

Woking Green Belt Boundary Review – Non-Technical Summary by Woking Borough Council

1.0 Introduction and context

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council has a Core Strategy that was adopted in October 2012. It makes provision for the delivery of 4,964 net additional homes in the Borough between 2010 and 2027. This is equivalent to an annual average of 292 dwellings. National planning policy requires the Council to identify sufficient deliverable sites to deliver 15 years housing supply from the date of the adoption of the Core Strategy. The Council has carried out an assessment of the potential capacity of the urban area to accommodate the housing requirement. Sufficient land could only be identified within the urban area to meet 10 years of the requirement. Consequently, insufficient land has been identified to meet housing need for the entire plan period and the national requirement as set out above. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment that contains detailed information of potential housing sites within the urban area is on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk).
- 1.2 In finding the Core Strategy sound, the Secretary of State accepted that the Council would carry out a Green Belt boundary review to identify sustainable and deliverable sites to enable the Council to meet its housing requirement over the entire period of the Core Strategy. This was consistent with the evidence the Council had submitted to the Secretary of State in support of the Core Strategy. Specifically, the review is to identify sufficient sites to deliver about 550 new homes between 2022 and 2027. He also requested the Council to use the outcome of the Green Belt boundary review to inform the Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD), which will allocate specific sites for various types of development. It is therefore important to clarify and emphasise that the Green Belt boundary review itself does not allocate sites for development but will be used to inform the Development Plan Document that will do so. It should be noted that the Delivery DPD will comprise site allocations and detailed development management policies.
- 1.3 Policy CS10 – *Housing Provision and Distribution* of the Core Strategy sets out the Council's policy on housing provision and distribution. It identifies the Green Belt to make a contribution of about 550 new homes between 2022-2027 towards the overall housing requirement of 4,964 dwellings.
- 1.4 The Secretary of State also required the Council to carry out a Travellers Accommodation Assessment (TAA) and plan for the delivery of any identified need. Specific sites should be identified to meet the identified need through the Delivery DPD process. Policy CS15 – *Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople* of the Core Strategy confirms this approach. The Council has carried out the TAA and a need for 19 pitches has been identified up to 2027. Details of the TAA are on the Council's website.
- 1.5 It is important that proposed future development is supported by adequate infrastructure. The Council has also decided that the Green Belt boundary review should identify land to meet the future educational needs of the Borough and the necessary green infrastructure to support development.

- 1.6 To ensure the enduring permanence of the Green Belt boundary (in line with national planning policy) and to plan strategically ahead into the future, the Council decided that the Green Belt boundary review should also identify sufficient land to meet development needs between 2027 and 2040. This is necessary to avoid another Green Belt boundary review before the review of the Core Strategy. The overall total of land that the Council considers to be adequate for this purpose is about 40 hectares. Additional land should also be identified to meet the provision of 9 Traveller pitches between 2027 and 2040. This land will be protected by a safeguarding policy to resist its development before 2027. In any case, its release for development will only be through the review of either the Core Strategy or the Delivery DPD. Any proposal to develop the safeguarded land before 2027 will be strongly resisted as a matter of policy principle.
- 1.7 The Council commissioned an independent consultant - Peter Brett Associates - to carry out the Green Belt boundary review to ensure its objectivity. The consultants were given a specific brief agreed by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Working Group of the Council to:
- Carry out a comprehensive review of the Green Belt of Woking Borough with the view to identify suitable, deliverable and sustainable sites to deliver about 550 new homes. This should be based on an approximate average density of about 30 dwellings per hectare (dph);
 - Identify potential additional site(s) to be safeguarded for residential development between 2027 and 2040. This should be based on an annual average of 292 new homes per year at an average density of about 30dph. Based on a number of assumptions, it is estimated that about 40 hectares of land have to be identified for this purpose;
 - Identify sufficient deliverable site(s) for 20 pitches to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and a further site to be safeguarded to deliver 9 pitches between 2027 and 2040;
 - Identify one transit site to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople; and
 - Provide advice about where a defensible Green Belt boundary should be drawn, taking into account the sites that will be recommended for release for development. This should endure until 2040.
- 1.8 The consultants have submitted their final report to the Council. Following its publication (July 2014), over the next few months, the Council will be considering the recommendations of the report to inform the Delivery DPD.
- 1.9 The preparation of the Delivery DPD has already started. The Council intends to publish it for full public consultation during Winter 2014, where the public will be given the opportunity to comment on the specific sites that the Council wishes to allocate for development. Sufficient time will be given to enable the public to be involved at each key stage of this process. Before the Delivery DPD is published for consultation, all the relevant committees of the Council will be scrutinising its key stages to ensure that the appropriate decisions are made. Preparation of the DPD will also be informed by assessments of the DPD proposals in terms of their potential transport impacts, implications for protected habitats and species, and their overall likely environmental, social and economic effects.

1.10 The Council will take all comments received during the consultation into account before the Delivery DPD is finalised for submission to the Secretary of State for Examination. The DPD will be subject to public Examination by an Independent Inspector of the Secretary of State, where everyone who supported or objected to the Council's proposals will be given the opportunity to be heard. The public Examination is likely to be held in Autumn 2015 but the specific date will be confirmed closer to the time. It is only after the Council has received the Secretary of State's report and taken its recommendations into account will the DPD be adopted.

2.0 How the Green Belt boundary review was carried out - Methodology

2.1 The Council has been concerned to ensure that the Green Belt boundary review is founded on a robust and credible methodology. In this regard, the consultants published a Method Statement prior to the review for targeted consultation to ensure that all technical aspects of how to carry out a Green Belt boundary review would be covered. Comments received were taken into account by the consultants before the review was carried out. The Council was satisfied with the robustness of the methodology to form the basis of the review. Details of the Method Statement are on the Council's website.

2.2 The Council also thought that the review should not be restricted to a particular part of the Borough as was suggested in the revoked South East Plan but should be comprehensive to consider all potential areas of the Green Belt. This approach is considered necessary to ensure that a defensible Green Belt boundary that is able to endure beyond the period of the Core Strategy and certainly until 2040 can be drawn.

2.3 The methodology adopts a number of assessments of land parcels in the Green Belt to inform the preferred sites that the consultants are recommending for development. Overall, the Green Belt was divided into 31 parcels for the purposes of the various assessments. A Map showing the various parcels is attached as Appendix 1 of this summary report and is Figure 3 of the consultant's report. The assessments that were carried out include:

- An assessment of how various parcels of land in the Green Belt contribute to its purpose. The purposes of the Green Belt are defined by national planning policy and reiterated in the Core Strategy as:
 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- The Council also asked that an additional context for the study should be the preservation of the character and quality of the setting of the Borough.
- An assessment of the landscape character and sensitivity to change of developing the various parcels of land was undertaken to ensure that the landscape character of the area and the setting of the Borough are not compromised¹.

¹ See, for example, Table 3.12 of the Green Belt boundary review report.

- An assessment of the sustainability of sites with respect to their close proximity to key services and facilities and how accessible they are by various modes of travel. Distance to the various key centres, bus and car journey times to the centres and distance to a rail station were particularly considered.
- The environmental sustainability of sites were comprehensively assessed to sieve out land that could not be developed due to absolute constraints such as the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas, common land, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and areas at risk of flooding.
- The availability, viability and deliverability of sites were also considered.

3.0 Key recommendations of the Green Belt boundary review report

- 3.1 The report makes a recommendation for land parcels 4, 6, 7, 9, 20 and 22 to be released from the Green Belt to contribute towards the delivery of the number of dwellings identified above (see Appendix 1 for the Map showing these parcels). It is not recommended to develop the whole of each area of the parcels. Specific deliverable sites have been identified within these parcels for residential development and the necessary infrastructure to support them. The sites would need to be master planned to ensure that development would be well integrated with their supporting infrastructure and their immediate neighbourhood.
- 3.2 Table 1 (next) is a schedule of the sites that the consultant's recommend for development, their locational addresses, the parcels within which they are situated, the number of dwellings which they consider each site could accommodate (estimated dwelling yield), their indicative density and the ward within the Borough where they are situated. It also shows the recommended parcel to deliver a secondary school and community facilities. Their recommendations are indicative only, it cannot be assumed that a particular site will be developed for a given land use(s); allocations for sustainable future development sites will be developed through the local plan-making process(es).
- 3.3 Overall, the sites will be able to deliver a total of 1,833 dwellings between 2022 and 2040. Recommendations are made about which of the sites should be developed between 2022 and 2027 and the ones to be safeguarded for development between 2027 and 2040. It is emphasised that Broadoaks, Parvis Road, West Byfleet is recommended to be released from the Green Belt and will continue to be an employment led site.
- 3.4 60% of the Borough is currently designated as Green Belt. The sites that are recommended for development in the Green Belt boundary review are equivalent to 1.71% of this total Green Belt area.
- 3.5 Location plans for each of the sites identified for development illustrating the sites in the context of their locality are included in Appendix 2. Two overview maps of the Borough are also given in Appendix 2, showing Green Belt sites recommended for release in the east and west halves of the Borough respectively.

Table 1 Schedule of the sites that are recommended by the consultants to be released for development

This table should be read in conjunction with Figure 11 of the Green Belt boundary review report, which illustrates all of the Green Belt changes recommended by the consultants.

GBBR site reference	Site location (informed by SHLAA 2011)	GBBR land parcel	Estimated dwelling yield	Indicative density	Ward	SHLAA 2011 reference (where applicable)
WGB004a	Land surrounding West Hall, Parvis Road, West Byfleet	Parcel 4	592	40	West Byfleet	SHLAAWB019b
WGB006a	Land South of High Road, Byfleet	Parcel 6	85	50	Byfleet	SHLAABY043
WGB006b	Land to the south at Murray's Lane, Byfleet	Parcel 6	135	45	Byfleet	SHLAABY044
WGB009a	Land rear of 79-95 Lovelace Drive, Teggs Lane, Pyrford	Parcel 9	223	30	Pyrford	SHLAAPY004
WGB020a	Nursery Land adjacent to Egley Road, Mayford	Parcel 20	188 ² Plus secondary school & allowance for Gypsy and Traveller site in parcel.	40	Mayford and Sutton Green	SHLAAMSG009
WGB020c	Land West of Saunders Lane, Mayford	Parcel 20	171	30	Mayford and Sutton Green	SHLAAMSG016
WGB020d	Land North of Saunders Lane, Mayford	Parcel 20	210	30	Mayford and Sutton Green, St John's and	SHLAAMSG017

²This is the estimated number of dwellings which can be accommodated on the northern part of the site, with a secondary school (10ha) and a potential Gypsy and Traveller site (1ha) to the south. It should be noted that this does not suggest that this site in particular accommodates a Gypsy and Traveller site, but this is to make allowance for that site somewhere in parcel 20.

					Hook Heath	
WGB020e	Woking Garden Centre, Egley Road, Mayford, Woking	Parcel 20	50 ³ Plus shops/facilities to enhance local centre.	N/A	Mayford and Sutton Green	SHLAAMSG030
WGB020f	Land off Hookhill Lane, Hook Heath	Parcel 20	0 ⁴	0	St John's and Hook Heath	SHLAASJHH035
WGB020g	Land on higher ground, west of railway line, Hook Heath	Parcel 20	12	30	St John's and Hook Heath	n/a
WGB022a	Land at Coblands Nursery & Lyndhurst, Brookwood Lye Road, Brookwood	Parcel 22	37	35	Brookwood	SHLAABR014a
WGB007	Land east of Byfleet	Parcel 7	Up to 130	35	Byfleet	n/a

³ This is a notional amount to allow for housing to come forward in conjunction with retail development, either above shop units or adjacent.

⁴ This site is one of two which the consultants consider have potential to provide green infrastructure.

4.0 The phasing of the release of the recommended sites to meet development needs between 2022 and 2027, and 2027 and 2040

4.1 Suitable sites will have to be released to deliver about 550 new dwellings to meet the housing requirement of the Core Strategy between 2022 and 2027. The rest of the sites will be safeguarded to meet development needs between 2027 and 2040.

4.2 The consultants' report sets out three options about how the sites could be brought forward within these two time bands. The options are:

- **Option 1** – bring forward parcels 6, 9, 22 and part of the nursery land adjacent to Egley Road, Mayford (parcel 20; site WGB0020a) first for development between 2022 and 2027 and safeguard the rest for development between 2027 and 2040;
- **Option 2** – bring forward parcel 20 first for development between 2022 and 2027 and the rest to be safeguarded for development between 2027 and 2040;
- **Option 3** – bring forward parcel 4 first for development between 2022 and 2027 and the rest of the sites for development between 2027 and 2040.

4.3 If the Council wishes to give priority to the most sustainable location for new development, the report recommends Option 3 to be the most appropriate. Option 3 consists of land at Broadoaks and surrounding West Hall, Parvis Road in West Byfleet.

4.4 If on the other hand the Council wishes to give priority to the provision of a range of sites that give flexibility in delivery options around the Borough, then the consultants recommend Option 1 as the most appropriate. Option 1 comprises: land south of High Road, Byfleet; land at Murrays Lane, Byfleet; land at rear of 79 – 95 Lovelace Drive, Teggs Lane, Pyrford; land at Coblands Nursery and Lyndhurst, Brookwood Lye Road, Brookwood; and part of the nursery land adjacent to Egley Road, Mayford.

4.5 The Council will be considering these options as part of the Delivery DPD process to inform its decision about which sites to develop at what time. No decisions have been made regarding potential sites for allocation at this time.

5.0 Other recommendations of the consultant's report

5.1 Traveller accommodation

The report also makes a recommendation about the priority order for meeting the need for Traveller accommodation. 1 is the first priority, 2 the second and so on. This is set out below:

- 1 Safeguard existing sites to prevent their loss to other uses (which would increase the identified pitch requirement for the Borough).
- 2 Grant full planning permission for existing sites with temporary permission;
- 3 Allocate sites within or adjacent to the urban area;
 - a. Potential new sites within the urban area;
 - b. Potential new sites within urban extensions recommended for the Green Belt release. Parcels 4, 6 and 20 have been identified to have capacity to deliver 15 pitches each in addition to the number of dwellings to be delivered on the

- sites. The specific location of the pitches will be identified as part of the masterplanning process;
- 4 Allocate sites within the Green Belt;
 - a. Potential intensification of existing sites within the Green Belt;
 - b. Potential new or expanded sites within the Green Belt.
 - 5.2 The priority order is in line with the national planning policy and the requirements of the Core Strategy. The Council is considering how these recommendations could be taken forward. In allocating sites to meet the needs of Travellers, the Council will also seek to ensure an effective integration of the Traveller community with the settled community.

6.0 A new Green Belt boundary

- 6.1 As stated above, the report makes recommendations for some parcels of land to be released from the Green Belt to meet future development needs. Consequently, a new Green Belt boundary will have to be drawn to reflect that. In doing so, the review also takes the opportunity to suggest adjustments that could be made to reflect current local circumstances, in particular, where boundaries are not well defined along enduring boundaries or where sites make little or no contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and also to correct obvious historical anomalies. This is necessary to ensure that the proposed new boundary has an enduring permanence. Parcels of land are being recommended to be removed from the Green Belt to achieve this purpose. It is emphasised that these categories of parcels of land are not identified as suitable for development. They are recommended to be released from the Green Belt to ensure that a defensible new Green Belt boundary with an enduring permanence can be drawn. The sites that would be released for this purpose would be protected by other appropriate designations to ensure that they cannot be developed.
- 6.2 Table 2 is a schedule of the sites recommended by the review report to be released from the Green Belt to enable a defensible boundary to be drawn, their addresses and the ward within the Borough that they are situated. The reasons why the consultants recommend that these are released from the Green Belt are clearly stated in the main Green Belt boundary review report. A map showing broadly where the sites are located is included in Appendix 3 of this summary. A map of the recommended new Green Belt boundary is included in Appendix 4.

Table 2 Schedule of the sites recommended by the consultants for release from the Green Belt to enable a defensible boundary to be drawn

This table should be read in conjunction with Figure 11 of the Green Belt boundary review report, which illustrates all of the Green Belt changes recommended by the consultants.

GBBR parcel reference	Location	Ward	Reference on Map(s) at Appendix 3 and/or 4)
Parcels to be removed as recommended to accommodate new development			
Part of parcel 4	Parvis Road, West Byfleet	West Byfleet	4
Part of parcel 6	Western edge of Byfleet	Byfleet	6
Part of parcel 7	Land east of Byfleet	Byfleet	7
Part of parcel 9	Teggs Lane, Pyrford	Pyrford	9
All of 20	Land at Mayford and Hook Heath	Mayford and Sutton Green, St John's and Hook Heath	20
Part of parcel 22	Brookwood Lye Road, Brookwood	West Byfleet	22
Parcels to be removed as recommended rationalising the Green Belt boundary at locations where land is contributing little or nothing to the purposes of Green Belt and is protected by other designations.			
3	West Byfleet junior and infant school playing fields, Parvis Road, West Byfleet	West Byfleet	Area A
4	Broadoaks, West Byfleet	West Byfleet	Area D
5	Land adjacent M25, north of Parvis Road, West Byfleet	West Byfleet	Area B
5	Land east of Sopwith Drive and north of Parvis Road, Byfleet	Byfleet	Area C
12	Land north east of Pyrford Common Road, Pyrford	Pyrford	Area E
12	Woking College, St John the Baptist School, Coniston Road allotments, Hoebridge School, land to the south of White Rose Lane, the Hockering Estate / Old Woking	Mount Hermon East, Kingfield and Westfield, Old Woking	Area F
29	Goldsworth recreation ground	Goldsworth East	Area H
30	St John's Lye	St John's and Hook Heath	Area G
n/a (excluded land)	Land at Horsell Common and to the south of Littlewick Road	Horsell West, and Horsell East and Woodham	Area I

n/a (excluded land)	Horsell Common, Wheatsheaf Recreation Ground to the Six Crossroads Roundabout	Horsell East and Woodham	Area J
Additional boundary adjustments are also recommended by the consultants to ensure a suitable well defined revised Green Belt boundary line. For example, land to the east of Egley Road in Parcel 20 (Mayford) and land to the east of Parcel 7 (Byfleet). For full information please see chapter 7 of the Review report.			

7.0 Next stages

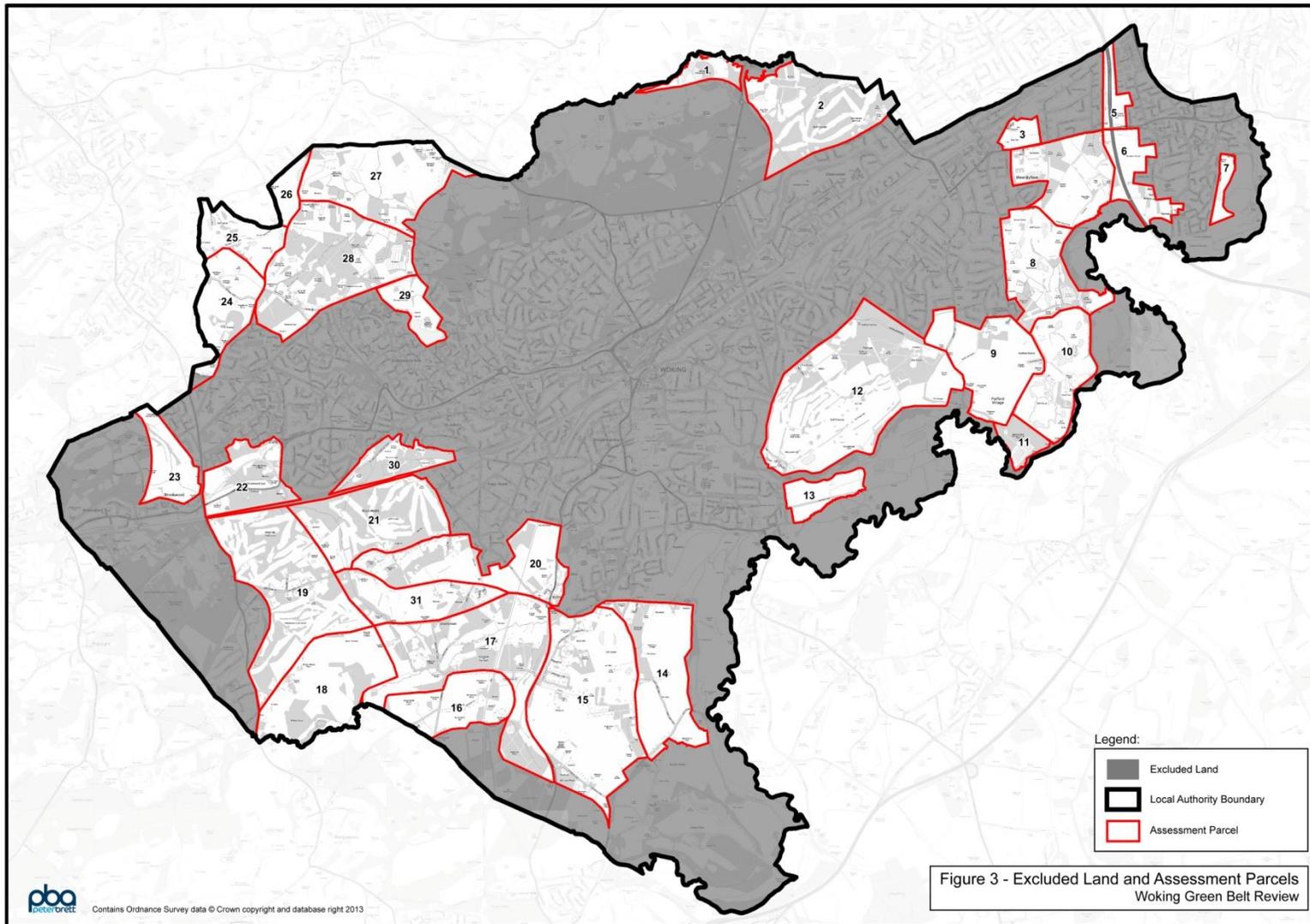
- 7.1 The Green Belt boundary review report is evidence to inform the Delivery DPD and is not a site allocations document. It is the Delivery DPD that will allocate specific sites for development, including sites to be released from the Green Belt. A draft of the DPD will be considered by the Council's Local Development Framework Working Group and the Executive of the Council before it is published for full public consultation in Winter 2014.
- 7.3 The general public and other interested parties will be given the opportunity and sufficient time to comment on the draft Delivery DPD, in line with the Statement of Community Involvement. It is emphasised that the Green Belt boundary review report itself will not be subject to consultation, it is an evidence base for the DPD. It is published for information purposes.
- 7.4 The Council will take into account all representations received before submitting the Draft Delivery DPD to the Secretary of State for public Examination. Everyone who supported or objected to the Draft DPD during the consultation period will be given the opportunity to be heard by an Independent Inspector of the Secretary of State. Subject to the recommendations of the Inspector, it is anticipated that the DPD will be adopted by early 2016.

Non-Technical Summary – Appendices

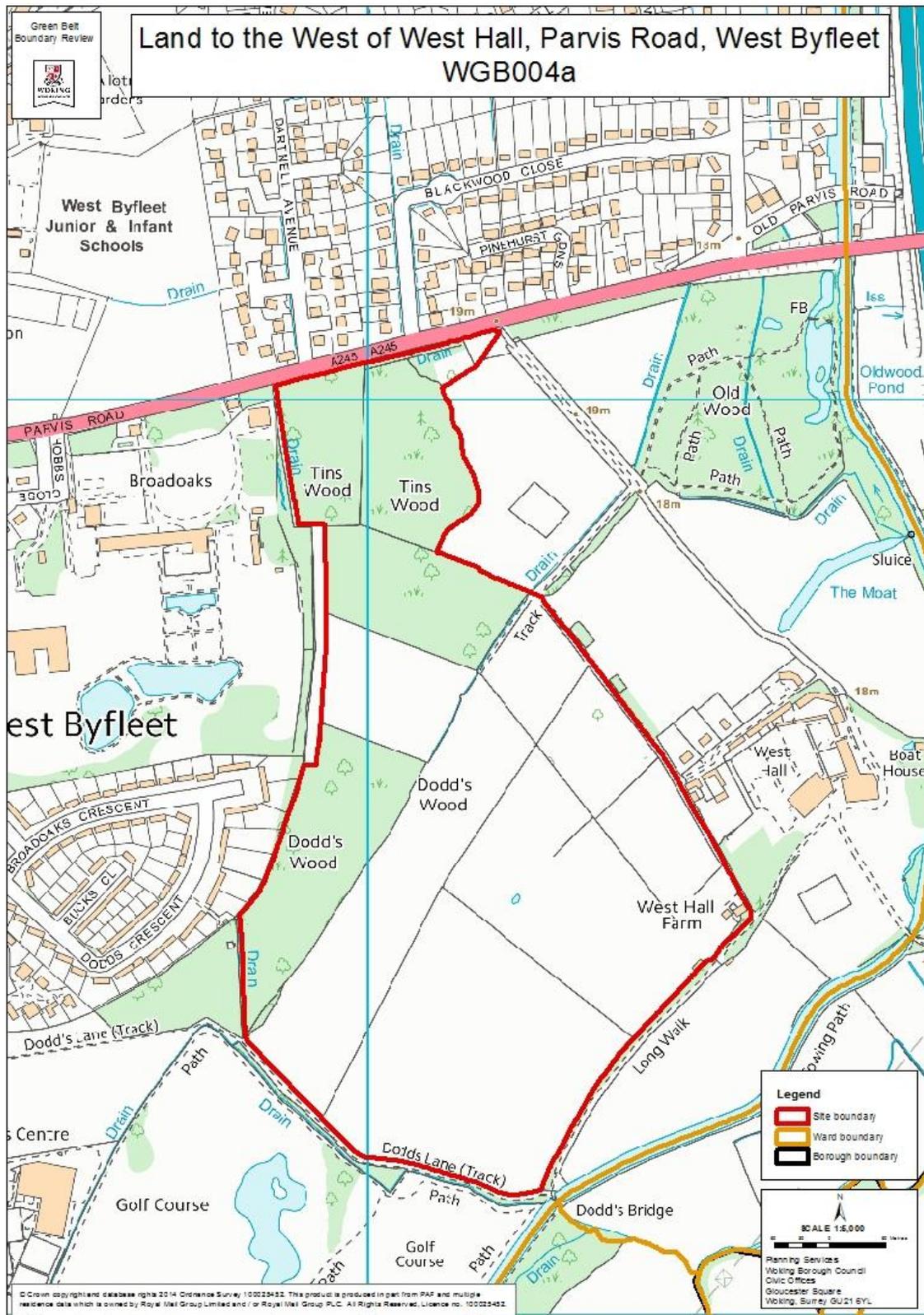
- Appendix 1 Map showing the land parcels the consultants have assessed and recommend
- Appendix 2 Location plans for each of the sites the consultants recommend for development
- Appendix 3 Map showing the location of land recommended by the consultants for release from the Green Belt to enable a defensible boundary to be drawn
- Appendix 4 Map showing the consultants recommended new Green Belt boundary.

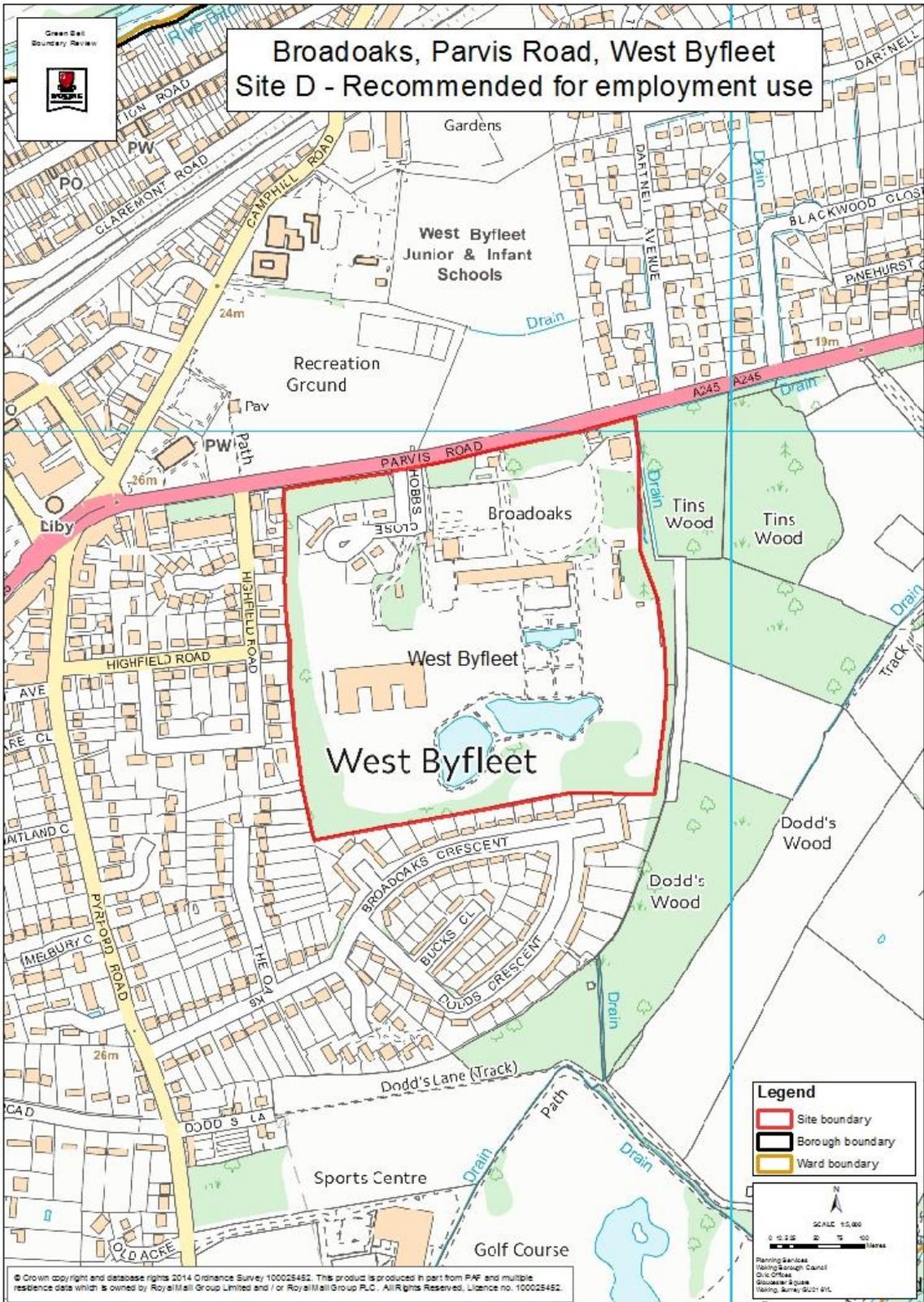
Please note that the following maps are indicative and are provided for information only. Site details and context for example should always be checked on the ground.

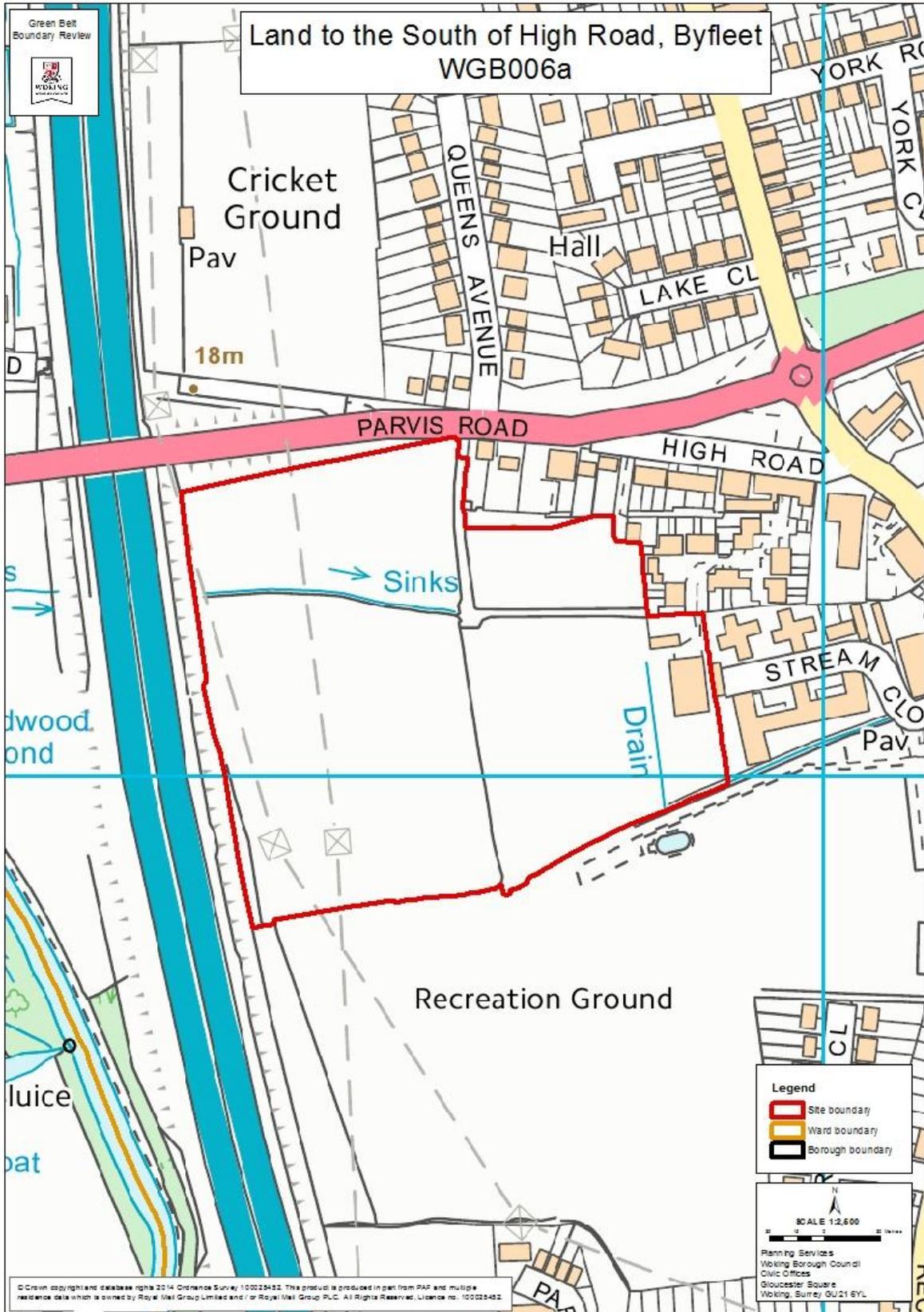
Appendix 1 Map showing the consultants assessed and recommended land parcels (Figure 3 of Green Belt boundary review report)

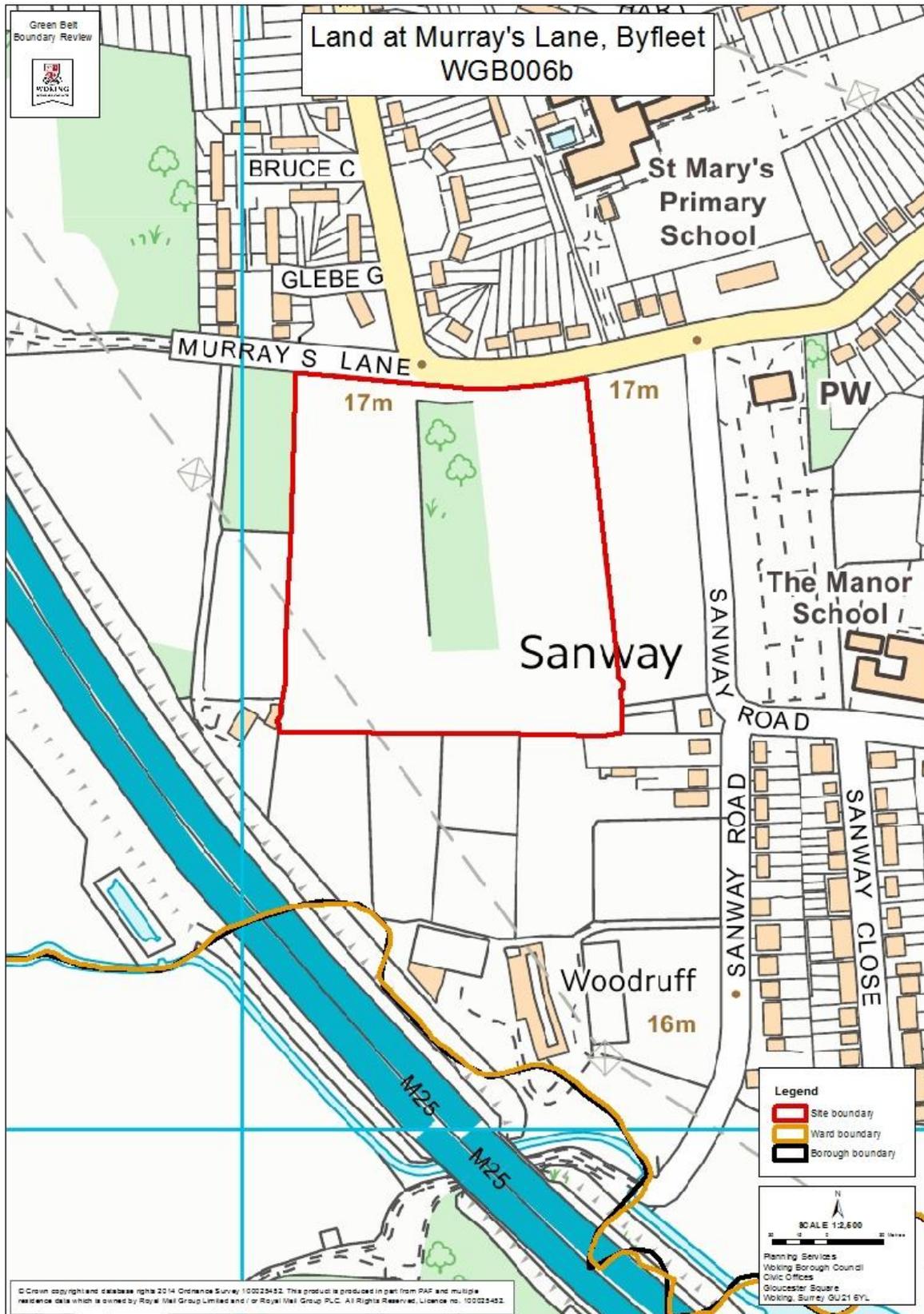


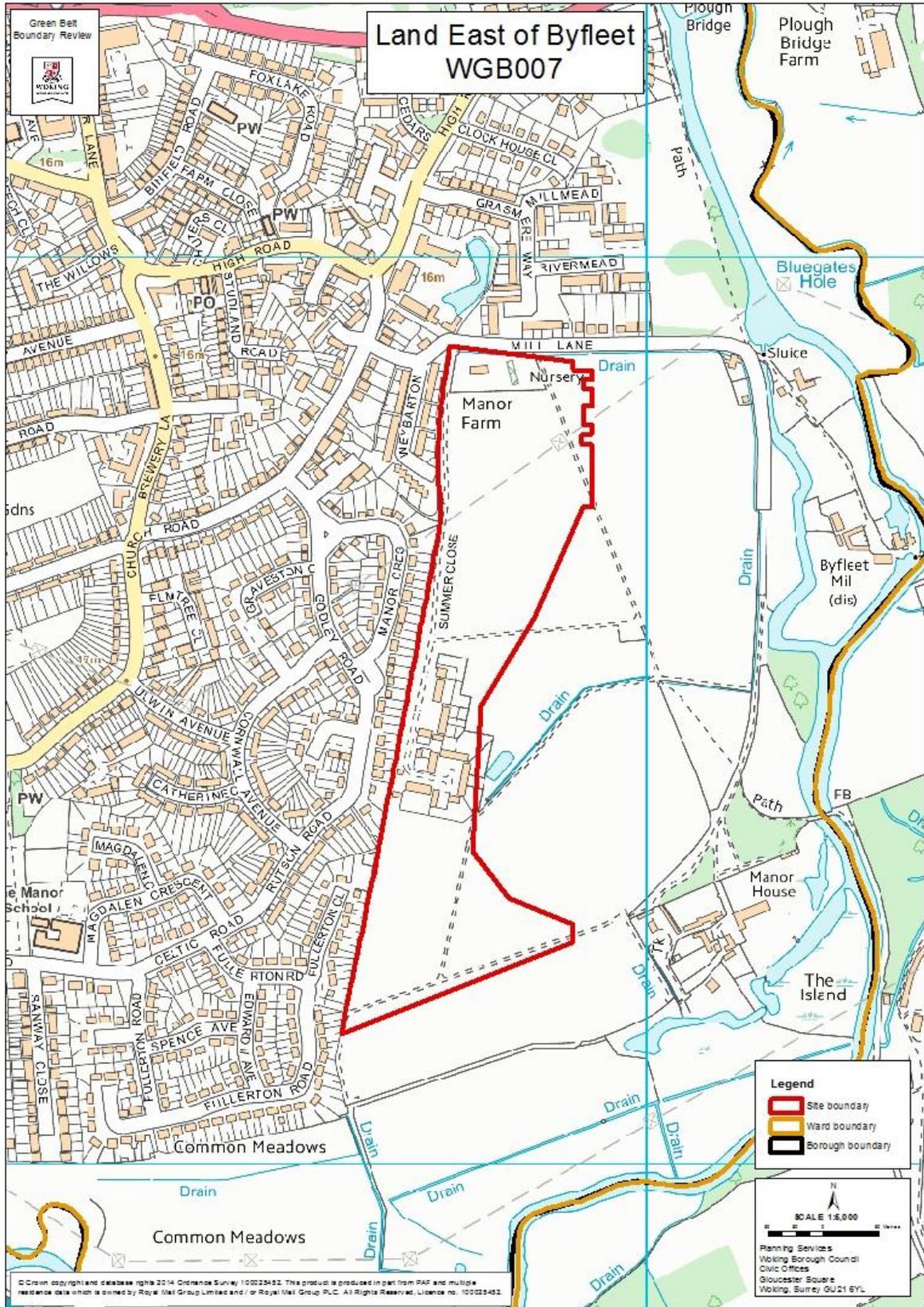
Appendix 2 Location plans for each of the sites the consultants recommend for development



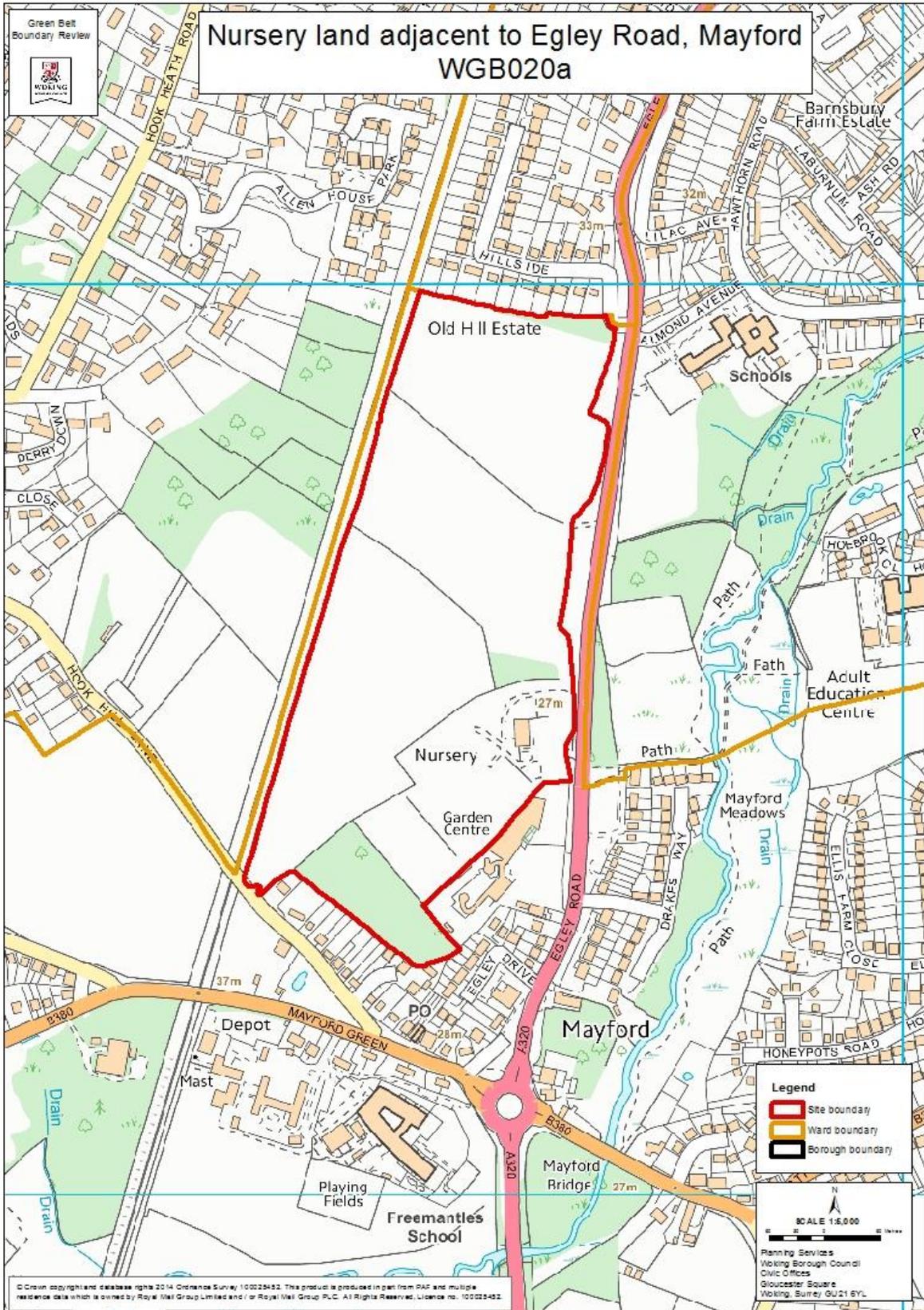


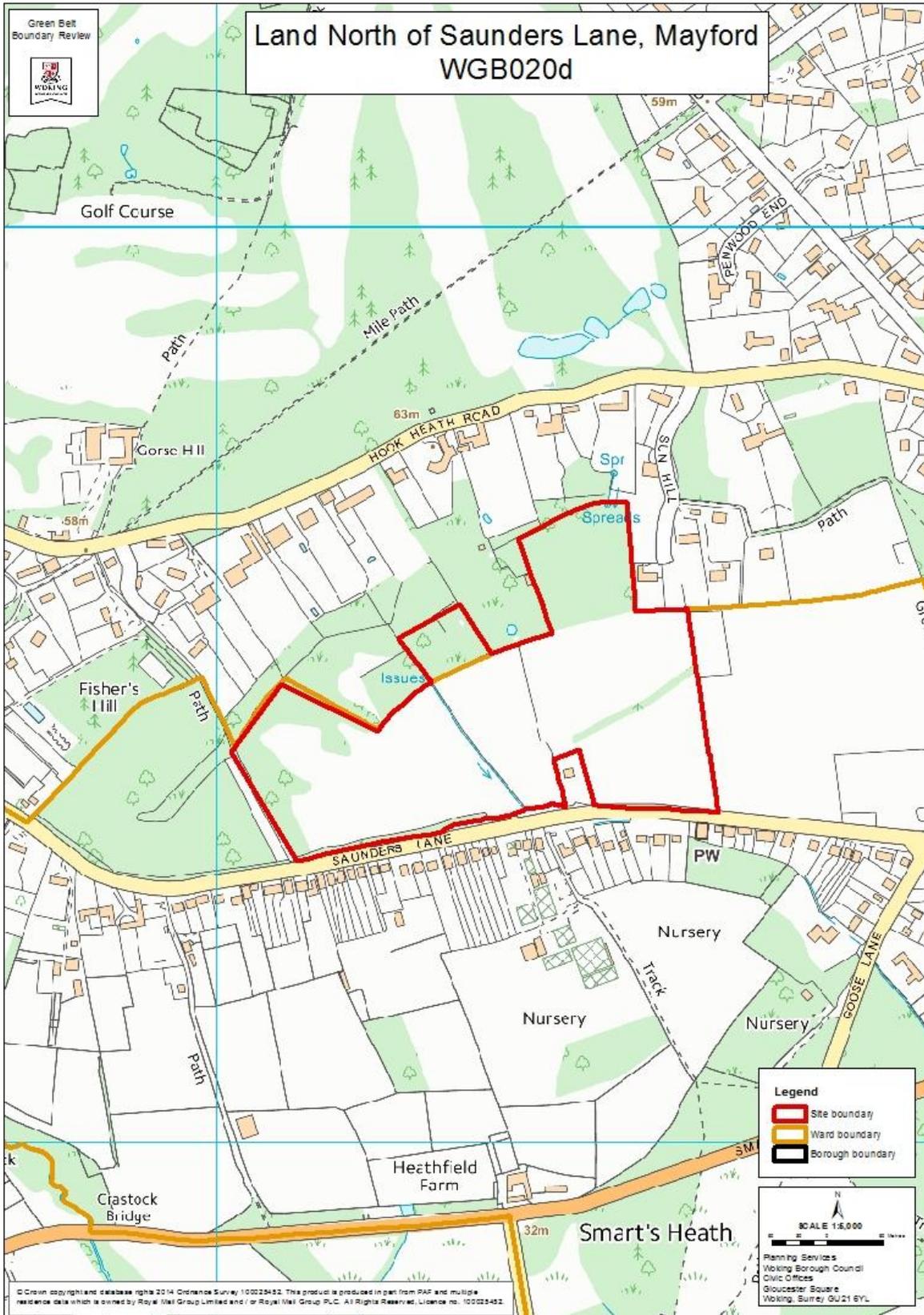




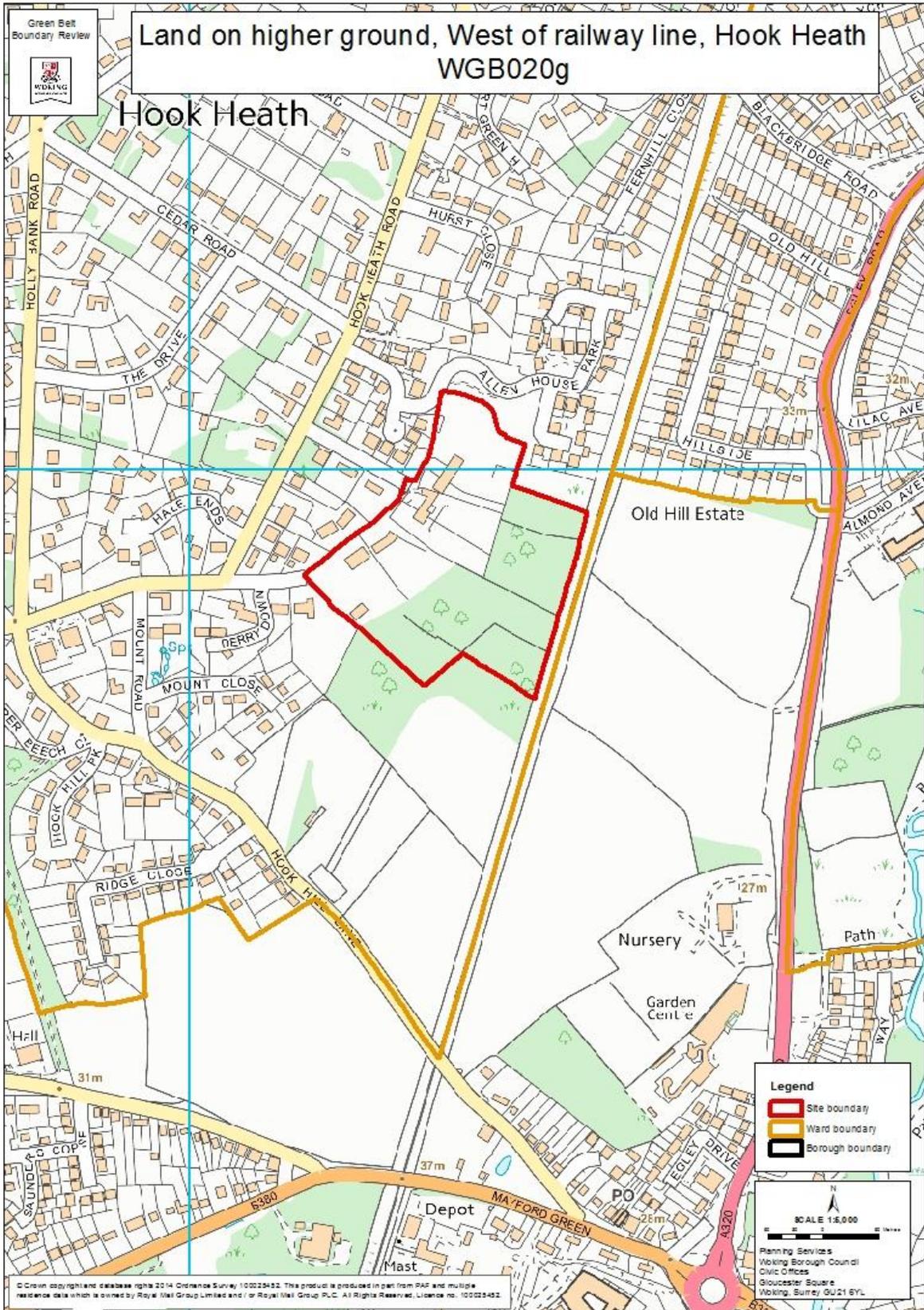


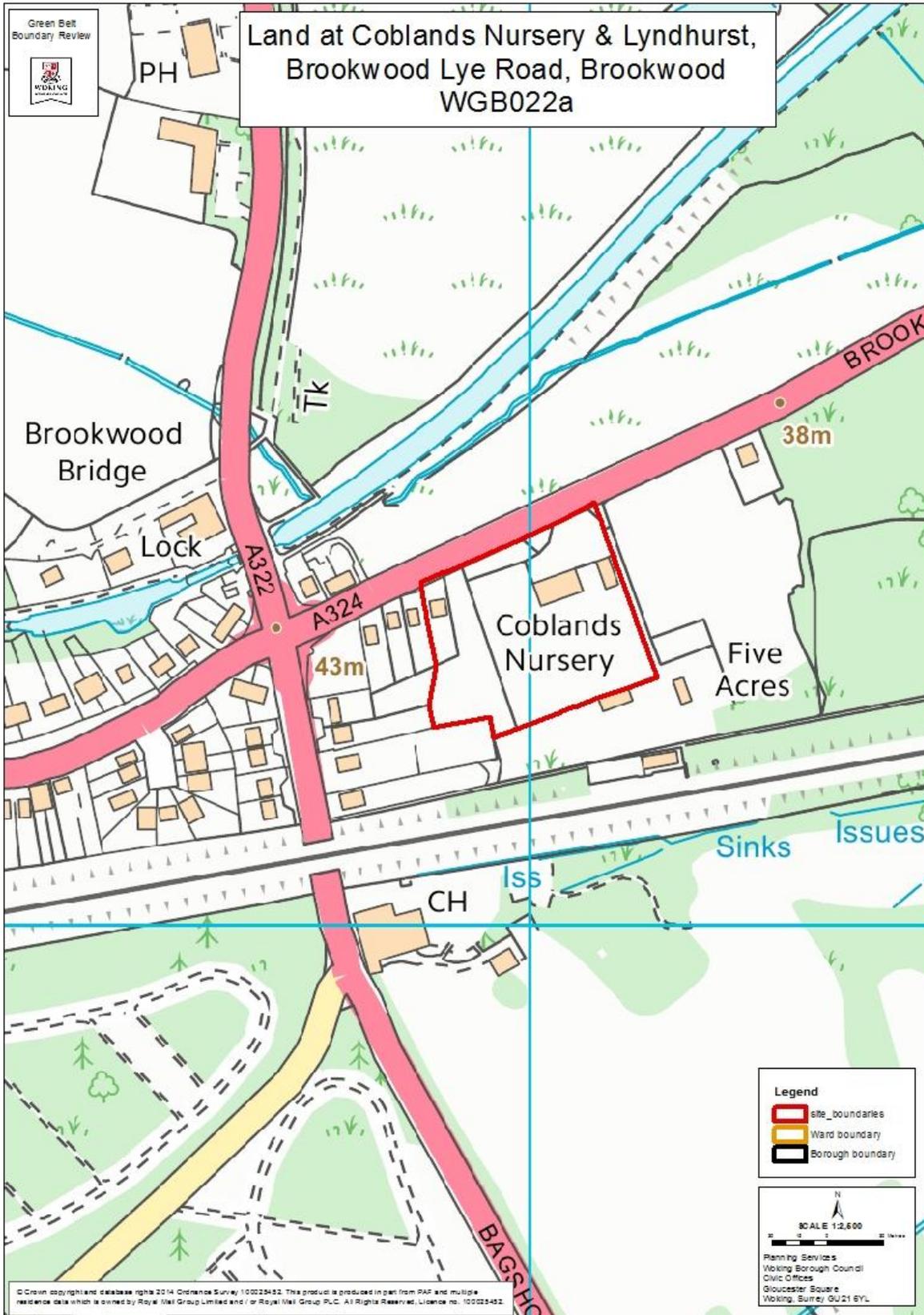


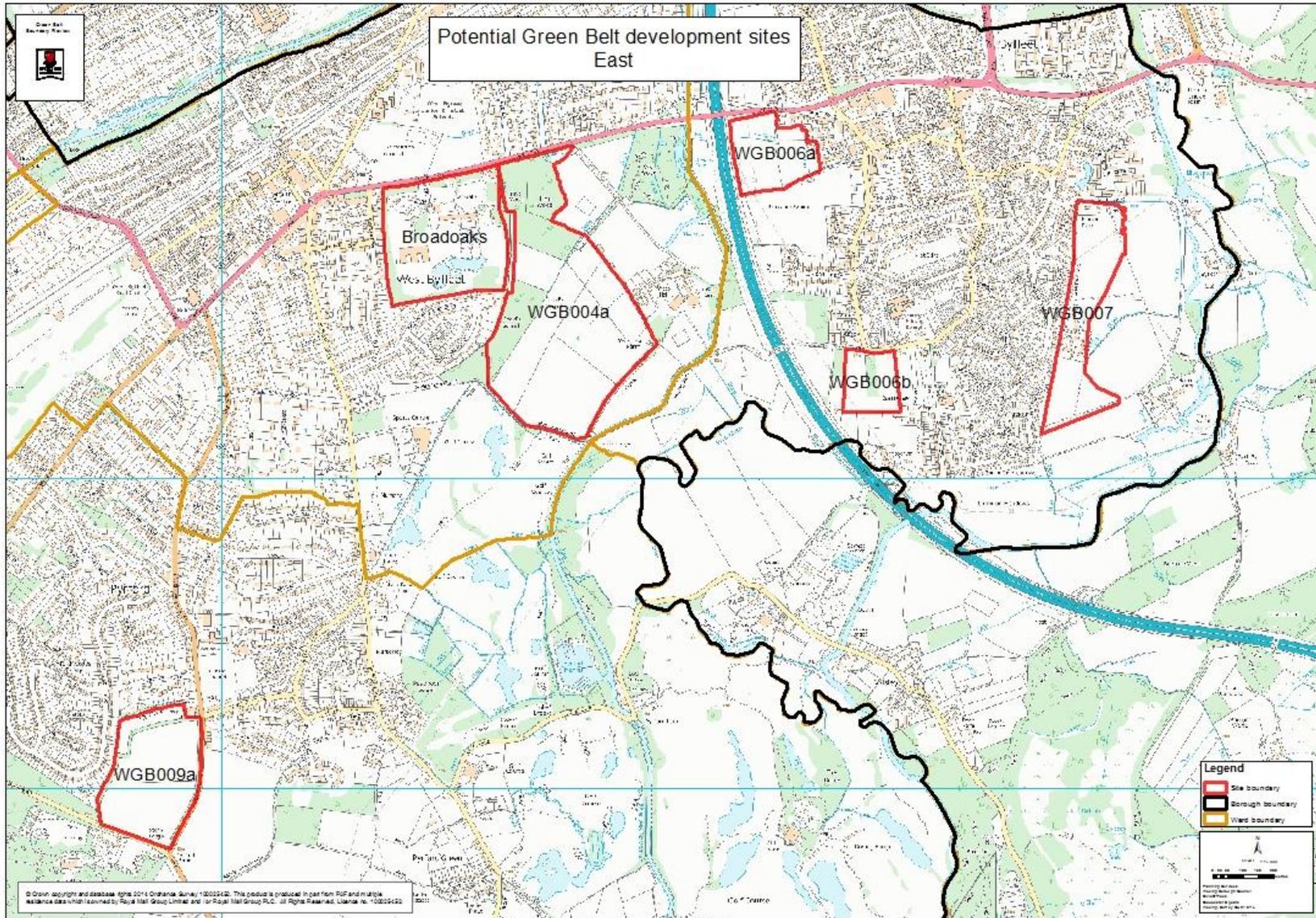


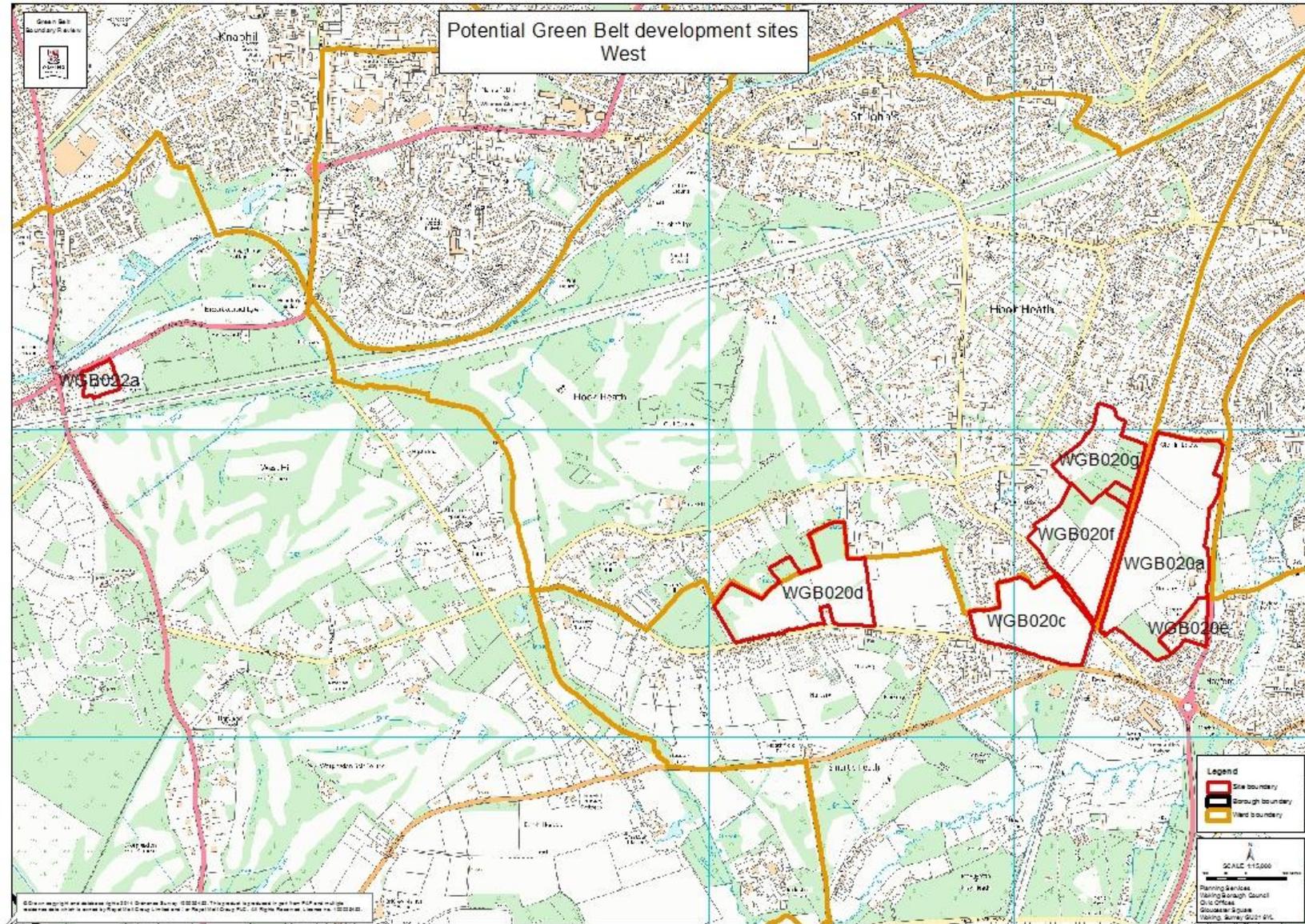




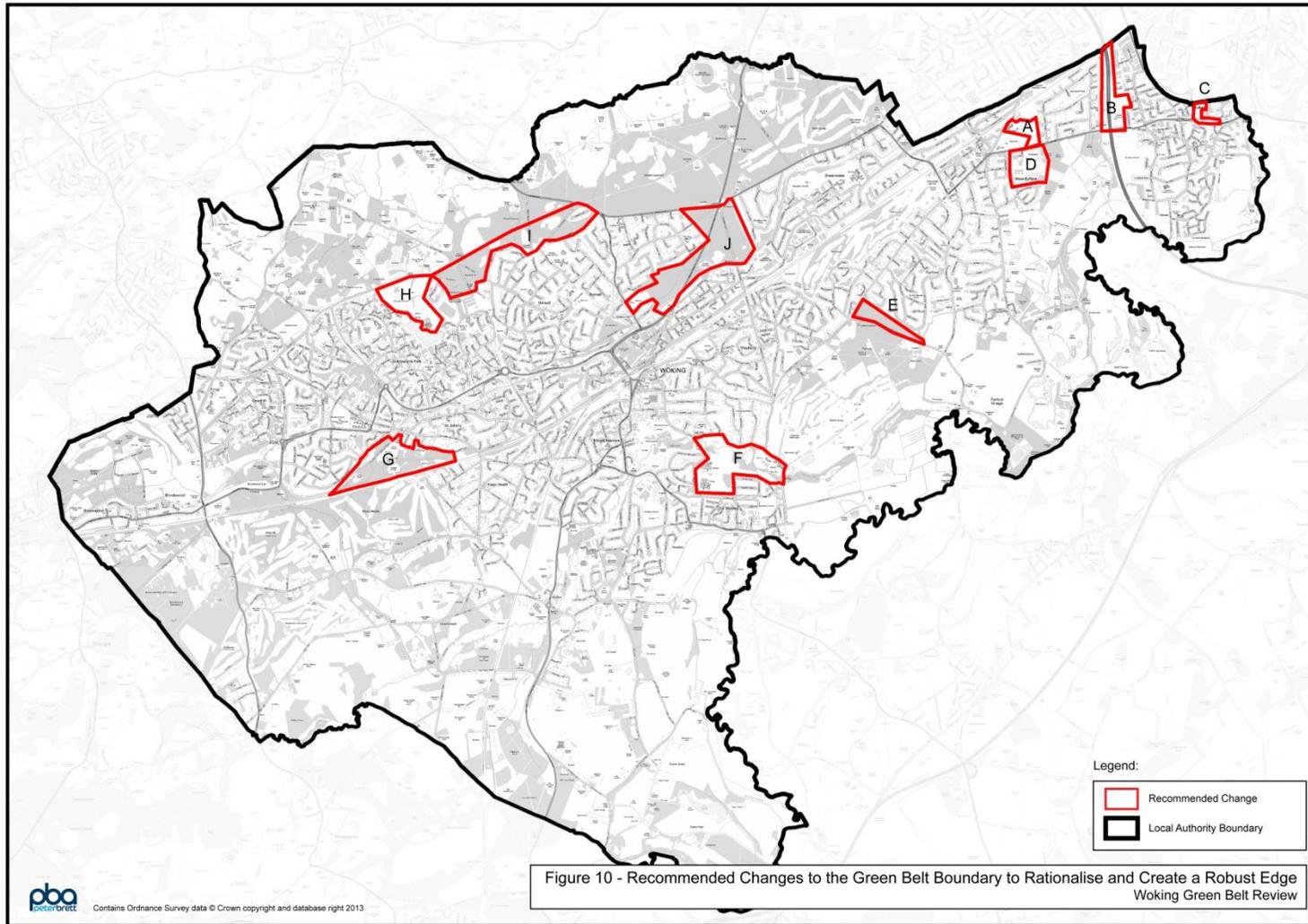








Appendix 3 Map showing the location of recommended for release from the Green Belt to enable a defensible boundary to be drawn (Figure 10 of Green Belt boundary review report)



Appendix 4 Map showing the recommended new Green Belt boundary (Figure 11 of Green Belt boundary review report)

