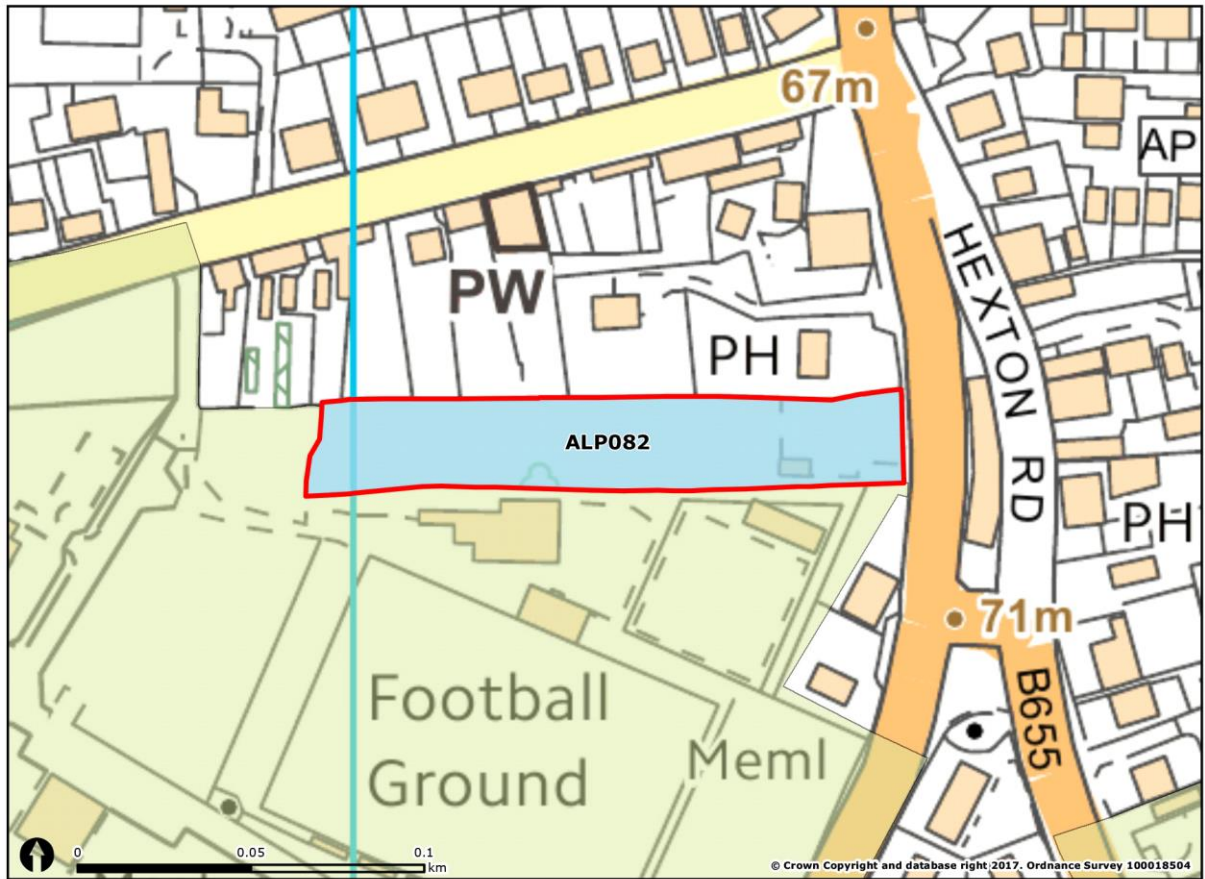


Barton le Clay



Committed development Harm rating from release of whole site - High Moderate high Moderate Low moderate Low



Site description

A narrow strip of rough scrub and trees located along the southern edge of the inset settlement of Barton-le-Clay. Residential properties and back gardens define the northern boundary and partly to the south whilst Luton Road extends along the eastern extent with further residential properties located adjacent. Sports pitches and ancillary buildings make up the southern and western boundaries.

Relationship between site, settlement and countryside

The existing inset settlement of Barton-le-Clay borders the site on the eastern and northern edges, and to the south are sports pitches. Together these impart an urbanising influence over the parcel, so whilst the site's tree cover provides visual separation between houses on Sharpenhoe Road and the sports ground it doesn't represent a distinction between settlement and countryside.

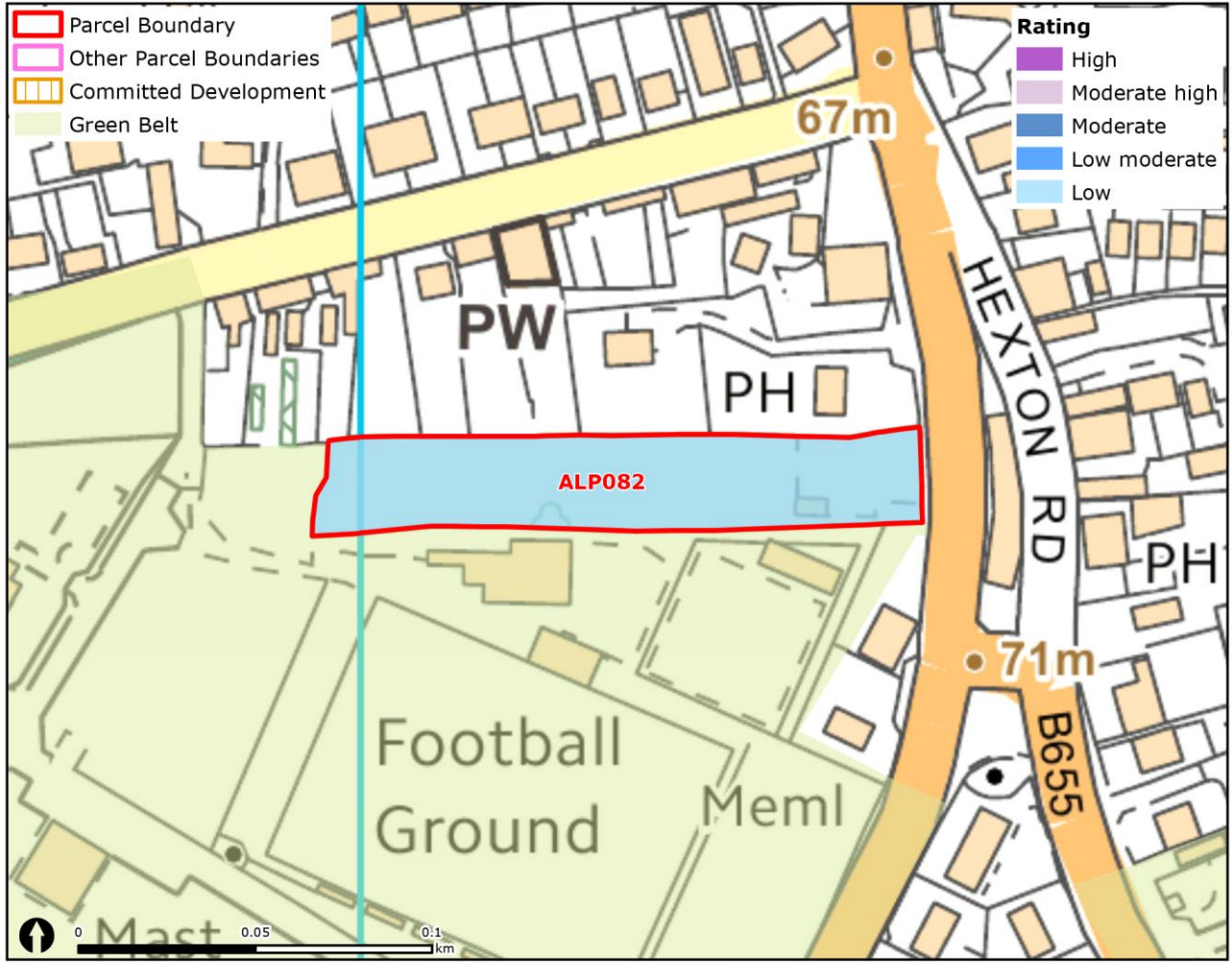
Parcels

This site is assessed as one parcel.

Site: ALP082 - Top Orchard

Site size (ha): 0.45

Parcel: ALP082 Parcel area (ha): 0.45



Looking west from Bedford Road.

Parcel: ALP082 Parcel area (ha): 0.45

Stage 1 assessment

Stage 2 assessment

Parcel: BC4
Highest contribution: Purpose 3 - Relatively weak contribution

Parcel: BC4a
Contribution: Relatively weak

Contribution to Green Belt purposes

Purpose	Comments
Purpose 1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas	Development here would relate to the expansion of Barton-le-Clay and would not be associated with the large built up areas of Luton/Dunstable/Houston Regis or Leighton Linlade. Therefore the belt plays no role with respect to this purpose.
Purpose 2: Preventing the merger of neighbouring towns	Barton-le-Clay sits in a low lying clay vale at the foot of a chalk escarpment which forms a strong boundary feature which separates the town from Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis to the south. Therefore development of this parcel would not result in the merging of towns.
Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	This belt of vegetation and trees does not make a clear distinction between the town and countryside. There is little separation between the site and the settlement due to its containment by housing to the north and east by the settlement. The site relates more strongly to the settlement to the countryside and development here would represent very limited encroachment on the countryside.
Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns	This parcel does not form a significant part of the setting of any historic towns.
Purpose 5: Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

Spatial options

The parcel is not located within an identified Potential Growth Location. However, the site's location in the settlement of Steppingley, the absence of any landscape elements that could create clear separation between existing and new development, and the location of the site within 1.2km of an A-road mean that village extension and growth in transport corridors are viable development scenarios.

Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries

This belt of vegetation and trees forms a Green Belt boundary in itself. There are no existing alternative Green Belt boundaries within the site or nearby that would offer stronger boundaries.

Site: ALP082 - Top Orchard

Site size (ha): 0.45

Parcel: ALP082 **Parcel area (ha):** 0.45

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release

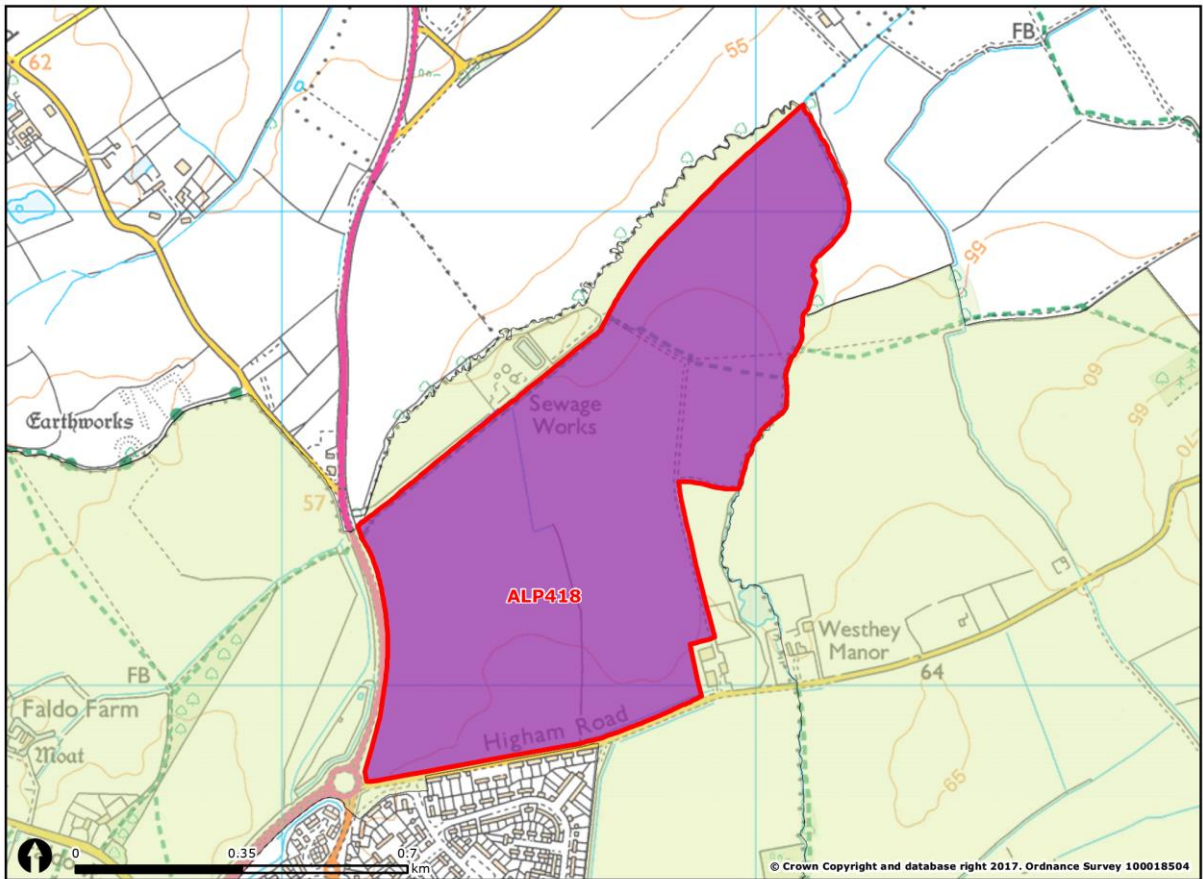
Scenario	Comments	Rating
Release of ALP082 in isolation.	This site does not play a strong role in any of the Green Belt purposes. It has a strong relationship with the settlement and is unlikely to cause harm to the wider Green Belt.	Low

Cumulative release scenarios

ALP082 lies in proximity to NLP123. ALP082 is assessed isolation causing low harm to the Green Belt, whilst NLP123 is assessed as causing low moderate harm. It is considered the harm resulting from their combined release would not be significantly greater than that of NLP123 in isolation.

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release of site

Scenario	Comments	Rating
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Committed development Harm rating from release of whole site - High Moderate high Moderate Low moderate Low



Site description

Three arable fields to the north of Barton-le-Clay, separated from the edge of the inset settlement by Higham Road. The A6 Bedford Road forms the western edge of the site and the northern edge is formed in part by a wooded hedgerow some of which follows the course of a small stream and in part by the boundaries of a small sewage works. Hedgerows, in part lining another watercourse, form the site's eastern boundary. There is no development within the site but the sewage works lies just beyond the northern edge and several barn/storage units are situated at the south-eastern corner. A residential property, Westhey Manor, lies just to the east of these and the washed-over hamlet of Higham Gobion is 1.5km to the east along Higham Road. Much of the site's northern edge is also the outer boundary of the Green Belt or lies within 100m south from the edge of the Green Belt.

Relationship between site, settlement and countryside

There is no significant visual separation between the site and Barton-le-Clay, but Higham Road marks a clear and sharp edge between the urban area and the fields that form the site. The buildings close to the fringes of the site are isolated from the settlement and do not represent a significant urbanising influence. Although the A6 and the well-treed streams and hedgerows provide a degree of physical and visual containment, these fields form part of a homogeneous, visually open, arable landscape that defines the character of the vale.

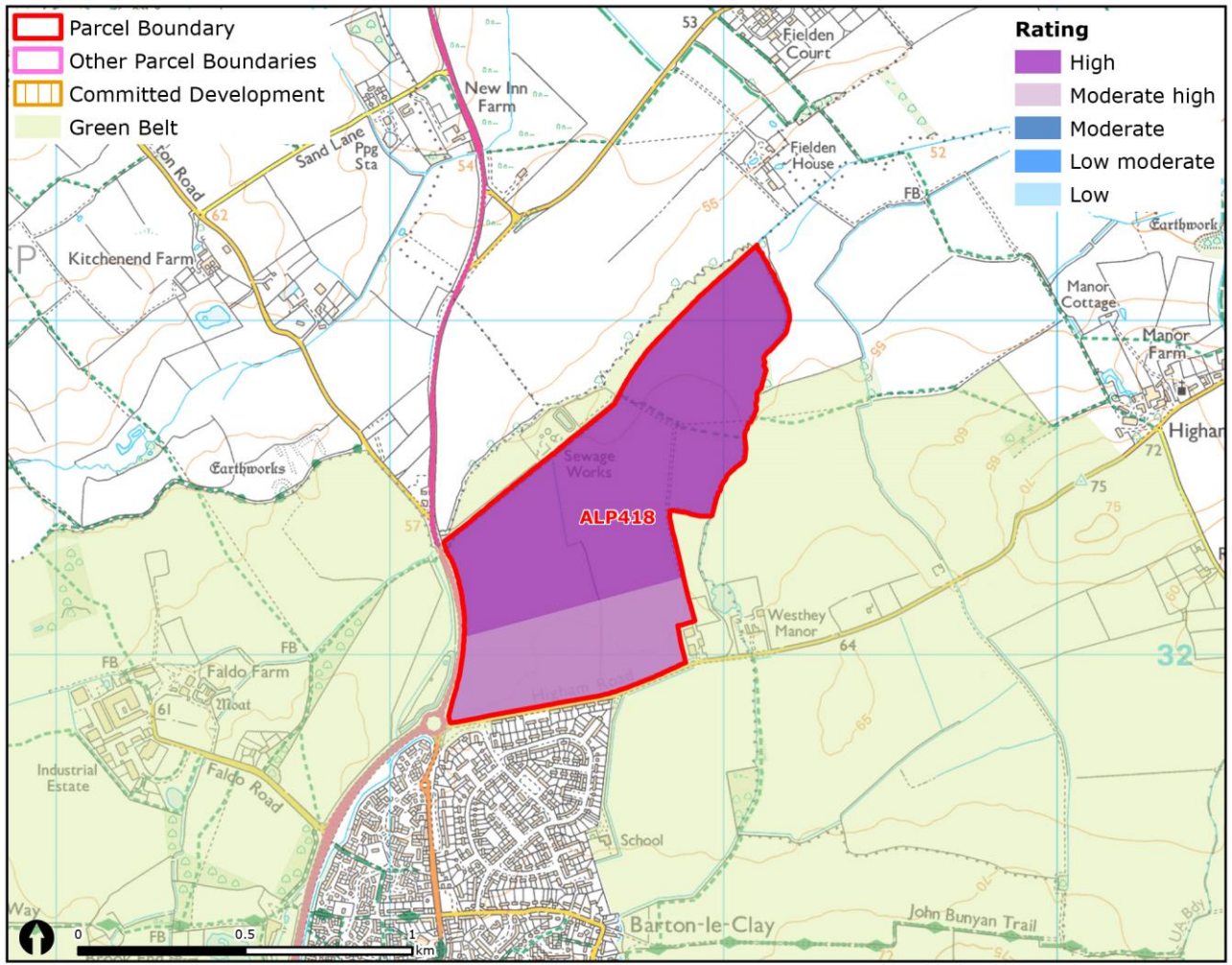
Parcels

The hedgerows that divides the fields and the sewage works access road, do not mark any significant change in relationship between site, settlement and countryside, so the site is assessed as a single parcel of land. Site NLP382 covers exactly the same area but without the addition of the small area of arable land to the north of the sewage works access road.

Site: ALP418 - Land north of Higham Road/east of Bedford Road, Barton le Clay

Site size (ha): 69.44

Parcel: ALP418 Parcel area (ha): 69.44



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Looking north-west from the south-east corner of the parcel on Higham Road

Parcel: ALP418 **Parcel area (ha):** 69.44

Stage 1 assessment

Stage 2 assessment

Parcel: BC1
Highest contribution: Purpose 3 - Strong contribution

Parcel: n/a
Contribution:

Contribution to Green Belt purposes

Purpose	Comments
Purpose 1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas	Development here would relate the expansion of Barton-le-Clay and would not be associated with the large, urban area of Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. Therefore the parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.
Purpose 2: Preventing the merger of neighbouring towns	The nearest towns are Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south and Flitwick to the north-west. Both occupy distinctly separate landscape area, with the chalk escarpment forming a strong boundary feature immediately to the south of Barton-le-Clay and the hills around Pulloxhill creating strong separation from Flitwick to the north of the clay vale.
Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The fields form part of the homogeneous agricultural landscape and constitute a sizeable area of countryside in their own right. Higham Road marks a clear distinction between the parcel and the settlement edge, and expansion northwards can be considered a greater intrusion on the vale's landscape than expansion closer to the foot of Barton Hills. The parcel therefore makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment.
Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns	The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5: Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

Spatial options

Three spatial options for development are identified for Potential Growth Location L10, of which the site forms part: new settlement, village extension and growth in a transport corridor. However the site's location adjacent to the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay, and the absence of any landscape elements that could create clear separation between existing and new development, mean that village extension is the only viable development scenario.

Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries

The northern and eastern edges of the site are clearly defined by hedgerows, streams and associated tree cover and by the A6 to the west. However the release of all or most of the parcel would leave no Green Belt to contain Barton-le-Clay to the north. The north-south hedgerow which subdivides the site would form a weaker settlement edge than Higham Road but would align with the eastern edge of Barton-le-Clay.

Site: ALP418 - Land north of Higham Road/east of Bedford Road, Barton le Clay

Site size (ha): 69.44

Parcel: ALP418 **Parcel area (ha):** 69.44

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release

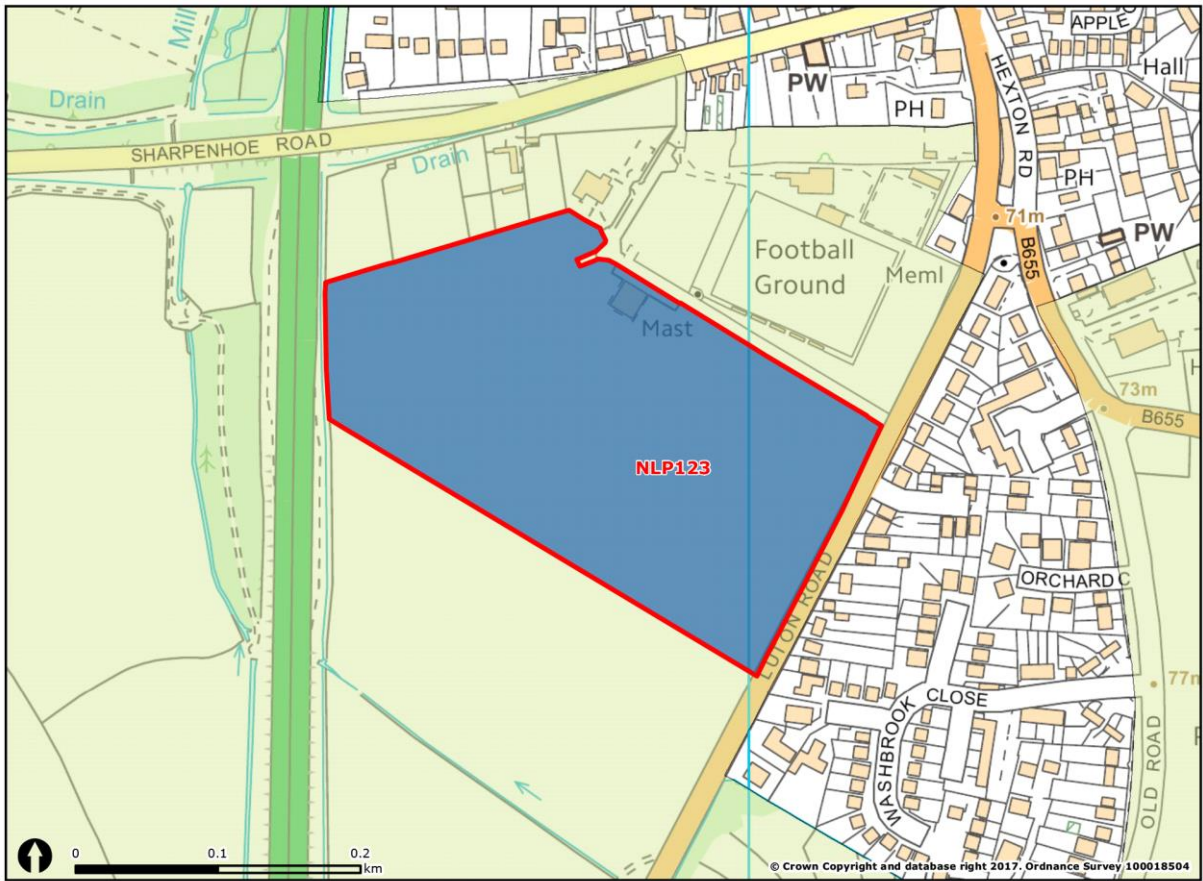
Scenario	Comments	Rating
Release of ALP418 in isolation	The parcel makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment. Its release would remove any effective Green Belt containment to the north of Barton-le-Clay. Release of ALP418 would not significantly weaken the contribution of adjacent arable farmland to the west or east, due to the strength of relationship between these areas and the wider countryside. Release of just the westernmost field would still constitute significant encroachment.	High
Release of the southern part of ALP418 in isolation or with NLP158.	Retention of a wider strip of Green Belt would reduce harm but such a strip would still be relatively narrow. In the absence of any existing east-west boundary features a new inner Green Belt boundary would be weaker than the existing edge on Higham Road.	Moderate high

Cumulative release scenarios

ALP418 adjoins NLP158, which also makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment but does not contribute significantly to other Green Belt purposes. Release of the two areas in combination would not have any significant additional impact.

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release of site

Scenario	Comments	Rating



Committed development Harm rating from release of whole site - High Moderate high Moderate Low moderate Low



Site description

A recreational field to the south of Barton-le-Clay. The parcel is separated by a line of conifers from the sports pitches and buildings associated with Barton Rovers FC to the north-east, and by a hedgerow from some small paddocks to the north-west; both are within the Green Belt. A well-defined hedgerow marks the boundary elsewhere. There is no development within the site.

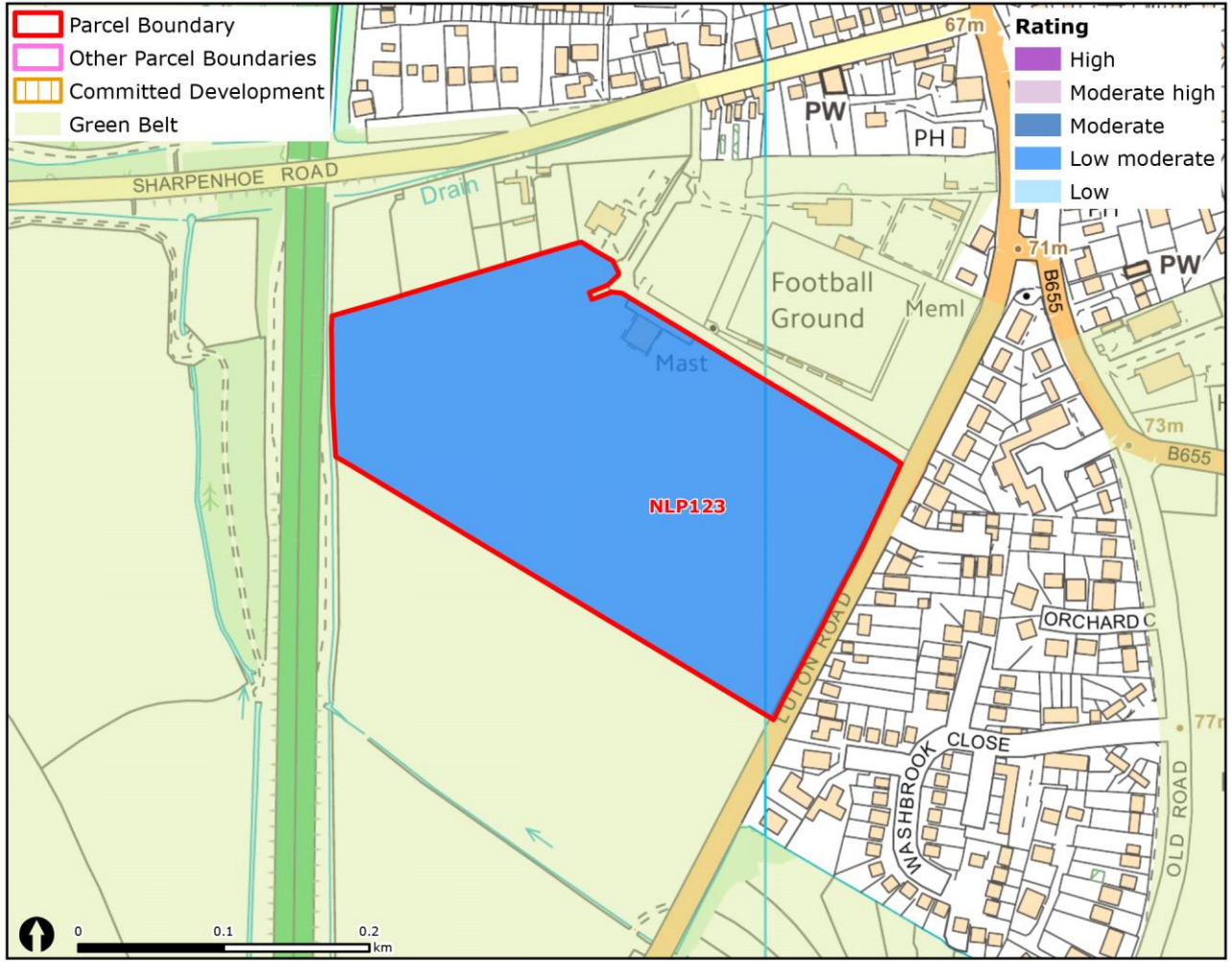
Residential houses along B655 Luton Road and Sharpenhoe Road mark the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay to the north and east of the site respectively. An open arable field lies to the south of the parcel. The B655 Luton Road extends along the south eastern boundary and the tree-lined A6 runs along the short north western boundary. The washed over village of Sharpenhoe lies 1.2km to the west along Barton Road.

Relationship between site, settlement and countryside

The tall coniferous tree belt along the northern boundary and the mature trees and hedgerow field boundaries limit the extent to which housing along Sharpenhoe and Luton Road has an urbanising influence over the parcel. However, the A6 creates strong physical and visual separation between the site and the broader arable landscape to the west. The woodland and rise in terrain up to the Sharpenhoe Clappers has a similar effect to the south.

Parcels

This site is assessed as a single parcel of land.



Looking south-west from sports pitch access road

Parcel: NLP123 Parcel area (ha): 7.03

Stage 1 assessment

Stage 2 assessment

Parcel: BC4
Highest contribution: Purpose 3 - Relatively weak contribution

Parcel: BC4a
Contribution: Relatively weak

Contribution to Green Belt purposes

Purpose	Comments
Purpose 1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas	Development here would relate to the expansion of Barton-le-Clay and would not be associated with the large urban area of Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. Therefore the parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.
Purpose 2: Preventing the merger of neighbouring towns	Barton-le-Clay sits in a low lying clay vale at the foot of a chalk escarpment which forms a strong boundary feature which separates the town from Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. The position of the parcel to the south of Barton-le-Clay and the hills around Pulloxhill to the north east create strong separation from Flitwick.
Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Containment by settlement to the north and east, and by strong road and landscape edges to the west and south, separates this parcel from the wider countryside, despite the football ground and paddocks to the north being part of the Green Belt. Urbanising influences are limited.
Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns	The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5: Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

Spatial options

Three spatial options for development are identified for Potential Growth Location L10, of which the site forms part: new settlement, village extension and growth in a transport corridor. However the site’s location adjacent to the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay, and the absence of any landscape elements that could create clear separation between existing and new development, mean that village extension is the only viable development scenario.

Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries

The site boundaries are clearly defined by the strong landscape and road edges along the A6 and Luton Road. However, the rising topography along the edge of the Barton Hills along the B655 Luton Road would make a stronger edge to the Green Belt.

Site: NLP123 - Land at Luton Road, Barton le Clay

Site size (ha): 7.03

Parcel: NLP123 **Parcel area (ha):** 7.03

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release

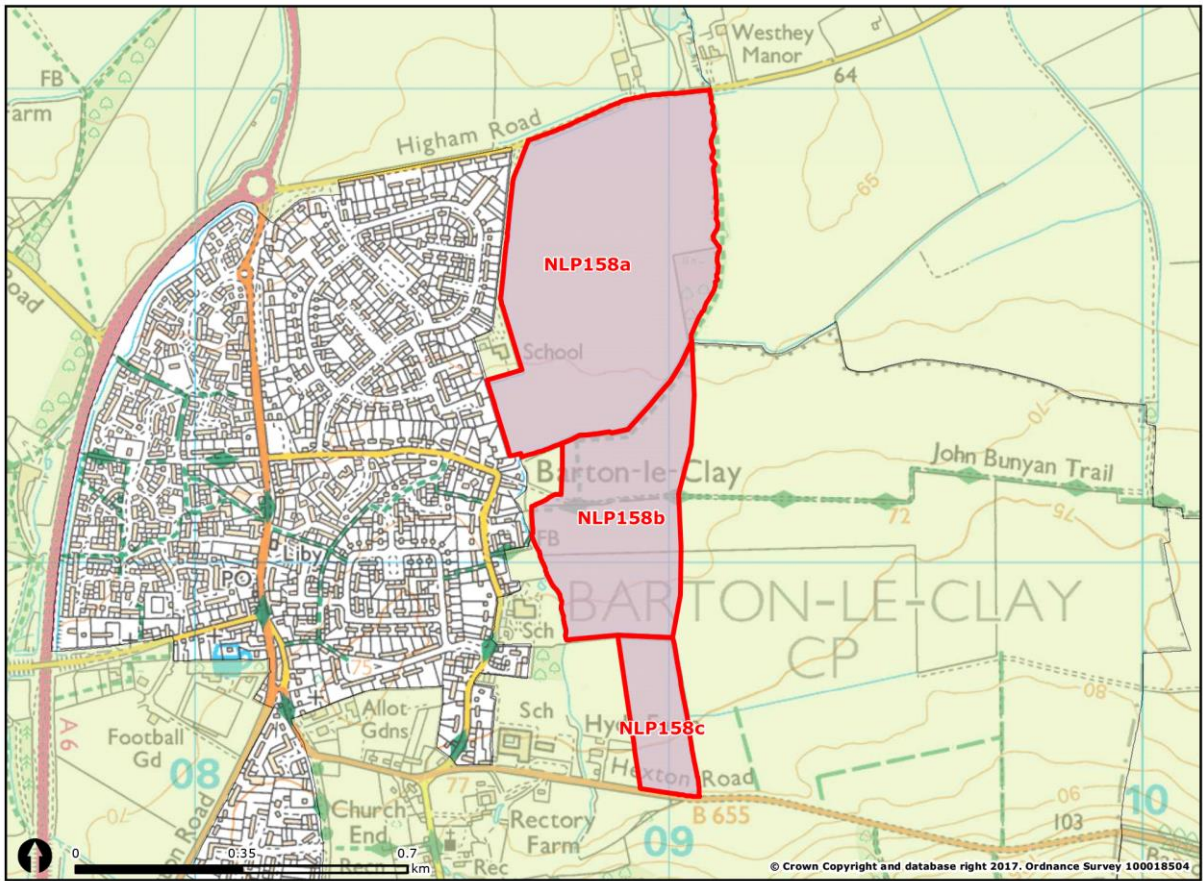
Scenario	Comments	Rating
Release of Parcel NLP123 in isolation	Although it only abuts the settlement edge to the east, across Luton Road, NLP123 sits within an area which has strong containment from the wider Green Belt. Releasing this parcel would weaken the contribution of the remaining triangle of land to the south of the site within the boundary created by the A6 and Luton Road, and there would be little justification for retaining the Green belt status of the football ground and paddocks to the north.	Low moderate

Cumulative release scenarios

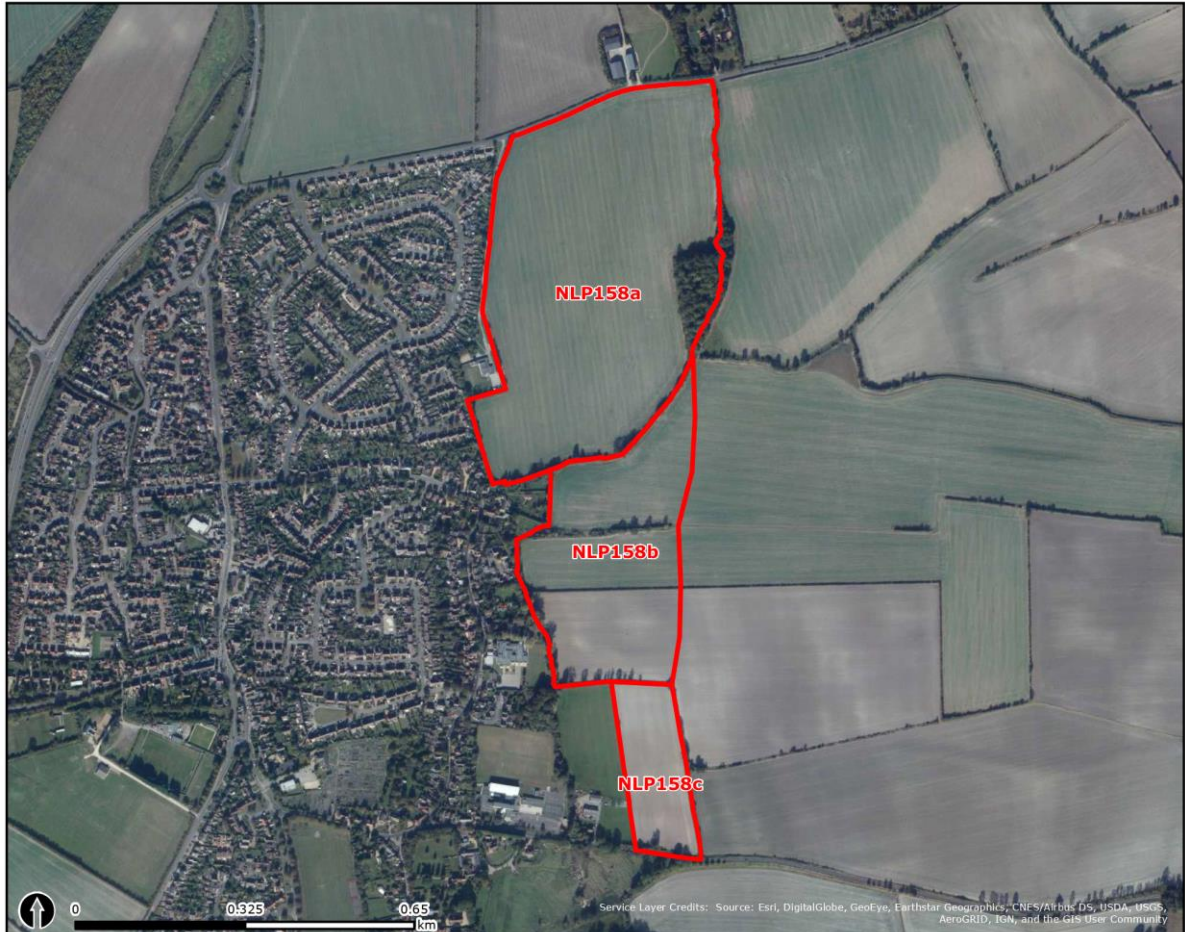
The release of NLP123 in combination with ALP418/NLP382 and/or NLP158 is not considered due the physical and visual separation of the parcels by the settlement.

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release of site

Scenario	Comments	Rating



 Committed development Harm rating from release of whole site -  High  Moderate high  Moderate  Low moderate  Low



Site description

The site extends eastwards from the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay and comprises flat open arable fields situated within an expansive low-lying clay vale at the foot of the Barton Hills. Arnold Academy, Ramsey Manor Lower School and Orchard School and the open school fields around them, are all situated within the Green Belt, adjacent to the built edge and along the western boundary of the site, separated from the site by hedgerows and tree belts. Minor roads (Higham Road and Hexton Road) lined by short gappy hedges, form the short northern and southern boundaries respectively. A small copse and ditch just south of Higham Road and an old hedgerow line, marked by surviving hedgerow trees, mark the edge of the site on the eastern boundary although the middle section of this boundary is open and the arable field continues eastwards.

There is no development within the site, but a residential property Westhey Manor lies just north of the site and Hyde Farm lies south west of the site, separated from the settlement edge by a small stream. The washed over village of Higham Gobian lies 1.5km to the east along Higham Road and the village of Hexton lies 1.5 km along the Hexton Road.

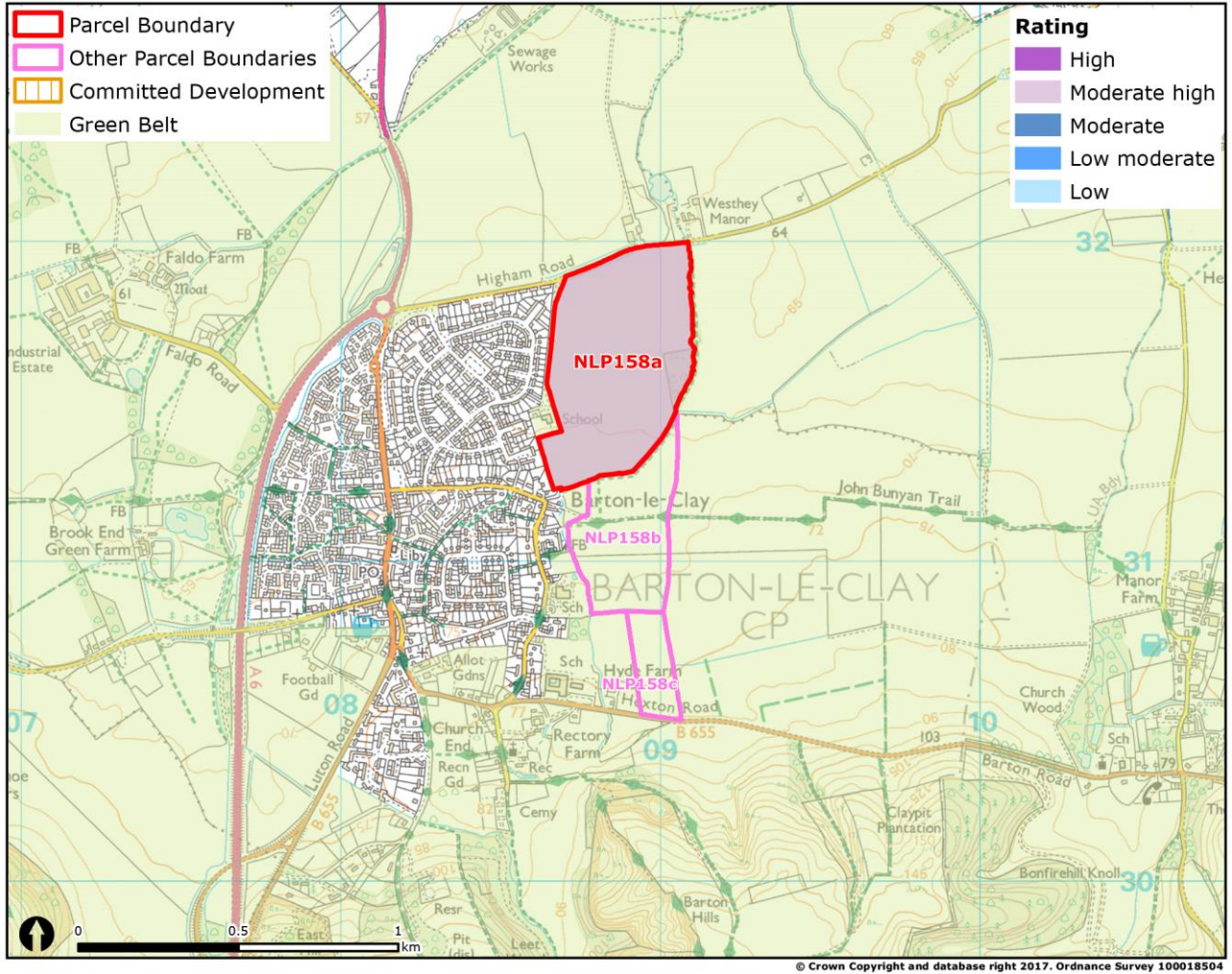
Relationship between site, settlement and countryside

The hedgerows and tree belt along the western boundary provide physical and visual separation between the site and Barton-le-Clay, particularly to the south of the site where tree belts around Arnold Academy provide a high level of containment. There is no significant urbanising influence beyond the existing settlement edge. The eastern boundary is more open with further large arable fields located beyond the site, meaning that the site relates strongly to the wider countryside.

Parcels

This site is assessed as three parcels of land:

- Parcel NLP158a cover the large field bounded by a tree lined ditch to the north of the site;
- Parcel NLP158b covers open arable fields east of Ramsay Manor Lower School; and
- Parcel NLP158c covers a smaller field east of Arnold Academy which is separated from the settlement edge by an arable field around Hyde Farm.



Looking north from Barton Hills

Parcel: NLP158a Parcel area (ha): 27.79

Stage 1 assessment

Stage 2 assessment

Parcel: BC2
Highest contribution: Purpose 3 - Strong contribution

Parcel: n/a
Contribution:

Contribution to Green Belt purposes

Purpose	Comments
Purpose 1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas	Development here would relate to the expansion of Barton-le-Clay and would not be associated with the large urban area of Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. Therefore the parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.
Purpose 2: Preventing the merger of neighbouring towns	Barton-le-Clay sits in a low-lying clay vale at the foot of the Barton Hills, a steep chalk escarpment which forms a strong boundary feature which separates the town from Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. The hills around Pulloxhill to the north east create strong separation from Flitwick. The parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.
Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, the flat arable fields forming part of a homogenous open rural landscape which stretches eastwards from the edge of the settlement. The hedgerow and tree belts along the settlement edge form a boundary between the settlement and the parcel. The parcel therefore makes a contribution to preventing countryside encroachment.
Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns	The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5: Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

Spatial options

Three spatial options for development are identified for Potential Growth Location L10, of which the site forms part: new settlement, village extension and growth in a transport corridor. However the site’s location adjacent to the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay, and the absence of any landscape elements that could create clear separation between existing and new development, mean that village extension is the only viable development scenario.

Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries

The northern edge of the site is clearly defined by the Higham Road. The proposed Green Belt boundary which would define the eastern and southern edge of the parcel would be bounded by an old hedgerow alongside a ditch lined by hedgerow trees and a small copse and would not be significantly weaker than the existing Green Belt boundary on the settlement edge. There are no existing alternative Green Belt boundaries within the site or nearby that would offer stronger boundaries.

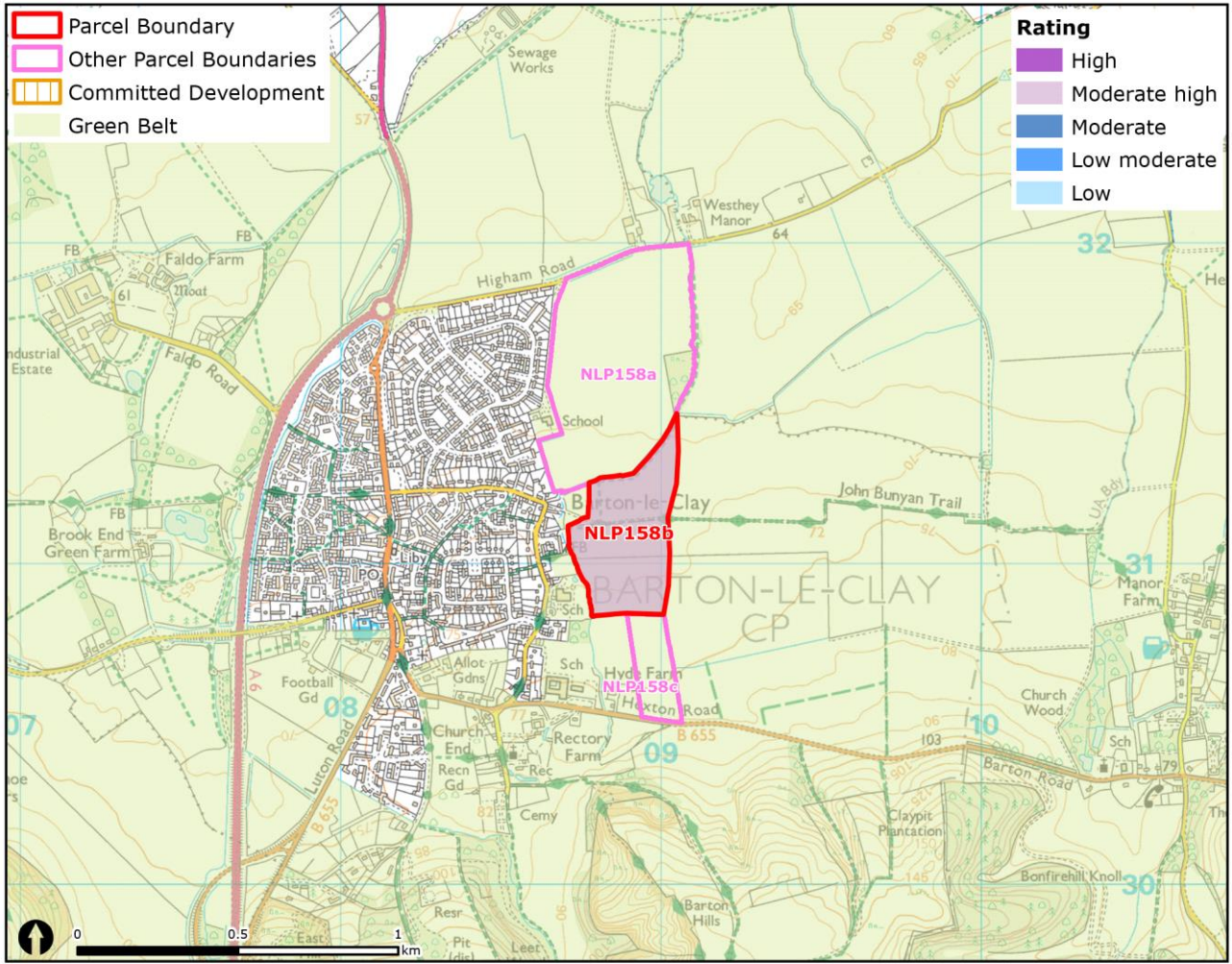
Site: NLP158 - Land to the East of Barton le Clay

Site size (ha): 44.74

Parcel: NLP158a **Parcel area (ha):** 27.79

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release

Scenario	Comments	Rating
Release of NLP158a in isolation	The parcel makes a contribution to preventing countryside encroachment but does not contribute to other Green Belt purposes. Its release in isolation would not weaken the contribution of adjacent arable farmland to the east, due to the strength of the relationship between these areas and the wider countryside, but it would weaken the contribution of the land to the south as it would be contained on two sides by development.	Moderate high



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Looking north from Barton Hills

Parcel: NLP158b Parcel area (ha): 12.99

Stage 1 assessment

Stage 2 assessment

Parcel: BC2
Highest contribution: Purpose 3 - Strong contribution

Parcel: n/a
Contribution:

Contribution to Green Belt purposes

Purpose	Comments
Purpose 1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas	Development here would relate to the expansion of Barton-le-Clay and would not be associated with the large urban area of Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. Therefore the parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.
Purpose 2: Preventing the merger of neighbouring towns	Barton-le-Clay sits in a low lying clay vale at the foot of the Barton Hills, a steep chalk escarpment which forms a strong boundary feature which separates the town from Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. The location of the site to the east of Barton-le-Clay and the hills around Pulloxhill to the north east of the village create strong separation from Flitwick.
Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel relates strongly to the wider countryside, the site comprising the western edge of a large open field which stretches eastwards from the edge of the settlement towards Hexton and forms part of a homogenous open rural landscape. The hedgerow and tree belts along the settlement edge form a boundary between the settlement and the parcel. The parcel therefore makes a contribution to preventing countryside encroachment.
Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns	The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5: Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

Spatial options

Three spatial options for development are identified for Potential Growth Location L10, of which the site forms part: new settlement, village extension and growth in a transport corridor. However the site's location adjacent to the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay, and the absence of any landscape elements that could create clear separation between existing and new development, mean that village extension is the only viable development scenario.

Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries

The southern edge of the site is defined by an old hedgerow line marked by hedgerow trees, and the northern edge by a public footpath which runs alongside an old hedgerow line and ditch. The longer eastern boundary is open with no existing north-south boundary feature. There are no alternative GB boundaries within the site.

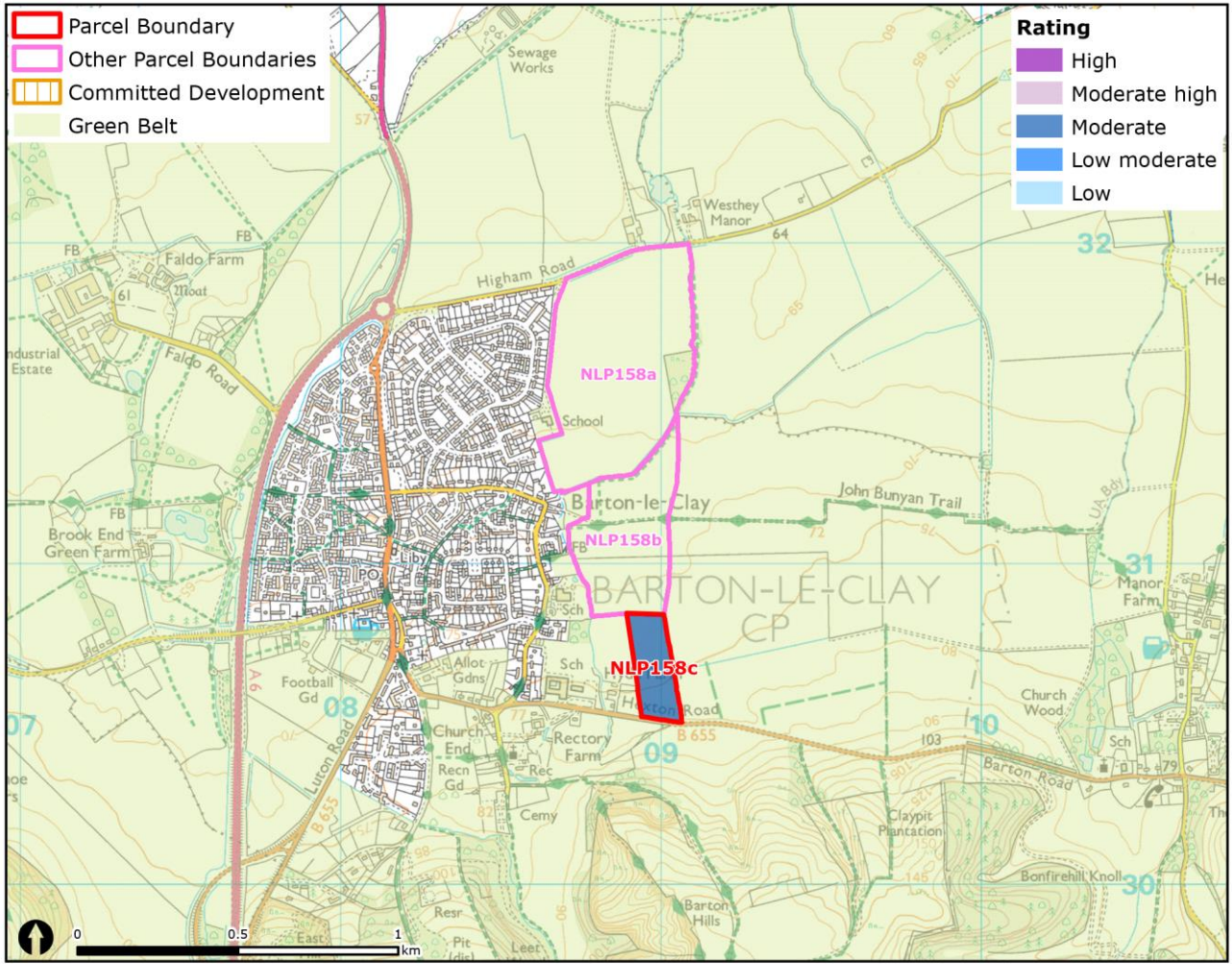
Site: NLP158 - Land to the East of Barton le Clay

Site size (ha): 44.74

Parcel: NLP158b **Parcel area (ha):** 12.99

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release

Scenario	Comments	Rating
Release of NLP158b in isolation	The parcel makes a contribution to preventing countryside encroachment but does not contribute significantly to other Green Belt purposes. In the absence of any existing north-south boundary feature along the parcel edge, a new Green Belt boundary would be weaker than the existing tree belt along the settlement edge. The release of this parcel in isolation would weaken the contribution of the land to the north and south, as it would be contained on two sides by development. Release would also leave little justification for retaining the school and private gardens to the west within the Green Belt.	Moderate high



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Looking north from Barton Hills

Parcel: NLP158c Parcel area (ha): 3.96

Stage 1 assessment	Stage 2 assessment
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<p>Parcel: BC2</p> <p>Highest contribution: Purpose 3 - Strong contribution</p>	<p>Parcel: BC2a</p> <p>Contribution:</p>
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Contribution to Green Belt purposes	
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Purpose	Comments
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<p>Purpose 1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas</p>	<p>Development here would relate to the expansion of Barton-le-Clay and would not be associated with the large urban area of Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. Therefore the parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.</p>
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<p>Purpose 2: Preventing the merger of neighbouring towns</p>	<p>Barton-le-Clay sits in a low lying clay vale at the foot of the Barton Hills, a steep chalk escarpment which forms a strong boundary feature which separates the town from Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. The location of the site to the east of Barton-le-Clay and the hills around Pulloxhill to the north east of the village create strong separation from Flitwick. The parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.</p>
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<p>Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The parcel relates more strongly to the wider countryside than the settlement, the field forming part of an open homogenous rural landscape which stretches eastwards from the settlement edge towards Hexton. The hedgerow along the western edge of the parcel, the land around Hyde Farm and the tree belt around Arnold Academy, separates this parcel from the settlement edge and urbanising influences are limited. The parcel therefore makes a contribution to preventing countryside encroachment.</p>
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<p>Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns</p>	<p>The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.</p>
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<p>Purpose 5: Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land</p>	<p>All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.</p>
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Spatial options

Three spatial options for development are identified for Potential Growth Location L10, of which the site forms part: new settlement, village extension and growth in a transport corridor. However the site's location adjacent to the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay, and the absence of any landscape elements that could create clear separation between existing and new development, mean that village extension is the only viable development scenario.

Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries

The southern edge of the site is clearly defined by the Hexton Road. The western boundary with Hyde Farm runs alongside an open ditch. The outer eastern and northern edge of the parcel are defined by an old hedgerow line marked by hedgerow trees. These boundaries would not be significantly weaker than the existing Green Belt boundary on the settlement edge. There are no alternative Green Belt boundaries within this parcel.

Site: NLP158 - Land to the East of Barton le Clay

Site size (ha): 44.74

Parcel: NLP158c **Parcel area (ha):** 3.96

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release

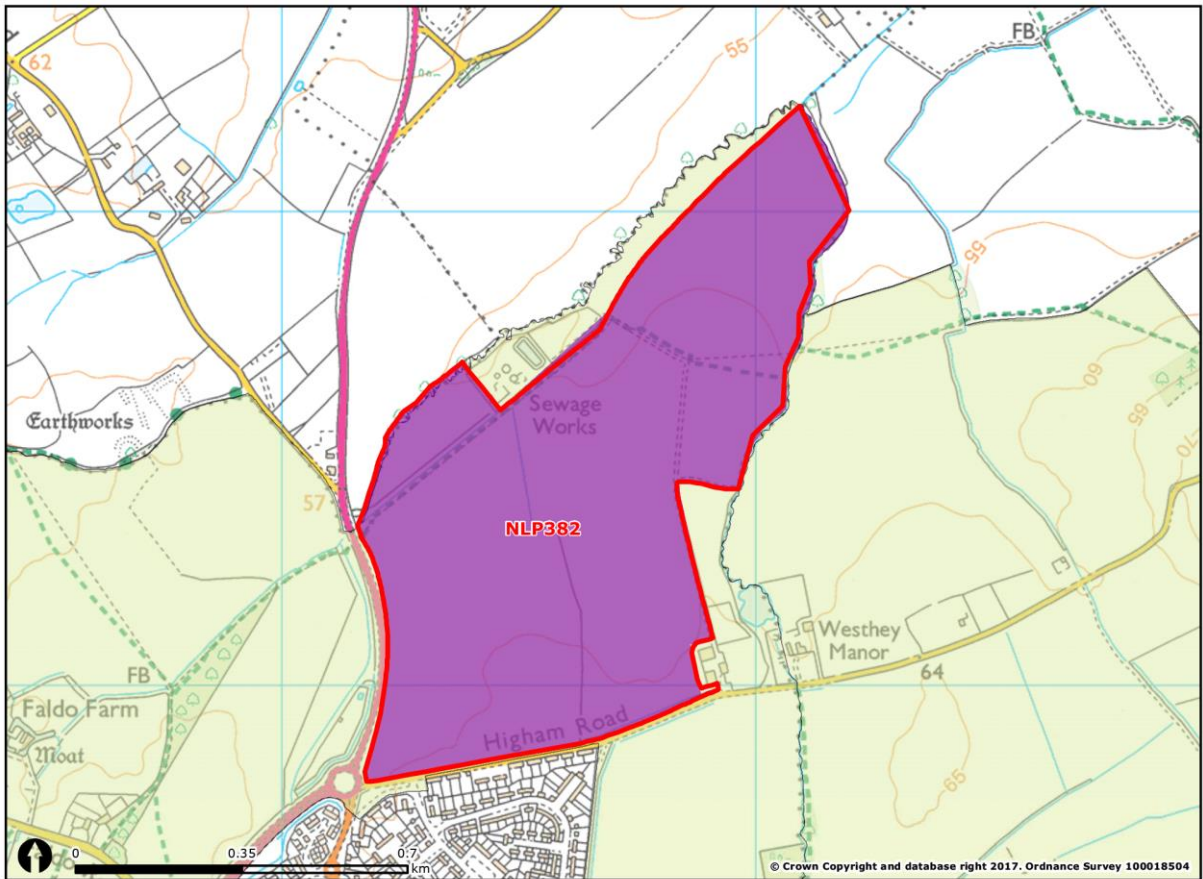
Scenario	Comments	Rating
Release of NLP158c in isolation	Development of this land would represent encroachment on the countryside, but the parcel is relatively small and does not contribute significantly to other Green Belt purposes. Although it has a degree of detachment from the settlement edge its release in isolation would not weaken the contribution of adjacent arable farmland to the east and north, due to the strength of the relationship between these areas and the wider countryside. Its release would weaken justification for retaining the Green Belt land to the west around Hyde Farm and the Arnold Academy which already form linear development along Hexton Road.	Moderate

Cumulative release scenarios

NLP158 adjoins ALP418/NLP382, which also makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment and which forms the Green Belt edge. The harm resulting from release of both sites would not be significantly greater than the harm resulting from release of ALP418/NLP382 in isolation.

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release of site

Scenario	Comments	Rating
<p>Release of NLP158 in its entirety.</p>	<p>The site makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment but does not contribute significantly to other Green Belt purposes. The release of the site would represent a consistent advance of the eastern edge of the settlement: there is not a particularly strongly defined settlement edge at present so the new boundary wouldn't be any weaker, and it would not result in any significant weakening of adjacent Green Belt (roads help to strengthen the edges to the north and south).</p>	<p>Moderate high</p>



Committed development Harm rating from release of whole site - High Moderate high Moderate Low moderate Low



Site description

Two large, arable fields to the north of Barton-le-Clay, separated from the edge of the inset settlement by Higham Road. The A6 Bedford Road forms the western edge of the site and the northern edge is formed in part by the tree-lined access road to a small sewage works and in part by a wooded stream corridor. Hedgerows, in part lining another watercourse, form the site's eastern boundary. There is no development within the site but the sewage works lies just beyond the northern edge and several barn/storage units are situated at the south-eastern corner. A residential property, Westhey Manor, lies just to the east of these and the washed-over hamlet of Higham Gobion is 1.5km to the east along Higham Road.

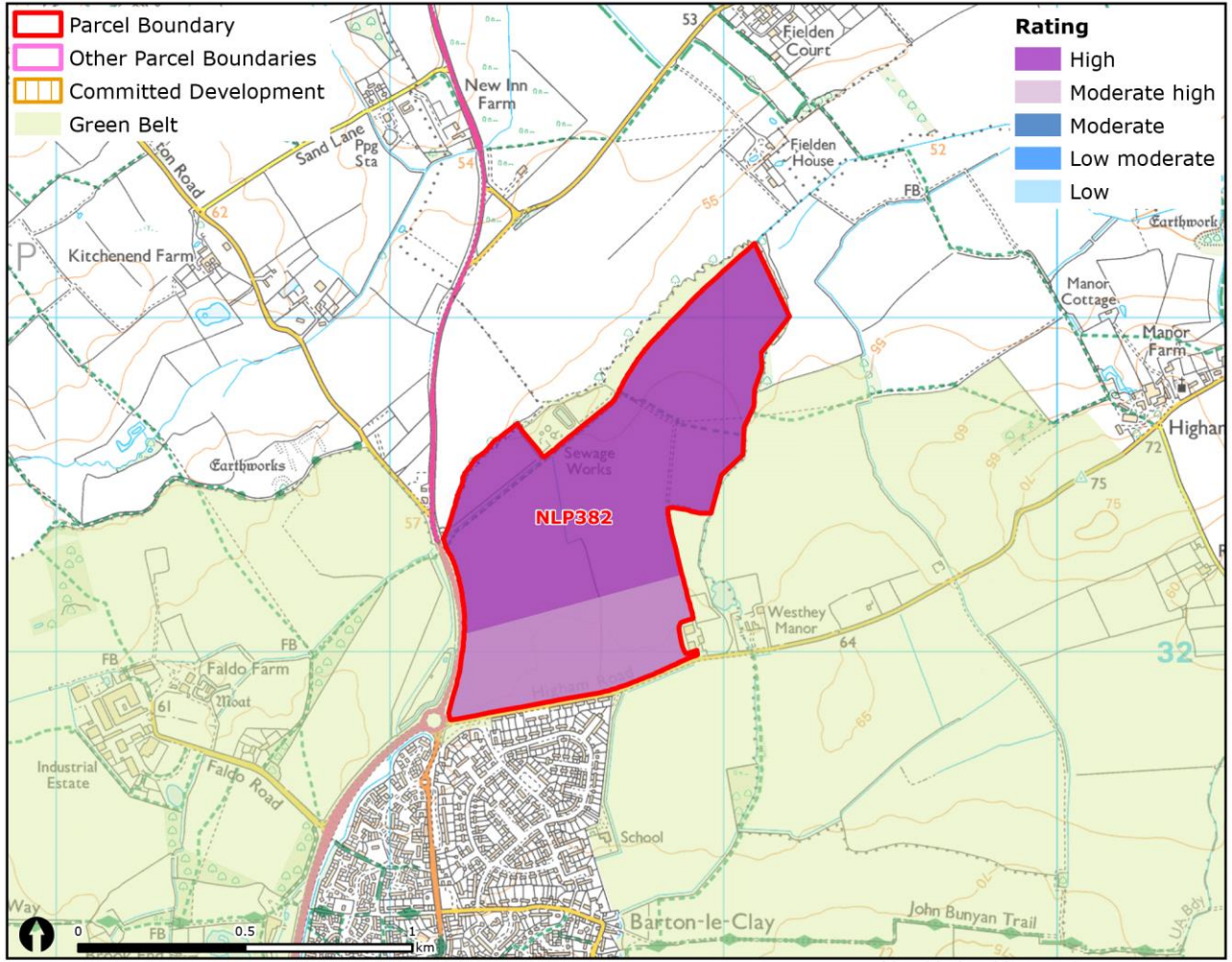
The watercourse which forms part of the northern boundary, and which passes only a short distance from the rest of the site's northern edge, is also the Green Belt's outer boundary.

Relationship between site, settlement and countryside

There is no significant visual separation between the site and Barton-le-Clay, but Higham Road marks a clear and sharp edge between the urban area and the fields that form the site. The buildings close to the fringes of the site are isolated from the settlement and do not represent a significant urbanising influence, and although the A6 and the well-treed streams provide a degree of physical and visual containment these large fields form part of a homogeneous, visually open, arable landscape that defines the character of the vale.

Parcels

The hedgerow that divides the two fields does not mark any significant change in relationship between site, settlement and countryside, so the area is assessed as a single parcel of land. Site ALP418 covers exactly the same area but with the addition of a small area of arable land to the north of the sewage works access road.



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Looking north-west from the south-east corner of the parcel on Higham Road

Parcel: NLP382 Parcel area (ha): 72.39

Stage 1 assessment

Stage 2 assessment

Parcel: BC1
Highest contribution: Purpose 3 - Strong contribution

Parcel: n/a
Contribution:

Contribution to Green Belt purposes

Purpose	Comments
Purpose 1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas	Development here would relate to the expansion of Barton-le-Clay and would not be associated with the large, urban area of Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south. Therefore the parcel plays no role with respect to this purpose.
Purpose 2: Preventing the merger of neighbouring towns	The nearest towns are Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to the south and Flitwick to the north-west. Both occupy distinctly separate landscape areas, with the chalk escarpment forming a strong boundary feature immediately to the south of Barton-le-Clay and the hills around Pulloxhill creating strong separation from Flitwick to the north of the clay vale.
Purpose 3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The fields form part of a homogeneous agricultural landscape and constitute a sizeable area of countryside in their own right. Higham Road marks a clear distinction between the parcel and the settlement edge, and expansion northwards can be considered a greater intrusion on the vale's landscape than expansion closer to the foot of Barton Hills. The parcel therefore makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment.
Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns	The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town.
Purpose 5: Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

Spatial options

Three spatial options for development are identified for Potential Growth Location L10, of which the site forms part: new settlement, village extension and growth in a transport corridor. However the site's location adjacent to the settlement edge of Barton-le-Clay, and the absence of any landscape elements that could create clear separation between existing and new development, mean that village extension is the only viable development scenario.

Potential alternative Green Belt boundaries

The northern and eastern edges of the site are clearly defined by streams and associated tree cover - although the wooded watercourse would form a more consistent boundary than the sewage works access road - and by the A6 to the west. However the release of all or most of the parcel would leave little or no Green Belt to contain Barton-le-Clay to the north. The north-south hedgerow which subdivides the site would form a weaker settlement edge than Higham Road, but would align with the eastern edge of Barton-le-Clay.

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release

Scenario	Comments	Rating
<p>Release of NLP382.</p>	<p>The parcel makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment. It's release would remove any effective Green Belt containment to the north of Barton-le-Clay. Release of NLP382 in isolation would not significantly weaken the contribution of adjacent arable farmland to the west or east, due to the strength of relationship between these areas and the wider countryside. Release of just the westernmost field would still constitute significant encroachment.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Release of the southern part of NLP382.</p>	<p>Retention of a wider strip of Green Belt would reduce harm but such a strip would still be relatively narrow. In the absence of any existing east-west boundary features a new inner Green Belt boundary would be weaker than the existing edge on Higham Road.</p>	<p>Moderate high</p>

Cumulative release scenarios

NLP382 adjoins NLP158, which also makes a significant contribution to preventing countryside encroachment but does not contribute significantly to other Green Belt purposes. Release of the two areas in combination would not have any significant additional impact.

Harm to Green Belt resulting from release of site

Scenario	Comments	Rating
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