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Oxford Green Belt Study

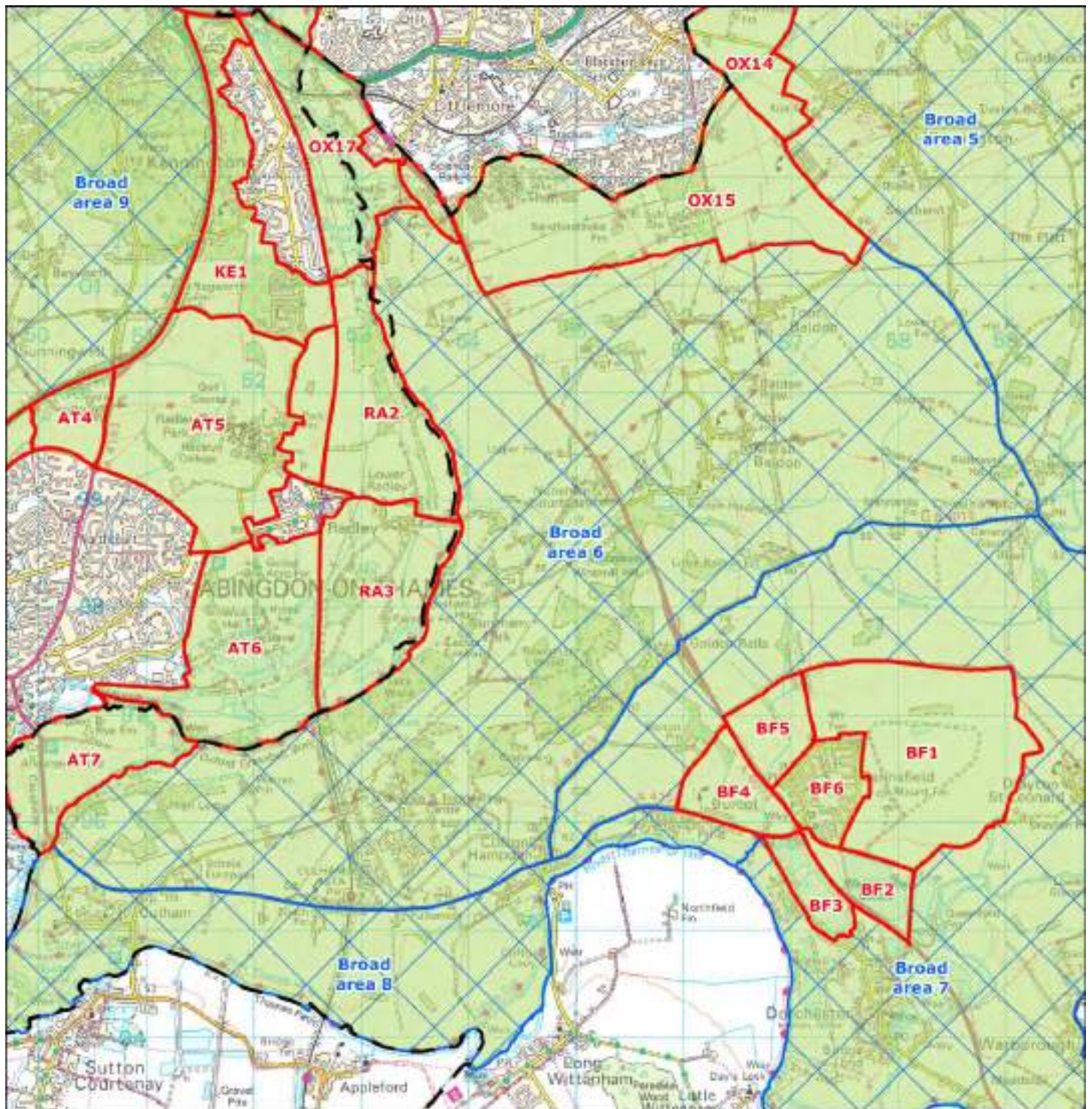
Final Report
Prepared by LUC
October 2015



Land Parcel Ref: Broad area 6

Main Authority: South Oxfordshire

Parcel Type: Broad area



--- District boundary Green belt parcel Broad area Green belt 0 1 km 

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Main Authority: South Oxfordshire

Other Authorities: Vale of White Horse

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Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Does the parcel exhibit evidence of urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness?

Rating: N/C

The broad area does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area and so is not assessed against this Purpose; however, the northernmost part of the broad area lies close to the existing urban edge of Oxford. The southern sprawl of Oxford in to the village of Sandford-on-Thames could be facilitated through ribbon development along Henley Road, so the broad area could in the future contribute to preventing sprawl of Oxford from the south, were development to occur in this area.

Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another or into neighbouring smaller settlements

Does the Broad Area prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between the following settlements; Abingdon on Thames, Botley, Cumnor, Kennington, Radley, Wooton, Appleton, Eynsham, Oxford (including urban villages and settlements within Oxford), Kidlington (including Oxford Spires Business Park), Begbroke, Yarnton, Wheatley (including Littleworth) and Berinsfield?

Rating: Low

The Broad Area is located to the south of the Oxford urban area (including Kennington), to the southeast of Radley and to the north of Berinsfield. All of the settlements are relatively distant from one another other than Radley and Kennington, but the Broad Area lies on the opposite bank of the Thames to these and so is not considered to make more than a low contribution to settlement separation. The Broad Area also includes the smaller unassessed settlements of Toot Baldon and Marsh Baldon which are in close proximity to one another, and in relatively close proximity to the south of Oxford. The two settlements are on elevated ground in comparison to their surroundings and have limited views between one another, and towards Oxford. The Broad Area therefore plays some role in preventing the reduction of the physical and visual gap between these settlements, and between them and Oxford.

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Does the Broad Area have the characteristics of countryside or has it been significantly affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?

Rating: High

The broad area contains five villages – Sandford-on-Thames, Nuneham Courtenay, Toot Balson, Marsh Baldon and Clifton Hampden. All are rural in character. To the west of Clifton Hampden is a large estate of science and engineering buildings, government buildings and a sewage treatment works. This large concentration of buildings, car parks and street lighting has a significant urbanising influence on the Green Belt within the southern portion of the Broad Area. The centre of the parcel contains the large Grade I listed Nuneham Courtenay Registered Park and Garden with its large ancient woodlands and open fields. The River Thames and its floodplain flows along the western edge of the broad area. The rest of the Broad Area is made-up of open agricultural fields with open views of the surrounding countryside.

Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Does the Broad Area contribute to the setting and special character of Oxford?

Rating: High

The hills to the south of Oxford are for the most part lower than those that frame the city to the east and west, but they provide important vistas along the Thames Valley approach to the city, in particular from Nuneham Park (one of the viewpoints in Oxford's viewcones policy). Nuneham House in its parkland setting, and the wooded ridgeline above the valley, are an important element of the city's setting. The river valley itself, on the western edge of the parcel, provides an important link between the city centre and the countryside, and although the importance of this reduces to the south of

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Abingdon the distinctive meanders and historic riverside settlements can still be seen to contribute to the Oxford's historic character, and are seen in context with Oxford by those approaching by river or on the Thames Path. Away from the Thames and the higher ground facing Oxford, to the south east, the broad area plays a less direct role in the city's setting but still provide a rural setting that can be appreciated on approach along the A4074 and B480. The 'high' rating relates to the Thames Valley approach to Oxford, whilst the rest of the parcel is considered to make a 'medium' contribution.