

**APPENDIX B:
STRATEGIC GREEN
BELT AREA
ASSESSMENTS**

B.1 Introduction

- B.1.1 This Appendix sets out the detailed assessment of the three Strategic Green Belt Areas. The questions asked to assess the strategic area against each purpose are set out at paragraph 6.2 of the main report.

B.2 Strategic Green Belt Assessments

B.2.1 Strategic Area A:

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

- B.2.1.1 The Greater London Plan 1944 set out the concept of the Metropolitan Green Belt and recognised the need to prevent the conurbation of London sprawling out to other settlements beyond the main development of the city. However, it was not until the Surrey Development Plan 1958 that the Green Belt boundaries for the north of Tandridge District were defined. The main reason for the Green Belt and where the boundaries were drawn around settlements in the north of the District was to contain the sprawl from London and resist coalescence. Since the Green Belt boundaries were drawn in the north of the District, there have been a number of amendments to the boundaries and large scale development has occurred in the Green Belt. Areas such as St Lawrence's Hospital, Kenley Aerodrome, Portley School, Caterham School, De Stafford School in Caterham and Whyteleafe, and Farleigh Road and Mayes Close in Warlingham saw changes to the Green Belt. More information can be found in Appendix A The main reason why these changes occurred was to cater for development needs. However, these changes have not weakened the strategic role this area plays to prevent the conurbation of London sprawling, and instead have had the opposite effect through demonstrating that the settlements within the north of Tandridge can accommodate change but without sprawling into London. In addition, this band of Green Belt continues to limit the outward expansion of development from adjacent London Boroughs. Therefore the Green Belt within this area has been effective in meeting this purpose.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

B.2.1.2 The following towns in Tandridge District are within this Strategic Area; Warlingham, Whyteleafe and Caterham. Towns in neighbouring authorities but relevant to this purpose include Kenley, Purley, New Addington, Sanderstead, Selsdon, Biggin Hill and Old Coulsdon. Of particular focus for the purpose and relevance for Tandridge District is the coalescence of Whyteleafe and Caterham, although Whyteleafe and Caterham were merged before the designation of the Green Belt in 1958. Some of the development around Kenley airfield has taken place since the designation of Green Belt in this area and gives the perception that Kenley and Whyteleafe have merged. The Green Belt in this area does separate Caterham from Old Coulsdon and also the area between the distinct neighbourhoods of Caterham Valley and Caterham on the Hill. Consequently, this strategic area of the Green Belt has generally been effective in preventing towns from merging, with the only exception being between Kenley and Whyteleafe.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

B.2.1.3 The characteristics of the area are dominated by infrastructure features; railways and roads that lead towards the conurbation of London. As a general characteristic, the area appears slightly dilapidated emphasised through the degraded vacant buildings and industrial estates. There are some large open spaces that are currently tired and overgrown. The amount of countryside in this Strategic Green Belt Area is minimal in comparison to the other Strategic Green Belt Areas, limiting its tranquillity and serenity. There are a number of ancient woodlands and the topography of the area is very steep, sitting on a ridge. However due to the valley and the wooded areas, the settlements themselves are quite obscured. Overall, this band's contribution to this purpose is less effective than Band C, for example, that is predominantly open countryside.

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

B.2.1.4 There are five conservation areas in the Strategic Green Belt Area, which are quite scattered and dispersed. The conservation areas are located within the centre of the main towns as well as on the outskirts. Some of them are quite prominent and easily seen due to their positioning and scale. However, others are more screened due to the woodland and topography around them. Fickleshole, Farleigh and Chaldon in particular are preserved by this band of Green Belt. As such, the Strategic Area is effective at maintaining the setting and special character associated with the Conservation Area.

Conclusion: How effectively does Strategic Area A serve the purposes of the Green Belt?

B.2.1.5 Strategic Area A has similar characteristics to outer London towns, including the small open pockets of Green Belt that sit between the settlements. The amount of countryside in this area is minimal in contrast to the other strategic areas although it is effective in preventing unrestricted sprawl. Whilst there are some areas that are already merged with London, for example, development on Kenley airfield and change of use in this area has added to the perception that Kenley has merged with Caterham, there are settlements within this strategic area that have remained separated, such as Caterham Valley and Caterham on the Hill. The Green Belt in this location plays a key role in the setting and special character of the Conservation Areas within this Strategic Area and is effective at meeting this purpose. As such this Strategic Area is moderately effective at meeting Green Belt purpose.

B.3.1 Strategic Area B:

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

B.3.1.1 The Strategic Area has a number of smaller settlements within it, with the exception of Oxted which is a large town in comparison. The settlements of Redhill and Sevenoaks outside the District fall within this area, both of which have similar characteristics. The rest of the area is semi-rural with small clusters of development spread throughout. When considering the role this area plays to check the unrestricted sprawl of London, this area is a substantial distance away from London and therefore cannot be effective at meeting this purpose. However, there are some large scale settlements within this area, which are just outside the District such as Redhill, Merstham and South Merstham. The Green Belt to the western edge of this strategic area has an important role to prevent the sprawl of these large built up settlements creeping into the Tandridge District. Consequently, this Strategic Area serves this purpose fairly.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

B.3.1.2 In accordance with the Methodology, the following towns are within this Strategic Area; Tatsfield, Nutfield, Woldingham, Bletchingley, Godstone, Tandridge, Oxted, Old Oxted and Limpsfield, Limpsfield Chart and Hurst Green. Towns outside the District but which should be considered include Merstham, South Merstham, Redhill, and Westerham. The settlements within Strategic Area B are generally dispersed across the area with little risk of coalescence, demonstrating that this area has been effectively serving this purpose. The exception to this is Limpsfield, Oxted, Hurst Green and Old Oxted that on a map appear as one settlement, although they are very different in character and appearance on the ground. Godstone and Bletchingley are also reasonably close together, and this band of Green Belt helps to maintain separation between them. Consequently, this Strategic Area serves this purpose moderately.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

B.3.1.3 The characteristics of this Strategic Area are semi-rural with a number of small scale settlements washed over by the Green Belt and surrounded by small clusters of woodland, open fields and golf courses. The main urban area in this band is Oxted, but even with this settlement, the open countryside is never far away and easily viewable from within it. The M25 goes through this area but consideration to its position and design were implemented when it was built and consequently, it is generally well screened and not overly prominent. Outside of the settlements this band is mostly open countryside, and so this band is considered to generally be effective at safeguarding it from encroachment except where development already exists.

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

B.3.1.4 There are a number of Conservation Areas within this Strategic Area, including Bletchingley, Pendell, Place Farm and Brewer Street, Godstone, Old Oxted and Limpsfield. Some of these Conservation Areas are located on the outskirts of the towns, whilst others cover the majority of a settlement. They are all quite prominent and easily seen, and due to their positioning and scale in open countryside the Green Belt in this band has a strong role in helping to preserve their setting and special character.

Conclusion: How effectively does Strategic Area B serve the purposes of the Green Belt?

B.3.1.5 Strategic Area B is semi-rural in character with a number of small scale towns dispersed and spread throughout Tandridge District. There are some exceptions such as Oxted and towns in neighbouring areas such as Redhill. However, even with Oxted, there is a perception that the countryside is never far away due to the character, and size and scale of the settlement. Whilst this strategic area does not restrict sprawl from London, it is effective at restricting sprawl from the large built up areas beyond the District boundary. There is little risk of coalescence between the settlements within this area due to their dispersed nature and the Green Belt has been effective at ensuring this gap remains. Oxted, Old Oxted, Limpsfield and Hurst Green have already coalesced yet it is noted that these settlements are different in character and appearance. The setting and special character of the Conservation Areas within this Strategic Area are emphasised by their positioning within the open countryside of the Green Belt. As such this Strategic Area is generally moderately effective at meeting Green Belt purposes.

B.4.1 Strategic Area C:

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

B.4.1.1 This strategic area is a considerable distance from London and therefore cannot be effective at checking the unrestricted sprawl from London. Further, the northern parts of this band do not lie in proximity to any large built up areas. However, the strategic importance of this area was identified through the Surrey Development Plan 1974 where it extended the Green Belt to cover this area in order to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas to the South of the County. For Tandridge, the large built up settlements that sit on the Surrey boundary within Mid Sussex are Copthorne and East Grinstead, which have not sprawled into settlements in the District since the Green Belt was designated in this area in 1974. Overall this area makes a strong contribution to checking sprawl from towns just beyond the District's border.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

B.4.1.2 This strategic area contains quite a number of smaller settlements and defined villages within relative proximity to each other. For example, these include Felbridge, Dormansland, Dormans Park, Burstow and Domewood. There are two larger settlements within this area; Smallfield and Lingfield. However both are inset from the Green Belt. This is also applicable to the larger settlements outside the District; Horley and Edenbridge that are inset from the Green Belt. All the settlements have maintained their own character and identity and have not physically merged or have the perception that they have merged. This is particularly relevant to Lingfield / Dormansland and Dormans Park that are in close proximity to each other, and Horley and Smallfield that are also not far from each other. Consequently, this strategic area plays a strong role in maintaining their collective separation.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

B.4.1.3 Whilst there are some areas of development, including two large scale commercial areas; Lambs Business Park and Hobbs Industrial Estate, the majority of the area is open countryside free from any significant concentration of development. Most concentrations of development are within the defined villages, and built form elsewhere across the band is generally agricultural in nature. The area is very rural in nature and has large amounts of countryside within it; however, there are some areas which have been developed for activities such as go-karting, paint-balling and golfing. These activities are normally found in large rural areas with access to the countryside and in most cases are unauthorised; therefore this strategic area plays a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

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

B.4.1.4 There are 4 conservation areas within this band: Burstow, Lingfield, Outwood and South Park. Most of the Conservation Areas with the exception of Lingfield are washed over by Green Belt and away from large areas of built development, as the settlements themselves are very small rural villages / hamlets. Consequently, this strategic area makes a strong contribution to preserving the Conservation Areas in this area.

Conclusion: How effectively does Strategic Area C serve the purposes of the Green Belt?

B.4.1.5 Overall the Strategic Area is considered to provide a key role in checking the sprawl from large built up areas on the other side of Surrey County border. Even though the area is predominately rural, this is attractive to unauthorised activities such as go-karting and paintballing, which have encroached the countryside and therefore the area plays a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The area makes a strong contribution to preserving the wider setting of conservation areas, and it also helps to prevent neighbouring towns from merging, which are in close proximity to each other.