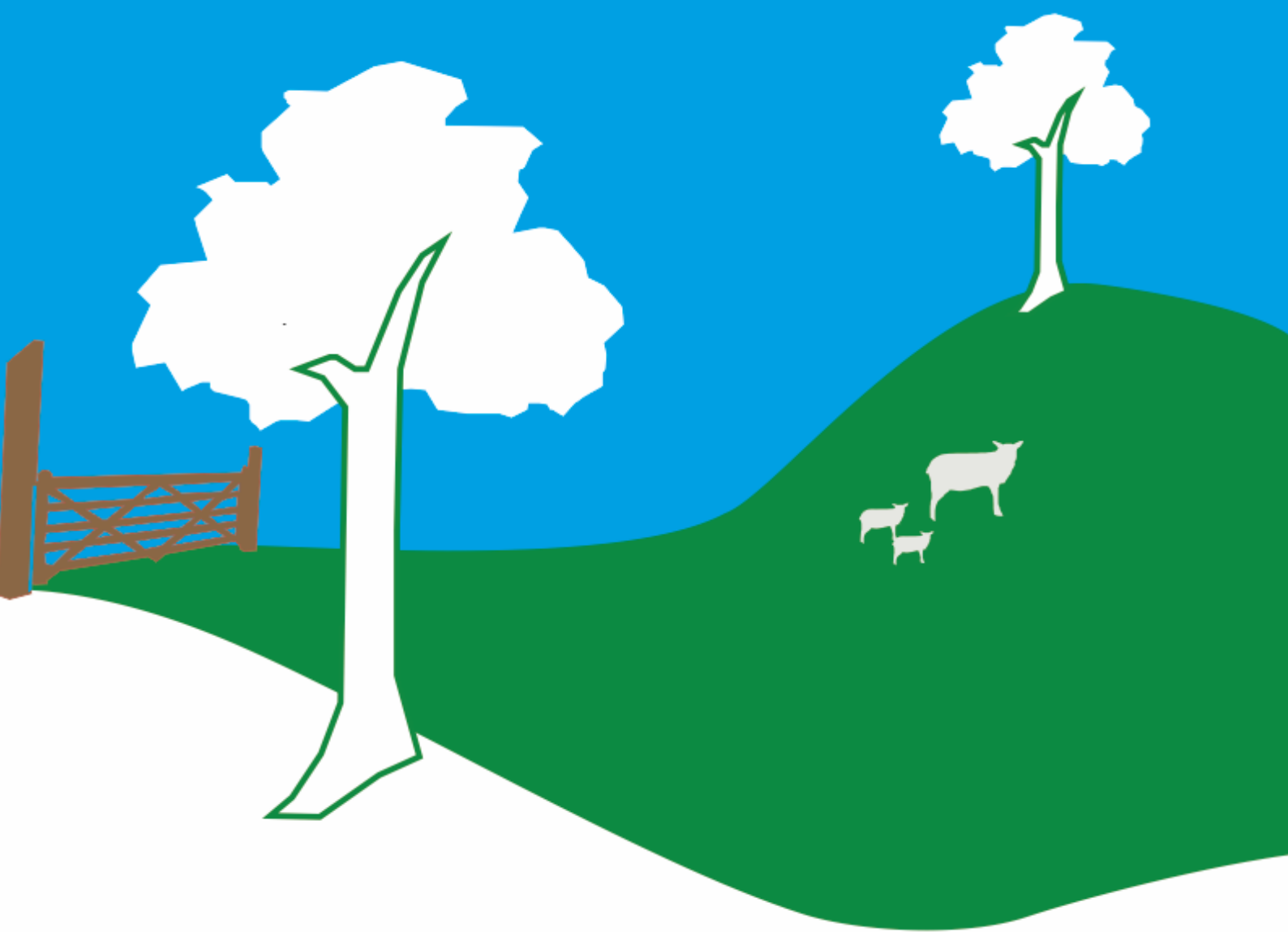


# Strategic Green Gaps Topic Paper





# East Staffordshire Strategic Green Gap Topic Paper 2013

## Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Planning Policy Context	2
	• National Planning Guidance	2
	• The Localism Act 2011	3
	• The Emerging East Staffordshire Borough Local Plan	3
3	Purpose of Strategic Green Gaps	4
4	Methodology	5
	• Rolleston on Dove	8
	• Anslow	9
	• Tatenhill	10
	• Bramshall	10
	 Contact Details	 13

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Borough wide Strategic Green Gap Plan	14
Appendix 2 – Rolleston on Dove Strategic Green Gap (SGG1)	15
Appendix 3 – Anslow Strategic Green Gap (SGG2)	16
Appendix 4 – Tatenhill Strategic Green Gap (SGG3)	17
Appendix 5 – Bramshall Strategic Green Gap (SGG4)	18
Appendix 6 – Designation List	19



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This topic paper sets out the Council's position in relation to Strategic Green Gaps. The intention is that this topic paper will evolve as the Local Plan emerges through the various stages of preparation. This topic paper relates to information available at June 2013.
- 1.2 Strategic Green Gaps will support strategic policies within the Local Plan and will form part of a strategic designation. It is not intended that such a designation will form part of Neighbourhood Plans though they are free to designate their own local green spaces. The justification for this approach is outlined in sections 3 and 4 of this topic paper.
- 1.3 East Staffordshire Borough Council considers that the use of Strategic Green Gaps is appropriate for the following reasons:
- To inform the place shaping agenda in the emerging Local Plan
  - To enable growth to be accommodated appropriately within Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs)
  - To prevent coalescence of adjacent settlements, especially villages to Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter and in doing so retaining the character and local distinctiveness of these settlements
  - To contribute to the borough's green infrastructure
- 1.4 This Topic Paper sets out the following:
- The reason why the Council wants to designate Strategic Green Gaps
  - The methodology for the identification of Strategic Green Gaps
  - Where the Strategic Green Gaps should be designated
  - How it will inform the emerging Local Plan, the spatial strategy and related policies.

## 2. Policy Context

### The Localism Act 2011

- 2.1 The Localism Act (2011) introduced optional Neighbourhood Planning provision which provides local communities with a genuine opportunity to influence the future of the places where they live. The Act introduces a new right for communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan which is aligned to the strategic priorities and level of growth in the new Local Plan. Where a Parish Council (in East Staffordshire, since the whole Borough is parished) wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, and when it has passed through Examination to Adoption, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Borough's Development Plan.

### National Planning Guidance

- 2.2 The NPPF clarifies that 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' and promote economic growth. The NPPF abolished the previous Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPSs & PPGs). Strategic Green Gaps are not referenced directly within the NPPF as they are for Green Belts, they can serve to identify locations on a smaller scale.

### The Green Belt

- 2.3 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF sets out the strategic nature of the Green Belt and the five purposes which broadly carries on from the former PPG2 (Green Belts). The five purposes consist of the following:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

- 2.4 East Staffordshire Borough has one small Green Belt designation consisting of 40 square hectares on the eastern fringe of Burton upon Trent which was originally designated in 1983 to prevent coalescence with the neighbouring town of Swadlincote, located within the adjacent South Derbyshire District. The Borough Council does not consider Green Belt to be appropriate for other locations in the Borough because such locations would not meet the five purposes as stated in the NPPF.

### Local Green Spaces

#### Paragraph 76

Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to

identify for special protection **green areas of particular importance to them**. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

#### Paragraph 77

The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

#### Paragraph 78

Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

2.5 Based upon the national framework, our approach is to create Strategic Green Gaps which fits between the role of Green Belts and Local Green Spaces, a role which the NPPF does not provide. Whilst Strategic Green Gaps are local designations, the role is strategic in what they are trying to achieve in policy terms.

- Green Belt designations should have a degree of permanence and Strategic Green Gaps won't have that level of permanence, due to it being a strategic designation and the flexibility that is required in terms of delivering the required growth beyond the plan period.
- The NPPF does not make any specific reference to the use of local designations such as Strategic Green Gaps or the use of a designation that would act as a constraint. It does make reference to 'Local Green Space' can be identified as part of a bottom up approach (such as within a Neighbourhood Plan where it would be a permanent designation) as stated in paragraph 76 (see below). Paragraph 77 elaborates on where local green area designations would be considered appropriate such as the protection of local significance, including landscape character and biodiversity matters. In contrast, Strategic Green Gaps are a strategic designation, and so they should not conflict with Local Green Space designation as they have two distinctly different roles, which is further explained in this paper.

- It is considered that the Strategic Green Gap is an 'extensive tract of land' in comparison to what would be considered as 'Local Green Space' as defined in paragraph 77 of the NPPF (see below) where SGGs serve a more Strategic role and consequently of a larger scale.
- Whilst there is a coalescence issue with Burton upon Trent, these are with adjacent villages, where there are no cities or towns. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF however states that local green designations should be consistent with the Green Belt five purposes.
- Strategic Green Gaps has the aim of preserving the setting, character and distinctiveness that is present within the borough. Green Belt designation is not appropriate for delivering this aim.

### The Emerging East Staffordshire Borough Local Plan

- 2.6 The adopted Local Plan 2006 contains supporting text to Policy NE1 that introduced the concept of preventing development intruding into the countryside outwards, and therefore avoiding coalescence of towns and villages especially between the urban fringes of Burton and the villages of Tatenhill, Anslow, Rolleston on Dove and Tutbury. Saved Policy NE1 further elaborates on suitable development outside of the development boundary.
- 2.7 The emerging Local Plan will deliver the spatial strategy for East Staffordshire Borough. It will supplement and deliver sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF. The designation of Strategic Green Gaps will aid the implementation of Strategic Objectives listed in the Local Plan, especially Objective 1 'Cohesive Communities'. The Local Plan Pre-submission Document contains several key spatial challenges where Strategic Green Gaps are considered relevant:
- Ensuring that new development does not have a detrimental impact on people's quality of life or the quality of the Borough's built and natural environment;
  - Protecting the Borough's open spaces and natural environment both for recreational use and to safeguard important habitats;
  - Promoting environmentally sustainable development and travel;
  - Achieving healthy lifestyles through improving access to green infrastructure.
- 2.8 The Local Plan Pre-submission Document also contains a vision where the key theme is delivering a Progressive East Staffordshire. It is considered that a significant part of the vision can be delivered through the provision of strategic green gaps and in particular:
- Protect each village's individual character and setting;
  - Develop a network of Green Corridors linking Burton and Uttoxeter town centres to the outlying countryside, villages and National Forest, providing opportunities for a range of activities and uses, including walking and cycling.



- 2.9 The representations to the Local Plan Preferred Options document raised issues that could be alleviated by the designation of Strategic Green Gaps such as the prevention of urban sprawl located to the west of Burton upon Trent as well as the need to protect the character and setting of villages.
- 2.10 It is considered that Strategic Green Gap designations will support the following Local Plan policies as well as supporting relevant Neighbourhood Plans:
- Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
  - East Staffordshire Approach to Sustainable Development;
  - Sustainable Urban Extensions;
  - Green Infrastructure

### 3. Purpose of Strategic Green Gaps

- 3.1 The emerging Local Plan for East Staffordshire Borough Council will be tasked with the delivery of sustainable growth and development as set out in the NPPF. It will manage development so that it delivers economic prosperity and vitality whilst not harming what makes East Staffordshire Borough special in terms of heritage and environmental assets. Whilst the designation of green strategic gaps should not fully prohibit the delivery of future housing growth, it should inform the delivery of sites in most sustainable and least harmful locations, especially in the prevention of coalescence of existing settlements as well as safeguarding the separate identity, cultural value and local distinctiveness of communities within and around Burton upon Trent that face growth.
- 3.2 Strategic Green Gaps would serve as a useful strategic planning function in the prevention of coalescence of settlements. They are not afforded the same statutory protection or weight as Green Belts. However Strategic Green Gaps serve to identify locations at a smaller scale worthy of designation and guide Burton upon Trent's and Uttoxeter's growth in the most sustainable locations. As Strategic Green Gaps are locally defined they are therefore locally distinctive.
- 3.3 The types of acceptable land uses for Strategic Green Gaps will be clarified in the Local Plan policy. Uses such as intensive forestry whilst it may prevent the coalescence of settlements may be resisted as this may affect the openness of a Strategic Green Gap as well as potentially compromising National Forest principles. Some minor tree replanting such as along historic field boundaries and hedgerows would be acceptable in principle.
- 3.4 Using the Local Plan 2006 as a basis, the settlements listed below have been selected due to their close proximity to Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter where there may be a risk of coalescence:
- Rolleston on Dove
  - Anslow
  - Tatenhill
  - Bramshall
- } Burton upon Trent
- Uttoxeter
- 3.6 The village of Barton under Needwood, was considered but discounted from this exercise due to their relative long distance from Burton upon Trent's current development boundary and the physical separation provided by the A38 and the Trent and Mersey Canal which is covered by conservation area status. There are also ongoing mineral operations between Burton upon Trent and Barton under Needwood where such operations may last for a significant amount of time and certainly within the current plan period of 2012-31. Such land when the minerals are exhausted may be restored to recreational purposes and consolidate the Central Rivers Initiative (CRI) area and their ongoing work. The Council will review if a Strategic Green Gap should be located between Burton upon Trent and Barton under Needwood in future reviews of the Local Plan should circumstances change.

- 3.7 The land between Drakelow in South Derbyshire District and Burton upon Trent was also considered, but it is covered by existing environmental constraints such as flooding from the River Trent and an established golf course, where development will not occur in any case. Land that may be suitable for development would lie in South Derbyshire District.
- 3.8 The designation of Strategic Green Gaps should be informed by the building lines of Burton, Uttoxeter and the surrounding villages as well as the land inbetween.
- 3.9 The use and precedence of Strategic Green Gaps have not been prominent in Staffordshire especially given the role of the West Midlands and North Staffordshire Green Belts, though they have been in the East Midlands Region and the Leicestershire authorities in particular, where they have been well established in the East Midlands RSS and the Leicestershire Structure Plan. The policy has been successful in examination in public (EiPs) as within planning appeals. Successful appeals consist of the following cases:
- APP/K2420/A/12/2181080/NWF – Land east of Groby Cemetery, Ratby Road, Groby (Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council)
  - APP/G2435/A/12/2182880 – Land at Loughborough Road, Peggs Green, Coleorton (North West Leicestershire District Council)
  - APP/G2435/A/11/2158154 – Land north of A511, Stephenson Way, Coalville, Leicestershire (North West Leicestershire District Council)

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Actions that took place in the identification, designation and developing the methodology of Strategic Green Gaps

1. Meet with Planning Policy and Planning Delivery (workshop).
2. Compile and analyse Local Plan Preferred Options representations.
3. Include a proforma form and table in how sites are assessed
4. Do we designate 'safeguarded land'? This should allow enough growth during the plan period and beyond without the need to amend the Strategic Green Gap boundaries for a considerable period of time.
5. Proximity to the existing development boundary (of 1km).
6. Use strong and defensible boundaries, such as roads and field boundaries.
7. How should each Strategic Green Gap site meet the methodology?
8. Have proposed sites come forward in the SHLAA?
9. When should Strategic Green Gaps be reviewed in light of changing circumstances?

### Proposed Methodology

### 4.2 Internal discussions led to the following methodology where Strategic Green Gaps will:

1. Prevent the coalescence of settlements
2. Guide development form as part of delivering growth
3. How it contributes to Green Infrastructure provision (to include the various issues of recreation, landscape, biodiversity, sustainable transport corridors (walking and cycling) and character.

### 4.3 Sites will be designated that:

- Have strong defensible boundaries such as roads and field boundaries.
- Are adjacent to a existing built development.

### Proposed Proforma Assessment Form for Suitable Sites based on Proposed Methodology

Site Ref No. SGG	Site	Site size	ha
	Current use of site		
	Comments		
Criteria based on methodology	1		
	2		

	3	
<b>Concluding comments</b>		

### Rolleston on Dove

- 4.3 Rolleston on Dove is the closest settlement in proximity to the Burton upon Trent urban fringe (development boundary), the closest being Knowles Hill where the boundaries of Burton upon Trent and Rolleston on Dove are only 400m apart. It is also the largest proposed SGG, ranging from Stretton in the east to Tutbury Road in the west. Whilst there is typical suburban housing in the vicinity in both Burton upon Trent and Rolleston on Dove, Rolleston on Dove has its own unique topography, character and appearance which includes a conservation area in its centre. The proposed strategic green gap (SGG1) proposes to protect the most valuable land in terms of setting and views which would preserve the separation of each settlement. It has also been drawn in order to allow required growth for Burton upon Trent as well as Rolleston on Dove which is a Tier 1 settlement, some of which have been identified as SHLAA sites. As the character of the housing is suburban, it is characterised by ribbon development, so the SGG has been drawn in order to allow logical infill development.
- 4.4 The Craythorne Golf Club is located between Burton upon Trent (Stretton) and Rolleston on Dove and is partially within the Strategic Green Gap. As discussed in paragraph 3.3 there are certain uses that may or may not be acceptable within a Strategic Green Gap. As the Golf Course is an established use it is appreciated that there may be the need for the updating of facilities on the site which may involve some new build that may affect the openness of the Strategic Green Gap. Therefore potential planning applications needs to be mindful of the importance and integrity of the Strategic Green Gap designation but also allowing a degree of flexibility.

<b>Site Ref No. SGG1</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Land between Burton upon Trent and Rolleston on Dove</b>	<b>Site size</b>	<b>155.0ha</b>
		<b>Current use of site</b> Agricultural (with farmsteads) and some leisure use (The Craythorne Golf Course)		
		<b>Comments</b>		
<b>Criteria based on methodology</b>	1	The designated SGG would prevent development coalescing between Burton upon Trent and Rolleston on Dove, especially along Knowles Hill where the development boundaries are only 400m apart. The distinctive topography of the vicinity also aids the division between the two settlements despite the relative narrow tranche of the designation along Knowles Hill.		
	2	The designated SGG would allow some growth to be delivered for both Burton upon Trent and Rolleston on Dove with some infill		

		potential for the Local Plan period that would have little overall harm to the separateness' between the two settlements.
	<b>3</b>	The Strategic Green Gap would provide some GI benefit, mainly through visual amenity and biodiversity provided through hedgerows and individual trees particularly those that feature along field boundaries. The designation would also protect the character and setting of Rolleston on Dove, some of which has conservation area status which reflects historic character and setting.
<b>Concluding comments</b>		Rolleston on Dove is the largest of the four villages that have been identified to have an adjacent Strategic Green Gap to be designated adjacent to it. Therefore the retaining of the separation of these settlements is a significant consideration.

## Anslow

- 4.5** Anslow is the smallest settlement out of the four identified settlements. There is ribbon development coming out from Burton along Beamhill Road (Upper Outwoods). The Strategic Green Gap (SGG2) has been drawn to prevent further ribbon development along Beamhill Road and to accommodate and direct growth behind the ribbon development so that the land is infilled. Due to Anslow being a small settlement (Tier 3) it does not have a development boundary, though the distance from Burton upon Trent's development boundary to the built section of Anslow to the north-west is around 900m. Being a small settlement, Anslow does have its own unique sense of place despite not having a designated conservation area, so that needs to be protected.

<b>Site Ref No. SGG2</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Land between Burton upon Trent and Anslow</b>	<b>Site size</b>	<b>72.71ha</b>
		<b>Current use of site</b> Agricultural & forestry		
		<b>Comments</b>		
<b>Criteria based on methodology</b>	<b>1</b>	The designated SGG would prevent development coalescing between Burton upon Trent and Anslow. It would also protect the character and setting of the village of Anslow.		
	<b>2</b>	The designated SGG would allow some growth to be delivered for both Burton upon Trent that involves the delivery of the Upper Outwoods Farm, Beamhill Road site (that was granted permission by the Council on 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2013).		
	<b>3</b>	The Strategic Green Gap would provide some GI benefit, mainly through visual amenity and biodiversity provided through hedgerows and trees.		
<b>Concluding comments</b>		Anslow is the smallest of the four villages that have been identified to have an adjacent Strategic Green Gap to be designated adjacent to it.		

	The designation of a Strategic Green Gap adjacent the village is therefore important to protect its individual character and modest scale.
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## Tatenhill

- 4.6 Like Anslow, Tatenhill is a Tier 3 settlement and therefore does not have a development boundary. Ribbon development at Burton upon Trent is drawn southwards along Postern Road and therefore the Strategic Green Gap (SGG3) has been designated to prevent infill between the village and where the development boundary terminates along Postern Road. The distance between Burton upon Trent's development boundary at Postern Road to the northern edge of Tatenhill is just over 1km in length. Tatenhill also has a distinctive setting which is identified by a conservation area as well as the attractive backdrop of the Battlestead Hills.

Site Ref No. SGG3		Site Land between Burton upon Trent and Tatenhill	Site size	111.2ha
		Current use of site Agricultural & forestry		
		Comments		
Criteria based on methodology	1	The designated SGG would prevent development coalescing between Burton upon Trent and Tatenhill. It would also protect the character and setting of the village of Tatenhill, most of which is covered by conservation area status.		
	2	The designated SGG would allow some growth to be delivered for both Burton upon Trent and some very modest growth (windfall development) in Tatenhill.		
	3	The Strategic Green Gap would provide some GI benefit, mainly through visual amenity and biodiversity provided by the attractive and distinctive escarpment of the Battlestead Hills.		
Concluding comments		The designation of a Strategic Green Gap adjacent Tatenhill is important to protect its distinctive historic built environment and landscape character.		

## Bramshall

- 4.7 Bramshall lies west of Uttoxeter and does not have a development boundary. The Local Plan's Spatial Strategy identifies growth to the west of the town and there is a current major planning application. The Strategic Green Gap (SGG4) has been drawn to allow the implementation of that site which will provide much of the planned growth stated in the Local Plan. Bramshall does not have a development boundary but the distance between the Uttoxeter development boundary and the eastern extent of the built area of Bramshall is just under 1km.

<b>Site Ref No. SGG4</b>		<b>Site</b> Land between Uttoxeter and Bramshall	<b>Site size</b>	<b>214.5ha</b>
		<b>Current use of site</b> Agricultural		
		<b>Comments</b>		
<b>Criteria based on methodology</b>	<b>1</b>	The designated SGG would prevent development coalescing between Uttoxeter and Bramshall. It would also protect the character and setting of the village of Bramshall.		
	<b>2</b>	The designated SGG would allow some growth to be delivered for Uttoxeter where the development strategy directs development westwards.		
	<b>3</b>	The Strategic Green Gap would provide some GI benefit, mainly through visual amenity and biodiversity provided through hedgerows and trees.		
<b>Concluding comments</b>		The designation of a Strategic Green Gap adjacent the village of Bramshall is important to protect its individual character and modest scale.		



## CONTACT DETAILS

For more information about the new system of plan making or about how to make a planning application, some useful contact details are listed below.

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### **Planning Policy Team**

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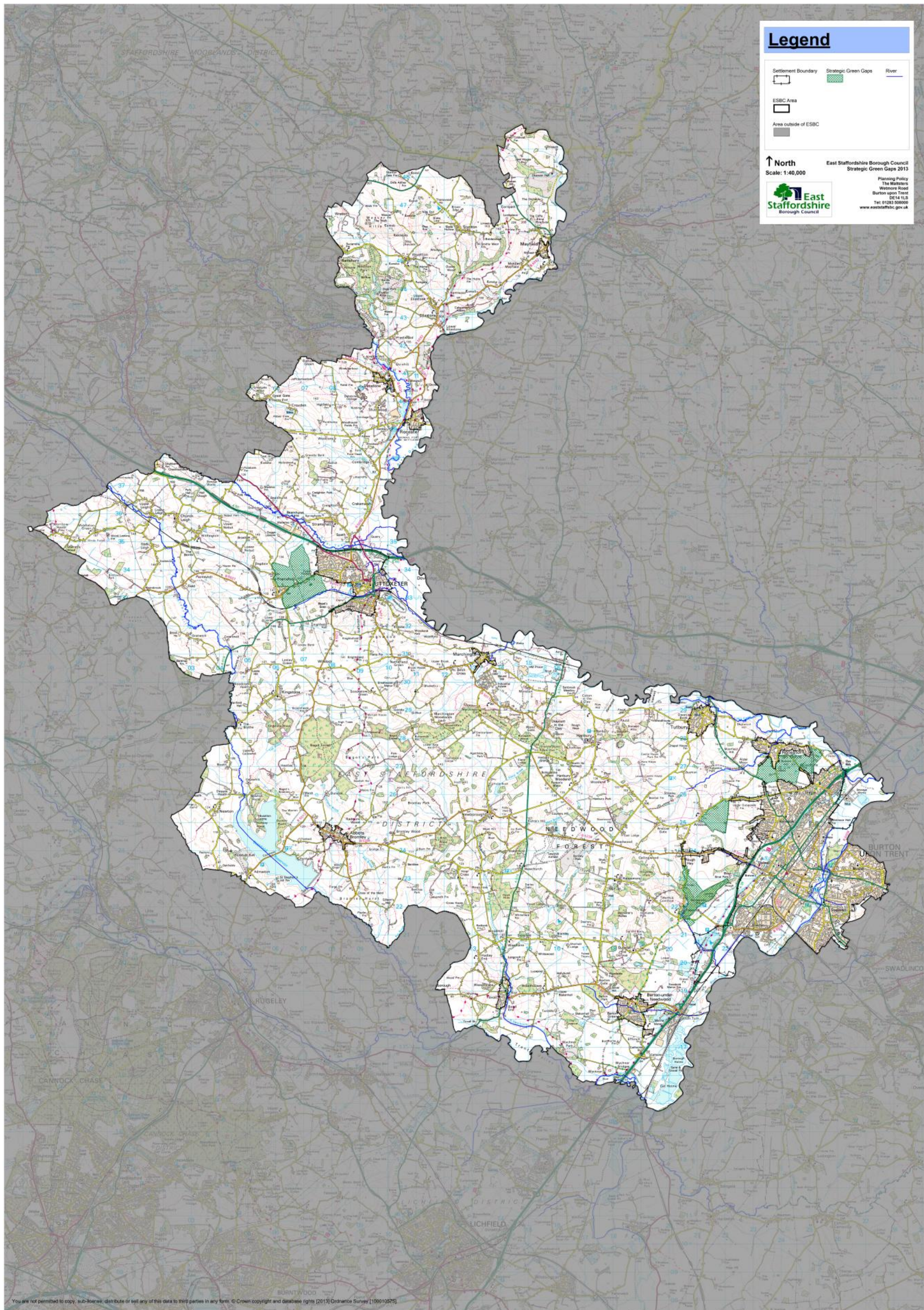
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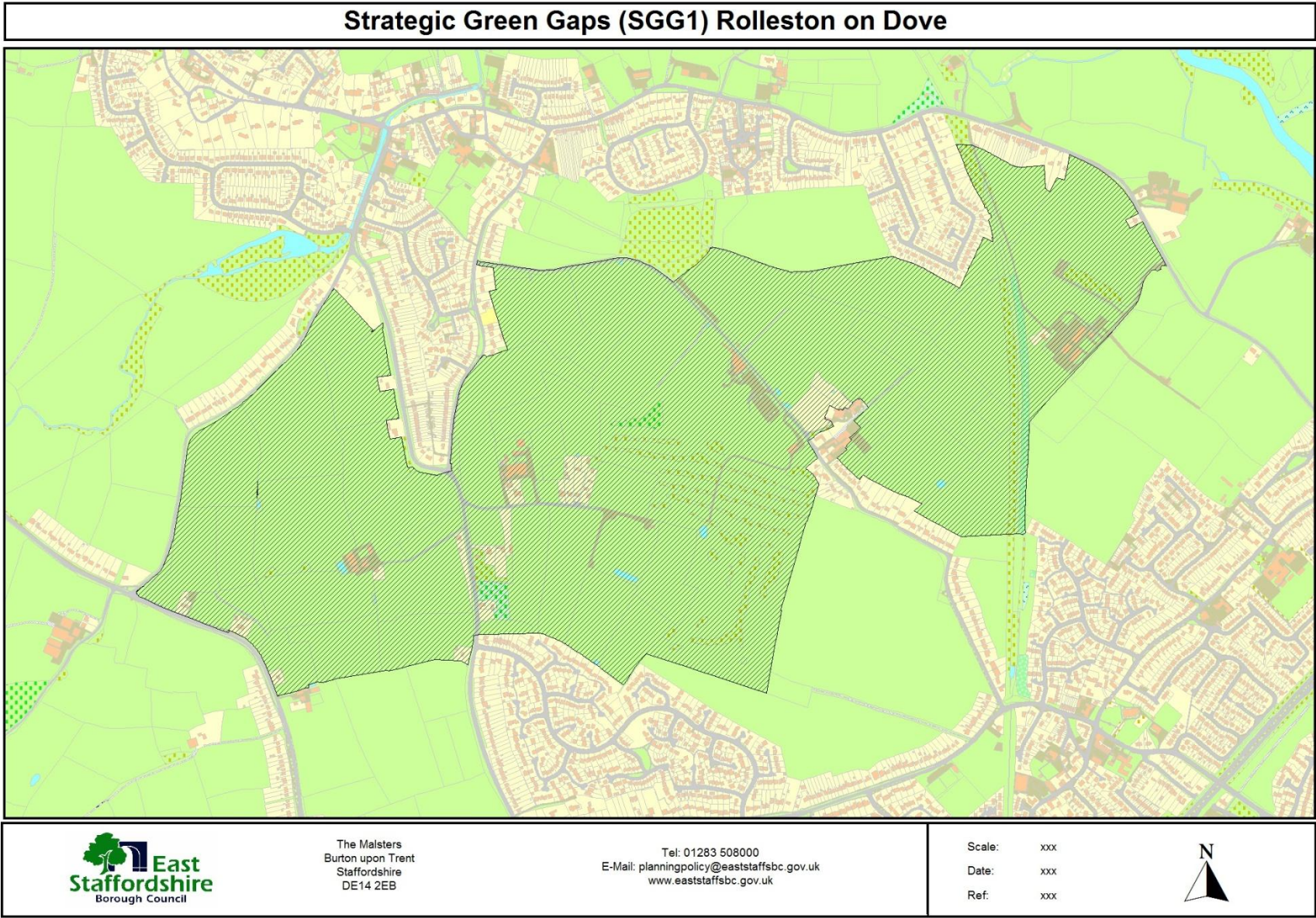
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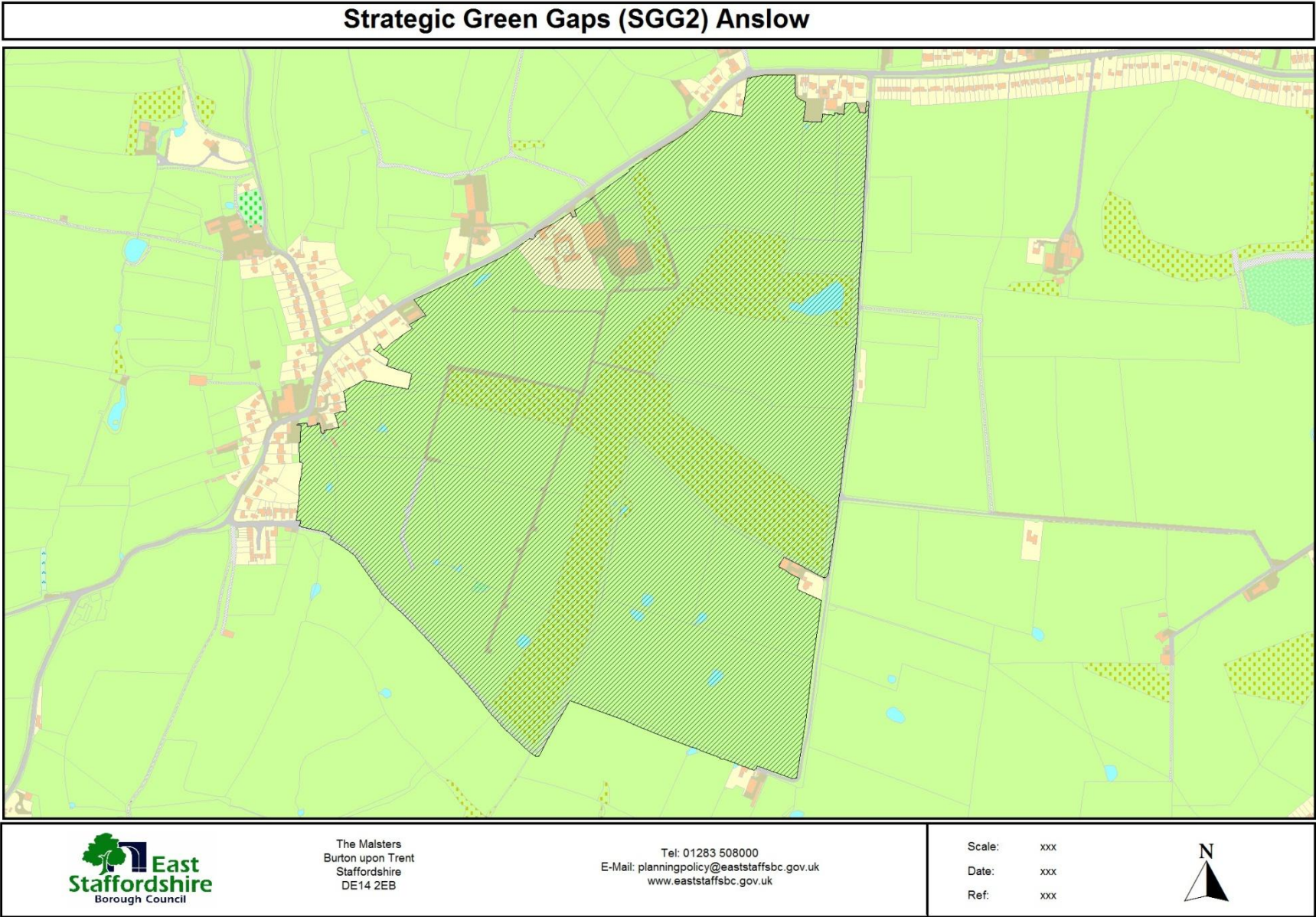
## Appendix 1 – Borough wide Strategic Green Gap Plan



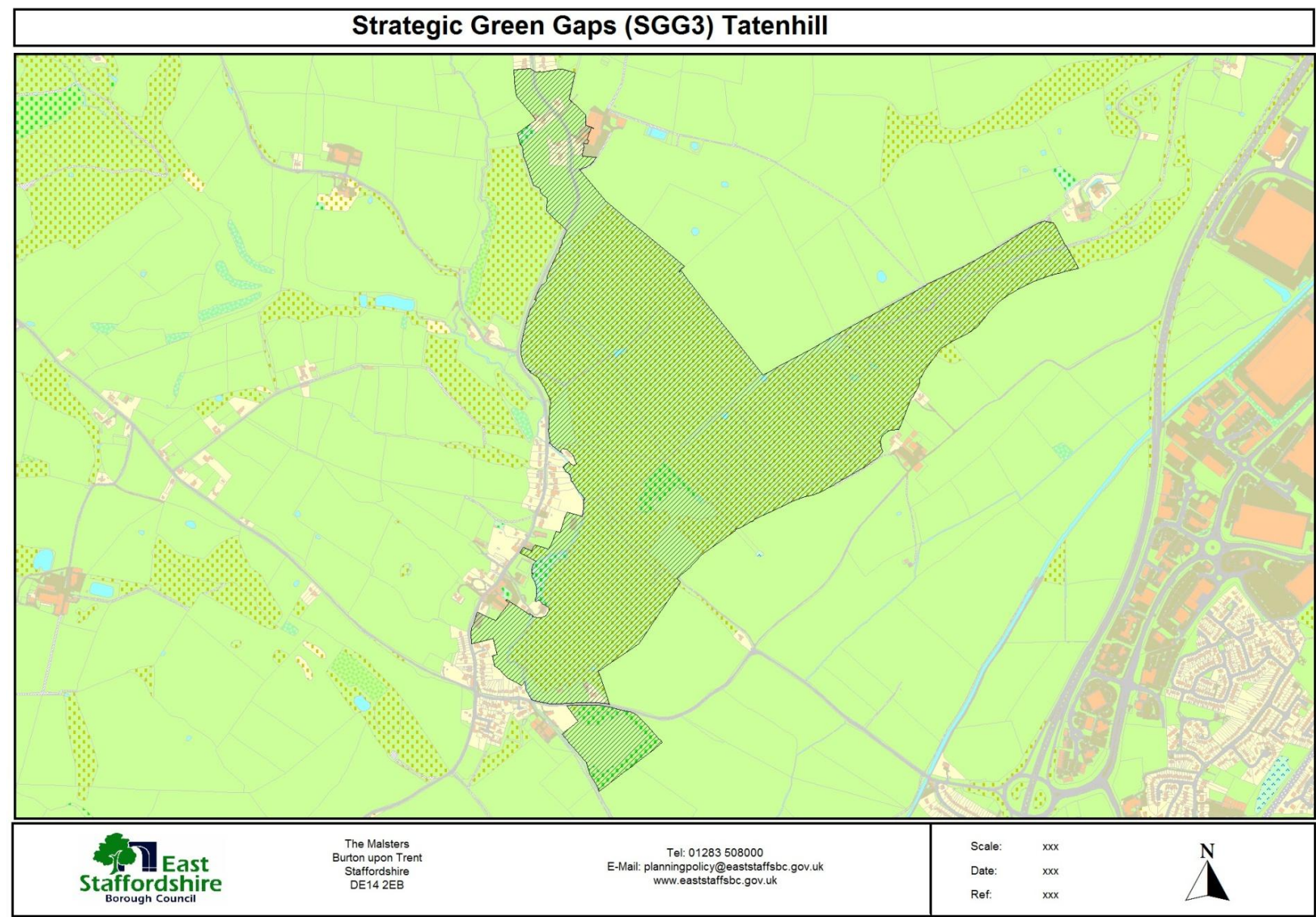




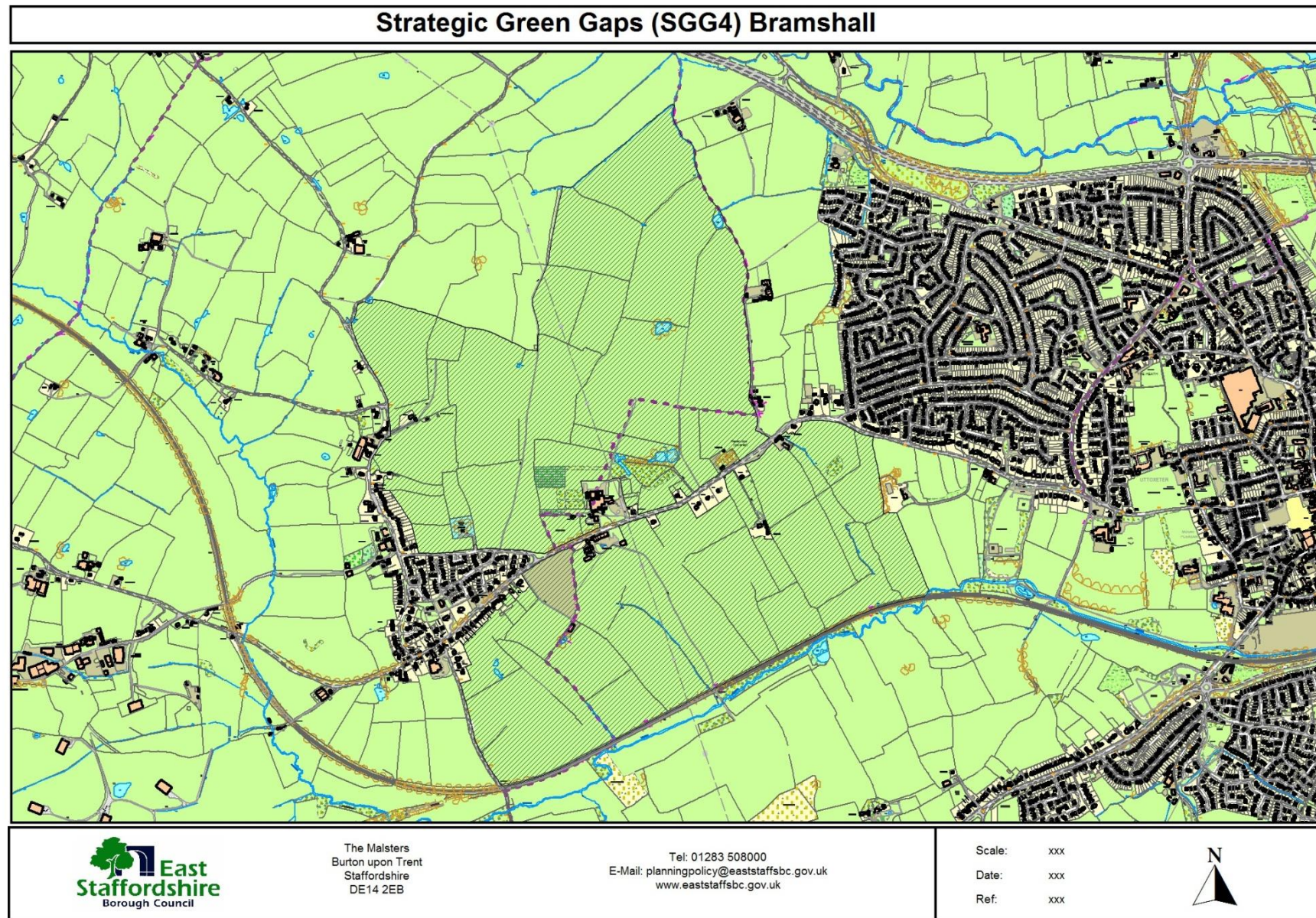












## Appendix 6: Designation List

- Natural Environment/Ecological designations (ie SSSI, SBIs, LNRs)
- Existing Public Rights of Way
- Landscape Character, topography and Setting (Locally Significant Landscape Areas), historic hedgerows and local landmarks some of which may be of local significance such as Stapenhill Tower etc
- Air Quality Management Areas
- Areas identified for Minerals extraction
- Areas of archaeological importance (as identified on Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Record)
- Areas of Agricultural Land that demonstrate significant quality as defined by The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)
- Environment Agency flood risk zones
- Existing transport corridors
- Existing Green Infrastructure
- Mitigate against climate change and reduce the production of carbon
- Increase opportunities for sport and recreation
- National Forest