

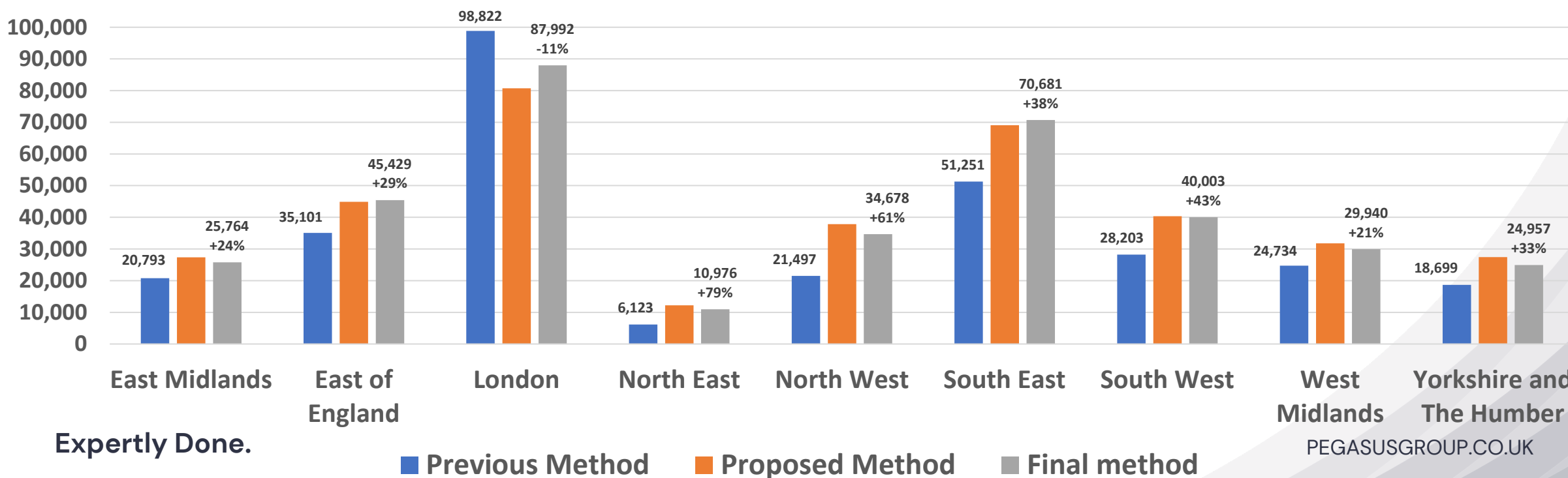
New NPPF & Grey Belt Land

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New NPPF and PPG

- NPPF Published 12th Dec 2024 alongside WMS and some revisions to PPG.
- Restoring and raising the housing targets 300,000 national target increased to 370,000 pa
- Green Belt / Grey Belt PPG issued on 27th February 2025



New NPPF: Local Plans

Clear expectation to meet Standard Method requirement.

Transitional arrangements for Local Plan production. **12th March 2025** key date for applying the new Framework policies including new Standard Methodology requirements.

- Submitted to SoS = proceed. However, if below 80% of the SM = Immediately prepare new Local Plan (under the new Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, 2023 Act).
- Reg 19 Consultation Stage + 80% of new SM requirement = proceed.
- Reg 19 Stage and follows an operative Spatial Development Strategy = proceed.
- If Local Plan follows a Part 1 plan or Joint Plan adopted prior to **12th March 2020** = proceed.
- If below 80% of SM and reached Reg 19 stage, must update plan to new SM and proceed to examination by **12th June 2026 or 12th December 2026** if required to go back to Reg 18 stage.

#148 – Applies sequential approach to site selection: Brownfield prioritised, Grey Belt then considered followed by other Green Belt.

New NPPF: Decision Making

- Scrapped 4 year housing land supply test.
- Standard Method applies when Local Plan is more than 5 years old.
- Reintroduced 5% / 20% buffers for the 5YHLS test.
- Significant changes to the exceptions to developing in the Green Belt.
- Slight softening of flood risk sequential test but still applicable to all forms of flooding.
- Please note new flood risk mapping has now been released by Environment Agency. These maps are due to be formalised for planning purposes on 25th March 2025.

Development in the Green Belt: Routes to 'not inappropriate'!

PDL

Grey
Belt

#154g

#155 + #156
Golden Rules

Openness
Test

GB Purpose
Test

Route 1: #154g PDL

- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of **previously developed land** (including material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), which would not cause **substantial harm to the openness** of the Green Belt.
- Openness Considerations **PPG: 001**
 - Spatial Harm - Heights/Footprint/Vol.
 - Visual Harm – LVIA/TVIA
 - Duration and Activity



Grey Belt Land Definition

Grey belt: For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

Route 2: #155 Grey Belt Exception

Defining Land as Grey Belt

Step 1: Consideration of Green Belt purposes A, B and D

Step 2: Consideration of footnote 7 designations/assets.

Appropriateness Test Applied to Development on Grey Belt Land

Step 3a: (#155a): Would the development undermine the purposes (all 5) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan?

Step 3b: (#155b): Is there a demonstrable need?

- Housing Delivery Test below 75%; and/or
- Lack of a 5YHLS (tested against new Standard Methodology if LP 5+ years old)

Step 3c: (#155c): Is the site in a sustainable location? #110 / #115

Step 4: (#155d + #156): Can the Golden Rules be met?

Step 2: Footnote 7 Policies

- **Cannot** inc. Footnote 7 land that **provides a strong reason for refusal:**
 - European/National Habitats
 - SSSIs
 - Local Green Spaces (check Neighbourhood Plans)
 - National Landscapes: National Parks, Broads, AONBs, Heritage Coast
 - Irreplaceable habitats (ancient woodland / veteran trees)
 - Designated heritage assets
 - Areas at risk of flooding and costal change.
- **PPG confirms that a site might have to be ‘provisionally’ identified as Grey Belt until further assessments are carried out that relate to the above policies.**

Step 1: Grey Belt Land?

Green Belt Parcels that do **not strongly contribute** to:

Purpose A) Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas,

Purpose B) Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another, and

Purpose D) Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

PPG confirms villages are not applicable to any of these purposes.

Council GB Evidence

Existing Council GB Assessments provide a useful starting point but:

- Typically assess different parcels to a planning application / proposed development site.
- Methodology may not be consistent with the approach now set by the PPG.
- Rankings/scores may not be consistent with the PPG.

PPG confirms:

Where necessary, Green Belt assessments will need to be carried out by the Council.

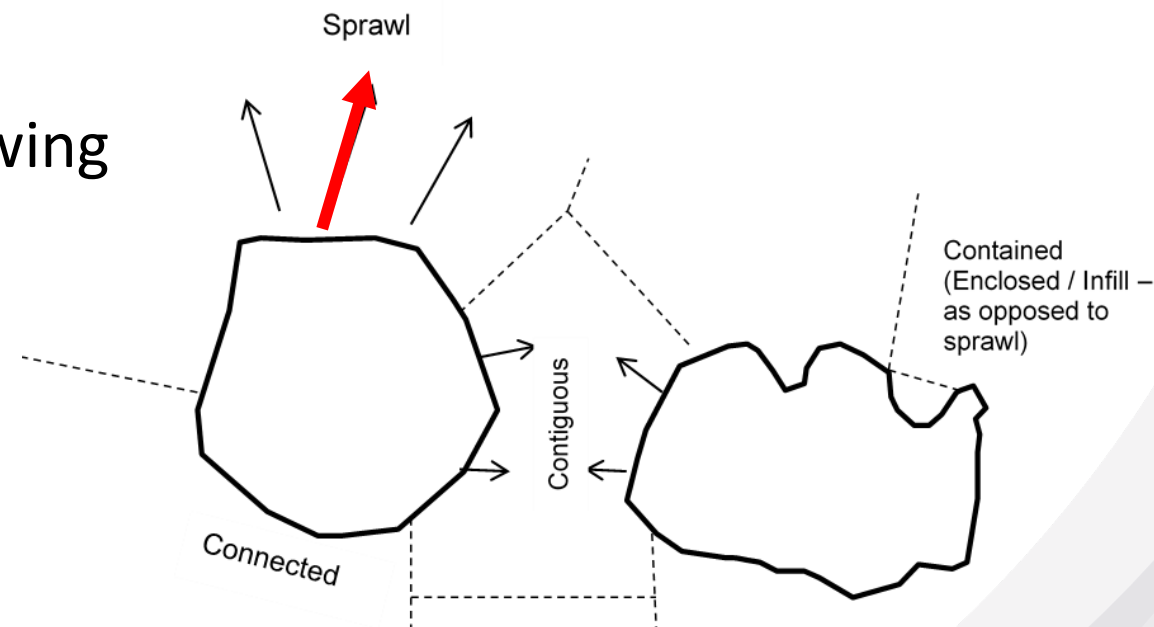
Should include:

- All Green Belt land within the LPA area.
- Identify parcels at a suitably granular level.
- A small number of large areas will not be appropriate in most cases.
- In certain locations, smaller parcels might be more appropriate
- e.g. around existing settlements or public transport hubs/corridors.
- Applies rankings of Strong / Moderate / Weak / None

Step 1: Purpose A

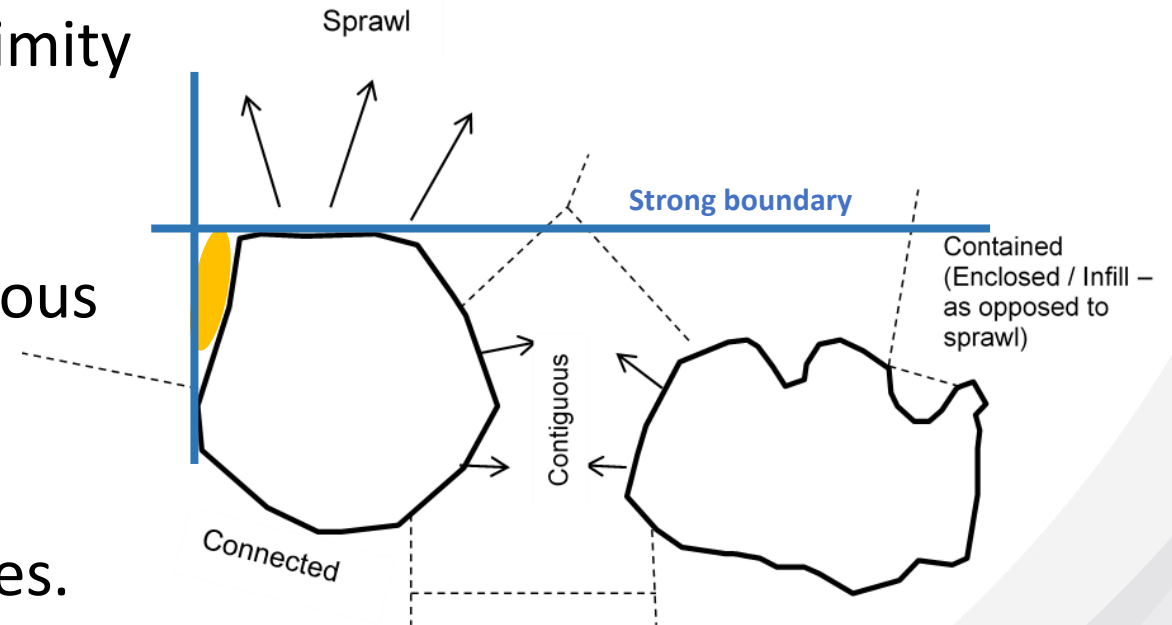
To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area

- No definition of LBA other than not applied to villages.
- **Strong** – likely to include **all** of following features:
 - free of existing development,
 - lack physical features in reasonable proximity that could restrict/contain development,
 - Adjacent to large built up area,
 - Result in **incongruous** pattern of development (e.g extended finger of development).



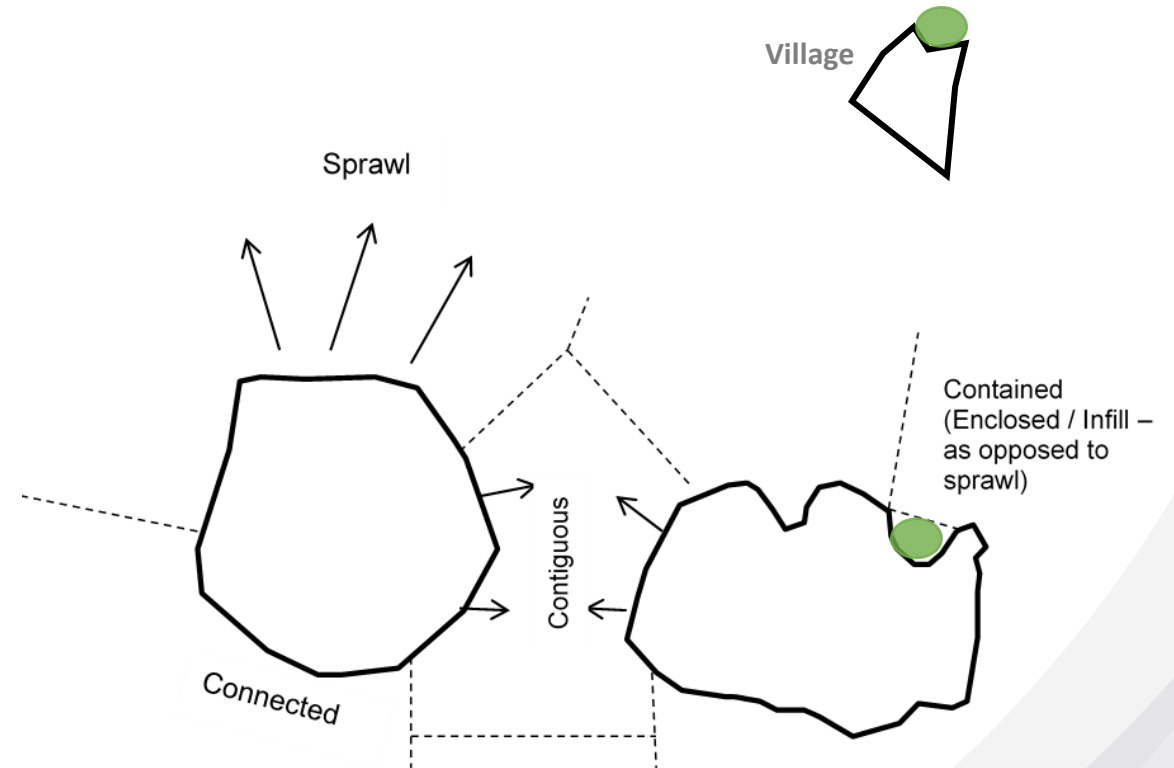
Step 1: Purpose A

- **Moderate:** Still likely to adjacent or near large built up area but include:
- Physical features in reasonable proximity that could contain development,
- Partially enclosed by existing development (not result in incongruous pattern),
- Contain existing development,
- Subject to other urbanising influences.



Step 1: Purpose A

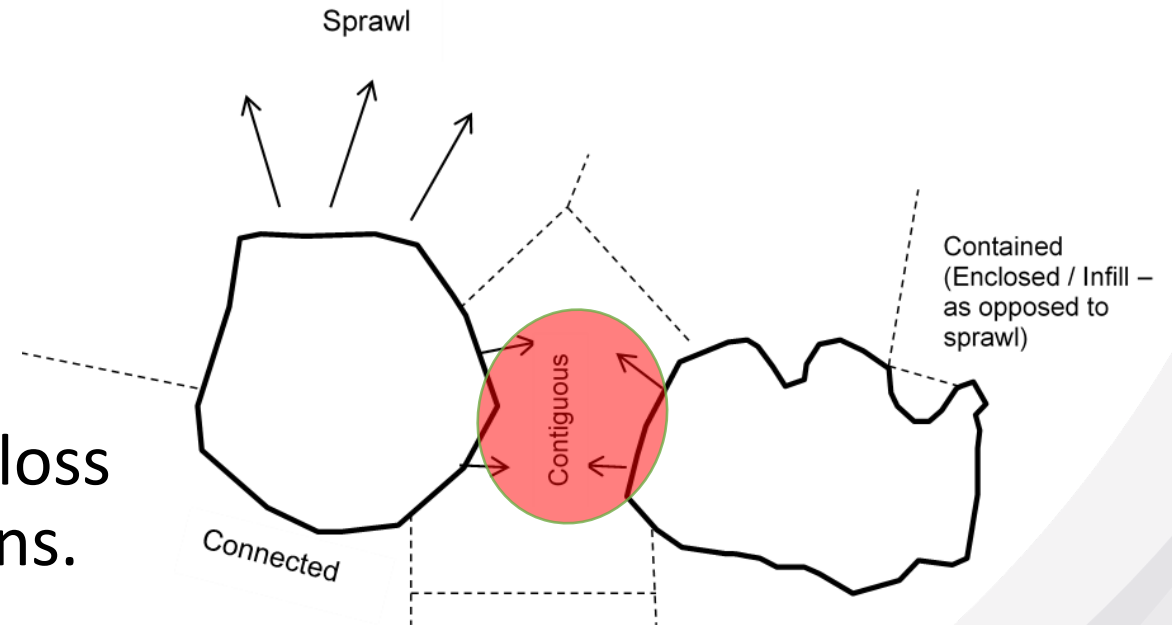
- **Weak or None**
- Not adjacent or near LBA, or
- Adjacent to or near LBA but containing or being largely enclosed by significant existing development.



Step 1: Purpose B

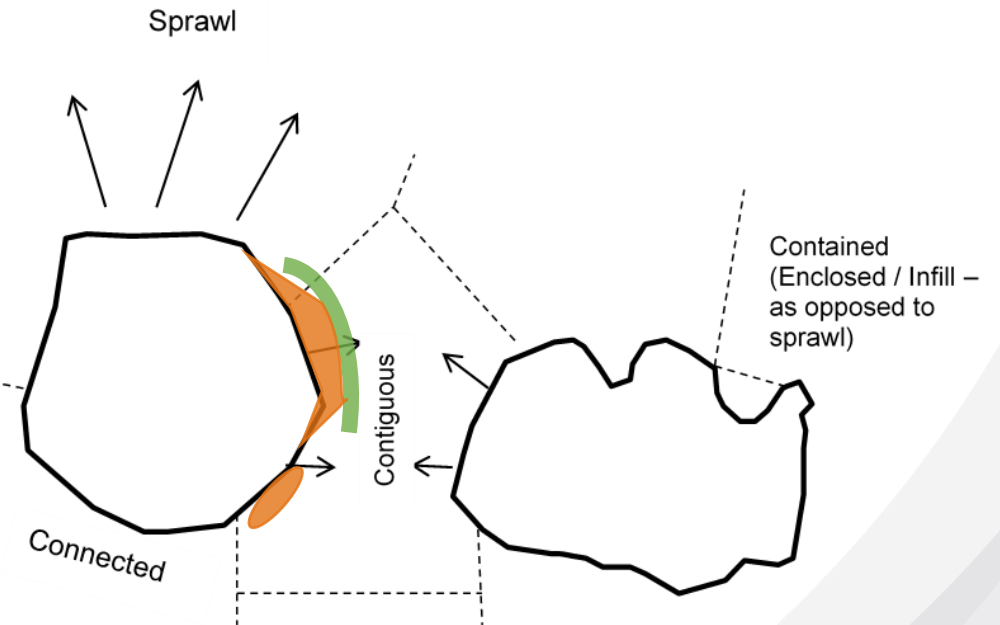
To prevent neighboring towns merging into one another

- PPG refers to visual analysis!
- **Strong**
- forms substantial part of a gap between towns **and**,
- Development would result in the loss of visual separation between towns.



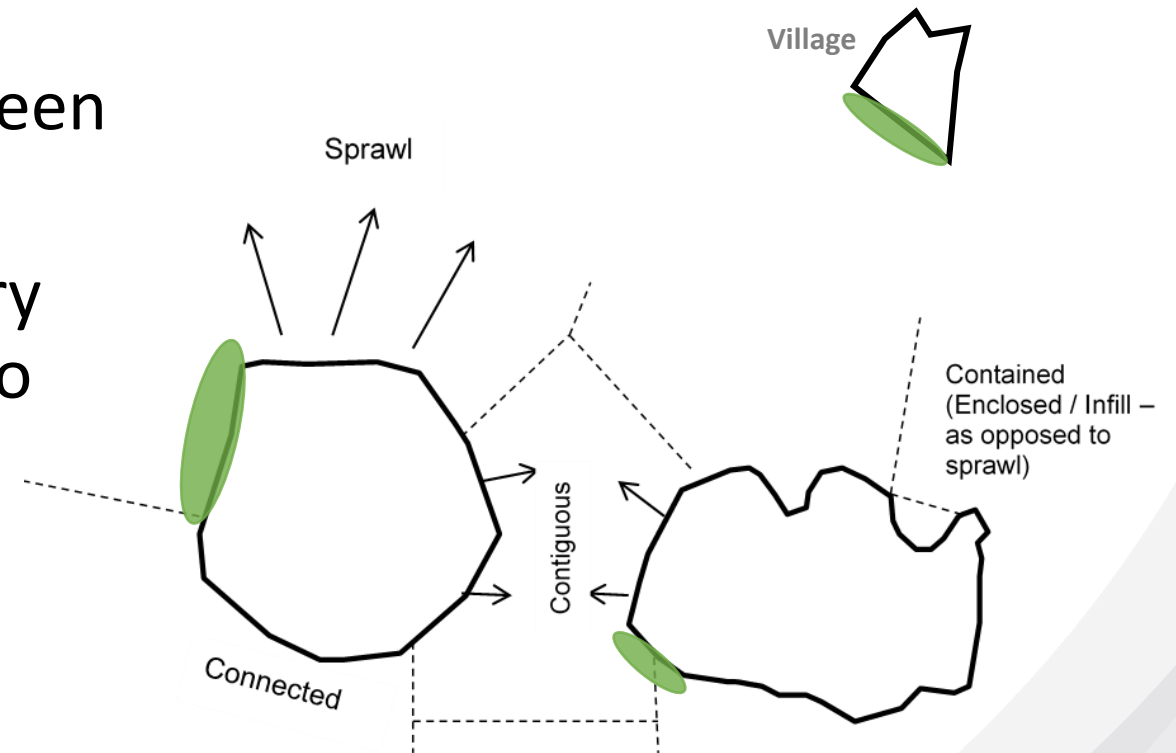
Step 1: Purpose B

- **Moderate**
- Forms small part of a gap between towns, or
- Can be developed without the loss of visual separation between the towns due to structures, natural landscape, topography that preserve visual separation, etc.



Step 1: Purpose B

- **Weak or None**
- Does not form part of a gap between towns, or
- Forms part of a gap but only a very small part, without contributing to visual separation



Step 1: Purpose D

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Heritage and visual analysis required subject to the historic nature and setting of the town

Strong: Forms part of the setting of the historic town **and** makes a considerable contribution to the special character of the historic town (e.g. adjacent to or of significant visual importance of the historic aspects of the town)

Moderate: Likely to form part of the setting and/or contribute to special character of a historic town but weakened contribution by (one or more):

- Being separated to some extent from historic aspects by existing development or topography
- Containing existing development
- Not having an important visual, physical or experiential relationship to historic aspects of the town.

SoS Decision: Tatton Services

SoS Decision - Approved: 05/03/2025

15.8 ha site for Westmoreland MSA surrounded by Strategic Road Network.

LPA Cheshire East Council – supported.

Trafford Council – objected then withdrew at Inquiry.

Called in by Gove in May 2024 just before General Election.

Inquiry and Inspector progressed under old NPPF & VSC case.

Pegasus and CEC agreed Purposes A, B and D were not conflicted. Only dispute was the degree of impact on Purpose C – countryside encroachment.

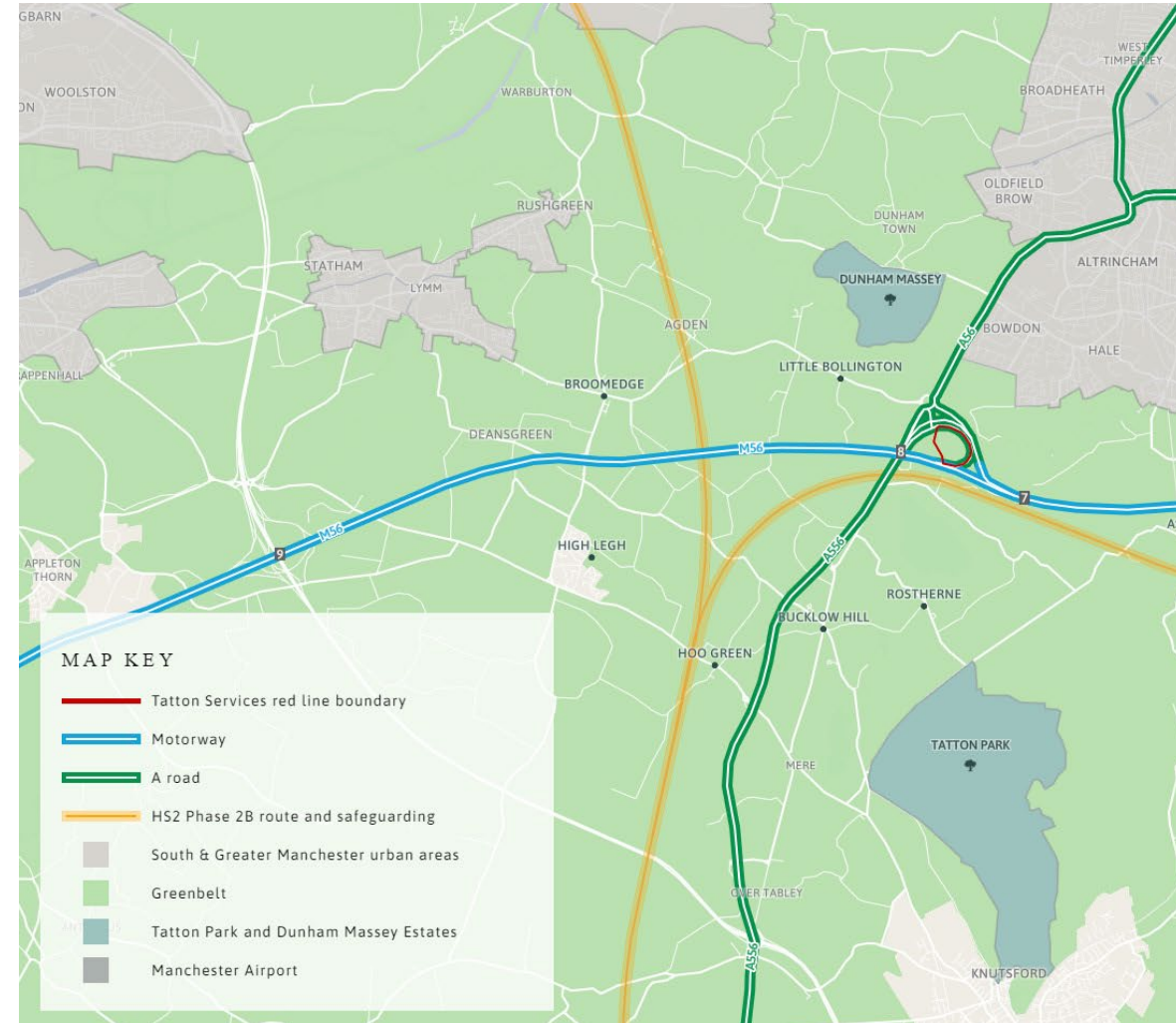
Inspector agreed with our evidence that there is only a weak/limited contribution to Purpose C.

Separate Grey Belt notes provided to SoS by Pegasus and CEC.

CEC suggested that it did not meet a #155 test (not an accessible location in the context of Grey Belt policy).

SoS confirmed Grey Belt Land. No conflict with A/B/D and no strong reasons to refuse against FN7 issues.

SoS confirmed not inappropriate development in the GB.



Expertly Done.

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Expertly Done.

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