







CONSULTANTS LTD



MSC1650/CP/ST


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Warrington Borough Council

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Dear 

Bents Garden Centre - Green Belt Assessment Observations

* Further to our telephone conversation this morning I have summarised below my comments regarding Arup's Green Belt Assessment Report. I enclose the relevant pages.

To the north of Bents Garden Centre Arup have identified 2 parcels of land: GB2 and GB3. They have assessed parcel GB3 as making a "Strong Contribution" to the 5 purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The only purpose that scored "strongly" was safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (the other 4 purposes made either no contribution or a moderate contribution). However within parcel GB3 there is a golf course (formerly a Bird of Prey Centre), a childrens play area, display gardens and the restaurant terrace. I am not clear, therefore, why Arup has assessed the parcel as making a "Strong Contribution" to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment since the majority of the parcel is developed and is not open countryside.

With regard to parcel GB2 approximately half of this area has planning consent for a visitor attraction being the Wildlife Gardens which include a Bird of Prey flight zone which could attract 20,000 visitors per annum. This part of the parcel is, therefore, not 'open countryside'.

It is my view that parcel GB3 makes a weak (or at most moderate) contribution to safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment and parcel GB2 could make a strong contribution. I would note that parcel GB6 has been assessed as making a weak contribution and yet it is the garden centre's display garden and is no different to parcels GB2 and GB3.

Development in parcel GB3 would have little effect upon the Green Belt and could indeed take pressure off other parcels which make a stronger contribution (for example parcels GB1, 12 and 13).

With regard to GB13 I would note that this is partly developed as allotments including a car park and yet it has been assessed as making a "Strong Contribution".

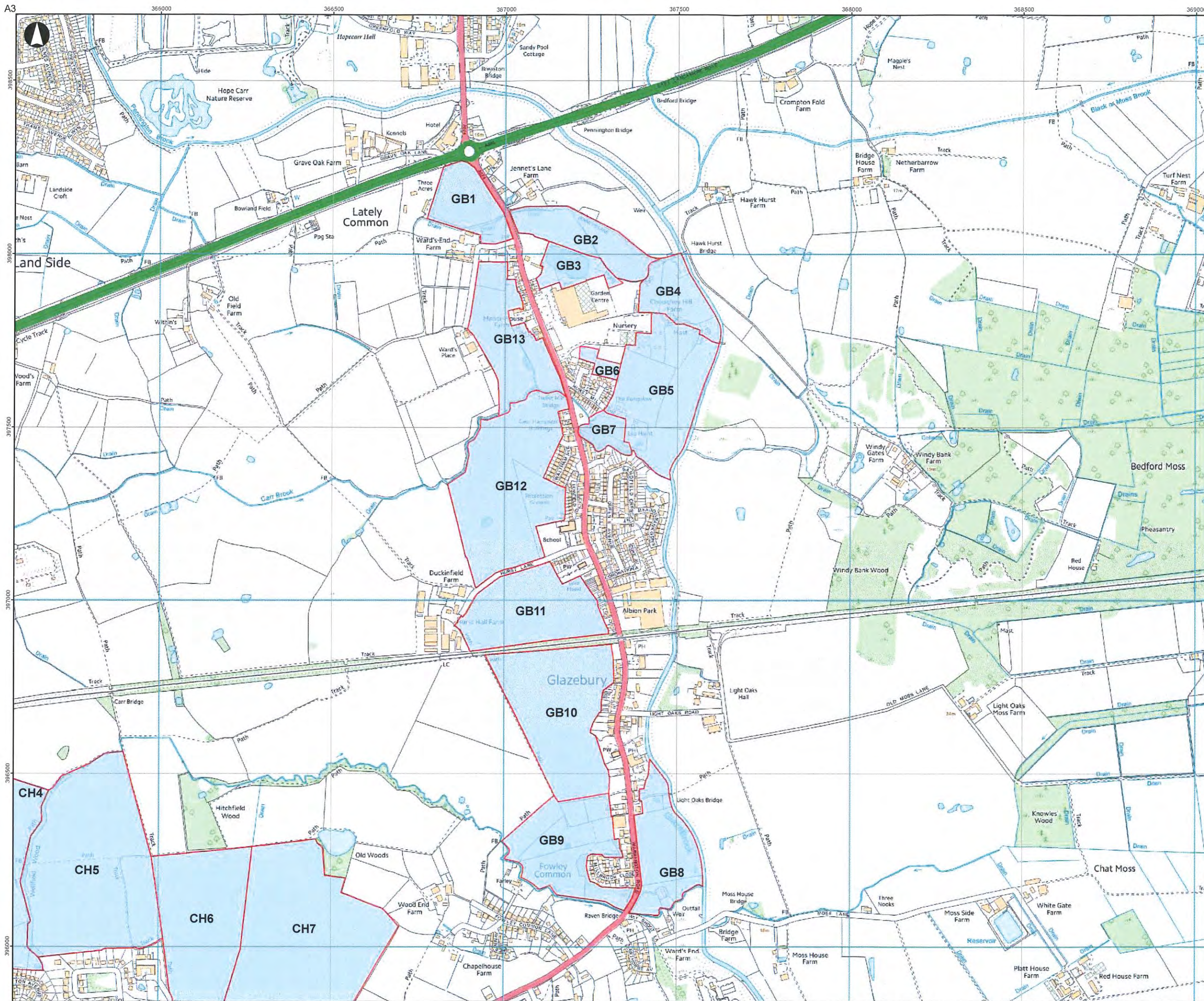
I would be grateful if you could re-assess parcels GB2 and GB3 with regard to their respective contributions to the 5 purposes of include land in the Green Belt.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

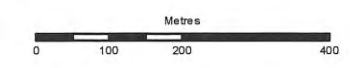
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Key
 Green Belt Assessment Parcel

PO	2016-07-28	APS	APS	APS
Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd



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1:10,000

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	parcel. Overall the parcel makes a moderate contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl.	makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.	encroachment due to its openness and the non-durability of its western boundary.		purpose.	settlement and the countryside therefore the parcel has a strong role in preventing encroachment into the open countryside. The parcel therefore makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under paragraph 79 of the NPPF in protecting the openness of the Green Belt.	
WR84	Moderate contribution: The parcel is well connected to the built up area on two sides. These boundaries are Liverpool Road and Laburnum Lane. Both of these are durable although may not be permanently durable enough in the long term to prevent sprawl into the parcel. Overall the parcel makes a moderate contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl.	Weak contribution: The parcel forms a less essential gap between the Warrington urban area and Widnes whereby development of the parcel would slightly reduce the actual gap but not the perceived gap between the towns. Furthermore, the gap is already narrower in other places. Overall, the parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.	Strong contribution: The parcel is well connected to the built up area on two sides. These boundaries are Liverpool Road and Laburnum Lane. Both of these are durable. The parcel is well connected to the countryside. Laburnum Lane is a durable boundary. A tree lined field boundary to the west of the parcel is not durable and may not be able to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is mainly open countryside. There are a small number of residential properties along Laburnum Lane and minimal vegetation in the parcel. The parcel supports long line views and overall supports a strong degree of openness. Overall the parcel makes a strong contribution to safeguarding from encroachment due to its openness and the non-durability of its western boundary.	No contribution: Warrington is a historic town however the parcel is not within 250m of the Warrington Town Centre Conservation Areas. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to two, a weak contribution to one and no contribution to one. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a strong overall contribution as it supports a strong degree of openness and there are non-durable boundaries between the parcel, the settlement and the countryside therefore the parcel has a strong role in preventing encroachment into the open countryside. The parcel therefore makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under paragraph 79 of the NPPF in protecting the openness of the Green Belt.	Strong contribution
GLAZEBOURY							
GB1	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	Weak contribution: The parcel forms a less essential gap between Culcheth and Leigh in the neighbouring authority of Wigan. Development of the parcel would slightly reduce the actual gap between the towns although it would not result in the towns merging. Overall, the parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.	Moderate contribution: The boundary between the parcel and the settlement consists of Warrington Road and the A580 which is durable and could prevent encroachment into the parcel. The boundaries between the parcel and the countryside consists of an access road, an industrial storage yard and a dense tree line. These boundaries may not be able to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is open countryside. The parcel is connected to the open countryside along two of the boundaries. The parcel is flat, with no built form or vegetation within the parcel however there are no long-line views given the land uses surrounding the parcel and thus the parcel supports a strong-moderate degree of openness. Overall, the parcel makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a moderate contribution to two purposes, a weak contribution to one purpose, and no contribution to two purposes. In line with the methodology, the parcel has been judged to make a weak overall contribution. The parcel supports a strong-moderate degree of openness and has durable boundaries with the settlement thus it makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding from encroachment. The parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging. The parcel does not contribute to checking unrestricted sprawl or preserving the setting of historic towns.	Weak contribution
GB2	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	No contribution: The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging.	Strong contribution: The boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-durable so may not be able to prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. The boundaries between the parcel and the countryside are durable and consist of Jennet's Lane to the north which could prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is open countryside that is in agricultural use. The parcel is well connected to the open countryside along three boundaries. The parcel supports a strong degree of openness as the parcel is flat and has long-line views, no vegetation and no built form.	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this	The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose, and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a moderate overall contribution as whilst it does support a strong degree of openness and the boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-	Moderate contribution



			Overall the parcel makes a strong contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.		purpose.	durable, the boundaries between the parcel and the countryside are durable and could contain development thus preventing it from threatening the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. The parcel makes no contribution to preventing towns from merging.	
GB3	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	No contribution: The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging.	Strong contribution: The boundary between the parcel and settlement is non-durable as it follows the limits of development consisting of a garden centre warehouse and its car park. This would not prevent further encroachment into the parcel in the long term. Between the parcel and the countryside there is a dense tree line which is a non-durable boundary and would not be able to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel was developed. The existing land use is open countryside however there is a large water body that occupies that majority of the parcel. The parcel is connected to the countryside on two boundaries. The parcel supports a strong degree of openness as it is flat, has long-line views, no vegetation and no built form. Overall, the parcel makes a strong contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a strong overall contribution as it supports a strong degree of openness and the boundaries between the parcel and the settlement as well as the parcel and the countryside are not durable and therefore the parcel has a strong role in preventing encroachment into the countryside. The parcel therefore makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under paragraph 79 of the NPPF in protecting the openness of the Green Belt.	Strong contribution
GB4	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	No contribution: The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging.	Strong contribution: Between the parcel and the settlement there is a mix of durable and non-durable features, with tree-line and an access road. This boundary would not be able to prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. Between the parcel and the countryside is Jennet's Lane and Pennington Brook which are both durable boundaries that could prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is open countryside. The parcel is connected to the countryside along three boundaries. The parcel supports a strong degree of openness as it is flat, there are long-line views, no built form and no vegetation. Overall, the parcel makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a strong overall contribution as it supports a strong degree of openness and the boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are not durable and therefore the parcel has a strong role in preventing encroachment into the countryside. The parcel therefore makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under paragraph 79 of the NPPF in protecting the openness of the Green Belt.	Strong contribution
GB5	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	No contribution: The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging.	Strong contribution: The boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are predominantly non-durable consisting of Carr Brook to the south, and the limits of residential and retail development to the west. Therefore these boundaries would not prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. The boundaries between the parcel and the countryside are durable to the east consisting of Glaze Brook. The boundary to the north consists of a track which is not durable and may not be able to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is mixed and	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this	The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a strong overall contribution as it supports a strong degree of openness and the boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-durable and therefore	Strong contribution

			part of the site is open countryside and part of the site consists of a garden centre. The parcel is connected to the countryside along two boundaries. The parcel supports a strong degree of openness as there is less than 10% built form, it is flat, has long line views and minimal vegetation. Overall, the parcel makes a strong contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.		purpose.	the parcel plays a strong role in preventing encroachment into the countryside. The parcel therefore makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under paragraph 79 of the NPPF in protecting the openness of the Green Belt.	
GB6	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	No contribution: The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging.	Moderate contribution: The parcel is well connected to the settlement along three boundaries. The boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-durable as there is a tree-lined boundary to the south and the other boundaries are the Green Belt boundary which is not demarcated by any physical features. Therefore these boundaries would not prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. Between the parcel and the countryside the boundary is tree lining which is not durable. This boundary would not prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is mixed as there are a number of allotments and a wooded area within the parcel. The parcel has a weak connection to the countryside as it only adjoins the countryside on one boundary where there is a dense tree line. The parcel supports a moderate degree of openness as there is no built form, some vegetation, the parcel is flat and has long line views. Overall, the parcel makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a moderate contribution to two purposes and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, the parcel has been judged to make a weak overall contribution. The parcel has a weak connection to the open countryside however the boundaries between the parcel, the settlement and the countryside are non-durable and the parcel has a role in preventing encroachment. The parcel makes no contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl, preventing towns from merging or preserving the setting of historic towns.	Weak contribution
GB7	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	No contribution: The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging.	Moderate contribution: Between the parcel and the settlement there are durable boundaries. To the south is the heavily tree lined Carr Brook and to the north is Hurst Mill Lane which is bordered by dense tree line, therefore these boundaries could prevent encroachment into the parcel. The boundary between the parcel and the countryside is less durable as it is a natural boundary that is tree lined. This may not be permanently durable enough to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land is open countryside. The parcel is connected to the countryside along two boundaries however it is fairly enclosed by the settlement. The parcel supports a moderate degree of openness as the parcel is flat, there are no long line views, and no built form however there are areas of dense heavy vegetation. Overall, the parcel makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a moderate contribution to two purposes and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, the parcel has been judged to make a weak overall contribution. The parcel is fairly enclosed by the settlement and the boundaries between the parcel and the open countryside are non-durable thus the parcel has a moderate role in safeguarding from encroachment. Furthermore, the parcel supports a moderate degree of openness and makes a moderate contribution to encouraging urban regeneration. The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging, checking unrestricted sprawl or preserving the setting of historic towns.	Weak contribution
GB8	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	No contribution: The parcel does not contribute to preventing towns from merging.	Moderate contribution: Between the parcel and the settlement the boundary partly consists of a dense tree line which although is durable may not be permanently durable in the long term. The remainder of the northern boundary is not durable and would not prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. Durable boundaries are present between the parcel and the countryside which consist of Glaze Brook and a minor watercourse. This would prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is open countryside. The	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate	The parcel makes a moderate contribution to two purposes and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, the parcel has been judged to make a weak overall contribution. The boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-durable and may not be able to prevent encroachment in the long term however the boundaries between the parcel and the countryside	Weak contribution

	and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	in the neighbouring authority of Wigan. Development of the parcel would slightly reduce the actual gap between the towns although it would not result in the towns merging. Overall, the parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.	would not prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. The boundaries between the settlement and the countryside are durable as these consist of Hurst Lane to the north and dense trees that surround the Glazebrook trail (following the disused railway) to the south of the parcel. This boundaries could prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use is agricultural. The parcel is connected to the countryside along two boundaries, and a third boundary is farm buildings. The parcel is flat, has long line views and there is no vegetation or built form present and therefore the parcel supports a strong degree of openness. Overall, the parcel makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.	viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	purposes. In line with the methodology, the parcel has been judged to make a weak overall contribution. There are durable boundaries between the parcel and countryside although the boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-durable and therefore the parcel has a moderate role in preventing encroachment. The parcel makes a moderate contribution to encouraging urban regeneration. The parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging and makes no contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl and preserving the setting of historic towns.	
GB12	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	Weak contribution: The parcel forms a less essential gap between Culcheth and Leigh in the neighbouring authority of Wigan. Development of the parcel would slightly reduce the actual gap between the towns although it would not result in the towns merging. Overall, the parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.	Strong contribution: The boundary between the parcel and the settlement is very weak and not durable as it consists of the garden boundaries and some intermittent tree line. Therefore the boundaries would not prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. The boundaries between the parcel and the countryside are more durable. To the south is Hurst Lane and to the north is Carr Brook, the western boundary is dense and continuous hedge line. The combination of these boundaries would prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed but only from the north and south as the western boundary is not durable enough to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel. The existing land use is open countryside that is currently in agricultural use. The parcel is well connected to the open countryside along three boundaries. The parcel is flat, with no built form, minimal vegetation and long line views and thus supports a strong degree of openness. Overall, the parcel makes a strong contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose, a weak contribution to one purpose, and no contribution to two purposes. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a strong overall contribution as there are non-durable boundaries between the parcel and the settlement and therefore the parcel has a strong role in preventing encroachment. There are slightly more durable boundaries between the parcel and the countryside although the western boundary is not durable. The parcel therefore makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under paragraph 79 of the NPPF in protecting the openness of the Green Belt.	Strong contribution
GB13	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose	Weak contribution: The parcel forms a less essential gap between Culcheth and Leigh in the neighbouring authority of Wigan. Development of the parcel would slightly reduce the actual gap between the towns although it would not result in the towns merging. Overall, the parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.	Strong contribution: The boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are mostly non-durable. Part of the boundary is Warrington Road which is a durable boundary however may not be permanently durable in the long term. The other boundaries along the eastern and northern edge are the rear gardens of houses and other buildings which are not durable boundaries and therefore these would not prevent encroachment into the parcel in the long term. The boundaries between the parcel and the countryside are mixed in strength. The southern boundary is Carr Brook which is a durable boundary that could prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. However the western boundary consists of a track, a farm building and intermittent tree lining which is not durable and would not be able to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if it were developed. The existing land use is open countryside that is in agricultural use. The parcel is well connected to the countryside along two boundaries. The parcel is flat, with no built form, no	No contribution: The parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.	Moderate contribution: The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose.	The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose, a weak contribution to one purpose, and no contribution to two purposes. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a strong overall contribution as there are predominantly non-durable boundaries between the parcel and the settlement and the parcel and the countryside therefore the parcel has a strong role in preventing encroachment. The parcel therefore makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under paragraph 79 of the NPPF in protecting the openness of the Green Belt.	Strong contribution

