

Final report

Alderley Edge

Cheshire East

Landscape Study

Appraisal of residential site allocation options

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is currently considering options for allocating land on the periphery of Alderley Edge for residential development. In all cases land would require release from the Green Belt given its tightly drawn boundary around the existing urban area.

In parallel, Alderley Edge Parish Council (AEPC) is promoting completion of a Neighbourhood Plan to help ensure that allocation decisions taken by CEC reflect local views.

The purpose of the report is to consider the relative merits of different areas of land around the periphery of Alderley Edge for Green Belt release and for allocation for residential development. The study has been led by a professionally qualified landscape architect who is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). The different options for the potential growth of the town are considered from two principal perspectives:

- The likely landscape and visual effects of residential development - this is referred to as the landscape and visual suitability of different areas of land around the periphery of the town to successfully accommodate residential development; and
- The contribution of the different areas of land to the five purposes of Green Belt designation – this acknowledges that Green Belt is not a landscape designation and focuses on how release might affect the effectiveness and integrity of Green Belt policy as it applies in this location.

These two perspectives are distinct and conclusions are drawn separately for each. The former takes a landscape and visual perspective to understand how residential development might affect the character and value of the landscape resource and people's visual amenity. The latter focuses on land use, the purposes of Green Belt policy and the maintenance of the essential characteristics of Green Belts which are their openness and permanence (paragraph 133 of the NPPF, July 2018). However, the report also concludes with a combined professional judgement as to the overall relative suitability of different areas of land around the periphery of the town.

1.2 Scope and approach

The report comprises the following sections:

- **Section 2** introduces **the landscape setting of Alderley Edge** and seeks to identify landscape features or characteristics that help to define the natural limits to the potential growth of the town (i.e. lines beyond which growth of the town might fundamentally alter its character and its relationship to its setting).
- **Section 3** undertakes **an assessment of 42 parcels of land around the periphery of the town** to provide a consistent and comprehensive overview of its options for growth.

- Drawing on the conclusions reached in Section 3, **Section 4** then focuses in more detail on a number of **sites that are known to be the subject of proposed development** (i.e. competing sites for residential allocation).

2 The landscape setting of Alderley Edge

2.1 Introduction

This Section of the report provides a general overview of the landscape setting of Alderley Edge. The purpose of this introduction is to identify ways in which landform, hydrology and landcover help to define the relationship between the town and its landscape setting and may help to identify ways in which growth could be accommodated without adversely changing this relationship. These aspects of the landscape setting of the town are illustrated by Figure 1.

2.2 Landform

Eponymously the location of the town is defined by its position adjacent the distinctive topographical feature of Alderley Edge. The Edge comprises a substantial and steeply sided landform to the south east of the centre of the town that provides both a prominent wooded backdrop to the town and extensive views over the Cheshire Plain and towards the Pennines to the west and north. The town centre sits at the lower elevation on the edge of the Cheshire Plain with the current settlement limits taking in a combination of both elevated and low-lying areas. Large scale and often older development extends up the slopes of 'The Edge' and the visibility of these more elevated areas helps to define the town's distinct built and landscape character. The existing elevated town edges that relate to this topography to the west of Congleton Road to the south of the town and to the north of Mottram Road to the east of the town are important to its distinct character.

Land to the west and north of the town is in large part low lying within the Cheshire Plain. There are however subtle variations that influence how development in different areas might affect the setting of the town:

- Open areas to the south and to the north east of the town are slightly more elevated with lower ground principally located to the north west; and
- Although some areas appear relatively flat, distinct undulations and low hills are found in several locations, especially near the A34 road corridor which meanders through them.

The current footprint of the town generally avoids these low landforms and, other than at the Edge itself, generally extends over lower ground.

2.3 Watercourses

The topographical context influences the local hydrology with two influential watercourses located to the north and to the west of the existing settlement footprint:

- To the north Whitehall Brook forms a natural boundary between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow. No part of the exiting town extends to the north of this watercourse which in many places also marks the Parish boundary.

- A minor watercourse flows to the south west of the town. Sometimes hardly visible on the ground, it nevertheless provides a similar function to Whitehall Brook.

These hydrological features delineate a subtle topographical change of aspect. The town generally extends over land with a subtle south western, western and northern aspect running down to these two watercourses from the elevated ground of 'The Edge'.

2.4 Landcover

Figure 1 shows areas of tree cover around the town which are greater than 10m high. This is derived from BlueSky National Tree Map (NTM) data but with lower vegetation removed. A focus on vegetation which is more than 10m high helps to illustrate the relative levels of visual enclosure provided by landcover. The analysis illustrates:

- The very open nature of the landscape in parts of the north east and south west which comprise continuous tracts of extensive and very open countryside.
- The location of smaller field parcels with greater visual enclosure often located around the immediate periphery of the town. Such field parcels are not found in all locations and in some places the larger scale open countryside extends to the settlement limits without a buffer of smaller and more enclosed parcels.
- The generally higher levels of tree cover located to the north west towards Wilmslow. This is associated with a range of what can broadly be described as urban fringe land uses between the two towns including dispersed residential properties, major highway corridor, a golf course, school, hotels, public houses and playing fields.

The relationship of this tree cover to areas of more fragmented field pattern on the periphery of Alderley Edge marks where the finer grain and more enclosed character has been more heavily influenced by proximity to the town. A distinction can be drawn between larger parcels of continuous and open agricultural countryside and those areas of land on the periphery of the town which are undeveloped but nevertheless have a more settled character. These may comprise small fragmented fields and paddocks, parkland influences associated with larger older properties and in some cases a slight sense of suburbanisation.

It is nevertheless acknowledged that some of these parcels of land which have a partially settled character derived from their proximity to the town can also be areas of less intensively farmed and relatively high landscape value which, in their current open state, sometimes make an important contribution to the landscape setting of the town (these areas are in addition to the locally designated Area of Special County Value which protects the elevated landscape to the south east – see section 2.6 below). This is often particularly the case where these smaller scale open parcels relate to larger properties and the older, possibly more historic, parts of the town which make a special contribution to local distinctiveness (for example west of Congleton Road on the south west side of the town and north of Mottram Road and Moss Road on the north-east side of the town).

2.5 Landscape character

The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (2008) identifies that the following landscape types are found around the periphery of Alderley Edge:

- Landscape Character Type 9 – Estate, Woodland & Meres (EWM) – The elevated areas to the south east of the town around ‘The Edge’.
- Landscape Character Type 10: Lower Farms and Woods – Generally lower lying countryside of the Cheshire Plain to the north and west of the town.

The location and extent of these landscape types is identified by Figure 2.

Landscape Character Type 9 – Estate, Woodland & Meres (EWM)

EWM is described as containing a concentration of historic estates and associated features, a high density of woodland, numerous mosses and meres. Topography is described as ranging from flat to undulating with occasional steeper slopes. The visual characteristics of EWM include reference to *“the predominance of mature woodland blocks and individual parkland trees, resulting in a substantial degree of enclosure and creating a small to medium scale landscape”*. Views from ‘The Edge’ are noted as *“particularly striking and extend beyond the Bollin Valley to encompass the Manchester-Stockport conurbation and the Pennine Hills beyond”* (a photograph provided within Appendix C demonstrates an example of this view within the context of this study).

Landscape Character Type 10 – Lower Farms and Woods (LFW)

LFW is described as a gently rolling landscape with greater concentrations of woodland (compared to the Lowland Plain Landscape Character Type), a slightly higher settlement density and a mix of arable and pasture. In terms of the visual characteristics, LFW is *“characterised by a medium scale landscape, with local variations dependent upon the presence of woodland and the condition of hedgerows. Local increases in vegetation are often associated with larger brooks or minor watercourses... a great variety in the range of available views but they are often limited in extent due to the lack of elevated vantage points”*. The study includes references to views of the prominent wooded escarpment of Alderley Edge and the urban influences of the Manchester-Crewe railway and the busy Handforth-Wilmslow Bypass and how *“the noise generated by both rail and railway can be intrusive and the roofs of residential properties can be glimpsed amongst mature trees”*.

2.6 Landscape designations

The Local Development Plan identifies a local landscape designation to the south east of Alderley Edge. The designation is an Area of Special County Value (ASCV), a historic Cheshire County policy designation adopted in the 1970s. The southern and eastern periphery of Alderley Edge falls within the “Bollin Valley and Parklands” ASCV. Its extent is shown on Figure 2. Its designation reflects the following valued features and characteristics identified within an appraisal undertaken in May 2013: intact and high quality rural landscape, historic parkland estates, undulating landscape with wooded backdrop focal points and the Alderley Edge wooded sandstone escarpment.

There is a close correlation between the extent of the identified landscape character areas and the local landscape designation (see Figure 2). Where there is inconsistency, principally an area of land to the south of the town (an area to the south of Whitebarn Road that falls within the Area of Special County Value but outside of the EWM character type), a site visit has been undertaken during which it was confirmed that no significant area of landscape which might be able to successfully accommodate residential development had been included within the Area of Special County Value.

2.7 The Green Belt at Alderley Edge

A Green Belt has been designated which extends around all sides of Alderley Edge. The boundary of the Green Belt generally extends up to the existing settlement footprint with no significant areas of open land around its periphery excluded from protection. Some areas of ribbon development to the west and south of the town (such as along the Brook Lane to the west of the A34) are washed over by the designation.

The purposes of Green Belt designation have remained broadly consistent over many decades and are re-stated in paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2018). The essential characteristics of Green Belts are re-stated as their openness and permanence such that release from Green Belt should only take place in exceptional and fully evidenced circumstances. A particular purpose of the Green Belt at Alderley Edge has been to prevent it merging with the neighbouring town of Wilmslow to the north west. The degree to which any real gap between the two towns persists today is a theme which runs through this report.

3 Assessment of the periphery of the town

3.1 Introduction

This Section of the report provides a consistent and comprehensive assessment of land around the periphery of Alderley Edge that could be subject to potential allocation for residential development. The scope of the assessment comprises:

- The landscape and visual implications of residential development (the suitability of different areas to potentially successfully accommodate low-rise residential development); and
- The contribution of different areas of land to the five defined purposes of Green Belt designation.

3.2 Study area

The study area for this general assessment of the periphery of the town comprises all areas of designated Green Belt located within 500m of the current settlement boundary (as defined by the Green Belt boundary which encircles the town) but which fall outside of the locally designated Area of Special County Value on the south-eastern side of the town. A site visit to the south-eastern periphery of the town included within the local landscape designation confirmed that it should be treated as a hard constraint to potential allocation and should therefore be excluded from the assessment. Contiguous areas of built up development within the Green Belt comprising residential plots (including gardens) were also been excluded from the study area. The study area is shown on Figure 3. This study area is considered to capture all land around the immediate periphery of Alderley Edge that is likely to be subject to promotion for allocation for residential development.

3.3 Identification of assessment parcels

Land within the study area was divided into parcels to enable assessment. The starting point for parcel identification was the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment update of 2015. This was a broad-brush study undertaken over a very wide area and a finer grain of assessment was considered necessary to better understand options for growth at Alderley Edge. 42 parcels were identified. In many cases these comprise individual fields but some fields were amalgamated where there was little landcover on the ground to divide them (e.g. a simple, open fence line). The identified parcels strike a balance between a reasonably fine grain of assessment and a manageable number. They are mapped on Figure 3. The assessment parcels are either the same as, or subdivisions of, those used in the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update of 2015 (i.e. no parcel assessed in this study crosses the boundary between two used in the earlier and broader brush work undertaken at District level).

3.4 Assessment criteria

Using a combination of desk top analysis and site visits during which each parcel was assessed from a single publicly accessible vantage point, each parcel of land was subject to a simple qualitative assessment with reference to the following criteria. These criteria were used to guide and assist structured and consistent assessment. The weight attributed to each of the listed criteria was variable reflecting the need for an overall professional view.

Landscape and visual criteria

Each land parcel was assessed with reference to a consistent set of landscape and visual suitability criteria. The following landscape and visual criteria were adopted.

TABLE 1: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria	Comments
Landform	The ability of the landform to successfully accommodate appropriate growth of the town for residential development. This was a rounded judgement which included consideration of elevation; gradient; aspect including the topographical relationship of the land to the existing extent of the town; and any enclosure that might be achieved through topography. In this context an easily developable flat site was not necessarily considered to be preferable in terms of landform.
Watercourses	Whether the land parcel lies within the alignments formed by notable watercourses that help to define the natural settlement limits of Alderley Edge (see Section 2). This consideration has a connection with aspect in that land between the existing town and these watercourses has a subtly different aspect to the land that lies beyond them.
Existing landscape structure / framework	The presence of tree and other landcover which would assist in integrating new residential development with the existing town and the landscape. Parcels which are already defined by a strong existing landscape framework were considered favourably.
Character - countryside influences	Continuity of open uninterrupted agricultural countryside. More fragmented parcels which do not form part of extensive areas of uninterrupted open countryside were considered favourably.
Character - urban influences	Influences of the town, views of urbanising features and any sense of suburbanisation of landscape character. This criterion and the preceding reflects a spectrum between the parcel forming part of an area of uninterrupted open countryside as opposed to a strong sense of connection with and influences of the existing town.
Landscape value	Relative landscape value. NB: given that all assessed land parcels fall outside of the local landscape designation none is considered to be of the highest value. Some lower level differentiation of different parcels was however considered helpful.
Visual openness	General openness and visual exposure to surrounding areas.

Visual relationship with surrounding countryside	Visual effects in views from surrounding countryside areas. A focus on views from surrounding footpaths, roads and other accessible areas within the open countryside that surrounds Alderley Edge towards the town and how any new settlement edges might appear in those views. This considered the acceptability of the likely appearance of the changed settlement edge rather than its simple visibility.
Visual relationship with the town	The acceptability of views from the town (roads, footpath and properties) and whether a strong visual connection with the town already exists. This was a rounded professional judgement of the likely visual effect where visibility from the town was not necessarily considered to be unfavourable. The judgement included consideration of any special views from the town into the surrounding countryside that might contribute to the overall character and distinctiveness of the settlement (e.g. elevated views over surrounding countryside from the more historic parts of the town).
Views from important elevated vantage points	Views across the town from elevated vantage points, in particular 'The Edge' (see Appendix C), elevated hillsides such as around Congleton Road and visually sensitive settlement edges such as in the vicinity of Moss Road/Mottram Road.

Green belt purposes

The following approach was taken to the assessment of contribution to Green Belt purposes.

TABLE 2: GREEN BELT PURPOSES ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria	Comments
Merging	Contribution of the parcel to the prevention of the merging of neighbouring towns. In this study this focused on the nature of the gap between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow. This assessment is premised on the observation that the gap between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow on the northern side of the town in the vicinity of Wilmslow Road is no longer effective due to landscape fragmentation and the influence of diverse urban fringe land uses (see final paragraph in section 3.6).
Sprawl	Sprawl beyond existing settlement limits. A sense of unrestricted and unimpeded growth into areas outside of the natural limits of the town and where future growth would be unlikely to be prevented by the presence of strong defensible boundaries. This criterion is most relevant to land parcels that immediately abut the existing settlement edge.

Encroachment	Safeguarding from encroachment into and loss of uninterrupted, open, countryside of a character with limited existing sense of connection to the town. This criterion is most relevant to land parcels that do not immediately abut the existing settlement edge.
Setting of historic towns	Any special or notable contribution of the land parcel to historic aspects of character and setting (the assessment of contribution to this purpose shows limited range with contribution identified only where the parcel abuts and contributes to the visual setting of particularly historic or otherwise sensitive parts of the town).
Urban regeneration	Encouragement of brownfield development (included for completeness – all land parcels have been judged the same against this purpose).

3.5 Assessment method and ‘scoring’ system

The assessment was undertaken using a combination of desk top and field assessment techniques. A brief site visit was undertaken to all 42 parcels to record site observations and to capture a typical site photograph (parcel photographs are provided in Appendix B). An elevated vantage point at ‘The Edge’ was also visited to determine which parcels would result in significant changes to the available view (an annotated photograph is provided within Appendix C).

During field work each criterion was assessed on a four-point scale. The assessment was wholly qualitative based on the following RAG (Red, Amber, Yellow, Green) ‘scoring’ system. Each assessment is the product of rounded professional consideration and the non-quantitative ‘scoring’ system is simply used as shorthand to express the observations made and the overall professional opinion reached. The four-point scale and terminology used for the assessment of contribution to Green Belt purposes is consistent with that used in the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update of 2015.

TABLE 3: RAG 'SCORING' SYSTEM

Red	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates not suitable to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	Major contribution to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Not considered suitable/preferable for residential allocation
Orange	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates low suitability to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	Significant contrition to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Unlikely to be suitable/preferable for residential allocation
Yellow	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates moderate suitability to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	Contribution to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Potentially suitable/preferable for residential allocation
Green	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates high suitability to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	No contribution to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Suitable/preferable for residential allocation

3.6 Assessment observations

The assessment matrix provided in Appendix A summarises the combined desk and field assessment of the 42 land parcels around the periphery of Alderley Edge. These assessments are mapped by Figures 4, 5 and 6. It is stressed that in combining different criteria, rounded and considered professional judgement was applied and appropriate variable weight has been applied to each consideration to reach an overall professional view.

The assessment matrix provided in Appendix A generally shows a correlation between the landscape and visual suitability of different parcels of land for residential development (Figure 4) and their assessed Green Belt contribution (Figure 5) (albeit that only one parcel of land has been identified as making 'no contribution' to Green Belt purposes). This reflects an overall preference within both assessments to avoid areas of extensive, uninterrupted, open, countryside which lie outside of the perceived current urbanising influence of the town. Such areas do not have the existing landscape character and structure that would help to accommodate residential development which would therefore result in a strong perceived impression of sprawl beyond the natural limits of the town's influence and encroachment into open countryside.

A degree of correlation also exists at Alderley Edge between the consideration of landscape value and important views within the landscape and visual assessment and the Green Belt purpose of preserving the setting and special character of an historic town. The landscape value of land parcels immediately to the west of Congleton Road (east of the railway) are influenced by their visual relationship with the adjacent historic and elevated parts of town which overlook them. Their openness contributes to the setting of the town and, conversely, views of the built heritage and mature tree cover within these parts of the town contribute to their landscape value. The same applies to land to the north of Moss Road on the north-eastern side of the town. Development on these parcels would be visible from the elevated viewpoint at 'The Edge' to the south (thereby affecting the setting of the town in an important way) and the appearance of 'The Edge' as a distinct, heavily wooded backdrop to the landscape of these parcels increases landscape susceptibility and landscape value in this vicinity. These areas of greater landscape value (albeit outside of the locally designated Area of Special County Value) are principally located on slightly higher ground on the north eastern and southern periphery of the town.

There is potentially less correlation on the north and north-western side of the town between the landscape and visual suitability of the parcels to accommodate residential development and the land's arguable contribution to the Green Belt purpose of preventing the merging of the neighbouring towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. The conclusion of this study is that land on the north and north-western side of Alderley Edge towards Wilmslow is generally of a character, visual structure and landscape value that would be better suited to allocation. The unintended consequence of placing too much weight on a desire to limit development between the two towns would be to steer the growth of the town towards less suitable locations. On the northern edge of the town in the vicinity of Wilmslow Road the gap between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow has already been lost and protecting land from development here for the purpose of preventing their merging would be ineffective and is unnecessary (refer also to final paragraph in this section of the report

below). In this respect the conclusions of this study's assessments reach a different opinion to that set out in the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update of 2015 within which the relevant assessment results map shows the greatest contribution to Green Belt purposes ('Major Contribution') in areas between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow.

Figure 6 shows this study's combined professional view as to the overall suitability of different parcels of land around the periphery of Alderley Edge for residential allocation. It illustrates three key conclusions:

- That areas of open, uninterrupted, countryside which is unsuitable for residential allocation flow up to meet the existing settlement edge in areas to the north east and south west of the town (e.g. parcels 10, 28 and 42).
- More fragmented and potentially suitable areas to the south east are often of greater landscape value and contribute to the historic setting of the town due to being overlooked (e.g. parcels 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 to the north and parcels 34, 35, 36 and 39 to the south).
- The gap between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow is already characterised by a range of urbanising influences and the Green Belt purpose of preventing the merging of the two towns should not be used to steer development to the less suitable locations indicated above.

Many of those parcels considered to be most suitable areas for allocation are located on the north and north-western periphery of the existing settlement footprint (i.e. closer to Wilmslow). This area comprises a series of physically fragmented and visually enclosed parcels of land which are bisected by various man-made and natural features that provide a strong existing landscape framework and defensible boundaries for potential future residential development. Foremost amongst these are the fragmentation and visual enclosure created by the A34, Wilmslow Road, the mainline railway and tree cover associated with the course of Whitehall Brook. The cumulative effect of the entwined alignments the A34 and Whitehall Brook would create a natural northern limit to the settlement footprint of Alderley Edge with no significant corresponding loss of any remaining gap between the two towns. The remaining open land in this vicinity, particularly as perceived from the north-south route of the main road that joins the town towns (i.e. Alderley road/Wilmslow Road), does not function as a gap and its development would not result in significant harm to the Green Belt or, more generally, to the landscape.

4 Appraisal of proposed site allocations

4.1 Introduction

This Section of the report considers various proposed site allocations in light of the assessment observations set out in Section 3 and Appendix A. The following text expands on the assessments of individual parcels to enable an opinion to be given on the overall merits of each promoted allocation.

4.2 Ryleys Farm

Ryleys Farm is formed of two parts falling to the north and south of Ryleys Lane. The A34 contains both parts to the west. The northern parcel is roughly triangular with an eastern edge formed by the existing settlement boundary and the southern edge formed by Ryleys Lane. The southern part is more irregular in shape and it is bound to the north by Ryleys Lane, Old Chorley Hall and the existing settlement boundary; to the east by the Manchester-Crewe railway line; and to the south by agricultural fields.

South of Ryleys Lane

The southern part of Ryleys Farm falls within Parcels 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 42 (Figure 7). The landscape and visual suitability for development has been determined as follows: parcels 29 and 30 as high, parcels 31 and 32 as low and 28 and 42 as not suitable for development. Parcels 29 and 30 were assessed more favourably due to the definition provided by a watercourse, greater levels of structural landscape features, higher levels of enclosure, lower continuity with the surrounding open countryside and lower intervisibility with the wider Green Belt.

In terms of Green Belt, all the southern part parcels contribute to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcels 31 and 32 provide significant contributions in terms of prevent sprawl and encroachment into the countryside and parcels 28 and 42 providing major contributions in terms of preventing sprawl and encroachment into the countryside. This reflects the particularly open character of these parcels, their continuity with the open countryside to the south west and the general absence of urbanising or suburbanising influences.

Overall suitability for allocation and residential development has been assessed as follows: the more enclosed areas at parcels 29 and 30 are considered suitable/preferable, parcels 31 and 32 are unlikely to be suitable/preferable, and 28 and 42 are not considered suitable/preferable. When forming an opinion on the developability of the southern part of the Ryleys Farms site, land to the east of Green Lane and north of the watercourse is the most suitable/preferable for allocation. Land to the east of Green Lane and north of the watercourse has greater levels of structural vegetation and relatively higher levels of enclosure, lower continuity with the surrounding open countryside and lower intervisibility with the wider Green Belt. The existing extent of the town already exerts an influence on the character of these areas. Development of parcels 29 and 30 would not harm either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. Should any part of the southern part of Ryleys Farm be taken forward for allocation, the area to the east of Green Lane has scope for residential development focused towards the existing settlement edge and north of the watercourse. The remaining areas should remain free of development to prevent

sprawl into the open countryside and to maintain a positive 'gateway' along the Ryleys Lane approach to Alderley Edge. The particularly large scale and open character of parcels 28 and 42 are considered important to the integrity of the Green Belt on this side of Alderley Edge and provide no existing landscape structure that would help to successfully accommodate residential development. Development here would be seen as a substantial incursion into open countryside which is currently influenced very little by its proximity to the town.

North of Ryleys Lane

The northern part of Ryleys Farm falls within Parcels 26, 27 and 40 (Figure 7). The landscape and visual suitability for development has been determined as follows: the fragmented and low value landscape at parcels 26 and 27 as high, and parcel 40 as low. Landform, definition provided by water course and the comparatively lower landscape value associated with parcels 26 and 27 contribute to making them preferable to parcel 40. All parcels contribute towards Green Belt purposes and parcel 40 provides a significant contribution in terms of preventing sprawl and protecting the historic setting of Alderley Edge. Although there is limited structural vegetation along the watercourse which divides parcels 40 and 27, the south-western corner of this potential allocation at parcel 40 is relatively elevated and development in this corner would detract from what is currently perceived as a positive arrival point into the town adjacent Old Chorley Hall which coincides with the point at which Ryleys Lane crosses a watercourse which helps to define the natural limits of the town.

Overall suitability for allocation and residential development has been assessed as follows: parcels 26 and 27 are considered suitable/preferable and parcels 40 is unlikely to be suitable/preferable. Taking this forward into forming an overall opinion regarding the developability of the northern part of the Ryleys Farm site, there is some potential for residential development focused towards the northern extents of the northern part closer to the existing settled edge of Alderley Edge. The south-western corner of the northern part is less suitable and residential development within parcel 40 would result in a perception of sprawl and the loss of a positively perceived 'gateway' into the town along Ryleys Lane.

4.3 Hole Farm

This study has interpreted 'Hole Farm' as the entirety of both parcel 38 and 17.

Hole Farm is located to the west of the A34 and to the north of Brook Lane. It falls completely within assessment parcels 17 and 38 (Figure 7). As there is no proposed allocation boundary available, the allocation area is taken to be the same extent as the combined extent of assessment parcels 17 and 38. Parcels 17 and 38 are bound to the east by the A34, to the south by residential properties along Brooke lane and to the north and west by Alderley Edge Golf Course.

Parcels 17 and 38 have been assessed as suitable in terms of landscape and visual suitability, do not provide any significant or major contributions to Green Belt purposes and suitable/preferable overall for residential development allocation. The parcels are completely hidden from view by existing vegetation and housing along Brook Lane, have low continuity with the surrounding countryside, high levels of enclosure and low levels of intervisibility with surrounding open countryside. Development of this site

would not harm either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. Taking this forward into forming an opinion regarding the developability of the Hole Farm site, there is potential for residential development. Should the site be taken forward, plans for residential development should include the retention and enhancement of existing vegetation to prevent opening the site to the wider countryside and surrounding Green Belt.

4.4 Land off Wilmslow Road

Land off Wilmslow Road proposed allocation site is located to the west of Wilmslow Road and to the east of the A34. It is bound to the south by residential properties along Brook Lane and to the north by adjacent agricultural fields. Its boundary correlates with assessment parcel 16 (Figure 7).

Parcel 16 has been assessed as having high landscape and visual suitability to accommodate residential development, as providing no significant or major contributions to Green Belt purposes, and overall suitable/preferable for residential allocation.

Previous sections of this study have concluded that on the northern edge of the town, in the vicinity of Land off Wilmslow Road, the gap between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow has already been lost and protecting sites from development here for the purpose of preventing their merging would be ineffective and is unnecessary. The vicinity of the site comprises a series of physically fragmented and visually enclosed parcels of land which are bisected by various man-made and natural features that provide a strong existing landscape framework and defensible boundaries for potential future residential development. Foremost amongst these are the fragmentation and visual enclosure created by the A34, Wilmslow Road, the mainline railway and tree cover associated with the course of Whitehall Brook. The cumulative effect of the entwined alignments the A34 and Whitehall Brook would create a natural northern limit to the settlement footprint of Alderley Edge with no significant corresponding loss of any remaining gap between the two towns. The remaining open land in this vicinity, particularly as perceived from the north-south route of the main road that joins the town towns (i.e. Alderley road/Wilmslow Road), does not function as a gap and its development would not result in significant harm to the Green Belt.

The parcel is considered suitable due to landform (with an aspect facing into the existing town), watercourses, a low continuity with surrounding open countryside, low intervisibility with the wider surrounding countryside and no visibility from 'The Edge'. Development of this site would result in very limited harm to either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. The structural vegetation framework around the site is moderate and the local landscape value attributed to the parcel is relatively high because of the intact nature of the landscape features, such as trees and ponds, within the parcel (the site has a slight parkland character). Taking this forward into an opinion regarding the developability of the Land off Wilmslow Road site, there is potential for residential development and should the site be taken forward, plans for residential development should include the retention of valued landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows along the boundary with Wilmslow Road to retain landscape value and prevent opening up the site.

4.5 Land north of Beech Road

Land north of Beech Road proposed allocation site is located to the east of the Manchester-Crewe railway line and to the west of Whitehall Brook. The site is irregular in shape; bound by residential properties along Beech Road to the south, by allotment gardens to the south west, by the Manchester to Crewe railway line to the north-west and agricultural fields to the north-east. The boundary of the proposed site partially correlates with assessment parcel 11 to the west and cuts roughly halfway through the assessment parcel to the east (Figure 7).

Parcel 11 has been assessed as having high landscape and visual suitability to accommodate residential development, as providing no significant or major contributions to Green Belt purposes, and overall suitable/preferable for residential allocation. In terms of the site proposed for allocation, located within the extents of parcel 11, the site is suitable/preferable for residential development allocation. This is due to its position to the west of Whitehall Brook, the visual enclosure provided by vegetation along the brook, existing structural visual enclosure and the role of Whitehall Brook in helping to define the natural limits of the town. Development of this site would result in very limited harm to either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. The proposed allocation comprises a fragmented area of land which is perceived as having strong connections to the existing extent of the town and as very separate from the much more open (and occasionally elevated) areas of uninterrupted countryside located to the north east of Whitehall Brook.

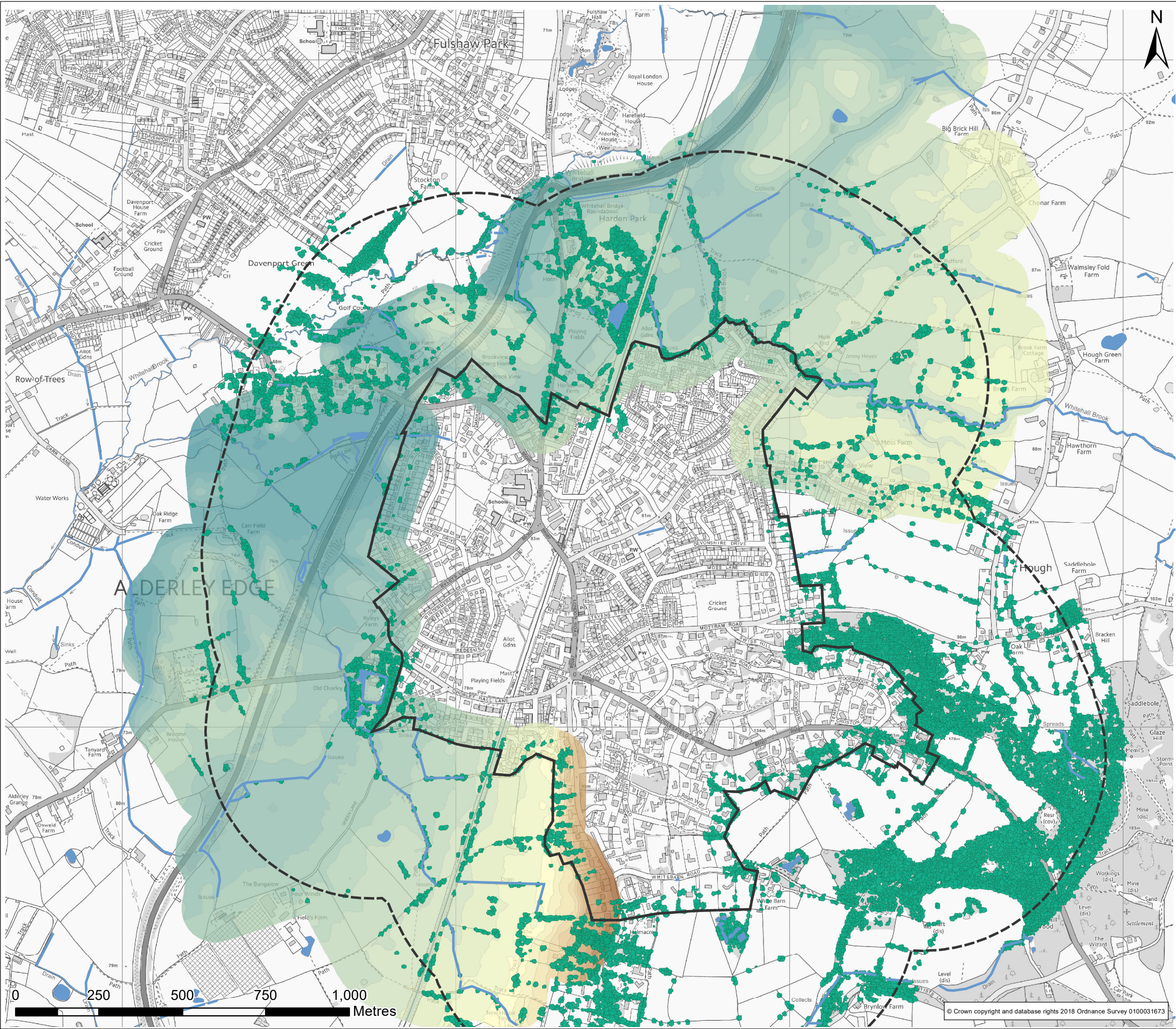
4.6 Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes

The Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes proposed allocation site is located to the south of Heyes Lane. The site is bound to the north west by Heyes Lane, to the south west by Whitehall Brook, to the north east by Jenny Heyes residential property and by agricultural fields to the south east. The proposed allocation boundary falls within the western extent of assessment parcel 6 (Figure 7).

Parcel 6 has been generally assessed by this study as having low landscape and visual suitability to accommodate residential development, as providing significant contributions to Green Belt purposes, and overall unlikely to be suitable/preferable for residential allocation. Development may be possible within the small parcel of land at Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes because of the limited presence within this small plot of any special landscape character or value and the degree of its visual enclosure. Separation from the continuity of open countryside within the eastern extent of parcel 6 and further to the north and east is partially achieved by layers of hedgerow and tree vegetation of moderate height. However, overall the findings of this study suggest that development is unlikely to be preferable here due to the potential visibility of any development in the elevated view from 'The Edge' (see Appendix C), prevention of sprawl and the protection of the historic setting of the town.

Furthermore, it is noted that the boundaries of Local Landscape Designations within Cheshire East are currently under review and that the Local Landscape Designation to the south east of Alderley Edge may be extended northwards to include the Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes site. It is understood that the proposed extension of the designation is in large part due to its visibility from 'The Edge', underlining that despite its small size this land may not be suitable for residential development.

Figures



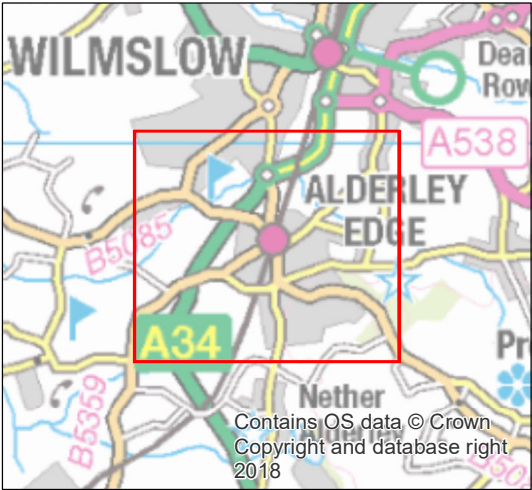
Legend


- Alderley Edge Settlement Boundary
- 500m Buffer from Settlement Boundary
- Water Courses
- Water Bodies
- National Tree Map Canopies (Height of 10m and above)
- Contours (2m Intervals)

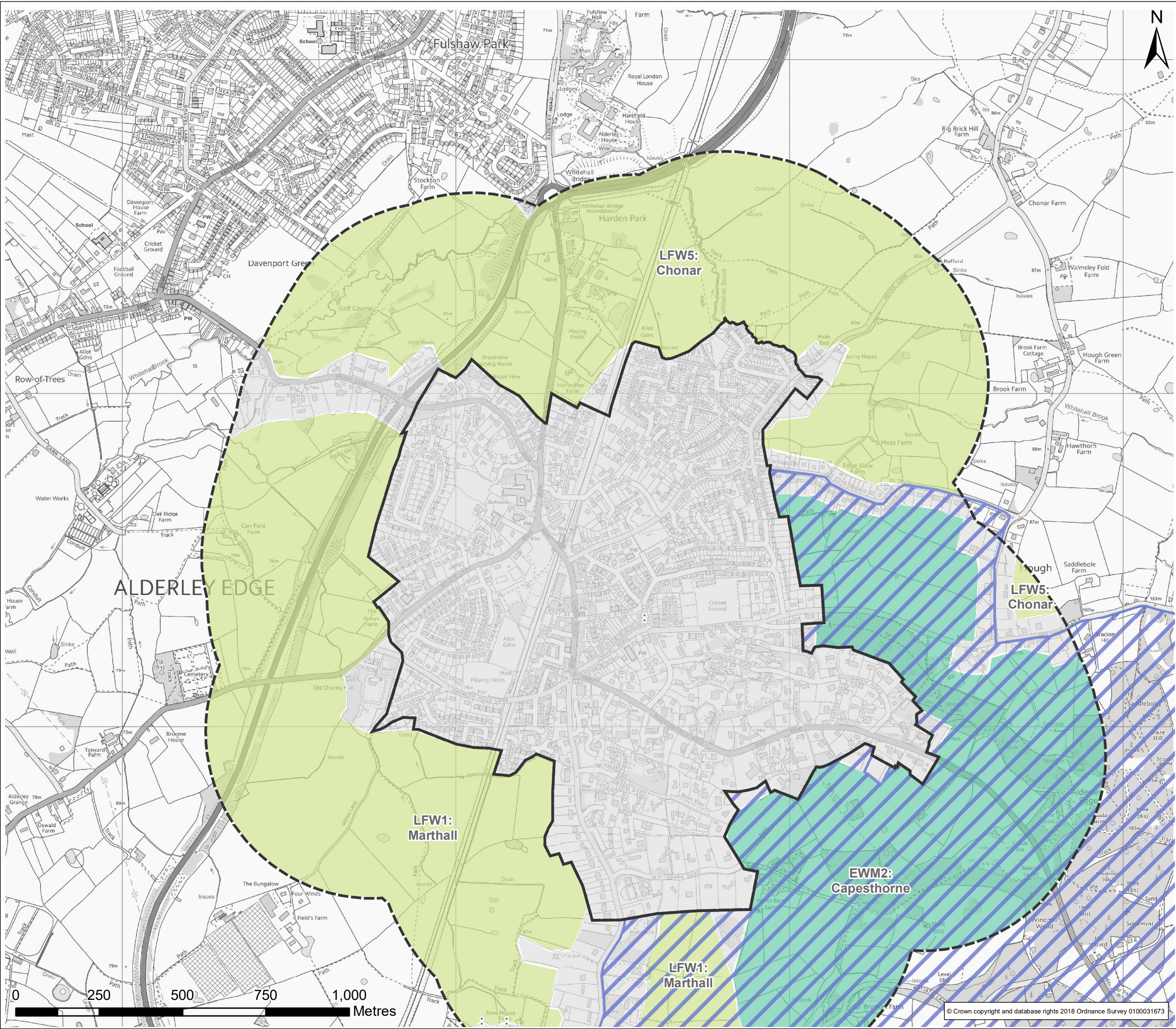
Topography (metres above Ordnance Datum)

116m

64m



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Rev.	Rev. Date	Drawing Suitability	Drawn	Appr'd
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Client				
Barratt D W Homes				
Project				
Alderley Edge Landscape Study				
Drawing Title				
Figure 1: Landscape Context				
Scale @ A3	1:11,000		DO NOT SCALE	
Project No.	120390 (001)		Status	Final
BIM No.	n/a			
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Legend

Alderley Edge Settlement Boundary

500m Buffer from Settlement Boundary

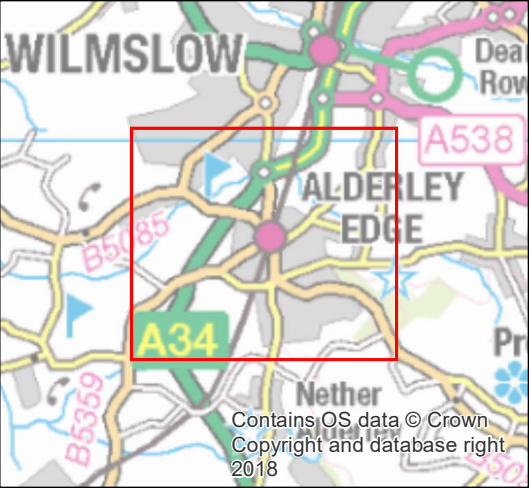
Area of Special County Value


Cheshire 2008 LCA Landscape Character Types

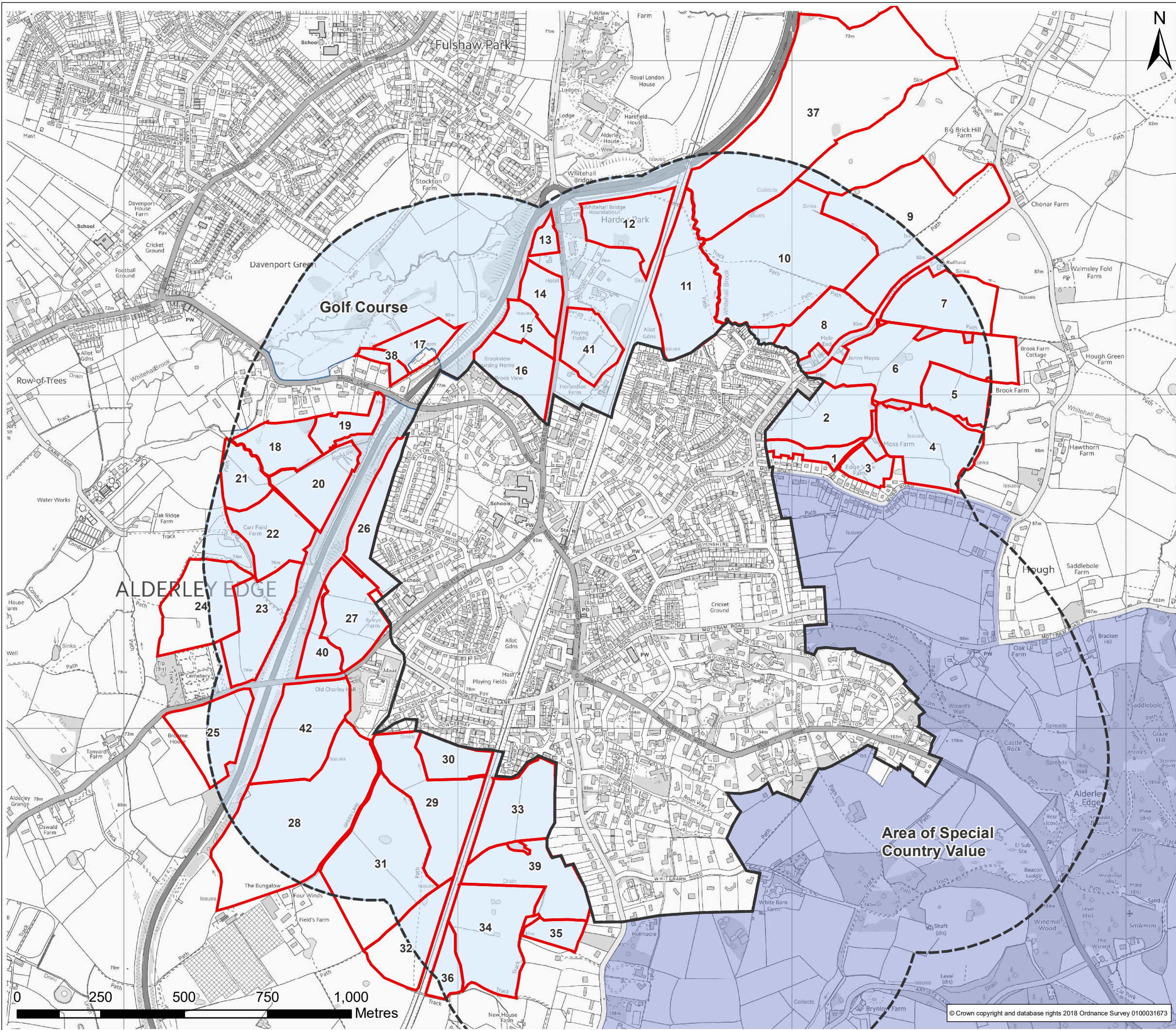
Lower Farms and Woods

Estate, Woodland & Meres

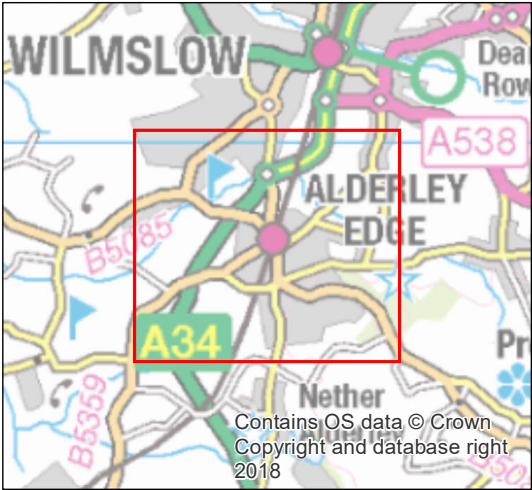
Urban




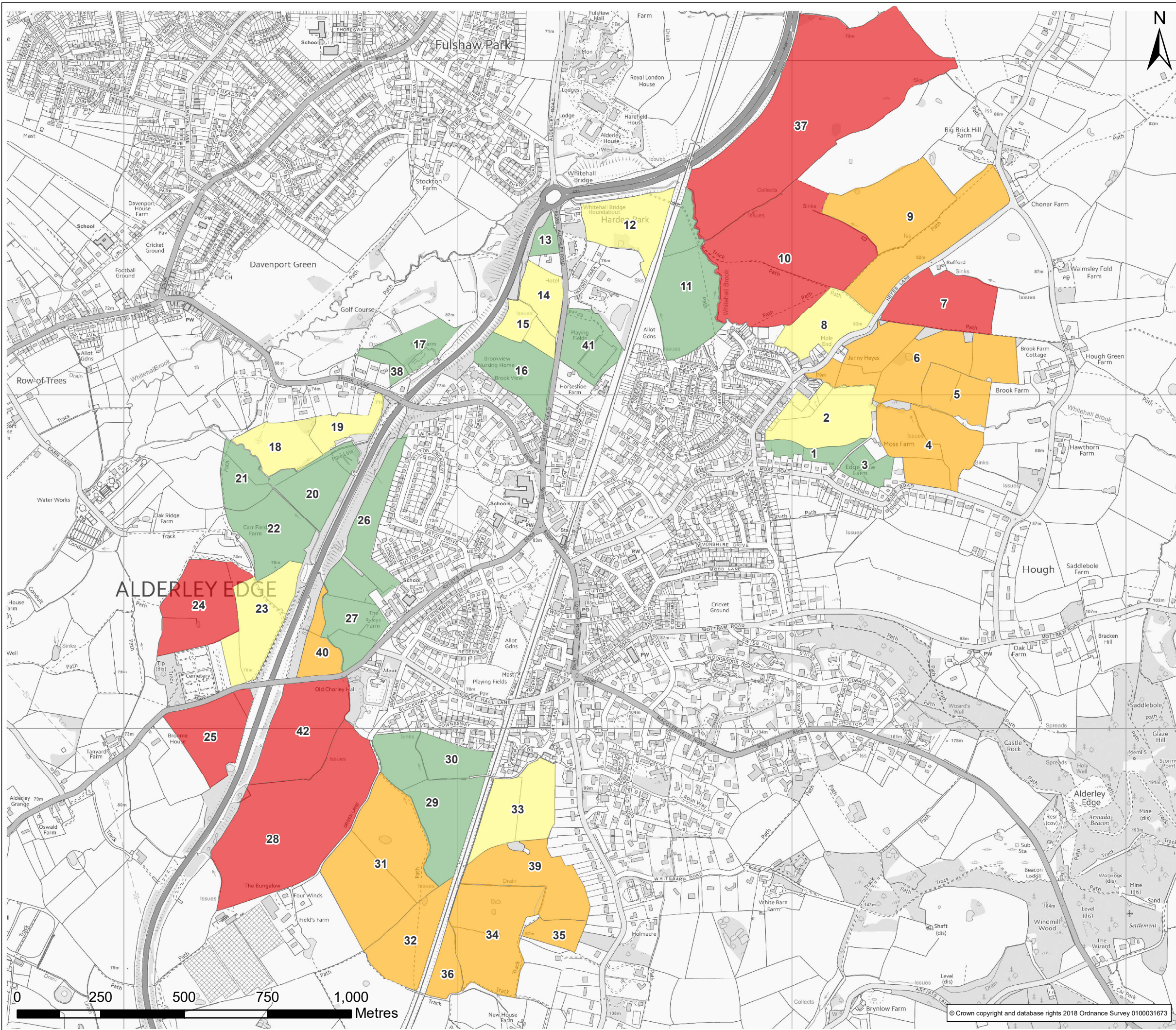
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Client				
Barratt D W Homes				
Project				
Alderley Edge Landscape Study				
Drawing Title				
Figure 2: Landscape Character and Designations				
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Project No.	120390 (001)		Status	Final
BIM No.	n/a			
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- Legend**
- Alderley Edge Settlement Boundary
 - 500m Buffer from Settlement Boundary
 - Study Area
 - Assessment Parcels
 - Area of Special County Value



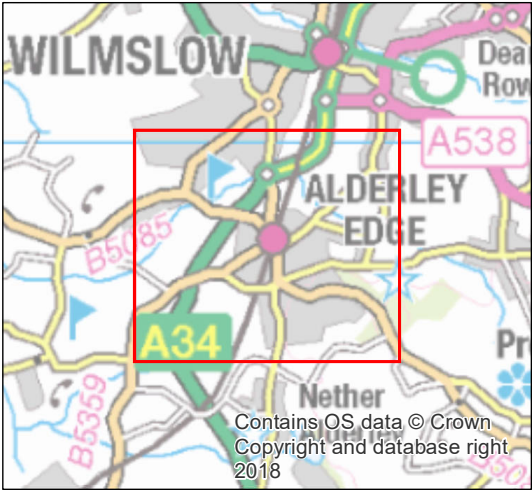
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Rev.	Rev. Date	Drawing Suitability	Drawn	Appr'd
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Client				
Barratt D W Homes				
Project				
Alderley Edge Landscape Study				
Drawing Title				
Figure 3: Study Area and Assessment Parcels				
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BIM No.		n/a		
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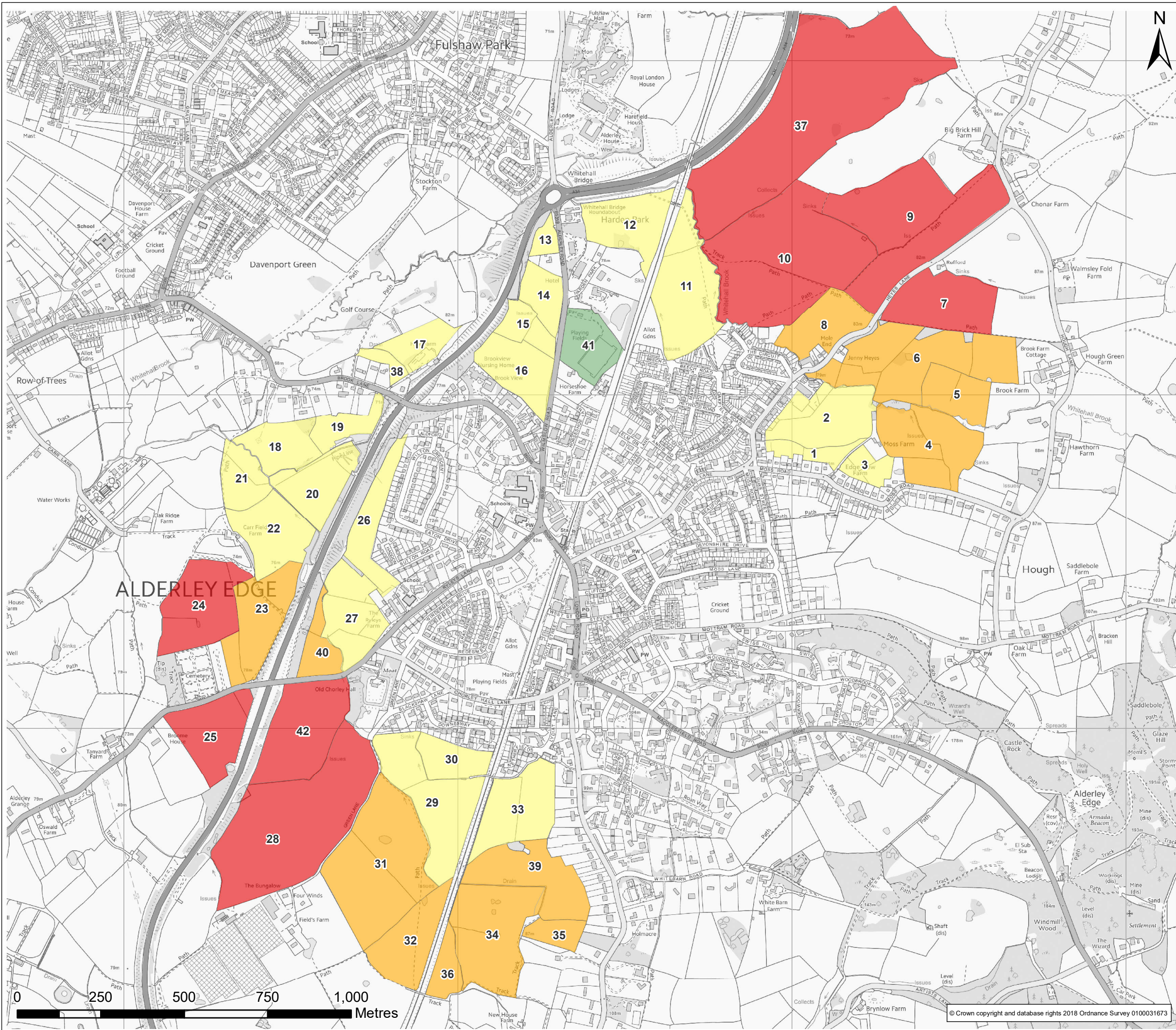
Legend

Landscape and Visual Suitability for Residential Development

- High suitability to accommodate residential development
- Moderate suitability to accommodate residential development
- Low suitability to accommodate residential development
- No suitability to accommodate residential development



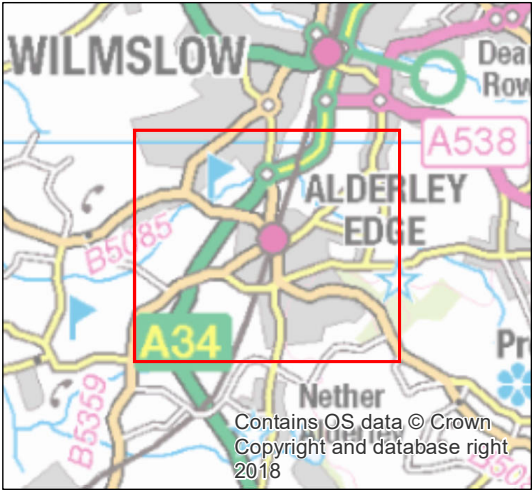
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Client				
Barratt D W Homes				
Project				
Alderley Edge Landscape Study				
Drawing Title				
Figure 4: Landscape and Visual Suitability for Residential Development				
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Project No.		120390 (001)	Status	Final
BIM No.		n/a		
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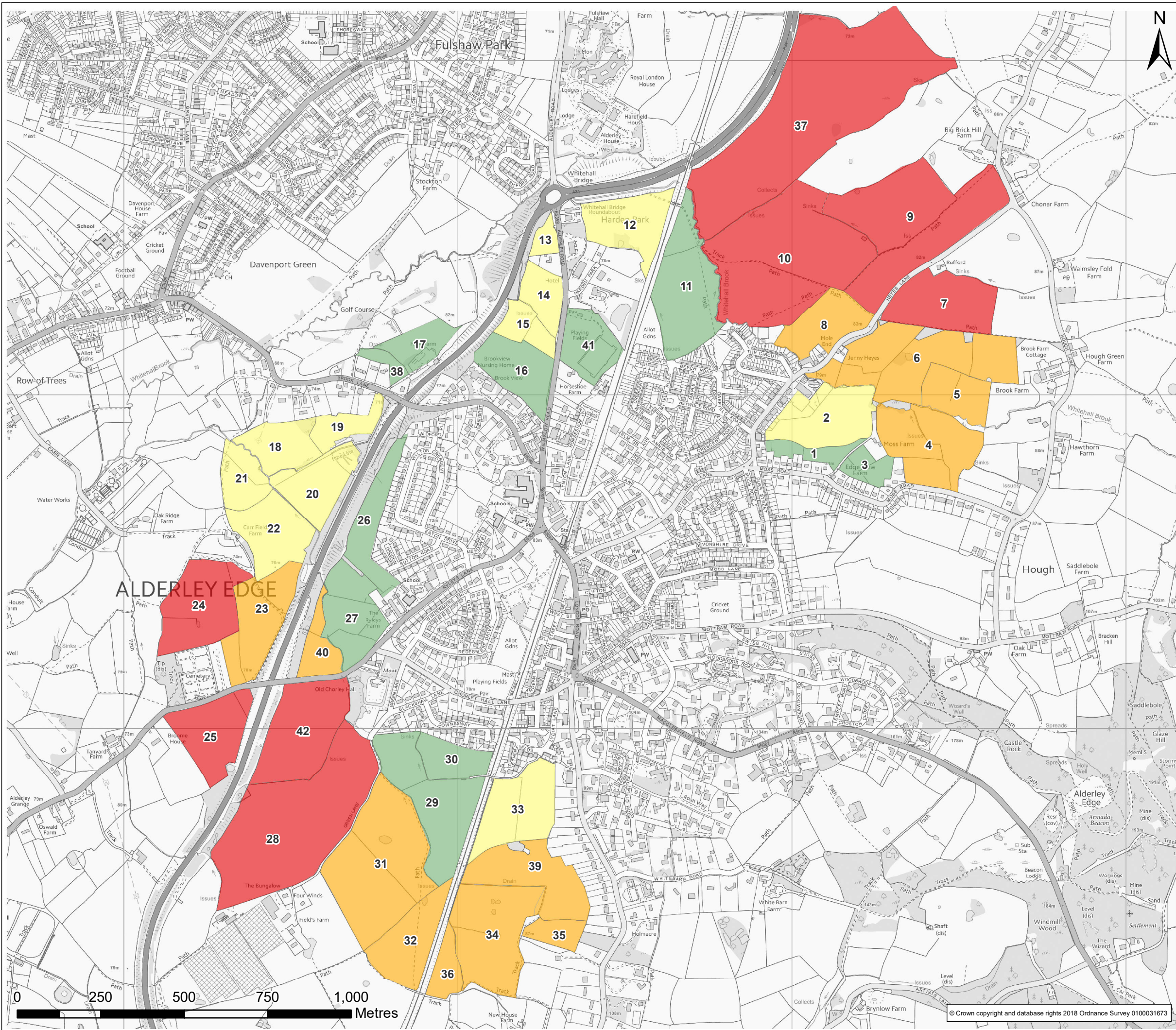
Legend

Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

- No contribution
- Contribution
- Significant contribution
- Major contribution



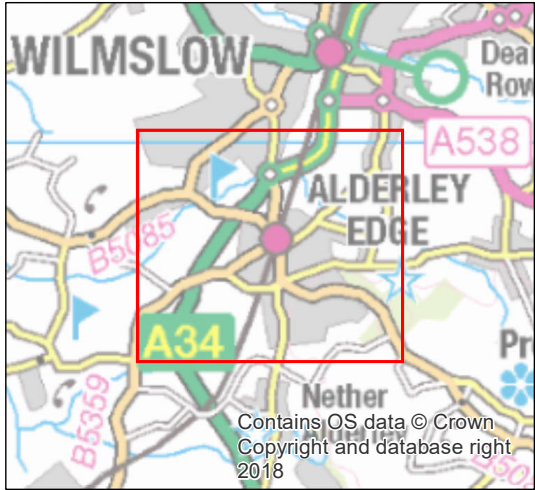
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Client		Barratt D W Homes		
Project		Alderley Edge Landscape Study		
Drawing Title		Figure 5: Contribution to Green Belt Purposes		
Scale @ A3	1:11,000	DO NOT SCALE		
Project No.	120390 (001)	Status	Final	
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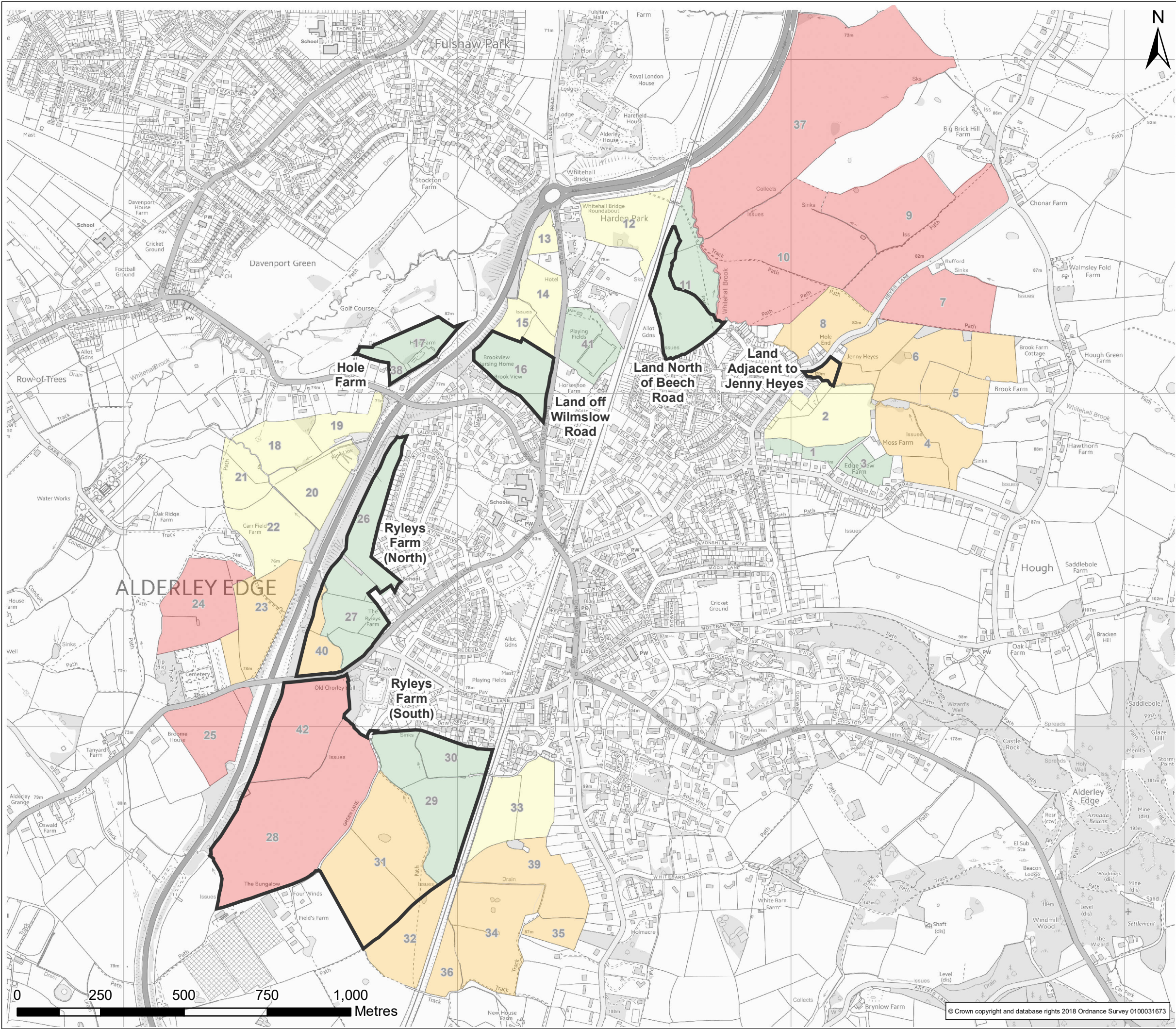
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Overall Suitability for Development

- Suitable/preferable for residential allocation
- Potentially suitable/preferable for residential allocation
- Unlikely to be suitable/preferable for residential allocation
- Not considered suitable/preferable for residential allocation

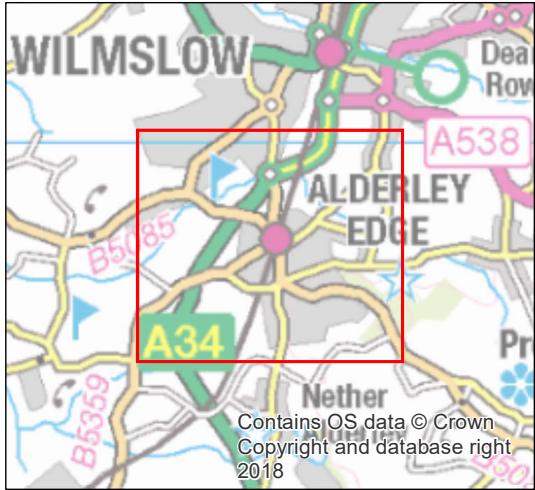


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Client				
Barratt D W Homes				
Project				
Alderley Edge Landscape Study				
Drawing Title				
Figure 6: Overall Suitability for Residential Development				
Scale @ A3		1:11,000	DO NOT SCALE	
Project No.		120390 (001)	Status	Final
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Legend

Proposed Site



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Client																			
Barratt D W Homes																			
Project																			
Alderley Edge Landscape Study																			
Drawing Title																			
Figure 7: Proposed Site Allocations																			
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Project No.	120390 (R01)	Status	Final																
BIM No.	n/a																		
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Appendix A – Assessment Matrix

This Appendix provides the 'RAG' assessment matrix using the criteria set out in Section 2 of the main report.

Appendix A – Assessment Matrix

[illegible]

Appendix B – Parcel Photographs

This Appendix provides a photograph of each of the 42 parcels of land assessed in Section 2 of the report.

Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix C – Elevated View from ‘The Edge’

This Appendix provides a photograph from ‘The Edge’ annotating which of the 42 parcels of land assessed in Section 2 of the report are visible.

Appendix C – Elevated View from ‘The Edge’

