





LAND AT BYFLEET

BYFLEET GREEN BELT STUDY

FOR WEST ESTATES LTD

OCTOBER 2009



CONTENTS

CONIENIS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
STUDY AREA LOCATION PLAN	4
METHODOLOGY	5
SITE LOCATION PLAN	6
SITE ANALYSIS	
Area A - Land south of Parvis Road	7-9
Area B - Land rear of High Road	10-12
Area C - Byfleet Recreation Ground	13-15
Area D - Allotment Gardens	16-18
Area E - Land to the north of Murray Lane	19-21
Area F - Land to the south of Murray Lane	22-24
Area G - Land to the south of Rectory Lane and west Sanway Road	25-28
Area H - Land at Common Meadows	29-31
FINDINGS	32-34
GREEN BELT BOUNDARY & STRATEGY PLAN	35
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION	36
APPENDIX ONE	37

COPYRIGHT

This document is the copyright of Floyd Matcham (Dorset) Limited and their Clients. Unauthorised reproduction of these documents undertaken without the written consent of a Director shall constitute a breach of copyright.

ABBREVIATIONS AND MEASUREMENTS

Elevations are given in metres above Ordnance Survey Datum (AOD). All measurements are given in metric with the following abbreviations:

m metre(s) ha hectare(s) kilometre(s)

© Floyd Matcham (Dorset) Limited 2009

INTRODUCTION

INSTRUCTIONS

Floyd Matcham is instructed by West Estates Ltd to undertake a landscape character and land use appraisal of land situated in the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB), lying between Byfleet village and the M25 motorway corridor, and located within the administrative area of Woking Borough Council in Surrey. For ease of description, this appraisal will be called the 'Byfleet Green Belt Study'.

The Byfleet Green Belt Study will form part of formal representations that will be submitted by Turley Associates, Planning Consultants (on behalf West Estates) in connection with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for the Borough.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the preparation work for the SHLAA, Woking Borough Council has invited land owners to propose sites that may be suitable for residential development and possible allocation in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document that forms part of the Local development Framework (LDF). West Estates has interests in land situated on the west side of Byfleet and has previously submitted a plan showing sites, including sites in common ownership, that may have potential to accommodate new residential development and associated community and recreational uses.

Policy SP5 of the recently published SE Plan (May 2009) acknowledges that:

- "...in order to meet regional development needs in the most sustainable locations, selective reviews of Green Belt boundaries are required
- in the Metropolitan Green Belt to the north east of Guildford, and possibly to the south of Woking" (our emphasis)

The extent and location of such a release is nevertheless a matter for Woking Borough Council to determine through the emerging Core Strategy DPD. The policy reference to south Woking derives from an earlier review of the Surrey Structure Plan that initially identified this location as an area of search. This was picked up on by the Panel examining the South East Plan, who recommended this be a good starting point for any area of search.

Woking Borough Council is understood to be progressing a Green Belt Study to inform the future spatial development policies of the Core Strategy DPD. Rather than starting from a predetermined location south of Woking, it is understood that a more holistic review is being undertaken to determine possible locations for green belt releases, should this be needed to give certainty that the South East Plan development requirements are met within the plan period.

Turley Associates have submitted representations to Woking Borough Council recommending greater flexibility is built into the housing land supply assumptions of the Core Strategy to react effectively (within the projected timescales) to any shortfall or slippage arising from the SHLAA. Turley Associates believe this flexibility is necessary to meet the soundness tests of PPS12 and therefore endorse the planned Green Belt Study by Woking Borough Council.

This report has been commissioned by West Estates Ltd to review possible options to safeguard land from the green belt for development west of Byfleet, should Woking Borough Council and / or the LDF Inspector determine the need for such flexibility. The additional planning or community gains derived from such releases fall beyond the remit of this assessment, and will be the subject of subsequent submissions by West Estates Ltd to Woking Borough Council.

West Estates considers that the corridor of land lying in the Metropolitan Green belt between the western settlement boundary of Byfleet and the M25 motorway is a promising location for identifying suitable sites for development and community gain. The construction of the M25 motorway was undertaken in 1983 much later than the original designation of the Metropolitan Green Belt. Consequently, construction of the motorway radically and permanently altered the setting of the west side of Byfleet village, severing both the physical and visual connections that previously existed between the village and the wider countryside, In turn, this permanently changed the contribution that this land could make in terms of achieving the original purposes of the green belt designation.

INTRODUCTION cont.

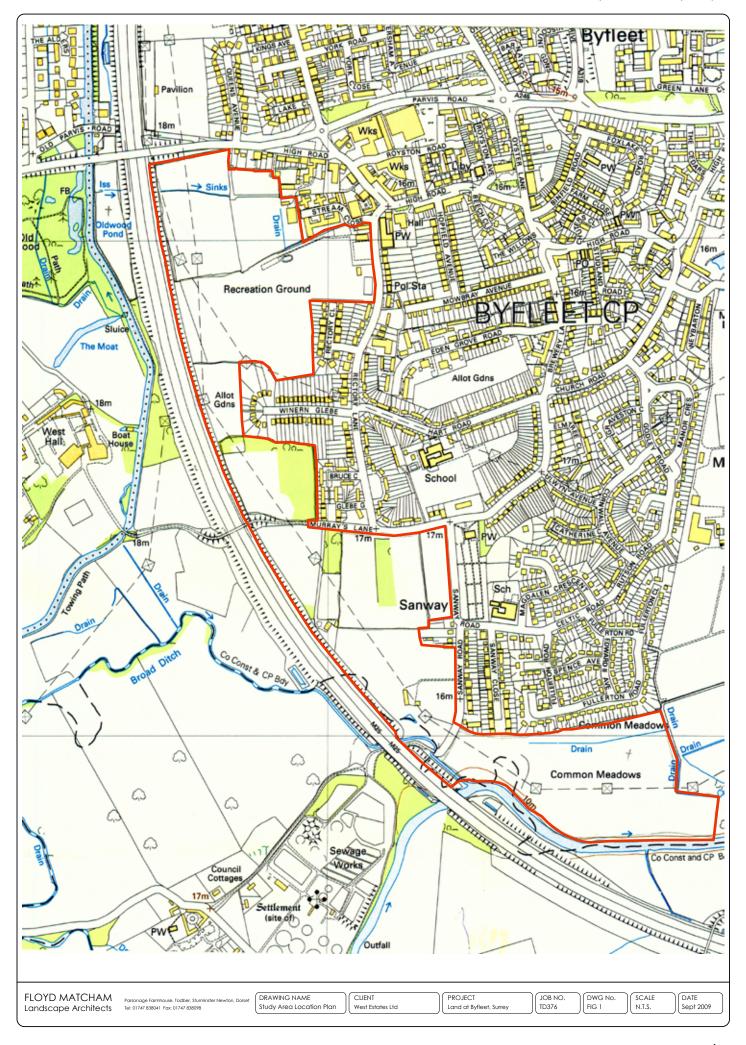
This corridor of land forms the study area and is identified on the Study Area Location Plan at Fig. 1.

This independent study conducted by Floyd Matcham is intended to inform Woking Borough Council's own Green Belt Study. It examines the study corridor in the context of the purposes and uses of the Metropolitan Green Belt, as set out in PPG2, namely:

- a) the extent to which land contributes to the purposes of including land in the MGB (paragraph 1.5 of PPG2); and
- b) the opportunities for making a positive contribution to the uses of land in the MGB (paragraph 1.6 of PPG2).

The study is also relevant in the context of the guidance in paragraph 2.12 of PPG2. This highlights the need for local planning authorities to consider safeguarding land between the urban area and the green belt when preparing new or revised development plans. This should be capable of enduring the plan period without further review and therefore has full regard to the development requirements of the South East Plan for the period.

This report assesses each site west of Byfleet by reference to the criteria above (using an objective assessment system) to assist in identifying those sites that are most suitable for release from the MGB. The detailed methodology of the study is explained in the following section.



METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

The study area is assessed as a series of eight landscape units and these are shown on the Site Location Plan at Fig. 2. Each landscape unit corresponds to a tract of countryside or undeveloped land that is well-defined by existing features such as roads, field boundaries, hedgerows and woodlands.

The assessment for each site comprises:

- An analysis sheet, with accompanying visual material, has been prepared for each site, setting out: a)
 - a summary description
 - site features
 - summary of landscape setting
 - summary of landscape character
- b) A Green Belt Purposes table which identifies (with reasoned justification) the extent to which the site contributes to meeting each of the five statutory purposes of including land in the Metropolitan Green Belt, and assigns a score for each purpose based on the following scale:
 - 2= important contribution to purpose
 - 1= moderate contribution to purpose
 - 0= no contribution to purpose

The purposes of the green belt, as set out in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2 are reproduced in Appendix 1 which also shows the abbreviations used in the table. The total score achieved by a site indicates a low, moderate or high contribution to meeting the purposes of the green belt, as indicated below¹:

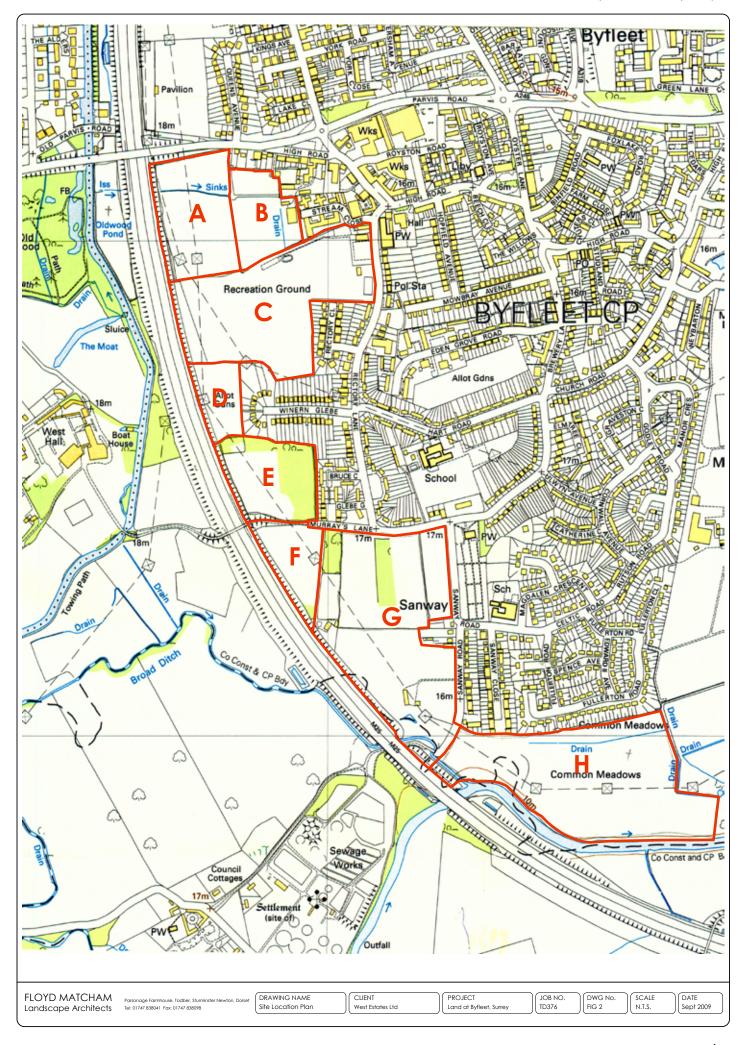
- 1-3 Low contribution to green belt purposes
- 4-7 Moderate contribution to green belt purposes
- 8-10 High contribution to green belt purposes
- C) A Green Belt Uses table which identifies (with reasoned justification) the opportunities presented by each site for making a practical contribution to the positive uses of land in the Green Belt (PPG2, paragraph 1.6), and assigns a score for each use based on the following scale:
 - 2= important actual or potential contribution to uses of land
 - 1= moderate actual or potential contribution to use of land
 - no actual or potential contribution to use of land

The uses of land in the green belt, as set out in paragraph 1.6 of PPG2 are reproduced in Appendix 1 which also shows the abbreviations used in the table. The total score achieved by a site indicates low, moderate or high potential/ actual usefulness for green belt uses, as indicated below²:

- 1-3 Low usefulness for green belt uses.
- 4-7 Moderate usefulness for green belt uses.
- 8-10 High usefulness for green belt uses.
- A summary, informed by the analysis sheet and the Purposes/ Uses tables, describing the potential of d) the site to accommodate change and the type of land use change(s), if any that may be appropriate.

Land may be considered as meeting the purposes of the green belt even if it makes only a moderate contribution to only one of the green belt purposes. However, the table is a guide that helps to illustrate how some sites may make a greater overall contribution to meeting Green Belt purposes.

The Uses tables give an indication of the actual and/or potential value of a site for playing a positive role in fulfilling the various objectives. Not all green belt uses are compatible with each other. For example, formal recreational use would not be compatible with agricultural or forestry land uses, while nature conservation interests are often incompatible with both mainstream agriculture or significant recreational use. The usefulness of a site may therefore depend in part on its size and in part on its existing character. Small discrete sites will tend to score lower while larger sites with better actual/ potential value to accommodate more than one green belt use would be the most useful but higher scores could only be achieved where multiple uses are compatible, probably achievable on larger sites only. The scoring system is therefore only a guide and a lower score does not automatically indicate that a site is not making a worthwhile contribution to the uses of land in the Green Belt.



Area A - Land south of Parvis Road

Description

Existing open field bounded by Site B to the east, Parvis Road, the M25 Motorway and Byfleet Recreation Ground.

Landscape Setting

Thirty years ago the site extended further west to the River Wey Navigation Canal and was part of an area of countryside that separated West Byfleet and Byfleet. It was subsequently bisected by the M25 corridor, severing the site from the countryside to the west and fundamentally altering its setting. The site is now an isolated area of countryside sandwiched between Site B and the motorway. In common with many areas of countryside lying between the motorway and nearby urban areas in this part of Surrey (including all of the sites in this study), there is no longer any perception of open countryside in the accepted sense because the site is now dominated by high motorway embankments.

Site features

Topography Site area is generally level but there is a distinctive earth bank causeway running north to south on the eastern boundary

Drainage A drainage ditch runs across the north part of the site flowing west to east, along the south eastern boundary and along the boundary with the Recreation Ground to the south

Land use The site is grassland and grazed by beef cattle.

Vegetation A line of mature oak trees runs along the eastern boundary on a low causeway and there are

> individual field oaks in the north western and south western area. The motorway embankment beyond the site boundary is planted and the tree growth has twenty years maturity. Hedgerow vegetation including hazel and hawthorn runs along the southern boundary with the Recreation

Ground.

Settlement The site does not adjoin any settlement, except at the north-east corner where it meets the end

of a row of houses on Parvis Road.

Access Main access to the site is via a track directly off Parvis Road

Rights of Way No public rights of way cross the site.

The site is visible from Parvis Road to the north all year round and from the motorway bridge **Views**

carrying Parvis Road in winter. The site is visible from the Recreation Ground to the south in gaps

in the boundary hedgerow and under the canopy of mature trees.

Service corridors 400kv and 230kv power lines run across the western side of the land with two large pylons

located on the site

Landscape Character

Although the site retains some landscape assets in the form of mature oak trees the power cables and pylons on the site are a major detracting visual element and under current standards limit the range of land uses under their route.

The site has a fairly consistent landscape character with an open appearance of traditional pastoral fields framed by the line of oaks and the motorway planting belt and punctuated by individual mature field oaks. This scene however is spoilt by the power lines.

The visual character of the site is essentially open, with clear views from Parvis Road to the north and from the Recreation Ground to the south.

Area A - Land south of Parvis Road

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
1 1	Land south of Parvis Road	Pl	1	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway.
		P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	2	The site is in countryside use and any development would constitute encroachment into the countryside.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district ³ .
		Total score:	3	This site makes a low contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification / Comment
Α	Land south of Parvis Road	U1	0	Not accessible to public at present; does not provide access to open countryside.
		U2	1	Moderate potential within site for public recreational uses as possible extension to Recreation Ground (if required).
		U3	1	The site is partly unspoilt but overhead HV ET lines are a detractor Provides a pleasant setting for residents of adjoining housing areas; visible from Parvis Road and Recreation Ground
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	0	No special ecological interest has been noted
		U6	2	The site is used for agriculture and could be retained in agricultural, forestry or related uses.
		Total score:	4	This site has moderate usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development / land use change

The site is very open in character and is physically and visually separated from the village by the line of oak trees on the eastern boundary. The site makes a low contribution to meeting green belt purposes but has moderate usefulness. Development could not be readily accommodated without causing significant visual intrusion and any new residential area would be physically separated from the village unless linked to development on site B. However, if required, the site could provide a community benefit as an extension to the Recreation Ground.

SITE ANALYSIS Area A - Land south of Parvis Road







Area B - Land rear of High Road

Description

Partly enclosed field bounded by Site A to the west, Parvis Road to the north, existing housing to the east and north, and Byfleet Recreation Ground to the south.

Landscape Setting

The site is a remnant of the former more extensive area of countryside that extended to the west prior to construction of the M25 motorway. Its setting now is a mixture or rural and urban elements defined by the site boundaries, including an area of new housing to the north that has been completed recently.

Site features Topography	Site area is generally level but there is a distinctive earth bank causeway running north to south on the western boundary
Drainage	There is a drainage ditch along the south boundary with the Recreation Ground and a further north-south ditch near the eastern boundary.
Land use	The site is under pasture but near the eastern boundary there is a storage shed.
Vegetation	A line of mature oak trees run along the causeway on the western boundary. Hedgerow vegetation including hazel and hawthorn runs along the southern boundary with the Recreation Ground and in parts along the built up area boundaries.
Settlement	The eastern side of the site abuts part of Byfleet village centre. A line of houses and a Public House run along High Road to the north and a new development lies to the east. Stream Close, a 1970's development of flats and terraced houses is situated to the south east.
Access	Main access to the site is via a track directly off Parvis Road
Rights of Way	No public rights of way cross the site.
Views	The site is mainly visible from the Recreation Ground to the south, through gaps in the boundary

Service corridors None

Landscape Character

The site retains some landscape assets in the form of mature oak trees and boundary vegetation and has a moderate sense of physical enclosure, with few direct views into the site. Post and rail fencing subdividing the field gives more of an urban fringe character than the open field to the west (site A), and this is reinforced by adjoining built development.

vegetation, and from the garden of a public house to the north.

Area B - Land rear of High Road

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
В	Land rear of High Road	Pl	1	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway.
		P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	1	The site is in countryside use but has an urban fringe character. Development would not constitute significant encroachment into open countryside.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district.
		Total score:	2	This site makes a low contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification / Comment
B Land rear of High Road		U1	0	Not accessible to public at present; does not provide access to open countryside.
		U2	1	Moderate potential within site for public recreational uses as possible extension to Recreation Ground (if required).
		U3	0	The site does not provide a notably attractive setting for residents of the adjoining houses.
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	0	No special ecological interest has been noted
		U6	1	Part of the site appears to have been used for pasture, so there is some potential to retain land in agricultural, forestry or related uses.
		Total score:	2	This site has low usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development / land use change

This site makes a low contribution to meeting green belt purposes and is also low in terms of its usefulness. It has existing housing development on two sides and tree belts and hedgerows on the other two sides that could be retained and enhanced to form clear and defensible boundaries. Consequently, because it is fairly well enclosed by these boundary land uses and physical features, an urban extension into the eastern section of the site could be absorbed with low visual impact, and it would be well-related to the settlement boundary.

SITE ANALYSIS Area B - Land rear of High Road







Area C - Byfleet Recreation Ground

Description

Large open site bounded by residential development to the south and east, allotment gardens on the southern boundary, adjoining the motorway, the motorway embankment to the west and site A and B to the north.

Landscape Setting

The setting is strongly defined by the housing boundaries (many screened by mature garden vegetation) around part of the periphery of the site, and by the motorway embankment with associated plantings now maturing.

Site features

Topography Site area is generally level or gently sloping

Drainage No significant features.

Land use Sports pitches and facilities.

Open grassland, apart from some mature trees on a north south line on the eastern part of Vegetation

the site.

Settlement The site abuts the settlement boundary with houses on Winern Glebe, Rectory Lane, Rectory

Close and Stream Close

Existing access from Rectory Lane Access

Rights of Way Land in public use.

Views The site is mainly visible from Rectory Lane and from the adjoining houses and gardens.

Service corridors A high voltage power line run across the western side of the site with one pylon on the southern

boundary.

Landscape Character

The site has an open essentially municipal character, only partly broken up by the tree belt at the eastern side of the. There is a range of recreational facilities and buildings near the eastern boundary that are well related to the adjoining settlement, while the main body of the site is almost entirely mown grassland.

Area C - Byfleet Recreation Ground

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
Rec	Byfleet Recreation Ground	Pl	1	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway.
		P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	0	The site is not in countryside use.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district.
		Total score:	1	This site makes a low contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification/ Comment
С	Byfleet	U1	0	Does not provide access to the open countryside.
	Recreation	U2	2	Already in recreational use.
	Ground	U3	2	The site provides a pleasant setting to adjoining houses and there is good potential to enhance landscape character through additional tree planting.
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	0	No special ecological interest has been noted
		U6	0	Land is not in agricultural, forestry or related uses.
		Total score:	4	This site has moderate usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development / land use change

Because the site has existing housing development around a substantial part of the eastern periphery, this part of the site is well related to the existing settlement and could represent a suitable site for an urban extension. Moreover the site as a whole makes a low contribution to meeting green belt purposes. However, the site is in active recreational use and this is reflected in the assessment of usefulness for green belt uses which is moderate. Moreover, the use of the eastern part of the site for housing development would most likely require the re-provision of recreational land lost to development, quite apart from disruption from relocating established recreational facilities on Rectory Lane.

SITE ANALYSIS Area C - Byfleet Recreation Ground







Area D - Allotment Gardens

Description

Small site located at the western end of Winern Glebe, adjoining Recreation Ground and motorway

Landscape Setting

The setting is defined by the garden boundaries on Winern Glebe, the open sports pitches on the recreation ground to the north, an area of scrub woodland on site E to the south, but most significantly by the motorway embankment to the west.

Site features

Site area is generally level Topography

Drainage No significant features.

Land use Allotments

Vegetation Cultivated land with hedgerow boundaries, and some mature trees to the south; developing

tree belt on the motorway embankment.

Settlement The only settlement boundary is the boundary with houses at the end of a cul-de sac (Winern

Glebe)

Track from Winern Glebe Access

Rights of Way Land accessible to allotment holders.

Views The site is mainly visible from the recreation ground to the north and from the houses and

gardens at the end of Winern Glebe

Service corridors A high voltage power line run across the western side of the site with one pylon on the western

boundary.

Landscape Character

The site has a secluded semi-enclosed character, dominated by the motorway embankment.

Area D - Allotment Gardens

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
D	Allotment Gardens	P1	0	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway which lies very close to the motorway at this point.
		P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	0	The site is not in countryside use.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district.
		Total score:	0	This site makes no contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification / Comment
D	Allotment	U1	0	Does not provide access to the open countryside.
Gardens	U2	1	Not in recreational uses, but value to community for personal food production.	
		U3	0	The site does not provide an attractive setting to adjoining houses.
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	0	No special ecological interest has been noted
		U6	1	The land has a quasi-agricultural function
		Total score:	2	This site has low usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development / land use change

This site makes no effective contribution to meeting green belt purposes and has low usefulness for green belt uses. However, the site is small, is physically not well-related to the main urban area of Byfleet and could not be accessed easily. Accordingly, notwithstanding its low scoring against green belt purposes and uses, the site is not suitable to provide an urban extension.

Area D - Allotment Gardens







Area E - Land to the north of Murray Lane

Description

A field bounded by the M25 Motorway to the west ,allotments to the north , the settlement edge of Winern Glebe, Bruce Close and Glebe Gardens to the north and east and Murrays Lane, a track designated a public bridleway to the south.

Landscape Setting

In common with Area A this field once extended further west to the River Wey Navigation Canal and was part of an area of countryside that separated West Byfleet and Byfleet. The severance of the site from the countryside to the west by the motorway has left it as an isolated field sandwiched between the village built up area and the motorway. Due to very low key agricultural use of the site the natural processes of vegetation succession have resulted in woodland cover which has improved the setting of the site. The close proximity of the motorway and the overhead power lines remain significant landscape detractors to the site setting.

Site features Topography	The site area is generally level
Drainage	No drainage ditches across the site
Land use	The site is grassland but left open on the southern boundary. There are no signs of current or recent grazing use of the site.
Vegetation	The northern edge of the site and the eastern third are woodland. A narrow woodland belt comprises mainly birch and sycamore along the northern boundary which is fenced off from the grassland with post and wire. Oak is the predominate tree species in the eastern woodland which appears to have has developed naturally and has an open edge with the grassland. A line of mature oaks also occur along the Murray Lane boundary to the south. The motorway embankment is planted with pine, ash and oak with hazel and hawthorn.
Settlement	The site has two boundaries with existing housing although the woodland areas act as a buffer with the site.
Access	The only access to the site is via Murrays Lane which is a metalled track but under SCC barrier control.

Service corridors The 400kv power line runs across the centre of the site on a north west to south east alignment

enclosed from wider view on each of the other three sides.

Murray Lane along the southern boundary is a public bridleway that crosses the M25 on a bridge to the west. No public rights of way cross the site but dog walkers have created a

The site is only visible to pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders from Murrays Lane bridleway and it is

Landscape Character

circular path within the site.

Rights of Way

Views

Despite the detracting impact of the motorway and the overhead power line the site has a pleasant balance between woodland and grassland resulting in a relatively attractive pocket of countryside. It is also proving to be a useful informal open space for local people.

The visual character of the site has to be assessed from Murrays Lane. The woodland cover acts as a natural visual buffer between the motorway and the development area.

Area E - Land to the north of Murray Lane

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
E Land to the north of Murro lane	north of Murray	Pl	1	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway.
		P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Pyrford/ Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	2	The site is in countryside use and any development would constitute encroachment into the countryside.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district.
		Total score:	3	This site makes a low contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification / Comment
-	Land to the north of Murray lane	U1	1	Not formally accessible to public at present, but permissive access is evident. Access to the open countryside via Murray Lane and M25 overbridge.
		U2	1	Not in recreational use, but potential for informal recreational use.
		U3	1	The wooded eastern part of the site provides an attractive landscape setting to adjoining houses.
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	0	No special ecological interest has been noted
		U6	1	Part of the site appears to have been used for pasture, so there is some potential to retain land in agricultural, forestry or related uses.
		Total score:	4	This site has moderate usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development / land use change

Although the site lies at the settlement edge it is visually separated from existing housing by the woodland. This vegetation is valuable environmentally and occupies about half of the site area. The site is bisected by an overhead power line which limits land use/development in a corridor underneath.

Taking these factors together, and notwithstanding that it makes a low contribution towards meeting green belt purposes, the site has very low potential to accommodate development change. However, the site has moderate usefulness for green belt purposes and the informal recreational use of the site could usefully be formalised as a community benefit to allow access and the continued development of the woodland.

Area E - Land to the north of Murray Lane







Area F - Land to the south of Murray Lane

Description

A triangular shaped field bounded by the M25 Motorway to the west, Murrays Lane to the north and the boundary of a single property known as Pipers Hill to the east.

Site features

The site area is generally level Topography

Drainage No drainage ditches across the site

Land use The site is grassland but there are no signs of current or recent grazing use.

Vegetation The northern boundary along Murrays Lane has a line of mature Horse Chestnut and smaller

> oaks. A large individual field oak is situated in the north west corner beside the motorway. The motorway embankment is planted with pine, ash and oak with hazel and hawthorn and the

eastern boundary is defined by a continuous line of trees, mainly oak.

Settlement The site lies to the east of Pipers Hill a single house in grounds but it is remote from the settlement

edge.

The only access to the site is via Murrays Lane which is a metalled track but under SCC barrier Access

control.

Rights of Way Murray Lane along the southern boundary is a public bridleway that crosses the M25 on a

bridge to the west. No public rights of way cross the site.

Views The site is only visible to pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders from Murrays Lane bridleway and is

enclosed from wider view on each of the other two sides.

Service corridors The 400kv power line runs across the north east corner of the site and a pylon is located in the

north east corner.

Landscape Setting

The setting of Area C is similar to Area E to the immediate north. This field once extended further west to the River Wey valley but the severance effect of the motorway has left it as an isolated field lying between the village and the motorway. The site is fenced off from Murray Lane and is grassland that appears to have some occasional grazing use. The close proximity of the motorway and the overhead power lines remain significant landscape detractors to the site setting.

Landscape Character

The site is a simple paddock framed by woodland cover in the grounds of Pipers Hill to the east and the planting on the motorway embankment to the west. The visual character of the site has to be assessed from Murrays Lane and the site is an incidental enclosed field space that is part of the bridleway corridor but with few intrinsic qualities.

Area F - Land to the south of Murray Lane

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
	Land to the south of Murray lane	Pl	1	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway.
		P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Pyrford/ Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	2	The site is in countryside use and any development would constitute encroachment into the countryside.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district.
		Total score:	3	This site makes a low contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification / Comment
F	Land to the south of Murray	U1	1	Not formally accessible to public. Access to the open countryside via Murray Lane and M25 overbridge.
	lane	U2	0	Not in recreational use; possible potential for informal recreational use in conjunction with area E.
		U3	0	The site has little intrinsic interest and does not provide a significant setting for any adjoining residential area
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	0	No special ecological interest has been noted
		U6	1	Part of the site appears to have been used for pasture, so there is some potential to retain land in agricultural, forestry or related uses.
		Total score:	2	This site has low usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development/land use change

The site lies remote from the urban edge and is visually separated from it by tree lines. Moreover it lies very close to the motorway. Consequently, notwithstanding that it only makes a low contribution to green belt purposes and is of low usefulness, the site has very low potential to accommodate development change. However, there is potential for further woodland planting in association with Area E and this would be a useful community benefit.

Area F - Land to the south of Murray Lane





Area G - Land to the south of Rectory Lane & west of Sanway Road

Description

The site comprises a collection of fields bounded by Murrays lane and Rectory Lane to the north, Sanway Road to the east, the M25 embankment to the south and the wooded edge of Pipers Hill to the west. The site excludes a group of isolated residential properties on the west side of Sanway Road.

Landscape Setting

The site forms a broad wedge of open countryside left between the motorway and the urban boundary. Existing housing is in view from the site to the north and south east but to the east the play area, the tree lined avenue along Sanway Road and churchyard grounds create a park like setting.

Site features

Topography The site area is generally level with minor undulations, with the southern area forming part of

the River Wey valley sides before the M25 severed this connection

Drainage Minor drainage ditches

Land use There are recreational uses on the Sanway Road boundary. Most of the remainder of the site

> is grassland with a number of mature trees surviving from a former woodland in the centre of the site. There are no signs of current grazing use of the site. The holding to the south has paddocks, an isolated set of barns and a degree of clutter in the paddocks and access from

Sanway Road near the motorway.

Vegetation Existing vegetation within the site is limited to the northern boundary which is defined by a

> hawthorn hedge and the surviving oak trees in the centre of the site. A line of mature oak trees within Pipers Hill run along the western boundary. Other boundaries are defined by fencing. There are a few scattered trees in the southern part of the site, and there is also a belt of

developing vegetation on the motorway embankment.

Settlement The site lies opposite existing housing in Rectory Lane to the north. To the east, the Church and

> churchyard of St Marys Church has two boundaries with existing housing although the wooded burial ground acts as a buffer with the built-up area. Further housing fronts the southern section of Sanway Road. Piper's Hill, to the east is an isolated dwelling with a substantial curtilage

extending north, separating the site from Site F.

There are field gate access points along Murrays Lane and Rectory Lane, and there is also a Access

vehicular access on the southern section of Sanway Road.

Rights of Way No public rights of way cross the site.

Views The site is visible to pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders from Murrays Lane bridleway, Rectory

Lane and Sanway Road.

Service corridors The 400kv power line crosses the site on a north west to south east alignment

Landscape Character

Apart from the surviving trees and the hedge along Rectory Lane the site is open grassland with no special distinctive characteristics. Although the site has few intrinsic landscape features it is the central part of a larger area of surviving countryside overlooked by people living, walking or travelling in this part of the village. Its public amenity value therefore focuses on its openness but all views across the site are terminated by the motorway embankments which are a constant reminder of its detracting influence on the landscape.

The views across the site only partly retain the sense of countryside that existed here before the motorway and gradually the area's character is changing as a result of current land management. The play area is of local recreational value but its functional chain link fencing is unattractive. Further south the fields have been subdivided to form fenced off smaller paddocks which is a form of management that leads to urban fringe characteristics setting in.

Apart from the play area there is no public access or recreational use of this surviving area of countryside so although its openness can be enjoyed it is not available for public use.

Area G - Land to the south of Rectory Lane & west of Sanway Road

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
G	Land to the south of Rectory Lane	Pl	1	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway.
	and west of Sanway Road.	P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Pyrford/ Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	2	The site is in countryside use and any development would constitute encroachment into the countryside.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district.
		Total score:	3	This site makes a low contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification / Comment
G	Land to the	U1	1	Not formally accessible to public.
	south of Rectory Lane and west of Sanway Road.	U1	1	Not formally accessible to public. Access to the open countryside via M25 underpass from Sanway Road
		U2	1	Not in significant recreational use now but sufficiently large to be used in whole or part for recreational uses, if required.
		U3	0	The site has little intrinsic interest and does not provide a significant setting for any adjoining residential area
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	0	No special ecological interest has been noted
		U6	1	Much of the site is under grassland and part is used as paddocks, so there is some potential to retain land in agricultural, forestry or related uses.
		Total score:	3	This site has low usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development/land use change

The northern edge of this site adjoining the settlement edge of Byfleet is separated from nearby housing on its east side by a play area, Sanway Road and St Mary's church and burial ground. Although situated within the green belt, as currently drawn, the church and burial ground are physically and visually related to the adjoining urban area.

As a large site, well related to the existing urban edge, the site offers good potential to accommodate new residential development. This would not conflict with green belt purposes as the site only makes a low contribution to meeting green belt purposes and has low usefulness for green belt uses. The northern part of the site would be best related to the urban form of Byfleet and offers an opportunity to round off of the urban area in this location. There is sufficient land to respect the motorway and power lines as part of any landscape buffer, creating a suitable defensible edge to the settlement in this area. This proposal would retain existing open land, comprising the churchyard and play area, which would effectively form an urban green space to the east of the new development. The remnant woodland south of Rectory Lane would be managed for public access, creating an additional recreational feature.

Area G - Land to the south of Rectory Lane & west of Sanway Road









Area H - Land at Common Meadows

Description

A large single stretch of low lying grassland bounded by Sanway Road to the west, existing housing in Sanway Close and Fullerton Road to the north, a drainage ditch to the east and the River Wey to the south.

Landscape Setting

The site is a low lying wedge of open countryside between the motorway and the urban boundary.

Site features Topography	The site has a gradual slope north to south from 16m AOD to 10m AOD area is generally level with minor undulations.
Drainage	There are drainage ditches across the site and along the eastern boundary draining to the River Wey.
Land use	The site is rough grassland with clumps of willow scrub. There are no signs of current grazing use of the site.
Vegetation	Existing vegetation comprises emerging scrub vegetation in many areas, clumps of willow, natural tree and shrub vegetation along the River Wey bank side and individual trees across the top of the site.
Settlement	The site adjoins an area of mixed age housing which generally back onto the site.
Ecology	No base data available but land to the east is an SNCI
Access	Access to the site is from the narrow extension to Sanway Road which leads south under the motorway.
Rights of Way	No public rights of way cross the site but a bridleway runs along the western boundary.
Views	The site is visible to pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders from the Sanway Road boundary.

Service corridors The 400kv power line bisects the site north to south

Landscape Character

The site is a pleasant expanse of meadow grassland. However, the motorway embankment, and overhead power line detract significantly from the site's rural character. Moreover, there is only limited vegetation to provide screening on the long urban boundary of the houses on Fullerton Road that back onto the site, and this is a further visual detractor.

Area H - Land at Common Meadows

Green Belt Purposes Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Purpose	Score	Justification / Comment
Н	Land at Common Meadows	P1	1	The GB boundary prevents the extension of Byfleet to the west and south of the settlement boundary. However, unrestricted sprawl is physically prevented by the M25 motorway while the River Wey acts as a strong natural boundary to further development.
		P2	0	Byfleet could not merge or be perceived to merge with West Byfleet or Pyrford/ Woking. The settlements are separated by the M25 motorway which is a major physical and visual barrier.
		P3	2	The site is in countryside use and any development would constitute encroachment into the countryside.
		P4	0	Byfleet is not recognised as an historic town that has a special character or setting which requires protection.
		P5	0	There are no significant areas of derelict or other urban land within the district.
		Total score:	3	This site makes a low contribution to meeting the green belt purposes.

Green Belt Uses Table

Ref. Letter	Site	Green Belt Use	Score	Justification / Comment
Н	Land at Common	U1	1	Not accessible to public but access to the open countryside is available via M25 underpass from Sanway Road.
	Meadows	U2	1	Not in significant recreational use now but sufficiently large to be used in whole or part for recreational uses, if required.
		U3	0	Although the site has little intrinsic interest, because it is open in character it does provide a pleasant setting for the residents of houses on Fullerton Road.
		U4	0	The site is not damaged or derelict.
		U5	1	No special ecological interest has been noted but proximity to the SNCI to the east may provide potential for ecological enhancement.
		U6	1	The site is under grassland, with scrub vegetation, but there is limited potential to retain land in agricultural, forestry or related uses.
		Total score:	4	This site has moderate usefulness for green belt uses.

Potential for the site to accommodate development/land use change

This site lies close to the motorway and is low-lying. Accordingly, although it makes only a low contribution to green belt purposes, the site is not considered suitable for release from the green belt for development. However, the site does have moderate usefulness for green belt uses and it would be suitable for informal recreational use and possible habitat creation to enhance its nature conservation value. These would be valuable community benefits.

Area H - Land at Common Meadows







FINDINGS

FINDINGS

Landscape Quality

The study demonstrates that construction of the M25 motorway has directly and negatively affected the landscape character of the study corridor. This is evident to varying degrees for all of the individual study sites, with the exception of site B, which is physically separated from the motorway by site A and a tree line. The principal effects are described below

- The motorway has almost entirely severed the countryside on the edge of Byfleet from the River Wey valley landscape to the west. This was hitherto an attractive landscape of low lying fields, watercourses and small woodlands with extensive views between Wisley, Byfleet and West Byfleet. It was also a peaceful scene with fields running up to the River Wey Navigation Canal to the west and the woodlands of Wisley Common to the south. Although the River Wey lies east of the motorway at the southern edge of the village (adjoining site H), the perception of a complete valley landscape has nevertheless been lost.
- Views across the valley are now terminated by the high motorway embankment that faces the entire western side of Byfleet. Although tree planting on the motorway embankment is maturing, this cannot disguise the height and massing of this artificial feature that forms the backcloth and horizon to most views looking west from the village.
- Land management in the area has been directly affected with land holdings divided, increasing the difficulties of land management in an urban fringe situation. This is evident from reduced investment in land management generally and particularly in tree and vegetation management.

Green Belt Purposes and Uses

This reduction in landscape quality shows up very well in the individual analyses of green belt purposes and green belt usefulness for each site. Taken together, these analyses show that the entire study corridor makes no significant contribution to meeting the purposes of green belt designation and is of very limited usefulness in contributing to the uses of land in the green belt.

By itself, the reduction in the contribution to meeting green belt purposes and uses arising from construction of the motorway may not justify the removal of land from the green belt. Nevertheless, in the context of meeting the development requirements of the South East Plan, there may well be a need to release or at least safeguard suitable sites from the green belt for development. Indeed, as set out in the introduction to this report, this possibility is implicit in policy SP5 of the recently adopted South East Plan. Turley Associates have also submitted representations to Woking Borough Council postulating the need for such flexibility to comply with the soundness tests of PPS12. If this scenario is to be sensibly planned for, it is plainly good planning to look firstly at sustainable sites abutting urban areas that do not make a significant contribution to green belt purposes and/or sites that have limited usefulness for green belt uses. There may well be other community planning gains that further justify such releases, but a green belt review provides an appropriate policy tool to shortlist suitable options as advised in para. 2.12 of PPG.

The analysis of the eight individual sites in the study corridor shows that most could be considered for a possible release but two sites in particular are suitable for more detailed examination. As set out below, these comprise Site B and the northern part of site G.

The presence of high voltage overhead power lines running parallel to the motorway will effectively preclude allocation of land for residential development immediately adjoining the M25. Land under the overhead power lines could therefore be retained as a corridor of undeveloped land which would also serve as a useful buffer between the urban edge of Byfleet and the motorway itself.

FINDINGS

The Study Sites

The study reveals that the individual sites have a range of opportunities and constraints in relation to development potential and suitability for other uses, particularly recreation. These opportunities and constraints are summarised below.

Site A

There is limited potential for this sites release from the green belt for residential development, but the site could provide a valuable community benefit in the form of an extension for the recreation ground, if required.

Site B

This site has good potential to be released as a residential development allocation. It performs poorly in terms of green belt purposes and uses and is well-related to the urban form of the village. The development of the land may also provide opportunities for improved access and use of adjacent lands for community benefit (as above and below re: sites A and C).

Site C

The recreation ground is already providing an important community function for the village. However, if exceptional need requires the release of further land for residential development, the eastern part of the site adjoining Rectory Lane could be considered, subject to sufficient other land being made available to compensate for the loss of land in active recreational use.

Site D

Although this site performs poorly in terms of green belt purposes and uses, development is likely to be impracticable given the proximity of the M25. Moreover, the allotment gardens already provide a community function which might otherwise need to be replaced..

Site E

Although performing poorly in terms of green belt purposes, this site has moderate usefulness for green belt uses. This site could not easily accommodate residential development (due to power lines) but there is a good opportunity to use the site for community open space purposes, which could include managing and extending the emerging oak woodland.

Site F

Although performing poorly in terms of both green belt purposes and uses, this site also could not easily accommodate residential development (due to power lines). However there is scope to plant additional areas of oak woodland which would be a valuable landscape improvement for the local community.

Site G

This site performs poorly in terms of green belt purposes and uses, and there is good potential to develop the northern part of this site, which is well-related to the urban area of Byfleet, Moreover, there is also scope to introduce valuable community benefits. These would include the creation of additional public open space as an extension of the Sanway Recreation and play area, and associated woodland planting and management which would also be a valuable landscape enhancement for the village.

Site H

This site performs poorly in terms of green belt uses but has moderate usefulness for green belt uses. This site could not easily accommodate residential development (due to power lines) but there is good potential to provide community benefits by conserving the meadow for low-key informal recreation, through associated habitat creation and/or by enhancing of existing habitats. It would be logical for any habitat enhancement or creation schemes to be linked to the management of the adjoining SNCI.

FINDINGS

Landscape and Development Strategy

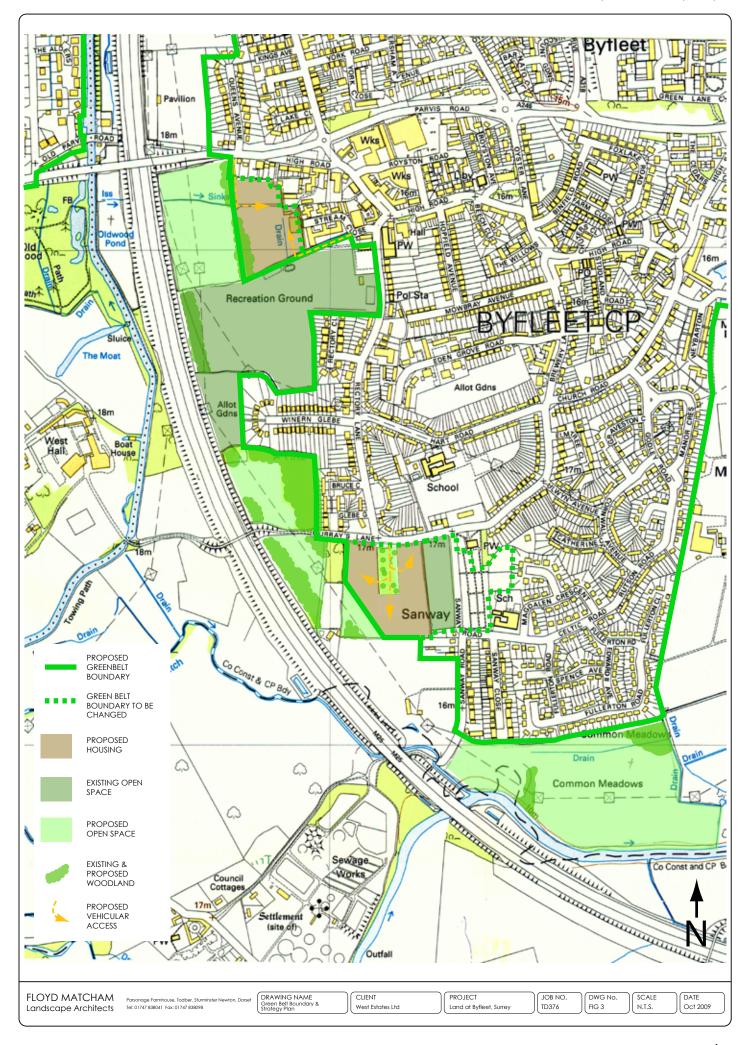
The discussion of the opportunities and constraints set out above provides the basis for formulating an indicative landscape and development strategy for the study corridor. This is illustrated on the plan at Fig. 3 Such a strategy would provide a framework for the controlled release of land from the green belt, in order to meet essential housing need, while promoting the positive use and enhancement, where required, of remaining undeveloped land that would continue to provide an effective buffer between the urban edge of the village and the motorway.

The strategy indicates that Site B and the northern part of Site G are both suitable to accommodate residential development without significantly affecting the purposes of including them in the green belt. Moreover both sites have low usefulness for green belt uses and they represent only a small part of the overall land area within the study corridor.

The plan at Fig. 3 shows a suggested revised green belt boundary that would be consistent with the landscape and development strategy.

At the same time, wherever possible, it would be important to ensure that other land in the study corridor could be put to good use in terms of enhancing overall community benefits. West Estates Ltd control land within the study area that has been shown to be unsuitable for release from the green belt, but which could be put to better community use.

West Estates Ltd have confirmed their willingness to discuss such opportunities in liaison with the local community as part of any comprehensive proposals west of Byfleet. Such enhancements could be achieved by making more land available for public use, framed by landscape enhancements that would also be directed at enhancing biodiversity. The landscape strategy identifies the broad locations where these enhancements could be undertaken. At the same time, land not required for development or community use would continue to provide an effective green buffer between Byfleet and the M25.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report sets out the methodology for and findings of a land use and landscape character study of the green belt corridor lying between the western edge of Byfleet village and the M25 motorway. A sequence of individual sites has been assessed in terms of their contribution to meeting the purposes of the green belt and their usefulness in contributing to the positive uses of land in the green belt.

The study concludes that:

- the landscape quality of the study area has been substantially diminished by construction of M25 motorway;
- there are potential opportunities for release of land that does not make a useful contribution to the green belt and whose release would not materially undermine the purposes of including land in the green belt; and
- there are important opportunities for providing community benefits in the form of positive recreational, landscape and biodiversity enhancements within the remaining undeveloped land.

The findings of the study provide the basis for an indicative landscape and development strategy that could make additional land available for meeting essential housing needs while achieving other beneficial community improvements within a buffer of undeveloped land between the western edge of Byfleet village and the motorway.

APPENDIX ONE

APPENDIX ONE: PURPOSES AND USE OF LAND IN THE GREEN BELT

Purposes of including land in the Green Belt (paragraph 1.5 of PPG2)

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (P1);
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another (P2);
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (P3);
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns (P4); and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. (P5)

Use of land in the Green Belt (paragraph 1.6 of PPG2)

- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population (U1);
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas (U2);
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live(U3);
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns(U4);
- to secure nature conservation interest (U5); and
- to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses (U6).