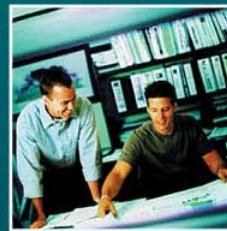
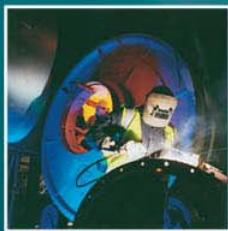
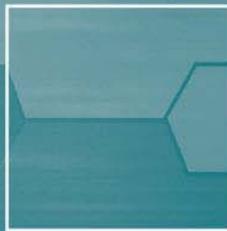
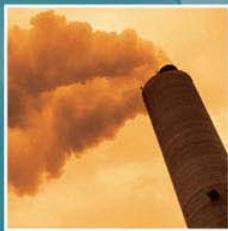
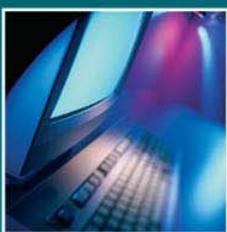


# The Manchester Airport Group

## Local Development Framework Evidence Base

Green Belt Review

July 2010



# Entec

*Creating the environment for business*

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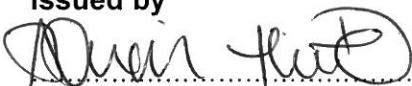
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## The Manchester Airport Group

### Local Development Framework Evidence Base

Green Belt Review

July 2010

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

Entec were commissioned to undertake a robust qualitative assessment of the Green Belt in the vicinity of Manchester Airport (MA) focusing particularly on the existing and proposed extensions to the Operational Area of the Airport. The purpose of this work is to examine the proposed extensions to the operation area, as identified in the Airport Master Plan, published in 2007, and to consider whether the land in question is serving a Green Belt function as defined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2). We have also assessed the existing operational area to identify whether this land serves a Green Belt purpose.

The Study also examines whether there are any exceptional circumstances which, despite the land serving a Green Belt purpose, would warrant the removal of the land from the Green Belt.

This Study sets out the findings of that assessment and makes recommendations on whether the existing Green Belt boundary should be amended. It will ultimately comprise part of a suite of evidence base documents that are intended to inform policies within the emerging Manchester City Council (MCC) Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy.

### 1.2 Background

MA is a major economic driver for both the Manchester City Region and the North of England. The Airport handles in excess of 22 million passengers per annum (mppa) travelling on around 226,000 aircraft movements and employs approximately 19,000 people on-site. It is estimated that a further 23,000 jobs in the North West are also related to the Airport and that by 2015, 60,000 jobs will be directly or indirectly related to its operation<sup>1</sup>. The Airport also has an important role to play in relieving congestion at airports in the South East and is the only UK airport, other than Heathrow, to have two full-length runways.

In recognising the important strategic and economic function of MA, the Government's Airport White Paper, *The Future of Air Transport* (Department for Transport, 2003) concludes that the Airport capacity “*should in principle continue to grow to accommodate additional demand up to around 50mppa by 2030*”. In 2007, MAG published the Manchester Airport Master Plan to 2030 in response to the White Paper’s recommendations, setting out how these targets are to be met including identifying proposed extensions to the Operational Area of the Airport.

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<sup>1</sup> MAG (2007a)



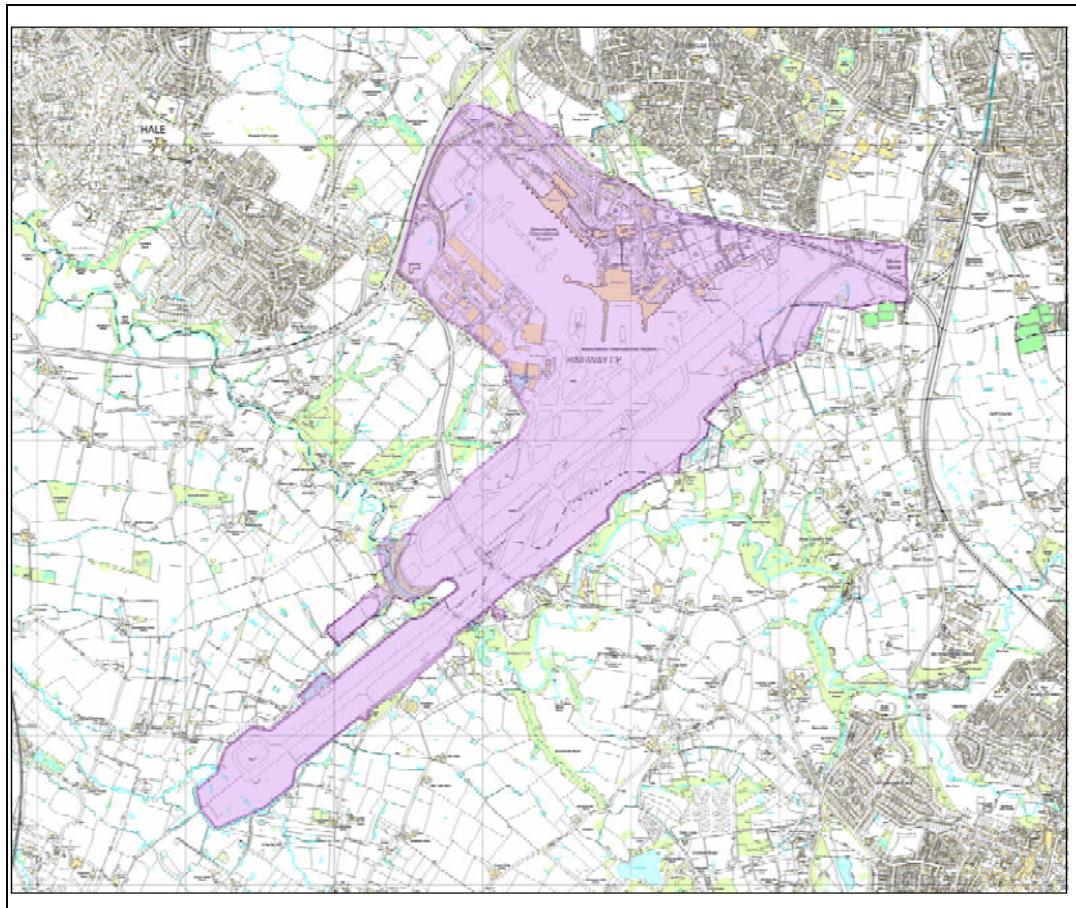
The Airport's Operational Area was first defined in 1974. Comprising 505ha, it was intended to safeguard land to enable development to support around 10 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 1995. The Development Strategy to 2005 published in 1993, proposed extending the Operational Area to 710ha in order to accommodate an airport handling 30mppa and included land for the Second Runway (R2) together with extensions at three locations namely, Land between the Airport's western boundary and the A538 (Cloughbank Farm), Land to the North of Ringway Road and Land within the M56 Junction 5. However, as a result of uncertainties in relation to a second runway, the proposed extensions were not taken forward within Manchester City Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

The Airport's current Operational Area is shown in **Figure 1.1** and extends to 625ha, the majority of which is developed. For its passenger throughput, Manchester is one of the most land efficient airports in Europe.

To support a throughput of 50mppa in accordance with the White Paper, a detailed appraisal of the environmental effects, land demands and business needs was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Master Plan in order to define a revised Operational Area. The Airport's Master Plan provides the context to guide the development of the site up to 2030 in line with the Air Transport White Paper. It identifies a number of essential uses and facilities that are required for the Airport's operation and need to be located within the Operational Area. It also sets out the locations where extensions are required to the Operational Area (Areas A to F). See Figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.1 Existing Operational Area**



Source MAG (2007b:99)

The main principle of development at the Airport is one of land use efficiency and technological improvement. Limits have been placed on the physical spread of the site. The Airport Company's approach is for redevelopment of land within the existing boundary as far as possible and activities that do not need direct connection to the airfield moved to the site periphery, or offsite altogether.

To deliver the growth outlined in the Air Transport White Paper, the Airport will require a minimum of 175 ha of additional land to accommodate an expanded Operational Area in 2030. Further information on how this figure is divided across the airport estate can be found in the Need for Land document prepared by Manchester Airport.

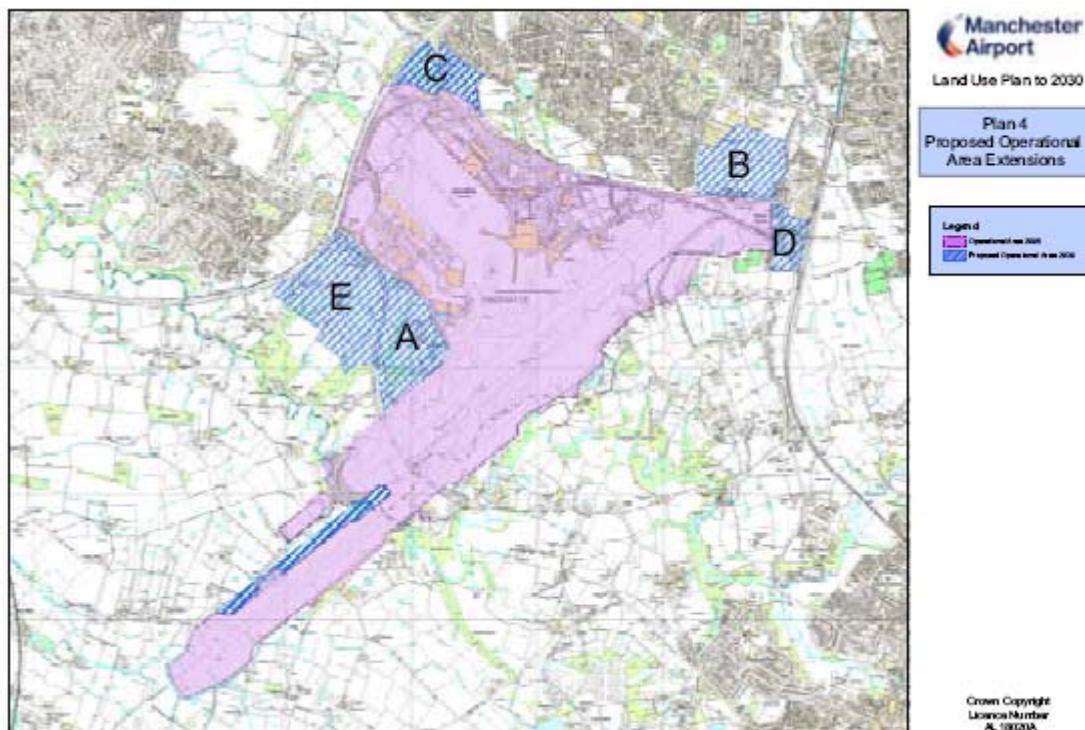
The Master Plan proposes a total of six extensions to the existing Operational Area which have been prioritised for the use of airfield, apron, maintenance, car parking and commercial/office facilities. These are shown in **Figure 1.2** and comprise the following sites:

- A - Land to the east of the A538 (Cloughbank Farm);



- B - Land to the north of Ringway Road;
- C - Land within Junction 5 of the M56;
- D - Land to the south of Ringway Road, between Tedder Drive and Styal Road;
- E - Land to the west of the A538 (Oak Farm);
- F – Parallel Taxiway Area.

**Figure 1.2 Proposed Operational Area Extensions**



Source MAG (2007:67)

## 1.3 Green Belt Constraint to Growth

The majority of the existing Operational Area of the Airport is located within the Green Belt where national planning policy, in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2) asserts a presumption against inappropriate development. The Airport's designation as a Major Developed Site (MDS) in the (Greater Manchester) Green Belt has enabled some limited growth to take place whilst in other cases it has been argued that



'very special circumstances' exist to justify development. However, the Green Belt designation introduces uncertainty, requiring many developments to be assessed from 'first principles'. This significantly impedes the ability of MA to plan strategically and to fulfil the role set out for the Airport in the Air Transport White Paper.

In response to this impediment, the Master Plan contains an action to seek to remove parts of the existing and extended Operational Area from the Green Belt through the development plan system and in particular the North West of England Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (NW RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF).

Following the change of Government, in July 2010 the RSS was abolished by the Secretary of State. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the evidence (and debate at the EIP), which fed into the RSS, remains a sound basis for Policy. The RSS was published in September 2008 and confers agreement for detailed changes to the Green Belt to be made to meet operational requirements. In accordance with the provisions made in the RSS, this Study seeks to examine the extent to which the proposed Operational Area shown in **Figure 1.2** (above) meets the purposes of the Green Belt to help inform the policy approach taken forward with respect to MA. As such, this review is not intended to be a strategic assessment of the wider Green Belt but is instead to be a local reassessment of the Green Belt in order to satisfy national policy objectives for airport growth. However we acknowledge that the removal of any land from the Green Belt has the potential to impact on the integrity of the wider Green Belt. We therefore propose to also undertake a high level review of the impact of removing land from the Green Belt at MA on the wider Green Belt.

This report is part of a suite of documents which have been prepared and submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC) to provide an updated planning policy framework in line with national and regional policy.

MA has provided evidence to MCC to justify the expansion of the airport and to identify the exact nature of the airport uses which are proposed. 'Manchester Airport – The Need for Land' which was submitted to MCC in December 2009 sets out the rational behind the MA plans for growth and a phasing programme for how and where it will be delivered.

## **1.4 Structure of this Study**

This remainder of this Study is set out as follows:

- Section 2**      Discusses the strategic and policy context and identifies the key drivers which underpin the need to undertake a localised assessment of the Green Belt in the vicinity of MA.
- Section 3**      Sets out the approach to assessing the proposed Operational Area against the purposes of the Green Belt.
- Section 4**      Contains the results of the assessment for the existing Operational Area and each extension in relation to the extent to which land meets the purposes of the Green Belt and the



potential impact of development. It also assesses the impact of an amended boundary of the integrity of the wider Green Belt.

- Section 5** Draws together the results of the assessment contained within Section 4 and proposes an alternative Green Belt boundary for further review and definition and discussion with local planning authorities.



## 2. Strategic and Policy Context

### 2.1 Introduction

This section of the Study sets out the context in which the review has been undertaken. It begins by providing a brief description of the Green Belt in the vicinity of MA and the controls over development within it, before examining those factors which necessitate a localised review of the Green Belt to facilitate the growth of MA.

### 2.2 Existing Green Belt

#### 2.2.1 Green Belt Origins

The Green Belt in the vicinity of the MA was established in 1961 as part of an amendment<sup>2</sup> to the Cheshire County Development Plan which considered the Green Belt in the north of the County. The Written Statement sets out the following reason for its designation:

*“It is considered essential to prevent the further major spread of that part of the South-East Lancashire conurbation lying in Cheshire and to preserve as far as possible the undeveloped breaks between existing towns and settlements”.*

However, like other areas in the region, the Green Belt was not formally approved. This was a consequence of first, rapid population growth and outward migration that characterised urban development in the 1960s and 1970s and resulted in uncertainty surrounding the quantities of land required to accommodate change, second, the introduction of a new Development Plan system and, third, local government re-organisation (the creation of the Greater Manchester Council and the 10 metropolitan District Councils). By the late 1970s there was considered to be a need for a more consistent and rationalised approach to Green Belt policy which culminated in the Greater Manchester Structure Plan. Adopted in 1981, the Plan sought to define a Green Belt boundary for the conurbation as a whole in accordance with the following Green Belt purposes set out in national policy<sup>3</sup>:

- i. to check the further growth of a built-up area;

---

<sup>2</sup> County Palatine of Cheshire (1961) *Development Plan Amendment: Green Belts – Written Statement, North Cheshire Green Belt*

<sup>3</sup> Circular 42/55 of the former Ministry of Housing and Local Government



- ii. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging; and
- iii. to preserve the special character of a town.

The Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan was prepared and adopted in 1984 following a Planning Inquiry and sought to take forward the policy approach contained within the Structure Plan and define, in detail, the boundaries of the Green Belt. Extracts from the relevant policies is produced in Appendix B.

## 2.2.2 Existing Green Belt

Today, the Greater Manchester Green Belt forms part of the wider North West Green Belt covering land in Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire and comprising some 241,700ha<sup>4</sup>. More locally, this includes 1,710ha of land in Manchester, 34,080ha in (former) Macclesfield Borough, 3,980ha in Trafford Borough and 5,860ha in Stockport<sup>5</sup>. The extent of the Green Belt in the vicinity of MA is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

In the vicinity of the Airport, the existing Green Belt boundary extends around the eastern edge of Hale Barns. This narrow part of the Green Belt is enclosed and dominated by existing built form and dense vegetation associated with the M56. The Green Belt to the west of the M56 extends as a relatively narrow belt (1.8km width at most) in a westerly direction to meet with the eastern edge of Altrincham; and is comprised of golf courses, agricultural land, residential and farm related properties, lanes and tracks.

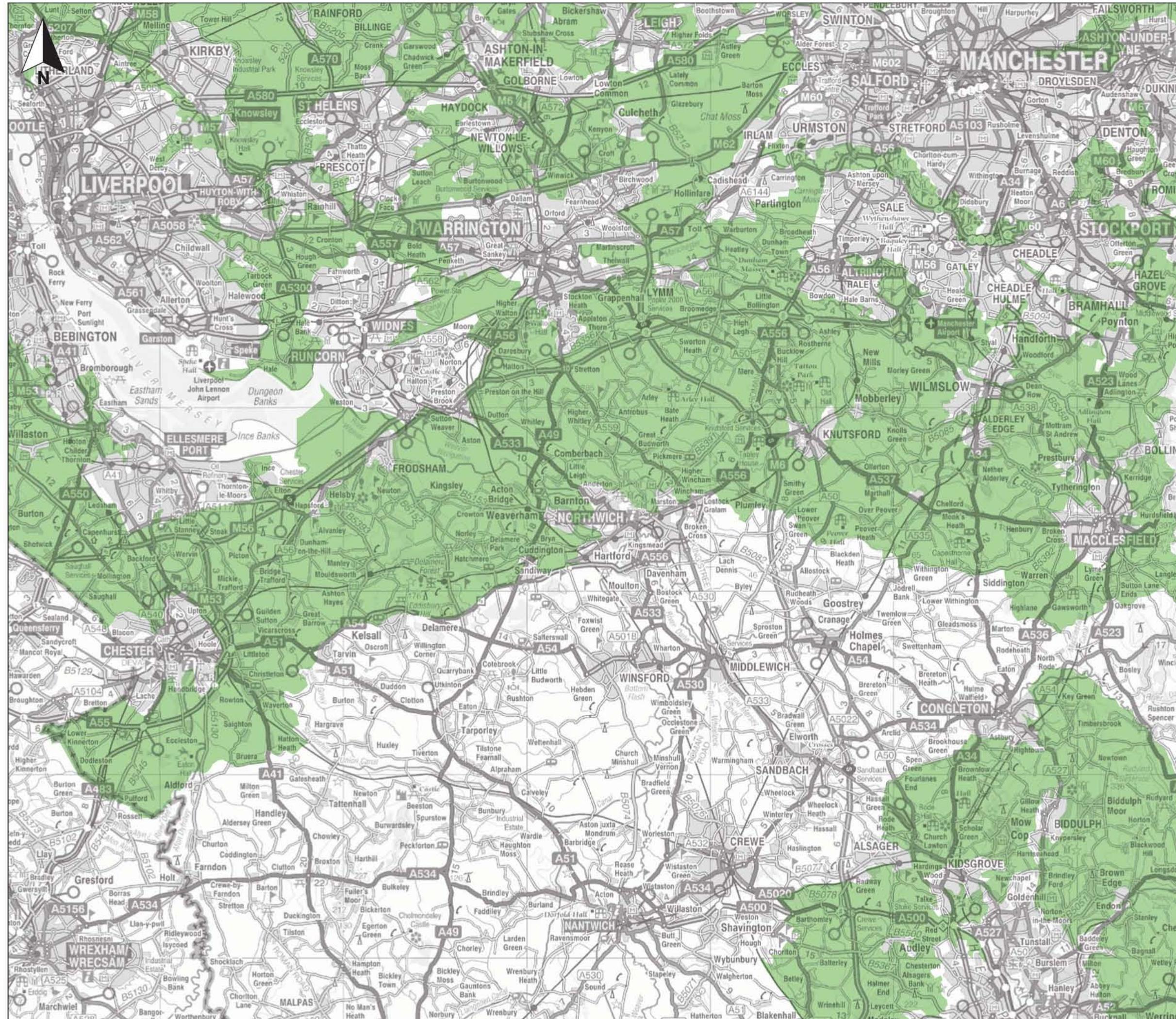
From Altrincham, the Green Belt boundary extends in an easterly direction along the southern edge of Wythenshawe and Woodhouse Park (crossing the M56 to the north of Junction 5); the southern edge of the M56; and the northern edge of airport related built form. To the south of this boundary the Green Belt comprises a large expanse of built form and infrastructure related to the main operational area of the Airport.

Continuing from the northern edge of the Airport, the Green Belt boundary extends in an easterly direction along the southern edge of Ringway Road; a small section of the B5166; and then heads in a northerly direction. The area of Green Belt narrows dramatically as it heads northwards and is dominated by urban infrastructure and residential, commercial and industrial built development (both adjacent to and within the Green Belt itself). The Green Belt forms part of the Gatley Brook Valley and reflects the emphasis placed on existing river valleys in the Greater Manchester Structure Plan.

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<sup>4</sup> PPG2





**Figure 2.1**  
**Wider Green Belt Boundary**

## 2.3 Control of Development in the Green Belt

### 2.3.1 National Policy

#### Planning Policy Guidance Note 2

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2) sets out the national policy framework in relation to extent, purpose and designation of Green Belts and identifies five key purposes of including land within them (these are set out in **Box 1**).

##### **Box 1: Five purposes of the Green Belt**

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

Source PPG2 (para 1.5)

Paragraph 2.6 establishes that the general extent of a Green Belt should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, and if an alteration is proposed, the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that opportunities for development within urban areas have been considered. Paragraph 2.7 continues that where a local plan is being revised, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the structure plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist which necessitate such a revision.

#### Air Transport White Paper

The Government's White Paper, 'The Future of Air Transport', was published in December 2003 and sets out a strategic framework for the development of airport capacity over the next 30 years. It promotes a measured and balanced approach to development which:

- recognises the importance of air travel to our national and regional economic prosperity, and that not providing additional capacity where it is needed would significantly damage the economy and national prosperity;

---

<sup>5</sup> Communities and Local Government (2009) Local Planning Authority Green Belt Statistic 2008/09



- reflects people's desire to travel further and more often by air, and to take advantage of the affordability of air travel and the opportunities this brings;
- seeks to reduce and minimise the impacts of airports on those who live nearby, and on the natural environment;
- ensures that, over time, aviation pays the external costs its activities impose on society at large – in other words, that the price of air travel reflects its environmental and social impacts;
- minimises the need for airport development in new locations by making best use of existing capacity where possible;
- respects the rights and interests of those affected by airport development; and
- provides greater certainty for all concerned in the planning of future airport capacity, but at the same time is sufficiently flexible to recognise and adapt to the uncertainties inherent in long-term planning.

The White Paper encourages, subject to environmental constraints, the growth of regional airports and identifies MA as offering the main potential for growth in the North of England stating that “*as a major international gateway, it provides an important alternative to the congested airports in the South East and is the only UK airport other than Heathrow to have two full-length runways. Consequently it potentially has significant spare runway capacity, especially if new operating procedures allowing more intensive use to be made of the existing runways in segregated mode were to be introduced. This would enable Manchester to cater for demand of at least 50mppa, provided this could be delivered in an environmentally acceptable manner*<sup>6</sup>”. The White Paper places an emphasis on development of terminal capacity to serve up to 55mppa and states that the Government “*supports in principle the growth of terminal capacity to make maximum use of the existing runways operated in segregated mode, subject to meeting environmental concerns*”.

In December 2006, a Progress Report was issued which assessed progress on the policies and proposals set out in the White Paper. This report confirmed continued support for the expansion of regional airports such as MA as a way of relieving congestion at south east airports and supporting the growth of regional economies.

In 2007 as part of the wide ranging agenda for the reform of the UK Planning System, the Labour Government announced its intention to produce National Policy Statements (NPS) in respect of national infrastructure. The Coalition Government have confirmed their intention to continue with this, and an NPS covering aviation is expected in the near future.

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<sup>6</sup> DfT (2003:84)



## 2.3.2 National Policy Conflict

Whilst there is strong policy support for airport growth, it is widely considered that PPG2 provides an inadequate policy framework for dealing with development at those airports situated in Green Belts which may impede the delivery of national objectives for aviation as set out in The White Paper. This can be attributed to the fact that PPG2 fails to recognise the unique nature of airport development. For example, Annex C of PPG2 which sets out the criteria in relation to the development of MDSs does not explicitly cover airports, which differ in their built form from the vast majority of MDSs which tend to comprise a large central core of buildings such as hospitals set within large grounds. MDSs were originally devised to deal with the re-development of former hospitals and institutions.

Runways and airfields, on the other hand, are by their very nature ‘open’ with built development restricted for operational and safety reasons in accordance with the Airport’s Civil Aviation Authority license. As such, it could be argued that they play a significant Green Belt function by prohibiting development and providing a long-term, strongly defensible boundary.

However, PPG2 does make provision for development that would normally be considered inappropriate provided very special circumstances exist to justify it. The very special circumstances that exist in relation to MA have been used as basis to support its development since 1985, particularly its role in facilitating regional and local economic growth as highlighted in the supporting text to Policy EW21 of the Manchester UDP, which states that the growth of the Airport “*has always been regarded in a special way. The Airport is playing an increasingly important role in the economy and life both of the City and the wider region, particularly as it expands its range of services and facilities. It is a major employer in its own right as well as being a major public transport facility. It supports many more jobs away from the Airport and is an important part of initiatives to attract investment and tourism*”.

Indeed, this argument was successful in relation to the development of the Second Runway. With specific regard to openness, the Inspector in 26.6.21 concluded:

*Would the development maintain the most important attribute of Green Belts, openness? Undoubtedly yes. Indeed, MBC, describe the runway as a huge, almost featureless void.*

Whilst the Inspector was of the opinion that the runway would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, he concluded that the benefits associated with the proposed development would outweigh the impact on the Green Belt. Those benefits identified in the Report included:

- the need for additional aviation capacity in the North West;
- achievement of aviation policy objectives;
- lack of a viable alternative;
- economic benefits; and



- retention of the openness of the Green Belt.

Nevertheless, the current policy framework does not provide sufficient certainty with which to plan for the strategic growth of MA and this ultimately undermines the ability of the airport to achieve national policy goals.

This issue is recognised within the White Paper (paragraph 12.10) which highlights that a number of major airports, including Heathrow, Manchester and Edinburgh, are situated in Green Belts and that a conflict exists between the need to plan for growth and Green Belt policy. Revised national planning policy in relation to Green Belts was due to be released in 2004. That was expected to reflect the Government's aspirations for airport growth but has not yet been published and the White Paper Progress Report did not provide any further advice on how both policy objectives should be reconciled.

### 2.3.3     Regional Policy

In the absence of up-to-date national Green Belt policy which reflects and is consistent with national aviation policy, the need to reassess how airport expansion in the Green Belt is accommodated falls to regional and local policy. However recent announcements from the Coalition Government have confirmed that the RSS is to be revoked. Whilst the RSS may therefore not now form part of the development plan, it is important to reference the discussions which took place as part of the preparation of the RSS, which we believe are an important element of the case for a Green Belt review. It is considered that the evidence (and debate at the EIP) which fed into the RSS, remains a sound basis for Policy.

This issue of the Green Belt was considered during the North West RSS Examination in Public following which the Panel Report, published in May 2007 (paragraph 7.53), stated that, where airport expansion was considered necessary, local planning authorities would be faced with a difficult decision. On the one hand, they would be unable to allocate land to accommodate for such growth in light of paragraph 2.7 of PPG2 which stipulates that Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless exceptional circumstances exist, whilst on the other failure to make provision for expansion would impede national air transport policy.

In examining potential solutions, the Panel concluded (7.56) "*we cannot see why the relevant local planning authority should not be able to come to a view on whether local adjustments to a Green Belt boundary should be made to facilitate proposals in an Airport Master Plan, that are made pursuant to the objectives of the Air Transport White Paper*".

Thus the RSS published in September 2008, sets out that, whilst a major review of the Green Belt is unlikely to be required to accommodate future development within Cheshire or Greater Manchester before 2011, more location-specific and detailed boundary changes may be required to meet exceptional purposes. The RSS stipulates that any such changes should be dealt with through the LDF process and be subject to the agreement of the Regional Planning Body. Policy RDF4 confers that agreement in respect of changes to the Green Belt to meet operational infrastructure requirements at MA (see **Box 2**).



## Box 2: North West RSS Policy RDF4: Green Belts

Overall the general extent of the Region's Green Belt will be maintained.

There is no need for any exceptional substantial strategic change to Green Belt and its boundaries in the North West within the timescales set out below:

- within Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire or Merseyside before 2011; and
- within Warrington before 2021.

After 2011 the presumption will be against exceptional substantial strategic change to the Green Belt in Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire or Merseyside. Strategic studies, undertaken by The Regional Planning Body, together with relevant stakeholders should investigate both the need for change and options for implementation. The findings will inform future reviews of RSS and subsequent reviews of plans and strategies.

Local Development Frameworks may provide for detailed changes in Green Belt boundaries to accommodate the expansion of Manchester Airport and Liverpool John Lennon Airport; and to provide for an inter-modal freight terminal at Newton-Le-Willows. Subject to the agreement of The Regional Planning Body, any other local detailed boundary changes should be examined through the LDF process.

The need to plan strategically and with certainty to meet anticipated growth has resulted in the proposed realignment of Green Belt boundaries in the vicinity of airports through the development plan process. For example, the John Lennon Airport Master Plan to 2030 published in November 2007 contains plans to release land from the Green Belt through the LDF process to accommodate the expansion of cargo facilities stating that “*the social and economic benefits arising from the expansion of cargo facilities, and the cost of failing to realise them, comprise exceptional circumstances which justify the Airport’s proposal for longer term development in the Green Belt*<sup>7</sup>”.

Liverpool’s Core Strategy in turn reflects the Airport’s Masterplan. Proposed Policy Approach 6 states “*A local change to the Green Belt boundary south of the existing operational airport, to facilitate expansion as set out in the Airport Masterplan in the latter part of the Core Strategy period, will be considered*”.<sup>8</sup>

Reflecting the White Paper, the RSS places considerable emphasis on aviation as a regional and local economic asset. In this context, Policy RT5 stipulates that plans and strategies should support the economic activity generated and sustained by the region’s airports and in particular the importance of MA as a key economic driver for the North of England. In determining requirements for the expansion of an airport beyond its existing boundary, the policy requires that account be taken of:

- the scope for intensification and rationalisation of activities and facilities within the existing boundary;
- the scope for relocating existing activities or facilities off-site; and
- the scope for developing proposed activities or facilities off-site.

<sup>7</sup> John Lennon Airport Masterplan 2007 (Paragraph 7.6)

<sup>8</sup> Liverpool Core Strategy Proposed Option 2010 (Paragraph 271)



## 2.3.4 Local Policy

There has also been continuing policy support for the development of MA in successive development plans. Proposal 4 of the Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan 1984 defined the airport operational area and supported development within it that was directly related to the operational efficiency and amenity of the airport. It identified the airport as a unique case and outlined 3 reasons why development would not be incompatible with the purposes of the Green Belt:

- It lies in the middle of an important tract of open land that performs, overall, a Green Belt function;
- The airport's proportion of building land, in relation to its total area, is so low that it does serve as an open break; and
- It is important to prevent inappropriate development on open land surrounding the Airport.

The Manchester UDP maintained support for the continuing expansion of MA stating that the “*Airport is important in its own right as an employment provider and because of the travel opportunities which it brings to the region. It also has important indirect economic benefits for the region as a whole*”. Policy T4.1 stipulates that expansion of the Airport will be managed in accordance with the former Ringway Local Plan and that land will be safeguarded which may be needed to accommodate expansion until plans are put in place that set out the future growth of the Airport.

Policies EW20 to EW35 of the UDP support the principle for future expansion of the Airport within the Operational Area subject to high standards of design and landscaping, noise and other environmental considerations. Policy EW21 of the UDP designates the Airport as a major developed site in the Green Belt, allowing infilling or re-development which is in accordance with the provisions contained within Annex C of PPG2 and those uses set highlighted in **Box 3**. Other development must be subject to the test of very special circumstances and be demonstrated to be essential to the operational efficiency and amenity of the Airport and as contributing to regional economic growth.

### Box 3: Appropriate development within the Airport Operational Area

- Essential operational facilities on or adjacent to the airfield which include runways, taxiways and associated navigational aids, passenger and cargo handling facilities, paved aircraft stands, aircraft maintenance hangars, fuelling facilities, storage of aircraft fuel, aircraft washing plant, aircraft engine testing plant, general aviation facilities (for air taxi, helicopter and private use), vehicle washing, repair and maintenance facilities, facilities for the repair and maintenance of specialised plant and equipment, flight catering units, apron services buildings, emergency services buildings, essential staff car parking, security facilities, specialised staff training accommodation and operational accommodation;
- Cargo terminal facilities, which include warehouses for the storage of goods and livestock for distribution by air, bonded warehouses, associated accommodation for airline agencies, freight forwarders and Government agencies, administrative accommodation, staff catering, lorry parks, and vehicle refuelling and servicing facilities;
- Passenger terminal building and related facilities, which include public car parks, public transport facilities, administrative accommodation for airlines, handling agencies, tour operators and Government agencies, petrol filling and service stations, car rental facilities, staff and air passenger shopping facilities, and ancillary public viewing facilities;
- Airport ancillary facilities, which include car rental, maintenance and storage facilities, hotel accommodation, and staff training and recreational facilities;



- Roads, footways and public transport infrastructure;
- Sewage and other waste disposal facilities;
- Landscaping works, including strategic tree planting and earth mounding; and
- Staff car parking, within a policy context of reducing car trips to and from the Airport, where the intention is to relocate staff car parking to appropriate sites so that a time penalty is introduced for such journeys.

Source MCC (1995)

Regarding the Green Belt, Policy E.21 sets out that permission for development in Green Belt locations will only be granted in very special circumstances and for proposals relating to agriculture, forestry, outdoor sport and outdoor recreation and cemeteries as well as for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

MCC is currently preparing the Core Strategy component of the LDF which will set out the long-term spatial vision and development strategy for the City up to 2027<sup>9</sup>. The Council commenced work on the Core Strategy in 2005, consulting on its Issues and Options from December 2007 to February 2008. Building on the responses received, a series of ‘refined’ policy approaches have been developed which, together with associated strategic objectives, formed the ‘Refining Options for the Core Strategy’ document which underwent consultation between April 2009 and May 2009. The issues were developed into policy approaches for each of the options outlined at the Issues and Options stage. A set of background Issues Papers were prepared to support the document. In November 2009, the Council issued, for consultation Manchester's Core Strategy Proposed Option<sup>10</sup>. It contains the proposed approach to the issues that have been identified as being important to the City in previous stages of the Core Strategy’s preparation.

With regard to MA, Policy MA1 supports the growth of the Airport in-line with the White Paper and identifies it as a strategic site due to its role as an international gateway to the North West and an economic driver of the region. The document presented three growth options for MA:

- Retain the existing areas of Manchester Airport within the Green Belt and the existing Major Developed Site boundary and manage expansion in line with the Future of Air Transport White Paper as proposals come forward;
- Review the Green Belt boundary in the current operational area against the tests in PPG2 to determine which areas meet PPG2 requirements. Remove any areas which have been identified as no longer

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<sup>9</sup> Full details of the Local Development Documents to be prepared by MCC is set out in the Council’s *Local Development Scheme* available from [http://www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?fileID=3872](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=3872)

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/file/12003/core\\_strategy\\_proposed\\_option](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/file/12003/core_strategy_proposed_option)



serving a Green Belt function. Prepare an Area Action Plan to consider proposals for further expansion to meet the capacity targets of the Future of Air Transport White Paper;

- Review the Green Belt boundary in the current operational area and proposed extensions set out in the Manchester Airport Masterplan and Land Use Plan 2007. Remove those areas which will no longer serve a Green Belt function during the lifetime of the Core Strategy on the basis of proposed airport expansion.

## 2.4 Airport Master Plan

The Manchester Airport Master Plan was published in 2007 following public consultation on a draft version in 2006, in response to the White Paper. Together with four action plans (covering Land Use, Transport, Environment and Community), it sets out the strategic framework for the development and growth of the Airport to 2030. The Master Plan's strategy comprises 7 key strands which include providing an appropriate reservoir of land to support growth and in this regard, identifies operational area requirements in the region of 800ha in order to support a throughput of 50mppa. By their very nature, Airports are a fixed location which cannot be accommodated elsewhere. Many operational uses require direct access to the existing airfield therefore a number of the proposed uses must be located on land directly adjoining the airfield.

In the absence of suitable non-Green Belt sites immediately adjacent to the Airport, the Master Plan proposes 5 extensions to the Operational Area within the Green Belt, totalling 175ha. These are shown in **Figure 1.3** (see Section 1) and described in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1 Proposed Operational Area Extensions**

Proposed Extension	Current Uses	Proposed Uses
A - Land to the East of the A538 (39ha)	Agriculture and non-agricultural including the Aviation Viewing Park, public house, Church and residential properties.	Apron and aircraft parking, aircraft maintenance, cargo and other ancillary operational uses.
B - Land to the north of Ringway Road (33ha)	Largely undeveloped with some residential.	Airport car parking displaced as a result of operational uses which require direct access to the apron.
C - Land within, and adjacent to, Junction 5 of the M56 (17ha)	Largely undeveloped with some residential properties and the airport crèche.	Airport commercial uses within Junction 5 such as offices or hotels which are required to be on site.
D - Land to the south of Ringway Road (9ha)	Mixture of existing and redundant commercial uses with two residential dwellings to the west and agricultural land to the south	Commercial and operational uses along with a major road scheme (SEMMMS)
E - Land to the west of the A538 (59ha)	Largely agricultural with a small number of residential dwellings, highways depot.	Uses displaced from the central terminal complex including, cargo, flight catering,



Proposed Extension	Current Uses	Proposed Uses
F – Parallel Taxiway (18ha)	Agricultural land to the north of Runway Two.	realigned Junction 6 of M56 and A538, and car parking). Additional taxiway/airfield.

Although the Green Belt designation of the Airport and the proposed extensions does not necessarily preclude future growth, it does impinge on the ability to plan development in a strategic manner. It is widely recognised that PPG2 provides an inadequate policy framework for dealing with development at airports situated in Green Belts and this conflict does not just affect Manchester; other UK airports are faced with a similar constraint. This is explored in the following section.

## 2.5 Other Airports within Green Belts

Similar issues to those discussed at the NW RSS, were also debated at the South West RSS, with particular focus on Bristol and Bournemouth Airports, both of which are in the Green Belt, and both identified in the ATWP for significant passenger growth throughout the RSS plan period.

In both instances the Panel proposed that land around the airports should be removed from the Green Belt, on the basis that the ATWP provides exceptional circumstances to justify an alteration. As with the NW Panel, the SW Panel did not identify the specific boundary but required that the identified boundary should be established through the Local Development Framework process, having regard to the development needs of the airport.

### 2.5.1 Bristol Airport

The Replacement North Somerset Local Plan identifies that land on the northern side of Bristol Airport effectively lies outside of the Green Belt (being within the Green Belt Inset) however land to the south of the existing terminal building, including the runway and the existing Silver Zone long stay car parking area, are within the Green Belt. The Green Belt Inset was recommended by the Inspector at the Replacement Local Plan Inquiry.

In this instance and following the consideration of detailed evidence, the Inspector recommended that a Green Belt ‘inset’ should be created around the northern part of the Airport to allow for development to come forward within the plan period:

*It is expected that the greater part if not all of the development that will require express planning permission to raise the capacity of the Airport to 9 million passengers per year (9mppa) and which is governed by Policy T/12 will be located within this inset.*



However, the Inspector was also of the view that regardless of the evidence before him, the presence of the White Paper as current Government guidance was on its own exceptional circumstances to warrant amending the Green Belt. In paragraph 46.8 he states:

*Consequently, I consider that the test of PPG2 concerning a strategic basis for a change to the Green Belt boundary at BIA is met. Even were this not so, then I consider that the publication of the Airport's White Paper as a statement of government policy constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance' to warrant such action.*

Importantly the Inspector arrived at this conclusion without any regional policy that advocated a change to the boundary.

The Inspector also considered the issue of conflict between the support given for the expansion of BIA in the ATWP and the presumption against development contained in PPG2. He concluded (para 46.3):

*...having presumptions in favour (White Paper) and against (Green Belt) must foster a climate of uncertainty that the White Paper was meant to dispel. It may be that the Green Belt status of the land did not prevent planning permission being obtained for the existing terminal but that was only after a Public Inquiry and passage of a considerable length of time, a process that the production of the White Paper was intended to streamline.*

## 2.5.2 Newcastle Airport

Most of the Newcastle International Airport (NIA) site has been removed from the Green Belt and re-designated for airport related development. In its 1994 Master Plan, the case was made for the removal of part of the Airport site from the Tyne and Wear Green Belt. The approach was adopted by all relevant local planning authorities and the main part of the Airport site was duly removed from the Green Belt and allocated for Airport related development. NIA's most recent Master Plan confirms that the main benefit of this approach has been to enable the Airport to grow with certainty. The expansion of the terminal, car parking and freight facilities are seen to be of overriding importance to the economy of the North East region and to meet passenger demand, and allocation within the Green Belt was seen to be inappropriate for this level of growth.

## 2.6 Summary

National aviation policy and regional and local planning policies support the growth of MA as a key regional and local economic driver and as a means to tackle congestion at airports in the south east. The MA Master Plan has identified the land required to meet these growth objectives. Like other airports, however, in the absence of up-to-date or emerging revised Green Belt policy which more adequately addresses the special characteristics of airport development, it is increasingly considered necessary to look to revise Green Belt boundaries at airport locations through the LDF process in order to plan, with certainty, for future growth to fulfill the requirements of national



policy. Therefore in accordance with the provisions made in the RSS, this review is not intended to be a strategic assessment of the Green Belt but is instead a local reassessment of the Green Belt in order to achieve national policy objectives for airport growth.

Having identified the relevant national, regional and local planning policies, the following chapter provides the methodology for the Green Belt assessment.



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## 3. Assessment Approach

### 3.1 Introduction

This section details the approach to the review. It begins by presenting the results of an examination of best practice that was used to inform the approach before outlining the methodology employed by Entec.

### 3.2 Review of Best Practice

In developing Entec's approach to this study, a review of methodologies employed in some of the more recent Green Belt studies was undertaken in order to identify best practice. This review included studies undertaken in Nottingham – Derby, Purbeck, Cheltenham and Coventry (it should be noted that only the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt study had been the subject of consideration at Examination in Public (EiP)). .

#### Cheltenham Green Belt Review

The Cheltenham Green Belt Review was undertaken in March 2007 and seeks to assist Cheltenham Borough Council in re-designating areas of Green Belt. The methodology comprised an initial identification of sub areas for assessment across the existing Green Belt and between the Green Belt and the built-up area. The assessment approach utilised a scoring system comprising a set of defined measurable criteria relating to each Green Belt purpose (for example, distance from the built-up area, nature conservation value and agricultural land quality). Once each score was determined, a ranking multiplier was added to derive an overall score enabling each sub-area to be classified as either 'high', 'average' or 'low' in relation to the extent to which they met the proposes of Green Belts.

To support the sub-area analysis, an assessment of development constraints in relation to Green Belt boundaries was undertaken. This focused on mapping 'hard' constraints (i.e. those constraints which preclude development) and 'soft' constraints (i.e. those constraints which may act as a barrier to development but which are not insurmountable) to assist in the identification of the most suitable development locations. Finally, the Review undertook an analysis of the existing Green Belt boundary in terms of its defensibility, identifying 'strong' and 'weak' sections to highlight those areas in need of strengthening and to identify new potential Green Belt boundaries.



## Nottingham-Derby Green Belt Review

The Nottingham-Derby Green Belt Review was published in 2006 and adopted a more qualitative-based approach to scoring sub-areas, including potential urban extensions. This focused predominantly on the extent to which each met the five purposes of Green Belts but also included an assessment of the importance of each area in providing green infrastructure. Nevertheless, the outcome of the approach was broadly similar to that of the Cheltenham Green Belt Review with each area scored and classified (high, medium and low) in relation to the extent to which it met the purposes of the Green Belts.

## Coventry Green Belt Review

The Coventry Green Belt Review, completed in December 2007, combined Green Belt and sustainability criteria relating to nature conservation value, flood risk, transport and accessibility (see **Box 1 – page 10**). The assessment sought to determine whether any Green Belt land within Coventry’s boundaries could make a significant contribution to meeting long term development land supply needs and focused on two areas of search for expansion of the urban area, identifying those parts suitable for removal from the Green Belt.

## Purbeck Green Belt Review

This study built upon the work of the South East Dorset Joint Study Area sub-regional Green Belt Review, undertaking a more localised and detailed review around the urban fringes of the District’s main settlements and the outer boundaries of the Green Belt. The assessment utilised aerial photography together with the analysis of photographs taken from site visits to determine the extent to which each sub-area met the purposes Green Belts. The results were presented using a traffic light-based system to identify potential areas for further review.

## 3.3 Entec's Approach

The examination of Green Belt reviews undertaken elsewhere indicates that all have focused predominantly on assessing land against the five purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2, with the majority utilising a scoring/grading system to indicate the relative Green Belt ‘value’ of land. However, there was no consistent approach used to assign grades/scores to Green Belt areas that could be taken forward as the basis for a review of the Green Belt in the vicinity of MA. Some reviews adopted a commentary-based approach (e.g. Purbeck and Nottingham-Derby) whilst others have drawn together Green Belt and sustainability criteria (e.g. Coventry) leading towards to the use of weighted criteria (Cheltenham). Such a criteria-based approach was not considered appropriate in the context of MA given the unique nature of the study area and the careful consideration that has already been given to the location of the Operational Area extensions in terms of their sustainability as part of the Master Plan preparation process. Moreover, the studies identified above were generally undertaken at a broader, more strategic spatial scale than is necessary for this review, focusing on identifying areas where boundary



review may be appropriate rather than detailed boundary changes to accommodate growth. In effect this stage has already been completed with the RSS process and publication of the Master Plan.

In light of the above, it was therefore considered necessary to develop a tailored approach which, where possible, incorporated the findings of the best practice review. This involved the following key stages:

- Stage 1: Review of the role and purpose of the Green Belt;
- Stage 2: Assessment of the existing and proposed Operational Area;
- Stage 3: Identification of revised Green Belt boundary;
- Stage 4: Impact of a revised boundary on the wider GB.

These stages are described in-turn below.

### 3.3.1    Stage 1: Role and Purpose of the Green Belt

Prior to undertaking a review of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Airport, it was necessary to determine the reasons for its designation and how development at the Airport had been considered in relation to Green Belt policy in order to inform the assessment process. The role the Green Belt performs was established through a review of planning policy (both current and historic) and examination of the growth of the Airport. In essence this is work presented in the previous chapter.

### 3.3.2    Stage 2: Assessment of the Existing and Proposed Operational Area

Stage 2 comprised an assessment of both the existing Operational Area and the proposed extensions identified in the Master Plan against the Green Belt ‘purposes’ set out PPG2 (as highlighted in **Box 1 – page 10**).

The assessment primarily involved an analysis through a combination of desk and field study focusing on Green Belt purposes (Paragraph 1.5 of PPG2) which reflects paragraph 1.4 of PPG2 which states that the “*fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness*”, and examined, amongst other, aspects:

- Existing land use;
- Proximity to the built-up area and relationship to the existing built up areas of the Airport;
- Degree of enclosure;



- Size of the area and its contribution to the openness;
- Relationship to countryside or urban area; and
- Boundary definition.

The assessment did not take into account the use or value of land other than in specific relation to the above Green Belt purposes. This reflects the scope of the study and the guidance contained within PPG2 which states that, whilst the use of land within Green Belts has a positive role to play in fulfilling a range of objectives for example, in relation to nature conservation, agriculture and recreation, “*the extent to which the use of land fulfils these objectives is however not in itself a material factor in the inclusion of land within a Green Belt, or in its continued protection*”.

Having assessed the various areas, we then consider whether there are any exceptional circumstances which justify an amendment to the existing Green Belt boundary.

### 3.3.3 Stage 3: Identification of Revised Green Belt Boundary

Taking forward the outputs of Stage 2, together with an appraisal of the existing Green Belt boundary, consideration was given to the potential location of an alternative boundary in accordance with Policy RDF4 of the RSS which makes provision for detailed changes to the Green Belt boundary to accommodate expansion of the Airport. This was undertaken in the context of the guidance contained within PPG2 which states that, in defining Green Belts boundaries, it is necessary to ensure that they endure, using clearly defined boundaries with recognisable features. To assist in identifying the boundary, a list of strong boundaries was developed based on the outcomes of the best practice review and taking into account the guidance contained within PPG2 (see **Box 4**) in order to ensure that a clear, defensible and robust boundary was defined.

#### Box 4: Strong boundaries

- Motorways
- Mainline (in use) railway line
- District Distributor Roads forming boundary (not bisecting Green Belt)
- Rivers, watercourses and significant drainage features
- Prominent physical features (i.e. ridgeline, non-intermittent waterways)
- Woodland edges and tree belts
- Residential development with strong rear boundaries
- Other development with strong established boundaries



Reference has also been made to the Need for Land document prepared by MA which provides more detail on the extent of development likely to be required within the extension areas.

It should be noted that the proposed revised Green Belt boundary may require more detailed review of its ‘edges’ in order to more accurately define its location, especially at those areas which do not comprise part of the proposed extensions or existing Operational Area.

### 3.3.4 Stage 4 - Impact of a Revised Boundary on the Wider GB

We acknowledge that the removal of any land from the Green Belt has the potential to impact on the integrity of the wider Green Belt. Therefore having reviewed the proposed operational area extension, we undertook a high level review of the impact of removing land from the Green Belt at MA on the wider Green Belt.

Having set out our methodology for undertaking the assessment, the next section of the report undertakes the assessments and presents the results of this exercise.



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## 4. Appraisal

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by assessing whether there are any strategic exceptional circumstances which exist that justify an amendment to the Green Belt boundary. Having examined these, we then assess, in turn, the proposed extension areas and the existing operational areas to understand whether they are currently serving a Green Belt purpose, as defined in PPG2. Finally we then examine whether there are further, more site specific exceptional circumstances which justify removal of land from the Green Belt.

### 4.2 Exceptional Circumstances which Justify Green Belt Amendment

#### 4.2.1 Manchester Airport Masterplan to 2030

In 2007, and following public consultation, MA published their Master Plan which responded to the proposals for growth as identified in ATWP and outlined how the projected growth forecasts would be delivered. The Masterplan flagged the issue of the Green Belt around the Airport. Alongside the ATWP, guidance was published on the preparation of airport master plans which recommended that Master Plans should be integrated into LDF process. The submission of The Need for Land to MCC in December 2009 was part of the ever more detailed evidence base to inform a revised policy framework.

The Need for Land provides Manchester Airport Company's response to Manchester City Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Proposed Option stage. Details of this have been explained in Section 2.3. It provides a framework to guide the physical development of the Airport up to 2030 in association with the Airport's Master Plan and associated Land Use Plan. All these documents frame the future development of Manchester Airport, and align future land-use requirements with national policy.

The document identifies that the main principle of development at the Airport is one of land use efficiency and technological improvement. The Airport Company's approach is for redevelopment of land within the existing boundary as far as possible and activities that do not need direct connection to the airfield moved to the site periphery, or offsite altogether.

The Need for Land provides more detail on the development requirements and in principle it:



- Establishes the requirement and exactly which parcels will be used for what purpose and how they relate to existing operations;
- Demonstrates when land will be developed and how the impacts of development will be mitigated; and
- Gives effect to ATWP and RSS strategic policies.

## 4.2.2 Air Transport White Paper

The National Policy on Aviation is set out in the Government's White Paper, 'The Future of Air Transport' (ATWP), published in December 2003, which sets out a strategic framework for the development of airport capacity over the next 30 years, against the background of wider developments in air transport. The White Paper itself does not authorise development, but its purpose is to set out policies which will inform and guide the consideration of specific planning applications.

With regard to Manchester, it identifies MA as offering the main potential for growth in the North of England stating that "*as a major international gateway, it provides an important alternative to the congested airports in the South East and is the only UK airport other than Heathrow to have two full-length runways. Consequently it potentially has significant spare runway capacity, especially if new operating procedures allowing more intensive use to be made of the existing runways in segregated mode were to be introduced. This would enable Manchester to cater for demand of at least 50mppa, provided this could be delivered in an environmentally acceptable manner<sup>11</sup>.*"

## Status of the Air Transport White Paper

In May 2007, the Labour Government published its Planning White Paper: Planning for a sustainable Future. The Planning White Paper establishes a wide ranging agenda for reform of the UK Planning System, including identifying the Government's intention to produce National Policy Statements in respect of national infrastructure. The Coalition Government has confirmed their intention to publish an NPS. The purpose of such statements is to bring greater certainty and to avoid the situation, for instance, where extended periods of time have to be spent at inquiries (such as Heathrow Terminal 5) into major infrastructure projects debating issues such as need.

Paragraph 3.1 of the Planning White Paper states:

*A key problem with the current system of planning for major infrastructure is that national policy and, in particular, the national need for infrastructure, is not in all cases clearly set out. This can cause significant delays at the public inquiry stage, because national policy has to be clarified and the need for the*

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<sup>11</sup> DfT (2003:84)



*infrastructure has to be established through the inquiry process and for each individual application. For instance, the absence of a clear policy framework for airports development was identified by the inquiry secretary in his report on the planning inquiry as one of the key factors in the very long process for securing planning approval for Heathrow Terminal 5. Considerable time had to be taken at the inquiry debating whether there was a need for additional capacity. The Government has since responded by publishing the Air Transport White Paper to provide a framework for airport development. This identifies airport development which the Government considers to be in the national interest, for reference at future planning inquiries. But for many other infrastructure sectors, national policy is still not explicitly set out, or is still in the process of being developed.*

The Planning White Paper emphasises that nationally important infrastructure is "vital" to the UK economy (paragraph 1.49). In terms of the status of the Air Transport White Paper, paragraph 3.31 is important:

*National policy statements would need to be regularly reviewed or updated to ensure that they take account of significant developments. The Air Transport White Paper, for example, had a commitment to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the policies with a progress report after three years, and the Government is now committed to a full review in a further three to five years.*

The Planning White Paper therefore confirms that the Air Transport White Paper and its Progress Report remains the up-to date statement of national policy and it can be argued that it is an exceptional circumstance to justify an amendment to the Green Belt boundary to ensure its delivery.

This conclusion is backed up by the decision of the Inspector when considering the Green Belt around Bristol Airport at the Inquiry into the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan, where he concluded in paragraph 46.8:

*Consequently, I consider that the test of PPG2 concerning a strategic basis for a change to the Green Belt boundary at BIA is met. Even were this not so, then I consider that the publication of the Airport's White Paper as a statement of government policy constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance' to warrant such action.*

#### 4.2.3 Regional Spatial Strategy Policy

The adopted RSS (Policy RDF4) sets out that, whilst a major review of the Green Belt is unlikely to be required to accommodate future development within Cheshire or Greater Manchester before 2011, more location-specific and detailed boundary changes may be required to meet exceptional purposes. The RSS stipulates that any such changes should be dealt with through the LDF process and be subject to the agreement of the Regional Planning Body. Policy RDF4 confers that agreement in respect of changes to the Green Belt to meet operational infrastructure requirements at MA and states:



*Local Development Frameworks may provide for detailed changes in Green Belt boundaries to accommodate the expansion of Manchester Airport and Liverpool John Lennon Airport; and to provide for an inter-modal freight terminal at Newton-Le-Willows.*

However recent announcements from the Coalition Government have confirmed that the RSS is to be revoked. Whilst the RSS may therefore not now form part of the development plan, it is important to reference the discussions which took place as part of the preparation of the RSS, which we believe are an important element of the case for a Green Belt review. It is considered that the evidence (and debate at the EiP), which fed into the RSS, remains a sound basis for Policy

#### 4.2.4 Summary of Exceptional Circumstances

Overall it is considered that there are a number of key, strategic exceptional circumstances which support the principle of amending the Green Belt boundary around MA. In summary they are:

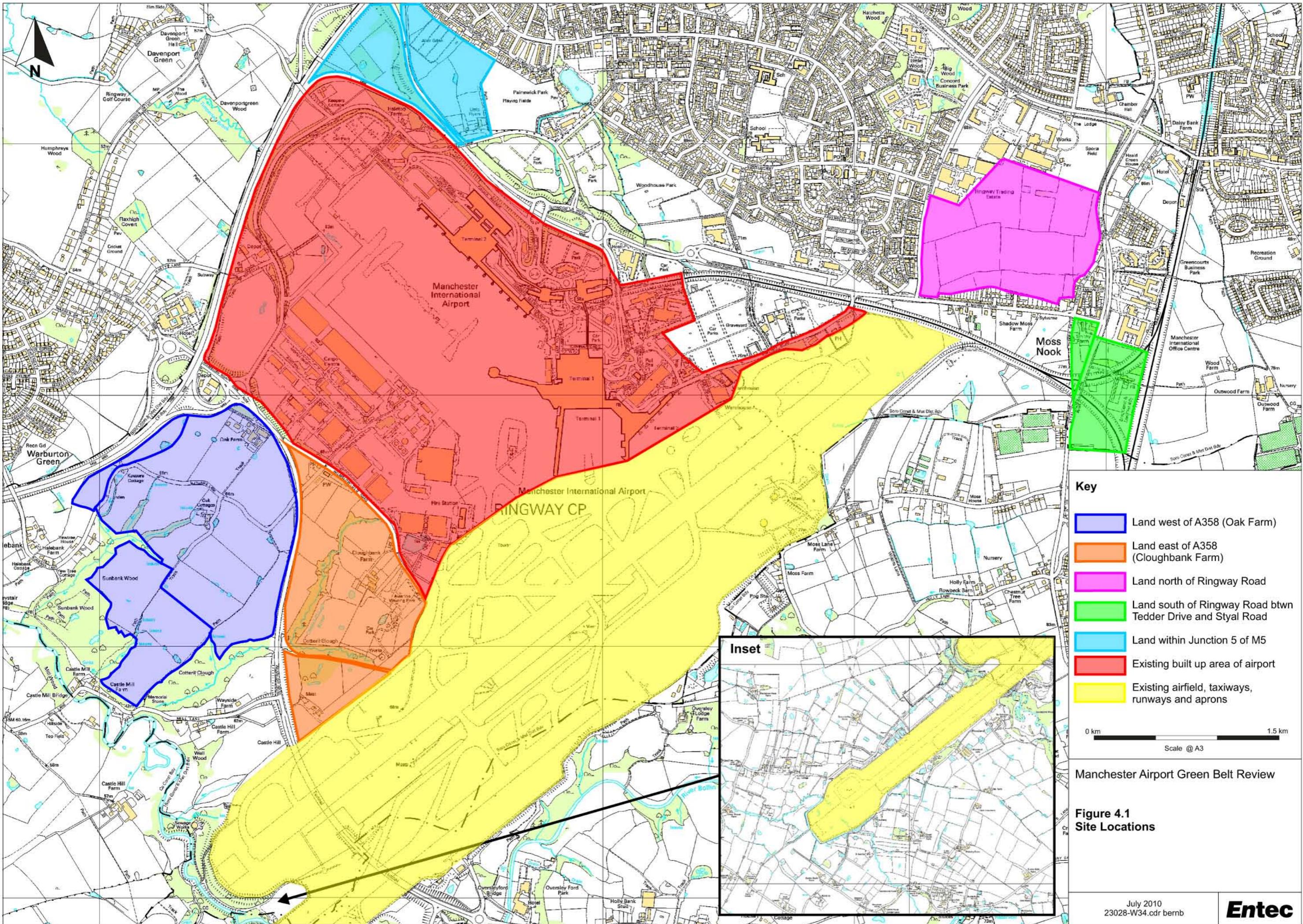
- National policy support for the growth of MA up to the capacity of its existing runways;
- Evidence and debate as part of the preparation of the North West RSS supports local Green Belt boundary change to accommodate the growth; and
- Detailed evidence has been prepared by MA, in the form of the Need for Land document, December 2009, which sets out the rational behind the MA plans for growth and a phasing programme for how and where it will be delivered.

#### 4.3 Area Assessments

Having established that there are exceptional circumstances which support an amendment to the Green Belt around MA, we propose, in this next section to assess the extent to which each of the proposed extension areas and the existing operational area serves the five purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2. The results are presented in the assessment matrix over the following pages.

Figure 4.1 shows the locations of the areas.





**Table 4.1 Assessment Matrix**

	Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
Area A - Land east of A538	<p>Currently the site plays a role in checking urban sprawl due to the well enclosed and contained nature of the majority of the site. The eastern edge of the site (associated with the Aviation Viewing Park) is enclosed on the northern, western and southern boundaries but there are open views across the runway to the wider countryside. The site is generally not seen in the context of the wider countryside and where visible, it is seen in context of existing substantial airport related development.</p> <p>Within the site there is a degree of openness however this is limited due to existing landscaping and the Cotteril Clough Brook which runs through the middle of the site and breaks it up.</p> <p>The location of the site adjacent to the runway and associated taxiways means that any development in the area will need to be relatively low rise to comply with CAA requirements and avoid infringement of the airports</p>	<p>The site is a relatively large area 0.9km from the eastern edge of Hale Barns, and is separated from this settlement by the M56 and a large area of agricultural fields and woodland belts.</p> <p>Surrounding development is located a considerable distance from the site and is separated by very substantial areas of land predominantly developed for airport related uses (buildings, infrastructure, runways, hard standing and grassed areas), woodland belts and agricultural land. Importantly the airfield to the east is open and for operational reasons will remain open. The removal of the site would therefore not be perceived as resulting in coalescence due to the presence of large</p>	<p>The majority of the site is well contained and enclosed by woodland belts and tree cover along site boundaries and within the site. For the most part, the site cannot be viewed from the wider countryside due to intervening screening, although the area associated with the Aviation Viewing Park is open, but is dominated by the car park, hangars and related facilities. The proximity of the existing built form associated with the Airport also reduces the sense of openness.</p> <p>Whilst it is accepted that further development on the site would result in the loss of countryside and represent encroachment, the fact that parts of the site are already developed means that the land is not open countryside and that the removal of this site from the Green Belt would not reduce openness of the wider Green Belt.</p>	<p>The nearest historic town is Styal, which is separated from the site by the existing operational airfield. It is therefore considered that the site could be developed with limited harm to this purpose.</p>	<p>The protection of the land helps to push development towards the surrounding urban areas. However given the proximity of the land to the operational airfield, there are restrictions on the type of development which can be accommodated.</p> <p>The developments which are proposed on the land are specifically airport related and therefore will only locate at the Airport and cannot be in the surrounding urban area.</p>



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>runways. The presence of the Cotteril Clough Brook, which is protected from development, will also ensure that the enclosed nature of the site is maintained. On balance it is therefore considered that the site could be released from the Green Belt harm to this purpose.</p>	<p>areas of open countryside between the site and surrounding developments.</p> <p>Whilst development within the Aviation Viewing Park would be visible to users of a public right of way on the eastern edge of the airport, any views are seen in the urban context of the existing airfield.</p>	<p>The site is located between the eastern edge of Woodhouse Park and Heald Green. To the north is a large scale commercial and industrial development located between the B5166 and the railway line and agricultural fields.</p> <p>The development of the site would result in the coalescence of Woodhouse Park and Heald Green.</p>	<p>The site plays a limited role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment due to the visual dominance of urban form around the entire site and the lack of a relationship with the wider countryside.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the site can be removed from the Green Belt without significant harm to this purpose.</p>	<p>The nearest historic towns are Styal and Knutsford, both of which are a considerable distance away and separated from the site by the existing development (operational development) the railway line in the case of Styal, and open countryside in the case of Knutsford.</p> <p>The protection of the land helps to push development towards the surrounding urban areas. However given the proximity of the land to the operational airfield, there are restrictions on the type of development which can be accommodated.</p> <p>It is likely that the land will be used for long stay car parking. Whilst it is accepted that this could be provided off-site it is considered that such a use will contribute little to urban regeneration aims.</p>
<p>Area B – land north of Ringway Road</p> <p>The fact that the site is surrounded by development means that the site plays a limited role in checking urban sprawl. It is well contained by strong boundaries and is defined by existing built form which reduces the openness of the site.</p> <p>The site lies directly under the flight path of the runway therefore the only development that is likely to be permissible is car parking, which by its nature is open and will not include buildings.</p>				



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>Whilst development on the land will undoubtedly remove the openness of the land, it is considered that given the area is already compromised by existing development it could be removed from the Green Belt with limited harm.</p> <p>Area C – land within Junction 5 of M56</p> <p>The land to the north east of the existing motorway slip road, performs a role in preventing urban sprawl from the existing development to the north.</p>	<p>However the site is currently a relatively small isolated area of Green Belt which is almost entirely surrounded by existing built development. Its ability to fully satisfy this purpose has therefore already been compromised by other developments.</p> <p>Due to its location directly under the flight path of the runway the only development which is likely to be permissible is car park, which by its nature is open and will not introduce large urban buildings. It is therefore considered that the land can be removed from the Green Belt with only moderate harm.</p>	<p>The north eastern part of the site is a large area located immediately adjacent to the existing edge of Woodhouse Park.</p>	<p>It is therefore considered that the site could be developed with limited harm to this purpose.</p> <p>The site plays a limited role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment due to the visual dominance of urban form around the entire site and the lack of a relationship with the wider countryside.</p> <p>The nearest historic towns are Styal and Knutsford, both of which are a considerable distance away and separated from the site by the existing development</p>	<p>Whilst it is accepted that this could be provided off-site it is considered that such a use will contribute little to urban regeneration aims.</p> <p>The protection of the land helps to push development towards the surrounding urban areas. The land is proposed to be used for the development of offices and hotels, which are uses that could be accommodated within the urban area.</p>



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>In contrast, due to its well-contained and enclosed nature, the area of land within Junction 5 of M56 plays a very limited role in checking urban sprawl. There is a significant amount of existing urban elements associated with the road junction (lighting, signage and other road bridges) and as a consequence it is considered that this area does not serve the Green Belt purposes.</p> <p>Overall therefore, it is considered that the northern part of Area C does fulfil a Green Belt purpose, where as the southern part does not.</p> <p>If the land within J5 is removed from the Green Belt, then this will leave only a thin sliver of Green Belt land, which considering the existing urban features around the site is already compromised and therefore on balance, the whole site can be removed with only limited harm.</p>	<p>The site is located 2.0km to the north east of Hale Barns and is separated from the settlement by land predominantly developed for airport related uses (building and infrastructure). The removal of the site from the Green Belt would not cause the coalescence due to the limited relationship between the site and the surrounding area, the well contained and enclosed nature of the site and the presence of large areas of built form between the site and Woodhouse Park itself.</p> <p>The western part is located 0.15km from the existing edge of Woodhouse Park. The site is located 1.8km to the north west of Hale Banks and is separated from the settlement by the M56, airport related development, a golf course and agricultural land.</p>	<p>The parcel within the motorway junction is enclosed by dense tree and shrub cover around the boundaries of the site. The site cannot be viewed from the wider countryside and is not perceived as being a part of the wider countryside.</p>	<p>(operational development) the railway line in the case of Styall, and open countryside in the case of Knutsford. It is therefore considered that the site could be developed with limited harm to this purpose.</p>	<p>However these are uses specifically related to the level of airport demand and will be part of the necessary portfolio of facilities making up a successful international airport and therefore require a location which is easily accessible to the airport terminals. Having such facilities at the airport is an important element in the economic benefits that the airport delivers.</p>



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>Area D – land south of Ringway Road between Tedder Drive and Styal Road</p> <p>The majority of the site plays a limited role in checking urban sprawl, as it is a relatively small area of land that is dissected by the railway line and is partly developed. For the most part, the site is well contained and enclosed.</p> <p>Where the site is less well enclosed it is seen in the context of existing development within the site and the cutting of the railway line. The removal of this site from the Green Belt would not reduce openness, would not cause visual intrusion and would not harm this purpose.</p>	<p>The removal of the site from the Green Belt would not cause the coalescence of the site with this settlement due to the limited relationship of the site with Hale Barns and the wholly enclosed and self-contained nature of the site.</p> <p>The site is located 0.6km to the east of Woodhouse Park and immediately adjacent to a large area of urban development off the B5166 and the Ringway Trading Estate. The site lies 0.7km from the western edge of Heald Green, and is separated from the settlement by existing built form, sub station, large scale commercial and industrial development located between the B5166 and the railway line and agricultural fields.</p>	<p>The northern and central parts of the site play a limited role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment due to the visual presence of existing built form within the locality and the relatively well enclosed nature of these areas. The removal of these parts from the Green Belt will not reduce openness, would not cause visual intrusion and would not harm this purpose.</p> <p>Despite the southern part of the site having some degree of enclosure, the lack of urban influence in this site means that the site is open. Any development would be seen to be encroaching beyond the existing railway line.</p>	<p>The nearest historic towns are Styal and Knutsford, both of which are a considerable distance away and separated from the site by the existing development (operational development) the railway line in the case of Styal, and open countryside in the case of Knutsford. It is therefore considered that the site could be developed with limited harm to this purpose.</p>	<p>The protection of the land helps to push development towards the surrounding urban areas. The land is proposed to be used for the development of airport support activities, which are uses that could be accommodated within the urban area. However these are uses specifically related to the airport and therefore require a location which is easily accessible to the airport. Having such facilities at the airport is an important element in the economic benefits that the airport delivers.</p>



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>The southern part of the site (beyond the railway cutting) is open and visible to both users and residents located along the B5166. Their view is of a large open field with little urban influence. The removal of this part of the site (located to the south of the railway cutting) would reduce the perceived openness of the Green Belt and subsequently would introduce sprawl.</p> <p>Area E – Land west of A358.</p> <p>The southern part of the site plays an important role in checking urban sprawl. The site is bounded by the existing M56 and A358, both of which currently serve to keep the majority of Area E open.</p>	<p>Development on the northern and central parts of the site would not cause the coalescence of Woodhouse Park and Heald Green due to the existing urban features within the site which currently influence the character of the area. However the area of agricultural land to the south of the railway line serves to prevent coalescence. This part of Area D therefore fulfils a Green Belt purpose.</p> <p>The SEMMMS road scheme is proposed to run through part of this site, which will add a further urban feature.</p>	<p>The removal of this part of the site from the Green Belt would result in encroachment into the Green Belt.</p> <p>Views onto the site are limited to glimpsed views through occasional gaps in the roadside vegetation, and whilst these are seen in the context of urbanising</p>	<p>The southern part of the site is a visually well contained and enclosed and due to the drop in levels. Views are restricted to being from two public rights of way within the site.</p>	<p>The nearest historic town is Styal, which is a considerable distance away and is separated from the site by the</p> <p>The protection of the land helps to push development towards the surrounding urban areas. The land is proposed to be used for the relocation of the existing cargo facilities to enable the extension of the existing apron area.</p>



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>Should development be seen to spill across these roads, then it would have an adverse impact upon the openness of the site, with development introducing sprawl.</p> <p>The land is therefore considered to serve a Green Belt function of restricting urban sprawl.</p>	<p>elements such as the M56 (traffic, signage and infrastructure) and built form associated with Hale Barns and the Airport, these serve to reinforce the role the site plays in preventing coalescence between the existing cargo centre, the M56 corridor and the existing edge of the Hale Barns.</p>	<p>Whilst the remainder of the site is visually separated from the wider countryside by the southern wooded belt and hedgerows, there are views into the site. These are seen in context of the exiting urban influences of the airport buildings and the A538. However essentially these are views onto open land, with a backdrop of urban features (airport, M56 and associated infrastructure). Development on the land would therefore impact upon the openness and would be regarded as encroachment.</p>	<p>existing development (operational development). The land is therefore considered that the site could be developed with limited harm to this purpose.</p>	<p>These are uses specifically related to the airport and therefore require a location which is easily accessible to the operational airfield.</p>
<p>Existing built up area of airport</p> <p>Development within the area is limited by operational requirement, which severely restricts the location of development, with new built development happening around the boundaries, with the middle of the site being retained as open land for taxiway and aprons. However, operational restrictions, rather than Green Belt policy prevent development from sprawling. This will not change in the future.</p>	<p>Development within the area is limited by operational requirement, which severely restricts the location of development, with new development happening around the boundaries, with the middle of the site being retained as open land for taxiway and aprons.</p>	<p>The area plays a limited role in safeguarding the countryside as it already comprises large scale built form and urban infrastructure and is for the most part well contained and enclosed by strong boundaries (dense vegetation to the north, west and south).</p> <p>The Airport has been planned and developed in a controlled way as a unique land use with very particular needs and characteristics.</p>	<p>The nearest historic town is Styal, which is a considerable distance away and is separated from the site by the existing development (operational development) and the railway line. The land is therefore considered that the site could be developed with limited harm to this purpose.</p>	<p>The protection of the land helps to push development towards the surrounding urban areas however any development which takes places with the area is operational development that can only be provided at the airport.</p>



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>The openness will be further reinforced should the existing cargo area be replaced with essentially 'open' apron areas.</p> <p>The area plays a limited role in checking urban sprawl as it is for the most part well contained with strong boundaries (the comprising dense screening vegetation to the north, west and south and the sharp definition between built form and runway to the east) and already comprises large scale built form and urban infrastructure. Given the existing urban influence there is little 'green' land left to protect and it is considered that the land does not fulfil this Green Belt purpose.</p>	<p>The openness of the taxiways does prevent surrounding developments from merging, however this is as a result of operational restrictions rather than Green Belt policy. Should the land be removed from the Green belt, operational restrictions will still exist to prevent surrounding developments from merging.</p> <p>Given the existing urban influence it is considered that the land does not fulfil this Green Belt purpose</p>	<p>The large areas of open land associated with the apron and taxiways, and the tight restrictions on development have been very effective in preventing the encroachment of development within the countryside. Importantly however it is essentially operational restrictions rather than Green Belt policy which has influenced this.</p> <p>Given the existing urban influence it is considered that the land does not fulfil this Green Belt purpose.</p>		
<p>Existing airfield, taxiways, runways and aprons</p>	<p>The presence of the airport, its two runways and their operational restrictions act as a barrier to prevent existing development to the north from spreading further. The area is large and visually open as a result of its scale, topography (largely flat) and lack of intervening features. The land therefore fulfils this Green Belt purpose.</p>	<p>The area is located on the existing southerly edge of Woodhouse Park and is separated from the settlement by Ringway Road and associated roadside vegetation. The village of Styal is located 0.8km to the east of the area and is separated from the area by a number of</p>	<p>In the R2 report, the Inspector was of the view that the development of the second runway would result in enormous encroachment into the countryside. Now developed, it is considered that the area plays an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment due to its openness and general lack of urban features. The land therefore fulfils this</p>	<p>The nearest historic towns are Styal and Knutsford.</p> <p>Knutsford is some distance away and separated from the site by the existing development (operational development).</p> <p>The protection of the land helps to push development towards the surrounding urban areas however any development which takes places with the area is operational development that can only be provided at the airport and requires large open areas.</p>



Prevent Unrestricted Sprawl	Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging	Safeguard Countryside from Encroachment	Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns	Assist in Urban Regeneration
<p>This was the view of the Inspector at the appeal on R2, where he concluded in paragraph 26.6.22 '<i>the openness of the proposed R2 development, and the removal of a far larger area of buildings than is proposed, would assist rather than conflict with the Green Belt purpose to check unrestricted spiral of a built-up area</i>'.</p>	<p>agricultural fields (with associated hedgerows) and woodland blocks. Hale Barnes is located 1.6km to the north-west and is separated from the area by large built-up areas associated with airport related uses that limit any visual relationship. There is limited visual relationship between this area and the settlements of Styal, Woodhouse Park and Hale Barnes, therefore the area plays a significant role in reducing perceived coalescence between these settlements. The land therefore fulfils this Green Belt purpose.</p>	<p>Green Belt purpose.</p>	<p>Therefore in the case of Knutsford it is considered that the site could be developed with limited harm to this purpose.</p> <p>However in the case in the case of Styal, given the proximity, it is considered that the Green Belt currently fulfils this purpose.</p>	



## 4.3.1 Summary

The above Section has explored whether there are any exceptional circumstances which support an amendment to the Green Belt and the subsequent tables have assessed both the existing operational parts of the airport within the Green Belt and the proposed areas of expansion to identify whether the land fulfils any of the five purposes of Green Belts as set out in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2.

Having assessed whether the specific areas serve a Green Belt function this next section of the report examines whether there are further, site specific exceptional circumstances which support the removal of the land from the Green Belt. We consider them in this section as a whole rather than on an individual site by site basis.

## 4.3.2 Exceptional Circumstances

National policy in the form of The Air Transport White Paper supports the growth of MA up to the capacity of its existing runways which would accommodate a passenger throughput of 50mppa by 2030. Such a growth requires an expansion of the existing operational area and the Need for Land document outlines the detail of how this growth will be delivered. It is clear from this document that for MA to deliver national policy the existing operational area is too small to accommodate the scale of growth set out in national policy. The main principle of development at the Airport is one of land use efficiency and technological improvement. Limits have been placed on the physical spread of the site. The Airport Company's approach is for redevelopment of land within the existing boundary as far as possible and activities that do not need direct connection to the airfield moved to the site periphery, or offsite altogether. It is these displaced uses that are to be provided particularly in Areas A and E (See Figure 1.2 for areas). Therefore whilst development in these areas would have an impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, this development is required to implement national policy, which supports the continued growth of MA.

By their very nature, airports require large open spaces to deliver functioning runways, taxiways and apron space. As a consequence the open uses account for the largest percentage of land take with the airfield. To support the growth there will need to be an expansion of existing uses which can only be provided at the Airport as they require direct runway access. These include uses such as aircraft maintenance facilities, cargo areas and new aircraft aprons. As such there is no potential to locate such uses anywhere other than at the Airport. It is these arguments that have been used to put forward very special circumstances to support recent developments at MA. The Need for Land proposes these uses in Areas A, E and within the existing airfield.

To support the operation of MA, in the role set out in the ATWP, there is need to provide operational uses, such as car parking, office accommodation for airlines and airport maintenance, operational staff hotels and a range of ancillary uses. Such uses are proposed in Areas B, C and D. The need for them has been demonstrated in the Master Plan and the Need for Land. PPG 13(Transport) and the UDP identifies those uses that are considered to be necessary and appropriate to locate at an airport. They are a key element of the operation and economic basis for



the Airport and, for the economic potential to be fully realised, then they cannot be located anywhere else. Whilst such uses are ‘inappropriate development’ as they amount to development within the Green Belt, they are considered to be required to ensure the implementation of national policy and continued growth of MA and consequently help to deliver the associated benefits.

Within a number of the expansion areas there are operational restrictions which limit the type and the overall height of development that will be allowed. For example, Area B lies underneath the flight path and therefore buildings are not permitted in the interest of safety. The same applies to those parts of Area A adjacent to the taxiway, where significant development could impede the safe operation of the runways. As a consequence of the operational restrictions it is therefore likely that built development will be low key and some instances will allow the land to retain some of its open character. For example Area B is proposed to be predominately surface car parking, which will allow the area to remain essentially open and Area F, whilst being developed will be used for taxiways and therefore, as with the existing airfield, will also remain open. This openness will remain as the operational restrictions will also continue.

## 4.4 Overall Conclusions

The assessment has concluded that there are some parts of the proposed operational extensions which do currently serve a Green Belt function as defined in PPG2. The test for changing boundaries is whether there are exceptional circumstances which necessitate a revision. A further assessment has identified a number of exceptional circumstances which justify an amendment to the Green Belt to accommodate additional development at MA. In summary the exceptional circumstances are:

- National policy support in the Air Transport White Paper for the growth of MA;
- The significant benefits arising from airport operations and its growth to the whole of the North-West of England;
- Evidence and debate as part of the preparation of the North West RSS supports local Green Belt boundary change to accommodate the growth;
- The extension areas are required to implement national policy;
- The land required has been kept to the minimum following efficiency measures set out in the Airports Masterplan to 2030
- A number of the identified uses require direct runway access and can not be located elsewhere;
- There is long standing policy support of the Airport being a special case within the Green Belt;
- There is a precedent of previous decisions at Manchester Airport and at other regional airports for amendments to the Green Belt;



- Whilst ancillary uses (e.g. hotels, offices and car parking) could be located outside of the Green Belt, these are uses which are specifically related to the airport and their provision at the airport is supported in PPG13, the RSS and the adopted UDP; and
- Despite being developed, operational restrictions mean that essentially certain areas will remain open.

## 4.5 Impact on the Integrity of the Wider Green Belt

As part of any proposals to amend the Green Belt boundary around the Airport, there has to be a consideration of whether the changes substantially harm the integrity of the wider Green Belt. Given the overall size of the Green Belt and the small scale, localised alterations that are being recommended, it is difficult to conclude that the proposed alterations will result in any strategic harm to the wider Green Belt. It is, however, appropriate to consider how the proposed amendments will impact on the Green Belt in the immediate surroundings of the Airport. This section examines the overall impact of the recommendations of the report on the surrounding Green Belt and whether it can continue to fulfil its purpose.

To the south, the Green Belt will remain intact. The Airport's two runways are essentially a permanent feature within the Green Belt and will continue to provide a strong defensible boundary. Due to operational restrictions this area must remain predominately open.

To the north-west, there is currently a wedge of Green Belt which wraps around Hale Barns and then extends beyond Davenport Green (out of the Green Belt in the current UDP) towards Altrincham, on the western side of the M56 within Trafford Metropolitan Borough (known as the Timperley Wedge). However, to a certain degree this area has already been affected by the M56, and new commercial development around Junction 6. It is proposed that the amended southern boundary of the Green Belt will follow the realigned A538, which will provide a logical and clearly defined defensible boundary. Following this line will help to maintain the overall integrity of the Green Belt and help it to continue to serve its purpose. The provision of a landscape buffer along the proposed Airport extension will serve to provide further screening.

Historically, it has been suggested that the Timperley Wedge has already become isolated on account of the existence of development at the Airport, the M56 and the fact that the 'neck' in Trafford was also developed out. However, the case for defending the Green Belt has always been upheld – it has been successfully defended through two iterations of the Trafford Unitary Development Plan and no change is currently proposed within the Borough's Core Strategy. Whilst it is accepted that the width of the Green Belt will be reduced, the amendments proposed to the Green Belt boundary do not cross the M56. Overall, the impact upon all the Green Belt on the western side of the M56 will be not significant over and above the current situation. The Green Belt will therefore continue to meet its strategic purpose and prevent severance that could impact upon the Timperley Wedge and therefore there remains a sound basis on which to protect the land in the future.

Directly to the north, should the land within Junction 5 (Area C) be removed from the Green Belt, a small area of land, outside airport ownership would remain as an isolated parcel of Green Belt land (Painswick Park). If retained



within the Green Belt, it would serve no Green Belt function and its retention would be contrary to the guidance in PPG2. On this basis, we would recommend that this area is removed from the Green Belt. The land in question is used as playing fields and, importantly, is protected by other planning policies which carry significant weight. Therefore, despite its removal from the Green Belt the land will be retained as open and undeveloped, allowing it to continue to contribute to openness.

To the east there is another wedge of Green Belt, which extends towards Cheadle Hulme along the Gatley Brook Valley. There is already a significant amount of built development within the area including the Manchester International Office Centre however it is considered that the Green Belt plays an important role in preventing the coalescence of surrounding settlements. The proposed amendments to the Green Belt boundary in Areas B and D, do reduce the overall amount of the Green Belt in this area, however because these two areas are currently heavily influenced by existing built development, it is not considered that the proposed amendments will impact on the integrity of the wider Green Belt and diminish its purpose of retaining an open gap between the existing settlements. Importantly the uses proposed within these areas will essentially be ‘open’ and will include landscaping to soften any impacts.

At a strategic level, the overall integrity of the Green Belt will remain unaltered along the southern edge of the conurbation, preventing the spread of Greater Manchester and protecting the freestanding towns to the south of the airport.

Overall it is considered that the recommended changes are of such a small scale, compared to the size of the wider Green Belt, that they amount to only a local realignment of the boundary to allow for the implementation of national policy. The exceptional circumstances put forward to support the amendments are unique to the Airport and cannot be used to support other, small scale, incremental changes at other locations. If this was the case, then the overall integrity of the Green Belt might be called into question.

On this basis we believe the proposed updating of the boundary will not compromise overall integrity of the Green Belt.



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## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 Introduction

MA is a major economic driver for both the Manchester City Region and the North of England and also has an important role to play in relieving congestion at airports in the South East. Recognising the important strategic and economic function of MA, the White Paper recommends that the Airport's capacity should increase to 50mppa by 2030 which will necessitate an increase in the Operational Area of the Airport to around 800ha.

However, the Airport's location within the Green Belt severely restricts the ability of its operators, MAG, to plan, with certainty for future development and therefore to deliver national and regional aviation and wider policy objectives. Whilst paragraph 2.6 of PPG2 states Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances once consideration has been given to opportunities for development within urban areas, it is considered that the strategic economic importance of the Airport together with the policy support afforded by the White Paper are "exceptional circumstances" in Green Belt terms. The Airport is a fixed location and related development cannot take place on alternative urban sites. Moreover, there is a lack of suitable non-Green Belt alternatives to accommodate growth in close proximity to MA.

Having recently examined this matter in detail the RSS has made provision for a local reassessment, through the LDF process, of the Green Belt in order to achieve national policy objectives for airport growth. This study has sought to provide a robust evidence base on which to base this reassessment.

### 5.2 Green Belt Boundary

The results of the assessment of the Green Belt in the vicinity of MA, suggest that the existing airfield, runways and apron perform a significant Green Belt function in light of their open nature and permanence and should therefore remain within the Green Belt. In contrast, as a consequence of the progressive development of the existing built up area of the airfield, it is considered that this area should be removed from the Green Belt.

With regard to the proposed Operational Area extensions required to support growth of MA in accordance with national policy, the assessment has concluded that the majority of the areas should be considered for removal from the Green Belt as, when developed in line with the Masterplan and Need for Land they will fulfil only limited Green Belt purposes and where they do, there are a number of exceptional circumstances which justify an amendment to the boundary. At present they do, to varying degrees fulfil Green Belt purposes.

This approach is backed up by the conclusions of the Inspector on the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan, when considering Bristol Airport, where he concluded:



Consequently, I consider that the test of PPG2 concerning a strategic basis for a change to the Green Belt boundary at BIA is met. Even were this not so, then I consider that the publication of the Airport's White Paper as a statement of government policy constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance' to warrant such action.

As a result of the above, the appraisal has identified the need for the redefinition of the Green Belt boundary in order to facilitate the proper planning of the Airport as it expands in line with national aviation policy.

## 5.2.1 Alternative Green Belt Boundary for Consideration

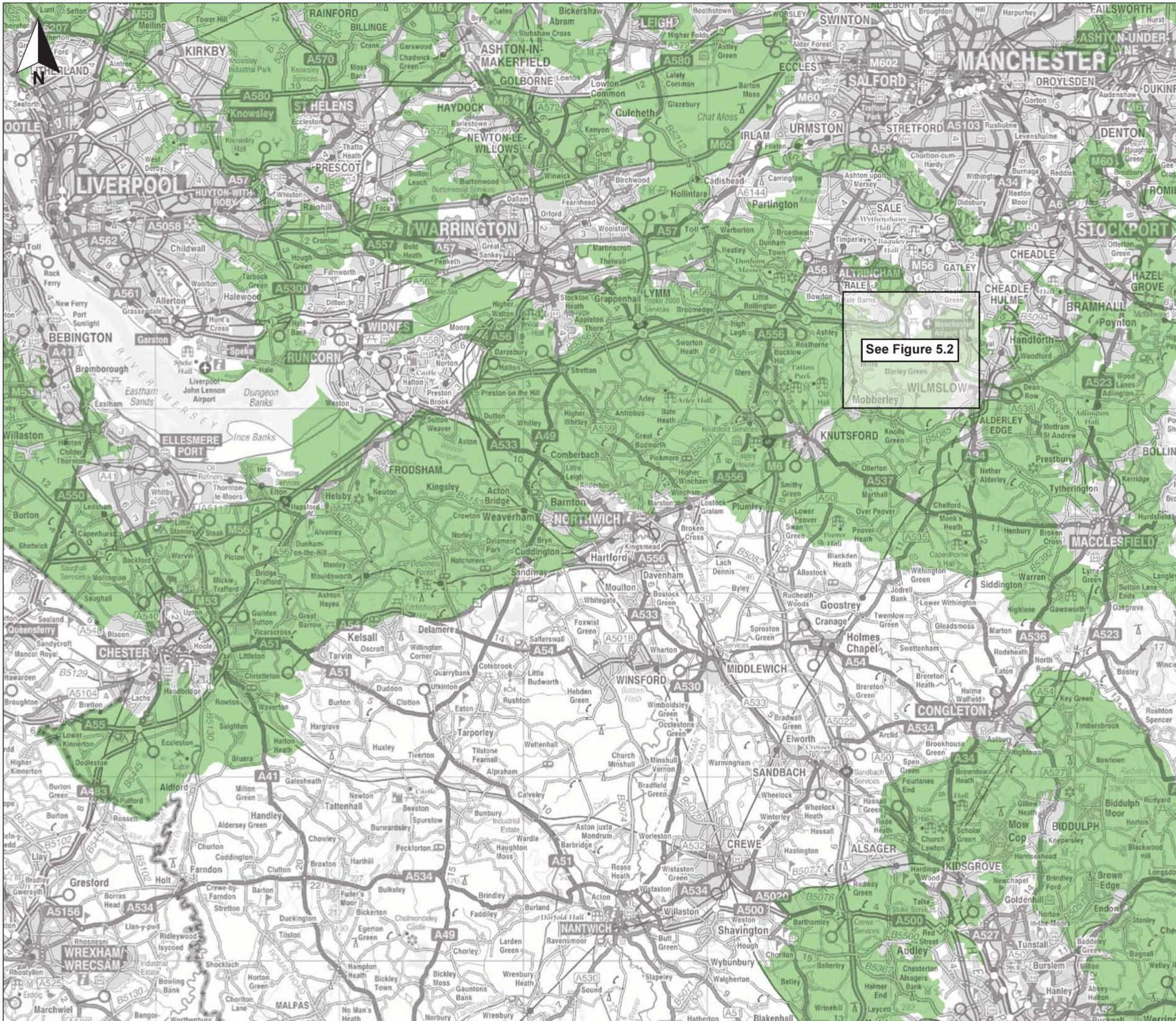
Subsequently, on the basis of both our appraisal and in response to the national support for growth, we propose that an alternative Green Belt boundary is considered for further review and definition, as follows and as identified on **Figures 5.1 and 5.2**. The plans show the removal of an area of approximately 415ha of land from the Green Belt. The total area for the North West Green Belt is 241,700ha, therefore the proposed area for removal amounts to about 0.17% of the total Green Belt.

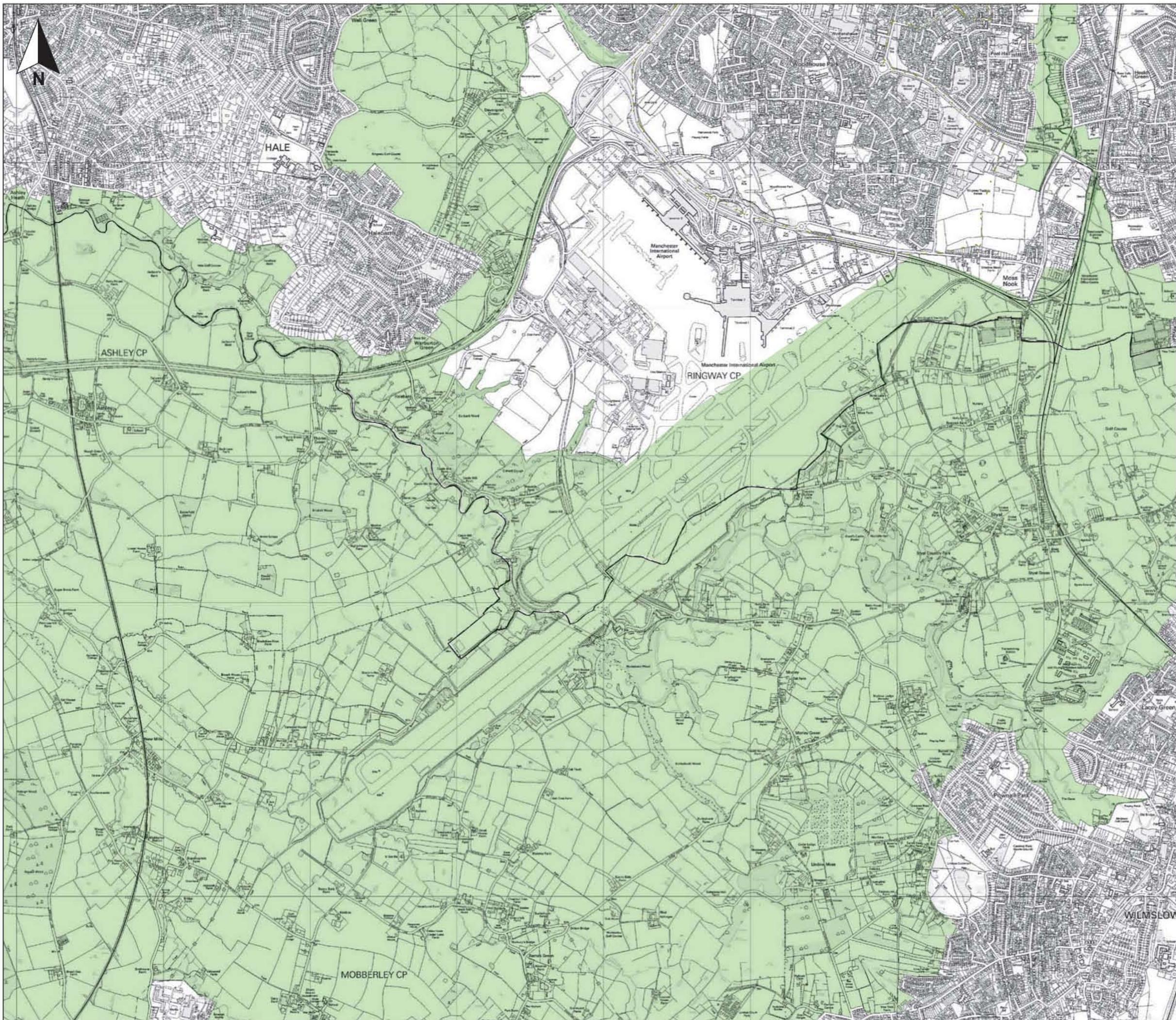
The alternative boundary comprises readily recognisable features as recommended in PPG2 such as the M56, existing field boundaries and wooded valleys to the south, the well defined edge of built form to the north of the Airport and the railway line. It is considered that these features play an important role in visual enclosure and separation of the six sites under review from the wider countryside.

Whilst at present the proposed boundary follows physical features on the ground such as field boundaries and tree lines, we do however recognise that the A538 will need to be realigned in the future and that this would make a more appropriate long term boundary.

Figure 5.2 shows the detailed boundary amendments around the airport.







Key



Green Belt

0 km  
1.5 km  
Scale 1:25,000 @ A3

Manchester Airport Green Belt Review

**Figure 5.2**  
**Close View of Figure 5.1 Inset**

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Appendix A

# Entec

*Creating the environment for business*



**Appendix A**

## Appendix B Planning Policy



**Appendix B**

# Entec

*Creating the environment for business*



**Appendix B**

The  
GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
GREEN BELT  
**LOCAL PLAN**  
**WRITTEN  
STATEMENT**

CD4

R2 TEAM (PLANNING)

# The GREATER MANCHESTER GREEN BELT **LOCAL PLAN** **WRITTEN STATEMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

**History of the Green Belt**

The idea of Green Belts goes back a long way—certainly its roots can be seen in much of the thinking about the future of our towns and cities from the 1930's onwards. In the event, the impetus to do something about uncontrolled urban "sprawl", and to prevent towns and villages from merging into each other without any check, arose from particular concern about the rapid expansion of London between the World Wars.

In a statement in 1968, Duncan Sandys, then Minister of Housing and Local Government, produced the first clear policy on the need for Green Belts—a wide zone of land around the larger urban areas of the country would be declared effectively "out-of-bounds" for building, with the only exceptions being granted for farming, or other activities which would be acceptable in the countryside. Local authorities were invited to prepare plans for Green Belts as soon as possible.

Almost immediately, the good sense of this policy was understood by the public at large and became one of the most enduring and universally supported town and country planning objectives. Achieving it, however, was not quite so straightforward.

The country was entering a period of rapid physical change. The population was growing, the economy expanding; a massive programme of slum clearance and redevelopment had begun in the big cities (with much "new" land being required as a result of lower replacement densities); house prices were rising, giving a sharp stimulus to building activity. Moreover, the projections during the 1960's about likely population levels towards the end of the century pointed to continuing, even accelerated, growth. The later dramatic drop in birth-rates (and, in areas like Greater Manchester, the high levels of outward migration) were not anticipated. Although proposals for Green Belts were being made, the assumed continuing need for large, but unquantifiable, areas of building land naturally affected progress.

There was a further area of uncertainty. The planning system itself was undergoing radical change, with (from 1968) a new Development Plan system to replace that established under the Planning Acts of 1947 and 1962. To add to the difficulty planning authorities faced, the late '60's onwards saw increasing pressure to re-organise the whole local government structure—culminating, in this area, in the creation of the Greater Manchester Council and the 10 metropolitan district councils in 1974.

**Progress Since 1974**

The new authorities inherited an unsatisfactory "patchwork-quilt" of green belt policies. There were some detached areas of approved Green Belt within the former Oldham and Stockport County Boroughs (and also in a small part of the old West Riding of Yorkshire which passed to the new Metropolitan County). There were much more extensive areas submitted to the Government by Lancashire (1960) and Cheshire (1961) County Councils, but never approved: these were the Merseyside and South-East Lancashire and the North Cheshire "submitted" Green Belts. Although without formal status, they served the area well during the '60's and early '70's. There were other draft proposals in the Saddleworth area, and a "provisional" Green Belt in what are now the northern and western parts of Greater Manchester, prepared by Lancashire County Council but never submitted for approval.

There was an urgent need for some rationalisation and a consistency of approach.

**The Greater Manchester County Structure Plan** appeared as a draft in 1978 and was approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in March 1981. For the first time, a plan had been produced which attempted to look at planning policies for the conurbation as a **whole**—and the need for a coherent Green Belt naturally featured prominently.

The Greater Manchester Council, whose task it was to prepare the Structure Plan, had already begun to view the Green Belt as part of an overall strategy for the regeneration of the older, urban parts of the County—as well as accepting its "traditional" role of separating the various towns from each other, and checking the continuing suburbanisation of the surrounding countryside.

In 1978 work began on defining the boundary, taking on board wherever possible the "submitted" and other Green Belts which had gone before. The Structure Plan itself contained only very general guidance about the areas to be included, and was not in fact accompanied by a map in the accepted sense. As a result, original fieldwork was required throughout the whole of the County area, and 76 maps were eventually prepared by the County Planning Department, at a scale of 1:10,000.

These maps (collectively known as the "Proposals Map")form the crucial part of this **Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan**, which was adopted by GMC on 29th January 1984. A major Public Inquiry was held in Manchester between October 1981 and March 1982 to look into objections to the Plan, the Department of the Environment Inspector producing his report in October 1982.

### **Understanding The Green Belt**

Deciding on what land should be included in the Green Belt, and what not, is a highly complex matter, involving many aspects of local and national planning policies, many of which are inherently in conflict with each other. A few basic facts should be noted, however:

there are many locally important areas of open land in Greater Manchester which the planning authorities intend to retain, but which do not have the "strategic" quality needed for them to be described as "Green Belt";

although the intention of the Structure Plan is to concentrate as much future building as possible within the existing urban areas, some further "greenfield" development is inevitable;

as a result, and because the Green Belt implies long-term protection from building, some areas which might otherwise have been suitable for inclusion have been left out—at least for the time being;

over the years, the various planning authorities may wish to make amendments to the areas of Green Belt shown on the maps. During the preparation of the first edition, for example, additions to the Green Belt were already being actively considered along the western edge of the built-up area of Salford/Farnworth; in the Walsshaw and Ordswoth areas of Bury; around Heywood; between Shaw and Royton; and around Woodhouses in Oldham; in the Droylsden area of Tameside; between Hale and Timperley in Trafford; and in several other locations.

## **2 The component parts of the Green Belt Local Plan**

The Local Plan is in two parts—the Proposals Map (which is divided into 76 map-sheets at 1:10000 scale, or about 6 inches to the mile) on which the boundary of the green belt is drawn; and this Written Statement. The four formal proposals in the Written Statement set out the development control policies which will apply within the green belt, while the Proposals Map delineates the precise areas to which these policies apply. An additional map at 1:50000 scale is intended to accompany the local plan documents but is not, in a legal sense, a part of the local plan itself. This smaller scale map is simply an index to the 76 sheets of the Proposals Map. While it provides a useful broad illustration of the overall shape of the Greater Manchester Green Belt, it cannot and should not be used to identify the precise green belt boundary in a particular area. For that purpose only the Proposals Map itself should be used.

During the preparation of the Green Belt Local Plan, the Greater Manchester Council prepared many documents which, though not part of the Plan itself, contain much useful background information. Three of the most important are a statement setting out the steps which the County Council took to publicise the Green Belt proposals at their draft stage, which shows how public representations were taken into account; the Report of the Inspector who considered objections to the Plan; and the Statement by the Council following their consideration of that report. These and other documents are available from the County Planning Officer on request.

## **3 The Written Statement**

This document is the Written Statement of the Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan. It consists of three sections:

the present introductory section, which describes the respective functions of the Green Belt Local Plan's two component parts (the Written Statement and the Proposals Map), explains the plan's relationship with the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan and with other local plans, and describes the policy guidance the Structure Plan gives in respect of the green belt;

the green belt proposals themselves, of which there are four. They are set out in **green type** and are accompanied by a brief explanation of their purpose and effect;

an appendix containing explanatory and supporting material.

#### 4 The relationship of the Green Belt Local Plan to the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan and to other Local Plans

The Town and Country Planning Acts of 1968 and 1971 established a two-scale system of development plans—structure plans and local plans. The purpose of a structure plan is to make a broad appraisal of the whole of an area, to decide what the strategic planning objectives for that area should be, and to set out broad policies designed to attain them. Structure plans do not express their policies in precise geographical terms: indeed, they are expressly prohibited from using maps on an ordnance base. It is the function of local plans to supply this greater degree of clarity and detail; to identify the areas referred to broadly in the strategic policies; and to put forward more detailed land use and development control proposals for them. A prime purpose of local plans, therefore, is to implement the policies of the Structure Plan. Structure plans need to receive the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment. Local plans are adopted by the local planning authority (in this case the Greater Manchester Council).

This Green Belt Local Plan is a local plan concerned with the specific subject of green belt in Greater Manchester. It is therefore intended to reflect and refine the green belt policies of the Structure Plan by defining, on an ordnance map base, the boundaries of the green belt areas described in broad terms in policy OL1 (see over page) and by stating how development control will operate within them, thereby giving effect to policies OL2 and OL3. Any future alterations to the Structure Plan may necessitate appropriate changes in the Green Belt Local Plan, and it would also be possible to alter the Plan formally after adoption, if changed circumstances made it essential.

In addition, other local plans adopted after this Plan may have the effect of further refining the green belt boundaries. It is anticipated that a number of district-type local plans will make amendments to the green belt, the majority of which are expected to be additions. These district plans will also be prepared on a formal basis and the public will have the opportunity to comment on them. The views of the County Council will be sought during their preparation.

#### 5 The Green Belt policies of the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan

The Structure Plan has four main themes:

- an emphasis upon urban concentration;
- an attempt to redirect development more towards the central core of the conurbation;
- the maintenance of the regional centre, a theme which is linked to the regeneration of Manchester's and Salford's inner areas;
- resource conservation and amenity.

The green belt policies OL1, OL2 and OL3 (see over page) have a major role in implementing these themes. In addition, in putting forward the areas subject to green belt policies, the County Council has borne in mind the purposes for which green belts were first created—and which are very relevant to circumstances in Greater Manchester. These purposes are set out in Circular 42/85 of the former Ministry of Housing and Local Government:

- i to check the further growth of a built-up area;
- ii to prevent neighbouring towns from merging;
- iii to preserve the special character of a town.

It will be seen that there are minor differences of wording between the Policies of the Structure Plan and Proposals 1, 2 and 3 of this Local Plan. In one case, this results from a recommendation by the Inspector at the Public Inquiry; in others, the differences are either a reflection of the greater level of detail afforded by the Local Plan, or are improvements of phrasing to aid understanding.

Policy OL1 contains broad descriptions of 36 areas chosen for their contribution towards achieving the principal objectives of the Structure Plan, and serving the 3 broad purposes of green belt as set out in Ministerial advice.

The green belt policies of the Structure Plan are as follows:

#### **Policy OI.1**

*The Development Control Policies described in Policy OI.2 will operate over a Green Belt which will enclose and separate the various built up areas of the county. Its primary purposes will be:*

- i to check the further growth of a built-up area;
- ii to prevent neighbouring towns from merging;
- iii to preserve the special character of a town.

*The Green Belt will include within it both wide tracts and narrow fingers and wedges of land between settlements. In determining its boundaries the local planning authority will pay particular attention to the need to minimise increases in the length of the urban perimeter resulting from small salients or isolated developments and to limit sporadic development and its effects. The Green Belt will include land in the following general areas but precise boundaries will be determined in local plans.*

- 1 Between Wigan, Horwich, the northern GMC boundary and Westhoughton but excluding Blackrod and Haigh Aspull.
- 2 Between Wigan and Standish and extending to the northern and western GMC boundaries.
- 3 Part of the Douglas Valley north west of Wigan and land to the west and south west of Wigan to the GMC boundary and Ashton-in-Makerfield.
- 4 Between Huddlesley and Westhoughton and Bolton extending to the east of the A579.
- 5 Separating Leigh from Atherton and Tyldesley.
- 6 South of Ince-in-Makerfield and Hindley and west of Leigh extending to the GMC boundary and excluding Abram, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Golborne.
- 7 South of the East Lancashire Road (A580) and west of the A575/M63 north and west of Irlam to the GMC boundary.
- 8 Between Atherton, Tyldesley and Little Hulton.
- 9 Between Bolton and Horwich and extending north of Horwich, Bolton and Egerton to the GMC boundary.

- 10 Between Bolton and Bury from the GMC boundary in the north to Little Lever and Radcliffe in the south and incorporating the settlements of Ainsworth and Hawkshaw.
- 11 The Irwell Valley between Bury, Ramsbottom and the GMC boundary.
- 12 Part of the Roch Valley between Bury and Rochdale and north west and north of Rochdale.
- 13 The Croal - Irwell Valleys between Darcy Lever, Blackford Bridge and Rainborough.
- 14 Between Bolton and Salford at Linyshaw and Clifton Moss.
- 15 Between Heywood, Rochdale, Milnrow, Shaw, Royton, Chadderton and Middleton, including Heaton Park and generally following the line of the M62.
- 16 North and east of Rochdale, Milnrow and Shaw but excluding Wardle Village and settlements in the valley of the River Roch.
- 17 Between Oldham and the Peak Park boundary but excluding the villages of Denshaw, Droylsden, Delph, Dobcross, Grasscroft, Uppermill and Greenfield.
- 18 Between Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne, including the Medlock Valley to Clayton Bridge and Ashton Moss, and extending to the east of Ashton over Hartshead Green and Izzyby.
- 19 Between Mossley, Stalybridge and Mottram; towards the Peak District National Park and the GMC boundaries but excluding Hollingworth Village.
- 20 In the Marple Edge/Higher Marple area north of the M67/A57.
- 21 Between Broadbottom, Hyde, Bredbury, Romiley, Marple and Marple Bridge to the eastern GMC boundary including the Etherow Goyt Valleys, Werneth Low and Mellor Moor.
- 22 The Tame Valley south of Dukinfield and the Goyt Valley and open land between Bredbury, Rudyard, Stockport, Hazel Grove, Macclesfield and High Lane.

23 Land between Hazel Grove, Bramhall and Cheadle and the southern county boundary and incorporating the settlement of Woodford and the airfield.

24 To the south of Manchester, Hale and Bowdon to the Bollin Valley and the GMC southern boundary.

25 Between Bowdon, Broadheath, Sale, Carrington, Partington, The Ship Canal and the GMC southern boundary and incorporating the villages of Dunham Town, Dunham Woodhouses and Warburton.

26 Along the Mersey Valley from its junction with the Ship Canal to Cheadle Heath'.

#### **Policy OL2**

*'Within the Green Belt, except in those settlements affected by Policy OL3, development will not normally be permitted unless it is clearly needed in connection with agriculture, forestry, or other uses appropriate to a rural area—including the development of an outdoor recreational facility such as a sports ground, golf course, country park (or large town park having the character of a country park), together with ancillary buildings required in connection with the outdoor facility, cemeteries and institutions standing in large grounds, or is limited development which will form part of and be essential to the maintenance of an existing source of employment. Any such exceptions considered under this policy will only be acceptable in principle where it can be shown that, by reason of their scale, siting or design, they would not have a noticeable impact on the purpose of the area as Green Belt as set out in Policy OL1'.*

#### **Policy OL3**

*'In all settlements which fall within the Green Belt, limited infilling development may be permitted where this is in scale with the settlement and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings'.*

The Structure Plan also contains a number of other policies which affect open land and resource conservation, and which operate in parallel with the green belt policies. They are summarised in paragraph iv of the appendix at the end of this Written Statement.

The Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan Written Statement now sets down the following four proposals:

#### THE PROPOSALS

(The term "Proposal" is a formal one which originates with the Town and Country Planning Acts. The 4 Proposals of this Local Plan may appropriately be referred to as "Adopted Policies of the County Council").

### **Proposal 1**

A green belt is hereby established extending over the areas defined on the Proposals Map accompanying this Written Statement. The three primary purposes of this green belt are:

- i* to check the further growth of the large built-up areas of Greater Manchester;
- ii* to prevent neighbouring towns and urban areas in Greater Manchester from merging into each other;
- iii* to preserve the special character and identity of towns and villages in Greater Manchester.

### **Explanation**

Proposal 1 implements policy O.1 of the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan, by defining (on the 76 sheets of the Proposals Map) the areas of green belt described in that policy in broad terms.

The three primary purposes of the green belt are substantially those stated in Circular 42/55 of the former Ministry of Housing and Local Government. These three purposes, and the four broad themes of the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan, together formed the basis of the green belt area descriptions in policy O.1.

The name of this green belt is 'The Greater Manchester Green Belt'.

## **Proposal 2**

Within the green belt, development will not normally be permitted unless:

- i it is clearly needed in connection with agriculture, forestry, or other uses appropriate to a rural area (including the development of an outdoor recreation facility—such as a sports ground, golf course, country park or other park—together with ancillary buildings required in connection with that facility; cemeteries; and institutions standing in large grounds); or
- ii it is limited development which will form part of, and be essential to the maintenance of, either
  - a an existing source of employment, or
  - b the provision and improvement of public services and utilities.

Proposed development falling within these categories will be acceptable in principle only where it can be shown that it would not prejudice, by reason of its scale, siting or design, the primary purposes of the green belt.

## **Explanation**

Proposal 2 gives effect to policy OL2 of the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan, by stating how the local planning authorities will react to proposals for development within the green belt. The effect of the proposal is to ensure that green belt will generally be kept open, and certainly protected from inappropriate development. The potentially acceptable categories of development listed in the proposal all possess at least one of the following characteristics. They would:

- have a low proportion of building area in relation to land area; or
- be essential or traditional countryside uses; or
- help to secure the proper management of green belt land; or
- help to maintain existing firms in the green belt, thereby sustaining the economic health of the area and avoiding the risk of dereliction; or
- be needed to ensure that essential public services are maintained.

### **Recreation**

Proposal 2 implies a somewhat greater willingness than formerly to accept recreational activities in green belt areas, though it should be noted that leisure facilities of an urban nature, not ancillary to outdoor recreation, and leisure facilities containing large buildings, will not normally be permitted.

### **Mineral Extraction**

Special consideration will need to be given to planning applications for the exploitation of minerals, where these occur within the green belt. Mineral extraction need not be incompatible with the broad objectives of green belt, although in particular cases there may be other good reasons for not granting permission. The County Council is preparing a Minerals Local Plan, which will provide detailed guidance on the control of mineral development, and meanwhile will continue to deal with each case on its merits. The green belt will have the positive effect of helping to conserve valuable mineral resources, by preventing inappropriate development.

#### *Public Services*

The planning authorities will also continue to give sympathetic consideration to the particular operational requirements of statutory undertakers, and other bodies providing essential public services. Where uses such as hospitals, electricity generating and sub-stations, water and sewage-treatment installations, and public transport and related facilities are already established on sites within the green belt, this would not of itself inhibit the continuation, improvement or reasonable extension of the use.

However, where a proposal is made to locate within the green belt an entirely new development, or a significant addition to or consolidation of an existing facility, the planning authorities will require the various public bodies concerned to show compelling reasons why a site outside the green belt was considered by them to be unacceptable; and there will be a presumption against development of this kind where no such compelling reasons appear to the planning authorities to exist.

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of such public buildings and facilities, for purposes unconnected with operational requirements, will continue to be assessed on their merits. This means giving full weight to the general presumption against development considered inappropriate in the green belt, and set out in Proposal 2.

#### *Interpretation*

For the avoidance of doubt, the term "an existing source of employment" as used in Proposal 2 means an existing operation (such as a business or factory) and not merely existing, though vacant, land or buildings.



### **Proposal 3**

In all settlements which lie within the Green Belt, limited infilling development may be permitted, provided that it is in scale with the settlement and would not adversely affect its character or surroundings.

### **Explanation**

Proposal 3 gives effect to policy OL3 of the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan, and is a refinement of Proposal 2 solely in respect of settlements in the green belt.

The term 'settlement' in this context implies something more than a collection of houses or farmsteads. A settlement would normally contain at least one place of worship, a public house and one or more shops, together with perhaps a doctor's surgery and a post office. The term 'limited infilling development' may include forms of development other than frontage infilling, such as the development of backland where it would be in keeping with the settlement's character. However, this is not intended as a general dispensation to develop houses in the back gardens of frontage properties.

A particular difficulty exists in relation to the 'ribbon' developments which are strung out along many roads in the county. Where ribbon developments are within the green belt, and present a significant and generally unbroken frontage, small gaps may be capable of successful development without prejudicing green belt objectives. This will usually be a question of looking at each case on its merits: the local planning authority will wish to take into account the character of the site; and, generally, development which would involve the felling of trees, or the spoiling of a fine view, would be prevented.

Where the local planning authority considers that even limited infilling development would be inappropriate in a settlement in the green belt, Proposal 2 will be deemed to apply.

#### **Proposal 4**

**Development which is directly related to the operational efficiency and amenity of Manchester International Airport will be accepted in principle within the Airport's operational area.**

#### **Explanation**

Proposal 4 states how development control will operate in the special case of the operational area of Manchester International Airport.

The wording of the proposal follows as closely as possible that of the agreed Development Control Policy for Manchester Airport and Surrounding Areas—a policy which GMC and the City of Manchester have implemented since 1974. The 'operational area' is defined on a map which accompanies that policy, and an addendum to the policy defines the types of development which are considered to be directly related to the Airport's operational efficiency and amenity. The operational area is also shown on the Proposals Map.

*It should be noted that, at the time of the adoption of this Local Plan, changes to the extent of the operational area were being proposed in the Ringway Local Plan, prepared by the Manchester City Council.*

The Airport is a unique case as far as Greater Manchester is concerned. There are three reasons why development within the operational area need not be incompatible with the purposes of the green belt:

- i* it lies in the middle of an important tract of open land that performs, overall, a green belt function;
- ii* the Airport's proportion of building land, in relation to its total land area, is so low that it does serve as an open break;
- iii* it is important to prevent inappropriate development on open land surrounding the Airport.

At the same time, a special proposal related to the Airport's own development is needed because the Airport is so important to the county, and indeed the North of England generally, that development directly related to its operational efficiency and amenity should be viewed sympathetically.

*i Drawing up the boundary*

The areas of green belt defined on the 78 sheets of the Proposals Map accompanying this Written Statement represent a detailed interpretation of the area descriptions set out in policy OL1 of the Greater Manchester County Structure Plan. In drawing up their boundaries, basic factual information and technical guidance were obtained from the various Structure Plan Reports of Survey—particularly the Report of Survey on Open Land and Physical Restraints on Development. The findings of these reports have been continually up-dated or revised as part of the process that led to the submission of the Structure Plan to the Secretary of State for the Environment. Every part of the green belt boundary has, in addition, been drawn following detailed inspection on the ground.

The County Council has been conscious of the fact that, of all planning policies, the green belt is probably the most widely understood and accepted by the public at large. In order to maintain this confidence, the drawing of the green belt boundary has to represent a balance between offering long-term protection to open land that performs an essential green belt function whilst, at the same time, allowing sufficient development land to be found elsewhere.

The areas of Greater Manchester which have been under the greatest pressure for urban development are mainly the surviving fingers and wedges of open land which surround and penetrate the conurbation core and the other principal urban areas. It is a prime purpose of the Green Belt Local Plan (as it is of the Structure Plan) to protect these vital yet vulnerable breaks, by ensuring that any development which takes place does not have the effect of allowing one major built-up area to merge with another. At the same time, many of these fingers and wedges of open land merge with larger expanses on the periphery of the county, and they in turn are in many cases contiguous with land of similar character in neighbouring counties (a summary of the green belt proposals of neighbouring counties is given at *iii* in this appendix).

*ii Detailed criteria for defining the Green Belt boundary*

In an attempt to ensure a consistent approach to the definition of the boundary over such a large and complex area, certain ground-rules have been followed. In particular, the boundary follows recognisable physical features wherever possible, and so:

- where the boundary follows a railway line, the permanent way itself is the feature used;
- on motorways the boundary is normally the hard shoulder on the green belt side;
- in the case of roads, lanes, bridleways and footpaths, the boundary is normally the green belt side of the route.

Along the edge of the green belt, where difficult decisions are frequently involved, further guidelines governed the drawing of the boundary. These were worked out in considerable detail, but in summary:

- house gardens have normally been excluded;
- parks and sportsgrounds have normally been included;
- in most cases primary schools have been excluded, and secondary schools—with their more extensive provision of playing fields—included;
- areas with a valid planning permission for built development have been excluded;
- 'ribbon' development, where it is surrounded by, or extends into, land with green belt qualities, has normally been included;
- allotments, chicken-runs, garden centres, nurseries and sewage works have generally been included;
- churchyards abutting the green belt have generally been excluded;
- garages, isolated industry, tips, reclamation sites, hospitals, and land allocations in inherited plans, were individually assessed on their merits.

Neighbouring counties' green belt policies and proposals cover a high proportion of the land adjoining the Greater Manchester boundary—indeed have been drawn up partly for the purpose of preventing the further outward spread of the Greater Manchester conurbation. At the time of preparation of this Written Statement, they complement the Greater Manchester Green Belt to a very high degree.

The Cheshire green belt proposals cover a broad swathe of land right across north Cheshire, including all but a very small part of the boundary with Greater Manchester.

Derbyshire's proposals place virtually all the land on the Greater Manchester boundary in green belt.

The green belt zones proposed in the North east Lancashire Structure Plan area were in large part designed to be complementary to green belt in Greater Manchester. They give further protection to the valley settlements extending northwards from the Greater Manchester boundary.

Merseyside's green belt, now adopted, involves most of their boundary with Greater Manchester, and is complementary to the Greater Manchester Green Belt.

There is no green belt as such on the Peak District National Park, but the Peak Park Planning Board's policies severely restrict development and are therefore compatible with Greater Manchester's green belt proposals.

Most of the land adjoining the Greater Manchester boundary is included in West Yorkshire's green belt proposals.

*NB This broad description of the green belt proposals of neighbouring counties was correct at the time of adoption of this Local Plan (January 1984). Since changes to them can be made at any time (subject to the statutory procedures), up-to-date information on them should be obtained direct from the planning authorities concerned.*

Although nearly all the policies in the Structure Plan, because of their close inter-relationship, have a bearing on the extent of the green belt, many are particularly concerned with protecting open land from unnecessary urban development. These policies are designed to safeguard open land both for its inherent value as a rapidly diminishing resource, and because of the relief it gives from urban life and surroundings. These policies are summarised here. These brief summaries are intended only as a guide: the precise wording of the Structure Plan policies is important, and direct reference should be made to them in all cases of doubt.

Policy O1A states that all open land outside the green belt will be protected, unless the proposed development comes within seven restricted categories. In general terms, these relate to proposals which would be acceptable in a rural area; or related to an established source of employment or a bona fide rural enterprise; constitute limited infilling in a settlement; meet development needs arising from other Structure Plan policies (some of which state the need to release certain amounts of land for housing, industry etc); or involve a major source of employment, with special site needs not capable of being met within the urban area.  
*Refer to Structure Plan Policy O1A*

All agricultural land receives special protection from development, and the severance and disruption of farm holdings are to be resisted. A particularly strong presumption operates against the use of high-grade land for development—land graded 1, 2 or 3a in the classification established by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.  
*Policies O16 and O17*

Policy O18 states that special development control policies, restricting development and demanding very high standards of design, siting and landscaping, will operate in 21 areas of high landscape quality. Policy O19 contains a presumption against development on or close to areas of biological interest.  
*Policies O18 and O19*

In addition to these protection policies, the Structure Plan contains support for a wide variety of more positive improvement programmes, many of which are carried out by the County Council itself. The major effort on reclaiming derelict land will continue, as will the comprehensive tree planting programme, the restoration of tips and the important river valley and country park schemes, which have become a major attraction of the Greater Manchester area.  
*Policies O10, O11, EN1 and EN3-6*

In an area where recreation facilities are in many cases deficient, the Structure Plan has a double emphasis - to defend existing facilities against development, and to encourage new provision. Many kinds of outdoor recreation facility—sports grounds, golf courses, parks etc. are appropriate in green belt areas. As for informal recreation, considerable emphasis is placed on exploiting the potential of the county's river valleys, areas of open countryside etc. Public access to the countryside and other informal recreation areas is recognised to be both important and in need of improvement. Improvements to existing footpaths and bridleways will be continued and new paths created, especially in areas of high recreational use, with special emphasis being given to the provision of footpaths linking town and countryside. Improved access along canal towpaths is also sought, and the canals themselves are to be protected against inappropriate development. The importance of water areas for recreation is recognised. Increased recreational use of rivers, lakes and reservoirs is promoted, and further use of the canal network for recreation encouraged. The County Council supports the North West Water Authority in its efforts to clean up polluted rivers.

*Policies L1-L6, L8-L12 and EN3-EN6*

Although it might be helpful to be made aware of these other policies, the majority of which not only are compatible with the green belt, but also actually tend to reinforce it, it is still necessary to keep them separate from consideration of the green belt policies themselves. Land that falls within the scope of these other policies will be protected for its own sake, whether it falls within the green belt or not. Equally, it should not be expected that all open land with resource value should inevitably be placed in green belt—not unless it also happens to perform a genuine green belt function. As it happens, the areas covered by these other open land and resource policies frequently overlap with green belt areas, and where they do the policies will be mutually supporting.



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1947

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# DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Amendment No.

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## GREEN BELTS

### Written Statement

## NORTH CHESHIRE GREEN BELT

KENNETH O. MALE, FRICS, MTP, AMIMunE  
*County Planning Officer*

A. C. HETHERINGTON, MBE  
*Clerk of the County Council*

COUNTY PLANNING OFFICER

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1967

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

AMENDMENT NO 1

GREEN BELTS

WRITTEN STATEMENT

NORTH CHERHILL GREEN BELT

KENNETH O. MALE  
F.R.I.C.A., M.T.P.L., A.M.T.M.O.E.,  
County Planning Officer

A.G. BETHERINGTON  
M.B.E.  
Clerk of the County Council

### General

This Written Statement forms an amendment of the Cheshire County Development Plan and will be added to and incorporated in the Written Statement already operative. It refers to the proposed North Cheshire Green Belt, which is shown on a map (scale 1 inch to 1 mile). It is intended that the County Map should have effect subject to the addition of the detail shown on this map. Those parts of the Green Belt falling within the areas of Town Maps already operative are shown on other maps (scale 6 inches to 1 mile) and it is intended that the Town Maps in question shall have effect subject to the addition of the detail shown in those maps; the Town Maps so affected are:

- No.7 (Macclesfield)
- No.8 (Sale, Altringham, Hale and Bowdon)
- No.9 (Wilmslow and Alderley Edge)
- No.10 (Brodbury and Romiley)
- No.11 (Shudee & Gatley and Hazel Grove & Bredbury)

Those parts of the Green Belt falling within the areas of Town Maps not yet submitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government will be shown in conjunction with the remainder of those Town Map proposals, at a scale of 6 inches to 1 mile and will be dealt with as necessary in the Written Statement or Statements accompanying the further submissions.

### Reasons for the Green Belt

It is considered essential to prevent the further major spread of that part of the South-East Lancashire conurbation lying in Cheshire and to preserve as far as possible the undeveloped breaks between existing towns and settlements.

### Control of Development in the Green Belt

Subject to reservations made later in this Written Statement about development in existing settlements, the only purposes for which building or the change of use of existing buildings may be permitted in the Green Belt are agriculture and forestry, sport, education, institutions standing in large grounds or other uses appropriate to a rural area. Proposals falling into these categories will be considered with especial regard to their siting and general position within the Green Belt.

### Development in "whilst" areas between the boundary of the Green Belt and areas allocated for development in the Plan

Green Belt boundaries have been so drawn as to leave un-allocated certain areas of land between the Green Belt and the development proposals in the Plan. These areas may later be allocated to meet demands for development either beyond the present period of the Plan or after all present allocations have been taken up. Meanwhile only such development as would be appropriate to the neighbouring Green Belt will be permitted in these areas.

Development in existing settlements within the Green Belt

In the settlements which lie within the Green Belt and which are not the subject of Town Maps, it is intended that some expansion shall be allowed at those set out in Appendix 'A' and the limits within which development will be allowed in these settlements are shown on the Insular to the County Map, which are numbered in accordance with the Appendix.

It is proposed to allow only a limited amount of building in the settlements listed in Appendix 'B' to this Written Statement and no inset maps are provided in these cases.

Development detrimental to the visual amenity of the Green Belt

Care will be taken to ensure that the visual amenity of the Green Belt will not be injured by development within or complementary to the Green Belt which, although not prejudicing its main purpose, might be inappropriate by reason of siting, materials or design.

## APPENDIX 'A'

Settlements proposed for expansion within the Green Belt

<u>Inset Map No.</u>	<u>Name of Settlement</u>	<u>Local Authority</u>
13	High Legh	Bucklow R.D.C.
14	Mobberley	Bucklow R.D.C.
15	Ollerton	Bucklow R.D.C.
16	Parkgate (Peover Superior)	Bucklow R.D.C.
17	Ghelford	Bucklow R.D.C. and Macclesfield R.D.C.

## APPENDIX 'B'

<u>Name of Settlement</u>	<u>Local Authority</u>	<u>Grid Reference</u>
Mellor	Marple U.D.C.	990885
Morley	Wilmslow U.D.C.	822833
Styal	Wilmslow U.D.C.	839835
Mobberley (Knolis Green)	Bucklow R.D.C.	802795
Warburton	Bucklow R.D.C.	699896
Mere	Bucklow R.D.C.	728817
Bollington	Bucklow R.D.C.	729870
Plumley	Bucklow R.D.C.	721754
Ashley	Bucklow R.D.C.	775842
Dunham Massey (Dunhamtown)	Bucklow R.D.C.	740876
Dunham Massey (Dunham Woodhouses)	Bucklow R.D.C.	725879
Chorley (Row of Trees)	Macclesfield R.D.C.	826791

### Town Maps

It is proposed that the following should be added as amendments to the approved Written Statement.

#### Town Map 7: Macclesfield

The control of development in that part of the North Cheshire Green Belt lying within the Town Map area will be in accordance with the general policy set out above.

#### Town Map 8: Sale, Altrincham, Hale and Bowdon

The control of development in that part of the North Cheshire Green Belt lying within the Town Map area will be in accordance with the general policy set out above. In addition to its main objective of preventing undue urban spread, the Green Belt has the local objectives of maintaining the break along the river Mersey, to the north and north-east of Sale, and the breaks between Hale and Wythenshawe and between Hale and Altrincham.

#### Town Map 9: Wilmslow and Alderley Edge

The control of development in that part of the North Cheshire Green Belt lying within the Town Map area will be in accordance with the general policy set out above. In addition to its main objective of preventing undue urban spread, the Green Belt has the local objectives of maintaining the breaks between Wilmslow and Cheadle, along the valley of the river Bollin in Wilmslow and between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge.

Strictly limited infilling will be allowed in the settlements of Styall and Morley, in Wilmslow Urban District.

#### Town Map 10: Bredbury and Romiley

The control of development in that part of the North Cheshire Green Belt lying within the Town Map area will be in accordance with the general policy set out above. In addition to its main objective of preventing undue urban spread, the Green Belt has the local objectives of preserving the breaks between Woodley and Hyde, along the valley of the river Tame, between Bredbury and Stockport, and between Romiley and Marple, and of protecting the amenity of the high land in the Greavefold area.

#### Town Map 11: Cheadle and Gatley and Hazel Grove and Bramhall

The control of development in that part of the North Cheshire Green Belt lying within the Town Map area will be in accordance with the general policy set out above. In addition to its main objective of preventing undue urban spread, the Green Belt has the local objectives of preserving the breaks between Gatley and East Didsbury, south of the river Mersey, between Cheadle and Wilmslow, between Hazel Grove and the Offerton area of Stockport, between Bramhall and Poynton and between Norbury and the High Lane area of Marple.