

Core Strategy Evidence Base

Green Wedge & Strategic Gap Indicative Assessment

(Oct 2011)



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FOREWORD

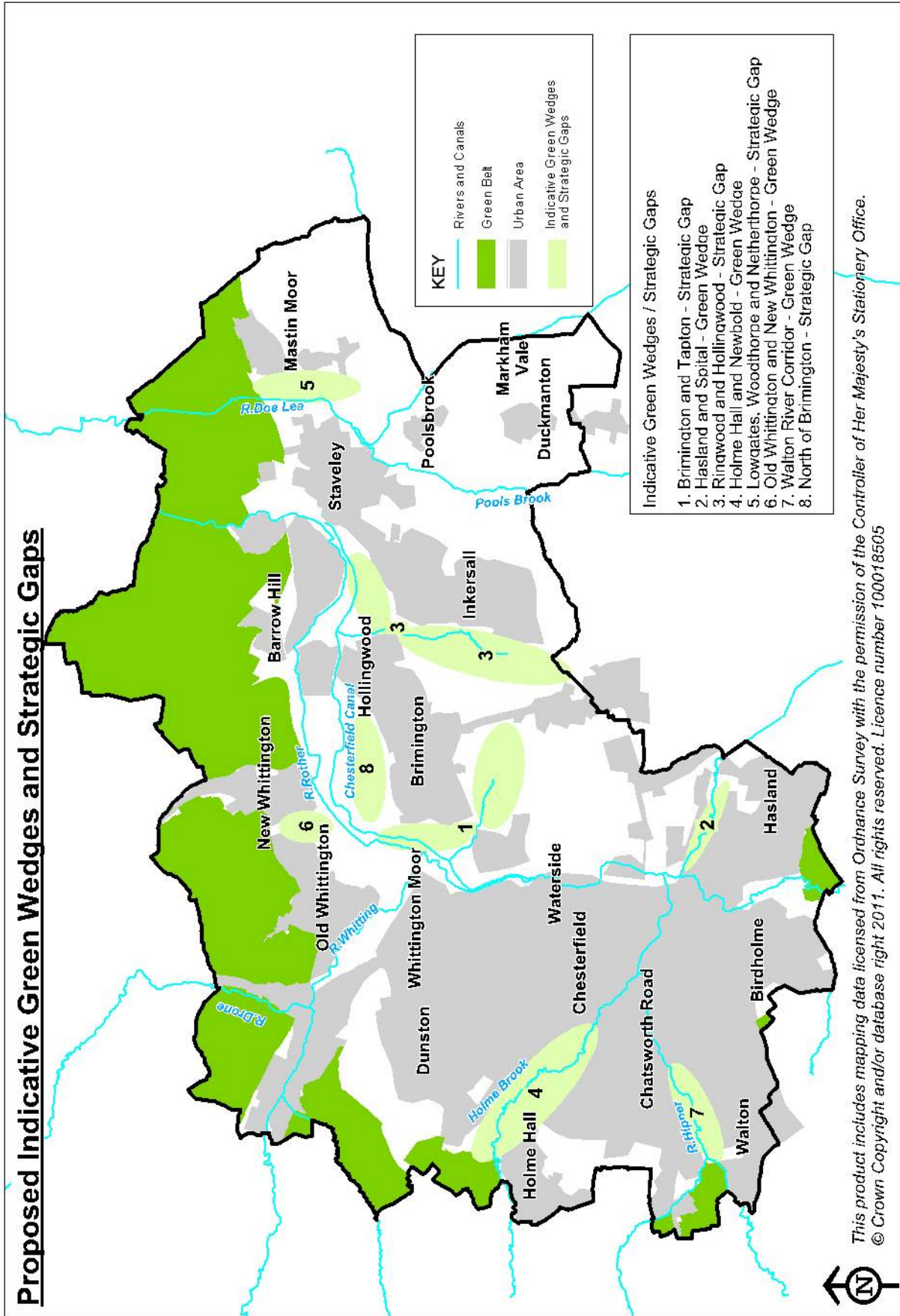
This paper draws upon existing policy and other background information for evaluating the requirement and justification for a 'Green Wedge' or 'Strategic Gap' policy in the council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The draft policy is shown at Appendix 1.

The aims of the paper are to:

- Define what is meant by the terms 'Green Wedge' and 'Strategic Gap' and provide background information about their planning benefits.
- Research relevant policy and evidence at the national and local level.
- Provide a framework for the identification of key Green Wedge and Strategic Gap areas.
- Provide justification for a Green Wedge or a Strategic Gap policy in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

This assessment does not identify specific boundaries for Green Wedge or Strategic Gap areas. This is because the Core Strategy should only identify broad and indicative areas for policy making. Specific boundaries will be identified when the Site Allocations Development Plan Document is prepared (expected to be adopted by the council in summer 2012). The indicative areas are shown on the map on page 4.

Proposed Indicative Green Wedges and Strategic Gaps



1.0 WHAT ARE GREEN WEDGES AND STRATEGIC GAPS?

- 1.1 The fullest account of the origins and meanings of the terms 'Green Wedge' and 'strategic gap' was provided in 2002 as part of research carried out for central government. The main aim of the research was to identify how local authorities have used and justified policies to protect the areas of land not large enough to be defined as Green Belt but variously called strategic gaps, green wedges and rural buffers¹.
- 1.2 The research highlighted that normally, where an additional layer of protection against unnecessary development is needed, restraint has taken one of three forms:
- The designation of Green Belts, operating in accord with national policy set out in PPG2.
 - Strategic gap, rural buffer and green wedge policies, mainly put forward by local planning authorities.
 - Areas of Outstanding National Beauty and local landscape designations (the former determined by national agencies and the latter by local planning authorities).
- 1.3 In respect of strategic gaps, rural buffers and green wedges, the research found that whilst these terms are often interchangeable, there are subtle differences between them, depending on the circumstances of their use (e.g. whether they are allocated in rural or built-up areas). The basic purposes of the designations are as follows:
- *Strategic gaps* protect the setting and separate identity of settlements, and avoid coalescence; retain the existing settlement pattern by maintaining the openness of the land; and retain the physical and psychological benefits of having open land near to where people live.
 - *Rural buffers* avoid coalescence with settlements (including villages) near a town until the long-term direction of growth is decided.
 - *Green wedges* protect strategic open land helping to shape urban growth as it progresses; to preserve and enhance links between urban areas and the countryside; and to facilitate the positive management of land.
- 1.4 In particular, it was identified that green wedges can serve a more specific purpose than rural buffers or strategic gaps, as they are more related to providing access to open space from urban areas. Green wedges can:
- Penetrate urban areas (unlike strategic gaps) and help preserve and promote landscape and wildlife corridors between the countryside and urban areas.

¹ This research was in the form of a report and called *Strategic gap and green wedge policies in structure plans: main report* (ODPM, 2002). It can be viewed here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/planningandbuilding/strategicgap>

- Provide space for appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents, at the same time reducing potential journey times to such facilities which might otherwise be located in less accessible locations.
- Facilitate the positive management of land so that the wedges are enhanced as an important contributor to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.

1.5 In respect of strategic gaps the essence of their support appears to reside in three basic arguments. These are:

- The need to protect the setting and separate identity of settlements, by avoiding their coalescence.
- The need to retain the openness of the land by resisting greenfield growth, and thus conserving the existing character of an area in terms of its current mix of urban and rural development.
- The need to provide real access and recreational benefits to urban dwellers, and the perceived (psychological) as well as real benefits of having open countryside near to where people live.

1.6 The roles of both green wedges and strategic gaps crossover and are often interchangeable. But there are subtle differences in the two terms, which when applied to specific locales, are helpful in identifying the role of particular areas. Strategic gaps are more concerned with maintaining the openness and landscape qualities of large open areas whilst green wedges tend to be narrower and penetrate urban areas providing recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents.

1.7 This is particularly relevant in Chesterfield Borough, which as a mainly urban area of distinct settlements contains valuable urban pockets of open space which can effectively be described as green wedges or strategic gap (less so rural buffers). There is therefore strong justification to include a green wedge and strategic gap policy within the council's Core Strategy.

History of Green Wedge and Strategic Gap type policies within Chesterfield Borough

1.8 The concept of green wedge or strategic gap policies to protect important areas of open land was introduced in Derbyshire via the Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan (2001). The plan highlighted that such areas have an important function in urban areas, helping to bring the countryside closer to the town or city. The plan noted that they can also create a more attractive and interesting form to the overall pattern of development. Moreover, the retention of open breaks between separate urban areas helps to maintain their identity and reduce the impact of sprawl. Such areas were also considered to have important existing and potential recreational and ecological value.

1.9 The plan highlighted that these areas are vulnerable to development pressure so it was recommended that they be protected from inappropriate development. Priority should be also given to the conservation and improvement of the environment in Special Landscape Areas, particularly in the coalfields of north Derbyshire.

- 1.10 Prior to the 2001 Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan, local planning policy provided a number of policies with a similar intent to these type of structure plan policy. The Staveley and Brimington Local Plan (1984) for instance contained an 'Open Breaks Between Settlements' policy aimed at protecting areas of amenity value open countryside and to prevent the coalescence of settlements. The Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (1996) and the Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) put forward criteria based policies to assess development proposals to protect open countryside, with the presumption against any development unless related to the rural economy or tourism. The former plan also put forward 'Areas of Local Landscape Significance' which were similar to strategic gaps in that they ensured the protection of valued open areas and prevented urban coalescence.
- 1.11 In 2004 Regional Plans replaced county Structure Plans. The East Midlands Regional Plan (2009) does not contain a specific policy on green wedges (or similar type of area) but empathised that a review of existing green wedges or the creation of new ones be created via the local development framework process. The supporting text stated that:
- Green wedges serve useful strategic planning functions in preventing the merging of settlements, guiding development form and providing a 'green lung' into urban areas, and act as a recreational resource. Although not supported by government policy in the same way as Green Belts, they can serve to identify smaller areas of separation between settlements. Provision will be made in green wedges for the retention or creation of green infrastructure or green links between urban open spaces and the countryside, and for the retention and enhancement of public access facilities, particularly for recreation².*
- 1.12 Whilst the government intends to formally abolish regional plans via the forthcoming Localism Bill, at the time of writing the East Midlands Regional Plan is still legally part of the Development Plan.

² *The East Midlands Regional Plan (2009), paragraph 4.2.18.*

2.0 POLICY & EVIDENCE BACKGROUND

2.1 The following provides an overview of those aspects of policy and evidence which ought to be considered when looking at the context of a green wedge or strategic gap policy.

National Policy

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (2011)

2.2 At the time of writing, planning policies aimed at the protection of the natural environment are currently set out in the following Planning Policy Statements (PPSs):

- *PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*
- *PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*
- *PPS17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*

2.3 The government published its draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2011. The NPPF is intended to bring together Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and some Circulars into a consolidated document. Whilst this is a consultation document - and subject to amendment - the government has made it clear that the draft NPPF indicates a clear direction of travel and is capable of being a material consideration.

2.4 Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of NPPF provides a policy context for open countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives are to protect valued landscapes and, where possible, provide net gains in biodiversity.

2.5 A strategic approach should be taken in Local Plans which plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of ecological networks and green infrastructure. Biodiversity should be taken into account at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries and areas that are prized for their tranquillity and amenity should be protected. There is also an emphasis on mapping and monitoring.

2.6 The draft NPPF also reflects the government's recent emphasis on localism and neighbourhood planning. The Sustainable Communities section states that local communities are able to designate land as Local Green Space within neighbourhood plans. However, this designation should only be used where: 1) it is in reasonably close proximity to centres of population; 2) it has local value; 3) it is not an extensive tract of land, and; 4) the designation does not overlap with Greenbelt.

Local Evidence and Policy

Chesterfield Borough Green Infrastructure Study (May 2009)

- 2.9 Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined as a multi-functional network of green spaces such as green corridors, the open countryside, parks and greenways. It encompasses natural green spaces (such as wildlife sites or woodland) and man-made managed green spaces (such as parks and greenways), as well as their many connections (footpaths, cycleways, green corridors and waterways).
- 2.11 A Green Infrastructure Study was published the council in 2009 to act as part of the evidence base for the council's Core Strategy. It brings together relevant information from various sources, including the Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) and the borough's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2002). The study also identifies those areas of change where green infrastructure may play an important role in providing environmental or recreational improvements.
- 2.12 The study proposes that green infrastructure provides significant economic, social and environmental benefits, particularly in a borough such as Chesterfield, which is in a process of economic restructuring away from a legacy of heavy industry. It identifies a number of components which make up the borough's green infrastructure network (such as Landscape Character, Parks and Open Spaces, External Linkages, etc) and identifies their role in the network. The borough has a good supply of these components, particularly in respect of parks & open spaces, river/canal corridors, open countryside and Local Wildlife Sites.
- 2.13 While the issue of potential green wedge or strategic gap areas was not addressed specially in the Green Infrastructure Study an initial analysis of the borough's open countryside and landscape was undertaken (called 'landscape study areas'). This has informed the preparation of this paper.

A Greenprint for Chesterfield (2010 – 2020)

- 2.14 The UK has an international legal obligation to conserve biodiversity. Consequently, Local Authorities and other statutory bodies have a duty to promote and enhance biodiversity through Biodiversity Action Plans. Chesterfield Borough comes under the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan, which identifies the aims and targets for specific types of species and habitats in Derbyshire outside of the Peak District. There is also the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act which introduces a duty for all public authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.
- 2.15 More specific to Chesterfield Borough is the Greenprint for Chesterfield (2010), which provides a local framework for the conservation of biodiversity and sets out which habitats and species are particularly important at a local level. The Greenprint for Chesterfield strives to incorporate biodiversity into the everyday practices of the council and aims to create a network of wildlife habitats throughout the borough.

- 2.16 This is also a fundamental principle of green infrastructure and any initiatives for the provision or enhancement of green infrastructure in the borough should take account of the Greenprint's aims, objectives and aspirations.

East Derbyshire Greenways Strategy

- 2.17 Derbyshire County Council's East Derbyshire Greenways Strategy (1998, currently being reviewed) proposes a greenway network that includes a northern section encompassing Chesterfield Borough. The network is made up of primary, secondary and tertiary routes, which when linked together will provide circular routes into and out of the borough. The aim of this greenway network is to provide both functional and recreational routes that link urban areas with the rural environment for a variety of users such as cyclists, walkers and horse riders. Greenways also have a role as biodiversity corridors. The Trans Pennine Trail which runs along the Chesterfield Canal towpath and Bluebank Pools Local Nature Reserve is a good example.
- 2.18 Many of the borough's greenway routes are located within the green wedge and strategic gap areas identified in this document and provide a means for countryside access and recreation.

The Landscape Character of Derbyshire (Derbyshire County Council, 2003)

- 2.19 Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) is clear that the role of a green wedge or other similar types of allocation should not simply act as a landscape designation. Planning authorities should use criteria based policies in Local Development Documents rather than restrictive local landscape designations. However, as there will be certain landscape characteristics with green wedge or strategic open gap areas then it is advantageous to include landscape character as part of the assessment.
- 2.20 Derbyshire County Council has published and adopted a Landscape Character of Derbyshire (2003) that identifies distinct landscape character types throughout the whole of Derbyshire, including Chesterfield Borough. The key characteristics of each landscape type are identified and described.
- 2.21 The work was taken a stage further in 2011 when Derbyshire County Council assessed the sensitivity of the landscape at a strategic level via data relating to ecology, landscape history and visual unity. This work is called *Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity* and identifies the most environmentally sensitive areas across the county outside the Peak District National Park.

3.0 PROPOSED GREEN WEDGE AND STRATEGIC GAP AREAS

- 3.1 As highlighted in Section 1 a criteria has to be developed when identifying whether it is appropriate in planning terms to designate an area as a green wedge or strategic gap. To summarise, the key questions should be:
- Do they prevent the merging of settlements?
 - Do they provide a 'green lung' into urban area?
 - Do they act as a recreational or biodiversity resource?
 - Do they influence the form and direction of urban development?
- 3.2 For a predominantly urban area like Chesterfield Borough the aim should be to identify those areas that will provide the most benefits for local communities living within an urban environment. Green wedges and strategic gaps should be seen as a part of a green infrastructure network by linking urban open space and the countryside and providing recreational access to nearby open land. They should also be viewed as areas for biodiversity protection or improvement.
- 3.3 It is considered that the following eight areas within the borough best meet this criteria:
1. Brimington and Tapton - **Strategic Gap**
 2. Hasland and Spital - **Green Wedge**
 3. Ringwood and Hollingwood - **Strategic Gap**
 4. Holme Hall and Newbold - **Green Wedge**
 5. Lowgates, Woodthorpe and Netherthorpe - **Strategic Gap**
 6. Old Whittington and New Whittington - **Green Wedge**
 7. Walton River Corridor - **Green Wedge**
 8. Brimington North – **Strategic Gap**

Why not identify other areas as a green wedge or strategic gap?

- 3.4 For the sake of clarity and consistency it is important to understand why other areas of open countryside within the borough have not been included as potential green wedge or strategic gap areas.

Open countryside in the east of the borough

- 3.5 Unlike the more urban concentrated form of development within the centre and to the west of the borough, the villages of Mastin Moor, Woodthorpe, Poolsbrook and Duckmanton are - in geographical terms - relatively rural and do not constitute large built-up areas. Furthermore, these villages are close, and have access to large swathes of open countryside so there is less of a need to provide a 'green lung' into these communities.
- 3.6 When identifying green wedges or strategic gaps the starting point should be to assess the last significant undeveloped parts within an urban area. In Chesterfield Borough, these areas tend to be close to the town centre or to the west where there

are continuous built-up urban forms. The objective should be to provide open space and recreational opportunities to the residents in these concentrated urban areas. It is not considered at present that the eastern villages have this type of concentrated urban form which would justify the allocation of a strategic gap or green wedge allocation.

- 3.7 A further consideration should be given to the way green wedges or strategic gaps can prevent the coalescence of distinct settlements and promote the notion of 'setting'. The latter is particularly applicable to those urban areas that have some form of historic urban core or where views have an important role in protecting character and local distinctiveness (e.g. views towards Chesterfield Town Centre and the Chesterfield Canal). As such, green wedges or strategic gaps are important to overall urban form. Given the lack of historic cores or conservation areas within the eastern villages it is difficult to justify green wedge or strategic gap allocations on this basis.
- 3.8 Regarding the coalescence of settlements, the open countryside around Mastin Moor, Woodthorpe, Poolsbrook and Duckmanton extends eastward for a number of kilometres before meeting large-scale areas of urban concentration (i.e. Worksop to the east and Mansfield to the south-east). The small market town of Bolsover (approximately 6 km from Mastin Moor and 2 km from Duckmanton) is the closest significant settlement which might represent some form of future urban coalescence. However, it is not considered likely given the development scenarios put forward via work on draft Core Strategies by this council and its neighbouring planning authorities (the districts of Bolsover and North East Derbyshire).

Land to the north, south and west of the borough

- 3.9 The North East Derbyshire Green Belt extends north, south and west around the borough meaning large swathes of open countryside are protected from unsuitable development. The popularity and success of Green Belts has resulted in them remaining a fundamental part of national planning policy and they are altered only in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.10 Consequently large sections of the borough's population on the edges of, or close to, Green Belt, have access to open countryside which is unlikely to change in character or role, negating a planning requirement for green wedge or open gap areas.³

Protection of Green Infrastructure outside Green Wedge or Strategic Gap areas

To ensure that the best of the borough's natural environment and green infrastructure network outside of green wedge or strategic gaps is protected, the draft Core Strategy puts forward policy CS8: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity. The policy can be view at Appendix 2.

³ At the time of writing the government is currently consulting on changes to national planning policy via the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There are no proposals to alter the role or status of Green Belt.

Reviewing Green Wedges and Strategic Gaps

- 3.12 Over time, the need for green wedges and strategic gaps will be reviewed. The purpose of the review would be to assess the extent of existing green wedge and strategic gap areas. Particular attention should be paid to existing boundaries and identifying potential extensions or reductions of areas. The review would also provide the opportunity to identify new green wedge or strategic gap areas as a result of changing circumstances
- 3.13 This review will be carried out when development plan documents are reviewed as part of the normal planning process. It is expected these reviews will take place approximately every 3 years once development plan documents are adopted.

4.0 GREEN WEDGE ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION

4.1 The following assesses each of the proposed green wedge and strategic gap areas for Chesterfield Borough. The assessment provides a brief analysis under the following headings:

- Landscape character type⁴
- Blue Infrastructure (e.g. rivers, open water, wetland, etc)
- Replacement Chesterfield Borough Plan (2006) allocations
- Biodiversity⁵
- Access, routes and public rights of way
- Historic Heritage
- Urban Rural Fringe Issues
- Previously Developed Land
- Public Land Ownership

4.2 It is considered that this type of assessment will enable the qualitative aspects of each area to be evidenced. It will also highlight the multifunctional nature of the areas, meaning an area of open land or countryside can provide a number of different types of recreational or natural benefits such as walking, nature conservation, landscape protection and so on. Clearly, the more benefits an area can provide then the more value it will have to local communities. This is also consistent with a strategic approach to planning which views the borough's natural environment as part of a green infrastructure network.

4.3 As previously highlighted in the Foreword, the following seven green wedge and strategic gap areas have been identified:

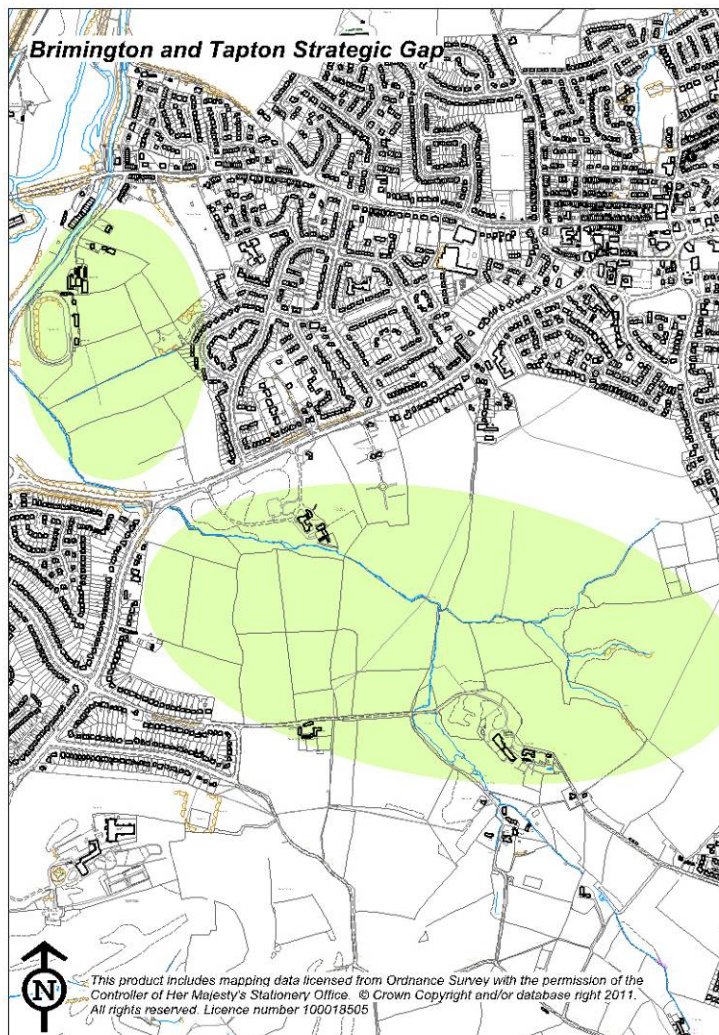
1. Brimington and Tapton - **Strategic Gap**
2. Hasland and Spital - **Green Wedge**
3. Ringwood and Hollingwood - **Strategic Gap**
4. Holme Hall and Newbold - **Green Wedge**
5. Lowgates, Woodthorpe and Netherthorpe - **Strategic Gap**
6. Old Whittington and New Whittington - **Green Wedge**
7. Walton River Corridor - **Green Wedge**
8. *Brimington North* – **Strategic Gap**

4.4 The rest of the assessment will consider each of these areas in turn.

⁴ As identified in *The Landscape Character of Derbyshire* (2003) (published by Derbyshire County Council).

⁵ Biodiversity information relates only to that supplied by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust under Service Level Agreement (2010). Hence for species, this only includes information on water vole and otter populations. Thus the biodiversity of these areas is likely to be richer than indicated here.

1. Brimington and Tapton: *Strategic Gap*



Derbyshire coalfield landscape character type⁶

Coalfield Village Farmlands and Riverside Meadows

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

- The northern part of this area is adjacent to the River Rother & Chesterfield Canal, key green infrastructure assets offering major recreation, biodiversity and amenity value.
- Areas of Flood Zone 3A contiguous with the route of the Rother/Chesterfield Canal.
- The Tinker Sick flows eastwards towards the Rother and connects to Tapton Fishpond.

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations and policies

- Open countryside and other open land (EVR2)
- River and canal environment (EVR13) - River Rother & Chesterfield Canal

- Wildlife site (ref: CH031) - Tapton Fish Pond
- Historic Parks and Gardens (EVR34) - Tapton Grove
- Proposed greenways and strategic walking and cycling routes (TRS13) - Trans Pennine Trail
- Staveley - Chesterfield Regeneration Route (TRS3) - left of the former greyhound stadium

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

- Water Vole populations adjacent to the Chesterfield Canal
- Bluebank Pools Local Nature Reserve.
- Wildlife site - Tapton Fish Pond (ref: CH031)

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

A good Public Right of Way network provides access into the area, particularly off Station Road and Manor Road.

⁶ More information about Derbyshire coalfield landscape character types are attached at Appendix 3.

Historic Heritage

Chesterfield canal dates from 1777 (now largely restored). Tapton Grove is a locally designated Historic Park and Garden

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

The former greyhound stadium area is fragmented and downgraded with large industrial fencing delineating land ownership. This area and adjacent field has experienced development pressure and is an 'omission site' from the Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006).

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

The former greyhound stadium is overgrown and has blended into the landscape. It is therefore questionable whether this area can be defined as previously developed land under national planning guidance (PPS3).

Public Land Ownership?

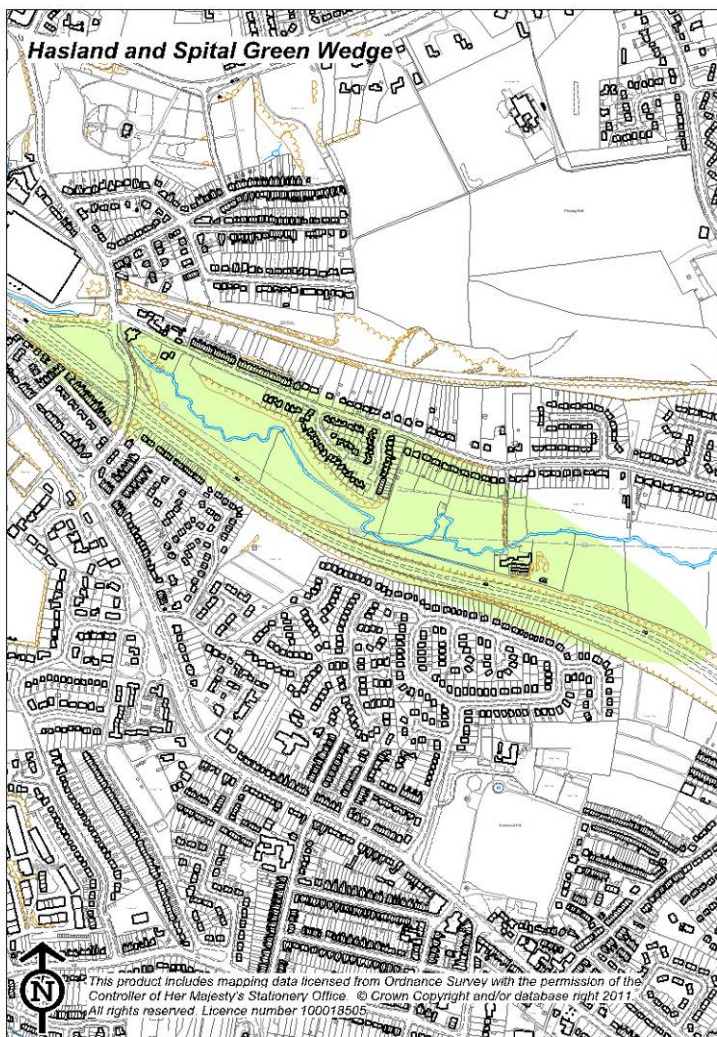
Wheeldon Mill Plantation and Brimington Cemetery/Crematorium are owned by Chesterfield Borough Council. Chesterfield Canal and the Trans Pennine Trail are owned by Derbyshire County Council.

Summary

Strategic Gap justification:

- ***Prevents coalescence of settlements:*** Brimington and Tapton
- ***Maintains a strategic gap:*** between Brimington and Chesterfield Town Centre/Hady
- ***Public Rights of Way:*** area crisscrossed by the Trans Pennine Trail and other public footpaths
- ***Amenity and landscape value:*** Riverside Meadows to the north and Coalfield Village Farmland landscape character to the south. Areas of attractive, publicly owned woodland to the north
- ***Biodiversity value:*** Water vole populations to the north, Tinker Sick water corridor flows east to west

2. Hasland and Spital: *Green Wedge*



Derbyshire coalfield landscape character type

This area of river corridor land between the settlements of Spital and Hasland is consistent with the Riverside Meadows landscape character type.

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

- Spital Brook flows westwards eventually joining the confluence of the River Hipper and River Rother.
- Adjacent land is consequently within Flood Zone 3A.

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations

- Open countryside and other open land (EVR2)
- River and canal environment (EVR13) - Spital Brook

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

Populations of Water Vole identified, some hedgerow and woodland.

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

No identified recognised Public Rights of Way.

Historic Heritage

Non identified.

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

The area sits within an urban/highways context and whilst it is not a major contributor to the wider open countryside and landscape it provides an opportunity to maintain biodiversity linkages and help stem the loss of green space. The southern boundary of the area is adjacent to the A61 which adds to the area's isolation and inaccessibility. Sites within this area have previously been put forward for development and are 'omission sites' from the Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006).

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

None identified.

Public Land Ownership?

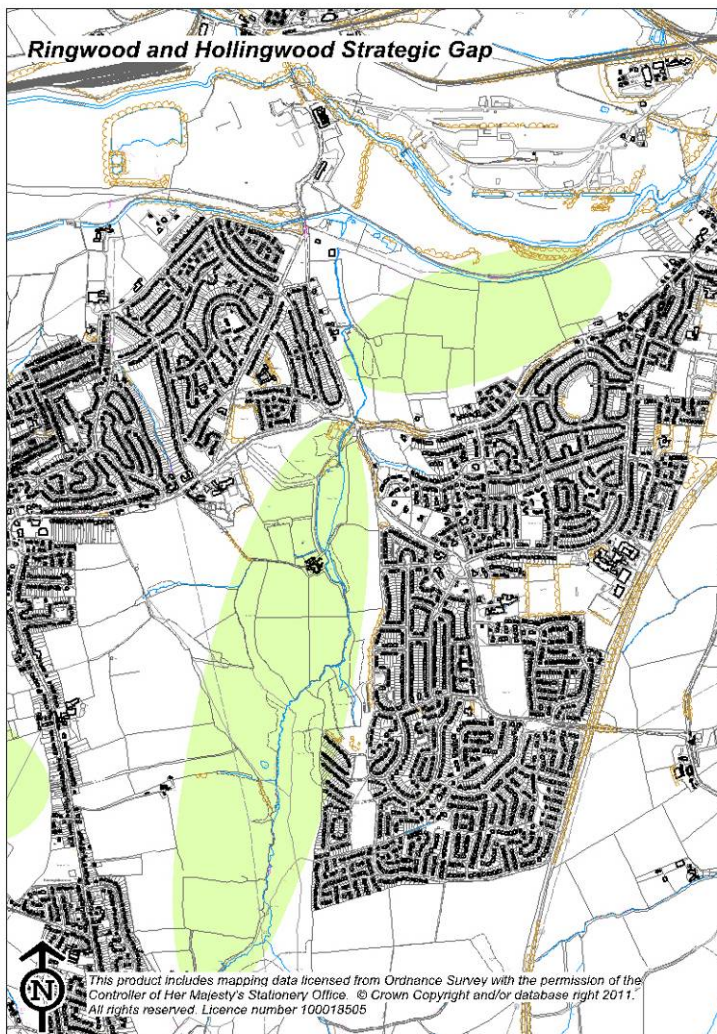
None identified.

Summary

Green Wedge justification:

- ***Prevents coalescence of settlements:*** Hasland and Spital
- ***Biodiversity value:*** water corridor (Spital Brook), hedgerows & woodland
- ***Penetration of urban areas:*** provides a 'green lung' between Hasland and Spital

3. Ringwood and Hollingwood: *Strategic Gap*



Derbyshire coalfield landscape character type

Estate Farmlands

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

- Northern part of the area overlooks the River Rother & Chesterfield Canal.
- Area of Flood Zones 2 and 3A contiguous with the route of the Rother/Chesterfield Canal to the north.
- Trough Brook and Ringwood Lake to the south provide significant recreational and biodiversity value.

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations

- Open countryside and other open land (EVR2)
- River and canal environment (EVR13) - Trough Brook
- Historic Park and Garden (EVR34) - Ringwood Hall Grounds
- Proposed greenways and

strategic walking and cycling routes (TRS13) - Trans Pennine Trail

- 3 Wildlife Sites - Brimington Field (ref: CH006), Ringwood Lake (ref: CH008) and West Wood & Parkers Wood (ref: CH007)
- Safeguarded route for Phase 2 of the Markham Vale connection (north of Middlecroft)

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

Populations of water voles identified. Troughbrook Wood is an area of Plantation Ancient Woodland and is now a designated Local Wildlife Site which contains a number of rare wetland/wetland plants and species. The area around Ringwood Lake is home to water vole populations. The area's three Local Wildlife Sites, Brimington Field, West Wood & Parkers Wood and Ringwood Lake, contain a rich mix of woodland (including ancient woodland), wetland species and woodland flora. Good canalside wetland habitats on Chesterfield Canal.

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

Strong Public Rights of Way in the area around Ringwood Park as well as an informal network of paths within Troughbrook Wood. Human activity mainly recreational as a result of public rights of way network and established parkland and lake.

Historic Heritage

Ringwood Hall is a Georgian Grade II listed building and the hall's ground is a locally designated Historic Park and Garden. West Wood contains significant areas of ancient woodland. Chesterfield Canal to the north dates from 1777 and includes Hollingwood Lockhouse (now a restored community hub)

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

Chesterfield Road (A619) and Middlecroft form built-up areas (where there are also some derelict farm cottages). Established residential/Industrial areas to the north and west.

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

None identified.

Public Land Ownership?

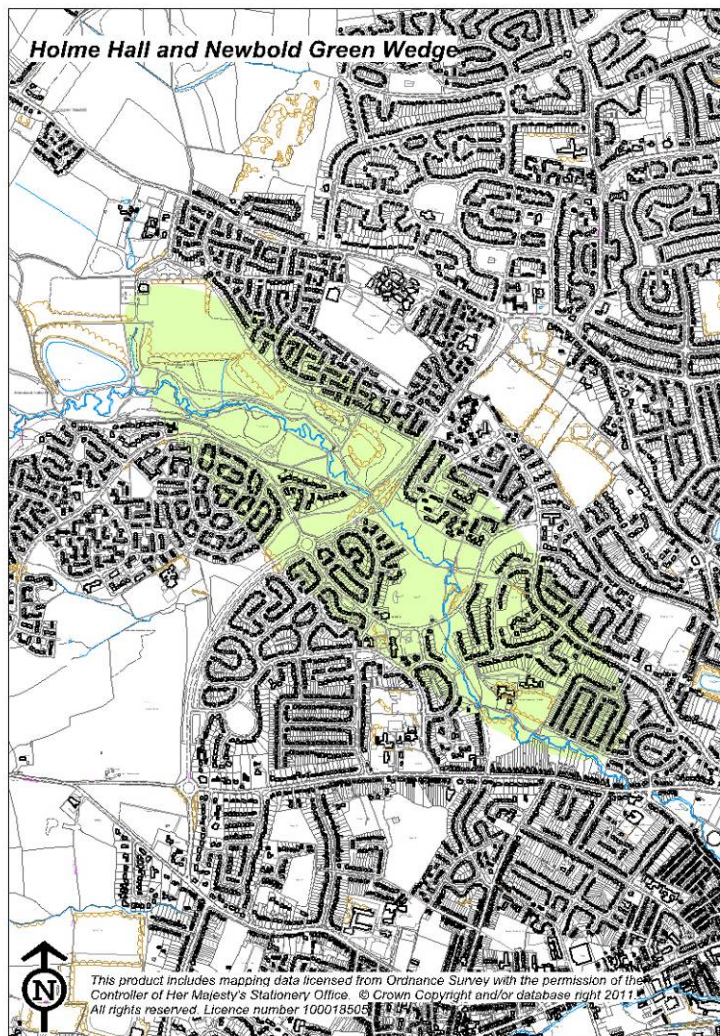
The parkland, lake and areas of woodland are owned by Chesterfield Borough Council.

Summary

Strategic Gap justification:

- ***Prevents coalescence of settlements:*** Hollingwood and the western part of Middlecroft
- ***Maintains a strategic gap:*** between Inkersall and Brimington
- ***Public Rights of Way:*** a good network of public rights of way in the Ringwood park area including access to the Trans Pennine Trail (via Troughbrook Wood)
- ***Biodiversity value:*** Troughbrook and Westwood Ancient woodland. Ringwood Lake and West Wood & Parkers Wood Local Wildlife Sites, water corridor (Trough Brook), woodland and hedgerows and water vole populations
- ***Strategic Gap value:*** the northern area operates as a buffer between Staveley and the former Staveley Works Corridor
- ***Amenity value:*** attractive parkland with lakes and attractive footpaths

4. Holme Hall and Newbold Green: *Green Wedge*



Derbyshire coalfield landscape character type

Coalfield Village Farmlands

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

- Holme Brook traverses this area providing a valuable water corridor.
- Areas of mainly Flood Zones 3A contiguous with the route of the brook and pond.

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations

- Existing parks and open spaces (POS1) - Holmebrook Valley Park
- Sports pitches and playing fields (POS4) - Holmebrook Valley Park
- River and canal environment (EVR13) - Holme Brook
- Proposed greenways and strategic walking and cycling routes (TRS13) - Holmebrook Valley Trail

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

Holme Brook Local Wildlife Site accommodates areas of semi-natural woodland, species rich grassland and other woodland/wetland habitat.

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

An established rights of way network crisscrosses the area, including the Holmebrook Valley Greenway which links the town centre with open countryside to the west. (including Linacre Reservoir).

Historic Heritage

None identified.

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

This is managed parkland with an established role and status, unlikely to suffer negative urban-rural fringe activity such as neglect, poor management or anti-social behavior.

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

Large areas of Holmebrook Valley Park are former sites of opencasting.

Public Land Ownership?

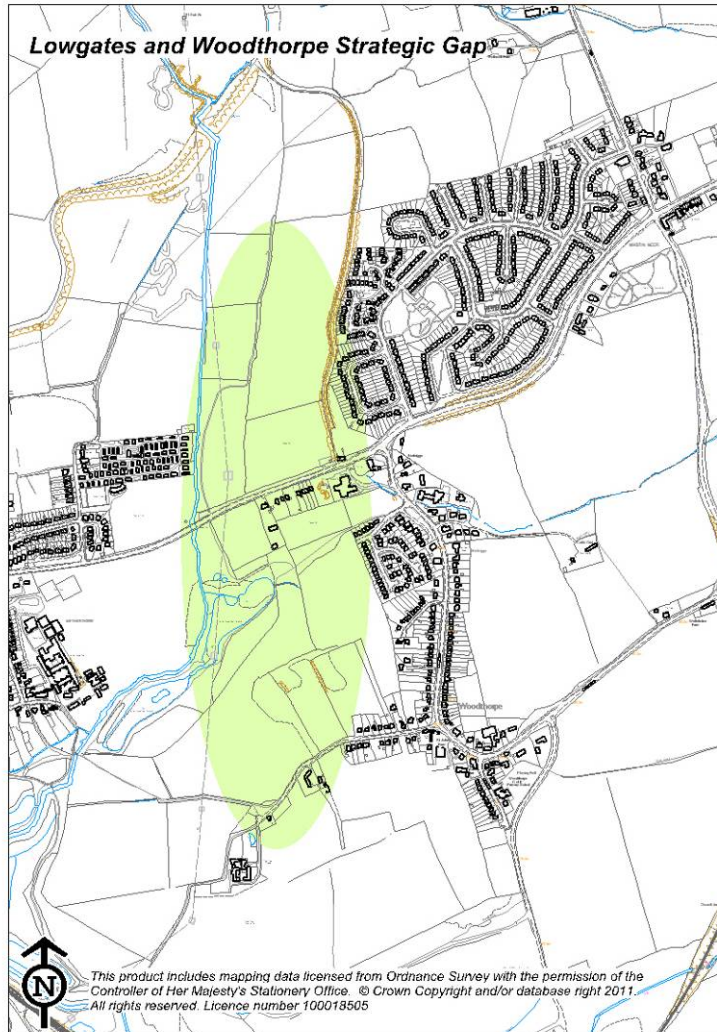
Holmebrook Valley Park is owned by Chesterfield Borough Council.

Summary

Green Wedge Justification:

- ***Prevents coalescence of settlements:*** Holmehall and Newbold
- ***Biodiversity value:*** Holme Brook Local Wildlife Site, water corridor (Holme Brook), woodland and hedgerows
- ***Public Rights of Way:*** attractive public rights of way network including the Holmebrook Valley Trail
- ***Amenity value:*** large areas of recreational parkland (Holmebrook Valley Park)
- ***Countryside access:*** to North East Derbyshire and the Peak District
- ***Contains a strategic greenway:*** the Holmebrook Valley Trail
- ***Penetration of urban areas:*** Holme Hall and Newbold

5. Lowgates, Woodthorpe and Netherthorpe: *Strategic Gap*



Derbyshire coalfield landscape character type

Riverside Meadows flank the River Doe Lea through Norbriggs and Estate Farmlands is to the west of Woodthorpe

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations

- Open countryside and other open land (EVR2)
- River and canal environment (EVR13) - Doe Lea
- Sports pitches and playing fields (POS4) - Norbriggs and Netherthorpe School
- Wildlife sites - Pinnock (Norbriggs) Flash (ref: CH051) and Netherthorpe Flash (ref: CH052)
- Proposed greenways and strategic walking and cycling routes (TRS13) - part of the Chesterfield Canal towpath network)
- Chesterfield – Staveley regeneration route (TRS3) -

north of Mastin Moor

- Allotment (ref: REEMA)
- Green Belt (to the north)

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

The river Doe Lea flows north through this area to join the river Rother beyond. The Doe Lea is an import river corridor providing habitats for a various species and Norbriggs Flash Local nature Reserve. Flood Zone 2 and 3A are contiguous with the route of the river.

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

The area contains populations of Water Voles and Great Crested Newts. Norbriggs Flash Local Nature Reserve includes several important wetland and grassland habitats as does Netherthorpe Flashes Local Nature Reserve includes several important wetland and grassland habitats. The area also includes populations of bats, water voles and great crested newts.

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

An established Public Rights of Way network provided access into the area, including access to the Chesterfield Canal via a Greenway and strategic walking and cycling route, and to the south of the area off Netherthorpe Road and Bridle Road.

Historic Heritage

The Chesterfield Canal to the north was established in 1777.

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

Minor urban fringe pressures caused by human activities in the past (i.e. some antisocial behavior). The allocation of the northern part of the area as an Local Nature Reserve in 2009 has provided better management. Some development pressure adjacent to Worksop Road (an 'omission' site from the Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) is located in this area. Open cast mining to the north of this area has previously been proposed by UK Coal (although no planning application has been submitted).

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

None identified.

Public Land Ownership?

The areas making up Norbiggs Flash Local Nature Reserve and Netherthorpe Flash are owned by Chesterfield Borough Council.

Summary

Strategic Gap justification:

- ***Maintains a strategic gap:*** between Netherthorpe and Mastin Moor/Woodthorpe
- ***Biodiversity value:*** Local Nature Reserve (Norbiggs Flash), Local Wildlife Site (Netherthorpe Flash), two areas identifies as having potential for Wildlife Site status and a river corridor (Doe Lea)
- ***Public Rights of Way:*** good public rights of way network with access to the Chesterfield Canal

6. Old Whittington and New Whittington: *Green Wedge*



Derbyshire coalfield landscape character type

Coalfield Village Farm Land

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations

- Open countryside and other open land (EVR2)
- River and canal environment (EVR13) - River Rother
- New Public Open Space (POS2)
- Sports pitches and playing fields (POS4) – Brearley Park
- Wildlife sites (EVR4/EVR5) - Brearley Park Meadows
- Allotments (POS5) - Old Whittington

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

The river Rother is located to the south of this area providing an environment for varied species and habitats. Consequently the southern part of the area has been

designated Brearley Park Local Nature Reserve. There are also significant areas lying within Flood Zone 2 & 3A.

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

Brearley Wetlands Local Nature Reserve contains a number of valuable habitats and species including rare invertebrates and valuable wetland areas.

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

The area is accessible via an established Public Rights of Way network, including the opportunity to access the River Rother/Chesterfield canal environs via the Cuckoo Way.

Historic Heritage

None identified.

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

Accessed by large populations of Old & New Whittington and constrained to the south by rail lines. Proper management of the Brearley Park and Brearley Wetland Local Nature

Reserve but industrial uses to the south (including a sewage treatment works). The rail line to the south is something of a barrier.

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

None identified.

Public Land Ownership?

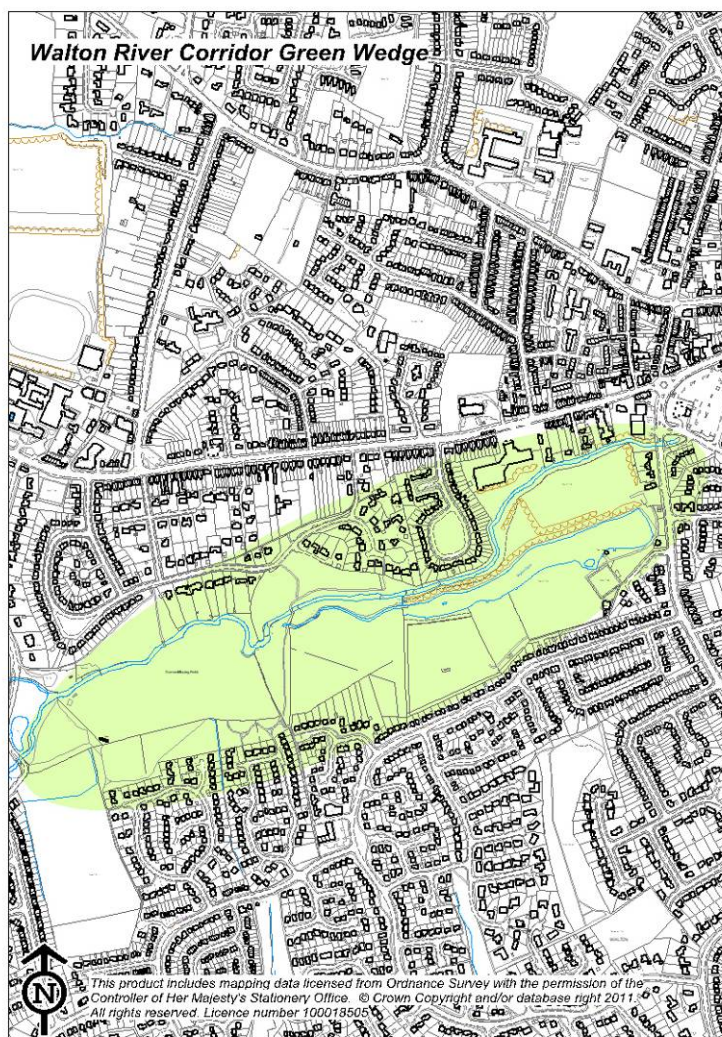
Brearley Park is owned by Chesterfield Borough Council.

Summary

Green Wedge justification:

- ***Prevents coalescence of settlements:*** between old Whittington and New Whittington
- ***Public Rights of Way:*** good Public Rights of Way network providing access to the Chesterfield Canal (Trans Pennine Trail) and Cuckoo Way
- ***Penetration of urban areas:*** into Old Whittington and New Whittington
- ***Biodiversity value:*** Brearley Park Local Nature Reserve, some hedgerow and tree cover
- ***Amenity value:*** attractive areas of parkland

7. Walton River Corridor: *Green Wedge*



Derbyshire landscape character type

Wooded Farmlands (Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent)

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

The river Hipper flows eastward through this area providing an important riverside environment. Walton Dam to the east provide a small recreational lake area (as well as industrial water supply). Flood Zone 3A is contiguous with the course of the dam and river

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations

- Open countryside and other open land (EVR2)
- River and canal environment (EVR13) – River Hipper
- Sports pitches and playing fields (POS) - Somersall Park
- Proposed greenways and strategic walking and cycling routes (TRS13) - Hipper Valley Trail

- Conservation area to the west (EVR30) – Somersall Lane)

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

Oakfield Avenue Meadow Local Wildlife Site is located south of Oakfield Avenue. This is a small area of meadow land with species rich plants. Other species and habitats in the areas include water voles, fresh water crayfish and veteran trees.

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

The area is accessible via an established Public Rights of Way Network, including the Hipper Valley Trail.

Historic Heritage

Somersall Lane Conservation Area lies to the west of the area. Walton Dam is an element of the borough's industrial legacy.

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

Managed parkland.

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

Non identified.

Public Land Ownership?

Sommersall Park is owned by Chesterfield Borough Council.

Summary

Green Wedge justification:

- ***Public Rights of Way network:*** good public rights of way network, including the Hipper Valley Trail (providing access into the town centre and open countryside)
- ***Penetration of urban areas:*** into Walton and Ashgate
- ***Biodiversity Value:*** river corridor habitats
- ***Amenity value:*** attractive river corridor (the Hipper) and parkland setting

8.0 Brimington North: *Strategic Gap*



Landscape character type:
Coalfield Farmlands

Blue Infrastructure (rivers, open water, wetland, etc)

Chesterfield Canal forms the northern boundary.

Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006) allocations

- Open countryside and other open land (EVR2)
- River and canal environment (EVR13) – Chesterfield Canal
- New Public Open Space (POS2)
- Sports pitches and playing fields (POS4) – Brimington Junior School
- Wildlife sites (EVR4/EVR5) - Bluebank Pools
- Proposed greenways and strategic walking and cycling routes (TRS13) – Chesterfield Canal Towpath
- Chesterfield – Staveley regeneration route (TRS3)

Biodiversity (as identified by DWT)

Populations of water voles along the Chesterfield Canal. Bluebank Pools Local Nature Reserve includes a mosaic of habitats, including unimproved grasslands, wet woodland, oxbow pools, scrub and the running and standing water habitats provided by the river and the canal. The area also includes habitats and species referred to in local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) including the Lowland Derbyshire BAP and the Chesterfield Greenprint BAP (see appendix 4).

Access, Routes & Public Rights of Way

The area is accessible via an established Public Rights of Way Network, including access onto the Trans-Pennine Trail (aka Chesterfield Canal Towpath) from Bilby lane. The Trans-Pennine Trail is a multi-user trail

Historic Heritage

The Chesterfield Canal was established in 1777.

Urban-Rural Fringe Issues

The Staveley and Rother Valley Corridor Area Action Plan aims to create major new mixed uses regeneration of the former Staveley Works corridor.

Previously Developed Land (e.g. open casting, brownfield land, etc)

Much of the area is part of the Dixon opncase coal site.

Public Land Ownership?

Chesterfield Canal and Bluebank Wood Local Nature Reserve are owned by Derbyshire County Council.

Summary

Strategic Gap justification:

- ***Public Rights of Way network:*** good public rights of way network, including Bilby lane, the Trans-Pennine Trial (aka Chesterfield Canal towpath) which is route of national importance
- ***Penetration of urban areas:*** into Brimington North
- ***Amenity value:*** attractive river/canal corridor setting
- ***Biodiversity value:*** Chesterfields Canal and Bluebank Pools Local Nature Reserve

Appendix 1: Draft Core Strategy policy

Strategic Gaps and Green Wedges (from CS1 Spatial Strategy)

Strategic gaps give distinct identity to different areas, prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into one another, and maintain open space. Green Wedges provide access to the countryside from urban areas. The open character of Strategic Gaps and Green Wedges will be protected from development between:

- Brimington and Tapton
- Hasland and Spital
- Ringwood and Hollingwood
- Holme Hall and Newbold Green
- Lowgates, Woodthorpe and Netherthorpe
- Old Whittington and New Whittington
- Walton River Corridor
- Brimington North

The broad locations of Strategic Gaps and Green Wedges are identified on the Key Diagram and will be defined in detail in the Sites and Boundaries DPD. The boundaries will be based on an assessment of the character of the proposed Green Wedge or Strategic Gap and its contribution to: the setting and identity of the borough and its urban areas; landscape character, habitat and biodiversity; access to countryside and recreation; the ability to connect areas of green infrastructure; and the impact that development would have on the function of the Green Wedge or Strategic Gap.

Appendix 2: Draft Core Strategy policy

CS8 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Chesterfield Borough's green infrastructure network will be recognised at all levels of the planning and development process with the aim of protecting and enhancing the network.

Development proposals are required to meet the following criteria where appropriate, and should:

- a) not involve the loss of public open space
- b) enhance connectivity between and public access to green infrastructure
- c) increase the opportunities for cycling, walking and horse riding
- d) enhance the multi-functionality of the borough's formal and informal parks and open spaces
- e) conserve or enhance the local distinctiveness and character of the landscape
- f) enhance the borough's biodiversity and where possible link habitats
- g) increase tree cover in suitable locations in the borough
- h) in cases where loss of a green infrastructure asset is unavoidable, include provision of alternative green infrastructure, on site where possible, to ensure at least "no net loss" in quantity, quality or function

For major developments the council will seek to negotiate up to 1% of the total development cost of the scheme towards green infrastructure improvement in the borough. Where a need is identified, major developments must also contribute to sports and play provision in accordance with the standards set out in an adopted SPD.

The council will require the submission with the planning application of ecological surveys and assessments of the biodiversity and geological value of sites as set out in the Local List.

Where new green infrastructure is proposed, there must be clear funding and delivery mechanisms in place for its long term management and maintenance prior to the development commencing.

Appendix 3: Landscape Character of Derbyshire

Landscape Character Types <i>Source: The Landscape Character of Derbyshire (2003)</i>
<p>Derbyshire Coalfield Coalfield Village Farmlands (applies to: <i>Brimington and Tupton Strategic Gap, Holme Hall and Newbold Green Wedge, Old Whittington and New Whittington</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently undulating landform • Dairy farming with pasture and localised arable cropping • Copses and linear tree-belts • Dense streamline trees and scattered hedgerow trees • Network of small irregular lanes between larger urban roads Adjacent to former mining terraces
<p>Derbyshire Coalfield Riverside Meadows (applies to: <i>Brimington and Tupton Strategic Gap, Hasland and Spital Green Wedge, Lowgates, Woodthorpe and Netherthorpe Strategic Gap</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow rivers meander along flood plains of variable width • Remnant riverside vegetation, wetland and unimproved grassland • Dairy farming dominated by pasture • Dense tree cover along river channels • Scattered tree cover along boundaries • Strong association with transport routes due to the presence of canals, railway lines and roads
<p>Derbyshire Coalfield Estate Farmlands (applies to <i>Ringwood and Hollingwood Strategic Gap, Lowgates, Woodthorpe and Netherthorpe Strategic Gap</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad gently undulating landform • Mixed farming dominated by arable cropping. • Localised woodland blocks and occasional trees. • Hedgerows enclose medium size, semi-regular fields. • Small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads constructed from local coal measures sandstone some expanded with red brick former mining terraces. • Open landscape with long distance views.
<p>Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent Wooded Farmlands (applies to <i>Walton River Corridor Green Wedge</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undulating, intermediate landform, with gentle slopes • Poorly draining soils over mudstone with localised sandstone and coal seams • Localised bracken on thinner soils over sandstone • Scattered ancient woodlands • Scattered hedgerow trees locally dense in places • Dense tree cover along streams • Areas of irregular fields bounded by mixed species hedgerows • Small to medium fields, enclosed by hedgerows • Curving lanes with irregular verges • Scattered sandstone farmsteads and occasional hamlets