

Appendix 7

Shifnal Assessment

Part 1: Settlement Context

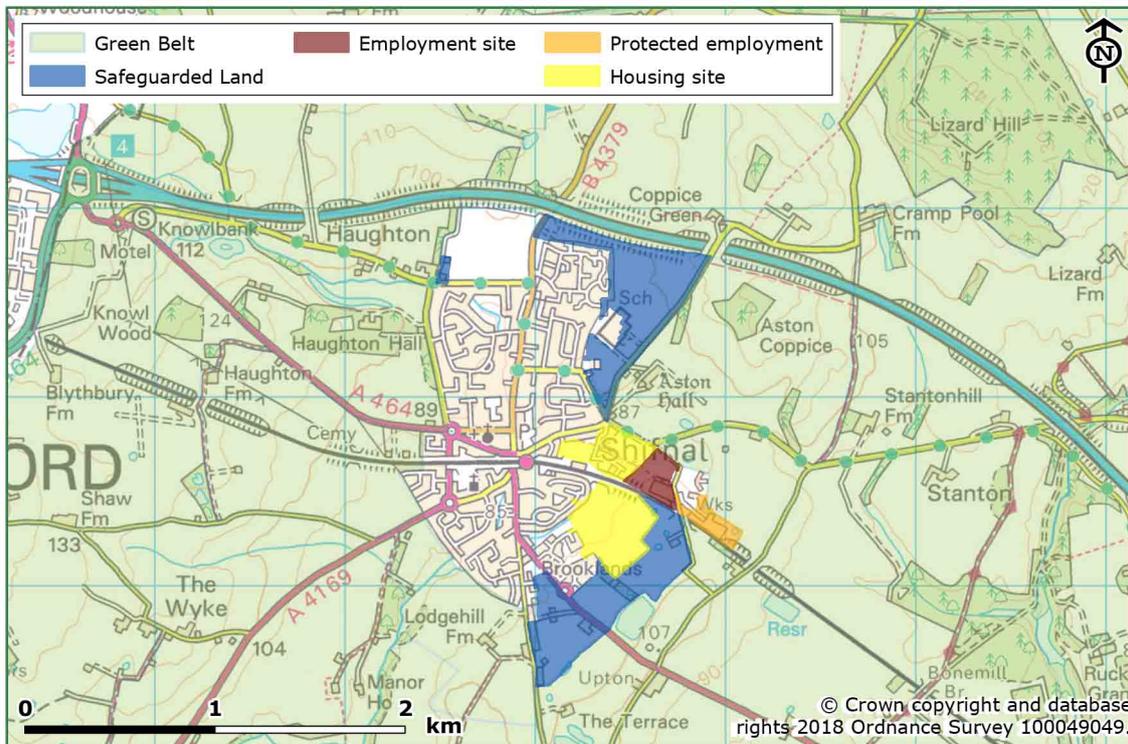


Figure A7.1: Shifnal Settlement Context

The town of Shifnal is located in the northwest of the Shropshire Green Belt. The population of Shifnal is estimated to be around 6,991 persons living in approximately 3,215 dwellings¹. The historical growth of the town was limited until the 1960s when the town began to expand considerably². Older buildings in the original marketplace were cleared to create the present wide shopping area of Bradford Street and Cheapside and housing estates were built around the core of the old town. There is still some light industry serving the town, but Shifnal now has a much lower level of economic self-containment than many other settlements in Shropshire.

The existing built area of the town has limited remaining infill opportunities, however the Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document (2017)³ states that 1,500 homes and 16 ha of employment land are proposed to be developed in the town in the period up to 2036. This includes existing sites allocated to the north, northeast and southeast of the existing built area of Shifnal, most of which are within the existing development boundary around the town.

Additionally, land to the northeast and southeast of Shifnal has been safeguarded for future development, beyond 2036. However, the SAMDev Plan (2015)⁴ has now brought forward a significant proportion of the land safeguarded for development through the existing allocations in the SAMDev Plan, many of which have planning permission, or are now in productive use. Despite this, it was recommended that the SAMDev Plan should preserve the openness of the remaining safeguarded land to avoid prejudicing the capacity of Shifnal to meet its future needs.

¹ Shropshire Council (2017), Hierarchy of Settlements.

² Shifnal Town Council (2015) Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2026.

³ Shropshire Council (2017), Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document

⁴ The Planning Inspectorate (2014), Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development Local Plan, Inspector's Report

The preferred strategy for the Local Plan Review has identified Shifnal as a 'Key Centre', as it offers a range of services and facilities and therefore presents opportunities to deliver growth at a moderate scale⁵. Shropshire Council's Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document (2017) proposes that around 18% of total growth in Shropshire in the period to 2036 will occur in the Key Centres. As an identified 'Key Centre', it is intended that a development boundary will be identified for Shifnal, possibly with specific site allocations, as part of the Local Plan Review for the period to 2036.

Shifnal benefits from an existing Neighbourhood Plan⁶ (adopted December 2016) which provides policies that supplement those in the adopted Local Plan. Shropshire Council will continue to work with Shifnal Town Council to consider the need to update their Neighbourhood Plan in light of the Local Plan Review.

⁵ Shropshire Council (2017), Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document

⁶ Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan (2016) Available at: www.shifnalplan.co.uk

Part 2: Parcels - Assessment of Harm on the Green Belt

The map and aerial show the location and extent of all the parcels around Shifnal that were considered in the Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment (2017) (outlined in blue and purple on Figure A7.2 and A7.3). The parcels that are outlined in purple are those being considered in further detail as part of the assessment of harm. This assesses the harm to the Green Belt as a consequence of releasing this land for development.

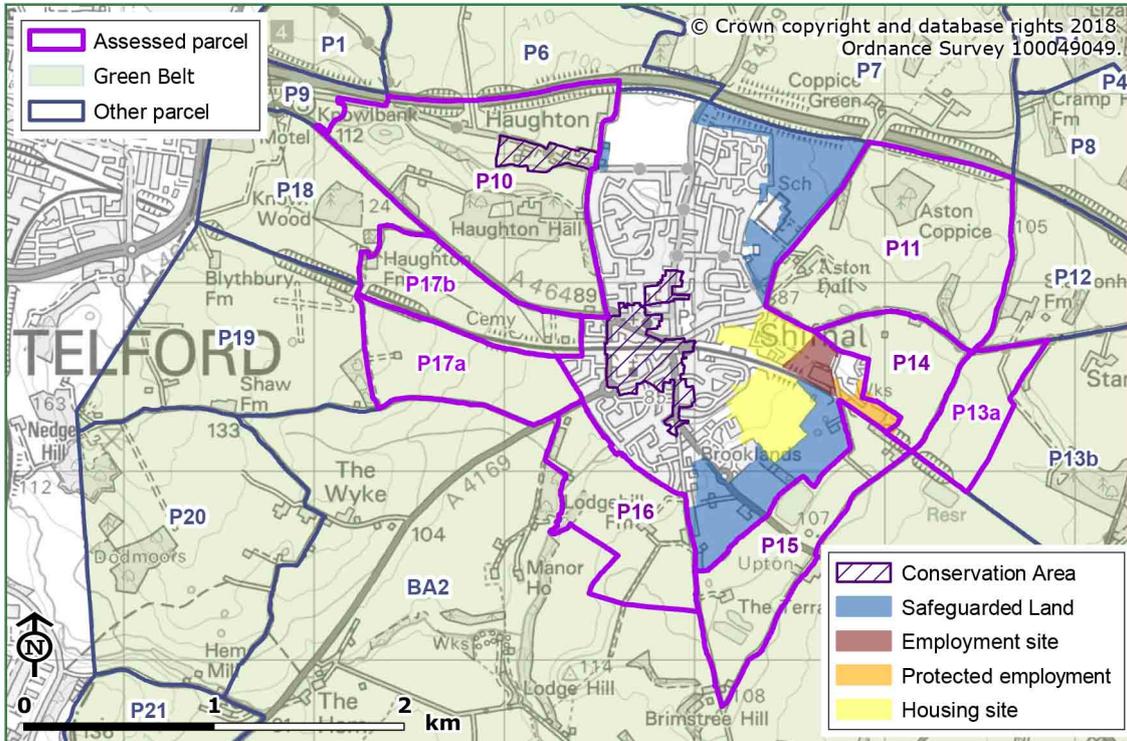


Figure A7.2: Shifnal Surrounding Green Belt Parcels

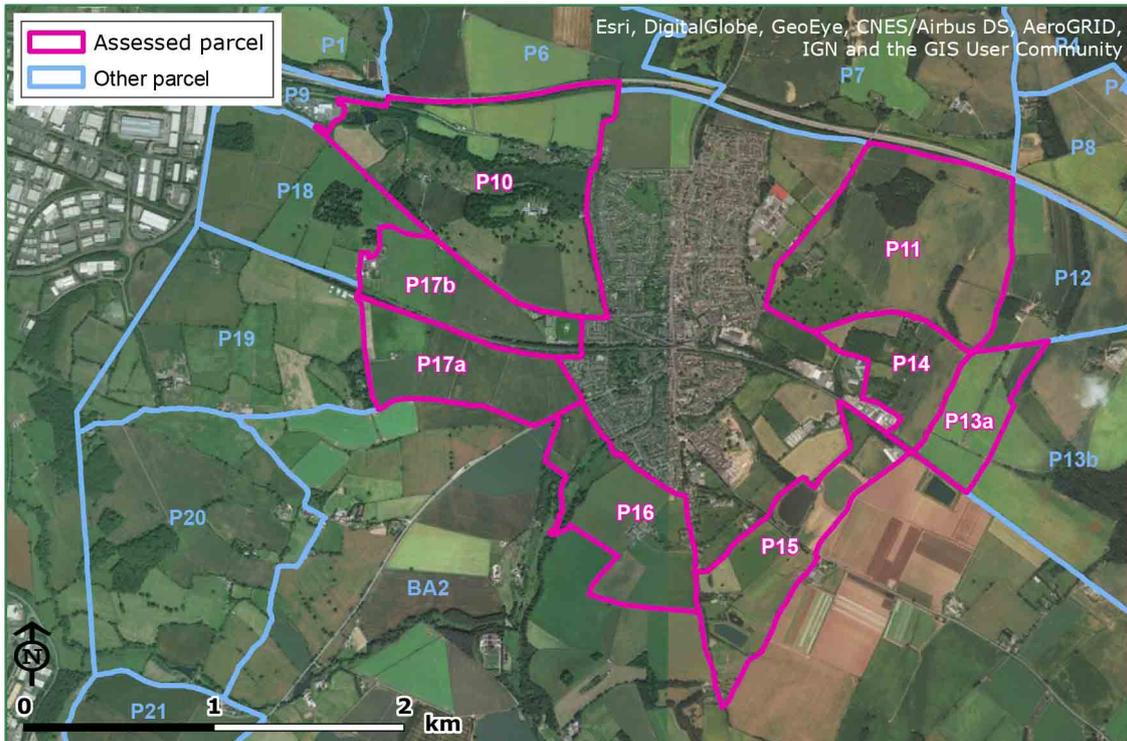


Figure A7.3: Shifnal Assessed Parcels

Parcel P10

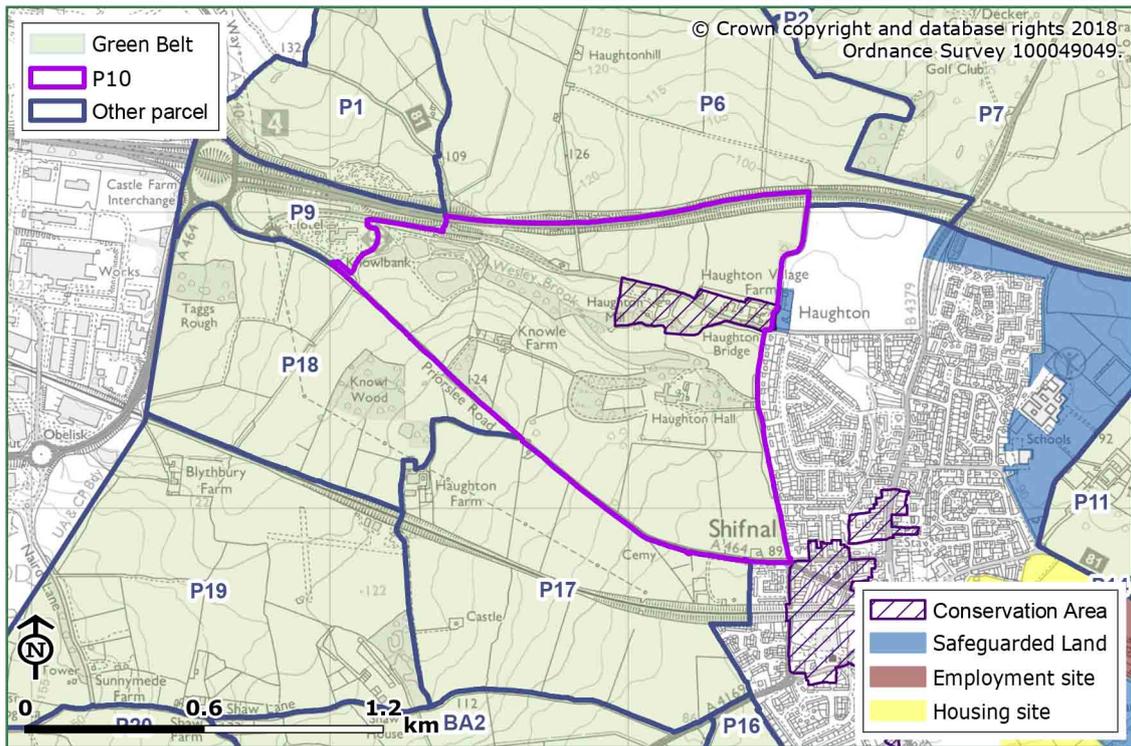


Figure A7.4: Parcel P10



Figure A7.5: Parcel P10 from Priorslee Road on the western edge of Shifnal. Haughton Hall is seen in the distance.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P10 is situated between Shifnal and Telford and comprises predominately agricultural land, the estate grounds of Haughton Hall hotel and leisure club, and Haughton Village (a Conservation Area). The parcel is separated from the wider countryside to the north by the M54 motorway corridor. This provides a degree of disconnect between the parcel and the wider countryside to the north, however the parcel is associated with agricultural land to the south and forms a strip of countryside between Shifnal and Telford. The parcel has a stronger relationship with the wider countryside than the neighbouring settlements.

The conclusions about the performance of Parcel P10 are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that would have a lower degree of harm.

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

No Contribution

This parcel does not lie directly adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1. Whilst this parcel does not lie adjacent to the urban edge of Telford, it is acknowledged that if the parcels immediately adjacent to Telford were developed (particularly P1 directly and/or P18 creating further pressure for Telford to expand eastwards), this parcel would play a strong role in preventing any further urban sprawl of Telford spreading out into the Shropshire Green Belt. The rating of 'no contribution' should therefore not imply that this parcel is not playing any role in relation to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Strong

The parcel forms part of a critical gap between the settlements of Telford, adjacent to the west of the parcel, and Shifnal, to the east of the parcel. The settlements are in relatively close proximity to one another (approx. 2km) but with areas of intervening development between, including Haughton Village and the Knowle Bank Service Station. Travelling along the M54 (located along the northern border of the parcel), or Priorslee Road from Telford to Shifnal (along the south-western border of the parcel), the relationship and separation of the settlements can be appreciated. Parcel P10 plays an essential role in preventing the physical coalescence and a perception of merging of Telford and Shifnal. Additionally, Haughton Village (washed over by the Green Belt) is located within this parcel to the north east, adjacent to Shifnal. This hamlet is not considered a town with regard to Purpose 2, nonetheless it is acknowledged that any new development that took place within the parcel could lead to the perception of narrowing the gap between this hamlet and Telford.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of Knowle Bank Service Station (located in the adjacent parcel P9), Haughton Village, isolated houses located to the north of the parcel, and Haughton Hall hotel and leisure club located in the centre of the parcel. Furthermore, residential developments in Shifnal line much of the eastern border of the parcel, contributing to a sense of encroachment. The parcel is also bordered to the north by the M54 motorway corridor. However, despite these urbanising influences, the parcel displays some of the characteristics of the countryside, is generally open and is largely rural in character.

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

Strong

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Shifnal. In practice the parcel has good intervisibility with Shifnal and forms an important part of its immediate setting. The openness of the land contributes positively to the historic significance of the settlement and to its setting and special character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The existing Green Belt edge runs along Houghton Lane to the west of Shifnal and field boundaries up to the M54. The M54 motorway along the northern boundary of Parcel P10 would constitute a strong and defensible boundary. The A464 along the southern boundary of the parcel would also constitute a readily recognisable boundary, albeit not as strong as the boundary formed by the motorway to the north. A stronger Green Belt boundary could be formed to the west if P9 was included in any proposed areas of release.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel forms a large part of the critical gap between the settlements of Shifnal and Telford and contributes to setting of the historic area of Shifnal. Its release from the Green Belt would significantly weaken the Green Belt in this area with regard to Purpose 2 and Purpose 4. The parcel contains some built development but it is largely open, displays the characteristics of the countryside and is associated with the large area of open countryside to the south. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a loss of the countryside, as well encroaching on neighbouring areas of land and weaken the role these parcels are playing as Green Belt. Releasing Parcel P10 from the Green Belt would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

Parcel P11

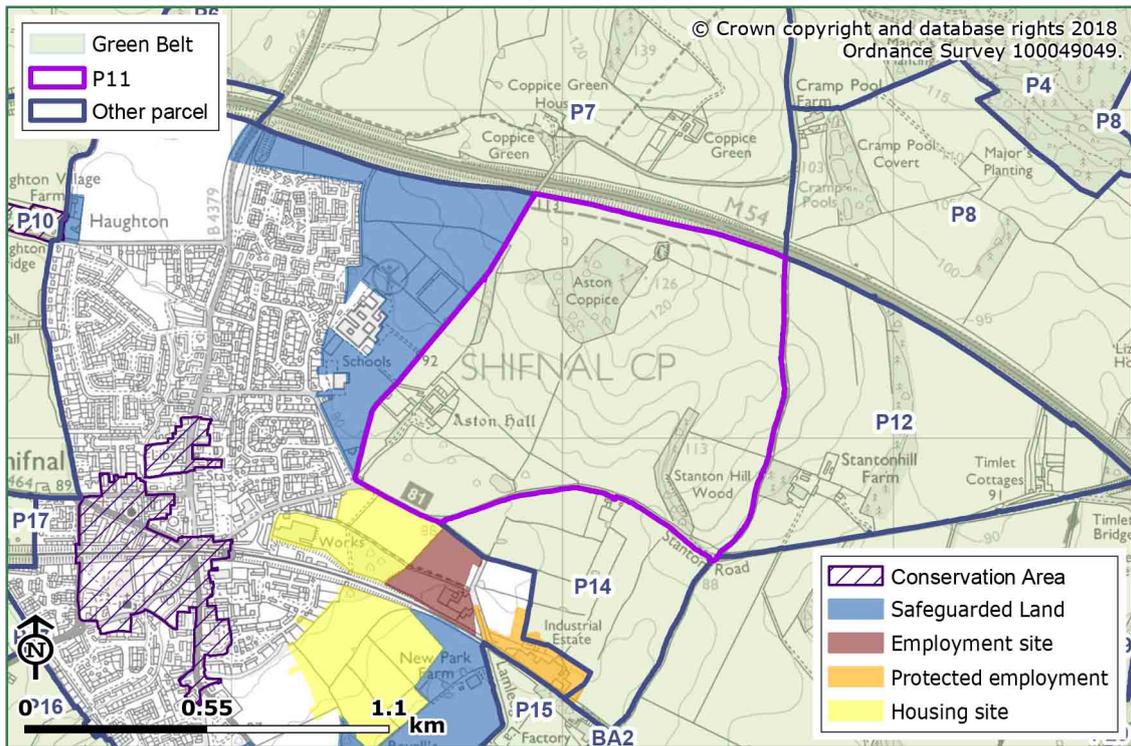


Figure A7.6: Parcel P11



Figure A7.7: The estate grounds of Aston Hall, in the distance Aston Coppice is seen on top of elevated land within parcel P11

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P11 is situated on the eastern edge of Shifnal, between the settlement and the M54 motorway corridor. The parcel contains a small hill rising to 126m AOD upon which Aston Coppice sits. Land cover is predominately agricultural land as well as the estate grounds of Aston Hall located in the south-western extent of the parcel. The parcel contains little urban development and is open. Although separated from the wider countryside to the north by the M54, the parcel is more closely associated with the countryside to the east, than the settlement of Shifnal to the west.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P11 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that have a lower level of harm.

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

No Contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Moderate

The parcel is located on the eastern edge of the settlement of Shifnal which has a relationship with the settlement of Albrighton, approximately 5km to the southeast. It also lies between Shifnal and Wolverhampton/West Midlands conurbation beyond. The intervening development of RAF Cosford is also located between the settlements. The settlements are not in close proximity, but any new development that took place within the parcel, and subsequent loss of openness, could lead to the perception that the eastward growth of Shifnal is narrowing the settlement gap. Due to the relative distance and size of the parcel loss of openness would not however be perceived as significantly reducing the gap between Shifnal and the West Midlands conurbation beyond.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

With the exception of a cluster of properties at Aston Court Mews and Aston Hall, with its associated landscaped park, this parcel contains no development, and therefore there is a limited sense of encroachment. The M54 lies adjacent to the north of the parcel, however embankments and vegetation reduce the sense of encroachment caused by this. Shifnal lies to the west of the parcel with a section of the settlement boundary of Shifnal adjoining to the south west of this parcel. The partly developed land adjacent to the west of the parcel is safeguarded for the expansion of the settlement and the land to the south is dedicated for housing developments, as defined by Shropshire Council Local Plan Policy. Development could therefore increase the sense of encroachment felt within the parcel.

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

Strong

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Shifnal. In practice the elevated land within this parcel has good intervisibility with Shifnal and forms an important part of its immediate setting. The openness of the parcel contributes positively to the historic significance of the settlement and to its setting and special character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The existing Green Belt boundary lies to the west of the parcel and runs along Coppice Green Lane. The M54 motorway along the northern boundary of Parcel P11 would constitute a strong boundary. The unpaved farm track along the eastern boundary of the parcel and Stanton road to the south would constitute a weaker Green Belt boundary.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a minimal amount of development and has a closer association with the wider countryside than the settlement of Shifnal. Releasing the parcel from the Green Belt would constitute encroachment into the countryside and would significantly weaken neighbouring areas of Green Belt land, specifically parcel P14 as this would be enclosed by development on two sides. Although there is a degree of separation from the wider countryside to the north, due to the presence of the M54, any development occurring on the higher ground within Parcel P11 would be clearly visible from surrounding areas of countryside and would lead to a level of encroachment on the surrounding countryside. The openness within the parcel also makes a significant contribution to the historic area of Shifnal and its setting. Releasing parcel P11 from the Green Belt would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Parcel P13a

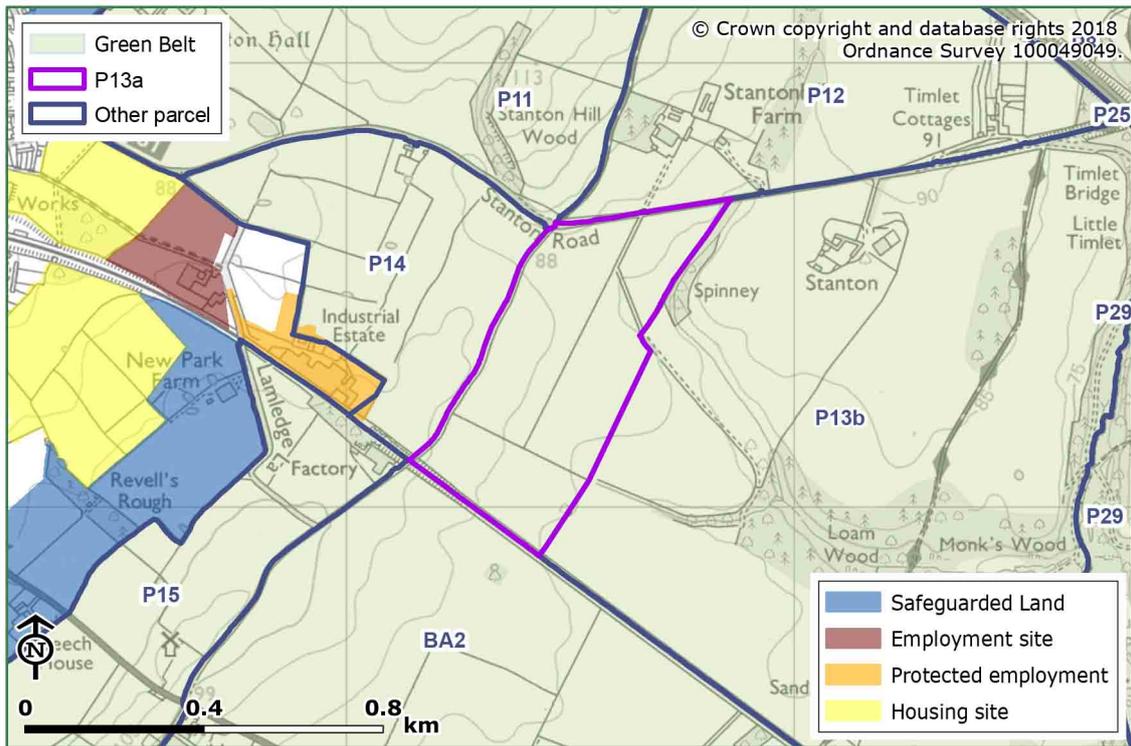


Figure A7.8: Parcel P13a



Figure A7.9: Parcel P13a from Coppice Green Lane to the west of Shifnal

Relationship to settlement/countryside

The western extent of P13 (P13a) does not lie adjacent to any existing built up edge. It forms part of an area of open countryside to the east of Upton Lane. The parcel has a closer association with the countryside, than settlement of Shifnal. It is bounded to the south by the railway line, to the north by Stanton Road and to the west by Upton Lane. There is no clearly defined boundary to the east – comprising open arable fields.

The conclusions on the contribution of the parcel P13a to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that have a lower level of harm.

Purpose 1

No Contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2

Moderate

The parcel forms part of the gap between the settlements of Shifnal (approx. 200m West) and Albrighton (approx. 2.8km southeast). It also lies between Shifnal and Wolverhampton/West Midlands conurbation beyond. Travelling along the railway track, which lines the southwest edge of the parcel and connects Shifnal and Albrighton, the relationship and separation of the settlements can be appreciated. The intervening development of RAF Cosford is also located between the parcel and Albrighton. Any new development that took place within the parcel could lead to perception of narrowing the gap between the settlements but there remains a reasonable distance (approximately 3km) between the parcel and Albrighton/Cosford. Due to the relative distance and size of the parcel loss of openness would not however be perceived as significantly reducing the gap between Shifnal and the West Midlands conurbation beyond.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Strong

There is little sense of encroachment due to presence of only two residential properties within the parcel. The parcel comprises woodland and arable land and farm buildings. Only a short section of the M54 borders the north of the parcel, however embankments and vegetation reduce the sense of encroachment caused by this. The parcel therefore plays a strong role safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

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

No Contribution

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Shifnal and Albrighton/ Donington. In practice, the parcel has very little intervisibility with these historic settlement areas and does not contribute to the immediate setting or wider setting.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The parcel does not lie adjacent to any existing Green Belt boundaries but if released for development, in conjunction with P14, this could link to the existing industrial estate to the west. There are no existing readily recognisable boundaries along the eastern extent of this assessed area. Stanton Road and the railway line would form the boundaries to the north and south respectively.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains no built development and is more closely associated with the wider area of open countryside to the east of Shifnal than the settlement to the west. The land slopes away to the east. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to encroachment into the countryside to the east of Shifnal and a slight narrowing of the gap between Shifnal and Albrighton. The release of western section of P13a would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Parcel P14

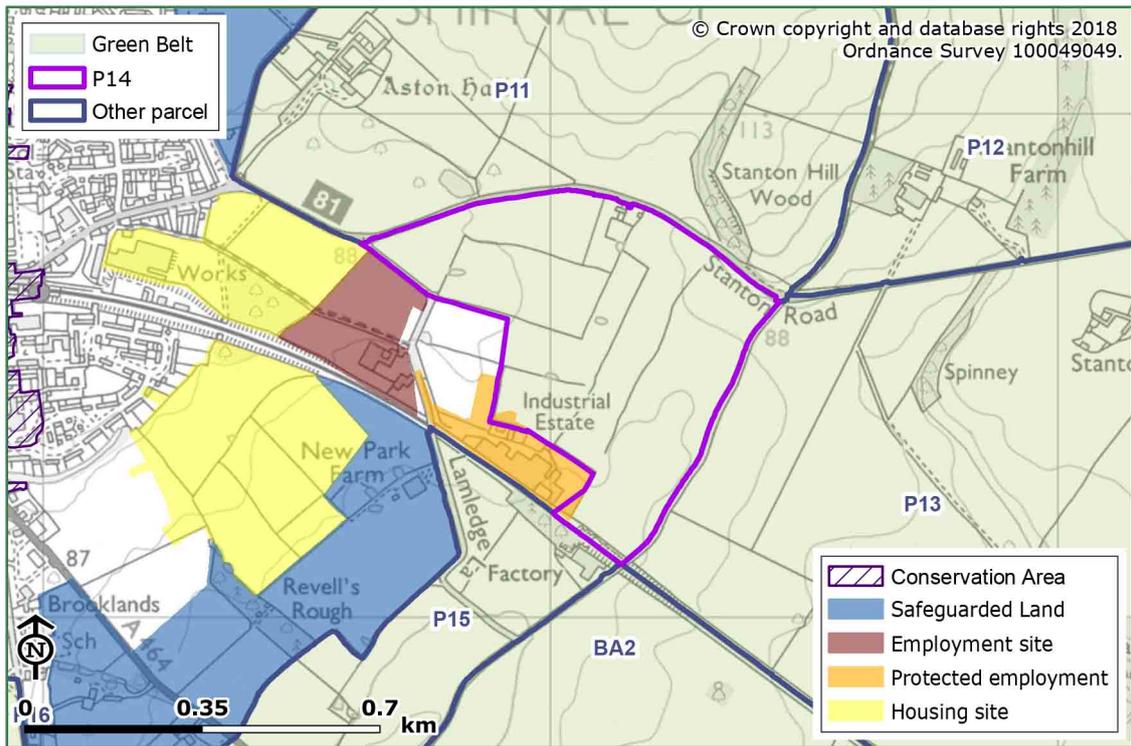


Figure A7.10: Parcel P14



Figure A7.11: Small arable field forming the western extent of Parcel P14

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P14 is separated from an area of open countryside to the east by the narrow country road of Upton Lane. The western extent of the parcel comprises a small arable field that is bound to the east by mature woodland, with open field beyond to the east. The parcel has a closer association with the countryside to the north and east, than settlement of Shifnal.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P14 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that have a lower level of harm.

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

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Moderate

The parcel is on the edge of the settlement of Shifnal which has a relationship with the settlement of Albrighton (approx. 5km southeast). It also lies between Shifnal and Wolverhampton/West Midlands conurbation beyond. The intervening development of RAF Cosford is also located between the parcel and Albrighton. The settlements are not in close proximity but any new development that took place within the parcel, and subsequent loss of openness, could lead to the perception that the eastward growth of Shifnal is narrowing the settlement gap. Due to the relative distance and size of the parcel loss of openness would not however be perceived as significantly reducing the gap between Shifnal and the West Midlands conurbation beyond.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

The border of the parcel adjacent to the settlement boundary of Shifnal lies next to the Options College and the protected employment land of Shifnal Industrial Estate (based on Shropshire Council Local Plan Policy). This 'leg' of urbanising development within the settlement boundary extends into the Green Belt with the adjoining parcel. The parcel itself contains few urbanising features (other than some residential properties), with the majority of the parcel being open, containing arable land and woodland, and displaying the characteristics of countryside.

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

Weak

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Shifnal. In practice, there is limited intervisibility between the parcel and Shifnal. The openness of the flat land within this parcel is not considered to form an important part of the immediate setting of this historic settlement, however it does contribute to its wider rural setting.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The existing Green Belt boundary is defined by Lamledge Lane to the east but has no readily recognisable boundary to the west. The roads of Upton Lane and Stanton Road would constitute alternative Green Belt boundaries that are more readily recognisable and stronger than the existing Green Belt boundary.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a limited amount of built development but is more closely associated with the wider area of open countryside to the east of Shifnal than the settlement edge to the west. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a level of encroachment into the countryside to the east of Shifnal and a narrowing of the gap between Shifnal and Albrighton. The release of parcel P14 could weaken the integrity of neighbouring Green Belt land with regard to Purpose 3, particularly to the north as P11 would be contained by development on two sides and by the M54. There is however the potential to create a more clearly defined Green Belt boundary along Upton Lane and Stanton Road. The release of parcel P14 would lead to a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Parcel P15

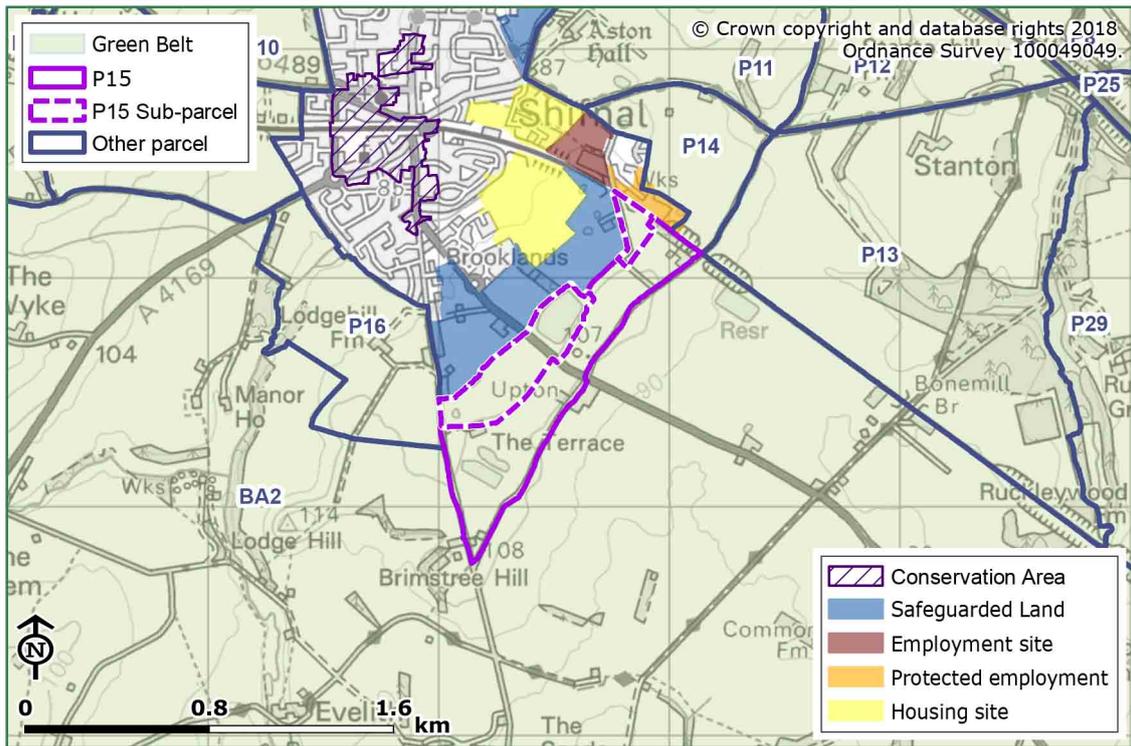


Figure A7.12: Parcel P15



Figure A7.13: Ridgeline within parcel P15, the land slopes east towards the wider countryside. The southern area of Sub-Parcel P15 is sited beyond the crest of the ridgeline.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P15 is separated from the wider countryside to the east by the narrow country road of Upon Lane. The eastern half of the parcel slopes down towards the east and is more closely associated with the countryside than the settlement edge. The south-western extent of the parcel slopes down to the west and has a weaker relationship to the countryside to the east. Additionally, a small triangular field forming the north-western extent of the parcel contains an industrial building and has a weaker relationship to the countryside.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P15 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt are set out in the descriptions below. This includes the identification of two sub-parcels within Parcel P15 (delineated on Figure A7.12 in a purple hatch line) which the assessment concludes would have a lower level of harm associated with their release.

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

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Moderate

The parcel is located on the south-eastern edge of the settlement of Shifnal which has a relationship with the settlement of Albrighton, approximately 5km to the southeast. It also lies between Shifnal and Wolverhampton/West Midlands conurbation beyond. The intervening development of RAF Cosford is also located between the settlements. The settlements are not in close proximity but any new development that took place within the parcel, and subsequent loss of openness, could lead to the perception that the eastward growth of Shifnal is narrowing the settlement gap. Due to the relative distance and size of the parcel loss of openness would not however be perceived as significantly reducing the gap between Shifnal and the West Midlands conurbation beyond.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of Upton Mill Industrial Park in the northeast of the parcel. The parcel also contains a commercial angling lake but this is not considered to be an urbanising feature. Land along the north-western boundary of the parcel is safeguarded by the Shropshire Council Local Plan for the expansion of Shifnal, which could increase the sense of encroachment within this parcel. The parcel itself however is open and displays the characteristics of the countryside.

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

Moderate

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Shifnal. In practice there is good intervisibility between this parcel and Shifnal. The openness of the ridge of higher ground within this parcel is considered to play a moderate role in the immediate setting of this historic settlement.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The roads of Upton Lane and Park Lane would constitute alternative Green Belt boundaries that are stronger and more readily recognisable than the existing boundary that is defined by field boundaries hedgerows and lines of trees.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a limited amount of built development and the eastern section is more closely associated with the wider area of open countryside to the east of Shifnal. The parcel contains a ridge of elevated farmland and its release from the Green Belt would lead to a significant level of encroachment into the countryside and a weakening of the contribution of neighbouring areas of Green Belt land to the east and south. The roads of Upton Lane and Park Lane would constitute alternative Green Belt boundaries that are stronger and more readily recognisable than the existing boundary. Overall, it is considered that the release of this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

A sub-parcel has been identified within Parcel P15 that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt if it was to be released. Sub-parcel P15 covers the south-western and north-western extent of the parcel and comprises two small agricultural fields and a fishing lake in the south and a small triangular field of rough grassland in the north. The land in the south of the sub-parcel slopes down to the west and away from the countryside to the east. The land in the north is partly contained by industrial development. Releasing the sub-parcel from the Green Belt would not constitute significant encroachment on the countryside and due to the topography would not lead to a significant weakening of neighbouring Green Belt land. Releasing Sub-parcel P15 would lead to a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

Parcel P16

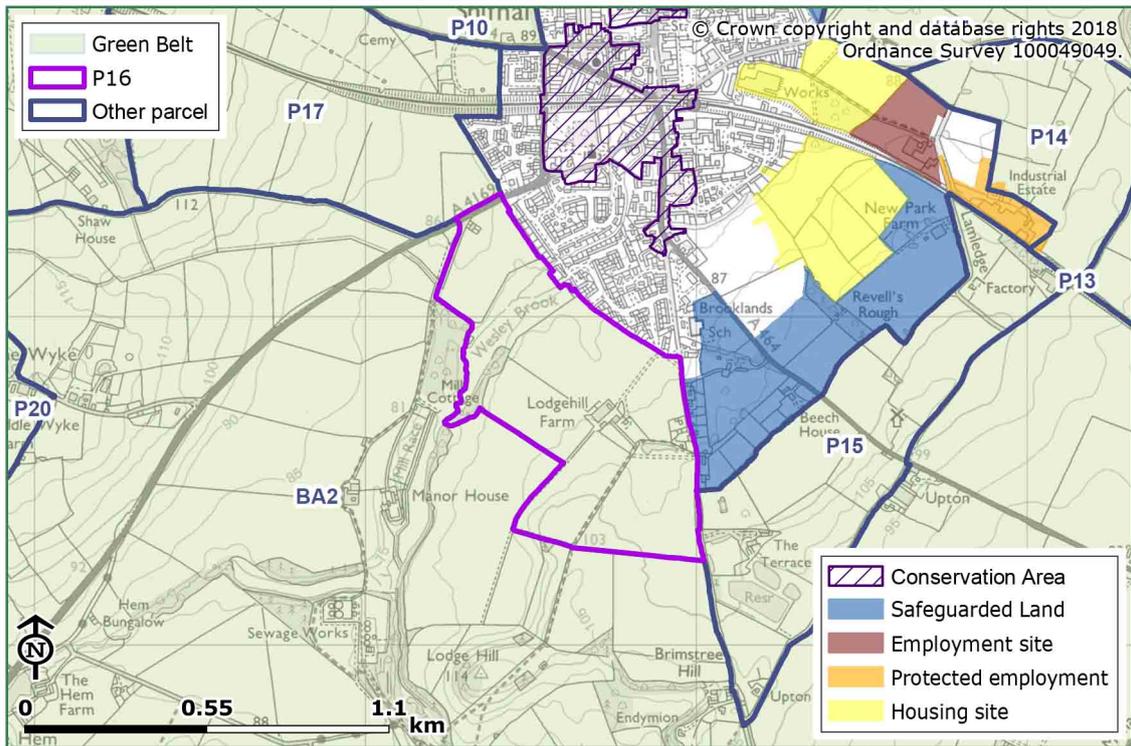


Figure A7.14: Parcel P16



Figure A7.15: Farmland on the southern edge of Shifnal within parcel P16, view from Park Lane

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P16 is separated from the wider countryside to the south of Shifnal by field boundary hedgerows, with the parcel forming part of a wide area of countryside that stretches south from the southern edge of Shifnal. The parcel is more closely associated with the wider open countryside than the settlement of Shifnal.

The conclusions about the performance of Parcel P16 are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that have a lower level of harm.

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

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Moderate

The parcel is located on the south-western edge of the settlement of Shifnal which has a relationship with the settlement of Telford, approximately 2.5km to the west. Any new development that took place within the parcel could lead to the perception of narrowing the gap between them, most noticeably when travelling between Telford and Shifnal along the A4169 running to the northwest of the parcel.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of a cluster of property developments within the parcel to the east and the presence of the residential developments within Shifnal along the northeast border of the parcel. Individual properties along the eastern border of the parcel also cause a sense of encroachment upon the parcel, and this could be increased as this land to the east of the parcel is safeguarded by Shropshire Council Local Plan for future expansion of the settlement of Shifnal. The parcel itself however is open and displays the characteristics of the countryside.

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

Moderate

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Shifnal. In practice there is some intervisibility between the elevated land in the south of this parcel and Shifnal. The openness of land is considered to play a moderate role in the immediate setting of this historic settlement.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

If the parcel was released, the field boundaries along the southern boundary would constitute an alternative Green Belt boundary of similar strength to the existing settlement edge of Shifnal but these would not constitute strong Green Belt Boundaries.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

Parcel P16 contains no urban development and forms part of the wide area of countryside that stretches south from the settlement edge of Shifnal. Releasing the parcel from the Green Belt would constitute encroachment into the countryside and a weakening of the Green Belt contribution of neighbouring land in relation to Purpose 3. Releasing the parcel would lead to a **Moderate- High** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

Parcel P17

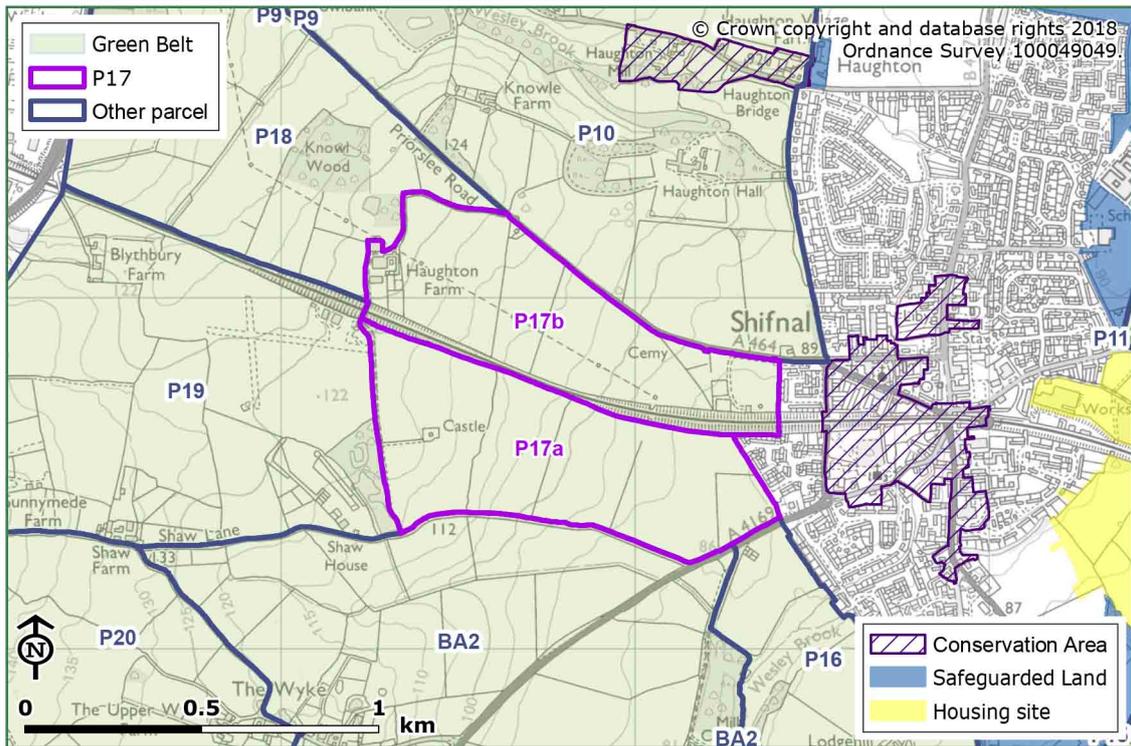


Figure A7.16: Parcel P17



Figure A7.17: Sloping farmland within Parcel P17 with railway embankments seen in the distance, views from Shaw Lane.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P17 is situated between Shifnal and Telford and comprises predominately agricultural land and has a strong sense of openness. The parcel is separated from the wider countryside to the south by Shaw Lane, with the parcel forming a strip of countryside between Shifnal and Telford. The parcel has a stronger relationship with the wider countryside than the neighbouring settlements.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P17 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that have a lower level of harm.

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

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1. Whilst this parcel does not lie adjacent to the urban edge of Telford, it is acknowledged that if the parcels immediately adjacent to Telford were developed (particularly P18 and/or P19), this parcel would play a strong role preventing the urban sprawl of Telford spreading out in the Shropshire Green Belt. The rating of 'no contribution' should therefore not imply that this parcel is not playing a key role in relation to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Strong

The parcel forms part of a critical gap, along with parcels P10, P18 and P19, between the settlements of Shifnal and Telford, approximately 1km to the west. There is little intervisibility between the settlements due to the gently undulating topography and a ridge of slightly elevated land to the west of the parcel, upon which Haughton Farm sits. The parcel plays an essential role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between the settlements of Telford and Shifnal. It is a significant area of open land seen by receptors travelling between Telford and Shifnal along the railway, passing through the parcel, or when travelling adjacent to the parcel along Priorslee Road, Shaw Lane and the A4169.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of the railway crossing the parcel from east to West, allotments, floodlit tennis courts, a floodlit bowls green and associated parking and buildings at the Shifnal Cricket club. These urbanising influences within the parcel are however limited and the parcel is open and does display some characteristics of the countryside.

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

Strong

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Shifnal. In practice the parcel has good intervisibility with Shifnal and forms an important part of its immediate setting. The openness of the land contributes positively to the historic significance of the settlement and to its special character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The unpaved farm tracks around Parcel P17, Shaw Lane and the A464 would constitute readily recognisable, alternative Green Belt boundaries that are of a similar strength to the existing settlement edge of Shifnal. These do not however constitute strong Green Belt boundaries.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel forms a large part of the critical gap between the settlements of Shifnal and Telford along with adjacent parcels P10, P18 and P19. Its release from the Green Belt would significantly weaken the integrity of the Green Belt in this area with regard to Purpose 2. The parcel contains little urbanising development, is open and forms an important part of the historic setting of Shifnal. It has a strong relationship with the large area of open countryside to the south and east. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a loss of open countryside and encroachment on neighbouring areas, weakening the role they play as Green Belt. Releasing Parcel P17 from the Green Belt would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

Note that in addition to the sub-parcel, the southern part of the parcel (P17a) is identified separately for inclusion within Opportunity Area Sh-2 in Parts 3 and 4 of this assessment. Release of P17a would not lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt than the release of Parcel P17 as a whole.

Conclusion

Figure A7.18 below shows the level of harm associated with the release of parcels/sub-parcels considered within the assessment around Shifnal.

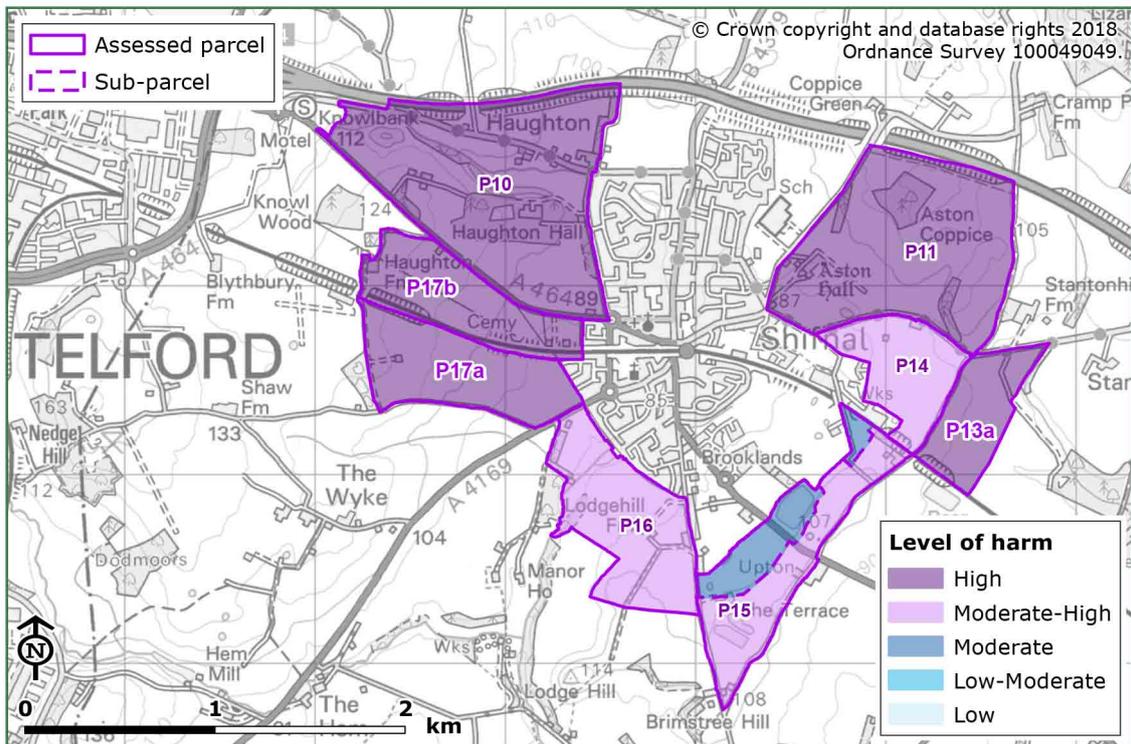


Figure A7.18: Individual Harm from Release of Parcels Surrounding Shifnal

The parcel assessment summarised on Figure A7.18 indicates that the release of Green Belt land for development could result in a 'high' level of harm to the Green Belt sited in between Shifnal and Telford, as well as to the northeast of Shifnal. Land adjacent to the east, south and south-west of Shifnal could result in a Moderate-High level of harm. Two smaller sub-parcels along the east and south-east of the settlement edge have been identified that have a closer relationship with the settlement of Shifnal and would lead to Moderate levels of harm to the Green Belt if they were to be released.

Part 3: Opportunity Areas – Assessment of Harm on the Green Belt

The assessment of the harm that could be caused by releasing Green Belt land for development has been tested through the identification of three distinct Opportunity Areas around Shifnal and by the identification a further Sub-Opportunity Area. The findings of these assessments are set out below.

Opportunity Area Sh-1

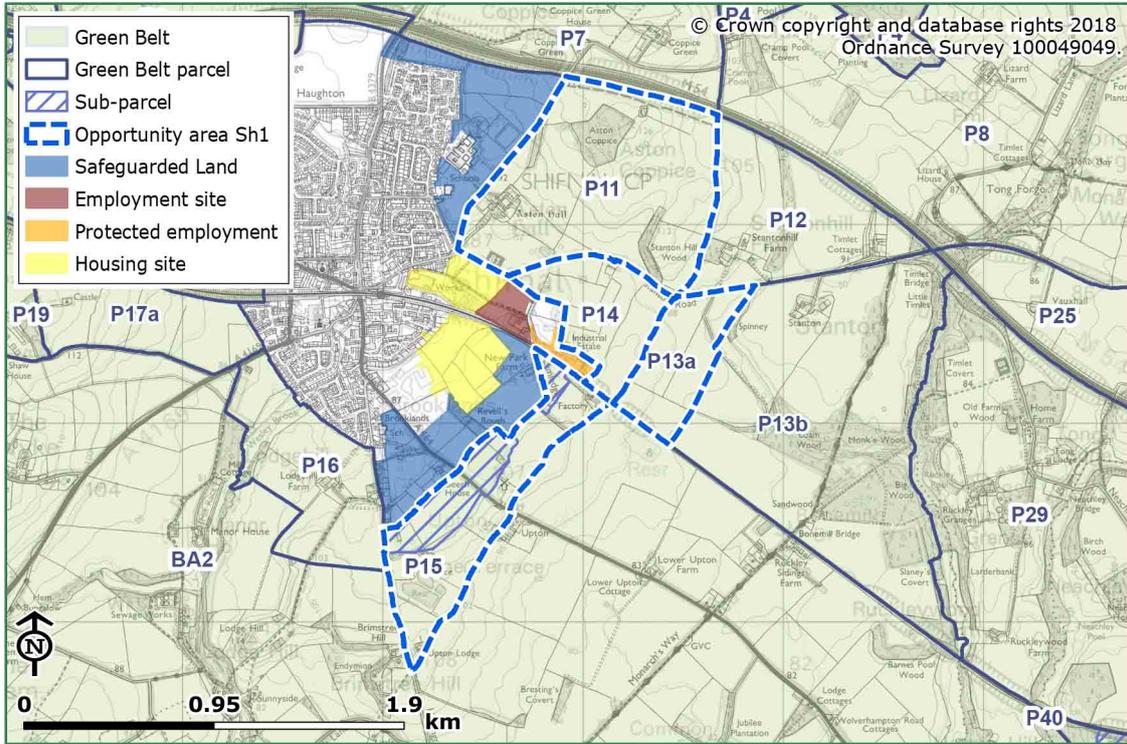


Figure A7.19: Opportunity Area Sh-1

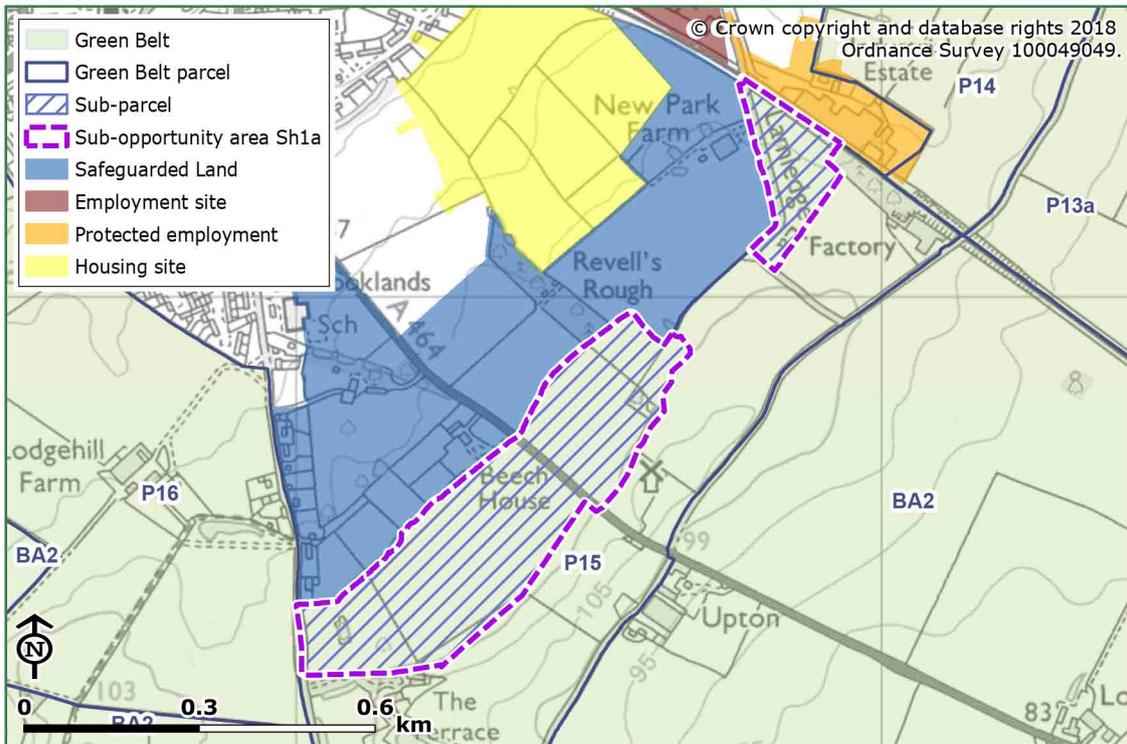


Figure A7.20: Sub-opportunity Area Sh-1a

Description of Opportunity Area Sh-1

Opportunity Area Sh-1 comprises the entire combined areas of parcels P11, P14 and P15 and the western part of P13 to identify a potential direction for growth across the eastern boundary of Shifnal.

Sub-opportunity Area Sh-1a

One Sub-Opportunity area has been identified that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt. Sub-opportunity Area Sh-1a comprises two separate areas within the western extent of parcel P15.

Summary of Assessment of Harm for Individual Parcels

The individual release of parcels P11 and the western part of P13 would have a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt. The individual release of Parcels P14 and P15 would have a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment of Harm for Sub-parcels

The release of Sub-parcel P15 would have a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment of harm

Removal of Opportunity Area Sh-1

The removal of Opportunity Area Sh-1 would result in development being sited on the elevated land within the centre of parcel P11 and on the ridge of land that slopes eastwards on the eastern side of parcel P11. Development would also be prominent in the eastern area of Parcel P14 and within the western part of P13. These areas of the parcels have a strong relationship with and are clearly visible from, the countryside located between Shifnal and Albrighton. Any development within these areas of the parcels could lead to a significant level of encroachment on this area of countryside and a weakening of the contribution this Green Belt makes to Purpose 3. It should be noted, however, that there is a degree of separation between these parcels and the wider area of countryside to the north of Shifnal due to the separating feature of the M54 Motorway corridor. P11 also plays a significant role in contributing to the historic setting of Shifnal. The release of Opportunity Area Sh-1 would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

High

No mitigation measures have been identified, as release of the opportunity area would lead to a high level of harm to the Green Belt.

Removal of Sub-opportunity Area Sh-1a

Sub-opportunity area Sh-1a includes two sub-parcels of P15. These areas of land are located close to the eastern settlement edge of Shifnal and are related to the intervening topography or containment created by existing development. Consequently, they do not have a strong relationship with the band of open countryside between Shifnal and Albrighton. Development within these sub-parcels would lead to a level of encroachment within neighbouring areas of Green Belt land but it is considered unlikely their release would significantly weaken the integrity of the Green Belt designation within this local area.

Releasing Sub-opportunity Areas Sh-1a from the Green Belt would lead to a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

Moderate Harm

The following section sets out the mitigation measures that could be considered in order to minimise the degree of harm to the Green Belt associated with the release of Sub-opportunity Areas Sh1a.

Mitigation Measures

- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees defining the eastern boundary of sub-parcel P15 should be retained and strengthened at any weak points in order to define a clearer Green Belt boundary. Hedgerow trees should also be retained and protected against any new development in accordance with best practice.
- Hedgerows along Park Lane should be retained and strengthened at any weak points.
- Development within Sub-opportunity Areas Sh-1a should be restricted to appropriate small scale and low density residential development of up to two storeys or single storey employment development to minimise encroachment on the neighbouring Green Belt land.

Opportunity Area Sh-2

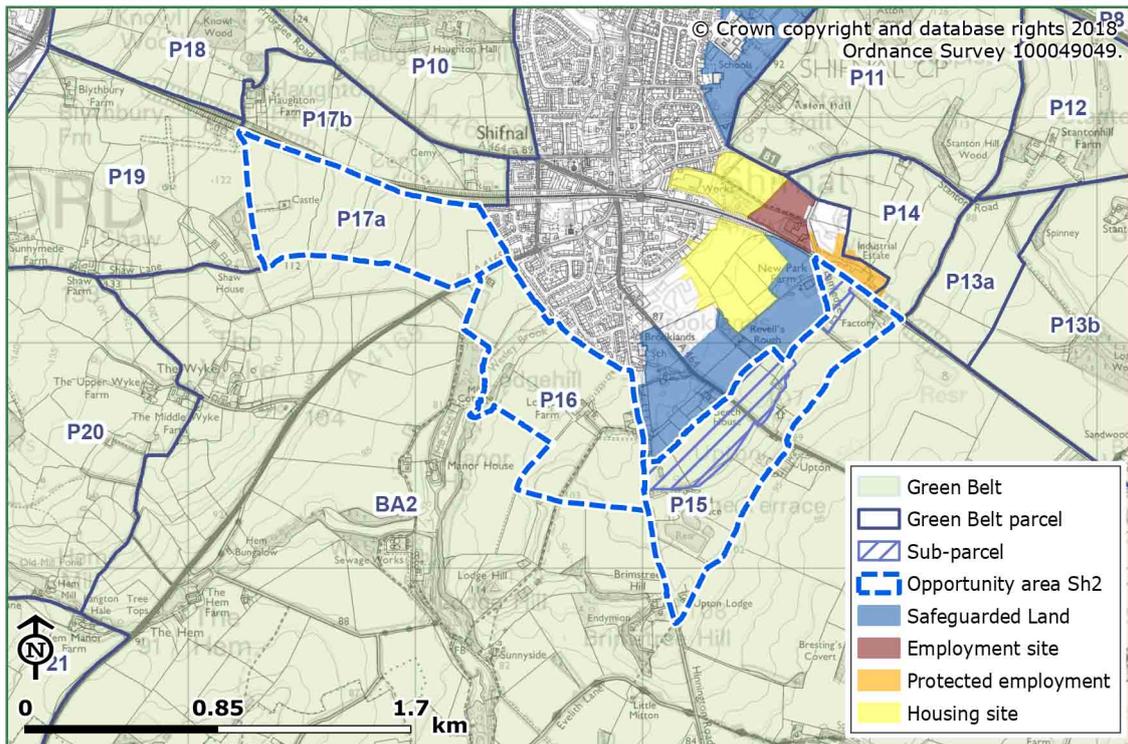


Figure A7.21: Opportunity Area Sh-2

Description of Opportunity Area Sh-2

Opportunity Area Sh-2 comprises the entire combined areas of parcel P15, P16 and the southern half of parcel P17 (P17a). No sub-opportunity areas were identified.

Summary of Assessment of Harm for Individual Parcels

The individual release of parcels P15 and P16 would have a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt. The individual release of parcel P17 (including P17a) would have a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment of harm

Removal of Opportunity Area Sh-2

Parcels P15, P16 and P17a all form part of an area of open countryside that stretches south from the settlement edge of Shifnal. Releasing the entirety of these parcels from the Green Belt would constitute significant encroachment into the countryside. There is little separation between these parcels and neighbouring areas of open countryside. Furthermore, the openness of the land within Parcel P17a plays a critical role in maintaining the settlement gap between Shifnal and Telford. Releasing Parcel P17a from the Green Belt would compromise the role the Green Belt is playing with regard to Purpose 2.

The release of the Opportunity Area Sh-2 would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

High Harm

No mitigation measures have been identified, as release of the opportunity area would lead to a high level of harm to the Green Belt.

Opportunity Area Sh-3

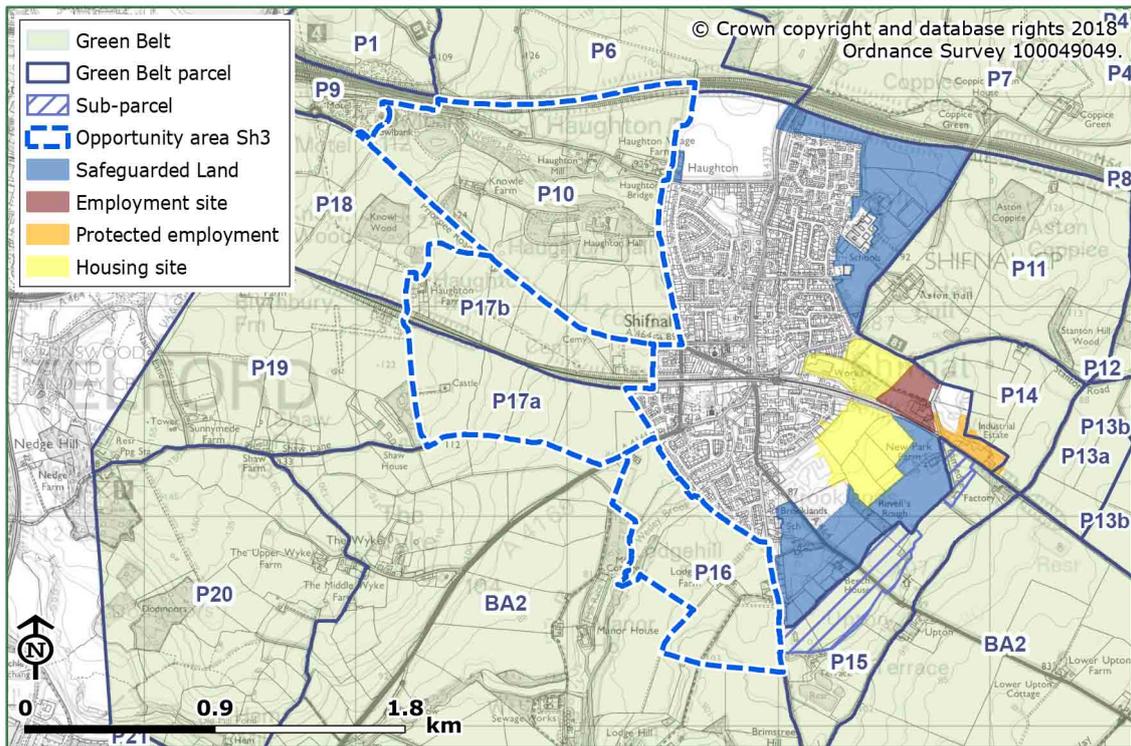


Figure A7.22: Opportunity Area Sh-3

Description of Opportunity Area Sh-3

Opportunity Area Sh-3 comprises the entire combined area of parcels P10, P16 and P17. No sub-opportunity areas were identified.

Summary of Assessment of Harm for Individual Parcels

The individual release of parcels P10 and P17 would have a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt. The individual release of parcel P16 would have a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt

Assessment of harm

Removal of Opportunity Area Sh-2

Parcels P10, P16 and P17 form part of an area of open countryside the stretches south and west from the settlement edge of Shifnal. Releasing the entirety of these parcels from the Green Belt would constitute significant encroachment into the countryside. There is little separation between these parcels and neighbouring areas of open countryside. Their release from the Green Belt is likely to weaken the role these areas are playing as Green Belt with regard to Purpose 3. Furthermore, the openness of the land within parcels P10 and P17 plays a critical role maintaining the settlement gap between Shifnal and Telford. Releasing parcels P10 and P17 from the Green Belt, and the subsequent loss of openness, would significantly compromise the role the Green Belt is playing with regard to Purpose 2.

The release of the Opportunity Area Sh-3 would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this area.

High Harm

No mitigation measures have been identified, as release of the opportunity area would lead to a high level of harm to the Green Belt.

Part 4: Conclusions

The assessment has reviewed the potential harm to the Green Belt of releasing for development, individual parcels or sub-parcels identified in this Green Belt Review. This has subsequently informed the identification of three opportunity areas; and one sub-opportunity area around the settlement of Shifnal.

The findings of the assessment of harm likely to result from releasing the opportunity areas or sub-opportunity areas for development are summarised in **Table A7.1**.

Table A7.1: Summary Assessment of Harm for Opportunity Areas within Shifnal

Opportunity Area Reference	Area (ha)	Rating
Sh-1	202.3	High
Sh-1a	17.9	Moderate
Sh-2	143.7	High
Sh-3	245.5	High

The consideration of the release of Green Belt land around Shifnal, set out in detail in the preceding sections and summarised in the table above, highlights the various potential Green Belt impacts arising from the possible release of land for development or as safeguarded land to meet the future needs of the community of Shifnal. The assessment in this Green Belt Review has shown that up to 17.9ha of land (within opportunity area Sh-1a) could be released from the Green Belt for development with only moderate levels of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area.

Whilst development on Green Belt land may inevitably lead to some degree of encroachment into the countryside within the Green Belt, the strategic function of the West Midlands Green Belt will not be affected by small scale releases of land in Shifnal. Release of opportunity area Sh-3 would however have a strategic effect on the functioning of the Green Belt by leading to the effective merging of Shifnal and Telford particularly in relation to parcels P10 and P17.