



North Somerset Local Plan 2038

North Somerset Green Belt Assessment

April 2021



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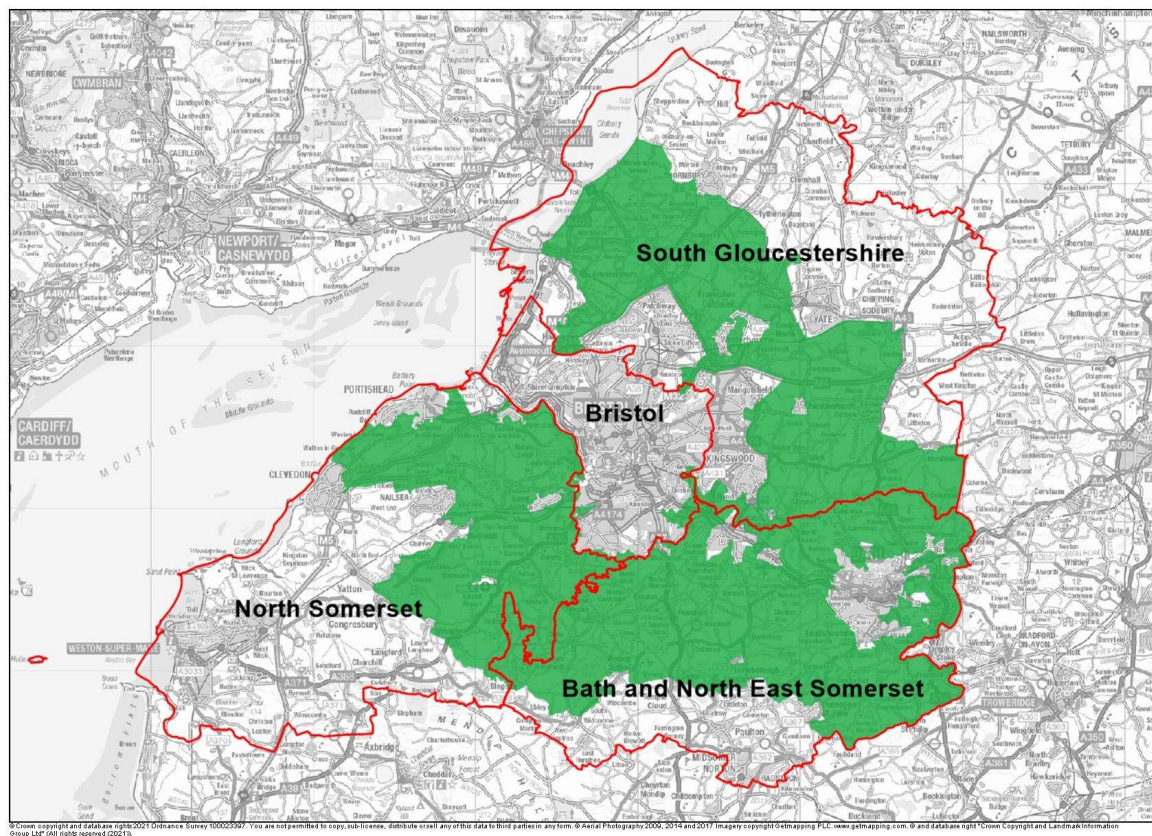


1. Objective and Purpose

1.1 The objective of this document is to provide a strategic assessment of the Green Belt across North Somerset. This assessment provides part of the evidence base for the North Somerset Local Plan 2038. It helps to inform the consideration of the four approaches set out in the Choices for the Future Consultation in 2020. It assesses the whole Green Belt across the plan area in relation to the purposes of Green Belts as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. For the purposes of this study, the Green Belt has been divided into cells which have been assessed to determine which of the five purposes of Green Belt they serve, having regard to the essential characteristic of openness. The assessment also identifies and describes any changes to the characteristics of locations within the Green Belt.

1.2 The assessment is based on earlier work carried out by the West of England as part of the evidence base for the Joint Spatial Plan. It has however been reviewed and updated where necessary. The assessment relates only to the North Somerset element of the Green Belt and cells and text have been amended accordingly. It is acknowledged that the Green Belt in North Somerset is part of the wider Bristol and Bath Green Belt and the council will continue to engage with neighbouring authorities regarding any proposals which may affect the designation.

Figure 1 Bristol and Bath Green Belt



2. National Planning Policy

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that the government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The NPPF states:

'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.' (NPPF paragraph 133)

The NPPF goes on to state that Green Belt serves five purposes. These are:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.* (NPPF paragraph 134)

The NPPF explains that the general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established (paragraphs 135-136) and that boundaries

'should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period.'

3. History of the Green Belt

3.1 The Bristol and Bath Green Belt was broadly established in the mid-1950s through the Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire County Development Plans. The majority of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt fell within the Somerset authority area and the Green Belt designation was locally adopted in 1957 and then given Ministerial approval in 1966.

3.2 The Avon County Structure Plan of 1985 defined the general extent of the Green Belt at that time with the detailed boundaries then defined in Local Plans. These included the South West Avon Green Belt Local Plan which was adopted in 1988.

3.3 The most recent strategic plan to cover the entire plan area was the Joint Structure Plan 2002 which has now been revoked. The Joint Structure Plan defined the continued general extent of the Green Belt and showed it on a key diagram. Policy 16 set out its purpose:

“A Green Belt shall continue to surround and separate Bristol and Bath, and will be kept open in order to:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of the Bristol conurbation and Bath;
- assist in safeguarding the surrounding countryside from encroachment;
- prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- preserve the setting and special character of villages, towns and historic cities; and
- assist in urban regeneration.”

3.4 The aim of the Green Belt in the West of England has been, in the main, to prevent the urban sprawl and merger of Bristol and Bath. It is apparent, however, from the 2002 Joint Structure Plan that emphasis was placed on preserving the setting and special character of the villages and towns within the Green Belt, as well as the overall aim of checking the growth of Bristol and Bath and preventing the merger of the two cities.

3.5 The current extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt is shown in Figure 1.

4. North Somerset’s Green Belt today

4.1 The current extent and detailed boundaries of the Green Belt in North Somerset is defined on the Policies Map. It covers 15,490 hectares (40%) of land in North Somerset. The North Somerset Core Strategy (2017) includes a policy for the Green Belt which confirms that the boundary remains unchanged from the previous Plan (the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007). The explanatory text of Policy CS6 North Somerset’s Green Belt (paragraph 3.91) identifies the five functions Green Belt performs. Paragraph 3.93 goes on to say:

'The protection and maintenance of the Green Belt is very important to the affected communities and ensures a clear distinction between urban Bristol and rural North Somerset. It makes an important contribution to their local character and distinctiveness and is highly valued and strongly supported'.

4.2 The last time changes were made to the Green Belt was in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007. This Plan extended the Green Belt between the Royal Portbury Dock and the new development to the east of Portishead whilst excluding an area at Court Farm specifically for port related uses. The Replacement Local Plan also created an inset in the Green Belt at Bristol Airport to accommodate medium term expansion requirements.

5. Green Belt Assessment Methodology

5.1 This assessment is based on that carried out by the four local authorities as part of the evidence for the Joint Spatial Plan¹. It extracts the information for the North Somerset area, updates reference to developments which have taken place and document references. Cells, which had previously crossed Local Authorities boundaries, have been adjusted to correspond with the unitary boundary.

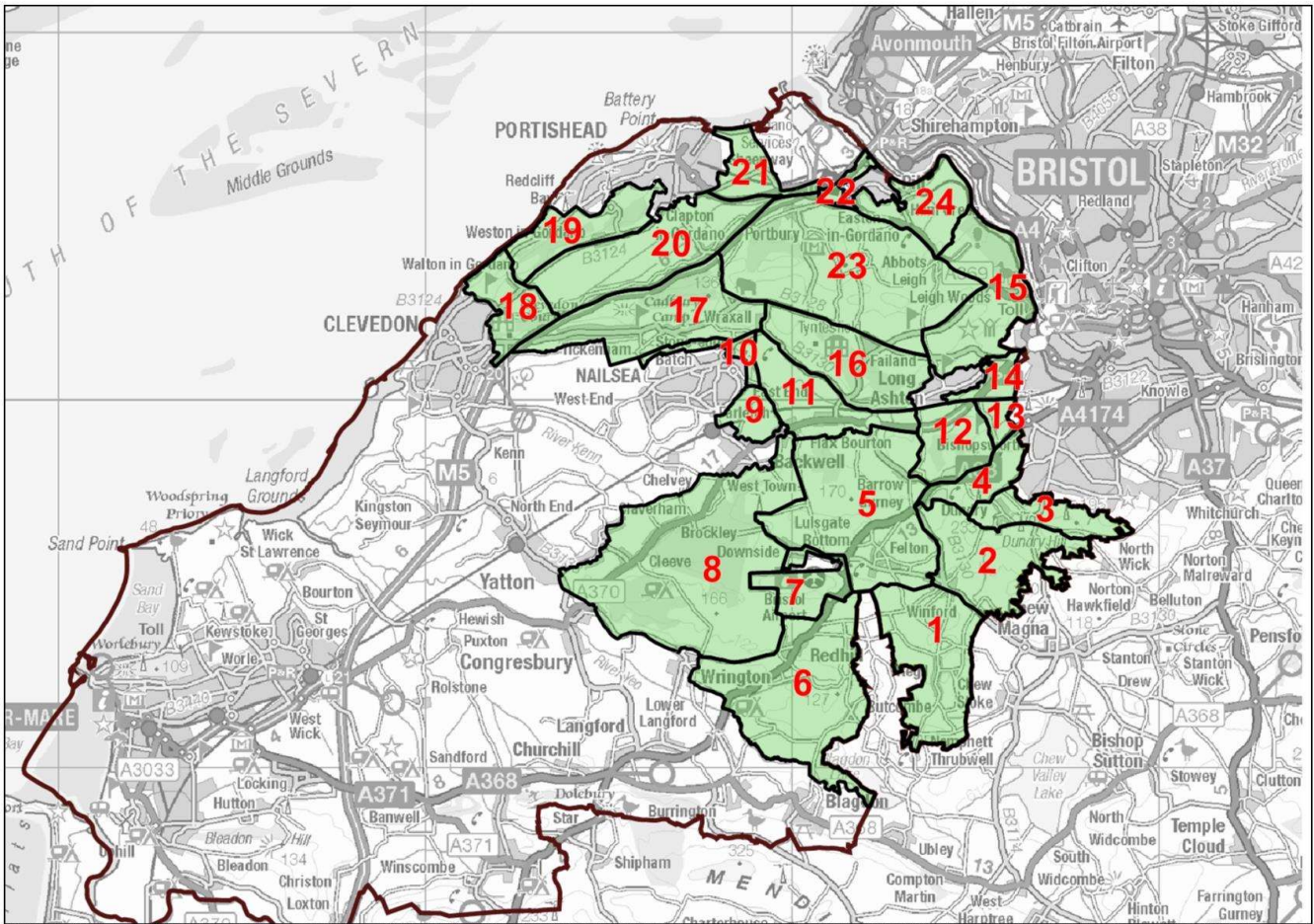
Definition of the cells

5.2 Twenty-four cells are identified in North Somerset. They provide manageable areas for analysis and presentation of results. Cells have been renumbered but generally reflect that used in the JSP assessment with some cells amended to correspond with the North Somerset administrative boundary.

5.3 Clear physical features have been used wherever possible in identifying assessment cells. These include motorways, roads, railways, rivers or water features, belts of trees and woodland. Consideration has also been given to landscape character and/or topography, including existing land use, plus any boundaries of designated historic/ecological sites (where they have identifiable boundaries). Boundaries do not cross administrative areas the cells relate solely to North Somerset.

5.4 Each cell was given a reference number and a name to assist with identification. These are shown on the map and in the matrix.

¹ West of England Joint Spatial Plan Nov 2015



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Assessment of cell against the 5 purposes

5.4 The five purposes of Green Belts set out in the NPPF form the basis for the assessment. These are listed below in table 1 alongside the form of analysis which was undertaken for each purpose.

Table 1:

National policy: Purposes of Green Belt	Cell analysis
1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Assessment of whether cell performs the purpose of checking the unrestricted sprawl of the Bristol built-up area.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another:	Assessment of the cell and whether it prevents neighbouring towns merging into one another. Consideration of whether the cell contributes to purpose 2 by preserving the individual character, identity and setting of villages and hamlets within the Green Belt.



National policy: Purposes of Green Belt	Cell analysis
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Assessment of the cell and whether it performs the role of assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Assessment informed by consideration of existing use and topography
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Assessment of the cell and whether it performs the role of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Consideration given to historic areas and their setting and special character with reference to settlements designated as or containing Conservation Areas.
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Assessment of the cell and whether it performs the role of assisting urban regeneration. Noting that this purpose is served by all Green Belt areas, particular note is taken of the relationship of the cell with areas of urban regeneration.

The assessment matrix also includes a description and summary.

Description and summary	
	An overall description of the features of each cell with particular reference to openness. Identification of any changes in the cell since the Green Belt was most recently designated in the Local Plan. A summary of whether the cell contributes to serving any of the five purposes.

5.5 The assessment process made use of the following sources of information:

- Up-to-date aerial photography – images for each cell were examined systematically to enable the cell to be described and for it to be assessed against the five purposes.
- Data in geographic information systems – these were interrogated to identify mapped features such as AONB or heritage assets.
- Planning application records – were examined to identify planning permissions for development in the Green Belt which may have implications for the cell being assessed.

- Site visits/professional knowledge – these were used to verify information identified from aerial photography

6. Results

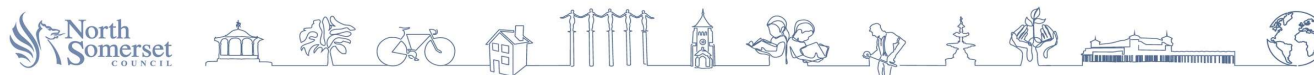
6.1 The results of the cell assessment are set out in the matrix below. Ticks and green shading are used to denote when a cell clearly meets one of the purposes of the Green Belt. (The criteria in bold in Table 1) The commentary notes the additional analysis set out in Table 1.

A series of maps shown in the conclusion set out how the cells are assessed against each purpose.

Cell No. (JSP cell no) Name	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Description and Commentary
1 (part 56 & part 61 JSP) South of Winford	-	- (Maintains the separation of villages and settlements - Winford, Chew Stoke, Chew Magna)	✓ Safeguards mainly open agricultural land from encroachment	-	✓	This land to the south of Winford consists mainly of undulating open farmland. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 3 and 5.
2 (part 57 JSP). Land to north and east of Winford, and south of Dundry	- Northern section helps to check the sprawl of Bristol	- (Maintains the separation of villages and settlements Dundry, Winford and Chew Magna)	✓ Safeguards mainly open agricultural land from encroachment.	-	✓ Adjacent to the south Bristol regeneration area	This land to the south of Dundry, and to the north and east of Winford consists mainly of rural undulating farmland with occasional woodland and belts of trees. Parts are steeply sloping particularly as the land rises to the Dundry ridge. The high ground and topography particularly to the north are prominent landscape features. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 3 and 5.

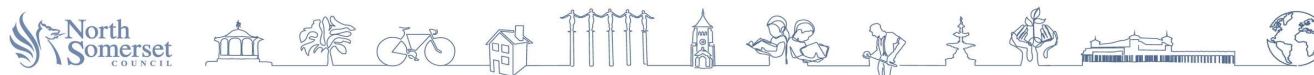
Cell No. (JSP cell no) Name	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Description and Commentary
3 (part 58 JSP). Dundry Ridge	✓ Checks the sprawl of Bristol	- (Prevents the merger of Bristol with Dundry)	✓ Safeguards mainly open agricultural land from encroachment.	-	✓ Adjoins south Bristol regeneration area.	This land to the south of Withywood and Hartcliffe forms part of the prominent, steeply sloping ridge to Dundry Hill. The extent of the built-up area of Bristol forms the inner Green Belt boundary at a similar height along the ridge. The land is mainly open agricultural land with some woodland and includes the village of Dundry. The high ground and topography make it a highly visible part of the Green Belt with the ridge providing a visual and physical limit to the built up area of Bristol. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 1, 3 and 5.

Cell No. (JSP cell no) Name	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Description and Commentary
4 (59 JSP) Southeast of the A38 towards Highridge and Dundry	✓ Checks the sprawl of Bristol	-	✓ Safeguards mainly open agricultural land from encroachment	- (The high ground is visible from western parts of the city. There are views to and from Ashton Court Estate)	✓ Adjacent to south Bristol regeneration area	This land cell to the southeast of the A38 abuts the city at Highridge. The land rises progressively toward Dundry and the distinctive hill known as the Peart. The area is predominately open agricultural land although there is some development alongside the A38 and Dundry Lane. The Green Belt in this location has an effect of preventing coalescence of development on the A38 and thus restraining the sprawl of Bristol and towards the airport. The South Bristol link in the far north eastern section of the cell is newly constructed it runs from north of Highridge Common towards the A38 near Castle Farm. The cell directly serves three Green Belt purposes.



Cell No. (JSP cell no) Name	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Description and Commentary
5 (60 JSP) North of Bristol Airport, Felton, Barrow Gurney and south of A370 at Flax Bourton.	-	- (Maintains the separation of villages and settlements Felton, Potters Hill, Winford Barrow Gurney)	✓ Safeguards open agricultural land from encroachment. Some areas of quarrying	- (Preserves the setting of Felton and Barrow Gurney Conservation Areas)	✓	This land to the north of Bristol Airport, contains the villages of Felton and Barrow Gurney and encompasses land to the south of the A370 at Flax Bourton. It is mainly open agricultural land but has a significant area of quarrying. The land slopes downwards towards Flax Bourton. The Green Belt in this location has a role in preventing coalescence of development on the A38 and thus restraining the sprawl of Bristol and towards the airport. The Green Belt in this directly serves purposes 3 and 5.
6 (part 61 JSP) Land northwest and southeast of the A38 at	-	- (Maintains the separation of villages and settlements)	✓ Safeguards mainly open agricultural land from encroachment	-	✓	This land to the northwest and southeast of the A38 at Redhill includes Butcombe, Numpnett Thrubwell and Blagdon Lake. The land is open and undulating rising to the plateau at Bristol

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Redhill, and east of Wrington includes Butcombe, and part of Blagdon Lake.		-Redhill, Butcombe, Numpnett Thrubwell)				Airport. It is interspersed with small rural hamlets. The Green Belt directly serves purposes 3 and 5.
7 (62 JSP) Bristol Airport	-	-	✓ A proportion of the land is in airport uses, the area outside of this serves to safeguard the countryside from encroachment.	-	✓	Bristol airport sits on an elevated plateau. The terminal and built up areas were excluded from the Green Belt in the 2007 North Somerset Replacement Local Plan. Part of the land in the Green Belt is in use by the airport this includes the runway and surface car parking. The land to the south falls towards Redhill and is mainly open and visually prominent. The A38 passes through the western part of the cell. This cell mainly acts to contain the spread of development around the airport and serves purposes 3 and 5.



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8 (63 JSP) Land north of Wrington, south of Backwell extending to Yatton and Congresbury in the west	-	-	✓ The Green Belt safeguards the countryside which is heavily wooded and interspersed with farmland.	- (The Green Belt abuts or includes parts of the conservation areas in Backwell and Wrington preserving their settings.)	✓	This land cell straddling the A370 consists of wooded steep slopes (particularly to the west of the A370) and open farmland. The Green Belt abuts the villages of Wrington Claverham, Yatton, and Congresbury maintaining a substantial area of open land between Bristol and these settlements. The Green Belt directly serves purpose 3 and 5.
9 (64 JSP) Land to the southeast Nailsea and north of Backwell	-	✓ Maintains the separation of Nailsea and Backwell and the merger of this area with Bristol.	✓ Safeguards an area of lower lying open countryside which is mainly agricultural from encroachment	- (Preserves the settling of the Farleigh conservation area at Backwell)	✓	This cell comprises mainly open agricultural land. It is crossed north/south by the main railway line. This land directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5.

Cell No. (JSP cell no) Name	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Description and Commentary
10 (65 JSP) Land to the north and east of Nailsea	-	✓ To the east prevents the merger of Nailsea with the Bristol urban area and to the north merger of Nailsea and Portishead. Maintains the separation of villages (between Nailsea and Tickenham and Wraxhall)	✓ Safeguards mainly open agricultural land from encroachment	-	✓	The cell comprises open agricultural land to the north of Nailsea, with a stream along the northern edge of the cell. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5
11 (66 JSP) A370 corridor between Backwell and Long Ashton Land and southwest of Clevedon Road near Wraxall	-	✓ The Green Belt serves to prevent merger between Bristol and Nailsea/ Backwell, (Maintains separation of villages -Flax Bourton and Farleigh with Long Ashton)	✓ Safeguards predominantly agricultural land and some woodland to the south from encroachment	- (Preserves the setting of the conservation area at Farleigh, Backwell)	✓	Predominantly open agricultural land and some woodland This land cell follows the lower lying land between steeply sloping land to the north and south. It is bounded to the northeast by Clevedon Road and includes the village of Flax Bourton and the newer development at the former Farleigh hospital site.

Cell No. (JSP cell no) Name	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Description and Commentary
						The Green Belt directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5.
12 (67 JSP) Land between the A38 and the railway line including Woodspring Golf club and Barrow Hospital	✓ With cell 13 to the east, prevents the sprawl of the Bristol in this direction	✓ Prevents the merger of Nailsea, Long Ashton and Bristol.	✓ Safeguards open countryside which includes agricultural land, a golf course, woodland and a reservoir from encroachment.	- (Preserves the setting of the conservation area at Yanley.)	✓ Adjacent to the south Bristol regeneration area	The land to the east of Monarchs Way public footpath is predominantly open. West of Monarchs Way the land is more wooded and contains the former Barrow Hospital, reservoir and associated water works development. The land sits between the ridge at Dundry to the south and the steep ridge to the north of Long Ashton. The cell directly serves purposes 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Green Belt.

Cell No. (JSP cell no) Name	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Description and Commentary
13 (68 JSP) Land bounded by the A38, Yanley Lane and the railway line, adjoining Bedminster Down.	✓ Checks the sprawl of Bristol	✓ Prevents the merger of Nailsea, Long Ashton and Bristol.	✓ Safeguards open agricultural and recreational uses from encroachment	- (Preserves the setting of the conservation area at Yanley and includes views from the higher ground towards the Avon Gorge and the Suspension Bridge.)	✓ Adjacent to the south Bristol regeneration area.	This land cell to the east of Yanley Lane abuts the city at Ashton Vale and Bedminster Down. The cell contains a steep sided valley adjacent to Hanging Hill wood. The area is predominately agricultural. It also contains the Yanley landfill site which is being restored and some outdoor recreation. The South Bristol link has recently been constructed bisecting this cell from the A38 to the railway line. The Green Belt directly serves purposes 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Green Belt.
14 (69 JSP) Land to the east of Long Ashton	✓ Checks the sprawl of Bristol	✓ This area prevents the merger of Long Ashton and Bristol	✓ Safeguards agricultural land although land uses also include a Park and Ride, the Long Ashton bypass and South Bristol Link.	- (Preserves the setting of the Long Ashton and Yanley Conservation Areas. Also helps preserve the setting of the grade 1 Ashton Court Estate.)	✓ Adjacent to south. Bristol regeneration area	Most of this land to the east of Long Ashton is in open agricultural use. It is also the site of a park and ride facility. It is crossed by route corridors including the SBL. The land adjoins an area of Green Belt in Bristol City which BCC are proposing

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						to release from the Green Belt. The land directly serves purposes 1, 2, 3 and 5.
15 (70 JSP) Ashton Court, Leigh Woods	✓ Land is immediately adjacent to the Avon Gorge. The river and gorge provide a significant physical boundary. The Green Belt prevents the sprawl of Bristol extending beyond this boundary.	- (The Green Belt serves to maintain the separation of settlements Abbots Leigh, Leigh Woods and Long Ashton)	✓ The land safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	✓ Preserves an open setting for the Gorge and Suspension Bridge, preserves the setting of the conservation areas in Clifton, central Bristol and Leigh Woods. Also contains the Ashton Court Estate.	✓	Area of land including the open environment of the Ashton Court Estate and Leigh Woods to the west of the Avon Gorge with extensive recreation uses. Land is heavily wooded including the ridge to the north of Long Ashton. Area also includes nationally important environmental designations. The cell directly serves purposes 1, 3, 4, and 5.
16 (71 JSP) Wraxall, Failand, the Tyntesfield	-	✓ Helps prevent the merger of Nailsea, Long Ashton and Bristol	✓ This land safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	- (The Green Belt assists in preserving the setting of	✓	This area forms part of the steep sided ridge in the vicinity of Wraxhall and Failand and includes the Tyntesfield estate (National Trust). The area is primarily

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Estate to the west of Long Ashton			There is also significant recreational and agricultural use	Tyntesfield House and the country estate.)		open and undeveloped, with heavily wooded areas, agricultural land and open recreation uses. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5
17 (72 JSP) Tickenham Ridge	-	✓ Prevents the merger of Portishead and Nailsea. Maintains the separation of villages and settlements (Tickenham, Wraxall)	✓ Safeguards mainly open agricultural land and woodland from encroachment	-	✓	Steeply sloping ridge to the north of Nailsea and south of the M5. Primarily open land which includes the village of Tickenham and residential development at Cadbury Camp Lane. Directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5.
18 (73 JSP) Northeast of Clevedon	- (Prevents the spread of Clevedon to the northeast.)	✓ Prevents the merger of Clevedon and Portishead	✓ Safeguards areas of woodland and agricultural land from encroachment	- (Preserves the setting of Walton Conservation Area)	✓	Area of land to the northeast of Clevedon includes steeply sloping ridges separated by the Gordano Valley. Open agricultural land, woodland and a golf course. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5.

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19 (74 JSP) Southwest of Portishead	- (Prevents the spread of Portishead to the south and southwest.)	✓ Prevents the merger of Clevedon and Portishead. Maintains the separation of villages (Weston in Gordano) from Portishead.	✓ Safeguards open countryside including from encroachment	- (Part of the wider setting of Portishead and preserves the setting for the Weston in Gordano Conservation Area)	✓	Open agriculture and extensive woodland. Area of higher ground between the coast and the Gordano Valley including Portishead Down. The Green Belt directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5.
20 (75 JSP) Gordano Valley	-	✓ Prevents the merger of Portishead and Nailsea and maintains the separation of Clapton in Gordano and smaller settlements	✓ Safeguards open countryside from encroachment.	-	✓	Visually prominent area of land to the north of the M5 motorway primarily in open agricultural or nature conservation use. Includes the villages of Clapton in Gordano and part of Weston-in Gordano. Part of cell is designated as Gordano National Nature Reserve. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 2, 3 and 5
21 (76 JSP) Area at Sheepway	✓ Checks the urban sprawl associated with Bristol Port (Portbury)	✓ Maintains the separation of the Bristol urban areas at Bristol Port from Portishead	✓ Safeguards the countryside and environmental designation in this	-	✓	Area of open countryside between the Port and Portishead at Sheepway containing Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve and

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between the Royal Portbury Dock and Portishead			area from encroachment			agricultural land. Adjoins Bristol Port. The Green Belt is this cell was designated in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007. Directly serves purposes 1, 2, 3, and 5.
22 (77 JSP) Small parcel of land between the M5 and Easton-in-Gordano	✓ Helps to contain the urban sprawl of Bristol Port	-	✓ Safeguards some open agricultural land from encroachment	-	✓	Small parcel of land between the M5 and Easton in Gordano. Comprises open agricultural land and river bank area. There is some development including a motorway service station. The M5 motorway and a branch railway line pass through the cell. It adjoins Bristol Port. Directly serves purposes 1, 3 and 5.
23 (78 JSP) Area to the south of the A369, north of the	-	- (Maintains the separation of villages and settlements - Portbury, Lower	✓ Safeguards countryside which is mainly agricultural and woodland.	-	✓	Area of undulating open countryside with some prominent steep slopes. This cell directly serves purposes 3 and 5.

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B1328 including Portbury and Lower Failand		Failand, Easton- in-Gordano)				
24 (79 JSP) East of Easton-in-Gordano including Ham Green and Leigh Court	✓ Land is immediately adjacent to the River Avon which provides a significant physical boundary. The Green Belt prevents sprawl of Bristol extending beyond this boundary.	- (Maintains separation of villages (Ham Green from Pill) and whilst the river forms a strong defensible boundary the Green Belt prevents the merger of Bristol with Easton-in-Gordano.	✓ Safeguards mainly agricultural land	- (Preserves the setting of the designated historic park and garden of Leigh Court.)	✓	Area to the east of Easton in Gordano and south of the River Avon. Mainly open agricultural land and part of the Leigh Court estate with its parkland and woodlands. It includes a developed area, comprising residential development and a business park, at the former Ham Green hospital. The Green Belt in this cell directly serves purposes 1, 3 and 5

7. Conclusions and further assessment

7.1 The cell assessment indicates that the Green Belt in the plan area continues to retain the fundamental characteristic of openness and serves the purposes of the Green Belt. The descriptions of each cell identify that the Green Belt in the plan area is mainly open and undeveloped throughout.

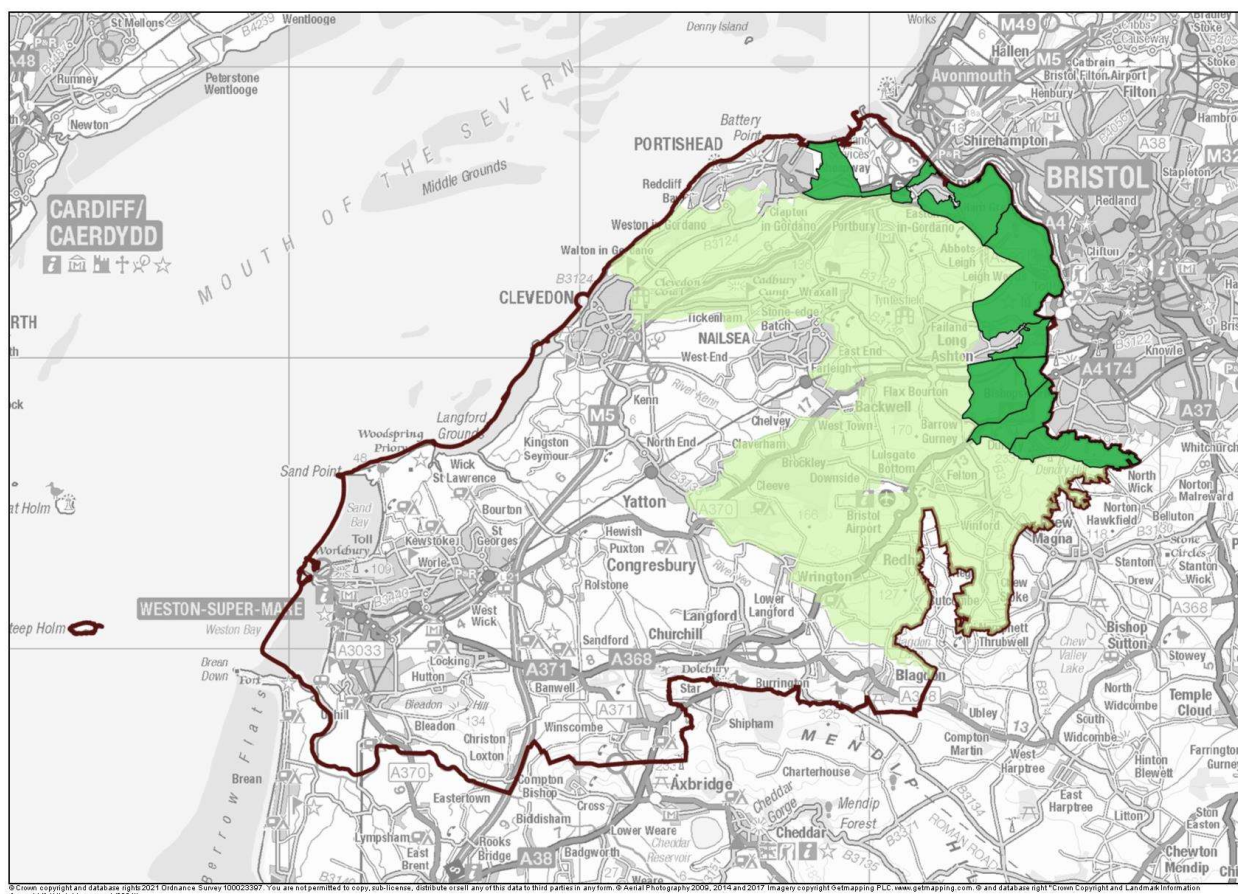
Purposes of the Green Belt

As the cell assessment matrix shows, each cell directly serves two or more of the five purposes defined in the NPPF.

Check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

The cells closest to the large built up areas of Bristol all directly serve the purpose of checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built up area. No areas of significant urban development have been identified in those cells. All cells maintain open, undeveloped land at the edge of these large built-up areas.

Map1 showing cells which check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

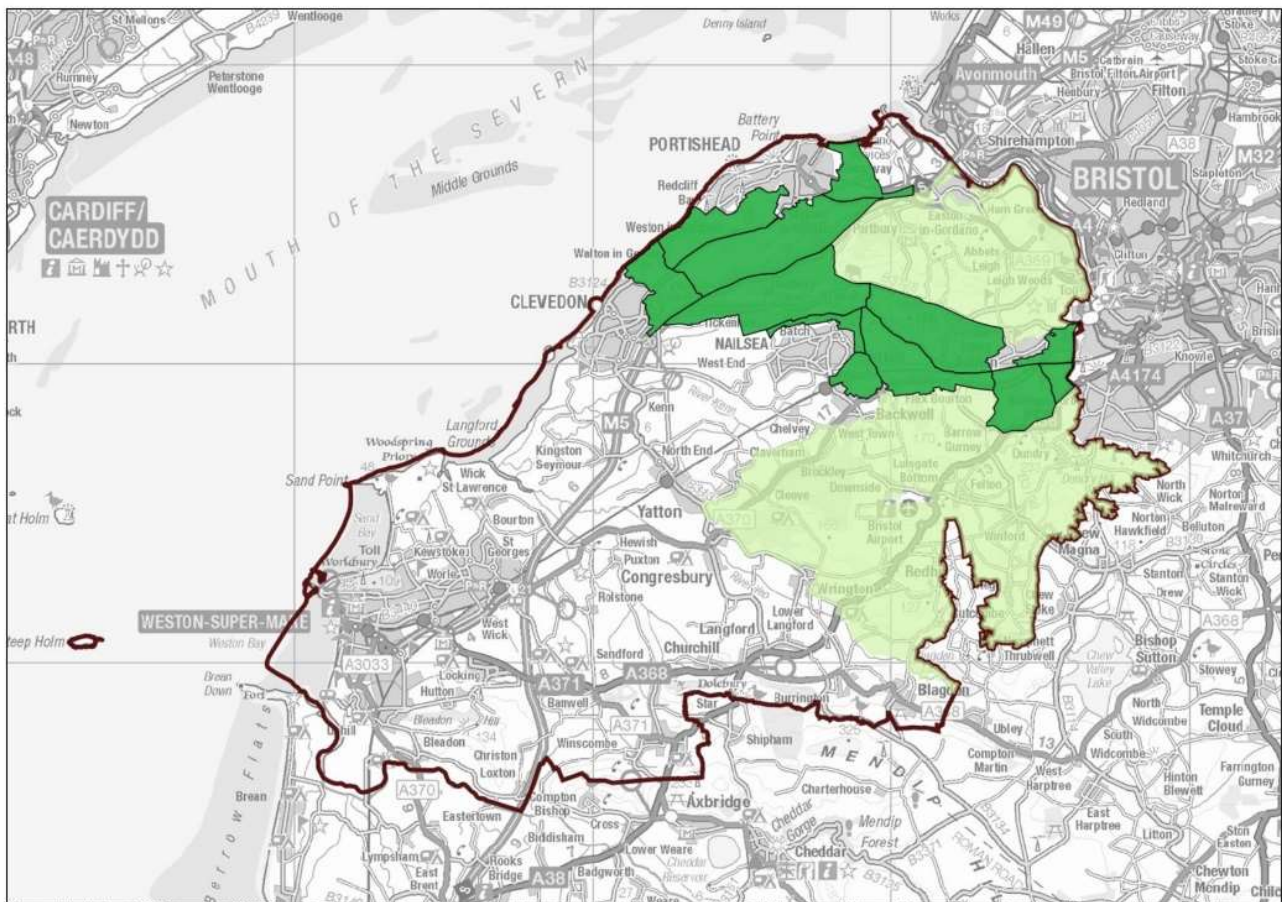


Prevent neighbouring towns merging

Cells between a number of settlements perform the role of preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another. These include the cells in the following corridors:

- Bristol Port/Bristol urban area and Portishead;
- Bristol, Long Ashton and Nailsea/Backwell
- Portishead and Clevedon

Map 2 showing cells which prevent neighbouring towns merging

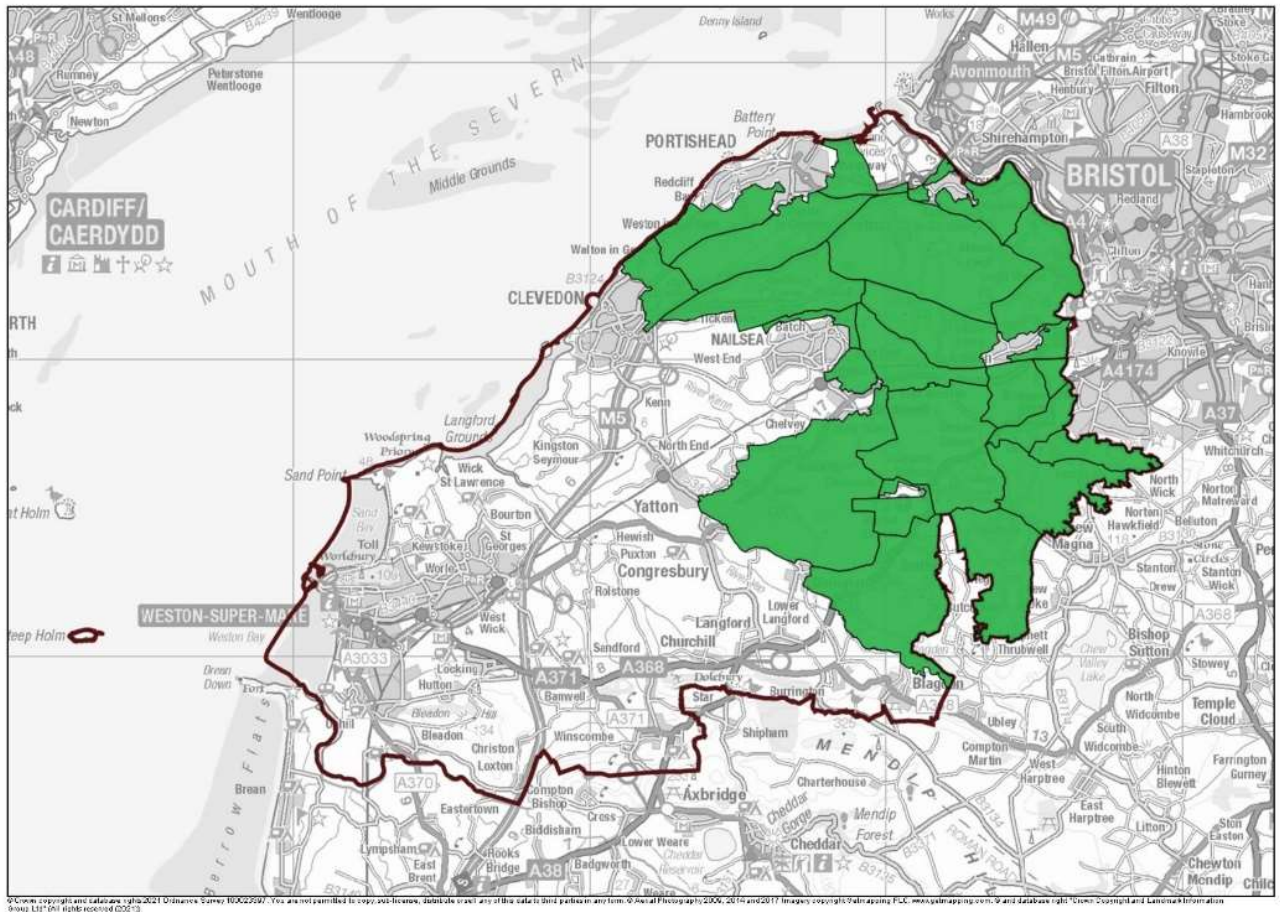


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Safeguarding countryside from encroachment

The description of each cell notes the dominance of countryside and the rural character of the areas. Most cells were identified as serving the purpose of safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment.

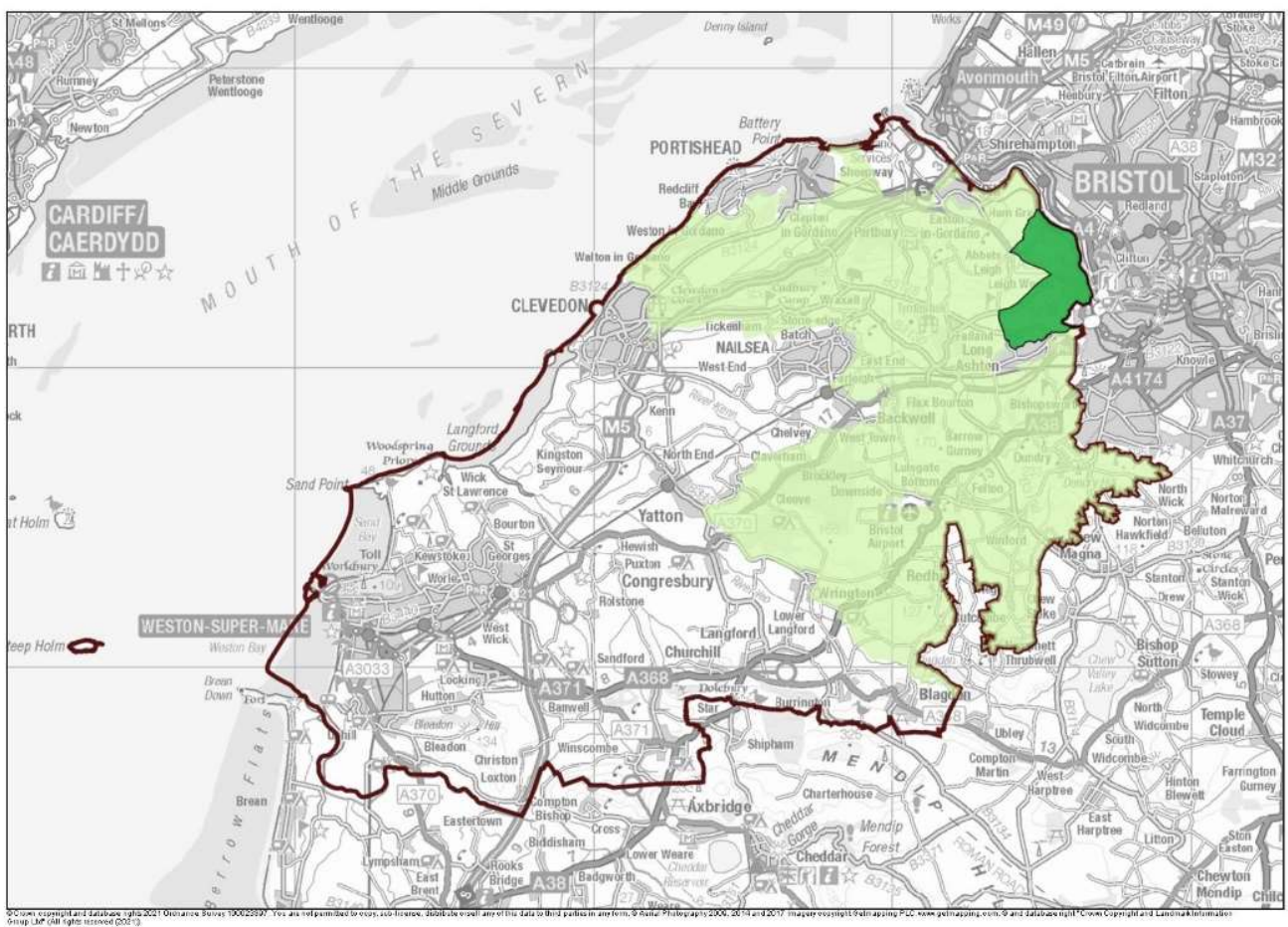
Map 3 showing cells which safeguard the countryside from encroachment:



Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns

Only cell 15, which provides a prominent open setting to the west of the group of conservation areas of central Bristol and Clifton, was also noted as serving this purpose. In many locations it was noted in the cell assessment that the Green Belt assisted in preserving the setting of designated Conservation Areas.

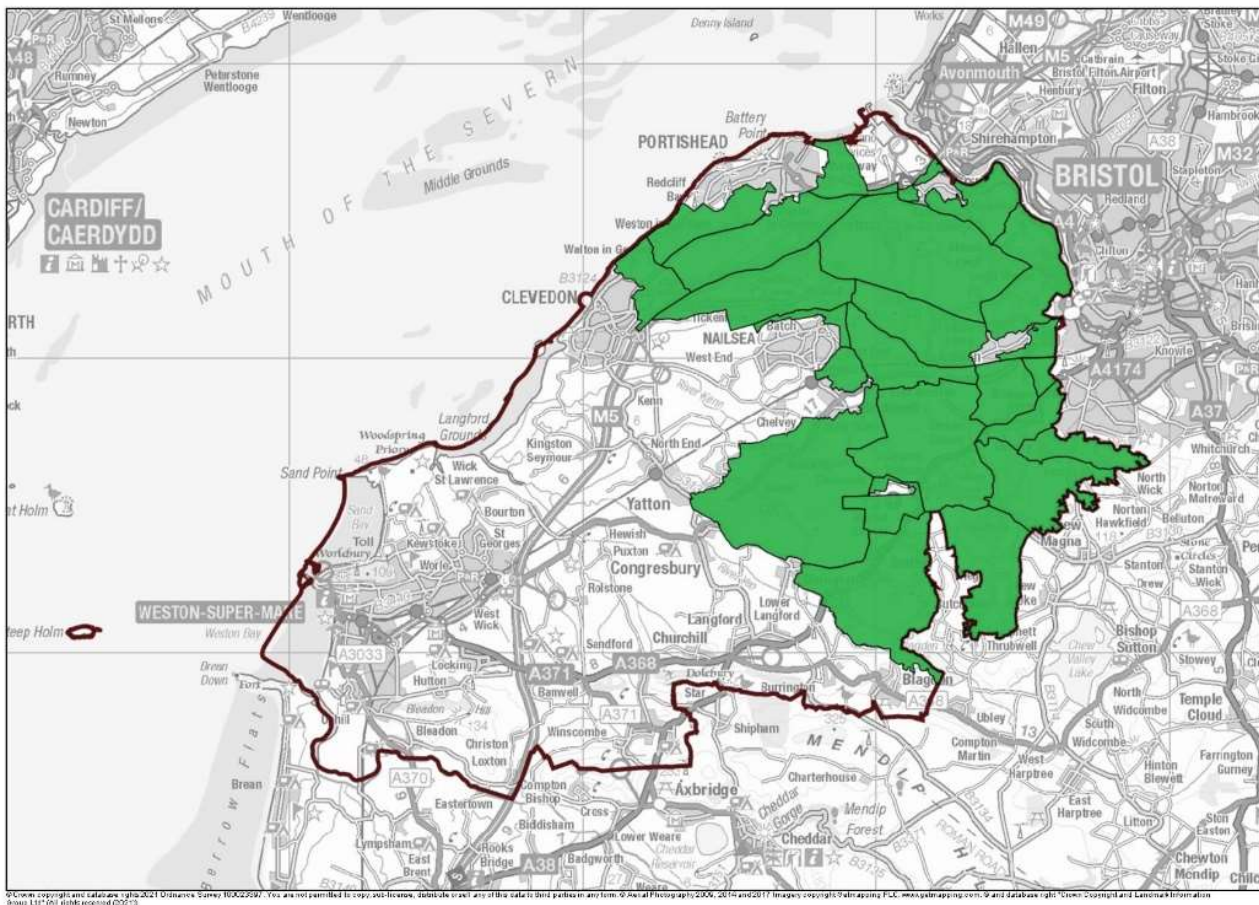
Map 4 shows cells which preserve the setting and special character of historic towns



Assist in urban regeneration

The role of the Green Belt in assisting urban regeneration is supported by policies in Local Plans which have regeneration objectives. All cells were identified as assisting in urban regeneration as they collectively encourage the recycling of derelict and other urban land in Bristol (including Avonmouth), and the other settlements surrounded by Green Belt. The cells closest to the regeneration areas of south Bristol were specifically identified in the assessment matrix.

Map 5 shows cells which assist in urban regeneration:



7.2 Changes to the Green Belt

The assessment identified very few areas of significant change to the Green Belt since it was most recently established in Local Plans. The most notable change was the construction of Colliters Way. This road and rapid transit route connect the A370 and A38. The construction of the road has not reduced the openness of the wider Green Belt in this location but has resulted in a new feature close to the western

edge of the Bristol urban area. Some areas of open land to east of the new route is now physically separated from open areas to the west.

7.3 Further assessment

The NPPF requires that Green Belt boundaries are only changed if there are exceptional circumstances. Should the work on emerging Local Plan conclude the exceptional circumstances have been met further work will consider the impact on the Green Belt of the preferred strategy and broad locations for growth, the consideration of detailed amendments, the impact of removing any locations from the Green Belt, as well as considering the effect on the integrity of the remaining Green Belt area.