Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify small anomalies along the detailed boundaries of Knowsley’s Green Belt. Its purpose is NOT to identify any land that may be suitable for development on the edge of the urban area.

The Green Belt in Knowsley forms part of the Merseyside Green Belt which was adopted in 1983. National Planning Policy guidance note 2 Green Belts (PPG2), stresses that changes to the Green Belt should only be made in exceptional circumstances. Boundaries should not be changed, for example, because land has become derelict.

However, there are a number of instances where development has taken place, or where there seem to be inconsistencies on where the Green Belt boundary was drawn. This review identifies where these exist and makes recommendations about where changes are needed.

The review assessed the entire Green Belt boundary in Knowsley.

The review has been carried out in house by the Knowsley Council Local Development Framework team. Its recommendations will be subject to public consultation, and will be incorporated into our Site Allocations DPD, following the adoption of the Core Strategy.

The methodology is set out below. The review was carried by way of a desktop study, with sites visits carried out to check the boundary where any changes were proposed.

Reasons a change may be needed

PPG2 states that Green Belts can only be changed in exceptional circumstances. The circumstances where we may consider a change are listed below. All of the changes here are, both individually and the assessment taken as a whole, all considered exceptional due to the need to provide a consistent Green Belt boundary in order to secure the long term integrity of the Green Belt.

1) Consistency

The way that sites of a particular type on the edge of the Green Belt have been treated is not consistent across Knowsley.

We also need to be consistent about how built development that is in the Green Belt and is contiguous with the urban area is treated. Is the whole planning unit included in either the urban area or the Green Belt, and if not, are there robust reasons why part of the area is treated differently to the rest? In many cases such as with school sites (see below), it may be appropriate for
changes to be considered during the main Green Belt Study as they are policy decision and not boundary changes.

2) **Digitising errors**

It has become apparent that as the Green Belt was drawn on small-scale maps, anomalies sometimes exist when the boundaries are viewed at a larger scale. For example, when viewed at a large scale, the boundary appears to be in a different place as it may go through a plot of land instead of following a physical boundary, whereas this may not be apparent when the map is viewed at a small scale.

3) **Reflects current conditions**

As the boundaries of the Green Belt were drawn up over 25 years ago, it is inevitable that circumstances will have changed in a few places, requiring a minor realignment of the Green Belt boundary in order to reflect current conditions. This might be where a new development has been built that crosses the Green Belt boundary, or where development adjacent to the boundary is so similar to the character of the development in the urban area that the difference in status between each area is illogical.

**Assessment criteria**

PPG2 provides guidance about matters to be taken into account when Green Belt boundaries are first established. We have taken these into account in order to ensure that any proposed boundaries are consistent.

1) Where a strong feature exists (such as a main road, railway or canal) and forms the current Green Belt boundary, and the density of development is higher in the urban area than in the Green Belt and is urban in character, the existing boundary should remain as it is a strong permanent feature.

2) Where the land currently in the Green Belt is developed at a similar density to the adjacent urban area, it should be incorporated within the urban area – unless it crosses a strong boundary and, in the case of a ribbon development, doesn’t create a strong boundary.

3) Where the existing boundary appears to be incorrect due to either the scale it was drawn at, or through a digitising error, then the boundary should be realigned. Where any realignment is proposed, strong boundaries will be chosen wherever possible.

4) Where development since the boundary was drawn may result in the existing boundary being inappropriate, the boundary may need to be realigned with the new development.
Assessment Procedure

The above assessment criteria were applied to the boundary of the Green Belt in Knowsley. The existing Green Belt is shown in Knowsley’s Replacement Unitary Development Plan (June 2006). Where an anomaly was identified with the boundary, then the site was brought forward for further consideration.

With all identified anomalies, a record was made of the site location, the site area, the reasons why a change of Green Belt boundary might be required and the suggested changes to the proposals map for the area of land affected. Two maps of each site were prepared, one showing the current UDP designations and the other comprising the most up to date aerial photograph (in this case 2005/6). The existing boundary plus any suggested alteration is clearly shown the on UDP map.

All the suggested changes were reviewed by a wider group and a recommendation made on whether changes may be needed to the Green Belt boundary on the Proposals Map and as part of the Site Allocations DPD.

A site visit was carried out in all instances where a change was recommended to check that the assessment made in the office reflected the situation on site.

Assessed Sites and Recommendations

This section shows the individual site assessments. These are made on an area by area basis and are ordered for those sites where the boundary is to be changed removing land from the Green Belt, those where land is recommended to be added to the Green Belt and those where no change is recommended.

The sites assessments include; the parcels current UDP designation, a written explanation on why the sites were considered initially, how they were assessed, a justification for the recommendation and a recommendation.

The site assessments also include two images. The first image shows a copy of the relevant part of the Proposals Map from the Unitary Development Plan. The sites, subject to assessment are displayed with a red lined boundary. The Green Belt is shown as being light green in colour. The second image is an aerial photograph of the site taken in 2005.

Prescot / Whiston

Carr Lane, South Prescot Action Area (Site ID: KDBR11)

UPD Site Designation: Green Belt

Reason why the site is included in the Study: Possible digitising error.

Justification: Carr lane has been slightly realigned (to the north) and widened in order to accommodate additional traffic in South Prescot Action Area. This
has resulted in the Green Belt boundary running beyond Carr Lane in one location to the north of the road. This should be altered so Carr Lane is wholly within the Green Belt and does not extend beyond it.

**Recommendation:** Small area of Green Belt extending beyond Carr Lane should be removed.

knowsley park lane, prescot (site ID: KDBR04 & KDBR05)

**UDP Site Designation:** Green Belt

**Reason why the site is included in the Study:** Consistency of character between land uses. Strength of alternative boundaries.

**Justification:** The Green Belt boundary to rear of properties to the west of Knowsley Park Lane generally follows the rear boundaries of the gardens. However, there are two locations to the north and south of the road that cut between the properties. There boundary should be amended to run consistently along the tree line and rear of the gardens.

**Recommendation:** The Green Belt boundary to be altered so it consistently follows the extent of private gardens along Knowsley Park Lane.
Whittaker’s Nursery Site, North West Prescot (Site ID: KDBR03)

**UDP Site Designation:** Green Belt

**Reason why the site is included in the Study:** Different character of land within the site, largely developed use to the surrounding Green Belt.

**Relevant Criterion:** Character of the site compared to the Green Belt and Urban Area.

**Justification:** Whittaker’s Nursery has recently been extended, the site is wholly within the Green Belt and different in character to the surrounding, open agricultural land. It is considered outside the scope of this stage of the study.

**Recommendation:** The inclusion of this site within the Green Belt should be reviewed by the Green Belt Study.

Stadt Moers Park, Cross Lane (Site ID: KDBR06)

**UDP Site Designation:** Urban Greenspace and Educational Land

**Reason why the site is included in the Study:** Development has taken place since the Green Belt boundary was drawn.
Relevant Criterion: Is the development similar in character and density to the urban area?

Justification: The site is identified as Urban Greenspace within the UDP and currently contains a derelict building. Following a site visit it was considered that the site was sufficiently different in character when compared to the open area of Green Belt within Stadt Moers Park and has more in common with the neighbouring residential area. It is therefore recommended that no change is required.

Recommendation: No change to the boundary

Stadt Moers Park, Greenes Road (Site ID: KDBR07)

UDP Site Designation: Green Belt

Reason why the site is included in the Study: Development has taken place since the Green Belt boundary was drawn. The Green Belt now included a small car park to the north eastern corner of Stadt Moers Park.

Relevant Criterion: Development has occurred since the boundary was drawn and the question is whether the existing boundary is still appropriate

Justification: The car park was developed after the Green Belt was drawn in this area. The car park is associated with Stadt Moers Park, and although different in character to the park should remain within the Green Belt.

Recommendation: No change to the boundary
Stadt Moers Park, Cronton Avenue (Site ID: KDBR08)

**UDP Site Designation:** Urban Greenspace and Educational Land

**Reason why the site is included in the Study:** There is a small parcel of land outside the existing Green Belt boundary that may make a stronger boundary.

**Relevant Criterion:** Possible digitising error.

**Justification:** The Green Belt boundary here ignores an area of greenspace adjacent to the urban area. However, the area of land in question has planning permission for access improvements (cycle way / footpath) with buffer planting which following completion will create a clear boundary between Stadt Moers Park and the residential and employment areas to the east and west respectively.

**Recommendation:** No change to the boundary

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Huyton

Wantage View, Huyton (Site ID: KDBR10)

**UDP Site Designation:** Green Belt

**Reason why the site is included in the Study:** The existing boundary no longer reflects current conditions. The boundary goes through the curtilage of 60 Chestnut Walk

**Relevant Criterion:** Development has occurred since the boundary was drawn and the question is whether the existing boundary is still appropriate.

**Justification:** The rear of gardens at Wantage View are included in the Green Belt, along with an area of woodland between the properties and the M62. Further east the M62 has been washed over by the Green Belt and has been used to define it in this area.
**Recommendation:** The parcel of land should be removed from the Green Belt, so the Green Belt boundary in this location consistently follows the M62.

Junction improvements at M57/62 interchange (Site ID: KDBR09)

**UDP Site Designation:** Proposed Major Highway Scheme  
**Reason why the site is included in the Study:** Since the Green Belt boundary was drawn junction improvements have been made to the M62 / M57 interchange “Tarbock Island”.

**Relevant Criterion:** Subsequent development has made the existing boundary unsatisfactory.

**Justification:** The motorway interchange has been extended following the Green Belt being drawn. However highway infrastructure (including motorways and associated junctions and slip roads) are consistently washed over by the extent of the Green Belt.

**Recommendation:** No change to the boundary

Kirkby

Bank Lane, Kirkby (Site ID: KDBR01)  
**UDP Site Designation:** White Land (Land where existing use is proposed to continue)
**Relevant Criterion:** Possible digitising error.

**Justification:** The Green Belt boundary adjacent to Bank Lane Kirkby consistently runs to west of the road with the exception of a small area shown as White Land within the UDP. It is recommended the Green Belt boundary in this area should consistently follow Bank Lane.

**Recommendation:** The Green Belt boundary in this area should be changed to include the small parcel of white land within the Green Belt.

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**Ingoe Lane, Kirkby (Site ID: KDBR02)**

**UDP Site Designation:** Primarily Residential Area

**Reason why the site is included in the Study:** The boundary line for the Green Belt is not consistent with the line on the ground.

**Relevant Criterion:** Possible digitising error.

**Justification:** The Primarily Residential Area protrudes beyond edge of the urban area in a number of locations. The Green Belt boundary in this location is inconsistently defined by the highway and residential dwellings. It is recommended that the Green Belt boundary be consistently defined by the extent of built development and the highway is washed over by the Green Belt.

**Recommendation:** The Green Belt boundary to be changed to include the entire highway along Eastfield Way / Ingoe Lane.
Conclusions

The Review has revealed a small number of anomalies with the existing boundary. Many of these have resulted from digitising errors, and the scale of map on which the Green Belt was originally drawn. Only a handful of anomalies have resulted from subsequent development where the circumstances have changed to such an extent that this warrants a change of designation.

It is recommended that the revised boundaries be included in the Site Allocations DPD, at which time the Proposals Map would also be amended accordingly.