

Clifton Hampden & Burcot Green Belt Assessment

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Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
Kathryn Whitmore Associate	Simon Dowse, Technical Director	Simon Dowse, Technical Director	Stephanie Brewer Associate

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Prepared for:

Clifton Hampden and Burcot Parish Council

Prepared by:

Kathryn Whitmore
Associate

AECOM Limited
Aldgate Tower
2 Lemn Street
London E1 8FA
United Kingdom
aecom.com

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Clifton Hampden and Burcot Neighbourhood Area is located within the Oxford Green Belt, which covers the area between Oxford and the River Thames on the southern edge of the Neighbourhood Area. Figure 1 shows the extent of the Green Belt and its relationship to Neighbourhood Area. During the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, consultation has identified a wish for some limited development within the Neighbourhood Area. There is no location currently available within the Neighbourhood Area which is outside the designated Green Belt. Therefore, any development would be within Green Belt.
- 1.2 This report explores the potential for small-scale development within the Neighbourhood Area and reviews potential development plots against Green Belt policy.

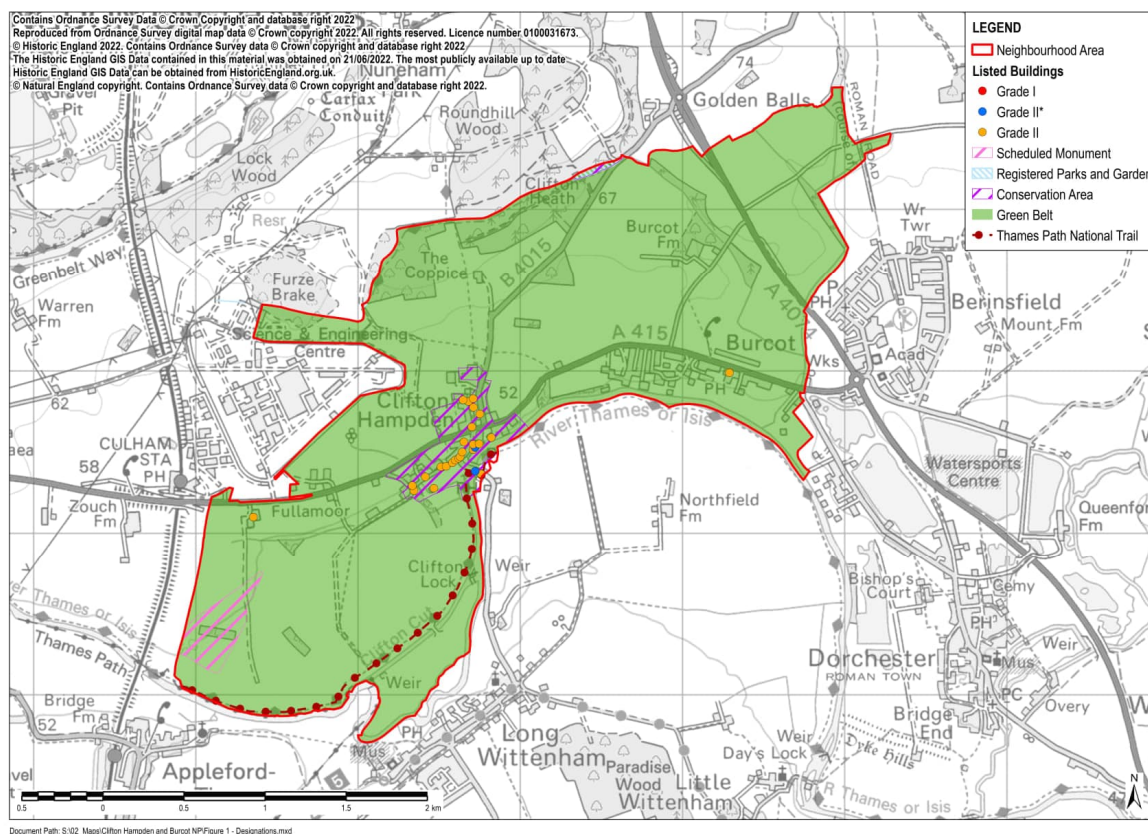


Figure 1 Designations

2. Policy Framework

- 2.1 Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref 1), paragraph 137, states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence, and identifies the five purposes of the Green Belt in NPPF paragraph 138:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

- c) *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
 - d) *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
 - e) *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*
- 2.2 NPPF paragraph 140 states that once Green Belt boundaries have been established, they *“should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.”* Any changes should have *“regard to their intended permanence in the long term.”* Amendments may be made through *“non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.”*
- 2.3 NPPF paragraph 147 onwards considers proposals affecting Green Belt and sets out that *“inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”*
- 2.4 NPPF paragraph 148 requires that local planning authorities *“should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*
- 2.5 NPPF Paragraph 149 requires that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include:
- b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
 - e) *limited infilling in villages;*
 - f) *limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
 - g) *limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
 - *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*
- 2.6 NPPF paragraph 150 states certain forms of development are not considered to be *“inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.* These include:
- e) *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
 - f) *development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.*
- 2.7 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Ref 2) on the Green Belt sets out the factors which can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt. It states :

“openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume.”

2.8 The PPG also states that assessment on impacts to openness need to consider:

“the duration of the development, and its remediability, taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and

the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.”

2.9 Whilst aimed at land to be released from the Green Belt, the PPG sets out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset by compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land. Opportunities identified include new or enhanced green infrastructure, improvements to biodiversity and new or enhanced walking and cycle routes.

2.10 At the local level, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2035 (Ref 3) includes Policy STRAT6 Green Belt. It conforms with the NPPF and protects the Green Belt from harmful development. Development is restricted as stated in the NPPF unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. It does however identify where the Green Belt boundary has been altered to accommodate strategic allocations. In these locations *“development should deliver compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land, with measures supported by evidence of landscape, biodiversity or recreational needs and opportunities.”*

2.11 SOLP Policy STRAT6 Green Belt also states, *“where land has been removed from the Green Belt, new development should be carefully designed to minimise visual impact.”*

3. Development in Clifton Hampden and Burcot

Context

3.1 Burcot and Clifton Hampden is a civil parish in South Oxfordshire. The Neighbourhood Area coincides with the parish boundary and includes the village of Clifton Hampden to the west, and the hamlet of Burcot 1.5km to the east. With a perimeter of approximately 17km, the Neighbourhood Area borders the parishes of Berinsfield and Dorchester to the east, Wittenham and Appleford-on-Thames to the south, Nuneham Courtenay, and Marsh Baldon to the north, and Culham to the west. With an area of approximately 8km², the Neighbourhood Area is located approximately 6.5km southeast of Abingdon, 6km north northeast of Didcot, and 11km south of Oxford.

3.2 Clifton Hampden and Burcot Neighbourhood Area sits within the wide, shallow river valley of the River Thames. Both Clifton Hampden and Burcot are adjacent to the northern bank of the river at an elevation of 46m AOD that rises to approximately 85m AOD to the north, Figure 2. The priority floodplain grazing marsh habitat to the south of the river manages the regular floodwaters leaving a small risk from surface water flooding within the settlements largely focused along Watery Lane.

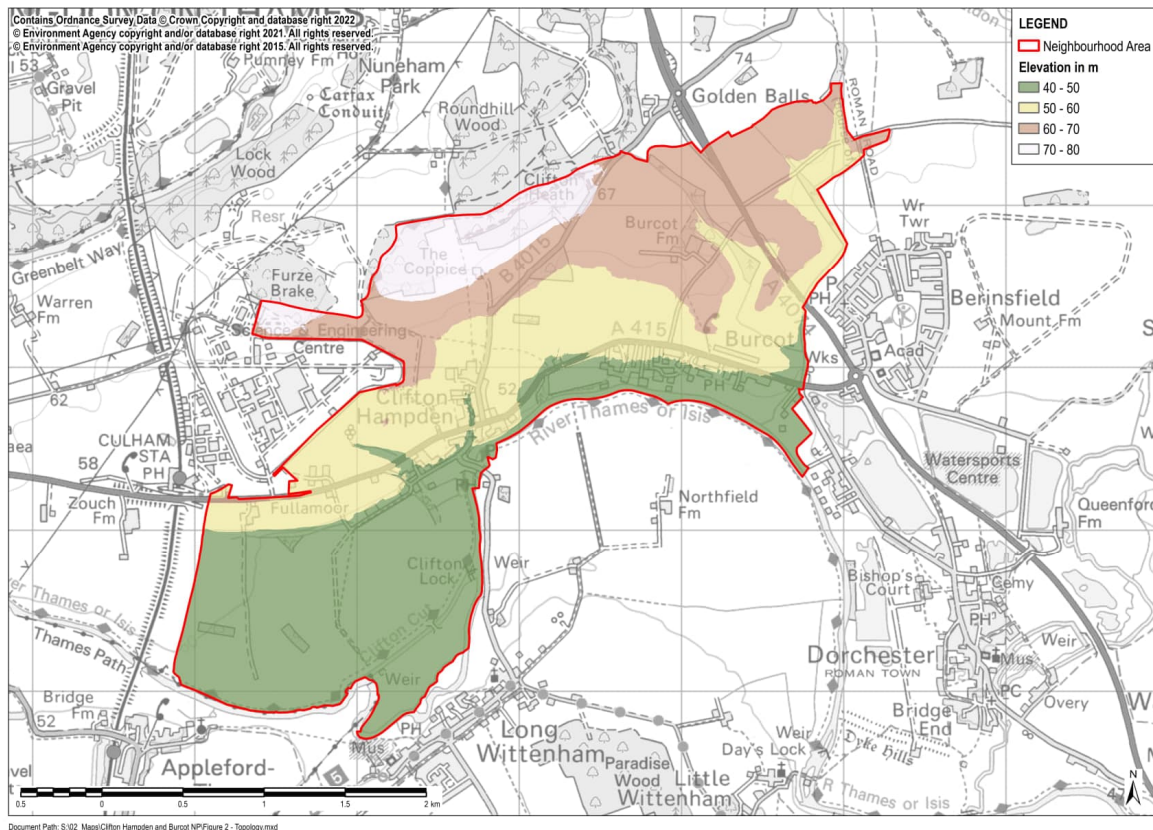


Figure 2 Topography

- 3.3 The majority of the Neighbourhood Area is set within the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (NCA) 108 (NE570) (Ref 4), displaying some of the typical characteristics of enclosed pastures within a wet valley and open arable fields to the south and to the north respectively. A small section in the north-east of the Neighbourhood Area is located within NCA 109 Midvale Ridge (NE417) (Ref 5) which is characterised as an agricultural landscape along a band of low-lying hills stretching east west, providing extensive views over the landscape of NCA 108.
- 3.4 Within the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6), most of the Neighbourhood Area sits in the Nuneham Courtenay Ridge Landscape Character Area (LCA) – LCA 2 and a section along the southern boundary including Burcot is located in the LCA 4 River Thames Corridor, Figure 3. LCA 2 is more typical of NCA 109 than NCA 108 in which it partially sits and reflects the finer level of detail of the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment. LCA 2 is described as an undulating agricultural landscape, sparsely settled with small villages, with land rising eastwards from the River Thames creating a dramatic ridge. In contrast, LCA 4 is more consistent with NCA 108 and is described as almost flat, comprised mostly of agricultural floodplain associated with the River Thames with settlements located in close proximity to the river.

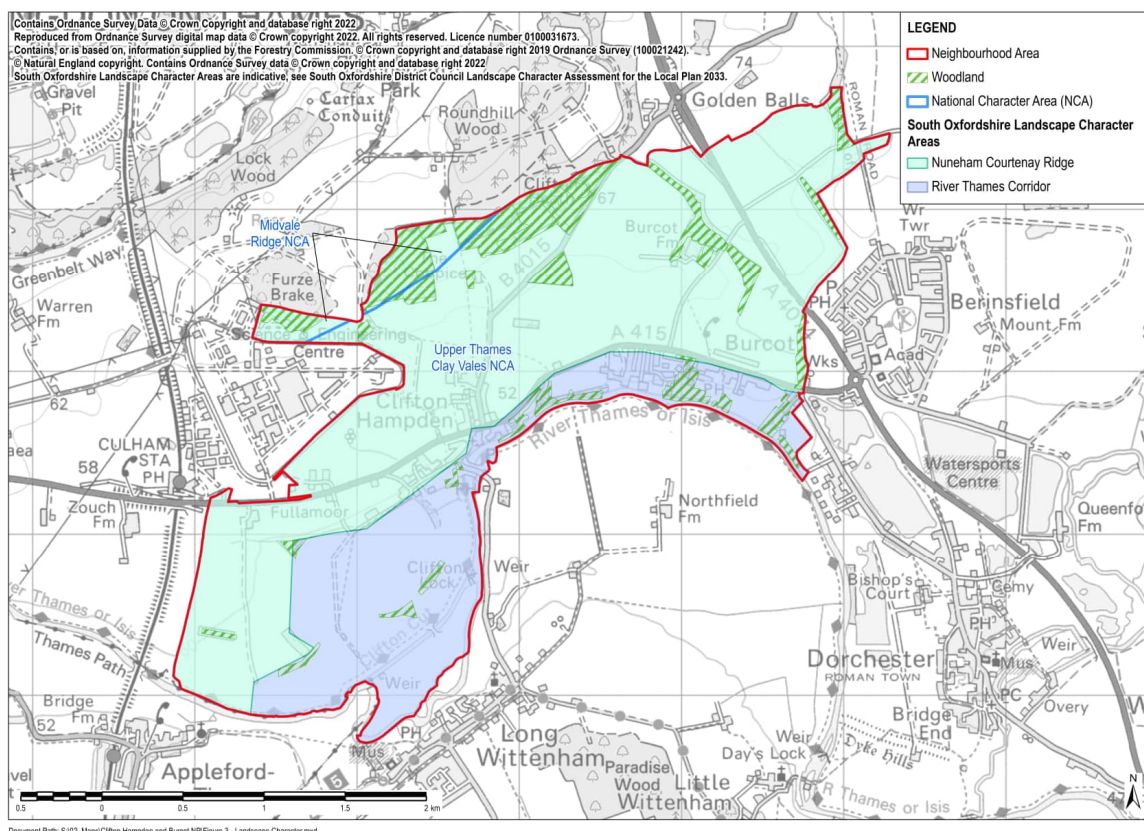


Figure 3 Landscape Character Areas

- 3.5 Clifton Hampden to the west is the larger of the two settlements with approximately 60% of the 230 properties compared to Burcot in the east. The nearest railway station is at Culham approximately 2km from the centre of Clifton Hampden. The number 45 bus connects the two settlements and affords onward connections from Abingdon and Berinsfield to Reading, Oxford and other larger towns within the South Oxfordshire area. The A415 Abingdon Road connects the two settlements to one another and onward to Abingdon to the west and Berinsfield to the east, where further connections using the A4074 to Oxford and Reading are realised. Traffic lights in the centre of Clifton Hampden control traffic along the A415 and the connecting roads, south towards the River Thames and north, the B4015 Oxford Road towards Oxford.
- 3.6 Policy TRANS3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Ref 3) makes provision for the development of the Clifton Hampden bypass. This would take traffic using the A415 from adjacent to Culham Science Centre in the west of the Neighbourhood Area, north of Clifton Hampden village to meet the B4015 Oxford Road, avoiding the controlled junction in the centre of the village. This is intended to alleviate traffic within Clifton Hampden and provide potential additional capacity required by the following policies: STRAT8 Employment growth at Culham Science Centre, STRAT9 Development of 3500 homes adjacent to Culham Science Centre and STRAT10 Development of 1700 homes at Berinsfield Garden Village to the east of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.7 Clifton Hampden is designated a conservation area, although there is no accompanying statement or appraisal detailing its special characteristics. 27 listed buildings and structures are located within the Neighbourhood Area, with the majority in Clifton Hampden, Figure 1.
- 3.8 The Neighbourhood Area is well connected for recreational users. A 1.5km trip along the local cycleway connects into the long-distance National Cycle Network Route 5 at Long Wittenham. There is access to the countryside via numerous Public Rights of

Way including the Thames Path National Trail which runs along the southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area.

- 3.9 The settlements support a thriving community with a range of village amenities including a Primary School and GP Surgery within Clifton Hampden. At the 2021 census the resident population was 662 as defined by the Office of National Statistics (Ref 7).

Development in Neighbourhood Area

- 3.10 The Neighbourhood Area falls within the remit of 'smaller villages' in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Ref 3), where there is no requirement to impose development. However, the District Council will support groups who wish to promote development in their Neighbourhood Development Plan where it can be shown to be commensurate in scale and character of the setting.
- 3.11 The Neighbourhood Area is within the 'Science Vale area' where South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) is promoting major new development at Didcot Garden Town, Culham Science Centre and Berinsfield Garden Village.
- 3.12 In 2014, an initial parish consultation survey to determine the need for, and type of, housing stock to be developed in the Neighbourhood Area received 266 respondents. The published data demonstrated a clear need for development within the Neighbourhood Area, with 86% of respondents expressing support for new housing. However, where respondents indicated housing type and volume, there was no significant preference for any of the surveyed combinations except it was felt there was very little requirement for large (5 or more bedrooms) houses to be built. The same survey revealed that residents placed a high priority on preserving existing amenities, including the GP Surgery.
- 3.13 Further in-person consultations took place in November 2018 with 50 households (one fifth of the Neighbourhood Area) being represented. An overwhelming (90%+) support was given in favour for the principle of additional housing. There was a stated preference for smaller affordable housing for local residents and keyworkers split across smaller sites rather than at one large development.
- 3.14 An initial parish consultation on a possible Neighbourhood Development Order conducted in late 2020/early 2021 revealed that the level of support for new housing remained unchanged at 86%, and 74% of residents supported the provision of a new building for the GP Surgery. Given the strong support for a new surgery building and additional housing in the Neighbourhood Area, the steering group of the Neighbourhood Plan determined to explore the potential for new development further and is considering a Neighbourhood Development Order to bring forward the required development.

4. Green Belt Assessment of Potential Development Sites

- 4.1 During a workshop in January 2019, members of the steering group and officers from SODC met to identify potential sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area that might support development on the scale required. The workshop identified nine sites based on their proximity to existing settlements and potential not to conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. Other than these nine sites, the workshop were unable to identify any additional sites with the potential for development, as sites distant from the existing settlements were considered to have greater potential at fulfilling the five

purposes of the wider Green Belt and preserving openness. This is a consequence of the existing agricultural landscape which is sparsely settled except in small villages. The locations of the potential development sites are shown on Figure 4.

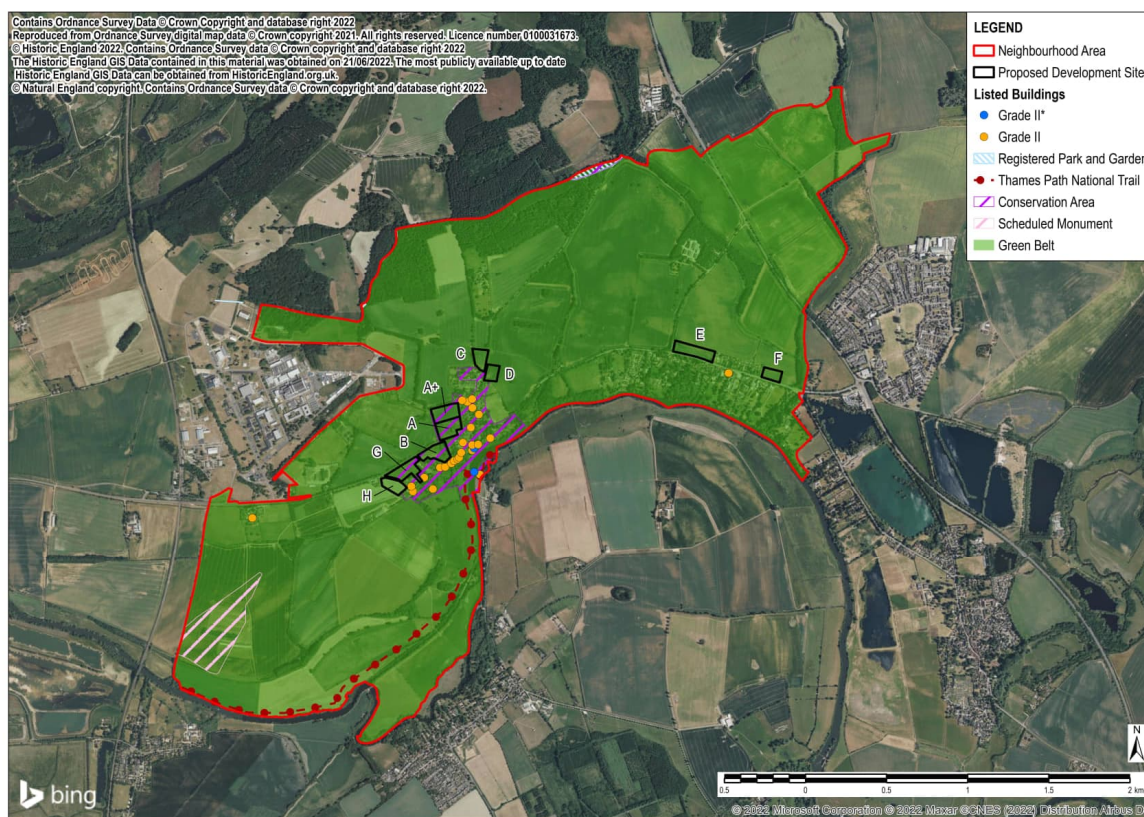


Figure 4 Potential Development Sites

- 4.2 Each potential development site is located within Green Belt. Therefore, each site should be assessed against the five purposes of the Green Belt as detailed in the NPPF.
- 4.3 Assessment of two of these purposes would however be the same for each of the sites. All the potential development sites are in close proximity to each other, and none are considered “to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas” which for this assessment are Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot. The Neighbourhood Area is over 6km from the built up area of these towns and consequently none of the sites contributes to this NPPF purpose in landscape and visual terms.
- 4.4 Also, there are few opportunities within the Neighbourhood Area for development on derelict or other urban land. As a result, development on any of the potential development sites is not considered “to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”.
- 4.5 In addition to the five purposes of the Green Belt, NPPF paragraph 137 states that an essential characteristic of Green Belt is its openness. The potential impact of development on openness should therefore also be considered for each of the sites.
- 4.6 PPG on the Green Belt (Ref 2) states that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects. Thus, the visual impact of development is relevant as well as its volume.
- 4.7 The PPG also states that any assessment on impacts to openness need to consider the duration of the development, its remediability and potential traffic generation. At this stage it is considered there is no difference between the potential development

sites in regard to these criteria as development on any of the sites would be permanent, with similar levels of traffic generation. Hence these criteria are not considered as part of the assessment on impacts to openness, only the potential spatial and visual aspects of development are relevant.

- 4.8 Starting from the principle of the existing landscape character across the Neighbourhood Area, the Green Belt is characterised by a range of land uses. These include the settlements, Culham Science Centre, three main roads, river valley to the south, woodland to the north and agricultural fields throughout. In landscape character and visual terms, this part of the Green Belt could be considered inherently 'open' outside the settlements and Culham Science Centre. However, the locations of the potential development sites, adjacent to the existing settlements result in their degree of 'openness' being significantly reduced in relation to the wider extent of the Green Belt.
- 4.9 Development would introduce new structures, which would result in additional 'volume' and therefore a potential further reduction in physical 'openness' of the Green Belt. This physical change is however within an area where the 'open' characteristic of the wider Green Belt is already impacted. Nonetheless, each potential development site has a different relationship to the existing settlement, and this relationship is considered as part of the assessment on impacts on openness.

Potential Development Sites

Site A

Description

- 4.10 Site A is a rectangular parcel of land to the north of the A415 and adjacent to the Clifton Hampden Village Hall and associated car park, Figure 5. The site is partially open grassland to the south and west and allotments to the north of the Village Hall. Mature trees and hedgerows are along the boundary with several small blocks of trees and individual trees within the site. The whole site is currently assigned as allotments. The site is adjacent to properties along Watery Lane to the east, the Old School Yard to the north, and the A415 to the south. It is accessible from the A415 with no other directly connecting roads to the boundary.



Figure 5 Potential Development Site A

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The site is located close to the central core of the Clifton Hampden and does not extend the village toward Burcot. There are no other settlements within a 1km radius of the site. Developing the site does lead to a minor narrowing of the gap between the village and Culham Science Centre although mature trees and shrubs along its northern and western boundaries of the site help to visually define Site A as part of Clifton Hampden settlement. The Culham Science Centre is not a neighbouring town.
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Development on this site could be contained to the south by the A415 and existing and proposed trees and shrubs along its western, northern and eastern boundaries. There are several urbanising influences due to the location of the site adjacent to the built up area of the village to the east and the presence of the Village Hall, associated car park and allotments. Views into the countryside from footpath 171/2/10 which runs along the eastern boundary of Site A and properties along Watery Lane may be altered. However, both the footpath and properties are already subject to foreground views of the Village Hall, car park and allotments with views of the

countryside only possible through existing intervening vegetation and structures.

In general, Site A is visually detached from the wider countryside by the urbanising use of the area and strength of its boundaries.

to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

The site is located within the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and is within 50m of the Grade II listed Plough Public House to the east and Grade II listed Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School and attached Teachers House to the south. Existing mature trees and shrubs along the boundaries and topography, with the land gently rising towards Site A, help to screen existing views from both the listed buildings and the majority of the conservation area.

Therefore, Site A contributes to the setting and special character of the village. Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the special character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings.

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.11 Site A is adjacent to the built up area of Clifton Hampden and is in an area where the landscape character is already experiencing urbanising influences as a result of the presence of the existing village, the Village Hall, associated car park, allotments and A415. Generally, it is visually contained by mature trees and shrubs along its boundaries.
- 4.12 By its location, urban character and containment, Site A has strong relationship to the existing settlement and currently contributes little to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt. Any development of Site A could potentially be screened by strengthening existing boundary planting, minimising visual intrusion into the Green Belt, safeguarding openness of the wider Green Belt.

Site A+

Description

- 4.13 Site A+ is an open rectangular parcel of land to the north of Site A, Figure 6. The site is open agricultural land currently used for pasture, with mature trees and hedgerows to the boundary and a large linear block of woodland to the north. The site is adjacent to properties along Watery Lane to the east and north including the Grade II listed Courtiers, just outside the north-east corner of the site. Access to the site is only possible from the northern end of Watery Lane adjacent to Courtiers with no other direct connecting roads to the boundary.



Figure 6 Potential Development Site A+

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The site is located to the west of Clifton Hampden and is close to the central core of the village. Development does not extend the village toward Burcot and there are no other settlements within a 1km radius of the site.</p> <p>Developing the site would lead to a minor narrowing of the gap between the village and Culham Science Centre although mature trees and shrubs along its northern and western boundaries help to visually define Site A+ as part of Clifton Hampden settlement. The Culham Science Centre is not a neighbouring town.</p>
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Development on this site could be contained by existing mature trees and hedgerows and new planting along the boundaries. The location of the site adjacent to the built up area of the village to the east, partially to the north and south with the Village Hall also introduces urbanising influences.</p> <p>Even though development could be contained and there are some urbanising influences, the agricultural land use coupled with hedgerow boundaries creates a semi-rural character for Site A+.</p>

Footpath 171/2/10 runs along the eastern and northern boundaries of the site and development would alter existing views of the wider countryside from the footpath and potentially from properties along Watery Lane.

In general, although Site A+ is visually detached from the wider countryside by the existing vegetated boundaries, development over the whole of the site would result in a loss of the semi-rural character. Limited development along the eastern boundary of the site would minimise the loss of rural character and may reduce the considered encroachment into the countryside.

to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

The site is located within the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and is within 25m of the Grade II listed Courtiers to the north-east.

Existing mature trees and shrubs along the boundaries and topography, with the land gently rising towards Site A+, help to screen existing views from the majority of the conservation area. Views across parts of Site A+ are however possible from the Grade II listed Courtiers

Site A+ contributes to the setting and special character of the village and the setting of the Grade II listed Courtiers. Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the special character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building.

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

4.14 Site A+ is to the west of the built up area of Clifton Hampden and is currently an agricultural field. The presence of the existing village, including the Village Hall and allotments to the south, introduces some urbanising influences along the western half of the site. The agricultural land use however, coupled with the hedgerow boundaries creates a rural character for the majority of Site A+, that contributes to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.

Site B

Description

4.15 Site B is an open irregular shaped parcel of land located to the south of the A415, Figure 7. The site is adjacent to properties along the High Street to the south and west, and the A415 Abingdon Road to the east, resulting in built development along all its boundaries except the A415, directly to the north. The site consists of open pastoral land with mature trees and hedgerows to the southern and eastern boundary. There are several large individual trees within the site. The site is accessible from the A415 with no other direct connecting roads to the boundary.



Figure 7 Potential Development Site B

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The site is located to the west of Clifton Hampden and close to the central core of the village. Development does not extend the village toward Burcot and there are no other settlements within a 1km radius of the site.</p> <p>Developing the site would lead to a minor narrowing of the gap between the village and Culham Science Centre although mature trees and hedgerows along the A415 help to visually define Site B as part of Clifton Hampden settlement. The Culham Science Centre is not a neighbouring town.</p>
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Site B is enclosed by the existing built up area of Clifton Hampden and the A415. While the site is an agricultural field, it experiences several urbanising influences and appears to form part of the existing settlement boundary, with the wider countryside to the north of the A415.</p> <p>Footpath 171/2/10 runs along the eastern boundary of the site and even if development alters existing views of the site, as a consequence of existing vegetation and topography there are limited views beyond the immediate site.</p>

	<p>As a whole, Site B is contained by existing urbanising influences and is visually detached from the wider countryside. Development would result in the loss of pasture but strengthening of the existing vegetated boundaries, particularly to the north would help safeguard the countryside from encroachment.</p>
<p>to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</p>	<p>The site is located within the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and is within 100m of seven Grade II buildings along the High Street to the south. Existing mature trees and shrubs along the boundaries, surrounding buildings and topography, with the land gently rising towards the north, helps to screen existing views from the majority of the conservation area and the listed buildings.</p> <p>Site B contributes to the setting and special character of the village. Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the special character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings.</p>
<p>to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.16 Site B is enclosed on three sides by the built up area of Clifton Hampden and the A415 to the north. While the site is an agricultural field, it is in an area where the landscape character is already experiencing urbanising influences and it has a strong relationship to the existing settlement. The built up area and existing mature trees and shrubs along boundaries help to visually contain the site minimising its contribution to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.
- 4.17 Any development of Site B could potentially be screened by strengthening existing planting, minimising any visual intrusion into the wider Green Belt.

Site C

Description

- 4.18 Site C is an open, thin rectangular shaped parcel of land located on the northern extent of Clifton Hampden along the B4015 Oxford Road which runs parallel to the eastern edge of this site, Figure 8. It is bounded on two sides by mature trees and hedgerows, and open to a footpath 171/5/10 to the north and the road to the east. It is accessible from the B4015 Oxford Road.



Figure 8 Potential Development Site C

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The site extends ribbon development along the B4015 and therefore the northern extents of Clifton Hampden village. There are however no settlements within 1km of the village and therefore development of Site C does not lead to the merging of neighbouring settlements including Burcot to the east.
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Site C is part of an agricultural field on the outskirts of the village. The existing built up area is only to the south and any development would extend the settlement boundary north. Although partially enclosed by existing trees and hedgerows, gaps in these boundaries and limited woodland in the vicinity results in extensive views of the site from the surrounding area. The extension of the settlement boundary and the potential visibility of any development of the site in the wider countryside would be considered a major encroachment into the countryside.
to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site is north of the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and is over 150m from the closest Grade II listed building to the south. Nuneham Courtenay Grade I registered historic park and garden is over 600m to the north and west of the site.

Existing mature trees and shrubs along the southern boundary of the site and residential properties in the north of Clifton Hampden village help to screen existing views from the conservation area and the listed buildings to the south.

Although outside designations, Site C is in the setting of the conservation area and possible views from Nuneham Courtenay Grade I registered garden. Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the special character of the conservation area, the setting of listed buildings and the registered historic park and garden.

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.19 Site C is part of an open agricultural field on the northern edge of Clifton Hampden. It has a limited relationship with the existing settlement along its southern boundary. Intermittent vegetation along the boundaries, enables extensive views towards the site from the surrounding area and together with the lack of urbanising influences results in Site C making a significant contribution to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.
- 4.20 Any development of Site C would extend the settlement boundary north and intrude into the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.

Site D

Description

- 4.21 Site D is an open rectangular shaped parcel of land located to the east of Site C on the northern extent of the Clifton Hampden, Figure 9. The B4015 Oxford Road runs parallel to the western edge of this parcel. The site is an area within a larger arable field and therefore has no discreet boundary to the north and east. The site is bounded to the west and south by mature trees and hedgerows and is accessible from the B4015, Oxford Road. Footpath 171/4/10 runs along the northern boundary.



Figure 9 Potential Development Site D

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose

to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)

N/A

to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The site extends ribbon development along the B4015 and therefore the northern extents of Clifton Hampden village. There are, however, no settlements within 1km of the village and therefore development of Site D does not lead to the merging of neighbouring settlements including Burcot to the east.

to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Site D is part of an agricultural field on the outskirts of the village. The existing built-up area is only to the south and any development within Site D would extend the settlement boundary north. As part of a larger field with no vegetated boundaries to the north and east and limited woodland in the vicinity, Site D is visible in extensive views from the surrounding area.

The extension of the settlement boundary and the potential visibility of any development of the site in the wider countryside would be considered a major encroachment into the countryside.

to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

The site is north of the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and is over 130m from the closest Grade II listed building to the south-west. Nuneham Courtenay Grade I registered historic park and garden is over 800m to the north and west of the site.

Existing mature trees and shrubs along the southern boundary of the site and residential properties in the north of Clifton Hampden village help to screen existing views from the conservation area and the listed buildings to the south.

Although like Site C, Site D is outside designations, it is in the setting of the conservation area and possible views from Nuneham Courtenay Grade I registered garden. Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the special character of the conservation area, the setting of listed buildings and registered historic parks and gardens.

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.22 Site D is on the northern edge of Clifton Hampden and is a small part of a large agricultural field, which extends to the north and east. It has a limited relationship with the existing settlement along its southern boundary and is more connected to the agricultural landscape to the north-east. Limited vegetation along the southern and western boundaries and in the vicinity, enables extensive views towards the site from the surrounding area. The visibility and open character of the site, together with the lack of urbanising influences results in Site D also making a significant contribution to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.
- 4.23 Any development of Site D would extend the settlement boundary north and intrude into the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.

Site E

Description

- 4.24 Located to the north of Burcot and the A415, Site E is an open, thin rectangular shaped parcel of land west of a group of properties (Balfour Cottages) at the northern extent of the hamlet, Figure 10. The site is an area within a larger arable field and therefore has no discreet boundary to the north. The site is bounded to the south by mature hedgerows with the adjoining properties to the west. Footpath 171/21/10 runs along the western boundary. The site is accessible from the A415.



Figure 10 Potential development Site E
Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The site consolidates existing ribbon development along the A415 and therefore the northern extents of Burcot. There are however no settlements within 1km to the north of the hamlet and therefore development of Site E does not lead to the merging of neighbouring settlements including Clifton Hampden to the west and Berinsfield to the east.
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Site E is part of an agricultural field on the northern limits of the hamlet of Burcot. The existing built-up area is south of the A415 and to the west. Any development within Site E would extend ribbon development along the A415 and the settlement boundary of Burcot north. As part of a larger field with no vegetated boundaries to the north and limited woodland in the vicinity, Site E is visible in extensive views from the surrounding area to the north. The extension of the settlement boundary and the potential visibility of any development of the site in the wider countryside would be considered a major encroachment into the countryside.
to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Site E is distant from the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and over 100m north-west of the only listed building in Burcot, the Grade II listed 'The Old Cottage'. Existing mature trees and shrubs along the A415 help to screen existing views from the listed building to the north-west.

Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the setting of the listed building and even though not a conservation area, the special historic character of Burcot.

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.25 Site E is located to the north of Burcot, beside the A415. It is part of a large, open agricultural field which extends to the north and north-east. The site, and the adjacent Balfour Cottages to the east are considered to be separated from Burcot by the intervening A415, minimising any relationship with the existing settlement. Site E has a strong relationship with the agricultural landscape to the north and makes a significant contribution to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.
- 4.26 The lack of vegetation along its northern boundary and in the near vicinity, together with rising ground, results in Site E being visible in extensive views from the north. Any development would alter the settlement pattern of Burcot and intrude into the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.

Site F

Description

- 4.27 Located to the north of Burcot and the A415, Site F is a small, open square parcel of land east of a group of properties (Balfour Cottages), Figure 11. The site is an area within a larger arable field and therefore has no discreet boundary to the north or east. The site is bounded to the west and south by mature trees and hedgerows with the adjoining properties to the west. The site is accessible from the A415.



Figure 11 Potential Development Site F

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The site consolidates existing ribbon development along the A415 and therefore the northern extents of Burcot. Berinsfield is within 1km of the site to the east and therefore any development of Site F could be considered as starting to fill the gap between the two neighbouring settlements.
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Site F is part of an agricultural field on the north-east limits of the hamlet of Burcot. The existing built-up area is south of the A415 and to the west. Any development within Site F would extend ribbon development along the A415 towards Berinsfield to the east and the settlement boundary of Burcot north. As part of a larger field with no vegetated boundaries to the north and limited woodland in the vicinity, Site F is visible in views from the surrounding area to the north. The extension of the settlement boundary, merging of settlements and the potential visibility of any development of the site in the wider countryside would be considered a major encroachment into the countryside.
to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Site F is distant from the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and over 200m east of the only listed building in Burcot, the Grade II listed 'The Old Cottage'. Existing mature trees and shrubs

along the A415 help to screen existing views from the listed building to the west.

Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the setting of the listed building and even though not a conservation area, the special historic character of Burcot.

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.28 Site F is located to the east of Balfour Cottages, north of the A415 and Burcot. It is a small part of large, open agricultural field which extends to the north, east and north-west. Again, the site, and the adjacent Balfour Cottages to the west are considered to be separated from Burcot by the intervening A415, minimising any relationship with the existing settlement. Instead, as with Site E, Site F has a stronger relationship with the agricultural landscape to the north and makes a significant contribution to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.
- 4.29 The lack of vegetation along its northern and eastern boundaries, and in the near vicinity, together with rising ground results in Site F being visible in extensive views from the north and west. Any development would alter the settlement pattern of Burcot and intrude into the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.

Site G

Description

- 4.30 Site G is an open irregular shaped parcel of land located to the south of the A415, Figure 12. The site is adjacent to several large properties along the High Street to the south and is open pastoral land with mature trees and hedgerows to the boundary. The site is accessible from the A415 and the High Street to the west.



Figure 12 Potential Development Site G

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The site is located on the western limits of the village of Clifton Hampden. Development would not extend the village toward Burcot and there are no other settlements within a 1km radius of the site.</p> <p>Developing the site would lead to a narrowing of the gap between the village and Culham Science Centre. Due to topography at the junction of the A415 and the High Street, development would be visible and result in the perception of an extended settlement boundary of Clifton Hampden village to the west. The Culham Science Centre is not however a neighbouring town.</p>
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Site G is an agricultural field on the western limits of the village of Clifton Hampden. The existing built up area is to the south and consists of a few individual properties in large plots located along the High Street. Development on this site would be contained by the roads and the built-up area but would be detached from the main body of the village to the east resulting in a perceived extension to the settlement boundary and encroachment into the countryside.</p>
to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>The site is located within the Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and is within 75m of three Grade II listed buildings along the High Street to</p>

the south. Existing mature trees and shrubs along the boundaries and topography, with the land gently rising towards the north-west, helps to screen existing views from the majority of the conservation area and the listed buildings to the south and west.

Site G contributes to the setting and special character of the village. Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the special character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings.

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.31 Site G is an agricultural field to the west of Clifton Hampden. It is enclosed to the south by individual properties in large plots and to the west and north by roads, the High Street and the A415. The site is however separated from the village to the east by Site B. Consequently, although Site G is partially contained by development and roads, it feels detached from the village with a limited relationship to the existing settlement. However, the physical containment of Site G by the roads and roadside vegetation also limits its relationship to the wider agricultural landscape to the north. As a result, Site G contributes less to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt compared to Sites C, D, E, F and H.
- 4.32 Yet the topography of Site G reduces the potential to screen any development by strengthening existing boundary planting. Thus, development would intrude into the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.

Site H

Description

- 4.33 Site H is an open irregular shaped parcel of land, on a plateau located to the south-west of the junction of the A415 and the High Street at the western limit of Clifton Hampden, Figure 13. The site consists of open arable land situated between the Turnpike Filling Station on the A415 and a property on the High Street to the south. There is a thin block of trees to the south of the site but otherwise vegetation is sparse. The site is accessible from the A415 and High Street.



Figure 13 Potential Development Site H

Assessment against Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (Oxford, Abingdon or Didcot)	N/A .
to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The site is located on the western limits of the village of Clifton Hampden. Development does not extend the village toward Burcot and there are no other settlements within a 1km radius of the site.</p> <p>Developing the site would lead to a narrowing of the gap between the village and Culham Science Centre. Due to topography, with the site on a plateau and open in nature, development would be visible and result in the perception of an extended settlement boundary of Clifton Hampden village to the west. The Culham Science Centre is not however a neighbouring town.</p>
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>Site H is an agricultural field on the western limits of the village of Clifton Hampden. The existing built up area to the south consists of a single property in a large plot. Turnpike Filling Station is located on the north-west boundary. Apart from these properties, there is little built development close to the site.</p> <p>The High Street and agricultural fields of Site G and Site B separate the site from the main body of the village to the east. Site H is located on a plateau, with sparse existing vegetation within the site and in the vicinity, it is visible in extensive views to the south and west. Any development of Site H would</p>

	result in a major encroachment into the countryside.
to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>The site is located to the west of Clifton Hampden Conservation Area and is within 50m of two Grade II listed buildings along the High Street to the south-east. Existing mature trees and shrubs to the east along property boundaries in Clifton Hampden, help to screen existing views from the majority of the conservation area. The site is however on high ground, on a plateau open in nature resulting in potential views from the listed buildings located close to the southern boundary.</p> <p>Site H is in the setting of the conservation area and the listed buildings to the south. Any development would need to be designed to safeguard the special character of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings.</p>
to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	N/A

Assessment of 'openness'

- 4.34 Site H is an agricultural field, on a local high point, on the western outskirts of Clifton Hampden. The existing built up area surrounding the site consists of a single property in a large plot to the south and to the-north-west, Turnpike Filling Station. Apart from these properties, there is little built development close to the site. The High Street and Sites G and B separate the site, from the central core of the village to the east. Accordingly, Site H has a limited relationship to the existing settlement, in contrast to the strong connection to the adjacent agricultural landscape over which there are extensive views to the west and north. Site H makes a significant contribution to the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.
- 4.35 As Site H is located on an elevated plateau, there is little potential to screen any development through planting and hence, it would intrude into the 'openness' of the wider Green Belt.

5. Summary and conclusion

- 5.1 Development of any of the potential development sites would result in loss of Green Belt land. The assessment of each site against the Green Belt purposes and the 'visual' and 'spatial' qualities of openness demonstrates that each site currently does not fulfil the purposes equally.
- 5.2 Several of the sites, C to H, fulfil the purposes more effectively than A, A+ and B. Development of any of the potential development sites C to H would lead to encroachment into the countryside and intrusion into the openness of the wider Green Belt. Whereas development of Sites A, A+ or B would be less intrusive and could be visually contained reducing potential encroachment into the countryside.
- 5.3 Site A+, however, has a semi-rural character and is visible from a listed building. Any development of this site would need to be carefully related to the existing built-up area to safeguard the countryside and the setting of the listed building.
- 5.4 Sites A and B are both within the conservation area but are visually contained by the existing settlement and mature vegetation. Both experience urbanising influences from adjacent land uses and have a closer relationship to the neighbouring settlement, than

the wider agricultural landscape. They have existing clearly defined boundaries and are in contrast to the more open boundaries of the other potential development sites. Sensitive design could strengthen these boundaries, reinforcing the settlement extents and help safeguard the special character of the conservation area.

- 5.5 Away from the settlements, the open nature of the undulating agricultural character of the landscape in the north of the Neighbourhood Area or the flat, agricultural floodplain in the south of the Area minimise opportunities to identify further development sites that would not have a major impact on the purposes and openness of the Green Belt. Consequently, only the nine sites assessed are considered to have some potential for development with sites A and B being considered to be the least successful at fulfilling the purposes of the Green Belt.

6. References

- Ref 1 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021, National Planning Policy Framework, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
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- Ref 4 Natural England, 2014, National Character Area 108 (NE570) Uppers Thames Clay Vales, <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136>
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- Ref 7 Office of National Statistics, 2021, Population data for Clifton Hampden and Burcot Parish, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwalescensus2021>

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