



# Surrey Heath Local Plan: Preferred Options (2019 – 2038)

## Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study

### Addendum



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## **I. Introduction**

- I.1. Surrey Heath Borough Council consulted on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options document between March – May 2022. The Draft Local Plan included proposals to remove the Green Belt designation from the settlement of Chobham and sought comments on these proposals.
- I.2. Comments received in respect of the proposals to remove the settlement of Chobham from the general extent of the Green Belt have now been reviewed. This Paper sets out:
  - a) The proposed changes to Green Belt and Chobham settlement boundaries as set out at the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation;
  - b) A summary of the consultation responses received in response to the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation;
  - c) The Council's consideration of the comments received, and
  - d) Proposed further revisions to Green Belt and settlement boundaries for Chobham resulting from comments received through the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation
- I.3. This document should be read in conjunction with the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundary Study.

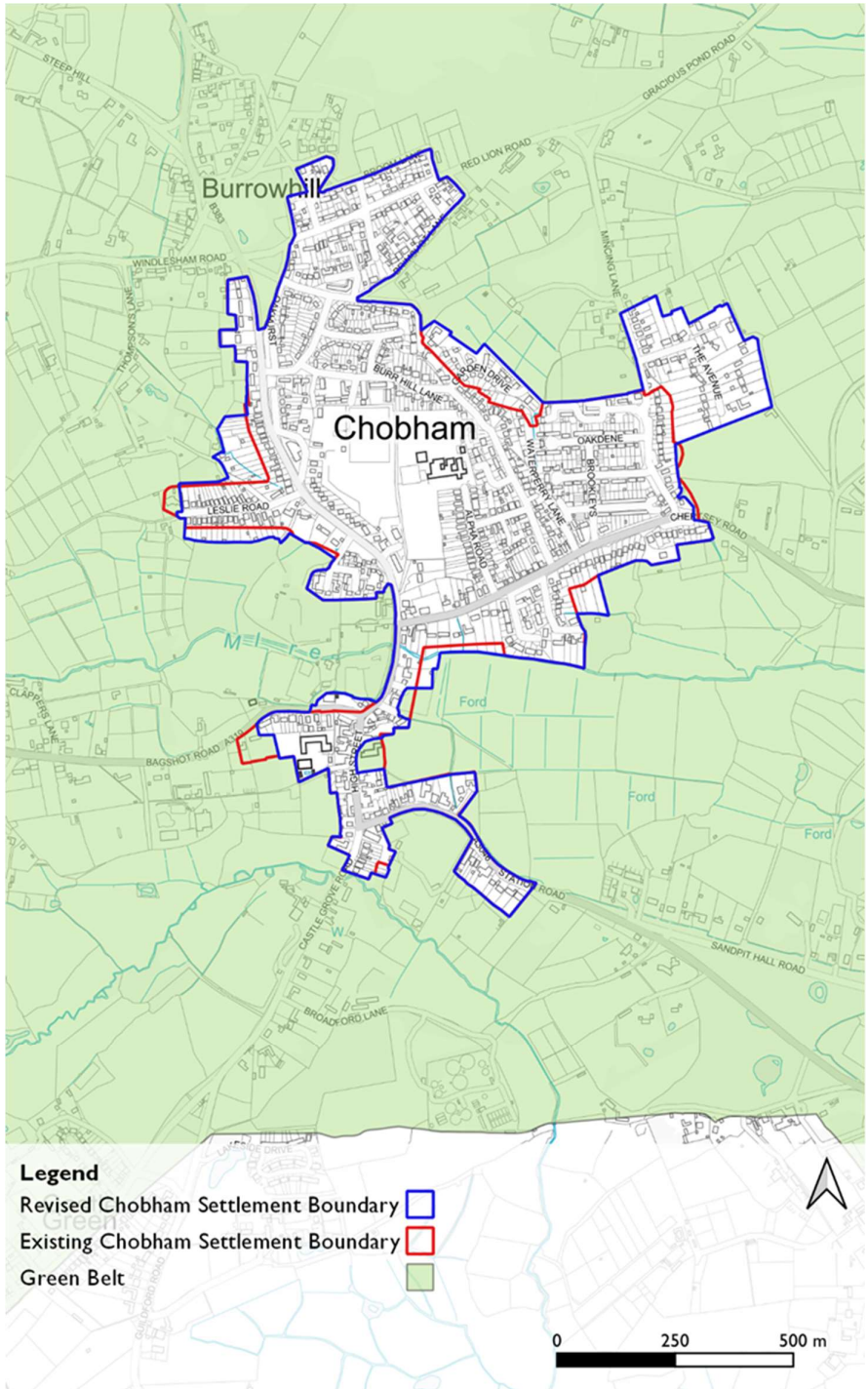


## 2. **Proposed changes to Green Belt and Chobham settlement boundaries as set out at the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation**

- 2.1. The settlement area of Chobham is washed over by the Green Belt. The decision to carry the Green Belt designation over the settlement was set down in the Surrey Heath Local Plan 1987, with regard had to Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2): Green Belts. PPG2 sets out that the decision on whether to 'wash' the Green Belt designation over a settlement should have regard to the type of development that was expected to come forward within it. The Council determined that the Green Belt designation should be carried over the settlement of Chobham so that development would be limited to infilling only. The decision was in part driven by the desire to maintain the historical integrity of the settlement.
- 2.2. Since the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the approach to addressing Green Belt settlements has changed significantly. The NPPF now requires washed over Green Belt settlements to exhibit an open character, and make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. The NPPF indicates that if the character of a village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.
- 2.3. Chobham is the only settlement within Surrey Heath washed over by Green Belt and in light of the change to national policy, it was considered appropriate to review whether the retention of the designation over the settlement remained consistent with the NPPF. This assessment was undertaken in advance of the preparation of the Surrey Heath Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options. Following the review, it was concluded that much of the settlement does not exhibit an open character and does not contribute significantly to the openness of the Green Belt. As a result the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation sought views on proposals to remove the settlement from the Green Belt and provide a revised settlement boundary (see Figure 1). The assessment made of Chobham's Green Belt status is set out in full in the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Review January 2022.







**Figure 1: Proposed changes to Green Belt and Settlement boundaries as set out in the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study January 2022**



### 3. Responses to the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation

3.1. Surrey Heath Borough Council undertook a consultation on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options document between March – May 2022.

3.2. A number of comments were received in respect of the proposal to remove the Green Belt designation from the settlement of Chobham. In summary, the responses raised the following points regarding the extent of the proposals:

- Chobham village is largely open in character and should remain Green Belt;
- Removal of the village from the Green Belt would result in overdevelopment and a loss of character;
- Clarity is required in respect of the exceptional circumstances justifying the removal of the settlement from the Green Belt;
- Areas around the village should be removed from the Green Belt in order to meet housing needs;
- A finer grained assessment of settlement boundaries would be appropriate with involvement from the community;
- Consideration should be given to implementing an Article 4 Direction, or an update to the Chobham Village Conservation Area Appraisal to safeguard character.
- Insetting could be processed through the Chobham Village Neighbourhood Plan.
- Contested areas. Several areas identified for potential removal from the Green Belt should be reconsidered including:
  - a) North of 81 Windsor Road;
  - b) The entirety of The Avenue;
  - c) Mincing Lane north of The Avenue;
  - d) Station Road east of the Recreation Ground;
  - e) Any row of housing with residential gardens that back onto open fields, e.g. parts of Chertsey Road west of Green Lane, parts of Windsor Road (west side) and parts of Leslie Road.



## 4. The Council's response to comments received through the R.18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options Consultation

- 4.1. The Council has now had the opportunity to consider the consultation responses received to the R18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options Consultation, and addresses each of the key themes below.

### **Chobham Village is largely open in character and should remain Green Belt**

- 4.2. Paragraph 144 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that villages should only be retained within the Green Belt where the open character of the village makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. The Council considers that this sets a high bar for the retention of villages within the general extent of the Green Belt.
- 4.3. Findings of the Council's Green Belt and Countryside Study 2017, Green Belt Review 2022 and Chobham Green Belt Boundaries Review all indicate that extensive areas of the village of Chobham do not meet the purposes of the Green Belt as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework and that much of the settlement does not exhibit an open character which contributes to the openness of the Green Belt. In view of the findings of the relevant studies it is considered that the retention of the Green Belt designation over the settlement of Chobham would be inconsistent with the NPPF.
- 4.4. It is also noted that in recent years, several washed over Green Belt settlements openness in neighbouring Boroughs that are comparable to Chobham in size, density and have been removed from the Green Belt in recognition of the changes introduced through the NPPF.

### **Removal of the village from the Green Belt would lead to overdevelopment and result in a loss of character**

- 4.5. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF is clear that villages should only be retained within the Green Belt if their open character makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. If the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used.
- 4.6. It is not considered that the removal of the Green Belt designation from the settlement would result in overdevelopment or a loss of character.





- 4.7. Notably, the boundary revisions set out within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundary Study are proposed to be tightly drawn around the edge of the built form of the settlement. As a result, notwithstanding the proposed redevelopment of Chobham Rugby Club, it is not considered that the removal of the Green Belt designation from the settlement of Chobham would present any further significant or notable development opportunities, other than limited infilling (Which is already permitted by the National Planning Policy Framework).
- 4.8. Any development proposed within the settlement will be expected to comply with relevant Policies contained within the Local Plan, including Policies DH1: Design Principles and DH7: Heritage Assets. It is also expected that any development would need to have due regard to the guidance set out within the Chobham Village Conservation Area appraisal, and the Chobham Neighbourhood Plan (and accompanying Design Guidance and Codes), once adopted. Cumulatively it is expected that these set a high bar for development in Chobham.

### **Clarity is required in respect of the exceptional circumstances justifying the change**

- 4.9. The consideration of whether there are exceptional circumstances should be made in the round with regard had to a wider range of evidence based documents as necessary. For this reason, a full discussion of exceptional circumstances is not set out in detail here, but will be set out in an Exceptional Circumstances Topic Paper to accompany the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Local Plan consultation.

### **Areas around the village should be removed from the Green Belt in order to meet housing needs**

- 4.10. The Council's proposed spatial strategy provides for a quantum of development that is sufficient to meet identified needs within the borough over the plan period (accounting for some unmet need being delivered in Hart District in accordance with their adopted local plan). Consequently, it is not envisaged that exceptional circumstances exist to warrant the release of wider Green Belt land to meet housing needs.

### **A finer grained assessment of settlement boundaries would be appropriate with involvement from the community**



- 4.11. The methodology used to assess the Green Belt wash over Chobham is set out within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study and is considered to proportionate, with the approach and scope of the study comparable, and in many cases, finer grained than other comparable studies undertaken by other authorities. The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation sought views on proposals to remove the settlement from the Green Belt and provide a revised settlement boundary from the community.

### **Consideration should be given to implementing an Article 4 Direction, or an update to the Chobham Village Conservation Area Appraisal to safeguard character**

- 4.12. This is noted and the Council recognises that these methods could be employed to further safeguard the unique character of Chobham.

### **Detailed boundaries could be processed through the Chobham neighbourhood plan**

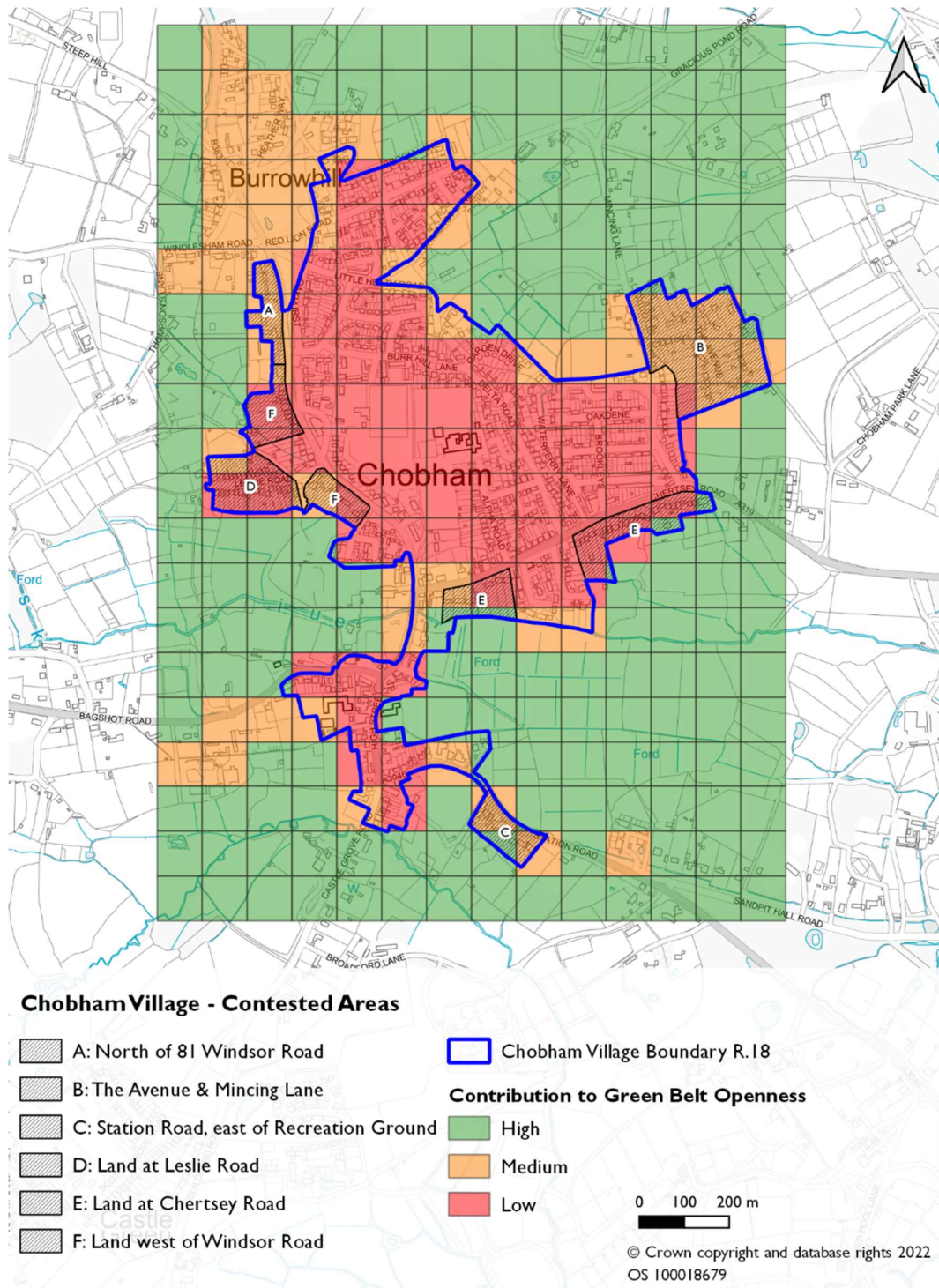
- 4.13. It is considered appropriate for the Local Plan to review the boundaries of Chobham, given the strategic nature of the document. However, should Chobham Parish Council wish to review the proposed settlement boundaries through the Neighbourhood Plan, such a step could be undertaken. Notwithstanding this, it is noted that at the time of writing, draft iterations of the Neighbourhood Plan have not given consideration to strategic issues.

### **Contested Areas**

Several consultation responses agreed with the principle of the inseting of the settlement of Chobham, but disagreed with some of the specific boundary revisions. These are referred to in this Addendum as 'contested areas'. The contested areas are set out below, with each assigned a reference number for clarity:

- North of 81 Windsor Road (A);
  - The entirety of The Avenue and Mincing Lane north of The Avenue (B);
  - Station Road east of the Recreation Ground (C);
  - Any row of housing with residential gardens that back onto open fields, including:
    - Land at Leslie Road (D);
    - Land at Chertsey Road (E); and
    - Parts of Windsor Road (F).
- 4.14. These areas are identified in Figure 2 below.



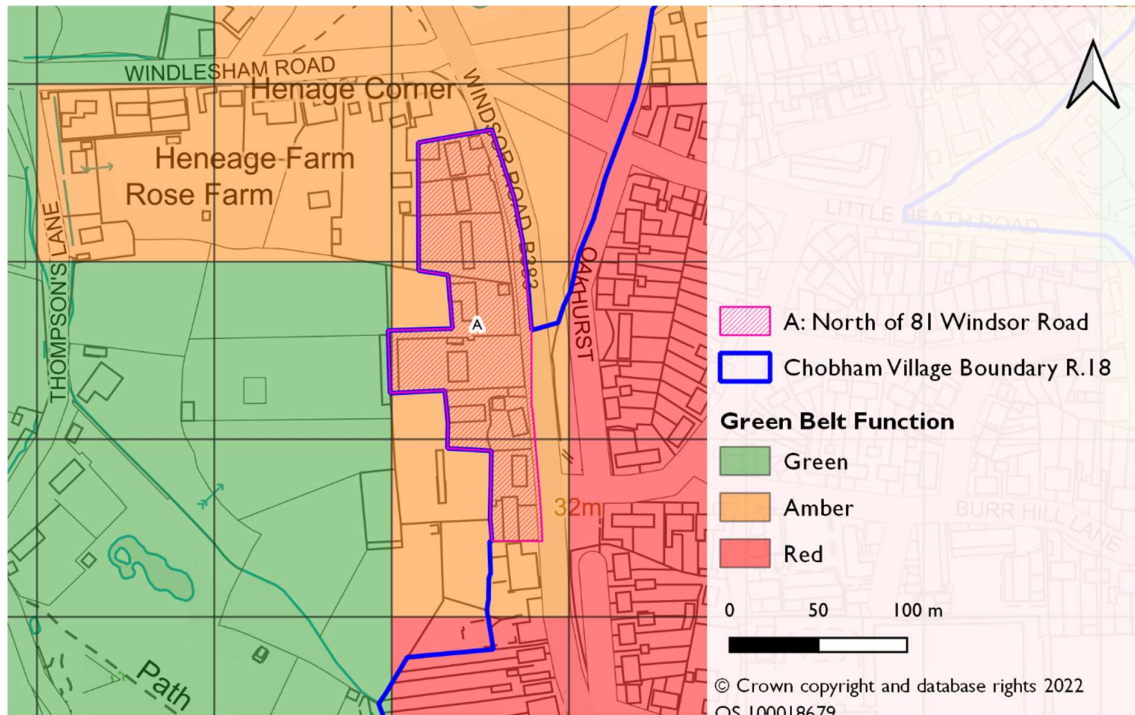


**Figure 2: Contested Areas**



- 4.15. Each of the contested areas are considered in turn below.

### Land North of 81 Windsor Road

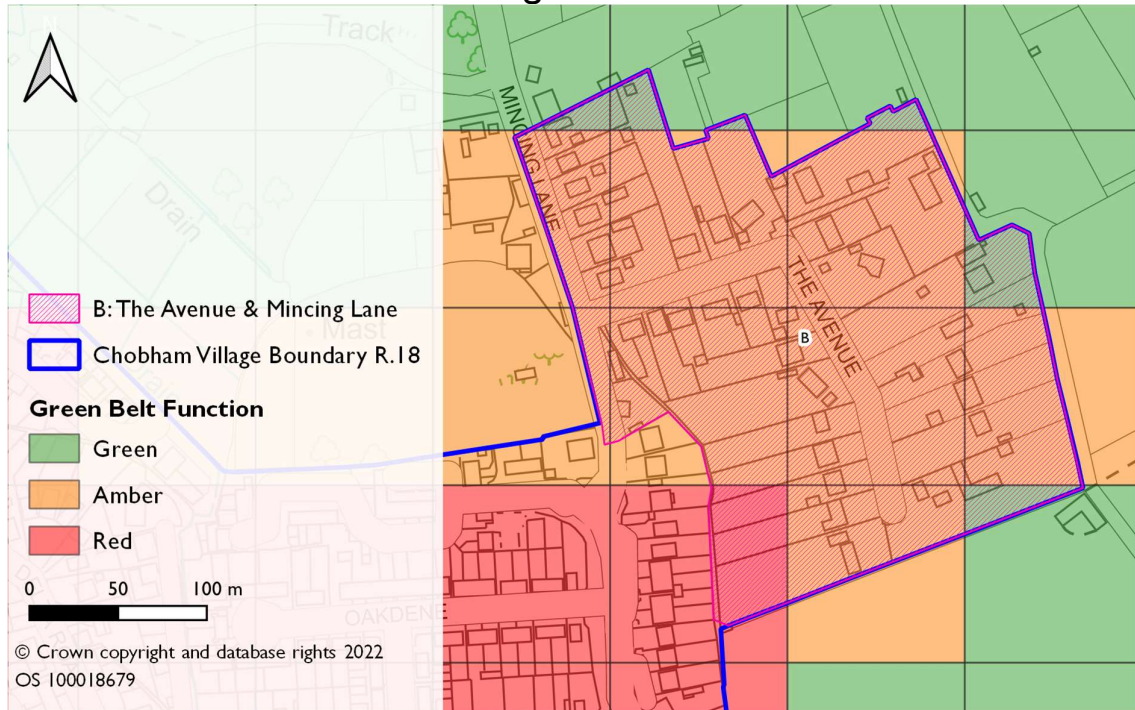


- 4.16. This area was assessed as making a moderate contribution to the openness of the Green Belt within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study 2022.
- 4.17. Along the course of Windsor Road to its western side between the junction with Leslie Road to 73 Windsor Road, development generally consists of small to medium sized mixed residential and commercial development set on narrow, but often deep plots. From 75 Windsor Road northwards, plots increase in size and large, two storey development dominates. Plots widen slightly between 75 – 81 Windsor Road, however development in this location generally exhibits a low/moderate level of openness, with closely spaced two storey buildings. Beyond 87 Windsor Road, plots become larger and properties front onto an open area of common land. The properties in this location relate more closely to development on Windlesham Road, which is proposed to be retained in the Green Belt, rather than development further southwards. Taking account of the form, density, character and openness of development in this location, on balance it is accepted that development north of 87 Windsor Road (inclusive) could be retained in the Green Belt.





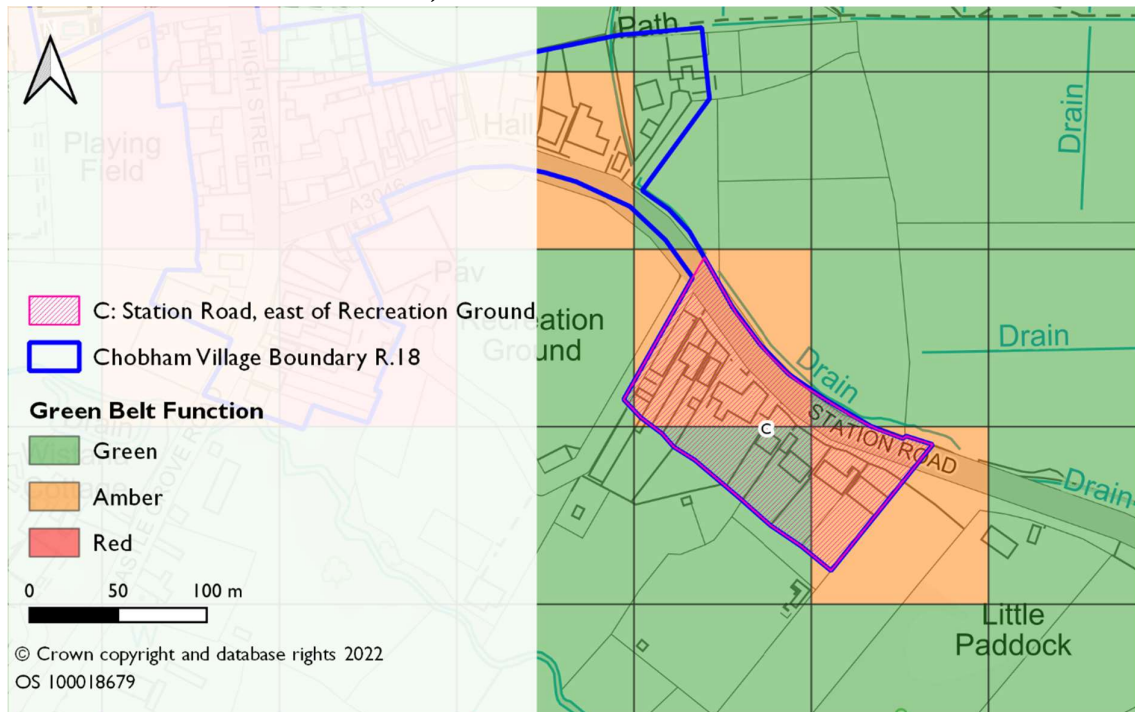
### Land at The Avenue & Mincing Lane



- 4.18. Land at The Avenue and Mincing Lane was assessed as making a moderate contribution to the openness of the Green Belt within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study 2022.
- 4.19. Development in this location is characterised by large, detached dwellings, generally set within deep plots of modest width. Gaps between buildings vary in size but tend to be limited, particularly to the southern and western side of the highway. Gaps between buildings increase slightly to the east of the highway. Notwithstanding this, the cul de sac exhibits a more suburban appearance than would normally be expected in the countryside and in recent years, infilling and other development has impacted on openness in this location. On balance, the Council remains of the view that The Avenue and Mincing Lane should be removed from the general extent of the Green Belt.



### C: Land at Station Road, east of the Recreation Ground

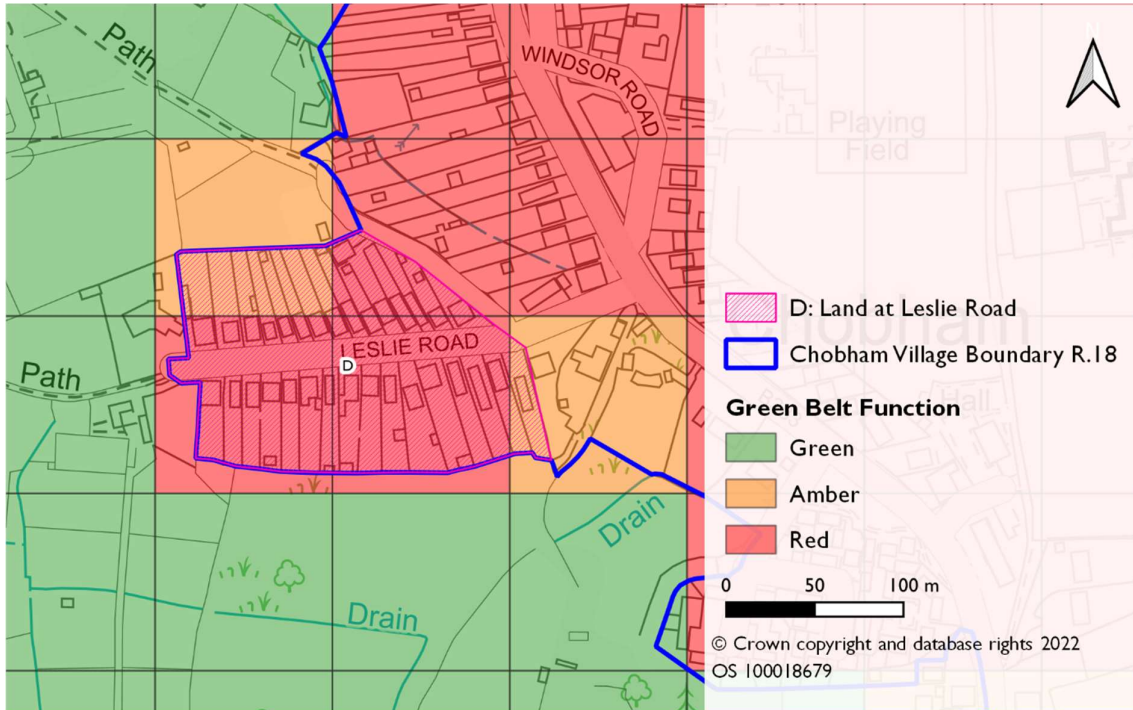


- 4.20. This area was assessed as making a moderate to good contribution to the openness of the Green Belt within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study 2022.
- 4.21. Development in this location is relatively mixed in form, with detached and semi detached properties across a variety of scales set within small to large plots. Whilst the gaps between properties are limited in some places, other gaps are more extensive and the presence of single storey buildings bring a more open texture to development in this location. This area also relates poorly to the wider built settlement of Chobham.
- 4.22. Taking account of the form, density and character and openness of development in this location, it is accepted that development east of Chobham recreation ground and to the southern side of Station Road should be retained within the Green Belt.

### D: Land at Leslie Road



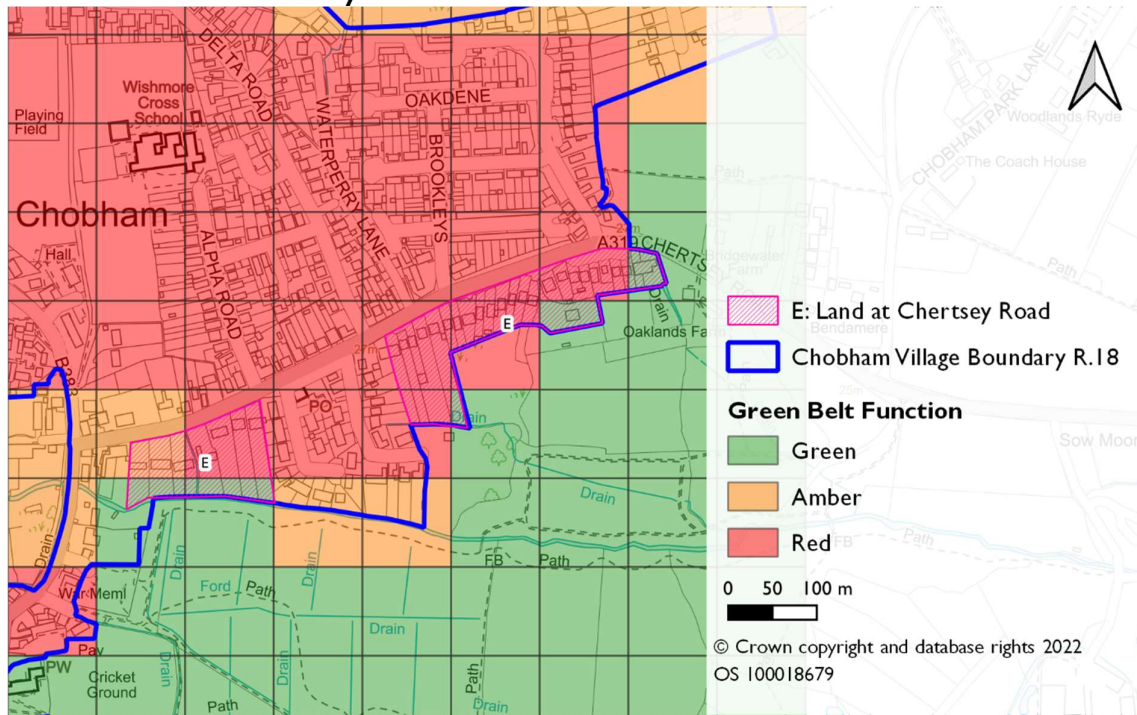




- 4.23. This area was assessed as making a very limited contribution to the openness of the Green Belt within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study 2022.
- 4.24. Leslie Road generally comprises modest single two storey development set within narrow, deep plots. There is a semi-rural feel to the easternmost part of the road, with single storey development giving longer views from the road to the wooded areas beyond and hedging offering the road a verdant character. The western end of the road however gives way to a more urban feel, with an increase in built form and the sense of space around buildings reducing.
- 4.25. Taking account of the form, density, character and openness of development in this location, it is considered, on balance, that the Green Belt designation should be removed from this location.



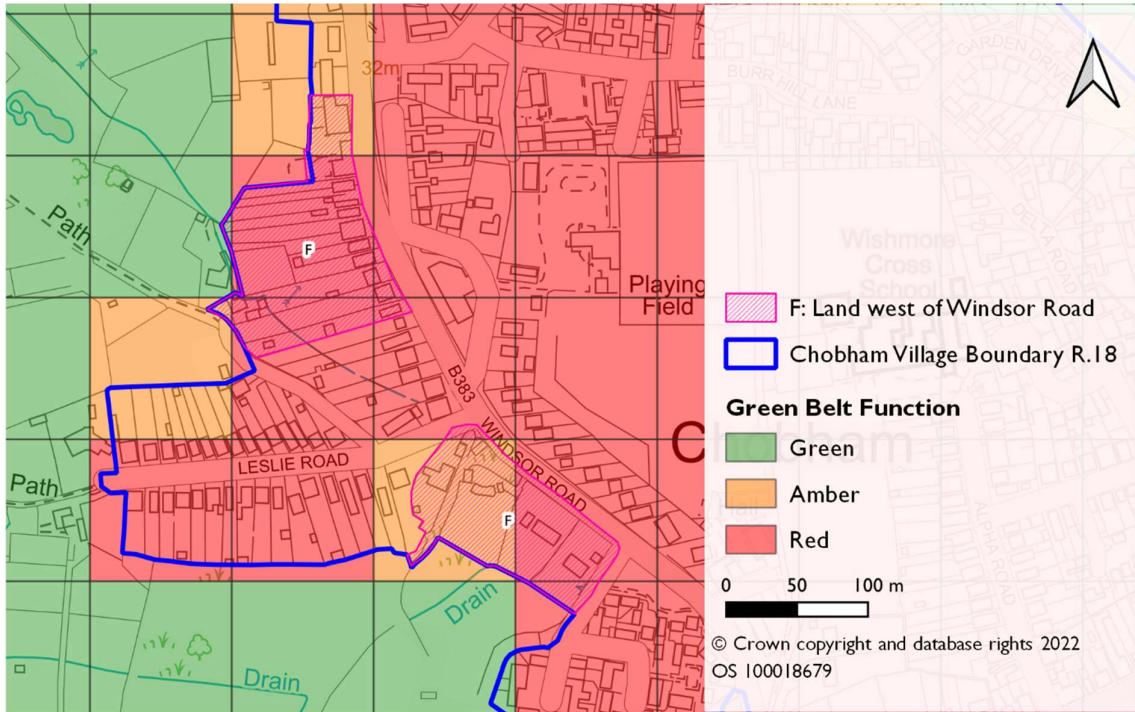
### E: Land at Chertsey Road



- 4.26. This area was assessed as making a limited to moderate contribution to the openness of the Green Belt within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study 2022.
- 4.27. Development in this location generally comprises two storey residential development. To the west of Chertsey Road, development generally comprises larger dwellings set within larger, verdant plots. Further eastwards, both properties and plot sizes reduce, with the sense of spaciousness around properties limited. Although the garden areas serving a number of the properties are extensive, they are nonetheless part of the domestic curtilage. In addition, drawing the Green Belt boundary such that it excludes garden areas but includes properties would not fulfil the requirement of the NPPF that Green Belt boundaries are clearly defined. Taking into account the character and openness of the road overall, in addition to the need to clearly define Green Belt boundaries, it is considered that these areas should be removed from the Green Belt.

### F: Land West of Windsor Road





- 4.28. This area was assessed as making a limited contribution to the openness of the Green Belt within the Chobham Village Green Belt Boundaries Study 2022.
- 4.29. Development in this location principally comprises two storey detached development with some areas of terraced development set within deep but narrow plots. Longer views are relatively limited, owing largely to the limited gaps between development. Although the garden areas serving a number of the properties are deep, they are nonetheless part of the domestic curtilage. In addition, drawing the Green Belt boundary such that it excludes garden areas but includes properties would not fulfil the requirement of the NPPF that Green Belt boundaries are clearly defined. Taking into account the character and openness of the road overall, in addition to the need to clearly define Green Belt boundaries, it is considered that these areas should be removed from the Green Belt.



## 5. Outcomes of Review

- 5.1. Surrey Heath Borough Council has considered the responses made to the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options consultation undertaken between March – May 2022 and has set out the Council's responses to the comments made here.
- 5.2. In addition, consultation responses have suggested a number of areas which the Council should give further consideration to in respect of where revised Green Belt and settlement boundaries should fall. The Council has given detailed consideration to these suggestions and as a result has proposed the following further alterations to the Green Belt and settlement boundaries as set out within the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan: Preferred Options document:
  - Land to the north of 87 Windsor Road;
  - Land to the east of Chobham Recreation Ground and to the south of Station Road.
- 5.3. The resultant boundary proposals are set out at Figure 3.





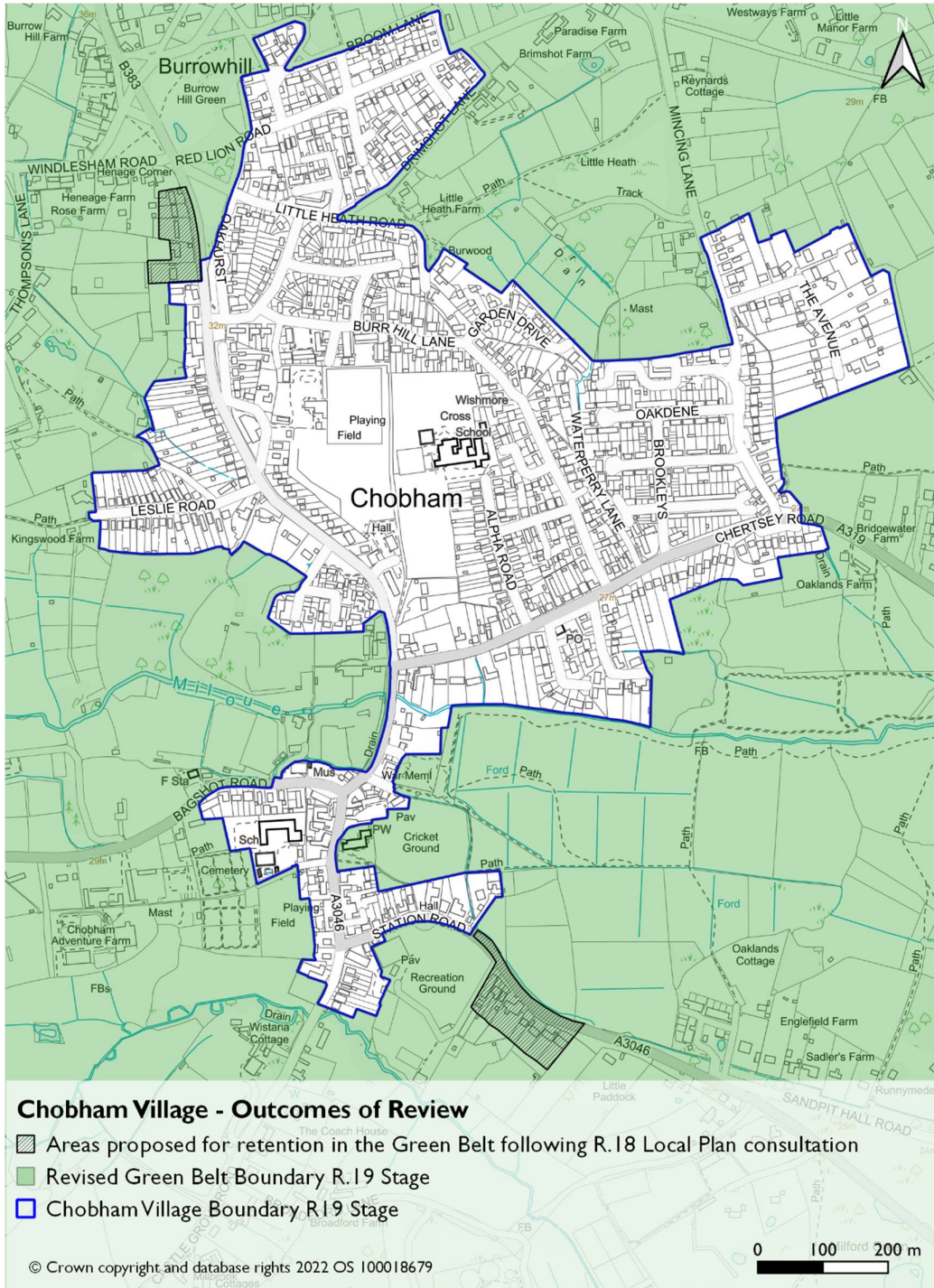


Figure 3: Outcomes of Review Process

