



North East Derbyshire Local Plan

For Consultation:

Green Belt Review

Methodology

August 2012

Foreword

Green Belt Review Methodology Consultation

North East Derbyshire District Council is currently preparing a 'Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies' for the District. This is a strategic level document which will provide the spatial vision and strategy that will shape the future of North East Derbyshire. Part 2 of the Local Plan will be prepared in due course and will consist of site allocations and detailed development management policies. Both parts must be based on robust evidence.

Consultation is currently taking place on a number of key issues regarding the emerging Local Plan, including the vision and objectives, local strategy approach and a local housing target.

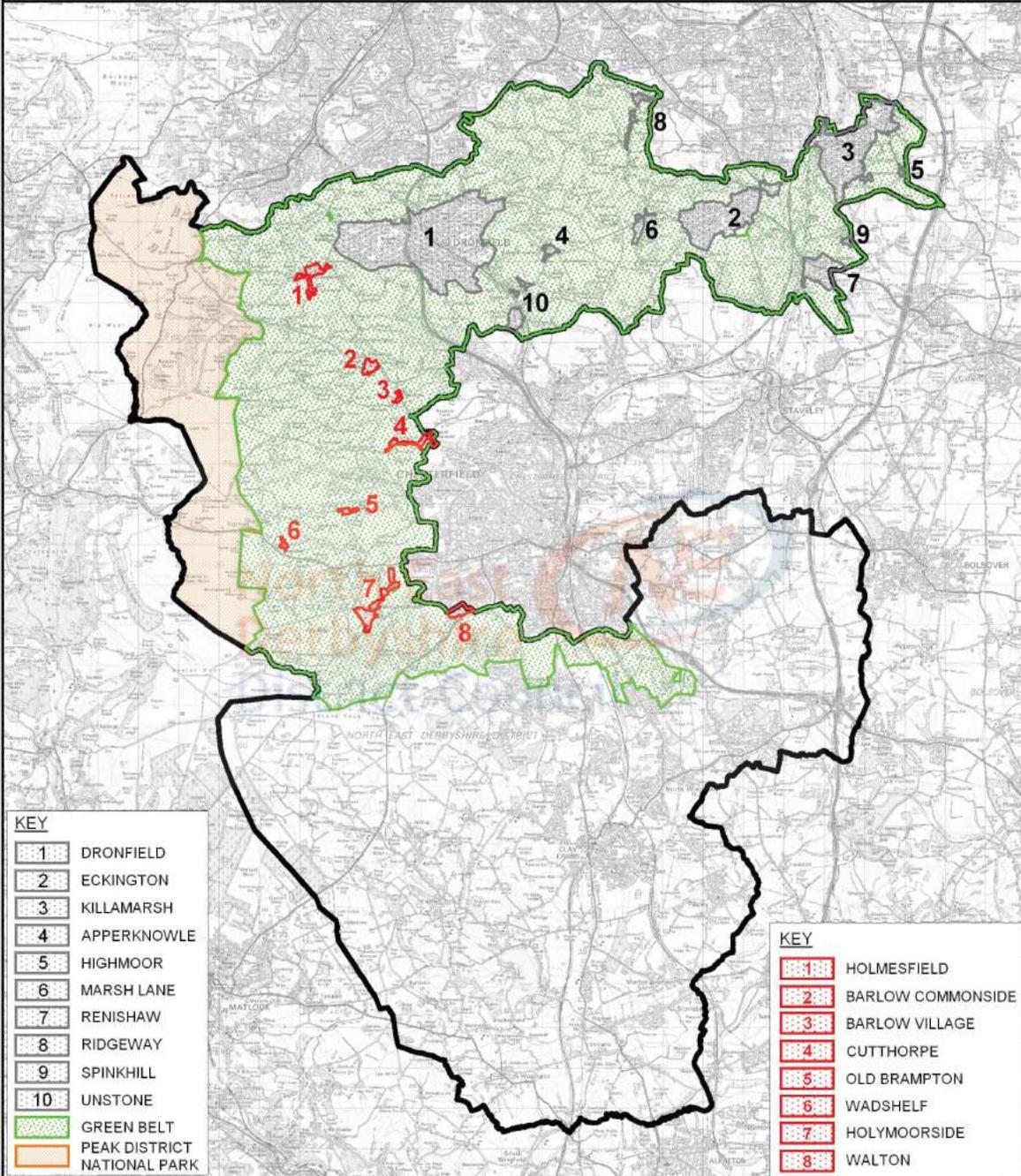
As part of the ongoing work for the evidence base of the emerging Local Plan, the Council intends to undertake a targeted review of the Green Belt, focused upon areas surrounding the settlements in the north and west of the district. The sole purpose is to identify suitable land that is capable of providing affordable needs housing in line with the emerging strategy and policies in the Local Plan.

The Council has drafted a Green Belt Review Methodology for consultation. You are invited to comment on the methodology. Please use the standard representation form to provide your comments. The consultation runs from **2nd August to 13th September 2012**.

Please note that this consultation is focused on the methodology only. The Review itself will take place once the methodology has been finalised and then will be undertaken in stages. No targets have been set for the number of homes that will be provided for and no sites have been selected. These issues will be subject to further consultation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the methodology for a Green Belt Review for the settlements in the northern and western sub-areas of the district. The Green Belt Review will form part of the ongoing work for the evidence base of the Council's emerging Local Plan. The nature and purpose of Green Belts, the need for a Green Belt Review and the proposed methodology are set out below.
- 1.2 A Green Belt is an area of land which is kept permanently open to prevent urban sprawl. The most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness and permanence. Green Belts can shape patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scale, and help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans. They help to protect the countryside, be it in agricultural, forestry or other use. They can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development. Section 2 below explains the purpose of Green Belts in more detail.
- 1.3 The idea of maintaining a belt of open land around towns goes back to 1935 when the Greater London Regional Planning Committee proposed 'to provide a reserve supply of public open spaces and of recreational areas and to establish a green belt or girdle of open space'. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act allowed local authorities around the country to incorporate green belt proposals in their first development plans. Circular 42/55 invited local planning authorities to consider the establishment of Green Belts.
- 1.4 The North East Derbyshire Green Belt (10,380 ha) covers a substantial part of the District (37.7%), located between Sheffield and Chesterfield in the north, Chesterfield and Wingerworth in the south and also the land to the west of Chesterfield to the Peak Park boundary. It surrounds the towns of Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh, and a number of smaller settlements which are inset into the Green Belt by Settlement Development Limits. A range of small villages and hamlets are 'washed over' by the Green Belt. Map 1 shows the area of the district covered by the Green Belt.
- 1.5 First drawn up in 1955, the North East Derbyshire Green Belt was adopted in 1986 and carried forward in the North East Derbyshire Local Plans of 1999 and 2005. In 2002, the Council carried out a Green Belt Review, which informed the 2005 Local Plan.
- 1.6 It is now considered necessary to undertake a targeted review of the Green Belt as part of the ongoing work on the evidence base of the Council's emerging Local Plan. This Review is focused upon the Green Belt surrounding the settlements in the north and west of the district, with the sole purpose of identifying suitable land that is capable of providing affordable needs housing in line with the emerging strategy and policies in the Local Plan. Section 3 below explains the need for a Green Belt Review of the northern and western settlements in more detail.



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MAP 1 : EXTENT OF GREEN BELT

2. Purpose of Green Belts

- 2.1 Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012, states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The five purposes of the Green Belt are:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.2 Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged or derelict land.
- 2.3 Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.
- 2.4 As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate, with the exception of the following:
- buildings for agriculture and forestry,
 - appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, recreation and cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt,
 - extensions and alterations to buildings provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building,
 - the replacement of buildings, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces,
 - limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs,
 - limited infilling or redevelopment of previously developed sites, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
- 2.5 Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt, such as mineral extraction, engineering operations, local transport infrastructure, re-use of buildings and development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order. In the case of renewable energy projects, the developer will need to demonstrate very special circumstances such as wider environmental benefits.

3. Need for a Green Belt Review

- 3.1 In January 2011, the Council's Cabinet resolved to pursue a local strategy based upon local circumstances and the principles of protecting the Green Belt in the North of the District and providing for development in the South to meet the local needs arising in the South. Cabinet agreed to consider new evidence as it emerges and decide whether there is a need to undertake a review of the Green Belt to meet the essential needs arising in the North of the District, that cannot be met within existing settlement boundaries.

North of the District

- 3.2 The Housing Needs, Market & Affordability Study 2012 considered the detailed housing needs of North East Derbyshire District. The study found that the North of the District has a net annual need for 244 affordable dwellings. This is almost half of the District's affordable housing need.
- 3.3 Further work was undertaken to identifying detailed capacity of the Northern settlements. The Northern Settlements Housing Capacity Study 2012 has found that the area has a capacity of only 50 dwellings per year on non - Green Belt land.
- 3.4 It is considered that the high level of local need for affordable homes and the limited supply of non-Green Belt land is sufficient to justify a Review of the Green Belt in the North of the District to identify suitable land.

West of the District

- 3.5 In respect of the West of the District, a minimal housing target of 30 dwellings per annum is proposed, which is roughly equivalent to the net annual need for affordable housing for this area, as identified in the Housing Needs, Market & Affordability Study 2012. This means that affordable housing needs could only be met in this area if the entire strategic requirement for the West of the District was built for affordable units, which is clearly unrealistic.
- 3.6 A Housing Capacity Study of the Rural West has been undertaken which reveals limited capacity for approximately 100 dwellings in the 14 larger villages of the sub area. 8 of the 14 villages lie within the Green Belt, with a combined capacity for 25 dwellings, which severely limits the opportunity to provide for the local affordable housing needs. For this reason it is considered appropriate to carry out a Review of the Green Belt in the West of the District to identify suitable land to provide for localised affordable housing needs.
- 3.7 It is important to note that there is no expectation that the full net need for affordable housing in either sub-area will be met through the planning system, or by the release of Green Belt land. The scale of the release of land from the Green Belt should be restricted and balanced against the need to provide local affordable housing to meet local needs and the need to protect the integrity of the wider Green Belt.

4. Methodology

4.1 It is proposed that a simple methodology should be adopted for the Green Belt Review, which is undertaken in stages. To inform the Local Plan (Part 1): Strategic Policies, a strategic review should be carried out first. The assessment of specific sites would take place through the Local Plan (Part 2): Allocations Document, when Stage 2 of the methodology would apply.

Stage 1: Strategic Green Belt Review

4.2 This stage will inform the Local Plan (Part 1): Strategic Policies and will focus upon strategic areas of land. This will involve assessing the function of general areas of Green Belt land around existing settlements in the north of the district against the five Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF. At this stage the review will not look at specific sites, rather it will rate the strategic performance of general areas of Green Belt against the Green Belt purposes.

4.3 Appendix 1 to the methodology includes maps showing the general areas of Green Belt, which are subject to the Stage 1 Review. These are by and large to the North, South, East and West of the larger settlements. For the smaller settlements the general areas can encompass the entire surrounding area, as it is important to keep the assessment at a strategic level,

4.4 Figure 1 sets out the proposed scoring mechanism. It is considered that this will enable an objective assessment to identify those areas of Green Belt that are least sensitive to change and where development would be least damaging in principle (ie a lower performance score).

Stage 1 Strategic Green Belt Review: Scoring Mechanism	
Green Belt Purpose	Performance Scoring (0-5)
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	A high score for areas of Green Belt that stop the coalescence of large build up areas on the edge of the district. A low score for areas that have a wide expanse.
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	A high score for areas of Green Belt that are very narrow. A low score for areas that have a wide expanse.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	A high score for areas of Green Belt that border an existing settlement on one side. A low score for areas that border the settlement on three sides (eg horse shoe shape)
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	A high score for areas of Green Belt land that have a clear link with the settlement's historic core. A low score for settlements without a clear historic core, or where the historic core has been subsumed by 20th Century development.
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Due to the strategic nature of the Green Belt, this purpose performs highly in all areas and should score 5 in all areas.
TOTAL SCORE	5 - 25

Figure 1: Stage 1 Strategic Green Belt Review: Scoring Mechanism

4.5 It is not clear at this stage whether the Local Plan (part 1): Strategic Policies will identify general areas for further consideration/protection. This will ultimately depend upon the findings of the Stage 1 Review.

Stage 2: Detailed Site Identification and Assessment

4.6 This stage will inform the Local Plan (part 2): Allocations Document and will focus on the general areas of Green Belt identified for further consideration through Stage 1. A sequential approach will be taken to finding sufficient land for development, starting with those general areas that score lowest.

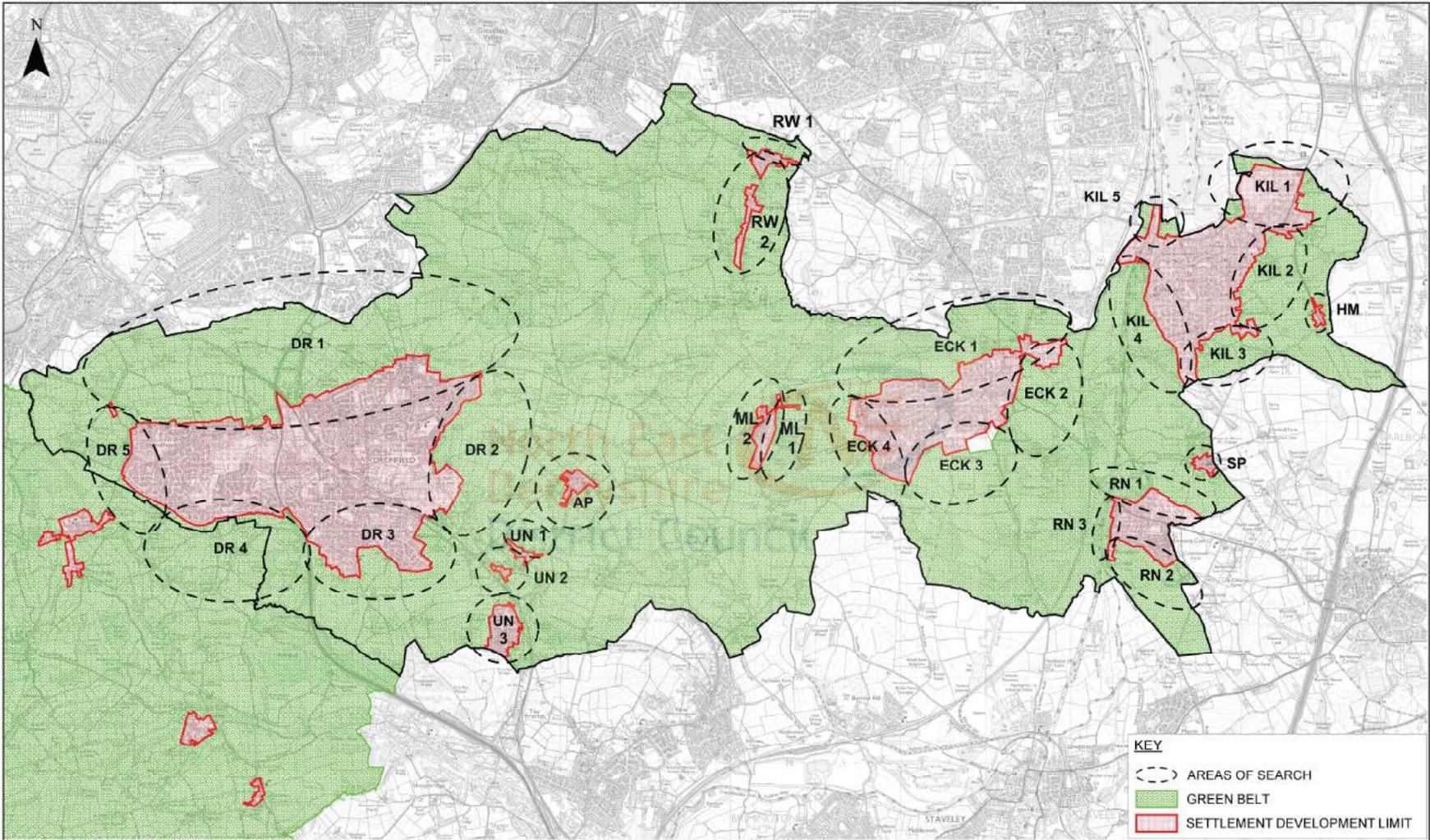
4.7 Sites that have been put forward through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) will form the starting point of the site identification process. If necessary, a further call for sites will be carried out as well as in-house site identification work.

4.8 The boundaries of the sites will be given careful consideration to ensure that they provide robust and defensible boundaries over time. This is particularly important as weak boundaries can be vulnerable to urban encroachment. Any new Green Belt boundaries should be strong and durable. The following criteria will be used to determine the site boundaries:

- Roads
- Railway lines
- Rivers or streams
- Hedgerows or walls
- Prominent physical features such as ridgelines
- Relative position of existing built up area

4.9 Once the specific sites are identified, they can be assessed using the same criteria as the SHLAA: suitability, availability and achievability. Appendix 2 includes the site assessment table that will be used.

Appendix 1: Stage 1 General Area Maps



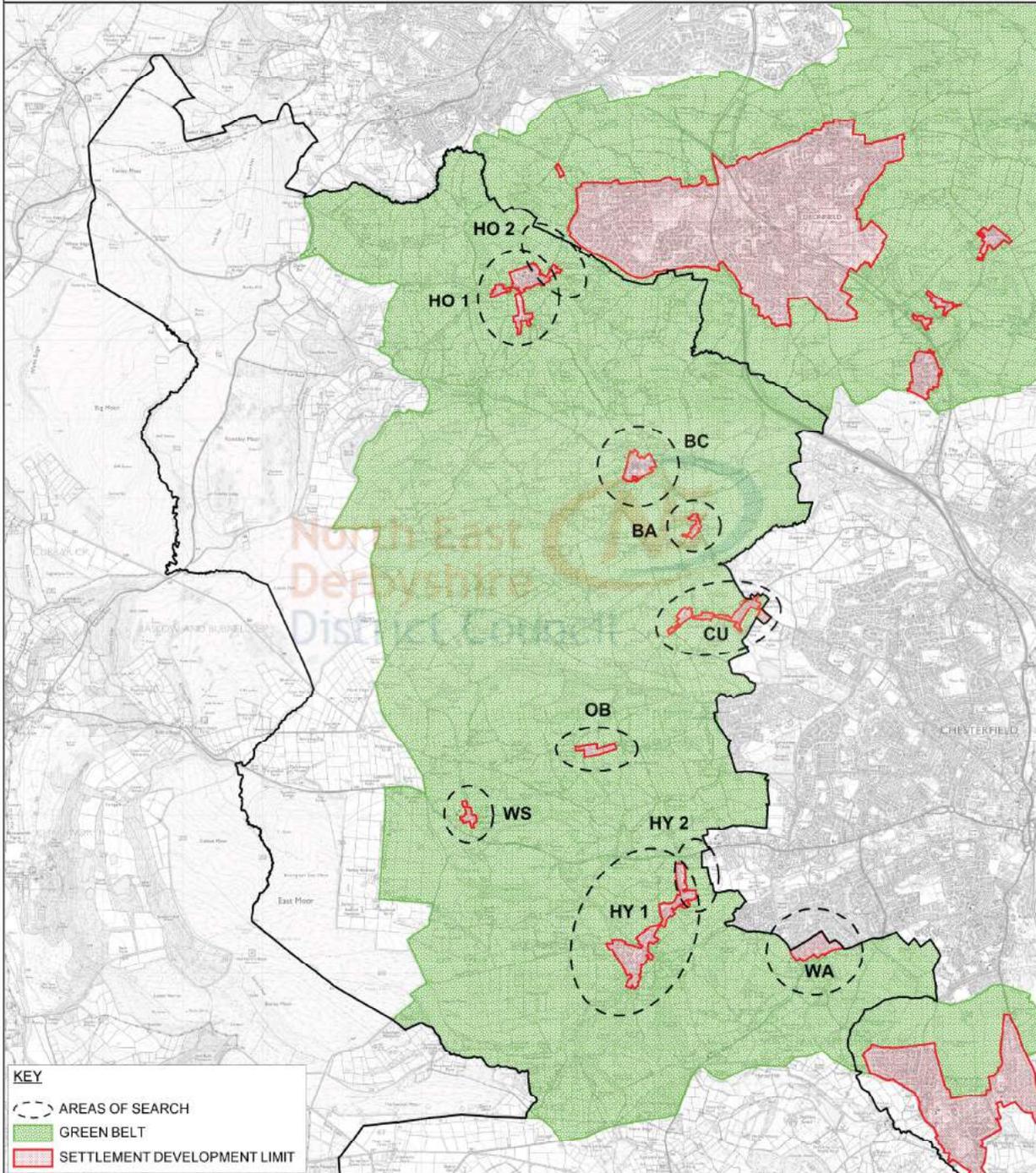
**GREEN BELT REVIEW METHODOLOGY
AUGUST 2012
NORTH**

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GREEN BELT REVIEW METHODOLOGY
AUGUST 2012
RURAL WEST

Appendix 2: Site assessment table

North East Derbyshire District Council – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment				
Site details	Site reference			
	Parish			
	Ward			
	Site Address			
	Owner			
			Tick	Comments
	Location	In settlement		
		Edge of settlement		
		Outside settlement		
	Grid Reference			
	Site Area (ha)			
	Area which is brownfield			
	Housing Yield			
	Current use(s)			
	Previous use (s)			
	Surrounding land use (s)			
	Planning History			
	Nearby nature or historic conservation designations	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)		
		Local Wildlife Sites		
		Ancient Woodlands		
Local Nature Reserves				
Scheduled Ancient Monuments				
Registered Historic Parks and Gardens; Historic Battlefields				
Listed Building				
Conservation Area				
Protected Trees				
Site plan				

Suitability of the site			Tick	Comments
Constraints	Physical Problems or Limitations	Access		
		Infrastructure		
		Ground conditions		
		Steep slopes		
		Flood risk		
		Hazardous Risks		
		Location of pylons		
		Pollution / contamination		
		Other constraints?		
	Policy restrictions	Existing Local Plan policy restriction		
	Potential impacts	Protected Species		
		Landscape		
		Agricultural land quality		
		Open space and recreation		
Neighbouring uses				
Accessibility		Within 30 minutes public transport time	Within 10 minutes walking time	
	GP Surgery			
	Pharmacy			
	Primary School			
	Secondary School			
	Post Office			
	Supermarket / convenience st.			
	Tick	Reasoned justification		
This site is not suitable				
The site may be suitable				
The site is suitable				
Availability of the site				
Planning Permission	Application Number			

	Outline/Full			
	No. of dwellings			
	Dw. complete			
	Dw. under construction			
	Dw. remaining			
		Tick	Comments	
Legal/ Ownership Constraints		Single ownership		
		Multiple ownership		
		Ransom Strip (s)		
		Tenancies		
	If constraints identified	Can they be overcome?		
Commercial interest	Current status	Known developer interest?		
		Site for sale?		
		Proposed use?		
	Tick	Reasoned justification		
This site is not available				
The site may be available				
The site is available				
Achievability of the site				
Is there a reasonable prospect the site will be developed at a particular point in time?				
	Tick	Reasoned Justification		
This site is not achievable				
This site may be achievable				
This site is achievable				
Conclusion				
The site is deliverable				

The site is developable, subject to overcoming minor issues		
The site is not developable		

Timeframe for delivery		
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When will the site be delivered?	2012/13	
	2013/14	
	2014/15	
	2015/16	
	2016/17	
	2017/18	
	2018 – 2023	
	2023 – 2028	