
South Tyneside: Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review

Prepared on behalf of Church Commissioners For England

October 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A strategic Green Belt Review of land in South Tyneside was undertaken by Barton Willmore in 2013 to identify the suitability of twelve Sites to accommodate housing. This initial strategic overview of the Sites was subsequently used to identify seven Sites to focus on, in terms of their contribution to the functions of the Green Belt (referred to hereafter as “the Site” or “the Sites”).
- 1.2 The site appraisals used to update the 2013 Review were carried out by Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) between March and September 2019. This site-based work, together with a desk-based study of the evidence base documents (including published landscape character assessments and Green Belt assessments and guidance), has formed the updated baseline for this high-level Landscape and Visual (L&V) Appraisal and Green Belt Assessment, (referred to collectively hereafter as “the Appraisal”) which has also been carried out in line with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) . It should however be noted that this is not a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- 1.3 The Sites which are the subject of this latest Appraisal are shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** and **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan**. It should be noted that since the 2013 Review referred to above, in all cases (with the exception of Site 9), the numbering has changed in line with the July 2019 study. In addition, in the case of Site 7, the extent of the Site has been increased; and two new sites have emerged (Sites 2 and 8).
- 1.4 This Appraisal reviews the relevant landscape designations, policies and published landscape character assessments; summarises the landscape and visual characteristics of the Site and its role within the wider landscape context; assesses the contribution the Site makes to the functions of the Green Belt; and identifies landscape and visual opportunities and constraints, and the capacity of the Site to accommodate development and to be released from the Green Belt.

2.0 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

- 2.1 Sites 2, 3 and 4 are located adjacent to the settlement of East and West Boldon. Sites 7 and 9 are located adjacent to the settlement of Cleadon; site 8 is just to the south of Cleadon Park; whilst Site 16 lies adjacent to the settlement of Whitburn.
- 2.2 Located at the mouth of the River Tyne, the Metropolitan Borough of South Tyneside is bordered by the River Tyne to the north, the North Sea to the east, and by Sunderland and Gateshead to the south and west. As illustrated with reference to **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan**, South Tyneside is a relatively low-lying area, for the most part gently undulating and with few steep slopes. To the north and west, the borough is relatively flat, sloping towards the river, whilst the eastern and southern areas tend to be more undulating. There are few areas over 50m, the largest extent of high ground being the Cleadon Hills, which rise to 83m at Beacon Hill. The Sites, with the exception of Site 16 which lies on the coast, are all located in the central low-lying landform with topography varying between 25m and 50m AOD. Aside from the River Tyne which forms the northern boundary, there are no major rivers within South Tyneside. The largest watercourse is the River Don, which rises in Washington, and flows generally northwards through West Boldon and Hedworth to Jarrow.
- 2.3 Much of South Tyneside can be considered urban, with extensive residential areas spread out from the three distinct town centres of South Shields, Jarrow and Hebburn. Beyond the suburban areas, the villages of Whitburn, Cleadon and Boldon each maintain an independent setting. Rural areas of South Tyneside consist primarily of agricultural land, much of which is given over to large-scale arable production, with some very large fields in the south-west of the area. Mineral extraction is ongoing at two sites at Marsden Quarry north of Whitburn; and Red Barns Quarry south of Hebburn.
- 2.4 There is a relatively low level of woodland cover across South Tyneside although woodland cover has been increased through planting on former colliery sites, the largest area being Boldon Colliery Woods. Vegetation within the Sites is largely limited to field boundary hedgerows and tree belts. Land use within the Sites comprises urban fringe arable land, which is typical of the surrounding landscape, with scattered residential development beyond settlement boundaries.

Landscape Designations

- 2.5 The Sites are not subject to any national landscape designations relating to scenic quality, there are no listed buildings or conservation areas within the Sites, and there are no Registered Parks and Gardens in the immediate vicinity of the Sites.

- 2.6 However in terms of local designations, in the Emerging Local Plan (ELP), the Cleadon Hills Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) and Conservation Area lie adjacent to the eastern edge of Site 8 and the Whitburn Coastal Park and The Coast (Trow point to the administrative boundary with the City of Sunderland) AHLV lies adjacent the north eastern edge of Site 16.
- 2.7 Although the southern sides of Sites 2 and 3 and western end of Site 4 lie approximately 1km of the Boldon Downhill AHLV, potentially significant effects are considered unlikely due to foreground screening by trees, topography and buildings and for this reason this AHLV is not considered further in this Appraisal.
- 2.8 It should be noted that the Area of Landscape Significance (ALS) in the Boldon Downhill Area mentioned in the Local Plan which previously encompassed what is now part of Site 4, has been replaced by the aforementioned Boldon Downhill AHLV which no longer extends to the east. Since the Local Plan will soon be superseded by the ELP (see below in Section 4) this ALS is not considered further in this Appraisal.
- 2.9 The location of all these designated areas are indicated on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**.

Landscape Character

- 2.10 The Landscape Character Assessment approach is a descriptive approach which seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes. The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, landscape management or development. **Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan** illustrates the extent of landscape character areas in the vicinity of the Sites, as featured in published assessments.

National Character Areas

- 2.11 Natural England has produced a Countryside Character Map of England which includes "broad-brush" descriptions of the different national character areas.
- 2.12 All the Sites are located within National Character Area 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau' include the following key characteristics which are of relevance to the Sites:

- *"Open, large-scale landscape with big fields, low hedges and few trees on the plateau tops, incised with stream valleys along limestone escarpment to the west and denes running down to the coast to the east.*
- *Dramatic coastline with exposed cliffs of limestone and boulder clay, undulating series of small, sheltered bays and headlands, flower-rich Magnesian Limestone grassland, steep-sided wooded coastal denes, and sand dunes and*

beaches that support large populations of waders and seabirds.

- *Strong influence of historic mining industry on both local culture and the landscape, in the form of ex-coal mining towns and villages with distinctive surrounding areas of allotments and pony paddocks, reclaimed colliery sites, disused and existing railways, and industrial archaeology.*
- *A productive farmed landscape with a high proportion of large arable fields and some pasture for sheep and cattle grazing.*
- *Historic villages subject to a high degree of 20th-century expansion.*
- *Widespread urban and industrial development in the north and major transport corridors throughout."*

Local Character Areas

South Tyneside Landscape Character Study (LCS)

2.13 The LCS provides a review of the landscapes of South Tyneside, and the means by which their distinctive characteristics can be maintained and enhanced, whilst it also presents a classification of the land use types which are present, and the areas of distinct local character which can be identified. The relevant key characteristics of each of the character areas in which the Sites are located are identified below.

2.14 Sites 2, 3, 7 and 8 are located within Rural LCA 34 'Boldon-Cleadon Fragmented Farmland'. Key sensitivities for this LCA include:

- *"The area is fragmented into areas of farmland, formal and informal open space, and commercial uses, and is divided up by busy roads and the Metro line.*
- *Readily accessible area for informal recreation, close to large residential areas. The area includes a number of extensive publicly accessible areas and footpaths.*
- *Woodland and hedgerows form a partial landscape structure, strongest around Tilesheds and the River Don.*
- *Narrow areas between settlements are potentially vulnerable to development and coalescence. Existing commercial uses affect character around Cleadon Lane industrial estate, for example. The area is locally affected by the quality of the settlement boundary.*
- *The River Don forms the focus of biodiversity value, with several areas of high value across the area."*

2.15 Guidance for the LCA regarding landscape structure includes the promotion of further woodland planting particularly where this will form links and enhance landscape structure and supporting the reinstatement and reinforcement of hedges and hedge trees. With respect to settlement boundaries, ways of strengthening visual and physical settlement boundaries should be examined, whilst maintaining connectivity with settlements.

2.16 The westernmost parts of Site 4 (i.e., south of the A184,) are located within Rural LCA 32 'Baldon Downhill'. Key sensitivities for this LCA include:

- *The high ground and westward scarp of Baldon Downhill are a key feature in the South Tyneside landscape, particularly prominent from the A19 and A184. The hill is affected by infrastructure including power lines, reservoir and substation.*
- *Baldon Downhill, particularly the old quarry, is of high geodiversity value, though relatively inaccessible. There is no formal path to the summit to allow appreciation of the wide views.*
- *The arable area to the east of the summit is relatively well-wooded compared to the rest of South Tyneside, though there are gappy hedges.*
- *The former MOD depot presents an opportunity for sustainable development."*

2.17 The eastern part of Site 4 (i.e., north of the A184,) is located within Rural LCA 33 'Baldon Flats and Whitburn Moor'. Key sensitivities for this LCA include:

- *"Urban fringe character, particularly around the edges of Cleadon and East Baldon, where the area is affected by Cleadon Lane industrial estate*
- *Low-lying areas of habitat value are an important biodiversity resource, and the winter flooding is characteristic of this area.*
- *The B1299 offers broad southward views across the lower-lying Whitburn Moor and Seaburn to Sunderland and the coast.*
- *Field boundaries are generally in poor condition, with evidence of loss of hedgerows and fences in poor repair. The open area lacks significant woodland cover and landscape structure.*
- *The area is affected by busy roads, particularly where these are narrow."*

2.18 Guidelines for the LCA include resisting the further extension of Cleadon Lane industrial estate on the urban fringe and examining ways of enhancing settlement boundaries to form an improved Green Belt edge. With regard to views, broad views of the coast to the south and east should be retained through the retention of the open aspect of eastern areas, particularly along the B1299.

2.19 Site 16 is located within Coastal LCA 29 'Whitburn Coast'. Key sensitivities for this LCA include:

- *"The coastline is accessible along its length. Whitburn Coastal Park is a key resource in the overall access network along the coast, though access to the car parks is seasonally restricted.*

- *The settlement edge of Whitburn presses close against the coastline in the southern part of the area. The new school building is a visible presence in views along the coast.*
- *Development pressure for housing is likely to affect the area of the former rifle ranges. The target mounds present an interesting contrast with Medieval ridge-and-furrow field systems."*

2.20 Guidelines for the LCA include; resisting further large-scale development close to the coast, which may affect coastal views; and examining ways of softening the settlement edge, without adversely affecting residential views.

Great North Forest Local Management Zones (2003)

2.21 A character assessment was undertaken to inform the Great North Forest Plan which identified 'local management zones' across the forest area, with five zones within South Tyneside. These zones nest within the NCAs and provide some background to the landscape of South Tyneside. The seven Sites are located within a number of different Landscape Management Zones (LMs) and these have been identified below:

- Sites 4 and 9 are located within LM5 'North Sunderland Fringe'. where the key aim is to enhance this area through significantly increasing tree cover.
- Sites 2,3,7 and 8 are located within LM3 'Boldon/ Cleadon'. the key aim for which is reconstruction as "an informal and wooded local recreation area that softens intrusive urban edges".
- Site 16 is located within LM4 'Cleadon Hills' where the key aim is stated as "conserving the open limestone grassland character".

3.0 GREEN BELT POLICY & GUIDANCE REVIEW

National Planning Policy

3.1 Under National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019), Green Belt is a functional designation, its purpose being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and as such the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. More specifically Green Belt serves the following five purposes:

- *"to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land."*

3.2 The fifth purpose relates specifically to brownfield land and as all seven Sites are located on greenfield land, each Site has therefore been assessed below in this Appraisal against the four remaining Green Belt purposes.

Local Planning Policy

South Tyneside Local Development Framework and Core Strategy (LDFCS)

3.3 LDFCS Policy EA1 'Local Character and Distinctiveness' seeks to conserve the best qualities of South Tyneside's built and natural environment.

3.4 Key criteria for this policy are to;

- *"... protect the openness of the Green Belt*
- *preserve the special and separate characters of the urban fringe villages of Boldon Colliery, West Boldon, East Boldon, Cleadon and Whitburn*
- *implement the Great North Forest's strategies for access, education, enterprise and biodiversity in a forestry framework by:*
- *i) enhancing the River Don Valley farmland into a well-wooded recreational landscape enclosing a network of open corridors;*
- *ii) reconstructing the Boldon / Cleadon fringe as an informal and wooded local recreation area that softens intrusive urban edges;*
- *iii) conserving the open limestone grassland character of the Cleadon Hills;*
- *iv) enhancing North Sunderland fringe by significantly increasing tree cover; and*

- ***v) restoring the small-scale agricultural field pattern of Downhill."***

3.5 The Development Management Policies document defines the role and purpose of the South Tyneside Green Belt as having "...an important role to play in restricting the spread of the built up area of the borough and retaining the separate character of the urban conurbation and villages. In order to retain its openness there is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt."

3.6 The Policies document describes the principal purposes as follows:

- ***"To check the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up area of South Tyneside;***
- ***To safeguard the borough's countryside from further encroachment;***
- ***To prevent the merging of South Tyneside with Sunderland, Washington or Gateshead;***
- ***To preserve the special and separate characters of the Boldon Colliery, West Boldon, East Boldon, Cleadon and Whitburn; and***
- ***To assist in the regeneration of the urban area, by encouraging the recycling of land, particularly along the riverside."***

The Emerging Local Plan (ELP)

3.7 Although it will supersede the current Local Plan in due course once adopted, the recently issued ELP is currently being circulated as a Consultation Draft. However, it does indicate the latest draft Policies of relevance to the Sites under consideration in this Appraisal. These are as follows.

3.8 Policy H3; Housing Sites. Following the LPGBR/ SLRS reviewed above in Section 3 this policy identifies a number of sites currently situated in the Green Belt which, upon adoption of the ELP will be allocated as potential sites for residential development;

- BC58/ H3.68 (Site 2) North of New Road Boldon;

Key landscape considerations are:

- The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision.
- The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent, in particular a landscape buffer is required to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and will include the retention of mature trees.
- The Public Right of Way which runs along the eastern boundary of the site should be retained.

- BC25a/H3.59 (Site 3) North Farm Boldon

Key landscape considerations are:

- i. The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision.
- ii. The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent.
- iii. Opportunities to re-naturalise the water course should be explored
- iv. The bridleway to be retained and improved and the trees running along it to be retained.
- v. Tree buffers to the north and south of the site should be retained. Buffer between the water course and residential development should be at least 8 metres.
- vi. Existing hedgerows should be retained.

- BC33a/H3.61 (E. part of Site 4) South of St. John's Terrace and Natley Avenue. Key landscape considerations are:

- i. The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision.
- ii. The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent.
- iii. Formal connections to East Boldon metro station should be established.
- iv. Tree buffers should be preserved and enhanced.

- BC48b/H3.2 South of Cleadon Park (Majority of west part of Site 8) and BC48c/H3.3 West of Sunnyside Farm (Majority of east Part of Site 8)

Key landscape considerations are:

- i. The sites should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision.
- ii. The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the sites and the Green Belt to which they are adjacent, in particular a landscape buffer should be created to the south of site 3.3.
- iii. Tree buffer to the north of sites 3.2 and 3.3 should be retained.
- iv. Footpath running along the north of sites 3.2 and 3.3 should be retained and improved.
- v. Lower densities should be considered towards the eastern part of site 3.3 to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Cleadon Hills Conservation Area and the locally listed heritage asset (Sunnyside Farm).

- BC44/H3.70 (Site 9) West Hall Farm

Key landscape considerations are:

- i. The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision.
 - ii. The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent.
 - iii. Mature trees to the east of the site should be retained and an appropriate landscaped buffer along Sunderland Road should be created.
 - iv. Houses should be set back from the eastern boundary of the site to retain the feeling of openness along the A1018.
 - v. The southern part of the site is affected by surface water flooding as well as the gardens on West Meadows Roads. SuDS should seek to alleviate both the flooding on the site and on West Meadows Road.
- WH 9a/9b /H3.74/H3.75 (Site 16) North of Shearwater, Whitburn

Key landscape considerations are:

- i. The sites should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision.
- ii. The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the sites and the Green Belt to which they are adjacent.
- iii. Mature trees should be retained and tree planting throughout the sites should be used to minimise visual impacts of developing the sites.

Policy S6: Appropriate Development Within the Green Belt (Strategic Policy) states that development proposals must protect and enhance the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. This will supersede LDFCS Policy EA1 referred to above once the ELP has been adopted.

Landscape Evaluation of South Tyneside Green Belt

- 3.9 The findings of Part 3 of the LCA were used to assist in the evaluation of the function of the Green Belt in South Tyneside, in terms of contribution to Green Belt purposes.
- 3.10 The study notes that the key landscape and visual principles of Green Belt can be summarised as setting, identity and boundaries, however in this instance the Green Belt study has not examined boundaries. The study therefore focuses on the first two principles which have been defined as follows.
- 3.11 The contribution of a landscape to the setting of settlements is explored through the following criteria:

- *How important is the landscape in relation to key views from static locations, such as landmarks, hills and recreational areas?*
- *How important is the landscape in views from key transport corridors?*
- *Does the landscape play an important role in the setting of other areas of landscape importance?*

3.12 The contribution of a landscape to the identity of settlements is explored through the following criteria.

- *Does the landscape contribute to appreciation of (historic) settlement form?*
- *Does the landscape include distinctive features which are important to a settlement's sense of place?*
- *Does the landscape contribute to settlement identity through providing physical, visual or perceptual distinction between settlements?*

3.13 The findings of the Green Belt study provide a review of each of the Landscape Character Areas within South Tyneside in relation to the above two criteria i.e. setting and identity.

3.14 Part 3 of the LCA concludes that ***"... the Green Belt in South Tyneside plays an important role in maintaining the setting and identity of the individual settlements. There are no substantial areas which do not play a major role in one or other of these key Green Belt aims, and therefore the principal purposes as set out in policy EA1"***.

The South Tyneside Local Plan Green Belt Review (LPGBR) and South Tyneside Strategic Land Review Study (SLRS)

3.15 The LPGBR summarises how the Council can demonstrate that ***"... exceptional circumstances exist at the borough wide level (through the Stage One Green Belt Review) and the process by which individual parcels of land (are) assessed (though the Stage Two Green Belt Review)."***

3.16 The LPGBR Stage Three Report then details how the Council has ***"...assessed and justified making detailed boundary amendments to the Green Belt for (the) emerging Local Plan based upon the detailed exceptional circumstances that exist for those individual boundaries."***

3.17 The report reviews South Tyneside's existing Green Belt in order to inform the ELP and is intended to aid decisions on where the Green Belt may be amended, if necessary, to accommodate future development requirements.

3.18 The Sites are all located within the South Tyneside Green Belt and their individual LPGBR assessment ratings are summarised below in Table 3.1. In the LPGBR, the contribution that

each Site makes to the Green Belt is reviewed against the five NPPF Purposes of Green Belt (see above para. 3.1).

3.19 The LPGBR Assessment Criteria are as follows;

- *A: Zero Impact; makes no contribution to the openness of the Green Belt; performs weakly;*
- *B: Minor impact, which can be mitigated; makes a limited contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, whereby the removal of the parcel would have a minor impact upon the overall openness of the Green Belt; performs moderately;*
- *C: Moderate impact, which can be mitigated; makes a limited contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, whereby the removal of this parcel would have a moderate impact upon the overall openness of the Green Belt; performs moderately;*
- *D: Adverse impact/ some mitigation feasible; contributes to openness in a significant way, whereby removal of part of the parcel would have a major impact upon the overall openness of the Green Belt; performs relatively strongly; and*
- *E: Significant adverse impact; contributes to openness in a strong and undeniable way, where removal of the parcel from the Green Belt would detrimentally undermine the overall openness of the Green Belt; performs strongly.*

3.20 The SLRS was prepared by the Council to provide evidence of its capacity to accommodate additional housing and employment development. National planning policy requires local authorities to ensure that there is a supply of deliverable housing site to meet housing requirements and that enough land is available to support the needs of businesses, or whether there is a need to review planning designations such as Green Belt boundaries. However, the SLRS does not allocate sites for development nor does it set planning policy but is used to help inform policies in the ELP. A summary of its findings insofar as these relate to the Sites can be found below in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1: LPGBR/ SLRS SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Site	Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3: Assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	LPGBR Conclusions; Overall Contribution to Green Belt	SLRS Conclusions; Suitability for Development
BC58/ H3.68 * (Site 2) North of New Road Boldon					Performs Relatively Strongly but capable of mitigation.	Potentially Suitable

BC25a/H3.59 (Site 3) Land east of Boker Lane Baldon	A	C	D	A	Performs Moderately	Potentially Suitable
BC33a/H3.61 (E. part of Site 4) Land east and west of Sunderland Road East Baldon	D	C	D	A	Performs Moderately	Potentially Suitable
BC 31b (Central Part of Site 4) Land east and west of Sunderland Road East Baldon	D	C	C	A	Performs Relatively Strongly	Potentially Suitable
BC28d* (West Part of Site 4) Land east and west of Sunderland Road East Baldon					Performs Moderately	Not Considered Suitable
BC45b* (West Part of Site 7) Land west of Shields Road, Cleadow					Performs Strongly	Not Considered Suitable
BC46d (East Part of Site 7) Land west of Shields Road, Cleadow	C	C	D	A	Performs Moderately	Not Considered Suitable
BC48b/H3.2 (Majority of west part of Site 8) Land South of Cleadow Park	C	A	D	A	Performs Moderately	Potentially Suitable
BC48c/H3.3 (Majority of East Part of Site 8) Land South of Cleadow Park	B	A	D	A	Performs Moderately	Potentially Suitable
BC44/H3.70 (Site 9) Land west of Sunderland Road, Cleadow	C	C	D	A	Performs Moderately	Potentially Suitable
WH 9a/9b /H3.74/H3.75 (Site 16) Land north of Shearwater, Whitburn	C	C	D	A	Performs Moderately	Potentially Suitable

4.0 COMPARATIVE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL & GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Following a Site visit and a review of baseline material, the seven Sites have been assessed in terms of the above four NPPF functions (see above, para. 3.1). In evaluating the contribution of the land to the Green Belt, the following criteria (Table 4.1) were used to inform the contribution of the Sites to the NPPF first four purposes of the Green Belt:

Table 4.1: Contribution of Green Belt function categories

Threshold	Assessment
Significant	Significant Contribution to Green Belt function
Some	Some Contribution to Green Belt function
Limited	Limited Contribution to Green Belt function

4.2 With reference to the methodology used within the LCA, Part 3 of the study identifies landscape and visual objectives for each of the four purposes of the Green belt and these are set out in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: Landscape and visual objectives relating to Green Belt purposes Green Belt purposes Landscape and visual objective

Green Belt purposes	Landscape and visual objective
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Maintaining settlement identity, and strong, defensible, Green Belt boundaries
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Maintaining settlement identity (including actual and perceived separation between settlements)
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Maintaining perceived separation of town and country, including strong, defensible Green Belt boundaries
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Protecting areas of landscape which contribute to setting and character of historic towns and historic features within settlements

4.3 Although the study related to borough-wide landscape character areas, for the purposes of this strategic review of each of the seven Sites, the landscape and visual objectives identified above have been utilised at a site specific scale to assist in the determination of the contribution of each Site to the purposes of the Green Belt.

Assessment against the Characteristics of the Green Belt

- 4.4 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are 'their openness and their permanence,' (paragraph 133). In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development on the identified sites.
- 4.5 An assessment will be made of the openness of the Green Belt in that particular location and to what extent the removal of the Site would have on the perception of openness in the remaining designated area.
- 4.6 In addition, the Sites and locations will be shown demonstrating their relationship to existing elements, such as roads and rivers, as well as visual barriers, such as ridgelines and areas of woodland. This is to help assess the impacts of the development upon the openness of the remaining designated areas and to help identify boundaries that may be considered to be 'permanent'.
- Definitions
- 4.7 When considering the ability of each site to meet each of the purposes of the Green Belt, the following definitions should be considered.
- Openness
- 4.8 Openness is taken to be the degree to which the area is unaffected by built structures. It is considered that, in order to be a robust assessment, this should be considered from first principles, i.e. acknowledging existing structures that occur within the area, rather than seeing them as being 'washed over' by the existing Green Belt designation.
- Sprawl
- 4.9 Disorganised and unattractive extension to developed area (perhaps lacking defensible boundaries).
- Defensible boundaries
- 4.10 The NPPF states that, when choosing boundaries, 'local authorities should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent,' (paragraph 139).
- 4.11 A description of the characteristics; an appraisal of potential landscape and visual effects; and a review of contributions to the Green Belt of each of the Sites is set out below.

Site 2 Land north of New Road, Boldon (ref: H3.68)

- This site has been identified as potential green belt release housing land (H3.68)
- NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
- LM2 'Downhill'
- LCA 34 'Boldon – Cleadon Fragmented Farmland'

Landscape Character

4.12 The 4.2 ha Site is located within a pastoral field on the northern edge of Boldon as illustrated with reference to **Figure 1, Figure 4A** and **Figure 5..** The L-shaped Site extends from B1298 New Road which is fronted by residential development to the south and to the north wraps around a play area. The area context is defined by school playing fields to the east and further playing fields and a health centre to the west and immediately to the north is Boldon Woods, an area of scrub woodland growing on the former colliery site. The lowest point of the site is in the north east where a permanent boggy pool exists. The Site is bounded by wire fences and overgrown hedgerows with the latter enclosing the site to the east and west.

Visual Influence

4.13 The Site is well contained due to the nature of surrounding built form and vegetated boundaries. A public footpath obtains open views into the Site from along New Road, and receptors on the road and within residential properties to the south of this also obtain open views into the Site. The site is bordered by Public Rights of Way (PROWs) to the west and north and in addition the PROW to the east is a Bridleway which has open views across the site. The PROW to the north has partially open and partly screened views, whilst the PROW to the west has largely screened views. The play area to the west has screened/ filtered views due to the foreground hedgerows.

4.14 The ridgeline location on which West Boldon is located offers distant views to the north. From the highest point, just under a kilometre to the south of the Site near the local landmark of St. Nicholas Church (at open space by St. Nicholas View), the views out of the West Boldon Conservation Area are panoramic with local landmarks to the north identifiable for many miles. However, although the Site is visible from this location, due to distance it would appear to be a relatively small part of the wider panorama and any housing development would be seen in the context of the foreground residential areas. In addition, away from the viewpoint referred to, the introspective nature of the linear hillside residential development more generally limits views out to the north.

Landscape Value

- 4.15 The Site is within the Green Belt, although the locally substantial screening effect of the woodland to the north, overgrown hedgerow to the east and built form to the west and south limits local intervisibility with the surrounding area and higher land around St. Nicholas Church in the Boldon Conservation Area which lies approximately 750m to the south at its closest point.

Table 4.3: Review of Contribution of Site 2 to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The Site has a limited role in restricting sprawl to the northeast of Boldon, as the Site is closely bounded by residential development on New Road to the south which presents a hard urban built edge; a play area, playing fields and community buildings immediately to the west and playing fields immediately to the east.	Limited
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	There is no intervisibility between the Site at Boldon and Boldon Colliery to the west and Whiteleas to the north.	Limited
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Site retains an area of agricultural land adjacent to the urban edge of Boldon, although adjacent buildings to the west and sports fields to the east impact on the character of the countryside and the sense of openness.	Limited
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The land has limited intervisibility and does not contribute to the setting and special character of historic Boldon Conservation Area which lies approx. 750m to the south at its closest point.	Limited
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Limited

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

- 4.16 The ELP has identified a number of key landscape considerations to be addressed if this site is developed for housing. These considerations and their proposed design resolutions are listed below;
- i) The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision;
 - a civic square or space is proposed at the hub of this development;
 - an informal open space is proposed in the north-east corner around the proposed SUDS pond; and
 - pedestrian links will be provided to the adjacent play area and PROWs.
 - ii) The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent, in

particular a landscape buffer is required to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and will include the retention of mature trees;

- existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and reinforced with a new hedgerow and a tree planting buffer to the east and north; and
 - street trees are proposed along the New Road frontage and within the site itself.
- iii) The Public Right of Way which runs along the eastern boundary of the site should be retained;
- this path will be retained.

Summary

4.17 The Site's location on the northern edge of Boldon adjacent to residential development and set within a relatively well enclosed pastoral field bound by vegetation and buildings provides limited contribution to the Green Belt in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework functions.

4.18 In line with the requirements of the ELP, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;

- the retention and reinforcement of the existing hedgerows and creation of new hedgerows where those existing are off-site to strengthen boundaries for screening and to create a landscape buffer against further development to the east;
- establishment of street trees within the proposed development and along the New Road frontage to improve landscape structure;
- a civic space is proposed together with an informal open space;
- pedestrian links will be provided to the adjacent play area and PROWs; and
- the design will ensure that the scale of development does not adversely affect distant views from Boldon Conservation Area.

Site 3 Land east of Boker Lane, Boldon (ref: H3.59)

- The Site has been identified as potential green belt release housing land (H3.59)
- NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
- LM2 'Downhill'
- LCA 34 'Boldon – Cleadon Fragmented Farmland'

4.19 Landscape Character

- 4.20 The 9.3ha Site is located south of New Road adjacent to residential development on the north-eastern edge of Boldon as illustrated with reference to **Figure 1, Figure 4b** and **Figure 5**. The Site comprises two arable fields bound by built form on the west and south, New Road to the north and a lit and surfaced PROW and Bridleway to the east. The fields are divided by a hedgerow and PROW which runs W-E with approximately a quarter of the area on the north side and three-quarters on the south side. The surrounding area to the north and east is largely urban fringe comprising an area of scrub and rough grass and medium to small scale fields on the banks of the River Don, bound by hedgerow and hedgerow trees and enclosed by tree belts and settlement edges. The Site is relatively flat and low-lying at approximately 25m AOD.
- 4.21 The presence and close proximity of the adjacent built edge means there is limited sense of remoteness, particularly when combined with the influence of New Road to the north and the railway line crossing the area to the east.

Visual Influence

- 4.22 Due to the relatively flat nature of the topography in the area, the Site is well contained within the immediate locality, with views across fields curtailed by woodland and tree belts and the settlement edge.
- 4.23 Visual receptors include recreational receptors using the PROW which crosses the Site who would obtain open views to the south. Receptors within residential properties on the north-eastern edge of Boldon including those along Lilburn Close, Brooke Avenue and Keats Avenue would obtain partially screened or filtered views on account of foreground trees and/or hedgerows. In addition, receptors using Boker Lane immediately to the west and New Road to the north obtain open or filtered views into the Site, with views from the PROW to the east largely screened or filtered. Elsewhere views of the site are screened by a combination of intervening built form and vegetation.

Landscape Value

- 4.24 The Site is within the Green Belt. Noise from the nearby urban area of Boldon and road traffic reduces the tranquillity of the area, whilst the road/rail network in this area creates an exposed settlement edge and reduces the sense of remoteness.

Table 4.4: Review of Contribution of Site 3 to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The landscape assists in restricting further urban sprawl to the north of Boldon, although residential development on the edge of the settlement and the road and rail corridors present a fragmented urban	Limited

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
	edge.	
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	There is currently no intervisibility between the Site and Whiteleas to the north or Cleadon to the east. New Road to the north of the Site and the double hedgerow along the lit and surfaced PROW/ Bridleway to the east together form a strong physical boundary beyond which development should be restricted so as to prevent the towns merging.	Limited
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The western and southern boundaries are bordered by existing urban influences; however the Site is located on the north-eastern edge of Boldon, on the edge of the River Don with open countryside beyond.	Some
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The land does not form part of the visual envelope of the historic core of Boldon and therefore does not contribute to the setting and special character of historic towns.	Limited
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Limited

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

4.25 The ELP has identified a number of key landscape considerations to be addressed if this site is developed for housing. These considerations and their proposed design resolutions are listed below;

- i) The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision and opportunities to re-naturalise the water course should be explored;
 - an informal recreation area is proposed at the north end of the site around a SUDS feature and potentially the re-naturalised watercourse if feasible.
- ii) The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent;
 - existing boundaries will be preserved and reinforced as necessary.
- iii) The bridleway to be retained and improved and the trees running along it to be retained;
 - the bridleway and PROW will be retained and improved as necessary and adjacent hedgerows and trees will also be retained.
- iv) Tree buffers to the north and south of the site should be retained. Buffer between the water course and residential development should be at least 8 metres;
 - existing trees will be retained, and additional tree screen planting is proposed along the east, south and south-east sides of the site together with street trees on the west and north sides.

- v) Existing hedgerows should be retained;
- these will be retained and augmented as necessary.

Summary

- 4.26 The Site has a limited contribution to the Green Belt NPPF function in this location, being already defined by strong defensible boundaries. The development of the Site would enable the retention of the physical separation between both East Boldon and Cleadon along the B1298 where the settlements would remain clearly distinct. Likewise, the gap between East Boldon and Whiteleas would be retained.
- 4.27 In line with the requirements of the ELP, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;
- the retention of existing trees and hedgerows along the boundaries, and new tree planting to reinforce the landscape structure and settlement character of this part of Boldon;
 - improving the character and robustness of the urban edge by implementing new peripheral tree planting including screen planting and buffer planting to the east, south and south west and street tree planting to the west and north;
 - also in line with landscape management zones guidelines for this area, an informal recreation area could be incorporated within the Site, softening the urban edge; and
 - opportunities to re-naturalise the water course would also be explored in line with planning requirements.

Site 4 Land east and west of Sunderland Road, East Boldon (ref: H3.61)

BC28d (West Part of Site 4); BC 31b (Central Part of Site 4) ;

BC33a/H3.61 (East part of Site 4)

- The eastern end of the Site has been identified as potential green belt release housing land (H3.61)
- NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
- LM2 'Downhill'
- BC31b and BC33a (i.e. west of the A184) lie within LCA 32 'Boldon Downhill' whereas BC33a/H3.61, on the east side, lies within LCA 33 'Boldon Flats and Whitburn Moor'

Landscape Character

- 4.28 The 11.6ha Site and its component parts is located immediately adjacent to the southern edge of East Boldon as illustrated with reference to **Figure 1, Figure 4c** and **Figure 5**. The highest point in the borough is just over a mile west of the westernmost edge of Site 4 at Boldon Downhill which rises to 90m AOD. To the east of this, the land falls away beyond Site 4 into the lower lying Whitburn Moor. Land use is a mixture of arable and pasture and field boundaries tend to comprise gappy hedgerows and wire fences. The character area comprises stands of woodland around farms; however, the Site itself is devoid of any woodland but has peripheral hedges and mature hedgerow trees giving a sense of enclosure.

Visual Influence

- 4.29 The A184 Sunderland Road divides the eastern end of the Site from the much larger western end, which is further divided by a north-south track/ PROW called Green Lane. Between Green Lane and Sunderland Road is a triangular site containing Low House Farm and outbuildings, which has a mixture of livestock and caravan / plant sales. Visual receptors in addition to those on this farm include residents along the southern edge of East Boldon, in Hunter Close, Ferndale Grove, Natley Avenue, St. John's Terrace and along the A184; although filtering/ partial screening is provided by mature garden trees, shrubs and fences especially in respect of single storey houses. Close, open views will be obtained from a PROW which runs along the southern edge and crosses the western end, and from a cricket pitch and clubhouse which adjoin the north-east corner of Site 4.

Landscape Value

- 4.30 The Site and its component parts are within the Green Belt, and two PROWs cross the western part of Site 4. Noise from Boldon and local road traffic reduces the tranquillity of the area, however beyond the settlement boundary to the south, the land displays some characteristics of open countryside although the perception of this openness is reduced by pylons along the ridge to the south. The dilapidated former Army base which lies immediately to the south and the poor condition of the extant farm sheds and caravan sales business all add to the urban fringe site characteristics and further reduce the local landscape value.

Table 4.5: Review of Contribution of Site 4 to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The land will assist in restricting further urban sprawl to the south of East Boldon by providing a definitive and defensible edge to further expansion.	Some
Prevent nearby	The Site currently provides a limited contribution to	Limited to Some

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
towns from merging into one another	maintaining Boldon and Downhill to the south merging into each other. The development of this land would result in a degree of physical convergence, however this would not be visually perceived due to the distance (approximately 1.2km) and the change in topography between the two settlements. However, the wider settlement as a whole plays an important role in providing physical distinction between the Boldons and Sunderland. The elevated ground around Downhill provides a high degree of visual and perceptual separation so any development within the Sites on the edge of the settlement would not readily reduce the perceived physical separation between the two settlements.	
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The northern parts of the Site are bordered by and contain some development, and the southern and western boundaries are relatively contained by existing mature treebelts and hedgerows. To the south east the site is contained by the cricket ground and the headwaters of the River Don.	Some
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site does not influence the historic setting of the East Boldon conservation area, and therefore does not contribute to the setting and special character of historic towns.	Limited
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Limited-Some

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

4.31 The ELP has identified a number of key landscape considerations to be addressed if the eastern part of the site is developed for housing. These considerations however apply equally to the western half of the Site and their proposed design resolutions are listed below;

- i) The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision;
 - informal and formal open space provision is proposed.
- ii) The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent;
 - existing boundaries will be preserved and enhanced with tree and hedgerow planting as necessary.
- iii) Formal connections to East Boldon metro station should be established;
 - connections from the site to the existing adjacent PROW network/ street footpaths will be created to facilitate this.
- iv) Tree buffers should be preserved and enhanced;

- existing trees and hedgerows will be preserved, with additional tree belts proposed along the south and west boundaries of the site.

Summary

4.32 Site 4 has limited, or some, contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt function as defined by the NPPF. Its boundaries are defined by a legible landscape framework and the opportunity exists to establish a stronger gateway contrast between the countryside and urban development on the eastern edge of Boldon on the A184.

4.33 In line with the requirements of the ELP, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;

- the enhancement of hedgerows and tree cover by the planting of additional trees and hedgerows along the southern and western boundaries of the site in keeping with the existing character of the more established, wooded parts of Boldon Downhill;
- screen planting along the north east boundary to reduce visual effects;
- provision of formal and informal public open space; and
- ensuring development does not encroach beyond the physical landscape boundaries to the south of the Site.

Site 7 Land west of Shields Road, Cleadon

Site 7a Land west of Shields Road, Cleadon; BC45b

- NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
- LM3 'Boldon Cleadon'
- LCA 34 'Boldon-Cleadon Fragmented Farmland'

Landscape Character

4.34 The 11.82ha Site is located to the north of Cleadon village on land to the west of Cleadon North Farm and to the north of the residential settlement edge as shown in **Figure 1, Figure 4d** and **Figure 5**. Topography rises to the east of the Site towards Cleadon Hill, whilst the Site itself is located on the lower part of a relatively open slope ranging in height from approximately 35m AOD at its easternmost side to 25m AOD at its lowest point in the south west corner.

4.35 The Site comprises two medium-to-large scale fields used for pasture and enclosed by hedgerow boundaries. To the south, the settlement edge of Cleadon contains the Site; to the

east at the top of the slope are two hedged fields lying adjacent to Cleadon North Farm and Shields Road while to the west and north, the Site opens out to open countryside beyond.

- 4.36 Although the area is mostly influenced by built development to the south and east of the Site, the surrounding built-up edge of South Tyneside also influences the character to a lesser extent as it is intervisible with this due to its slightly elevated location.

Visual Influence

- 4.37 Due to its slightly elevated location, more distant views out across Whiteleas and beyond this, towards Newcastle, are obtained from the site.
- 4.38 Visual receptors include road users and residents to the east with mid-ground open elevated views along Shields Road, and in Cleadon North Farm and adjacent Hexham House. Receptors in residences along the south side of the site, along Sandgrove, The Close, and Cleadon Lea would all have close potential views albeit filtered /screened by foreground high, mature hedgerows. In addition, views may be obtained by receptors in residences on the south-eastern edge of Whiteleas and by staff and pupils of the Cleadon Church of England Academy in Boldon Lane although again there would be some foreground filtering/ screening by trees and hedgerows.

Landscape Value

- 4.39 The Site is within the Green Belt and is intervisible with the wider countryside.

Table 4.6: Review of Contribution of Site 7a to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Due to the influence of built form along Shields Road to the north of Cleadon village centre, the Site is strongly influenced by this; however any new development would contribute to the extension of the settlement to the north-west. There are however no major defined boundaries to the west and north and as such any proposals would need to respect and reinforce existing hedgerow boundaries to create a new defensible edge to the Green Belt at this point.	Some to Significant
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	The Site does contribute to the separation distance between Cleadon and Cleadon Park to the north and Cleadon and Whiteleas to the north-west.	Some to Significant
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Site is defined by existing residential development to the south providing some contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Some
Preserve the setting and special	The Site is distantly influenced by views to and from Cleadon Hills, with the water tower a prominent landmark	Limited to Some

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
character of historic towns	in views from the local area. However the setting and prominence of the tower would be retained.	
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Some

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

4.40 In line with good practice, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;

- maintaining a strategic gap between Cleadon and Whiteleas;
- informal and formal open space provision within the Site;
- connections to existing PROW network;
- screen tree planting to houses along the southern boundaries; and
- landscape buffer planting along the west, east and northern boundaries to reinforce existing hedgerows and provide a robust defensible new boundary to the Green Belt.

Summary

4.41 The Site is sensitive in views from the wider area to the north and north-west. However, the built-up edge of the settlement provides a degree of containment and influences the character of the Site, which provides Some contribution to the function of the Green Belt as defined by the NPPF. Should the Site come forward for development, it should not extend north beyond existing field hedgerows which, suitably reinforced, would provide a defensible boundary.

4.42 In support of this, the following mitigation and landscape enhancement features are proposed;

- existing peripheral hedgerows should be reinforced with a belt of hedgerow tree planting to provide a robust landscape buffer and defensible edge against further development; and
- screen tree planting would be provided along the southern and eastern boundaries.

Site 7b Land west of Shields Road, Cleadon; BC46d

- NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
- LM3 'Boldon Cleadon'
- LCA 34 'Boldon-Cleadon Fragmented Farmland'

Landscape Character

- 4.43 The 6.42ha Site is located to the north of Cleadon on higher land immediately to the south west of Cleadon North Farm and west of Hexham House as illustrated with reference to **Figure 1, Figure 4d** and **Figure 5**. Topography rises to the east of the Site towards Cleadon Hill at 70m AOD, whilst the Site itself is located at the top of a relatively open slope ranging from 35m-45m AOD.
- 4.44 The Site comprises two medium scale fields used for pasture and enclosed by hedgerow boundaries. To the north and east Cleadon North Farm, Hexham house and housing along Shields Road; to the south, the settlement edge of Cleadon contains the Site; while to the west the Site opens out to countryside beyond.
- 4.45 Although the area is mostly influenced by built development to the north, south and east of the Site, the surrounding built-up edge of South Tyneside also influences the character to the west as it is intervisible with this due to its elevated location.

Visual Influence

- 4.46 The elevated ridge along Shields Road to the east of the Site obtains distant views out across Whiteleas and beyond this, panoramic views towards Newcastle.
- 4.47 Visual receptors include road users with open elevated views along Shields Road, and receptors in residences with open elevated views in Shields Road, Cleadon North Farm and adjacent Hexham House. Receptors in residences along the south side of the site along Cleadon Meadows would have close potential views albeit filtered by foreground mature trees. In addition, more distant views may be obtained by receptors in residences on the south-eastern edge of Whiteleas and Cleadon Lea; and closer oblique views from houses in The Close and Sandgrove and by staff and pupils of the Cleadon Church of England Academy in Boldon Lane although again there would be some foreground filtering/ screening by trees and hedgerows.

Landscape Value

- 4.48 The Site is within the Green Belt and is intervisible with the wider countryside.

Table 4.6: Review of Contribution of Site 7b to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Due to the influence of built form along Shields Road to the north of Cleadon village centre, the Site is strongly influenced by this although any new development would contribute to the extension of the settlement to the north. Although there are no strongly defined boundaries	Limited to Some

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
	to the west;to the north and east, Cleadon North Farm, Hexham House and Shields Road provide containment and to the south the residential edge of the village likewise. Any proposals would therefore need to respect and reinforce existing boundaries and associated hedgerows to the west.	
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	The Site does contribute to a certain extent to the separation distance between Cleadon and Cleadon Park to the north and Cleadon and Whiteleas to the north-west.	Limited to Some
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Site is defined by existing roads and residential development to the north, east and south providing limited to some contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Limited to Some
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The Site is influenced by views to and from Cleadon Hills, with the water tower a prominent landmark in views from the local area. However the setting and prominence of the tower would be retained even if there was new development along Shields Road.	Some
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Limited to Some

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

4.49 In line with good practice, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;

- maintaining a strategic gap between Cleadon and Whiteleas;
- informal and formal open space provision within the Site;
- connections to existing PROW network;
- screen tree planting to houses along the southern and eastern boundaries; and
- landscape buffer planting along the west and northern boundaries to reinforce existing hedgerows and provide a robust defensible new boundary to the Green Belt.

Summary

4.50 Due to its elevation, the Site is sensitive in views from the wider area to the north and north-west. However, the built-up edge of the settlement provides a degree of containment and influences the character of the Site which provides Limited to Some contribution to the function of the Green Belt as defined by the NPPF. Should the Site come forward for development, it should not extend north beyond Cleadon Farm North which provides a defensible boundary.

4.51 In addition, the following mitigation and landscape enhancement features are proposed;

- existing peripheral hedgerows should be reinforced with hedgerow tree planting to provide a robust landscape buffer and defensible edge against further development; and
screen tree planting would be provided along the southern and eastern boundaries.

Site 8; Land South of Cleadon Park (ref: H3.2 & H3.3)

- NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
- LM3 'Baldon Cleadon'
- LCA 34 'Baldon-Cleadon Fragmented Farmland'

Landscape Character

- 4.52 The 18.4ha Site is located immediately to the south of Cleadon Park on land to the west of Sunnyside Farm and is split into two discrete halves by Sunderland Road, as illustrated with reference to **Figure 1, Figure 4e** and **Figure 5**. Topography rises steeply to the east of the Site towards Cleadon Hill at 70m AOD, whilst the Site itself is located on a relatively even, open slope at 55m AOD to the east falling to approximately 35m AOD at its lowest point in the south west corner.
- 4.53 Two important local landscape features can be found on Cleadon Hill; the Water Tower and the disused Mill, both of which are listed. The eastern part of the site is partly bounded by the imposing Sunnyside Farm which overlooks the Site at the east end and there is also a public house and surrounding trees in the north west corner on Sunderland Road.
- 4.54 The Site comprises two medium-to-large scale arable fields. To the north, the settlement edge of Cleadon Park bounds both halves of the Site. To the east is the aforementioned Sunnyside Farm with its surrounding trees on the edge of Cleadon Hill. To the south east is a large double belt of mature trees; to the south at approximately 250m distance is the northern residential edge of Cleadon forming an important gap between the settlements; whilst to the south west and west, beyond the boundary of the A1018 Shields Road, the Site opens out to the countryside below.
- 4.55 Although the area's character is primarily influenced by built development to the north and south of the Site, the nearby built-up edge of South Tyneside also influences the character as it is intervisible due to the elevated location of the Site.

Visual Influence

- 4.56 The elevated nature of the Site results in distant westerly views out across Whiteleas and beyond this, more distant views towards Newcastle.

- 4.57 Visual receptors include road users with open views along Shields Road and filtered/ screened views due to hedgerows along Sunderland Road, and pedestrians with open or filtered views from the PROW which runs the length of the northern boundary.
- 4.58 Residential receptors obtain open elevated views of the site from Sunnyside Farm at the east end of the Site. Receptors in residences along the north side of the site along Luffness Drive, Marian Way, Ganton Drive, Carnoustie Drive, Sunnilaws, Clyvedon Rise, Cleadon Hill Drive, Cleadon Hill Road and Mill Grove would all have close potential views albeit screened/ filtered by foreground mature hedgerows. In addition, open views may be obtained by receptors in residences on the northern edge of Cleadon in Thornleigh Gardens although this could be mitigated by substantial tree buffer planting (see below).
- 4.59 Views of the site from Cleadon Hill, the Linnet Way Long Distance Footpath, and Cleadon Mill, are largely screened by foreground topography and the mature trees which enclose the site from the east and south east.

Landscape Value

- 4.60 The Site is within the Green Belt with distant views out across the wider countryside. The easternmost part of the site abuts the Cleadon Hills Conservation Area and Cleadon Hills AHLV.

Table 4.7: Review of Contribution of Site 8 to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Due to the juxtaposition of Cleadon Park immediately to the north, the Site is strongly influenced by built form; however, any new development would contribute to the extension of the settlement to the south. The substantial tree belt on the south east Site edge and Shields Road along the south western Site edge in combination with a substantial new tree belt along the southern section would restrict any further sprawl.	Some
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	The Site currently contributes to the separation distance between Cleadon Park and Cleadon to the south. However, the mature tree belt on the south east Site edge and Shields Road along the south western Site edge in combination with a substantial new tree belt along the southern section would create a new defensible edge to the Green Belt and maintain a strategic gap between the two settlements.	Some to Significant
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Site is defined by existing roads and residential development to the north and west providing some contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Some
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The Site is influenced by views to and from Cleadon Hills, with the water tower within the conservation area a prominent landmark in views from the local area. However, the setting and prominence of the tower could be retained despite new development along Shields Road. Also, existing mature trees and Sunnyside Farm at the east end	Some

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
	of the site act as a visual buffer to the conservation area.	
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Some

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

4.61 The ELP has identified a number of key landscape considerations to be addressed if the site is developed for housing. These considerations and their proposed design resolutions are listed below;

- i) The sites should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision;
 - Both formal and informal public spaces are proposed.
- ii) The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the sites and the Green Belt to which they are adjacent, in particular a landscape buffer should be created to the south of site 3.3;
 - a broad tree planting buffer including larger specimen trees for initial effect is proposed along the southern boundary, whilst maintaining the strategic gap between Cleadon and Cleadon Park and continuing to allow views to the Cleadon water tower.
- iii) Tree buffer to the north of sites 3.2 and 3.3 should be retained;
 - this will be retained and augmented by additional tree and hedgerow planting.
- iv) Footpath running along the north of sites 3.2 and 3.3 should be retained and improved;
 - this will be retained and improved and connections into the Site facilitated.
- v) Lower densities should be considered towards the eastern part of site 3.3 to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Cleadon Hills Conservation Area and the locally listed heritage asset (Sunniside Farm);
 - lower density housing will be considered in this area and screen buffer planting is proposed for the east end of the site.

Summary

- 4.62 Due to its elevation, the Site is sensitive in views from the wider area to the south and south-west. However, the built-up edge of Cleadon Park to the north, Shields Road to the west and south west and Cleadon Hill to the east provides a degree of containment and combine to influence the character of the Site, which provides Some contribution to the function of the Green Belt as defined by the NPPF.
- 4.63 In line with the requirements of the ELP, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;
- retention of the mature tree belt on the south east Site edge and Shields Road along the south western Site edge in combination with a proposed substantial new tree belt along the southern section would create a new defensible edge to the Green Belt and maintain a strategic gap between the two settlements;
 - retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows will further assist in mitigating any potentially adverse landscape and visual effects; and
 - lower housing densities will be considered and additional semi-mature tree planting would be proposed towards the east end of the site to mitigate effects upon the Cleadon Hills Conservation area and Sunnyside Farm.
- **Site 9 Land west of Sunderland Road, Cleadon (ref: H3.70)**
 - This site has been identified as potential green belt release housing land (H3.70).
 - NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
 - LM5 'North Sunderland'
 - LCA 33 'Baldon Flats and Whitburn Moor'

Landscape Character

- 4.64 The 10.3ha Site comprises a mix of urban fringe agricultural land on the south-eastern edge of Cleadon as illustrated with reference to **Figure 1**, **Figure 4f** and **Figure 5**. The land comprises relatively few landscape features, has sporadic planting along boundaries and is relatively open. The Site is bound by strong physical boundaries; to the west and north the built form associated with the settlement edge defines the Site boundaries, whilst to the east and south busy road corridors influence the sense of tranquillity/remoteness in the area and act as defensible boundaries to the Site.

Visual Influence

- 4.65 Visual receptors include residential receptors along West Meadows Road, whose views are partially screened/ filtered by foreground trees and hedgerow; and those in Farm Road and

Mayfield Drive who have elevated, mostly open views of the Site. Users of the busy road corridors of the A1018 Sunderland Road to the east and Moor Lane to the South which connects to Boldon, also have largely open views into the Site. Due to the low-lying nature of the topography, the Site is seen in open views in the context of the built edge of Cleadon. There are also long views south towards Sunderland.

Landscape Value

- 4.66 The Site is within the Green Belt, however the urban fringe character and influence of roads reduces the sense of openness and remoteness.

Table 4.8: Review of Contribution of Site 9 to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The landscape assists in restricting further urban sprawl to the southeast of Cleadon, protecting the open character of the Green Belt to the south, although the Academy of Light training facility is visible to the south.	Some
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	There is currently no visibility between the Site and Whitburn to the east and Sunderland/Fullwell to the south and as such, the Site provides limited contribution to this function due to the presence of the main road corridors which define its boundaries. Any development of the Site would not reduce the gap between settlement boundaries.	Limited
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The boundaries are defined by gappy hedgerows and few trees, although any development would result in the loss of countryside. However, the road corridors provide defensible boundaries containing the Site	Limited
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	This Site plays a limited role in the setting of the Cleadon Hills to the north, and Boldon Downhill to the west, though its low-lying nature means that this role is low-key.	Limited
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Limited

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

- 4.67 The ELP has identified a number of key landscape considerations to be addressed if the site is developed for housing. These considerations and their proposed design resolutions are listed below;

- i) The site should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision;
 - both formal and informal public open space is proposed.

- ii) The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the site and the Green Belt to which it is adjacent;
 - existing boundaries will be retained and enhanced with street tree planting and hedgerows.
- iii) Mature trees to the east of the site should be retained and an appropriate landscaped buffer along Sunderland Road should be created;
 - mature trees will be retained and augmented as necessary;
 - there will also be buffer/ screen planting along the west and northern boundaries to reduce visual effects upon residents.
- iv) Houses should be set back from the eastern boundary of the site to retain the feeling of openness along the A1018;
 - this will be considered as part of the layout design.
- v) The southern part of the site is affected by surface water flooding as well as the gardens on West Meadows Roads. SuDS should seek to alleviate both the flooding on the site and on West Meadows Road;
 - SUDS is to be proposed in this area as part of an informal recreation space.

Summary

- 4.68 Although development would infill a parcel of land between the settlements, the physical boundaries which define the Site and effectively contain the settlement of Cleadon would not be breached. Moor Lane to the south and Sunderland Road to the east provide defensible boundaries to the Site whilst also containing any further expansion of the settlement.
- 4.69 In line with the requirements of the ELP, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;
- proposals would require the retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and mature trees and the enhancement of existing boundaries to the south and east along Moor Lane and Sunderland Road by hedgerow and tree structure planting; and
 - tree screen planting along the western and northern edge of the site is proposed to mitigate visual effects in this direction.

Site 16 Land north of Shearwater, Whitburn (ref: H3.74 & H3.75)

- This site has been identified as potential green belt release housing land (H3.74/H3.75).
- NCA 15 'Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau'
- LM4 'Cleadow Hills'
- LCA 29 'Whitburn Coast'

Landscape Character

4.70 The 1.64ha Site is located within a pastoral field on the northern edge of Whitburn as illustrated with reference to **Figure 1, Figure 4g** and **Figure 5**. The L-shaped Site extends from Shearwater residential development to the south and to the north wraps around Whitburn Lodge, a disused and derelict Public House. This combined with a row of makeshift stables and a caravan at the north end, add to the urban fringe characteristics of the Site and reduce its landscape value. The area landscape context is defined by coastal cliffs and shingle beaches of the Whitburn Coastal Park to the east and arable fields rising up to a ridge to the west. Immediately surrounding the Site, small groups of woodland define the coastal landscape to the north-east, whilst built form, Mill Lane and White Rocks Grove effectively contain the Site to the west and south.

Visual Influence

4.71 The Site is well contained due to the nature of surrounding built form and vegetated boundaries. A public roadside footpath obtains open views into the Site from along Mill Lane, while receptors within residential properties in White Rocks Grove also obtain open views into the Site. To the north east potential views from the Coastal Park and AHLV are screened by foreground tree belts and houses in Shearwater.

Landscape Value

4.72 The Site is within the Green Belt, although the locally substantial screening effect of the small clusters of woodland along the coast limits local views from the surrounding area including from the Whitburn Coastal Park and The Coast (Trow point to the administrative boundary with the City of Sunderland) AHLV.

Table 4.9: Review of Contribution of Site 16 to the Green Belt

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up	The Site restricts sprawl to the northeast of Whitburn, although the Site is bound by residential development on Shearwater to the south and Whitburn Lodge and	Some

Purposes of the Green Belt	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purpose
areas	hardstanding to the north which presents a hard urban built edge.	
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	There is no intervisibility between the Site at Whitburn and Cleadon to the west and Cleadon Park to the north.	Limited
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The Site retains an area of agricultural land adjacent to the urban edge of Whitburn, although urban fringe activities and urban development impact on the character of the countryside and the sense of openness to the north.	Limited
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The land does not form part of the visual envelope of the historic core of Whitburn and therefore does not contribute to the setting and special character of historic Whitburn Conservation Area.	Limited
Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt		Limited

Landscape and Visual Mitigation and other Design Considerations

4.73 The ELP has identified a number of key landscape considerations to be addressed if the site is developed for housing. These considerations and their proposed design resolutions are listed below;

- i) The sites should provide scope for environmental net gains, including onsite open space provision;
 - both formal and informal public open space is proposed;
- ii) The design and layout should actively seek to create and preserve, clear and defensible boundaries between the edge of the sites and the Green Belt to which they are adjacent;
 - existing peripheral boundary treatments will be preserved and enhanced.
- iii) Mature trees should be retained and tree planting throughout the sites should be used to minimise visual impacts of developing the sites;
 - mature trees and hedges will be retained and additional screen planting proposed on the west and south sides together with street tree planting.

Summary

4.74 The Site's location on the northern edge of Whitburn adjacent to residential development and set within a relatively well enclosed pastoral field bound by vegetation and a derelict public house provides Limited contribution to the Green Belt function in terms of the NPPF definition.

4.75 In line with the requirements of the ELP, opportunities to enhance the local landscape and mitigate landscape and visual effects include the following proposed features;

- reduction of potential visual impacts by additional tree screen planting along the west and south sides and by establishment of street trees within the proposed development;
- retention and reinforcement of the existing hedgerow and boundary wall along Mill Lane; and
- ensuring that the scale of development does not adversely affect views of the skyline of Whitburn.

5.0 SUMMARY

Comparative Assessment

- 5.1 This Appraisal provides a general overview of the Landscape and Visual context and key issues.
- 5.2 It is considered that in landscape and visual terms, there is potential to establish some residential development within each of the Sites; adding to the landscape structure and biodiversity of the area; and creating better defined urban edges, whilst also retaining and unaffacting the historic core of the settlements.
- 5.3 Key Landscape and Visual constraints to residential development include:
- Visual effect of development on skyline, particularly at Cleadon where the Cleadon Water Tower is a prominent feature in local views from within the character area as viewed from the open agricultural countryside to the west and south west.
 - Importance of retaining the visual links between the open countryside surrounding Boldon, Cleadon, Whiteleas and Cleadon Park.
- 5.4 Key Green Belt constraints to residential development include:
- Intervisibility between the Sites at Boldon, Cleadon, Cleadon Park and the surrounding countryside
 - Historic setting of Cleadon Hills and East/West Boldon Conservation Areas
- 5.5 Sites with the greatest potential to be released from Green Belt, in terms of the significance of their contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, are ranked as per Table 5.1 below. Sites with limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt have the greatest potential to be released, whilst Sites with significant contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt are unlikely to be released.

Table 5.1: Summary Table of Sites in terms of their Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt

SITE REFERENCE	Overall Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt	Location	Area (hectares)
Site 2	Limited	Land north of New Road, Boldon (ref: H3.68)	4.2
Site 3	Limited	Land east of Boker Lane, Boldon (ref: H3.59)	9.3
Site 9	Limited	Land west of Sunderland Road, Cleadon (ref: H3.70)	10.3
Site 16	Limited	Land north of Shearwater, Whitburn (ref: H3.74 & H3.75)	1.64
Site 4	Limited-Some	Land east and west of Sunderland Road, East Boldon (ref: H3.61)	11.6
Site 7b	Limited-Some	Land west of Shields Road, Cleadon	11.8
Site 7a	Some	Land west of Shields Road, Cleadon	6.42
Site 8	Some	Land South of Cleadon Park (ref: H3.2 & H3.3)	18.4

- 5.6 As noted in the LCA, all land within the Green belt contributes to the purposes of the Green Belt. However, at a site-specific level, there is scope for development within a number of the Sites identified in this strategic review.
- 5.7 Of those Sites which have been reviewed in terms of the contribution to the Green Belt, those with Limited contribution to the function of the Green Belt as defined by NPPF are Sites 2, 3, 9 and 16; and these are also sites which, in the ELP, have also been identified as potential housing sites.
- 5.8 Site 4 provides Limited-Some contribution to the function of the Green Belt as defined by NPPF, however it was noted that with landscape mitigation there is scope for portions of the component parts of this Site to be developed as described above; and in recognition of this potential the east part of the Site has been identified as a potential housing site in the ELP.
- 5.9 Site 7b is considered to currently provide Limited-Some contribution to the to the function of the Green Belt as defined by NPPF on account of its elevation and openness on its west side but is contained by existing development to the north, east and south. The Site represents a logical extension to Cleadon; would maintain a strategic gap between Cleadon and Whiteleas/ Cleadon Park; and with reinforced field hedgerows could create a new defensible edge to the Green Belt at this location.

- 5.10 Site 7a is considered to currently provide Some contribution to the to the function of the Green Belt as defined by NPPF on account of its openness on its north and west sides. Nevertheless, if developed there is still the opportunity to maintain a strategic gap between Cleadon and Whiteleas/ Cleadon Park and to reinforce existing field hedgerows to create a new defensible edge to the Green Belt.
- 5.11 Finally, Site 8 provides Some contribution to the function of the Green Belt as defined by NPPF and any development of this site must maintain a strategic gap between Cleadon Park and Cleadon, to be reinforced by a substantial landscape buffer. Most of this site has been identified as a potential housing site in the ELP.