

Gravesham Green Belt Study

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Introduction

1. National planning policy sets out that Green Belt boundaries should only be changed in 'exceptional circumstances', at the time of preparation or updating of a local plan. A requirement to meet development needs of an area is capable of being an 'exceptional circumstance', albeit it is necessary to take into consideration the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development in determining whether or not such needs should be met in full when this involves revisions to the Green Belt.
2. This document provides the assessment of the Green Belt in Gravesham against the national and local purposes of the Green Belt. The results will help to inform the options for accommodating growth in the Borough and detailed changes to the Green Belt boundaries and site allocations, if required.
3. It is not intended to be a comprehensive Green Belt review at this stage, rather a higher level appraisal that will inform more detailed work later to be prepared for the Regulation 18 (Stage 2) consultation in 2019. This later work will consider the acceptability or otherwise of actual sites to accommodate development, including detailed work on the Culverstone Valley area and Longfield Hill as highlighted in the independent inspector's report on the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy examination (paragraphs 70 and 74). Nothing within this document should be taken as a commitment to release Green Belt land for development in advance of its formal consideration through the Local Plan process.
4. This document continues by setting out the relevant Gravesham planning policies, including the applicable parts of the Core Strategy and future consultation stages on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document. It then outlines the methodology for carrying out the assessment, including information on: the boundaries of the parcels assessed; the national and local purposes of the Green Belt; and how the parcels are assessed against these purposes. Finally, it sets out the results of the assessment for each parcel.
5. No consideration has been given within this document at this stage to the recent publication by the Government of its draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (March 2018). Whilst this includes some changes to Green Belt policy and how 'exceptional circumstances' will be tested at the examination of Local Plans, it is only expected to be published in its final form in the Summer. It will therefore be taken into account when the Council publishes its Regulation 18 (Stage 2) consultation in 2019.
6. The Council is obliged to undertake a review of Green Belt as part of an assessment of options for meeting unmet housing need. This commitment was made to the independent Planning Inspector when the Local Plan Core Strategy was being examined. In addition, in negotiating with neighbouring authorities as to whether they can help us meet any unmet need in the future, the Council will need robust evidence to show either why it can't and the implications if it does. This means going through due process and properly examining all options.
7. Finally, no consideration has been given at this stage to the potential implications of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. This would pass through Green Belt and sever (in particular) parcels 6 and 7, to the east and south of Riverview Park, Gravesend. Should this be granted planning permission and constructed in due course, it has the potential to act as a new robust boundary to the Green Belt. However, this is not guaranteed and Highways England will need to fully consider and demonstrate the "very special circumstances" case needed to outweigh the harm

to the Green Belt that will result from its project in this location. In addition the new road would only be in place towards the end of the current Local Plan period (2028). Further consideration will be given to this during the later stages of Local Plan preparation.

Gravesham Planning Policies

Core Strategy

8. The adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 includes a commitment to carry out a strategic Green Belt boundary review. The relevant excerpts are set out below.
9. Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) states that:
“A strategic Green Belt boundary review will be undertaken to identify additional land to meet the housing needs up to 2028 and to safeguard areas of land to meet development needs beyond the plan period, while maintaining the national and local planning purposes of the Green Belt.”
10. Paragraph 4.2.15 of the Core Strategy supports the policy and this states that:
“The Green Belt boundary review will identify land that is unnecessary to keep permanently open, to provide land for development. It will also identify land for safeguarding to meet development needs beyond the plan period. The national and local purposes of including land in the Green Belt, the potential for adding land to and removing land from the Green Belt and consideration of wider sustainability principles will all be taken into account in the review process. Any changes to the Green Belt boundary will be included in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD and shown on the Policies Map.”

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document

11. The stage 1 Issues and Options consultation on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document is programmed to take place in April 2018. This will set out options for accommodating growth in the Borough. The consultation on the stage 2 Preferred Approach is due to occur in 2019. As noted above, this will include site allocations and will also show detailed changes to the Green Belt boundaries, if required.
12. The options for accommodating growth, the detailed changes to the Green Belt boundaries (if required) and the allocation of sites will be informed by a number of matters. These include: the extent to which the areas contribute to the purposes of the Green Belt (i.e. the results shown in this document); landscape capacity and sensitivity; access to and capacity of services/infrastructure; and impacts on biodiversity.

Methodology

Parcel Boundaries

13. Much of Gravesham's rural area to the east and south of Gravesend and Northfleet falls within the metropolitan Green Belt which is intended to protect London from sprawling further outwards. Parts of the Borough form the eastern boundary to the metropolitan Green Belt. Figure 1 on the following page shows the parts of north and west Kent which are subject to the Green Belt designation.

14. The whole of the Green Belt in Gravesham is covered by this Green Belt assessment. The area has been subdivided into parcels. These vary in size but are intended to be strategic enough to inform the growth options (stage 1 consultation) and small enough to inform the site allocations and potential detailed changes to the Green Belt boundaries (stage 2 consultation).
15. The parcels generally follow boundaries formed by:
- Roads
 - Railways
 - In more remote areas with few roads, tracks
 - Edge of the urban area of Gravesend/Northfleet/Ebbsfleet defined on the Local Plan Policies Map
 - Edges of settlements inset from the Green Belt defined on the Local Plan Policies Map
 - The Council's administrative boundary
16. Figure 2 shows the boundaries of the Green Belt parcels assessed.

Figure 1: Green Belt in North and West Kent

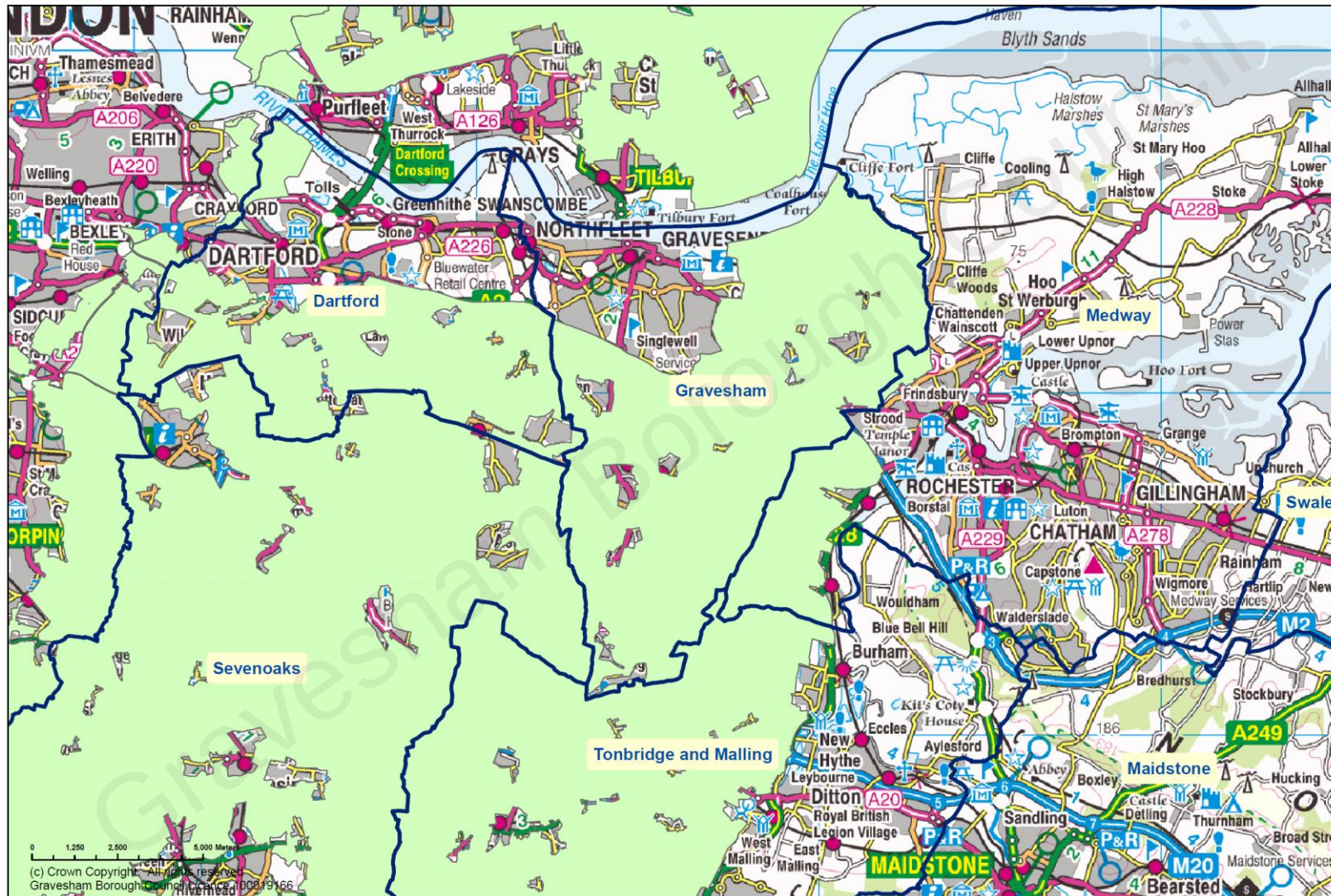
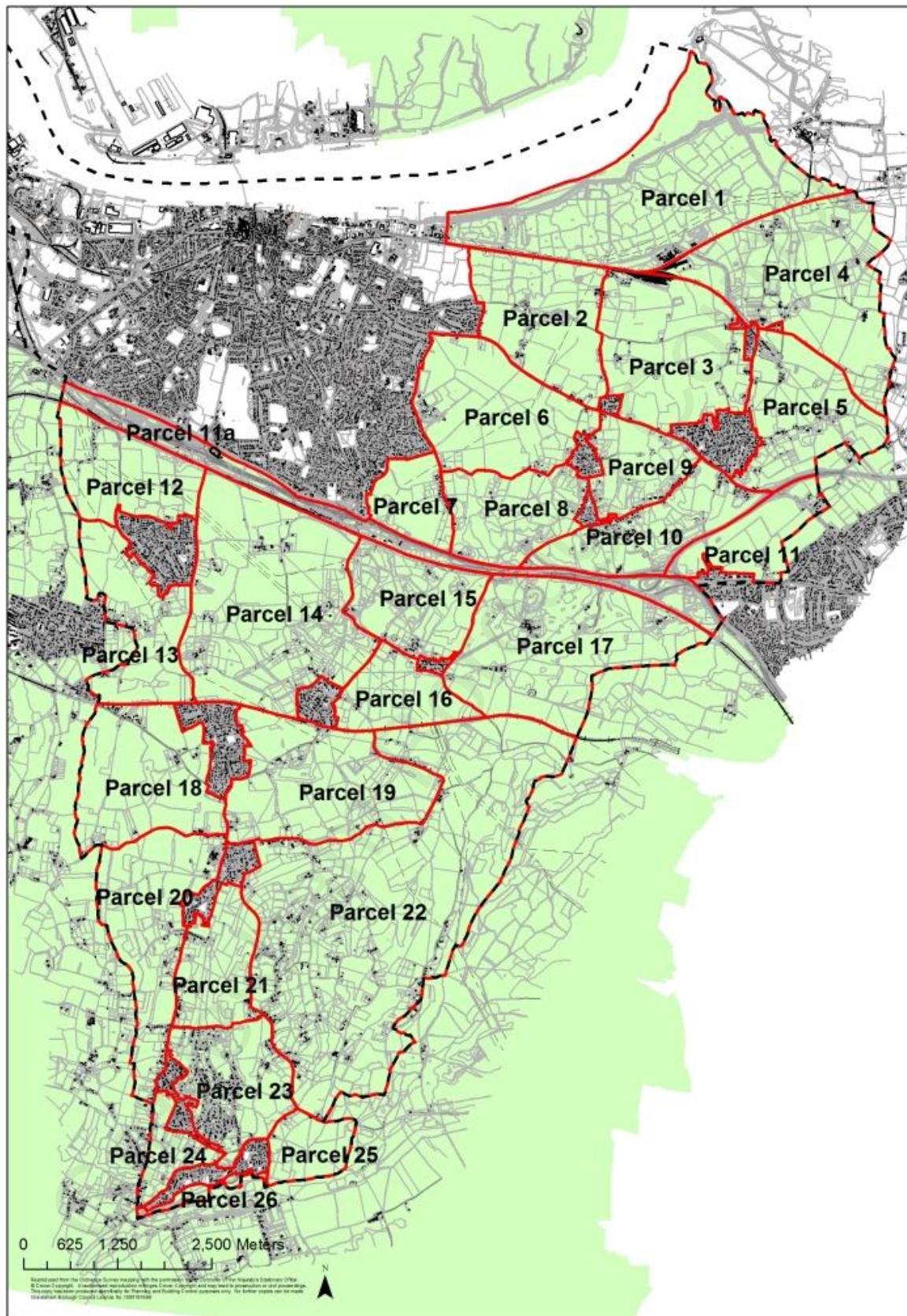


Figure 2: Green Belt Parcel Boundaries



Purposes of the Green Belt

17. The National Planning Policy Framework states that 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. It sets out the five purposes served by the Green Belt – see Figure 3 below. The Core Strategy also sets out a number of local purposes of the Green Belt. These relate to some of the national purposes and are included in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: National and Local Purposes of the Green Belt

National Purpose	Related Local Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	to maintain the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns which is one of the few barriers preventing the further eastward sprawl of London and the merging of towns along the southern part of the Thames Estuary
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment by minimising the expansion of the Borough's rural settlements
to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No specific related local purpose
to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	to assist in concentrating development on underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet

Assessments of the Parcels

18. The assessment methodology has been developed following extensive research of Green Belt assessments produced by other local planning authorities. It takes into account the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, planning practice guidance and best practice. We have consulted the neighbouring local planning authorities on the methodology and amended it accordingly.
19. For each parcel, the following information is provided:
- Map
 - Description
 - Assessment against each relevant national and local Green Belt purpose using a traffic light system of: **Significant Contribution**, **Contribution** or **Minimal/No Contribution**
 - Summary
- Further information is given on points (ii)-(iv) below.

Description

20. The description sets out:
- Location of the parcel

- Description of what the parcel contains
- Topography and visibility of the parcel

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

21. This analyses what contribution the parcel plays in preventing the sprawl of the large built-up areas of Gravesend, Northfleet or Strood. Where the parcel directly abuts these towns, consideration is given to the amount and nature of development within the adjoining part of the parcel. Reference is made to the strength of the boundary between the parcel and the built-up area. Main roads and railways are considered to be strong boundaries. Smaller residential and country roads are considered to be weak but distinct boundaries. Curtilages are weak boundaries. In cases where there is minimal development in the parts of parcels which abut urban areas, these are assessed as having a significant contribution. All parcels which do not abut the large built-up areas of Gravesend, Northfleet or Strood are assessed as having minimal/no contribution.

Purpose 2: Prevent neighbouring towns merging

22. This assesses what contribution the parcel plays in preventing the merging of Gravesend and Strood. When considered in the context of the Metropolitan Green Belt as a whole, the gap between the towns of Gravesend and Strood is very narrow, i.e. it is only 4km at the nearest point. The analysis makes reference to the presence of main roads and railways which link the towns and the gaps between the settlements. The effects will always be an in-combination effect with other parcels. Parcels which lie directly between Gravesend and Strood are assessed as having a significant contribution. All other parcels are assessed as having minimal/no contribution.

Purpose 2a: Prevents other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

23. This is an additional purpose which has been added to the assessment to consider the contribution each parcel plays in preventing settlements inset from the Green Belt from merging with each other. It considers the effect of development on both sides of the roads where the roads form the boundary of the parcel. It also highlights if one part of the parcel is more important in terms of preventing merging. Where the majority of the parcel separates two or three settlements inset from the Green Belt, it is assessed as having a significant contribution. In cases where part of the parcel separates two or three settlements inset from the Green Belt, it will be assessed as having a contribution. All other parcels will be assessed as having minimal/no contribution.

Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

24. In assessing the extent to which a parcel safeguards the countryside from encroachment, consideration will be given to:

- the strength of the existing boundaries
- land use
- topography and landscape character

25. The strength of the boundaries is assessed on the same basis as set out in paragraph 15 above.

26. In relation to land use, the assessment sets out how much of the parcel comprises open uses acceptable in the Green Belt (agriculture, forestry, outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries). It also indicates how much built development/urbanising features are present in the parcel. These include buildings, pylons, electricity lines,

roads, railways and car parking. It refers to where recent encroachments have occurred, e.g. GP surgeries, affordable housing, leisure and community centres, new/widened roads, new railways. Where there is built development close to the urban area and settlements inset from the Green Belt, it refers to the comparative character of this, e.g. sporadic, spaced out development as opposed to more dense, built up character. The nature of the topography, landscape character and size of the parcel is also considered.

27. Where the parcel has been affected by only small scale development since its inclusion within the Green Belt, it is assessed as having a significant contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Where its boundaries have been influenced by major rail or road building or significant amounts of the parcel have been subject to new development, it will be assessed as having a contribution to this Green Belt purpose. Where most of the parcel has been affected by major rail or road building, the parcel will be assessed as having minimal/no contribution.

Purpose 4: Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

28. Gravesend and Northfleet comprise the towns within the Borough and both have historic cores which are reflected by a number of conservation area designations. The Green Belt boundaries are located some distance from these conservation area boundaries, so it is considered that the Green Belt has no real role in preserving the setting and special character of Gravesend and Northfleet.

Purpose 5: Assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

29. The Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2016) for Gravesham and Medway identified most of the Borough as being within the Dartford, Gravesham and Medway housing sub-market. It found that Dartford and Gravesend are closely tied to each other and also to London. On this basis, it is considered that the Green Belt parcels in Gravesham contribute equally towards assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land in the wider area. For these reasons, this purpose is not specifically assessed in this document.

Summary

30. The summary for each assessment includes a brief outline of the results for the parcel. This highlights if there are any particular areas which are important to prevent the merging of settlements and includes information about any encroachment which has occurred. It identifies whether there are any potential opportunities for development without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. This recognises the fact that paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF include lists of developments which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The summary also sets out whether there are alternative, stronger boundaries, both strategically and locally.

Assessment Results

31. This section outlines the assessment results for each parcel. These are summarised in figures 4-8 below.

Figure 4: Summary of Assessment Results

Parcel Name	1	2	2a	3
1. Shorne and Higham Marshes				
2. Filborough Marshes and Land East of Chalk				
3. North and West of Higham				
4. Higham Church Street and North of Lower Higham				
5. East of Higham				
6. East of Gravesend				
7. South East of Gravesend				
8. Shorne Woods				
9. East of Shorne				
10. South of Shorne				
11. North West of Strood				
11a. A2 and High Speed Railway Corridor				
12. Northfleet Green and North of Istead Rise				
13. Istead Rise and New Barn Gap				
14. West and North of Sole Street				
15. Jeskyn's and Ashenbank Woods				
16. South of Cobham				
17. Cobham Park				
18. West of Hook Green				
19. East of Hook Green				
20. West of Meopham Green and Culverstone				
21. South East of Meopham Green				
22. Luddesdown and Rural South East				
23. Culverstone Valley				
24. South West of Culverstone				
25. East of Vigo				
26. South of Vigo				

1 to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

 Significant Contribution

2 to prevent neighbouring towns merging

 Contribution

2a to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

 Minimal/No Contribution

3 to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

Figure 5: Purpose 1 Results – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

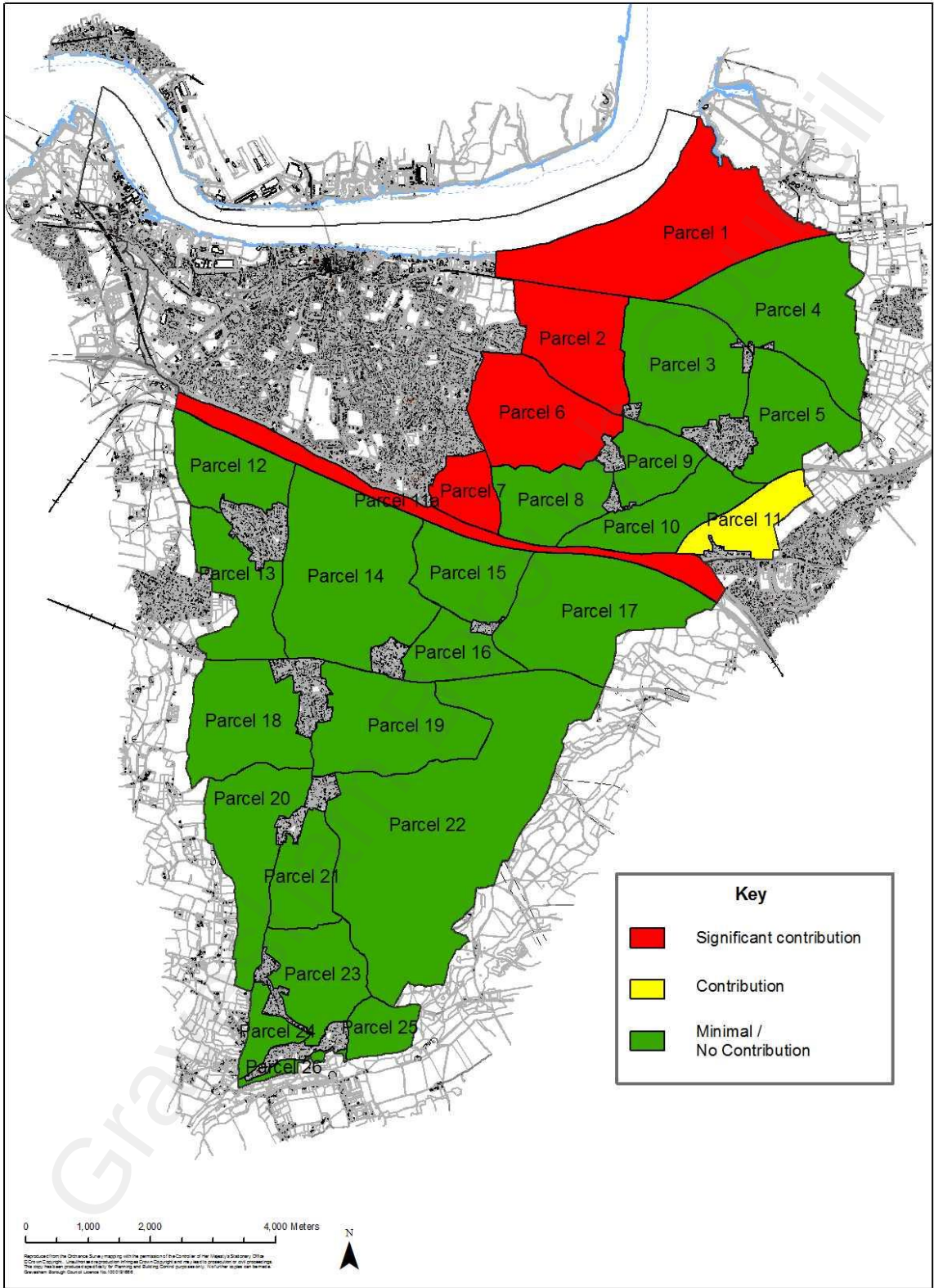


Figure 6: Purpose 2 Results – To prevent neighbouring towns merging

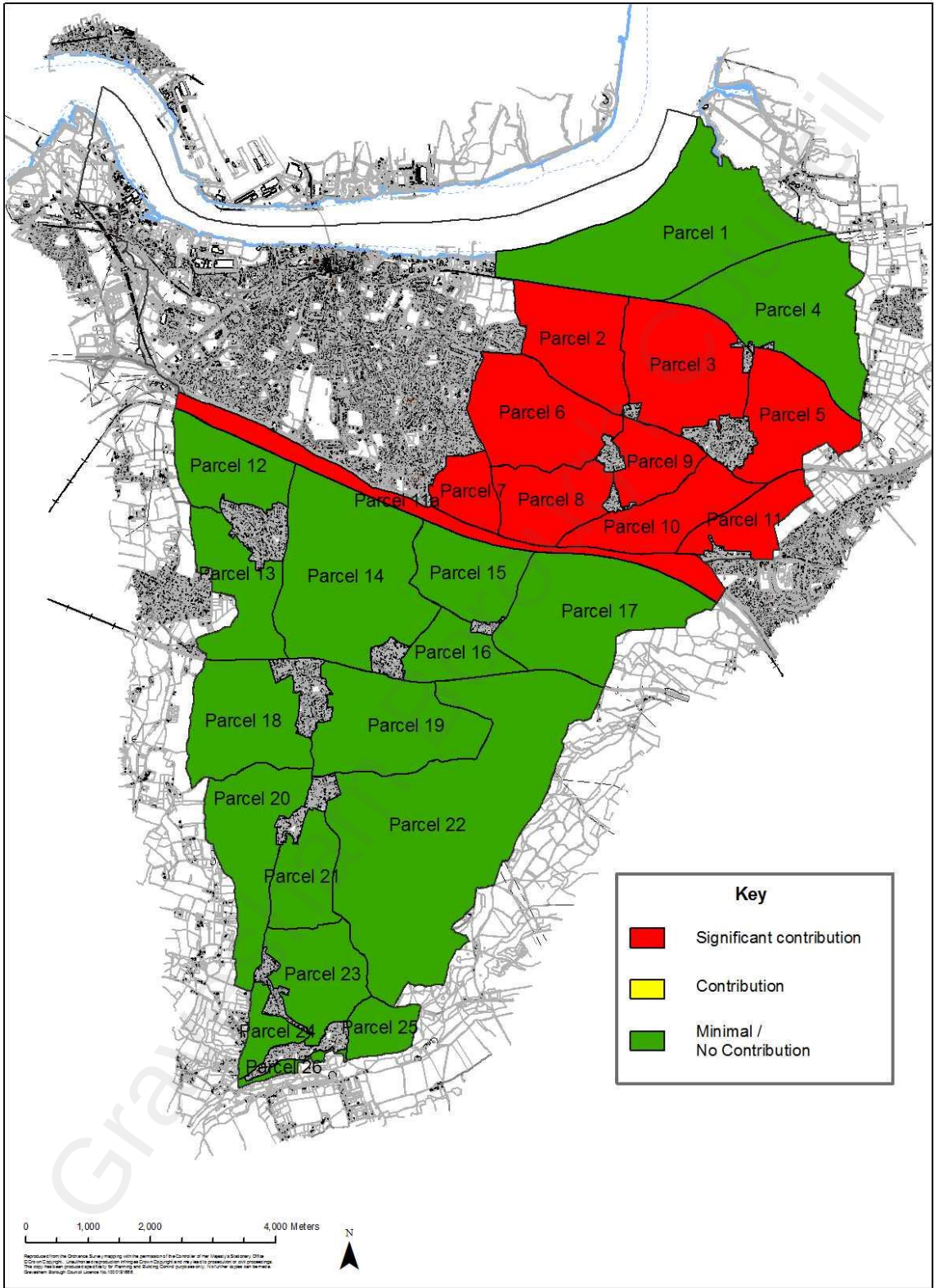


Figure 7: Purpose 2a Results – To prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

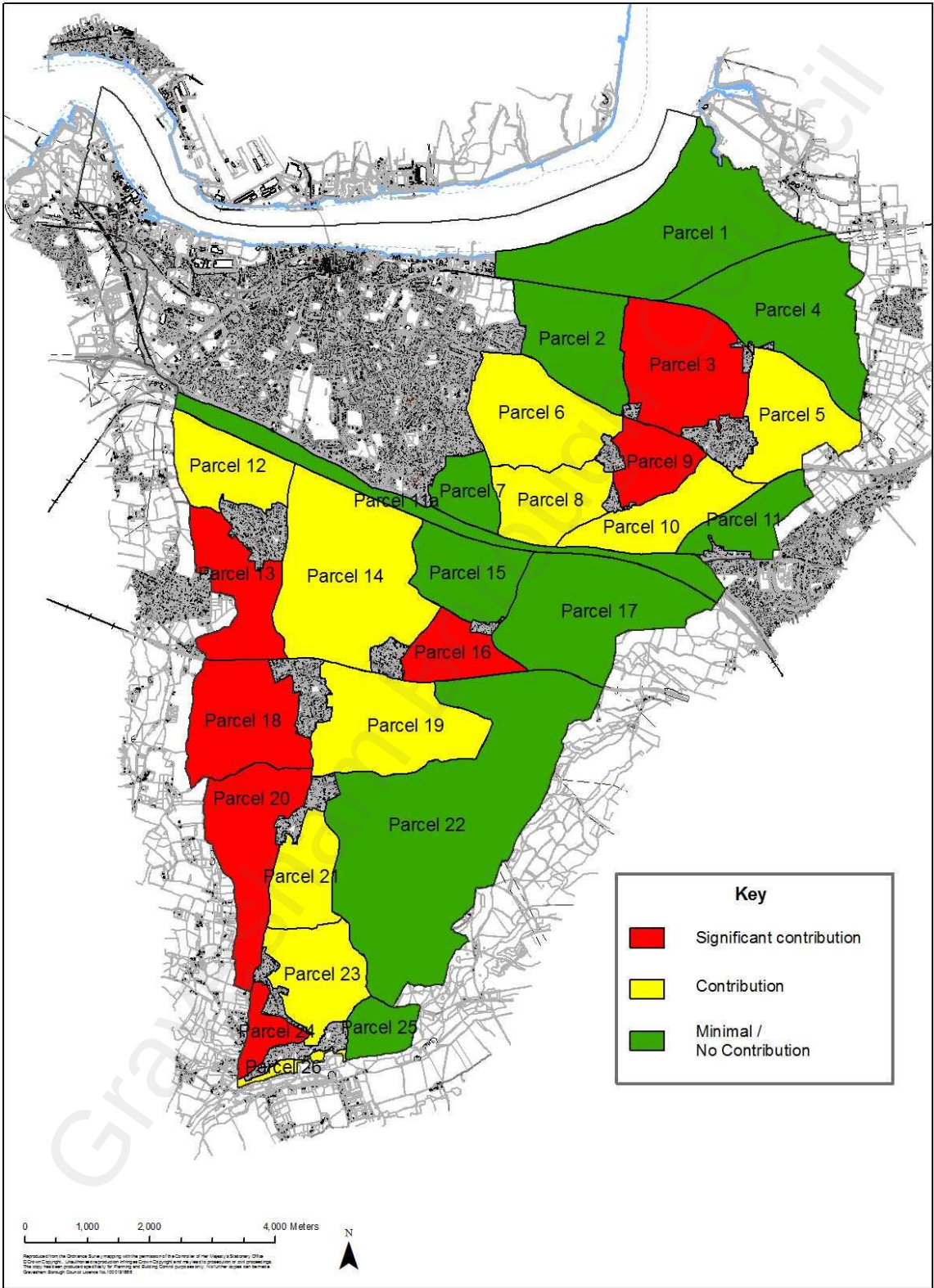
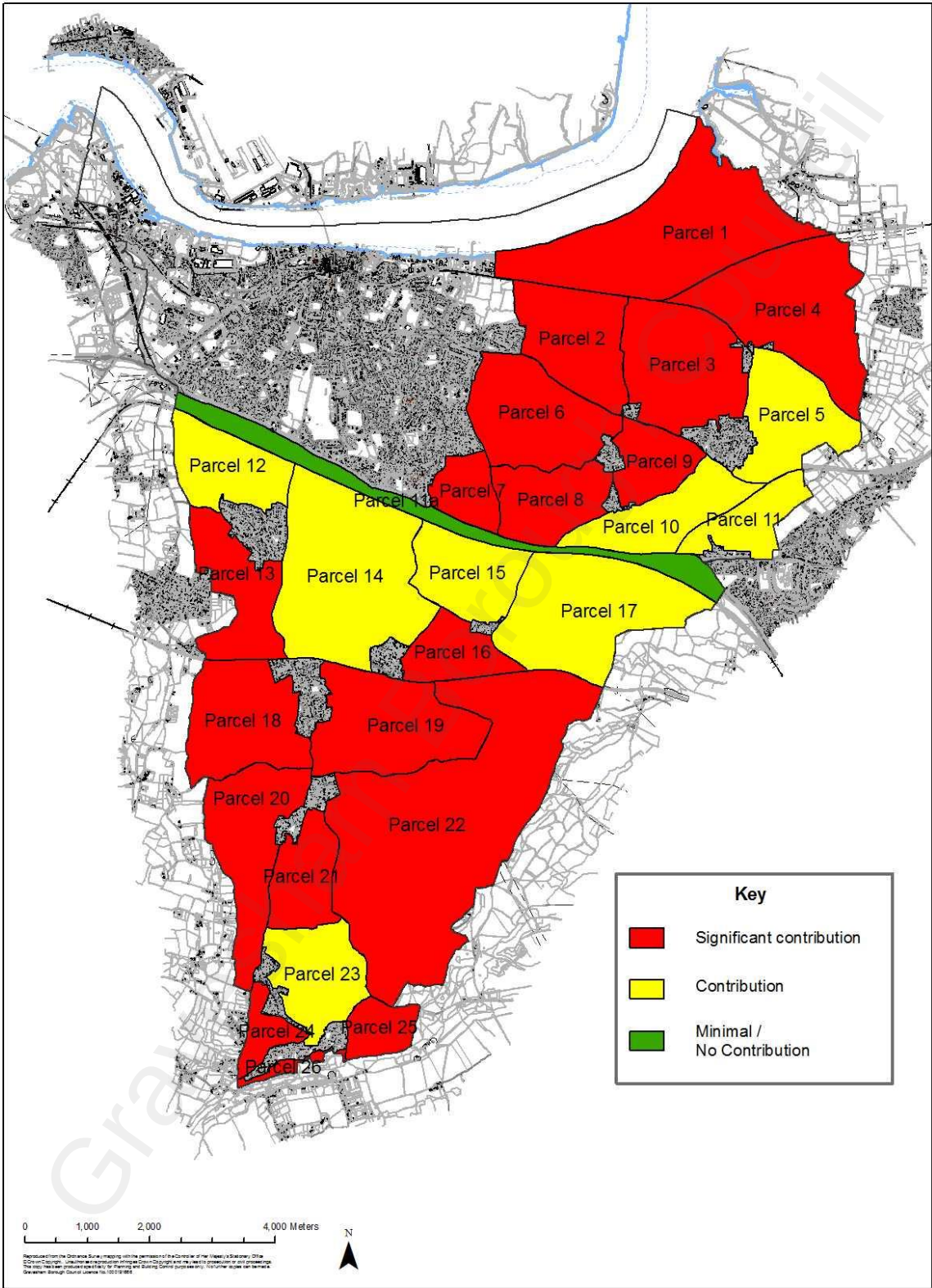
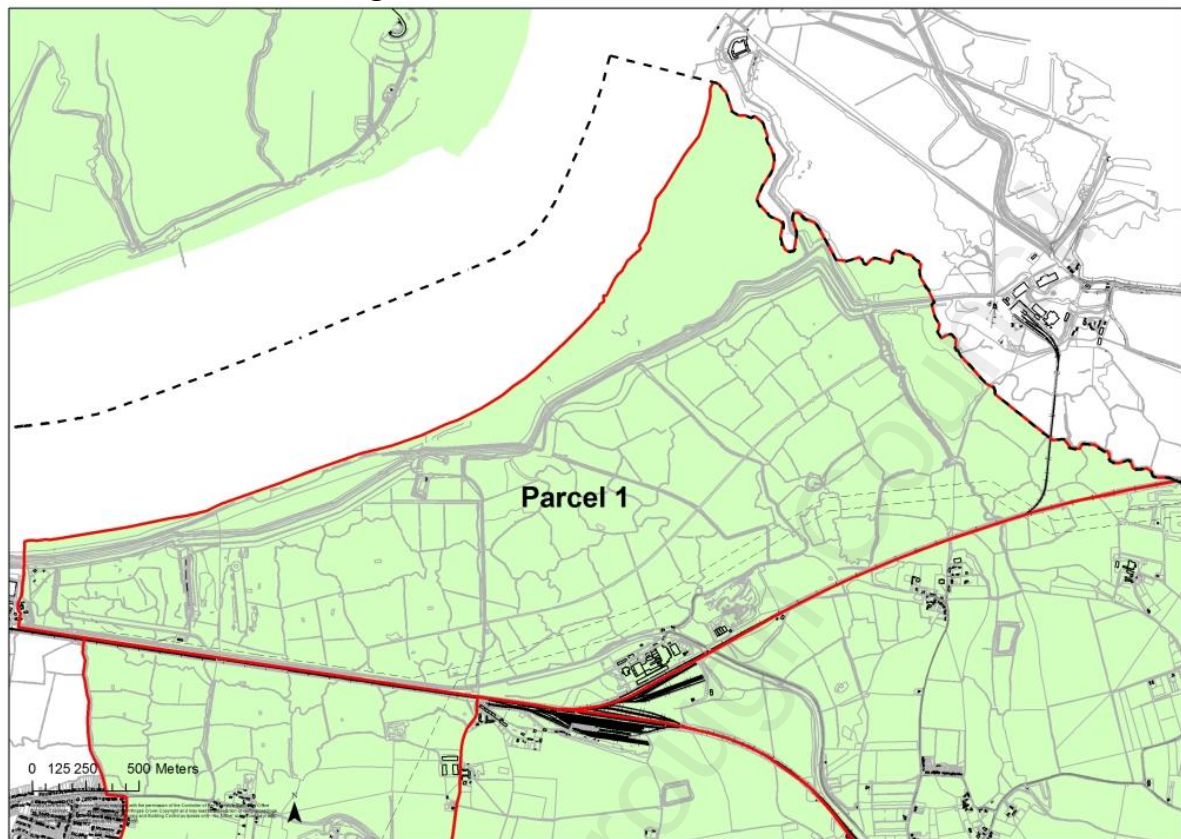


Figure 8: Purpose 3 Results – To safeguard the countryside from encroachment



Parcel 1 Shorne and Higham Marshes



Description

The parcel lies between the River Thames to the north and the north Kent railway line/Isle of Grain freight railway line to the south. Immediately west lie the buildings of the Metropolitan Police training centre which form the eastern edge of the Gravesend urban area. The eastern boundary of the parcel is the Borough's administrative boundary and beyond this the marshes continue onto the Hoo Peninsula which lies in Medway Council's area.

The parcel is primarily grazed marshland, parts of which are used by the police as a firing range and as an RSPB reserve. There are some urban features within the parcel. Nuralite industrial estate and Beckley Hill Works are two industrial estates which form a pocket of built development within the parcel, adjacent to the freight railway line, close to where it joins the north Kent railway line. There are flood defence bunds alongside the river. The Saxon Shorne Way long distance footpath runs along the north of the parcel. The Thames and Medway Canal and associated towpath (now part of the Sustrans National Cycle Route 1) run along much of the southern part of the parcel, next to the railway line. There is an electricity substation and pylon in the north western corner of the parcel and high voltage electricity lines and pylons run from this along the southern part of the parcel.

The area is generally flat and open. It is visible from higher ground to the south and east.

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

The parcel abuts the defined urban area of Gravesend. The electricity substation, one of the pylons, a few small buildings and a track leading to the substation and flood defences lie within the parcel close to the urban area boundary. This development is sporadic. The current boundary is formed by a drainage ditch which is a weak but defined boundary.

Overall, it is considered that this parcel plays an important role in ensuring that development in the urban area does not sprawl further east along the River Thames.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Whilst the parcel adjoins the Gravesend urban area, it does not adjoin any rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. As a result, it does not contribute to this purpose.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern and southern boundaries of the parcel are strong since they are formed by the river and railway line. The western boundary is less strong since it is formed by a drainage ditch and buildings which form part of the police training centre, the use of which extends into the parcel, i.e. the firing range which does preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The eastern boundary is relatively weak as it follows the administrative boundary rather than defined physical features on the ground.

The parcel largely comprises grazing marshland which is an appropriate use of the Green Belt. There is a small area adjacent to the railway line which contains buildings and development associated with two small industrial estates. These are remote from existing settlements. Other urban features include: pylons and electricity lines which extend along the southern part of the parcel; flood defence bunds; and the remnants of Shornemead Fort along the northern boundary of the area. These have been present in the area for a significant length of time.

The flat and open topography of the parcel and its use primarily as grazing marshland are important in ensuring that it makes a significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

Significant Contribution

Summary

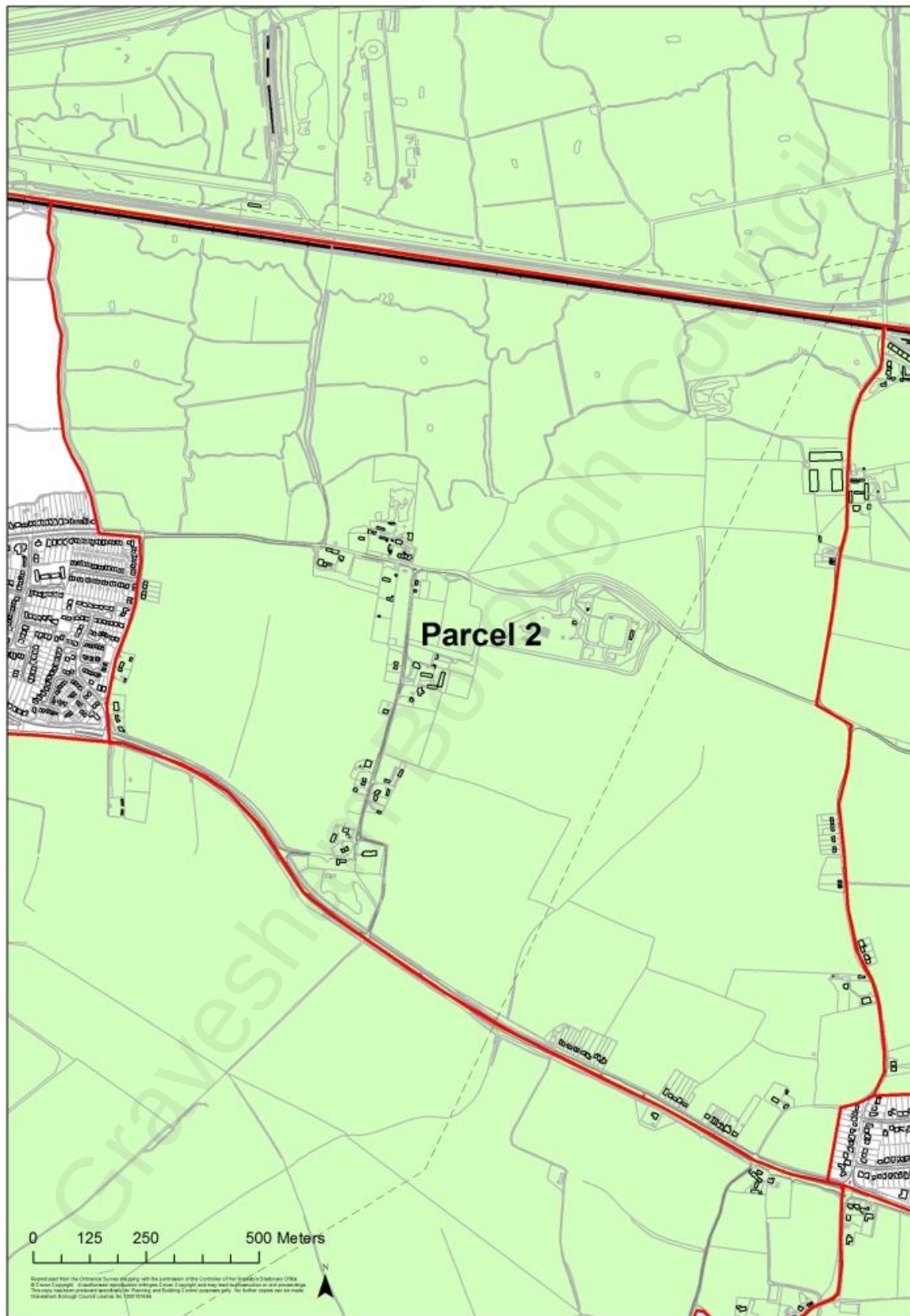
The parcel plays a significant role in preventing urban sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are opportunities to infill or partially or completely redevelop the industrial estates in accordance with national Green Belt policy if this does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Any other development in the parcel would undermine its strategic purposes. There is no obvious stronger strategic boundary which could be used to further safeguard the countryside from encroachment in the west. However, it is considered that the track leading to the electricity substation would provide a more defined and stronger

boundary at a local level. In the eastern part of the parcel, it is considered that stronger boundaries could be defined by using roads, potentially within Medway Council's area.

Gravesham Borough Council

Parcel 2 East of Chalk



Description

The parcel lies between the north Kent railway line to the north and the A226 Rochester Road/Gravesend Road to the south. Its western boundary is formed by a public right of way which runs through the marshes, Castle Lane and the eastern edge of the defined urban area at Chalk. Its eastern boundary is delineated by Green Farm Lane and Queens Farm Road. Lower Shorne, a settlement inset from the Green Belt, lies to the south east. The parcel is bisected by Lower Higham Road (east-west) and Church Lane (north-south). The northern half of the parcel comprises Filborough Marsh and this abuts Great Clane Lane Marsh to the west.

The parcel comprises mainly arable land and grazing marshes though there are dwellings along the roads which run both through the area and along its boundaries. St Mary's Church Chalk is a prominent building in the area and there are clusters of dwellings around it and along Church Lane. There are high voltage electricity pylons and lines running north-south through the site.

The area is generally flat and open though it does rise slightly from north to south between Lower Higham Road and the A226. It is visible from higher ground to the south and east.

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

Chalk already extends further east than the rest of the Gravesend urban area and the southern part of this parcel plays a significant role in ensuring that this part of the urban area does not sprawl further eastwards. Castle Lane is a rural and sunken lane which forms a distinct but relatively weak boundary to the edge of the urban area at Chalk. The northern part of the parcel abuts marshes to the west (which are within the defined urban area) rather than built development. The boundary between them is formed by a public right of way which is weak. It is considered that the parcel plays a significant contribution towards ensuring that Gravesend does not sprawl any further east.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel lies between Gravesend and Strood, alongside one of the main roads (A226) and the railway which link the two towns. Lower Shorne lies immediately to the south east of it. The subsequent gaps between the settlements of Lower Shorne and Higham (parcel 3) then Higham and Strood (parcels 5 and 11) are narrow. As a result, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Whilst the parcel abuts the small settlement of Lower Shorne, it does not adjoin any other settlement inset from the Green Belt. Therefore, it does not contribute towards preventing the merging of rural settlements.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern and southern boundaries of the parcel are strong since they are formed by the railway line and a main road (A226). The western and eastern boundaries are distinct but weaker as they are formed by a public right of way running through the marshes and narrow

rural lanes. The boundary to Lower Shorne in the south eastern part of the parcel follows the curtilages of a row of dwellings on the west side of Green Farm Lane so is also relatively weak.

The parcel is primarily agricultural and marshland though there is some sporadic urbanising development within it, particularly around St Mary's Church and Church Lane. There is some development abutting the Gravesend urban area and Lower Shorne. This is more sporadic than the development within the urban area and Lower Shorne. It also precedes the Green Belt designation.

The parcel has a flat and open topography. The landscape character and the primarily agricultural use of the parcel mean that it makes a significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

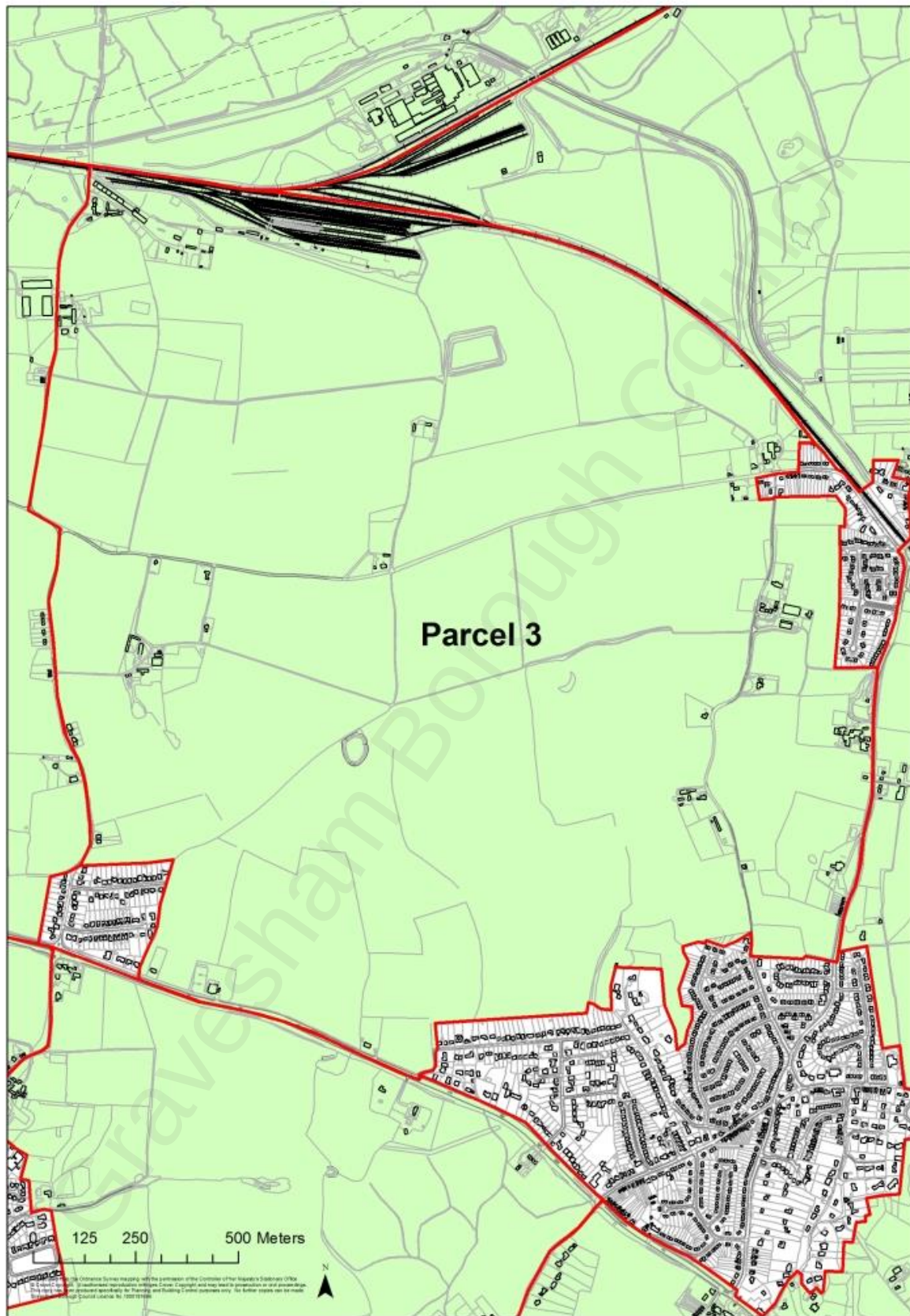
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel plays a significant role in preventing urban sprawl, preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are no real opportunities for development in the area without adverse effects on the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are no obvious alternative stronger strategic boundaries though following the line of built development at North East Gravesend may be a more logical boundary than the current one through the marshes. At a more local level, the Green Belt boundary around Lower Shorne may be strengthened by following Green Farm Lane rather than the rear curtilages around dwellinghouses.

Parcel 3 North and West of Higham



Description

The parcel lies between the north Kent railway line to the north and the A226 Gravesend Road to the south. Queens Farm Road and Green Farm Lane form the western boundary and School Lane comprises the eastern boundary. A number of settlements inset from the Green Belt abut the parcel; Lower Higham to the north east, Higham to the south east and Lower Shorne to the south west. The area is bisected from west to east by Lower Road/Chalk Road.

The parcel is mainly arable land. It contains some scattered farmsteads and dwellings, as well as Higham Primary School. The north western part of the parcel contains railway sidings and industrial development associated with Hoo Junction and industrial buildings around Queens Farm Road.

The area is relatively flat to the north of Lower Road/Chalk Road. To the south of this, it rises towards the A226 Gravesend Road and Higham where there is a distinctive hillock containing Chilton Hills Wood and this part of the parcel is quite visible from Lower Road. There are some views of the southern part of the parcel from the A226.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel is situated between Gravesend and Strood, alongside one of the main roads (A226) and the railway which link the two towns. It immediately abuts Lower Shorne, Higham and Lower Higham. The gaps to the west between Lower Shorne and Gravesend (parcel 2) and to the east between Higham and Strood (parcels 5 and 11) are relatively narrow. As a result, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between three settlements inset from the Green Belt (Lower Shorne, Higham and Lower Higham). The gaps between Higham and Lower Shorne and Higham and Lower Higham are narrow. In the latter case there is already a significant amount of development in the gap between the two settlements, both within the parcel to the west of School Lane and in parcel 5 to the east of School Lane. This development includes Higham Primary School, the Knowle restaurant and Vicarage Row, a terrace of dwellings. The presence of this development makes this part of the parcel particularly important in preventing any further merging of the settlements. Overall, it is considered that this parcel plays a significant contribution in preventing settlements from merging with each other.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

Where they do not abut settlements, the northern and southern boundaries follow the railway line and a main road (A226) so these form strong boundaries. The eastern and western boundaries largely follow more rural lanes so are distinct but weaker. Around all three settlements the boundaries are weak as they generally follow the curtilages of residential properties.

The parcel mainly comprises agricultural land. The main urbanising features are around the Hoo Junction railway sidings but these comprise only a small part of the parcel and do not abut a settlement. There is some development close to the defined settlement of Lower Higham on Chalk Road but this is more sporadic than the more dense development within the settlement boundaries and does not undermine its boundaries.

The open nature of the parcel and its rising topography make it visible from roads in the vicinity. This landscape character, together with its primarily agricultural use, means that it plays a significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel plays a significant role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging, preventing rural settlements from merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The easternmost part of the parcel is particularly important in preventing Higham from merging with Lower Higham.

Apart from possibly infilling or redeveloping the small industrial areas in the north western corner of the parcel, there are no real opportunities for development in the area without adverse effects on the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are limited opportunities to strengthen the strategic boundaries without causing the settlements to merge. At a more local level, the Green Belt around Lower Higham may be strengthened by following Taylors Lane rather than the curtilages of dwelling houses to the west of it.



Description

The triangular shaped parcel lies between the Isle of Grain freight railway line to the north and the north Kent railway line/Lower Rochester Road to the south west. The eastern boundary of the parcel is the Borough's administrative boundary and beyond this arable land continues onto the Hoo Peninsula and the settlements of Cliffe Woods and Cliffe which lie in Medway Council's area. Lower Higham, a settlement inset from the Green Belt, abuts the southern boundary.

The parcel largely comprises arable land, orchards and horse paddocks. There are some dwellings which form a hamlet around St Mary's Church, Church Street. There are also some terraces of dwellings near the junction of Church Street and Bull Lane. There are scattered dwellings and farmsteads elsewhere along roads within the parcel, particularly around Lower Higham which create ribbon development along Church Street and Gore Green Road. Part of the Thames and Medway Canal runs through the western part of the parcel. There are two sets of high voltage electricity pylons and lines running through the northernmost part of the area.

The part of the parcel between the railway lines is largely flat. Further east, the land is more undulating and rises towards the south east.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Whilst the parcel abuts Lower Higham, it does not abut any other rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. As a result, it does not contribute to this purpose.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The north western boundary is strong since it follows a railway line. The south western boundary largely follows more rural lanes so this is distinct but weaker. Part of the eastern boundary is formed by Town Road but the rest follows the administrative boundary between Gravesham and Medway which does not run along defined physical features on the ground so is relatively weak.

The parcel mainly comprises open uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt. However, there are some clear pockets of development within it, primarily around Bull Lane and Church Street which create ribbon development. There is some development close to Lower Higham, including an affordable housing development at Chequers Court, which cause

some encroachment into the countryside. However, most of the development predates the Green Belt designation and is more sporadic than the development within the settlement boundaries. Chequers Court is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt under national planning policy.

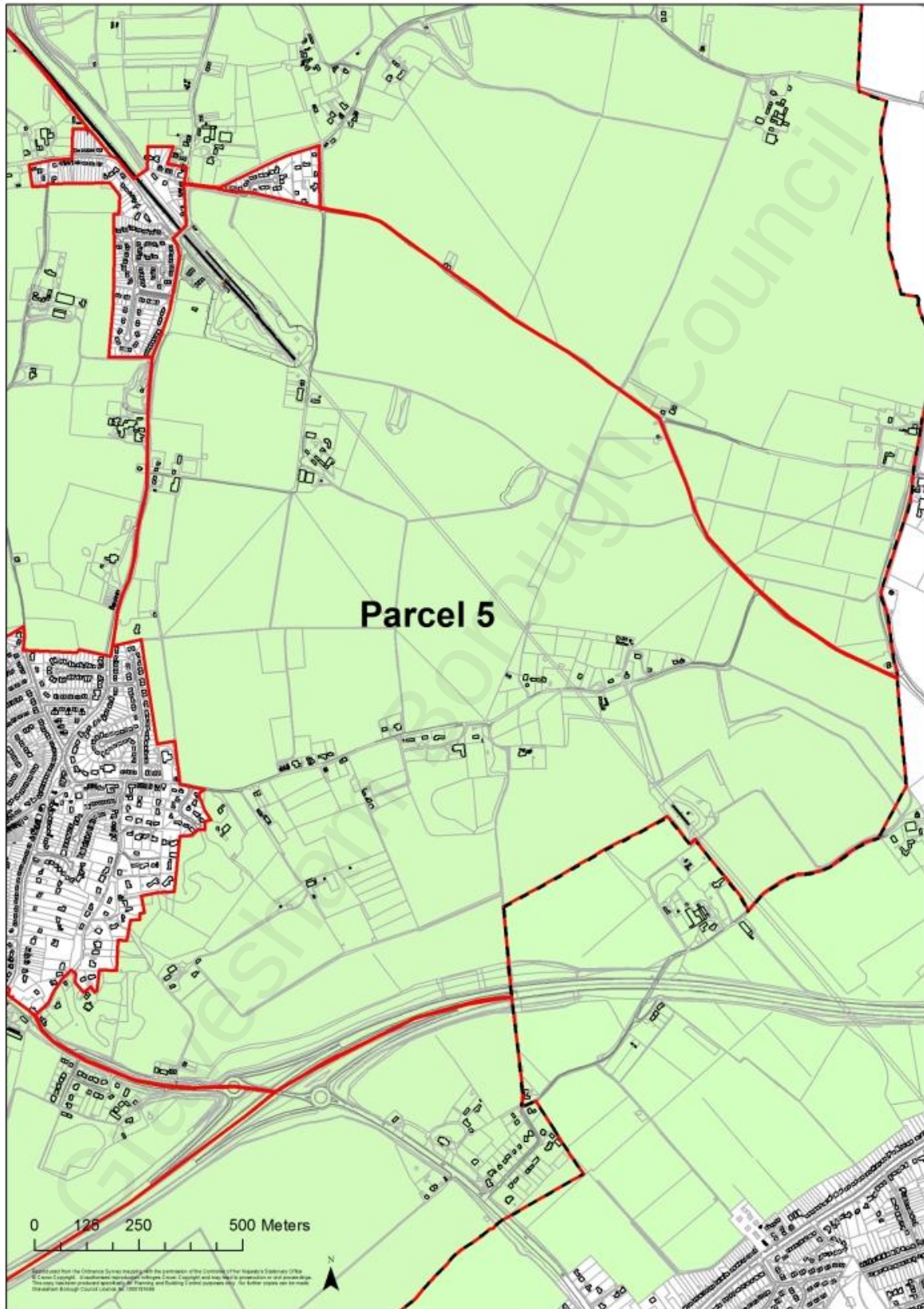
The generally open character of the parcel and its rising topography gives it a character which means that it plays a significant contribution towards safeguarding countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt. This is reinforced by the fact that most of the parcel comprises uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt.

Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel plays a significant role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. There are no clear opportunities for development in the parcel without causing encroachment into the countryside. A stronger eastern boundary could be delineated by using roads, potentially within Medway Council's area.

Parcel 5 East of Higham



Description

The parcel lies between Lower Rochester Road to the north and the Gravesend Road/A289 Wainscott Bypass to the south. The eastern boundary of the parcel is the Borough's administrative boundary with Medway Council. School Lane and the edge of built development forming the settlements of Higham and Lower Higham (which are inset from the Green Belt) comprise the western boundary.

The parcel mainly comprises land used for horse grazing but also includes arable land and orchards. Higham Station and part of the North Kent railway line lie in the north western corner of the site and this goes into a tunnel to Strood. Immediately east of School Lane is the Higham Recreation Ground and associated buildings as well as the village hall. There are some farm complexes within the parcel. There are also some dwellings, most notably along Hermitage Road, but there is also a newer development at Jupp Court off School Lane.

The parcel has a distinctive topography with Hermitage Road forming the highest point. The land falls away towards the River Thames to the north of it and towards a valley containing the A289 to the south of it.

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

The area does not directly abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not contribute towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel is situated between Gravesend and Strood, alongside main roads which link the two towns (A226 and A289). Strood lies to the south east of it, on the opposite side of the A289 Wainscott Bypass, and Higham abuts the western boundary. The gap between Higham and Strood (this parcel and parcel 11) is relatively narrow. The gaps to the west between Higham and Lower Shorne (parcel 3) then Lower Shorne and Gravesend (parcel 2) are also narrow. As a result, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The westernmost part of the parcel is located between two settlements inset from the Green Belt (Higham and Lower Higham). The gap between the two is narrow. There is already a significant amount of development in the gap between the settlements, both within the parcel to the east of School Lane and in parcel 3 to the west of School Lane. This development includes the village hall, sports pavilion and a number of dwellings. The presence of this development makes this part of the parcel particularly important in preventing any further merging of the settlements. Overall, it is considered that this parcel contributes towards preventing settlements from merging with each other.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The A226 and the A289 Wainscott Bypass form a very strong boundary to the south. The northern and western boundaries largely follow more rural lanes so are distinct but weaker. The eastern boundary runs along the administrative boundary between Gravesham and Medway, part of which follows small rural lanes and part of which is not delineated by any physical feature on the ground. Therefore this is a relatively weak boundary. Around Higham, the boundary is weak as it follows the curtilages of residential properties.

The parcel mainly comprises open uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt. However, there is a cluster of ribbon development along Hermitage Lane which largely predates the Green Belt designation. More recently, significant encroachment has occurred as a result of the construction of the A289 Wainscott Bypass, a dual carriageway which bisects the area between Higham and Strood. The A289 lies in a valley which separates part of this parcel and parcel 11. Some encroachment has also occurred because of the development at Jupp Court in the north western corner of the parcel. This is an affordable housing development which was granted planning permission as it is not inappropriate development under national planning policy.

The open character of the parcel and its topography mean that it is visible from the north and south. Whilst some encroachment has occurred in this parcel, the character and topography ensure that it makes a contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

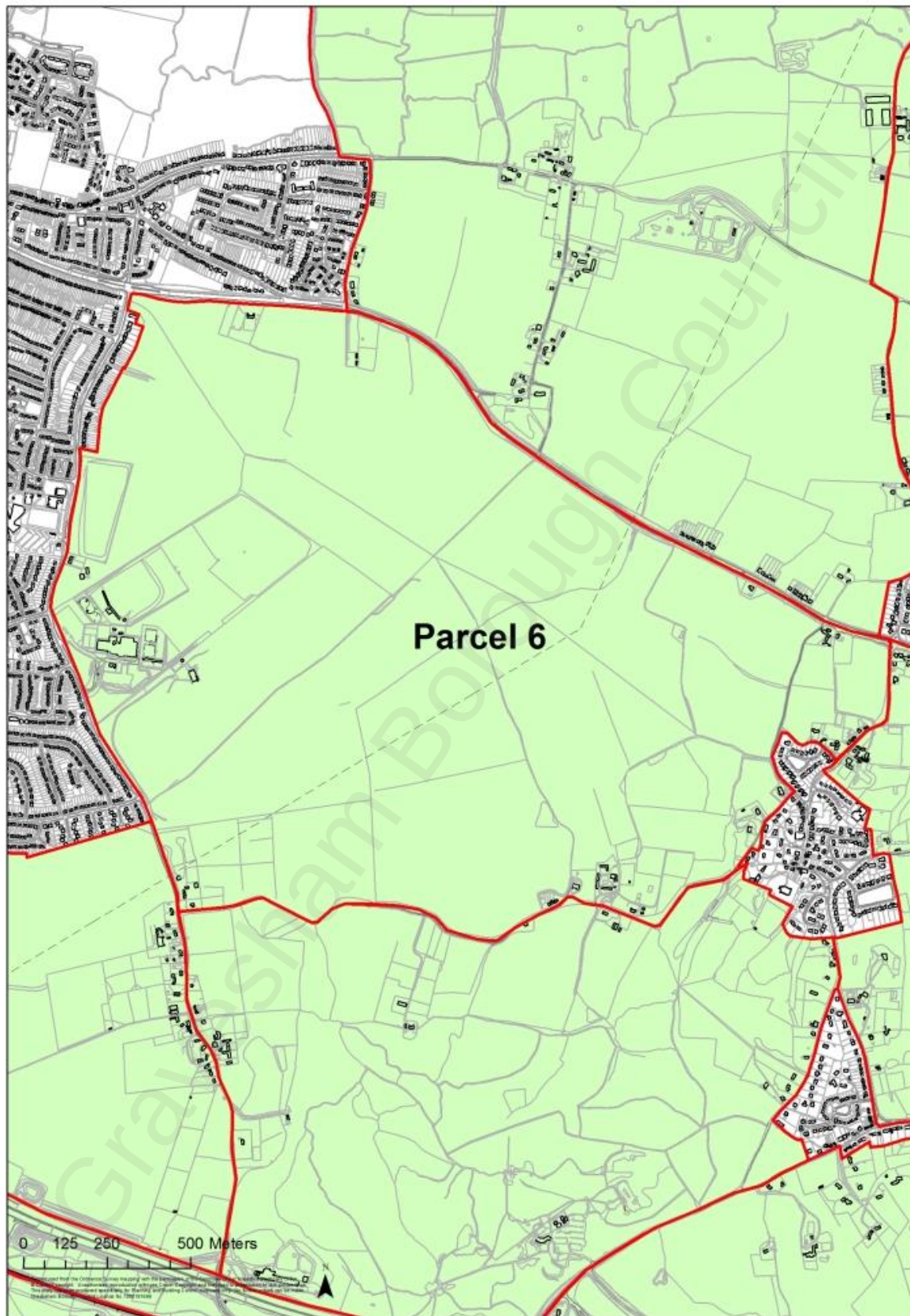
Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing the merging of Gravesend and Strood and it plays a contribution in preventing rural settlements from merging. The westernmost part of the parcel is particularly important in preventing Higham from merging with Lower Higham. The parcel also contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment but there has been some encroachment as a result of the construction of the A289 and the Jupp Court affordable housing development.

There are no real opportunities for development in the area without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. A stronger boundary could be delineated by using the A289 Wainscott Bypass in the south and more roads in the east, potentially the B2000 Lower Rochester Road/Town Road, which lie within Medway Council's area.

Parcel 6 East of Gravesend



Description

The parcel lies between Rochester Road to the north and Shorne Ifield Road to the south. The western boundary mostly runs along Thong Lane but the parcel excludes a row of dwellings on the eastern side of Thong Lane close to its junction with Rochester Road whose rear curtilages form the boundary. This boundary comprises the eastern edge of the Gravesend urban area. The eastern boundary is formed by parts of Forge Lane, Crown Lane and Mill Hill Lane. Some of this boundary forms the edge of the built development to Shorne, a settlement which is inset from the Green Belt.

Large chunks of the parcel fronting Thong Lane are in recreational use, formed of golf courses, a golf driving range, the Cascades leisure complex and the Thamesview School playing fields. The rest of the parcel is largely in arable use with a limited number of buildings along the road frontages. There are high voltage electricity pylons and lines running diagonally through the middle of the parcel.

The parcel has an undulating topography. Generally it rises from north west to south east. It has an open character but is screened by hedges and trees along much of its boundary.

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

Most of the western boundary and part of the northern boundary form the edge of the defined urban area of Gravesend. For the most part, these have strong boundaries formed by main roads. The cluster of dwellings on the eastern side of Thong Lane forms dense development appropriate to the urban area so there is a definite urban edge. Whilst there is some development associated with the leisure uses on the eastern side of Thong Lane within the parcel, this is more sporadic. As a result of these characteristics, the parcel plays an important role in ensuring that this part of the urban area does not sprawl further eastwards.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel lies between Gravesend and Strood, alongside one of the main roads (A226) which link the two towns. Shorne lies immediately to the east of it. The subsequent gaps between the settlements of Shorne and Higham (parcel 9) then Higham and Strood (parcels 5, 10 and 11) are narrow. As a result, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant contribution towards preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between two settlements inset from the Green Belt (Shorne and, to the north of the A226, Lower Shorne). There is some development in the gap between these settlements both within this parcel around St Katherines and Malthouse and to the west of Forge Lane in parcel 9. The presence of this development makes this part of the parcel important in preventing any further merging of the settlements. As a result, this parcel contributes towards preventing settlements from merging with each other.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern and most of the western boundaries are strong as they primarily follow main roads (A226 and the urban part of Thong Lane). The remaining boundaries largely follow rural lanes so these are distinct but weaker. Parts of the boundary around Shorne and Gravesend are formed by the curtilages of residential properties so are weak.

The parcel primarily consists of arable uses and land used for sport and recreation. These generally maintain the openness of the Green Belt. There are a number of large buildings and parking areas forming part of the Cascades leisure complex on Thong Lane. As a result of the number and size of these and their location adjacent to the Gravesend urban area, they have caused some encroachment of urban type development into the Green Belt. However, they are of a more sporadic form than the more dense, built up character of the urban area on the opposite side of Thong Lane. A relatively recent GP surgery has been built in the Green Belt at Crown Lane adjacent to Shorne which also causes some encroachment. There are also some other groups of primarily residential buildings within the parcel, particularly around Ifield Farm in the south, St Katherines in the east and Crown Garage in the north east but these largely predate the Green Belt designation. Other urban features include the pylons and electricity lines which run through the parcel.

Although there has been some encroachment into the parcel by new development, it is still largely open in character and has an undulating topography. As a result, it plays a significant role in safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment.

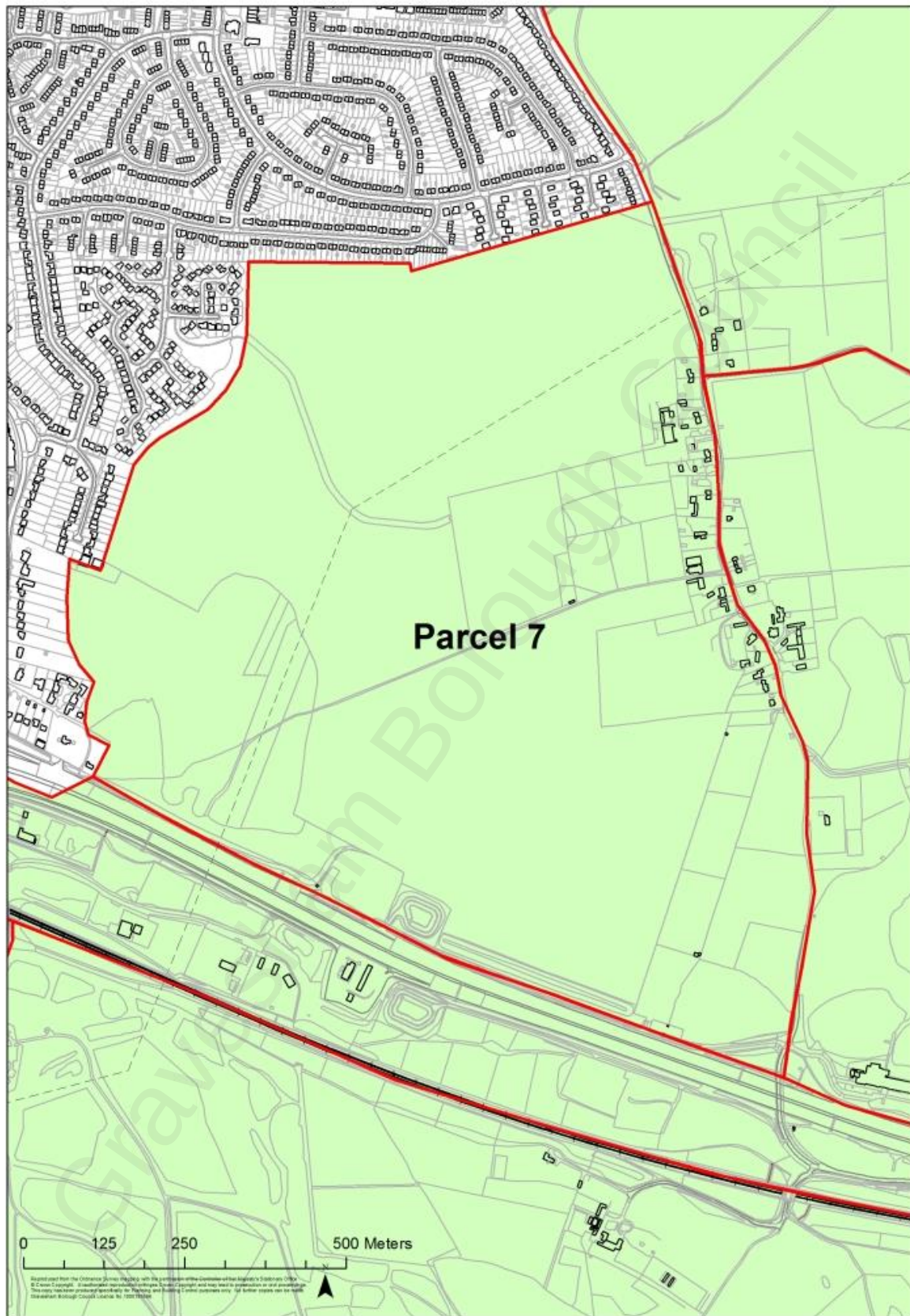
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, preventing neighbouring towns merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It also has a role in preventing other settlements in the Green Belt from merging, particularly in the east between Shorne and Lower Shorne.

There are no real opportunities for development in the area, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adverse effects on the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are no opportunities to strengthen the strategic boundaries. At a more local level, the Green Belt boundary around Gravesend may be strengthened by following Thong Lane rather than the curtilages of dwellinghouses to the east of it.

Parcel 7 South East of Gravesend



Description

The parcel lies between the edge of the Gravesend urban area (formed by residential curtilages and a landscape belt) to the north and west and the A2 and Thong Lane to the south and east.

The parcel is largely arable farmed land though there are areas of woodland in the south western and south eastern corners and some smallholdings with horse paddocks in the eastern part of the parcel. There are a number of dwellings and farm buildings along Thong Lane which form part of Thong hamlet. There are also high voltage electricity pylons and lines running diagonally through the middle of the parcel.

The parcel is relatively flat and open to views from Thong Lane and the A2.

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

The western and northern boundaries form the edge of the defined urban area of Gravesend. These boundaries are relatively weak as they follow residential curtilages and a landscape belt rather than roads. The parcel does not extend further east than the existing defined urban area and extends only slightly further south. As the parcel directly abuts Gravesend, it has a significant contribution in terms of checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel lies between Gravesend and Strood, alongside one of the main roads (A2) which link the two towns. The parcel is part of the narrowest gap between Gravesend and Strood (along with parcels 8, 10 and 11). The settlements of Shorne, Shorne Ridgeway and Three Crutches, which are inset from the Green Belt, lie within this gap. For these reasons, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

This parcel does not adjoin any rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. As a result, it does not contribute to this purpose.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

Purpose 1 above indicates that the northern and western boundaries are weak. The eastern boundary comprises the rural part of Thong Lane, a country road, so this forms a weak but distinct boundary. The southern boundary is very strong as it follows the A2 trunk road.

The parcel mainly comprises arable land with some woodland and paddocks and these are appropriate uses in the Green Belt. The ribbon development of buildings at Thong hamlet and the electricity pylons and lines running through the area are the only urban features in this parcel. The development around Thong is detached from the defined urban area boundary and is more rural and sporadic in character. Therefore, it does not undermine this Green Belt purpose.

The flat and open character of this parcel, together with the characteristics described above, indicate that it significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

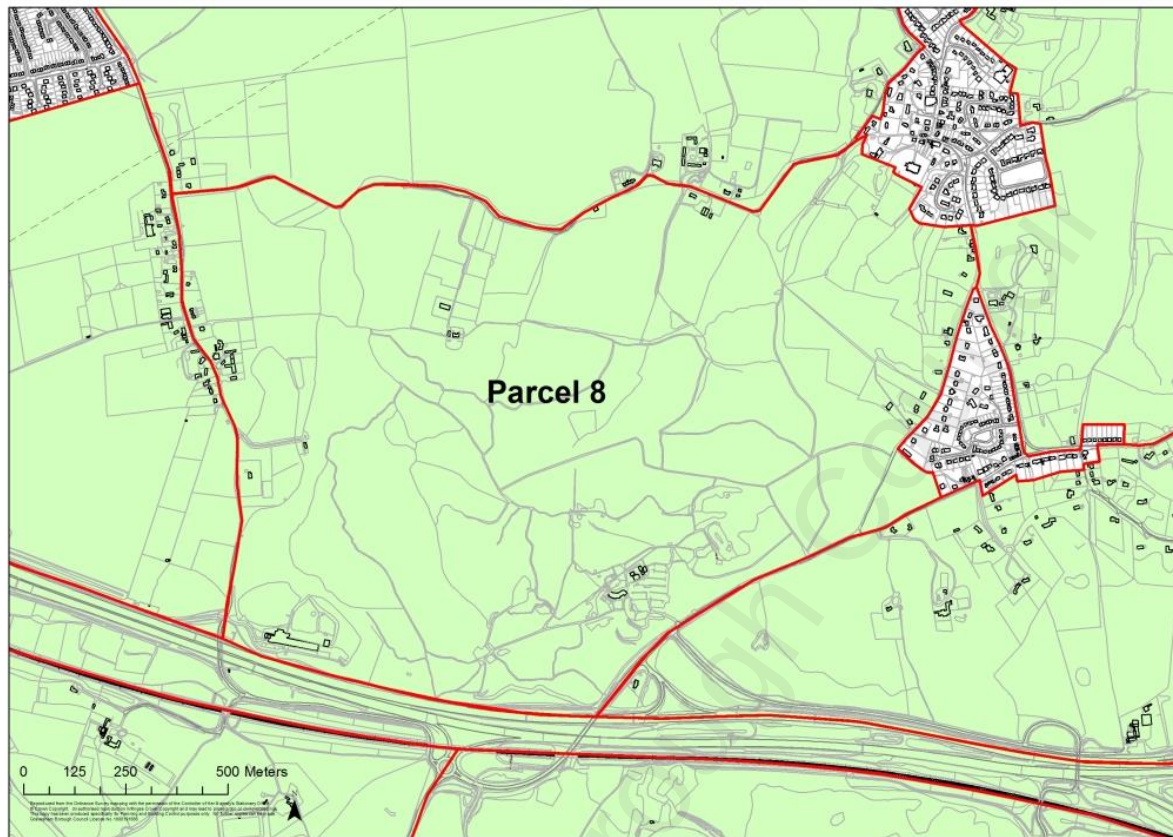
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel has a significant contribution towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, preventing neighbouring towns merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Development in the area would have adverse effects on the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. However, the A2 would provide an alternative stronger southern boundary and Thong Lane would provide a more distinct eastern boundary than the existing boundaries along the curtilages of dwellinghouses.

Parcel 8 Shorne Woods



Description

The parcel lies between Shorne Ifield Road to the north and the A2 and Brewers Road to the south. The eastern boundary is formed by Brewers Road, Woodlands Lane, part of Tanyard Hill and the edge of built development forming the settlements of Shorne and Shorne Ridgeway (which are inset from the Green Belt). The western boundary runs along Thong Lane.

Most of the parcel is woodland and this is largely within the Shorne Woods Country Park. The park has a large car park and a visitor centre which are accessed from Brewers Road. The Inn on the Lake Hotel lies in the south western corner of the parcel. There are a number of dwellings along Thong Lane which form part of Thong hamlet and a few dwellings accessed from Shorne Ifield Road. There is some arable land along these roads.

The primarily wooded parcel has an undulating topography.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel is situated between Gravesend and Strood, alongside one of the main roads (A2) which link the two towns. It immediately abuts Shorne and Shorne Ridgeway. The gaps to

the west and north between this parcel and the edge of Gravesend (parcels 6 and 7) and to the east between Shorne, Shorne Ridgeway and Strood (parcels 9, 10 and 11) are relatively narrow. Therefore, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Shorne lies to the north east and Shorne Ridgeway is located to the south east. There is only a small gap between these two settlements inset from the Green Belt. There is already development in the gap between the settlements, comprising scattered dwellinghouses in large grounds. The presence of this development makes this part of the parcel particularly important in preventing any further merging of the settlements. Overall, the parcel contributes towards preventing the merging of other settlements in the Green Belt.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

Part of the southern boundary is very strong as it is formed by the A2 trunk road. The remaining boundaries are largely delineated by country lanes so are distinct but weaker. The boundaries around Shorne and a small part of Shorne Ridgeway are formed by residential curtilages so these are weak.

The parcel is primarily in recreational use as a country park and mainly consists of woodland. Its car park and visitor centre introduce some development into the southern part of the parcel and these have been built since the Green Belt was designated. There are some dwellings in large grounds in the eastern part of the parcel, close to Shorne and Shorne Ridgeway, and these create some ribbon development. There is also a cluster of buildings in the western part of the parcel around Thong. The dwellings largely predate the Green Belt designation and are more sporadic than the dwellings within the settlements inset from the Green Belt.

The parcel is largely contained due to the amount of woodland within it. Parts of it, especially the north western corner, are visible from roads.

On the basis of these characteristics, it is considered that the parcel plays a significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Significant Contribution

Summary

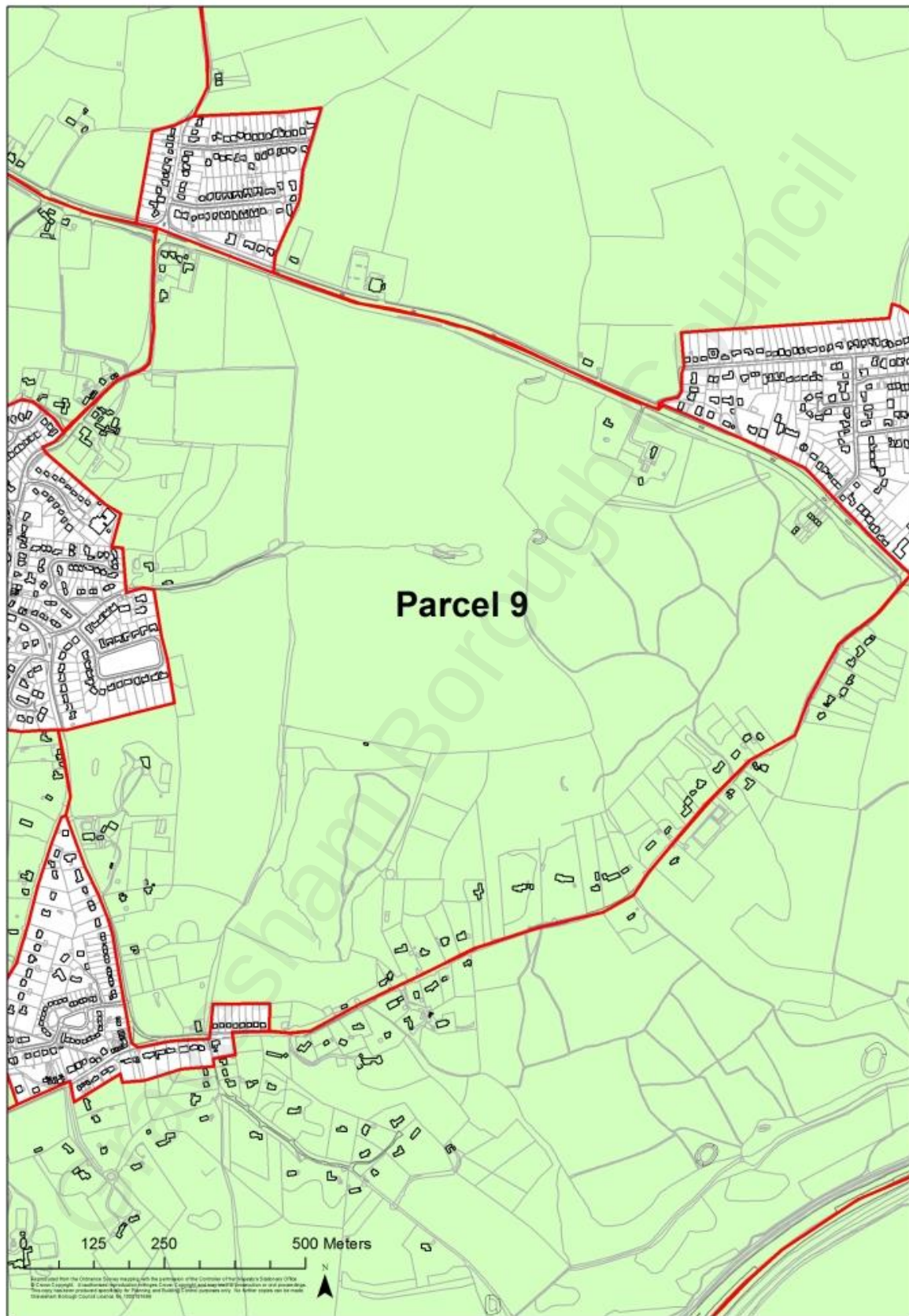
The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing the merging of Gravesend and Strood and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It also contributes towards preventing rural settlements from merging. Its easternmost part is particularly important in preventing Shorne from merging with Shorne Ridgeway. There has been some recent encroachment as a result of development associated with Shorne Woods Country Park but this is largely screened and not adjacent to existing development.

There are no opportunities for development in the parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes

of the Green Belt. There are no opportunities for stronger strategic boundary but Woodlands Lane and The Ridgeway could form stronger boundaries around Shorne Ridgeway.

Gravesham Borough Council

Parcel 9 East of Shorne



Description

The triangular shaped parcel lies between the A226 Gravesend Road to the north east and Pear Tree Lane to the south east. The western boundary is formed by Tanyard Hill, the edge of built development forming the settlements of Shorne and Shorne Ridgeway (which are inset from the Green Belt) and Forge Lane. Higham and Lower Shorne also abut the parcel, on the opposite side of the A226.

The southern and eastern parts of the parcel contain areas of woodland (Starmore Wood and Court Wood) and the remainder is largely arable land. There are dwellings in large grounds along most of the length of Pear Tree Lane, set within the woodland. There is a small group of dwellings in the north east corner of the parcel where Forge Lane meets Gravesend Road. There are also a few farm buildings and houses in large grounds along the western boundary, close to the settlements.

The parcel rises from the north west (A226 and Lower Shorne) to the south and south east (Pear Tree Lane) though there is a distinctive hillock (The Warren) to the north east of Shorne.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel is situated between Gravesend and Strood, alongside one of the main roads (A226) which links the two towns. It immediately abuts Shorne, Shorne Ridgeway, Lower Shorne and Higham. The gaps to the west between Shorne and Gravesend (parcel 6) and to the east between this parcel and Strood (parcels 10 and 11) are relatively narrow. As a result, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between four settlements inset from the Green Belt (Shorne, Shorne Ridgeway, Lower Shorne and Higham). Extensive ribbon residential development, in the form of large dwellings in large grounds, already exists along much of Pear Tree Lane which separates Shorne Ridgeway from Higham. There is only a small gap between the boundaries of Shorne and Shorne Ridgeway and there is also development in this gap, comprising scattered dwellinghouses in large grounds. Whilst the gap between Shorne and Lower Shorne is bigger, there is also some development in this location around Smith's Farm and at the junction between Forge Lane and the A226 Gravesend Road. The presence of so much development in the gaps between the settlements makes these parts of the parcel particularly important in preventing any further merging of the settlements. Overall, the parcel plays a significant contribution towards this Green Belt purpose.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern boundary is strong as it follows a main road (A226). The remaining boundaries are generally delineated by rural lanes so these are distinct but weaker. Parts of the boundaries around Shorne and Shorne Ridgeway are formed by the curtilages of dwellings so these are weak.

The parcel mainly consists of woodland and arable land. However, the ribbon development of dwellings along Pear Tree Lane, the sporadic development to the east of Tanyard Hill, and the clusters of buildings around Smith's Farm and in the north east corner of the parcel create some urbanisation. This development largely existed prior to the designation of the Green Belt and is more spaced out than the development within the settlements.

Despite the presence of development, the parcel is still largely wooded and arable in character. As a result, it has a significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment.

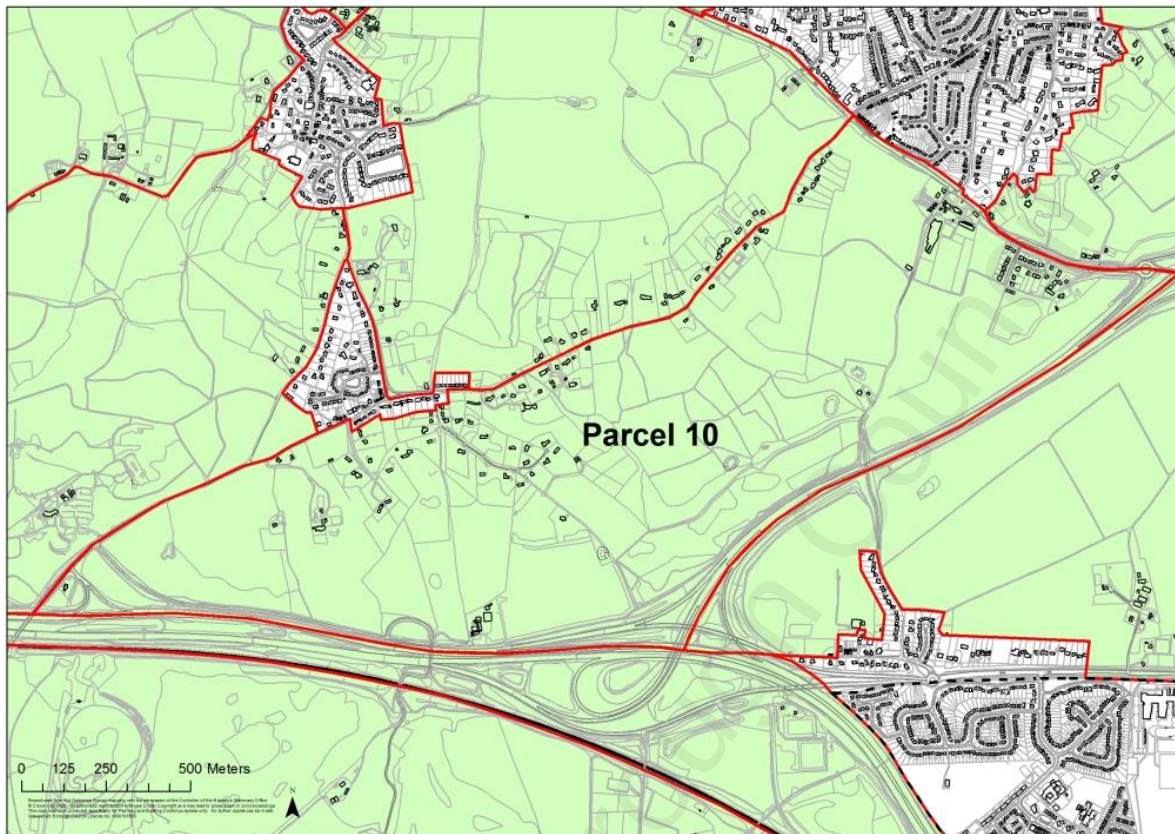
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing neighbouring towns from merging, preventing the merging of other settlements, and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The part of the parcel between Shorne and Shorne Ridgeway is particularly important in preventing the merging of these two settlements.

There are no opportunities for development in the parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are no opportunities to strengthen the strategic boundaries. At a more local level in Shorne Ridgeway, the Green Belt boundary may be strengthened by following Pear Tree Lane rather than the curtilages of Ridgeway Bungalows.

Parcel 10 South of Shorne



Description

The parcel lies between the A226 Gravesend Road to the north and the A2/M2 to the south. Part of the northern boundary abuts Higham which is a settlement inset from the Green Belt. The western boundary is formed by Brewers Road, part of The Ridgeway, the edge of built development forming the settlement of Shorne Ridgeway (which is also inset from the Green Belt) and Pear Tree Lane. The A289 Wainscott Bypass comprises the eastern boundary of the parcel.

The parcel comprises a mix of uses. It contains several woods including Brewers Wood and Great Crabbles Wood. It includes some areas of arable land, particularly in the eastern and southern parts of the parcel. It also has pockets of residential development along Gravesend Road around Gad's Hill School and Copperfield Crescent/Charles Dickens Avenue. There are dwellings in large grounds along much of Pear Tree Lane and also along Bowesden Lane and Pondfield Lane.

With the exception of its easternmost point, much of Pear Tree Lane runs along a ridge. The parcel slopes down from this towards the A289 which lies in a valley.

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

The area does not directly abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not contribute towards check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel is situated between Gravesend and Strood, alongside main roads which link the two towns (A2, A226 and A289). Strood lies only a short distance to the south east of it. Shorne Ridgeway abuts the western boundary and Higham lies to the north. The gap between Shorne Ridgeway and Strood (this parcel and parcel 11) and between Higham and Strood (parcel 5, this parcel and parcel 11) is relatively narrow. The gaps to the west between Shorne Ridgeway and Shorne (parcels 8 and 9) then Shorne and Gravesend (parcel 6) are also narrow. As a result, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between Shorne Ridgeway and Higham, which are settlements inset from the Green Belt. Extensive ribbon residential development, in the form of large dwellings in large grounds, already exists along much of Pear Tree Lane which separates the two settlements. The presence of this development in the gap makes this part of the parcel important in preventing the merging of the Shorne Ridgeway and Higham. Overall, this parcel contributes towards preventing the merging of settlements inset from the Green Belt.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern, eastern and southern boundaries are very strong as they follow major roads. The western boundary largely follows a country lane so is distinct but weak. Part of this boundary around Shorne Ridgeway follows the curtilages of dwellings and a public house so this is weak.

Large parts of the parcel are covered by woodland and arable land, both of which are appropriate uses in the Green Belt. However, there are also significant numbers of residential properties set within large curtilages within the area. This creates sporadic and ribbon development along Pear Tree Lane, Bowesden Lane and Pondfield Lane which encroaches into the countryside. However, this development largely predates the Green Belt designation and is more spaced out than the development within the settlements. More recently, significant encroachment has occurred as a result of the construction of the A289 Wainscott Bypass, a dual carriageway which bisects the area between Higham and Strood. The A289 lies in a valley which separates this parcel and parcel 11.

Despite the presence of development, the parcel is still largely wooded and arable in character. It is visible from the A2 and A289 due to the fact that it slopes up from the roads. Whilst encroachment has occurred in this parcel, the character and topography ensure that it makes a contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

Contribution

Summary

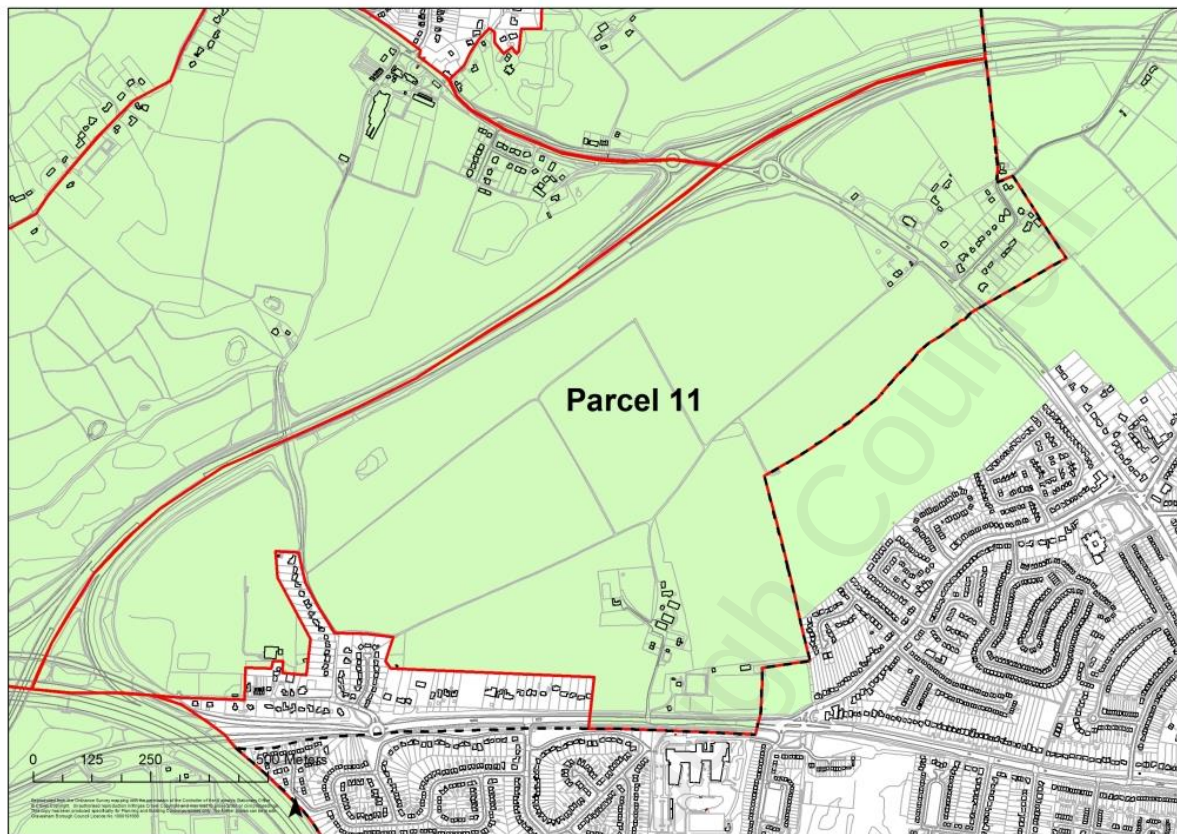
The parcel makes a significant contribution towards preventing the merging of Gravesend and Strood. It also contributes towards preventing other settlements from merging and

safeguarding the countryside from encroachment but there has been some encroachment as a result of the construction of the A289.

There are no opportunities for development in this parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are also no opportunities for strengthening the strategic Green Belt boundaries. More locally, a stronger boundary could be formed by using The Ridgeway and Pear Tree Lane as the boundary to Shorne Ridgeway.

Gravesham Borough Council

Parcel 11 North West of Strood



Description

The parcel lies between the A289 Wainscott Bypass to the north and west and the Borough's administrative boundary with Medway Council in the east. The southern boundary runs along the A2 Watling Street and along the edge of built development forming the settlement of Three Crutches (which is inset from the Green Belt). In the north east, it is bisected by Gravesend Road (which runs north-south).

The parcel primarily comprises arable land. There is a cluster of dwellings around Dillywood Lane and Little Hermitage, immediately east of Gravesend Road. There are also a few buildings around Chapter Farm in the southern part of the parcel. The Blaw Knox Sports Ground provides recreational facilities adjacent to the Chapter Farm buildings.

The parcel is open in aspect and generally rises from north west to south east, i.e. away from the A289 which lies in a valley.

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

A small part of the southern boundary runs along the A2 Watling Street which forms the edge of the Strood urban area, providing a strong boundary. The remaining part of the southern boundary abuts the curtilages of dwellings at Three Crutches which makes it relatively weak. There is an anomaly in that part of the A2 Watling Street is within the Green Belt but the built development either side of it, i.e. Three Crutches to the north and Strood to the south, is not within the Green Belt. This will need to be considered as part of the detailed boundary review. The parcel does not extend further north than the existing defined urban area but it does extend slightly further west. As a small part of the parcel directly

abuts the urban area of Strood, it plays a role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel lies between Gravesend and Strood. The main roads between the two towns (A2, A289 and A226) form the boundaries of the parcel and bisect it. The parcel is part of the narrowest gap between Gravesend and Strood and part of the parcel abuts the latter town. The gaps between Strood and Shorne/Shorne Ridgeway (this parcel and parcels 9 and 10) and between Strood and Higham (this parcel and parcels 5 and 10) are relatively narrow. The gaps further west between Shorne Ridgeway, Shorne and Gravesend (parcels 6, 7, 8 and 9) and Higham, Lower Shorne and Gravesend (parcels 2 and 3) are also narrow. As a result, this parcel, in combination with other parcels, plays a significant role in preventing Gravesend merging with Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel abuts Three Crutches, a settlement inset from the Green Belt, but does not adjoin any other rural settlements. This settlement adjoins the Strood urban area and there is an anomaly in that the A2 Watling Street is within the Green Belt. Given this, and the fact that this parcel does not adjoin any other settlements inset from the Green Belt, it has a minimal contribution to this purpose.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The relative strengths of the parcel boundaries are mixed. The northern boundary is very strong as it follows a major road (A289). The part of the southern boundary which follows the A2 Watling Street also provides a strong boundary. The remaining part of the southern boundary and the eastern boundary are weak as they generally either follow field boundaries or the curtilages of dwellings.

The parcel is mainly arable land and recreational land which are appropriate uses in the Green Belt and contribute to its openness. There are some pockets of urbanising development, particularly around Dillywood Lane/Gravesend Road, which encroach into the countryside and impact on the openness but these generally precede the Green Belt designation. More recently, significant encroachment has occurred as a result of the construction of the A289 Wainscott Bypass, a dual carriageway which bisects the area between Higham and Strood. The A289 lies in a valley which separates this parcel from parcels 5 and 10.

Although there is development within the area, the parcel has a rising topography and retains its open character. Most of it is screened by trees from the surrounding main roads but small parts of it are visible from certain points. As a result, it contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

Contribution

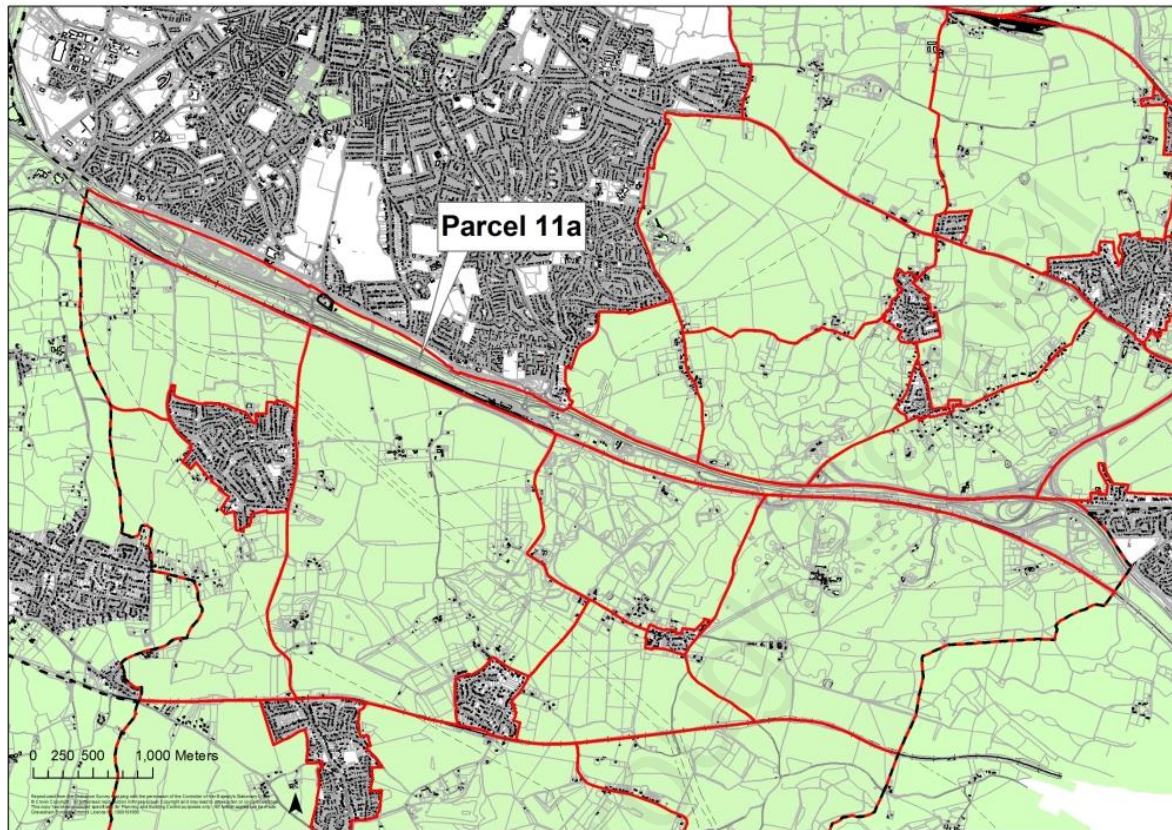
Summary

This parcel plays a significant role in preventing Strood and Gravesend from merging. It also contributes towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of Strood and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment though there has been some encroachment as a result of the construction of the A289.

Development in the area would have an adverse effect on the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. However, the A289 Wainscott Bypass would provide an alternative stronger strategic boundary than the existing ones along field boundaries and the curtilages of dwellinghouses.

Gravesham Borough Council

Parcel 11a A2 and High Speed Railway Corridor



Description

The parcel lies between the line of the former A2 corridor to the north and the High Speed 1 railway line and the former temporary Channel Tunnel Rail Link line to the south. The Borough's administrative boundaries with Dartford and Medway Councils comprise the western and eastern boundaries respectively. It is bisected by the A227 Wrotham Road which runs under the road and railway.

The parcel comprises the corridors of A2/M2 and High Speed railway line. It also consists of areas between the former A2 corridor, the realigned A2 corridor and the railway line. These are largely landscaped and the western part incorporates part of the Cyclopark recreation facility. The buildings of the former Tollgate Hotel are located east of the A227, immediately north of the realigned A2. There are a few other buildings between the A2 and the railway line close to the Marling Cross junction. These include the Esso Petrol station at Cobham and depots associated with the railway line. There are two sets of high voltage electricity pylons and lines which run across the westernmost part of the parcel and another one which runs through the parcel close to the Marling Cross junction.

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

Part of the northern boundary of the parcel forms the edge of the defined urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet. This boundary follows the southern alignment of the original A2. Due to the realignment of the A2, this boundary does not follow a defined physical feature and is weak. The defined urban area adjacent to this parcel includes some recent development, e.g. Cyclopark pavilion and car park, affordable housing development at Epsom Close. There has been recreational development within the parcel itself as part of Cyclopark, including a bike circuit, mountain trail and skate park, but these are open uses

which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The open nature of the parcel has been retained and built development has been limited to areas just outside the parcel. As a result, the parcel plays a significant contribution towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of Gravesend and Northfleet.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The eastern part of the parcel is situated between Gravesend and Strood. It includes the A2 and M2 which are main roads linking the two towns. This parcel forms part of the smallest gap between the towns. Whilst there are no other settlements located directly between the towns in the vicinity of this parcel, its characteristics mean that it has a significant role in preventing the merging of Gravesend and Strood and maintaining the break in built development between them. This is especially the case when this parcel is considered in combination with parcels 7, 8, 10 and 11 immediately to the north.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel abuts Three Crutches, a settlement inset from the Green Belt, but does not lie adjacent to any other rural settlements. This settlement abuts the Strood urban area. Given these characteristics, it is considered that this parcel plays a minimal role in preventing the merging of other settlements.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The southern boundary is very strong as it largely follows the High Speed 1 railway line. The part of the northern boundary to the east of Gravesend follows the line of the A2 and is also very strong. The part of this boundary to the south of Gravesend and Northfleet follows the southern boundary of the former A2 and is weak (see purpose 1 above). There are also weak western and eastern boundaries as these follow administrative boundaries rather than any defined physical features.

Large parts of the parcel form part of the strategic transport network. Significant encroachment has occurred into the parcel as a result of the realignment and widening of the A2/M2, the construction of new/upgraded junctions associated with this and the A289 Wainscott Bypass, and the building of the High Speed 1 railway line. Whilst the buildings of the Tollgate Hotel have been in situ for many years, other buildings are more recent and have created further encroachment, e.g. the redeveloped petrol filling station and the infrastructure maintenance depot near Cobham. Some areas of the parcel between the railway and the road and between the road and the edge of the urban area have retained open uses which are acceptable in the Green Belt, e.g. the open recreational part of Cyclopark, landscaping associated with the new road and railway.

Overall, it is considered that this parcel has not safeguarded the countryside from encroachment and has a minimal contribution towards meeting this Green Belt purpose.

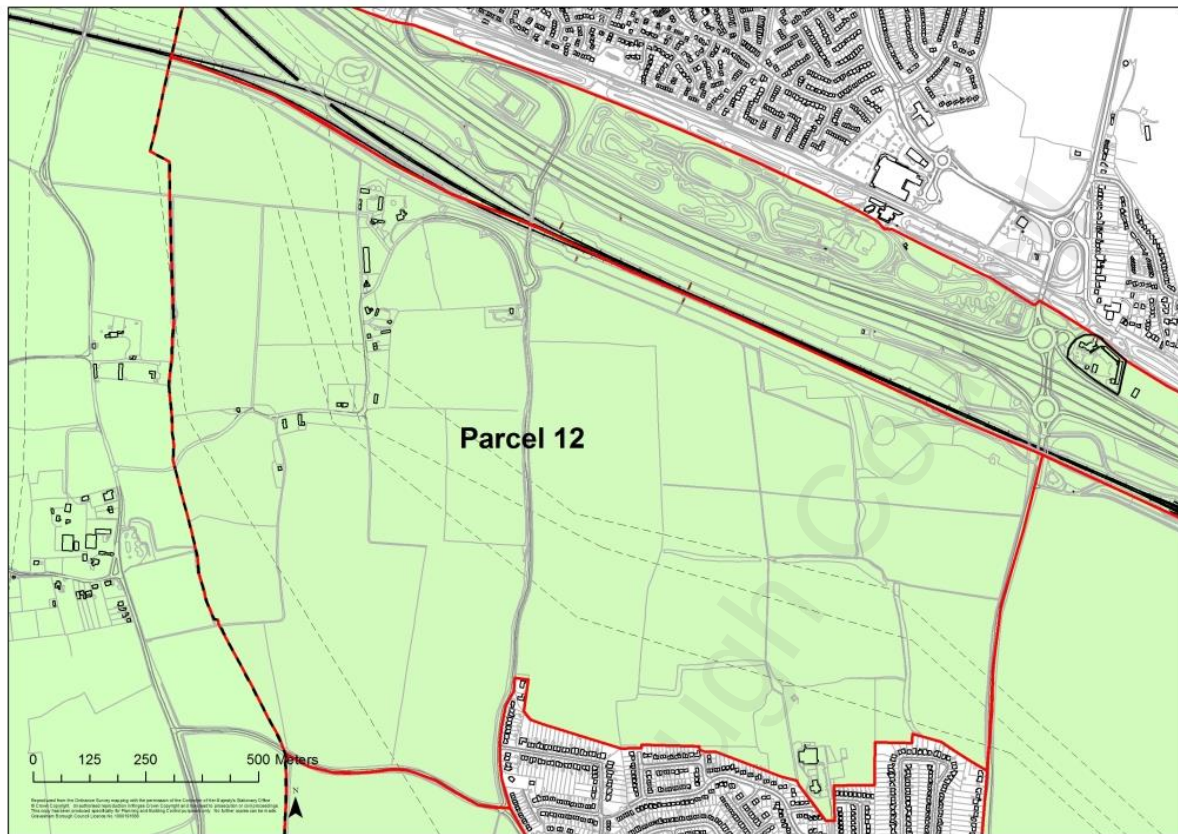
Minimal/No Contribution

Summary

The parcel plays a significant role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of Gravesend and Northfleet and preventing Gravesend from merging with Strood. Significant encroachment has occurred as a result of the construction of the High Speed 1 railway line and the realignment of the A2/M2.

There are no obvious opportunities for development in this parcel without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. The strategic boundary adjacent to Gravesend and Northfleet could be strengthened by either following the southern boundary of the realigned A2 or following the southern boundary of the HS1 line or following the southern edge of urban development.

Parcel 12 Northfleet Green and North of Istead Rise



Description

The parcel lies between the High Speed 1 railway line and the former temporary Channel Tunnel Rail Link line to the north and Broad Ditch Road and the edge of built development forming the settlement of Istead Rise (which is inset from the Green Belt) to the south. The administrative boundary with Dartford Borough forms the western boundary and the A227 Wrotham Road comprises the eastern boundary. The parcel is bisected by Downs Road (north-south).

The parcel mainly consists of arable land though there are some small pockets of woodland. Istead Rise recreation ground, community centre and GP surgery are located in the south eastern part of the site. There are a number of dwellings and farm buildings scattered along Northfleet Green Road which form the hamlet of Northfleet Green. There are four sets of electricity pylons and lines running through the area.

The parcel has an undulating topography with two distinctive dry valleys running north-south through it. The area is visible from the roads which run along its boundaries.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The southernmost part of the parcel is located between Istead Rise (a settlement inset from the Green Belt in Gravesham) and Southfleet (a settlement which has village confines in Dartford Borough). There is some development in the gap between them but none of this is within the parcel itself. This part of the parcel is important in ensuring that the separation between the settlements is maintained and that they do not merge with each other. It is assessed as contributing towards this Green Belt purpose.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern boundary is very strong as it largely follows the High Speed 1 railway line. The eastern boundary is also strong as it follows the A227 Wrotham Road, a main road running north-south through the Borough. Part of the southern boundary is formed by a rural lane so is distinct but weaker. The remaining part of the southern boundary and the western boundary are weak as they mostly either follow field boundaries or the curtilages of dwellings.

The parcel is largely arable land, with some recreational land and woodland. The Istead Rise community centre was built in the late 1970s/early 1980s and more recently a GP surgery has been built to the south of it. These buildings and their associated car parking areas have caused some encroachment into the Green Belt. Whilst there are a number of other buildings within the parcel, particularly around Northfleet Green, these largely predate the Green Belt designation. The recent construction of the High Speed railway line, which bisects the area between the A2 and Istead Rise, has caused encroachment. This railway line separates this parcel from parcel 11a.

Although there has been encroachment into the parcel by new development, it is still largely open in character and has an undulating topography. As such, it contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

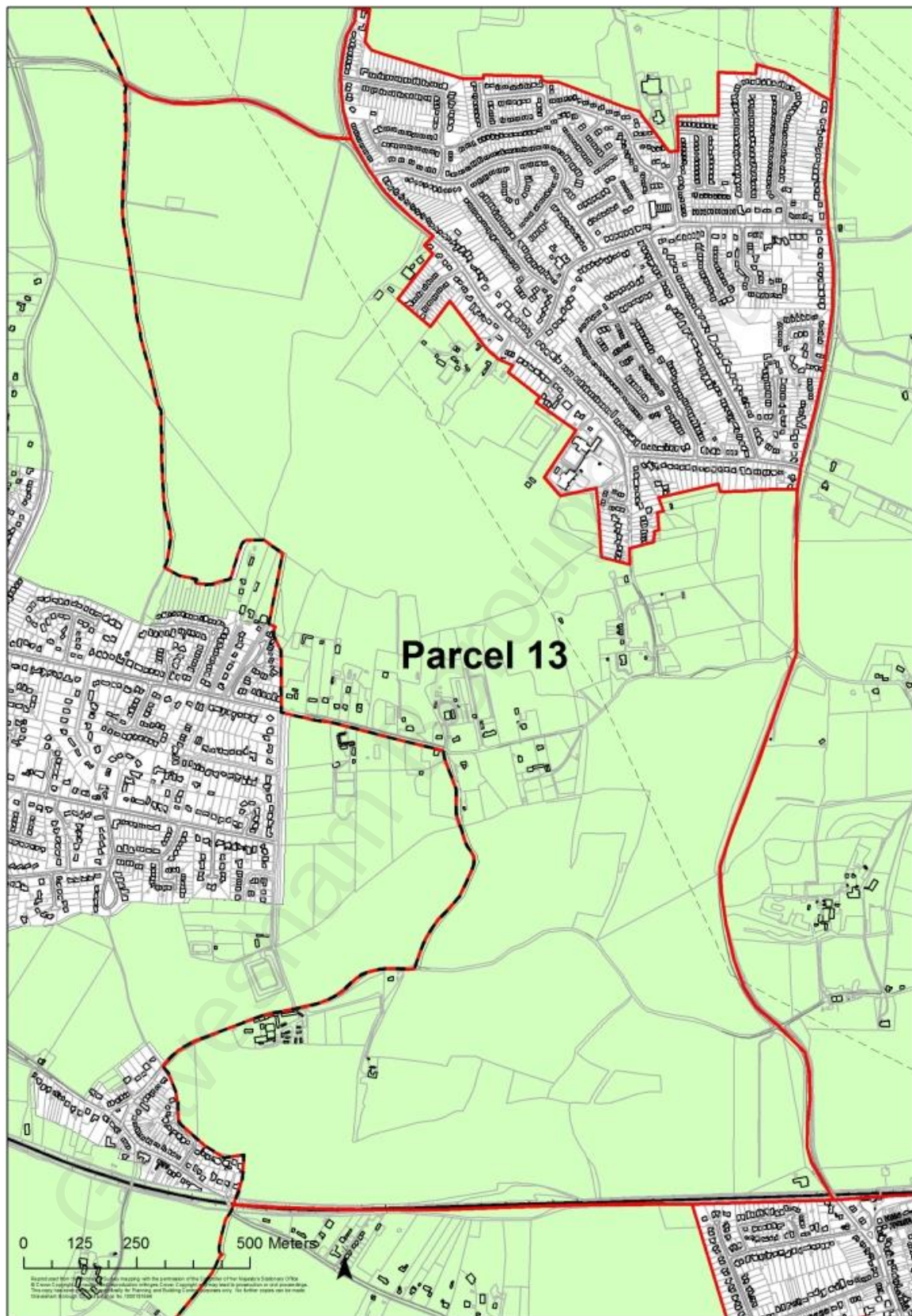
Contribution

Summary

The parcel contributes towards preventing rural settlements from merging. It also plays a role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment but there has been some encroachment as a result of the construction of the High Speed 1 railway line, the community centre and GP surgery.

There are no opportunities for development in the parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are also no obvious opportunities for strengthening the Green Belt boundaries.

Parcel 13 Istead Rise and New Barn Gap



Description

The parcel lies between Broad Ditch Road and the edge of built development forming the settlement of Istead Rise (which is inset from the Green Belt) to the north and the Chatham mainline railway line to the south. The western boundary is formed by the administrative boundary with Dartford Borough. Part of this runs along the edge of built development at New Barn and Longfield Hill, as well as rural lanes (Longfield Avenue/Stony Corner/Nurstead Lane). The A227 Wrotham Road comprises the eastern boundary.

The parcel primarily comprises arable land though there are some small pockets of woodland. There are a number of dwellings, stables and a nursery along Longfield Avenue and Walnut Hill Road. There is also a group of dwellings close to the pumping station at the southern end of Downs Road and a couple of farm complexes elsewhere in the parcel. There is a set of electricity pylons and lines running diagonally through the area (north west-south east).

The parcel has an undulating topography with a distinctive dry valley running north-south to the south of Istead Rise. The land rises between the western boundary of Istead Rise and the north eastern boundary of New Barn. The parcel is visible from the A227 Wrotham Road.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between Istead Rise, Hook Green (both of which are settlements inset from the Green Belt in Gravesham Borough), New Barn and Longfield Hill (settlements which have village confines in Dartford Borough). There is some development in the gap between Istead Rise and New Barn along Longfield Avenue and Walnut Hill Road which create ribbon development. There are also some farm buildings immediately west of the defined boundary at Istead Rise. There is also some development in the gap between Istead Rise and Hook Green. This includes development along the southern part of Downs Road. These characteristics mean that the parcel is important in maintaining the separation between these settlements and preventing them from merging.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The eastern and southern boundaries are strong as they follow a main road (A227) and a railway line respectively. Parts of the western and northern boundaries are distinct but weaker as they are formed by rural lanes. Parts of these boundaries which abut the

settlements are delineated by residential and school curtilages which makes them relatively weak.

The parcel is largely arable land, with some woodland. However, the ribbon development of dwellings along Longfield Avenue/Walnut Hill Road, the dwellings in the southern part of Downs Road, the farm complexes to the west of Istead Rise and the pylons and electricity lines create some urbanisation. This development largely existed prior to the designation of the Green Belt and is more spaced out than the denser development within the settlements.

Despite the presence of development, the parcel is still largely arable and open in character. It has an undulating topography. As a result, it makes a significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment.

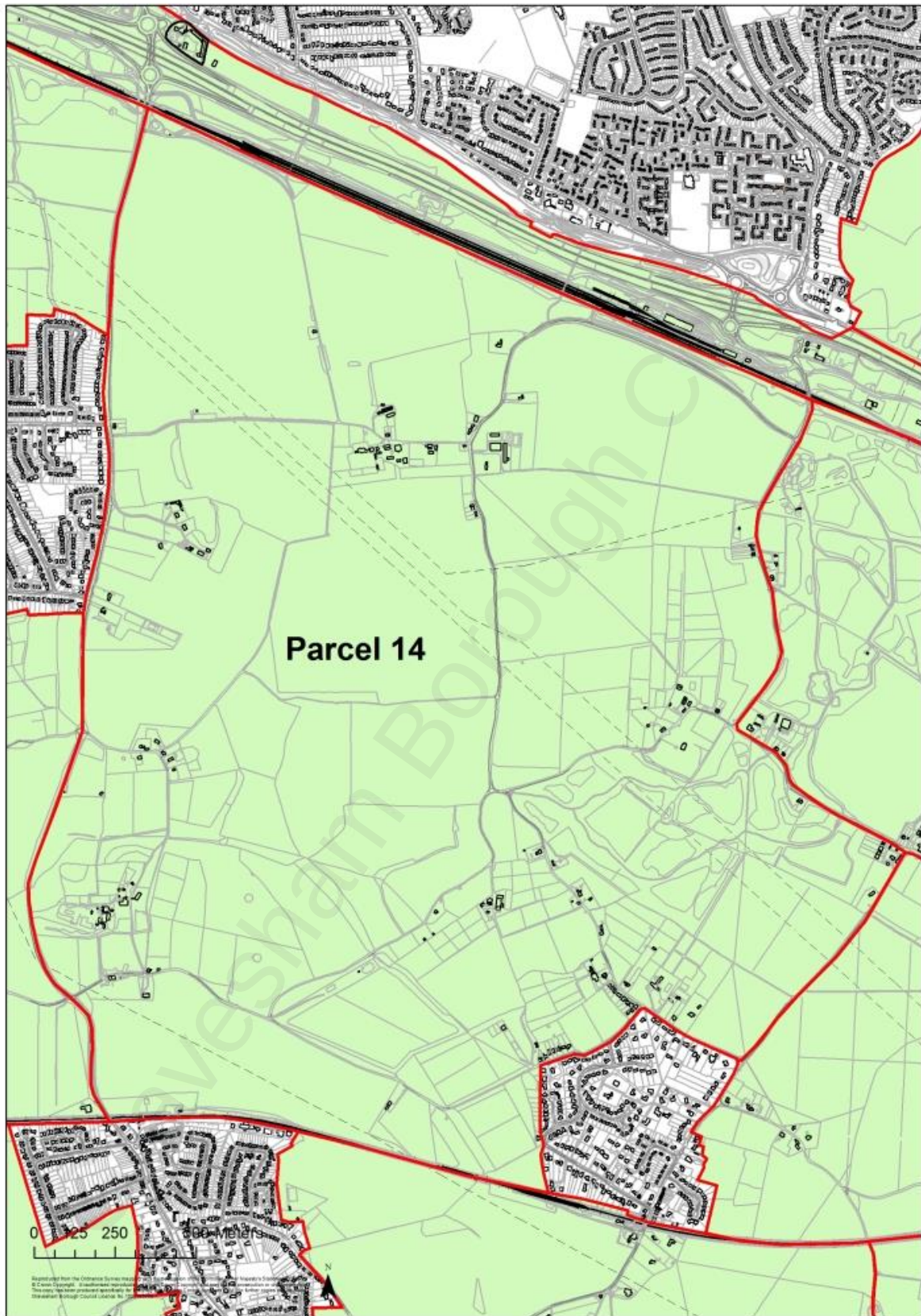
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing rural settlements from merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are limited opportunities for development in the parcel without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. To the south of Istead Rise, Nash Bank, Downs Road and the A227 Wrotham Road would provide a more distinct boundary than the existing boundaries along the curtilages of dwellings and may provide an opportunity for development.

Parcel 14 West and North of Sole Street



Description

The parcel lies between the High Speed 1 railway line to the north and the Chatham mainline railway line and the settlement of Sole Street to the south. The western boundary is formed by the A227 Wrotham Road. The eastern boundary is delineated by Henhurst Road, Jeskyns Road and Sole Street. Parts of the eastern, southern and western boundaries abut the settlements of Sole Street, Hook Green and Istead Rise which are settlements inset from the Green Belt.

The parcel mainly comprises arable land though there are some small pockets of woodland. There are some groups of dwellings close to the settlement of Sole Street, in particular to the north of White Post Lane and around the junction of White Post Lane and Round Street. There are also farm complexes and other buildings scattered throughout the parcel, most notably around Nash Street, Nurstead, Ifield Court and Dabbs Place Farm. Part of the Jeskyns Community Woodland is located in the western part of the area. There are four sets of electricity pylons and lines running through the parcel.

The area is relatively flat and open, with some wide views across it.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between Istead Rise, Hook Green and Sole Street, all of which are settlements inset from the Green Belt. There is minimal development between them apart from very small clusters of buildings around Nurstead Court, Nash Street and Marlborough House. There is also some residential development immediately north west of Sole Street. The south western part of this parcel is important in ensuring that the separation between the settlements is maintained and that they do not merge with each other.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern and most of the southern boundaries are very strong as they follow railway lines. The western boundary is also strong as it follows the A227 Wrotham Road, a main road running north-south through the Borough. The remaining boundaries largely follow rural lanes so are distinct but weak. A small part of the boundary with Sole Street follows the curtilages of dwellings so is relatively weak.

The area mainly comprises arable land, with some woodland. There are some small clusters of buildings scattered throughout the parcel which were largely built prior to the

designation of the Green Belt. Of particular note are the two separate rows of dwellings abutting Sole Street which create some ribbon development predating the Green Belt designation. Whilst these are at a similar density and layout to those houses within the settlement, the existing boundary along White Post Lane is logical and distinctive. More recently, the construction of the High Speed 1 railway line has caused significant encroachment. The railway line separates this parcel from parcel 11a. Other urban features within the parcel include the pylons and electricity lines.

Although the railway has resulted in development which encroaches into the parcel, the area is still largely flat and open. It is widely visible from Ifield Road to the north and Henhurst Road to the east. As a result, it contributes towards maintaining the openness of the Green Belt and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

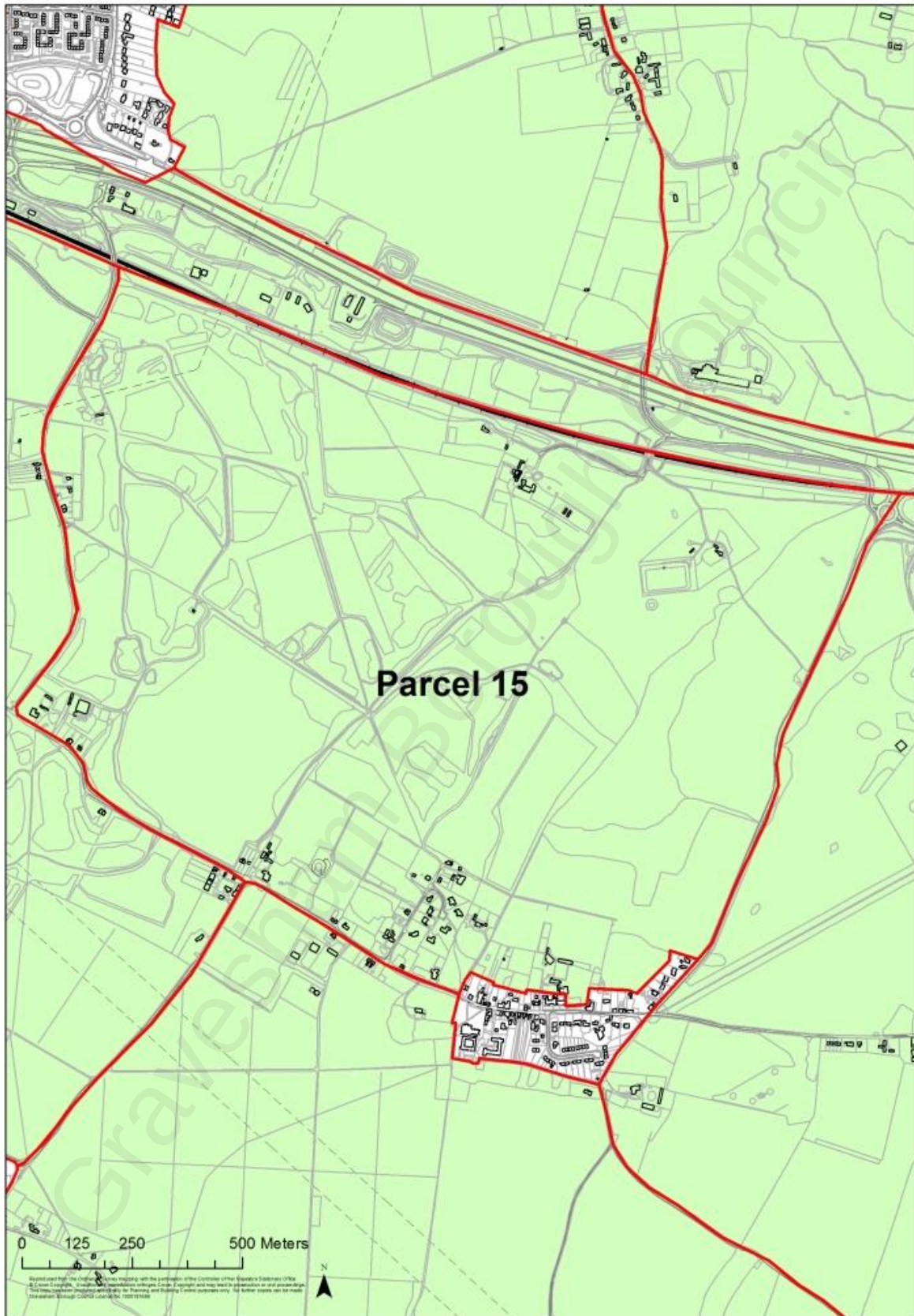
Contribution

Summary

The parcel contributes towards preventing rural settlements from merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are no opportunities for development in the parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are also no obvious opportunities for strengthening the Green Belt boundaries.

Parcel 15 Jeskyn's and Ashenbank Woods



Description

The parcel lies between the High Speed 1 railway line to the north and Jeskyns Road, The Street and the edge of built development forming the settlement of Cobham (which is inset from the Green Belt) to the south. Henhurst Road delineates the western boundary and Halfpence Lane forms the eastern boundary.

The western part of the parcel comprises Jeskyns Community Woodland whilst Ashenbank Wood occupies much of the eastern part of the area. It includes a small amount of arable land and Cobham Recreation Ground. There is some built development, particularly around Battle Street and Owletts (west of Cobham village) and Jeskyns Court in the westernmost part of the parcel. There is a set of electricity pylons and lines running through the north western corner of the area.

The western part of the area is a more open landscape and this rises up towards the more wooded part of the parcel in the north east.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Whilst the parcel abuts Cobham, it does not adjoin any other settlement inset from the Green Belt. Therefore, it does not contribute towards preventing the merging of rural settlements.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern boundary is very strong as it follows the High Speed 1 railway line. The eastern, western and most of the southern boundaries are delineated by country roads which form weak but distinct boundaries. The boundary to Cobham in the south eastern part of the parcel follows the curtilages of dwellings within the settlement so is also relatively weak.

The parcel mainly comprises recreational land which is both open and wooded. There are some clusters of buildings within the area. The built development around Battle Street is close to the Cobham settlement boundaries and causes a significant amount of encroachment into the countryside to the west of the village. This development largely predates the Green Belt designation and is more sporadic than the denser development within the settlement. There are also a number of buildings in recreational use associated with the recreation ground, but these are consistent with paragraph 89 of the NPPF and/or already existed prior to the designation of the Green Belt. There are some relatively recent buildings associated with Cobham Primary School which have encroached into the Green Belt close to the recreation ground. The parcel has also been affected by the recent

construction of the High Speed 1 railway line, which bisects the area between the A2 and Cobham. This has caused significant encroachment. The railway separates this parcel from parcel 11a. Other urban features include the pylons and electricity lines which run through part of the parcel.

Although there has been encroachment into the parcel by new development around Cobham village and by the High Speed railway line, it is still largely undeveloped. The western part of the parcel is visible from surrounding roads. The area is mainly in outdoor recreational use which preserves the openness of the Green Belt and contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

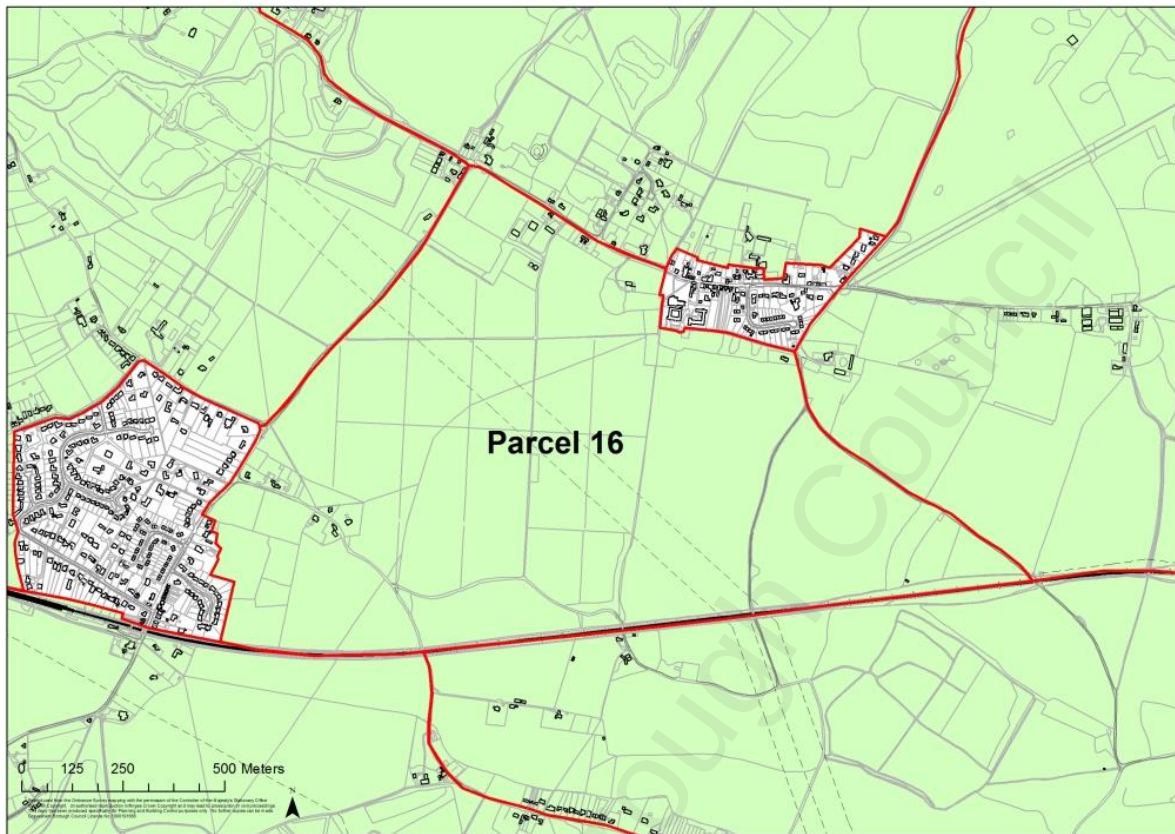
Contribution

Summary

The parcel contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. There has been some encroachment as a result of the construction of the High Speed 1 railway line and school buildings.

There are no opportunities for development in the parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are also no obvious opportunities for strengthening the Green Belt boundaries.

Parcel 16 South of Cobham



Description

The parcel lies between The Street and the edge of built development forming the settlement of Cobham to the north and the Chatham mainline railway line to the south. The western boundary is formed by Sole Street and the edge of built development forming the settlement of the same name. The eastern boundary is delineated by Cobhambury Road. Both Cobham and Sole Street are inset from the Green Belt.

The area primarily comprises arable land, including large areas of orchards. There are some allotments and a churchyard immediately south of Cobham village. The parcel contains a limited number of buildings, along Gold Street in the east and along parts of The Street. There are two sets of electricity pylons and lines running diagonally through the middle of the parcel (north west to south east).

The eastern part of the parcel is undulating and open, with long views south towards the North Downs. The western part of the parcel consists of orchards which are largely screened by hedgerows along the roads.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between Sole Street and Cobham, which are settlements inset from the Green Belt. The land between them is largely agricultural though there is some development between the two along The Street to the west of Cobham and around the junction of The Street and Sole Street. The parcel plays a significant role in preventing the merging of settlements inset from the Green Belt.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The southern boundary is very strong as it follows a railway line. The remaining boundaries mainly follow rural lanes so are distinct but weak. The boundaries with Cobham and much of Sole Street follow the curtilages of dwellings so are relatively weak.

The area primarily consists of farmed land and orchards. There is some development close to the boundaries of the settlements of Cobham and Sole Street but this is sporadic and predates the Green Belt designation. The pylons and electricity lines are other urbanising features within the parcel.

The eastern part of the parcel has a more open aspect than the areas further west due to the nature of the farming and the presence/absence of roadside hedgerows. There has not been encroachment into the parcel from new development. As such, it significantly contributes towards this purpose.

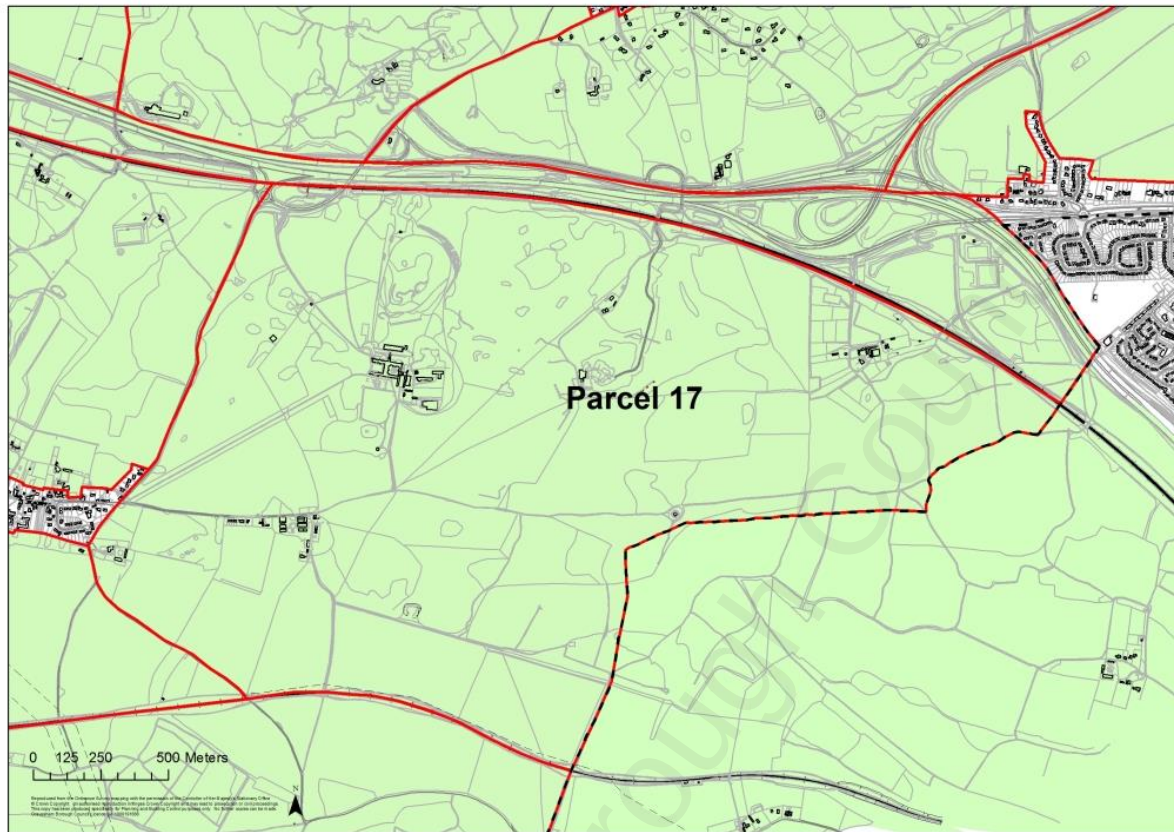
Significant Contribution

Summary

This parcel significantly contributes towards preventing the merging of settlements inset from the Green Belt and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are limited opportunities for development in the parcel without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. To the east of the settlement of Sole Street, the triangle formed by Sole Street, Gold Street and the railway line would provide a more distinct boundary than the existing boundaries along the curtilages of dwellings and may provide an opportunity for development.

Parcel 17 Cobham Park



Description

The parcel lies between the High Speed 1 railway line to the north and the Chatham mainline railway line to the south. The western boundary is delineated by Halfpence Lane and Cobhambury Road. The eastern boundary is formed by the administrative boundary with Medway Council.

The north western part of the parcel comprises the buildings of Cobham Hall School and its grounds (Cobham Park and West Park). To the east of this are the Rochester and Cobham golf club and its associated club house. The eastern part of the site largely consists of woodland. There is some arable land in the southernmost parts of the area. There is a cluster of buildings around Lodge Farm in Lodge Lane and there are a couple of other farms in the parcel (Cobhambury and Knights Place).

The area has a slightly undulating topography though the landform gently increases in height to the north of Cobham Hall. The landform also gradually increases and then drops steeply away to the south of Cobham Mausoleum in the south eastern corner of the parcel.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Whilst the parcel abuts Cobham, it does not abut any other rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. As a result, it does not contribute to this purpose.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern and southern boundaries of the parcel are very strong as they are formed by railway lines. The western boundary is weak but distinct as it is formed by the rural lanes of Halfpence Lane and Cobhambury Road. The eastern boundary is weak as it follows footpaths, field boundaries or no identifiable features on the ground.

Cobham Hall is a distinctive and sizeable historic building but there is very little other development in this parcel apart from buildings clustered around farm complexes. Cobhambury Farm lies close to the boundaries with Cobham. More recently, significant encroachment has occurred as a result of the construction of the High Speed 1 railway line, which bisects the area between the A2 and Cobham. This railway line separates this parcel and parcel 11a.

Despite the presence of development, the parcel is still largely parkland and wooded in character. It is hidden from views from the railway line. Whilst encroachment has occurred in this parcel, the character and topography ensure that it makes a contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

Contribution

Summary

The parcel contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment but there has been encroachment as a result of the construction of the High Speed rail link to the north.

There are no real opportunities for development in the area without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are also no obvious stronger boundaries.



Description

The parcel lies between the Chatham mainline railway line to the north and Idleigh Road/Idleigh Court Road/Shipleigh Hills Road to the south. The administrative boundary with Sevenoaks District forms the western boundary. The eastern boundary comprises the edge of built development forming the settlement of Hook Green (which is inset from the Green Belt) and the A227 Wrotham Road. Longfield Road runs through the north eastern part of the parcel.

The parcel comprises a mix of arable and grazing land with some belts of trees. There is a cluster of buildings, including dwellings, a cattery and a garage company, between the railway line and Longfield Road in the northern part of the area. There are a few farm complexes, most notably Melliker Farm on Longfield Road.

The parcel has an undulating topography with two distinctive dry valleys running north-south through it. The northern part of the area is more open and visible than the southern part which is more screened by hedgerows and tree belts along the roads.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between Hook Green, Meopham Green (settlements inset from the Green Belt in Gravesham), Longfield Hill (a settlement which has village confines in Dartford), Hartley and New Ash Green (rural towns/villages excluded from the Green Belt in Sevenoaks). There is some development in the gap between the defined settlements of Hook Green and Longfield Hill along Longfield Road. There is minimal development in the part of the parcel between Hook Green and Meopham Green but, as the gap is relatively narrow, it forms an important function in maintaining the separation between them. The gap between Hook Green and Hartley/New Ash Green is wider and there is some sporadic development between them, most of which lies outside Gravesham Borough and beyond the extent of this parcel. As a result of these characteristics, this parcel plays a significant role in maintaining the separation between the settlements and preventing them from merging. This is particularly the case between Hook Green and Longfield Hill and between Hook Green and Meopham Green.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern boundary and a small part of the eastern boundary are very strong as they follow a railway line and the main A227 Wrotham Road respectively. The southern boundary

follows rural lanes so is distinct but weak. A small part of the western boundary follows a field boundary but the remaining part does not follow any identifiable features on the ground so it is weak. Around the settlement of Hook Green, the boundaries are also weak as they largely follow the curtilages of residential properties.

The area mainly consists of land used for arable farming and grazing, including horse grazing. There are various clusters of buildings within the parcel, most notably along Longfield Road close to the defined village confines of Longfield Hill in Dartford Borough, and this creates ribbon development. The railway line forms a strong boundary separating these buildings from the village. This development is more spaced out and less dense than the development within the village and it largely predates the Green Belt designation.

The northern part of the parcel has a more open aspect than the areas further south due to the nature of the landscape and the presence/absence of roadside hedgerows/tree belts. There has not been obvious encroachment into the parcel from new development. As such, it significantly contributes towards this purpose.

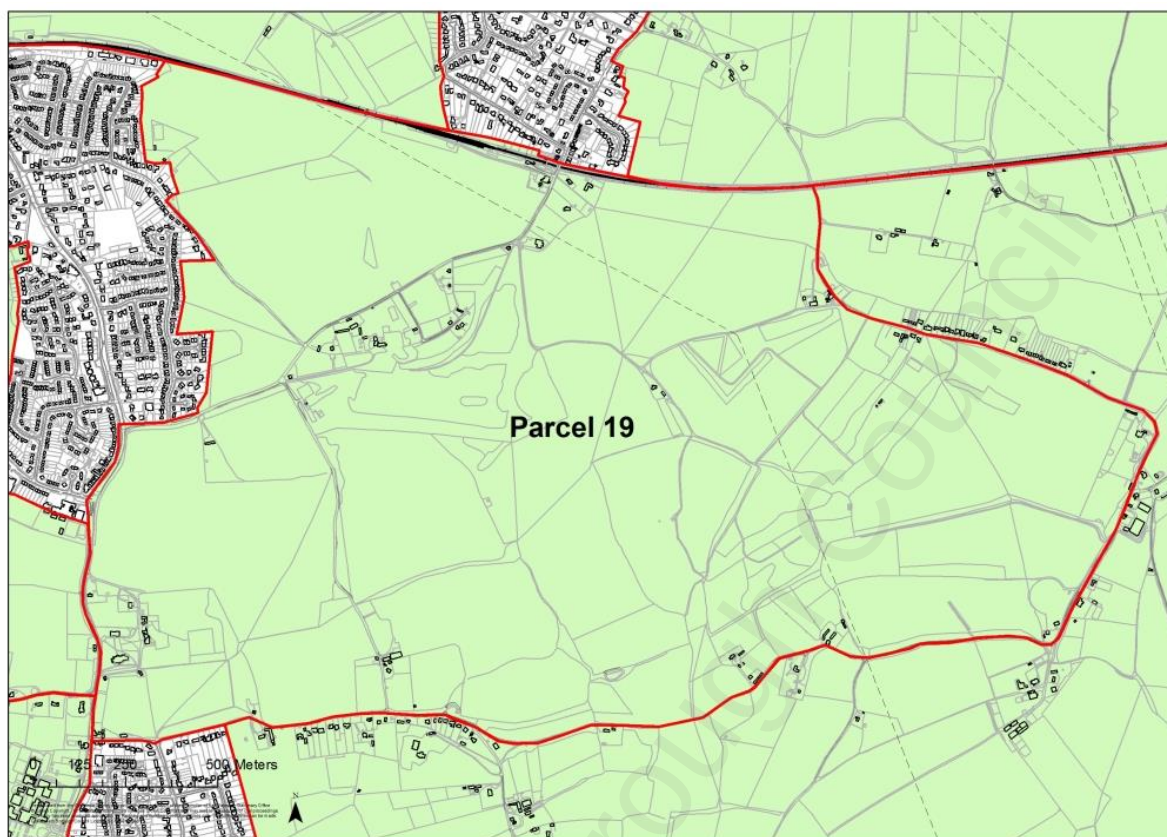
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing the merging of settlements, in particular Hook Green/Longfield Hill and Hook Green/Meopham Green, and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are limited opportunities for development in the parcel without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. To the west of Hook Green, the triangle formed by Melliker Lane and Longfield Road would provide a more distinct boundary than the existing boundaries along the curtilages of dwellings and may provide an opportunity for development.

Parcel 19 East of Hook Green



Description

The parcel lies between the Chatham mainline railway line to the north and Foxendown Lane/Oakenden Road to the south. The western boundary comprises the edge of built development forming the settlement of Hook Green (which is inset from the Green Belt) and the A227 Wrotham Road. The eastern boundary is formed by Gold Street/ Henley Street/ Luddesdown Road. To the north and south west lie Sole Street and Meopham Green respectively, which are also inset from the Green Belt. Green Lane/ Camer Road bisect the north western part of the parcel.

The parcel includes the grounds of Camer Park together with Henley Wood and some woodland shaws. Much of the remainder is arable and grazing land. Development in the area is concentrated around Meopham Court/St John's Church on the A227 Wrotham Road and Camer Farm on Camer Road though there are small groups of dwellings on Henley Street and around Sole Street railway station. A set of electricity lines and pylons runs through the area from south east to north west.

The parcel rises gently from north to south but it takes on a more undulating downland character in the south east. The northern part of the area is more open to views than the southern part which is more screened by hedgerows and tree belts along the roads.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel lies between Hook Green, Sole Street and Meopham Green, all of which are settlements inset from the Green Belt. There is some limited development between them, including dwellings, St John's Church, the church hall and the Railway Tavern. The western and north western parts of the parcel are particularly important in maintaining the separation between Hook Green and Meopham Green/Sole Street as the gaps between them are relatively narrow. Overall, the parcel contributes towards maintaining the separation between settlements and preventing them from merging.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern boundary and a small part of the western boundary are very strong as they follow a railway line and the main A227 Wrotham Road respectively. The eastern and southern boundaries are delineated by rural lanes so are distinct but weak. Around Hook Green, the boundary mainly follows residential curtilages which makes it weak.

The parcel is mainly in open recreational and agricultural use which is appropriate in the Green Belt. There are electricity lines and pylons running through the area. There are also some clusters of buildings, especially around Meopham Court and Camer Farm. The amount of development within the parcel is minimal and sporadic. It largely predates the Green Belt designation except for the relatively recent St John's Church hall which is set within the cluster of buildings around Meopham Court/St John's Church.

The northern part of the parcel has a more open aspect than the areas further south due to the nature of the landscape and the presence/absence of roadside hedgerows/tree belts. The character and topography means that this parcel significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

Significant Contribution

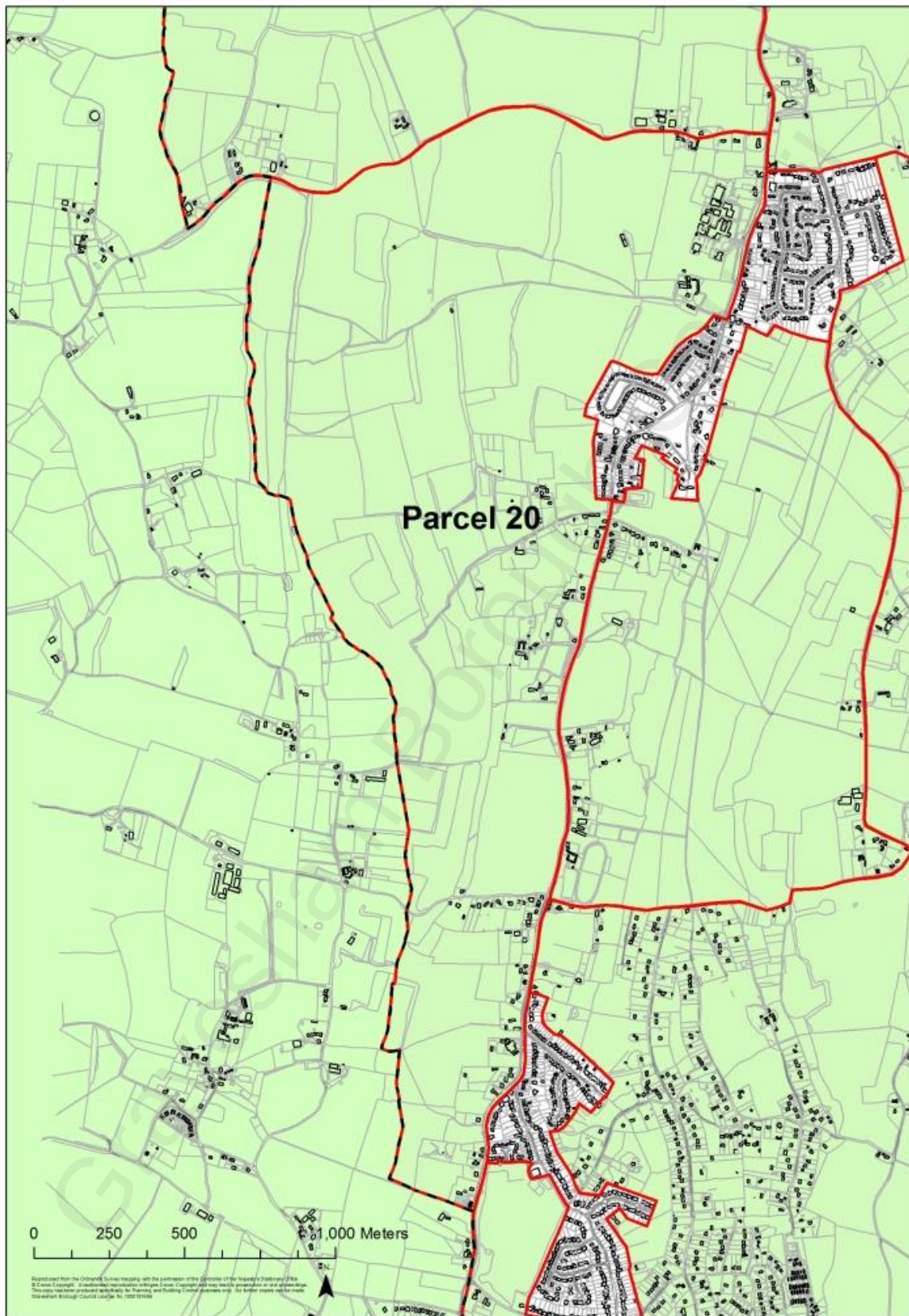
Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It also plays a role in preventing the merging of settlements, in particular Hook Green/Sole Street and Hook Green/Meopham Green.

There are limited opportunities for development in the parcel without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. To the east of Hook Green, the triangle formed by Norwood Lane and Green Lane/Camer Road would provide a more distinct boundary than the existing boundaries along the curtilages of dwellings and may provide an opportunity for development.

Gravesham Borough Council

Parcel 20 West of Meopham Green and Culverstone



Description

The parcel lies between Shipley Hills Road in the north and residential properties close to Culverstone Green in the south. The western boundary is formed by the administrative boundary with Sevenoaks District whilst the A227 Wrotham Road and the edge of built development to Meopham Green comprise the eastern boundary. These settlements are inset from the Green Belt. Ifield Road and Chapman's Hill bisect the parcel from west to east.

The parcel comprises a significant amount of grazing land (including horse paddocks), with some belts of trees. There is a lot of development present in the area. This includes a number of scattered farm complexes as well as a significant amount of residential development, particularly to the west of the A227 near Culverstone and along Chapman's Hill. It also includes the sizeable grouping of buildings comprising Meopham School, library, leisure centre, GP surgery and nursery and other development in close vicinity to this in the north eastern corner of the parcel.

The parcel has an undulating topography. It slopes down to the west away from the A227 towards a distinctive dry valley running north-south through it. There are some views towards the parcel from Wrotham Road but these are limited because of the amount of development which exists there. There are also some wider views from the west but the sunken lanes and roadside hedgerows and tree belts limit these views.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel is located between Culverstone, Meopham Green, Hook Green (settlements inset from the Green Belt in Gravesham) and New Ash Green (rural town/village excluded from the Green Belt in Sevenoaks). Whilst there is minimal development between Meopham Green and New Ash Green, there is a significant amount of development between Meopham Green and Hook Green/Culverstone. Between Meopham Green and Hook Green lies the Lomer Farm complex, Meopham School and other community buildings (see description above), some dwellings and The George public house. The presence of this development and the narrow gap between Meopham Green and Hook Green makes the north eastern part of the parcel particularly important in preventing these settlements from merging with each other. There is also a significant amount of residential development between Meopham Green and Culverstone, particularly closer to the latter settlement. As a result of these characteristics, this parcel significantly contributes towards this Green Belt purpose.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

Most of the eastern boundary is strong as it follows a main road (A227). The part of this boundary with Meopham Green is relatively weak as it follows residential curtilages. The northern boundary is distinct but weaker as it is formed by a rural lane. The western and southern boundaries largely follow field boundaries and tree belts which are relatively weak.

Whilst the majority of the parcel is open, mainly grazing land, there are significant pockets of development within it. There have been various developments allowed around Meopham School since the Green Belt was designated which encroach into the countryside, including the GP practice, the children's nursery, the leisure centre, and various extensions and additions to the school. Further development has also been allowed at the Meopham Veterinary Centre to the south of Meopham Green and Culverstone Primary School to the west of Culverstone. The primarily residential development to the west of the A227 near Culverstone and along Chapman's Hill creates ribbon development. This, together with the more scattered farmsteads and other residential development in the parcel, is more sporadic and less dense than the development within the settlement boundaries and largely predates the Green Belt designation.

Although there has been significant encroachment by new development into parts of this parcel, it is still mainly of an open character and has an undulating topography. As such, it is assessed overall as significantly contributing to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

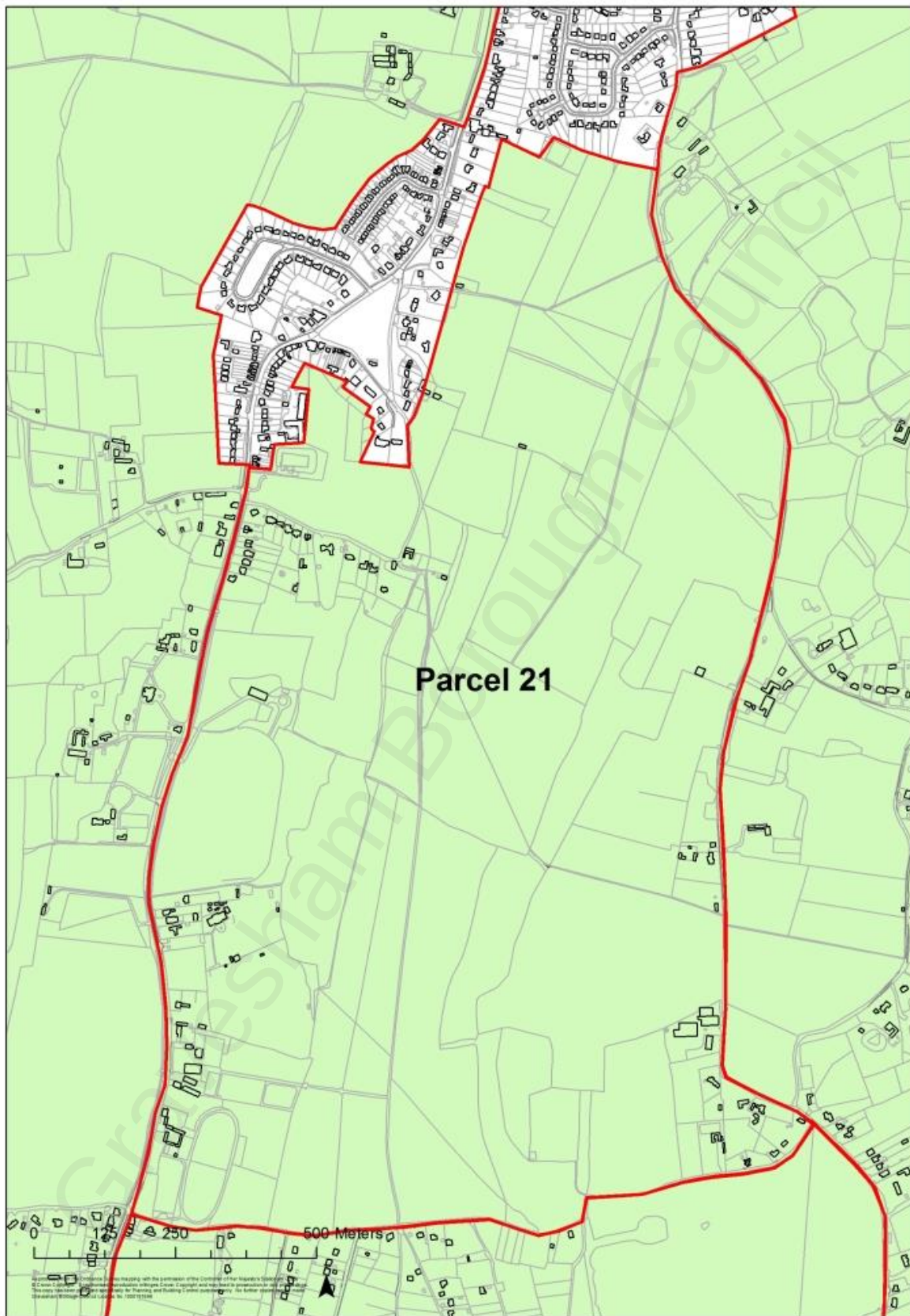
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing the merging of settlements, in particular between Meopham Green and Hook Green, and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are opportunities to infill or partially or completely redevelop the area around Meopham School in accordance with national Green Belt policy if this does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Any other development in the parcel would undermine its strategic purposes. There are no obvious opportunities for strengthening the Green Belt boundaries.

Parcel 21 South East of Meopham Green



Description

The parcel lies between the edge of built development at Meopham Green, a settlement inset from the Green Belt, to the north and Heron Hill Lane to the south. The A227 Wrotham Road delineates the western boundary and Whitehill Road and David Street form the eastern boundary.

The area comprises a mixture of grazing land (including horse paddocks), arable land and some woodland belts. There is a row of dwellings along Steele's Lane. There are also clusters of buildings along Wrotham Road, particularly close to the junction with Steele's Lane, around Hopehill Scout Camp and around Valley and South Street Farms. On the eastern side, there is a group of buildings around Eastfield Farm/Heron Hill Lane.

The western and eastern parts of the parcel are higher up and these slope down to a distinctive dry valley which runs north-south through the centre of the area. There are some views of the western part of the parcel from the A227. Views from the roads to the south and east are more limited because these are sunken lanes which are lined with roadside hedgerows and tree belts.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The eastern part of the parcel is located between Meopham Green and Culverstone Green which are settlements inset from the Green Belt. There is some development in the gap between them particularly around Steele's Lane and further south along Wrotham Road. However, there are breaks in development where there are more open tracts of land. The gap is wider than between other settlements. The eastern part of this parcel contributes to maintaining the separation between the settlements and preventing them from merging.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

Most of the western boundary is strong as it follows the A227 which is a main road. The other boundaries are delineated by rural lanes so are distinct but weaker. The boundary with Meopham Green follows residential curtilages so is weak.

Much of the parcel is grazed or in arable use which is appropriate within the Green Belt. There are some urbanising features, most notably the pockets of development around Steele's Lane and around Hopehill Scout Camp, with farm complexes located elsewhere. The dwellings around Steele's Lane and this part of Wrotham Road are close to the defined

settlement of Meopham Green but there is a small gap between them so this development does not undermine the settlement boundaries. The development within the parcel also predates the Green Belt designation.

The western part of the parcel is open to some views from the A227 due to its more open aspect and its location on a plateau. The eastern part of the parcel is more screened due to the topography, sunken lanes and presence of roadside hedgerows/trees. There has not been encroachment into the parcel from new development. As such, it significantly contributes towards this purpose.

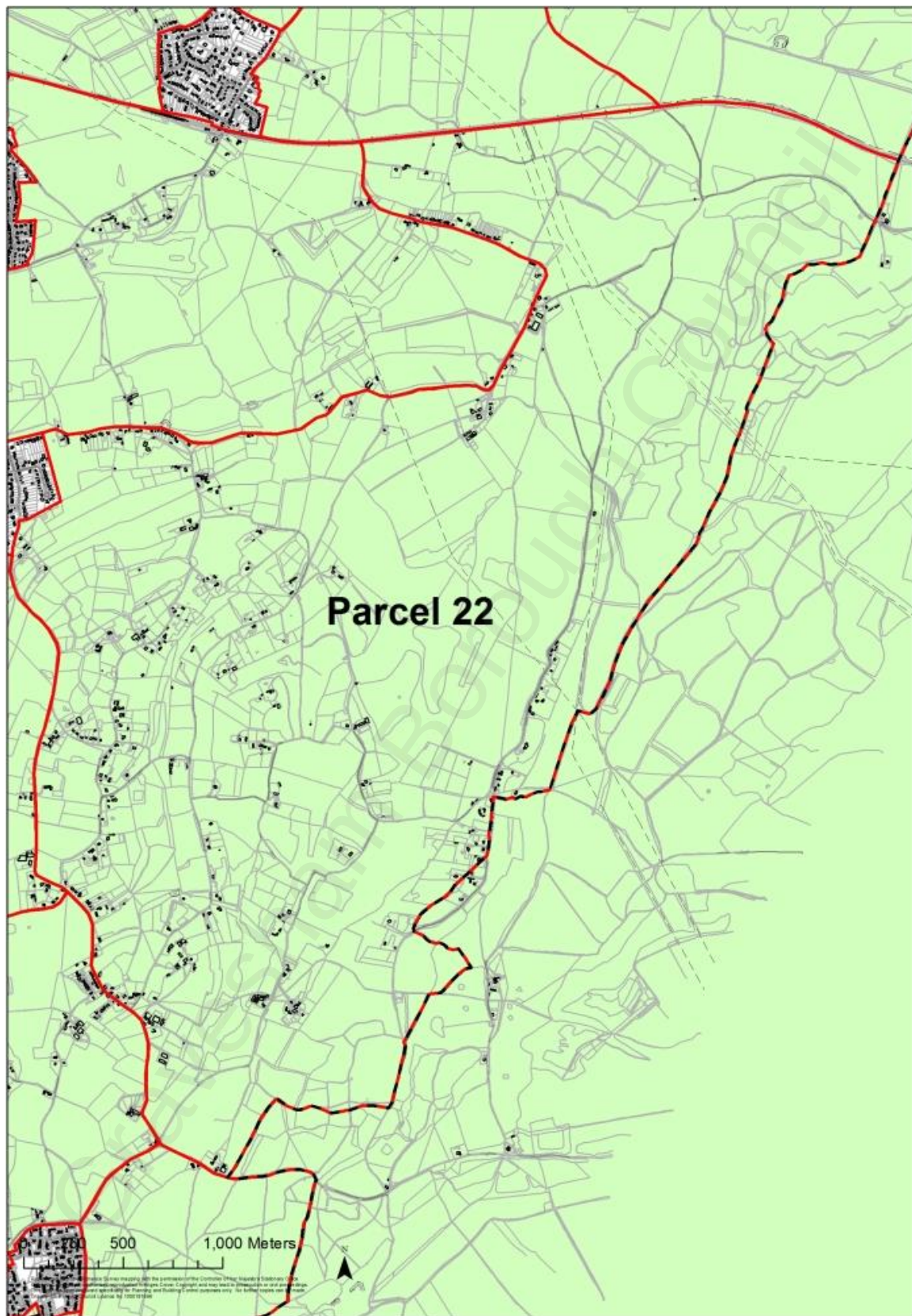
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It also has a role in preventing the merging of settlements.

There are limited opportunities for development in the parcel without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. To the south of Meopham Green, the area delineated by Steele's Lane and the A227 Wrotham Road would provide a more distinct boundary than the existing boundaries along the curtilages of dwellings and may provide an opportunity for development.

Parcel 22 Luddesdown and Rural South East



Description

This large parcel lies between the Chatham mainline railway line to the north and White Horse Road to the south in the south eastern part of the Borough. The western boundary is delineated by the edge of built development at Meopham Green (a settlement inset from the Green Belt), Whitehill Road, David Street, Harvel Street and White Horse Lane. The eastern boundary is formed by the administrative boundaries with Medway and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils.

The area comprises a mix of grazed pasture and arable land. There are significant areas of woodland, particularly in the eastern part of the parcel. There are pockets of development around the hamlets of Luddesdown, Lower Luddesdown and Harvel. A significant amount of residential development runs north of the latter along David Street, Priestwood Road and Horns Oak Road. There are also rows of dwellings along Foxendown Lane and Henley Street. In addition, there are some scattered farm building complexes. A number of electricity pylons and lines run through the north eastern part of the area.

The area is within the North Downs dipslope and is very undulating. The topography comprises series of dry valleys and ridges running north-south through the area. There are a number of narrow sunken lanes which follow the contours of the landscape.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Whilst the parcel abuts the eastern part of Meopham Green, it does not adjoin any other settlement inset from the Green Belt. Therefore, it does not contribute towards preventing the merging of rural settlements.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern boundary is well defined by the railway line and is therefore very strong. The southern and western boundaries are formed by rural lanes so are distinct but weak. The eastern boundary does not follow identifiable features on the ground and so it is very weak.

Although this is one of the most rural and remote parts of the Borough, there is a significant amount of development within it. There are rows of dwellings on Henley Street and Foxendown Lane which form ribbon development. The latter is close to the defined settlement of Meopham Green but there is a small gap between them so this development does not undermine the settlement boundaries. There is also a considerable amount of

residential development along the rural lanes running north of Harvel which also creates ribbon development. Further east, the multiple electricity lines and pylons introduce significant urban features into this part of the parcel. The development which exists is generally low density and largely predates the Green Belt designation.

There are some longer distance views of the northern part of the parcel from Cobham to the north and there are some places where it is possible to get long distance views of the dry valleys. In other parts of the area, views are limited because of the combined effect of topography and the heavily wooded character of the landscape. There is a lot of screening as a result of the sunken lanes and roadside hedgerows/trees. Whilst there are parts of the parcel which contain a lot of development, it maintains a very rural and remote feel. As such, it has an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

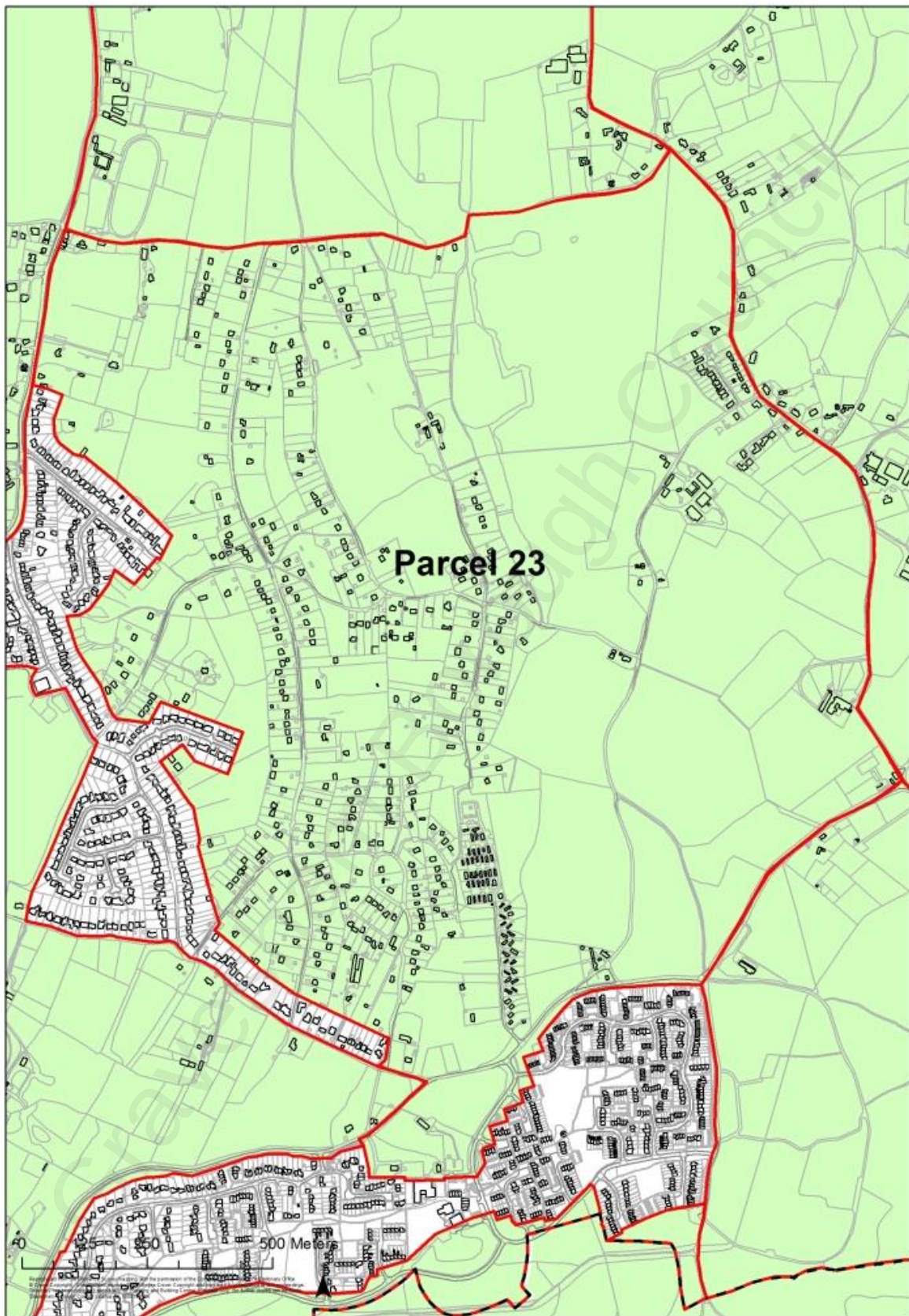
Significant Contribution

Summary

This parcel significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are no opportunities for development in the parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt nor are there any obvious opportunities for strengthening the Green Belt boundaries.

Parcel 23 Culverstone Valley



Description

The parcel is situated between Heron Hill Lane to the north and the edge of built development to Vigo and Harvel Road to the south. The western boundary is formed by Wrotham Road and the edge of built development to Culverstone Green. The eastern boundary is delineated by David Street, Harvel Street and White Horse Lane. In the south, the parcel is bisected by Harvel Road. Various unmade tracks run north-south through the area.

The western part of the parcel is largely wooded and much of it comprises the Culverstone Valley Area. This is an area of plots and there has been residential redevelopment of a large number of these. To the south east of this area are the park homes at Southfield Shaw. The eastern part of the parcel comprises arable and grazing land. There is some residential development concentrated at the settlement of Harvel which is located in the north eastern part of the area.

The Culverstone Valley Area comprises a wooded valley. The landform rises further west towards Culverstone Green and Wrotham Road. It also rises to the east where Harvel sits on a plateau. The eastern part of the parcel comprises more open farmland.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The western part of the parcel is located between Meopham Green and Culverstone Green and the southern part of the parcel is located between Culverstone Green and Vigo, all of which are settlements inset from the Green Belt. The gap between Culverstone Green and Vigo is narrow. It mainly comprises woodland and a recreation ground though there are some dwellings. The gap between Meopham Green and Vigo is wider. There is some development in the gap along Wrotham Road though this is interspersed with open tracts of land. It is considered that the parcel plays a role in maintaining the separation between settlements and preventing them from merging, particularly in the case of Culverstone Green and Vigo.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

Part of the western boundary is strong as it follows a main road (A227). The northern and eastern boundaries are distinct but weaker as they are delineated by rural lanes. The parts of the western and southern boundaries along Culverstone Green and Vigo are relatively weak as they follow residential curtilages.

Whilst the parcel comprises woodland as well as arable and grazing land, it also contains a significant amount of development. This is due to the development of plots in Culverstone Valley Area, the presence of Southfield Shaw and, to a lesser extent, the built development at Harvel village. Whilst it appears that the development at Harvel and Southfield Shaw predates the Green Belt designation, there has been a significant amount of development in the Culverstone Valley Area which postdates the designation. This relates to the number and size of dwellings together with associated outbuildings, walls, driveways and other residential paraphernalia.

The eastern part of the parcel has a more open aspect than the more contained wooded valley further west. The result is that the recent development in Culverstone Valley Area is largely out of sight from surrounding areas. Whilst the parcel has not safeguarded the countryside from encroachment in respect of this development, the fact that this development is set within a wooded valley means that the parcel still contributes towards this purpose.

Contribution

Summary

The parcel contributes towards preventing the merging of settlements, in particular Culverstone Green and Vigo. It also contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment though this has been somewhat undermined by the amount of development which has taken place in Culverstone Valley Area.

As a result of the level of development which has already taken place in Culverstone Valley Area, there are further opportunities for infilling in this location without creating significant further encroachment if this is done in such a way that wooded character of the area is retained. There are no opportunities for strengthening the strategic Green Belt boundaries. More locally, a stronger boundary could be formed to the north of Vigo by using Erskine Road and Harvel Road instead of residential curtilages.

Description

The roughly triangular shaped parcel has a western boundary along the A227 Gravesend Road/Wrotham Road which also forms the Borough's administrative boundary with Sevenoaks District and Tonbridge and Malling Borough. Its north eastern boundary is the edge of built development to Culverstone Green and includes parts of Mountfield Close, Newlands Lane and Whitepost Lane. The south eastern boundary comprises Harvel Road and the edge of built development to Vigo. Both Culverstone Green and Vigo are settlements inset from the Green Belt.

The northern part of the parcel comprises Culverstone Recreation Ground. There are some clumps of woodland, particularly along the Harvel Road boundary of the site, including Twelve Acre Wood and Fowler's Stone Wood. Much of the area is used for horse grazing. There is a row of residential buildings along Gravesend Road in the south western corner of the area. There are also a number of farms, smallholdings and other dwellings scattered throughout this parcel. Whilst not within the area, the Wrotham transmitting station is a tall and substantial mast which is visually prominent.

The parcel is relatively flat. It has an open aspect along much of the A227 Gravesend Road/Wrotham Road and Newlands Lane. Tree belts screen Culverstone Recreation Ground and many of the dwellings along the Gravesend Road frontage. They also screen views of much of the parcel from Harvel Road.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The parcel lies between Culverstone Green and Vigo which are settlements inset from the Green Belt. Further west, within Tonbridge and Malling Borough, lies the village of Fairseat which is also located outside the designated Green Belt. The gap between parts of Culverstone Green and Vigo is narrow. It mainly comprises horse grazed land and woodland though there are some scattered buildings. There is more development between Vigo and Fairseat, particularly along Gravesend Road and around the transmitting station. As a result, it is considered that this parcel has a significant role in maintaining the separation between settlements and preventing them from merging, particularly in respect of Culverstone Green and Vigo.

Significant Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The western boundary is strong as it follows the main A227 road. Parts of the northern and eastern boundaries are distinct but weaker as they follow Newlands Lane, Whitepost Lane and Harvel Road which are rural lanes. Around Vigo and parts of Culverstone Green, the boundaries mainly follow residential curtilages which makes them weak.

The parcel mainly comprises grazing, recreation and woodland uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt. There are some buildings, particularly in the south western corner of the parcel, but also scattered in other locations. The amount of development is relatively minimal and has been in situ for some time.

Whilst mainly having a flat topography and containing open uses, the area is largely contained by tree and hedge belts which run along the rural roads and lanes. It should be noted that Harvel Road runs through the parcel immediately north of Vigo but this also has belts of trees running either side of it with some glimpses into the open areas of the parcel to the north. The character and topography mean that this parcel significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

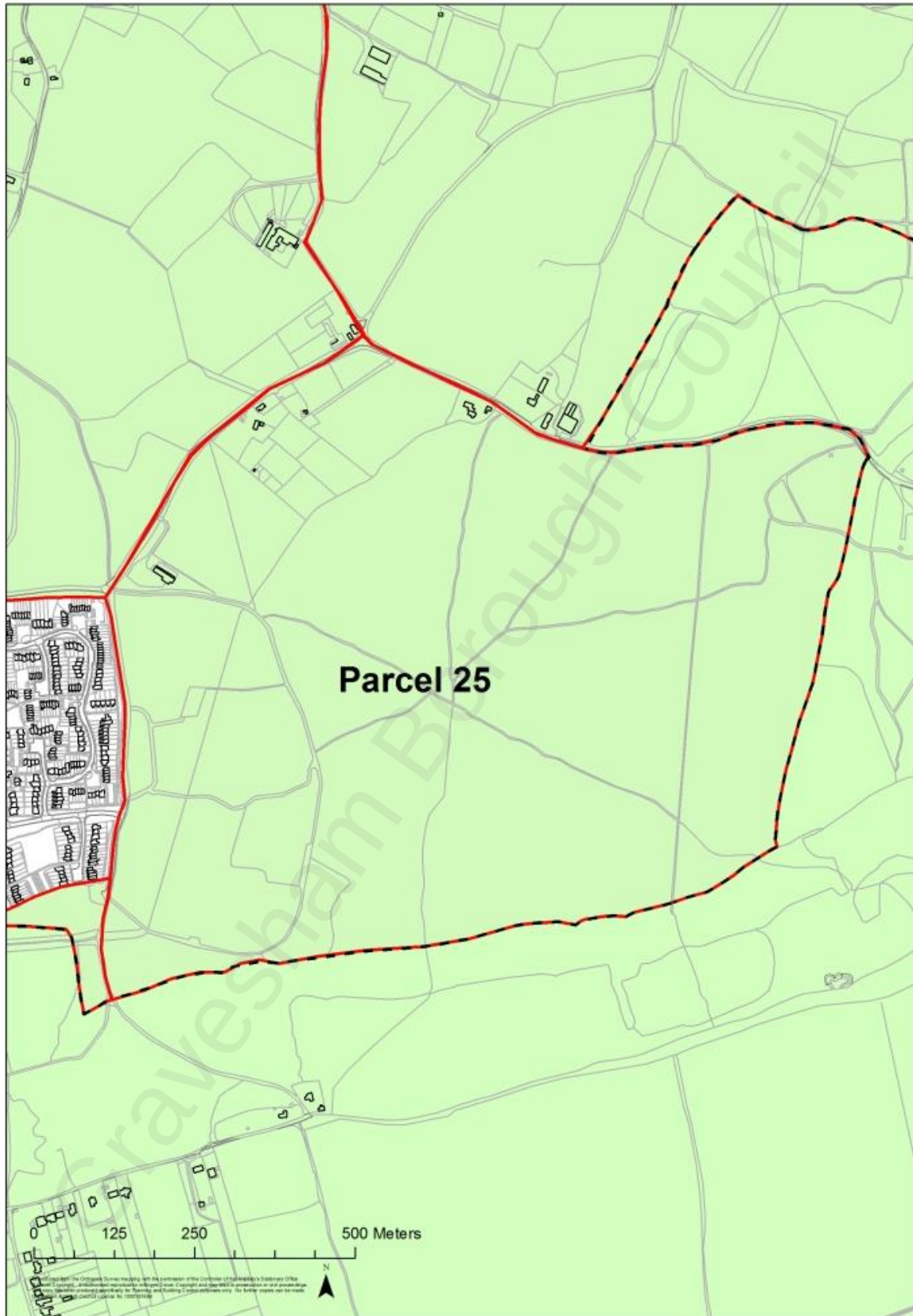
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing settlements from merging, in particular Culverstone Green and Vigo, and in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are no opportunities for development in this parcel, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are also no opportunities for strengthening the strategic Green Belt boundaries. More locally, a stronger boundary could be formed by using Harvel Road as the boundary to Vigo.

Parcel 25 East of Vigo



Description

The northern boundary of the parcel is delineated by Harvel Road and White Horse Road. The southern and eastern boundaries are formed by the administrative boundary with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. The western boundary comprises Commonory Road which is the edge of built development at Vigo (a settlement inset from the Green Belt) and also by a track which continues to the south of the road.

The area mainly comprises woodland. There is a small amount of open land along Harvel Road which consists of Vigo Rugby Club's floodlit sports ground and land used for horse grazing. There is little built development within the parcel except the rugby club's clubhouse, Swanswood Farm and a few other dwellings located along the boundaries.

The parcel is relatively flat and sits at the top of the North Downs escarpment. As the area is primarily woodland, it is fairly enclosed. There is a tree belt along part of Harvel Road which screens the rugby club's grounds. The only part of the parcel which has an open aspect is around the junction of Harvel Road and White Horse Road.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

Whilst the parcel abuts Vigo, it does not adjoin any other settlement inset from the Green Belt. Therefore, it does not contribute towards preventing the merging of rural settlements.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern and part of the western boundaries are formed by rural lanes which are distinct but weak boundaries. The remaining boundaries do not follow any identifiable features on the ground which makes them very weak.

The parcel mainly comprises woodland, though there is also the recreation use associated with the rugby club and some grazed land in the northern part of the area. These are uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt. There is only a small amount of sporadic built development along Harvel Road and White Horse Road.

The parcel is located at the top of the North Downs escarpment and is very enclosed due to the amount of woodland. Only the northernmost part of the site is open and visible from the rural lanes along the northern boundary.

There has been little encroachment of development into this area and it largely comprises uses which are appropriate in the Green Belt. On this basis, it is considered that the parcel plays a significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and maintaining the openness of the Green Belt.

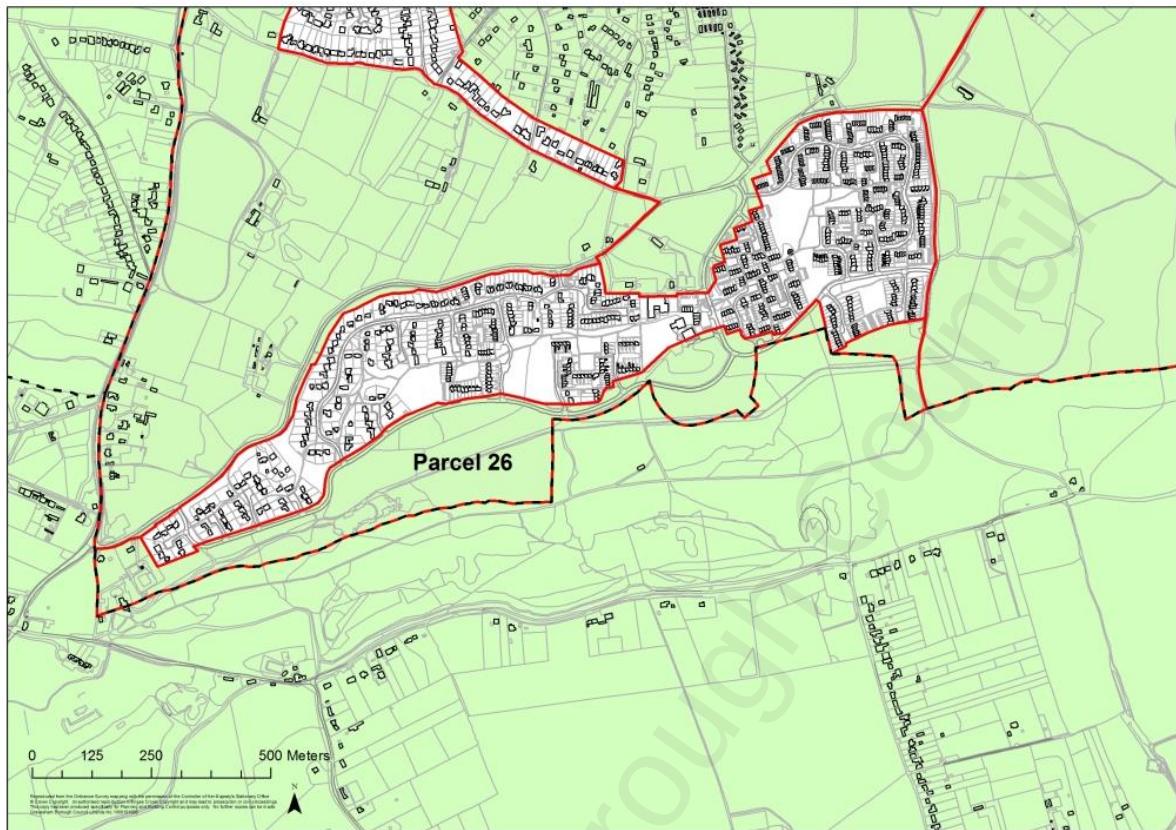
Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are no opportunities for development in the area, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, nor are there any opportunities for providing stronger Green Belt boundaries.

Parcel 26 South of Vigo



Description

The northern boundary of the parcel is delineated by Vigo Road, Waterlow Road and the edge of built development to Vigo, a settlement inset from the Green Belt. The western and southern boundaries are formed by the administrative boundary with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. The eastern boundary consists of Commority Road and a track which continues to the south of it.

The area is primarily wooded. Most of it is within Trosley Country Park. The only built development is in the westernmost part of the parcel which contains the country park's visitor centre and car park and a couple of dwellings.

The area is relatively flat and is located at the top of the North Downs escarpment.

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

The area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging

The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood. Therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.

Minimal/No Contribution

Purpose 2a – to prevent other settlements in the Green Belt from merging

The western part of the parcel is located between Vigo (a settlement inset from the Green Belt in Gravesham) and Trottiscliffe (a rural settlement excluded from the Green Belt in Tonbridge and Malling). There is residential development between them along Taylors Lane and Pilgrims Way but this lies outside Gravesham Borough. It is considered that the parcel plays a role in ensuring that the separation between the two settlements is maintained and that they do not merge with each other.

Contribution

Purpose 3 – to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

The northern boundary largely follows the curtilages of residential properties and the edges of open spaces, whilst the eastern boundary follows a track so these are relatively weak. The remaining boundaries do not follow any identifiable features on the ground which makes them very weak.

The parcel mainly comprises recreational land associated with the country park which is an appropriate use in the Green Belt. There has been some minor development associated with the country park since the Green Belt was designated, including the visitor centre. This is acceptable under national planning policy. There is minimal other development and that which does exist is longstanding and predates the Green Belt designation.

Although the parcel is located at the top of the North Downs escarpment, it is very enclosed due to the amount of woodland present.

On the basis of the above characteristics, it is considered that the parcel plays a significant role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and maintaining the openness of the Green Belt.

Significant Contribution

Summary

The parcel significantly contributes towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It also plays a role in preventing settlements from merging.

There are no opportunities for development in the area, with the exception of that allowed under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. There are no obvious opportunities for a stronger strategic boundary but Waterlow Road could provide stronger boundaries around Vigo.