

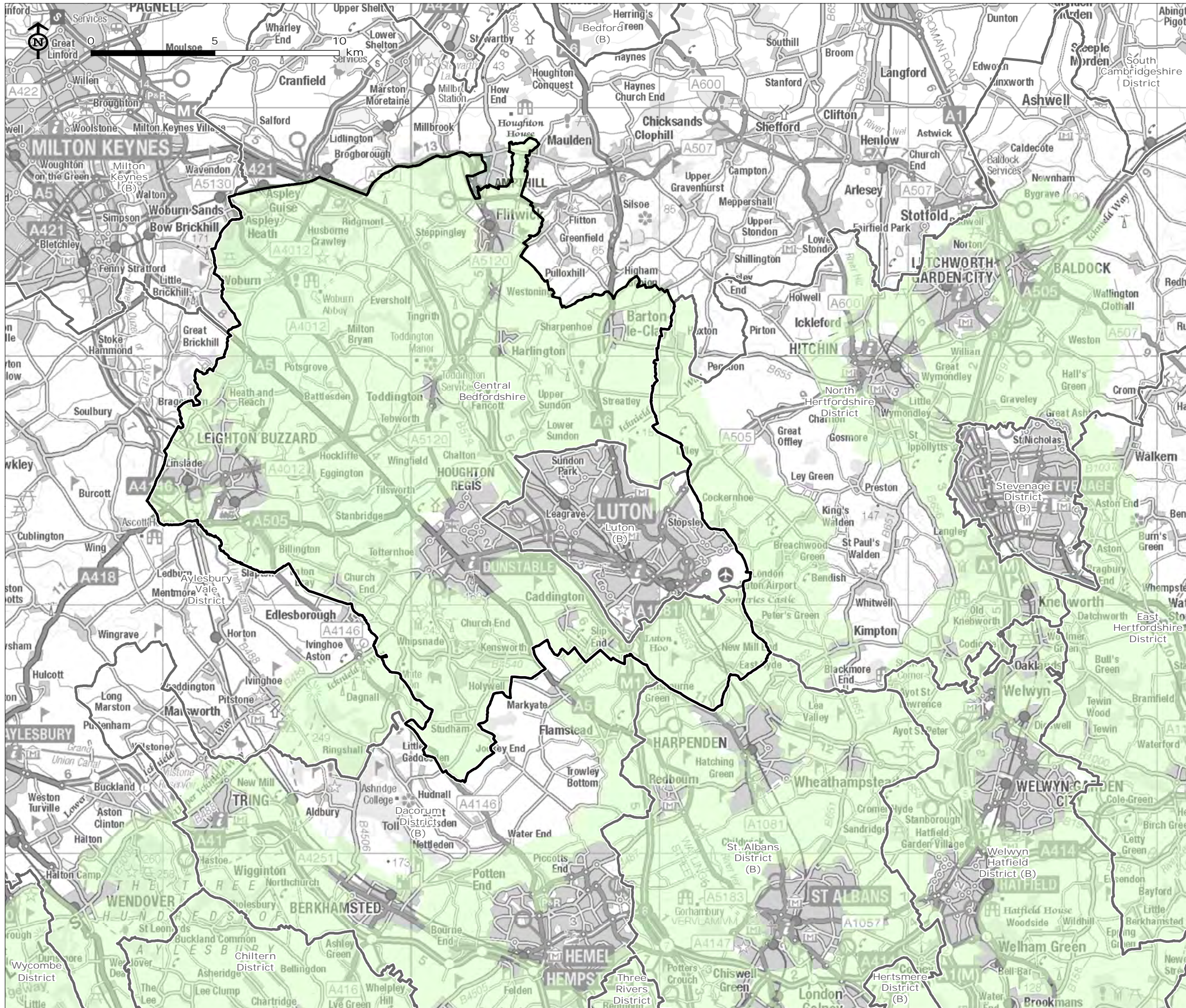
effects on the overall integrity of the Green Belt according to an assessment of the whole of the Green Belt according to the five purposes.⁸

The local context

- 2.23 Understanding the origins and character of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt is an important first step in understanding its role and value and re-evaluating its performance. A summary of the local context is provided below.




The South Bedfordshire Green Belt

- 2.24 Central Bedfordshire is a largely rural authority; conversely, Luton is predominantly urban. Approximately 40% of Central Bedfordshire (28,214ha) is Green Belt, whereas only 3% of Luton (136ha) is designated Green Belt.
- 2.25 The concept for the South Bedfordshire Green Belt was first introduced in 1944 as part of Abercrombie's Greater London Plan, but it was not until the early 1960s that the Green Belt was mapped and relevant policies were applied.
- 2.26 The main purposes of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt were to contain the outward sprawl of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linlade, Ampthill and Flitwick, and to prevent them merging with one another and other neighbouring settlements.
- 2.27 The adoption of the Bedfordshire County Structure Plan in 1980 gave the Green Belt statutory force. The extreme pressure for growth around the area's large built-up settlements was cited as the primary justification for the designation. Policy 8 of the Structure Plan stated: *'It is the policy of the County Council to maintain a Green Belt in the south of the County having a width of up to 12 miles measured from the south-western boundary of the County (but excluding that part of the County lying to the east of Hexton in Hertfordshire) for the purpose of containing the outward growth of Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis; Leighton-Linslade; and Ampthill and Flitwick and to prevent the coalescence of settlements within that area.'*
- 2.28 The South Bedfordshire Green Belt continues to play an important role in shaping the pattern of local development. The current extent of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt is shown in **Figure 2.1**.



CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON JOINT GREEN BELT STUDY

Figure 2.1: South Bedfordshire Green Belt

-  Study Area
-  Planning Authority boundary
-  Green Belt

Map Scale @ A3: 1:150,000

