

## **GREEN BELT STUDY – LAND SURROUNDING DALTON BARRACKS**

**for**

**Vale of White Horse District Council**

**by**

**Hankinson Duckett Associates**

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**Plans:**

- HDA 1:** Location Plan  
**HDA 2:** Landscape character  
**HDA 3:** Designations  
**HDA 4:** Green Belt Study Parcel Areas  
**HDA 5:** Green Belt Analysis

**Site Photographs****Appendices:**

- Appendix 1:** Methodology  
**Appendix 2:** Extracts from Oxford Green Belt Study  
**Appendix 3:** Extracts from Vale of White Horse Green Belt Review

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Instructions**

- 1.1.1 Hankinson Duckett Associates has been instructed by Vale of White Horse (VoWH) District Council to carry out an independent Green Belt Study for Dalton Barracks and the land immediately surrounding it, all of which is located within the Oxford Green Belt (Plan HDA 1). The study will form part of the evidence base for the VoWH Local Plan Part 2.

## **1.2 Methodology**

- 1.2.1 At the present time there is no definitive guidance on how to undertake a Green Belt review / study. There are also two types of study that could be appropriate in the decision making and evidence base required by the local authority. These are:
1. A Green Belt review of a whole District / Borough in order to ascertain any differences in areas of the Green Belt with regard to their performance against the aims, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt. This would be commissioned to assist Local Authorities in decision making, when considering a baseline for the location of sustainable development.
  2. Once the criteria for proving that the 'exceptional circumstances' for new development within the Green Belt have been met, a second type of study may be appropriate to test the potential impacts of removing a specific site / sites from the Green Belt.
- 1.2.2 The HDA methodology for this report is specifically tailored towards the second form of study and is set out in detail within **Appendix 1**. The methodology utilises the advice set out within the NPPF and PPG, in addition to documentation produced by the Planning Officers Society ('We need to talk about the Green Belt', March 2015, Ref 1) and the Planning Advisory Service ('Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues' – Green Belt, Feb 2015, Ref 2).
- 1.2.3 The aim of this study is to determine what contribution the land at Dalton Barracks and the landscape immediately surrounding the barracks, makes to the aims, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt and whether the exclusion of this land would harm the Green Belt as a whole. For ease of assessment the land reviewed within this study has been broken down into 9 parcels (see plan HDA 1). Parcel boundaries are based on local landscape character and follow easily recognised features. The Dalton Barracks site is Parcel 1, which has been subdivided later within the study into Parcels 1A – 1G (see plan HDA 5).
- 1.2.4 Parcel 2 is located to the north-east of the barracks, between the boundary of Parcel 1 and the linear settlement of Whitecross, located on Wootton Road (part of the B4017).

The southern boundary of the parcel is defined by the field boundary which runs parallel to the southern edge of the housing on Spey Road, to the north-east of Shippon. The Parcel consists of small scale fields in pasture. Parcel 3 comprises three small fields in pasture located to the north-east of Shippon and surrounded by settlement on 3 sides. Parcel 4 lies to the immediate east of Parcel 3 and south of Parcel 2. The eastern boundary of Parcel 4 is defined by Wootton Road and the Parcel consists of one large arable field. The road Long Tow defines the southern boundary of Parcel 4.

- 1.2.5 Parcel 5 consists of the land to the east of Shippon and west of the A34 dual carriageway, with Long Tow defining the northern boundary of the Parcel. The Parcel consists of open arable fields and allotments.
- 1.2.6 Parcel 6 is located to the south of Parcel 1 (Dalton Barracks), to the north of Marcham Road, with the A34 defining the eastern boundary and Sandford Brook defining the western boundary.
- 1.2.7 Parcel 7 includes the fields in pasture located between Wootton (to the north) and Honeybottom Lane (to the south) and lies between Dalton Barracks and Wootton. Parcel 8 is a broad sweep of arable land, which sits between the A34 (to the south) and Sunningwell (to the north), to the east of Wootton Road. The final area, Parcel (9), is located to the east of Wootton Road and north of Parcel 8. Parcel 9 consists of arable farmland between Whitecross and Sunningwell.

## **2 GREEN BELT POLICY**

### **2.1 National Green Belt Policy**

- 2.1.1 The study area for the Dalton Barracks (as shown on plan HDA 3) is washed over by Green Belt. *'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'* (Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework – Ref 3). Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out policies for 'Protecting Green Belt Land'.
- 2.1.2 Paragraph 80 lists the five purposes of the Green Belt. These are:
  1. *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
  2. *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
  3. *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
  4. *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
  5. *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

2.1.3 Paragraph 81 goes on to state that:

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

2.1.4 Paragraph 83 states that:

*‘Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.’*

Paragraph 84, states that:

*‘When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.’*

2.1.5 Paragraphs 83 and 84 set the context for Green Belt review. National guidance has prompted a requirement within many districts for a Green Belt review / study to inform the Local Plan and assist with the Local Plan evidence base for the provision of new areas of sustainable development. This is particularly pertinent for Local Authorities which have a large housing shortfall as a result of objectively assessed housing need. This study is intended to test land within and around Dalton Barracks, as identified on plan HDA1, against the purposes of the Green Belt and to assess the potential harm to the Green Belt resulting from the development of part or all of this site for housing.

2.1.6 Paragraphs 87 and 88 of the NPPF consider the protection of the Green Belt through local planning policy. Inappropriate development within the Green Belt *‘should not be approved except in very special circumstances...’*

*‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.’*

2.1.7 Paragraph 89 sets out a list of exceptions, where development within the Green Belt could be appropriate. These include:

- *‘Buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- *Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- *The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- *The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*

- *Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or*
- *Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.'*

The final bullet point is relevant for this study as Dalton Barracks is a previously developed site in continuing use, located within the Green Belt.

2.1.8 Previously developed land is defined within the glossary of the NPPF (p55) as:

*'Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure'*

The site at Dalton Barracks fits this definition of previously developed land.

2.1.9 In order for a site to be removed from Green Belt, a new Green Belt boundary would need to be defined. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF sets out the parameters for setting new Green Belt boundaries:

*'When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:*

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

## 2.2 **Local Green Belt Policy**

2.2.1 The Vale of White Horse District Green Belt policy is set out within the Local Plan Part 1 in chapter 5, Core Policy 13: The Oxford Green Belt (Ref 4). The policy states that:

*'The Oxford Green Belt area in the Vale, as amended following the local Green Belt Review, will continue to be protected to maintain its openness and permanence...*

*...Proposals for inappropriate development will not be approved except in very special circumstances\*...*

...\* *'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF, Paragraph 88).'*

- 2.2.2 Paragraph 5.43 of the Local Plan Part 1 states that:  
*'The local Green Belt Review undertaken does not preclude, and would inform any future Green Belt Review, should this be needed, to contribute to meeting any identified unmet housing need within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area...'*
- 2.2.3 The Planning Inspectors 'Report on the Examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan (November 2016 – Ref 5) recognised the need to provide sustainable housing development within the Oxford Green Belt, within the Abingdon-on-Thames / Oxford Fringe Sub Area (paras 75 – 77) and that national policy does not *'prohibit an authority from revising Green Belt boundaries subject to it being done in exceptional circumstances, through a local plan and having regard to the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.'*
- 2.2.4 Within the Local Plan Part 1 submission, Vale of White Horse District Council had proposed to remove further areas of land from the Green Belt to allow for housing to come forward as Part 2 of the Local Plan or within Neighbourhood Plans. Whilst this strategy was not endorsed by the Inspector, it is made clear in the report that *'Retaining these parcels of land in the Green Belt now would not prevent their deletion from Green Belt through the 'Part 2' plan or any other local plan or local plan review, if the necessary exceptional circumstances were to be demonstrated.'* (Para 91 – Ref 5). This statement supports the Councils decision to consider further sustainable development options within the Green Belt as part of Local Plan Part 2.

### **3 STUDY AREA CONTEXT (HDA 1)**

#### **3.1 Settlement Pattern**

- 3.1.1 The study area lies to the south-west of Oxford and to the immediate north-west of Abingdon. The majority of the study area is washed over by Green Belt. Abingdon is excluded from the Green Belt and the settlement of Wootton, to the north of the study area, is inset from the green belt boundary. The south-western part of the study area lies outside the Oxford Green Belt. This Green Belt Study will focus on the Dalton Barracks site and surrounding 8 land parcels, which have the potential to form a strategic allocation within Local Plan Part 2. The purpose of this study is to assess what contribution the land within and surrounding Dalton Barracks makes to the purposes of the Green Belt, in order to inform the site selection process.
- 3.1.2 The Market Town of Abingdon is located to the south-east of the study area. It is the largest settlement within the study area and is one of the largest towns in the district.



Abingdon is a historic town, located on the River Thames. The southern extents of the town lie adjacent to river. To the west and north-west, Abingdon is contained by the A34 dual Carriageway. To the north, the town is enclosed by a local ridgeline, beyond which lies Kennington and the southern extents of Oxford.

3.1.3 Wootton is a large village located to the north of Dalton Barracks and to the north-west of Abingdon. The historic core of Wootton is a linear settlement, located along Wootton Village road. The village has now expanded to the south and west to form a nucleated settlement centred on the B4017 and extending south and west along Besselsleigh Road and Lashford Lane. The south-western edge of Wootton Village is separated from the hamlet of Dry Sandford, located to the immediate south-west, by a recreation ground. Henwood, another hamlet, lies approximately 200m to the north-west of Wootton. The B4017 connects Wootton to Abingdon. Ribbon development lines the majority of the road, including Whitecross, a ribbon development which extends along the majority of the road between Wootton and Abingdon.

3.1.4 Dalton Barracks is a military installation to the west of Abingdon, with a barracks closely associated with the village of Shippon. Shippon is one of the smaller villages within the district and consists of a nucleated settlement, washed over by Green Belt. The village is located to the north-west of Abingdon with the A34 dual carriageway separating the two settlements. The accommodation within the barracks extends the settlement edge of the village to the north. Immediately beyond the barracks to the north and west are large hangers and storage areas, with huts and dispersed ancillary buildings beyond to the north. The western side of Dalton Barracks comprises an airfield with two runways.

3.1.5 The hamlets of Gozzards Ford and Cothill are located immediately to the west and north-west of the site respectively. Sunningwell is a small village to the north-east of the site, to the north of Abingdon and associated with Sunningwell Road. All three settlements are washed over by Green Belt. Marcham is a larger nucleated village located to the south-west of the site and connected to Abingdon via the A415 Marcham Road. This village lies outside the Green Belt.

### **3.2 Landscape context – Dalton Barracks (HDA 2):**

3.2.1 Within the VoWH District Landscape Character Assessment 2017 (Ref 6), four landscape types are present within the study area. These are the 'Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland' (LM), 'Wooded Corallian Limestone Ridge' (LW), 'River Floodplain' (RF) and 'Former Airfield' (XF). The vast majority of the Dalton Barracks site (Parcel 1) lies within the 'Former Airfield' landscape type, with the north-eastern corner lying within the 'Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland' and parts of the western boundary falling within the 'River Floodplain'. The south-eastern part of the site (the barracks) has been

considered as settlement. The key characteristics the 'Former Airfield' landscape type include:

- The Airfield consists of a flat open area, with significant lengths of runway, hardstandings, hangers and associated buildings.
- The site is a former Royal Air Force base. Buildings are currently still used by the Royal Logistic Corps as part of Dalton Barracks.
- The site has the characteristics of a military installation, with security fencing and perimeter warning notices.
- The large scale open aspect across the airfield allows wide ranging views towards the North Wessex Downs on the southern horizon.

3.2.2 The character within Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1) varies with land use. The accommodation buildings within the barracks are generally two storey brick buildings arranged in blocks of flats, with office blocks on the western edge of the barracks. The buildings are arranged on streets lined with mature trees. To the immediate north and west of the barracks are the large hangers, which are industrial buildings, approximately 3 storeys high with a minimum floorspace of approximately 3500m<sup>2</sup>. The hangers are surrounded by large areas of hardstanding, which are used for storage. Further north again are smaller huts and dispersed ancillary buildings, surrounded by hardstanding and connected to the main barracks by a series of roads. The land to the north and east of these buildings is part of a training facility which consists of modified landform and bunding in rough grass, with areas of woodland and scrub.

3.2.3 The central and western areas within Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1) make up the airfield, which comprises open expanses of grassland bisected by two runways, connected by a perimeter road. The airfield is open and expansive, with no internal boundaries or landscape features. The open nature of this part of Parcel 1 affords long views to the south, where the escarpment of the North Wessex Downs is visible on the skyline. Views to the east are of vegetation to the north-east of Parcel 1 and the large hangers at the edge of the barracks, with views of the high ground at Boars Hill beyond. Views to the west are contained by tree belts lining the Sandford Brook and views to the north are also contained by vegetation beyond Honeybottom Lane.

3.2.4 The north-western edge of Parcel 1 lies adjacent to Sandford Brook and contains areas of woodland and scrub. This area is also used for military training and has a similar modified landform to the north-eastern part of the site. This area is more enclosed than the land within the airfield to the east.

### **3.3 Landscape context – Surrounding land Parcels (2 - 9):**

3.3.1 The remaining 8 land Parcels within this study fall within the 'Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland' (LM) landscape type. The key characteristics of this type include:

- Undulating farm and estate land focused on ridge predominantly underlain by limestone.
  - Relatively steep north facing slopes, gentler south facing slopes forming transition to Upper Vale to the south.
  - Dispersed blocks of significant woodland, including areas of ancient woodland.
- 3.3.2 Within the landscape type, the parcels fall within three local Character Areas: LM15: Marcham Limestone Ridge with Woodland, LM25: Abingdon to Kennington Limestone Ridge with Woodland and LM22: Bessels Leigh Limestone Ridge with Woodland.
- 3.3.3 The majority of the land Parcels (2 – 5 and 8 – 9) lie within the LM25: Abingdon to Kennington Limestone Ridge with Woodland. Relevant key characteristics of this area include:
- Gently undulating, below steeper slopes to the north-west and above the Thames Valley floor to the east.
  - Predominately large scale arable fields.
  - Contains some limited areas of woodland and tree groups.
  - The Character Area has a few small groups of dwellings, but large parts are unsettled farmland.
  - The A34 dual carriageway cuts through the middle of the Character Area.
  - The Character Area adjoins Abingdon to the south and west, and Radley and Kennington the east.
- 3.3.4 Parcels 8 and 9 share many of the key characteristics of this Character Area; Parcels 2 – 5 display fewer of these characteristics. Parcels 4 and 5 are large arable fields with some connection to the wider rural character area and so share some of the key characteristics of the Character Area. However, these parcels are also associated with the settlement at Shippon and Dalton Barracks and have a higher degree of urban influence than the land within the character area that lies to the east of Wootton Road (Parcels 8 and 9). Parcels 2 and 3 are atypical of the character area. These Parcels are much smaller in scale, in pastoral use and are influenced by adjacent settlement. Both Parcels are, to some extent, separated from the wider rural landscape. Parcel 2 is separated from the remainder of the character area by the linear settlement of Whitecross; Parcel 3 is surrounded by settlement on 3 sides and is separated visually from the wider landscape by a strong tree belt.
- 3.3.5 Parcel 6 lies within Character Area LM15: Marcham Limestone Ridge with Woodland, and covers much of the Character Area located to the east of Sandford Brook. This character area is bisected by the River Floodplain Landscape Character Type, which follows the line of the brook. Key characteristics of this character area include:
- Situated on the gentle southern slopes of the Limestone Ridge, falling south and east towards watercourses.
  - Consists mainly of arable farmland with medium, and occasionally large, field sizes, in contrast to the smaller scale, more enclosed landscape to the west.
  - Field boundaries vary but are often well vegetated.
  - Includes occasional small blocks of woodland.

- Dissected into separate parts by River Floodplains, and contained to the south by the Ock floodplain.
- Contains very limited settlement, but surrounds Marcham and Sheepstead Park. Abuts the A34 and the western edge of Abingdon to the east, and Abingdon airfield to the north-east.

The parcel is typical of the Character Area.

3.3.6 Parcel 7, to the south of Wootton is located within character area 'LM22: Bessels Leigh Limestone Ridge with Woodland'. The Character Area consists of remnant parkland, arable fields and smaller pastoral fields, on the gentler, southern side of the wider ridge, which are contained by woodland to the south and west. The Character Area abuts Parcel 1 to the south. The fields within Parcel 7 are much smaller and more regular than the wider Character Area to the north-west, and have a stronger relationship with existing settlement, particularly to the north of the Parcel

### **3.4 Designations (HDA 3)**

3.4.1 There are a number of designations within the study area in addition to Green Belt. These relate to land designated to protect habitats and biodiversity, and designations regarding heritage assets within the built environment.

3.4.2 There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the study area, which are all associated with Sandford Brook, to the west of the Dalton Barracks. One lies to the west of Parcel 7 to the west of Lashford Lane, one is located to the immediate north-west of the Parcel 1 at Dry Sandford Pit Nature Reserve and one lies to the west of Barrow Farm, to the west of Parcel 6. The SSSI to the west of Lashford Lane is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

3.4.3 There are large areas of woodland at Boars Hill, to the north-east of the study area, much of which is designated as Ancient Woodland. These woodlands are located away from the 9 land Parcels and are unlikely to be adversely affected as a result of development within any of the 9 Parcels.

3.4.4 The market town of Abingdon contains two conservation areas (that lie within the study area), a Registered Park and Garden at Albert Park, three scheduled monuments (within the study area) and numerous Listed Buildings. Listed Buildings are present throughout the study area, with groups of listed buildings found within the villages of Wootton, Shippon, Sunningwell and Dry Sandford.

3.4.5 The study area is well served by public rights of way, particularly around Boars Hill and the land to the west of the study area, beyond the hamlet of Cothill. Public rights of way run through Parcels 5 and 7 – 9. The remaining Parcels do not have public access.

## **4 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING GREEN BELT STUDIES (HDA 4)**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The study area is covered by two existing Green Belt Studies. One is a high level assessment, which considers the whole of the Oxford Green Belt (Ref 7). The second is a study commissioned by the VoWH District Council (Ref 8), produced as part of the evidence base for Local Plan Part 1. This assessment focusses on the Green Belt Land within the Vale of White Horse District. Both studies have divided the Green Belt into parcels for assessment (see plan HDA 4). For clarity, tables have been provided for each study which lists the parcels surrounding Dalton Barracks, followed by the judgements of the study against each of the 5 purposes. The tables also include information on which of these parcels the site falls within.

### **4.2 Oxford Green Belt Study**

4.2.1 The Green Belt Parcels set out within the Oxford Green Belt Study (Ref 6) are measured against Purposes 1 – 4 of the purposes set out within Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which have been broken down into five criteria (Purpose 1 has two criteria). The parcel descriptions are included within Appendix 2. The study has been conducted at a high level, with strategic allocations in mind and focusses on the expansion of Oxford City. Parcels were broken down into small parcels adjacent to towns and the inset settlements, with broad parcels identified to represent the ‘main body’ of the Green Belt.

4.2.2 The criteria used to assess the performance of the Green Belt Parcels is set out within Table 3.2 of the report, also included within Appendix 2. Within the study area none of the settlements were considered to constitute a large built-up area, including Abingdon. Parcels adjacent to Abingdon and Wootton have been assessed as having No or negligible contribution (N/C) to purpose 1. For Purpose 2, the settlements within the study area, considered for merging are Wootton and Abingdon. For Purpose 4, the only historic town that the study recognises is Oxford.

4.2.3 Table 1 (below) summarises the judgements made within the Oxford Green Belt Study, with reference to the land Parcels 1 – 9, identified within the study area. The land parcels are identified on plan HDA 4.

Table 1

| Land Parcel within Study Area | Associated land Parcels of this study. | Performance against the Purposes of the Green Belt   |  |   |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|
|                               |  | 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 of the countryside from encroachment   | Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns             |
|                               |  | Criteria – Does the parcel exhibit evidence of urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness? | Criteria – Does the parcel protect open land from the potential for urban sprawl to occur? | Criteria – Does the parcel prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between neighbouring settlements? | Criteria – Does the parcel have or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by urbanised built development? | Criteria – Does the parcel contribute to the setting and 'special character' of Oxford? |
| AT1                           | Parcel 6                               | N/C  | N/C  | Low   | High   | N/C   |
| AT2                           | Parcel 5                               | N/C  | N/C  | Medium  | Low  | N/C   |
| Broad Area 9                  | Parcels 8 and 9                        | N/C  | N/C  | Low   | High   | High  |
| Broad Area 10                 | Parcels 1-4                            | N/C  | N/C  | Medium  | High   | Low   |
| WT3                           | Parcel 7                               | N/C  | N/C  | Low   | High   | N/C   |

4.2.4 None of the Parcels within the Study were assessed as contributing to Purpose 1 – checking the urban sprawl of Oxford.

4.2.5 Parcels 1 - 4 are located within Broad Area 10, which has been assessed as having no contribution to the setting and special character of Oxford. Broad Area 10 was assessed as having a Medium contribution to Purpose 2 (preventing neighbouring towns merging), due in part to its contribution to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The contribution of the Broad Area to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (Purpose 3) has been judged to be High, however the text supporting the judgement states that:

*'Shippon and the neighbouring Abingdon Airfield (Parcel 1) are urban in character and represent significant urbanising influences on the Green Belt within the eastern portion of the parcel (includes Parcels 1 – 4). Indeed, the airfield contains several large hangers, two runways and some significant areas of hardstanding.'* (Appendix 2 – Broad area 10)

4.2.6 The majority of Parcel 6 is located within AT1, which has been assessed as having no contribution to the setting and special character of Oxford. The Parcel has been assessed as having a Low contribution to the prevention of towns merging, but a High contribution to the safeguarding of the countryside (Purpose 3). WT3 (Parcel 5) has the same assessed contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt as AT1.

- 4.2.7 Broad Area 9 (which contains Parcels 8 and 9) has a comparable analysis of contribution to purposes 2 (Low) and 3 (High) of the Green Belt as both At1 and WT3, but in addition, has been assessed as having a High contribution to the setting and special character of Oxford. Boars Hill, which lies within this Broad Area, is part of the wooded backdrop to Oxford City and contains a protected view of the heritage assets within the city centre.
- 4.2.8 Parcel 5 lies within AT2, which has been assessed as having a Medium contribution to the separation between settlements (Purpose 2) and a Low contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (Purpose 3). This Parcel has not been assessed as contributing to the remaining 3 purposes.
- 4.2.9 The judgements set out within the Oxford Green Belt Study are focussed on the settlement of Oxford and discount Abingdon from the assessment of Purpose 1 (urban sprawl of large built-up areas) and Purpose 4 (preservation of the setting and special character of historic towns). This assessment considers that Abingdon constitutes both a 'large built up area' and a 'historic town', therefore the parcels within this study and the Oxford Green Belt Study may differ in the assessment of these parcels against Purposes 1 and 4 of the Green Belt designation.
- 4.3 Vale of White Horse Green Belt Review**
- 4.3.1 The Green Belt Parcels set out within the Vale of White Horse Green Belt Review (Ref 7) are measured against Purposes 1 – 4 set out within Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which have been broken down into five criteria. The criteria used to assess the performance of the Green Belt Parcels were set out within Table 1 of the report and are included within Appendix 3. For this assessment, the 'large built-up area' refers to Oxford. For Purpose 2, the settlements within the study area, considered for merging are the same as in the Oxford Green Belt Study: Wootton and Abingdon. For Purpose 4, as with the Oxford Green Belt Study, the only historic town that the study recognises is Oxford.
- 4.3.2 The study identifies locations at the edge of settlement which has the potential scope for amendment (with regards to the Green Belt). These are shown on plan HDA 4 as numbered circles and are referenced within the table as 'Notes'. None of the Parcels analysed within this study were identified as a settlement edge with the potential for revision to the Green Belt. All 9 Parcels within this study are washed over by Green Belt, and as such have no defined settlement edge in Green Belt terms. The study does not consider the redevelopment of previously developed land within the Green Belt.
- 4.3.3 Below is an extract from Table 5 of the report, which compares the contributions of the land parcels to the purposes of the Green Belt. This is also included within Appendix 3.

The majority of the study area lies within Parcel 9. The land parcels are identified on plan HDA 4.

Table 2

| Land Parcel                           | Proximity to the site                                 | Performance against the Purposes of the Green Belt                                  |   |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
|                                       |   | To check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford (Purpose 1)                              | To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another (Purpose 2)  | To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment (Purpose 3)   | To preserve the setting and special character of historic Oxford (Purpose 4)   |
| 8:<br>Foxborough Hill and Radley Wood | Part of Parcel 8                                      | Together with P5 and 6 the land parcel prevents any potential sprawl around the A34 | The land parcel is important to preventing the merging of 4 settlements: Oxford, Kennington, Radley and Abingdon                                      | The Land Parcel is a largely undeveloped and an important part of the series of wooded hills, hillsides and valleys that characterise the countryside west in the Vale west of Oxford. Scattered development is well contained and integrated into the countryside in the main.      | The land parcel contains landscape features recognised as key to preserving the setting and special character of historic Oxford |
| 9<br>Shippon and the airfield         | Parcels 1-9 (only the south-western half of Parcel 8) | N/A   | Most of the land parcel is very important in preventing the merging of Wootton and Abingdon, although the land to the west makes a lower contribution | The Land Parcel is heavily influenced by development at Shippon, the airfield and Whitecross but also includes the very rural settlements at Dry Sandford, Gozzards Ford and Cothill. The remaining open countryside is vulnerable to erosion due to its openness and fragmentation. | N/A  |

4.3.4 Parcel 9: Shippon and the airfield contains all the Parcels within this study, with the exception of the north-eastern part of Parcel 8. This parcel has been judged to have no contribution to the prevention of urban sprawl of Oxford (Purpose 1) or the preservation of the setting and special character of Oxford (Purpose 4). The parcel has been identified as contributing to Purpose 2 (to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) and Purpose 3 (safeguarding the countryside), however mention is made of the urbanising influence from the site and adjacent Shippon.

4.3.5 The north-eastern part of Parcel 8 falls within the Green Belt Review Parcel 8 Foxborough Hill and Radley Wood. This parcel has been judged to have some



contribution to the prevention of urban sprawl of Oxford (Purpose 1), by preventing sprawl along the A34. The Parcel has also been assessed as having an important contribution to the remaining purposes (2 – 4) of the Green Belt.

## **5 ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREEN BELT BY EACH LAND PARCEL**

### **5.1 Introduction** (*Plan HDA 5*)

5.1.1 In order to provide an analysis of how the Parcels perform in relation to the aims and purposes of the Green Belt, each Parcel has been tested against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt, as set out within paragraph 80 of the NPPF. This assessment has been carried out within two sections. The first (section 5.2) looks at the Dalton Barracks Site (Parcel 1), which has been subdivided to allow more detailed analysis of this large area. The second section (5.3) covers the remaining Parcels (2 – 9), which surround the Dalton Barracks Site.

5.1.2 For each purpose the study sets out the parameters for assessment, along with a judgement as to the contribution that each Parcel makes towards that purpose. The criteria for these judgements are set out within the methodology in Appendix 1.

### **5.2 Assessment of the Dalton Barracks site (Parcel 1) against the purposes of the Green Belt**

5.2.1 Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1) is large and contains different land uses, with differences in character. This Parcel has been subdivided into 7 smaller Parcels, each of which has been tested against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt.

5.2.2 The parcel boundaries are identified on plan HDA 5 and descriptions of each parcel are listed below:

- Parcel 1A - The existing built development of the barracks, including the large hangers, areas of hardstanding and storage to the north and recreation facilities to the south.
- Parcel 1B – A large area of hardstanding to the south of the barracks, with Shippon village to the east and Barrow Road to the south.
- Parcel 1C – The sports ground within Shippon Village, to the east of Dalton Barracks.
- Parcel 1D – The mixed use area to the north of the barracks including huts and dispersed ancillary buildings, surrounded by hardstanding and connected to the main barracks by a series of roads. The westernmost road forms the boundary to the parcel.

- Parcel 1E – The north-eastern corner of Dalton Barracks, which is separated from the main site by a belt of trees and a road. The Parcel is part of a training facility which consists of modified landform and bunding in rough grass, with areas of woodland and scrub. The Parcel still contains hard surfacing and ancillary buildings, but has fewer urban influences than Parcel 1D.
- Parcel 1F – The airfield and runways.
- Parcel 1G – The north-western edge of Dalton Barracks, with connections to Sandford Brook. The area contains areas of woodland and scrub, is used for training and has a similar modified landform to Parcel 1E.

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

5.2.3 For the purposes of this Green Belt Study, 'large built-up areas' have been defined as Oxford City and towns within the district. At a more local level the settlements that have been inset from the Green Belt are also considered. Within the study area this includes Abingdon and Wootton.

5.2.4 Oxford is located on the River Thames and the development of the city has been constrained by the river and its floodplain. Boars Hill is one of a series of hills that surrounds Oxford. These hills form a key part of the landscape setting to the city and also provide physical and visual separation to the landscape beyond. Kennington and Botley are the areas of Oxford that are closest to the site. Kennington lies approximately 3km to the north-east, beyond Boars Hill and the A34 dual carriageway. Botley lies approximately 4km to the north, beyond Boars Hill and the settlement of Wootton. Parcel 1 is substantially divorced from the large built up area of Oxford and neither Dalton Barracks, nor any of the parcels within it, contribute to preventing the urban sprawl of Oxford.

5.2.5 Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1) is not contiguous with the edge of the 'large built-up' area of Abingdon. The A34 corridor, a significant landscape feature, separates the Parcel from the built-up area. Consequently the Parcel does not contribute to the check of unrestricted sprawl in relation to Abingdon. Whilst outside the remit of Purpose 1, at a local level, the Parcel is separate from the built-up edge of Wootton and does not therefore contribute to the check of urban sprawl in relation to the inset village. In respect of Purpose 1, Parcel 1 contributes little to Green Belt policy.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

5.2.6 For the purposes of this assessment the 'neighbouring towns' are Oxford City and Abingdon. The urban conurbation of Oxford extends to Kennington in the South and Botley to the west. Kennington is located approximately 1km to the north-west of

Abingdon and is the closest point between the two settlements. The land between Kennington and Abingdon forms the essential separation between Abingdon and Oxford and is associated with a local ridgeline, which physically and visually separates the two settlements. Parcel 1 (Dalton Barracks) is located to the west of the A34 and does not form part of the separation between Abingdon and Kennington.

- 5.2.7 Botley is the second closest extent of Oxford to Abingdon, however this too is separated from Abingdon by intervening landform (Boars Hill and Hurst Hill) and settlement (Wootton). Dalton Barracks lies to the south-west of the high ground, around and including Boars Hill and is visually and physically divorced from Oxford. Parcel 1 and the sub-parcels within the site make a negligible contribution to the separation between Abingdon and Oxford.
- 5.2.8 At the local level Parcel 1 has a role in the separation between the villages within the study area, The NPPF specifically refers to the preventing of the merger of towns, not the merger of towns with smaller settlements. However, it is recognised that the perceived gaps between towns will in turn be affected by the extent of gaps between intervening settlements. The primary village assessed within this study is the inset village of Wootton, which lies between Abingdon and Botley. The smaller village of Shippon and the ribbon development at Whitecross, located along Wootton Road between Abingdon and Wootton, are washed over by Green Belt, but their presence is a consideration when assessing the contribution of a site or parcel towards the merging of Wootton and Abingdon.
- 5.2.9 Parcel 1 includes much of the land that lies between Abingdon and Wootton. The contribution that the site makes to Purpose 2 varies dependant on the location, land use and size of the various parcels.
- 5.2.10 Parcel 1A consists of previously developed land containing the bulk of the built development within the site. As developed land comprising built form, the parcel is not permanently open and makes no contribution to the separation between the settlements. Parcel 1B is part of the previously developed land of the airfield and is flanked by officer accommodation to the north, the village of Shippon to the east and existing commercial buildings within the site to the south. The land within the parcel does not protrude beyond the existing built edge of the barracks and makes a minimal contribution to the separation between settlements. The contribution of both parcels 1A and 1B to Purpose 2 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Very Low / None**.
- 5.2.11 Parcel 1C is also surrounded by settlement, off-site military housing, on two sides and the barracks within the site on a third. Again this parcel is contained by built development

and does not contribute to separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The contribution of parcel 1C to Purpose 2 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Low**.

5.2.12 Parcel 1D is part of the previously developed land within the Green Belt. It is located within the curtilage of Dalton Barracks and includes permanent structures and 'associated fixed surface infrastructure' (roads and hardstanding). The openness of the Green Belt within this Parcel is interrupted by built form. The Parcel lies between the defined built edge of the barracks and Wootton. The northern part of the Parcel, which lies beyond the main built form, has a higher contribution to this separation than the more developed southern part. The land between Honeybottom Lane and the northernmost extent of development within the Parcel provides the critical separation between the barracks and Wootton. The overall contribution of parcel 1D to Purpose 2 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Medium**.

5.2.13 Parcel 1G lies to the west of Wootton and Abingdon, distant from existing settlement and the built development within the site. The parcel does not form part of the physical gap between Wootton and Abingdon and the contribution of the parcel to Purpose 2 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Low**.

5.2.14 The remaining parcels, 1E and 1F make a more significant contribution towards the perceived and physical separation of Wootton and Abingdon. Parcel 1E forms the critical separation between Whitecross (the ribbon development on Wootton Road) and the village of Wootton. Parcel 1F is a large tract of open land, free of built development which makes a substantial contribution towards the perceived gap between Abingdon and Wootton and Shippon and Wootton. The eastern corner of this Parcel is contiguous with the existing built form within Dalton Barracks and contributes less to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The contribution of both parcels 1E and 1F to Purpose 2 of the Green Belt is judged to be **High**.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

5.2.15 Parcel 1 consists of a barracks and airfield, all of which is previously developed land and has some measure of urban influence or impact from built development. Only the north-eastern corner and the western-most extent of the Parcel have any conformity with the landscape character of the wider rural landscape. Parcel 1 as a whole has a **Medium – Low** contribution to safeguarding the countryside.

5.2.16 Parcel 1A consists of settlement and built development and parcel 1B has significant urban influence as a result of the hard surfacing within it in conjunction with the adjacent housing and barracks buildings. The parcel is largely separated from the wider rural

landscape by existing development and the runway aprons. The contribution of these parcels to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Very Low / None**.

- 5.2.17 Parcel 1D is not rural in character and includes significant areas of hardstanding and some built development and is largely separated from the wider rural landscape. The contribution of the parcel to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Low**.
- 5.2.18 Parcel 1C is a recreation ground to the east of Shippon. The parcel is not characteristic of the wider landscape. The parcel is separated from the wider landscape by an existing tree belt and is surrounded by existing development on three sides. The contribution of Parcel 1C to this purpose are is judged to be **Low**.
- 5.2.19 The landscape of Parcels 1E and 1G have been degraded to some extent by the changes to landform and their current use as training facilities, however they also contain semi-natural habitat and have links to the wider rural landscape. Parcel 1G is also connected to a SSSI to the north-west and contributes to the continuity of that landscape.
- 5.2.20 Parcel 1F comprises a maintained grassland area bisected by tarmac runways which is heavily influenced by the built form of the adjacent barracks, particularly the large aircraft hangers. The runways when visible add to the developed character of the Parcel, however the Parcel is open and exposed in character with views of the wider rural landscape. The overall contribution of parcels 1E, 1F and 1G to this purpose are judged to be **Medium**.

Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 5.2.21 Oxford city is the key historic town within the Oxford Green Belt. The string of hills to the north-east of the study area are an important contributor to the setting of Oxford and allow some important views into the city and the site. Whilst visible from the hills none of the sub-parcels within Parcel 1 (Dalton Barracks) contribute directly to the setting of Oxford.
- 5.2.22 Abingdon is located to the south-east of the study area and is also considered to be a historic town within this Green Belt Study. The town has an historic core, an abbey dating from the Saxon period and received its royal charter in 1556. Over 50% of the current town borders the Green Belt and the town. The historic centre of Abingdon is located to the centre and south of the town focused on the River Thames. The Thames river corridor and the hills containing the town to the north and north-west contribute to the setting of the town. The A34 dual carriageway lies to the west of the town, separating it physically and visually from the lowland landscape to the west. Parcel 1 and all the parcels within it do not contribute to the setting and special character of Abingdon.

Consequently none of the parcels within Parcel 1 (Dalton Barracks) contribute to Purpose 4 of the Green Belt. The contribution of the site to Purpose 4 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Very Low / None**.

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

5.2.23 The Planning Advisory Service, in their article 'Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt' (Ref 3) has advised that when considering Purpose 5  
*'it must be the case that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. 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.'*

5.2.24 On this basis no assessment is made of the performance of the Parcels performance against Purpose 5.

5.2.25 Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1) is a previously developed site within the Green Belt and Parcels 1A, 1B and 1D either contain built development (1A and 1D) or have significant influence from adjacent built form and internal infrastructure (1B and 1D). Development of these parcels would constitute regeneration, albeit not within an existing urban area.

### Summary

5.2.26 The performance of each of the Parcels within Dalton Barracks, against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt has been summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 3

| Land Parcel | Performance against the Purposes of the Green Belt                   |  |  |  |   | Summary  |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|---|--|
|             | Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns (Oxford and Abingdon) merging into one another | Purpose 2 (local) – To prevent Abingdon and Wootton from merging | Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment | Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns |  |
| Parcel 1A   | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None   | Consists of previously developed land, with considerable built form, within the Green Belt |
| Parcel 1B   | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None  | Very Low / None   | Constitutes previously developed land and has close associations with existing settlement. |
| Parcel      | Very Low /   | Very Low /   | Low  | Low  | Very Low /  | The recreation   |

|           |                 |                 |        |        |                 |   |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|-----------------|---|
| 1C        | None            | None            |        |        | None            | ground is surrounded by development on three sides, but has some contribution to Green Belt purposes  |
| Parcel 1D | Very Low / None | Very Low / None | Medium | Low    | Very Low / None | Consists of previously developed land within the Green Belt. The northern part of the Parcel has a local contribution to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton. |
| Parcel 1E | Very Low / None | Very Low / None | High   | Medium | Very Low / None | Forms part of the essential separation between Abingdon and Wootton. A less developed part of the site, with a rural character.                                       |
| Parcel 1F | Very Low / None | Very Low / None | High   | Medium | Very Low / None | The airfield is largely undeveloped and contributes to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton  |
| Parcel 1G | Very Low / None | Very Low / None | Low    | Medium | Very Low / None | The most rural part of the site, separated from built development, with close associations to the Sandford Brook and SSSI designations                                |

### 5.3 Assessment of the surrounding land Parcels (2 - 9) against the purposes of the Green Belt

#### Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 5.3.1 For the purposes of this Green Belt Study, 'large built-up areas' have been defined as Oxford City and towns within the district, including Abingdon.
- 5.3.2 The land Parcels within this study are substantially separated from the large built up area of Oxford and none of the assessment parcels, contribute to preventing the urban Sprawl of Oxford.
- 5.3.3 Parcels 5, 6 and 8 are contiguous with the edge of the 'large built-up' area of Abingdon. The A34 corridor, a significant landscape feature, currently separates all land Parcels from the built-up area and contains Abingdon to the north-west and west. The Parcels to the immediate north-west of the A34 have a **High** contribution to preventing the urban sprawl of Abingdon as they reinforce this separation. Parcel 4 is also located in close

proximity to the north-western edge of Abingdon and has a **Medium** contribution to Purpose 1, with regard to the sprawl of Abingdon. The remaining Parcels (2, 3, 7 and 9) are physically separated from Abingdon and have no contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of Abingdon.

- 5.3.4 At a more local scale, Parcel 7 restricts the sprawl of the inset village of Wootton and Parcels 2-6 restrict the expansion of Shippon. These local effects relate to small settlements and do not constitute large built-up areas. This contribution is provided as a commentary and does not form part of the judgement against Purpose 1 of the Green Belt, which is specifically focussed on large built-up areas.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 5.3.5 For the purposes of this assessment the 'neighbouring towns' are Oxford City and Abingdon. The urban conurbation of Oxford extends to Kennington in the South and Botley to the west. Kennington is located approximately 1km to the north-west of Abingdon and is the closest point between the two settlements. The land between Kennington and Abingdon forms the essential separation between Abingdon and Oxford and is associated with a local ridgeline, which physically and visually separates the two settlements. The north-eastern part of Parcel 8 extends to the north of Abingdon and contributes to the separation between Abingdon and Kennington. This Parcel has been assessed as having a **Medium** Contribution to Purpose 2 of the Green Belt. The remaining Parcels do not form part of the separation between Abingdon and Kennington.
- 5.3.6 Botley is the second closest extent of Oxford to Abingdon, however this too is separated from Abingdon by intervening landform (Boars Hill and Hurst Hill) and settlement (Wootton). None of the Parcels within this study contribute directly to the separation between Abingdon and Oxford.
- 5.3.7 At the local level the land Parcels within this study have a role in the separation between the villages within the study area, The NPPF specifically refers to the preventing of the merger of towns, not the merger of towns with smaller settlements. However, it is recognised that the perceived gaps between towns will in turn be affected by the extent of gaps between intervening settlements. The primary village assessed within this study is the inset village of Wootton, which lies between Abingdon and Botley. The smaller villages of Shippon and the ribbon development at Whitecross, are washed over by Green Belt, but their presence is a consideration when assessing the contribution of a site or parcel towards the merging of Wootton and Abingdon.
- 5.3.8 All the Parcels within the study lie between Abingdon and Wootton. The contribution that each Parcel makes to Purpose 2 varies dependant on the location, land use and size of



the various parcels. Parcels 4 and 5 are areas of open land that lie between Abingdon and Wootton. They also contribute to the separation between Abingdon and Shippon. These two Parcels have a **High** contribution to local separation.

- 5.3.9 Parcel 2 is also an area of open land between Abingdon and Wootton, however this land is bound to the east by the ribbon settlement of Whitecross and to the west by the previously developed land at Dalton Barracks, which reduce the perception of separation performed by the Parcel. Parcel 2 has therefore been assessed as having a **Medium** contribution to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton.
- 5.3.10 Parcel 7 consists of an area of open land to the south of Wootton. The northern part of the Parcel is surrounded on three sides by existing settlement, however the south-eastern field forms part of the critical separation between Wootton and Whitecross and the south-western part of the Parcel separates Wootton from Dry Sandford. The extension of the Parcel beyond the existing extents of Wootton means that the south-eastern part of the Parcel has a **High** contribution to the separation between Wootton and Abingdon, whereas the contained land to the north has a **Low** contribution. The overall contribution of the site towards this separation has been judged to be **Medium**.
- 5.3.11 Parcels 8 and 9 are located to the east of Wootton Road. The south-western part of Parcel 8 forms the critical separation between Abingdon and Whitecross, however the north-eastern part of the site has no contribution to the separation between these settlements. Parcel 9 is a large area of open land which lies to the east of Whitecross. The presence of Whitecross already affects the perceived separation between Abingdon and Wootton, which constrains the contribution that Parcel 9 can make to this separation. Both Parcels 8 and 9 have been judged to have a **Medium** contribution to the local separation between Abingdon and Wootton.
- 5.3.12 The remaining Parcels 3 and 6 have been judged to have a **Very Low / No** contribution to Purpose 2 of the Green Belt. Parcel 3 is small and surrounded by settlement on three sides and would not physically reduce the separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The majority of Parcel 6 does not form part of the separation between Abingdon and Wootton, however the north-eastern part of the Parcel contributes to the critical separation between Abingdon and Shippon and the Parcel does contribute to the separation between Abingdon and Marcham (which lies to the west, outside the Green Belt).

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

- 5.3.13      Parcels 6, 8 and 9 are large tracts of rural landscape, which form a characteristic and largely undeveloped part of the Countryside. These Parcels have been assessed as having a **High** contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt.
- 5.3.14      Parcel 7 site is well related to existing settlement at Wootton (particularly to the north) and is separated from the wider landscape by bands of boundary vegetation. The northern part of the site consequently has urban influences from the adjacent settlement. The southern Part of the Parcel has a weaker relationship with settlement and is more rural in character, with a higher contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. The overall contribution of this Parcel has been judged to be **Medium**.
- 5.3.15      Parcels 3 – 5 are located between Wootton Road, the A34 dual carriageway and the settlement of Shippon. These Parcels are separated from the wider rural landscape to some extent and have urban influences from the adjacent settlement and infrastructure. Parcel 5 also contains some urban edge land uses including playing fields and allotments. Parcel 3 is not typical of the wider landscape Character area, due to the scale and land use of the fields within the Parcel. These three Parcels are predominantly rural in character, however their contribution to the safeguarding of the countryside and prevention of encroachment into the wider rural landscape is limited by their association with settlement in combination with their separation from the wider rural landscape. Parcels 3 – 5 have been assessed as having a **Medium** contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt.
- 5.3.16      Parcel 2 is rural in character but is separated from the wider rural landscape by housing and the airfield. The parcel has little influence on the character of the surrounding countryside. The Parcel consists of fields in pasture and is atypical of the wider landscape character area. The contribution of this Parcel to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt has been judged to be **Low**.

Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 5.3.17      Oxford city is the key historic town within the Oxford Green Belt. The string of hills to the north-east of the study area are an important contributor to the setting of Oxford and allow some important views into the city and the land Parcels within the study area. Whilst visible from the hills none of the parcels within the site contribute directly to the setting of Oxford.
- 5.3.18      Abingdon is located to the south-east of the study area and is also considered to be a historic town within this Green Belt Study. The historic centre of Abingdon is located at the centre and south of the town. The Thames river corridor and the hills containing the

town to the north and north-west contribute to the setting of the town. Parcel 8 forms part of the local ridge which forms the setting to Abingdon. It also has associations with Boars Hill (part of the setting to Oxford) and the Green Belt Way. Parcel 8 has been assessed as having a **Medium** contribution to Purpose 4 of the Green Belt.

5.3.19 The A34 dual carriageway lies to the west of Abingdon, separating it physically and visually from the lowland landscape to the west. The remaining Parcels within the study area sit within this lowland landscape. Parcel 9 has an indirect contribution to the setting of Abingdon and Boars Hill and has been assessed as having a **Low** contribution to Purpose 4 of the Green Belt. The remaining Parcels (2 – 7) do not contribute to the setting and special character of Abingdon or Oxford. The contribution of these Parcels to Purpose 4 of the Green Belt is judged to be **Very Low / None**.

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

5.3.20 As discussed within section 5.2.23 of this report, no assessment is made of the performance of the Parcels performance against Purpose 5.

### Summary

5.3.21 The performance of each of the land Parcels against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt has been summarised in Table 4 below:

Table 4

| Land Parcel | Performance against the Purposes of the Green Belt                   |  |  |  |  | Summary   |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|             | Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas | Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns (Oxford and Abingdon) merging into one another | Purpose 2 (local) – To prevent Abingdon and Wootton from merging   | Purpose 3 – To assist in safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment   | Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns                                |   |
| Parcel 2    | Very Low / None<br>Separated from Abingdon and Oxford                | Very Low / None<br>An insignificant part of the separation between Abingdon and Oxford.  | Medium<br>The parcel lies between Abingdon and Wootton but is surrounded by settlement and previously developed Land | Low<br>The site is rural in character but is separated from the wider rural landscape by housing and the airfield. The parcel has little influence on the character of the surrounding countryside | Very Low / None<br>The site does not contribute to the setting or special character of Abingdon or Oxford. | The parcel is surrounded by settlement and previously developed land. It has a limited perceptible contribution to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The parcel is rural in character and Contributes to the openness of the Green Belt. |
| Parcel 3    | Very Low / None<br>Separated from Abingdon and Oxford                | Very Low / None<br>An insignificant part of the separation between Abingdon and Oxford.  | Very Low / None<br>The parcel is small and surrounded by settlement on three sides and would not physically          | Medium<br>Predominantly rural in character, however is surrounded by settlement on 3 sides. Some urban influence   | Very Low / None<br>The site does not contribute to the setting or special character of Abingdon or Oxford. | The parcel is surrounded by settlement on three sides and has no contribution to Purposes 1, 2 and 4 of the Green Belt. It is a rural land-use but has a limited connection to the wider  |

|          |  |   |   |  |  |  |
|----------|--|---|---|--|--|--|
|          |  |   | reduce the separation between Abingdon and Wootton.   | from adjacent settlement.  |  | rural landscape.   |
| Parcel 4 | Medium<br>Lies in close proximity to the A34 corridor.<br>Contributes to Checking the Sprawl of Abingdon | Very Low / None<br>An insignificant part of the separation between Abingdon and Oxford. | High<br>A small but important area of open land which sits between Abingdon and Whitecross  | Medium<br>Predominantly rural in character and provides the eastern setting to Shippon.<br>Some urban influence form adjacent settlement.  | Very Low / None<br>The site does not contribute to the setting or special character of Abingdon or Oxford. | The parcel is rural in character and contributes to Purposes 1 and 3 of the Green Belt. The contribution to Purposes 2 and 4 of the Green Belt is limited, however the site is an important part of the local separation between Abingdon and Wootton  |
| Parcel 5 | High<br>Checks urban sprawl of Abingdon  | Very Low / None<br>An insignificant part of the separation between Abingdon and Oxford. | High<br>A small but important area of open land which sits between Abingdon and Shippon   | Medium<br>Predominantly rural in character and provides the eastern setting to Shippon.<br>Contains some urban edge land uses.   | Very Low / None<br>The site does not contribute to the setting or special character of Abingdon or Oxford. | The Parcel is critical to the prevention of urban sprawl in relation to Abingdon. The parcel is generally rural in character and contributes to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. The contribution to Purposes 2 and 4 of the Green Belt are limited, however the site is an important part of the local separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The Parcel performs well against the aims and objectives of the Green Belt designation. |
| Parcel 6 | High<br>Checks sprawl of Abingdon  | Very Low / None<br>An insignificant part of the separation between Abingdon and Oxford. | Very Low / None<br>The parcel does not form part of the separation between settlements within the Green Belt. It does contribute to the separation between Abingdon and Marcham | High<br>Forms a characteristic and largely undeveloped part of the Countryside   | Very Low / None<br>The site does not contribute to the setting or special character of Abingdon or Oxford. | The Parcel is critical in preventing the urban sprawl of Abingdon. The parcel is also rural in character and has a high contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. The contribution to Purposes 2 and 4 of the Green Belt are limited. The Parcel performs well against the aims and objectives of the Green Belt designation.   |
| Parcel 7 | Very Low / None<br>Separated from Abingdon and Oxford  | Very Low / None<br>An insignificant part of the separation between Abingdon and Oxford. | Medium<br>An area of open land to the south of Wootton. The south-eastern field forms part of the critical separation between Wootton and Whitecross.                           | Medium<br>The site is well related to existing settlement and is separated from the wider landscape by bands of boundary vegetation. The northern part of the site has more urban influences and consequently has a lower contribution to this purpose than the southern part of the parcel. | Very Low / None<br>The site does not contribute to the setting or special character of Abingdon or Oxford. | The parcel is rural in character and has a medium contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. The Parcel also contributes to the local separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The contribution to Purposes 1 and 4 of the Green Belt are limited. The Parcel has some contribution to the aims and objectives of the Green Belt designation.  |

|          |  |  |  |   |  |  |
|----------|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Parcel 8 | High<br>Checks sprawl<br>of Abingdon                           | Medium<br>Contributes to<br>the separation<br>between<br>Abingdon and<br>Kennington                          | Medium<br>Contributes to<br>the separation<br>between<br>Abingdon and<br>Wootton | High<br>Forms a<br>characteristic<br>and largely<br>undeveloped<br>part of the<br>Countryside | Medium<br>The parcel<br>forms part of<br>the local ridge<br>which forms<br>the setting to<br>Abingdon. It<br>also has<br>associations<br>with Boars Hill<br>(part of the<br>setting to<br>Oxford) and<br>the Green Belt<br>Way | The Parcel is critical in<br>preventing the urban<br>sprawl of Abingdon. The<br>parcel is also rural in<br>character and has a high<br>contribution to Purpose<br>3 of the Green Belt. The<br>Parcel has a Medium<br>contribution to Purposes<br>2 and 4 of the Green<br>Belt. The Parcel<br>performs well against<br>the aims and objectives<br>of the Green Belt<br>designation. |
| Parcel 9 | Very Low /<br>None<br>Separated<br>from Abingdon<br>and Oxford | Very Low /<br>None<br>An<br>insignificant<br>part of the<br>separation<br>between<br>Abingdon and<br>Oxford. | Medium<br>Contributes to<br>the separation<br>between<br>Abingdon and<br>Wootton | High<br>Forms a<br>characteristic<br>and largely<br>undeveloped<br>part of the<br>Countryside | Low<br>The site has<br>an indirect<br>contribution to<br>the setting of<br>Abingdon and<br>Boars Hill.   | The parcel is rural in<br>character and has a high<br>contribution to Purpose<br>3 of the Green Belt. The<br>contribution to Purposes<br>2 and 4 of the Green<br>Belt are limited. The<br>Parcel performs well<br>against the aims and<br>objectives of the Green<br>Belt designation.   |

## 6 CONTRIBUTION OF EACH PARCEL TOWARDS THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR REMOVAL FROM THE GREEN BELT

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Paragraphs 83 and 84 of the NPPF set the context for Green Belt review. Paragraph 84, states that:

*'When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.'*

The Vale of White Horse has a housing shortfall brought about by the unmet objectively assessed housing need of Oxford City. The release of Green Belt is a strategic decision, taken during the production of a local plan. The Vale of White Horse are in the process of producing Part 2 of their Local Plan. The Dalton Barracks site and surrounding land parcels has been identified as a potential location for an allocation within this plan.

6.1.2 In order to identify possible sites for allocation, proposed development should meet the aims of sustainable development, which are set out within the NPPF. Key considerations for the identification of areas suitable for development include transport, infrastructure and the intrinsic qualities of the land within the potential allocation.

6.1.3 It is accepted practice that the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed development are contributing factors to the assessment of a sites suitability for development and this study will discuss these factors in order to support or refute the suitability of the for development in landscape terms.

- 6.1.4 With regard to visibility, the visual containment of a site and the potential to mitigate the visual effects of a proposed development are considerations when assessing the integrity of the wider Green Belt. A site that is well contained is more likely to maintain the integrity of the wider Green Belt than an open and exposed site.
- 6.1.5 With regard to the landscape character and quality of the site, landscape capacity assessment is an indicator of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development without adverse impacts on the wider landscape. Such an assessment forms part of the overall assessment of the suitability for a site's inclusion or removal from the Green Belt.
- 6.2 Site capacity of Dalton Barracks in landscape and visual terms**
- 6.2.1 The Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1) consists of an army barracks and airfield, complete with accommodation, offices, large hangars, two runways, large areas of hardstanding, connecting roads and training areas. The built form is concentrated to the south-east of the Parcel, with residential buildings immediately abutting the settlement edge of Shippon. The northern and western edge of the barracks contains the large hangars and further north again are smaller huts and dispersed ancillary buildings, surrounded by hardstanding and connected to the main barracks by a series of roads.
- 6.2.2 The land to the north-east and far west of the Parcel is part of a training facility which consists of modified landform and bunding in rough grass, with areas of woodland and scrub. The central and western areas within the Parcel make up the airfield, which comprises flat, open expanses of grassland bisected by two runways, connected by a perimeter road. The whole site is enclosed by perimeter fencing with warning notices. The Parcel is inconsistent with the wider rural landscape and has a distinct character associated with its use.
- 6.2.3 The large scale open aspect across the airfield, to the west of the Parcel, allows wide ranging views towards the North Wessex Downs on the southern horizon in addition to intervisibility with the high ground at Boars Hill to the east. There are open and panoramic views across the Parcel from through gaps in the boundary vegetation with Honeybottom Lane to the north. These views consist of the large open area of runways, with Didcot Power Station and the North Wessex Downs escarpment visible in the distance. The large commercial buildings to the south-east and the ancillary buildings to the east of the Parcel are also visible. There are open and panoramic views of the site from Barrow Road, to the immediate south of the site. Within the eastern part of the Parcel, the existing built form within the barracks constrains views and provides a much higher degree of enclosure.

- 6.2.4 There are open views of the Parcel from the properties lining Faringdon Road, to the west of the Parcel, with some views from the road itself. The majority of the views from this road are filtered by boundary vegetation. Views consist of the large open airfield, with large industrial buildings to the east and some housing visible to the south-east.
- 6.2.5 Cholswell Road, to the immediate east of the site, also affords open views of the Parcel. These views contain the recreation ground to the north and east, with the red brick dwellings within the airfield visible beyond security fencing and ornamental tree planting to the east. The western-most dwellings on Rookery Close (to the south-east of the site) have open views of the airfield and the properties lining Sycamore Close and Hawthorn Avenue have open views of the Barracks. Views from Blackhorse Lane to the north-west are blocked by hedgerows lining the road and tree belts on the boundary of the site. Glimpses of the site can be seen through gaps in the vegetation within Dry Sandford Nature Reserve.
- 6.2.6 Development of parts of Dalton Barracks (Parcels 1A and 1B) have the potential to reduce the visual prominence of the site through the removal of the large hangars and soften the existing development edge, in addition to having the potential for positive impacts on the settlement character. The capacity for development of housing within parcels 1A and 1B is **High**. Within parcel 1D there is the opportunity to redistribute the development within the Parcel to focus development to the south of the Parcel, adjacent to the existing built edge of the barracks, while reverting the more sensitive northern part of the site (to the north-west of the existing development at Whitecross) to amenity, agricultural use or structural landscape. This would have the potential for beneficial landscape and visual effects within the Parcel.
- 6.2.7 Parcel 1C is currently used as a sports ground. The Parcel has some capacity for built development, however the existing sports provision would need to be provided elsewhere within the site. The Parcel is well contained from the wider landscape, but is open to view from adjacent roads and properties.
- 6.2.8 Parcel 1F has a low landscape sensitivity, but a high visual sensitivity, particularly to the west of the Parcel, due to the openness of the airfield. The eastern edge of the airfield, adjacent to the barracks, is less visually sensitive, due to the existing open views of development and the screening provided by the existing built form within the barracks, which block views from the immediate west. There is the opportunity to soften the existing hard edge to the Parcel through the sensitive redevelopment of the adjacent parcel (1A).

6.2.9        Parcels 1E and 1G have the lowest capacity for development. Both Parcels are separated from the existing settlement at the barracks, contain some landscape features that are difficult to replace and have the potential to be restored to a rural landscape. Parcel 1G is also located adjacent to two SSSI's, which increases its landscape sensitivity.

6.2.10      In summary, parts of the site (particularly to the south-east) have a high capacity for development, whereas the central, western and north-eastern part of the site have a much lower capacity for development in landscape and visual terms.

### **6.3        Site capacity of surrounding land Parcels in landscape and visual terms**

6.3.1        Parcels 2 – 5 lie between Wootton Road, Dalton Barracks, the A34 dual carriageway and the village of Shippon. All of these Parcels are separated from the wider landscape to some extent and have varying degrees of urban influence. Parcel 2 is well contained and views from publicly accessible viewpoints are restricted to occasional glimpses from Wootton Road (B4017), through occasional gaps in the boundary hedgerow (e.g. at field gates). There are open views of the Parcel from the Barracks properties on Spey Road, at the south-western corner of the Parcel, along with some views from the north-western properties at Whitecross. The views from these properties are dependent on the boundary treatment of the back gardens which border this parcel. Parcel 2 is smaller in scale than the characteristic fields to the east of the B4017 and is influenced by adjacent settlement and the airfield. The south-eastern corner of the site lies within floodplain. The Parcel has capacity to accept development in landscape and visual terms.

6.3.2        Parcel 3 is also atypical of local landscape character and has close associations with the settlement edge of Shippon, particularly the northern part of the Parcel. The Parcel consists of small fields in pasture, to the east of the housing development off Cholswell Road. The fields have some strong field boundaries, however the boundaries to the east are open. The southern part of the Parcel lies within floodplain and is more contained. Views of the site from publicly accessible viewpoints is limited by the lack of access and the hedgerow boundaries, which contain Parcel 4 to the east. There are private views into Parcel 3 from adjacent housing, however these views are filtered by boundary vegetation. The northern part of this Parcel has some capacity for development, providing existing boundary features are maintained.

6.3.3        Parcel 4 contains a medium-sized, rectangular arable field, bound to the west by the B4017 Wootton Road, to the south by Long Tow, to the north by Parcel 2 and to the west by Parcel 3 and the housing located on Tyne Road. There are views across the Parcel from these houses to Boars Hill in the north-east. Views from the adjacent roads are restricted by intact boundary hedgerows, which form boundary features to the north, east



and south of the Parcel. The north-western and south-eastern parts of the Parcel lie within floodplain. The parcel has very limited capacity for development in landscape and visual terms.

- 6.3.4 Parcel 5 consists of two large, open arable fields and some allotments to the south-east. The site is bound to the north by Long Tow, to the east by the A34 dual carriageway, to the south by the village of Shippon and to the west by Wildmoor Brook, beyond which is Shippon and the Sports ground associated with the village. The Parcel has strongly vegetated boundaries to the east and west, however the northern boundary is open, which allows open views across the Parcel from Long Tow. A footpath runs across the southern part of the parcel, connecting to the north-west of Abingdon by means of a footbridge over the A34. There are open views of the Parcel from this footpath. The parcel has very limited capacity for development in landscape and visual terms.
- 6.3.5 Parcel 6 lies to the south of the study area and consists of a series of large, flat, open arable fields, bound by hedgerows, which are characteristic of the local Character Area. The fields to the north-east of the Parcel are smaller and in pasture. The only settlement within the Parcel is Burrow Farm, however the Parcel abuts the south-western edge of Shippon to the north-east. The airfield of Dalton Barracks lies to the immediate north of the Parcel. To the west the Parcel is bound by Sandford Brook and associated vegetation, to the east lies the A34 dual carriageway and Marcham Road lies to the south of the Parcel. Faringdon Road runs north-south through the Parcel and Barrow Road runs along the northern boundary. There are views of the fields within the Parcel from these roads. Boars Hill is visible to the north-west, across the Parcel. The parcel lies adjacent to the SSSI at Sandford Brook. The land within the Parcel has a high landscape sensitivity and is inconsistent with any existing settlement pattern. The Parcel has a very limited landscape capacity for development.
- 6.3.6 Parcel 7 is located between Wootton (to the north) and Honeybottom Lane (to the south) and consists of a series of rectilinear fields in pasture, subdivided by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The northern part of the Parcel is surrounded by settlement on three sides. The southern part of the Parcel is less consistent with the existing settlement pattern. A footpath runs across the northern part of the Parcel and a byway runs north-south through the Parcel, connecting Lashford Lane to Honeybottom Lane. Both rights of way have limited intervisibility with the site. The Parcel is generally well contained by hedgerows and trees with few available open views. Views into the site from surrounding properties vary with boundary treatment. The northern part of the Parcel is consistent with the existing settlement pattern and has a higher level of urban influence than the southern part, which is more rural in character and has a higher landscape sensitivity.

The capacity of the Parcel varies across the site, with a higher capacity to the north and a low capacity to the south.

6.3.7 Both Parcels 8 and 9 lie to the east of Wootton Road and form part of the footslopes to Boars Hill. Both Parcels are rural in character and are characteristic of the 'Abingdon to Kennington Limestone Ridge with Woodland' local Character Area. The Parcels form the rural setting to the village of Sunningwell. Both Parcels also contain numerous rights of way, which provide rural connections between local settlement and the wider landscape. There are open views of the land within Parcels 8 and 9 from these rights of way. Both Parcels have high landscape sensitivity and high visibility and neither is suitable for development in landscape and visual terms.

6.3.8 In summary, Parcels 2 and 3 and the northern part of Parcel 7 have some capacity for development, whereas the remaining Parcels have very limited capacity for development in landscape and visual terms.

## **7 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARCELS**

7.1 The aim of this study is to determine what contribution Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1), the 7 identified sub-parcels within this site and the remaining 8 land Parcels surrounding the barracks, make to the aims, essential characteristics and purposes of the Green Belt and whether the exclusion of this land would harm the Green Belt as a whole.

### Parcel 1

7.2 This study has identified that the contribution that the site makes to the Green Belt varies across the site. To this end, the site has been divided into parcels, to assess whether parts of the site could be developed without perceived harm to the Green Belt designation.

### Parcel 1A

7.3 The parcel contains the existing built development of the Barracks. Development of this parcel would be consistent with Paragraph 89 of the NPPF, which sets out a list of exceptions, where development within the Green Belt could be appropriate. The final bullet reads:

- *'Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.'*

- 7.4 Development of this Parcel would constitute complete redevelopment of a previously developed site, which has the potential for reduced impacts on the perceived openness of the Green Belt. This Parcel is suitable for redevelopment.

Parcel 1B

- 7.5 This parcel consists of a large area of hardstanding to the south of the barracks, which is surrounded by built form to three sides. The parcel has been assessed as having a **Very Low / None** contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt, due to its urban land use and close associations to existing settlement. Development within this parcel would constitute the 'limited infilling' of previously developed land. Development could occur within the site without perceived harm to the wider Green Belt designation.

Parcel 1C

- 7.6 The Parcel currently used as a sports ground and is highly visible from adjacent roads and properties. The tree belt to the east, contains the parcel from the rural landscape to the west. The parcel has a low contribution to the aims and objectives of the Green Belt, however the development of this land would constitute a loss of openness. There is potential for development within the parcel, provided the sports provision is relocated elsewhere and that the visual sensitivity of the parcel is addressed.

Parcel 1D

- 7.7 This Parcel consists of a mixed use area to the north of the barracks including huts and dispersed ancillary buildings, surrounded by hardstanding and connected to the main barracks by a series of roads. The westernmost road forms the boundary to the parcel. It is part of the previously developed land within the Green Belt due to its location within the curtilage of Dalton Barracks and the presence within it of permanent structures and 'associated fixed surface infrastructure' (roads and hardstanding). The openness of the Green Belt within this Parcel is interrupted by built form.
- 7.8 There is the potential to increase the contribution of the Parcel to the purposes of the Green Belt through the strategic redevelopment of the Parcel, locating built form towards the existing built edge of the barracks to the south while reverting the more sensitive and less developed northern part of the site, to the north-west of the existing settlement at Whitecross, to amenity, agricultural use or structural landscape. This would have the potential for beneficial landscape and visual effects within the parcel. Any redevelopment would need to ensure that it would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the baseline condition.

#### Parcel 1E

- 7.9 This Parcel is part of a training facility, to the north-east of Dalton Barracks, which consists of isolated areas of hard surfacing and ancillary buildings, set within modified landform and bunding in rough grass, with areas of woodland and scrub. The wooded edge to the Parcel is consistent with the wider landscape character. The Parcel has been assessed as having a **Medium** contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt (safeguarding the countryside).
- 7.10 The Parcel forms part of the essential separation between Abingdon and Wootton (Purpose 2) as it is one of the few areas of open land between the two settlements. The ribbon development at Whitecross to the south significantly reduces the amount of open, undeveloped land between Abingdon and Wootton.
- 7.11 The Parcel contributes significantly to a number of the aims and purposes of the Green Belt, particularly with regard to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton. Consequently any development within the Parcel would harm the integrity of the Green Belt.

#### Parcel 1F

- 7.12 This Parcel consists of the airfield and runways and is a large, flat and open expanse of grassland, which is largely undeveloped. The Parcel has a low landscape sensitivity, but a high visual sensitivity and is heavily influenced by the hangars to the south and east of the Parcel. The north-eastern corner of this Parcel is contiguous with the existing built form within Dalton Barracks, is less visually sensitive and contributes less to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton.
- 7.13 There is the opportunity to soften the existing hard edge to the parcel through the sensitive redevelopment of the adjacent parcels (1A, 1B and 1D) and at the north-eastern interface between Parcels 1A and the southern part of 1D (within Parcel 1F). The Parcel has a **High** contribution to the separation between Wootton and Abingdon (Purpose 2) and has some contribution to the separation between the barracks and Marcham, to the south-west. The Parcel has a **Medium** contribution to the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment (Purpose 3).
- 7.14 The open nature of the Parcel and lack of existing landscape structure would make mitigation for significant development, within the parcel, difficult and would result in a loss of openness and perceived harm to the wider Green Belt should the Parcel be developed. The north-eastern corner of this Parcel has a lower contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, due to its relationship with existing development within the barracks. The north-eastern corner is less visible in views from the east and south, and

has urban influences in views from the west and north. This area of the parcel may have scope for development as part of a wider strategic settlement.

#### Parcel 1G

7.15 This Parcel is located at the north-western edge of Dalton Barracks, with connections to Sandford Brook. The area contains areas of woodland and scrub, is used for training and has a similar modified landform to Parcel 1E. The wooded edge to the west of the Parcel, lining the brook, is consistent with the wider landscape character.

7.16 The Parcel has been degraded to some extent by the changes to landform and use as training facilities, however it also contains semi-natural habitat and has links to the wider rural landscape. The Parcel is connected to a SSSI to the north-west and contributes to the continuity of this landscape. The contribution to the Parcel to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt has been judged to be **Medium**.

7.17 The Parcel is separated from existing settlement, has a **Low** capacity for development and contributes to the openness of the Green Belt, due to its largely undeveloped nature, free of built development. Development within the site would harm the integrity of the Green Belt.

#### Parcel 2

7.18 This Parcel consists of small, regular fields in pasture which lie between Whitecross (to the east) and Dalton Barracks (to the west). These developed areas isolate the Parcel from the wider rural landscape. The fields are smaller scale than the characteristic fields to the east of the B4017 and are influenced by the adjacent settlement and airfield.

7.19 The parcel is surrounded by settlement and previously developed land. The parcel has a low contribution to the aims and objectives of the Green Belt with a limited perceptible contribution to the separation between Abingdon and Wootton. The parcel is rural in character and the development of this land would constitute a loss of openness, although any loss of openness would be barely perceptible in the wider landscape. There is some potential for the development of the Parcel as part of the strategic settlement that may come through the redevelopment of Dalton Barracks (Parcel 1).

#### Parcel 3

7.20 Parcel 3 is atypical of local landscape character, consisting of small fields in pasture, as opposed to the large, open arable fields that typify the local area. The fields have some strong field boundaries, which should be retained. The southern part of the Parcel lies within floodplain and is contained from the surrounding landscape. The northern part of

the site is closely associated with settlement to the north and west. Views of the site from publicly accessible viewpoints are limited.

- 7.21 The parcel is surrounded by settlement on three sides and has no contribution to Purposes 1, 2 or 4 of the Green Belt, but a **Medium** contribution to Purpose 3 (safeguarding the countryside). It is a rural land-use but has a limited connection to the wider rural landscape. Development within the Parcel would not encroach any further into the countryside than the existing settlement to the north and south of the Parcel. The Parcel has some capacity for development, providing existing boundary features are retained.

#### Parcel 4

- 7.22 Parcel 4 contains a medium-sized, rectangular arable field, which is consistent with local landscape character and provides part of the rural setting to Shippon. The Parcel is bound by intact hedgerows, which limit views into the site. The north-western and south-eastern parts of the Parcel lie within floodplain. The parcel has very limited capacity for development in landscape and visual terms, however the areas of floodplain would be restrictive.

- 7.23 The parcel is rural in character and contributes to Purposes 1 and 3 of the Green Belt. The contribution to Purposes 2 and 4 of the Green Belt is limited, however the site is an important part of the local separation between Abingdon and Wootton. Development within the site would harm the openness and integrity of the Green Belt.

#### Parcel 5

- 7.24 Parcel 5 consists of two large, open arable fields and a small area of allotments to the south-east. The Parcel is consistent with local landscape character, but has urban influences from the adjacent A34 dual carriageway and the settlement of Shippon. The Parcel is visually separated from the wider landscape by boundary vegetation but open views of the Parcel are afforded from the footpath within it and from the road Long Tow, to the north. The Parcel forms provides part of the rural setting to Shippon.

- 7.25 The Parcel is critical to the prevention of urban sprawl in relation to Abingdon (Purpose 1). The parcel is generally rural in character and contributes to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. The contribution to Purposes 2 and 4 of the Green Belt are limited, however the site is an important part of the local separation between Abingdon and Wootton. Development within Parcel 5 would result in the coalescence of Shippon, Dalton Barracks and Abingdon. This would cause significant harm to the integrity of the Green Belt.

#### Parcels 6, 8 and 9

- 7.26 These three Parcels are rural in character and exhibit the distinctive characteristics associated with their respective local character areas. Each Parcel has a **High** contribution to at least one of the Green Belt Purposes. None of the Parcels are suitable for development in landscape and visual terms and development within any of these Parcels would harm the openness and integrity of the Green Belt.

#### Parcel 7

- 7.27 Parcel 7 consists of a series of rectilinear fields in pasture, subdivided by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The Parcel is generally well contained by hedgerows and trees with few available open views. The northern part of the Parcel is consistent with the existing settlement pattern and has a higher level of urban influence than the southern part, which is more rural in character and has a higher landscape sensitivity. The landscape capacity of the Parcel varies across the site, with a higher capacity to the north and a low capacity to the south.

- 7.28 The Parcel is predominantly rural in character and has a medium contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. The Parcel also contributes to the local separation between Abingdon and Wootton, particularly in the south-eastern corner. The contribution to Purposes 1 and 4 of the Green Belt is limited. The Parcel has some contribution to the aims and objectives of the Green Belt designation. Removal of the whole Parcel from the Green Belt would harm the openness of the Green Belt, however removal of the northern field within the Parcel, which has less contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt, would be less harmful.

### **8 POTENTIAL CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

- 8.1 There are likely to be cumulative impacts on the essential characteristics of the Green Belt, should more than one of the Parcels be taken forward as a housing allocation. Development of all 9 Parcels would have the highest cumulative impacts on the aims and purposes of the Green Belt.
- 8.2 Parcels 5, 6 and 8 have the highest contribution to Purpose 1 (to prevent the Urban Sprawl of Abingdon), with Parcel 4 having a Medium contribution. Development of these four sites in combination would have significant cumulative impacts relevant to Purpose 1. The development of the remaining Parcels in conjunction with these 4 Parcels would have even greater adverse effects on the urban sprawl of Abingdon and the resulting settlement would extend out as far as Wootton.
- 8.3 The development of all 9 parcels would also have significant cumulative impacts relevant to Purpose 2. Development of site 8 in isolation would reduce the separation between

Abingdon and Kennington (southern edge of Oxford). Development of the remaining 8 Parcels would also significantly reduce the separation between Abingdon and Botley (western extent of Oxford), in addition to merging the settlements of Abingdon, Wootton, Shippon, Whitecross and Sunningwell. The development of Parcels 1E, 4, 5 and 7 would also result in the perceived merging of Abingdon and Wootton.

8.4 Parcels 8, 9 and 6 have been assessed as having the highest contribution to the prevention of encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3). Development of any of these Parcels would have adverse impacts relevant to this purpose of the Green Belt. Parcels 1E – 1G, 4, 5 and 7 all also have some contribution to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. Development of Parcels 1A and 1B would not harm the Green Belt in respect of Purpose 3 due to their developed nature and inconsistency with the surrounding landscape and settlement. Parcels 1C, 1D and 3 are inconsistent with local rural character, are well related to settlement and have a limited contribution to this Purpose of the Green Belt.

8.5 Only Parcel 8 and to a limited extent Parcel 9 have any contribution to the protection of the setting and special character of Historic Towns (Oxford and Abingdon), Purpose 4 of the Green Belt. There are unlikely to be cumulative impacts with respect to this Purpose.

## **9 CONCLUSIONS**

### **9.1 Suitability of the site for removal from the Green Belt**

9.1.1 This study has identified that while the Dalton Barracks site is not suitable for development in its entirety, there are areas within the site that contribute little to the Purposes of the Green Belt and have the potential to be developed / removed from the Green Belt without harm to the aims and objectives of the designation. Parcel 1A could be redeveloped in accordance with paragraph 89 of the NPPF, without alteration to the existing Green Belt boundary. Parcels 1B, 1C and the southern part of Parcel 1D also have some potential for sensitive development without harm to the wider Green Belt. The north-eastern corner of Parcel 1F may have scope for development as part of a wider strategic settlement. The northern part of Parcel 1D, in addition to the majority of Parcel 1F and Parcels 1E and 1G have a higher contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and would be difficult to develop with harming the openness or integrity of the Green Belt.

9.1.2 Should Parcels 1A, 1B, 1C, the southern part of Parcel 1D and the north-eastern corner of Parcel 1F be developed, there is also the potential to develop some of the surrounding land parcels in order to create a larger sustainable settlement. This study has identified that Parcels 2 and 3 could be developed in conjunction with the identified sub-parcels of



the Dalton Barracks site in order to create a new settlement, with a strong settlement pattern without significant harm to the integrity of the wider Green Belt.

- 9.1.3 Development of the remaining land parcels assessed within this study are likely to harm the aims, objectives and integrity of the Oxford Green Belt.

## **9.2 Potential revisions to the Green Belt boundary (HDA 5)**

- 9.2.1 In order for a site to be removed from Green Belt, a new Green Belt boundary would need to be defined. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF states that:

*'When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should...*

*...define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*

- 9.2.2 The development at the existing barracks site currently has a hard edge, with the largest and most incongruous buildings located at the western boundary of the development. The airfield to the west is open and exposed, with a high degree of intervisibility with the barracks and the wider landscape. There are currently no existing landscape features on which to base a new Green Belt boundary. However, the redevelopment of the site could provide the opportunity to create a less obtrusive development within a new settlement edge. The creation of such a robust and less obtrusive Green Belt boundary to a proposed development would be an important aspect of the redevelopment of the site.
- 9.2.3 Plan HDA 6 illustrates a potential new settlement edge that includes the redistribution of built development within Dalton Barracks, from more sensitive areas of the Barracks site to less sensitive areas. In order to create a more cohesive pattern of development to a potential new settlement the north-eastern corner of 1F has been included in addition to land Parcels 2 and 3, which would incorporate the ribbon development at Whitecross into a more meaningful settlement pattern, with access to improved facilities and transport connections. The existing southern edge of Shippon would be retained as the southern extent of the new settlement.
- 9.2.4 Further work is required from other disciplines in order to fully assess what would constitute a sustainable settlement in this location and to identify any further potential effects of development within the site on the integrity of the wider Green Belt designation.

## HDA Document Control and Quality Assurance Record

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## REFERENCES

- Ref 1 -** Planning Officers Society (March 2015), *'We need to talk about the Green Belt'*
- Ref 2 -** Planning Advisory Service (Feb 2015), *'Planning on the Doorstep: The Big Issues – Green Belt'*
- Ref 3 -** Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012), *'National Planning Policy Framework'*.
- Ref 4 -** Vale of White Horse District Council (2016), *'Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1'*
- Ref 5 -** The Planning Inspectorate (November 2016 – Ref 5); *'Report on the Examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1'* ref: PiNS/V3120/429/5
- Ref 6 -** Vale of White Horse District Council (2017), *'Vale of White Horse District Landscape Character Assessment'*
- Ref 7 -** LUC on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council (October 2015), *'Oxford Green Belt Study'*
- Ref 8 -** Kirkham Landscape Planning LTD / Terra Firma Consultancy on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council (February 2014), *'Green Belt Review'*.

## **Appendix 1: Green Belt Methodology**

## **Appendix 2: Extracts from Oxford Green Belt Study**

### **Appendix 3: Extracts from Vale of White Horse Green Belt Review**