

Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project
Anglian Water Services Limited

Planning Statement: Green Belt Assessment

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Summary

The aim of this assessment is to assess the harm to the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt that would result from the Proposed Development to relocate the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) to a new site in the Green Belt, on farmland north of the A14 between Fen Ditton and Horningsea. The area considered in this assessment is the 94ha area of land required for the proposed WWTP, surrounding earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road and associated landscape and ecological mitigation. Other elements of the of the Proposed Development, including a transfer tunnel, the Waterbeach pipeline and a treated effluent pipeline and outfall on the River Cam, are at or below ground level and for the reasons set out in the Planning Statement (Application Document Reference 7.5), in relation to Paragraph 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), would not affect the openness of the Green Belt and are not considered in the assessment.

This assessment follows the methodology used the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) which assesses the harm to Green Belt purposes likely to result from release of areas of land from the Green Belt to expand existing settlements. Therefore, it is not directly applicable to the Proposed Development which is not linked to an existing settlement and where the nature and design of the development is known. However, it does present a methodology and criteria for assessment which, for consistency, have been used in this site-specific assessment.

The National Policy Statement (NPS) for Waste Water (2012) states in paragraph 4.8.4 that “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness”. It also states that “the general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.

The NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts: “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”. The NPPF defines the five purposes of the Green Belt and these purposes have been applied locally as the 'Cambridge Green Belt Purposes', which are set out in the Cambridge City Council (CCC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Local Plans of 2018:

- Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;
- Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of its setting; and
- Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.

For consistency, this assessment follows the approach taken in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) and assesses the impact on Cambridge Green Belt

purposes. The Inspectors' Local Plan Examination reports for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the Cambridge Local Plan in 2018 accepted the continued validity of the three Cambridge Green Belt purposes as an application of national policy in a local context, reflecting "the importance of Cambridge as a historic city and the particular role of the Green Belt in preserving its setting". However, the Planning Statement (App Doc Ref 7.5) considers all five NPPF Green Belt purposes in relation to the proposed WWTP.

In the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021), the Green Belt is divided into parcels of land around settlement edges and in outer areas, away from settlements. These are assessed for their current contribution to Cambridge Green Belt purposes. The area of land required for the proposed WWTP lies in a large outer area parcel, Parcel OA2, which comprises farmland between Fen Ditton, Stow cum Quy, Horningsea, Waterbeach and Milton. The assessment considers that Parcel OA2 make a limited/no contribution to Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 1 as it is not linked to the built-up area of Cambridge, a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2 as it contributes to the characteristic rural landscape setting of the city and a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3 by maintaining the separation between Waterbeach, Horningsea, Fen Ditton and Stow cum Quy. The assessment concludes that the harm resulting from the release of land from Parcel OA2 as an expansion of a settlement or a settlement beyond the Green Belt's outer edge would be very high.

For this assessment a smaller land parcel within Parcel OA2 has been identified, which includes the area required for the proposed WWTP, the earth bank, the visitors' car park, site access road and associated landscape masterplan (which provides the landscape setting for the proposed WWTP). This is termed the 'WWTP Parcel' and is currently arable farmland, lying between the A14, the Horningsea Road, a dismantled railway line and Low Fen Drove Way. The land is open, lacks urbanising visual influences and has strong boundaries in the A14, Horningsea Road and the dismantled railway line. There is a moderate degree of separation between the land and Horningsea and Fen Ditton. This assessment concludes that the WWTP Parcel makes a limited/no contribution to Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 1 as it is not linked to the built-up area of Cambridge. It makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2 because the land has strong distinction from the urban edge of Cambridge and other settlements and contributes to the rural setting of Cambridge. It makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3 as the land is open and lies in a clear gap between Horningsea and Fen Ditton. Thus the WWTP Parcel makes the same contribution as the larger Parcel OA2.

The impact of the development of the proposed WWTP on the contribution of adjacent Green Belt land to Green Belt purposes would be moderate-minor or minor due to the urbanizing visual influence of the new structures, the diminishing of the contribution the land makes to Cambridge's setting and a reduction in the settlement gap between Fen Ditton and Horningsea.

The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021), the NPPF and Government's Planning Practice Guidance make recommendations for mitigation and enhancements that

can offset the impact of removing land from the Green Belt including on the design and location of buildings and the landscape and green spaces to minimise intrusion on settlement settings, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and enhance biodiversity and the landscape.

The landscape masterplan (within the Landscape Environment and Recreation Management Plan (LERMP) (Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14) for the Proposed Development includes landscape and biodiversity enhancements which would reduce the urbanizing effect of the proposed WWTP. Trees and woodland belts would in time screen the parts of the proposed WWTP visible above the surrounding 5m high earth bank from much of the wider area but would change the character of the WWTP Parcel from open farmland to a more wooded landscape. Open views across the landscape north of the proposed WWTP would be maintained. Recreational enhancements would include new recreational paths, publicly accessible open space around the proposed WWTP and a new bridleway linking Low Fen Drove Way and Stow cum Quy. The landscape masterplan would deliver a minimum of 20% BNG and would complement the Cambridge Nature Network opportunity areas for nature recovery, connecting with key areas such as Quy Hall, Little Wilbraham Fen and Quy Fen SSSI. The landscape and ecological mitigations and enhancements would be secured through the LERMP.

Overall, the development would result in a reduction in the moderate contribution the proposed WWTP site currently makes to two of the Cambridge Green Belt purposes and would constitute a moderate-minor or minor impact on the Green Belt function of adjacent Green Belt land. The landscape masterplan and the LERMP (Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref Appendix 5.4.8.14) would in time partly restore the existing contribution the WWTP Parcel and adjacent Green Belt land make to Green Belt purposes. This assessment concludes that the resulting harm of the proposed WWTP development to Green Belt purposes would be moderate.

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the Green Belt assessment

1.1.1 The assessment evaluates:

- the contribution that the land required for the proposed WWTP (including the earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road and associated landscape and ecological mitigation shown on the landscape masterplan) currently makes to the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt;
- the impact of the proposed WWTP on the existing contribution to Green Belt purposes of the land required for the proposed WWTP and of adjacent Green Belt land; and
- the resulting overall harm to the Green Belt that would potentially result from the development of the proposed WWTP in this location.

1.1.2 The assessment applies the methodology used in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment, which was published in August 2021. It was commissioned by Cambridge City Council (CCC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to provide an independent and objective assessment of the performance of all Green Belt land across the two authorities which together form Greater Cambridge. The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment will form an important piece of evidence informing the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan currently being prepared jointly by CCC and SCDC.

1.2 Planning policy and the Green Belt

National Policy Statement requirement

1.2.1 The National Policy Statement (NPS) for Waste Water (2012) states in paragraph 4.8.4 that "The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness". Paragraph 4.8.10 states that "*The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Applicants should therefore determine whether their proposal, or any part of it, is within an established Green Belt and, if it is, whether their proposal may be inappropriate development within the meaning of Green Belt policy*".

National and local planning policy

1.2.2 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) lists the Green Belt and planning policies relevant to the Cambridge Green Belt. There has been no change to these policies since 2021 and therefore a summary of the key policies and guidance is listed below.

- 1.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.
- 1.2.4 The NPPF defines the five purposes of the Green Belt. These are:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 1.2.5 The Cambridge City Local Plan 2018 and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 encapsulates the NPPF purposes in three 'Cambridge Green Belt Purposes':
- to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre (Purpose 1);
 - to maintain and enhance the quality of its setting (Purpose 2); and
 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city (Purpose 3).
- 1.2.6 The Inspectors' Local Plan Examination reports for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the Cambridge Local Plan in 2018 accepted the continued validity of the three Cambridge Green Belt purposes as an application of national policy in a local context, reflecting “*the importance of Cambridge as a historic city and the particular role of the Green Belt in preserving its setting*”.
- 1.2.7 In addition, the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) set out a number of factors that define the special character of Cambridge. Those relevant to the Proposed Development are:
- a soft green edge to the city;
 - a distinctive urban edge;
 - green corridors penetrating into the city;
 - the distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages; and
 - a landscape that retains a strong rural character.
- 1.2.8 This assessment follows the approach taken in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) and assesses the impact on Cambridge Green Belt purposes rather than on the purposes defined in the NPPF.

1.2.9 The Cambridge Green Belt includes approximately 1,910 hectares of land in East Cambridgeshire District. This area of Green Belt land, to the north-east of Stow cum Quy, would be too far from the site of the proposed WWTP be affected by the proposed WWTP development and is not considered in this assessment.

1.2.10 **Figure 1.1** below shows the location of the land required for the proposed WWTP (including the earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road and landscape masterplan) in the Green Belt. A stretch of Low Fen Drove Way (immediately north-east of the site) is a PRoW (Byway Fen Ditton 85/14). There are Sites of Special Scientific Interest at Quy Fen and Little Wilbraham Fen, north-east and south-east of the site respectively, and conservation areas in Fen Ditton, Horningsea and along the River Cam. The gardens of Anglesey Abbey are on the Historic England's register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and Biggin Abbey, approximately 450m west of the land required for the proposed WWTP is a grade II* listed building.

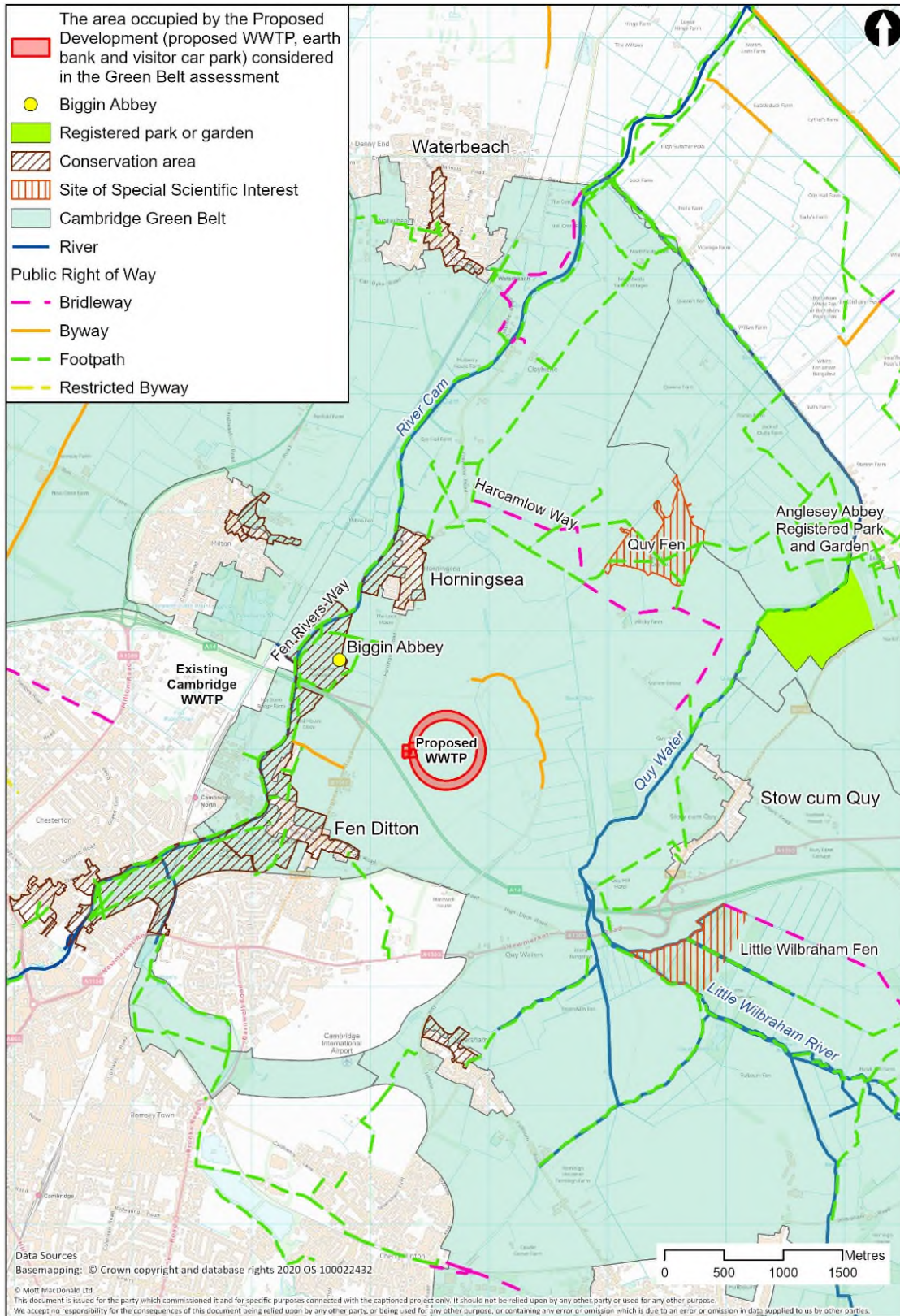


Figure 1.1: Cambridge Green Belt, site of the proposed WWTP, public rights of way and designated landscape, ecological and heritage features

2 Scope and Methodology

2.1 Scope of the assessment

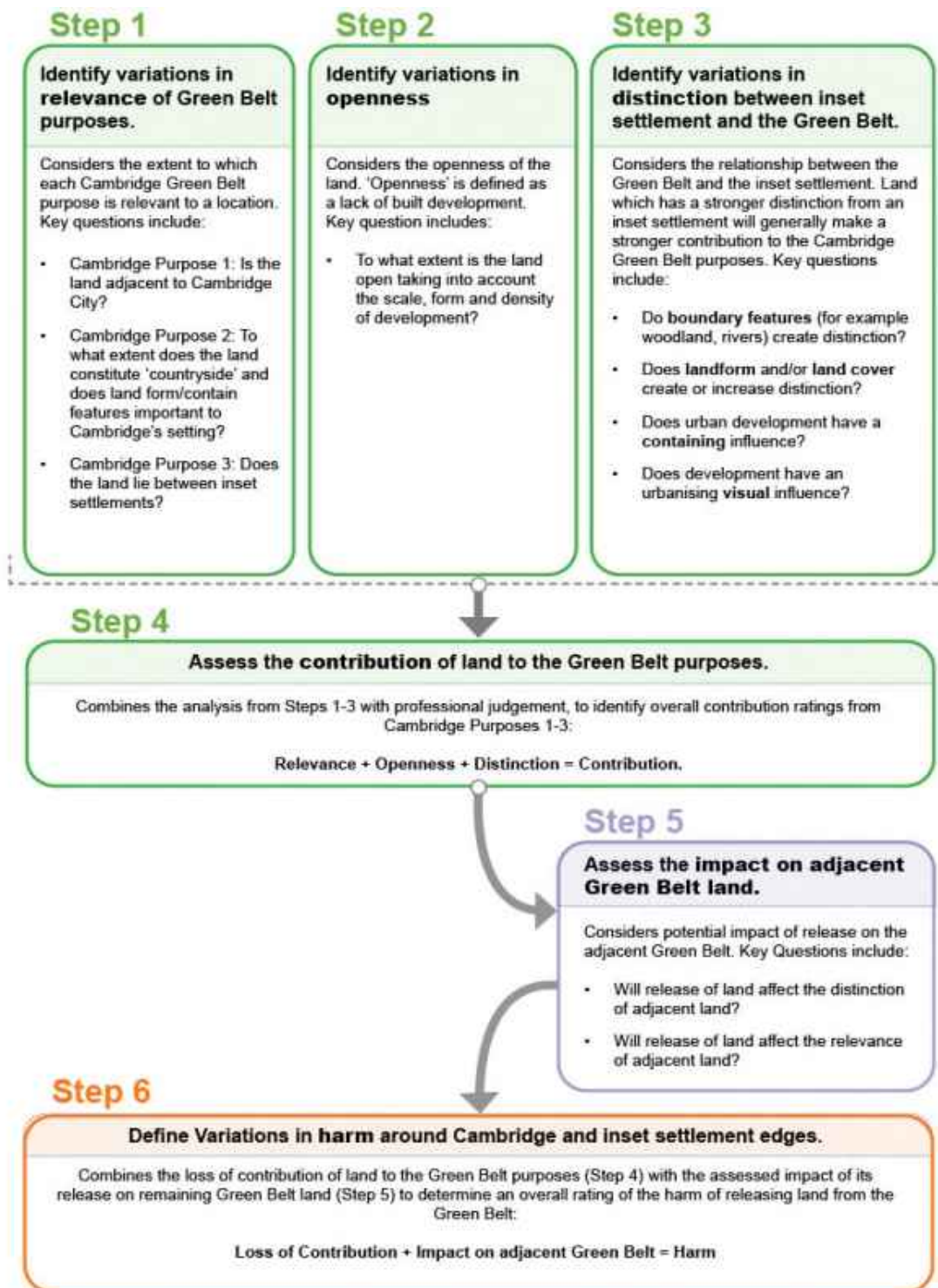
- 2.1.1 The aim of this assessment is to assess the current contribution of the land required for the proposed WWTP (including the earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road and landscape masterplan) to the Cambridge Green Belt purposes, the impact on the purposes of the site and adjacent Green Belt land and the resulting overall harm likely to result from the development of the proposed WWTP in that location.
- 2.1.2 The Proposed Development comprises the WWTP, earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road, landscape masterplan, waste water transfer tunnel, treated effluent pipeline, outfall on the River Cam and Waterbeach pipeline. The majority of the Proposed Development would be on Green Belt land, but the area considered in this assessment is the 94ha area of land required for the proposed WWTP, surrounding earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road and associated landscape and ecological mitigation shown on the landscape masterplan.
- 2.1.3 The other elements of the of the Proposed Development, including the transfer tunnel, pipelines and treated effluent outfall, would be at or below ground level. The tunnel and pipeline routes would be imperceptible in the landscape after the restoration of the land disturbed during construction and the outfall would be covered with soil and seeded with grass and wildflower and only partly visible from a short stretch of the river and towpath. Consequently, and for the reasons set out in the Planning Statement (App Doc Ref 7.5) in relation to Paragraph 150 of the NPPF, these elements would not affect the openness of the Green Belt and are not considered in the assessment.
- 2.1.4 Guidance on the assessment of the impact of a development on the openness of the Green Belt is provided in paragraph 1 of the planning practice guidance (PPG) on Green Belt (2019). This states that: *Assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case.* Matters to consider include:
- that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
 - the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state; and
 - the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

This assessment considers the visual impacts of the proposed WWTP (including the earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road and landscape masterplan) in terms of its urbanizing visual influence on the Green Belt, taking into account both the existing character of the landscape of the site and its surroundings and the visibility of the new structures. This approach differs from that taken in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development (App Doc Ref 5.2.15),

which separately assesses the likely significance of effects on the landscape as an environmental resource and on people's views and visual amenity.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 This assessment is informed by the findings of the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) and applies the methodology set out in Chapter 3 and the worked example in Appendix D of that assessment.
- 2.2.2 The methodology used in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) applies to the assessment of harm to the Cambridge Green Belt purposes likely to result from release of broad areas of land from the Green Belt to expand existing inset settlements (any settlement that is surrounded by Green Belt land, including the main urban area of Cambridge and the surrounding inset villages). The proposed WWTP would be a discrete development with a fully mitigated outline design, including maximum design parameters, and would not be linked to an existing settlement. Therefore, the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) methodology is not directly applicable to the proposed WWTP development because it does not take into account how design, mitigation or green infrastructure enhancements could reduce impacts on openness or harm to the Green Belt. However, for consistency, the methodology has been used in this site specific assessment.
- 2.2.3 A summary of the methodology for the assessment of harm is shown on Figure 2.1 below. The criteria tables used for the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment are included in Appendix 9.1.



Source: Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC 2021)

Figure 2.1: Methodology for the assessment of harm to Green Belt purposes

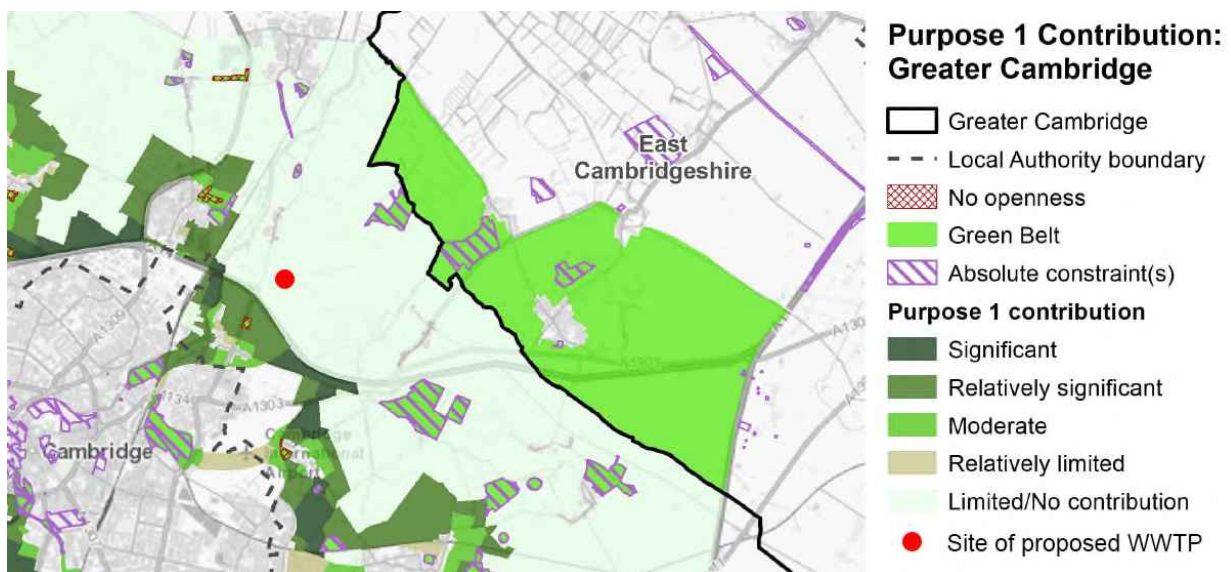
3 Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment

3.1.1 This section summarizes the assessment of the overall contribution to Cambridge Green Belt purposes of Green Belt land in the area of the Proposed Development as reported in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021).

3.2 Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment - overall contribution of Green Belt land to Cambridge Green Belt purposes

3.2.1 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021) assesses the overall contribution of land within the Cambridge Green Belt to Cambridge Green Belt purposes.

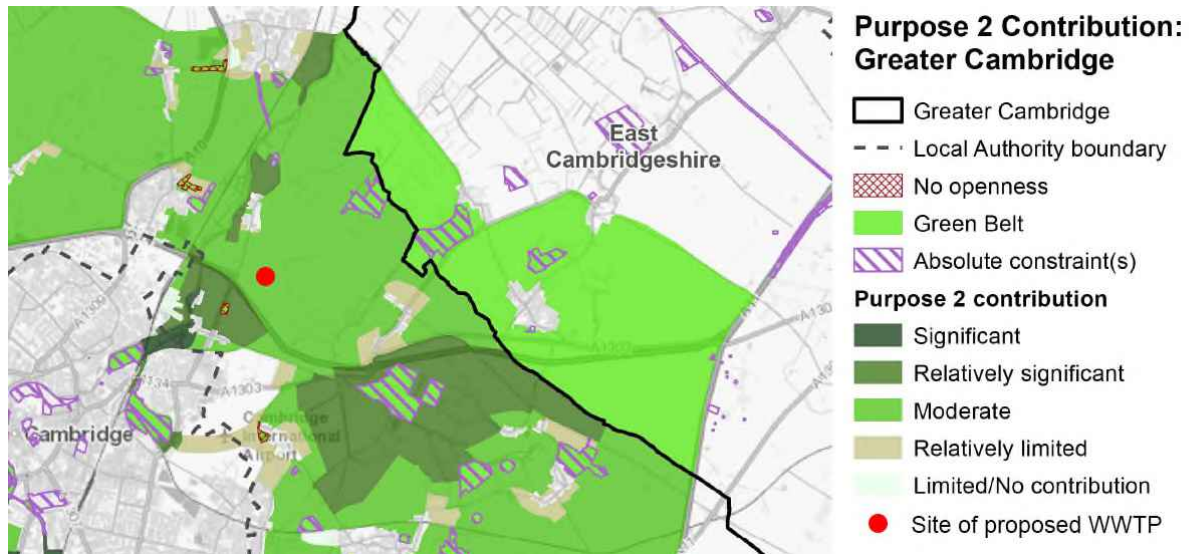
3.2.2 The land required for the proposed WWTP would be on land assessed as making a limited or no contribution to Purpose 1 (to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre) as shown on Figure 3.1 below.



Source: Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021)

Figure 3.1: Extract from map illustrating the contribution of Green Belt Land to Purpose 1

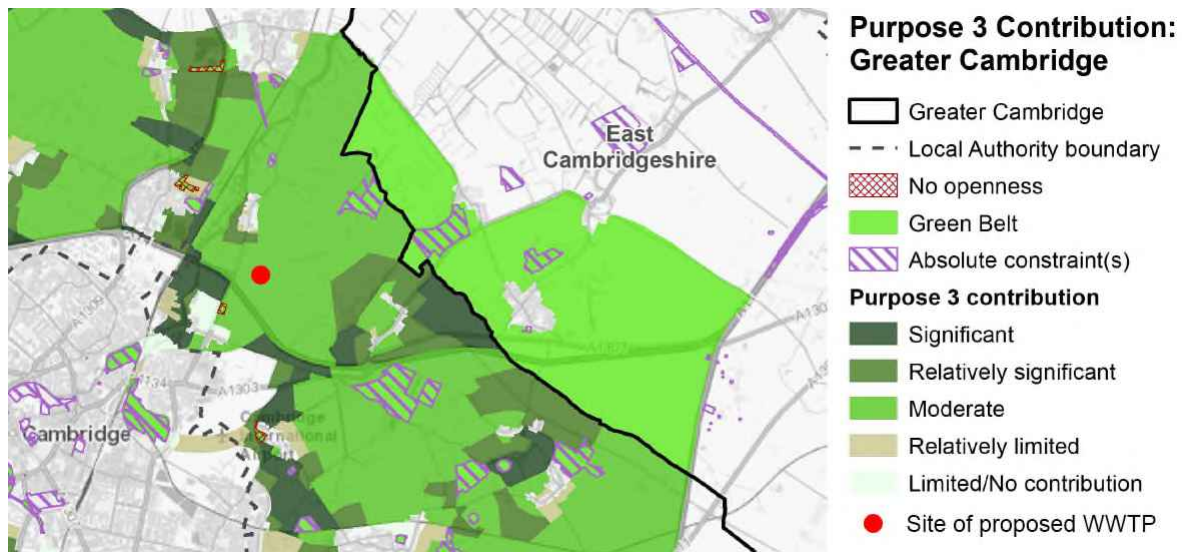
3.2.3 The land required for the proposed WWTP would be on land assessed as making a moderate contribution to Purpose 2 (to maintain and enhance the quality of the setting of Cambridge) as shown on Figure 3.2 below.



Source: Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021)

Figure 3.2: Extract from map illustrating the contribution of Green Belt Land to Purpose 2

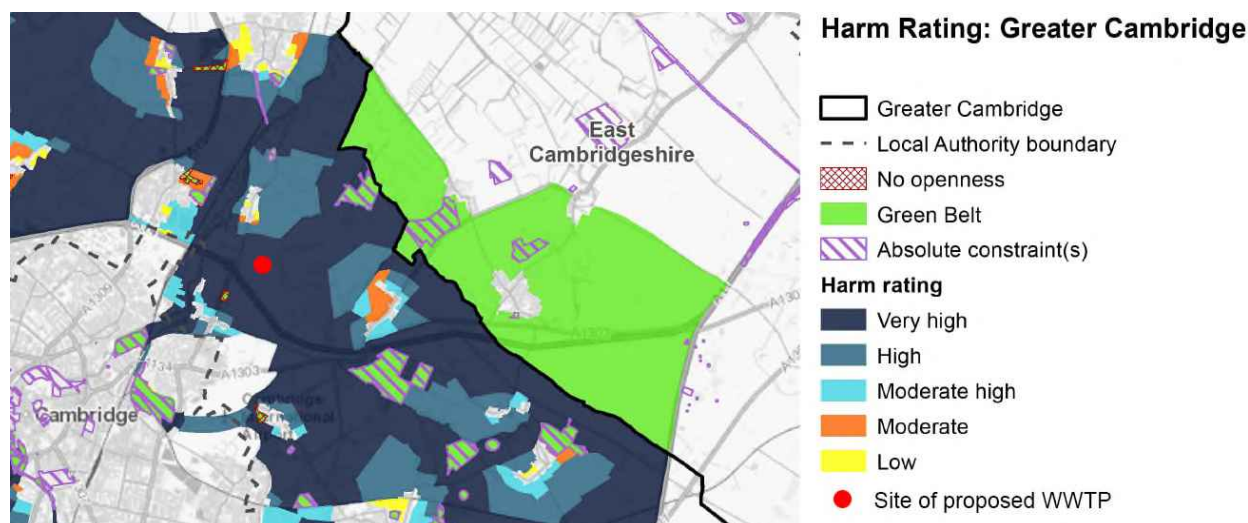
3.2.4 The land required for the proposed WWTP would be on land assessed as making a moderate contribution to Purpose 3 (to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city) as shown on Figure 3.3 below.



Source: Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021)

Figure 3.3: Extract from map illustrating the contribution of Green Belt Land to Purpose 3

3.2.5 The land required for the proposed WWTP would be on land assessed as having an overall rating of a very high potential degree of harm to Green Belt purposes resulting from the release of land from the Cambridge Green Belt for development as shown on Figure 3.4 below.



Source: Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021)

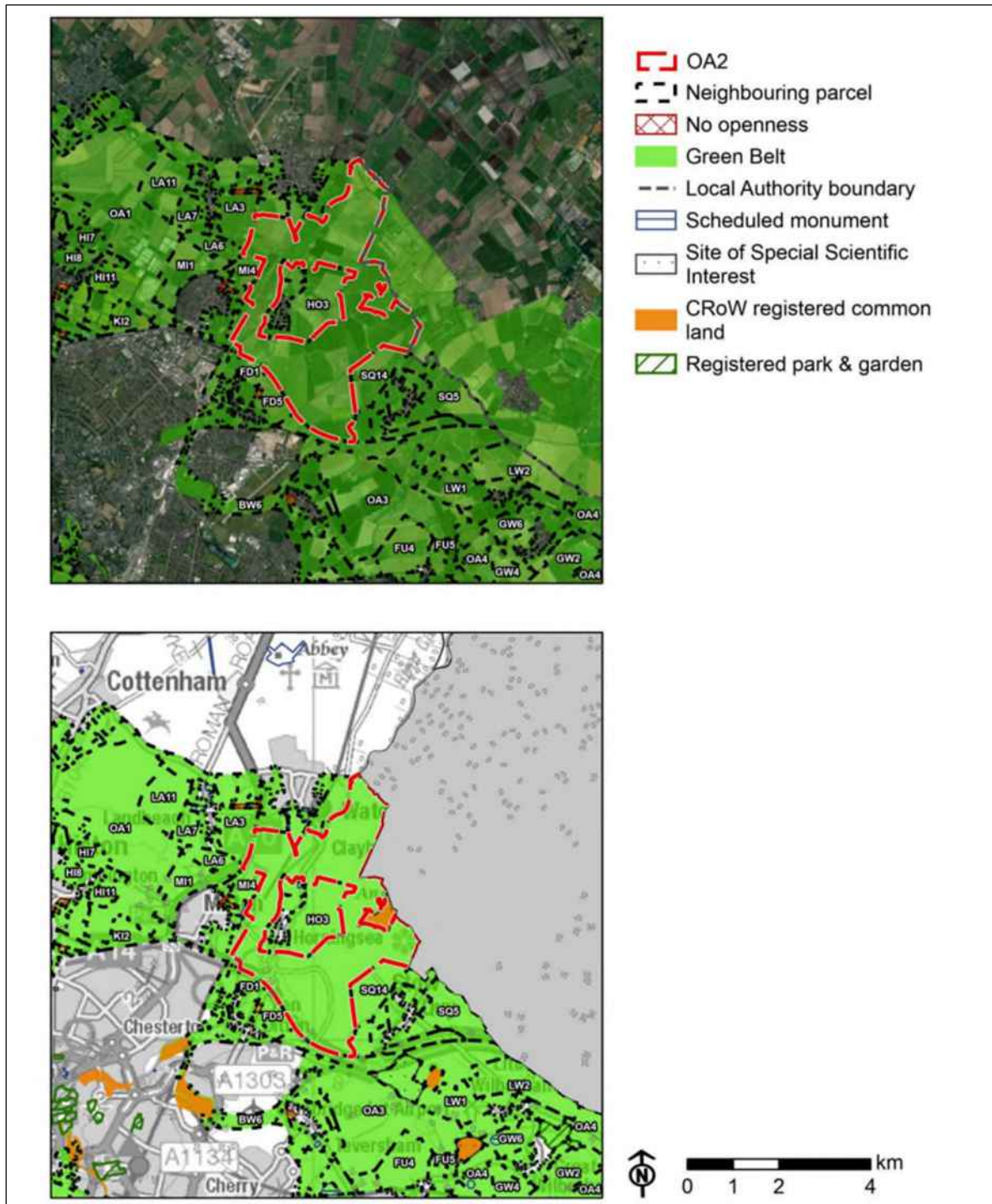
Figure 3.4: Potential degree of harm to the Cambridge Green Belt purposes from release of land

3.3 Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment - Outer Area 2

3.3.1 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment identifies a series of discrete areas of land, termed ‘parcels’, on settlement edges that could potentially be developed and assesses them for their contribution to Cambridge Green Belt purposes. The method of defining the parcels is described as follows:

‘Rather than considering pre-defined parcels, parcels were defined by applying an analysis process that works outwards from each inset settlement until parcels with a strong distinction (that is a strong perceived level of separation) from the inset settlement have been identified. This recognizes that with distance from these edges, the level of distinction from the inset settlement only increases, not diminishes. This approach was based on the assumption that any growth was most likely to take place extending out from the main urban area of Cambridge and existing inset villages, or villages adjacent to the outer Green Belt boundary’.

3.3.2 Land within the Green Belt but outside the strongly distinct parcels are subdivided into outer areas and these were assessed for their contribution to Cambridge Green Belt purposes. The land required for the proposed WWTP lies in the Outer Area 2 parcel (referred to as ‘Parcel OA2’). The location of the parcel is shown on Figure 3.5 below.



Source: Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021)

Figure 3.5: Outer Area 2

3.3.3 The overall harm of releasing this land (Parcel OA2) from the Green Belt is assessed in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (Appendix B) and is summarised below. The parcel includes a large area between Milton, Horningsea

Parcel location and openness

- 3.3.4 Parcel OA2 is a large area of land approximately 1,042ha in area, which forms the core Green Belt separation between Milton, Waterbeach, Horningsea, Fen Ditton, Stow cum Quy and Lode. This is mostly open farmland, but it also includes the River Cam corridor and Quy Fen. There is no significant urbanizing development in the parcel.

Distinction between parcel and inset area

- 3.3.5 The land in this area is considered to have strong, or very strong distinction from any inset or Green Belt edge settlement. This is a result of the presence of strong boundary features, distance from inset settlements, lack of urbanizing visual influences or a combination of these elements.

Contribution of Parcel OA2 to Green Belt purposes

Cambridge Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre.

- 3.3.6 Parcel OA2 makes a limited/no contribution to Cambridge Purpose 1 as the land is not closely associated with the large built-up area of Cambridge.

Cambridge Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting.

- 3.3.7 Parcel OA2 as a whole makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2. OA2 is predominantly open arable farmland that has a strong or very strong distinction from the urban area of the city and nearby inset settlements. This means it has a strong rural character. The land is characteristic of the open low-lying fenland landscape situated to the north and east of Cambridge and features Stow-cum-Quy Fen (SSSI and Registered Common Land) to the north-east.
- 3.3.8 The parcel allows an appreciation of the wider topographical framework of the city and contributes to its characteristic rural landscape setting as experienced when approaching Cambridge from the north along the River Cam (including the Fen Rivers Way, Harcamlow Way and Haling Way), on the railway line from Ely and on Clayhithe Road and from the A14 travelling east.

Cambridge Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.

- 3.3.9 Parcel OA2 makes at least a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3. Parcel OA2 contributes to maintaining the separation between Milton, Waterbeach, Horningsea, Fen Ditton, Stow cum Quy and Lode.

Impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt land

- 3.3.10 The additional impact of any release of land from Parcel OA2 for development on the strength of adjacent Green Belt land and on the Green Belt's function in maintaining separation between settlements would be at least moderate.

Overall harm of Green Belt release

3.3.11 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (Appendix B) concludes:

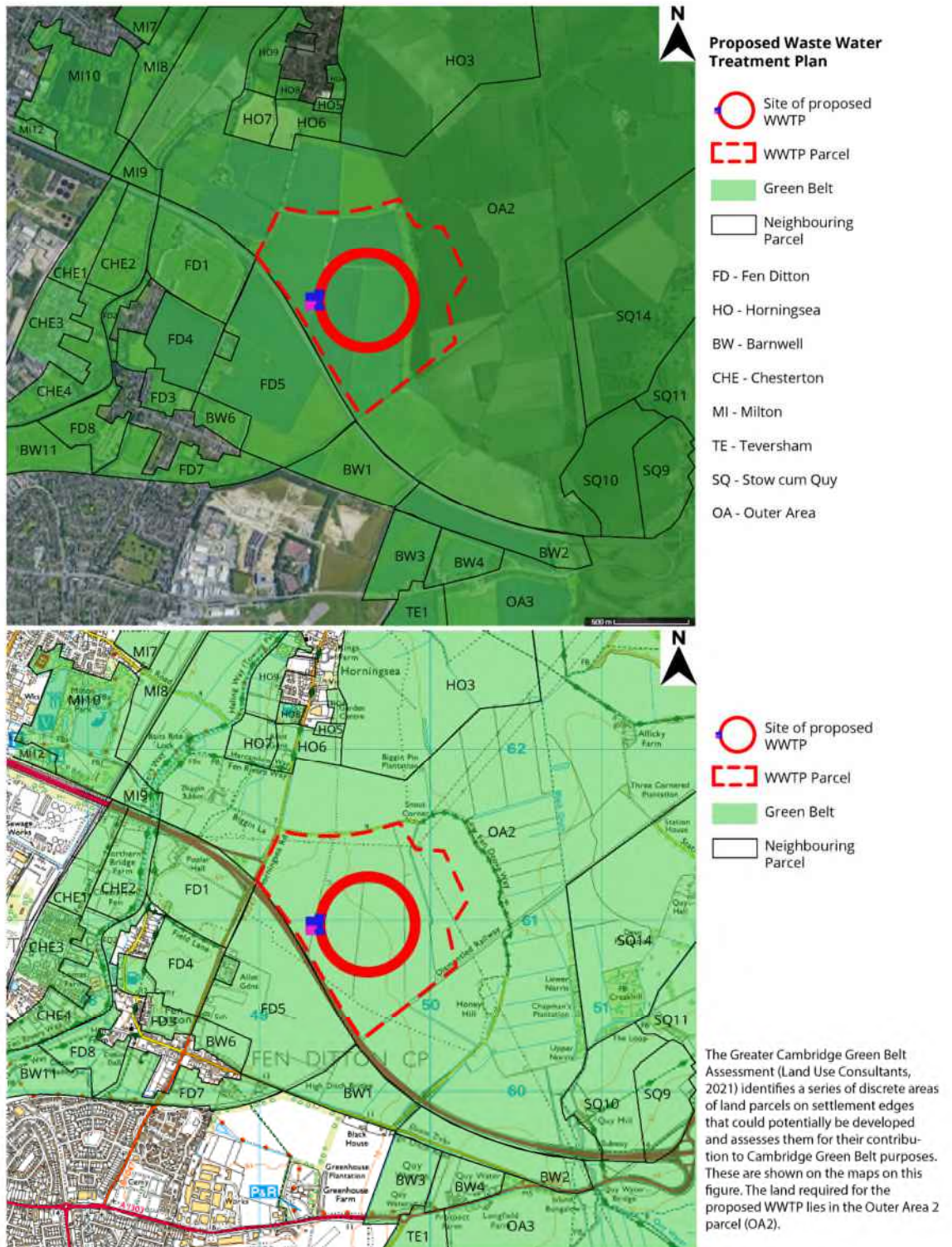
'Parcel OA2 makes at least a moderate contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting and to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with each other. Any expansion of Milton into this area would also have at least a relatively significant impact on preserving Cambridge's compact character. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be at least moderate. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of any inset settlement or settlement beyond the Green Belt's outer edge, would be very high'.

3.3.12 The assessment of overall harm resulting from releasing land from Parcel OA2 helps to inform the assessment of the impact of the development of the proposed WWTP (including access road and landscaping) on the Green Belt, but the two assessments are not directly comparable. The above assessment is partly derived from the harm resulting from the expansion of the settlement of Milton to Purpose 1, preserving Cambridge's compact character, whereas the construction of the proposed WWTP is unlikely to affect this purpose. In addition, the above assessment cannot not take into account the type of development or the mitigating effects of any associated Green Belt enhancement measures.

4 Proposed WWTP – Green Belt Assessment

4.1 Proposed WWTP parcel

- 4.1.1 This section assesses the contribution that the land required for the proposed WWTP (including the earth bank, visitors' car park, site access road and landscape masterplan) currently makes to the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt, the impact of the development of the proposed WWTP on the Green Belt purposes of the site and adjacent Green Belt land and the resulting overall harm to the Green Belt that would potentially result from the development of the proposed WWTP in this location.
- 4.1.2 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment does not consider new inset areas or new stand-alone settlements, but it states that:
- 'The analysis of variations in contribution to the Green Belt purposes gives an indication as to locations where new inset development would be more or less likely to affect contribution to those purposes. Supplementary analysis will be required to assess the harm associated with any specific new development scenarios that Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council would like to investigate.'*
- 4.1.3 Therefore, for this assessment a new land parcel has been identified. This includes the land required for the proposed WWTP, the 5m earth bank which would surround it, and the new woodland, hedgerows, meadows, recreational routes and site access road that would provide the landscape setting and access for the proposed WWTP. It does not include the land occupied by pipelines or the treated effluent outfall on the River Cam. The WWTP Parcel lies within Parcel OA2 assessed in Paragraph 3.3 above.
- 4.1.4 As set out in the Planning Statement (App Doc Ref 7.5), the proposed WWTP, earth bank and visitors' car park would be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The woodland, hedgerows, tree planting, meadows, recreational routes and site access road shown on the landscape masterplan (within the LERMP, Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14) would not be considered inappropriate development. The planting would provide screening which would reduce the visual impacts of the proposed WWTP on the surrounding countryside. It would also contribute to retaining the existing openness of the Green Belt and to reducing the adverse effects of the proposed WWTP on openness.



Source: Mott MacDonald, 2022

Figure 4.1: Proposed WWTP parcel and neighbouring land parcels assessed in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment

4.2 Green Belt Assessment – site of the proposed WWTP

Parcel location and openness

- 4.2.1 The WWTP Parcel is approximately 94ha in area. Within the WWTP Parcel, the land required for the proposed WWTP (including the proposed WWTP, earth bank and visitors' car park) and subject to inappropriate development is approximately 34ha in area.
- 4.2.2 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment defines openness as follows: *Green Belt openness relates to lack of 'inappropriate development' rather than only to visual openness; thus both undeveloped land which is screened from view by landscape elements (e.g. tree cover) and development which is not considered 'inappropriate', are still 'open' in Green Belt terms.* The NPPF does not define openness but makes it clear that it is predominantly a spatial designation. The PPG on Green Belt (2019) advises that in assessing impacts on openness, it should be considered that openness can have both spatial and visual aspects.
- 4.2.3 The WWTP Parcel is located to the north-east of Cambridge. It is currently arable farmland and lies between the A14, Horningsea Road, a disused railway line and Low Fen Drove Way. The land is open and there is currently no development of a scale, character or form that has an impact on Green Belt openness within the land parcel itself.

Distinction between the parcel and inset area

- 4.2.4 The A14, south-west of the WWTP Parcel, is partly bordered by belts of vegetation and hedgerow and provides a strong boundary and a moderate degree of separation between the parcel and the settlement of Fen Ditton. A tree belt along part of High Ditch Road and the dismantled railway line forms a strong boundary between the parcel and the residential area currently under construction north of Cambridge Airport (the Marleigh Development). Horningsea Road is intermittently lined with trees and is a moderate boundary feature between the parcel and Biggin Abbey and the River Cam corridor to the west. Open arable land and vegetation lining property boundaries in Horningsea provide a moderate degree of separation between the parcel and the settlement. The WWTP Parcel is not contained by urban development and views of open countryside dominate, with no urbanizing visual influence. Overall, there is a strong distinction between the WWTP Parcel and the nearby settlements.

Contribution of the WWTP Parcel to Green Belt purposes

- 4.2.5 This section assesses the contribution of the 'WWTP Parcel' to the Green Belt purposes.

Cambridge Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre.

- 4.2.6 The WWTP Parcel makes a limited/no contribution to Cambridge Purpose 1 as the land is not closely associated with the large built-up area of Cambridge. There is strong distinction between the parcel and the urban area.

Cambridge Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting.

- 4.2.7 The WWTP Parcel makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2 as the land has strong distinction from the urban edge of Cambridge and inset developments. It is open and has a rural character. The parcel and land around it contribute to the characteristic rural setting of Cambridge, experienced on key approaches to the wider city including from the River Cam corridor (the Fen Rivers Way and Harcamlow Way), Horningsea Road and the A14 (travelling east). These approaches create positive perceptions of the city on arrival. The land associated with the River Cam (west of the parcel) allows an appreciation of the wider topographical framework of the city.

Cambridge Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city:

- 4.2.8 The WWTP Parcel makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3 as the land is open and lies in a clear gap between Horningsea and Fen Ditton. The parcel has strong distinction from settlement edges which increases the extent to which new development within the land parcel would be perceived as narrowing the gap. The parcel lies within a much larger area of farmland (Parcel OA2), which contributes to maintaining the separation between Milton, Waterbeach, Horningsea, Fen Ditton, Stow cum Quy and Lode.

Impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt land

- 4.2.9 The assessment of the impact of development on the WWTP Parcel on the contribution of adjacent Green Belt land considers the impacts on the distinction of the adjacent land and on its relevance to Green Belt purposes.
- 4.2.10 The WWTP parcel lies within Parcel OA2 but occupies a small proportion of this large parcel which extends between Milton, Fen Ditton, Stow cum Quy and Waterbeach. The development of the WWTP parcel would therefore potentially affect part of Parcel OA2 and adjacent or nearby parcels (as identified in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment) including Parcels FD1, FD5, HO3, HO6, BW1, BW2, SQ10 and SQ14 shown on Figure 4.1 above.
- 4.2.11 The distinction of adjacent Green Belt land can be affected in a number of ways including:
- the weakening of boundaries (such as by crossing a main road);
 - increasing visual urban influence; and

- increasing urbanizing containment (where land adjacent to inset development becomes partially enclosed by the development).

4.2.12 The relevance of adjacent Green Belt land to Green Belt purposes can also be affected in a number of ways including:

- by containing land previously on the edge of the urban area, which diminishes its contribution to preserving Cambridge as a compact city (Cambridge Purpose 1);
- by diminishing the qualities of Cambridge's setting (Cambridge Purpose 2);
- by reducing the gap between settlements (Cambridge Purpose 3).

Parcel OA2

4.2.13 The additional impact of the proposed WWTP (including the WWTP, earth bank and visitors' car park) on the strength of the remaining area of OA2 on the Green Belt's function would be minor-moderate. Development of the proposed WWTP would introduce a visual urban influence into land within Parcel OA2 and would diminish the contribution Parcel OA2 makes to the quality of Cambridge's setting as experienced on two key approaches into the city, along Horningsea Road and the A14. However, a small proportion of the parcel would be affected and the majority of it would continue to perform this purpose.

Parcel FD5

4.2.14 The additional impact of the proposed WWTP (including the WWTP, earth bank and visitors' car park) on the strength of Parcel FD5 on the Green Belt's function would be minor-moderate. Parcel FD5 contributes to preserving Cambridge as a compact city. Development of the proposed WWTP to the north would have a containing influence on the parcel, slightly diminishing the contribution it makes to this purpose. It would also introduce a visual urban influence into land to the north, diminishing the contribution Parcel OA2 makes to the quality of Cambridge's setting. However, the A14 is a strong boundary feature between the parcel and the site of the proposed WWTP and the majority of the new structures would be screened by the 5m high earth bank and a substantial area of new woodland between the proposed WWTP and the A14, thus maintaining the distinction of Parcel FD5.

Parcels FD1, BW1, BW2, SQ10 and SQ14

4.2.15 The additional impact of the proposed WWTP (including the WWTP, earth bank and visitors' car park) on Parcels FD1, BW1, BW2, SQ10 and SQ14 on the Green Belt's function in maintaining separation between settlements would be minor. There is no built development between the WWTP Parcel and Parcels BW1, BW2, SQ10 or SQ14 but there is a single line of houses between the WWTP parcel and Parcel FD1. However, the A14 and existing intervening tree and woodland belts form strong boundaries between the WWTP Parcel and these parcels, maintaining the distinction of the adjacent land and limiting the urbanizing visual influence of the proposed WWTP. Therefore, the contribution the parcels make to the Cambridge Green Belt Purposes would be largely maintained.

Parcels HO3 and HO6

- 4.2.16 The additional impact of the proposed WWTP (including the WWTP, earth bank and visitors' car park) on Parcels HO3 and HO6 on the Green Belt's function in maintaining separation between settlements would be minor. There is a clear settlement gap between the WWTP Parcel and Parcels HO3 and HO6 with little intervening vegetation. Consequently, the proposed WWTP would have an urbanizing visual influence on land that is currently some distance from the nearest settlement. The contribution these parcels make to the quality of Cambridge's setting (Cambridge Purpose 2) and to maintaining the gap between settlements (Cambridge Purpose 3) would be slightly diminished by the development of the proposed WWTP.

5 Mitigation to Reduce Harm to the Cambridge Green Belt

5.1 Mitigation measures

- 5.1.1 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment sets out potential generic mitigation measures that could be applied to reduce the potential harm to the Green Belt if land were released and includes a discussion of the potential opportunities for enhancing the beneficial use of the Green Belt (in line with Paragraph 145 of the NPPF). The Greater Cambridge Green infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Report (LUC, 2021) provides information on some of the key opportunities to enhance Green Infrastructure within the area and there is further guidance on opportunities to enhance the landscape in the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2021).
- 5.1.2 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment cannot take into account potential compensatory improvements to the Green Belt, such as improvements to biodiversity, new or expanded walking and cycle routes or landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal) as these are obviously unknown at the time of the assessment. However, the Proposed Development incorporates a landscape masterplan for the proposed WWTP site which is shown in Appendix A of this report. This has been designed to reduce landscape and visual impacts, improve biodiversity (with an aim of a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain) and create opportunities for greater recreational use of the countryside. In so doing, the landscape masterplan would result in some compensatory improvements to green infrastructure on the site of the proposed WWTP and its immediate surroundings (BNG Report, Appendix 8.13, 5.4.8.13).
- 5.1.3 The landscape masterplan, comprising earth banks, woodland, trees, hedgerow and meadows, was developed in consultation with stakeholders including landowners and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (representing South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council). The structures of the proposed WWTP, the surrounding earth bank and visitors' car park would occupy approximately 34ha of land, leaving the remaining 60ha for the woodland, hedgerows meadows, recreational paths and access road. A Landscape Ecology and Recreation Management Plan (LERMP) sets out the landscape management and maintenance measures which would be followed to ensure the successful establishment of the proposed masterplan planting (Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14)
- 5.1.4 The potential generic mitigation measures set out in the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment, relevant to the proposed WWTP location, are listed below (in italics) with a description of the how they have been incorporated into the proposed WWTP design.

- *Consider ownership and management of landscape elements which contribute to Green Belt purposes. This can help to ensure the permanence of Green Belt.*
 - The LERMP (Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14) has been produced for the proposed WWTP, setting out the design principles underpinning the landscape masterplan and the management and monitoring measures required for the successful establishment and long-term success of the planting. The planting would be maintained for a minimum of 30 years and would become a permanent new area of woodland, trees, hedgerow and meadow in the Green Belt that would contribute to the setting of Cambridge (Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 2). The landscape masterplan would permanently and positively enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt through providing access and recreation opportunities and enhancing landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity.
- *Enhance visual openness within the Green Belt. This can help to increase the perception of countryside. Although openness in a Green Belt sense does not correspond directly to visual openness, a stronger visual relationship between countryside areas, whether directly adjacent or separated by other landscape elements, can increase the extent to which an area is perceived as relating to the wider countryside.*
 - The landscape masterplan and accompanying LERMP (Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14) would provide extensive mitigation and enhancement measures as part of the Proposed Development and in time, the earth bank, tree belts, woodland and meadows would screen the majority of the new structures of the proposed WWTP from the surrounding area. The establishing planting would provide strong new boundaries to the land occupied by the proposed WWTP and would reduce its urbanizing influence and impact on visual openness. It would in time largely restore the green approach to Cambridge along Horningsea Road and the A14, preserving the setting of Cambridge (Cambridge Purpose 2).
- *Improve management practices to enhance countryside character. This can help to increase the strength of countryside character. Landscape character assessment can help to identify valued characteristics that should be retained and where possible strengthened, and intrusive elements that should be diminished and where possible removed.*
 - In the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment, the site of the proposed WWTP is considered to be of the Fen Edge Chalklands landscape character type (LCT). The overall management objective for the LCT is to enhance the rural character and important surviving landscape features such as field boundaries, grassland, meadows, treed watercourses and scattered woodland/shelterbelts whilst retaining distinctive open views. The landscape masterplan (Appendix

8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14) responds to these objectives, retaining an important existing hedgerow within the site and providing new meadows, woodland belts and hedgerows. The maturing woodland would inevitably screen views across the southern part of the open farmland between Horningsea and Fen Ditton, but the majority of views over this landscape would remain open. Although the immediate setting of the proposed WWTP is currently open farmland, the wider landscape has a more wooded character in places, with woodland belts between the site of the proposed WWTP and Stow cum Quy and Quy Fen and along Horningsea Road and the River Cam corridor. As the planting of the masterplan develops, the site of the proposed WWTP would become more wooded and less open in landscape terms, but the urbanizing effect of the Proposed Development would be diminished, with few structures remaining visible after 15 years. This would restore the contribution of the proposed WWTP site in preserving the setting of Cambridge (Cambridge Purpose 2).

- *Design and locate buildings, landscape and green spaces to minimise intrusion on settlement settings. This can help to maintain perceived settlement separation by minimising the extent to which new development intrudes on the settings of other settlements. The analysis of settlement settings, including consideration of viewpoints and visual receptors, can identify key locations where maintenance of openness and retention of landscape features would have the most benefit.*
 - The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed WWTP ((App Doc Ref 5.2.15) identifies the existing views and visual receptors that would be affected by the proposed development. During the design development of the proposed WWTP, some potentially tall structures have been omitted from the design altogether, others have been reduced in height and the remaining tall structures, visible above the earth bank, have been clustered at the southern end of the proposed WWTP site, further from the nearest visual receptors in Fen Ditton, along Horningsea Road and near to Biggin Abbey reducing the impact on the contribution of the proposed WWTP site in preserving Cambridge’s setting (Cambridge Purpose 2).
- *Design road infrastructure to limit the perception of increased urbanisation associated with new development. Increased levels of ‘activity’ can increase the perception of urbanisation.*
 - The new junction on Horningsea Road for the access road to the proposed WWTP has been located opposite the A14 eastbound off-slip road to minimise the urbanizing influence of a new road junction on Horningsea Road. The vegetation belt along Horningsea Road between Low Fen Drove Way and the bridge over the A14 would be reinstated and strengthened to screen the new junction from further

north along Horningsea Road, reducing the impact on the contribution of the proposed WWTP site in preserving the setting of Cambridge (Cambridge Purpose 2).

5.2 Planning policy and the beneficial use of Cambridge Green Belt

5.2.1 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use such as providing access to outdoor recreation and enhancing landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (updated in relation to Green Belts in 2019) endorses the preparation of supporting landscape, biodiversity or recreation evidence to identify appropriate compensatory improvements including new or enhanced green infrastructure, woodland planting, landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal), improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital, new or enhanced walking and cycle routes.

5.2.2 The landscape masterplan aims to enhance the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (in italics) as follows:

- *Opportunities to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and new or enhanced walking and cycle routes linked to the wider network.*
 - A new shared pedestrian/recreational cycle path would cross the eastern part of the proposed WWTP site between Horningsea Road and Low Fen Drove Way, creating a circular route, off-road or on the little-used Low Fen Drove Way. A new bridleway would be created between Low Fen Drove Way and Station Road, Stow cum Quy which would give increased access to the footpath and bridleway network north-east of the proposed WWTP site.
- *New or enhanced green infrastructure, woodland planting, improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital.*
 - The landscape masterplan aims to deliver a 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG) as set out in the BNG report (Appendix 8.13, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.13) on the site of the proposed WWTP, with elements including new woodland, coppice, hedgerows, meadows, log piles, seasonal ponds, hibernacula and earthworks. The new habitat creation has been designed to complement the Cambridge Nature Network opportunity areas for nature recovery, providing a new component and potential extension to the stepping stones, corridors and core areas such as Quy Hall, Little Wilbraham Fen and Stow-cum-Quy Fen SSSI.
- *Landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal).*

- New planting outside the proposed WWTP site would strengthen the existing tree line along Horningsea Road (currently mainly ash trees) and restore an existing shelter belt between Horningsea and the proposed WWTP site.

5.3 Potential enhancements to the Cambridge Green Belt

5.3.1 The Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment also sets out measure which could be used to enhance the Green Belt. Those relevant to the Proposed Development are listed below. They are similar to the enhancement measures in the NPPF and PPG and have been largely incorporated into the landscape masterplan as described in paragraphs 5.1.3 and 5.2.2 above. They include:

- **Improving access** -enhancing the coverage and condition of the rights of way network and increasing open space provision is a key enhancement opportunity.
- **Landscape and visual enhancement** - using landscape character assessment as guidance, intrusive elements can be reduced and positive characteristics reinforced.
- **Increasing biodiversity** -most Green Belt land has potential for increased biodiversity value – e.g. the management of hedgerows and agricultural field margins, and provision of habitat connectivity, planting of woodland. There may also be opportunities to link enhancements with requirements to deliver ‘biodiversity net gain’ associated with development proposals.

5.4 Green infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Report

5.4.1 The Green infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Report (LUC, 2021) provides helpful information on some of the key opportunities to enhance Green Infrastructure within the area. Further guidance on the opportunities to enhance the landscape are included in the Landscape Character Assessment Report (Chris Blandford Associates, 2021).

5.4.2 Key Green Infrastructure policy recommendations are listed below (in italics) with a description of how they have been incorporated into the proposed WWTP design:

- *Strategic Initiative 4: Enhancement of the eastern fens. The objective is to conserve and enhance priority habitats including fen, grazing marsh and grassland (within and around the four designated SSSIs) for the benefit of wildlife, to create wildlife corridors to connect and expand these habitats where possible and to ensure negative impacts from access and recreational pressure on these sensitive ecological sites are minimised through habitat buffers and educating visitors.*
 - The site of the proposed WWTP intersects with the western boundary of the strategic initiative area. The ecological mitigations shown on the landscape masterplan and described in more detail in the LERMP

(Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14), including new woodland, coppice, hedgerows, meadows, log piles, seasonal ponds, hibernacula and earthworks would enhance nearby priority habitats and extend wildlife corridors with wildlife stepping stones and corridors linked to core areas such as Quy Hall, Little Wilbraham Fen and Stow-cum-Quy Fen SSSI.

- *Use a green infrastructure-led design approach to new development*
 - The landscape masterplan has been designed to deliver a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain (within land required for the proposed WWTP and landscape masterplan).
- *Dispersed strategic initiatives relevant to the wider area include woodland expansion and resilience.*
 - The landscape masterplan includes around 25ha of new woodland planting on or close to the WWTP parcel.

5.4.3 The landscape masterplan and accompanying LERMP (Appendix 8.14, App Doc Ref 5.4.8.14) would provide extensive mitigation and enhancement measures as part of the Proposed Development and in time, the earth bank, tree belts, woodland and meadows would screen the majority of the new structures of the proposed WWTP from the surrounding area. The planting would provide strong new boundaries to the land occupied by the Proposed Development and would reduce its urbanizing influence. It would also partly restore the green approach to Cambridge along Horningsea Road and the A14, while changing the experience along short stretches of both roads from a journey through open farmland to one bordered by woodland on one side. This would partly restore the strength of the adjacent retained Green Belt land in preserving Cambridge's setting (Cambridge Purpose 2).

6 Conclusion

6.1 Overall harm to Cambridge Green Belt Purposes

- 6.1.1 The WWTP parcel currently makes little/no contribution to preserving the unique character of Cambridge as a compact city (Purpose 1), but development on the land would slightly diminish the contribution Parcel FD5 (on adjoining land between Fen Ditton and the WWTP parcel) currently makes to this purpose.
- 6.1.2 The development of the proposed WWTP would diminish the moderate contribution that the WWTP parcel currently makes to maintaining the quality of Cambridge's rural setting (Purpose 2) by introducing an urbanizing visual influence on land that is currently some distance from the urban area and adversely affecting two key approaches into the city - along Horningsea Road and the A14.
- 6.1.3 The development of the proposed WWTP would diminish the moderate contribution the WWTP Parcel makes to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with one another (Purpose 3), with a reduction in the settlement gap between Fen Ditton and Horningsea. However, only part of the WWTP Parcel would be occupied by what is considered inappropriate development. The remaining area of the WWTP Parcel would continue to perform this Green Belt function. In addition, the nature of the development would prevent the further erosion of the Green Belt in this location due to the Safeguarding Area, or odour zone, which prevents development close to waste water treatment plants.
- 6.1.4 The proposed WWTP would have a minor/moderate or minor impact on the Green Belt function of adjacent Parcels OA2, FD1, FD5, HO3, HO6, BW1, BW2, SQ10 and SQ14.
- 6.1.5 The landscape masterplan and LERMP would provide extensive mitigation and enhancement measures over a 60ha area. The encircling earth bank, tree belts and woodland would, in time, screen the majority of the new structures of the proposed WWTP and provide new strong boundaries to the land occupied by the Proposed Development, reducing its urbanizing influence. The strength of the contribution to Green Belt purposes of adjacent retained Green Belt land would be largely restored.
- 6.1.6 Overall, the development would diminish the moderate contribution the WWTP Parcel currently makes to two of the Cambridge Green Belt purposes and would have a minor-moderate or minor impact on the Green Belt function of adjacent Green Belt land. According to the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2021), the WWTP parcel lies in Parcel OA2 which, if released from the Green Belt would result in very high harm. However, the proposed WWTP would occupy a small proportion of Parcel OA2 and the LUC assessment could not take into account any mitigation measures or enhancements to the Green Belt that would accompany a new development in this area. Therefore, guided by the benchmark examples used to inform the assessment of overall harm to the Cambridge Green Belt purposes (included in Appendix B of this assessment) and taking into account the mitigation of effects over time and the enhancements to green infrastructure that would come

with the landscape masterplan and the LERMP, the resulting harm of the proposed WWTP to Green Belt purposes would be moderate.

7 References

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8 Appendix A: Landscape Masterplan



LEGEND

- Existing intermittent tree groups and hedgerow trees
- Existing retained hedgerow vegetation
- Proposed areas of woodland
- Proposed trees and tree groups
- Proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow tree
- Proposed thicker of earth bank vegetation comprising trees (semi-mature, heavy standard and transplants) and hedgerow transplants. Tree clusters on earth bank outer banks.
- Undulating ridge and furrow
- Proposed areas of Calcareous Loam Meadow Grassland (refer to drawing 775_01 (MP)004
- Proposed habitat areas, for all grassland types.
- Proposed new pedestrian paths
- Proposed native whip planting to supplement existing young whip planting to fill and replace any existing that have failed
- Existing line of pylons
- Low Fen Drive Way Grasslands and Hedges County Wildlife Site (post hole show located)
- Drainage 'scrapes' to base of earth bank perimeter
- Easements for outfall and Waterbeach routes
- Existing PROW: Byway open to all traffic
- Proposed PROW: new bridleway (refer to 775_01)
- Proposed red line boundary

Retained arable field

Ventilation 'slices'

Gentle undulations with peaks and troughs to increase habitat variation

Proposed new bridleway

Native hedgerow and trees atop earth bank to form 3m depth thickets, to be allowed to grow to 5-6m height over time

Calcareous Loam/Neutral Meadow Grassland

Grassland buffer between woodland and County Wildlife Site



REVISIONS Scale 1:125000 @ A3

Rev	Date	Description
01	14.09.20	Added details and offset options
02	14.09.20	Woodland fence reminder
03	27.09.21	Hedge added to outline
04	08.12.21	Updated notes
05	21.12.21	Updates to 2021 hedgerows and woodland
06	14.01.22	Vert removed
07	16.01.22	Water route update
08	28.01.22	Amendments to 2021 ponds and bank lines
09	12.02.22	Detail response to 2021 bank lines
10	11.07.22	Amendments to 2021 hedge, woodland

WWTP, CAMBRIDGE

Client: Anglian Water

Drawing: Landscape Masterplan

Project No: 775_01

Drawing No: 775_01(MP)003

Scale: Scale: 1:75000@A3 Rev: 114

Date: April 2021 Drawn: JH

Checked: PM Checked:

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9 Appendix B: Assessment Criteria Tables

9.1 Assessment criteria tables extracted from the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (2021)

Table 9-1: Criteria used to inform the assessment of contribution to Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 1

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 1	Criteria
Significant contribution to purpose	Land is open and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has at least strong distinction from the urban edge.
Relatively significant contribution to purpose	Land is open and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has moderate distinction from the urban edge; or Land is relatively open and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has at least strong distinction from the urban edge; or Land is perceived as being within the main urban area of Cambridge but is open, has at least strong distinction from the urban edge and is physically and visually connected to the wider Green Belt.
Moderate contribution to purpose	Land is open and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has weak distinction from the urban edge; or Land is open and relatively close to the main urban area of Cambridge, but intervening land provides at least strong distinction from the urban edge; or Land is perceived as being within the main urban area of Cambridge but is open, has moderate distinction from the urban edge and is physically and visually connected to the wider Green Belt; or Land is relatively open and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has moderate distinction from the urban edge; or Land is relatively developed and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has at least strong distinction from the urban edge; or Land is perceived as being within the main urban area of Cambridge, is relatively open, has at least strong distinction from the urban edge and is physically and visually connected to the wider Green Belt; or Land is isolated within the main urban area of Cambridge but is open and has at least strong distinction from the urban edge.

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 1	Criteria
Relatively limited contribution to purpose	<p>Land is open and is physically and visually connected to the wider Green Belt, but is perceived as being within the main urban area of Cambridge and has weak distinction from the urban edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has weak distinction from the urban edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively developed and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has moderate distinction from the urban edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and is physically and visually connected to the wider Green Belt, but is perceived as being within the main urban area of Cambridge and has moderate distinction from the urban edge; or</p> <p>Land is isolated within the main urban area of Cambridge but is open and has moderate distinction from the urban edge.</p>
Limited or No contribution to purpose	<p>Land is relatively developed and close to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has moderate distinction from the urban edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and is physically and visually connected to the wider Green Belt, but is perceived as being within the main urban area of Cambridge and has weak distinction from the urban edge; or</p> <p>Land is open but is isolated within the main urban area of Cambridge and has weak distinction from the urban edge; or</p> <p>Land is not open; or</p> <p>Land is not close to the main urban area of Cambridge.</p>

Table 9-2: Criteria used to inform the assessment of contribution to Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 2

Contribution to Green Belt purpose 2	Criteria
Significant contribution to purpose	Land forms/contains one or more features/aspects of particular importance to the quality of Cambridge’s setting (for example to purpose key views of Cambridge including its historic core; location within a Green Corridor in proximity to the historic core; location on or close to a short and/or characteristic approach to the historic core). Reduced openness, land use or weak distinction from an inset settlement do not diminish these qualities; or Land forms/contains several features/aspects of importance (for example views of the wider city; location within a Green Corridor but at a distance from the historic core; location on or close to a key approach to the wider city). Reduced openness, land use or weak distinction from an inset settlement do not diminish these qualities.
Relatively significant contribution to purpose	Land forms/contains one or more features/aspects of importance to the quality of Cambridge’s setting. Reduced openness, land use or weak distinction from an inset settlement do not diminish these qualities; or Land forms/contains several features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge’s setting (for example view towards Cambridge but dominated by more modern peripheral development; location within a Green Corridor but separated from historic core by more modern intervening development; location on the periphery of a key approach to the wider city). Reduced openness, land use or weak distinction from an inset settlement do not diminish these qualities; or Land use is not associated with an inset settlement, land is open and it has a strong distinction from any inset settlements, and therefore has a strong rural character; and forms/contains some features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge’s setting.
Moderate contribution to purpose	Land use is not associated with an inset settlement, land is open and it has a strong distinction from any inset settlements, and therefore has a strong rural character; it may also form/contain limited features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge’s setting; or Land forms/contains no features/aspects that contribute specifically to the quality of Cambridge’s setting, but land use is not associated with an inset settlement, land is open and it has a strong distinction from any inset settlements, and therefore has a strong rural character; or Land use is not associated with an inset settlement, land is open but does not have strong distinction from any inset settlements and therefore has some rural character; but forms/contains some features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge’s setting; or

Contribution to Green Belt purpose 2	Criteria
Relatively limited contribution to purpose	<p>Land has development and/or uses which weaken its rural character but has a strong distinction from an inset settlement and also forms/contains some features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting.</p> <p>Land use is not associated with an inset settlement, land is open and does not have a strong distinction from an inset settlement, and therefore has some rural character; it may also form/contain limited features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting; or</p> <p>Land use is not associated with an inset settlement, land is open and does not have a strong distinction from any inset settlements, and therefore has some rural character. It contains no features/aspects that contribute specifically to the quality of Cambridge's setting; or</p> <p>Land has development and/or uses which weakens its rural character, but has a strong distinction from an inset settlement. It does not form or contain any features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting; or</p> <p>Land has development and/or uses which weaken its rural character, and does not have a strong distinction from an inset settlement, but forms/contains some features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting.</p>
Limited or No contribution to purpose	<p>Land has development of a scale that substantially weakens its rural character but has some distinction from an inset settlement. It does not form or contain any features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting; or</p> <p>Land has a use which associates it with an inset settlement and a weak distinction from an inset settlement. It does not form or contain any features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting; or</p> <p>Land is not open, and the development within it does not contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting.</p>

Table 9-3: Criteria used to inform the assessment of contribution to Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 3

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 3	Criteria
Significant contribution to purpose	<p>Land is open, lies in a gap which is very fragile and has moderate or at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is open, lies in a gap which is fragile and has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and lies in a very fragile gap between settlements. It has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge.</p>
Relatively significant contribution to purpose	<p>Land is open and lies in a very fragile gap between distinct settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and lies in a very fragile gap between settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge. Land is open and lies in a fragile gap between distinct settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is open and lies in a moderate gap between settlements. It has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and lies in a fragile gap between settlements. It has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively developed and lies in a very fragile gap between settlements. It has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge.</p>
Moderate contribution to purpose	<p>Land is open and lies in a fragile gap between distinct settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and lies in a very fragile gap between distinct settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is open and lies in a moderate gap between settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and lies in a fragile gap between settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively developed and lies in a very fragile gap between settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p>

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose 3	Criteria
	<p>Land is open and lies in a robust gap between settlements. It has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and lies in a moderate gap between settlements. It has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively developed and lies in a fragile gap between settlements. It has at least strong distinction from the inset settlement edge.</p>
Relatively limited contribution to purpose	<p>Land is open and lies in a moderate gap between settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or Land is relatively open and lies in a fragile gap between settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively developed and lies in a very fragile gap between distinct settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is open and lies in a robust gap between settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge; or Land is relatively open and lies in a moderate gap between settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively developed and lies in a fragile gap between settlements. It has moderate distinction from the inset settlement edge.</p>
Limited or No contribution to purpose	<p>Land is open and lies in a robust gap between settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively open and lies in a moderate gap between settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is relatively developed and lies in a fragile gap between settlements. It has weak distinction from the inset settlement edge; or</p> <p>Land is not open; or</p> <p>Land does not lie between neighbouring settlements.</p>

Table 9-4: Factors affecting the impact of release on adjacent Green Belt land

Impact on adjacent Green Belt Notes Examples	Impact on adjacent Green Belt Notes Examples	Impact on adjacent Green Belt Notes Examples
Major impact	The merging of inset settlements that are currently distinct would be considered a major impact, although this would be an impact on Green Belt functionality more than an impact on adjacent Green belt land; or A combination of moderate-major impacts.	Example 1 - Release of land would result in the merging of Purpose 3 settlements that are currently distinct. This would be a major impact. Example 2 - Release would reduce a narrow gap between Purpose 3 settlements to a very narrow gap and would also weaken the role of land which is of importance to the quality of Cambridge’s setting. Together these would be a major impact.
Moderate-major impact.	A significant change affecting a purpose of high relevance; or A combination of moderate impacts.	Example 1 - Release of land would significantly increase or the urbanising visual influence and containment of adjacent land and would breach the strong boundary feature. This would be a moderate-major impact. Example 2 - Release of land would result in containment of land located adjacent to Cambridge, such that it would now be perceived as being within the main urban area. It would also weaken the Green Belt boundary and increase urbanising visual influence. In combination this would be a moderate-major impact.
Moderate impact	A reduction in distinction sufficient to cause a reduction in contribution by two levels (for example from significant to moderate); or A moderate change affecting a purpose of higher relevance, or A combination of minor-moderate impacts.	Example 1 - Release of land impact sufficient to cause a reduction in contribution by two levels would result in containment of land located adjacent to Cambridge, such that it would now be perceived as being within the main urban area. This would be a moderate impact in terms of relevance of Purpose 1. Example 2 - Release would diminish the role of land which contributes to the quality of Cambridge’s setting. This would be a moderate impact.

Impact on adjacent Green Belt Notes Examples	Impact on adjacent Green Belt Notes Examples	Impact on adjacent Green Belt Notes Examples
Minor - moderate impact.	A reduction in distinction sufficient to cause a reduction in contribution by one level (for example from strong to relatively strong); or A limited change affecting a purpose of higher relevance; or A combination of minor impacts.	Example 1 - Release of land would increase the urbanising visual influence and containment of adjacent land. This would be a minor - moderate impact. Example 2 - Release of land would reduce the landform distinction of adjacent land and would result in the creation of a robust gap between Purpose 3 settlements that were previously considered too far apart to be 'neighbouring'. This would be a minor - moderate impact.
Minor impact	A reduction in distinction, but not enough to cause a reduction in contribution; or A limited change affecting a purpose of lower relevance.	Example 1 - Release of land would reduce the landform distinction of adjacent land. This would be a minor impact. Example 2 - Release would result in the creation of a robust gap between Purpose 3 settlements, which were previously considered too far apart to be 'neighbouring'. This would be a minor impact.
No/Negligible impact	Only Green Belt land that does not make a stronger contribution to any purpose would be affected by the release of land; or Release of land would result in negligible impact on the distinction of, and the relevance of, all Green Belt purposes of adjacent Green Belt land.	Example 1 - Adjacent Green impact does not make a stronger contribution to any of the Green Belt purposes. Example 2 - Release of land would not impact the distinction of adjacent Green Belt land or relevance of this land to Green Belt purposes. This would be a negligible impact.

Table 9-5: Benchmark examples used to inform the assessment of overall harm to the Cambridge Green Belt purposes

Harm rating	Benchmark examples
Very high harm	Release of land results in a loss of land which makes a particularly strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute at least a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or Release of land results in a loss of strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor-moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or Release of land results in a loss of moderate contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes and would constitute a moderate/major impact on adjacent Green Belt land.
High harm	Release of land results in a loss of strong contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, but would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or Release of land results in a loss of relatively limited contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes and would constitute a moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land.
Moderate harm	Release of land results in a loss of moderate contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or Release of land results in a loss of relatively weak contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes and would constitute a minor/moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt land.
Low harm	Release of land results in a loss of moderate contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes, and would constitute a negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land; or Release of land results in a loss of relatively weak contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes and would constitute a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt land.

Get in touch

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