

Staffordshire authorities

Staffordshire Green Belt Assessment

Addendum – Stage 2 site assessment

Lichfield District Council

Reference: Final Report

| 30 April 2026

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 313903-00

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1. Introduction

As an extension to the Staffordshire Green Belt Assessment (April 2026), Lichfield District Council (LDC) has appointed Ove Arup & Partners Ltd (Arup) to conduct a site-specific Green Belt Assessment (GBA) (typically referred to as a *Stage 2 assessment*) for one site within its authority area. The site lies within the West Midlands Green Belt and has been assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024), including consideration of whether it may constitute grey belt land.

Each authority included in the wider Staffordshire GBA is at a different stage of Local Plan preparation, with LDC having decided it was an appropriate time for this site to be assessed. This assessment will help to provide the evidence to enable LDC to make robust decisions as part of the preparation of their Local Plan. It is acknowledged that this is not a full Stage 2 assessment of all the possible sites that may require consideration across the authority area. It is instead a focussed assessment of the one site highlighted by the Council as requiring assessment at this stage.

The methodology applied in respect of the Green Belt purposes and grey belt assessment follows that set out in Chapter 4 of the Staffordshire GBA. In addition, the Stage 2 methodology includes an assessment of the potential harm to the Green Belt that could arise from the release of the site from the Green Belt.

2. Methodology

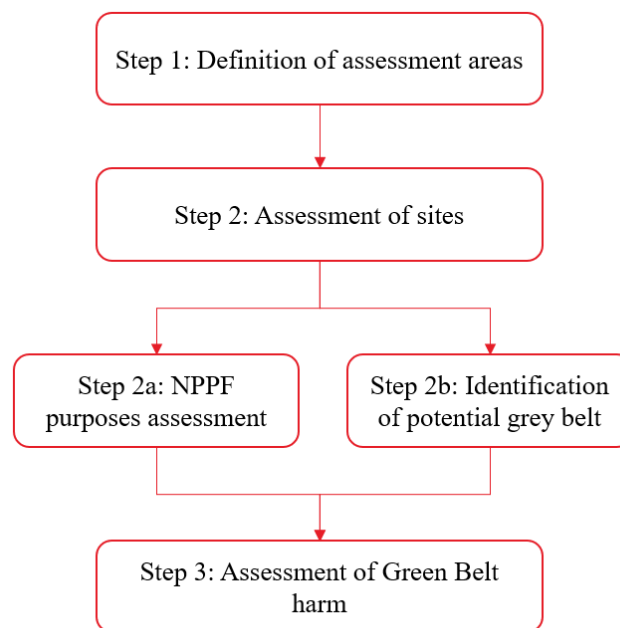
2.1 Overview

This section sets out the methodology for undertaking the Stage 2 GBA. The methodology has been developed to be consistent with the methodology used in the Staffordshire GBA (as set out in Chapter 4 of that report), providing a finer-grain assessment to feed directly into decision making on suitable amendments to the Green Belt boundary.

The aim of the assessment was to establish how the site functions and fulfils the purposes of the Green Belt. As such, the Stage 2 GBA considers the performance of the site against the NPPF purposes but also with respect to the wider Green Belt to understand the potential impact of removing it from the Green Belt.

The overall process followed to undertake the assessment is summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Stage 2 GBA methodology diagram



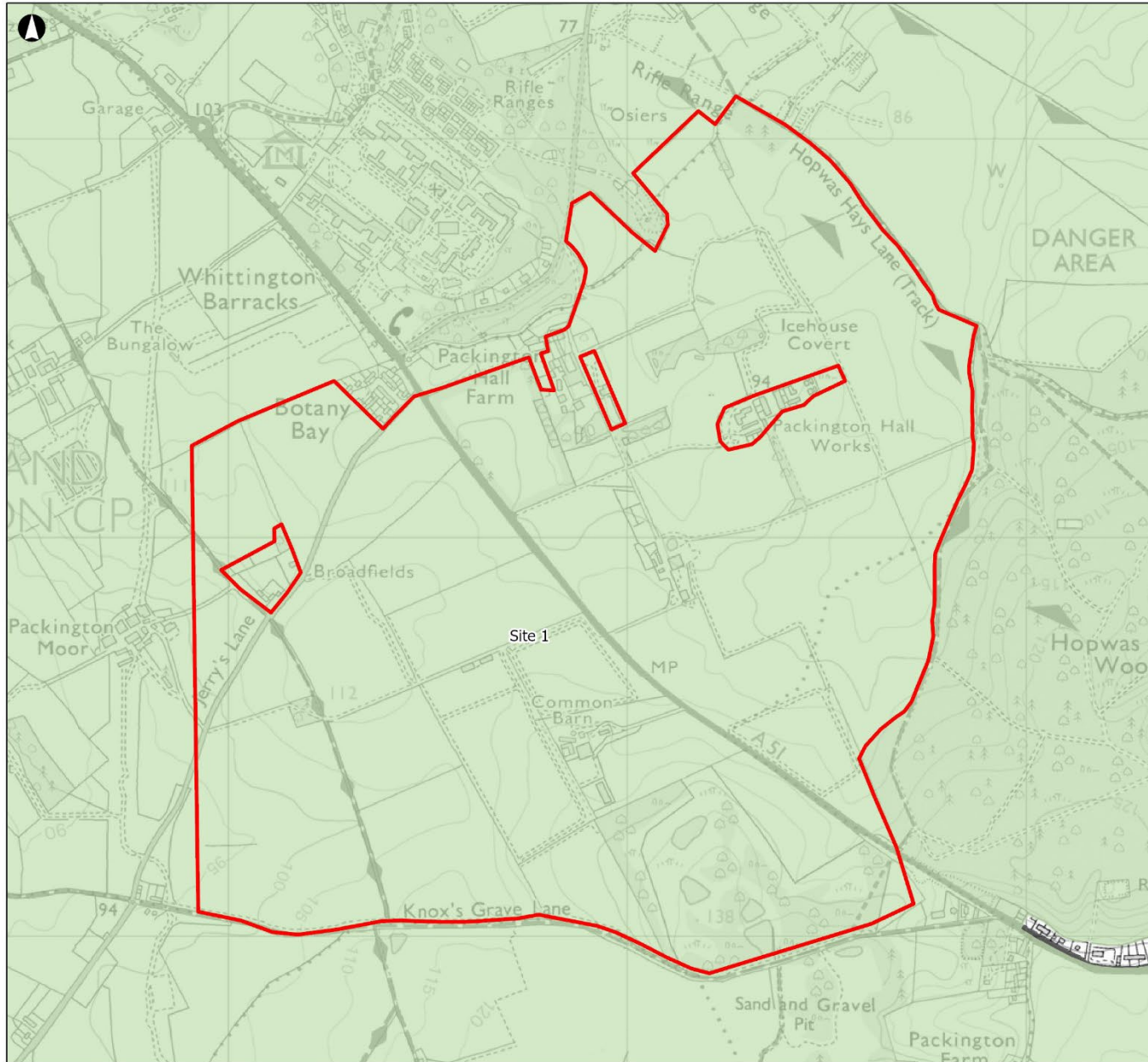
2.2 Step 1: Definition of assessment areas

The Staffordshire GBA assessed the entirety of the West Midlands Green Belt across the five Staffordshire authorities against the Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF. Given the Stage 2 assessment provides a finer-grained level of analysis intended to inform decisions on potential Green Belt boundary changes, it was appropriate to undertake a more spatially focussed piece of work for LDC.

To ensure a proportionate approach and to inform the consideration of available locations for development, this Stage 2 work provides an assessment of site promoted to the Council through its Call for Sites processes. This approach is consistent with the requirements of paragraph 72 of the NPPF paragraph 72, which requires planning policies to identify a supply of “*specific, deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption*”, as well as “*specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for subsequent years 6-10, and where possible, for years 11-15 of the remaining plan period*”.

The site has been provided to Arup by LDC, and the boundary reflects that which was promoted through the Call for Sites processes. The site is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Green Belt site for assessment



- West Midlands Green Belt
- Site boundary

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**Figure 2. Green Belt site for
assessment**

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2.3 Step 2a: NPPF Purpose assessment

The methodology used to undertake the assessment of the performance of the site against the NPPF Green Belt purposes is covered in Section 4.2 of the Staffordshire GBA. A pro-forma was prepared to capture the assessment of the site against each purpose of the Green Belt.

The assessment process involved a mixture of evidence from desk-based research (including contextual information and secondary data sources such as aerial photography, Bing maps and Google Streetview), supported by primary evidence obtained through a site visit.

2.4 Step 2b: Identification of potential grey belt

The identification of potential grey belt follows the same approach set out in Section 4.2.4 of the Staffordshire GBA and has been applied to the site subject to this Stage 2 assessment.

In accordance with national policy, the site was assessed against Green Belt Purposes A, B and D. Where a site makes a strong contribution to any of these purposes, it would not be considered to have grey belt potential.

Where the site does not make a strong contribution to any of these purposes, its identification as potential grey belt is considered further, including a review of the presence of relevant footnote 7 constraints (see Table 14 of the Staffordshire GBA).

2.5 Step 3: Assessment of Green Belt harm

This step considers the potential implications of releasing the site from the Green Belt (in terms of any harm to the function and integrity of the remaining Green Belt), and the resultant Green Belt boundary.

There is no recognised approach as to how this should be assessed, and the comparative review (see Section 3.5.1 and Appendix A.2 in the Staffordshire GBA) demonstrated that most authorities simply applied a brief commentary referencing Green Belt purposes. Table 1 therefore sets out the qualitative criteria which were used in the assessment:

Table 1. Qualitative assessment criteria to consider Green Belt implications

Key Question to Consider	How will this be assessed?
What is the impact on Green Belt function and purposes of removing the site from the Green Belt?	<p>This assessment will draw on the definitions and approach set out in the Green Belt Purpose Assessment Framework (see Section 4.2.3 in the Staffordshire GBA) however it will consider <i>how development of the site would impact</i> upon the purposes instead of <i>how the site in its existing state contributes</i> to the purposes:</p> <p>Purpose A – would development of the site represent unrestricted sprawl?</p> <p>Purpose B – would development of the site result in the merging of neighbouring towns or increase the potential for merging?</p> <p>Purpose C – would development of the site represent an encroachment into the countryside?</p> <p>Purpose D – would development of the site impact upon the setting or character of a historic town?</p> <p>As Purpose E relates to the role of the Green Belt in encouraging urban regeneration, it will therefore not be assessed.</p>

Key Question to Consider	How will this be assessed?
<p>What is the impact on the function and purposes of the surrounding Green Belt of removing the site?</p>	<p>Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the surrounding Green Belt continue to perform the same Green Belt function and purposes? (e.g. where the surrounding Green Belt becomes isolated or islanded as a result of the site being removed it would no longer perform the same Green Belt function and purposes). • Has the removal of the site increased or decreased the importance of the surrounding Green Belt to certain purposes? (e.g. where the site in question forms part of a gap between neighbouring towns, the importance of the surrounding Green Belt may be increased if that site is removed).
<p>Are there any cumulative impacts (due to release of sites in close proximity)?</p>	<p>This will only be relevant if a number of sites in the same area are recommended for further consideration.</p> <p>The cumulative impacts should apply the same considerations as above taking all sites together.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>A summary will be provided which will conclude on the potential Green Belt impact and whether removal of the site could harm the function or integrity of the Green Belt.</p>
<p>Would a new Green Belt boundary be defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?</p> <p>[Note: this is descriptive only and does not contribute to the conclusion on Green Belt impact]</p>	<p>Description of the resultant Green Belt boundary.</p> <p>If the resultant boundary features are not recognisable and permanent, it is recommended that if the site is taken forward, the accompanying policy will need to specifically state that a recognisable and permanent new Green Belt boundary must be provided or the existing boundary requires strengthening.</p>

3. Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment outcomes

This section summarises the outcomes of the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for the site assessed. Table 2 draws together the findings against each of the five Green Belt purposes using the scoring framework set out in the methodology and identifies whether the site has potential to be considered grey belt. It provides a high-level overview and should be read alongside the more detailed narrative set out in the Green Belt Assessment Form under Appendix A.

Table 2 Summary of Stage 2 Assessment Outcomes

Assessment component	Site 1
Overall contribution to Green Belt purposes	Moderate
Purpose A – checking unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	No contribution
Purpose B – preventing the merging of neighbouring towns	Moderate
Purpose C – safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Strong
Purpose D – preserving the setting and special character of historic towns	No contribution
Purpose E – assisting in urban regeneration	Moderate
Potential grey belt status	Yes
Harm assessment overall conclusion	Overall, the removal of the site could harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt.

In conclusion, the site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes, with a strong contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and moderate role in preventing the merging of the neighbouring towns of Lichfield City and Tamworth. On this basis, the site has the potential to be considered grey belt. However, it is considered that the removal of the site from the Green Belt could harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt.

4. Next steps

This Stage 2 addendum forms part of the Council's Green Belt evidence base and should be considered alongside the wider Staffordshire GBA and other relevant Local Plan evidence. It provides a site-specific assessment for one site identified by LDC as requiring further consideration at this stage of plan preparation, rather than a comprehensive review of all potential Green Belt sites within the authority area.

The assessment has considered how the site performs against the five purposes of the Green Belt, before determining whether it may be considered potential grey belt land and undertaking a Green Belt Impact Assessment in respect of the potential release of the site. Given that only one site has been assessed, the findings are intended to inform decision-making at a site-specific level and do not seek to determine overall spatial strategy or identify preferred locations for growth.

Where the Council considers taking the site forward for further consideration through the preparation of the Local Plan, it will be necessary to apply the sequential approach to Green Belt release set out in paragraph 148 of the NPPF. This requires consideration of previously developed land within the Green Belt first, followed by grey belt land, and then other Green Belt locations, while at all stages promoting sustainable patterns of development. Further work may therefore be required to consider the assessed site alongside other reasonable alternatives, including previously developed land and non-Green Belt options.

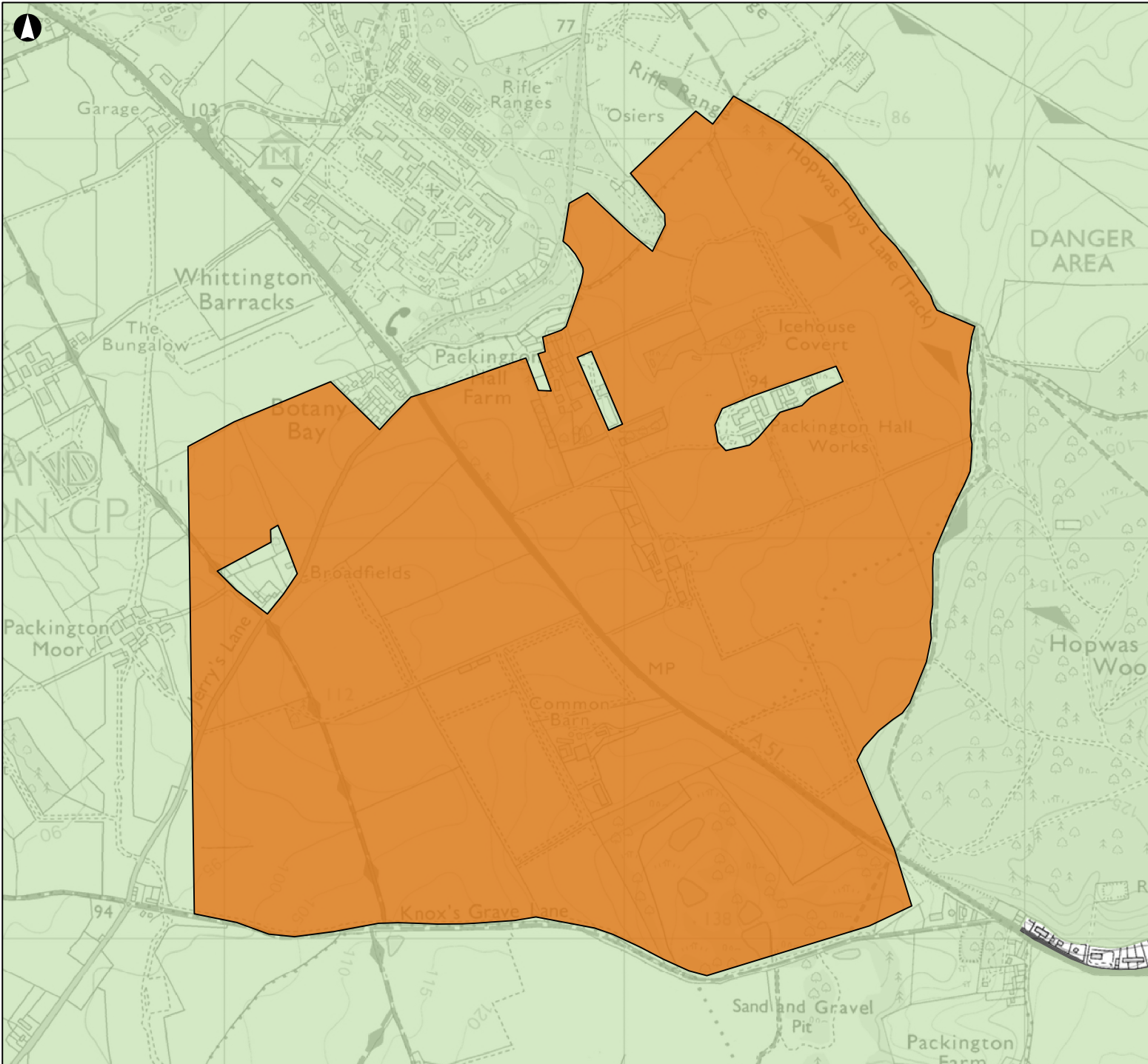
Whilst the site has been identified as being potential grey belt, the assessment does not determine whether the site should be released. It is for the Council to determine whether and how the findings of this addendum are taken forward, having regard to the Local Plan evidence base as a whole.

Where the Local Plan proposes the release of Green Belt land, the Council will need to demonstrate the existence of exceptional circumstances in accordance with paragraph 146 of the NPPF. In developing an exceptional circumstances case, it will be necessary to show that all reasonable alternatives for meeting identified development needs have been fully examined, taking account of the wider evidence base. This Stage 2 assessment provides evidence in relation to Green Belt considerations only and does not, on its own, establish an exceptional circumstances case.

For development management purposes, the outcomes of this Stage 2 assessment may be used to inform the consideration of planning proposals affecting the Green Belt. However, further scheme-specific assessment would be required to establish whether development would be not inappropriate in Green Belt terms as set out by paragraph 155 of the NPPF, and pass the 'tests' set out in the PPG, including whether the site is in a sustainable location, if there is a demonstrable unmet need for the development proposed, and whether the development of the site would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt.

It should be noted that the site has been assessed on the assumption that the full site area could be developed and without reference to any specific development proposals. As such, conclusions regarding Green Belt contribution, potential grey belt status and Green Belt impact are necessarily high-level and may change once the nature, scale and design of any proposed development are known.

Appendix A – Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment Maps



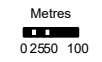
West Midlands Green Belt

Overall assessment

Moderate

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Overall assessment

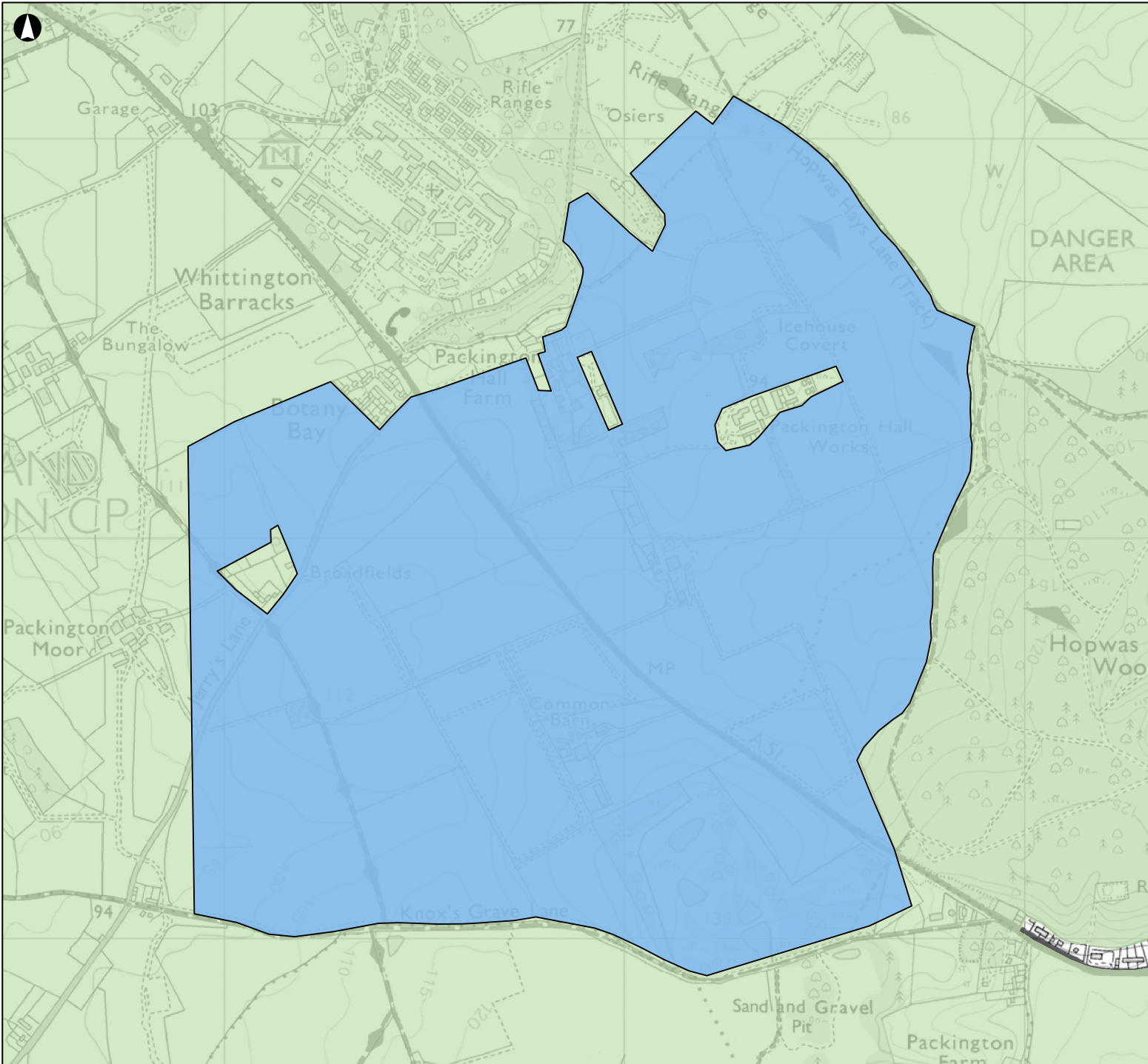
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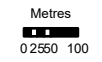
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Purpose A

No contribution

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Purpose A

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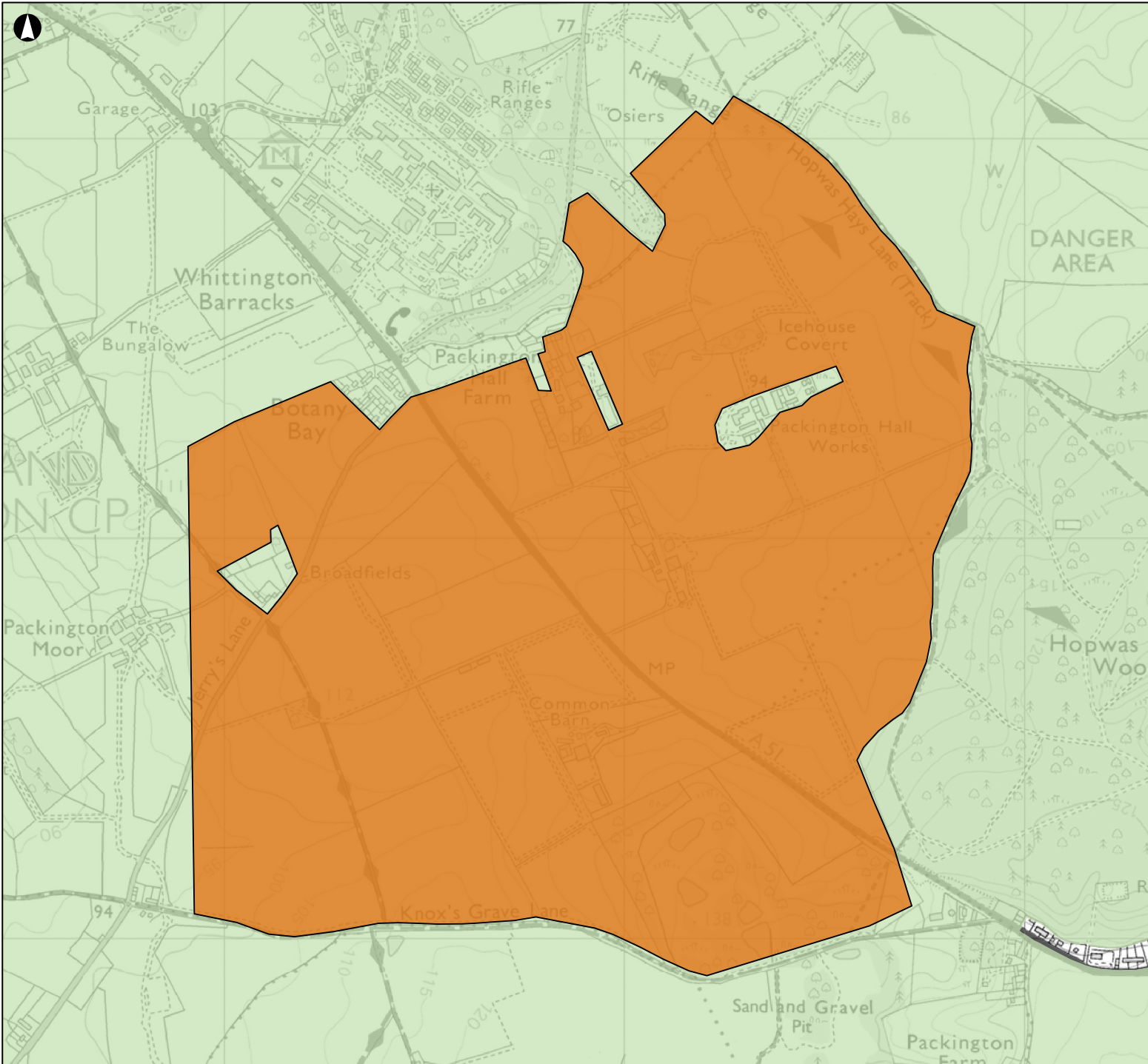
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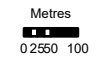
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Purpose B

Moderate

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Purpose B

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Role

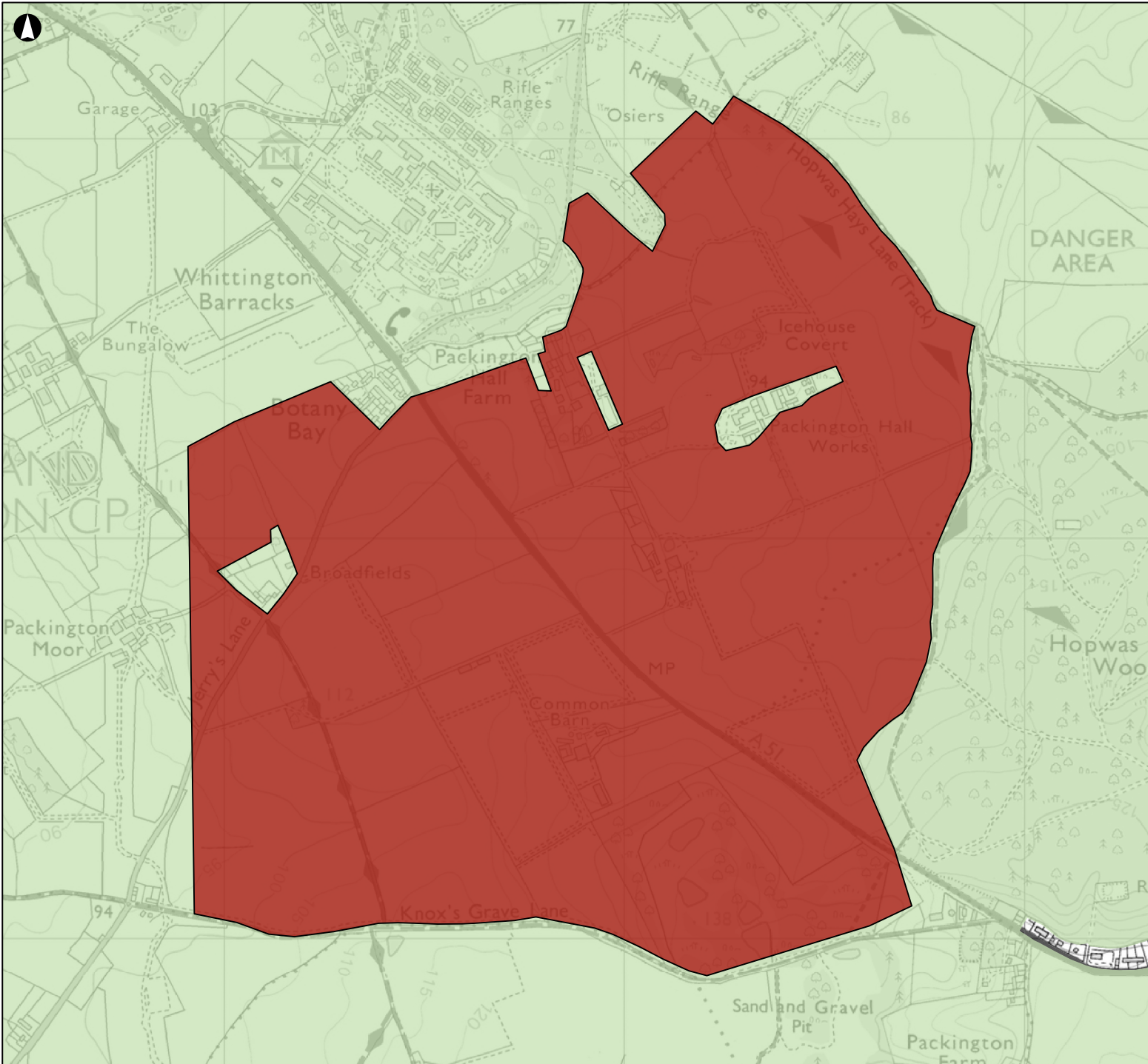
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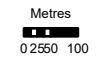
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Purpose C

Strong

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Purpose C

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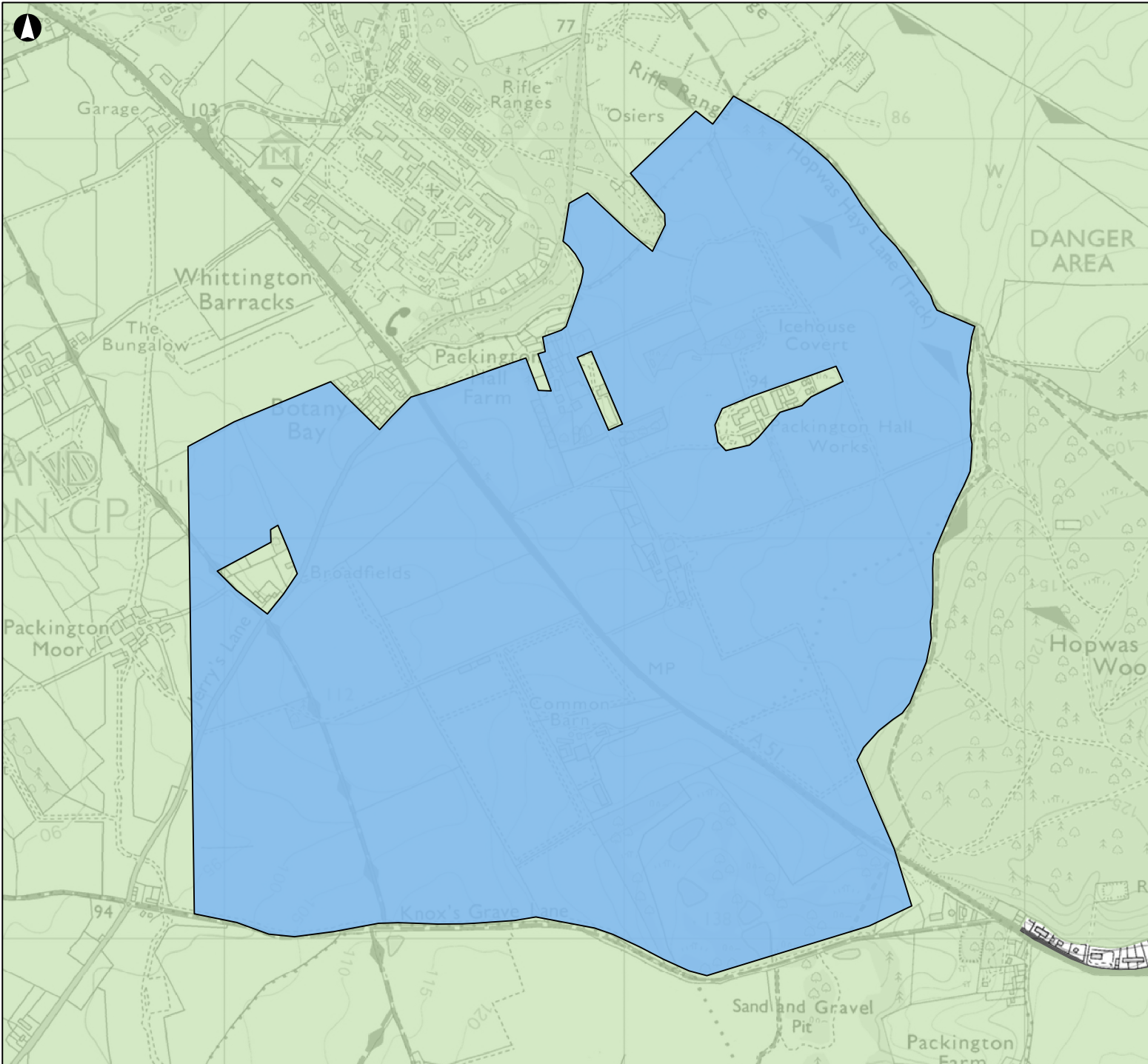
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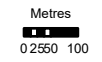
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Purpose D

No contribution

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Purpose D

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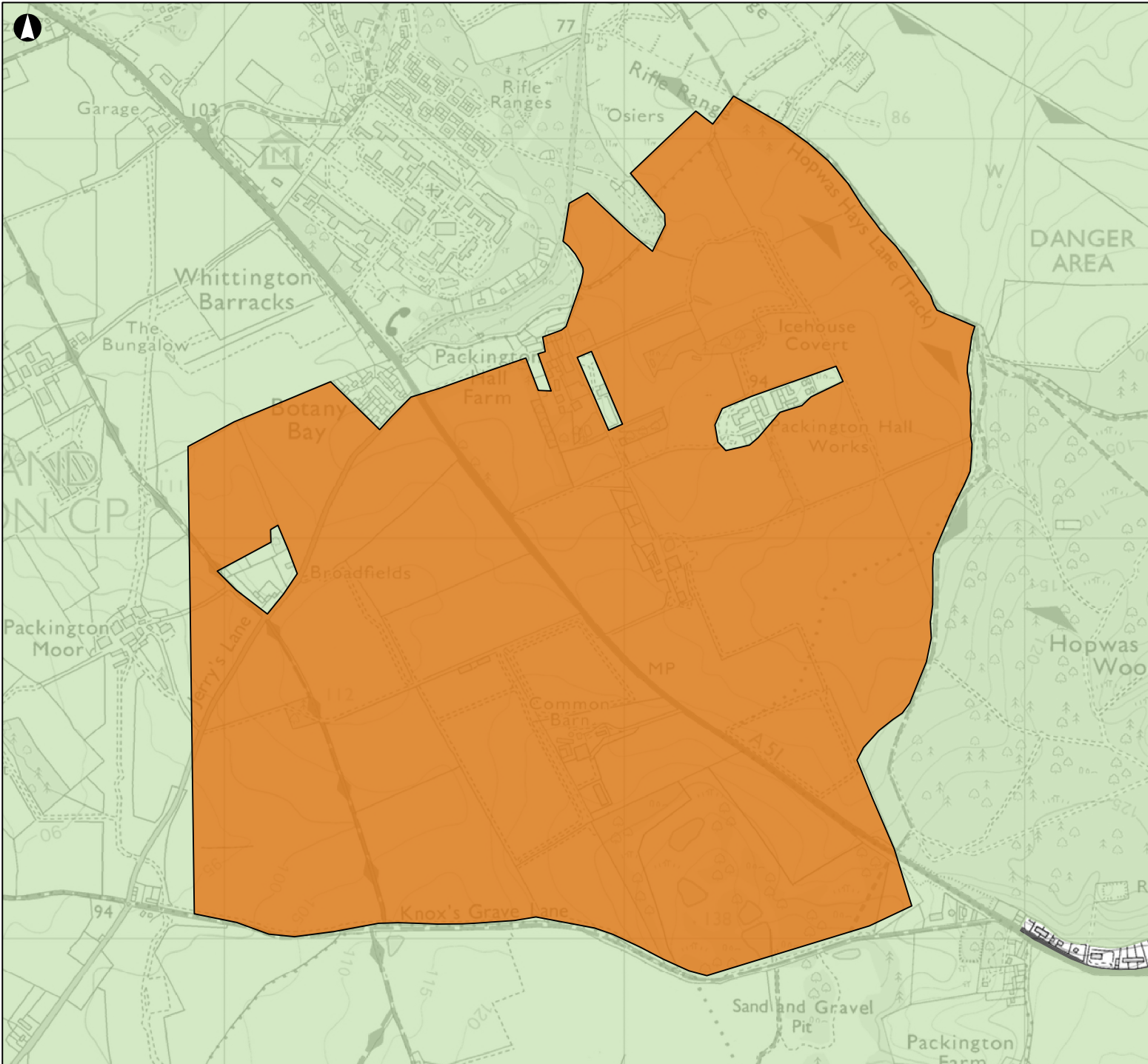
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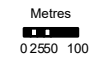
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Purpose E

Moderate

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Purpose E

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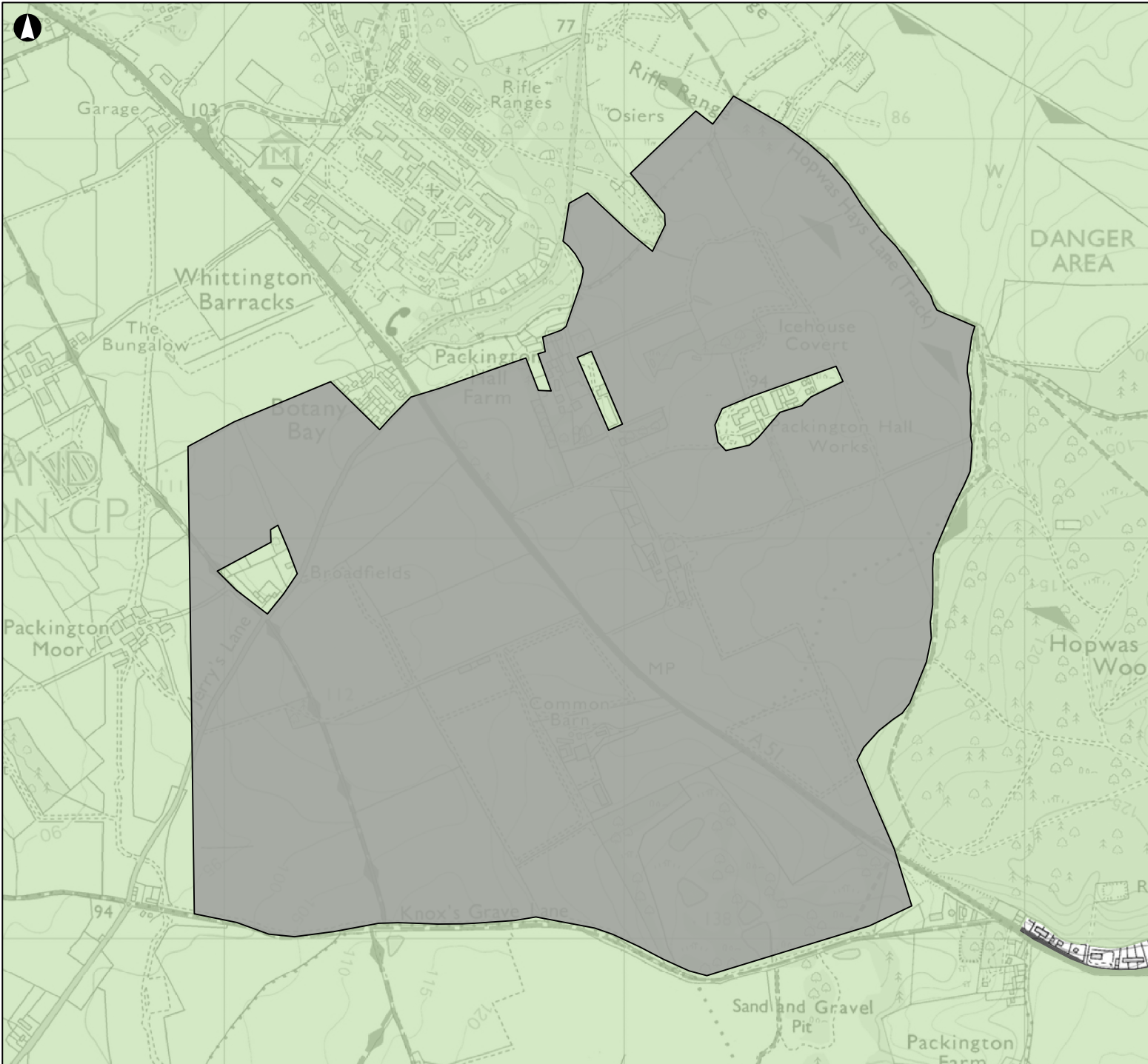
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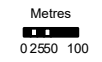
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- West Midlands Green Belt
- Potential grey belt
- Yes

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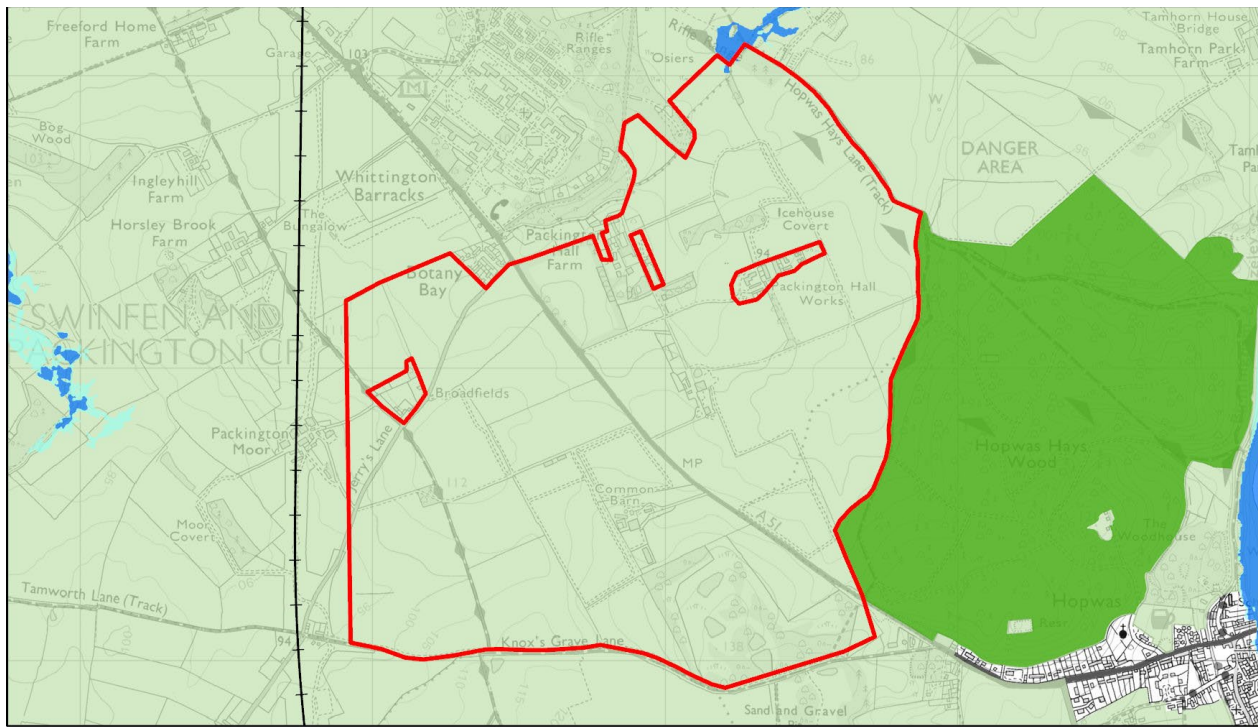
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Appendix B – Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment Form

Site 1



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Green Belt Purposes Assessment

Assessment criteria	Contribution outcome	Assessment
Purpose A	No	The site is not adjacent to a large built up area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose.
Purpose B	Moderate	<p>The site is located in a gap between the neighbouring towns of Lichfield City and Tamworth.</p> <p>The site forms part of the gap between towns where there is scope for some development without reducing the visual or perceived separation between the towns. However, the presence of Whittington Barracks to the north (although washed over by the Green Belt) and the inset village of Hopwas to the east, could result in the sense of continuous development along the A51 when travelling between Lichfield City and Tamworth and result in an increased perception of merging if the site was developed. Although development of the site would reduce the gap between the towns, there would still be a significant size gap to the northwest of the site and the edge of Lichfield City.</p> <p>Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.</p>
Purpose C	Strong	The site consists of open countryside and rural land uses, primarily in use as a pig farm and includes farm buildings. The site includes some semi-urban land uses including a couple of residential properties scattered throughout the site. There are further areas of development beyond but adjacent to the site boundary.

Assessment criteria	Contribution outcome	Assessment
		<p>The site has a strong degree of openness with less than 10% built form. There are open long line views across the majority of the site, but some views are restricted by built form, vegetation and topography. North-south/east-west views across the A51 (which runs through the centre of the site) are long line, with limited restrictions from field boundary vegetation. Views into the wider Green Belt are generally largely unrestricted with vegetation lining these boundaries creating some restrictions. Hopwas Hays Wood lies to the east which restricts views in this direction and similarly for the dense tree belt that screens Whittington Barracks to the north. The forthcoming HS2 works lies beyond the western edge of the site, which does create some restrictions in this direction. In part due to the site's overall scale, the site still maintains a sense of spatial openness.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by open countryside along all boundaries, with the Green Belt continuing in all directions. The washed over Whittington Barracks lies to the north of the site, but this built form has no impact on the site's sense of openness due to being screened by a tree belt, and the inset village of Hopwas lies to the east, however this is not visible from within the site.</p> <p>Overall, the site makes a strong contribution to this purpose.</p>
Purpose D	No	The site does not play a role in preserving the setting and special character of a historic town. Therefore, the site makes no contribution to this purpose.
Purpose E	Moderate	All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose E by encouraging the re-use of urban land. The site therefore makes a moderate contribution to Purpose E.
Overall assessment	Moderate	<p>The site makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to two purposes and no contribution to two purposes. Professional judgement has been applied taking into account the overall aims and purposes of the Green Belt.</p> <p>As the site is not adjacent or near to a large built up area it cannot act to prevent urban sprawl. However, it makes a strong contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and a moderate contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging. It has therefore, been judged on balance that the site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.</p>
Is the site potentially considered grey belt?	Yes	The site does not make a strong contribution to Purpose A, B or D. The site contains some small areas at risk of surface water flooding; however, these are not significant given the overall size of the site. Therefore, the site can be considered potential grey belt.

Assessment of Green Belt Harm

Impact assessment considerations	Assessment
What is the impact on Green Belt function and purposes of	The site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes and makes a strong contribution to Purpose C.

Impact assessment considerations	Assessment
removing the site from the Green Belt?	<p>Purpose A – The site is not adjacent or near to a large built up area and therefore cannot act to prevent urban sprawl.</p> <p>Purpose B – Development of the site would reduce the gap between Lichfield City and Tamworth and would represent a significant decrease in the separation of these, albeit a gap would still remain, however there may be increased potential for merging.</p> <p>Purpose C – Development of the site would represent a significant encroachment into the countryside given it is surrounded by the countryside, its substantial size and that the site is largely undeveloped.</p> <p>Purpose D - Development of the site would not have an impact upon the setting or character of a historic town given it is not adjacent to and does not provide views into or out of a defined historic town.</p>
What is the impact on the function and purposes of the surrounding Green Belt of removing the site?	<p>If the site is removed from the Green Belt and developed, the Green Belt to the northwest and in part east would become a more essential gap between the neighbouring towns of Lichfield and Tamworth, which is likely to impact its Green Belt function and purpose. The surrounding Green Belt to the north and south would continue to perform the same Green Belt function and purposes. Furthermore, removal of the site would result in an islanded area of Green Belt release. Releasing the site from the Green Belt would increase the contribution of the surrounding Green Belt to the Green Belt purposes.</p>
Are there any cumulative impacts (due to release of sites in close proximity)?	<p>There are currently no other known sites in this location under consideration which are likely to have cumulative impacts.</p>
Conclusion	<p>The site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes, and the site is considered to be potential grey belt.</p> <p>Development of the site would have an impact on Purpose B and Purpose C as reasons explained above. Removal of the site would result in an islanded area of Green Belt release, however of a significant scale which could support a new settlement.</p> <p>Furthermore, removal of the site from the Green Belt is likely to impact certain functions and purposes of the wider Green Belt.</p> <p>Overall, the removal of the site could harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt.</p>
Would a new Green Belt boundary be defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?	<p>The new Green Belt boundary would be defined by a dense, mature tree belt to the north and an Ancient Woodland to the east (which forms the majority of the eastern boundary), with these being defensible boundaries. The remainder of the site's existing outer boundaries to the northeast, northwest, south and west are less defensible with these primarily consisting of field boundaries/tree lines. It is noted the forthcoming HS2 line lies to the west and would be considered to be in reasonable proximity.</p>

Impact assessment considerations	Assessment
	If the site is taken forward, it is recommended these less defensible boundaries would need to be strengthened to create a recognisable and permanent new Green Belt boundary.