

Mr Mark Andrews  
Coventry City Council

27th October 2016

Dear Mark,

**Subject: West Midlands Joint Green Belt Review – Stage 1**

Thank you for your queries in relation to the Coventry and Warwickshire Green Belt Study we carried out in 2015, specifically the judgements associated with Parcel C25 to the north west of Coventry.

In the absence of definitive national guidance on how to undertake Green Belt studies, there are a number of ways of approaching a Green Belt study of this kind. The methodology for this study was based on LUC's extensive experience of undertaking Green Belt assessments, information on the context and background of the West Midlands Green Belt, case law and good practice elsewhere. It was also the subject of consultation with a Steering Group of planning officers representing each of the six local authorities and with their wider 'duty to co-operate partners' (i.e. adjoining authorities in surrounding Housing Market Areas (HMAs)).

In this letter I summarise the approach we adopted to assessing Green Belt parcels against purposes 2 and 4 of Green Belts, as set out in the NPPF.

Purpose 2, *'to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another'*, was interpreted as seeking to prevent settlements from merging to form larger settlements. All towns and villages within the Study Area and adjacent Districts were considered settlements in the assessment of purpose 2. The width of open countryside between settlements was used to assess the role of Green Belt in maintaining separation; the narrower the gap, the greater the role the Green Belt is considered to play. The distance between settlements was measured from the urban edge of every Green Belt parcel identified in the Study Area to the urban edge of the nearest neighbouring settlement. A straight line was measured at the narrowest point between settlements. In order to assess the role of each parcel of land in preventing the merging of settlements, this line was drawn through or along the edge of the parcel being assessed.

Purpose 4 aims to *'to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns'*. Whilst many settlements have historic elements, this Green Belt purpose is only relevant to settlements of a certain size – towns – which retain a historic character connected to surrounding landscape elements. The following historic towns were considered in the assessment:

- Coventry
- Rugby
- Bedworth
- Nuneaton
- Warwick
- Hinckley
- Kenilworth
- Royal Leamington Spa

**LUC LONDON**

43 Chalton Street  
London  
NW1 1JD  
T +44 (0)20 7383 5784  
london@landuse.co.uk

**LUC BRISTOL**

12<sup>th</sup> Floor Colston Tower  
Colston Street Bristol  
BS1 4XE  
T +44 (0)117 929 1997  
bristol@landuse.co.uk

**LUC GLASGOW**

37 Otago Street  
Glasgow  
G12 8JJ  
T +44 (0)141 334 9595  
glasgow@landuse.co.uk

**LUC EDINBURGH**

28 Stafford Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7BD  
T +44 (0)131 202 1616  
edinburgh@landuse.co.uk

www.landuse.co.uk

Land Use Consultants Ltd  
Registered in England  
Registered number: 2549296  
Registered Office:  
43 Chalton Street  
London NW1 1JD  
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The connection between a historic town's historic character and the wider countryside (Green Belt) was defined as either:

- Physical – Green Belt land within or adjacent to the historic cores (Conservation Areas) of historic towns, or
- Visual – where successions of development may have isolated core historic areas from the surrounding countryside, important visual connection remain through views into or out of historic towns.

In other words, not all historic features within the Green Belt have a direct connection with the setting and special character of a historic town.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P H Smith'.

**Philip Smith**

Director

LUC

[Philip.Smith@landuse.co.uk](mailto:Philip.Smith@landuse.co.uk)