



Waverley Borough Submission  
Local Plan 1: Strategic Policies and Sites

Topic Paper:  
**Green Belt**

August 2016  
updated December 2016

## **Topic Paper – The Green Belt**

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This topic paper sets out how the Council has developed the policy approach taken in the Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites in relation to the Green Belt.

The intention of the topic papers is to provide background information; they do not contain any policies or proposals. They are also living documents that will change to reflect amendments to the approach through consultation or other factors.

The main areas covered by this topic paper are:

- Waverley's Green Belt Review
- Amending Green Belt boundaries
- Inset of villages (removed from the Green Belt)
- Washed over villages (remaining in the Green Belt)

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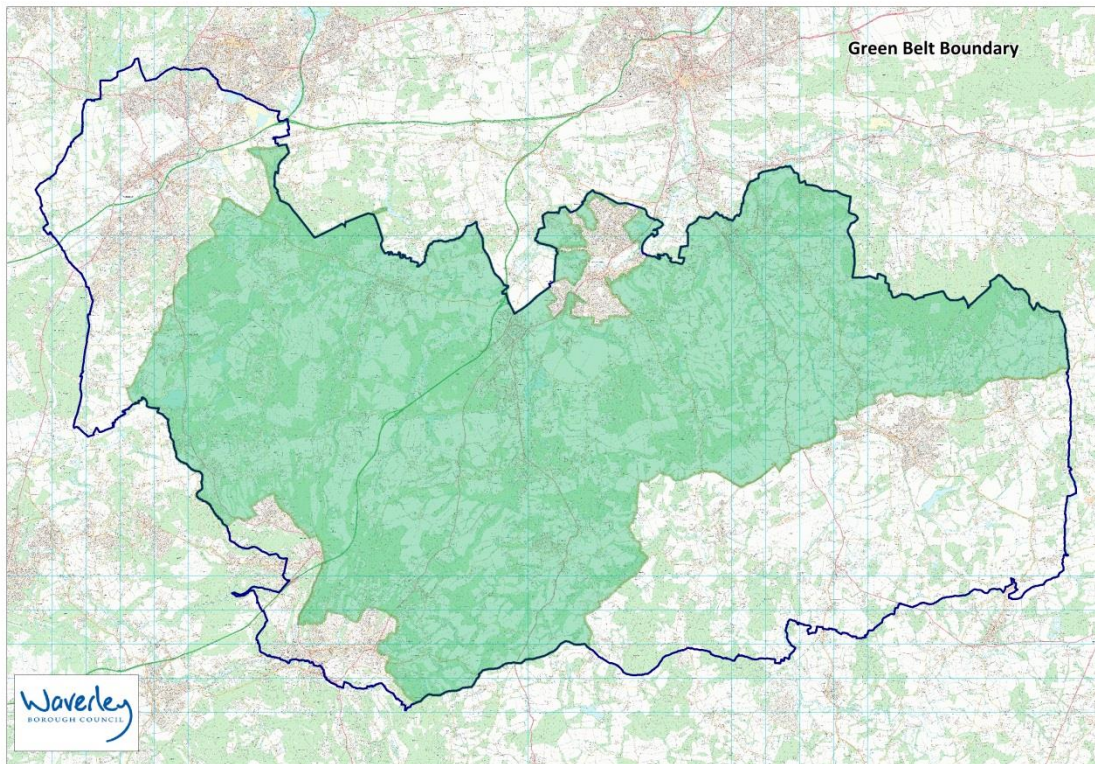
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## **1 Policy Background**

- 1.1 The NPPF (para 80) states that Green Belts serve five purposes:
- 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.
- 1.2 In defining the second purpose of preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another, this clearly refers to towns or their equivalent in size and function as opposed to settlements generally. Village and hamlets which are often 'washed over' by the Green Belt do not fall into this category.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework is clear (para 83) that, *'once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan'*. However, *the NPPF is equally clear (para 14) that 'Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs... unless specific policies... indicate development should be restricted.'*
- 1.4 It also states that villages should only be included in the Green Belt if the open character of the villages makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt (paragraph 86).
- 1.5 The NPPF has a general presumption against development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. There are, however, some uses that are appropriate in the Green Belt and these are listed in paragraphs 89 and 90.

## **2. Local Context**

- 2.1 Currently the Metropolitan Green Belt covers some 61% of the Borough. The original boundary was approved as part of the Surrey Development Plan in 1958 and a substantial extension in the south western part (in what is now Waverley Borough) was approved in 1974. The definitive boundary was finally drawn up in the Waverley Borough Local Plan 1984.



### **3. Why did Waverley need a Green Belt Review?**

3.1 When the Waverley Core Strategy was withdrawn in June 2013, the Council acknowledged that it was unlikely that there would be sufficient land within the built up areas of the Borough to meet its future housing needs, then up to 2030 (now 2032). In the withdrawn Core Strategy the Council indicated that some limited Greenfield releases around the four main settlements of Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh would be selected. However, the criteria for such releases was that this would be on land that is not within the Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

3.2 Following the Core Strategy Examination, the Inspector's letter dated 13 June 2013 (para. 20) refers to a Green Belt Review:

3.3 *"I note that your Council's justification for not undertaking a Green Belt review (Council's Statement on Matter 2: para. 2.2.23-27) derives in part from its view that housing sites outside the Green Belt were available to meet the policy CS2 housing target. However, given that this target was itself explicitly influenced by the presence of constraints including the Green Belt, this appears to be a circular argument. While the South East Plan (SEP) identified no requirement for a Green Belt review in Waverley Borough, the relevant SEP policies have been revoked. If the Council wishes to maintain its opposition to a Green Belt review, then such a stance would need to be justified in the context of the Framework's policies, as discussed above.*

*However, if a Green Belt review were to be considered then this has the potential to amount to a fundamental change to the Plan's strategy that could not be accommodated within the present examination."*

3.4 As a result of this, the Council has had to review its strategy for the delivery of housing and the Green Belt boundary review has informed this process. It was considered necessary to undertake a review of the Green Belt so that all possible options for meeting housing need were considered.

#### **4. The Green Belt Review**

4.1 Waverley commissioned AMEC Environment and Infrastructure UK Ltd to carry out a Green Belt Review for Waverley in 2014.

4.2 This was carried out in two stages:

- Part 1 is strategic in nature, which was appropriate at this stage of the Local Plan development. The consultants assessed the whole of the Green Belt to consider how it performs against the specific purposes of the Green Belt set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. As a result of this assessment the consultants identified specific locations for more detailed consideration;
- Part 2 This builds on the recommendations of Part 1 and contains three key elements:
  - The detailed assessment of some areas on the edge of main settlements to establish their potential for removal from the Green Belt
  - The assessment of villages in the Green Belt and how they should be treated; and
  - The assessment of land that could be considered as additional Green Belt.

4.3 The key recommendations of the Green Belt Review in relation to these areas are set out below. For each of these recommendations the consultant's recommendation in full is included with a map showing the current settlement/Green Belt boundary and an indication of the change proposed in the Review.

4.4 The Council has given careful consideration to each of the recommendations. It has not accepted them all and reasons for this are provided in each case. The suggested changes have been incorporated into the Waverley Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites, and this is the subject of consultation from 19 August to 3 October 2016.

4.5 In some cases the recommended changes are sufficiently specific that the Council has been able to provide an indication of how the Green Belt boundary might change. In other areas, the recommended changes apply to a broad area, with an expectation that the Council would establish the precise boundary following more detailed assessment in Part 2 of the Local Plan,

following consultation with local communities, and which will hopefully, align with the work that many are currently doing on neighbourhood plans.

- 4.6 The [Green Belt Review](#) comprises two volumes which are available as part of the evidence base and supporting documents on the Council's website. More detailed analysis of the various segments around the towns and villages is available in the Review documents.
- 4.7 The Topic Paper now examines the three sets of recommendations:
- Areas on the edge of the main settlements with potential for removal from the Green Belt.
  - Areas considered for designation as Green Belt;
  - Villages with Potential to be removed from the Green Belt;
  - Washed over villages (remaining in the Green Belt).

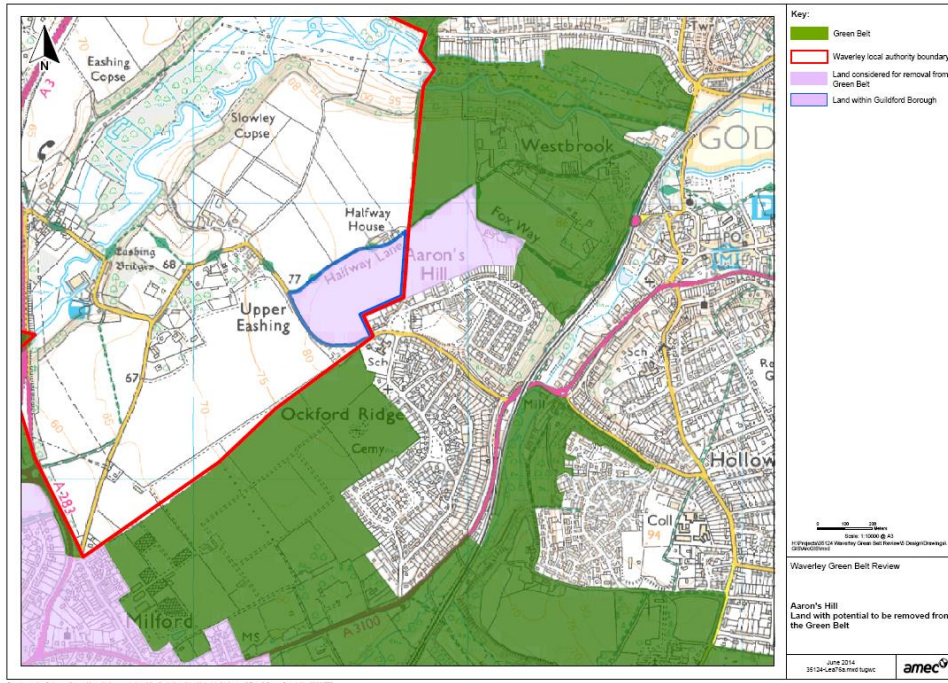
## **5. Areas on the edge of the main settlements with potential for removal from the Green Belt**

- 5.1 The consultants recommended changes to the Green Belt around Godalming in three locations:

### **5.1.1 Land at Aarons Hill, Godalming**

#### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1.2 There is the opportunity to re-define the urban edge using Halfway Lane/ Westbrook Road and structural planting, rounding-off current development without significant intrusion into open countryside. Liaison with Guildford would be required on land within Guildford Borough between Eashing Lane and Halfway Lane.



b) The Council's Conclusion

5.1.3 This piece of land is open, arable landscape with extensive views to the north-west. There is the opportunity to re-define the urban edge using Halfway Lane/ Westbrook Lane to the north without significant intrusion into open countryside.

5.1.4 Subject to further discussions with Guildford Borough Council, the area shown on the plan could be suitable for removal from the Green Belt. There is currently insufficient information on its deliverability for housing. Therefore, this matter will be considered further in Local Plan Part 2.

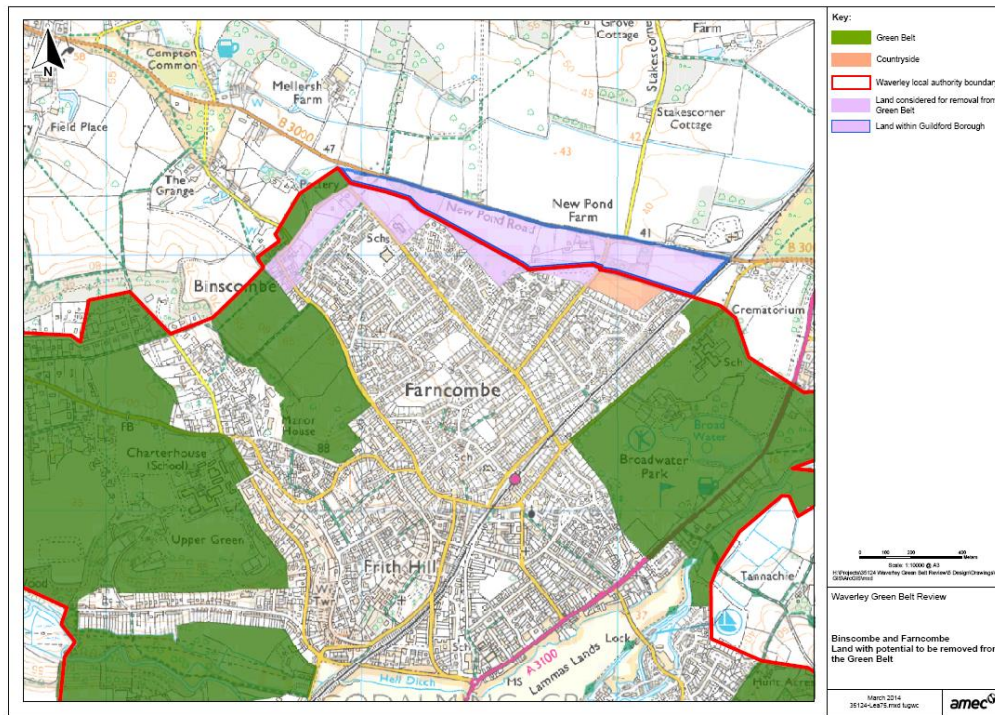
**5.2.1 Land at Binscombe, Godalming**

a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

5.2.2 The land in this area performs a clear local amenity function, bringing the wider countryside into the town through a substantial wedge which separates Binscombe from development along, and off, Charterhouse Road. Whilst the land's strategic Green Belt function is not significant, there is no strong boundary separating this land from the wider countryside meaning that a sense of visual openness is maintained deep into the land toward Farncombe.

5.2.3 Whilst development would effectively be contained on three sides and 'round-off' the urban edge, the role of the land in setting a context for this locality, clear amenity function and topographical constraints limit development potential.

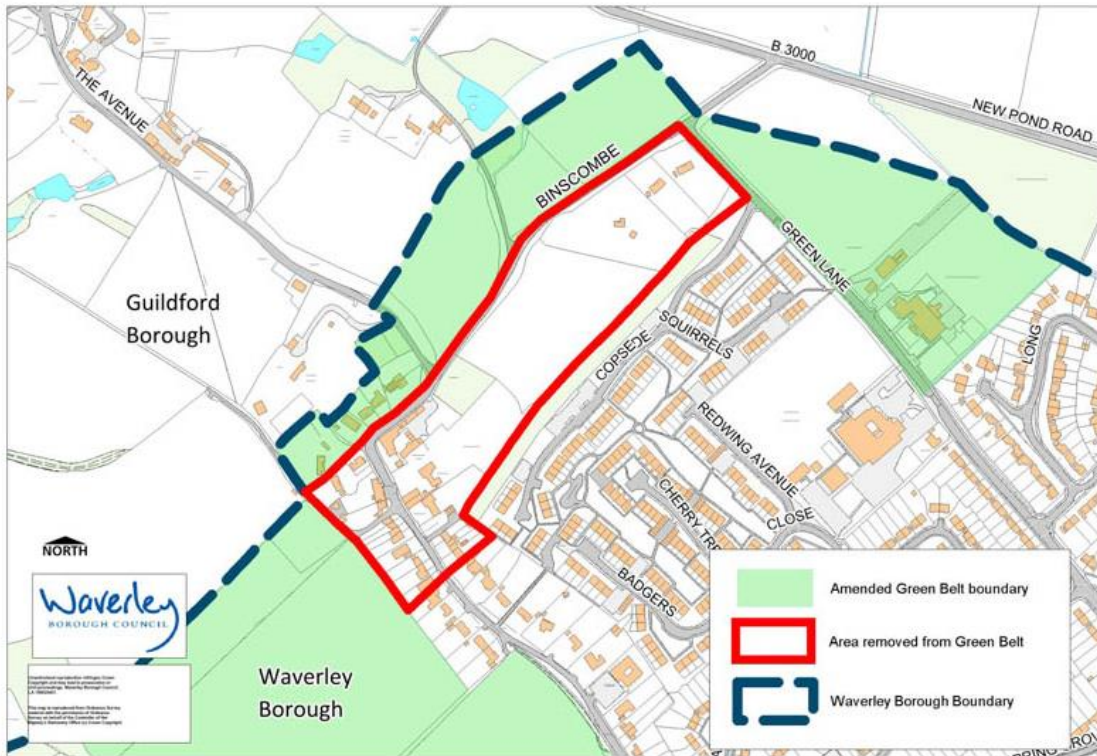
5.2.4 The land (shown pink on the plan below) which wraps around the urban edge on either side of Binscombe, offers potential for limited release to the south east of Binscombe but not to the north west where there is a strong visual connection with the open countryside (primarily within Guildford Borough).



b) The Council's Conclusion

5.2.5 This segment of land also included an area to the east of Green Lane, occupied by the Loseley Fields Childrens' Centre and the sports pitches adjacent. This part of the area has been rejected by the Council for removal from the Green Belt, for reasons explained below in relation to the sites in Farncombe.

5.2.6 However, the remaining piece of land to the east of Binscombe is predominantly in agricultural use. It helps to define the western edge of Godalming, but does not contain it. The removal of this piece of land from the Green Belt would effectively round-off the settlement and not affect the openness of the countryside in this area. This area is to be removed from the Green Belt as shown on the plan below.



### 5.3.1 Land at Farncombe, Godalming

#### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

5.3.2 The remnant segments as shown on the previous plan are small and of varying character with land to the north of Green Lane offering the clearest opportunity for development without significant harm occurring. More generally, land up to the B3000 New Pond Road (within Guildford Borough) could be taken without significant harm occurring, the B3000 acting as a strong northerly edge to Farncombe.

5.3.3 Strong landscape treatment to the edge adjacent to the B3000 would be required to reinforce the boundary to the Green Belt.

5.3.4 Flood risk appears to be a significant consideration in this location.

#### b) The Council's Conclusion

5.3.5 These are relatively small parcels of land and their potential for development would be affected by other factors, including existing land uses, flooding issues and tree cover. Any change to the Green Belt boundary in this location would need to be co-ordinated with Guildford Borough. However, it is not making any changes to its Green Belt boundary on the land between New Pond Road and the Waverley boundary and as such the Council has rejected the recommendation to remove these areas of land.

## **6. Areas considered for designation as Green Belt**

6.1 The consultants looked in detail at three broad areas to consider their potential for being added to the Green Belt. The Study recognises the potential local benefits of extending Green Belt.

### **6.1.1 Land to the north of Cranleigh**

#### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1.2 The segment to the west of the Guildford Road comprising housing development, sewage works and some open countryside presents a reasonably strong case for Green Belt designation, extending to the B2130, in turn protecting land along the B2128.

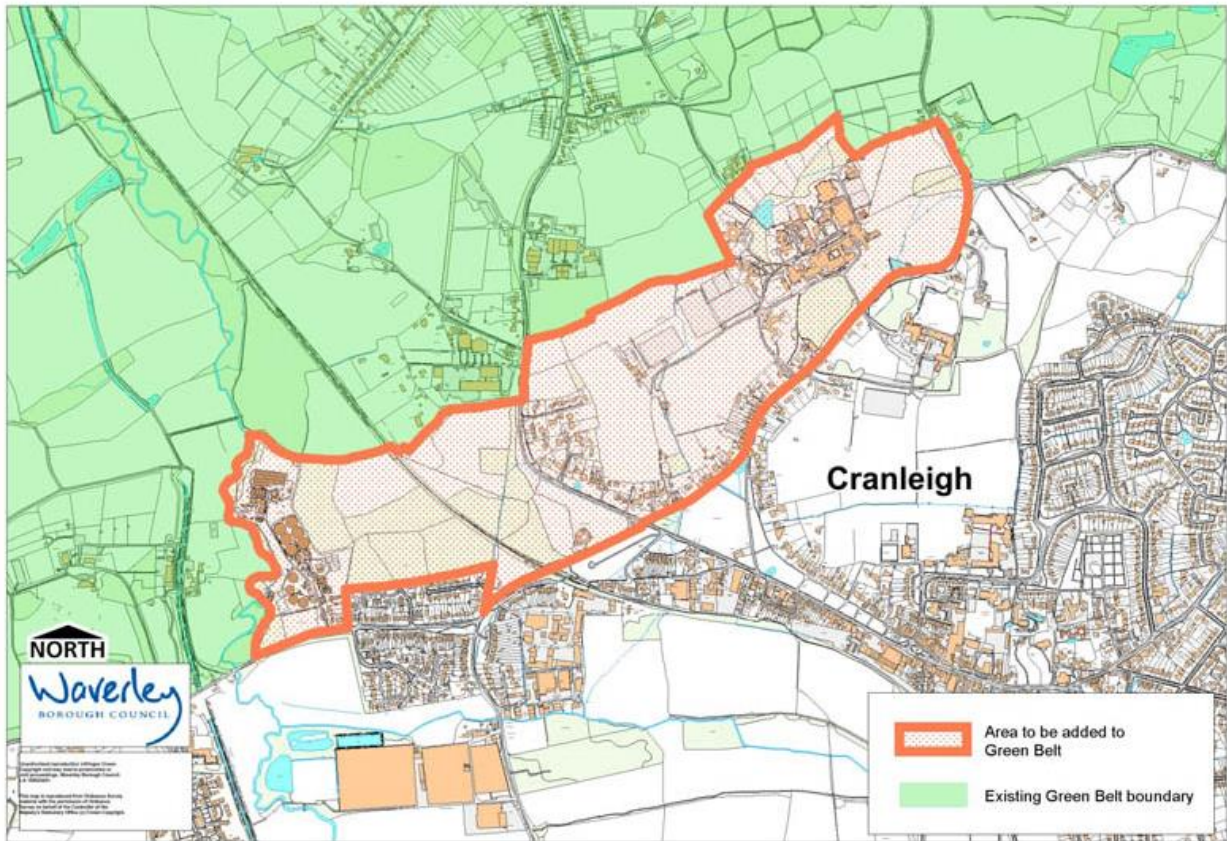
6.1.3 Land to the east of the B2128 Guildford Road is dominated by Cranleigh School abutting the southern edge of the Green Belt, although there are fragments of open land to the west of the segment which helps to maintain openness along the B2128 corridor.

6.1.4 The consultants also considered the area of land between Horseshoe Lane and the developed area of Cranleigh to the east, but rejected this area, since it considered that it would serve no clear strategic purpose, given the strong boundary set by the B2130.

6.1.5 The overall conclusion is that there is a case for extending the Green Belt southwards to include a swathe of land to the north/north west of Cranleigh. This would extend from the sewage treatment works to the west and take in land around Cranleigh School. The consultants concluded that redefinition of the Green Belt boundary in places would strengthen its role in the locality.

#### b) The Council's Conclusion

6.1.6 The Council accepts the consultants' recommendation to extend the Green Belt in this area. The area between the Common and Rowly including Cranleigh School and land to the west of the B2128 is potentially at risk of further urbanisation which would extend the footprint of Cranleigh northwards to meet the current Green Belt boundary. There is pressure for development (both realised and potential) around the northern edge of Cranleigh and there is a danger that this extends in places to the poorly defined southern edge of the Green Belt. Redefinition of the Green Belt in places would help to strengthen its role in this area. It is proposed therefore, that the Green Belt be extended to incorporate the land identified on the plan below.



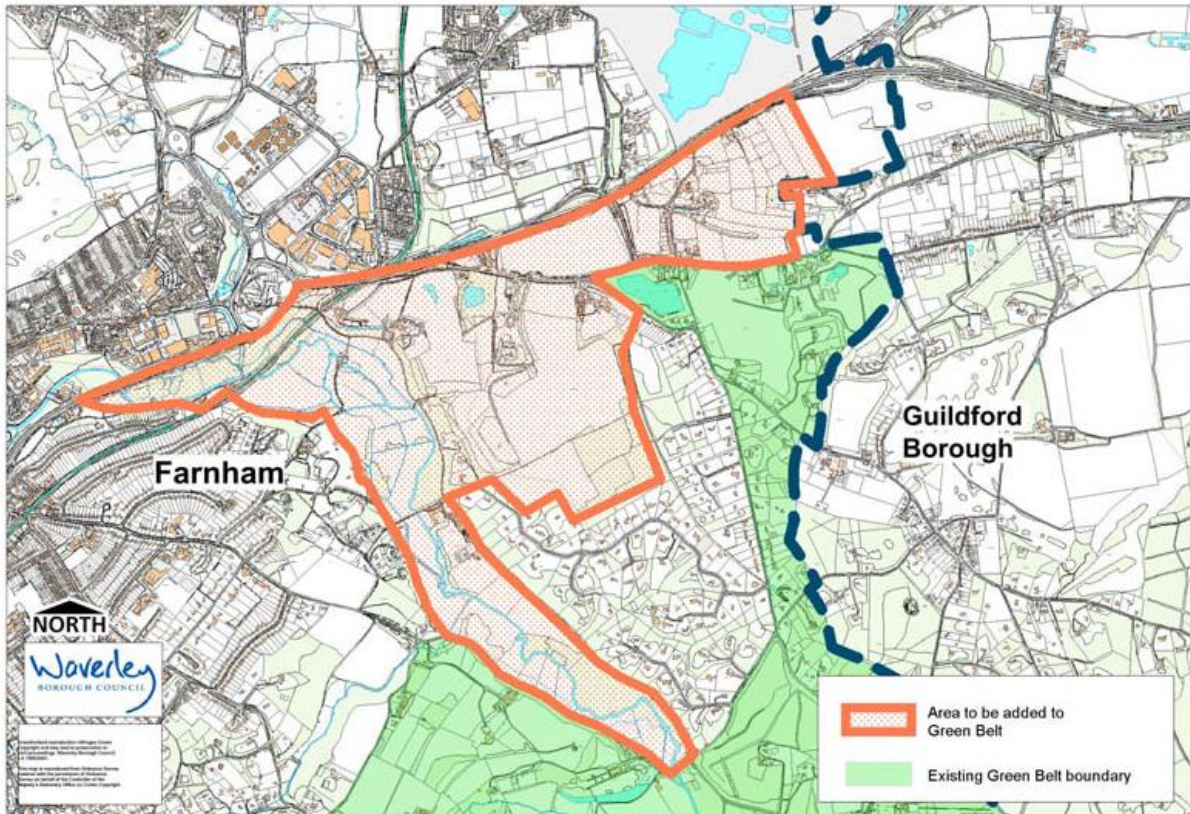
## 6.2.1 Land to the North East of Farnham & around Compton & Badshot Lea

### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

6.2.2 The overall recommendation is that there is a case for designating as Green Belt some of the land south of the A31 and north of the Moor Park estate. The broad extent of this land is indicated on the attached map.

### b) The Council's Conclusion

6.2.3 It is proposed that the land to the west of the River Wey and south of the A31 is designated as Green Belt, protecting the land from further intrusion and reinforcing existing Green Belt to the west. This would also complement the existing Green Belt land to the south and east, along with the wider Green Belt in Guildford Borough. The area of land to be included in the Green Belt is identified on the plan below.



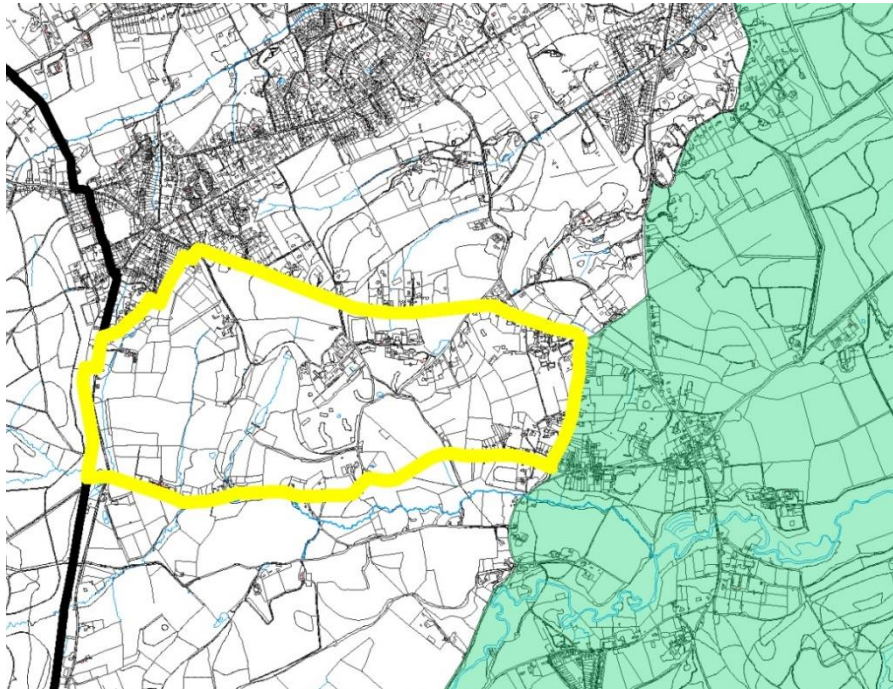
### 6.3.1 Land to the south of Rowledge

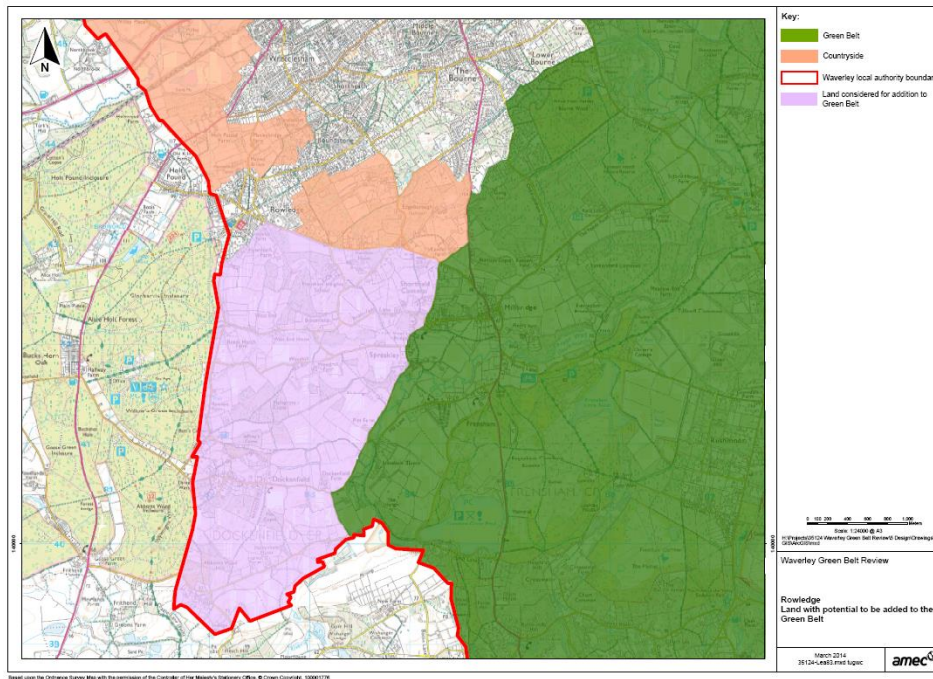
#### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

6.3.2 The overall conclusion is the Green Belt could be extended to take in land to the south of the Long Road. Whilst the northern extent of this addition is clearly defined as the Long Road, there is not a specific boundary identified to the south. The specific segment of land identified in the study and shown in yellow on the map below runs southwards to West End Lane. However, the consultants also said that two further segments (extending southwards to the Borough boundary and including Dockenfield) could also be considered for inclusion in the Green Belt. The whole of the area that they proposed for including in the Green Belt is shown in pink on the plan below.

#### b) The Council's Conclusion

6.3.3 The Council is not in agreement with adding any of this land into the Green Belt. The Green Belt Review suggests that if this land was to be considered suitable for development, it would be logical to add it in order to protect the open countryside from further encroachment. However, taking account of the Council's identified strategic site allocations, it is not considered that this area is currently under such pressure as to justify the extended Green Belt. It is designated as Countryside beyond the Green Belt and is also an Area of Great Landscape Value. The Review does not make a strong case for the inclusion of the additional land to include Dockenfield. As such, there is no firm justification or exceptional reason for adding this area into the Green Belt.





## 7. Villages with potential to be removed from the Green Belt

7.1 The Waverley Green Belt Review identified the large villages of Chiddingfold, Elstead, Milford and Witley which are currently 'washed over' by the Green Belt, as having potential for removal from it without significant damage to its strategic function. These villages already have Rural Settlement boundaries which were designated in saved Policy RD1.

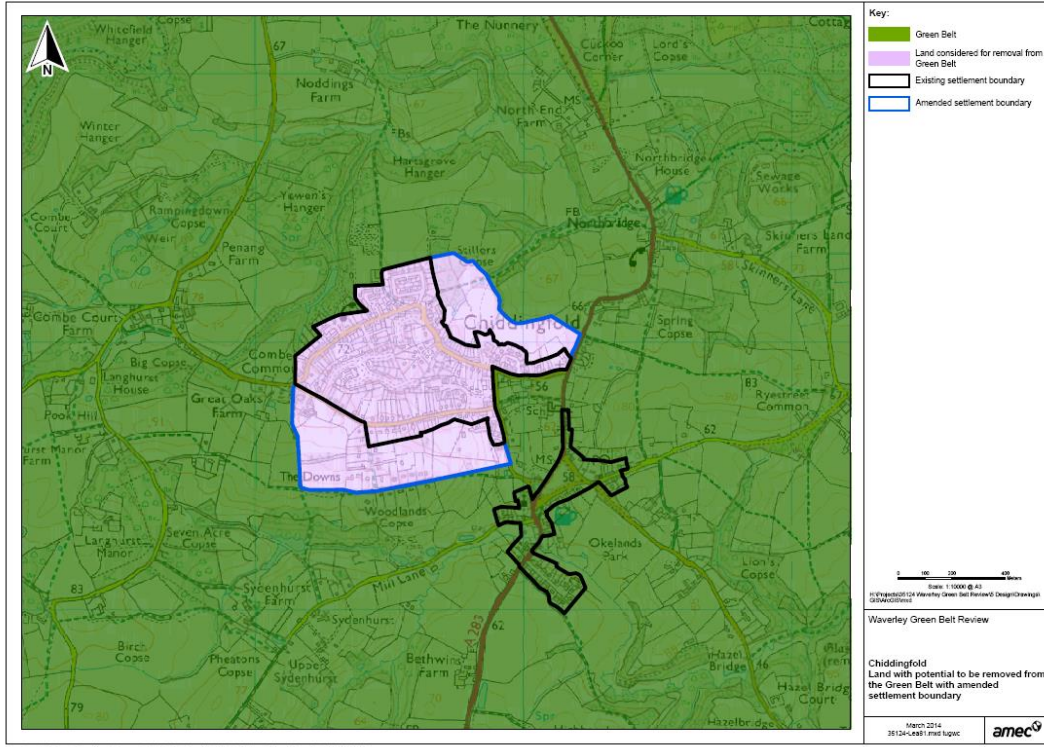
7.2 The Council broadly accepts the recommendations of the Green Belt Review relating to the large villages. This would effectively be a two stage process. In the first instance the areas within the currently designated settlement boundaries would be removed from the Green Belt. The second stage, involving further changes to the settlement boundaries would be dealt with in Local Plan Part 2, albeit that where possible the Council has indicated broadly where these changes are envisaged. This would involve consultation with the local communities and also sit side by side with work being carried out on the relevant Neighbourhood Plans.

### 7.2.1 Chiddingfold

#### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

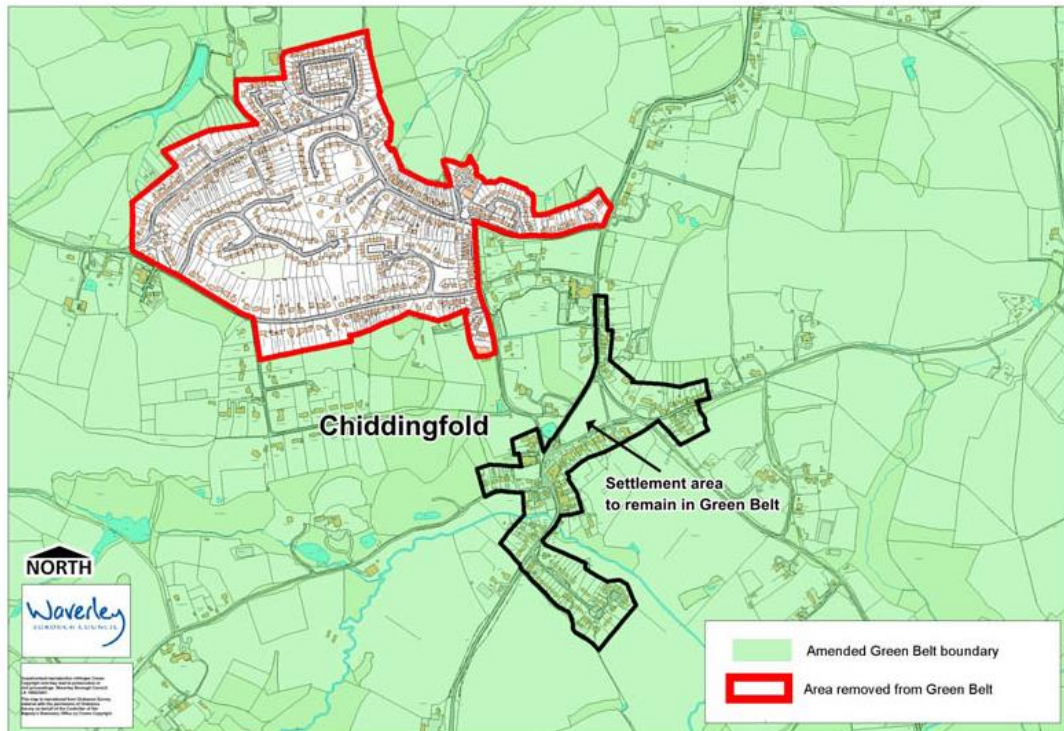
7.2.2 The Green Belt Review recommended two areas for inclusion into the village boundary, and as such, removal from the Green Belt as shown below on the consultants map. One comprises an area to the north of Woodside Road, where a Green Belt boundary could be set using woodland edges and hedgerows, with local topography limiting the visual exposure of the land.

7.2.3 The other area suggested is to the west of Coxcombe Lane towards Ballsdown and beyond to the surgery and Field View Close. This area is not one which is currently subject to pressure from development, but which also has a role in containing the southern edge of Chiddingfold.



b) The Council's Conclusion

7.2.4 The two areas recommended for removal from the Green Belt are much larger than would be required to meet Chiddingfold's overall allocation of 100 dwellings made in this Plan. The recommendations of the Green Belt Review and an assessment of sites promoted for development through the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) indicate that the overall allocation is achievable. However, the Council is mindful that Chiddingfold is in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan which is considering a number of alternative locations. Therefore, at this stage, the existing settlement area is to be removed from the Green Belt (Plan 3), with any further adjustments to the settlement boundary to be made through Local Plan Part 2 to, hopefully, align with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.



### 7.3.1 Elstead

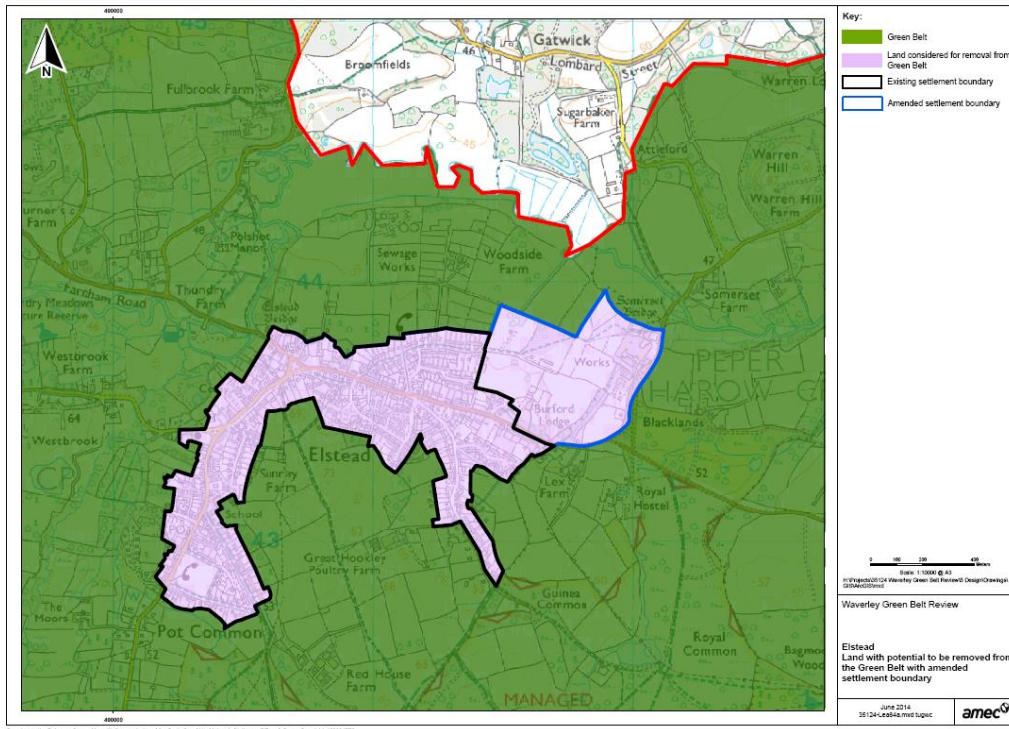
#### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

7.3.2 Elstead is a street village set within a mixed pastoral and wooded landscape with strong, well-maintained hedgerows. Field size and pattern is variable, with a more regular pattern to the north of the village, with larger, more irregular fields to the south which together with elevated topography gives the landscape a relatively open feel. As such, development would impact on openness more significantly to the south compared to the north, where flat topography and dense hedgerows visually contain the landscape.

7.3.3 Land to the north east of Elstead offers opportunities for accommodating development without significant damage to the Green Belt, consequently justifying exclusion of the village from the Green Belt and redefinition of the existing village boundary. Notwithstanding extension of the village into open countryside, the presence of a strong landscape structure means that visual mitigation of development could be readily achieved, along with opportunities to enhance access.

7.3.4 Land to the south rises quickly into an open landscape with extensive views towards the south and the SAC with its northern boundary south of the village. As such there is no opportunity for extension of the village boundary in this quarter. To the west of the village, land is constrained by flood risk and a

SNCI designation, and to the east the SAC wraps around the village to the B3001.

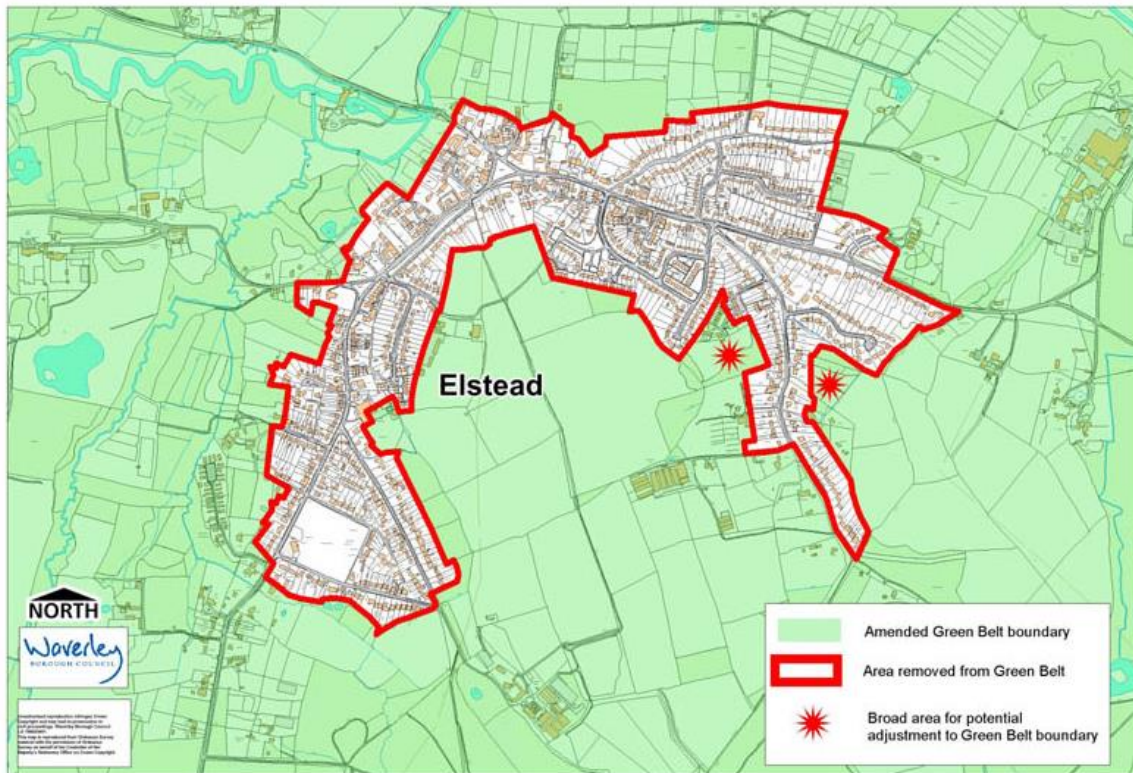


b) The Council's Conclusion

7.3.5 The Council does not fully agree with the consultant's recommendations.

7.3.6 The area to the north east of the village suggested for removal from the Green Belt includes the site currently known as Weyburn Works. As this is a rural brownfield site, it can be developed but still remain in the Green Belt. The land between Weyburn Works and the village is largely open, includes recreation land owned by the Parish Council and does not have potential for development. As such, the Council does not propose to accept this recommendation.

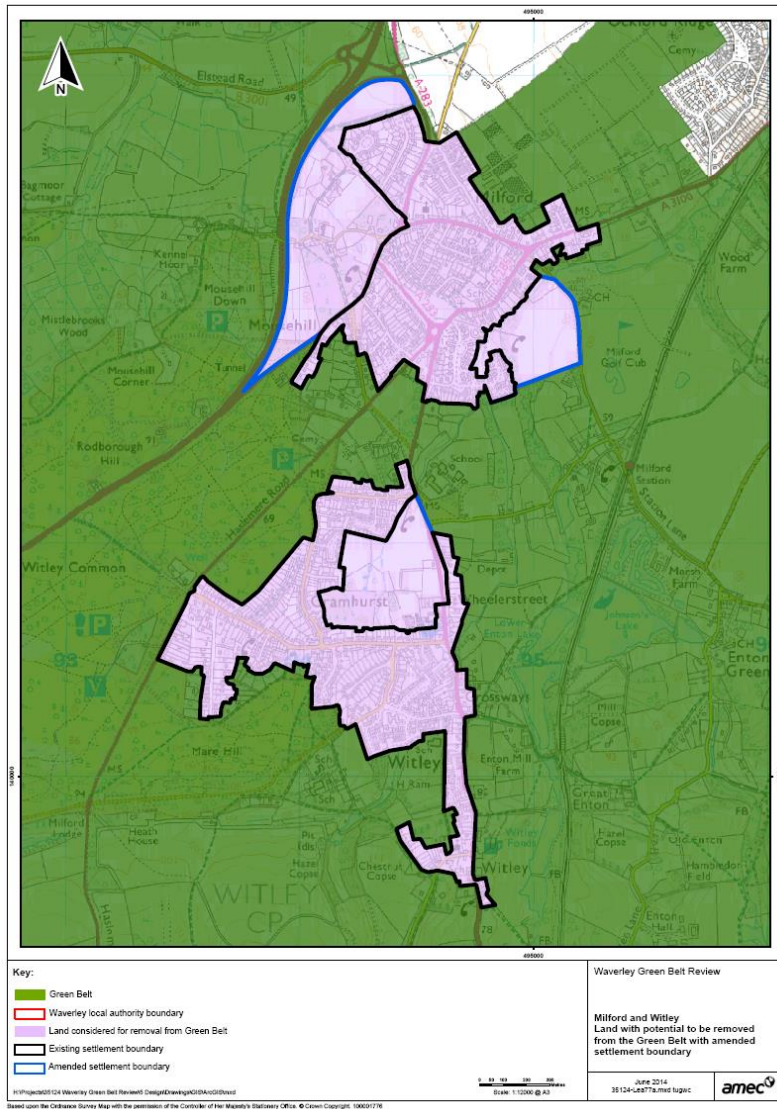
7.3.7 It is proposed that Elstead is inset from the Green Belt, based on the current settlement boundary defined in the 2002 Local Plan. There are some sites considered suitable for meeting future housing needs that would require minor adjustment to the existing settlement boundary. These are indicated on the plan below. The precise definition of the new settlement boundary will be identified in Local Plan Part 2.



#### 7.4.1 Milford and Witley

##### a) Consultant's Conclusions and Recommendations

- 7.4.2 It was recommended that these villages be excluded from the Green Belt and the settlement boundary redefined. The consultants indicated that there are various parcels of land around these villages that could have potential for development.
- 7.4.3 These areas in all cases are characterised by local enclosure by well-managed hedgerows and strong woodland edges associated with blocks of woodland and means that development could be accommodated with limited visual impact. Development on the southern and south western edges of Witley would constitute intrusion into open countryside.



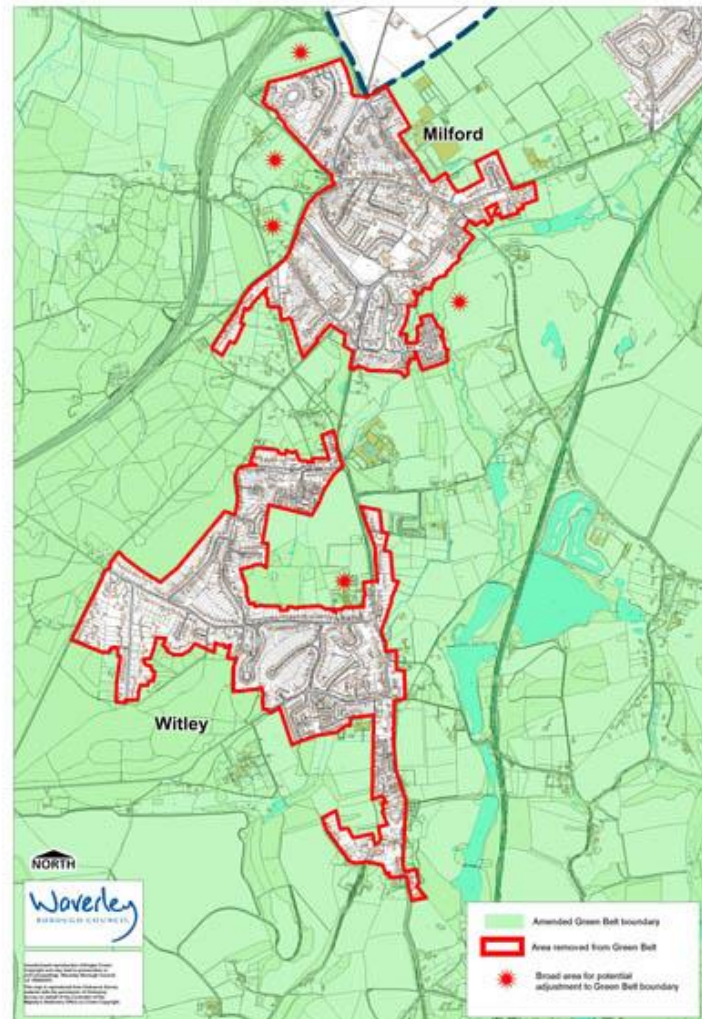
## b) The Council's Conclusion

7.4.4 The Review recommended the removal of an area of land to the north-west of Milford around Lower Mousehill Lane and north of Manor Fields, Amberley Road and the A3. The other area recommended for removal forms part of Milford Golf Course, to the rear of Church Road and Busdens Way and east of Station Lane.

7.4.5 In Witley, the area proposed for exclusion is west of Petworth Road, which is surrounded by development in Wheeler Lane and several residential developments in Cramhurst Lane and Oxted Green.

7.4.6 The Council supports, in principle, changes to the settlement boundaries and the removal of some land from the Green Belt within these broad areas, as indicated on plan below. However, in order to meet anticipated needs within these villages, it is not considered that the whole of the areas shown broadly within the Green Belt Review shall be removed from the Green Belt. It is

intended, therefore that the precise boundaries for change in these areas, along with any other minor adjustments to the settlement boundary, be undertaken in Local Plan Part 2.



### 7.5.1 Bramley, Wonersh and Shamley Green and Churt

7.5.2 The Green Belt Review examined all villages in the Green Belt in Waverley, and suggested that Bramley, Wonersh and Shamley Green and Churt should remain washed over by the Green Belt, with some minor changes proposed to the rural settlement boundaries to allow for selected infill to take place. The Council accepts these recommendations, and these changes will be considered in more detail in Part 2 of the Local Plan.