



*Basingstoke
and Deane*



Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Submission Local Plan 2011 to 2029

Strategic Gaps Topic Paper

October 2014

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1. What are the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan Topic Papers?

- 1.1 A series of topic papers have been produced to accompany the Basingstoke and Deane Submission Local Plan 2011-2029. The topic papers provide an understanding of the latest evidence, wider context, and reasoning for the proposed policy approach. All topic papers are living drafts and include a 'snapshot' of the evidence at the time of publication.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Submission Local Plan includes a policy on strategic gaps (policy EM2) and 5 strategic gaps have been defined on the Policies Map. In parts of Basingstoke and Deane borough, the towns and villages are located relatively close to one another, and the housing land allocations within the Local Plan (policies SS3.1 to SS3.11) will, in some instances, reduce the distance between settlements further. A strategic gap policy and the defined gaps will prevent the coalescence of settlements and maintain their separate identity.
- 2.2 The purpose of this topic paper is to provide the context and rationale for the strategic gap designations in the borough and to consider the approach of including a strategic gap policy in the Local Plan. The topic paper will provide evidence as to why the inclusion of such policy is justified and consistent with national policy.

3. Character of the borough

- 3.1 As identified in the 'Basingstoke and Deane context' at paragraphs 1.21 and 1.23 of the Local Plan, Basingstoke and Deane is a large borough, with a resident population of 167,800 people at the time of the 2011 Census. Less than 8 per cent of the borough is built up, supporting the majority of the borough's population. Over 75% of the land within the borough is defined as agricultural or woodland. This rural dimension is important in shaping the character of the area, its communities, economy and environment. The importance of agriculture and rural businesses, the prominence of landscape and countryside, along with the scale and dispersed nature of rural communities in comparison with the larger more urban settlements are all important issues. The rural environment of the borough adds significantly to the quality of life enjoyed by urban residents and is a considerable asset for the area. The natural environment of the borough is highly valued by residents and visitors, both for the quality and diversity of the biodiversity and also for the attractive setting and recreational opportunities that it provides.
- 3.2 The borough continues to grow in terms of population and houses. Between 1996 to 2011, 12,258 new homes were completed, with over 50% of these in

and around the main urban area of Basingstoke and Chineham. The borough is to experience on-going growth with the Submission Local Plan making provision to meet the housing requirement of 13,464 dwellings over the plan period 2011 to 2029.

4. What is a strategic gap?

- 4.1 Strategic gaps are defined in paragraph 6.12 of the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan as a planning tool to prevent coalescence of settlements and maintain their separate identity. Strategic gaps have not been specifically defined to protect the countryside or landscape. Paragraph 6.13 of the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan adds that a clear gap between settlements helps maintain a sense of place for both residents of, and visitors to, the settlements on either side of the gaps. When travelling through a strategic gap a traveller should have a clear sense of having left the first settlement, having travelled through an undeveloped area and then entered the second settlement.

5. Need for strategic gaps in Basingstoke and Deane Borough

- 5.1 Strategic gaps are a long established tool and have been a feature of county and local planning documents for over thirty years. The principle of strategic gaps has been a fundamental element of planning policy within Hampshire with its origins traced back to the Hampshire County Structure Plan (1994) and the Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996 – 2011 (Review).
- 5.2 Local Planning Authorities across Hampshire are continuing to include a strategic gap policy within their Local Plans, for example:
- Adopted Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (2013) (policy CP18 – settlement gaps)
 - Revised Submission Test Valley Local Plan (2014) (policy E3 – local gap).
- 5.3 There is also a history of using this tool within the borough and the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 1991-2001 included a policy on strategic gaps and defined strategic gaps on the Local Plan Proposals Map.
- 5.4 The provision of a strategic gap policy equips Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council with the means to:
- Protect the setting and separate identity of its settlements by avoiding their coalescence;
 - Retain the openness and character of the land around its existing settlements and the land allocations; and
 - Provide access and recreational benefits to urban dwellers and the perceived as well as real benefits of having open countryside near to where people live.

6. National Planning Policy Framework

6.1 Although the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not contain a specific reference to strategic gaps, table 1 below identifies the parts of the NPPF that strategic gaps accord with:

Table 1: Parts of the NPPF that strategic gaps accord with

Section and/ or paragraph number of the NPPF	Summary	Relevance to strategic gaps
Introduction Paragraph 1	“...sets out the Government’s requirements for the planning system only to the extent it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.”	The council has undertaken extensive public consultation during the preparation of the Local Plan. The representations received by the local community indicate that strategic gaps are important and support the inclusion of a strategic gap policy in the Local Plan.
Core Planning Principles Paragraph 17 – bullet point 1	“Planning should be genuinely plan led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings...”	As above.
Core Planning Principles Paragraph 17 – bullet point 5	“Planning should...take account of the different roles and character of different areas...”	Strategic gaps are a tool which helps to achieve this in Basingstoke and Deane borough by helping to maintain the separate identity of settlements.
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment Paragraph 114 – bullet point 1	<p>“Local planning authorities should: set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.”</p> <p>The NPPF glossary defines green infrastructure as “A network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life</p>	<p>Strategic gaps will provide a multifunctional green space in terms of maintaining settlement identity, providing a green lung into urban areas and providing a recreational resource.</p> <p>Examples of multi-functional green space are defined in paragraph 6.29 of the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan.</p>

	benefits for local communities.”	
<p>Plan-making</p> <p>Paragraph 157 – bullet point 7 and 8</p>	<p>Bullet points 7: “Crucially, Local Plans should...identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental significance;”</p> <p>Bullet point 8: “Crucially, Local Plans should...contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.”</p>	<p>Strategic gaps are a tool which helps to achieve this in Basingstoke and Deane borough by facilitating the positive management of land by helping to shape growth.</p>

7. The issues that the Local Plan seeks to address

- 7.1 The Local Plan Vision is based on analysis of characteristics of the area and the key issues and challenges being faced. From the Vision ensues the Local Plan Strategic Objectives and the Spatial Strategy which set out the key delivery outcomes the Local Plan should achieve by 2029.
- 7.2 The Vision for the Local Plan is shared with the Sustainable Community Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane (2011-2029) and the Council Plan (2013-2017). The Vision in paragraph 2.5 of the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan is relevant to strategic gaps as it states that the borough is to be an environmentally responsible and distinctive place – where:
- the local built and natural environments are in tune and continue to provide opportunities for the economy and people’s enjoyment; they are well managed to provide for the future
 - we enrich the different characters of and links between towns, villages and the countryside, in the way we plan, such as the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Loddon area
- 7.3 The Revised Pre Submission Local Plan, in paragraph 2.6, provides a summary of issues to address. The main issue in the borough regarding strategic gaps is the need to conserve and enhance the character of the borough’s high quality natural and historic environment, in light of pressures for growth and change.

8. Which Local Plan objectives will this policy help to deliver?

- 8.1 Paragraph 2.8 of the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan identifies objectives to address the identified issues and to help to deliver the Vision. As indicated in Table 1 (Policies to deliver the Objectives) of the Local Plan, policy EM2 will help to deliver or facilitate objective L (high quality design):

Ensure high quality and locally distinctive design which responds to local character to create inclusive, well connected and safe neighbourhoods by reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

- 8.2 Section 3 of the Local Plan identifies the Spatial Strategy to the year 2029. Paragraph 3.6 states that “...We will conserve and enhance the borough’s environmental, biodiversity and heritage assets and ensure new development is of a high standard that enhances the character of the borough and respects the environment and the quality of the landscape, including designated areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Development will be located to maintain the integrity of settlements and prevent their coalescence.”

9. Council strategies

- 9.1 The Local Plan has also been prepared to sit within a framework of other local documents. This includes the Sustainable Community Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane in addition to other strategies which cover specific issues such as the Living Landscapes Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy. This ensures that the Local Plan reflects and helps to deliver key priorities for the borough.
- 9.2 Table 2 below summarises these key local strategies, the relevance of the strategy to a strategic gap policy and whether policy EM2 will help to deliver the strategy.

Table 2 below summarises these key local documents and why they are of particular relevance to strategic gaps

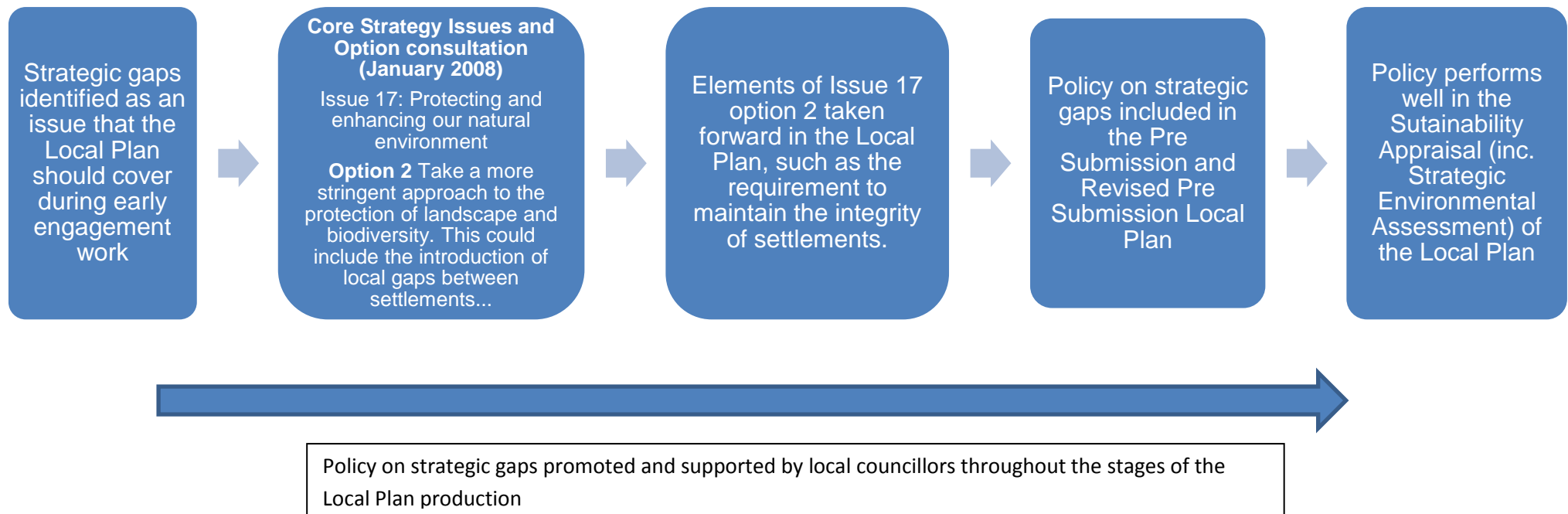
Local documents	Summary of local document	Relevance of strategy to Policy EM2	Will policy EM2 help to deliver the strategy?
Council Plan (2013-2017)	High level document which sets out our ambition for the borough, identifying key themes and priorities	Paragraph 1.6 of the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan states that the council's corporate priorities, as stipulated in the Council Plan, are of particular importance and provide a basis for the Local Plan. One of the corporate priorities is to have " <i>Planning policies that safeguard local distinctiveness.</i> "	Yes Strategic gaps will help to deliver this priority.
Pride in our Place: a Sustainable Community Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane (2011-2029)	The strategy reflects local need and local ambition, providing a reference for all organisations in the borough, and a clear focus for working together towards shared priorities - helping	To ensure future prosperity to secure a prosperous long term future in the borough, the Sustainable Community Strategy states at paragraph 4.1.3 that "A flourishing natural environment should be nurtured; it	Yes Strategic gaps will help to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy vision and future prosperity of the borough.

	to address the risks and challenges facing the area and its communities - whether social, economic or environmental.	provides a social and economic asset and will only continue to provide the natural services, green infrastructure <i>and local distinctiveness that is valued as a competitive draw, if the most important elements are protected and well managed.</i> "	
Living Landscapes – landscape and biodiversity strategy (2010)	Describes the features, landscape characteristics and species most in need of attention within the borough and sets out the council's approach to protecting and improving the natural environment, supported by a three-year action plan.	Landscape character analysis can inform how settlement patterns develop, the nature of individual character and setting, the pattern of separation between settlements and how the landscape functions to maintain that separation.	Yes Although not an aim of why strategic gaps have been defined, they will help to achieve the objectives of Living Landscapes.
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013 to 2029)	A strategy which assesses existing green infrastructure gaps/deficits to be identified and future requirements for Green Infrastructure.	Strategic Gaps will provide access and recreational benefits to urban dwellers and the perceived as well as real benefits of having open countryside near to where people live. As noted in paragraph 61 of the strategy one of the greatest threats to the character and appearance of the landscape is the loss of local distinctiveness.	Yes Although not an aim of why strategic gaps have been defined, they will help to achieve the principles and objectives of the Strategy.

10. Local Plan production

- 10.1 Strategic gaps were identified as an issue that the Local Plan should cover during early engagement work – including a ‘Future of the borough’ workshop held with councillors, officers and statutory consultees in 2007.
- 10.2 Figure 1 below shows the progression from Core Strategy Issues and Options to a Local Plan strategic gap policy. It shows that an option (of Issue 17: Protecting and enhancing our natural environment) at the Core Strategy Issues and Options stage was to consider the introduction of local gaps between settlements.
- 10.3 Policy EM2 of the Local Plan performs positively in the Sustainability Appraisal (inc. Strategic Environment Assessment) as it has a largely positive impact on the environmental SA objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of the local landscape and biodiversity.

Figure 1: Progression from Core Strategy Issues and Options to a Local Plan Strategic Gap policy



11. Review of consultation responses to the Local Plan preparation

- 11.1 The council has undertaken extensive public consultation during the preparation of the Local Plan including:
- Core Strategy – Issues and Options Consultation (January 2008)
 - Pre-Submission Local Plan (August 2013)
 - Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan (April 2014)
- 11.2 The representations received indicate there is a high level of public support for a strategic gap policy in the Local Plan, in particular in light of the levels of growth planned in the borough. As a result of representations received to the Pre-Submission Local Plan (August 2013), the Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan proposed additional areas to be included in the following strategic gaps:
- Basingstoke – Oakley strategic gap
 - Basingstoke – Old Basing strategic gap
 - Basingstoke – Sherborne St John strategic gap
- 11.3 Whilst the number of respondents who submitted representations in support of the policy (4 in total) were relatively low at the Pre Submission Local Plan stage, this increased to 271 respondents at the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan stage.
- 11.4 Also, the strategic gap policy has been heavily promoted and supported by local councillors throughout the different stages of Local Plan production including at:
- Workshops
 - Member Advisory Panel meetings
 - Committee meetings
 - Full council meetings

12. Key evidence supporting the strategic gaps policy

- 12.1 The following existing planning policy context and background documents are considered relevant to strategic gaps.
- [Landscape Assessment \(2001\)](#)

A comprehensive Landscape Assessment of the borough was undertaken in 2001. This document identified 20 distinct landscape character areas within the borough and summarises the key characteristics, qualities and issues

associated with each area. A fully integrated approach to landscape assessment was undertaken, drawing together historic, ecological and landscape elements into the characterisation process.

The Landscape Assessment is the most comprehensive and recent assessment of the landscape across the borough and assists the Planning Authority, communities and prospective developers in understanding the character and qualities of the landscape across the borough and the impacts potential development may have. The Landscape Assessment was undertaken to the recognised methodology at the time as set out by the Countryside Agency and although the report was published in 2001, the Council does not consider the Landscape Assessment to be out of date as the landscape within the borough has not fundamentally changed since it was undertaken.

- [Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Capacity Study \(2008\)](#)

The 2008 study indicates how much development is likely to be possible within the borough without causing unacceptable harm to visual amenity or the character of the landscape.

- [Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Capacity Study – Site Options \(2010\)](#)

A more detailed study, carried out in 2010, examines sites immediately surrounding Basingstoke, Tadley and Bramley, and also includes Overton and Whitchurch. It gives each site a capacity scoring from low to high.

- 12.2 Strategic gaps are not a landscape designation. However, landscape character analysis can inform how settlement patterns develop, the nature of individual character and setting, the pattern of separation between settlements and how the landscape functions to maintain that separation. The evidence documents above are therefore robust evidence documents for the strategic gaps policy and the defined boundaries.

13. Criteria for the designation of strategic gaps

- 13.1 The borough council considers that there are five strategic gaps that need to be designated. These are:

- Basingstoke – Oakley strategic Gap (Map 7a)
- Basingstoke – Sherborne St John strategic gap (Map 7b)
- Basingstoke – Old Basing strategic gap (Map 7c)
- Basingstoke/ Chineham – Bramley/ Sheffield on Loddon strategic gap (Map 7d)
- Tadley – Baughurst strategic gap (Map 7e)

- 13.2 A map of the defined boundary for each strategic gap can be found in Appendix 1 of this topic paper and are shown on the Submission Local Plan Policies Map.
- 13.3 The following criterion was used to select locations for the designation of gaps in the borough.
- a) The land to be included within the gap is open and provides a sense of separation between settlements.
 - b) The land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence (in particular from land allocations in the Local Plan).
 - c) In defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included, having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation.
- 13.4 Below is an assessment of each strategic gap against criteria a) to c). The assessments also include information on some of the following aspects:
- landscape character
 - landscape features (woodland, river valleys and landform)
 - topography
 - distance
 - existing vegetation and land uses
 - the nature of settlement edges and how they integrate with the adjacent countryside
 - key views
 - the sense of leaving a place
- 13.5 Key elements of the landscape character were an important aspect that informed the delineation of the strategic gap boundaries. Identified Landscape Character Areas that reside next to or fall within the strategic gaps are highlighted below with a brief summary of the important elements that help shape their character.
- 13.6 The council considers that other strategic gaps to those listed in policy EM2 do not need to be identified as the threat of coalescence, as a result of allocated sites in the Local Plan, between other town and villages is not considered to be significant. However, the impact of any development in the future may need to be reviewed in a subsequent Local Plan.

Basingstoke – Oakley strategic gap (Policies Map 7a)

Criteria a)	Criteria b)	Criteria c)
<p>The Landscape Assessment (2001) highlights the open and undeveloped nature of the landscape within the strategic gap between Basingstoke and Oakley. Key points from Part 3: Settlements of the assessment relevant to this gap are:</p> <p><u>Basingstoke western setting and edge (page 86/87)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> western edge of Basingstoke settlement is very abrupt, forming a straight, linear boundary. large open arable fields abut directly to the linear settlement edge <p><u>Oakley eastern setting and edge (101)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> land to the east of Oakley is relatively flat, with medium to large arable fields. Pack Lane enters Oakley from the east and links the village with Basingstoke. Whilst travelling along Pack Lane you get glimpses of the Oakley village, particularly to the north, give indications of the village's presence before reaching it. the contrast between the open arable landscape near Basingstoke and the village form is noticeable. <p>Landscape Capacity Study (2008) identifies the strategic gap being within landscape character areas BA22 (North east Dummer farmland and woodland) and BA23 (West of Kempshott open arable):</p> <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA22 -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> area is effectively separated from the built up part of Basingstoke, as it is linked only by Old Down woodland park. naturalistic character of the park reinforces the divorced nature of this area. the ridge in the eastern part of the site is an important feature in the visual setting of Basingstoke, is locally prominent and provides clear separation between town and country. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA23 –</p>	<p>Adjacent to the strategic gap on its east and north east boundary is the greenfield site allocation at Manydown, Basingstoke (policy SS3.10) for approximately 3,400 homes. This allocation will reduce the distance between Basingstoke and Oakley. In addition, to the south east of the strategic gap is the greenfield site allocation at Kennel Farm (policy SS3.2) for approximately 310 dwellings.</p> <p>Basingstoke and Oakley are located relatively close to one another and the allocated housing sites (policies SS3.2 and SS3.10) will reduce the distance between the settlements further.</p>	<p>Only that land which is required to prevent coalescence between settlements has been included in the strategic gap designation.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • located to the immediate west of Basingstoke. • open character with high levels of intervisibility. • landform is generally flat, except towards the southern end where it is more prominent in the local and wider context. • the north–western and eastern boundaries of the area are defined by strong linear features (a railway and the urban edge of Kempshott) and are more noticeable in the northern part of the site. <p>The Landscape Capacity Study (2010) considers the Manydown land as a whole (part of which forms part of the Manydown allocation – policy SS3.10) which is considered to have a rural character, forming a valuable buffer between Basingstoke and Oakley and part of the wider landscape setting of both.</p>		
<p>Conclusion: The allocated housing sites (policies SS3.2 and SS3.10) will reduce the distance between Basingstoke and Oakley. This strategic gap is necessary to prevent the coalescence of Basingstoke and Oakley and to ensure the separate identity of the settlements is maintained within the plan period. The strategic gap will provide a recognisable structure to the settlements, establishing in travellers’ minds that they have left one settlement before they arrive somewhere else.</p>		

Basingstoke – Sherborne St John strategic gap (Policies Map 7b)

Criteria a)	Criteria b)	Criteria c)
<p>The Landscape Assessment (2001) highlights the open and undeveloped nature of the landscape within the gap between Basingstoke and Sherborne St John. Key points from Part 3: Settlements of the assessment relevant to this gap are:</p> <p><u>Basingstoke northern setting and edge (page 86)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The urban edge, which extends from the A340 to Carpenter’s Down Wood, is abrupt with little integration or softening. • The prominent ridgeline and some small copse and shelter belts contains the visual linkage with the surrounding landscape. <p>Landscape Capacity Study (2008) identifies the strategic gap being within landscape character areas BA01 (Sherborne St John slopes), BA02 (Southern Weybrook slopes) and BA03 (Vyne Mosaic):</p> <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA01 -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partly located on the slopes beyond a ridge on the northern edge of Basingstoke and as a consequence is relatively prominent; • particularly open in the west of the character area • area is also important as a settlement gap, separating the town from Sherborne St John. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA02-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area lies to the north-western edge of Basingstoke • much of the land slopes towards the countryside and this influences the character. • open in character with many longer distance views, particularly to the north and is close to the North Wessex Downs AONB. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA03-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong and intact rural character 	<p>Adjacent to the strategic gap on its eastern boundary is the greenfield site allocation at North of Popley Fields, Basingstoke (policy SS3.4) for approximately 450 dwellings. Basingstoke and Sherborne St John settlement are located relatively close to one another and this allocation will further reduce the distance between Basingstoke and Sherborne St John.</p> <p>Basingstoke and Sherborne St John are located relatively close to one another and the allocated housing site (SS3.4) will reduce the distance between settlements further.</p>	<p>Only that land which is required to prevent coalescence between settlements has been included in the strategic gap designation.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extensive areas of woodland, many designated, which along with the gently undulating landscape create a small scale character. 		
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The allocated housing site (SS3.4) will reduce the distance between Basingstoke and Sherborne St John. This strategic gap is necessary to prevent the coalescence of Basingstoke and Sherborne St John and to ensure the separate identity of the settlements is maintained within the plan period. The strategic gap will provide a recognisable structure to the settlements, establishing in travellers' minds that they have left one settlement before they arrive somewhere else.</p>		

Basingstoke – Old Basing strategic gap (Policies Map 7c)

Criteria a)	Criteria b)	Criteria c)
<p>The Landscape Assessment (2001) highlights the open and undeveloped nature of the landscape within the gap between Basingstoke and Old Basing. Key points from Part 3: Settlements of the assessment relevant to this gap are:</p> <p><u>Basingstoke eastern setting and edge (page 86)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> defined by the River Loddon and associated fen, open space, and woodland, which separates it from Old Basing. <p><u>Old Basing western setting and edge (page 122)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> defined and confined by the Loddon Valley, Basingstoke Common and the visual presence of Basingstoke beyond. <p><u>Old Basing south-western setting and edge (page 122)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> defined by Park Lane and the open grassland area of Basingstoke Common. Basingstoke Common has park-like characteristics and is edged along the roadside by post and wire fencing and individual trees. <p>Landscape Capacity Study (2008) identifies the strategic gap being within landscape character area BA14 (Open North Hackwood Slopes) and BA15 (River Loddon/ Basing</p>	<p>Adjacent to the strategic gap on its western boundary is the greenfield site allocation at Swing Swang Lane, Basingstoke (policy SS3.1) for approximately 100 dwellings. Basingstoke and Old Basing settlement are located close to one another and this allocation will further reduce the distance between Basingstoke and Old Basing.</p> <p>Basingstoke and Old Basing are located relatively close to one</p>	<p>Only that land which is required to prevent coalescence between settlements has been included in the strategic gap designation.</p>

<p>Fen):</p> <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA14 -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area is on prominent slopes, containing extensive areas of amenity uses in addition to a number of significant nature conservation and historical designations. • Part of the area provides the physical and visual separation between Basingstoke and Basing. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA14 -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrow character area along a river valley floor, part of which provides the physical separation between Old Basing and Basingstoke. • Large parts of the area have strong historical, nature conservation and recreational interests. <p>Page 26 of the Landscape Capacity Study (2010) identifies that the Swing Swang Lane site is not in an area designated for its landscape value but is part of the area identified as important in providing physical separation between Basingstoke and Old Basing.</p>	<p>another and the allocated housing site (SS3.1) will reduce the distance between settlements further.</p>	
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The allocated housing site (policy SS3.1) will reduce the distance between Basingstoke and Old Basing. This strategic gap is necessary to prevent the coalescence of Basingstoke and Old Basing. It will also ensure the separate identity of the settlements is maintained within the plan period. The strategic gap will provide a recognisable structure to the settlements, establishing in travellers' minds that they have left one settlement before they arrive somewhere else.</p>		

Basingstoke/ Chineham – Bramley/ Sherfield on Loddon strategic gap (Policies Map 7d)

Criteria a)	Criteria b)	Criteria c)
<p>The Landscape Assessment (2001) highlights the undeveloped nature of the landscape within the gap between Basingstoke/ Chineham and Bramely/ Sherfield on Loddon. Key points from Part 3: Settlements of the assessment relevant to this gap are:</p> <p><u>Chineham northern setting and edge (page 95)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the northern edge of Basingstoke, the predominantly pasture, medium to small-scale landscape slopes gently downwards to the north. • The woodland planting of the MOD Armaments Depot, south of Bramley, prevents views of the settlement until entering the settlement itself. • The landscape to the north-east of Chineham is formed by the west-east flowing Petty’s Brook, and a typically medium to large-scale arable fieldscape. Intervisibility between the settlement and this landscape is very low, due to the embankments and high hedgerows which edge the A33 adjacent to Chineham, providing a strong visual barrier. <p><u>Bramley southern setting and edge (page 4 of addendum)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • landscape to the south of Bramley and Bramley Green is defined by gently undulating wooded, enclosed Ministry of Defence land. • Ministry of Defence land forms a very strong visual and physical barrier along the southern edge of the settlement. <p><u>Bramley south western setting and edge (page 4 of addendum)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the south-western edge of the village the landscape slopes gently to the south, dominated by medium and small scale mixed pasture and arable fields and woodland/copse. <p><u>Bramley eastern setting and edge (page 4 of addendum)</u></p>	<p>Adjacent to the strategic gap on its south west boundary are the greenfield site allocations at Razor’s Farm (policy SS3.3) for approximately 420 dwellings and Upper Cufaude Farm (policy SS3.8) for approximately 390 dwellings.</p> <p>Basingstoke/ Chineham, Bramley and Sherfield on Loddon are located relatively close to one another and the allocated housing site (policies SS3.3 and SS3.8) will reduce the distance between settlements further.</p>	<p>Only that land which is required to prevent coalescence between settlements has been included in the strategic gap designation.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bull's Down Copse lies at the junction of three large, very gently sloping arable fields edged to the south by a wooded stream corridor and to the north by Sherfield Road. • Modern houses are clearly visible from the east, between the trees where the hedgerow becomes lower, however this is a brief view when travelling along Sherfield Road and overall the eastern edge is relatively soft and enclosed. <p>Landscape Capacity Study (2008) identifies the strategic gap being within landscape character areas BA05 (Bramley Camp), BA06 (Sherfield Court Mixed Farmland), BA07 (West Sherfield), BA08 (Wildmoor Mixed Farmland and woodland) and BR03 (North Bramley open slopes):</p> <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA05 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • covers a military area known as Bramley Camp, the high security nature of it has resulted in a development which has completely altered the original landscape character. This is particularly noticeable from the nature of the woodland and security fencing on the perimeter. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA06 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small character area to the north of Chineham, adjacent to the A33. • enclosed character • more limited impact on the setting of Sherfield-on- Loddon, although any development here would need to ensure an adequate buffer to prevent coalescence with the village. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA07 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area is located to the south and west of Sherfield-on-Loddon and is currently entirely separated from the existing urban edge of Basingstoke. • landform in the area is locally prominent, which along with the land use and vegetation creates a rural character. • area is also important as it provides the visual and physical setting to the village and should be retained to prevent any coalescence should new development in Basingstoke continue in this direction. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BA08 –</p>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> located to the north-east of Chineham combination of the landform, small and numerous copses and woods, isolated farmsteads and occasional residential properties give the area a rural character, notably limiting any influence of the urban area. <p>Summary of overall landscape capacity of BR03 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> area is located to the north and east of Bramley on sloping open farmland. slopes give the area a higher visual sensitivity 		
<p>Conclusion: The allocated housing sites (policies SS3.3 and SS3.8) will reduce the distance between Basingstoke/ Chineham and Bramley/ Sherfield on Loddon. This strategic gap is necessary to prevent the coalescence of Basingstoke/ Chineham and Bramley/ Sherfield on Loddon and to maintain the undeveloped nature of the gap. It will also ensure the separate identity of the settlements is maintained within the plan period. The strategic gap will provide a recognisable structure to the settlements, establishing in travellers' minds that they have left one settlement before they arrive somewhere else.</p>		

Tadley – Baughurst strategic gap (Policies Map 7e)

Criteria a)	Criteria b)	Criteria c)
<p>The Landscape Assessment (2001) highlights the open and undeveloped nature of the landscape within the gap between Tadley and Baughurst. Key points from Part 3: Settlements of the assessment relevant to this gap are:</p> <p><u>Southern setting and edge (page 92)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> landform typically slopes down to narrow, relatively enclosed stream valleys, before rising again to the undulating landscape. Fields range from large to smallscale, predominantly pasture with a relatively strong hedgerow structure. A golf course forms part of the southern setting, enclosing part of the urban edge with dense bands of tree planting. There are five significant entrances into Tadley from the south. All of these provide a relatively gradual transition into the town, with previews of the town, outlying buildings, urban influences, and a gentle merging of landscape features with urban form. 	<p>There are no housing site allocations in the Tadley/ Baughurst area</p>	<p>Only that land which is required to prevent coalescence between settlements has been included in the strategic gap designation.</p>

Western setting and edge (page 92)

- defined by a southwest sloping landform, enclosed by large areas of broadleaf woodland.

Landscape Capacity Study (2008) identifies the strategic gap being within TA03 (Church Brook Valley Floor) and TA04 (Bishopswood Golf Course Slopes):

Summary of overall landscape capacity of TA03 –

- area extends from Tadley in the east to Baughurst beyond the western boundary.
- important role in both the visual settings to both settlements as well as providing physical separation between the built up areas.
- flat landform
- stronger rural character to the south and central

Summary of overall landscape capacity of TA04 –

- a modified landscape which has only localised impacts on the adjacent area.
- northern end of the area provides physical separation between Baughurst and Tadley and therefore it would be essential to retain this buffer.

Conclusion:

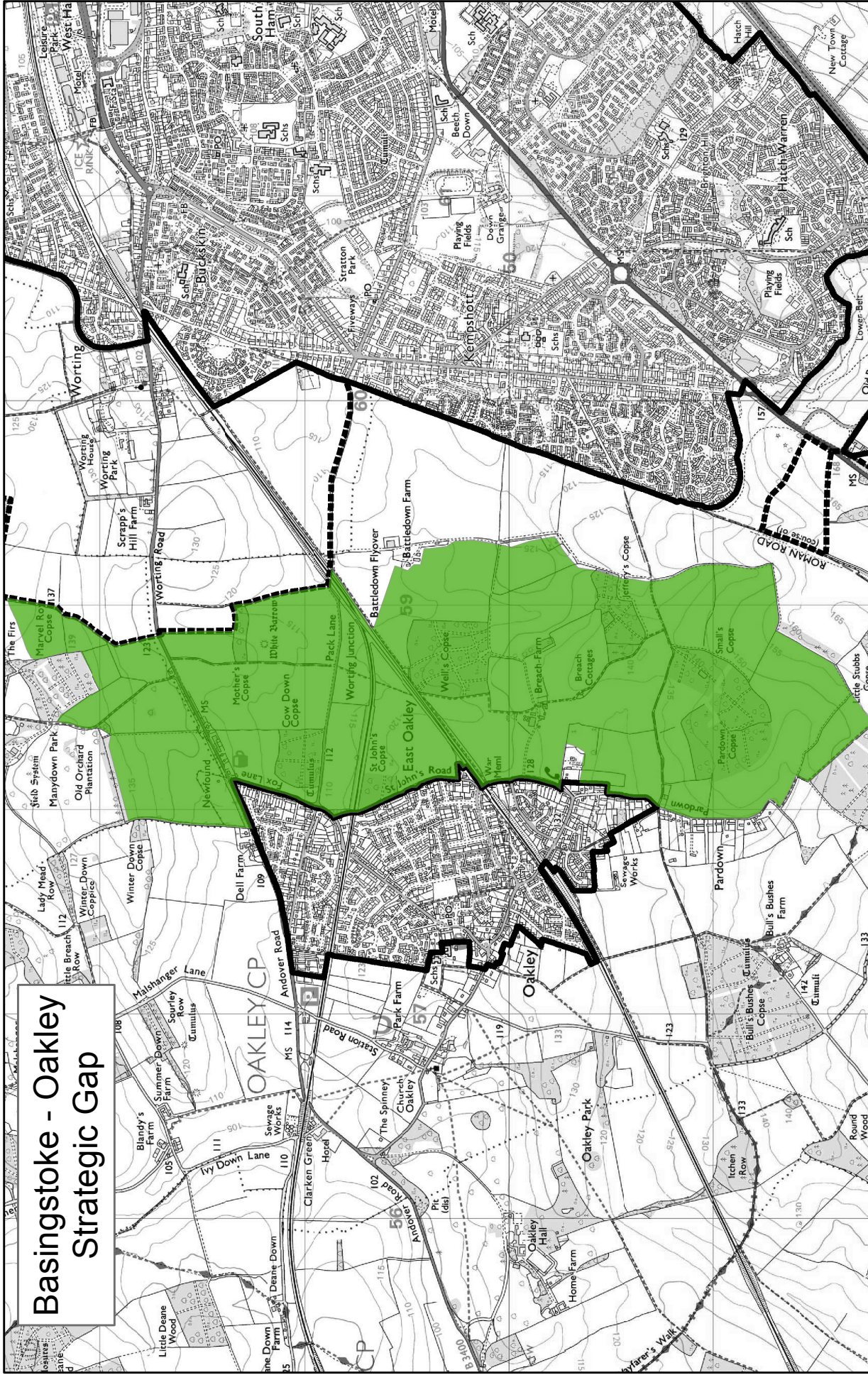
This strategic gap is necessary to prevent the coalescence of Tadley and Baughurst and to ensure the separate identity of the settlements is maintained within the plan period. The strategic gap will provide a recognisable structure to the settlements, establishing in travellers' minds that they have left one settlement before they arrive somewhere else.

14. Conclusions

- 14.1 The Council has examined the merits of a strategic gap policy and designations and can conclude that strategic gaps will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by preventing the areas in the borough where there is greatest risk of coalescence. The strategic gap policies can help safeguard local distinctiveness.
- 14.2 The strategic gaps will help to deliver the Council Plan, the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Plan Vision, address identified issues outlined in the Local Plan, deliver Local Plan objective L and help to achieve the Local Plan Spatial Strategy.
- 14.3 The inclusion of a policy on strategic gaps (policy EM2) is justified and consistent with national policy. Also, the borough council considers there is no suitable coverage in national policy for this local issue.
- 14.4 In addition, the strategic gaps policy in the Local Plan has considerable support from local councillors and the local community in the borough. The retention of the separate identity of individual settlements is extremely important to people living in the urban fringe and in urban areas. The policy and the designations provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency.
- 14.5 The policy is flexible and does allow for development to take place within the defined strategic gaps subject to compliance with policy criteria a) to c). Supporting text to policy EM2 at paragraph 6.14 states that small scale development that is in keeping with the rural nature of the gaps will not be prevented provided it meets certain criteria. Development proposals within strategic gaps will need to be of high quality design which responds to the local character.
- 14.6 Currently there are 12 neighbourhood plan designated areas. Criteria c) of policy EM2 adds additional flexibility as it states that development in gaps will be permitted where it is proposed through a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order, including Community Right to Build Orders. Evidence will need to justify why development proposed through these mechanisms is suitable when compared to the reasonable alternatives.

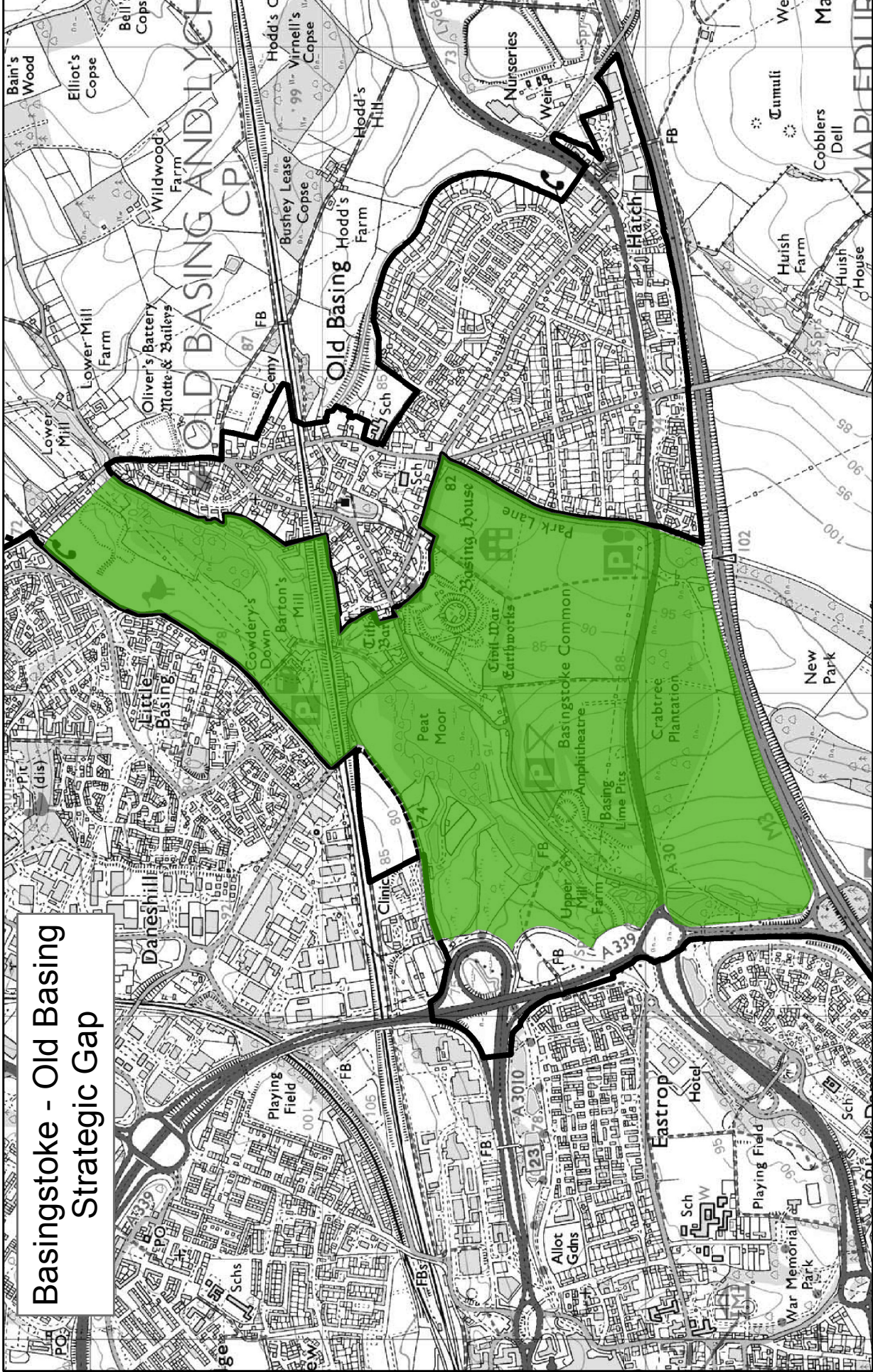
Appendix 1 - Maps of the strategic gaps defined in the Submission Local Plan

Basingstoke - Oakley Strategic Gap



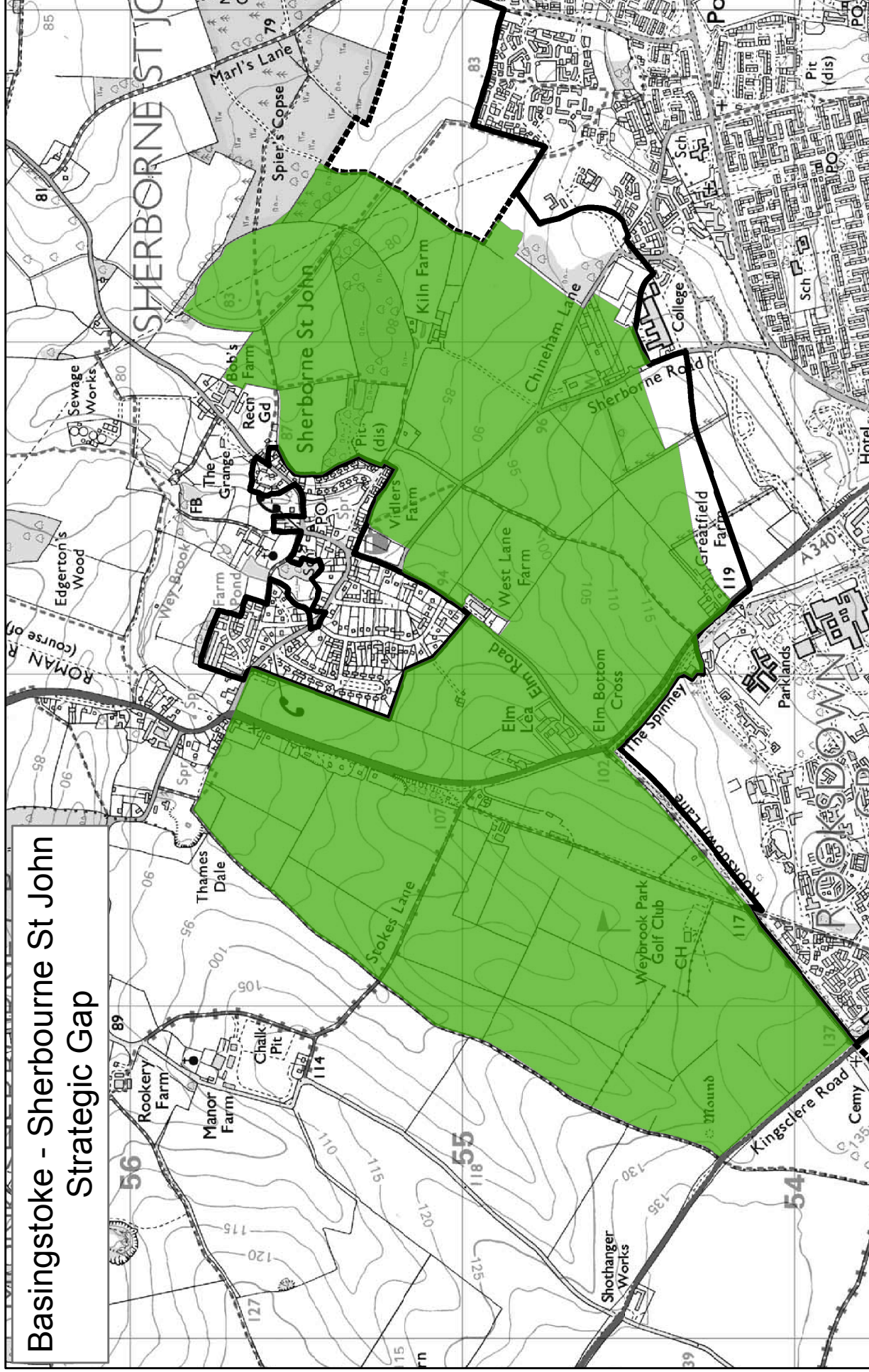
- Key**
- Proposed Strategic Gaps
 - Existing Settlement Policy Boundary
 - Proposed change to Settlement Policy Boundary

Basingstoke - Old Basing Strategic Gap



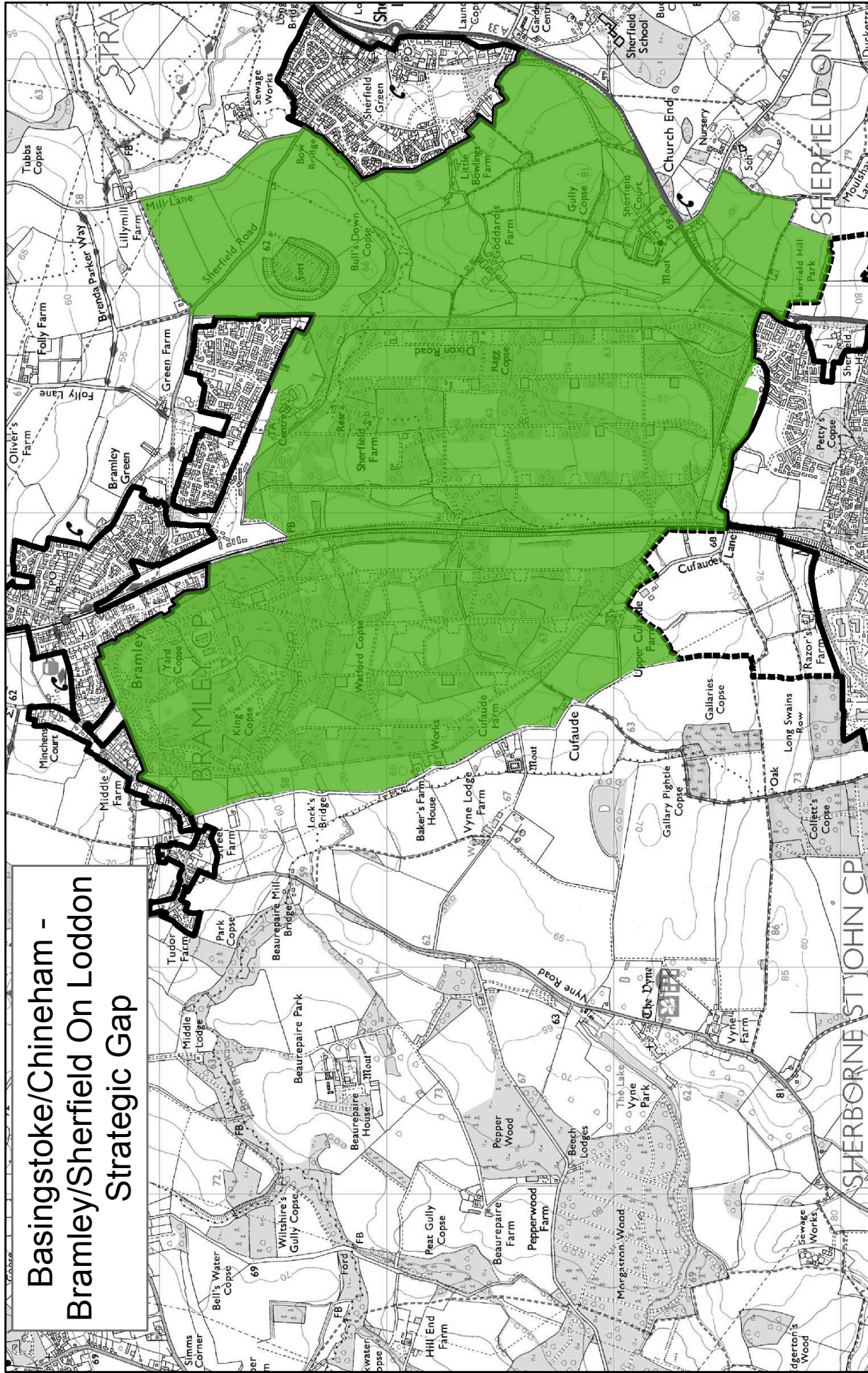
- Key**
- Proposed Strategic Gaps
 - Existing Settlement Policy Boundary
 - Proposed change to Settlement Policy Boundary

Basingstoke - Sherbourne St John Strategic Gap

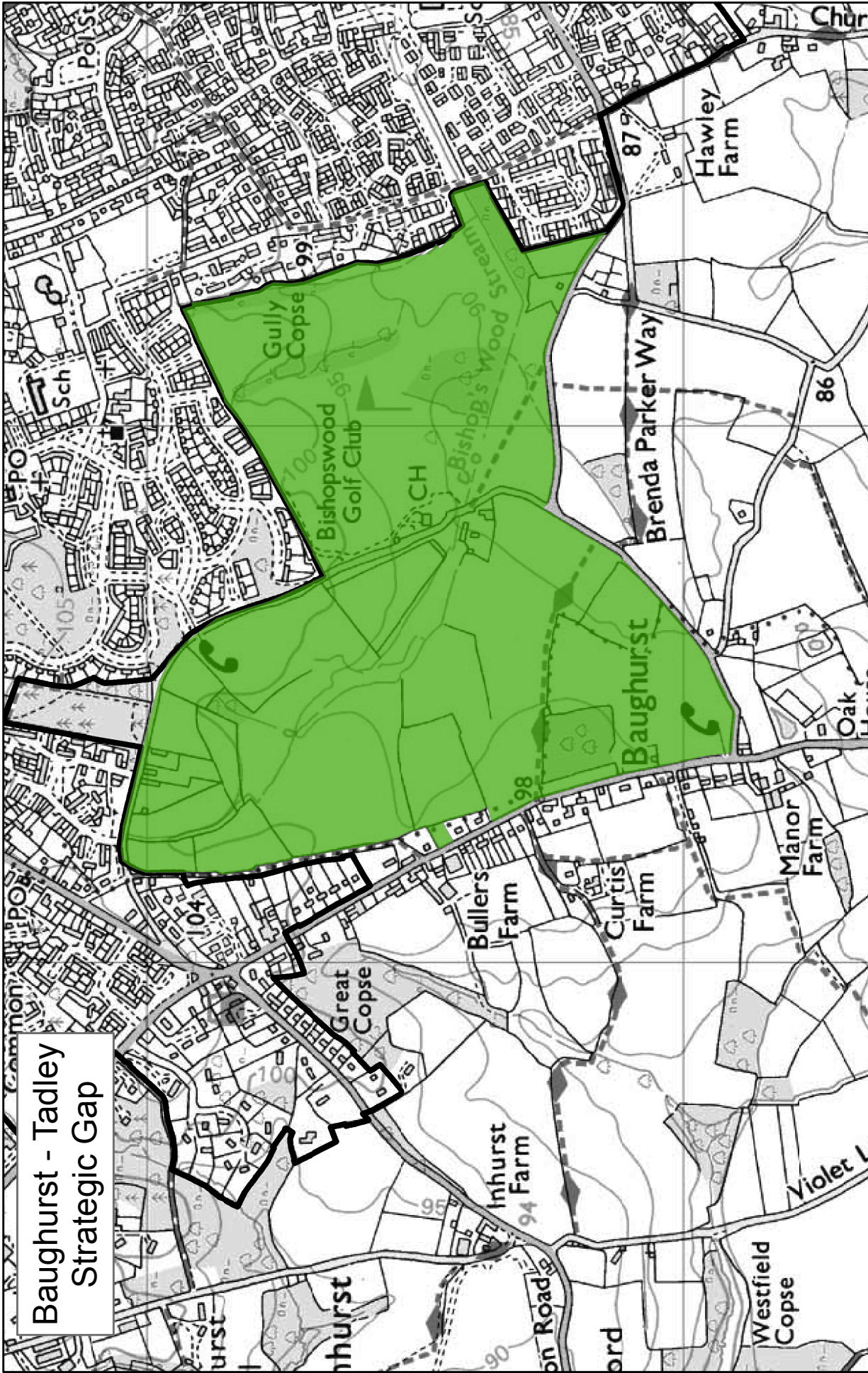


- Key**
- Proposed Strategic Gaps
 - Existing Settlement Policy Boundary
 - Proposed change to Settlement Policy Boundary

Basingstoke/Chineham - Bramley/Sherfield On Loddon Strategic Gap



- Key**
- Proposed Strategic Gaps
 - Existing Settlement Policy Boundary
 - Proposed change to Settlement Policy Boundary



Baughurst - Tadley Strategic Gap

- Key
- Proposed Strategic Gaps
 - Existing Settlement Policy Boundary
 - Proposed change to Settlement Policy Boundary