

# **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1**

## **Examination Hearings**

### **Examination Stage 2**

#### **Written Statement by Vale of White Horse District Council**

**in relation to:**

#### **Matter 5 – Proposed Revision of Green Belt Boundaries (including Policy CP13)**

Version:	Final
Dated:	6 January 2016

## **Matter 5 - Proposed Revision of Green Belt Boundaries (including Policy CP13)**

### **1. Introduction and Background to Oxford's Green Belt**

1.1 Green Belts have been an important planning tool since the 1950s. The original aim of Green Belt was to prevent the unrestricted urban sprawl of England's major settlements. Government circular 42/55 set the first policy on Green Belts, being replaced by PPG2 in 1988 and then by the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) in 2012.

1.2 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states five purposes of the Green Belt as:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

1.3 Once established paragraph 83 of the NPPF is clear that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through a Local Plan and if amended, should be redefined to endure beyond the plan period. The Council considers that exceptional circumstances do exist to alter Oxford's Green Belt boundaries within the Vale of White Horse. This paper summarises those circumstances and references the detailed justification for Green Belt review and the evidence that has informed preparation of the Local Plan in this respect. Appendix 1 sets out the list of documents and evidence relevant.

1.4 In terms of the Oxford Green Belt the process of defining the Green Belt began with the publication by the relevant local authorities of a 'sketch plan' in 1956 with an outer approved boundary and interim inner boundary finally approved in 1975. Five villages were identified as inset villages to absorb overspill development from the City: Kennington, Cumnor, Wootton, Radley and Appleton. The final inner boundaries to Oxford, Abingdon and these villages were later set by the approved Oxford Fringe and Green Belt Local Plan in 1991 and remain unaltered to the present time. The inner boundaries were drawn very tightly around the settlements with safeguarded land set aside north of Abingdon, and north and south of Botley. To date, they have endured for about 40 years. The current extent of Oxford Green Belt covers around 66,000 hectares, 8,312ha (13%) of which is within the Vale of White Horse district. The full history of the Oxford Green Belt is set out in the Green Belt Review: Final Phase 2 Report (**NAT02, Section 5, page 8**).

1.5 Appendix 3 shows the full extent of the Oxford Green Belt as shown in the Oxford Green Belt Study (October 2015) (**NAT09**), LUC. The settlements of Abingdon, Appleton, Botley, Cumnor, Kennington, Radley and Wootton are

'inset' settlements within the Vale part of the Green Belt. The specific role of the Oxford Green Belt within the Vale is:

- To check the growth of the large built up area of Oxford;
- To prevent the coalescence of Oxford and Abingdon;
- To prevent encroachment into the countryside surrounding Oxford and to preserve its rural setting;
- To preserve the special historic character of Oxford.

1.6 The Adopted Oxford Fringe and Green Belt Local Plan describes the distinctive rural character of the Oxford Green Belt within the Vale which form the backcloth to the historic 'dreaming spires of Oxford'. In summary, the course of the river Thames, the wooded hills rising above the watermeadows and villages (including Wytham Hill, Boars Hill, Cumnor, Bagley Wood, Babcock Hythe and the Chiswell Valley).<sup>1</sup>

## **2. The Green Belt Review Studies undertaken to inform the Local Plan**

2.1 For the reasons set out in Section 3 of this statement, the Council recognised the need to review the Green Belt. The approach to the Green Belt Review was to assess the Green Belt around Oxford, Abingdon and the six inset villages to enable the council to identify any Green Belt land adjacent to existing settlements which might be considered suitable to meet development needs having regard to national policy considerations.

2.2 The Green Belt Review was carried out in three phases between October 2013 and February 2014. Phases 1 and 2 were reported together in the Green Belt Review Final Phase 2 Report (February 2014) (**NAT02**). Phase 3 was also published in February 2014, and republished in November 2014 (**NAT03**).

2.2 In Phase 1 the Green Belt within the Vale was sub-divided into 11 land parcels based on landscape character and defined using physical features<sup>2</sup>. The settlement edges within each land parcel were assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt<sup>3</sup>. The findings were summarised in Table 4 of the Phase 2 Report. Where there was potential for Green Belt release, this was identified using a series of numbered notes for further review in Phase 3. The land parcels as a whole were then assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Table 5 of the Phase 2 Report.

2.3 Phase 1 concluded that all the land parcels contributed to at least three of the five purposes of the Green Belt and recommended that 25 areas of the Green Belt around settlement edges had the potential to be released from Green Belt, subject to further review in Phase 3.

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<sup>1</sup> **NAT02** Green Belt Review Final Phase 2 Report; Section 5

<sup>2</sup> **NAT02** Green Belt Review Final Phase 2 Report; Section 7

<sup>3</sup> **NAT02** Green Belt Review Final Phase 2 Report; Section 9

- 2.4 In its response to the Green Belt Review published in February 2014 (**NAT10**)<sup>4</sup>, the council agreed with 23 of the recommendations, but did not agree with the recommendations in relation to Area 12 (North Hinksey) or Area 15 (East of Abingdon) and these were not taken forward into Phase 3.
- 2.5 Phase 2 of the Green Belt Review assessed whether there was any justification for a minor expansion of Green Belt<sup>5</sup> and whether there was scope for any additional inset settlement<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.6 The report concluded that there was no justification for expansion of the Green Belt and that Farmoor be included as an inset settlement. The council agreed with this conclusion and the Proposals Map shows revised Green Belt boundaries in this location.
- 2.7 Phase 3 of the Review defines smaller areas of the larger Land Parcels suitable for release from the Green Belt informed by the influence of urbanising features or development. The proposed areas for release were defined using readily recognisable physical features that are visible on the ground and likely to be permanent, in accordance with paragraph 85 of the NPPF.
- 2.8 The Phase 3 Report was first published in February 2014. The council issued a response to it at the same time, in which it set out whether or not it considered the proposed areas for release suitable for development. The council's response also highlighted that whilst not mentioned in the Green Belt Review, it was also considering releasing land from the Green Belt at north Radley for housing through the Housing Delivery Update consultation (**PLP01**) (February 2014).
- 2.9 The Housing Delivery Update consultation in February 2014 featured proposed Green Belt boundary revisions, as set out in the Phase 3 Green Belt Review Report, in Figure 4.12; made reference to the Green Belt Review; and, showed the proposed housing allocations within the existing Green Belt, including North Radley.
- 2.10 Following consultation the council revised its package of sites and decided not to allocate the site at North Radley and to extend the North Abingdon site east of Oxford Road in Land Parcel 8. These changes were reflected in the Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Publication draft consulted on in November 2014.
- 2.11 As set out in the Publication Draft the council concluded that it should accept all the changes to the Green Belt proposed by the Phase 3 Report on the basis that each of the 23 areas identified made a limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. The council also acknowledged that these land parcels should be assessed for their development potential as part of Local Plan 2031

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<sup>4</sup> **NAT10** Vale of White Horse District Council's comments on the Green Belt Review

<sup>5</sup> **NAT02** Green Belt Review Final Phase 2 Report; Section 11

<sup>6</sup> **NAT02** Green Belt Review Final Phase 2 Report; Section 12

Part 1 or Part 2 depending on the potential development capacity of the land parcel.

- 2.12 The chronology of how each proposed area for Green Belt release was considered at each stage of the process is set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.13 Out of the 25 areas looked at by the Green Belt Review Study, 23 parcels of land (246ha) are proposed by the Local Plan to be removed from the adopted Green Belt. Of that 246 ha land, only some 82 ha is proposed to be allocated in Local Plan Part 1, on Strategic Allocation Sites 1, 2, 3 and 4. A further 18 parcels (164 ha) of land are proposed for removal from the Green Belt to provide additional opportunity for consideration as sites for less than 200 homes in Local Plan Part 2, or beyond the plan period. The total amount of land for release represents 3% of Green Belt in the Vale and 0.4% of Oxford's Green Belt overall.

### **Question 5.1**

**Do the exceptional circumstances, as required by the NPPF (paragraphs 79-86), exist to justify the plan's proposed revision of the boundaries of the Green Belt, having particular regard to:**

- a) Housing Allocation sites 1, 2, 3 and 4?**
- b) The land between sites 1 and 2, to the east of the A34?**
- c) The land to be removed from the Green Belt but not allocated for any particular use?**

### **3. The Council's Response to Question 5.1**

- 3.1 The Council considers that 'exceptional circumstances' exist to justify the proposed revisions to Green Belt boundaries as set out in the Local Plan. The particular circumstances of the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area and the Vale of White Horse are considered to warrant revisions to existing Green Belt boundaries to enable development at Abingdon, the Vale's largest and most sustainable settlement, the larger villages of Radley and Kennington, and the expansion of other sustainable settlements in Local Plan Part 2 or neighbourhood plans, as long as the overall purposes of the Green Belt in this location would not be compromised by those releases of Green Belt land.
- 3.2 When defining or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, paragraph 85 of the NPPF clearly states that 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.

3.3 The council sets out clearly what it regards as the ‘exceptional circumstances’ for reviewing and redefining Green Belt boundaries in the District, in its statement ‘Alterations to the Green Belt Boundaries and Proposed Housing Development in the North Wessex Downs AONB’.<sup>7</sup> In summary, the council considers the exceptional circumstances to be:

- The need to fully meet the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing within the district.
- The need to deliver sustainable development, including providing for sustainable patterns of growth and delivering supporting infrastructure
- The lack of alternative sites in sustainable locations.
- The limited contribution the land parcels being removed have in terms of the purposes of the Green Belt; having regard to the intended permanence of Green Belt boundaries and not including land that it is unnecessary to keep permanently open.

3.4 In terms of meeting the OAN, paragraph 14 of the NPPF requires when making new Local Plans, local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities for development to meet the needs of their area and meet objectively assessed needs unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

3.5 The objectively assessed housing need for the Vale of White Horse, identified within the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) of 20,560<sup>8</sup> homes, is 35% higher than the target set out in the adopted Local Plan 2011.

3.6 The Vale of White Horse is a largely rural district with the ‘knowledge spine’ including Oxford, Didcot, the A34 and Harwell Campus having a very strong influence on the District<sup>9</sup>. Abingdon-on-Thames, the largest settlement within the district, lies within this corridor and offers the best range of services and facilities. Strategic development at Abingdon-on-Thames can contribute to the

<sup>7</sup> **PC2A** ‘Alterations to the Green Belt Boundaries and Proposed Housing Development in the North Wessex Downs AONB

<sup>8</sup> **HOU01** Table 90 of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment

<sup>9</sup> **ECO010** Oxfordshire LEP: Strategic Economic Plan 2014, page 40

delivery of critical infrastructure, including the upgrade of the Lodge Hill A34 Interchange, which is identified within the adopted Oxford Transport Strategy<sup>10</sup>. However, this corridor is also constrained by AONB, Green Belt, and flood risk. When overlaid with the settlement hierarchy the opportunities for development in sustainable locations are limited. The council therefore has few options available to deliver sustainable growth and meet objectively assessed needs, unless it is to contemplate a review of its Green Belt.

- 3.7 In seeking to accommodate its objectively assessed development needs, the council has considered over 100 sites during preparation of the Local Plan<sup>11</sup>.
- 3.8 The council is not aware of any strategic scale sites within the built area of Abingdon. Therefore, to deliver strategic scale development at Abingdon, an expansion of development at the settlement is required. Opportunities for the southern expansion of Abingdon, which is not designated as Green Belt, are extremely limited, due to flooding constraints associated with the River Thames.
- 3.9 An alternative site (South Abingdon)<sup>12</sup> was assessed in detail as the only reasonable alternative to Green Belt sites located at Abingdon. However this site is severely restricted by road capacity to the south of the town that can only be addressed by a new 'South Abingdon by-pass'. There is no identified funding for this road, and it cannot be funded solely by development.
- 3.10 The only sustainable and deliverable locations for development around Abingdon therefore require release of Green Belt land.
- 3.11 The Green Belt boundary is drawn very tightly around villages, with no areas of safeguarded land and there is limited capacity for strategic scale development within the existing built areas of inset villages. The proposed revisions to Green Belt boundaries could create opportunity for some expansion of inset villages in the Local Plan, but these are not of a strategic scale. See response to Matter 5.1c below.
- 3.12 The Local Plan supports development at sustainable locations, in accordance with the NPPF. The Local Plan Spatial Strategy is heavily influenced by the need to support growth within Science Vale and the identified housing for Science Vale is being fully met by the Local Plan's proposals. Abingdon-on-Thames is the largest and most sustainable settlement in the district. The sites identified at Abingdon-on-Thames and the two highly sustainable larger villages close to Abingdon are some of the most sustainable options available to the Council in order to meet its identified housing needs. There are very few alternative sites available in other settlements and these are either not deliverable or located in far less sustainable locations. The Council considers that increased strategic housing allocations beyond the Green Belt boundary would result in unsustainable patterns of development. A detailed summary of

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<sup>10</sup> **TRA03** Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2030

<sup>11</sup> **TOP03** Topic Paper 3: Strategic Sites Selection

<sup>12</sup> **TOP03** Topic Paper 3: Strategic Sites Selection; Site reference TPS006

all site options tested and why alternatives have been rejected is set out within the Strategic Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>13</sup>.

- 3.13 Except for the land to the east of Oxford Road in Abingdon all of the proposed releases are areas that are no longer considered to contribute to the purposes of the Green Belt. This is consistent with paragraph 85 of the NPPF in not including land that is unnecessary to keep open.

**(a) Housing Allocation Sites 1, 2, 3 and 4**

- 3.14 The primary purpose of the Green Belt around Abingdon is to prevent Abingdon merging with other settlements, particularly Oxford, Wootton and Radley. The Green Belt also plays a part in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and safeguards the setting of Oxford, with the wooded hillsides and river landscapes being particularly sensitive in this respect. Phase 2 of the Green Belt Review identified the potential for further review of the settlement edge of Abingdon in land parcels P7, P8 and P9 in notes 17, 20, 21 and 22.<sup>14</sup>

**3.15 *Site 1: North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames***

This site is referred to as Area 22 within Land Parcel P9, Shippon and the Airfield, in the Green Belt Review Phase 2 and 3 Reports.

- 3.16 The Green Belt Review states that the settlement edge of Abingdon, North of Wildmoor (Area 22) makes limited contribution to preventing the neighbouring settlements of Abingdon and Wootton merging into each other as the area east of the A34 is heavily influenced by modern urban uses and contained by the elevated A34. The site is also judged to make little contribution to the perception of the open countryside.

- 3.17 The council concluded that this site could be released from the Green Belt for development without impacting on the purposes of Green Belt in this location.

**3.18 *Site 2: North of Abingdon-on-Thames***

This site straddles Land Parcel P9, Shippon and the Airfield and Land Parcel P8, Foxborough Hill and Radley Wood. The part of the site west of Oxford Road is referred to as Area 20 and 21 in the Green Belt Review. The Green Belt Review Phase 2 concluded that the area east of the A34 (P9), where the settlement edge is heavily influenced by modern urban uses and contained by the A34, makes limited contribution to the sense of separation and contribution to the open countryside.

- 3.19 The Green Belt Review Phase 2 concluded that the main purpose of Green Belt in land parcel P8 was for the separation of Abingdon and Radley, and its role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, with the perimeter road providing a clear boundary in this respect.

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<sup>13</sup> **TOP03** Topic Paper 3: Strategic Sites Selection

<sup>14</sup> **NAT02** Green Belt Review: Final Phase 2 Report; Page 49



- 3.20 The Green Belt Review Phase 3 also suggested Areas 20 and 21 for release, setting out the boundaries for the site to be released<sup>15</sup>. The land east of Oxford Road (Area 20a) was not specifically identified for Green Belt release.
- 3.21 Following the February 2014 Housing Delivery Update consultation the council considered whether land to the east of Oxford Road should also be allocated in the plan for strategic development. It concluded that an expanded site at North Abingdon would better support the provision of a new primary school, help to fund the A34 south facing slips at Lodge Hill as well as helping to meet the needs in the district's largest settlement.
- 3.22 In recognition of the findings of the Phase 2 Green Belt Review in relation to Land Parcel 8 a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment<sup>16</sup> (LVIA) (**NAT05**) was undertaken on land east of Oxford Road, Abingdon (Area 20a). The LVIA concluded that the western part of Parcel 20a was more contained and related better to the existing settlement and that the parcel made a limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes, as it did not provide essential separation between Abingdon and Radley (paragraph 5.2.2). The LVIA concluded that it would not cause significant detriment to the purpose of the Green Belt here if removed from Green Belt
- 3.23 Further Sustainability Appraisal (SA) work was also undertaken on the revised allocation to inform the proposed extension to the east of Oxford Road, as set out in the Submission Version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1<sup>17</sup>.
- 3.24 The SA concluded that the proposed allocation would have a major positive effect in delivering homes in an accessible edge of town location and would contribute towards meeting both market and affordable housing needs in the District. The proposed allocation was also assessed to have significant positive effects in reducing the need to travel and promoting sustainable transport, as well as contributing towards the local economy by providing access to employment sites and the town centre of Abingdon. Where development could have minor negative impact on SA objectives, appropriate mitigation measures are proposed as set out in Appendix A: Site Development Templates.<sup>18</sup>
- 3.25 The council concluded that the wider infrastructure provision and sustainability benefits<sup>19</sup> of this site justified a departure from the Green Belt Review recommendation particularly given that the separation between Abingdon and Radley can be maintained.

<sup>15</sup> **NAT03** Green Belt Review: Phase 3 Report; Page 2

<sup>16</sup> **NAT05** North Abingdon – Land to the east of Oxford Road Landscape and Visual Feasibility Study

<sup>17</sup> **DLP04** Sustainability Appraisal Report

<sup>18</sup> **DLP02** Local Plan 2031 Part 1 : Appendices, Pages 9-11

<sup>19</sup> **DLP04** Sustainability Appraisal, paragraph 11.4, Page 65

3.26 **Site 3: South of Kennington**

This site is referred to as Area 13 and is within Land Parcel P6: Kennington and Radley Floodplain in the Green Belt Review Phase 2. The Report states that the purpose of the Green Belt in this location is to prevent the spread of Oxford and the merging of Kennington and Radley. It states that Area 13 is less critical to maintaining this separation as it is west of the railway line and is contained by the existing settlement.

- 3.27 The council therefore concluded that this site could be released from the Green Belt for development whilst maintaining the separation of Radley and Kennington.

3.28 **Site 4: North-West Radley**

This site is referred to as Area 16 within Land Parcel P8: Foxborough Hill and Radley Wood in The Green Belt Review. The Phase 2 Report concluded that the main purpose of Green Belt in P8 is the separation of Abingdon and Radley and safeguarding the countryside, but that the edge of Radley, east of White's Lane, (note 16) is already compromised by the exposed village built form and not essential to the separation of these two settlements.

- 3.29 The council concluded that this site could be released from the Green Belt for development without eroding the separation of Radley and Abingdon and compromising the purpose of Green Belt here.

**(b) The land between sites 1 and 2, to the east of the A34**

- 3.30 The land between Sites 1 and 2, to the east of the A34 is in Land Parcel 9: Shippon and the Airfield (**NAT02, p.43**). The land in question is occupied by Tilsley Park an important and well-loved sports and recreation facility, with fields and woodland donated to the people of Abingdon for community and sporting use.
- 3.31 As stated above, the area east of the A34 is considered to make limited contribution to Green Belt purposes, is heavily influenced by modern urban uses and is well contained by the elevated A34. Tilsley Park will remain in its current use, and other policy constraints will apply governing development on the site.

**(c) The land to be removed from the Green Belt but not allocated for any particular use**

- 3.32 The Green Belt Review identified locations on the edge of Abingdon, Appleton, Botley, Cumnor, Kennington, Radley and Wootton that no longer contributed to the purposes of the Green Belt. In accordance with paragraph 85 of the NPPF the land has been released from the Green Belt where it is unnecessary to be kept permanently open<sup>20</sup> and with regard to the permanence of the revised boundary in the long term<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> **LNP02** CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 80

<sup>21</sup> **LNP02** CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 83

- 3.33 Given the strategic focus of Local Plan 2031 Part 1<sup>22</sup> is to make strategic housing allocations, sites below the strategic threshold of 200 homes have not been assessed as potential development sites for inclusion within the Part 1 of the Local Plan. These sites will need to be considered for inclusion within Local Plan 2031 Part 2. In that event, they would be subject to a comprehensive site selection process and further sustainability appraisal.
- 3.34 Whilst not allocating all land it proposes to release from the Green Belt, the council has proposed revised Green Belt boundaries based on identifiable features on the ground and which ensure that the revised Green Belt boundaries are capable of enduring beyond the plan period<sup>23</sup>

## Question 5.2

**Is it soundly based for Housing Allocation Site 2 to include an area of land designated as Green Belt?**

### 4. The Council's Response to Question 5.2

- 4.1 The approach for housing allocation Site 2 to include an area designated as Green Belt reflects the intention for an integral part of the development to be kept open, and provide important landscaping and open space for the development that takes place. A similar approach was taken in the adopted Lichfield District Local Plan: Strategy<sup>24</sup> when it proposed a Strategic Development Allocation at Deanslade Farm that included an area designated as Green Belt. The Inspector's Report concluded, that "*the release of sites at Cricket Lane and Deanslade Farm would not cause unacceptable harm to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt*" (paragraph 201). The Inspector accepted that the "*upper part of Deanslade Farm would remain in the Green Belt and be incorporated into a District park*".
- 4.2 The site template for this site allocation<sup>25</sup> limits development to those parts of the site identified in the Landscape Capacity Study (2014) and east of Oxford Road Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as being suitable for development. The element of the site remaining in Green Belt is an opportunity to positively enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 81 of the NPPF, which the council will address through its Green Infrastructure Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy.

<sup>22</sup> **DLP01** Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies Publication Version

<sup>23</sup> **LNP02** CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 83

<sup>24</sup> Lichfield District Local Plan: Strategy Inspector's Report (2015), available at: <https://lichfielddc.gov.uk/Council/Planning/The-local-plan-and-planning-policy/Resource-centre/Local-Plan-documents/Downloads/Local-Plan-Strategy-Inspectors-Report/Local-Plan-Strategy-inspectors-report-January-2015.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> **DLP02** Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Appendices

### **Question 5.3**

**Does the plan adequately identify the revisions to the Green Belt boundary that it proposes?**

#### **5. The Council's Response to Question 5.3**

- 5.1 The council's Proposals Map shows the revised Green Belt boundary. To provide further clarity the council issued a statement during stage 1 of the Local Plan examination entitled 'Summary Note on changes to the Oxford Green Belt.'(HEAR03)
- 5.2 A number of minor drafting errors have been corrected and a schedule of minor modifications including maps is attached at Appendix 5. The Local Plan Strategic Sites and Policies Appendices (DLP02) also show detailed Green Belt boundaries and these have been amended where required to clarify consistency with the Proposals Map.

### **Question 5.4**

**Is Policy CP13 soundly based?**

#### **6. The Council's Response to Question 5.4**

- 6.1 The Local Plan has done its utmost to plan positively for its development needs in sustainable locations and deliver a sustainable pattern of development in the District without compromising the purposes of the Green Belt in this part of Oxfordshire. This has involved balancing promoting the delivery of housing and employment and protecting the district's natural assets and the setting of Oxford.
- 6.2 The Local Plan has made every effort to explore alternative locations within urban areas, inset villages and locations outside the Green Belt but this would result in a less sustainable pattern of development in the Vale of White Horse. The only alternative would be to propose a lower level of development, but to do that would not maximise the Vale's potential to contribute to the strategic economic plan for Oxfordshire, nor would it meet its objectively assessed development needs.
- 6.3 The Local Plan is justified in its approach to reviewing Green Belt given the level of housing need and economic potential and only proposes to remove land from the Green Belt that no longer contributes, or contributes little to its purpose. The revisions to Green Belt proposed in the Local Plan reduces the overall amount of Green Belt in the Vale only by 3% and Green Belt in the Vale will continue to fulfil its purpose of protecting the historic landscape setting of Oxford and the views and provide a Green backdrop to views out of the city.

- 6.4 The council has defined the revised boundaries for the Green Belt using permanent physical features. This provides clarity for landowners and officers in the development management process. Policy CP13 is clear about the types of development that are appropriate and inappropriate in the Green Belt as is fully aligned in its wording to the NPPF.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The Council considers that in respect of this matter, it can justify that the Local Plan meets the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF without any further modifications to Policy CP13 and with minor modifications to the Proposals Map as it sets out in Appendix 5 to this Written Statement.

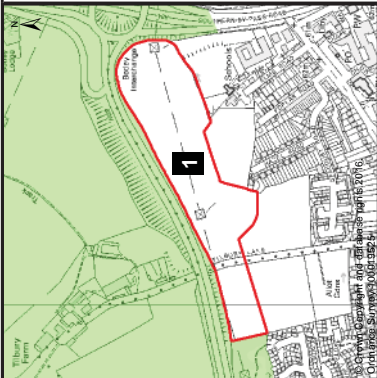
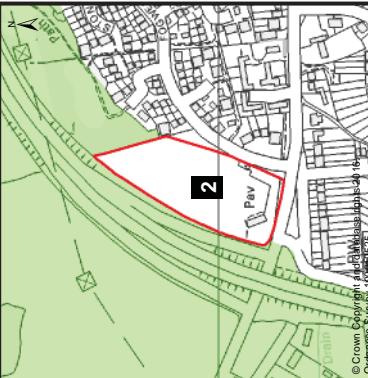
### **Appendix 1: Documents referenced in this statement**

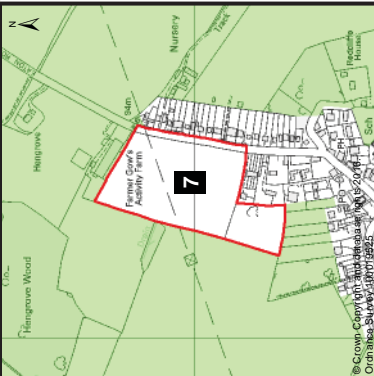
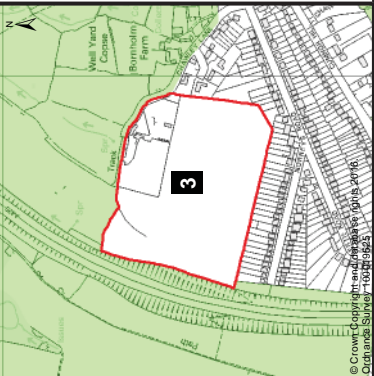
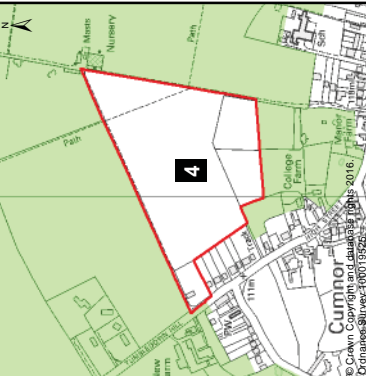
- LNP02** National Planning Policy Framework
- NAT02** Green Belt Review, Final Phase 2 Report (February 2014), Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd/ Terra Firma Consultancy on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council
- NAT05** North Abingdon – Land to the east of Oxford Road Landscape and Visual Feasibility Study, Hankinson Duckett Associates for Vale of White Horse District Council
- NAT03** Green Belt Review, Final Phase 3 Report (February 2014 and November 2014), Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council
- NAT10** Vale of White Horse District Council's comments on the Green Belt review (February 2014)
- PLP01\_1** Housing Delivery Update supporting paper
- PCD02** Alterations to Green Belt boundaries and proposed housing development in the North Wessex Downs AONB (August 2015), Statement by Vale of White Horse District Council
- NAT09** Oxford Green Belt Study (October 2015), Land Use Consultants on behalf of the Oxfordshire Growth Board
- HEAR03** Summary Note on changes to the Oxford Green Belt (September 2015), Vale of White Horse District Council
- HOU01** Oxfordshire SHMA, (April 2014), G L Hearn
- TOP03** Topic Paper 3: Strategic Sites Selection
- TOP09** Topic Paper 9: Natural Environment

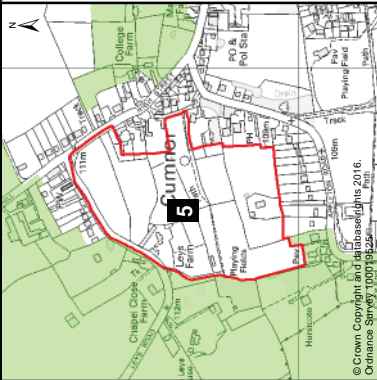
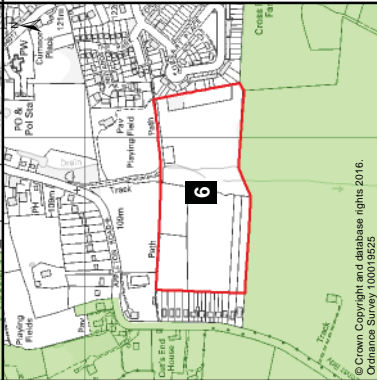
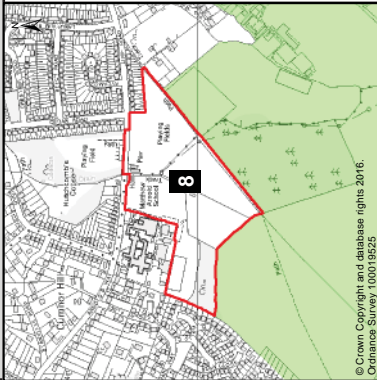
## Appendix 2: Chronology of proposed green belt releases

### Proposed edge of settlement Green Belt Releases

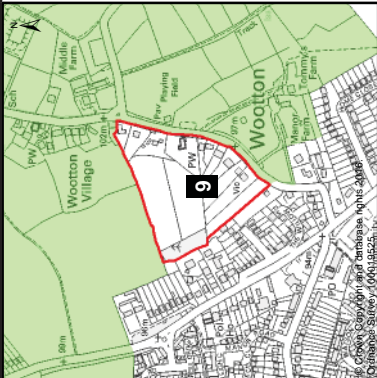
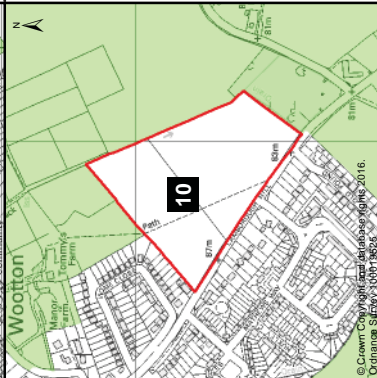
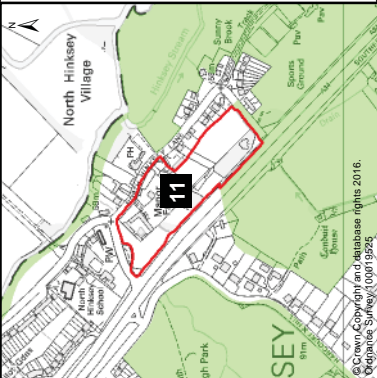
This table sets out the consideration of each of the proposed Areas for green belt release at each stage of the plan making process from February 2014 to January 2016. A – symbol indicates the area was not considered at that stage of the plan.

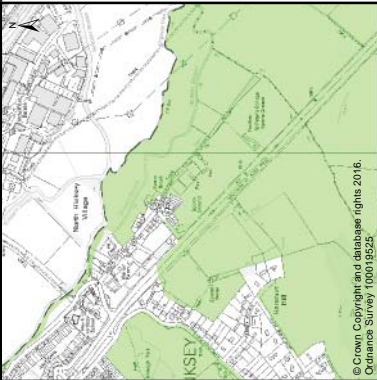
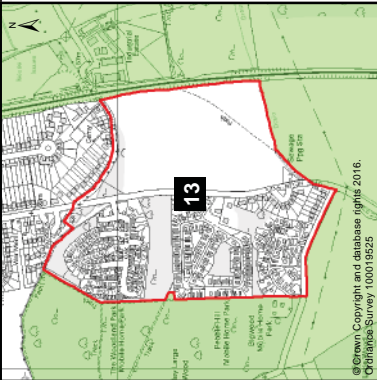
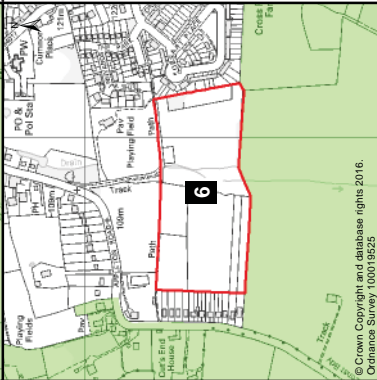
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Land Parcel 2									
	Botley	2	Note/area 1	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	x	✓	
	Botley	2	Note/area 2	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	x	✓	

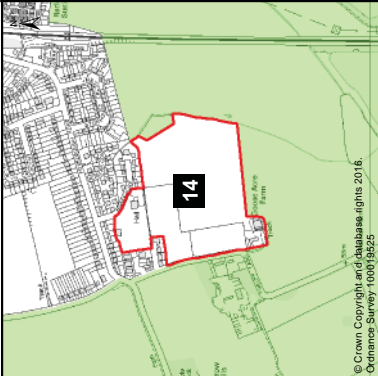
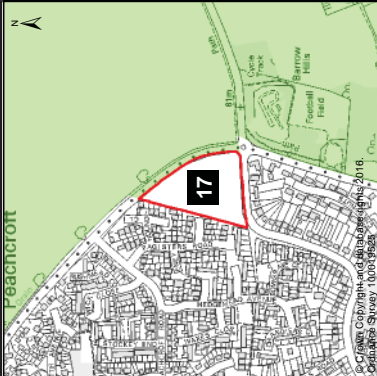
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Land Parcel 3									
	Appleton	3	Note/area 7	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓		✓	
	Botley	3	Note/area 3	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓		✓	
	Cumnor	3	Note/area 4	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Disagree Sensitive site due to contribution to the character of Cumnor Conservation Area.	✓		✓	

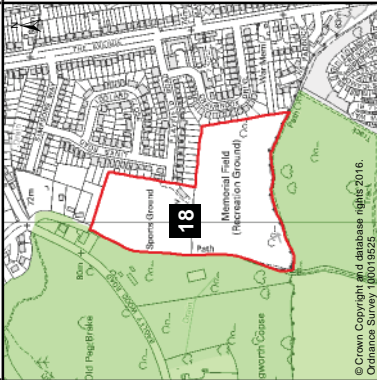
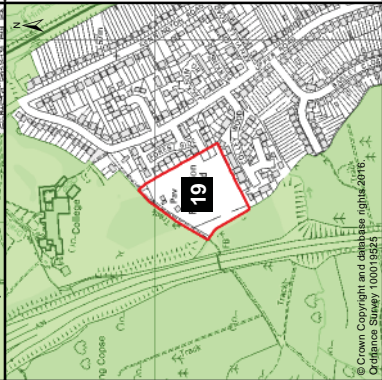
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	Cumnor	3	Note/area 5	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Disagree Sensitive site due to contribution to the character of Cumnor Conservation Area.	✓	✗	✓	Yes - see map below
	Cumnor	3	Note/area 6	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✓	✓	
Land Parcel 4									
	Botley	4	Note/area 8	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Disagree Playing fields on the site not supported for redevelopment. Sloping site.	✓	✗	✓	

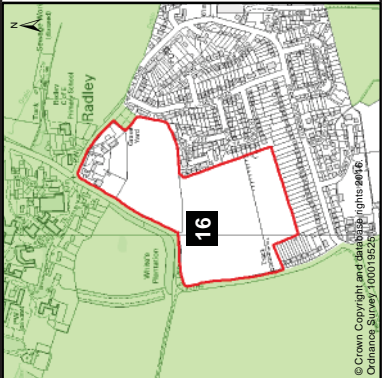
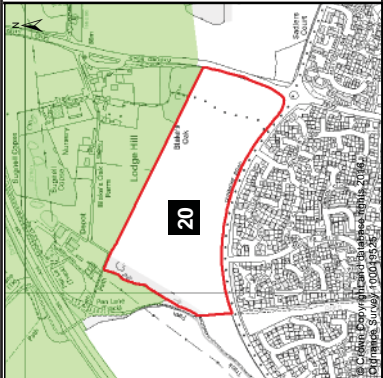
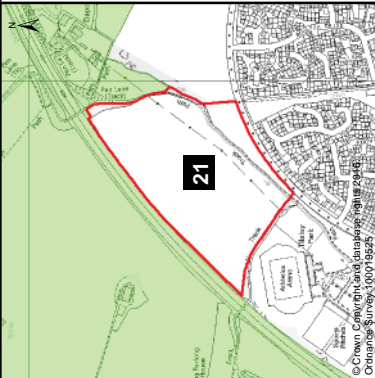


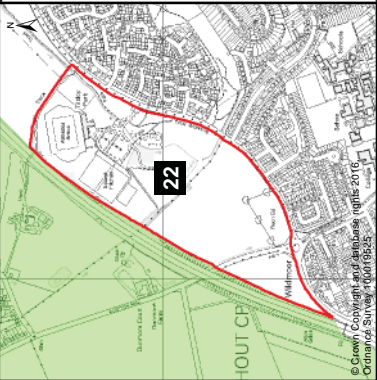
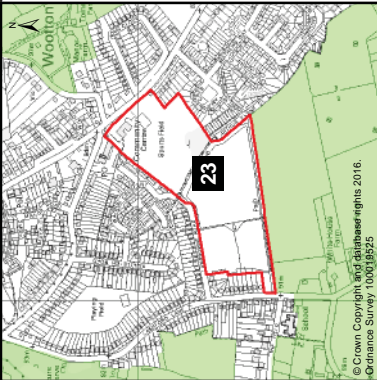
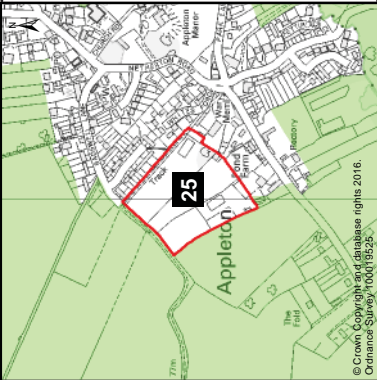
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	Wootton	4	Note/area 9	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	x	✓	
	Wootton	4	Note/area 10	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✓	✓	
Land Parcel 5									
	North Hinksey	5	Note/area 11	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Disagree Nar-rowness of site and noise from A34 constrain development.	✓	x	✓	

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	North Hinksey	5	Note/area 12	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Decision not to review in Phase 3 stated in Council response to GB review. Sensitive location separating Oxford from rural hinterland.	-	-	-	
Land Parcel 6									
	Kennington	6	Note/area 13	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✓	✓	
	Radley	6	-	-	Proposed boundary amendment to accommodate North Radley Strategic Site	✗	✓	✗	

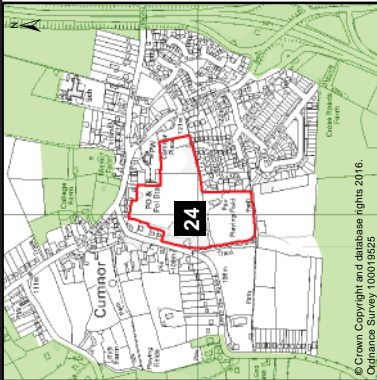
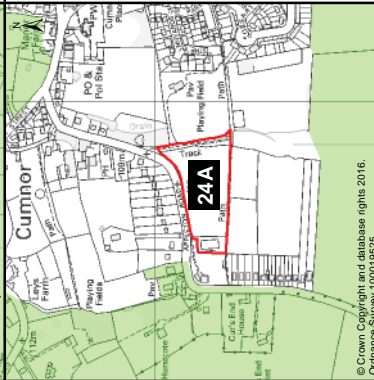
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Land Parcel 7									
	Abingdon	7	Note/area 15	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Decision not to review in Phase 3 stated in Council response to GB review. Audlett Drive logical edge to GB. Development would be encouraged into countryside.	.	.	.	.
	Radley	7	Note/area 14	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	?	✓	
Land Parcel 8									
	Abingdon	8	Note/area 17	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✗	✓	

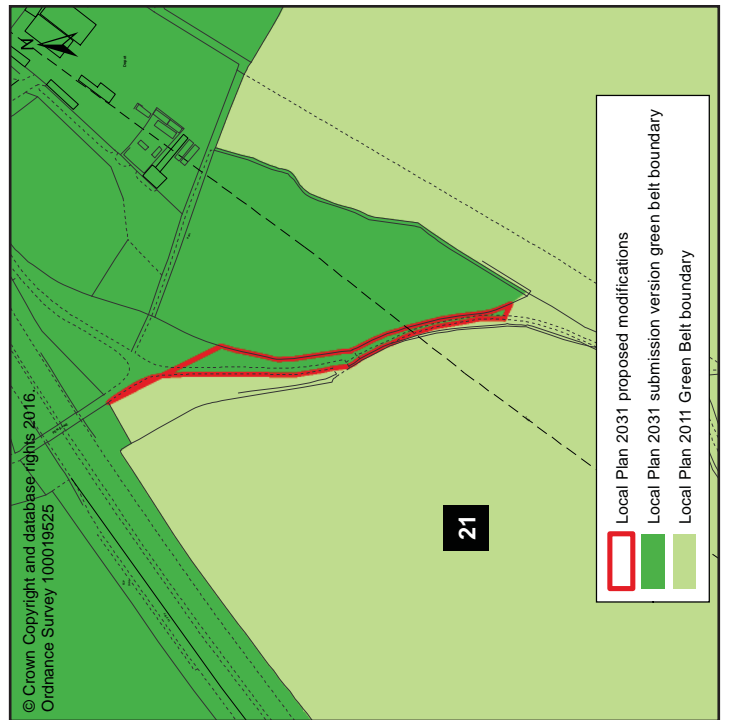
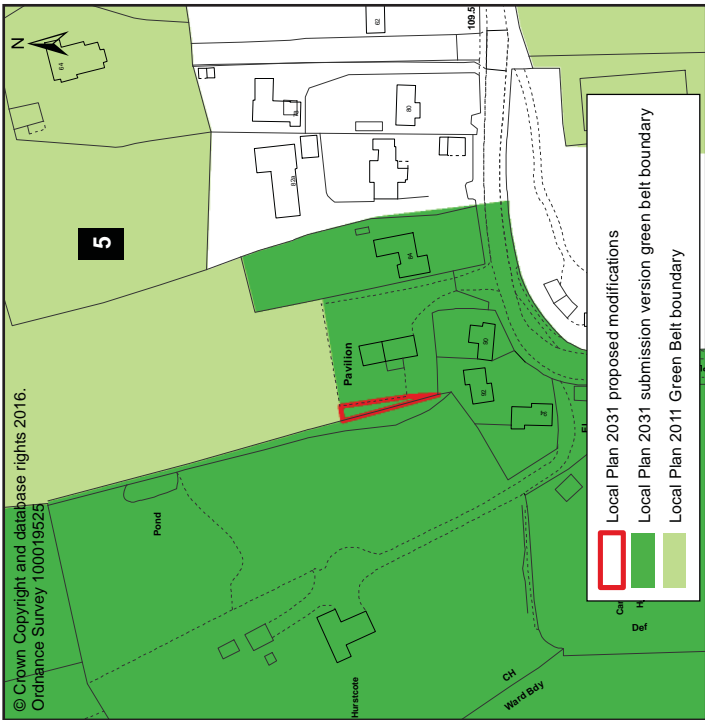
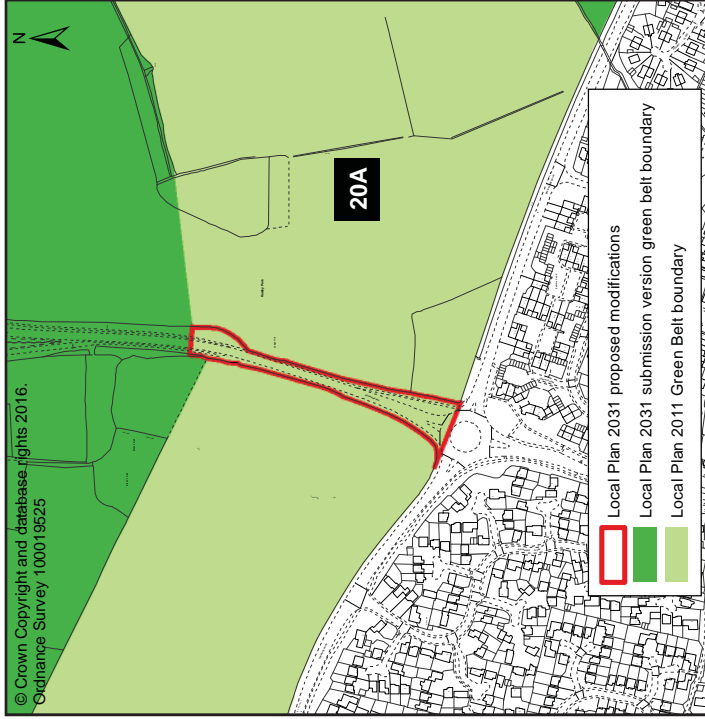
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	Abingdon	8	-	-	-	-	x	✓	
	Kennington	8	Note/area 18	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Disagree The site is a playing field. Development wouldn't be supported without alternative provision.	✓	x	✓	
	Kennington	8	Note/area 19	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Disagree The site is a playing field. Development wouldn't be supported without alternative provision.	✓	x	✓	

Map	Settlement	Land Parcel number in Phase 2 and 3 of Green	Reference in Phase 2 and 3 of Green Belt Review Report	Recom-mendation in Phase 2 report Feb 2014	Council view on development potential of proposed areas for further review	Proposed for release in Green Belt Review Phase 3	Proposed as a strategic housing allocation in February 2014 Housing	Proposed for release in Nov 2014	Post-submission minor modifications proposed
	Radley	8	Note/area 16	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✓	✓	
Land Parcel 9									
	Abingdon	9	Note/area 20	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✓	✓	Yes see map below
	Abingdon	9	Note/area 21	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✓	✓	Yes see map below

Map	Settlement	Land Parcel	Reference in Phase 2 and 3 of Green Belt Review Report	Recom-mendation in Phase 2 report Feb 2014	Council view on development potential of proposed areas for further review	Proposed for release in Green Belt Review Phase 3	Proposed as a strategic housing allocation in February 2014 Housing	Proposed for release in Nov 2014	Post-submission minor modifications proposed
	Abingdon	9	Note/area 22	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	✓	✓	
	Wootton	9	Note/area 23	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	x	✓	
Land Parcel 11									
	Appleton	11	Note/area 25	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	x	✓	



Map	Settlement	Land Parcel number in Phase 2 and 3 of Green	Reference in Phase 2 and 3 of Green Belt Review Report	Recom-mendation in Phase 2 report Feb 2014	Council view on development potential of proposed areas for further review	Proposed for release in Green Belt Review Report Phase 3	Proposed as a strategic housing allocation in February 2014 Housing	Proposed for release in Nov 2014	Post-submission minor modifications proposed
	Cumnor	11	Note/area 24	Review in more detail in Phase 3	Agree	✓	x	✓	Yes - see map below
	Cumnor	11	Area 24a	Not specifically mentioned	-	x	✓	x	Proposed amendment to address the anomaly of the island of Green Belt between areas 6 and 24.

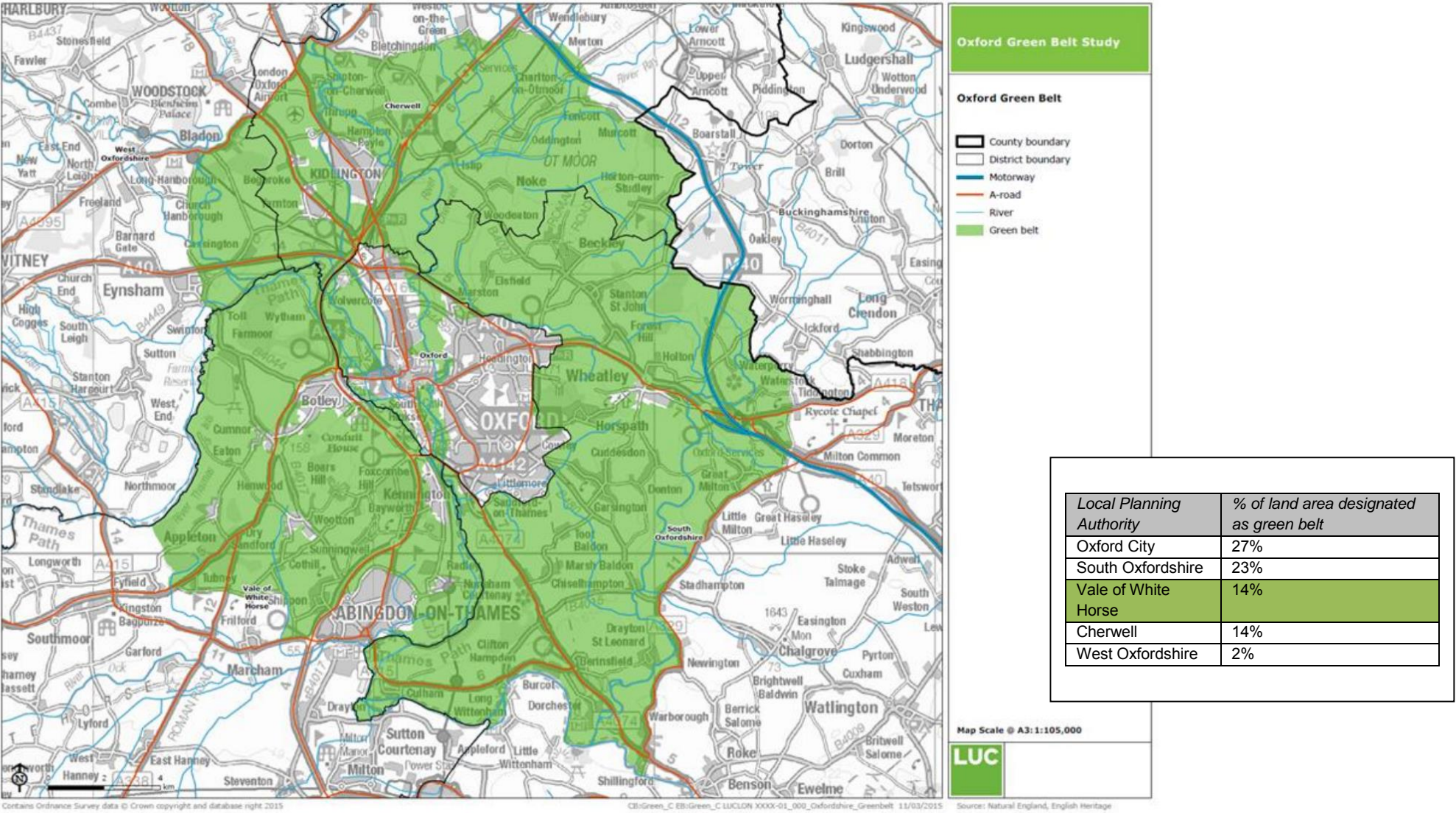




### Other proposed Green Belt revisions

Map	Settlement	Land Parcel number in Phase 2 and 3 of Green Belt Review Report	Reference in Phase 2 and 3 of Green Belt Review Report	Recommendation in Phase 2 report Feb 2014	Council view on development potential of proposed areas for further review at Feb 2014
	Farmoor		A	Inset village	Agree
	Fyfield	12		No addition	Agree
	Tubney	13		Adjust southern GB boundary to follow more permanent, easily identifiable boundary	Disagree

Appendix 3: The Oxford Green Belt



## Appendix 4: the settlement hierarchy in the Vale in relation to the Green Belt, AONB and flood zones.

