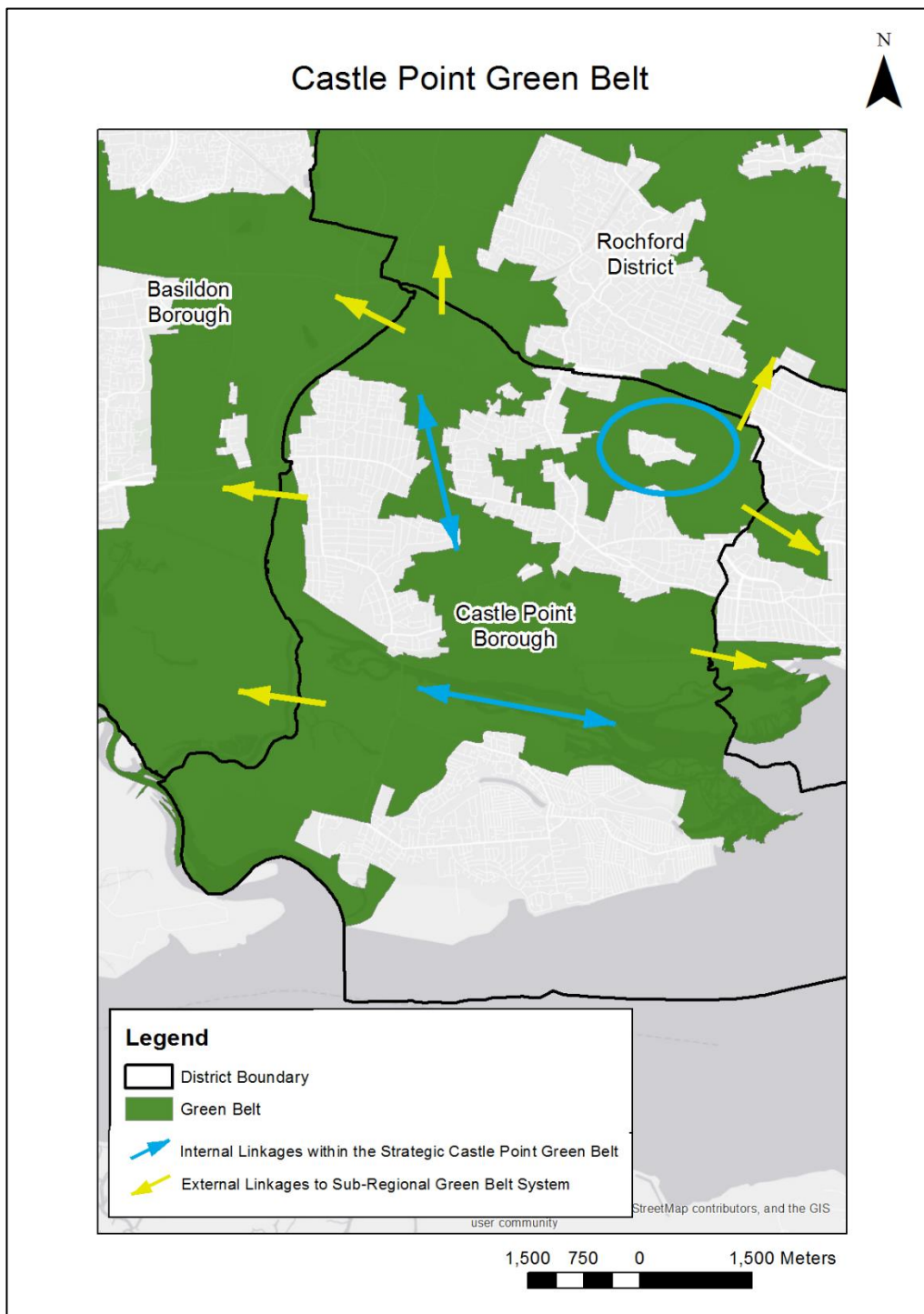
6.37 Approximately two thirds of the parcels are making a very strong contribution to the purposes of checking unrestricted sprawl with half making a very strong contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. This is in part reflective of the fact that much of the Green Belt, particularly in the south of the borough, is relatively isolated and / or not practical to develop such that it displays strong rural characteristics. However, it can also be said that despite many of the Green Belt parcels lacking a robust and defensible boundary, with the boundary of the Green Belt itself typically taking the form of residential curtilages, the designation has proved to be an effective barrier to inappropriate development.

7 CASTLE POINT BOUROUGH'S GREEN BELT IN ITS SPATIAL CONTEXT

- 7.1 As well as understanding how each parcel performs within the Borough's Green Belt, it is also important to understand whether the Green Belt has any strategic linkages to other areas inside and outside of the Borough. The figures within this section highlight the internal and external strategic Green Belt linkages assessed as being relevant to Castle Point and the wider sub regional Green Belt. Whilst there is an element of subjectivity in this exercise, parcels of Green Belt which can be assessed as being of importance by virtue of forming strategic linkages will require further consideration should all or part of any such parcels come under scope for de-allocation.

Sub-Regional and Strategic Linkages

Figure 8: Castle Point Borough's Green Belt in its spatial context



7.2 As expressed above, it is important to consider the linkages the Castle Point Green Belt has at the sub regional and strategic level. The Green Belt within Castle Point is part of the wider Metropolitan Green Belt which extends across a number of administrative boundaries. Linkages to Green Belt outside of Castle Point were

taken into account when analysing the individual Green Belt parcels, and will be also be required to be taken into account as part of any subsequent assessments of the Green Belt in order to form a better understanding of the holistic function of the Green Belt.

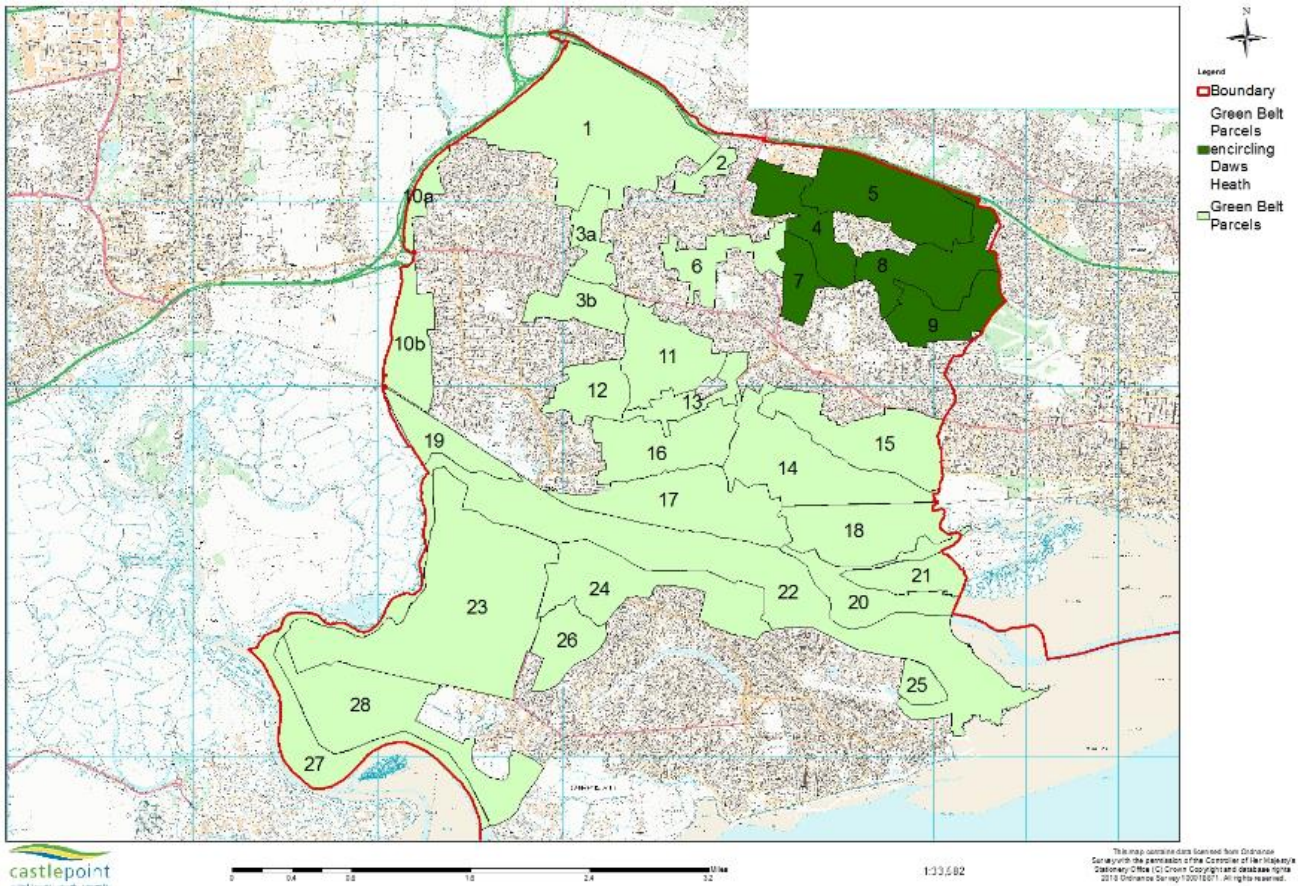
- 7.3 **Error! Reference source not found.** shows that there are two Green Belt units within Castle Point; the main Green Belt structure within the borough and the area around The Chase and Daws Heath in the north east of the borough, which is not connected to the other areas of Green Belt within Castle Point.
- 7.4 Green Belt linkages within the borough are therefore relatively strong as the larger of the two units in the Borough's Green Belt system, and therefore the majority of parcels, are connected. However, the length and breadth of these connections within the larger unit varies throughout the borough, with large swathes of Green Belt in the south contrasting with the linear strip running between South Benfleet and Thundersley in the northern portion.
- 7.5 At the sub-regional level it can be seen that the Green Belt in Castle Point has linkages to the Green Belt within the administrative areas of Rochford, Thurrock and Basildon. These provide further links to the wider Metropolitan Green Belt. However, due to the merging of settlements within Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea, and the general urbanisation of the latter, the Green Belt linkages in the north east are poor, with the local Green Belt system in this area not having any strategic or sub regional connection to a wider Green Belt system.

Locally Strategic Green Belt Linkages

- 7.6 Through the individual parcel assessments and the strategic level assessment above, it is possible to identify four strategic areas of Green Belt in Castle Point. These are set out below:

1. Daws Heath "Ring":

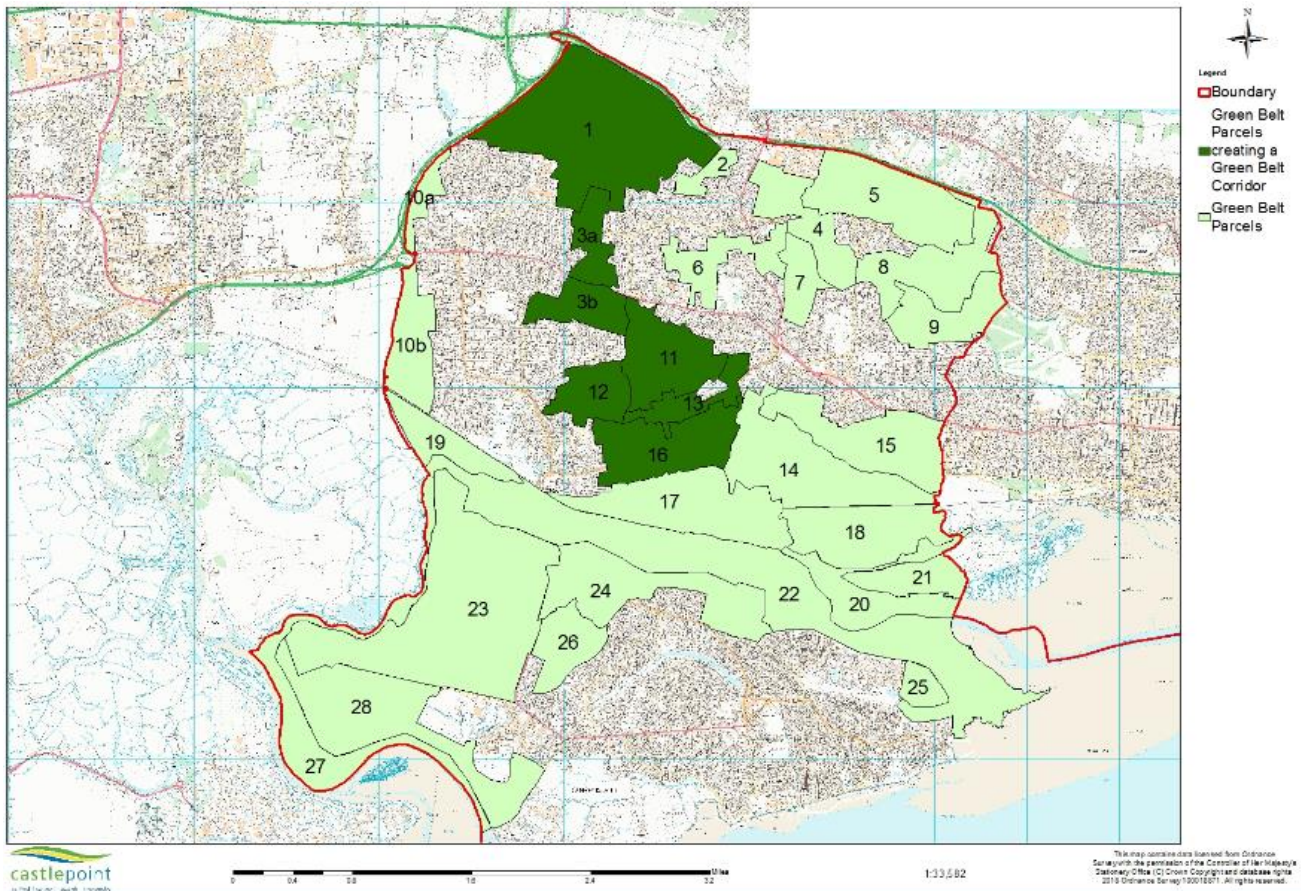
Figure 9: Strategic Green Belt Area 1 – Daws Heath "Ring"



7.7 This Green Belt area encircles the settlement of Daws Heath and has been effective in preventing urban sprawl and therefore preventing the settlement from merging with the surrounding settlements of Hadleigh, Thundersley, Rayleigh and Eastwood. It also has an important function of preventing urban coalescence between these settlements more generally. As a result, Daws Heath has a more rural character compared to other settlements within Castle Point and neighbouring districts.

2. Central Corridor

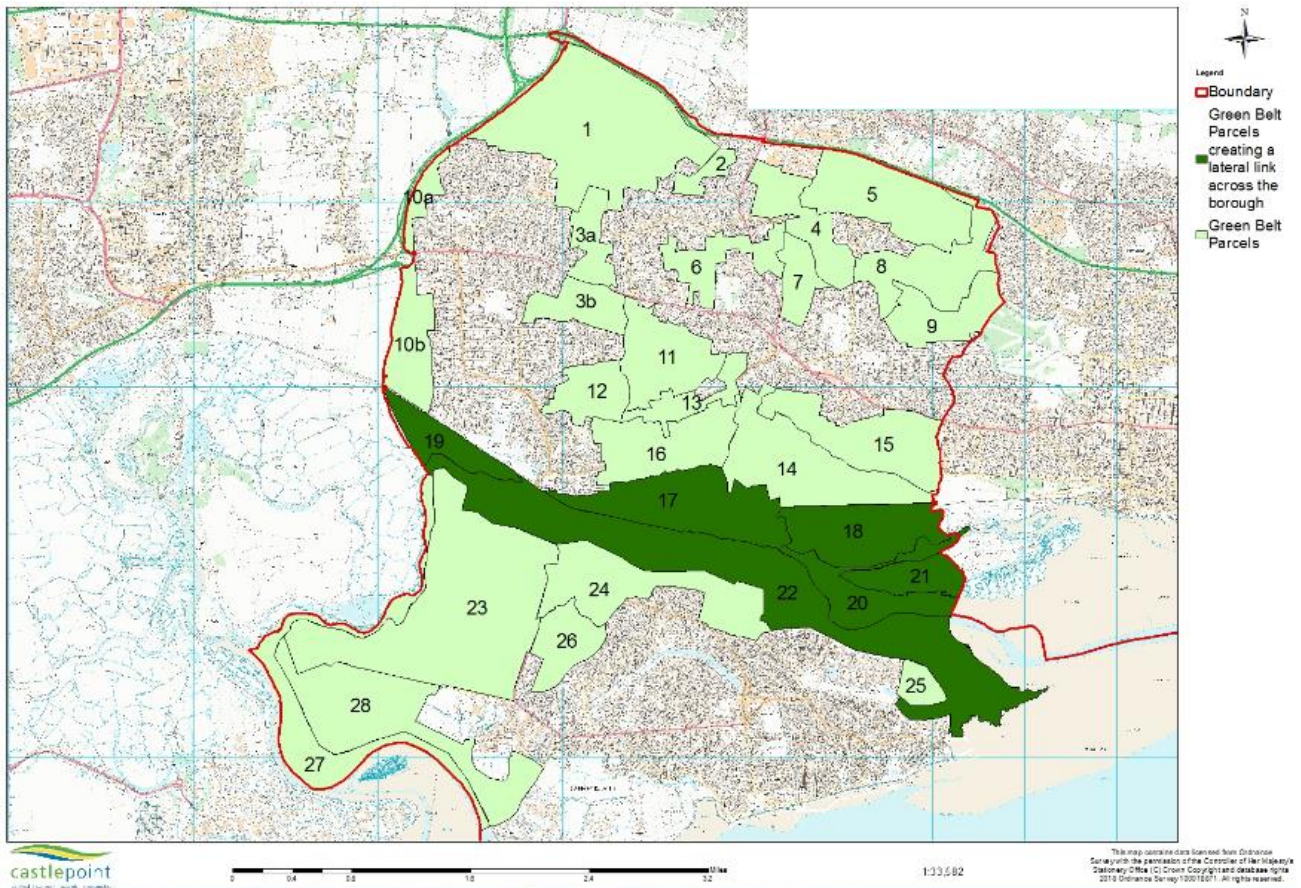
Figure 10: Strategic Green Belt Area 2 – Central Corridor



- 7.8 These parcels of Green Belt serve to restrict the settlements of South Benfleet and Thundersley from merging and also create a connection between the northern Green Belt parcels within the borough to those in the south. Without this linkage, the demarcation of these two urban areas would be indistinct and the wider Green Belt of Castle Point would become additionally fragmented.
- 7.9 At a sub-regional level this corridor is particularly important as it plays a role in linking the strip of Green Belt running along the Thames Estuary to the Green Belt extending between Rayleigh and Wickford and across towards Basildon.

3. Lateral Strip

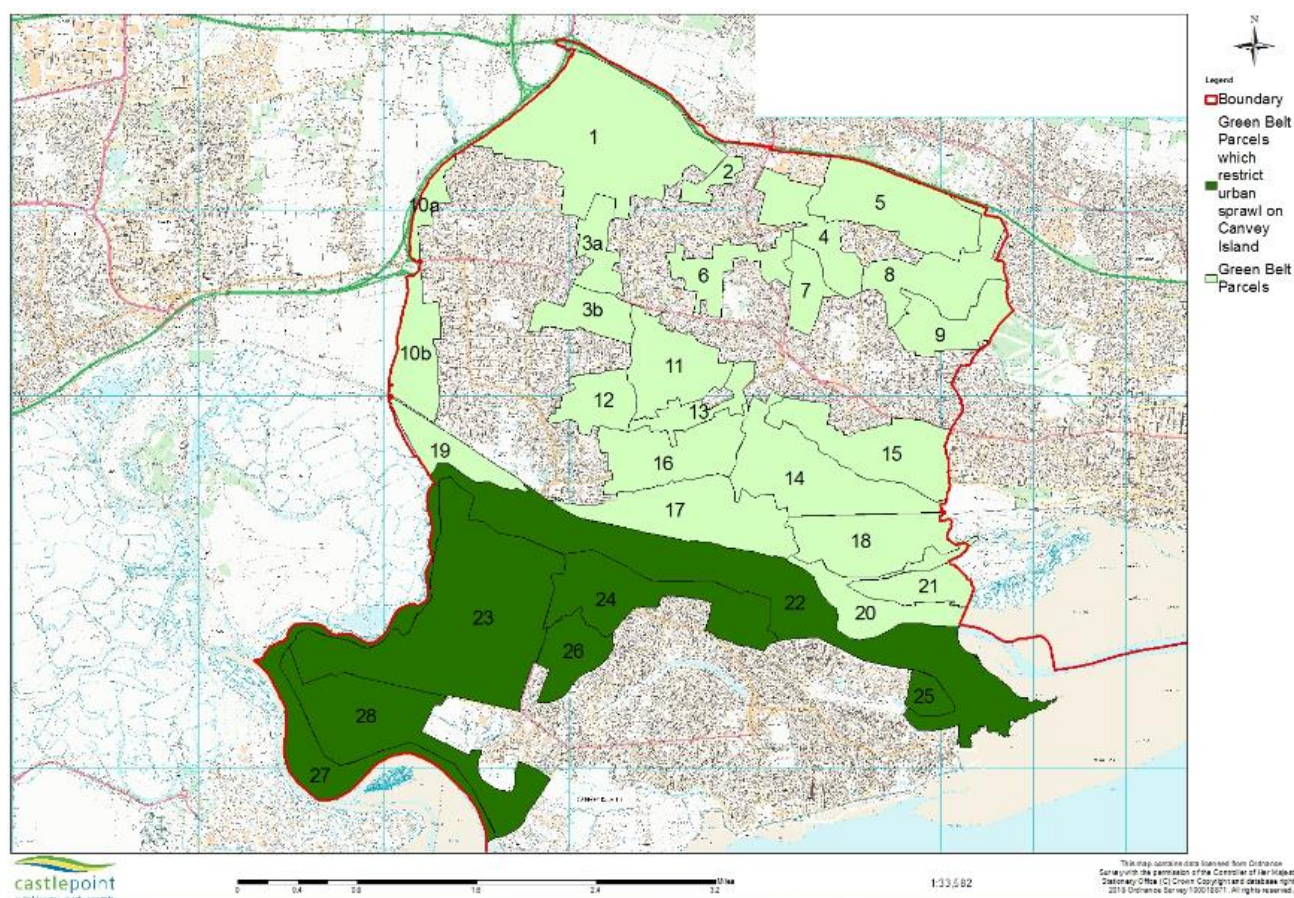
Figure 11: Strategic Green Belt Area 3 – Lateral Strip



7.10 This strategic unit takes the form of a large area of uninterrupted Green Belt extending east to west through the centre of the borough. This area of Green Belt has been effective in protecting a unique area of countryside from encroachment and plays a positive role at a sub-regional level in promoting biodiversity as well as creating opportunities for recreation in the countryside. This area is well connected to the small area of Green Belt remaining in Leigh-on-Sea, and to the larger area of Green Belt stretching between and around settlements in the administrative areas of Basildon and Thurrock.

4. Canvey Island

Figure 12: Strategic Green Belt Area 4 – Canvey Island



7.11 The Green Belt on Canvey Island effectively prevents the urban settlement from expanding to the extent of the coastal wall or urban encroachment disrupting the ecological value and landscape character of the west of the island. The designation of Green Belt on Canvey Island has been particularly effective in limiting encroachment into the countryside, as there are very few developments in the Green Belt on Canvey compared to the mainland. It would be difficult to accommodate low density development in the Green Belt on Canvey without affecting its openness due to the topography and vegetation cover, whereas woodland and scrubland hide low density development in some areas of the Green Belt in Benfleet and Thundersley.

7.12 The following table provides a reference for which parcels are considered to be a part of each of the four locally strategic Green Belt areas.

Table 9: Parcels Constituting a Part of a Locally Important Strategic Green Belt Area

Strategic Area	Parcels comprising the Strategic Area
Daws Heath Ring	4, 5, 7, 8, 9
Central Corridor	1, 3a, 3b, 11, 12, 13, 16
Lateral Strip	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
Canvey Island	22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
Not Part of a Strategic Area	2, 6, 10a, 10b 14, 15

7.13 Any assessment work taking the results of this Review forward should consider how any Green Belt release may impact on the performance of the parcel in the context of its role in contributing to a strategic area.

8 SUMMARY BY AREA

- 8.1 The results of this Review as they relate to each individual parcel can be found in Appendix One.
- 8.2 As has been previously noted, it is not the purpose of this Green Belt Review 2018 to allocate land for development and / or modify the current boundary of the Green Belt. The scope of this Review was to assess how different parts of the Green Belt were performing in accordance with the stated purposes of the Green Belt as articulated in NPPF Paragraph 134. As such, this Review does not draw any 'conclusions' other than to present the results of that assessment
- 8.3 In light of this defined scope, the Review will conclude with a brief summary of the assessed contribution of the Green Belt to the defined purposes of the Green Belt on a settlement / area basis.

South Benfleet

- 8.4 The Green Belt parcels to the immediate east of the settlement of South Benfleet have been assessed as being part of an important strategic unit within the overall Green Belt in the borough. This unit is that of a 'Central Corridor' which both prevents the merging of South Benfleet with Thundersley as well as also creating a connection between the northern Green Belt parcels within the borough to those in the south. These parcels are therefore found to make a very strong contribution to Purpose 2 which seeks to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. In terms of Purpose 1 and Purpose 3, there is a mixed contribution assessed for those parcels to the east of South Benfleet. Some parcels are found to be very strongly or strongly contributing to these purposes whilst others contain ribbon development or other such development which is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and which impacts on the local character.
- 8.5 The Green Belt boundary to the immediate west of South Benfleet takes the form of residential curtilages and is therefore not considered to be particularly robust. However, development in these parcels is limited such that the parcels in this area are considered to be very strongly contributing to the purposes of preventing urban sprawl. They are however not assessed as making strong contributions to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment as the perception of the parcels being in countryside is influenced by residential development and the A130.

Thundersley / Hadleigh

- 8.6 Due to the high degree of merge between these two settlements, they have been taken as a single area for the purposes of this summary.
- 8.7 The parcels to the immediate west of this area are those which lie to the east of

South Benfleet and have been summarised in paragraph 8.4 above. To the north of this area are the Green Belt parcels which make up the Daws Heath Ring which are discussed in the commentary for the Daws Heath settlement below.

- 8.8 To the south of the Thundersley / Hadleigh area lie the parcels which form a large landscape which can be seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. These parcels together form a large system which helps to preserve the sensitive landscape and ecological character of the area. This collection of parcels includes Hadleigh Country Park, an important recreational and ecological resource, as well as heritage assets including Hadleigh Castle and a fortlet. All but one of these parcels were assessed as making very strong contributions to the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment, whilst those parcels adjacent to existing urban areas were also found to be making a very strong contribution to preventing urban sprawl. Development inappropriate in the Green Belt is minimal across this entire area, which represents a large swathe of open countryside with unbroken views.
- 8.9 This area is also adjacent to Parcel 6 which is one of the few parcels which does not make a very strong contribution to at least one of the assessed Green Belt purposes. Parcel 6 contains a small ribbon development along the A129 which cuts through the parcel on the eastern side, and further ribbon development taking the form of residential dwellings both along The Chase, Wensley Road and other private access roads in the centre of the parcel. This development is assessed as constituting sprawl from an adjacent urban area and is inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is therefore considered to be encroaching development. As the parcel is surrounded by Thundersley, it is not contributing to preventing neighbouring towns from merging.
- 8.10 The urban area of Thundersley / Hadleigh bleeds into Eastwood / Leigh-on-Sea to the east such that there is no obvious demarcation between the settlements.

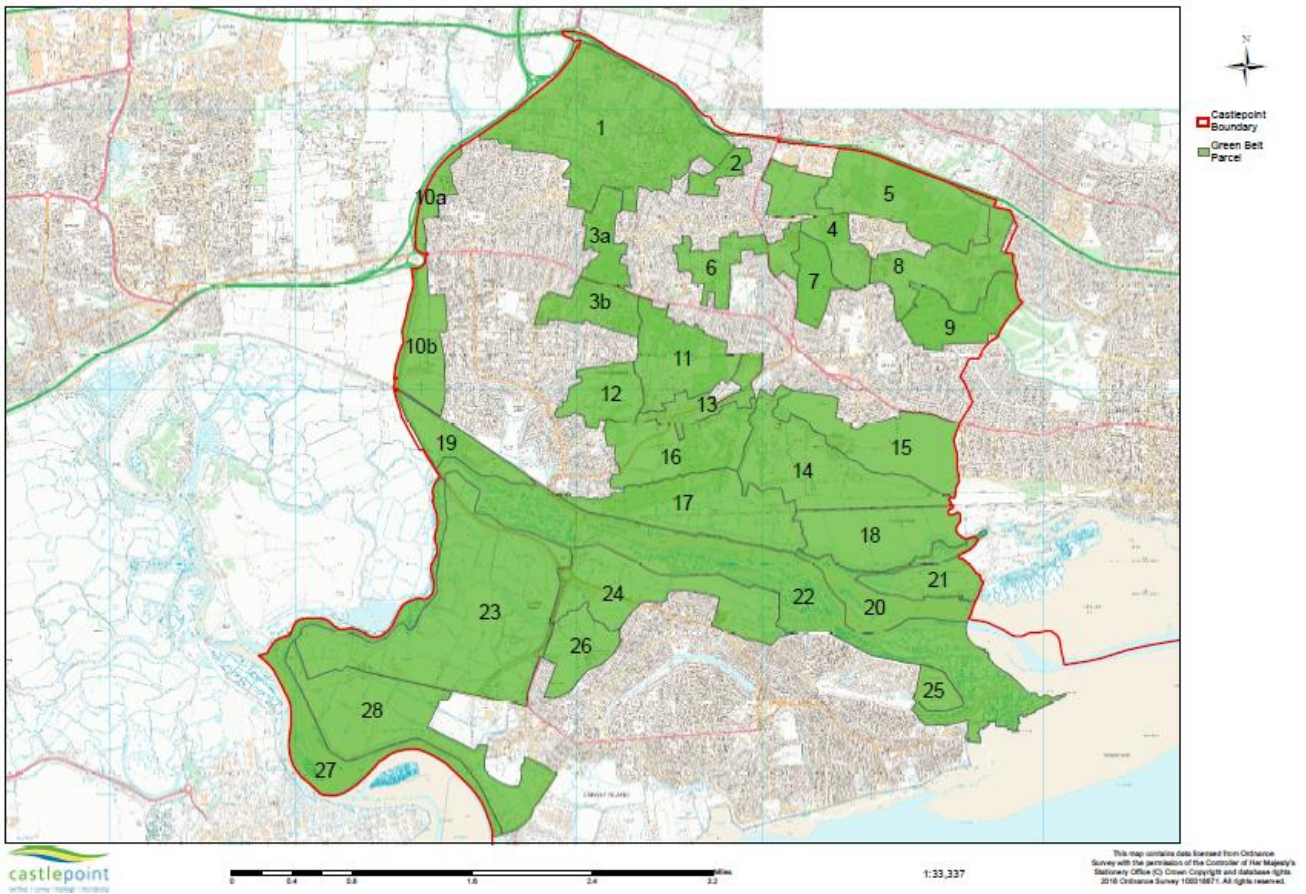
Daws Heath

- 8.11 The Green Belt parcels directly adjacent to the smaller settlement of Daws Heath all contribute to the Daws Heath Ring strategic area. These parcels prevent the settlement from merging with the surrounding settlements of Hadleigh, Thundersley, Rayleigh and Eastwood. As a result, Daws Heath has a more rural character compared to other settlements within Castle Point and neighbouring districts. All but one of these parcels is strongly contributing to Green Belt Purpose 2 which is to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into each other. Three of the five parcels within the Daws Heath Ring are assessed as making a very strong contribution to the other two Green Belt purposes assessed as part of this Review and so these parcels are making a very strong contribution to the holistic purpose of the Green Belt.

Canvey Island

- 8.12 The Green Belt parcels to the north of the settlement are part of the system already highlighted in paragraph 8.8. To the east of Canvey Island lie parcels 22 and 25. The latter of these is a former landfill which has since been restored and is now designated as Canvey Heights Country Park. Parcel 22 consists of the length of Benfleet Creek and is part of the Lateral Strip and Canvey Island strategic areas. This area of Green Belt is well connected to the small area of Green Belt remaining in Leigh-on-Sea, and to the larger area of Green Belt stretching between and around settlements in the administrative areas of Basildon and Thurrock.
- 8.13 Parcels to the west are also part of the Canvey Island strategic area and effectively prevents the urban settlement from expanding to the extent of the coastal wall or urban encroachment disrupting the ecological value and landscape character of the west of the island.
- 8.14 Due to the presence of Benfleet Creek acting as a natural barrier to development, and the relative isolation of the settlement of Canvey Island to other settlements, the Green Belt parcels in this area are not assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt Purpose 2. However, each of the Green Belt parcels in this area is either devoid of development or contains minimal development which is considered inappropriate in the Green Belt. Due to being adjacent to an urban area, they make a very strong contribution to Purpose 1. With regard to Purpose 3, parcels are assessed as making a very strong contribution other than Parcel 24, Parcel 25 and Parcel 26. These parcels are influenced by built development on the periphery of the parcels which is not characteristic of the countryside.

Appendix 1 – Individual Green Belt Assessment Pro-formas



Green Belt Parcel 1



Parcel Description

The parcel is a large, broadly triangular shape located in the north west of the borough. Much of the parcel is open land although there are a number of farmsteads and associated development sporadically located across the parcel as well as an industrial estate and a business park in the northern portion and residential development along the southern and south eastern boundary. It has been parcelled as it is an area characterised by sparse tree coverage, flat land and large green fields. In this respect it differs to the areas which border it. To the south of the parcel is a heavily wooded area, (Parcel 3) and to the east is Great Common, (Parcel 2).

The eastern boundary follows the A127, which is also the administrative boundary. The southern boundary is primarily formed of residential back gardens associated with the northern most dwellings in Thundersley and South Benfleet whilst other parts of the southern boundary follow the route of local roads and a footpath running adjacent to the west of Great Common. The western boundary follows the A1245 and A130 which is also the administrative boundary. This parcel is designated within the Castle Point Local Plan 1998 as the Great Burches Landscape Improvement Area.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to Thundersely and Souh Benfleet at its southern boundary. Whilst this boundary primarily takes the form of residential back gardens, meaning that the boundary is not robust, the only residential development in the parcel at the same density as the urban areas is located in the south east corner, where properties to the north of Goldfinch Lane can be found within the parcel. These properties are directly opposite other properties on Goldfinch Lane and are	Strong

	<p>therefore closely related to the current urban form. The rural / urban boundary is also relatively weakly defined in other areas with other residential dwellings and plotland development present in the parcel. These are considered to constitute sprawl. The majority of the parcel is however free from built development.</p> <p>The eastern and western boundaries are assessed as being strong, permanent boundaries but these are not adjacent to an urban area, with land across from these boundaries being Green Belt land within Rochford District and Basildon Borough respectively. Taking the form of residential back gardens, the southern boundary is not considered to be robust. However, the parcel lacks alternative features that could act as a strong, defensible boundary and as such this parcel is considered to strongly contribute to this purpose given the density of inappropriate development within it as a whole.</p>	
<p>2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another</p>	<p>Whilst such a scale of development is recognised as being unlikely, developing the parcel as a whole would lead to the coalescence of South Benfleet and Thundersley. As such, a very strong contribution is assessed against this purpose.</p> <p>It is also noted that development of the whole parcel will increase coalescence between South Benfleet / Thundersley and Rayleigh, although true coalescence would be impeded by the A127.</p>	<p>Very Strong</p>
<p>3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>There are a large number of different uses within this parcel although a significant proportion are not considered to be inappropriate to the Green Belt. These include a number of farms, formal and informal recreation uses, stables, riding schools and a cemetery. There are however residential dwellings predominantly in the north east and south east, as well as an industrial estate and a business park in the northern portion. In combination, the parcel is considered to represent a semi-rural character, although there are areas that are entirely rural (particularly in the centre and south west) and others more obviously developed (north and south east). Plotland dwellings, smallholdings, recreational buildings and stables are largely hidden by the vegetation.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

	The parcel is considered large enough that it is not materially influenced by its peripheral features.	
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Parcel Summary

The parcel makes a very strong contribution to Purpose 2 due to its size. Whilst development of this whole parcel is considered unlikely, it would result in the coalescence of South Benfleet and Thundersely, as well as bringing development to the border of Rochford District, and specifically the town of Rayleigh. The A127 would however act as a strong boundary between development in Castle Point and that which exists in Rayleigh.

The southern boundary of the parcel takes the form of residential back gardens but has been largely successful in preventing urban sprawl. There are no other strong permanent features through which to realign this boundary other than using local roads.

As a whole the parcel is however semi-rural, with industrial / business uses considered inappropriate in the Green Belt to the north, and some residential development, which in some locations constitutes urban sprawl. Large areas are nonetheless entirely rural in character, consisting of fields and development associated with agriculture. As such a strong contribution is assessed under Purpose 1 and a moderate contribution under Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt Parcel serves an important purpose at the strategic level. The restriction of urban sprawl and large scale urban encroachment from settlements within the borough creates a Green Belt area which is free from large scale urban development which also acts as a link with the Green Belt outside of the borough within Basildon and Rochford.

Green Belt Parcel 2



Parcel Description

Parcel 2 lies close to the northern boundary of the borough and takes the form of a relatively narrow band running north east to south west. The parcel comprises of two SSSIs, a Local Wildlife Site and also functions as public open space. The parcel further contains a recreation ground in the south. The parcel is entirely wooded in the northern and central portions, becoming open field to the south. This area has been parcelled on the basis that it has two sites of special scientific interest, (SSSIs), and its use as public open space (which differ to the uses of adjacent Parcel 1).

The northern boundary runs along the edge of Kingsley Lane, the eastern boundary follows residential back gardens associated with dwellings along Sandown Road, Ascot Close, Cheltenham Drive and Lewes Way. The southern boundary follows the edge of Common Lane and residential back gardens associated with Common Approach. The western boundary follows the route of a further road, The Common, then the front and subsequently the back gardens of properties along Abreys before following a footpath adjacent to the western boundary of Great Common. None of these boundaries are considered to be strongly robust.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	There is urban development adjacent to the northern, eastern, southern and the south western border. Whilst the border has not been drawn around permanent, robust features there is no urban development within the parcel, nor are there any other permanent boundaries within the parcel. As such the parcel makes a very strong contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl. It is noted that development of this parcel would effectively round-off the existing settlement pattern.	Very Strong

2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel is located on the edge of Thundersley and is almost completely encircled by this urban area. Development of the parcel would equate to an infilling of the urban area and would not result in the urban edge of Thundersley moving closer to another settlement.	None
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>The landform is gently rolling and the parcel comprises of open countryside and a large area of historic woodland with some grassland. The parcel contains recreation facilities and an associated pavilion. As such the parcel is free of any development that would be considered inappropriate in the Green Belt.</p> <p>Whilst the parcel contains strong countryside characteristics, it is not well connected to the wider countryside and it is considered to be influenced by the residential development that exists at the periphery, although this impact is lessened by the dense woodland across much of the parcel.</p>	Moderate

Parcel Summary

The parcel is largely wooded and almost encircled by urban development associated with Thundersley. Although the boundaries are not considered to be strongly robust, there is no development within the parcel that is considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt, nor are there any features within the parcel that would act as robust boundaries. Due to the absence of built development considered inappropriate in the Green Belt, and despite its proximal location to an urban area, the parcel makes a very strong contribution to Purpose 1. The parcel is however of limited size and as such is influenced by residential development along much of its border, although this impact is lessened by the fact that the parcel is largely formed of dense woodland, leading to a moderate contribution under Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

From a strategic view, the parcel only has limited linkages to the wider Green Belt and as a result it forms a slightly isolated pocket. The urban area to the east of the parcel prevents what could be an important linkage to the Green Belt within the north east area of the Borough. However, the presence of two SSSI's within the parcel makes it ecologically valuable.

Green Belt Parcel 3a



Parcel Description

This parcel is in the north west of the borough and takes the form of a strip of land which is largely wooded and which lies between South Benfleet and Thundersley. Coombe Wood, in the southern portion of the parcel, is registered as a Town or Village Green and is also Ancient Woodland. The parcel contains residential development, a place of worship and a hall, with Church Road running through the centre of the parcel from the east to west.

The northern boundary of the parcel follows Windermere Road, the eastern boundary follows a footpath and then runs along the back of residential back gardens associated with Grasmere Road, a school, and further back gardens and along the curtilage of properties associated with Fox Meadows, Coombewood Drive and Thundersley Grove. The southern boundary follows the A13 whilst the western boundary follows Downer Road North, the curtilages of dwellings associated with Rhoda Road North and Stanley Road as well as the route of Bassenthwaite Road. Those boundaries following existing road links, particularly the southern boundary, are considered to be robust.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The eastern and western parcel boundaries are adjacent to urban development associated with South Benfleet and Thundersley. Whilst not considered to be robust boundaries, development within the parcel has been largely restricted. However there is clear, albeit limited ribbon development following the route of Church Road which runs through the centre of the parcel and includes dwellings, a church, a hall and carparking.	Strong

<p>2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another</p>	<p>The parcel takes the form of a strip of land which forms the entire gap between the settlements of South Benfleet and Thundersley. The eastern and western boundaries are adjacent to these two urban areas and do not follow robust, permanent features. Views between the two settlements are currently blocked due to the presence of large wooded areas, and development would lead to physical coalescence. There is also very limited development within the parcel and as such, this parcel is very strongly contributing to this purpose. Church Road is a potential robust boundary located within the parcel but its orientation is such that a realignment of the Green Belt boundary to this feature would not prevent the merging of the two settlements.</p>	<p>Very Strong</p>
<p>3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The eastern and western parcel boundaries are adjacent to urban development associated with South Benfleet and Thundersley. Whilst not considered to be robust boundaries, development within the parcel has been largely restricted and the parcel is primarily characterised by wooded areas and open land. However there is clear, albeit limited ribbon development following the route of Church Road which runs through the centre of the parcel and is inappropriate to a Green Belt location. There are further residential dwellings in the north associated with Windemere Road and in the south east associated with Lake Drive.</p> <p>Although the parcel is a relatively narrow strip, it is not considered to be strongly influenced by periphery development to the east and west due to its wooded nature, and it also acts to link countryside in the north of the borough to that in the south.</p>	<p>Strong</p>

Parcel Summary

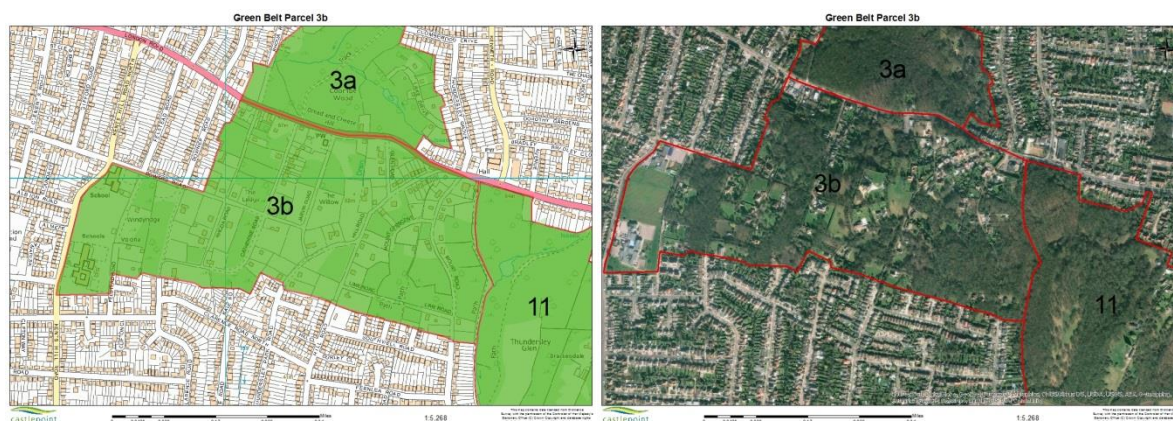
The parcel forms an important strategic gap between South Benfleet to the west and Thundersley to the east. Whilst the eastern and western boundaries primarily follow residential curtilages, there is only limited development within the parcel associated with Church Road. As such the parcel makes a very strong contribution to Purpose 2. This limited development also means that sprawl and encroachment have been largely resisted, leading to a strong performance under Purpose 1 and Purpose 3. The parcel contains a single feature which could consider to be a robust boundary, namely Church Road, but this is not orientated in such a way as to provide a useful

boundary, and any such realignment would cause coalescence between South Benfleet and Thundersley.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel serves to provide a link from the north west of the borough to the Green Belt parcels within the central and southern areas of the borough. This is an important link as it also connects the Green Belt parcels within Castle Point with the wider Green Belt system in surrounding authorities.

Green Belt Parcel 3b



Parcel Description

The parcel is broadly rectangular and located to the north east of South Benfleet. The parcel is a mix of wooded areas and residential development, with the residential developments screened by the wooded areas. There are two schools in the west of the parcel associated with South Benfleet. The parcel is adjacent to South Benfleet to the south and west, as well as being adjacent to Thundersley at the north east corner.

The northern boundary follows the A13 and the eastern boundary runs along a woodland footpath. The southern boundary follows curtilages associated with properties on Southwell Road, Hill Road, Thundersley Park Road, Kale Road, Clarence Road North, Clarence Road and. The western road follows Kents Hill Road

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel contains urban sprawl from both Thundersley and South Benfleet. Sprawl is present along most of the northern boundary, with sporadic housing contained within much of the east and south of the parcel, and housing at greater densities associated with roads cutting through the northern and southern boundaries, particularly in the north eastern portion. As such the parcel lacks a strongly defined edge between the built up area and the parcel. Although there are a number of roads that could act as an alternative and more robust Green Belt boundary, due to the fact that development is located throughout the parcel, none of these boundaries would result in a more natural fit for the Green Belt.	Moderate

2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel comprises of the entire gap between South Benfleet and Thundersley. The wooded areas mean that there is limited visibility within the parcel and its development would lead to actual coalescence between these two urban areas. The parcel already contains low density residential development across the entire parcel, with the density increasing in the north east. Removing this parcel from the Green Belt could potentially result in a continuation of the densities of development in the north east, whilst also threatening the wooded areas which act to screen the development which already exists.	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel contains a significant degree of residential development which, although sporadic, is present across the entirety of the parcel and is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Although areas are wooded, the overriding character of this parcel is assessed as being semi-urban as there is no clear demarcation between the urban settlement and the parcel. It is noted that parts of the parcel are nonetheless undeveloped and help to form a corridor of countryside linking that to the north to the countryside to the south. This linkage is however fractured within this parcel which also has an impact on the degree of contribution this parcel makes to this Purpose.	Minor

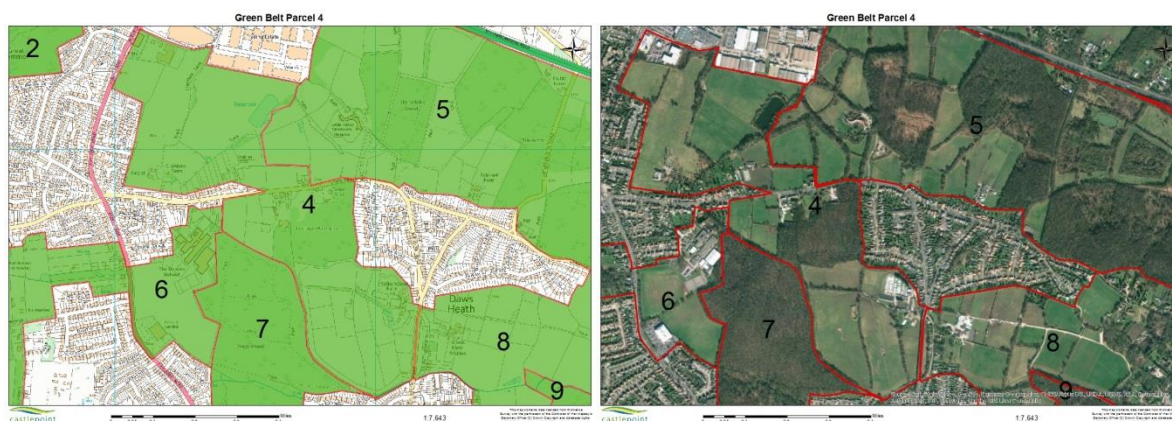
Parcel Summary

The parcel contains a significant amount of ribbon development and other sporadic residential development emanating from South Benfleet and Thundersley. The level of sprawl which also equates to inappropriate development means that the parcel is assessed as moderately contributing to Purpose 1 and making a minor contribution to Purpose 3. It does however make a very strong contribution to Purpose 2 as it forms the entire strategic gap between these two urban areas, which at its smallest extent is approximately 450m.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel serves to provide a link from the north west of the borough to the Green Belt parcels within the central and southern areas of the borough. This is an important link as it also connects the Green Belt parcels within Castle Point with the wider Green Belt system in surrounding authorities. Any development proposals coming forward in this parcel will need to be considered in light of any potential impact on the strategic linkages that this parcel provides as these are already considered fractured in the east of the parcel.

Green Belt Parcel 4



Parcel Description

The parcel is located in the north east of the borough and lies adjacent to four other Green Belt parcels. It has been parcelled as an area because its character differs from those areas surrounding it. The area to the north east is designated as ancient landscape, the area to the south west is a heavily wooded area and the area to the south east has been separated by Daws Heath Road. The parcel is largely free of built development other than a fire station, reservoir and retail park in the north, a farm, stables and residential dwellings in the centre, an Ancient Woodland which is also in the centre and a further farm and related development in the south.

The northern boundary follows Stadium Way and subsequently a footpath which act as the boundary to the industrial estate. The eastern boundary follows a drain and then a path before meeting up with Daws Heath Road, and then follows the rear of residential back gardens associated with Thorington Avenue, Wyburn Road and Western Road which turns into Daws Heath Road. The southern boundary follows a watercourse called Prittle Brook, which itself runs along the back of residential back gardens, with the western boundary following the edge of West Wood before joining back up with Daws Heath Road. The western boundary then continues through residential back gardens associated with properties on Daws Heath Road, and then follows Firfield Road and subsequently residential properties associated with Firfield Road and Asquith Gardens, and finally the route of the A129 before joining with Stadium Way. The majority of these boundary features are not considered to be robust.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The Green Belt parcel is adjacent to New Thundersley, Daws Heath and Hadleigh. There is limited sprawl across the northern border where commercial development acts to continue the	Very Strong

	trading estate across Stadium Way into the parcel. There is also ribbon development along the short stretch of Daws Heath Road which is in the Green Belt. However, outside of these examples, and despite the absence of permanent robust boundaries along much of the extent of the parcel, the parcel itself is free of built up development. As such the Green Belt is considered to make a very strong contribution to this purpose.	
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel represents the full extent of the strategic gap between Thundersley to the west and Daws Heath to the east, as well as Daws Heath and Hadleigh, located to the south. These strategic gaps at their shortest extent are approximately 350m and 300m respectively, meaning that significant development would act to notably decrease the remaining gap between these urban areas.	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>The topography is rolling with small valleys. It contains areas of pasture, woodland and hedgerows with field boundary trees. The main land use in the parcel is agriculture with farms being present in the north and south of the parcel. There are also stables and a timber yard which are not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The industrial estate on the northern edge is reasonably well screened and set below the high ground in views from the south. Whilst there is a small amount of localised ribbon development, the overall perception of this parcel is of agricultural land and woods.</p> <p>The parcel has residential development at its north western, eastern and southern boundaries but is considered large enough that it is not specifically influenced by these boundary features. The parcel also links to wider countryside to the north and south west.</p>	Very Strong

Parcel Summary

This parcel is adjacent to four other Green Belt areas as well as the urban settlements of Thundersley, Daws Heath and Hadleigh. Although the boundaries are mainly not comprised of strong, robust features, the parcel is almost devoid of development considered to be inappropriate for a Green Belt location. The parcel forms the entirety of the relatively small strategic gaps between these three

settlements and displays strong agricultural / countryside characteristics. As such it is considered to make a very strong contribution across the assessed Green Belt purposes.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level this Green Belt parcel and the surrounding Green Belt parcels serve to collectively encircle Daws Heath, acting as a ring of Green Belt around the settlement. This ring prevents encroachment into the surrounding countryside, which helps to maintain the character and integrity of the area.

Green Belt Parcel 5



Parcel Description

The parcel is rectangular in shape and is located in the north east of the borough, directly north of parcels 4 and 8. The northern boundary follows the A127 which also acts the northern administrative boundary for the borough. To the north east the boundary follows Eastwood Old Road before the eastern boundary follows a field boundary which is also the boundary of Garrold’s Meadow, a SSSI. The southern boundary follows the southern boundary of the SSSI, loops above land associated with Thatch Farm before meeting the boundary of Pound Wood, running along the rear of residential back gardens before meeting Bramble Road. The rest of the southern boundary runs along the rear of residential back gardens associated with Bramble Road and Daws Heath Road. The western boundary follows the route of a path, drain and the eastern boundary of a trading estate.

The parcel is almost devoid of built development other than for isolated farms at the northern and southern boundary, a church also by the southern boundary and Little Haven Children’s Hospice in the south west. St Michaels Road runs north to south through the middle of the parcel. Approximately half of the parcel is wooded land, consisting of Tile Wood in the centre and Pound Wood in the eastern portion is Ancient Woodland.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to a trading estate to the north east and Daws Heath to the south. It is also adjacent to development within Rayleigh across the A127, which forms a robust permanent boundary although to the north of the A127 is further Green Belt land within Rochford District. There has been no development in the parcel itself which could be said to be sprawl from an	Very Strong

	existing large built up area as defined in the methodology.	
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	<p>The topography is gently rolling with a substantial area of woodland cover. There are views into the area from adjacent residential properties and farmsteads. A network of minor roads, tracks, footpaths and public rights of way cross the site. Views into the area from the A127 in the north are screened by mature trees.</p> <p>Parcel 5 forms the entirety of the strategic gap between Thundersley and Daws Heath, and Rayleigh and Daws Heath. It also forms approximately 600m of the total 750m gap between Daws Heath and the urban settlement of Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea. At its closest point, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea falls within the district of Castle Point although the settlement is largely located in Southend-on-Sea.</p> <p>The fact that this parcel represents the sole strategic gap between two settlements, the majority of another strategic gap and there are no features which would block inter-visibility outside of the parcel, its contribution to this purpose is assessed as very strong.</p>	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>There is extremely minimal built development within this parcel. Other than for a children's hospice in the south west of the parcel and a place of worship, all other built development in the parcel is associated with the farms that are located in the north and south. The topography is gently rolling with a substantial area of woodland cover and more open fields. The parcel is bound by the A127 to the north and contains residential development along a portion of its southern boundary. However, the parcel is of such a size as to not be influenced by these periphery developments.</p>	Very Strong

Parcel Summary

Located in the north east of the borough, this parcel contains open fields, three wooded areas, and is almost devoid of built development. As such it makes a very strong contribution to Green Belt Purpose 1 and Purpose 3. Whilst the wooded areas provide screening within the parcel, the fact that the parcel forms the entirety of the strategic gap between Thundersley and Daws Heath, the majority of the strategic gap between Daws Heath and Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, and there are no features

which would block inter-visibility outside of the parcel, it is also assessed as making a very strong contribution to Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level this Green Belt parcel and the surrounding Green Belt parcels serve to collectively encircle Daws Heath, acting as a protective ring of Green Belt around the settlement. This ring prevents encroachment into the surrounding countryside, which helps to maintain the character and integrity of the area. This parcel also connects to the Green Belt within the Rochford administrative area to the north, although it is separated by the A127 which acts as a robust boundary between the administrative areas.

Green Belt Parcel 6



Parcel Description

The parcel is located in the north of the borough and represents a tract of predominantly open land largely encircled by the urban settlement of Thundersley. It is an area characterised by a mixture of plots of land which are divided into lateral strips. There are a number of uses within the parcel including residential dwellings, a school, a leisure centre and playing fields.

The northern, southern and western boundaries follow residential curtilages and the boundaries of school grounds associated with development in Thundersley. The eastern boundary follows the curtilage of a school and the boundary of West Wood.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The northern, western and southern boundaries are adjacent to Thundersley whilst the south eastern boundary is adjacent to Hadleigh. Much of these boundaries are formed by residential curtilages and are therefore not considered to be particularly robust. Nonetheless, high density residential development has been resisted across all of the parcel. There is however a small ribbon development along the A129 which cuts through the parcel on the eastern side, and further ribbon development taking the form of residential dwellings along The Chase and other roads that come off The Chase in the centre of the parcel. Much of the parcel is comprised of residential dwellings and their curtilages, a school and associated uses as well as a leisure centre and therefore there is a lack of a strongly defined edge between the built-up area and the parcel.	Moderate

<p>2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another</p>	<p>The parcel is almost entirely encircled by Thundersley, such that its development would represent infilling of land within Thundersley, apart from the south eastern boundary which is adjacent to Hadleigh. However, it is assessed that the parcel does not contribute to this purpose as the strategic gap between Thundersley and Hadleigh is comprised of a school, playing fields and a leisure centre and as such is already largely developed. Further, there has already been a significant degree of merge between Thundersley and Hadleigh in proximity to the parcel, with all of the undeveloped land within the parcel being within Thundersley</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The topography is gently sloping and the landscape is enclosed and compartmentalised with a variety of land uses. The landscape includes woodland, pasture, with hedgerows and grassed areas for formal and informal recreation. However, there are plotland developments across much of the centre of the parcel which amount to inappropriate development and a semi-rural perception through the main routes across the parcel, whilst the eastern portion contains a school and a leisure facility and displays no countryside character. The parcel is surrounded by residential or other built development uncharacteristic to a rural location across the entire length of its boundary which normally would create a perception of this parcel being in the countryside. The parcel is also poorly related to the wider countryside system.</p>	<p>Minor</p>

Parcel Summary

The parcel is located in the north of the borough and is adjacent to Thundersley along its northern, southern and western boundary, with Hadleigh adjacent to the south east boundary. There is not a clear boundary between the urban settlement and the Green Belt parcel due to the presence of ribbon development along the eastern edge and through much of the centre of the parcel. Much of this development is inappropriate in the Green Belt and therefore the parcel is assessed as making a moderate contribution to Purpose 1 even though the development which exists in the parcel is of a much lower density than that included in the urban settlement. The parcel is surrounded by residential or other built development uncharacteristic to a rural location across the entire length of its boundary which, coupled with the development within the parcel itself, strongly influences the

perception of this parcel being in the countryside. A minor contribution is assessed under this Purpose.

The parcel is assessed as not making a contribution to Purpose 2 as development of the undeveloped parts of the parcel would result in the infilling of Thundersley and not result in the merging of Thundersley and Hadleigh, which in any event have already merged at other points outside of the parcel.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level this Green Belt parcel is restricting a small part of Hadleigh and Thundersley from merging, although this merge has already occurred to a significant degree in close proximity. It is a fairly isolated Green Belt pocket which is only linked to the surrounding Green Belt system to the east, but it has a role in providing a recreational resource to residents in Hadleigh and Thundersley.

Green Belt Parcel 7



Parcel Description

The parcel is situated in the north west of the borough and comprises West Wood which is Ancient Woodland.

The boundaries have been drawn around the site of the Ancient Woodland. The south eastern, southern and south western boundary follows residential curtilages of dwellings in Hadleigh.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The southern portion of the parcel is adjacent to residential dwellings in Hadleigh. Although the boundary is not considered to follow robust, permanent features, there has been no sprawl into the parcel.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Development of the southern portion of the parcel would amount to the infilling of Hadleigh whilst development of the northern portion would act to extend Hadleigh northwards. This would bring development in Hadleigh closer to the urban settlement of Daws Heath. The existing topography would mean that there would be inter-visibility between Hadleigh and Daws Heath even though the settlements wouldn't physically merge, meaning that this parcel makes a strong contribution to this purpose.	Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Although the southern portion is adjacent to the urban settlement of Hadleigh, there has been no development within the parcel. The parcel takes the form of a substantial area of ancient woodland. The size of the parcel and the degree of woodland cover means that this parcel is not assessed as being influenced by the residential	Very Strong

	development along the periphery of the southern portion of the parcel, while it is also connected to a further expanse of countryside to the north.	
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Parcel Summary

The parcel is situated in the north east of the borough and comprises West Wood which is Ancient Woodland. There is no development within the parcel so it makes a very strong contribution to Purpose 1 and it is also not assessed as being influenced by development uncharacteristic to the countryside at periphery locations, leading to a very strong contribution to Purpose 3. Development of this parcel would result in inter-visibility between Hadleigh and Daws Heath, although these settlements would not physically merge, meaning that the parcel makes a strong contribution to Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level this parcel provides a link to Parcel 6 to the west. This link is fundamental, as otherwise parcel 6 would be isolated from the wider Green Belt system. Collectively, this and the adjacent Green Belt parcel (Parcel 4) are effective in restricting Hadleigh merging into Daws Heath. All the Green Belt parcels around Daws Heath act as a protective ring of Green Belt around that settlement.

Green Belt Parcel 8



Parcel Description

The parcel is located in the north east of the borough, surrounding the south eastern border of Daws Heath and the ancient landscape area which forms Parcel 5. This parcel is predominantly a green field area with low vegetation cover which differentiates it from the Ancient Woodland parcels to the north and south. This parcel also has some wooded areas and a degree of ribbon development and agricultural development, with these developments further differentiating it from the surrounding parcels.

The northern boundary follows residential curtilages associated with Daws Heath before following the boundary of the ancient landscape which forms Parcel 5 until it meets the A127 which also forms the administrative boundary with Rochford District. The north eastern corner of the parcel is defined by where the administrative boundary between Rochford and Castle Point meets with that of Southend-on-Sea. The eastern boundary follows residential curtilages associated with Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, which broadly follows the route of the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea until it meets the Ancient Woodland defined as Parcel 9. The southern boundary follows the boundary of the Ancient Woodland until it reaches the curtilages of dwellings associated with Hadleigh. The western boundary follows the curtilages of dwellings in Hadleigh before following Daws Heath Road before meeting with the northern boundary.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to Daws Heath at the northern boundary, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea to the east and Hadleigh to the south west. Other than for a small proportion of the western boundary, these boundaries take the form of the curtilages of residential properties and are therefore not considered to be strongly robust.	Strong

	<p>However, along the extent of most of these boundaries there has not been sprawl meaning that these boundaries are well defined. Nonetheless, there is evidence of sprawl into the parcel taking the form of ribbon development originating from Daws Heath and following the route of Bramble Road in the eastern portion of the parcel. Daws Heath Road, located in close proximity to the western boundary and which runs between Hadleigh and Daws Heath also contains a small amount of ribbon development. There are further, localised examples of sprawl in the north east whilst in general, the western portion is open field.</p> <p>Although sprawl has therefore occurred within the parcel, the degree of sprawl compared to the size of the parcel, and its proximity to three separate urban settlements means that it is assessed as strongly contributing to this purpose.</p>	
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	<p>The parcel is adjacent to Daws Heath, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, which is primarily in Southend-on-Sea, and Hadleigh and as such its development would lead to the physical merging of these three settlements. Leigh-on-Sea is some distance from the other two settlements, being approximately 1.2km away, and is already merged with Hadleigh further south across Bellfairs Park. However, the strategic gap between Daws Heath and Hadleigh is approximately 250m and comprised solely of this parcel, meaning that this parcel make a very strong contribution to this purpose.</p>	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Other than the ribbon developments already highlighted, the remainder of the parcel comprises of a number of farms and associated dwellings along with agricultural fields. The landscape is compartmentalised with hedges and fences separating areas, and it is also well screened by trees and hedges. Roads are few and narrow. The parcel adjoins significant expanses of countryside to the north and south but there is however residential development located along much of the boundaries in the eastern and western portion of the site which influence the perception of the parcel being in open countryside at these locations, which is further compounded by the ribbon developments in the centre.</p>	Moderate

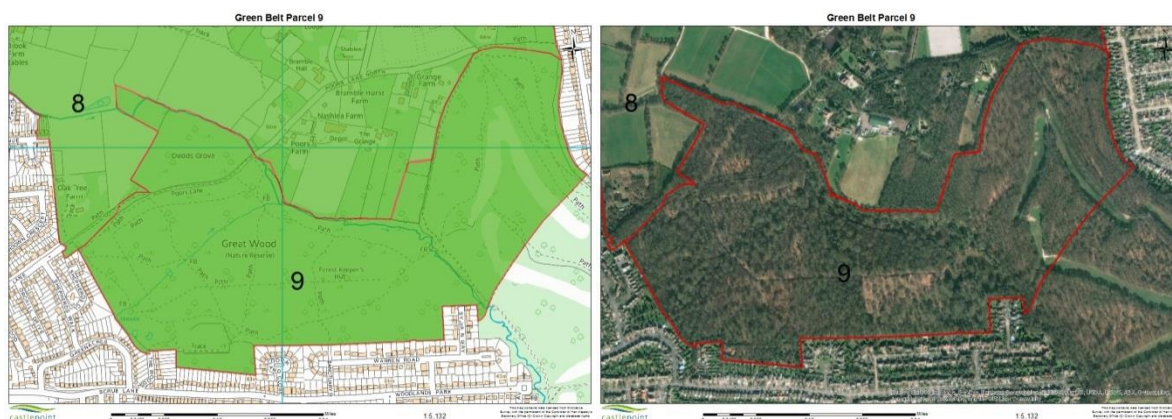
Parcel Summary

Parcel 8 is adjacent to the three settlements of Hadleigh, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea in Southend-on-Sea and Daws Heath meaning that it makes a very strong contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. Although the majority of the urban/rural boundaries between the settlements and the Green Belt parcel are not considered to be strongly robust or permanent, there has only been limited ribbon development in the parcel, with the greater proportion of dwellings being farmhouses or buildings ancillary to agricultural use. As such the parcel makes a strong contribution to Purpose 1. The parcel adjoins significant expanses of countryside to the north and south but there is however residential development located along much of the boundaries in the eastern and western portion of the site which influence the perception of the parcel being in open countryside at these locations, which is further compounded by the ribbon developments in the centre. As such a moderate contribution is assessed under Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

This parcel serves to prevent urban sprawl into nearby Eastwood, as it restricts the urban development of the settlement, thus maintaining a demarcation between Castle Point and Southend on Sea administrative boundaries in this area. This parcel is within a Green Belt system; all of the Green Belt parcels around Daws Heath act as a protective ring of Green Belt around the settlement.

Green Belt Parcel 9



Parcel Description

The parcel is situated in the north east of the borough and comprises solely of Ancient Woodland.

The boundaries have been drawn around the Ancient Woodland designation. The eastern boundary follows residential curtilages associated with dwellings in Leigh-on-Sea in Southend-on-Sea and continues along the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea. Beyond this boundary is a parcel of Green Belt which lies in Southend-on-Sea. The southern and western boundaries follow curtilages of dwellings in Hadleigh.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The eastern boundary of the parcel is adjacent to residential dwellings in Leigh-on-Sea in Southend-on-Sea and the parcel of Green Belt which remains in Leigh-on-Sea, whilst the southern and western boundary is adjacent to dwellings in Hadleigh. Although these boundaries are not considered to follow robust, permanent features, there has been no sprawl into the parcel.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Whilst Hadleigh is already completely merged with the part of Leigh-on-Sea to the south of Belfairs Park, Parcel 9 blocks all inter-visibility between Hadleigh and the part of Leigh-on-Sea to the north of Belfairs Park. This parcel also constitutes the entirety of a strategic gap which remains between Hadleigh and the part of Leigh-on-Sea north of Belfairs Park. Although a degree of merge has already taken place between Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea, this parcel is assessed as making a strong contribution to this	Very Strong

	purpose as there are no other parcels which would act as a barrier to the merging, or perception of merging, of this part of Leigh-on-Sea with Hadleigh.	
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	There has been no development within the parcel, which is entirely comprised of woodland. The nature of the land use combined with the size of the parcel means that it is assessed as not being influenced by the residential development which exists to the south and west of the parcel, whilst the parcel also connects to further countryside in the north west and south east.	Very Strong

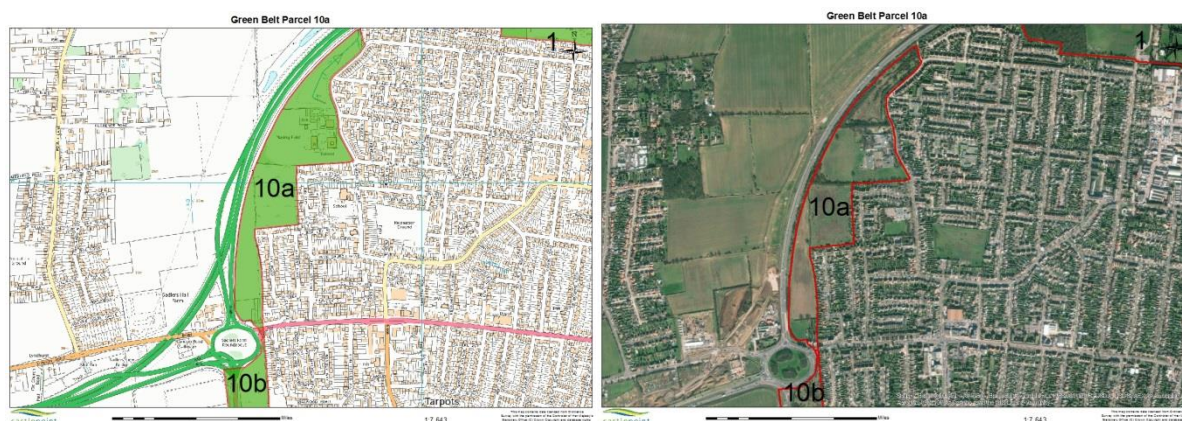
Parcel Summary

The parcel is defined by the boundaries of designated Ancient Woodland. It contains no development and therefore makes a very strong contribution to Purpose 1 and is also not influenced by surrounding development, leading to a very strong contribution to Purpose 3. Whilst the settlements of Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea have already merged to the south of Belfairs Park, Parcel 9 acts as the entirety of the strategic gap between Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea to the north as well as providing a strong barrier to inter-visibility. It therefore makes a strong contribution to the prevention of neighbouring towns merging.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel connects the “ring” of Green Belt parcels which surround Daws Heath to the Green Belt within the Southend on Sea administrative area. The presence of this Green Belt parcel ensures that the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Southend in this area is demarked.

Green Belt Parcel 10A



Parcel Description

The parcel is located to the north west of the borough, and comprises of land between South Benfleet and the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Basildon. The parcel is largely free of built development other than for a school in the north. It has been parcelled as it is bound by the A130 to the west and the settlement of Benfleet to the east, whilst it was split from Parcel 10B as Sadlers Farm Roundabout in the south creates a pinchpoint.

The eastern boundary follows the route of Rushbottom Lane followed by the residential curtilages of the most westerly dwellings in South Benfleet down to the A130. The western boundary follows Sadlers Roundabout anti-clockwise before meeting the A130, with the boundary then following that road until it meets the curtilages of residential dwellings associated with Hornbeams.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The entirety of the eastern boundary follows the western edge of South Benfleet. In the north west it follows the path of Rushbottom Lane which is considered to be a permanent boundary but a significant proportion of the parcel boundary takes the form of residential curtilages. Nonetheless, there is very little built development within the parcel, with the sum of the development taking the form of a school and associated buildings in the north of the parcel, and a small collection of dwellings at the pinchpoint by the A130. This amount of sprawl is assessed as minor in the context of the level of urban development across the eastern boundary.	Very Strong

2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel represents approximately 100m of the total strategic gap of 500m between South Benfleet and North Benfleet. It is considered that there is no inter-visibility between South Benfleet and North Benfleet, with the A130 forming a strong permanent boundary.	Minor
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The area generally provides an edge to the housing areas and a landscape corridor beside the A130. The parcel is a relatively narrow strip of land and is considered to be strongly influenced by residential development to the east and the A130 to the west. The parcel is cut off from the wider countryside by these features and also contains a school in the north which is uncharacteristic of the countryside and relatively prominent given the size and configuration of the parcel.	Minor

Parcel Summary

The area generally provides a rural edge to the housing areas and a rural landscape corridor beside the A130. Sprawl is very limited given the extent and nature of the rural/urban boundary which means a very strong contribution is assessed under Purpose 1. The development which is present is considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt but this is minor given the extent of residential development to the east. However, the parcel is a relatively narrow strip of land and is considered to be strongly influenced by residential development to the east and the A130 to the west. The parcel is cut off from the wider countryside by these features and therefore a minor contribution is assessed under Purpose 3. With regard to Purpose 2, a minor contribution has been assessed given the fact that this parcel represents a small proportion of the total gap between two settlements, where there is also no inter-visibility.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel demarks part of the boundary of the western extent of Castle Point borough. The parcel also provides a linkage to the Green Belt systems outside of the borough in Basildon, which in turn links to a wider Green Belt system.

Green Belt Parcel 10B



Parcel Description

The parcel is located on the western boundary of the borough and comprises of land between South Benfleet and the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Basildon. It has been parcelled as it is bound by the A130 to the west and the settlement of Benfleet to the east, whilst it was split from Parcel 10A as Sadlers Farm Roundabout creates a pinchpoint. The parcel is largely free of built development other than for a collection of buildings along Jotmans Lane which include farm buildings, commercial and stables. There is also a reservoir in the central portion of the parcel.

The northern boundary of the parcel follows Sadlers Farm Roundabout, the eastern boundary follows the residential curtilage of properties and allotment gardens in South Benfleet until it meets the railway line which comprises the southern boundary. The western boundary follows the administrative boundary of the borough, beyond which is further Green Belt land associated with the borough of Basildon.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to curtilages associated with South Benfleet along the entirety of the eastern boundary. Although this boundary is not considered to be strong and robust, there has been no urban sprawl into the area.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel represents a small proportion of the total strategic gap of approximately 550m between South Benfleet and North Benfleet. It is considered that there is no inter-visibility between South Benfleet and North Benfleet, with multiple lanes and slip roads of the A130 providing a robust barrier between the two urban areas.	Minor

3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The area generally provides an edge to the housing areas and a landscape corridor beside the A130. The topography is undulating with a long slope down toward the estuary and primarily takes the form of pasture used as fields for horses. The only built development within the parcel is a collection of buildings primarily in agricultural use towards the south, although some of these incorporate commercial uses, as well as a reservoir in the central portion. However, the parcel is a relatively narrow strip of land and is considered to be influenced by residential development to the east and the A130 to the west, although not to the same degree as Parcel 10a to the north which is narrower still. The parcel is assessed as being cut off from the wider countryside by this peripheral development.	Moderate
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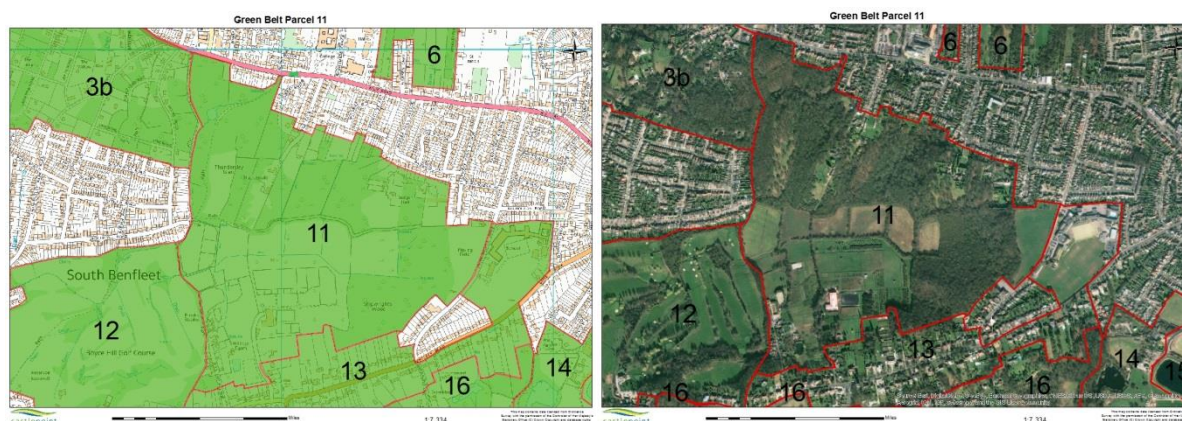
Parcel Summary

The parcel is located on the western boundary of the borough and comprises of land between South Benfleet and the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Basildon. There has been no urban sprawl into the parcel even though the full extent of the eastern boundary takes the form of residential curtilages and therefore a very strong contribution is assessed under Purpose 1. However, the parcel is a relatively narrow strip of land and is considered to be influenced by residential development to the east and the A130 to the west. The parcel is cut off from the wider countryside by these features and therefore a moderate contribution is assessed under Purpose 3. With regard to Purpose 2, a weak contribution has been assessed given the fact that this parcel represents a small proportion of the total gap between two settlements, where there is also no inter-visibility and a significant barrier exists outside of the parcel.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel demarks part of the boundary of the western extent of Castle Point borough. The parcel also provides a linkage to the Green Belt systems outside of the borough in Basildon, which in turn links to a wider Green Belt system.

Green Belt Parcel 11



Parcel Description

The parcel is located in the centre of the borough between South Benfleet, Thundersley and Hadleigh. It is largely free of built development although there are dwellings along the northern and western boundary with the latter also containing farm buildings and equestrian related development. There are further isolated residential dwellings in the northern portion of the parcel. The parcel also contains significant wooded areas some of which have been designated as Ancient Woodland, and a playing field.

A small proportion of the northern boundary follows the route of Kiln Road before following residential curtilages associated with the southern edge of Thundersley. The eastern boundary follows the route of Shipwrights Drive and then runs along the rear curtilage of dwellings on Shipwrights Drive. The southern boundary follows residential curtilages of dwellings associated with Benfleet Road and Vicarage Hill with the western boundary following a path which wraps around residential curtilages associated with South Benfleet before meeting Kiln Road

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The northern, half of the eastern, the southern and part of the western boundary are adjacent to urban settlements. For the most part, these boundaries take the form of residential curtilages and are therefore not robust features. There has been a small amount of sprawl across the northern boundary and isolated residential sprawl in the northern portion and the south west. However, in the context of the parcel, and particularly given the amount of urban development surrounding the parcel, it is considered that this parcel makes a very strong	Very Strong

	contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.	
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel is adjacent to Thundersley and South Benfleet and represents the entire strategic gap between the two settlements in this area. The parcel also represents approximately 1050m of the approximate total 1250m gap between the two settlements of South Benfleet and Hadleigh. Its development would therefore lead to the actual merging of Thundersley and South Benfleet, and the significant reduction of the strategic gap between South Benfleet and Hadleigh, giving rise to the strong perception of merging between the two. Development would also lead to the merging of South Benfleet with the ribbon development to the south of the parcel stretching out from Hadleigh.	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The area is undulating and comprises a large amount of woodland, with fields of pasture and new planting, and grassed area of formal recreation. The land is enclosed by hedges into fairly small units. The topography and woodland contribute to make the area relatively enclosed behind a fringe of residential development. In the context of the parcel as a whole, development within the parcel that is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt is well screened and isolated. The parcel is considered to be of such a size as to not be strongly influenced by the residential development at the northern, southern and part of the western boundary, which in any event are predominantly screened by woodland. The parcel contains links to the countryside to the north west and south west.	Very Strong

Parcel Summary

The parcel is located in the centre of the borough between South Benfleet, Thundersley and Hadleigh, and forms all or a significant proportion of the gap between these three settlements. It is largely free of built development considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt, with that which is present being well screened. This is despite the absence of features which would act to provide a robust boundary between the rural and urban environments. The parcel is also considered to be of such a size as to not be influenced by the residential development at the northern, southern and part of the western boundary. As such the parcel makes a very strong contribution to all three purposes.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel serves to maintain the link from the north-west Green Belt parcels of the borough to the Green Belt parcels within the central and southern areas of the borough. This is an important link as it also connects the Green Belt parcels within the borough with the wider Green Belt system in adjacent administrative areas. Directly north of this parcel is where the urban area of Hadleigh and Thundersely merge; the demarcation between the settlements is blurred by urban development that has isolated parcel 6, and resulted in fragmentation of the Green Belt to the south of Hadleigh from the ring of Green Belt around Daws Heath.

Green Belt Parcel 12



Parcel Description

Parcel 12 lies in the centre of the borough with the vast majority of the parcel being developed as a golf course. There are a small number of residential dwellings incorporated into the parcel in the south east corner as well a Bed & Breakfast in the centre of the southern boundary. There are also a small number of buildings associated with the golf course in the south of the parcel.

The northern boundary follows residential curtilages associated with Underhill Road in South Benfleet and the eastern boundary follows a path alongside the edge of the golf course until it meets Vicarage Hill. The southern boundary follows the route of Vicarage Hill before following the edge of the golf course which also makes up the western boundary. Immediately beyond the southern and western boundaries is a tree line and curtilages of residential dwellings also associated with South Benfleet.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to South Benfleet on its northern, western and most of its southern edge. Although the boundaries are primarily formed by a small tree belt and residential curtilages, so are not robust, there has not been any sprawl into the majority of the parcel. This is however strongly influenced by the fact that the majority of the parcel is a golf course. There has been a small amount of ribbon development in the south east corner on land outside of the golf course which is associated with the ribbon development running through Parcel 13.	Very Strong

2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Parcel 12 forms the entirety of the strategic gap between South Benfleet and the ribbon development extending west of Hadleigh. There are views into the area from the surrounding high ground and nearby properties have views down to the area between the trees and areas of woodland. Development of this parcel would significantly increase the physical and perceived merge between these two settlements.	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Whilst the use of this area as a golf course requires some amenity provision, golf courses by their nature are open and green, and therefore this parcel by virtue of both its designation and use prevents urban encroachment into the countryside. The parcel contains very limited screening across its entirety meaning that the perception of countryside is slightly influenced by the residential development at the periphery to the north, west and part of the southern boundary.	Strong

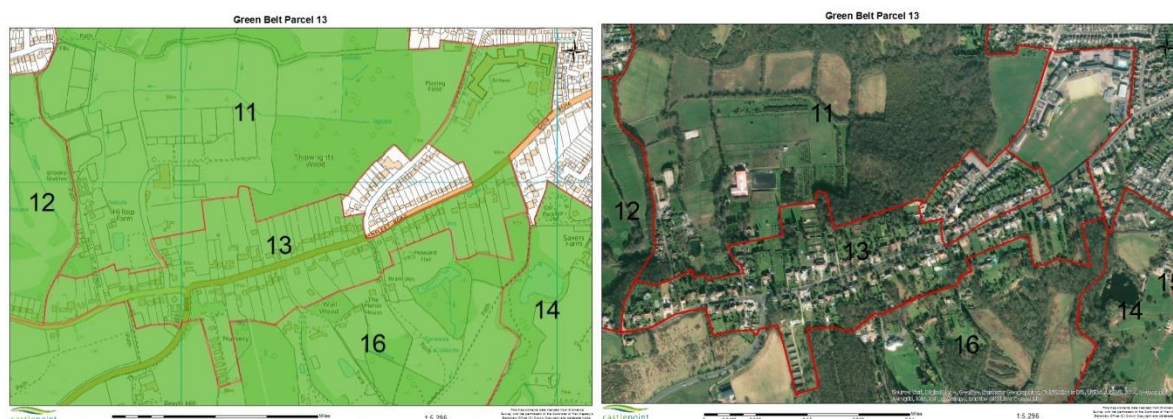
Parcel Summary

Parcel 12 lies in the centre of the borough with the vast majority of the parcel being developed as a golf course. The parcel is adjacent to South Benfleet on its northern, western and most of its southern edge. Although the boundaries are primarily formed by a small tree belt and residential curtilages, so are not robust, there has not been any sprawl into the majority of the parcel other than for a small amount of ribbon development in the south east extending out from Hadleigh. Golf courses by their nature are open and green, and therefore this parcel by virtue of both its designation and use prevents urban encroachment into the countryside. The parcel also forms the entirety of the strategic gap between South Benfleet and the ribbon development extending west of Hadleigh. As such, the parcel is considered to be making a very strong contribution to Purpose 1 and Purpose 2. However, the parcel contains very limited screening across its entirety meaning that the perception of countryside is slightly influenced by the residential development at the periphery to the north, west and part of the southern boundary. Nonetheless, a strong contribution is made against Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

This parcel contributes to ensuring that the demarcation of urban areas is maintained and that the linkage between the Green Belt parcels within the north of the borough and south of the borough is retained.

Green Belt Parcel 13



Parcel Description

Parcel 13 is situated centrally within the borough between Benfleet and Hadleigh. A school is situated within the north east corner of the parcel, with the parcel primarily taking the form of a ribbon of residential development extending into the Green Belt from Hadleigh. The area has been parcelled on this basis.

All of the boundaries associated with this parcel take the form of residential curtilages of properties associated with Benfleet Road other than in the north east corner where the boundary extends outwards to incorporate a school and its grounds.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is closely related to an adjacent urban area such that there is no significant break between the built-up urban area and the parcel. However, the development is confined to frontage land only, with extensive areas of openness to the rear. Therefore, whilst there is strong evidence of sprawl into the Green Belt, its designation as Green Belt safeguards against any further sprawl into the countryside. Strategic development would conflict with the purpose of the Green Belt as it would result in increasing the density of what is already an undesirable settlement pattern.	Moderate
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel is characterised as ribbon development between South Benfleet and Hadleigh which passes through the entire length of the parcel. As such the parcel does not act as a rural break between two settlements.	None

3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel is closely related to an adjacent urban area such that there is no significant break between the built-up urban area and the parcel, therefore the overriding character is that of residential development. However, the vast majority of development is confined to frontage land only, with extensive areas of openness to the rear. The Green Belt designation reduces the possibility that large gardens in the parcel can be partitioned and then sold for housing. Such an action would increase the degree of encroachment and reduces green field land, which would further detrimentally affect the character of the Green Belt. The parcel is linked to further countryside to the north, south and west although these links are fractured given the amount of development within the parcel itself.	Minor
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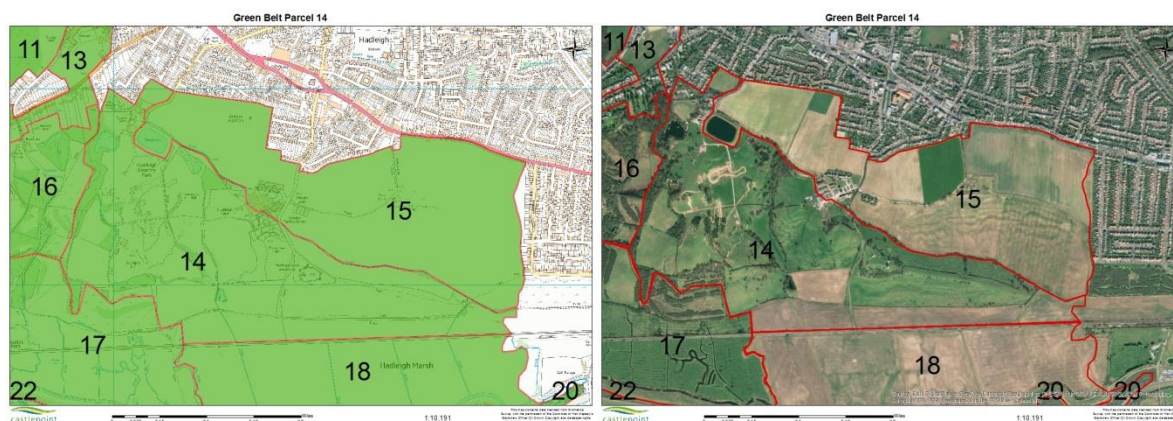
Parcel Summary

The parcel primarily takes the form of a ribbon of residential development extending into the Green Belt from Hadleigh. It is however assessed as making a moderate contribution to preventing unrestricted sprawl as development is confined to frontage land only, with extensive areas of openness to the rear. Further development would increase residential densities of what is already an undesirable settlement pattern. The overriding perception of the area is of residential development so the degree of encroachment is significant, but the designation is acting to prevent the propagation of an undesirable settlement pattern, whilst there are fractured links to further countryside to the north and south and west. As such a weak contribution is assessed under Purpose 3. With regard to Purpose 2, it is not considered that a contribution is being made due to the fact that the parcel does not function as a rural break.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel is not a highly dense urban settlement but generously spaced residential units. As a result, there is still some limited linkage through this parcel to green belt to the north, south and west. Had the extent of the urban encroachment been greater then this linkage could be severed.

Green Belt Parcel 14



Parcel Description

This parcel is located in the east of the borough and largely comprises of Hadleigh Country Park. The parcel has however been extended to the south to allow for the railway line to form its southern boundary as well as the south western boundary being slightly extended to follow a footpath which wraps around a wooded area. It is characterised as a parcel due to its usage as a public open space (whereas the surrounding areas are not designated as open space).

The parcel is almost entirely devoid of built development other than for a collection of commercial and leisure facilities associated with the Hadleigh Country Park in the north, agricultural buildings associated with Hadleigh Farm adjacent to the centre of the northern boundary and the remains of Hadleigh Castle.

As mentioned above the boundaries represent the extent of public open space and primarily take the form of paths other than for the southern boundary which follows the path of the railway line. This is the only parcel boundary which is considered to be robust.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to Hadleigh at its northern most point but is otherwise detached from the urban area. Where adjacent to the settlement, the boundary is not robust but there is nonetheless very limited development such that sprawl has been checked.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	This parcel is part of a large landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. There is a significant gap between these settlements made up by a number of other parcels as well as the railway line and Benfleet	Minor

	Creek which would be physical barriers to the urban areas merging. Nonetheless, due to inter-visibility between the urban settlements, this parcel represents a small part of the total contribution to this purpose in conjunction with the other parcels in the strategic gap.	
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Whilst the commercial development supporting the Country Park is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, this is concentrated entirely to the northern most part of the parcel, with the remainder of the parcel being entirely devoid of any built development other than for a small cluster of agricultural buildings. The area largely comprises of woodland, pasture, and a strip of arable farmland beside the railway. The parcel is adjacent to further countryside along the vast majority of its entire border, with the railway line not considered to significantly impact on any perception of countryside.	Very Strong

Parcel Summary

This parcel largely comprises of Hadleigh Country Park. The parcel is almost entirely devoid of built development other than for a collection of commercial and leisure facilities associated with Hadleigh Country Park in the north, agricultural buildings associated with Hadleigh Farm adjacent to the centre of the northern boundary and the remains of Hadleigh Castle. As such the parcel is very strongly contributing to Purpose 1, whilst there is also no development considered uncharacteristic at the periphery of the site, leading to a very strong contribution under Purpose 3. The parcel is not considered to be relevant to Purpose 2. Although there are long views across the strategic gap between Hadleigh and Canvey Island, such that there is inter-visibility between the high ground in Hadleigh and the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island, there is a significant gap between these settlements. Further, the railway line and Benfleet Creek would be physical barriers to the two urban areas merging.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel is well connected to the Green Belt parcels to the north and south. This means it has an important role in maintaining a high level of connectivity between Green Belt parcels in the borough and helps facilitate significant countryside amenity opportunities and exploration of this historically and ecologically important area.

Green Belt Parcel 15



Parcel Description

This parcel is located in the east of the borough. This area is open farmland and countryside, and is home to a Roman Fortlet, (a scheduled ancient monument). There are a small number of residential dwellings in the parcel along with buildings in rural / agricultural use.

The northern boundary follows residential curtilages associated with Hadleigh as well as the A13. The eastern boundary follows the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea. The southern boundary of the parcel follows a path and a drain and is determined by the designation of the parcel to the south as public open space whilst the western boundary follows Chapel Lane up to the southmost extent of Hadleigh.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The northern boundary is adjacent to residential curtilages in Hadleigh and further residential curtilages in Leigh-on-Sea to the east. These boundaries are not considered to be robust. However, although there are a small number of residential dwellings in the centre of the parcel along Seaview Terrace, as well as a training centre, these have not sprawled directly across from an adjacent urban area and in any event do not define the parcel.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel forms the entirety of a gap between Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea in Southend-on-Sea but these two urban areas are already significantly merged to the north of the parcel boundary.	Minor

	<p>This parcel is also part of a large landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. There is a significant gap between these settlements made up by a number of other parcels as well as the railway line and Benfleet Creek which would be physical barriers to the urban areas merging. Nonetheless, due to inter-visibility between the urban settlements, this parcel represents a small part of the total contribution to this purpose in conjunction with the other parcels in the strategic gap.</p>	
<p>3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The landscape is generally open, slopes from north to south and comprises mainly arable farmland with panoramic views down over Hadleigh Castle to the estuary. Fields are large, with some hedgerows and a few hedgerow trees. There are only isolated examples of built development in the parcel and much of that consists of buildings in rural or agricultural use. There is a small cluster of residential properties associated with Seaview Terrace towards the centre of the parcel as well as a training centre, which are considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, but these do not act to define the parcel. Although the residential development to the north exerts some influence on the parcel, the parcel is assessed as being far more closely associated as being part of a large rural landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island</p>	<p>Very Strong</p>

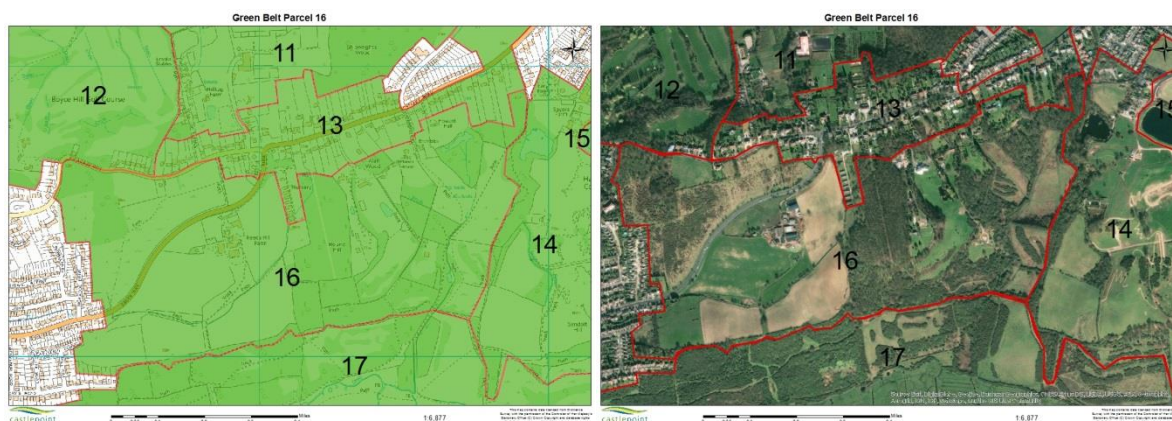
Parcel Summary

This area is open farmland and countryside, adjacent to the urban areas of Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea. There is very little development within the parcel which is considered to be inappropriate to the Green Belt and therefore the parcel makes a very strong contribution to Purpose 1. A very strong contribution is also assessed under Purpose 3. Although the residential development to the north exerts some influence on the parcel, the parcel is part of a large rural landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. However, a minor contribution to Purpose 2 is assessed as, despite the absence of development and the fact the parcel is a rural break between Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea, there is clear inter-visibility between the two settlements such that there is already a perception of merging, whilst there is also already significant merging to the north.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel is well connected to the Green Belt parcels in the north, via the corridor of Green Belt between South Benfleet and Thundersley, and the Green Belt parcels in the south of the mainland. This means it has an important role in maintaining a high level of connectivity between Green Belt parcels and helps facilitate significant countryside amenity opportunities and exploration of this historically and ecologically important area. Despite the parcel being adjacent to the urban fringe, the level of encroachment and sprawl is minimal, thus maintaining the demarcation of the urban area of Hadleigh and preserving the character of the Green Belt.

Green Belt Parcel 16



Parcel Description

This parcel is situated centrally within the borough and is south of Parcel 13 and east of South Benfleet. The parcel signifies the end of the urban encroachments into the Green Belt between Benfleet and Thundersley, (as seen in the parcels to the north) and the start of the Hadleigh Marshes. Its southern boundary is defined by the SSSI area of the marshes, (Parcel 17) and its eastern boundary is defined by the border of Parcel 14, which represents Hadleigh Country Park. The parcel contains some residential development in close proximity to the northern border as well as a farm in the western portion. The B1014 runs through the parcel from the north west to the south west.

The northern boundary follows the route of Vicarage Hill before following the residential curtilages of dwellings associated with the ribbon development along Benfleet Road which emanates from Hadleigh. The eastern boundary follows a path and then wraps around the boundary of Ancient Woodland. The southern boundary follows a country path before running along residential curtilages associated with South Benfleet, with the western boundary also following residential curtilages associated with South Benfleet.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The northern boundary is adjacent to ribbon development emanating from Hadleigh whilst the western boundary is adjacent to South Benfleet. Both boundaries take the form of residential curtilages and are therefore not considered to be robust. Sprawl has however been resisted across the western boundary but this is not the case at the northern boundary, where a number of large properties have been developed inside the parcel. Many of the properties that have sprawled into the	Strong

	Green Belt have large residential curtilages, but the fact that they are in the Green Belt acts to limit their further development.	
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel lies between South Benfleet and Hadleigh and represents the only parcel in the strategic gap at this location. Although the current strategic gap is small in those areas close to the ribbon development, due to the large amount of screening offered by existing woodland and other vegetation in the parcel there is no inter-visibility between most of South Benfleet and Hadleigh. However, due to the sloping topography, there is visibility of properties along Essex Way on the eastern edge of South Benfleet from the ribbon development emanating from Hadleigh. Development of parcel 16 would act to significantly impact on the physical degree and perception of merge between the two areas. As such the parcel is considered to very strongly contribute to preventing neighbouring towns from merging.	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The topography is undulating and slopes down towards the estuary. The parcel comprises of arable land, pasture, woodland and scrub. The landscape is relatively enclosed by woodland and hedges and hedgerow trees. The parcel is adjacent to two urban settlements and although there has been residential sprawl into the parcel, these dwellings are very well screened. A B road runs through part of the parcel but due to the size of the parcel this does not act to significantly detract from its rural nature. The properties to the north overlook the parcel but are well set back from the parcel edge. Given the size of the parcel it is not influenced by the residential development along its western boundary. Coupled with the relative lack of development, the overriding characteristic of the parcel is of countryside, and it contains strong links to further countryside to the east and south.	Very Strong

Parcel Summary

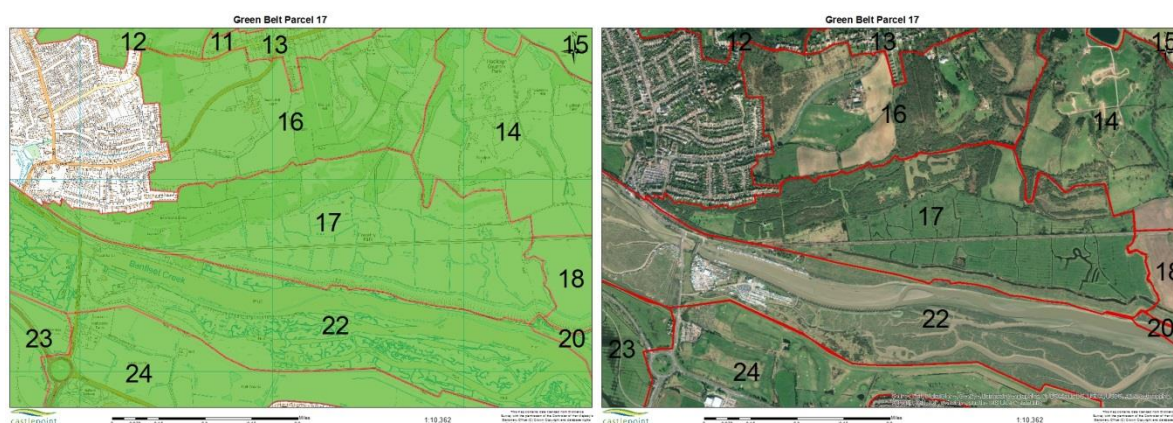
This parcel is situated centrally within the borough and is adjacent to South Benfleet and Hadleigh. Although there has been a small amount of residential sprawl, these properties are well screened and the overriding characteristic of the parcel is of countryside. As such the parcel is assessed as making a strong contribution to Purpose 1, whilst the parcel is of such a size as to not be influenced by the

residential development to the north and west, leading to a very strong contribution under Purpose 3. Given that the parcel is adjacent to two urban settlements, and provides a clear rural break between the two, it is considered to strongly contribute to Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

At the strategic level, this parcel serves to strengthen the link between the north west Green Belt parcels of the borough to the Green Belt parcels within the central and southern areas of the borough. This is an important link as it also connects the Green Belt parcels within the borough to the wider Green Belt system in adjoining administrative areas. To the north of the parcel is where the urban area of Hadleigh and Thundersley merge; the demarcation between the settlements is blurred and this urban development prevents a Green Belt linkage to Parcel 6, which could have linked the ring of Green Belt around Daws Heath to a wider system.

Green Belt Parcel 17



Parcel Description

Parcel 17 is broadly in the centre of the borough, north of Benfleet Creek and to the south west of South Benfleet. It has been parcelled as it is part of the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA and it is also entirely a SSSI. It is also within the Coastal Protection Belt. There is no development within this Green Belt parcel other than a car park in the south west corner, the railway line which runs through the centre and a single residential property in the western portion.

The northern boundary follows a country path, the eastern boundary follows the boundary of the SSSI / SPA until it meets a path running alongside Benfleet Creek which acts as the southern boundary until the path meets the railway line, which the boundary then follows before running down the back of the car park before meeting residential development in South Benfleet. The boundary then follows residential curtilages primarily associated with St Marys Road before meeting up with the country path that forms most of the northern boundary.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	A relatively small proportion of the northern boundary is adjacent to South Benfleet. At this location, the boundary takes the form of residential curtilages and so is not considered to be a robust boundary. However, there has been no sprawl across this boundary.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	A relatively small proportion of the northern boundary is adjacent to South Benfleet. The parcel forms approximately 300m of the total approximate 1150m of the strategic gap between South Benfleet and Canvey Island, and there is inter-visibility between the two. There is however	Minor

	<p>a strong boundary to any physical merge as a result of Benfleet Creek in Parcel 22.</p> <p>Development of Parcel 17 would not lead to inter-visibility between South Benfleet and Hadleigh due to the intervening hills that are located in the south of Parcel 16.</p>	
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>The landscape is flat, is mostly grazing marsh on the low land beside the estuary and is almost entirely free of built development. The land below the woodland edge is open which provides good views along the estuary and up to Hadleigh Castle and the hills beyond. A raised dyke follows the edge of the Creek which also provides access along the site. There are distant views of the area from Canvey Island, with areas of pasture creating a broken pattern of scrub and woodland on the hillside. The parcel links to further countryside across the majority of its boundaries.</p>	Very Strong

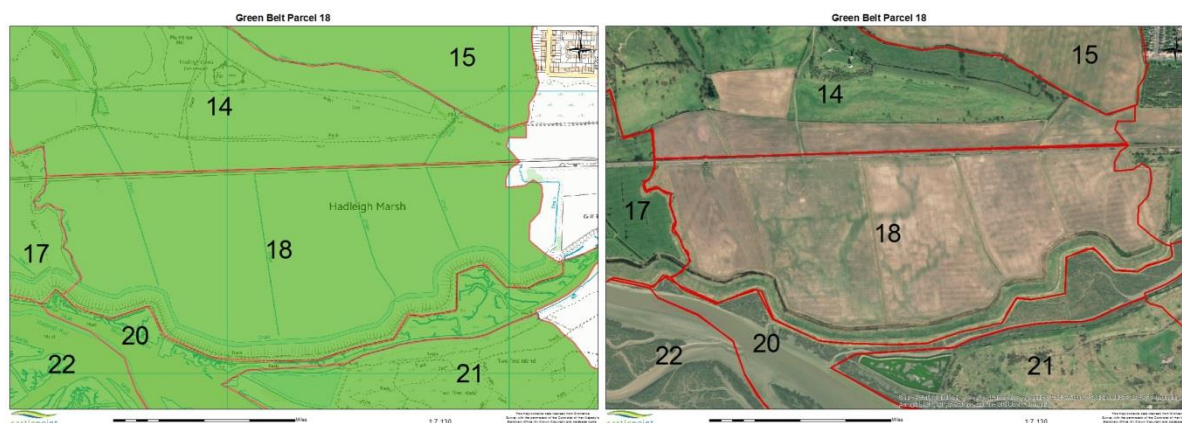
Parcel Summary

Parcel 17 is broadly in the centre of the borough, north of Benfleet Creek and to the south west of South Benfleet. A small proportion of the parcel is adjacent to residential curtilages associated with South Benfleet. Although this boundary is not considered to be robust, there has been no evidence of urban sprawl. Although it lies between South Benfleet and Canvey Island, the presence of Benfleet Creek and mud flats between the two means that these two settlements would not be able to physically merge and as such the parcel makes a weak contribution to this Purpose. The landscape is flat, is mostly grazing marsh on the low land beside the estuary, and is almost entirely free of built development. As such, the parcel displays a strong rural character and also links to further countryside along the majority of its boundaries, therefore making a strong contribution to Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

This parcel demarks the southernmost extent of the Green Belt parcels on the mainland of Castle Point. The Green Belt parcels in this area collectively allow for a wider east to west connection providing a vast area of uninterrupted strip of Green Belt stretching towards Southend and Basildon. This has resulted in areas of high ecological value which also benefit from additional protection with the wider area which is designated as a coastal protection area with the parcel itself being a SSSI.

Green Belt Parcel 18



Parcel Description

Parcel 18 is situated in the south east of the borough on the southernmost extent of the mainland. It is located directly east of Parcel 17 and south of Parcel 14. The parcel comprises of farmland that acts as a drainage area.

The northern boundary follows the railway line between Benfleet Creek and Leigh-on-Sea. The eastern boundary follows the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea. The southern extent of the parcel is defined by the embankment along Benfleet Creek whilst the western boundary follows the boundary of the SSSI / SPA

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is not directly adjacent to an urban area through which development could sprawl, nor it is adjacent to any sprawl originating from an urban area.	Not Relevant
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	This parcel is part of a large landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. There is a significant gap between these settlements made up by a number of other parcels as well as the railway line and Benfleet Creek which would be physical barriers to the urban areas merging. Nonetheless, due to inter-visibility between the urban settlements, this parcel represents a small part of the total contribution to this purpose in conjunction with the other parcels in the strategic gap.	Minor
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside	The landscape is flat with the parcel consisting of arable land which originally functioned as marsh prior to draining. The area is overlooked from the	Very Strong

from encroachment	north where areas of housing are on higher ground but these are some distance from the parcel. To the south there are views from across Benfleet Creek. There is no built development within the parcel, whilst it is also part of a large rural landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island.	
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Parcel Summary

The parcel comprises of farmland which is free of built development and which acts as a drainage area. It is not adjacent to any built development and forms a relatively small part of the strategic gap between Hadleigh / Leigh-on-Sea and Canvey. As such it is assessed as not being relevant to Purpose 1 and making a minor contribution to Purpose 2. The area itself is also free of built development and comprises of arable farmland and it is part of a large rural landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. A very strong contribution is assessed under Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

The parcel forms part of a larger system which helps to preserve the sensitive landscape and ecological character of the large landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island.

Green Belt Parcel 19



Parcel Description

The parcel is situated in the west of the borough and contains a sewage works, a farmhouse, a wildlife sanctuary, a playing field and two portacabins. The majority of the site is comprised of scattered or dense shrubland.

The northern boundary follows a railway line, the eastern boundary follows the path of Benfleet Creek and the western boundary follows the route of Canvey Way. The railway line marks the separation of this parcel from Parcel 10B, which is similar in topography.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to South Benfleet along part of its northern boundary. No residential development has sprawled into the parcel although the boundary comprises of a railway line which is considered to be a robust boundary. There is a sewage works located in the western portion of the parcel which is assessed as constituting urban sprawl, and which accounts is relatively prominent in the context of the parcel.	Moderate
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	This parcel is not considered to fall within a strategic gap between two neighbouring towns.	Not Relevant
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Although screened from the road, the sewage works are visible within the parcel itself and are relatively prominently located just to the east of the centre of the parcel whilst there is also a motorbike track to the east. However, with the	Strong

	<p>sewage works being screened from the A130, the overriding public perception of the site being rural in nature would not be impacted by this facility. Other parts of the site, particularly in the west, are entirely free of development such that overall the parcel is perceived as having a predominantly rural character. The parcel is assessed as being slightly removed from the wider countryside to the west due to the intervening A130 but more closely associated to the countryside in the east where the parcel adjoins the creeks.</p>	
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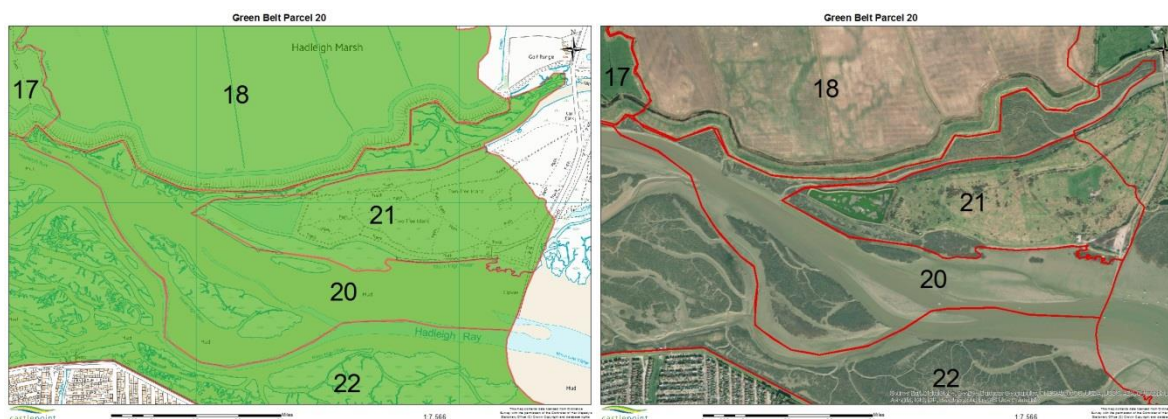
Parcel Summary

The parcel is situated in the west of the borough and is largely comprised of scattered or dense shrubland. It also contains a sewage works, a farmhouse, a wildlife sanctuary, a playing field and two porta cabins. However, much of this development is screened from the A130 such that the overriding perception of the site is that of countryside, albeit slightly removed from the wider countryside to the west due to the intervening infrastructure. A strong contribution is therefore assessed against Purpose 3. The parcel is not considered to lie in between two urban areas and therefore it is not considered to be relevant to Purpose 2. The sewage works are considered to be sprawl from an urban area and constitute a significant proportion of the total landuse.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel demarks part of the boundary of the western extent of the Castle Point borough. It provides a linkage to the Green Belt systems outside of the borough in Basildon, which in turn links to a wider Green Belt system.

Green Belt Parcel 20



Parcel Description

This parcel is situated at the eastern border of the borough directly south of Parcel 18 and encircling Parcel 21. It is within the Benfleet and Southend Marshes and is characteristically tidal. It is entirely free of development.

All of the boundaries of this parcel are delineated by the mean high water mark and are therefore not strictly physical features. However, the eastern boundary of this parcel wraps around Two Tree Island and also follows a part of the administrative boundary.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is not contributing to this purpose by virtue of not being in proximity to a defined urban area through which development could sprawl.	Not Relevant
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	This parcel is part of a large landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. There is a significant gap between these settlements made up by a number of other parcels as well as the railway line and Benfleet Creek which would be physical barriers to the urban areas merging. Nonetheless, due to inter-visibility between the urban settlements, this parcel represents a small part of the total contribution to this purpose in conjunction with the other parcels in the strategic gap.	Minor
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside	The parcel mainly consists of tidal mudflat, to the north of the permanent (low tide) channel of Hadleigh Ray. The area includes a small amount of saltmarsh along the north edge of the creek,	Very Strong

from encroachment	and a low saltmarsh island in the middle of the creek. It also includes the channel between Two Tree Island and the mainland, which contains saltmarsh and varies in width. It is free from built development. Although there is residential development in relative proximity to the south, this is not considered to impact on the perception of this parcel constituting countryside due to the clear change in land typology and extensive rural views in all other directions.	
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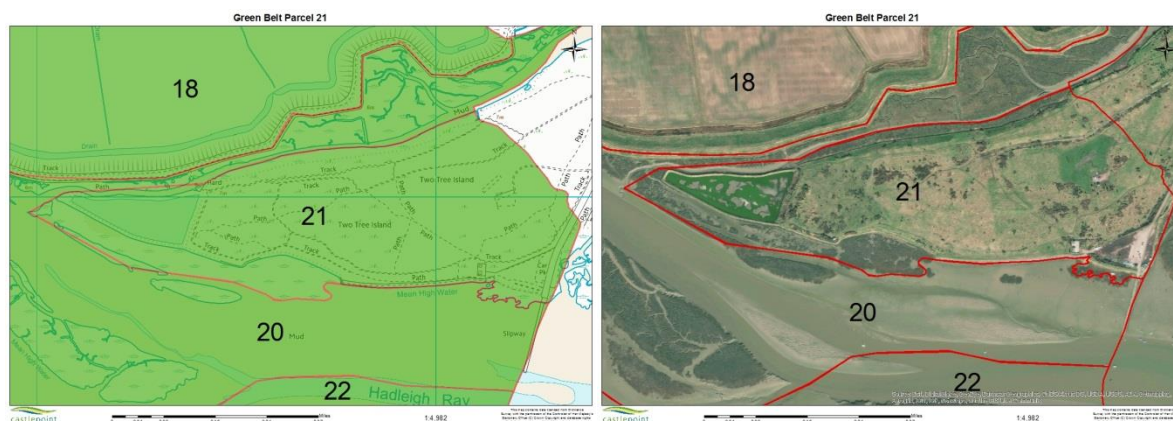
Parcel Summary

This parcel is a tidal area associated with Benfleet Creek. It is not in proximity to built development and is a small part of the strategic gap between Hadleigh / Leigh-on-Sea and Canvey. As such it is not considered to be relevant to Purpose 1 and makes a minor contribution to Purpose 2. The parcel mainly consists of tidal mudflat and is free of development, as well as being part of extensive rural views in conjunction with other parcels, and therefore it makes a very strong contribution to Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel provides an important gateway into the borough from the Green Belt in Leigh-on-Sea. This east to west link between the Green Belt parcels within the borough into Leigh-on-Sea provides a connection between the Green Belt within the Basildon, Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea administrative areas. This parcel also helps to establish a link between the Green Belt in Benfleet and the Green Belt on Canvey Island.

Green Belt Parcel 21



Parcel Description

Parcel 21 comprises the area of Two Tree Island which is primarily open space with sparse vegetation cover. The parcel is almost entirely devoid of built development, with that which exists being two areas of hardstanding used as carparks, isolated outbuildings related to the functioning of the area as a local nature reserve and a model aeroplane runway.

The northern, southern and western boundaries of this parcel follow the Mean High Water mark around Two Tree Island, with the eastern boundary following the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is not contributing to this purpose by virtue of not being in proximity to a defined urban area through which development could sprawl.	Not Relevant
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	This parcel is part of a large landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island. There is a significant gap between these settlements made up by a number of other parcels as well as the railway line and Benfleet Creek which would be physical barriers to the urban areas merging. Nonetheless, due to inter-visibility between the urban settlements, this parcel represents a small part of the total contribution to this purpose in conjunction with the other parcels in the strategic gap.	Minor
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside	The area generally consists of scattered shrubs in long grass with a small number of trees. The landform is fairly flat overall. In the past it was	Very Strong

from encroachment	used as landfill and parts of it are artificially raised. There are very isolated examples of built development within the parcel, amounting to two areas of hardstanding used as carparks, isolated outbuildings related to the functioning of the area as a local nature reserve and a model aeroplane runway. The parcel essentially functions as an important bird habitat and local nature reserve and its primary character is of open countryside. The parcel is also part of a wider network of countryside and contains no development on its periphery.	
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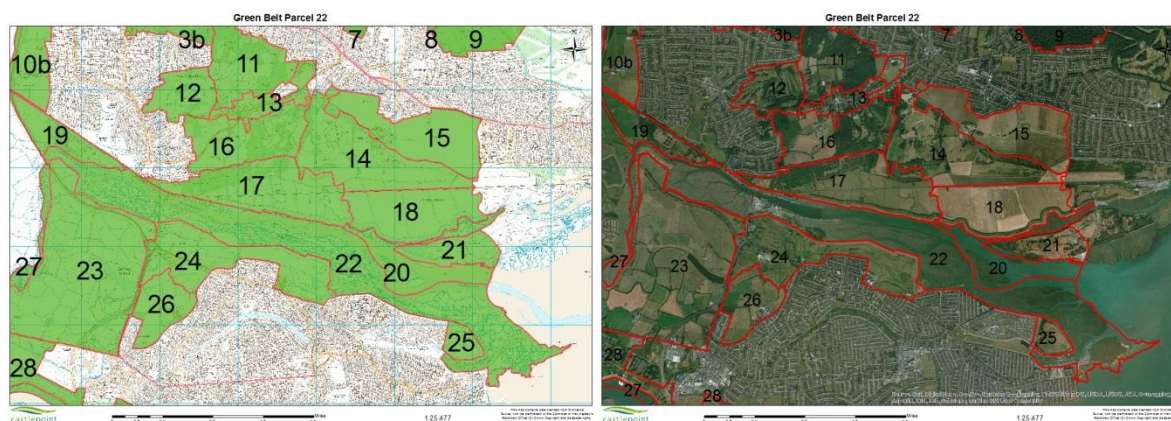
Parcel Summary

This parcel comprises the area of Two Tree Island which is primarily open space with sparse vegetation cover. The parcel is not in proximity to a defined urban area and so is not considered to be relevant to Purpose 1. The parcel makes a minor contribution to Purpose 2 by virtue of being part of the large landscape seen from the high ground in Hadleigh and Leigh-on-Sea and from the low land around Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island.. The parcel essentially functions as an important bird habitat and local nature reserve and its primary character is of open countryside, with no development on its periphery. As such it is assessed as making a strong contribution to Purpose 3.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel provides an important gateway into the borough from the Green Belt situated within Leigh-on-Sea. This east to west link between the Green Belt parcels within the borough into Leigh-on-Sea provides a connection between the Green Belt within the Basildon, Castle Point and Southend on Sea administrative areas.

Green Belt Parcel 22



Parcel Description

This area consists of the length of Benfleet Creek and adjacent saltmarsh, stretching from the Canvey Way bridge eastwards until it widens to form Parcel 20, and the belt of saltmarsh that continues further eastwards on the south of Hadleigh Ray as far as Canvey Point. Much of the southern boundary runs adjacent to the sea wall around Canvey Island. The parcel is free from development other than for a small number of yacht clubs.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel takes the form of a long sinuous strip that is adjacent to Canvey Island and South Benfleet. Due to the hydrology it is unlikely that traditional urban development would become established in this parcel but the Green Belt designation acts to prohibit the proliferation of marine related built development which could otherwise sprawl between the two urban areas. A very strong contribution is assessed under this Purpose due to the near absence of such development.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel takes the form of a long sinuous strip that is adjacent to Canvey Island and South Benfleet. Due to the hydrology it is unlikely that traditional urban development would become established in this parcel but the Green Belt designation acts to prohibit the proliferation of marine related built development which could otherwise sprawl between the two urban areas and contribute to the settlements merging. A very strong contribution is assessed under this	Very Strong

	<p>Purpose due to the near absence of such development.</p> <p>This parcel also forms part of the wider strategic gap between Hadleigh / Leigh-on-Sea and Canvey Island.</p>	
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>The parcel takes the form of a long sinuous strip that is adjacent to Canvey Island and South Benfleet. The area is crossed by the B1014 and adjacent to this is a boat yard. The dominant feature is however the belt of saltmarsh to the south of the tidal channel and enclosed by a sea wall on the south. Numerous creeks wind through the saltmarsh. Due to the hydrology it is unlikely that traditional urban development would become established in this parcel but the Green Belt designation acts to prohibit the proliferation of marine related built development which could otherwise encroach into rural landscape. A very strong contribution is assessed under this Purpose due to the near absence of such development. The Parcel also forms part of a much wider countryside system between Canvey Island and the mainland.</p>	Very Strong

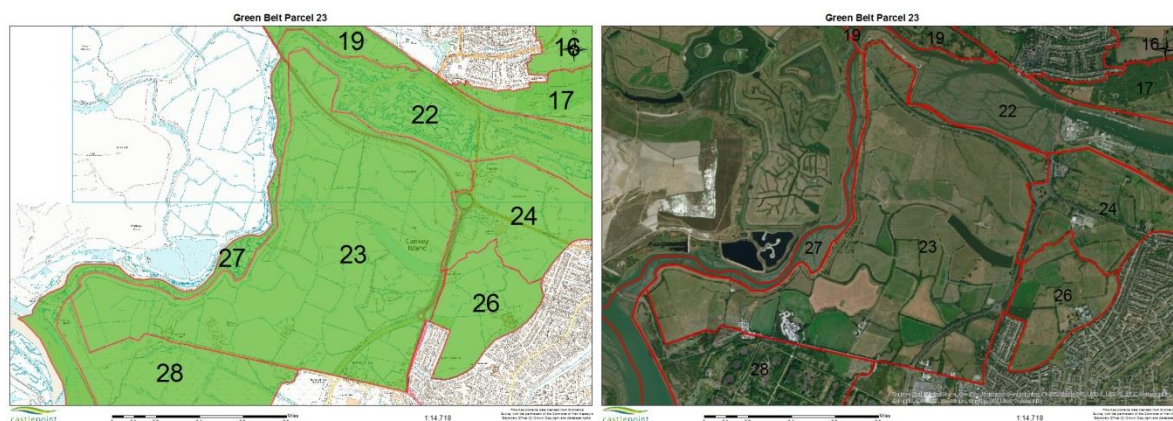
Parcel Summary

This area consists of the length of Benfleet Creek and adjacent saltmarsh. Due to the hydrology it is unlikely that traditional urban development would become established in this parcel but the Green Belt designation acts to prohibit the proliferation of marine related built development which could otherwise sprawl between the two urban areas. The Parcel also forms part of a much wider countryside system between Canvey Island and the mainland. As such a strong contribution is assessed against all three purposes.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel provides connectivity between Green Belt situated within Leigh-on-Sea in the east and Basildon to the west. From a purely Green Belt perspective, this is therefore an important parcel of Green Belt in terms of linking up the Green Belt of the wider sub-region.

Green Belt Parcel 23



Parcel Description

Parcel 23 is situated on the south west of Canvey Island, in the south west of the borough. This is a large area characterised by its low-lying topography, sparse grassland and marshland vegetation. Numerous dykes and drains cross the area and form part of the surface water drainage network for the island. The whole parcel other than for a small portion in the south east is classified as an ancient landscape area. Within the parcel there are two farms and a small amount of other commercial activity including a stables, a garden centre and a self-storage area along or in close proximity to the southern boundary. In the south east is a car park. There is also a sewage works on the southern boundary. The very north eastern corner includes two isolated cottages, with the south east also containing a small amount of residential development.

The northern boundary follows a drain in proximity to Benfleet Creek. The eastern boundary follows the route of the A130 until it meets Northwick Road which forms the southern boundary until the end of that road. The southern boundary continues along a drain which also forms the boundary of the ancient landscape area. The western boundary follows the boundary of East Haven Creek.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	A small proportion of the Green Belt parcel borders the west of Canvey Island. The border takes the form of the A130 and is therefore considered to be robust. However, there has been limited residential and commercial development over the A130 although this is relatively well connected to the settlement outside of the Green Belt. Development in this area is contained more effectively by Roscommon Way. There is limited sprawl along Northwick Road which makes up the	Very Strong

	southern boundary amounting to a sewage works and commercial development. This sprawl is however extremely limited in the context of the whole parcel and as such a very strong contribution against this purpose is assessed.	
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel forms the strategic gap between South Benfleet and Canvey Island in conjunction with Parcel 22, and forms the majority of that gap. At the shortest point between the two settlements, Parcel 23 accounts for approximately 1300m of the approximate 1800m total gap. However, Parcel 22 also constitutes a strong boundary between the two settlements meaning that this parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	Moderate
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel is generally very flat, open, rough grassland. It is generally without hedges and is therefore an expansive landscape. The area is generally all within a local wildlife site and most is managed as an RSPB reserve. There is a visitors' carpark, linked to footpaths across the site. The flat, open character means that higher features beyond the area are noticeable, although they are generally fairly distant, such as higher land to the north, traffic on Canvey Way, Pitsea landfill and the former oil refinery. Whilst there is also some built development around the margins of the parcel, this does not impact significantly on the parcel, with the overwhelming character being of open countryside.	Very Strong

Parcel Summary

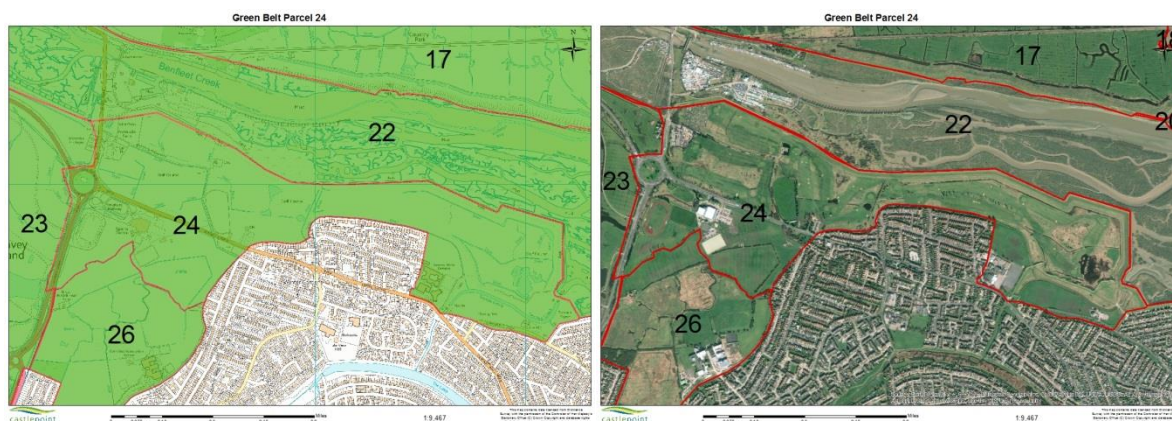
This is a large area characterised by its low-lying topography, sparse grassland and marshland vegetation. There is built development around the southern margin of the parcel which amounts to encroachment but this is relatively well contained in the south eastern corner. There is also limited sprawl along the southern boundary. The overwhelming character of the area is however open countryside and as such a very strong contribution has been assessed against Purpose 1 and Purpose 3. The parcel lies within the strategic gap between South Benfleet and Canvey Island and forms the majority of that gap. However, there is also a strong boundary between the two settlements in another parcel meaning that this parcel makes a moderate contribution to Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel assists in demarking the boundary of the western extent of

Castle Point borough in this area. The parcel directly north, (Parcel 22) provides the parcel with internal links to the Green Belt parcels to the north and east of the borough. When taking this parcel into account with Parcels 27 and 28 they provide an important link to the Green Belt outside of the borough in Basildon and Thurrock. This Green Belt parcel is part of a wider Green Belt area that encircles and demarks the boundary of Canvey's urban settlement.

Green Belt Parcel 24



Parcel Description

Parcel 24 is situated in northern Canvey, south of Benfleet Creek, (Parcel 22) in the south of the borough. The parcel is defined by the range of community and open space uses that occur in this location including a school, a rugby club, a golf course and a sports centre.

The northern boundary follows a sea wall adjacent to Benfleet Creek, with the same wall also forming the eastern boundary until it meets Kellington Road. The southern boundary follows Kellington Road for a short distance before meeting the rear of residential curtilages in proximity to Dovervelt Road. The southern boundary then continues to follow residential curtilages until it meets Central Hall Road until this meets Meppel Avenue. The western boundary runs along the outskirts of the Canvey Skills Campus which also incorporates a synagogue before following further residential curtilages until meeting a water course, which the southern boundary follows until meeting the A130. The western boundary follows the A130 and the B1014 before wrapping around allotment gardens and meeting the northern boundary.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The boundary is adjacent to the northern extent of Canvey Island along a significant proportion of its southern boundary. This boundary takes the form of residential curtilages for the most part and is therefore not considered to be a robust boundary. However, the only evidence of inappropriate development across this boundary is the Canvey Skills Campus, which in the context of the wider parcel is considered to be isolated development and relatively well located in relation to the	Very Strong

	settlement. As such a very strong contribution is assessed.	
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	A significant proportion of the southern boundary is adjacent to Canvey Island. The parcel forms approximately 500m of the total approximate 1200m of the strategic gap between South Benfleet and Canvey Island, and there is inter-visibility between the two. There is however a strong boundary to any physical merge as a result of Benfleet Creek in Parcel 22.	Minor
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	This parcel has generally been taken over by various sporting uses. The largest of these is a golf course, which runs along the whole length of the parcel at the north, from east to west. On the western half of the parcel, the golf course occupies the part to the north of the B1014, while the part to the south of this road is occupied by a sports centre. At the south-east of the parcel is a smaller area occupied by a rugby club, and a small area managed for nature conservation, containing a creek. The north-west corner of the parcel is occupied by waste management and an associated depot and buildings together with some allotments. There is also a Skills Campus in the eastern portion. Despite these latter developments, the vast majority of the parcel is in recreational use, which is permissible in the Green Belt. However, the presence of the waste facility and leisure centre is assessed as detracting from countryside character and there is a residential influence to the south, although this is tempered by the fact that the parcel contains a strong linkage with the wider countryside to the north.	Moderate

Parcel Summary

This parcel is defined by the range of community and open space uses that occur in this location including a school, a rugby club, a golf course and a sports centre. It is adjacent to the northern extent of Canvey Island and although this boundary is not considered to be robust, residential development has not sprawled across this boundary. The vast majority of the parcel is in recreational use, which is permissible in the Green Belt. As a result, this parcel is assessed as making a very strong contribution to Purpose 1. However, the presence of the waste facility is assessed as detracting from countryside character and there is some residential influence on the parcel, although this is tempered by the fact that the parcel contains a strong linkage with the wider countryside to the north. This parcel also lies between South Benfleet and Canvey Island and there is inter-visibility between the two. There is however a

strong boundary to any physical merge as a result of Benfleet Creek in Parcel 22 and as such this parcel makes a minor contribution to Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

The openness of this parcel of Green Belt means that it links well with Green Belt to the north, east and west, where it is in turn connected to the wider Green Belt system. Some development is apparent but it does not sever this link. This Green Belt parcel is part of a wider system that encircles and demarks the boundary of Canvey's urban settlement.

Green Belt Parcel 25



Parcel Description

This parcel is situated on the eastern part of Canvey Island and is bound on the north, south and east by intertidal habitats which form Parcel 22. The western boundary runs along the edge of Kings Park Chalet and Mobile Home Park. This area differs in character and vegetation to the surrounding Green Belt as it is a raised area of grassland, covering a reclaimed landfill site that is separated from the intertidal area by coastal defences.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The western boundary of the parcel is adjacent to the edge of Kings Park Chalet and Mobile Home Park. There has been no urban sprawl across this boundary.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	This parcel is not considered to fall within a gap between two neighbouring towns.	Not Relevant
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	There is a single one story building located on the parcel which is otherwise completely free of built development. The parcel was once a landfill and is now designated as Canvey Heights Country Park. Its landform, which is raised with a gently domed top, is noticeable in the context of the lower, flat surroundings. This therefore means that the proximal residential developments to the west and south are clearly noticeable and impact on the character of the parcel, although there are also strong linkages to the wider countryside to the north and east.	Moderate

Parcel Summary

This parcel is situated on the eastern part of Canvey Island and is bound on the north, south and east by intertidal habitats which form Parcel 22. The western boundary runs along the edge of Kings Park Chalet and Mobile Home Park. The parcel is a reclaimed landfill site which is largely free of built development and which is now designated as Canvey Heights Country Park. A very strong contribution is therefore assessed under Purpose 1. The proximal residential developments to the west and south are clearly noticeable, but there are also strong linkages to the wider countryside to the north and east. Due to the size of the parcel it is considered to be impacted by the residential development leading to a moderate contribution to Purpose 3. This parcel is not considered to fall within a gap between two neighbouring towns and is therefore assessed as not being relevant to Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

This parcel serves to restrict urban sprawl to the east of Canvey and when viewed from the strategic level this Green Belt parcel is part of a wider system that encircles and demarks the boundary of Canvey's urban settlement. Due to its close proximity to the urban population in Canvey it also allows for the access of countryside amenity and enjoyment for local residents. Although relatively small compared to other parcels, this parcel is part of a larger Green Belt area which links the southern Green Belt parcels with the Green Belt parcels to the north.

Green Belt Parcel 26



Parcel Description

This parcel is situated centrally within Canvey, south of parcel 24, and which is primarily characterised by public open space. This parcel is bordered to the west by Canvey Road and the urban settlement of Canvey to the east and south, effectively enclosing the parcel.

The northern boundary takes the form of a water course whilst the eastern and southern boundaries follow a drain in close proximity to the western urban edge of the settlement of Canvey Island. In the south west, the boundary follows the residential curtilage of the Dutch Village, with the western boundary following the path of another drain until it meets the northern boundary.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The eastern, southern and part of the western boundary either follow residential curtilages or a drain in very close proximity to the western urban edge of Canvey Island. These boundaries are not considered to be robust but there is nonetheless no residential sprawl into the parcel. The only development within the parcel which is not considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt is a single school. As such the parcel does not display significant urban characteristics.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel is between Canvey Island and South Benfleet. At its closest point, the current strategic gap between these two settlements is approximately 1200m. Development of this parcel would cause a different part of Canvey Island to come within approximately 1100m of South Benfleet, although there would still be another two parcels between them. One of these parcels	Minor

	contains Benfleet Creek which would be a strong boundary between the two settlements.	
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The landform is generally flat. The land cover is grass, most of which is left long, with some areas cut relatively short. There are ditches with reeds on some field edges and a concrete-lined ditch along one of the area's edges. The area includes the grounds of a school and is bounded by metal fencing. The housing bordering the site to the east, south and part of the west is partially screened. The northern portion is of a different quality to the rest, and is used for formal recreation. The overall character is of a relatively extensive rural area close to large areas of housing, and one also influenced to some degree by the presence of the school in the east of the parcel. The parcel contains linkages to further countryside to the north and west, but these are intervened by a leisure centre and Canvey Road respectively.	Moderate

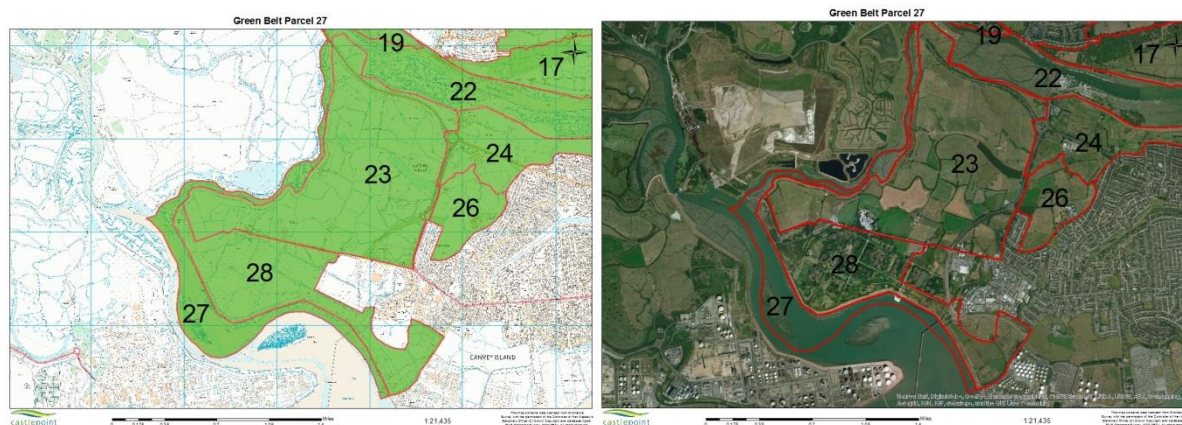
Parcel Summary

This parcel is situated centrally within Canvey, south of parcel 24, and is primarily characterised by public open space. The only development considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt is a school. The overall character of the parcel is of a relatively extensive rural area close to large areas of housing. As such, a very strong contribution is assessed against Purpose 1, although this housing and the school in the east of the parcel influence the perception of the site being in countryside such that a moderate contribution is assessed under Purpose 3. The parcel is located between Canvey Island and South Benfleet. Development of this parcel would create a shorter strategic gap than what currently exists between the two settlements, but this gap would still be over 1km and there would also still be another two parcels between them, of which one contains Benfleet Creek which would be a strong boundary between the two settlements.

Strategic Contribution

From a strategic viewpoint this Green Belt parcel demarks the boundary of the western extent of Canvey's urban settlement. The parcel directly north, (Parcel 24) and west, (Parcel 23) provide this parcel with a link to the Green Belt parcels to the north and east of the borough. This Green Belt parcel is part of a wider system that encircles and demarks the boundary of Canvey's urban settlement.

Green Belt Parcel 27



Parcel Description

This parcel is located in the south west of the borough and comprises of East Haven Creek and Holehaven Creek, with the latter being a SSSI. The western boundary of the parcel follows the administrative boundary between Castle Point and Thurrock.

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to industrial uses in both Canvey Island and Thurrock and yet does not contain any sprawl from these industrial urban areas.	Very Strong
2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The south of the parcel lies in close proximity to industrial areas associated with Canvey Island and Stanford-le-Hope in Thurrock. Development along this part of the Creek, particularly at the mouth, would give rise to physical merging between these industrial areas, which are currently otherwise separated.	Very Strong
3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	This parcel of Green Belt serves to safeguard the countryside from encroachment by marine / water based uses. Its current characteristics are a combination of the countryside environment offered by the parcel itself but with a strong industrial element in the south due to development immediately outside of the parcel. However, towards the north there is a significantly more remote feel. A very strong contribution is assessed as this parcel winds through a large area of countryside, has not been encroached itself, and is of a clearly different land typology to traditional urban uses.	Very Strong

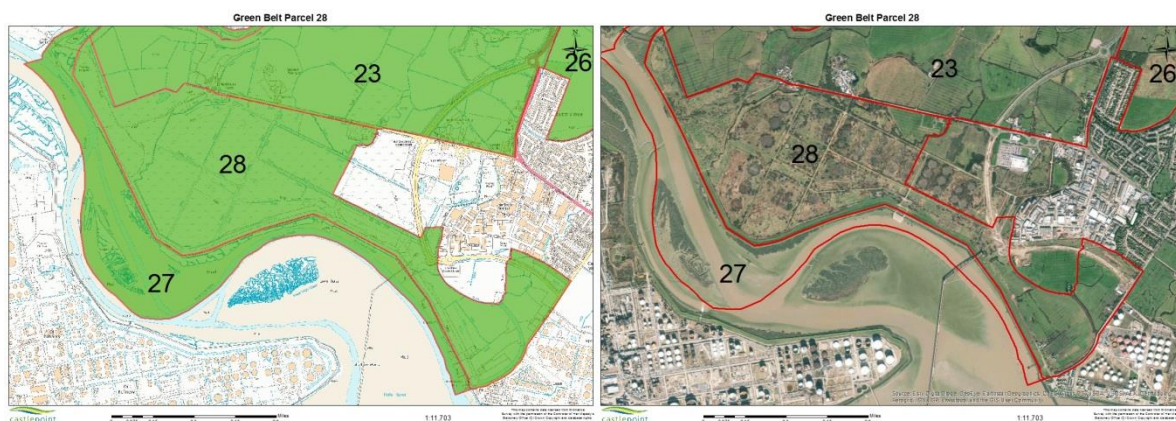
Parcel Summary

This parcel is located in the south west of the borough and comprises of East Haven Creek and Holehaven Creek. The parcel is adjacent to industrial uses in both Canvey Island and Thurrock and yet does not contain any sprawl or encroachment. As such a very strong contribution is assessed against Purpose 1. A very strong contribution is assessed against Purpose 3 as this parcel winds through a large area of countryside, has not been encroached itself, and is of a clearly different land typology to traditional urban uses. The south of the parcel lies in close proximity to industrial areas associated with Canvey Island and Stanford-le-Hope in Thurrock. Development along this part of the Creek, particularly at the mouth, would give rise to physical merging between these industrial areas, which are currently otherwise separated. As such a very strong contribution is assessed against Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

From a strategic viewpoint this Green Belt parcel demarks the boundary of the south western extent of the Castle Point borough. The parcel directly north, (Parcel 28) provides the parcel with a link to the Green Belt parcels further north of the borough. This parcel provides an important link to the Green Belt to the west in Thurrock, which then connects to the wider Green Belt.

Green Belt Parcel 28



Parcel Description

Parcel 28 is situated within the south west corner of the borough and west of Canvey Island. It is north of Parcel 27 and south of Parcel 23. It is similar in character and function of parcel 23 but it is not an ancient landscape area. The area is however important for its ecological value with much of the western and central portions identified as a SSSI, with the majority of the remainder of the parcel identified as a local wildlife site. On most of the parcel work was started to develop it as an industrial storage facility but was then abandoned. The parcel also contains scattered buildings associated with Northwick Farm by the northern boundary, a cemetery also along the northern boundary, a roundabout to the north west and abandoned storage units in the south. There are also isolated storage buildings along Haven Road by the eastern border.

The northern boundary follows a drain before meeting Northwick Road which comprises the boundary up until a complex of drains, before meeting up with industrial development and residential curtilages in Canvey Island. The eastern boundary follows Haven Road. The southern boundary follows a track running by the edge of the Holehaven Creek, with the eastern boundary also following drains

Green Belt Purpose Assessment

Purpose	Comments	Assessed Contribution
1 - To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to industrial areas in the south associated with Canvey Island as well as a small amount of residential development. Although existing boundaries are not robust, there has only been limited urban sprawl into the parcel comprising of an abandoned storage facility in the south east in close proximity to the industrial area in Canvey Island.	Very Strong

<p>2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another</p>	<p>The parcel is between the neighbouring settlements of Canvey Island and Stanford-le-Hope and forms an important part of the strategic gap. However there is another parcel within the strategic gap as well as land in Thurrock, and the parcel in Castle Point contains Holehaven Creek which is a strong barrier to any merge.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p>3 – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>On most of the parcel work was started to develop it as an industrial storage facility but this was subsequently abandoned. This part of the parcel now supports scrub, long grass and other self-seeded vegetation. The scrub varies in density but is generally scattered. A few belts of trees have also developed. Parts of the parcel contain debris from the abandoned facilities. Part of the western area was previously used as landfill, containing visibly raised and uneven land. There are isolated storage units in the south which are not considered to be agricultural and therefore are inappropriate in the Green Belt.</p> <p>The north western portion of Parcel 28 is also influenced to some extent by the proximity of Pitsea landfill but more significantly by the industrial land to the south east. Industrial land to the south west is also prominent but separated by the creek.</p> <p>The smaller east part of the area consists of fields used for grazing cattle and horses, with some fencing, a creek and some ditches. The quality of this part is degraded by adjacent industrial features on two sides and by a few sheds and clutter.</p> <p>It is considered that the abandoned storage facility has been reclaimed by nature and due to the near absence of other development that is inappropriate to the Green Belt other than the landfill to the north west and industrial land to the south east and south west, a very strong contribution is assessed against this purpose. Whilst degraded, the quality of the countryside is not a factor in this assessment, and the inter-tidal habitat acts as a clear buffer between the industrial land such that there is a clear demarcation. The parcel also connects to the wider countryside system along its northern</p>	<p>Very Strong</p>

	boundary and is assessed as primarily functioning as part of the wider landscape to the west of Canvey Island.	
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Parcel Summary

Parcel 28 is situated within the south west corner of the borough and west of Canvey Island. The area is important for its ecological value with much of the western and central portions identified as a SSSI, with the majority of the remainder of the parcel identified as a Local Wildlife Site. On most of the area work was started to develop an industrial storage facility, but this was then abandoned. This facility has subsequently been reclaimed by nature. There is very limited development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt in or immediately surrounding the parcel and as such a very strong contribution is assessed under Purpose 1. It is considered that the abandoned storage facility has been reclaimed by nature and due to the near absence of other development that is inappropriate to the Green Belt other than the landfill to the north east and industrial land to the south east, a very strong contribution is assessed against Purpose 3. Whilst degraded, the quality of the countryside is not a factor in this assessment, and the inter-tidal habitat acts as a clear buffer between the industrial land such that there is a clear demarcation. The parcel is assessed as primarily functioning as part of the wider landscape to the west of Canvey Island.

The parcel is between the neighbouring settlements of Canvey Island and Standford-le-Hope and forms an important part of the strategic gap. However there is another parcel within the strategic gap as well as land in Thurrock, and the other parcel forming the strategic gap in Castle Point contains Holehaven Creek which is a strong barrier to any merge. As such a moderate contribution is assessed under Purpose 2.

Strategic Contribution

This Green Belt parcel demarks the boundary of the south western extent of the urban development of Canvey. The parcel directly north, (Parcel 23) provides the parcel with internal links to the Green Belt parcels to the north and east of the borough. When taking this parcel into account with Parcel 27 they provide an important link to the Green Belt outside of the borough in Thurrock, which connects to the wider Green Belt. This Green Belt parcel is part of a wider system that encircles and demarks the boundary of Canvey’s urban settlement.