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Project title	Runnymede Green Belt Review Part 2	Job number	257142-00
cc		File reference	257142-4-05
Prepared by	Emily Jones / Max Laverack	Date	20 December 2017
Subject	Addendum and Additional Assessment		

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## 1 Introduction

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Arup was appointed by Runnymede Borough Council to undertake a Green Belt Review Part 2 (GBR Part 2) as part of the evidence base to support the Runnymede Local Plan.

This piece of work built upon a previous Study completed in December 2014. The 2014 GBR considered how well the Green Belt in Runnymede was performing against the Green Belt Purposes, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and whether alterations to the existing boundaries could be made. The Green Belt within Runnymede was assessed in its entirety, split across 41 parcels (referred to as General Areas). The performance of each individual parcel was assessed against three of the five Purposes, with parcels further refined through additional considerations relating to development constraints.

The GBR Part 2 was undertaken in response to comments received through the Council's Regulation 18 Consultation. These comments were taken into consideration, and as a result Arup recommended to the Council that additional, more spatially focused work could be undertaken. It was suggested that a more finely grained review could be carried out, to better understand the performance of smaller parcels against Green Belt purposes, and their context in relation to the Green Belt as a whole. This provided an independent and objective appraisal of all land outside of the Runnymede urban area boundary, which included the entirety of the area designated as Green Belt.

Arup completed the Study in March 2017. It forms part of the evidence based used to inform the emerging Runnymede 2035 Local Plan. Between May and June 2017, Runnymede Borough Council undertook formal consultation on its Additional Sites and Options consultation document.

Following this consultation, Arup was subsequently commissioned to undertake a review of representations which related to Green Belt issues and made detailed comments on the GBR Part 2. The representations raised two issues where it was considered that additional information should be supplied to clarify and further support the GBR Part 2. Specifically:

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- Lack of clarity over the methodology utilised to identify sub-areas that performed weakly, moderately and strongly overall – this is addressed in Section 2 as an addendum to the GBR Part 2 Report;
- The omission of an assessment for a smaller sub-area at St Ann’s Park, Virginia Water (part of sub-area 65 assessed in the GBR Part 2) – additional assessment is provided for the sub-area in Section 3 of this Note, utilising the same methodological approach as used in the GBR Part 2.

This section provides an Addendum to the GBR Part 2 – Report (March 2017).

Following paragraph 2.4.28, an additional section should be inserted, titled “Categorising Sub-Areas by Overall Score”. Following this, the following paragraph should be inserted:

**2.4.29** Following completion of the sub-area assessments, the criterion scores for Purposes 1-3 were collated and tabulated across all of the sub-areas to highlight those areas meeting the purposes to a lesser or greater extent. For each sub-area, an Overall Summary score was attributed. This did not weight scores or aggregate these numerically. Instead, reflecting the lack of weighting attributed to the Purposes in the NPPF, as well as the absence of a requirement for Green Belt to meet all Purposes equally, scores were attributed based on the following principles:

- Sub-areas which scored strongly (4 or 5) against at least one of the NPPF Purposes were judged as scoring strongly overall;
- Sub-areas which did not score strongly against any of the NPPF Purposes, scoring moderately (3) against at least one purpose, were judged as scoring moderately overall;
- Sub-areas which failed to meet, or scored weakly against, all NPPF purposes (0, 1 or 2) were judged as scoring weakly overall.

Following paragraph 2.4.29, a further section should be inserted, titled “Recommendations”, with the following paragraph inserted thereafter:

**2.4.30** Weaker performing sub-areas / clusters of sub-areas have been identified and listed with a view to possible further detailed consideration by the Council beyond this assessment. In addition, consideration was afforded to additional sub-areas on the basis of the following:

- Where sub-areas were judged, albeit medium scoring against the NPPF purposes, to be less important and harmful to the integrity of the strategic Green Belt – this involved an exercise of professional judgement, balancing the NPPF purposes assessment against the assessment of role in the wider, strategic Green Belt;
- Where sub-areas were judged, albeit medium scoring against the NPPF purposes, to be less important to the integrity of the wider, strategic Green Belt subject to provision of additional ‘mitigation’ to limit harm;
- Where medium or strongly performing sub-areas could be further sub-divided to identify weakly performing or strategically less important areas, subject to

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implementation of specific mitigation to ensure the presence of boundary features that will be permanent and readily recognisable.

## 2 Additional site assessment

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This section summarises the additional assessment undertaken for the sub-area located at St Ann's Park. It should be noted that this additional assessment does not impact upon the overall findings or conclusions arising from the GBR Part 2. As such, the clarifications set out in the following sections should be read alongside the GBR Part 2 – Report (March 2017).

### 2.1 Assessment context

As part of the review of representations, it was noted that an additional assessment should have been undertaken for a smaller area of Green Belt at St Ann's Park. The site was previously assessed as part of the wider sub-area 65 in the GBR Part 2 Study. At the time the Study was undertaken, there was a lack of clarity over whether this area had been put forward to the Council as a site in its own right.

To ensure consistency with the earlier Study, a site visit to the additional sub-area was undertaken on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017. In line with the GBR Part 2 methodology, the site was assessed as follows:

- Assessment of strength of performance against NPPF Purposes 1-3;
- Assessment of role in the wider, strategic Green Belt;
- Boundary observations made based on information from desk-based resources and the site visit.

### 2.2 Sub-area overview

The sub-area, 65i, is located to the south-east of Virginia Water and to the west of Thorpe. It adjoins the St Ann's residential complex and is formed of residential dwellings, open green space, dispersed woodland and a tennis court. The full assessment for the sub-area can be found in **Appendix A**.

### 2.3 Conclusion

The key findings set out in the GBR Part 2 have not altered substantively based on the findings of this additional assessment.

The sub-area is judged to score moderately overall. It scores moderately against Purpose 3, and although scoring weakly against Purpose 2, it is considered that the loss of this sub-area from the Green Belt would elongate/ contribute further to ribbon development along Sandhills Lane, which would further reduce the perceived gap between Virginia Water and Thorpe. The sub-area is not, therefore, recommended for further consideration.

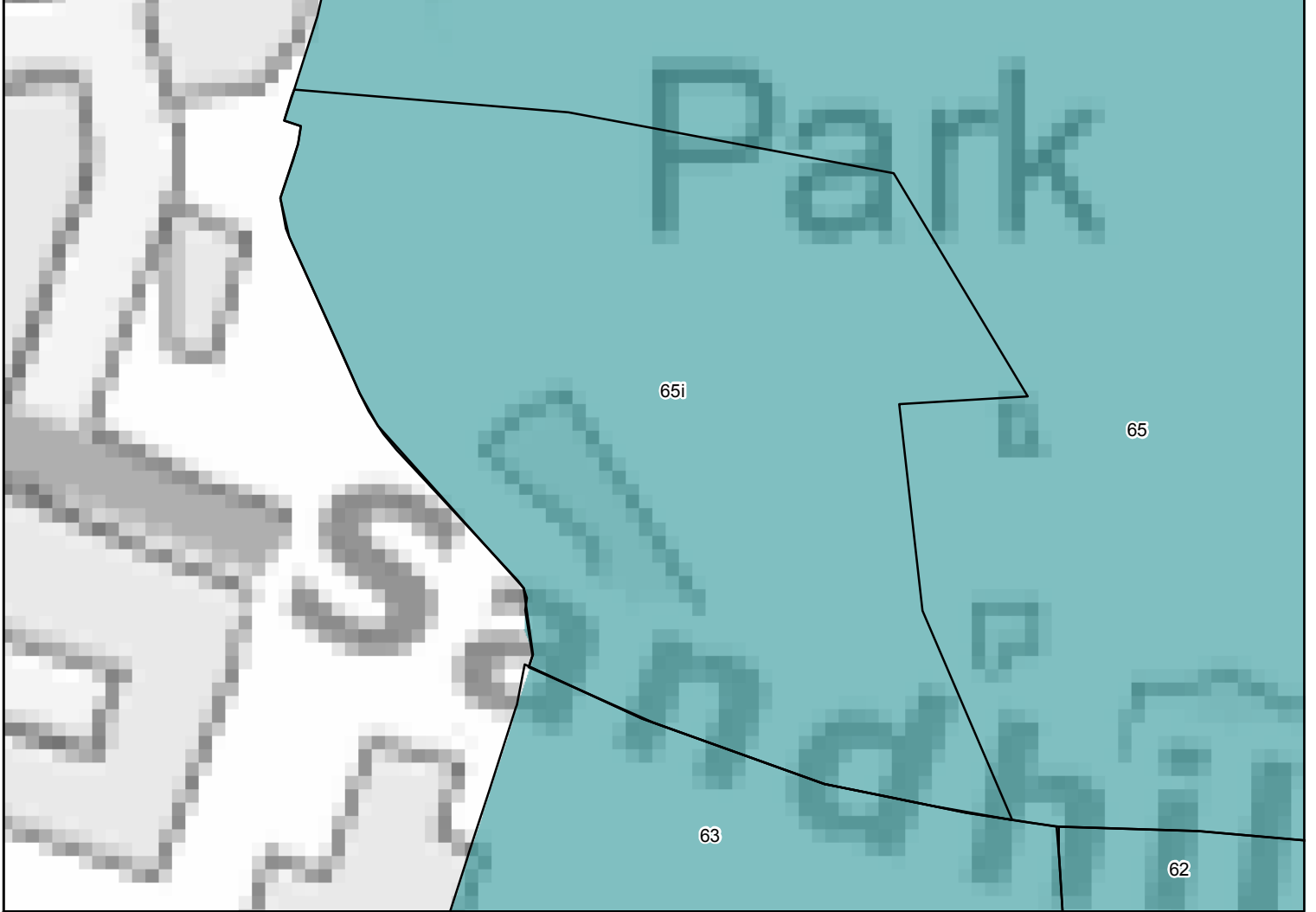
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## **APPENDIX A**

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Sub-Area	65i	
Area (ha)	1.19	
General Area	9	



Description	<p>The sub-area is located to the south-east of Virginia Water, and to the west of Thorpe Green. It is bounded by Sandhills Lane (B389) to the south, including the small access road to the south-west, open fields to the north and north-west, and dispersed woodland and residential dwellings to the west. To the east, the sub-area is bounded by residential dwellings and the leisure centre within the St. Ann's residential complex.</p>
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## Purpose 1 Assessment

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment	Score
(1) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Prevents the outward, irregular spread of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another	The sub-area is not physically or perceptually connected to a distinct large built-up area.	0

**Purpose 1 Total Score**

0 / 5

## Purpose 2 Assessment

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment	Score
(2) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	The sub-area forms a small part of the less essential gap between Virginia Water and Thorpe, which overall is of sufficient scale and character that the settlements are unlikely to merge. However, the release of this sub-area from the Green Belt may elongate/ contribute to further ribbon development along Sandhills Lane, which would result in a perceptual reduction in the scale of the gap between Thorpe and Virginia Water.	1

**Purpose 2 Total Score**

1 / 5

## Purpose 3 Assessment

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment	Score
(3) Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	Approximately 25% of the sub-area is covered by built form. This built form consists primarily of residential dwellings, along with a mix of land uses including tennis courts, and a play area. Although the sub-area is located near to the B389 Road, and residential uses, it is well screened and feels rural in character. There are strong visual and perceptual links to the open countryside to the north, including with St Ann's Park.	3

**Purpose 3 Total Score**

3 / 5

## General Area Details

	Purpose 1 (a)	Purpose 1 (a)	Purpose 2	Purpose 3
General Area Scores	3	1	1	3
Summary of Green Belt Review Findings	Parcel 9 scored moderately against Purpose 1 criteria, preventing the outward sprawl of Egham. It also scored moderately for Purpose 3, preventing encroachment into an area with a largely rural character. It scored weakly against Purpose 2, forming part of the less essential gap between Englefield Green/Egham and Virginia Water.			
Assessment of role in the Strategic Green Belt	The wider sub-area 65 was identified as performing moderately against Purpose 2, forming part of the wider gap between Virginia Water and Thorpe, and playing a role in maintaining the overall openness and scale of the gap. It was noted however that the gap has already been compromised both physically and perceptually by existing ribbon development along Sandhills Lane. The sub-area also scored moderately			
Commentary on existing boundary features	To the north of the sub-area there are no clear boundary features. The boundary comprises a fragmented natural hedgerow which would require strengthening to ensure the Green Belt boundary is readily recognisable and permanent. Similarly to the east, the boundary features are weak, formed of dispersed trees and brambles, along with backland associated with the surrounding residential dwellings.			



## Site Photographs



Photograph 1

View of tennis courts in northern part of the sub-area, facing north towards weaker boundary feature.



Photograph 2

Facing east along the northern boundary of the sub-area.



## Site Photographs



Photograph 3

Facing north in the northern part of the sub-area, with views towards Home Farm in adjacent sub-area 65.



Photograph 4

View of open land in the south of the sub-area, facing south towards Sandhills Lane.



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## DOCUMENT CHECKING (not mandatory for File Note)

	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Name	Emily Jones / Max Laverack	Andrew Barron	Andrew Barron
Signature			

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